

OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT OF READING
OF ISIZULU AS HOME LANGUAGE IN GRADE 3

BY

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“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13)

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates Outcomes-based assessment of reading isiZulu at the end of the foundation phase. Teachers are required to employ a variety of assessment methods to establish learners' strengths and weaknesses. This will ensure that teaching is organised in a way that will suit learners' needs. It is through assessment that a teacher is able to establish whether learning is taking place or not and this helps to provide support, where necessary. Six primary schools were chosen as settings within which qualitative research was conducted. Observations and informal interviews were the main method of collecting data. Six Grade 3 teachers were observed teaching and assessing reading of isiZulu in their classrooms.

The findings were divided into five themes that emerged from the data analysis, namely the language policy document, teaching of reading, assessment of reading, lack of facilities and essential support. The findings indicated that some teachers still struggled with teaching and assessment of reading in the outcomes-based approach.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The ability to read is the key to a learner's progress at school. Reading is essential for learning. Pretorius and Machet (2004: 45) cite that reading is a core competency at school and all academic achievement depends to a lesser or greater extent on reading literacy. A learner who has a reading problem encounters problems in mastering the learning content. According to Lane, Pullen, Eisele and Jordan (2002:101) reading is a foundation skill for school learning and life learning – the ability to read is critical for success in modern society.

This study investigates how reading should be assessed in an outcomes-based education (OBE) approach in isiZulu as home language. Assessment is an important factor that promotes reading instruction. Assessment enables a teacher to establish whether any learning is taking place or not and to provide support where necessary. Shellard (2003: 43) emphasises that effective assessment should be a key part of every school's literacy program. According to Learning First Alliance (2000) as cited in Shellard (2003: 43) frequent assessment of developing readers and the use of that information for planning instruction, is the most reliable way of preventing children from falling behind and staying behind.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Reading, as one of the important skills acquired in literacy, is used to accomplish many different goals. According to Mason and Au (1990: 3) and Hall, Ribovick and Ramig (1979:3) reading is used when we check price tags or street signs, exchange letters and greeting cards, maintain social relationships, get information from newspapers, learn about distant events, deal with the practical problems of everyday life and for recreation and enjoyment.

It is therefore clear that reading plays a crucial life-skill role as efficient living in the home demands acquiring information through reading, for example, recipes, menus, labels on

packages and cans, cheques, bank statements, household bills and manuals or operating instructions for appliances.

According to Duffy and Roehler (1993: 6) we need a new literacy – a literacy in which people do not only read and write but are in control of their language and enthusiastic about its use, a literacy in which they do not passively receive and send messages but use reading and writing to control their destinies, in which they not only comprehend and compose but also interpret, adapt, analyse, frame and solve problems and persuade others using higher forms of thinking. It is therefore the researcher’s opinion that functional reading is the underlying purpose of the reading programme of Grade 3.

1.2.1 Foundation phase learning programmes

According to the Department of Education (2003: 28) there are three learning programmes in the foundation phase, namely Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills. The learning outcomes for all the learning areas in the higher grades need to be covered across these three learning programmes. This does, however, not mean that each learning programme will cover all of these areas. The other learning areas done in higher grades are Mathematics, Natural Science, Social Science, Arts and Culture, Life Orientation, Economic and Management Sciences and Technology. Lessing and De Witt (2002: 274) cite that it is recommended that integration of knowledge and skills should be addressed within a specific learning area as well as across learning areas.

1.2.2 Literacy learning programme for Grade 3

The Department of Education (2003: 41) highlights that the main purpose of a Literacy learning programme is to enable learners to communicate effectively either in spoken or written/visual format as reflected by the learning outcome in the Revised National Curriculum Statement. According to the Department of Education (2003: 29) two languages will have to form part of the Literacy learning programme from Grade 3 to 9 in order to meet the multilingualism policy. This study deals with the teaching and assessment of reading in isiZulu as the first language or home language.

1.2.3 The importance of home language

“It is recommended that the learner’s home language should be used for learning and teaching in the foundation phase wherever possible” (Department of Education 2002a: 5). This means that the home language should be used as the medium of instruction in the foundation phase. According to Department of Education (2003: 21) learners are able to transfer the literacies they have acquired in their home language to their first additional language which, in the case of isiZulu speakers, may be English or Afrikaans in the South African context.

1.2.4 Integration of learning programmes

The Department of Education (2003: 28) states that teachers must ensure that they cover all the learning outcomes with all their related assessment standards from all learning areas within the three learning programmes. “The learning outcomes specify the broad knowledge or content, the skills and values to be taught in each grade” (Potenza & Johannesson 2003: 18). The Department of Education (2003: 42) emphasises that learning outcomes and their related assessment standards, as well as other learning areas should be integrated in the Literacy learning programme. This is done to design the learning activities and to support, enhance and extend the skills, knowledge and values of the language learning outcomes and assessment standards.

The Department of Education (2002a: 24) stipulates six main learning outcomes (LOs) with their assessment standards (ASs) for the home language at the Grade 3 level. They are as follows:

• Learning Outcome 1: Listening

The learner will be able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations.

• Learning Outcome 2: Speaking

The learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in spoken language in a wide range of situations.

• Learning Outcome 3: Reading and Reviewing

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.

• Learning Outcome 4: Writing

The learner will be able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes.

• Learning Outcome 5: Thinking and Reasoning

The learner will be able to use language to think and reason, as well as to access, process and use information for learning.

• Learning Outcome 6: Language Structure and Use

The learner will be able to use sounds, words and grammar of language to create and interpret texts.

As mentioned previously, the learning outcomes for all other learning areas done in higher grades should be integrated in the teaching of foundation phase learning programmes.

1.2.5 Reading and reviewing as main focus

This study focuses mainly on Learning Outcome 3 (Reading and Reviewing). The reason for this is that this learning outcome deals with the reading instruction and the assessment of reading. Learning Outcome 3 is stated as follows by the Department of Education:

“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 reading for meaning is the main purpose. Techniques and strategies that help learners do this with increasing accuracy support reading for meaning. Reading (including visual and multimedia texts) is essential for language development, learning to write for enjoyment, personal growth and learning about the world” (Department of Education 2002a: 32).

1.2.6 Assessment standards for reading and reviewing

An assessment standard is described in different ways. The Department of Education (2002a: 136) states that: “Assessment standard is defined as the language knowledge, skills and values that learners must be able to demonstrate that they know or can do by the end of a particular grade.”

According to Maree and Fraser (2004: 48) an assessment standard describes the level at which learners should demonstrate achievement of the learning outcome/s and ways of demonstrating their achievement. This means that when planning a reading lesson, teachers need to identify the assessment standards that they want to cover in that particular lesson.

For this study assessment standards define the levels of knowledge, skills and attitudes that learners will be required to demonstrate as evidence that they have achieved each phase outcome to an appropriate depth and breadth (Vandeyar & Killen 2003: 130). According to the Department of Education (2002a: 32) the following are the assessment standards of home language for Grade 3;

- *Uses visual cues to make meaning;*
 - *reads graphical texts such as photographs, maps, flow diagrams, charts and;*
 - *explains orally or in writing their meaning and purpose,*
 - *uses the information in appropriate ways (e.g. a map for direction),*
 - *evaluates the image for design features and effectiveness*

- *Makes meaning of the written text*
 - *comments on a story or poem the learner has read, and demonstrate*

- *understanding by answering questions on;*
 - ~ *main idea*
 - ~ *key details such as main characters, sequence of events, setting, cultural values,*
 - ~ *cause-effect relations,*
 - ~ *conclusions (e.g. What does this story/fable teach us?)*
 - ~ *whether or not the story was liked and why;*
 - ~ *reads instructions related to real-life interests and needs*
 - ~ *reads a variety of fairly complex texts such as fiction and non-fiction books, tables of contents and indexes.*

- *Reads text alone, and uses a variety of strategies to make meaning*
 - *reads a printed text fluently and with understanding*
 - *pronounces words with accuracy when reading aloud,*
 - *reads aloud with expression, using appropriate text stress, pausing and intonation,*
 - *uses word recognition and comprehension skills to read unfamiliar texts (e.g. phonics, contextual cues, predicting)*
 - *uses a range of automatic monitoring and self-correcting methods when reading such as re-reading, reading and pausing and practicing the word before saying it out loud.*

- *Consolidates phonic knowledge*
 - *recognises that the same sound can be spelled in different ways (e.g. play, pain, plate)*
 - *recognises that the same spelling can represent different sounds (e.g. bread, read)*
 - *recognises some more vowel sounds spelled with two letters (vowel diagrams e.g. oi, ou, oa, aw);*
 - *recognises the use of 'gh' and 'ght' at the end words;*
 - *recognises vowels with two sounds (diphthongs) (e.g. ere, air, are, au)*

- *Reads for information and enjoyment*
 - *choose fiction and non-fiction books and states what was liked or not liked about them.*
 - *reads and appreciates books written by authors from different cultures about a range of different contexts and relationships;*
 - *reads different kinds of texts such as comics, magazines, newspapers;*

- *develops vocabulary by using a dictionary and keeping a personal dictionary.*
- *uses tables of contents, index, key words, headings, captions and page numbers to find information;*
- *plays word games that draw on reading, vocabulary, knowledge and skills;*
- *identifies and finds information sources such as a community members, library books;*
- *starts to analyse oral, written and visual texts for sociocultural values, attitudes and assumptions.*

1.3 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROBLEM OF STUDY

According to Pretorius and Machet (2004: 47) research indicates that the literacy environment in both home and school influences and affects children's acquisition and development of reading skills. They also cite other factors that can impact on literacy outcomes, such as the availability of textbooks, availability and accessibility of reading material. The factors (deducted from the literature) that contribute to learners' reading problems in the home language are discussed below.

1.3.1 Problems experienced with outcomes-based assessment

Prior to the introduction of an outcomes-based assessment approach teachers used traditional evaluation methods. Assessment was characterised by tests and examinations that emphasised academic exercise and the recall of textbook-based knowledge. In the outcomes-based approach teachers need to know how to assess reading, using the set of assessment standards to assess the attainment of the learning outcome.

According to Vandeyar and Killen (2003: 130), for each grade of schooling, there is a set of assessment standards that define the levels of knowledge, skills and attitudes that learners will be required to demonstrate as evidence that they achieved each phase outcome to an appropriate depth and breadth.

According to this researcher's informal conversation with teachers at the time of data collection, many teachers were unsure about how to assess learning using the outcomes-based

approach. Teachers stated that they needed more support workshops on assessment. Vandeyar and Killen (2003: 133) contend that National Curriculum Statement was making several major advances in helping to simplify assessment in South African schools but its major weakness was that teachers were still not provided with sufficient guidelines on the fundamental principles of good assessment practices.

1.3.2 Teacher-based problems

According to Pretorius and Machet (2004: 47), the teacher-based factors that can influence learner outcomes include teacher education, qualification, training experience, classroom management and discipline, instructional approaches to reading, the personality of the teacher and his or her attitude towards learners. They also state that teachers who come from a home environment in which literacy activities are not frequent and work in schools that are not well resourced in terms of reading material, they themselves may not engage readily in reading for pleasure. Teachers who do not see the importance of reading is unlikely to influence their learners to like reading.

Teachers should first be readers before they will be able to motivate their learners to become good readers. They should read stories and come to class and tell stories to learners to develop that love for reading among learners. If the class does not encourage a print-rich environment learners are unlikely to be motivated to like reading. A variety of reading material can be displayed in class, for instance a library corner can be created. According to the Department of Education (2008:53) teachers should seek opportunities to expand their knowledge in peer coaching, mentorships, professional reading circles, networking opportunities with colleagues and literacy workshops and conferences.

1.3.3 Limited availability of reading materials in the school environment

According to Allington (2002), as cited in Pretorius and Machet (2004: 47), it is well documented, for example that learners in well resourced schools tend to attain higher literacy levels than learners from poorly resourced schools. All learners should have access to libraries and all schools should have libraries. Pretorius and Machet (2004: 48) indicates that teachers need to create a print-rich classroom environment. This means that classrooms should be

interesting, stimulating but safe places where a wide variety of books are available to learners to read or page through, where posters, charts, maps and other print material are displayed and are accessible and meaningful to the learners.

Many schools from previously disadvantaged communities still have no school libraries and have limited reading material. Public libraries are found in towns and townships and learners from a deep rural area find it difficult to travel to the library due to the socioeconomic status of the community.

1.3.4 Non-availability of reading material at home

Jennings, Caldwell and Lerner (2006: 241) argue that activities that are done in a nurturing home, such as reading books, listening to stories and engaging in the free exchange of ideas, form an important basis for language skills. This means that reading should not be seen as an activity that should only take place at school. Parents need to ensure that they foster literacy activities for their children at an early age. This can be done, for instance, by providing reading material at the child's level at home.

Pretorius and Machet (2004: 47) indicate that the home and school literacy environment influences and affects children's acquisition and development of reading literacy. Because parents in rural areas are sometimes illiterate and do not know the value of reading, they do not see the need to encourage their children to read at home. They often regard reading as something that should take place at school. According to the Department of Education (2003: 27) parents should be encouraged to read to their children, sing songs and say rhymes with them in the language they speak at home. Verhoeven, Elbro and Reitsma (2002: 261) also indicate that the promotion of programmes intended to stimulate parental involvement in children's literacy must be enlarged.

According to Joubert et al (2008: 126) a good atmosphere can also be created by

- parents who read and who convey the message that reading is enjoyable to the child.
- placing books at the child's disposal and encouraging him or her to page through and enjoy them

- talking to the child and enhancing his or her language experience and frame of reference
- regularly visiting a library with the child to enable him or her to borrow books he or she likes.

1.3.5 Parents' views on the importance of home language

The Department of Education (2002a: 5) recommends that the learner's home language be used for learning and teaching wherever possible. Because English is the language of government, it is recorded as the language of communication in South Africa. According to Pretorius and Matchet (2004: 48) English is being used as the predominant language of tuition in South African schools. The researcher in her experience as the teacher in the foundation phase has observed that parents tend to rate the performance of a school in terms of the level of English spoken by their children.

This has put pressure on teachers to concentrate on what the community demands. Consequently, many foundation phase teachers neglect the teaching of reading in IsiZulu. .

The importance of knowing all the basic skills in one's home language cannot be overemphasised. Maree and Fraser (2004: 207) allude to the fact that learners' home language needs to be strengthened and developed to provide a sound foundation for learning additional languages. Parents should motivate their children to love their home language while at the same time encouraging them to learn other languages. They should listen to their children when they read aloud at home and try to assess the level of their reading.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Deputy Director-General: General Education and Training published an open letter to all primary school principals (Mail & Guardian 11 to 17 August, 2006) stating that according to their assessment of how well children read a shockingly high number of learners in South African schools cannot read at the appropriate grade and age level. The letter challenged all primary schools principals to improve the reading skills of all their learners. Dreyer and Nel

(2003: 249) assert that research in South Africa indicates that many South African students who register for undergraduate studies each year are under-prepared for university education and that many of these students have low levels of reading ability. The above statements show that there is a serious problem regarding the teaching of reading skills in our schools. Pretorius and Machet (2004: 46) suggest that in order to establish sound reading competence in South African schools, it is essential to understand the factors that hinder the development of reading skills and to avoid or minimise them as much as possible, while at the same time nurturing those factors that promote reading skills.

The researcher, in her experience as a foundation phase teacher, has observed that at the time of this research there were large numbers of learners who struggle to read IsiZulu although it is their home language. The researcher decided to research the assessment of reading because it is through assessment that a teacher is able to establish what a learner knows, understands and can do, from there the teacher can decide what support to render. According to Fox (2004: 30) assessment helps teachers to monitor student growth in reading and provide timely information for instructional decision making. It is important for every learner to first learn the skills of his or her home language. Fagan (2003: 38) points out that research emphasises the need for learners to have a firm basis in their home language literary skills before they are introduced to a second language.

Mahabeer (2003: 15) states that reading problems include word-by-word reading, poor pronunciation, omissions, repetitions, poor word attack skills and inadequate information comprehension. It is the teacher's duty to assess and identify the kind of reading problem that a learner is experiencing. If the teacher is incapable of identifying the learner's problem this could have a negative impact on the learner's learning.

1.5 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this study is to investigate the assessment of reading of isiZulu in the practical teaching situation with the purpose of identifying strengths and weaknesses in the assessment process. The researcher also hopes to formulate guidelines to improve the assessment of reading of isiZulu at the end of the foundation phase to enhance the teaching of reading instruction of isiZulu.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- An in-depth literature study of reading instruction of isiZulu as a home language at the end of the foundation phase.
- An in-depth literature study on practical guidelines for the assessment of reading of isiZulu in an outcomes-based education at the end of the foundation phase.
- An empirical study on the practical applications of the assessment of reading of isiZulu as Home Language at the end of the foundation phase.
- Designing for the improvement of assessment of reading of isiZulu at the end of the foundation phase based on practical realities and an in-depth literature research.
- Recommendations for the improvement of reading assessment and also indications for further research.

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF CORE CONCEPTS

A clarification of some concepts used in this study is given in order to provide the reader with a clear understanding of what is meant by each concept.

1.7.1 Outcomes-based education: definition

Sieborger and Macintosh (2004: 33) define outcomes-based education as an approach to teaching, training and learning which stresses the need to be clear about what learners are expected to achieve. There are outcomes that are set for a learner to achieve at the end of the process. According to the Department of Education (1997: 21) outcomes-based education is a flexible, empowerment-orientated approach to learning. It aims to equip learners with the knowledge, competence and orientations needed for success after they leave school at the completion of their training. Griffin and Smith (1997: 6) describe outcomes-based education as a very accountable process as the educator, the school and the system are expected to publicly state what is important for learners to learn and to support these assertions with evidence that this has occurred. They believe that such an approach differs from previous orientations in that it changes the focus to what is achieved rather than what is provided.

Potenza and Johanneson (2003: 52) states that outcomes-based education is an achievement-orientated, activity-based and learner-centred education process. For the Department of Education (2002a: 1) outcomes-based education strives to enable all learners to achieve their maximum ability. Outcomes-based education encourages a learner-centred and activity-based approach to education.

For this study outcomes-based education is defined as an achievement-orientated, activity-based and learner-centred education process (Potenza & Johanneson (2003: 52). The reason for choosing this definition is that it highlights the main focus of outcomes-based education which is catering for the needs of the learner.

1.7.2 Assessment: definition

1.7.2.1 Evaluation prior to outcomes-based education

According to Mothatha, Lemmer, Mda and Pretorius (2000: 13), in the previous South African education system, all assessment of learners were done through tests and examinations at the end of the academic year. Evaluation was not integrated with teaching and learning as it took place at the end of the year or programme. For Vandeyar and Killen (2003: 119) evaluation in this paradigm was characterised by paper-and-pencil tests that emphasised academic exercises and the recall of textbook-based knowledge. This means that evaluation was done for the purpose of producing marks that could be recorded and reported. Evaluation was more summative in nature rather than formative.

1.7.2.2 Evaluation versus assessment

According to Nitko (2001:7) evaluation is defined as a process of making a value judgement about the learner's product or performance whereas assessment is seen as a non-judgemental process. McMillan (2001:10) asserts that evaluation involves an interpretation of what has been gathered through assessment, in which judgments are made about performance. In the evaluation of a learner's progress, for instance, assessment is an important aspect to consider, but you would also consider the home background of the learner and his or her interests and abilities. This means that assessment is one aspect of evaluation. The information obtained

through assessment is analysed and interpreted with the aim to make judgments about a learner's competence.

1.7.2.3 Outcomes-based assessment

Assessment in the outcomes-based education (OBE) approach is defined as a continuous, planned process of gathering information about the performance of the learners assessed against the assessment standards of the learning outcomes (Department of Education 2002a: 125). Flippo (2003: 5) states that assessment includes all observations, samplings and other formal and informal, written, oral or performance-type testing that a teacher might do in order to gather information about a child's abilities, interests, motivations, feelings, attitude, strategies, skills and special cultural or sociocultural considerations. According to the Department of Education (2002a: 127) a variety of assessment methods is needed to evaluate the learners' learning performance more fully. These include reading interviews, peer assessment, self-assessment, portfolio assessment, checklists, performance assessment, etcetera.

In this study, assessment is the process during which the information about the learner is continuously collected using a variety of methods, analysed and interpreted in order to help teachers, parents and other interested parties to make decisions about the learner's progress (Joubert, Bester & Meyer 2008:296).

1.7.3 Reading

According to Klein, Peterson and Simington (1991: 6) most of the contemporary definitions of reading include the following: (1) Reading is a process (2) Reading is strategic (3) Reading is interactive and (4) Reading instruction requires orchestration.

Pretorius (2000: 2) indicates that reading involves several component knowledge structures and processes that integrate simultaneously during the reading process. Thompson, Tunmer and Nicholson (1993: 1) and Aaron and Joshi (1992:56) highlight that reading consists of two major components, one that allows language to be recognised through a graphic representation (decoding), and another that allows language to be comprehended. According

to Pretorius (2000:2) decoding refers to the deciphering of printed symbols into language, and involves the oculomotor, perceptual linguistic parsing aspects of the reading activity relating to letter-sound correspondence, identification and lexical access. Comprehension refers to the understanding process and meaning is assigned to the text as a whole.

According to Richek, List and Lerner (1983: 7) reading is the ability to gather meaning from printed symbols. This entails that reading is about understanding and getting a message from a written text. Moore and Wade (1995:2) assert that the interactive nature of the reading process implies that readers make multiple responses. For example, they decode, read for meaning, criticise and employ their previous experience of life and of other texts. Browne (1998: 7) also emphasises the relationship between text and the reader.

Anderson, Hierbet, Scott and Wilkinson (1985) as cited in Lategan (1999: 28) see reading as a process in which information from the text and the knowledge possessed by the reader act together to produce meaning and it is therefore a constructive process. They also state that the text and the reader are alleged to 'act together' to integrate the new knowledge and prior knowledge and as such, reading is interactive.

In this study reading is defined as a complex organisation of patterns of higher mental processes that can and should embrace all types of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning and problem solving (Thompson et al 1993:1). The reason for choosing this definition is that it clarifies that cognitive aspects are involved in reading. Learners need to be taught how to activate these aspects.

1.7.4 Foundation phase

“Foundation Phase refers to the first four grades of the General Education and Training that is grade R-3” (Department of Education 2002a: 134). Learners in the foundation phase range from 4½ and 7½ years of age. This study focuses on Grade 3, the last year of the foundation phase.

Assessment of learner performance in the foundation phase in the three learning programmes should mainly focus on the learning outcomes and assessment standards defined in the Languages, Mathematics and Life Orientation learning areas. According to the Department of

Education (2007:22) no learner may stay in the foundation phase for longer than four years (or five years in the foundation phase where Grade R is offered), unless the provincial head of the department has given approval based on specific circumstances and professional advice.

1.7.5 Home language

“Home language is the language which children learn through being immersed in it in their home and/or community (Department of Education, 2002a:138). According to the Department of Education (2003: 20) the Literacy learning programme caters for all 11 official languages as both Home Language and First Additional Language for the foundation phase, to make provision for the rich language diversity that exists in South Africa. Learners are, however, not exposed to all 11 languages. This study focused on IsiZulu as a home language. The Department of Education (2002a:5) recommends that the learner’s home language should be used for learning and teaching wherever possible.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.8.1 Literature study

An intensive literature study was conducted. The information about reading instruction and outcomes-based assessment of reading was collected. According to Mouton (2006: 87) the importance of a literature review is to learn from other scholars, how they have theorised and conceptualised on issues, what they have found empirically, what instrumentation they have used and to what effect.

1.8.2 Empirical study

A qualitative approach was used in this study because the researcher explained the phenomenon under study through a description of a logical interpretation of what was observed. Johnson and Christensen (2006: 17) define qualitative research as research that primarily relies on the collection of qualitative data that is non-numerical data such as words and pictures.

Classroom observations enhanced by informal interviews were used as the major data-collection methods. Purposive sampling was used because the researcher handpicked participants who were believed to be most able to give information about the phenomenon under investigation. In chapter 4 the methodology of the empirical research is discussed in detail.

The researcher conducted her study in six schools from three different wards. The participants were six Grade 3 teachers. Tape-recordings, field notes and interview transcripts were the main ways used to collect data. As a result the researcher used triangulation of methods. This was done with the intention to improve the trustworthiness of the data.

1.9 PROGRAMME OF STUDY

This study will comprise the following chapters:

CHAPTER 1

The background, problem statement, the aims of the research, research methodology, programme of the study and concept clarification are discussed.

CHAPTER 2

This chapter contextualises reading instruction in Grade 3 by discussing a theoretical framework thereof. This was done by way of an in-depth study of relevant literature and official documents.

CHAPTER 3

This chapter deals with a discussion of practical guidelines for the assessment of reading. It serves as a theoretical foundation for the evaluation of the data collected in the empirical part of the study.

CHAPTER 4

This chapter describes the research design and methodology along with specific measures to ensure research ethics and trustworthiness of the results.

CHAPTER 5

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the empirical study.

CHAPTER 6

This chapter consists of the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

1.10 SUMMARY

The chapter sought to expose the problem, which prompted the researcher to conduct this study. Teachers need to be well informed about how assessment should be conducted and how the results should be used and communicated to learners, parents and other stakeholders. The way teachers assessed reading in the foundation phase is still questionable and they needed support. This study seeks to supply relevant support to teachers of reading. The aims that have been identified in this chapter give direction to the research.

CHAPTER 2

READING INSTRUCTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Mason and Au (1990: 43) define instruction as intentional actions taken to move learners towards particular curricular outcomes. This means that reading in the foundation phase requires the teacher to purposefully teach learners the strategies that they can use to read meaningfully. Duffy and Roehler (1993: 290) contend that reading instruction focuses on getting meaning from text. In this chapter the researcher discusses the instruction of reading in an outcomes-based approach.

The Department of Education (2007: 8) emphasises that assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and should be planned for when developing learning programmes, work schedules and lesson plans. This chapter will also highlight effective instructional guidelines and activities based on the learning outcomes and assessment standards that can be used to enhance the teaching of reading in Grade 3.

According to Goldbecker (1975), as cited in Hayes (1991: 8), the teacher is the single catalyst who can determine success or failure of a reading programme, no matter where the emphasis lies. This means that the teacher needs can be conversant with teaching and assessment strategies in order to cater for learners' needs to be able to read with understanding.

2.2 READING INSTRUCTION IN AN OUTCOMES-BASED APPROACH

The Department of Education (2002a: 7) advocates that listening and speaking, reading and reviewing, writing, thinking and reasoning and knowledge of sound, words and grammar – although presented in separate outcomes – should be integrated when taught and assessed. Dechant (1993: 15) indicated that language is indivisible, and when it is divided it is no longer is language.

According to Flanagan (1995), as cited in Ebrahim (2000:122), the whole language approach acknowledges the fact that learners often use reading to help them to write or writing to help them talk or talking to help them read – the one ability helps to develop the other. This idea is confirmed by McNeil (1992: 7) when he states that this approach to teaching features authentic literature rather than contrived to illuminate language patterns, and it focuses on the meaningfulness of language and the interrelatedness of reading, writing, speaking and listening. This means that this approach encourages the integration of literacy learning outcomes. According to Moore and Wade (1995: 20) reading is not taught as a series of sub skills, but holistically in conjunction with the other language skills and are interlocking and mutually supportive.

Ebrahim (2000: 123) views reading in the whole language approach as a process of actively making meaning from the interaction with print. According to McNeil (1992: 7) the whole language instruction acknowledges the reader as a composer of meaning and views reading as analogous to construction in writing. This means that learners can be taught to read material that they have produced through an experience they have shared.

It is evident from the above discussion that reading is part of the whole language programme. Therefore when taught, reading should not be isolated from other basic skills. Davin and Van Staden (2006: 105), alluding to the advantages of the whole language approach, maintain that reading is not an isolated skill but is mastered in order to understand an important form of communication, the written word. Meaning and communication are emphasised as being more important than the mere correct decoding of words.

2.3 APPROACHES TO READING INSTRUCTION

Learners have different learning and thinking styles. The teacher needs to employ different teaching approaches to accommodate all learners. The teachers should choose an approach that will best suit the type of learning that they want to achieve, that is, knowledge, skills, attitude and values. According to Knowles (2009:26) today's learners have many differences: background knowledge, learning styles, interests, and skills, to name a few. One – size fits all learning is no longer seen as the way to teach learners. Killen (2000: xii) contends that whatever approach to teaching you use, learners will learn more when they are motivated than

when they are not motivated. This means that learning will be more effective when you make it interesting, enjoyable and challenging for the learners. Some of the approaches that are in line with outcomes-based education are discussed below.

According to A Dictionary of Education (2006:1) there are two polarized approaches to the teaching of reading namely the look and say method, which uses a whole- word approach to recognizing and remembering words when encountered in new text, and the phonics approach, whereby learners are taught to sound out and blend specific phonemes.

2.3.1 The look- and- say approach

Hugo & Botha (2002:32) cite that the look- and- say approach aims at teaching young readers an increasing sight vocabulary of complete words that they can recognise and read at once. This method relies upon high rates of repetition of these words within the book or story. Look-and-say relies on learners' visual memory. They recognise words that they have seen before. For example, learners will recognise 'stop signs' or store names such as 'spar'.

According to Hugo & Botha (2002:36) the look-and- say approach involves two kinds of approach:

1. Whole word approach and
2. Sentence approach

2.3.1.1 Whole word approach

Botha & Hugo (2002:36) describe whole word approach as analytic which means first the word, then the syllables and lastly, the letters. Learners are taught to see and recognise the word as a complete unit and to say the word. They recognise words by means of:

- **Appearance.** The reader may recognise the word by its shape, its length, or by an outstanding Feature of the word such as the tall lls (as in wall) or the "tail" of the g in tag.
- **Association** with a familiar object, person, picture or action. For example if a picture of an apple is labelled apple, and learners can look at the picture and labels over a period of time.
- **Context.** For example, learners would soon recognise a new word such as "tail" in the context of "The dog wags its tail"

- **Repetition.** Learners recognise the word if they have seen it a number of times. They remember it because they recognise its particular pattern.

According to Botha and Hugo (2002:36) words are shown to the learners in the written form, preferably attached to a picture or object. Learners must be able to see a word often. Words of different lengths, shapes and meanings are introduced to help learners with the memorisation process.

For learners to understand the meaning of the text they need to recognise most words in the text. Chard and Osborn (1999) as cited in Gibb and Wilder (2002: 155) assert that proficient word recognition is the foundation of fluency, comprehension and reading enjoyment. Word recognition plays a crucial role in getting meaning from a text.

2.3.1.2 Sentence approach

According to Hugo & Botha (2002: 38) learners are taught using sentences and phrases. The sentence approach helps the learners to work out the word by using the context of the sentence. The teacher writes a sentence about the story, or a picture or object in the classroom, on a strip of paper or cardboard. The learners look at the sentence and say it. Hugo & Botha (2002:39) cite that learners should be given many opportunities to practise reading the sentence strips. By reading familiar sentences, the eye is trained from the start to take in short phrases or sentences at one glance to move from left to right.

2.3.2. Phonic method

According to Joubert, Bester & Meyer (2008: 89) the phonic method focuses on phonetics, which is the science of forming and pronouncing speech sound. It is also called phonology or sound learning. This method enables the learner to analyse words in a text. Phonics instruction teaches learners to analyse words according to their sound-spelling structure and thus to learn to read more and more new words without assistance (Gibb & Wilder 2002:155). Joubert et al (2008: 89) maintains that the phonic method connects the auditive and visual, and pays attention not only to the phonological structure of the spoken word, but also to the meaning and the syntax of words.

According to Joubert et al (2008: 90) the phonic method is supported by different strategies, such as

- making different associations to fix various letter sounds, for example presenting the letter “s” as a snake and making a hissing sounds when the “s” is seen
- writing the letters of sounds forming the word in the air, on the table, on sandpaper, on wet sand or on a friends back, who must then guess what the word is
- copying/tracing the word in different ways while it is sounded out aloud
- using pictures to illustrate the words
- using flash cards to practise different words
- using the word in different contexts
- repeating the word

According to Joubert et al (2008:90) the restrictions of using this learning method are the following:

- Reading speed decreases. The learners concentrate on the letters, which lead to jerky word-for-word reading.
- Eye span is not developed adequately. The learner’s eyes do not move ahead naturally to start recognising the next word, because they jump back to join the sounds of the previous word.
- It concentrates on mechanical reading with the emphasis on correctness, resulting in loss of comprehension.
- It does not lead to use other clues to unlocking words, such as illustrations and contextual clues.
- It does not lead the learner to use other clues to unlocking words, such as illustrations and contextual clues.

Jordan (1991) cited in Joubert et al (2008: 5) states:

Educationists agree that the phonetic method, especially in phonetic languages such as Afrikaans, Sesotho, Setswana, isiXhosa, isiZulu and Northern Sotho is very valuable, but can lead to word-by-word reading as it is difficult to break the habit of sounding every word.

2.3.3 The eclectic approach

According to Hugo & Botha (2002:47) the eclectic approach as a combination of different approaches. It is also referred to as the combined or integrated approach. The eclectic approach combines the strength of the different approaches. This approach can combine alphabetic principle, phonetic analysis, word reading, vocabulary development, listening comprehension and reading comprehension.

Dechant (1993: 99) states that reading is a twofold process. It is a synthesis and an integration of two processes, recognising words and comprehension. In the definition of reading in 1.7.3 it is highlighted that reading consists of two major components, one that allows language to be recognised through graphic representation and another that allows language to be comprehended. The two components cannot be separated because learners cannot comprehend the text if they are unable to recognise most words and cannot get meaning from a text if they do not understand it. This means that teachers of Grade 3 learners should emphasize both the learners ability to analyse and read words, as well as their ability to gain meaning from the words.

2.3.4 Individualised instruction

Although not a new approach, individualised instruction to reading is a very relevant approach in outcomes-based instruction. One of the main characteristics of an outcomes-based approach is the child-directedness of teaching. In an individualised approach, a learner's need as an individual is considered. According to Knowles (2009:26) this approach to teaching requires the teacher to assess where the learner are and start from that point by providing information and lessons in ways that solidly connect with the child's learning style and interests.

Mason and Au (1990: 398) state that in this approach, learners choose their own reading materials so that their reading is directly related to their interests and knowledge. The teacher needs to ensure that a variety of reading material is available for learners to select from. It should be the reading material that is interesting and at the reading level of the learners.

According to Drummond and Wignell (1979: 31) learners are assisted as far as possible to help themselves and to become responsible for their own education. They also state that the teacher gives help 'as directed' rather than on a structured basis. Knowles (2009:26) contends that differentiated instruction relies on frequent informal assessments and teacher talking to their learners to discover their interests, learning styles, and what they find easy and difficult.

"Pupils read different material and move at their own pace through the material each has selected" (Hall et al 1979: 176). This means that a learner is given an opportunity to be in control of his or her own learning. This develops independent reading among learners even during their spare time. Mason and Au (1990: 398) highlight that the individualised approach cannot be carried out merely by providing learners with an assortment of books to read. West (1964) as cited in Hall et al (1979:176) recommends that attention be paid to the following basic elements:

- choosing book materials
- organising book materials
- monitoring book reading
- assessing reading growth
- providing reading strategy instruction

According to Hall et al (1979: 176) the individual pupil-teacher conference is crucial to instruction in the individualised approach. They maintain that during the conference the teacher talks to the learner to check his or her choice of material, asks questions to guide his or her reading, questions the learner's understanding of the reading, reviews vocabulary and word analysis strategies, and notes progress and any special needs. It is evident that this approach develops communication and relationships between the teacher and the learner. It enables the teacher to know the learner better. Hayes (1991: 245) contends that emerging readers appear to need more teacher direction than older students, and they are not as capable of prolonged independent work.

Hayes (1991: 244) identifies the basic characteristics of individualised reading instruction as follows:

- Joint teacher and learner diagnosis.
- Joint teacher and learner prescription for improvement.
- Learner selection of goals, learning materials, activities and instructional aids.

- Self-pacing and self-levelling.
- Objectives and prescriptions based on student interest.
- Stress on learner creativity.

Hall et al (1979:176) advocate the major characteristics of individualised reading as:

- Learners select their reading material from a wide variety of books available in their classroom and/or school library.
- Learners read different material and move at their own pace through the material each has selected.
- Direct instruction occurs in a learner – teacher conference rather than in a reading group.
- The reading materials are trade (library) books rather than basal readers.

2.3.5 Cooperative learning reading programme

Cohen (1994) as cited in Flippo (2002: 219) defines cooperative learning as learners working together in a group small enough that everyone can participate in a collective task that has been clearly assigned. According to Gawe (2001); Van der Horst and McDonald (2003) cited in Joubert et al (2008:5) cooperative learning requires every learner to be involved in his or her own learning process in the group, but also to take responsibility for other members of the group to learn. Learners sometimes learn more from each other than they do from an adult. Each learner is given a task to perform in the group and no learner is allowed to copy from the other learners.

Learners perform different activities that develop higher level thinking skills and cooperating with a group. In these activities, learners work in heterogeneous learning teams. The learners work in their small groups without immediate supervision by the teacher.

Swan (2003: 90) asserts that collaborative learning provides opportunities for creating classroom cultures that support learners' thinking, strategy use conceptual knowledge and engagement with text. Duffy and Roehler (1993: 245) assert that for purposes of reading instruction, collaborative group projects are usually directed towards attitude goals. For instance, the teacher may form temporary collaborative groups:

- To create language experience stories.
- To read and discuss certain kinds of books.
- To discuss themes and issues relating to outside reading.
- To organise and prepare presentations to the whole class or other classes.
- To produce various kinds of text, such as poetry, drama, letter to the editor and essays.
- To engage in a variety of other activities that result in positive responses and conceptual understanding of reading.

2.4 **Teaching strategies**

According to the Department of Education 2008:19 reading strategies are ways of solving problems that the learners may come across while reading. For example, they might not know the meaning of a word, or they might find a section of the text difficult to understand. When these situations arise, learners should have a strategy for knowing what to do.

2.4.1 Shared reading

In shared reading session, the teacher reads with the class or group, using a large Story Book that has big, bold print. Learners follow the text, joining in when they are able to do so. According to the Department of Education (2008:19) this kind of lesson should take place in a relaxed learning environment. The teacher should encourage guessing and risk-taking, accepting all attempts from learners and using their responses to promote further learning. The teacher can encourage learners to participate in the reading by clapping, dancing, stamping, singing or suggesting other words. While the teacher is reading, she can choose a word and ask the learners to think of any other words that rhyme. For example, if you read the word “mean”, they can call out words like “lean” or “bean”

Botha and Hugo (2002:41) emphasis that accurate pointing is an essential part of the process because:

- it directs left- to- right eye movement across the page.
 - It indicates a one-to-one relationship between the spoken and the printed word.
- Pointing should be done with a smooth, sliding movement.

2.4.2 Word Attack Skills

According to the Department of Education (2008:25) in the early stages of learning to read, a simple “five-finger” strategy will assist learners in using a range of word- attack skills.

For instance:

Thumb: Leave the word out and read to the end of the sentence.

First finger: Look at the picture and headings.

Second finger: Ask yourself if there are any parts of the word that you recognise.

Third finger: Sound the word out.

Little finger: Ask your teacher what the word means.

2.4.3 Read Aloud

The Department of Education (2008:26) cites that in Read Aloud the teacher reads to the whole class or small group, using material that is at the listening comprehension level of the learners. Reading aloud to learners helps them to develop a love of good literature, motivation to read on their own and familiarity with a variety of genres, including non-fiction.

2.4.4 Group Guided Reading

The teacher supports a small group of learners as they talk, read and think their way through a text. According to the Department of Education (2009:27) learners can be grouped for guided reading by reading ability or specific needs for example learners having barriers to reading. Guided reading provides opportunities to integrate learner’s growing knowledge of the conventions of print, letter-sound relationships and other foundational skills in context. Through modelling and instruction, guided reading enables teachers to extend the learner’s vocabulary development and knowledge and use of comprehension.

2.4.5 Independent Reading

Learners choose their own books according to their interest and ability. Department of Education (2008:27) highlights that learners should be guided to choose texts that they can read with a high degree of success. Emergent readers should be encouraged to use the independent reading time to practice reading short predictable stories as well as books that have been read in the Shared and Guided Reading sessions. Independent reading should be followed by discussion and dialogue with the teacher and peers.

2.5 CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AS PREREQUISITE

2.5.1 Print-rich environment

According to the Department of Education (2003: 36) the teacher should try the ways of overcoming poor print environment, for example:

- Collect old newspapers, magazines, brochures, flyers and posters from the immediate environment.
- Link with publishing companies for old unsold copies of magazines and periodicals.
- Use the intermediate surroundings as a text (i.e. talk about the environment).
- Use residents in the neighbourhood as aural and oral sources by means of interviews.
- Write own texts, where possible.
- Use the radio or even TV and videos where possible.

Hall et al (1979: 138) assert that reading opportunities may be created by the teacher who finds appropriate moments to put ideas and messages in written language, for example:

- Captions beneath pictures.
- Written rather than oral directions for simple projects.
- A listing of daily assignments on the chalkboard.
- Written announcements to the class.

Notes to individual children placed in their mailboxes.

2.5.2 Library corners

According to Winburg and Bortes (2005:96) classroom library corners enable teachers to create a reading friendly environment that promotes learners' reading practices. Joubert et al (2008:112) state that this is a place which is specifically set apart for reading and related activities; it should invite the learners to read. They also state that since the National Curriculum Statement emphasises the reading of real books, the reading corner should contain fiction and non-fiction books catering for all levels in the class. Include books in the first (and second) additional language. In addition, the reading corner can contain the following:

- children's magazines
- reading and picture games
- picture books
- books made by the teacher (with the parents' help)
- reading cards with a variety of jokes, comics, poems, rhymes, recipes and so forth
- word and language games
- scrapbooks made by the learners
- text written by the learners for the reading corner

2.5.3 Planning for teaching reading

Learners have different styles of learning. According to the Department of Education (2003: 12) since different learners have particular and preferred learning styles, every class is certain to contain groups of learners who assimilate information and develop an understanding in different ways. Teachers need to take this into consideration when planning a lesson.

According to Gardener (1994), as cited in Mohlala (2000:25), multiple intelligence theory maintains that learners are different in noticeable ways and learning should therefore be designed so that it unearths learners' varied and sometimes hidden abilities and talents.

The Department of Education (2003: 12) highlights that a teacher must also have a sense of those activities that are likely to succeed with particular individuals or groups and those that are unlikely to, and must plan to accommodate all learners in the class. According to the Department of Education (2003:30) all planning should be meaningful for a particular group of learners at a specific point in time, that is, address the needs of the learners.

Felder and Brent (2004) as cited in Joubert (2008:2) distinguish between the following characteristics of learners. These represent two directly opposing learning styles:

- Learners who are **physically** attuned to experiences (concrete, practical, based on facts and methods) and **intuitive** learners (conceptual, innovative, directed towards theory and meaning).
- Learners who are **visually** attuned to experiences (prefer visual presentation – pictures, diagrams, maps) and **verbal** learners (prefer spoken and written explanations).
- **Active** learners (learn by trying things out and working with others) and **reflective** learners (learn by reflection and working alone).
- Learners who prefer **sequential order** and steps (linear, orderly, directed towards learning in small steps) and **global** learners (holistic, directed towards systems, learn in large leaps).

2.6 ASSESSMENT STANDARDS AND TEACHING GUIDELINES

According to the Department of Education (2002a: 126) the teachers' task is to teach in order to help learners to satisfy the requirements of the assessment standards in the curriculum. As mentioned in the definition in section 1.2.6, assessment standards describe the level at which learners should demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes and the ways of (depth and breadth) of demonstrating their achievement. Teachers need to identify the assessment standards (or at least clusters of standards) for each learning outcome that will be targeted at a particular time within the learning programme (Department 2003:10).

2.6.1 Use of visual cues: Assessment standard 1

According to Pretorius and Machet (2004: 48) visual cues refer to using pictures to interpret the meaning of stories. Davin and Van Staden (2006: 96) note that by interpreting pictures or telling a story from pictures in a book, learners start to realise that pictures can represent the spoken words.

Learners learn to interpret pictures, illustrations and other graphical text. According to Cooper and Kriger (2005: 517) graphical texts refer to non-print information and the special

arrangement or presentation of print material. There are different kinds of graphical text that can be used to create meaning, namely pictures, photos, maps, flow diagrams, street signs, symbols, drawings and other illustrations. These visual cues encourage critical thinking to learners.

The Department of Education (2002a: 32) describes the first assessment standard for home language in Grade 3 as follows:

Uses visual cues to make meaning;

- *reads graphical texts such as photographs, maps, flow diagrams, charts and;*
- *explains orally or in writing their meaning and purpose,*
- *uses the information in appropriate ways (e.g. a map for direction),*
- *evaluates the image for design features and effectiveness*

2.6.1.1 Teaching strategies: visual cues

According to Davin and Van Staden (2006: 96), telling stories by using pictures is a very important activity when introducing a reading programme.

The learner learns to predict what the story is about. The learner learns to think, analyse, select, synthesise and other skills. This means that before reading the story, the whole class can discuss the picture or learners can discuss it in groups, each learner says what he or she thinks about the picture while others are listening. The teacher can ask questions as a follow-up on what learners are saying to engage them in critical thinking.

Learners can use pictures to discuss the things that take place in their real-life situations in their environments. The following example can encourage learners to think:

- A chart with a family performing different tasks in their home using water can be shown to learners.
- Learners can be asked to look for ten ways in which the family wastes water and what they are supposed to do if they intend to save water.
- This activity enables a learner to create meaning from a visual text using his or her imagination.

Learners are taught to read and interpret what they read and see. For example, the maps of different places may be used, for instance, the map of their school, their environment, local town, province, South Africa etcetera. Looking at the map of their town, the learners may be asked questions, such as what is to the south of the police station? The hospital is in which direction of the town? Learners can read the names of the streets on the map. They can look at the places that are marked and think about how they are useful.

Learners may be taught the ability to identify the purpose of any graphical text. For instance, looking at the picture of the South African flag, learners may be taught what each colour in the flag symbolises. Learners may be shown the picture of the South African national symbols, for instance, the Court of Arms, Emblem and Logo and be taught what these represent in projecting the image of South Africa to the world.

2.6.2 Makes meaning: Assessment standard 2

Reading is about getting meaning from a written text. If learners cannot understand what they are reading, it means they have not mastered reading. Learners should be taught as early as possible to get meaning from what they are reading. According to Snowball (2006:63) research has shown that comprehension instruction can improve the reading comprehension of all readers, even beginners and struggling older readers. We will know that the learner has mastered reading with understanding when he or she meets the following assessment standards:

- *makes meaning of the written text*
- *comments on a story or poem the learner has read, and demonstrate*
- *understanding by answering questions on*
 - *the main idea*
 - *key details such as main characters, sequence of events, setting, cultural values,*
 - *cause-effect relations,*
 - *conclusions (e.g. ‘What does this story/fable teach us?’)*
 - *whether or not learners like the story and why;*
 - *instructions related to real-life interests and needs*

- *a variety of fairly complex texts such as fiction and non-fiction books, tables of contents and indexes* (Department of Education 2002a: 33).

2.6.2.1 Developing reading comprehension

According to the Department of Education (2003: 33), a learner in Grade 3 should be able to comment on a story or poem he or she has read, and to demonstrate understanding by answering questions on: main idea, key details such as main characters, sequence of events, setting, cultural values, cause-effect relations and conclusions.

Snowball (2006: 62) contends that various researchers have identified the six main comprehension strategies that should be taught at all grade levels.

- Predicting prior knowledge use
- Answering and forming questions
- Thinking aloud about reading
- Using text structure features
- Visualising and creating visual representations
- Summarising

Baumann and Johnson (1984: 62) contend that the teacher must provide instructional strategies that enable the reader:

- to activate prior knowledge and associate it with the material to be read
- to anticipate that the material to be read will be meaningful
- to make predictions about the material to be read
- to develop an interest in the material to be read

According to the Department of Education (2008:26) a teacher can teach the learners to monitor their own understanding of a text. Learners can follow the following steps:

- When the text does not make sense, stop and reread the sentence or paragraph.
- Try to link the problem sentence to what you have already read.

- Ask yourself what you already know about the topic. Think what the sentence could mean.
- Read on, and check whether what you read now makes sense.
- Check the meanings of words by using a dictionary or ask for help.

2.6.2.2 Teaching strategies: making meaning

After reading a story learners can be taught to perform the following activities:

- Write responses to the story in their journals.
- Re-tell the story or illustrate key story elements.
- Scan for main ideas.
- Say what they have learnt from the text.
- Debate about issues arising from the text.
- Role-play a story using their script.

(Goode 1997: 30)

Dramatisation is role-play or enactment of a scene in which a script is used. Learners could dramatised excerpts from genres chosen for the literature study or write their own original scripts. The following activities can be done:

- In groups, re-enact a selected scene from folklore, a short story, a novel or a drama that conveys conflict, humour or sadness. Write your own dialogue based on the actual text.
- In small groups or pairs, dramatised poems or stories that you have studied using actions, expressive voices and the sharing of the lines among the group, to convey the meaning of the poem or story (Department of Education nd:38).

2.6.3 Uses a variety of strategies to make meaning: Assessment standard 3

Learners should be taught different strategies to use when reading. According to the Department of Education (2008:19) reading strategies are ways of solving problems that the learners may come across while reading. We will know that the child has mastered this when he or she

- *reads text alone, and uses a variety of strategies to make meaning*
- *reads a printed text fluently and with understanding*
- *pronounces words with accuracy when reading aloud*
- *reads aloud with expression, using appropriate text stress, pausing and intonation*
- *uses word recognition and comprehension skills to read unfamiliar texts (e.g. phonics, contextual cues, predicting)*
- *uses a range of automatic monitoring and self-correcting methods when reading such as re-reading, reading on pausing and practising the word before saying it out aloud*

(Department of Education 2002a: 32).

2.6.3.1 Teaching strategies: word recognition

Jennings et al (2006:14) contends that to read the text, we need to recognise the words accurately. Learners need to be taught how to recognise words in a text accurately because that will facilitate the good comprehension of the story. According to Duffy and Roehler (1993: 149) word recognition and vocabulary instruction continue at the expanded fundamentals stage (Grades 3 and 4), but the emphasis shifts from the most basic skills and strategies to more sophisticated ones. This means that the teacher focuses on more difficult elements. According to Hayes (1991: 32) understanding must occur for the reading process to be fully activated, but comprehension is only facilitated when words are appropriately identified and the author's message is decoded. Although learners in the Grade 3 recognise most words in isiZulu, this does not mean that teachers should ignore teaching word recognition strategies. Hayes (1991: 17) states that effective teachers do not throw instruction in word recognition strategies out of the curriculum; they recognise its place in helping children learn to read for meaning. The learner in Grade 3 should be able to read the following words often found in texts.

Table 1 Basic sight vocabulary words

First	Second	Second
-ningi (many)	-ngenkathi (while)	-thola (got)
-phambi (before)	-gcina (last)	-hlanngene (united)
-fanele (must)	-ngase (might)	-shiya (left)

-ngenxa (through)	thina (us)	-nombolo (number)
-muva (back)	-khulu (great)	-impi (war)
-nyaka (years)	-dala (old)	-kuze (until)
-lapho (where)	-woza (come)	-njalo (always)
-wakho (yours)	-selokhu (since)	-manzi (water)
-kahle (well)	-hamba (go)	-ngaphansi (less)
-kahle (well)	-lungile (right)	-kude (far)
-phansi (down)	-sebenzile (used)	-ngcono (better)
-ngoba (because)	-ngenkathi (during)	-tshela (told)
-bantú (people)	-ngaphandle (without)	-bizwa (called)
-Mnu (Mr)	-futhi (again)	-mehlo (eyes)
-chaza (state)	-khaya (home)	-thola (find)
-bona (see)	-ncane (small)	-buka (look)
-madoda (men)	-thola (found)	-kamuva (later)
-sebenza (work)	-ngxenye (part)	-buza (asked)
-phakathi (between)	-jwayelekile (general)	-isiphetho (end)
-suku (day)		

Extracted from Dale D. Johnson. 1971. "The Dolch list reexamined," in *The Reading Teacher*, 24 (February), pp. 455-456 as cited in Richek, Caldwell, Jennings and Lerner (2002: 165).

Vocabulary, like word recognition, focuses on words. Duffy and Roehler (1993: 132) distinguish between word recognition and vocabulary. They state that if a learner has problems with word recognition he or she understands the word in conversation but may not recognise it in print. For instance, 'know' sounds like it should be spelled 'no'. A vocabulary problem is when a learner encounters the words the meaning of which he or she does not know. In isiZulu a learner may fail to recognise a certain part of a word but recognise other sounds, for instance, in 'isikhwama' (bag), he or she may recognise isi- and -ma but may fail to read the sound -khw-. Some IsiZulu words are not often used in isiZulu; instead their synonyms are normally used. They may therefore be unfamiliar to a Grade 3 learner, for instance, 'umkhwelo' (step). Such unfamiliar word will not be part of a learner's vocabulary.

All classrooms should consist of a variety of written words, for instance, labelling various objects, funny words, strange words and so forth. Pictures can be attached next to words, to enable the learner to get meaning. For instance, next to the word, 'intshengula' (spatula) a picture can be attached and learners may find it easy to understand this word. This may assist them when reading other words with the same sounds, for example, 'intshebe' (beard) and 'intsha' (youth) and so forth.

2.6.3.2 Teaching strategies: reading comprehension

- Vickyzygouris, Matthew and Lourdes (2005:381) assert that comprehension strategies are deliberate plans that, when used effectively, can help readers to make sense of text and become purposeful readers and active meaning makers. Teachers need to teach learners as soon as they begin reading, that a written text represents meaning. Gillet and Temple (2000: 41) suggest that the best approaches for teaching children to learn from reading is for teachers, as skilled readers, to figure out exactly what teachers learn from a text and demonstrate these operations to their learners.

Galda, Cullinan and Strickland (1997:279) suggest that on classroom walls and shelves there should be charts containing songs, poems, class records, graphs, and dictated materials related to children's experiences; and other print resources such as magazines, dictionaries and informational books of all types. What can be communicated orally can be put in writing and thereby provide an opportunity for reading. For instance, class rules can be written down and placed where all the learners may see them. Instruction, notices and warnings may be written, for example, the notice 'ungawisi amaphepha phansi' (do not throw papers on the floor). Routine instructions may be passed on to learners and the teacher may monitor whether they are followed properly.

Teachers can teach learners some strategies for independent learning that are appropriate at different points in reading. According to the Department of Education (2008:8) learners can be taught to do the following:

- Before reading:
 - read the title

- look at the contents page and index pages
 - read the subheadings and chapter titles
 - read the short description of the contents, usually printed on the back cover
 - look at the illustrations
- While reading:
 - read a range of words “on sight” without needing to break them into syllables and letters.
 - keep checking that the meaning of the text is clear
 - get a general idea of the meaning of an unfamiliar word by reading the sentence or paragraph where it is, or by breaking the word down into sounds or syllables.
 - After reading:
 - link the content of the text to his or her own ideas, experiences or opinions
 - remember new words and their meanings when seeing them again in other contexts
 - What did I learn? Were my predictions right? Did everything make sense?
 - Can I summarise the main points?

2.6.3.3 Vocabulary

According to the Department of Education (2008:16) learners need to have knowledge and understanding of a wide range of words. Knowing many words will help learners with fluency and to comprehend the text.

For explicit vocabulary instruction, the teacher needs to

- explain or demonstrate the meaning of the word (This could be a simple definition, an action, a picture, or a translation.)
- give examples of the word in a sentence
- encourage learners to use the word orally in sentences of their own
- display the new words and the meanings of the words on a word wall or a chart
- give the new words to learners to take home to review for homework
- make sure to follow up on this activity so that learners can practise using the new words

2.6.3.4 Reading fluency

Gibb and Wilder (2002: 154) define reading fluency as the ability to read with accuracy, speed, and expression. This means that the learner who reads fluently is a learner who reads without hesitating, smoothly and without mistakes. A learner who reads fluently recognises words in the text quickly.

Duffy and Roehler (1993: 146) assert that fluency results when learners possess both routine skills and metacognitive strategies associated with all aspects of reading, not just word recognition and vocabulary. Fluency enables a learner to understand what he or she is reading and to get meaning.

According to Rasinski, Blachowicz and Lens (2006: 232), not only are fluency and comprehension positively correlated, but fluency and practice also result in higher levels of comprehension. A learner who has a problem in recognising words from a text may fail to get meaning from the text. This is because a learner spends his or her time focusing on recognising words.

a. Developing reading fluency

According to Rasinski et al (2006: 31), activities such as paired or assisted reading in which students take turns to read portions of a text aloud to teach other, give each other feedback, and re-read the text multiple times until they do it well, have been found to be effective practices from the primary grades through high school.

➤ Repeated reading

“The children read the same material repeatedly, until they reach a desired level of fluency and accuracy” (Stahl & McKenna 2006: 283).

➤ Paired reading

Ransiski et al (2006: 181) asserts that paired reading takes place when the tutor and tutee read out loud simultaneously in close synchrony. The tutor adjusts his or her speed to the tutee’s pace as necessary. The tutee must read all the words out aloud correctly. Errors are corrected merely by the tutor again giving a perfect example of how to read the error word and ensuring that the tutee reports it correctly.

➤ Peer repeated reading

The learner reads the text that has been read in class previously while his or her partner listens. They take turns to read aloud. According to Rasinski et al (2006: 168), after the second reading, the learner again self-assesses, and the learner who is listening comments on how the reading is improving. Then the learner reads a final time, self-assessing and listening to his or her partner's positive comments. Then the partners switch roles, with the new reader self-assessing his or her own reading first and proceeding through the three readings of the text.

Teachers need to consciously plan *fluency development lesson* to encourage learners to read fluently. Rasinski, Padak, Linek and Sturtevant (1994) as cited in Jennings et al (2006: 226) developed an example of a fluency development lesson. The steps for a fluency development lesson of 10 to 15 minutes are as follows:

1. The teacher reads a short text of 50 to 150 words to the learners while they follow along silently with their own copies.
2. The teacher and learners discuss what the text is about. They also discuss the use of expressions during the reading.
3. The teacher and class read the text chorally several times until the teacher is certain that the learners read fluently.
4. The learners then practise reading the selection in pairs. Each partner takes a turn reading and receives help if needed from his or her partner. The partner also provides positive feedback.
5. Volunteers perform the text to the entire class. This performance can be done individually, in pairs, or in groups of four.

Rasinski et al (2006:72) advocates the following framework that a teacher can use to develop reading fluency.

Table 2

A daily lesson framework

<p>Teacher explanation, modelling of the elements and nature of fluent oral reading. 5-7 minutes</p> <p>Guided group or individual repeated oral reading practice. 10-15 minutes</p> <p>Group and/individual assessment and progress monitoring. Total maximum Daily Schedule Time 25-30 minutes.</p>

The fluency development daily routine (Ransiski et al 2006: 72).

b. Listening to learners read

The teacher should frequently listen to individual learners in her class reading a text. According to Richek et al (2002: 163), teachers can use their common sense and the guidelines to determine whether the reading is fluent. These authors identify three factors that hinder fluency, namely:

- choppy reading: learners stumble over words, repeat them and pause
- monotonous reading: readers has little expression or variation in the rise and fall of their voices
- inappropriate hasty reading: learners race through the text, ignoring punctuation and sentence breaks and make errors even on familiar words

If the learner experiences any of the above, the strategies discussed previously (see section 2.4.3.4 a) can be used to accommodate the learners' barriers.

2.6.4 Phonic knowledge: Assessment standard 4

Moore and Wade (1995: 3) assert that phonics require the subskills of being able to look at a word, analyse each grapheme (letter), translate each into a phoneme (sound) and then synthesise (blend) the phoneme into a word.

Phonics teaching aims to impact three kinds of knowledge, namely to help children master the letter sounds, including the sounds related to common letter combinations such as sh, ch, th and ng ; to help them recognise these words easily and accurately, they will be better able to focus on the meaning of text. We will know that the learner has mastered phonic knowledge when the learner:

- *consolidates phonic knowledge*
- *recognises that the same sound can be spelled in different ways (e.g. play, pain, plate)*
- *recognises that the same spelling can represent different sounds (e.g. bread, read)*
- *recognises some more vowel sounds spelled with two letters (vowel diagrams) (e.g. oi, ou, oa, aw)*
- *recognises the use of 'gh' and 'ght' at the end words*
- *recognises vowels with two sounds (diphthongs) (e.g. ere, air, are, au)*

(Department of Education 2002a: 32)

2.6.4.1 Developing phonic knowledge

Dechant (1993: 342) contends that the teaching of phonics, or the grapheme-phoneme correspondences, leads to automatic semantic activation, to internalisation of the alphabetic principle, to proficiency in word identification, to better prediction in reading and ultimately to better comprehension. According to Browne (1998: 25) teachers can do the following to develop phonic knowledge:

- Teach phonological awareness through drawing on children's delight in the rhyme, rhythm and pattern of oral language in meaningful contexts such as exploring language play in jokes, nursery rhymes, poetry, riddles, tongue twisters and songs.
- Encourage learners to use initial sounds to predict unknown words.
- Identify each syllable in multisyllabic words and ask children to pronounce each one and then read the word.

2.5 Read for information and enjoyment: Assessment standard 5

Reading is important for learning all other learning areas. A learner who has a problem in reading is likely to have a problem in grasping other learning areas. A learner needs to read a variety of books to acquire information and to develop his or her reading skills. We are living in a world where technology is developing at an amazing pace. A person who cannot read is left behind.

Learners should be given activities that will encourage them to go looking for information. We will know that the learner has acquired this when he or she

- *reads for information and enjoyment*
- *chooses fiction and non-fiction books and states what was liked or not liked about them*
- *reads and appreciates books written by authors from different cultures about a range of different contexts and relationships*
- *reads different kinds of texts such as comics, magazines and newspapers*
- *develops vocabulary by using a dictionary and keeping a personal dictionary*
- *uses a table of contents, index, key words, headings, captions and page numbers to find information*
- *plays word games that draw on reading, vocabulary, knowledge and skills*
- *identifies and finds information sources such as community members and library books*
- *starts to analyse oral, written and visual texts for sociocultural values, attitudes and assumptions*

(Department of Education 2002a: 32)

2.6.5.1 *Developing reading for information and enjoyment*

Browne (1998: 128) views that reading programmes should be meaningful, intrinsically interesting activities and use material that are motivating and linked to children's experience and interest. According to Swan (2003: 81) students will be able to gain deep, conceptual knowledge, if they are taught strategies for making sense of what they read. Asserting about a procedure for teaching comprehension strategies, Baumann and Schmitt (1986) as cited in Hayes (1991:65) advocate the following steps:

- The teacher informs the learners what reading strategy will be taught.

- This might be a simple description or definition of the strategy or an example of its use.
- The teacher tells the learners why the comprehension strategy is important and how its acquisition will help them become better readers.
- The teacher directly instructs, for instance, explains models verbally or uses an oral think-aloud exercise. Guided practice, which may include corrective feedback or reteaching, follows the direct instruction and teacher modelling. The teacher may initially work with short, contrived texts, but ultimately natural reading selections from basal readers, content textbooks or trade books should be used to apply the strategy.

Pearson, Dole, Duffy and Rochler (1992) as cited in Swan (2003: 80) identify six strategies that teachers can use to teach learners how to understand what they read. According to these authors learners should do the following:

- Search for connections between what they know and the new information they encounter when they read.
- Monitor their comprehension of text while they are reading.
- Use fix-it strategies when they realise they do not understand something.
- Learn to differentiate between important information and ideas in the text.
- Make inferences during and after reading to gain a fuller meaning of the text.
- Synthesise information well from a variety of texts and reading experience.

2.7 SUMMARY

Teachers as designers, facilitators and assessors of learning programmes are expected to have an insight into what reading entails and strategies to facilitate its teaching and learning. Effective reading instruction requires that a teacher recognises multiple goals for reading instruction, and that different means are required to reach these multiple goals. Teachers should use a variety of teaching approaches and assessment methods to accommodate different styles of learning. This study analyses the learning outcome for reading to enable a reader to understand what it entails and to understand its assessment standards. Teachers need to design different activities that will interest the learners and develop their reading skills.

CHAPTER 3

OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT OF READING: THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a literature review of outcomes-based assessment of reading in order to provide insights into and how assessment of reading should be done. The Department of Education (2006: 2) states that assessment is a process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information to assist teachers, parents and other stakeholders to make decisions about learners' progress. According to Mariotti and Holman (1997: 1), reading assessment is the gathering of information to determine a learner's developmental reading process. It answers the question "At what level is this learner reading?" In addition, assessment procedures provide information about the learner's comprehension and decoding strategies, interests, attitudes and communication skills. The Department of Education (2007: 8) state that the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 requires the use of a variety of appropriate assessment strategies that adequately assess learner achievement and the development skills for lifelong learning among learners.

Teachers need to plan properly before assessing. Knowledge of assessment theory is essential for teachers to select appropriate reading assessment tools and strategies. According to Grover (1994: 175) assessment should be multidimensional in order to accommodate learners' various learning styles so that they utilise their abilities to their full potential. The Department of Education (2003: 15) states that when planning an assessment activity, the teacher should have a clear sense of the wide range of the barriers that may inhibit learning and the achievement of the learning outcomes and how to address them.

3.2 PRINCIPLES OF OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT

This study will discuss the following principles of outcomes-based assessment as applied in the assessment of reading:

- The assessment must be continuous.
- The assessment must be directed by outcomes and assessment standards.
- The assessment must be integrated with teaching and learning.
- The process should be assessed, not only the product.
- Assessment must be authentic.
- Assessment must be multidimensional.

3.2.1 Outcomes-based assessment must be continuous

“Continuous assessment is a process of gathering valid and reliable information about the performance of the learner on an ongoing basis, against clearly defined assessment standards, while using a variety of methods, tools, techniques and contexts” (Department of Education 2003: 32). It is evident from the above definition that in an outcomes-based approach, assessment should form part of all activities that take place in the teaching and learning situation. The teacher is able to observe the learner’s strengths and areas of weaknesses during the reading lesson.

This means that while the learner is reading, the teacher assesses word recognition, pronunciation, fluency and comprehension. The teacher is able to notice the strategies that the learner uses when coming across a new word. They can then give the necessary support.

Gooden (1997: 29) posits that when assessment is a continuous process, teachers recognise that the children come to school with a variety of knowledge and literacy experiences and use assessment practices that reflect this outstandingly. Learners need to be given the opportunity to link that knowledge with what they are learning at school. If teachers continuously assess they get to know the level of reading of each and every learner in the class. They are able to offer support immediately where necessary and also organise suitable reading material to those who seem to be progressing well. According Nakabugo and Sieborger (1999: 288) continuous assessment is, thus, meant to serve not only as a method of accumulating marks, but also as a method of informing and aiding teaching and learning through regular feedback. It offers the teacher the opportunity to identify the weaknesses of his or her own teaching and to try to improve his or her teaching methods.

Dreyer (2000: 269) states that if the learners are assessed in an ongoing way, it means that the whole range of schoolwork and homework can be acknowledged.

3.2.2 Outcomes-based assessment must be directed by outcomes and assessment standards

“Assessment in the Revised Curriculum Statement Grade R-9 (schools) is a continuous, planned process in gathering information about the performance of learners measured against the assessment standards of the learning outcomes” (Department of Education 2002a: 125). Learning outcomes and assessment standards are central in outcomes-based education. According to the Department of Education (2006: 5) learning outcomes and assessment standards should be used to inform the planning and development of assessment tasks.

Lombard (1999: 84) maintains that teachers must be able to convey to learners what they are expected to be able to do at the end of the learning experience and should illustrate these to the learners, focus their instruction at the outcomes, teach to them and clearly assess them. The learning outcome for reading and reviewing has five assessment standards for assessing the home language in Grade 3. These were listed in chapter 1 (see section 1.2.6).

Kotze (2002: 77) asserts that learning outcomes express the broad expectations of what learners must achieve. The assessment standards are more specific and indicate how outcomes are to be achieved.

3.2.3 Assessment of process not only product

According to Lombard (1999: 92) assessment must move from emphasis on summative assessment as a single event to developmental assessment that is continuous, progressive and an ongoing process. This means that teachers should not only assess learners at the end of a reading lesson but mainly during the reading lesson. Kotze (2002: 77) explains that the **process** receives more attention and makes assessment more developmental than judgemental. The teacher is therefore able to identify a learner who encounters difficulty in reading during the lesson and will be able to assist that learner immediately. In this way

assessment is used with the purpose of developing a learner's reading ability and not only to judge him or her at the end of the year for grading purposes.

Gooden (1997: 28) stresses the same idea by stating that good, effective assessment describes both the process and the product of learning. She further states that effective assessment is a continuous process that occurs during instruction, is often a part instruction, and is not limited to information about children's achievement. Learners might be struggling to recognise most words in a story, they might have a problem comprehending the story or they might have a problem with reading fluently. Assessing the process of reading will enable the teacher to identify the learner's areas of weakness more accurately.

3.2.4 Outcomes-based assessment must be integrated with teaching and learning

Assessment should be integrated into teaching and learning. Grover (1994: 187) asserts that assessment should be an integrated part of the instructional process, beginning with an identification of the learner's level and statements of learning outcomes to be achieved. According to Galagher (1998: 54), teachers should plan assessment before any teaching begins and they should continue to use assessment throughout the instructional process to guide their actions and decisions. It is evident from the above discussion that the process of teaching, learning and assessment must take place simultaneously during a reading lesson.

According to the Department of Education (2002a: 127), learners become active participants in learning and assessment, understand the criteria that are used for assessment activities, are involved in self-assessment, set individual targets for themselves, reflect on their learning and thereby experience raised self-esteem. This means that learners can play an active role during the reading lesson, for instance, they can choose the book they want to read, role-play what they have read, summarise what they have read and read with a group. The learner can assess his or her reading (self-assessment) and also assess the group mates (peer assessment). The teaching strategy of assisted reading can be used very successfully to enhance self- and peer assessment (see section 2.3.3.2). The learner is able to learn from others while assessing them.

3.2.5 Outcomes-based assessment must be authentic

According to the Department of Education (2007:17) authentic assessment aims to assess knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in contexts that closely resemble actual situations in which those knowledge, skills, values and attitude are used. This means that assessment activities should be designed to assess a variety of skills in a meaningful context. Valencia (1997: 64) alludes that authentic assessment activities involve the application of skills and strategies in many reading contexts rather than assessment of isolated, decontextualised skills.

Meyer (1992) as cited in Dreyer (2000: 270) asserts that an authentic assessment is one in which students are allowed adequate time to plan, to complete the work, to assess themselves, to revise and to consult with others. Valencia (1997: 64) also states that learners read, respond and interact with books, engage in meaningful discussions, write about what they have read and set personal goals. Learners are also assessed on their ability to solve problems that are similar to real-life situations. Learners are asked questions that would enable them to apply the knowledge they have read to real-life situations.

According to Wiggins (1990) as cited in Nitko (2001:261) authentic tasks have the following characteristics:

- they require learners to use their knowledge to do a meaningful task.
- they are complex and require learners to use combinations of different knowledge, skills and abilities.
- they require high-quality polished, complete and justifiable responses, performances or products.
- they clearly specify standards for assessing the possible multiple correct responses, performances or products.
- they simulate the ways in which learners should use the combinations of knowledge, skills and abilities in the real world.
- they present to learners ill-structured “challenges and roles” that are similar to those roles and tasks they are likely to encounter as adults at work and at home.

3.2.6 Assessment must be multidimensional

Teachers must use different assessment methods during reading to accommodate different learning styles of learners. According to the Department of Education (2007: 8), the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 requires the use of a variety of appropriate assessment strategies that adequately assess learner achievement and develop skills for lifelong learning. Kotze (2002: 79) alluding to the same idea indicates that the assessment process incorporates multiple strategies or methods that encourage learners to demonstrate abilities through a variety of acceptable means or instruments.

3.3 PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT OF READING

Assessment of reading is undertaken for a variety of purposes. This is pointed out by Browne (1998: 132) when she states that although the principal function of assessment is to improve learners' existing knowledge there are a number of other purposes for undertaking assessment, all of which are relevant to reading.

3.3.1 Monitor the learner's progress

The teacher needs to monitor whether the learner acquires all the appropriate reading strategies. Browne (1998: 132) states that assessment should enable teachers to build up a detailed account of children's strengths and weaknesses as readers. Assessment should be used to monitor their developing knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. According to Browne 1998: 133) each time children read a piece of text or use books in the classroom the teacher is alerted to what they are able to read. This means that the teacher is able to notice and correct misunderstanding and give additional help if required. The teacher will also be able to establish whether the learner is achieving what is specified by the assessment standards. This then allows the teacher to give learners direct feedback and to give additional support help, if required.

3.3.2 Identify barriers to learning and development

Department of Education (2002b: 26) highlights that assessment helps to identify barriers that learners may have so that we can plan teaching that will help to overcome the barriers. The possible barriers to learning to read may be audio-visual, speech and mental barriers. Teachers may need to seek for assistance to help them accommodate learners that might experience barriers to learning.

3.3.3 Assess teacher and instructional effectiveness

Assessment can also be used to determine the appropriateness of the curriculum and teaching. It provides teachers with insight into learning as well as their own teaching therefore there is a close link between assessment and teaching. Assessment assists teachers to evaluate their teaching strategies with the purpose of improving them where there is a need. Poor teaching strategies and reading assessment methods can contribute to the poor performance of the learners in reading. Assessment is an important tool that teachers can use to assess the effectiveness of their teaching strategies. Fox (2004: 30) and Shellard (2003: 42) indicate that assessment data can assist the teacher in planning flexible groups, and determining which learners need more instruction as well as monitor learner growth in reading and provide timely information for instructional decision making.

3.3.4 Grading

Assessment helps teachers at the end of the year to decide whether a learner should progress to the next grade. According to Nitko (2001: 337) grading refers to the process of using a system of symbols for reporting various types of learners' progress. The school reports grades to learners and parents through various means such as report cards, conferences or letters.

3.4 MODES OF ASSESSMENT

3.4.1 Baseline assessment

"Baseline assessment usually takes place at the beginning of a grade or phase to establish what learners already know" (Department of Education 2002a: 126). According to Headington (2000: 33), the purpose of baseline assessment has traditionally been threefold; firstly to

screen learners to identify learners with possible barriers, secondly to investigate the nature of their learning and thirdly to consider how these needs should be supported.

This can be done in reading to establish the level of reading of a learner with the aim of catering for his or her individual needs. Baseline assessment enables a teacher to know the strengths and weaknesses of a learner in reading as early as possible before wasting time by teaching what is not addressing the learner's needs.

3.4.2 Formative assessment

According to the Department of Education (2002a: 134), formative assessment is a form of assessment that assesses the learners' progress during the learning process in order to provide feedback that will strengthen learning. Nakabugo and Suborger (1999: 294) state that formative assessment implies that the assessment forms part of the normal course of teaching and learning. Browne (1998: 132) states that formative assessment can refer to the frequent and formal attention teachers give to children's reading as well regular planned assessment opportunities. This means that assessment is done with the purpose of guiding and supplying feedback.

"Formative assessment appears to require a shift from regarding teaching as the transmission of knowledge, to viewing teaching as an interactive activity in which both teacher and learner participate in the teaching and learning process" (Nakabugo & Suborger 1999: 294). It is evident from the above statement that the teacher is able to detect difficulties that learners encounter during reading activities. Learners might experience difficulty in reading fluently, which may prevent them from getting the meaning of the text. The teacher then intervenes immediately and renders appropriate support to the learner. Browne (1998: 132) indicates that formative assessment generates information the teacher can use immediately.

3.4.3 Summative assessment

According to Weeden, Winter and Broadfoot (2002: 29) summative assessment is concerned with providing information about a learner in a simple, summary form that can be used to review progress, can be passed on to a new teacher or school or can certificate the learners'

achievement in a formal way. This assessment assesses the product of learning because it takes place at the end of learning.

Browne (1998: 147) cites that summative assessment is a summary of what each child can do, knows and understands as a result of being taught for a specified length of time.

3.5 ASSESSMENT METHODS

Learners have different abilities and different learning styles. The use of a variety of assessment methods is vital to accommodate different learning styles. According to Dreyer (2000: 271) the purpose of the assessment will dictate the most appropriate assessment method to be used. It is also important that the method used should be appropriate for the target or outcomes being assessed. “Chosen methods, tools and techniques must provide a range of opportunities for learners to demonstrate knowledge, skills values and attitudes” (Department of Education Undated: 6). This means that the methods chosen for assessment activities must be appropriate to the assessment standards.

According to Sanders and Horn (1995), as cited in Dreyer (2000: 271), no single method can appraise the totality of a learner’s school and learning experience, or do justice to the diversity of learners who must be accommodated. It is evident from the above discussion that a teacher cannot conclude that a learner is a poor reader after using only one method to assess the child. Nitko (2001: 5) asserts that assessment methods should provide learners with opportunities to specifically determine what they have achieved and what needs to be done to improve their performance.

3.5.1 Observation

According to Paris, Lipson and Wixon (1993), as cited in Valencia (1997: 64), by observing learners in a variety of different reading situations teachers can determine the repertoire of skills learners have at their disposal and how they strategically use them when reading for different purposes.

Browne (1998: 137) states that teachers may see spontaneous and important moments of literacy learning which represent a significant step in the learning development of a particular child. The teacher observes the attitude of a learner during reading and also observes what interests and motivates the learner or where there is lack of interest in reading.

Teachers use anecdotal notes to describe the learners' progress in reading and writing. Rhodes and Nathenson-Mejia (1992) as cited in Vukelich (1999: 430) view that taken regularly, anecdotal notes become not only a vehicle for planning instruction and documenting progress, but also a story about an individual. According to the Department of Education (2003: 32), it is difficult to assess all learners at the same time especially in large group classes. Smaller groups of learners can be targeted on a daily basis. According to Davin and Van Staden (2005: 244) the teacher can use focused observation to do the following:

- listen for verbal responses. This includes not only what the learner says but also the tone of the voice, pronunciation of words and the use of words.
- look for non-verbal responses. This includes gestures and facial expressions.
- describe the circumstances or context in which the behaviour takes place.

According to Headington (2000: 25), even a facial expression may be seized upon by a learner looking for feedback from the teacher.

3.5.1.1 Observing learners' reading

The advantage of using observation as an assessment method is that it can be used throughout the lesson. This means that the teacher can observe the learner from the beginning to the end of the lesson. Learners are observed while reading to identify the strategies that they use when they come across unfamiliar words. Assessment standard 2 (makes meaning from a written text) and Assessment standard 5 (reads for information and enjoyment) can be assessed using observation. Grover (1994: 183) asserts that observed non-verbal communication can be used to determine whether learners seem to comprehend, whether the teacher's questions are relevant or whether learners are actively participating in group discussions with other learners. "Teachers watch closely as the learner participate in individual, pair and group activities and listen to their conversations" (Department of Education 2003: 33). Browne (1998: 138) asserts

that anything that is particularly striking or that reveals a pattern in the child's behaviour should be noted and added to the reading record.

Grover (1994: 183) views that the teacher can regularly record an assessment grade or score as part of the total assessment, applying criteria that have been developed and shared with the students. To have direct observation the teacher can use the following strategies during his or her observation of the learner's reading skills:

a. Listening to learners read orally

The teacher should frequently listen to every individual learner in his or her class reading a text. According to Richek et al (2002: 163) the major difficulties with fluency are:

- Choppy reading: learners stumble over words, repeat them and pause.
- Monotonous reading: readers have little expression or variation in the rise and fall of their voices.
- Inappropriate hasty reading: learners race through the text, ignoring punctuation and sentence breaks. They make errors even on familiar words.
- Teachers must also use their common sense to determine whether the reading is fluent.

b. Timed administration of word lists

Timed administration of word lists are used to assess automatic sight word recognition. Richek, Caldwell, Jennings and Lerner (2002: 164) suggest a list of words to be recognised. As the learner reads, performance should be recorded on a teacher's record book.

For each word in the list, three responses are possible:

1. recognised automatically
2. recognised after hesitation or analysis
3. not identified correctly

These authors state that a word pronounced correctly within one second is marked as an automatic word. A word recognised correctly, but not automatically, is an analysis word, and of course, a word recognised incorrectly is not identified correctly. According to Richek et al (2002: 164) to compare a learner's instantaneous word recognition, compare automatic words and total words known. If a learner's total number of words is much larger than the automatic words, the learner needs to practise instant recognition of sight words.

c. Determining reading rate

According to Richek et al (2002: 163), a learner's reading rate can be assessed by giving a learner a passage to read. Time the learner's oral or silent reading, then calculate the words per second. Multiply the number of words in the passage by 60 and then divide the result by the number it took to read the passage.

Learners' reading rates must be interpreted with some caution. Teachers should not compare one learner's performance with that of a whole group. According to Joubert et al (2008:128) reading is not norm driven in the new curriculum. They also state that if learners do not succeed with the book they reading, they must be given another with which they will succeed.

3.5.2 Interviews with learners

“An interview is a dialogue between the assessor and the learner, creating opportunities for learner questions” (Department of Education 1998: 136). Browne (1998: 136) suggests that each learner should have at least one reading\interview with the teacher each term.

According to Headington (2000: 25), a teacher may observe a child selecting a reading book from several others on the shelf, but only the answer to the question “Why did you choose it?” will indicate whether the learner was keen to read more books by a particular author or chose that particular book because it looked easier than the others. Browne (1998: 136) states that during the interview the child should be invited to talk about him or herself as a reader and the book he or she enjoys. The child can then read the prepared text to the teacher and they can then discuss the text. The child's comments may provide additional evidence for assessment

and information for future planning. At the end of the session, the teacher and the child should agree on a target for improvement.

3.5.3 Checklists

A checklist consists of a list of characteristics or learning skills and a place for checking whether each is present or absent (Nitko 2001: 279). Checklists can be used to help teachers observe, understand and describe young children's literacy development. According to Nitko (2001: 279), learners can also use checklists to review and assess their own work. The checklist is formulated in simpler and less formal language than the scoring rubric used by the teachers.

3.5.3.1 Guidelines on how to use checklists

According to Dreyer (2000:278) checklists can be designed to be used once or over an extended period of time to show development and progress. The teacher uses ticks on the checklist to indicate what the learner has achieved. As learners demonstrate the behaviours identified on the checklist, the relevant box is marked. According to Dreyer (2000:278) when using checklists and rating scales teachers should take note of the following guidelines:

- Checklists should be based on the outcomes specified for each lesson.
- The format should be designed in such a way that it can be used to discuss learners' progress during conferences with learners and parents.
- The characteristics of skills listed on checklists must be specified and easily observable.
- Learners can help in constructing checklists to be used for self- or peer assessment.
- Record the dates of the observations so learner growth and development can be tracked.

The following is an example of a checklist in which relevant assessment standards have been broken down to assess a learner's development in reading.

A checklist to assess learners' phonic knowledge (Assessment standard 4).

Table 3 Observation checklist of phonological awareness

Developmental progression	No	Emerging	Yes
Early stages – child recognises that the speech is composed of words.			
1. Does the child identify sentences as long or short?			
2. Does the child identify individual words that compose compound words?			
3. Does the child count (or clap) the number of syllables in words with up to three syllables?			
Phonemic awareness: blending skills			
4. When orally presented with an onset and a rime (e.g. i/m/a), does the child say entire word ima (stand)?			
5. When orally presented with three phonemes that make up word (e.g. i/m/a), does the child say the entire word ‘ima’ (stop)?			
6. When orally presented with four phonemes that make up a word (e.g. i/d/l/a), does the child say entire word ‘idla’ (eat)?			
Phonemic awareness: segmenting skills			
7. When asked to say the first sound in a three-phoneme word, does the child say the first sound correctly (e.g. when told ‘ima’), does the child say the first sound is /i/?			
8. When asked to say the sounds in a three-phoneme word, does the child say at least two parts separately (e.g. when told sun, child says, “i/ma” “/im/a/”, or (“ /i/m/a/”)?			
9. When asked to say the sounds in a three- or four-phoneme word, does the child say all of the phonemes individually (e.g., ‘idla’), child says “/i/d/l/a/”; when told ‘sula’ (wipe), child says,			

Developmental progression	No	Emerging	Yes
“/s/u/l/a/”)?			

Adapted for isiZulu from Allor and McCathren (2003: 74). A checklist to determine learners’ automatic sight word recognition.

The adapted Dolce list (discussed in section 2.3.3.1) can be used for word recognition and recorded by the teacher. Richek et al (2002: 164) indicated that for each word in the list, three responses are possible:

1. recognised automatically
2. recognised after hesitation or analysis
3. incorrectly identified

If a word is read and pronounced correctly within one second it is marked as an automatic word. A word recognised correctly, but not automatically, is an analysis word, and a word that is recognised incorrectly is not identified correctly.

3.5.4 SELF-ASSESSMENT

“In self-assessment, learners get the opportunity to reveal what they think and feel about themselves, how they feel about their work and/or how they have met the criteria for the task” (Department of Education 2003: 34).

According to Dreyer (2002: 272), self-assessment is the key to student empowerment because it gives students the opportunity to reflect on their own progress towards the learning outcomes and assessment standards, to determine the learning strategies that are effective for them and to develop plans for their future learning. Assisted reading (see section 2.3.3.2) is an excellent strategy to apply self-assessment in reading.

3.5.4.1 *Guidelines on self-assessment*

To assist learners in self-assessment they can complete a rating scale after reading. Answering questions to say how they think about the way they read. According to Browne (1998: 144), learners will know what they are aiming for if they reflect on reading, are clear about what they are expected to achieve and are aware of the targets for their own reading development,. She states that children can be involved in assessing their own development in reading in the following ways:

- Talking about reading and whether the story was interesting.
- Identifying aspects of reading they find difficult.
- Including their comments in records.
- Writing an end-of-term report on their own progress.
- Keeping reading diaries.

Self-assessment can engage learners in critical thinking because they are expected to reflect on their actions.

For instance, if the learner has to answer the following questions:

- Did you understand what you were reading? If not, what was your problem?
- Was it easy to read the piece? If not, what do you think was your problem?
- Was the story interesting?

Table 4 An example of self-assessment: reading

Name:	Yes	No	Partly
I read very well			
I pronounced all words correctly			
I understood what I was reading			
I find the piece easy to read			
My voice was clear			

Adapted from an unpublished source (2009:27)

3.5.5 Peer assessment

Dreyer (2000: 273) states that peer assessment involves that the learner learns by reflecting on the activities of other learners.

3.5.5.1 Guidelines for peer assessment

- Learners in Grade 3 can be given a checklist after doing a reading task in groups to assess the performance of their group mates. The following questions can be answered:
 - Did the group work well together?
 - Did everyone participate in all activities?
 - Did everyone understand the story? (Unpublished source 2009:16)

After the learners have completed a performance task, the teacher can give the learners a scoring rubric based on appropriate assessment standards. Each group presents its work to the class and the whole class can assess the performance of a group using the scoring rubric. The teacher can request learners to provide reasons for their responses. This can stimulate reflection and metacognition. The following table can be used by a learner to assess his or her partner after listening to the reading. A combination of assessment standards can be assessed in this way, for instance, assessing word recognition, comprehension, fluency, attitude etcetera.

Table 5 Peer assessment: reading

Name:	Comment
Did he or she read most words correctly?	
Did he or she use facial expressions to make his or her meaning clear?	
Did he or she read so everyone could hear?	
Did he or she read fluently?	
Did he or she use fingers to point at where he or she is reading?	

Adapted from unpublished source (2009:xviii).

3.5.6 Group assessment

Learners are assessed while working in groups of four to five learners. Each learner has a role to play in the group. According to Killen (2000: 75), group work encourages learners to verbalise their ideas and feelings, and this can help them to understand the subject matter. Learners are assessed on how they cooperate with other group members. According to the Department of Education (2002a: 1), the critical outcomes envisage learners who are able to work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community. “Teachers need to design appropriate classroom activities that include group work so learners can acquire the appropriate communication skills, which incorporate the components of communicative competence” (Barry: 2002: 114).

3.5.6.1 Guidelines on how group assessment can be done

Learners are arranged into groups of four, five or six. They are assessed while performing tasks as a group. A teacher observes the role each learner plays in the group. Killen (2000: 82) cites that each learner should take an active role in the group by contributing ideas, responding to

the input from other learners and sharing the workload. According to Joubert et al (2008:4) if correctly implemented, group assessment can promote outcomes-based teaching and create an environment in which learners actively participate in the learning situation. They highlight the following group roles that can be applied meaningfully in the foundation phase, especially in Grade 3.

Table 6

Leader	Motivator	Scribe	Spokesperson	Sender
Learner reads or communicates the instruction and takes the lead.	Learner must praise and motivate the group members.	Learner does the writing for the group.	Learner has to convey the group's findings.	Learner has to fetch whatever the group needs.

Extracted from Joubert et al (2008:5)

Learners assess their performance as a group. Learners can answer questions such as: Did we work well as a group? Did everyone contribute to the group? Did we listen to everyone's ideas? Did we finish our task in the given time?

Each learner assesses his or her performance in a group and can answer questions such as: Did I participate well in the group? Did I speak loudly and clearly? The teacher can provide appropriate assistance to those learners who are shy to speak in the group.

The following checklist can be used by learners to assess the performance of the group:

Table 7 Group assessment

Members of group	Yes	No	Sometimes
Did we work well together?			
Did we work towards achieving the same goal?			
Did we follow instructions?			
Did we listen well?			
Did we all do something important in the group?			
Were we all involved in the task?			

Adapted from unpublished source (2009:57)

Table 8 Group assessment: comprehension test

<p>Name of group leader: _____</p> <p>Other members in the group:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Were all the questions answered?2. Which question was the easiest?3. Which question was the most difficult?4. Did the group read each question?5. Who was very helpful in the group?6. Who made the most noise in the group?7. Did it take very long to answer the questions?8. Did we waste a lot of time?9. What should we do next time to work better in a group? <hr/>

Adapted from unpublished source (2009:112)

3.5.7 Portfolios

According to Dreyer (2000: 272), a portfolio can be defined as a meaningful collection of learner work to give a full picture of what a learner has achieved. After reading, learners can make the following artefacts: letters, sketches, drawings, snapshots, projects, tapes, checklists, computer work and collaborative projects and assessment by peers. Learners should be given an opportunity to participate in the selection process of the things that should be included in their portfolios. Cole, Ryan and Fick (1995) as cited in Lubisi (1999: 158) point out that when assisting learners in making their selections, teachers should give attention to choosing entries that demonstrate pre- and post-growth.

3.5.7.1 *Guidelines on how portfolios can be done*

A portfolio should include a table of contents, identification of who selected the piece, the date of the work, the description of the task, and learners' reflection on the entry. A teacher should focus on the particular assessment standard when choosing the portfolio artefacts (for instance, Assessment standard 2, which says makes meaning of written text). There are a number of activities that a teacher can ask the learners to do in order to assess their understanding of what they have read.

Teachers also assess whether the learners are able to apply what they have read to another situation. This can be done by asking learners to role-play a story that they have read using their own script, write responses to the story using their journals and draw any kind of drawing to illustrate what they have read. This can be kept in the learners' portfolio.

According to Vukelich (1997: 434), learners might share their portfolio with one another or with the learners from another class or grade. For instance, third graders might take selected artefacts from their portfolios to a Grade 2 class to show these children what a Grade 3 reader and writer can do.

Paulson et al (1991) as cited in Grover (1994:186) propose a summary of guidelines for portfolios:

- the portfolio should contain information which shows learners self-reflection.

- the learner must be involved in selection of items to be included in the portfolio.
- the portfolio is separate from the learners' cumulative folder which is maintained in the school's central office.
- the learners activities must be conveyed, that is, the purpose for the portfolio, its goal, contents, standards of assessing and the learners assessment of his or her work.
- the portfolio may serve an instructional purpose during the year or at the end of the year. The portfolio may include only those items the learner wishes to make public.
- a portfolio may have many purposes, for example to meet the goals of learners, the teacher, parents or the district.
- the portfolio should illustrate growth, for example samples of school performance of various types, including reading records or attitude measures.
- learners need examples and guidance to help them develop and reflect on their portfolios.

3.5.8 Oral questions

According to the Department of Education (2009:30) oral questions are mainly used to generate evidence of a learner's ability to listen/sign, interpret, communicate ideas and sustain a conversation in the language of assessment. After having read, learners can be asked questions to assess their understanding of what they have read. Grover (1994:182) asserts that open-ended questions which require higher order thinking (comparisons, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) are effective ways of encouraging learners to consider applying the current learning task to their lives and to compare new ideas to knowledge they already possess. Oral questions can be used to assess

- the interpretation of ideas
 - the expression of ideas
 - the completion of questions/short answer questions
- (Department of Education 2009:30).

3.5.9 Reading aloud

According to the Department of Education (undated source: 39) a learner should be able to read a passage (prepared or unprepared) using voice projection, fluency, expression and other strategies for oral presentations. Some suggested forms for assessment include the following:

- suitable short extracts could be read to the educator or to the educator.
- prepared reading: extracts could be read from texts the class is studying or any text the learner has prepared.
- unprepared reading: learners may be called upon to read aloud in the class context and be assessed using some of the above criteria.
- learners could work in groups to prepare presentations of reading aloud and present this to the class.

Additional evidence when assessing reading aloud:

- the passage is understood and this is demonstrated.
- the passage is read fluently.
- the voice is projected.
- the words are clearly enunciated.
- pause is used well.
- audience rapport is maintained.
- the choice of extract takes audiences into account
- the length of the extract is appropriate.

(Department of Education undated 39)

Joubert et al (2008:96) suggest the following guidelines for successfully reading aloud:

- read aloud to learners every day.
- alternate old favourites with new books.
- know the story and practise reading it aloud.
- introduce the story briefly.
- read clearly and use dramatisation techniques. Use voice and body to portray the characters and the mood.
- if the teacher uses illustrations, he or she must ensure that he or she holds the book so that illustrations are visible to everyone.
- select books for reading aloud taking the following into account:
 - learners' interests and abilities

- current affairs in the classroom (events and study themes)
- size of the group (whisper stories and small illustrations work better in smaller groups)

3.6 HOW TO DESIGN AN OUTCOMES-BASED PERFORMANCE READING ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY

The Department of Education (2003:8) indicates that performance assessment requires learners to demonstrate a skill or proficiency by asking them to create, produce or do something, often in a setting that involves real-world applications.

According to the Department of Education (2003:16) the following documents should provide the framework when planning for assessment:

- the assessment policy for the General Education and Training Band, Grades R-9 and ABET.
- the Revised National Curriculum Statement (The Overview and the Learning Area Statements).
- assessment Guidelines for each Learning Area.
- assessment Guidelines for Inclusion.

When designing a performance task, it is important to consider the following:

Step 1

“In order to administer any good assessment, you must have a clearly defined purpose” (Dreyer 2000: 237). This means that the teacher must first think about why he or she wants to do the assessment. The purpose to assess might be to monitor the learner's performance (see 3.3.1)

Step 2

“Learning outcomes give guidance by indicating what should be assessed” (Department of Education 2003:16). The teacher specifies the **learning outcome** to be assessed. The learning outcome for reading is:

- *Reading and viewing* - The learner will be able to read and review for information enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts. The teacher then specifies the appropriate assessment standards. **Assessment standards** will give guidance about what to expect from a learner.
 - For instance, **assessment standards** to be assessed; makes meaning of written text:
 - *Comments on a story the learner has read and demonstrate understanding by answering questions on*
 - *main idea*
 - *key details such as main characters, sequence of events, setting cultural values*
 - *conclusions (e.g. What does this story / fable teach us?)*
 - *Reads instructions related to real-life interests and needs*

The teacher needs to think about the skills the learners will use, for instance role-playing, analysing, summarising, problem-solving, comparing, synthesising, visualising, classifying, dramatising and debating.

“Learning Outcomes and their related assessment standards from other Learning Areas should be integrated in the Literacy Learning Program. This is done to contextualise the learning activities and to support, enhance and extend the skills, knowledge and values of the language learning outcomes and assessment standards” (Department of Education 2003: 42).

Step 3

After learners have been given a story to read, they can work in groups and be asked to perform any of the following activities to assess their comprehension:

- Re-tell the story or illustrate key story elements.
- Write responses to the story in their journals.
- Scan for main ideas.
- Say what they have learnt from the text.
- Debate about issues arising from the text.

- Role-play a story using their own script.

Goode (1997:30).

Step 4

The teacher designs a scoring rubric to use when assessing the learners' performances. Rubrics should be given to learners before starting a task so that they will know what is expected of them. (The designing of a rubric will be discussed in detail in section 3.7.)

Step 5

After completing the task, each group can present their work to the whole class. Learners can be asked to assess the performance of a group using the provided scoring rubric. The teacher can request learners to provide reasons for their statements. This can stimulate reflection and metacognition. According to Van den Berg (2004: 283), learners learn about their own learning by reflecting on the activities of their peers.

3.7 HOW TO DESIGN A SCORING RUBRIC

The Department of Education (2003: 19) defines rubrics as scoring scales consisting of a set of criteria that describe the expectations that are being assessed/evaluated and descriptions of levels of quality used to evaluate students' work or to guide students to describe performance levels. Flippo (2002: 57) asserts that the development and use of rubrics, which are the assessment standards that will be used to score and assess learners' performance, work, or skills, help both the learners and the teacher to determine the extent to which learners have met the outcomes of a particular activity. According to Dreyer (2000: 275) a rubric is a rating system by which teachers can determine the level of proficiency at which a learner is able to perform a task or display knowledge of a concept.

There are two kinds of scoring rubrics, namely holistic and analytic rubric. Nitko (2001:19) highlights that a holistic rubric requires the teacher to score the overall process or product as a whole, without judging the component parts separately. In contrast, an analytic rubric enables the teacher to score separate, individual parts of the product or performances first, and then to sum up the individual scores to obtain a total score. The choice of the scoring

rubric should be determined by the purpose of the assessment. The Department of Education (Undated: 22) sets the following steps for the designing of a scoring rubric:

1. The teacher looks for appropriate assessment standards he or she wants to assess (for instance, Assessment standard 2: Makes meaning of written text):
 - comments on a story or poem the learners have read, and demonstrates understanding by answering questions.
 - reads instructions related to real-life interests and needs.
2. The teacher identifies specific observable attributes that the learners should demonstrate in the activity. He or she specifies the characteristics, skills, or behaviours that he or she will be looking for, as well as common mistakes for which he or she would penalise the learners.
3. Identifies ways to describe above average, average and below average performance for each observable attribute identified in step 2.
4. The teacher chooses between a holistic or an analytic scoring rubric. For the holistic rubric, the teacher writes thorough narrative descriptions for excellent work and poor work incorporating each attribute into the description. For the analytic rubric the teacher writes thorough narrative descriptions for excellent work and poor work for each individual attribute.
5. For the holistic rubric the teacher completes the rubric by describing other levels that range from excellent to poor work for the collective attributes on a continuum. For the analytic rubric the teacher completes the rubric by describing other levels that range from excellent to poor work for each attribute on a continuum.
6. The teacher collects samples of student work that exemplify each level. These will serve as the norm to help the teacher to score in the future.
7. The teacher revises the rubric, as necessary. The teacher reflects on the effectiveness of the rubric and revises it prior to its next application.

Table 9 Template for a holistic rubric: a rubric for summary writing after reading a story

Score	Description
4	Demonstrates complete understanding of the story. All requirements of task are included in the response.
3	Demonstrates considerable understanding of the story. All requirements of the task are included.
2	Demonstrates acceptable understanding of the story. Most requirements of task are included.
1	Demonstrates little or no understanding of the story. Many requirements of task are missing.

Department of Education (Undated: 20)

Table 10 Template for an analytic rubric: a rubric for summary writing after reading a story

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 1
	7 – 8	5 – 6	3 - 4	1 – 2
Main ideas subtopics key words	Learner is able to select main idea and key words that display a degree of relevance	Learner is able to select main idea key words that display some relevance	Learner is able to select main idea and key words that display limited relevance	Learner is unable to select the relevant main idea and key words.
Structural organisation Paragraphing Sentence construction	Learner is able to synthesise/integrate information showing a degree of coherence and	Learner is able to synthesise/integrate information showing adequate coherence and logical	Learner is unable to synthesise information. Much	Learner is incoherent and illogical. Inability to structure

	logical development. Mostly correct sentence structure.	development. Some correct sentence structure.	incorrect sentence structure.	sentences.
Language usage Clarity of expression Appropriate use of language Vocabulary Punctuation and spelling	Learner shows a wide range of vocabulary. Language usage mainly correct. Spelling and punctuation mainly correct.	Learner shows a range of vocabulary, some correct language structure, spelling and punctuation.	Learner shows limited use of vocabulary, much incorrect language structure, spelling and punctuation.	Learner shows poor use of vocabulary, an inability to use language correctly. Very flawed spelling and punctuation.

Department of Education (Undated: 74)

3.8 REFLECTING ON AND INTERPRETING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

After any form of assessment, the teacher should reflect and interpret the assessment results. Interpreting assessment results enables him or her to establish how the learner is progressing compared especially to his or her previous performances. Nitko (2001: 81) states that when you interpret and use assessment results, you have a responsibility to ensure that your interpretations are as valid as possible, are used to promote positive feedback, and are used to minimise negative learning (reading) experiences by learners.

According to the Department of Education (Undated:21) learners who experience serious difficulties in achieving the assessment standards, may need to seek additional support with follow-up interventions which may include:

- creating more opportunities for learning
- giving learners more examples
- building on prior activities
- giving learners more exercises to achieve certain skills

3.9 VALIDITY OF THEASSESSMENT PROCESS

According to Killen (2000: 1), validity is a unitary but multifaceted concept which needs to be applied to the questions we ask, the overall assessment process we use, the interpretation of assessment results, and the inferences and decisions we make about student learning.

“In Outcomes-based Education it is often said that the principal reason for assessment is so that we will know whether or not learners have achieved the outcomes we wanted them to achieve” (Killen 2000:10). This means if a teacher is not assessing the attainment of learning outcomes using the appropriate assessment standards, he or she is not in line with the outcomes-based assessment.

The teacher cannot use a single method to assess the attainment of a learning outcome and infer that the child is incompetent, but should employ a variety of methods. Cobb, Joyner and Williamson (1999: 8) contend that the method(s) of assessment chosen should provide enough information for the teacher to make adequate inferences about the learner's achievement of the learning outcomes. To collect the information of the learners' performance in reading using different assessment methods, improves the validity of the assessment process.

3.10 SUMMARY

Assessment plays a valuable role in reading instructions if it is done effectively. In this chapter the key elements of outcomes-based assessment and the activities that a learner can do in reading were discussed. These activities enable the teacher to assess a learner's performance in reading. The purpose of assessment is not only to assess the attainment of the desired outcomes but it is also about learning how learners think and what learners are able to accomplish. Teachers need to give learners assessment tasks that are multifaceted whereby teachers can assess a variety of skills from a single task. To ensure that assessment tasks are meaningful, teachers must explain the purpose of assessment to learners, learners must see the task as worthwhile. In the South African school context teachers must always link the assessment of reading to appropriate assessment standards prescribed by the national curriculum statement policy document.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapters 2 and 3 a literature review of reading instruction and assessment of reading in an outcomes-based approach was undertaken. In this chapter the research design and methodology that was used in this study is described. According to Fouche and De Vos (2006: 132) a research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research. They also add that a research design focuses on the end product, formulates a research problem as a point of departure and focuses on the logic of the research. The researcher intended to observe how Grade 3 teachers assess reading of the home language at the end of the foundation phase using an outcomes-based approach.

4.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

This study uses qualitative research. Johnson and Christensen (2000: 313) describe qualitative research as “naturalistic inquiry” where non-interfering data-collection strategies are used to discover the natural flow of events and processes and how participants interpret them. Fourie (2006:269) asserts that qualitative research design differs inherently from the quantitative research design in that it does not usually provide the researcher with a step-by-step plan or a fixed recipe to follow. He also alludes to the fact that, in quantitative research, the design determines the researcher’s choices or actions, while in qualitative research the researcher’s choices or actions will determine the design or strategy.

This study is phenomenological in nature. According to Fouche (2006: 270) phenomenology is the approach that aims to understand and interpret the meaning subjects give to their everyday lives. McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 26) highlight that the researcher “brackets” or puts aside, all prejudgements and collects data on how individuals make sense of a particular experience or situation. The literature review was done to gain a deeper understanding of issues related to this study. Marshall and Rossman (1995: 35) cite that the

literature review supports the importance of the study's focus and may serve to validate the eventual findings in a narrowly descriptive method.

4.3 RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher observed six teachers teaching in their respective classrooms. Johnson and Christensen (2000: 147) define observation as the unobstructive watching of people's behavioural patterns in certain situations to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest. Marshall and Rossman (1995: 80) describe observation as the fundamental and critical method in all qualitative inquiry used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings. According to Johnson and Christensen (2000: 188) qualitative observation involves observing all relevant phenomena and taking field notes without specifying in advance exactly what is to be observed.

The researcher recorded extensive field notes, supported by audio tape during classroom observation. Strydom (2002: 286) highlights that field notes should ideally contain a comprehensive account of the respondents themselves, the events taking place, the actual discussions and communication, as well as the observer's attitudes, perceptions and feelings.

The researcher conducted informal conversational interviews with each teacher after classroom observation and after an initial analysis of the data in order to get clarity on what was happening in the class. Rubin and Babbie (1997: 388) state that informal interviews occur spontaneously when researchers conduct fieldwork observations and want to maximise their understanding of what they are observing and what the people they observe think about what is happening.

The study was conducted in six primary schools with six Grade 3 teachers located in six different wards. They were chosen because they offer isiZulu as home language in Grade 3. The researcher observed teachers in their classrooms. Follow-up interviews were conducted with each teacher after the classroom observations. The purpose of conducting an interview was to hear how the participant explains in his or her own words what the researcher needed clarity on. The participants were given the opportunity to elucidate, elaborate and have additional input.

4.3.1 Sampling

Johnson and Christensen (2000: 175) define sampling as the process of drawing a sample from a population. The researcher selected six Grade 3 teachers from six schools in six different wards. The researcher selected the sample because she believed it to be information-rich. This type of sampling is called purposive sampling. According to Johnson and Christensen (2000: 175), in purposive sampling the researcher specifies the characteristics of a population of interest and then tries to locate individuals who have those characteristics. Participants were chosen because they were likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon being investigated. Rubin and Babbie (2001: 399) also explain that in purposive sampling - unlike probability sampling - the researcher selects a sample of observation that he or she believes will yield the most comprehensive understanding of the subject of study.

4.3.2 Data collection

According to Johnson and Christensen (2004: 161) the collection of data is necessary to obtain information that will provide answers to important questions. Observation and interviews were the main data-collection techniques used in this study. According to Best and Kahn (1993: 198) most qualitative research studies in education utilise observation, interviews or a combination of the two as all or part of their data-collection procedures. The researcher took field notes. According to Rubin and Babbie (1997: 393) notes should include both empirical observations and the interpretations thereof. All classroom observations and informal interviews with teachers were tape-recorded.

4.3.2.1 Site selection

The research was conducted in the junior primary schools in the Department of Education – KwaZulu-Natal, in the Lower Umfolozi circuit. There are nine wards in the Umfolozi circuit. There are 106 primary schools that offer isiZulu as a home language. The researcher observed six teachers from six schools in six different wards in their respective classrooms. McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 319) maintain that a clear definition of the criteria for site selection is essential.

The researcher believes that the participants are information rich and that they will supply valid and reliable first-hand information. As the study investigated the assessment of reading of home language at the end of the foundation phase, the schools that were selected offer isiZulu as a home language.

4.3.2.2 The participants

As indicated before, the participants for this study were Grade 3 teachers. All teachers had taught for more than five years in the foundation phase at the time of this research. They had attended workshops for outcome-based education and Revised National Curriculum Statement support workshops. All the participants' home language was isiZulu. The teachers also had indicated their willingness to take part in the research after the researcher had explained what the research was about and how it was going to be conducted.

4.3.3 Ethical measures

The researcher strived to observe all relevant ethical measures throughout this study. The researcher ensured that she included the following ethical standards; guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality, voluntary participation and informed consent, gaining permission from organisations, assurance of the right to terminate and impartiality in data collection and management of sensitive information. Johnson and Christensen (2000: 88) state that research ethics are necessary to assist the researcher in conducting ethically sound studies by providing a set of principles that will assist in establishing appropriate goals and resolving conflicting values.

4.3.3.1 Anonymity

According to Wiersma and Jurs (2009:438) anonymity means that the names of the participants from whom the data were obtained are not known. The researcher assured all the participants that their names, views and opinions would not be identified by anyone else (see appendix A). This included what they said or did in the informal interviews and their classroom practices. Walliman (2005: 364) emphasises that if anonymity cannot be assured,

the participant must be made aware of this before agreeing to take part in the research. The participants' anonymity was maintained by labelling the schools with A,B,C,D,E and F.

4.3.3.2 Confidentiality

According to Johnson and Christensen (2000: 83) confidentiality means that the participants' identity, although known to the research group, is not revealed to anyone other than the researcher and his or her staff. The researcher assured the participants that their names and school would not be mentioned in this study. Their views and opinions were treated strictly confidentially.

4.3.3.3 Voluntary participation

Participants were asked to participate voluntarily. No one was compelled to take part in the study against his or her free will. The researcher sought consent from the school principal (appendix B) and asked all the Grade 3 teachers from the targeted schools to participate. Each participant in the study was informed about the purpose of the study, the time required for participation as well as assuring them of anonymity and confidentiality and although their opinions may be used to illustrate findings, no individual or other school will be identifiable.

4.3.3.4 Gaining permission from organisations

Permission to conduct this research was asked from the circuit manager – Lower Umfolozi Education Office (appendix C). A letter with the reply from the Department of Education was sent to the principal (appendix D). Each teacher who participated in the study was given a letter (appendix E).

4.3.3.5 Informed consent

According to Terre, Durkheim and Painter (2006: 72) researchers must provide potential participants with clear, detailed and factual information about the study, its methods, its risks and benefits, along with assurances of the voluntary nature of participation, and freedom to refuse to participate or withdraw from participation without penalties. Teachers were asked to

sign the consent forms if they were willing to participate in the study (appendix F). Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2002: 510) emphasise that consent should be voluntary, informed and given by a competent individual. According to Strydom (2006:59) emphasis must be placed on accurate and complete information, so that subjects will fully comprehend the investigation and consequently be able to make a voluntary, thoroughly reasoned decision about their possible participation. Wiersma and Jurs (2009:437) state that informed consent must address the purposes and procedures of the research, and a description of any possible risks or negative consequences. Teachers were asked to sign the consent form after the researcher had explained the purpose of the research and had described the procedures that were to be followed including the length of time the participant would be requested to give towards providing relevant data to complete the study.

4.3.4 Measures to ensure trustworthiness

4.3.4.1 Reliability

According to Best and Kahn (1993: 208) reliability refers to the degree of consistency that the instrument or procedure demonstrates. The researcher used the following strategies to ensure reliability of the study.

a. Researcher's role

Johnson and Christensen (2000: 15) note that the observer-as-participant allows the researcher to take a mix of the insider's role and the outsider's role. The researcher observed, took notes and did some initial analysis, which might guide further investigations.

b. Analytical premises

The conceptual framework which safeguards against unreliability is presented in chapter 1 and the literature review in chapters 2 and 3. This will inform other researchers seeking to replicate this study. McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 332) highlight that the choice of conceptual framework made by one researcher for a given study will necessitate other researchers to begin from similar analytical premises.

c. Interobserver reliability

According to McMillan (2006: 324) interobserver reliability refers to the composition of events, especially the meanings of the events, between the researcher and the participants. The researcher used the following strategies to further reduce threats to reliability.

i. *The researcher as instrument*

The researcher took precaution not to be subjective during data collection and analysis. Factors like personal assumptions, values, biases affective states were always taken note of.

ii. *Verbatim accounts*

Conversations, transcripts and direct quotes will be highly valued as data. The researcher presented quotations from the data to illustrate participants' meanings. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 325) the recording of verbatim accounts of conversations and transcripts is essential. Direct quotations from the data illustrate participants' meanings and thus ensure validity.

iii. *Low inference descriptors*

McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 325) maintain that concrete, precise descriptions from field notes and interview elaborations are the hallmarks of qualitative research and the principle method for identifying patterns in the data. The researcher ensured that the descriptions from field notes and interview elaborations were almost literal. Johnson and Christensen (2000: 313) explain that one of the major characteristics of qualitative research is that detailed, thick description, inquiry in depth, direct quotations capturing people's personal perspectives and experiences are maintained.

iv. *Mechanically recorded data*

A tape recorder was used to record lessons and interviews with teachers. Rubin and Babbie (1997: 392) state that a tape recorder not only ensures verbatim accounts, but allows

interviewers to focus on the respondents, to ensure that they are listening to what is being said and to probe important cues.

v. *Participant information*

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 410) researchers who establish a field residence frequently confirm observations and participants' meaning with individuals through casual conversations in informal situations.

The researcher had casual conversations or informal interviews with each teacher after class visits to confirm observations and participant's meanings. Ary et al (2002: 437) maintains that feedback from the participants may help the researcher to gain further insight and/or call attention to something that he or she missed.

vi. *Participants review*

McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 410) highlight that the participant is asked to modify any information or interpretation of the interview data. Participants were asked to modify any misinterpretation of meanings derived from the interview data.

4.3.5 Validity

The researcher undertook appropriate measures to ensure descriptive, interpretive, internal and external validity (Johnson and Christenson 2000:212).

4.3.5.1 Descriptive validity

The researcher ensured that statements were accurately reported. This means that the researcher reported only what actually took place, that is what was seen and heard.

4.3.5.2 *Interpretive validity*

According to Johnson and Christensen (2000: 209) interpretive validity refers to accurately portraying the meaning participants attach to what the researcher is studying. The researcher ensured that she accurately understands and portrays the participants' viewpoints, thoughts, feelings, intentions and experiences.

4.3.5.3 *Internal validity*

Johnson and Christensen (2000: 212) discuss internal validity and highlight that the researcher takes on the role of the 'detective' who searches for the true cause of a phenomenon, examines each possible 'clue' and attempts to rule out each rival explanation generated. This means that internal validity refers to the interpretability of the rest.

4.4 Participants' language

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 409) informant interviews, phrased in the participants' language, are less abstract than many instruments used in other designs. The language that the researcher used in this study was simple and easily understood by the participants. The participants were free to express themselves in the language of their choice.

4.5 Data analysis

Johnson and Christensen (2004: 521) state that the purpose of data analysis is to clearly summarise the data and generate inductive theories based on the data. Ary et al (2002: 465) state that data analysis involves reducing and organising the bulk of information gathered during data collecting by synthesising, searching for significant patterns and lifting up what is relevant to the research question. The hierarchical category system was used to analyse data. According to Johnson and Christensen (2004: 511) categories are the basic building blocks of qualitative data analysis because qualitative researchers make sense of their data by identifying and studying the categories that appear in their data.

The empirical data was organised into main theme, subthemes and categories. Ary et al (2002:466) state that developing categories enables the researcher to physically separate material bearing on a given topic from other material and is a crucial step in organising the data.

The schematic presentation was used to present the main theme, subthemes and categories identified from empirical data.

4.6 SUMMARY

The research method and design have been discussed. Factors regarding research ethics, validity and reliability of the study have been described. Chapter 5 will discuss the findings and discussions of the research.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 4 the researcher described the research design and methodology used in conducting the research. In this chapter the research results are presented in order to answer the research question:

How do teachers assess reading of isiZulu as a home language in Grade 3 and how is assessment used to improve the teaching of reading?

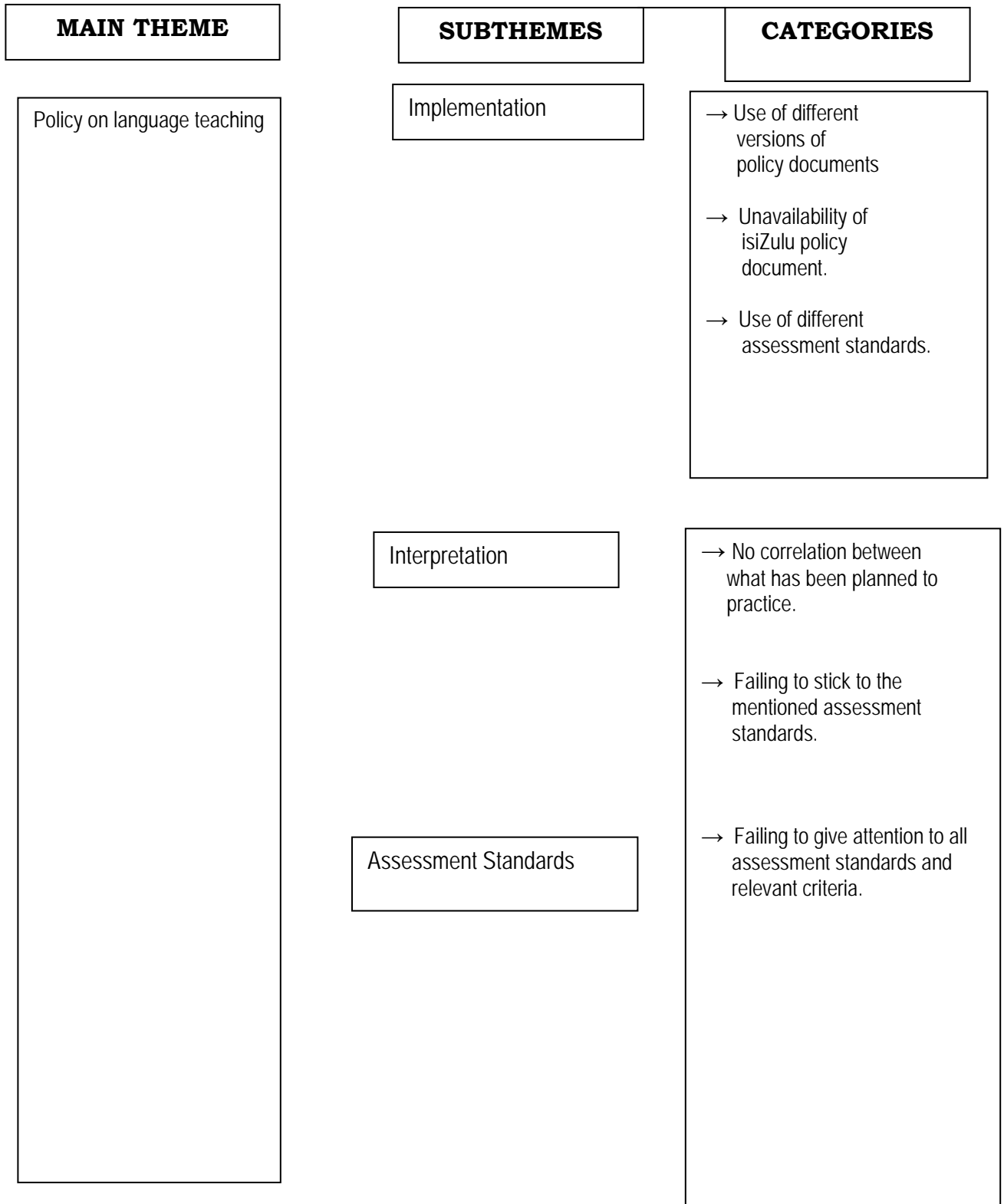
According to Davin and Van Staden (2005: 226) a very important reason for the assessment of learners is to help teachers to better their teaching. The findings show the extent to which teachers had been equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and correct attitude to teach and assess reading of isiZulu as home language, at the end of the foundation phase.

5.2 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to Johnson and Christenson (2004: 511) the researcher should focus on themes and the relationships suggested by the classification system rather than analysing each sentence or each word in the data. The main and subthemes were schematically outlined to assist the researcher to make sense of her data. The research results were organised under themes in order to reduce the bulk of information collected through interviews. From the data analysis five broad themes emerged, namely

1. Policy on language teaching
2. Teaching of reading
3. Assessment of reading
4. Lack of facilities
5. Support workshops

FIGURE 5.1 SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION OF MAIN AND SUBTHEMES MAIN THEME 1: Policy on language teaching



5.2.1 Main theme 1: policy on language teaching

The first main theme that emerged from the empirical study deals with the policy on language teaching. The Department of Education's (2003: 1) policy document for the Revised National Curriculum Statement provides teachers with a framework to develop their own learning programmes. It ensures that teaching, learning and assessment practices are developed effectively so that learners can achieve the learning outcomes as set out in the Revised National Curriculum Statement.

5.2.1.1 Implementation of the policy on language teaching

a) The use of different versions of the policy documents

It was observed that four different versions of policy documents are used in schools for home language, isiZulu.

- The first one is called “Languages – English – Home Language”.
- The second one is written in IsiZulu and is a translation of the English – Home Language but it also contains differences.
- The third version is written in isiZulu and is not the same as the one mentioned above. This copy is handwritten because the original version was unavailable. The teacher indicated that she got a copy at a workshop presented by teachers who were trained by the Department of Education as outcomes-based education facilitators.
- The fourth version is written in English and is entitled “Languages – English – First Additional Language”.

b. Unavailability of the policy on language teaching

According to the data collected, no policy documents written in isiZulu were formally distributed to schools for isiZulu as home language. Teachers got hold of copies from different sources, such as, the Circuit Office and workshops presented by Revised National Curriculum Statement facilitators.

The researcher observed that the policy document that was formally distributed to schools for all other learning areas was the one written for Languages - English Home Language. There was no policy document for isiZulu.

5.2.1.2 Interpretation of language teaching

a) The use of different assessment standards

It was observed that because different policy documents are used, schools do not use the same assessment standards to assess the reading ability of learners. Although the learning outcomes are the same in all four versions of the policy documents the assessment standards are different. It is specified in the literature study (see 1.2.6) that assessment standards describe the level at which learners should demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcome. It is not easy for schools to produce learners at the same level when they look for different evidence of achievement.

There is a lack of uniformity in schools as schools are guided by different guidelines and standards.

5.2.1.3 Assessment standards

a) Lack of correlation between planning and lesson practice

All observed teachers were able to plan their lessons. In their written planning they included the following: learning outcomes, assessment standards, assessment methods, resources and expanded opportunities. It was, however, observed that although they prepared their lessons thoroughly, including all essential aspects required in the National Curriculum Statement they did not necessarily apply it during their teaching effort.

Teachers seemed to have no problems regarding planning but seemed to have a problem in putting what they have planned into practice. For example, Teacher B did not do any assessment at all but in her preparation she included assessment methods and assessment standards. It was observed that teachers do assess but only at the end of the lesson. This is

not in line with an outcomes-based approach which emphasises that assessment should be integrated with teaching and learning (see 3.2.4).

b) Failing to stick to stated assessment standards

It was observed that teachers indicated the assessment standard at the beginning of the lesson but then failed to focus their teaching effort on it.

- Teacher A mentioned a relevant assessment standard but failed to stick to it. She indicated to the learners that she wanted to find out whether they were able to understand what they were reading (Assessment standard 2 – Makes meaning of a written text). The teacher assessed the knowledge of sounds and the learners' understanding of the story by asking only three simple content questions at the end of the lesson. For example, "Idlani inyoka?" (What does the snake eat?) "Shono amagama ezinyoka ezibaliwe endabeni" (Give the names of the snakes that are mentioned in the story.) The questions did not encourage learners to think.
- Teacher D also indicated to the learners that she wanted to assess their understanding of the text they are going to read. She focused on assessing correct pronunciation of words, while the learners struggled with the reading process. She ended up not assessing what she was supposed to assess, namely learners' making meaning.

c) Lack of inclusion of all assessment standards

Teachers tend to concentrate on assessing phonic knowledge. For example, Teacher C requested learners to pick from the story the words with the sounds; 'nhl', 'tsh', 'ndw' and 'khw'. She said "Ngifuna ningikhethele endabeni amagama analezinhlamvu, 'nhl', 'ndw' and 'khw'" (I want you to pick from the story the words with the sounds, 'nhl' 'ndw', 'khw'). She then requested learners to think of the words with the above sounds but were not found in the story. She wrote them on the board and asked learners to read them. This took about thirty minutes of the lesson. The rest of the lesson was spent on choral reading and asking learners simple questions to assess their understanding of the story.

According to the literature (see 2.4.3.1) a vocabulary problem occurs when a learner encounters the words for which he or she has no meaning. Teachers indicated that they developed learners' vocabulary by first asking learners to pick words from the story that they do not understand. The words would be explained and then learners would be asked to apply them in a sentence.

5.2.1.4 Interpretation of findings related to the policy on language teaching

Policy documents are very important in outcomes-based education as resource material. The policy document consists of the learning outcomes, assessment standards and other important information that a teacher should know. The teacher uses the policy document when doing his or her lesson planning by selecting the learning outcomes and assessment standards for the lesson he or she intends to teach. The schools should be using the same policy document as they are expected to produce learners of the same quality. The discrepancy that occurs because schools use different versions of policy documents as discovered in this study (see 5.2.1.1.1), indicated that there was a lack of good coordination. The Department of Education should supply schools with policy documents and monitor how individual teachers use the policy documents.

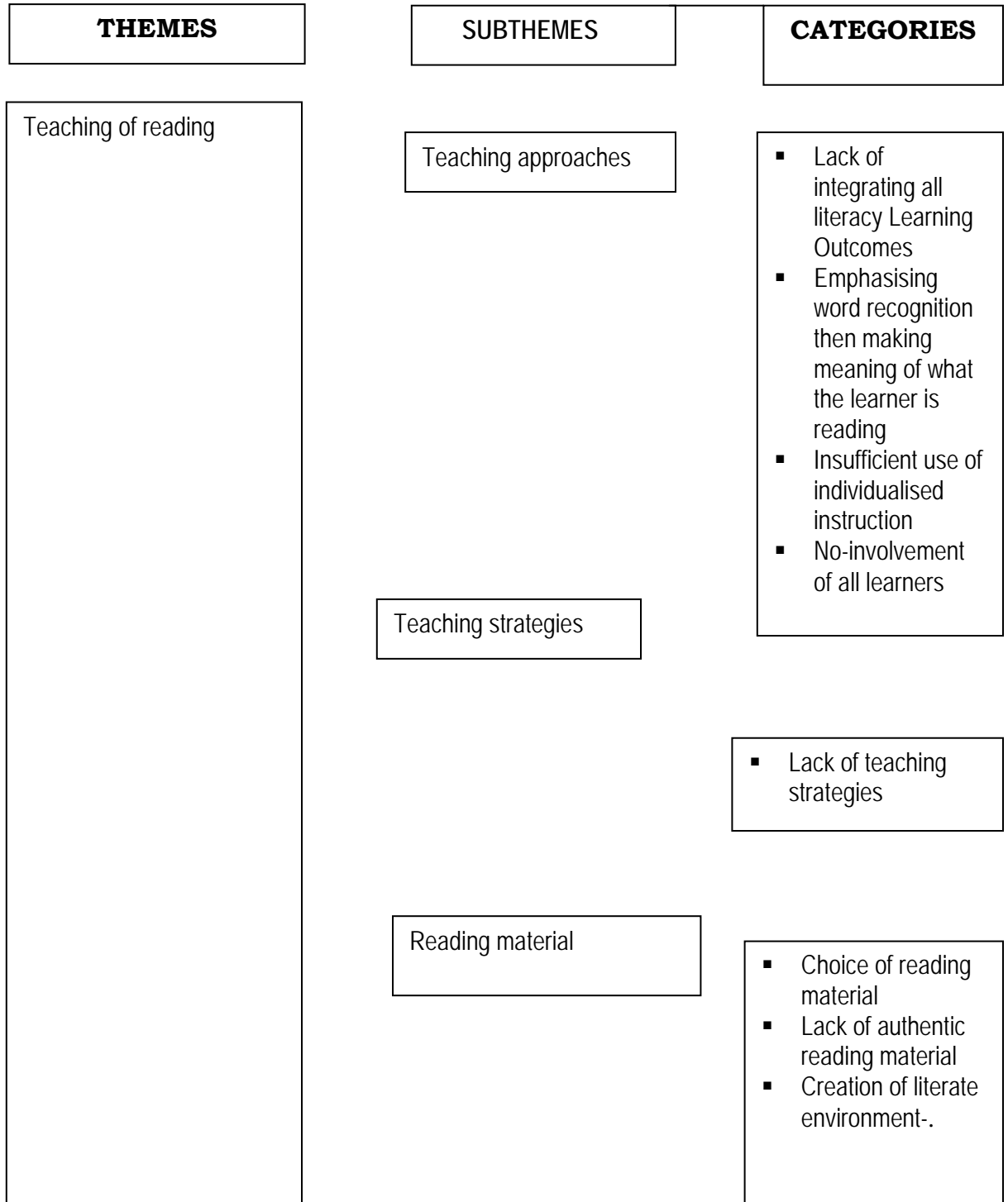
The use of different policy documents in schools could also be an indication that implementation workshops on the policy documents were not totally successful. Discrepancies caused by the use of different policy documents could have been picked up during the workshop series.

The foundation phase, like other phases, needs specialists to visit schools to give advice and help teachers in the implementation of policy documents. In the researcher's experience as the school principal, schools had not been visited by any foundation phase specialist at the time of this research.

It is not easy for schools to produce learners of the same quality while teachers are using different guidelines and standards. Learners who are assessed using assessment standards that are not up to the relevant standard may experience a learning gap.

FIGURE 5.2 SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION OF MAIN AND SUBTHEMES

MAIN THEME 2: Teaching of reading



5.2.1 Main theme 2: teaching of reading

It was important in this study not only to collect data on how teachers assess reading but also how they teach the reading of isiZulu. Assessment should be integrated with teaching and learning (see 3.2.4)

5.2.2.1 Teaching approaches

a. *Lack of integrating all learning outcomes*

According to the literature (see 2.2.1) listening, speaking, reading and reviewing, writing, thinking and reasoning, and knowledge of sound, words and grammar – although presented in separate outcomes - should be integrated when taught and assessed. According to the collected data teachers did not integrate the Literacy learning outcomes. Teacher A, B, C and D emphasised only reading and speaking, and this caused them to neglect the other four Literacy learning outcomes, namely listening, writing and thinking. Teachers also very seldom included the other skills in a reading lesson. Teachers indicated that they failed to integrate all learning outcomes because they concentrated on ensuring that learners read and if the reading piece was long it made it difficult to finish it and to integrate other skills during the reading lesson.

b. *More emphasis on word recognition than making meaning*

Teachers tended to concentrate more on word recognition than teaching learners the strategies that they could use to read with understanding.

For example, Teacher A concentrated on correcting the words that the learners read incorrectly, for example the words 'ngeke' (never), 'ngani' (with what), 'yimbi' (bad) and 'nokujova' (annoy). These words can be pronounced in different ways depending on the context of the story. She spent little time assessing the learners' comprehension of the story. Teachers also used strategies such as asking learners to look for words with particular sounds. For example, Teacher E asked learners to look for words with 'qh', and 'nhlw' in the story. She wrote those words on the board. She asked the learners to read them as a whole class and

thereafter in groups. Although the teacher mentioned at the beginning of the lesson that the purpose of the lesson was to increase the knowledge of different sounds and to read with understanding, she did not give attention to assessing the learners' reading comprehension or fluency.

c. *Insufficient provision of individualised instruction*

It is clear from the data collected that teachers spent little time on individualised instruction. Individualised instruction enables a teacher to ascertain which learners have not benefited from that particular lesson and need extra support (see 2.2.4). It was observed and also verified during interviews that teachers mostly used the following strategies:

- Teachers asked three to four simple questions based on the story. In the class of about 40 learners, the teacher was able to hear a few learners' understanding of the story.
- Teachers gave very little opportunity for individual reading. Teachers asked only three to four learners to read individually and by doing this they ending up not knowing the level at which each learner reads. Although it is not possible in one lesson to allow all 30-40 learners to read individually, the teacher should at least get an opportunity to hear each learner reading once a week.
- Teachers asked volunteers to stand up and read the story to the whole class. Teacher A asked volunteers to read. Two learners volunteered to read individually, they both read very well. It was not easy to observe the kind of reading difficulties learners had because the teacher did not point at individual learners who are struggling to read. If this method is normally used, learners who have reading difficulties can be left behind because it is not easy for them to read voluntarily as they know that they struggle.
- Teachers also indicated that large classes make it very difficult to assess each learner's reading ability and comprehension during a reading lesson.

d. Exclusion of group work

It was evident from the collected data that learners were not given work to do in groups during the lesson, except coral reading. Teachers indicated during the interviews that it is difficult for learners to discuss the story in groups when they struggle to understand it. Learners need to be given group work so that the learner can be assessed taking an active role by contributing his or her ideas, responding to the input from other learners and sharing the workload (see 3.5.6.1).

5.2.2.2 Teaching strategies

The collected data indicated that teachers see the reading lesson in a very limited way. The observed teachers started by explaining to the learners that they were going to first read the story, and they said they expected the learners to listen carefully. The teacher read the story while the learners listened and looked where the teacher was reading. The teacher demonstrated the correct pronunciation of words, the correct intonation and observing speech signs. For instance, Teacher A said “Ngizoqala ngifunde isigatshana ngifuna nibukisise lapho ngifunda khona” (I will start by reading the paragraph and I want you to look carefully where I am reading).

Teachers indicated that the above is the format of a reading lesson with very little variation. There was a lack of a variety of teaching strategies. According to the literature (see 2.3.3) learners have different learning styles and therefore different teaching strategies and assessment strategies should be employed to accommodate different learning styles.

5.2.2.3 Reading material

a. Choice of reading materials

It was observed that teachers used long narratives. The stories were not interesting to learners. The stories were about a python, a water dispute and a bishop. Some of the stories contained isiZulu idioms and proverbs that are difficult for Grade 3, for example, “Umthente uhlaba usamila”, “Izinyane lemvubu alidliwanga yingwenya kwacweba iziziba”. Learners

could not easily understand or summarize the story. There were no characters that the learners could identify with, imitate or use in role-play to display their understanding of the story.

During interviews teachers indicated that they did not have an option when selecting isiZulu reading books. Schools received catalogues from the Department of Education and teachers were compelled to only choose books from the publishers that were in the catalogues. In the catalogue there were only a few interesting books for isiZulu. Teachers said the catalogue did not contain interesting books.

b. Lack of authentic reading materials

Teachers did not use books and other reading materials that link with the learners' life world. Reading material should contain what the learners encounter in their real life (see 3.2.5). There is a lack of reading materials that relate to the everyday life of learners, suitable magazines and community orientated reading materials in the classes. Teachers indicated that schools do not have money to buy additional reading material that is interesting and additional to the readers supplied by the Department of Education.

c. Creating a print-rich environment

The classrooms did not display a print-rich environment. The classrooms lacked posters with printed messages and there were no library corners. It is indicated in the literature study (see 1.3.3) that in order to create a print-rich environment teachers need to ensure that they provide a variety of books to learners to read and display posters, charts, maps and other print material.

d. Lack of a variety of reading resources

There is a lack of reading resources to read for information, for example dictionaries, non-fiction resources to supplement learning content.

5.2.2.4 Interpretation of findings related to the teaching of reading

The knowledge of different *teaching approaches* that should be used to teach reading in outcomes-based approach is very essential (see 2.2). This should enable a teacher to know the approach he or she is using and if it fails he or she should be able to employ the other one. According to the literature (see 2.2) the teacher needs to employ different approaches to accommodate all learners because learners have different learning styles. Combrinch (2003: 59) maintains that learners' diversity regarding learning styles and intelligences must be accommodated.

Davin and Van Staden (2005: 66) contend that some children learn by:

- looking (visual learners);
- listening (auditory learners);
- handling something physically before they understand it (kinaesthetic learners).

This means that teachers should know all the different styles of learning.

As indicated above, it could be deduced that teachers were not conversant with various teaching approaches. Reading is taught in the same way as it had been taught prior to the outcomes-based approach. This meant that teachers did not focus on all learning outcomes and assessment standards. The integration of all basic literacy skills, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening is not properly done. Learners are not given the chance to choose the books they liked to read. Teachers used only questions and answers to assess the learners' understanding. No *alternative strategies* such as dramatisation of the story or discussion of the lesson from the story were observed. Alternative forms of literature such as poetry, drama and even a letter were also not used.

According to Kotze (2002: 77) learning outcomes express the broad expectations of what learners should achieve. The teacher needs, from time to time during the lesson, to check whether he or she is still working towards achieving the reading learning outcome. Reading is about getting meaning from the written text (see 1.7.3). If after reading learners cannot make meaning of what they have read it means the reading learning outcome has not yet been achieved.

The Department of Education should ensure that it supports teachers to obtain a variety of *reading material*. The material should be interesting and pitched at the learners' level, for example short stories. Although there is a problem with the availability of reading material in some schools, teachers should create library corners in their classrooms to enable learners to have access to reading books. Teachers should create a print-rich environment (see 2.3.1). A classroom should consist of displayed posters, charts, maps and other stimulating print material.

FIGURE 5.3 SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION OF MAIN AND SUBTHEMES:
 MAIN THEME 3: Assessment of reading

THEME	SUBTHEMES	CATEGORIES
Assessment of reading	Assessment standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment standard 1 - Assessment standard 2 - Assessment standard 3 - Assessment standard 4 - Assessment standard 5
	Assessment method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oral questioning - Lack of using other reading assessment methods
	Forms of assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of learners throughout the lesson - Assessment at the end of the reading lesson - Lack of assessment

5.2.3 Assessment of reading

The Department of Education (2003: 15) state that assessment practices that are encouraged in the Revised National Curriculum Statement are continuous, planned and integrated by gathering information about the performance of learners measured against learning outcomes and assessment standards.

5.2.3.1 Assessment standards

a. Assessment standard 1: visual cues

According to the literature, visual cues refer to using pictures to interpret the meaning of stories (see 2.4.1). It also indicates that pictures have a crucial role to play in enabling children to gain meaning from books and, apart from wordless texts, they work in partnership with print in picture books.

It was observed that pictures were an integral part of the limited reading materials used in classes included in the research. Although the pictures in the readers serve to assist the learners to understand the stories not all the teachers use them as assessment teaching instruments.

Teacher C did use the pictures provided with the story and asked the learners to predict what the story was about. She said “Ngifuna ubuke isithombe bese uyangitshela ukuthi kwenzakalani” (I want you to look at the picture and tell me what you think is happening). Teachers indicated that they did use pictures although they did not use them all the time, the reason being that it depends on what pictures are provided. They indicated that some readers had pictures that did not illustrate the story well and were not colourful and interesting to learners.

b. Assessment standard 2: makes meaning

Reading is about getting meaning from a written text (see 2.4.2). If learners do not understand why they are reading it means they have not mastered reading.

Teachers did use **this** assessment standard in their lessons but they focused on asking simple sentences that required the basic recall of knowledge.

For example, Teacher E told learners to listen carefully while she was reading because she was going to ask them questions after reading the story. She asked simple questions that required learners to reproduce what they had read, such as “Idlani inyoka? (What does the snake eat?).

According to the literature (see 2.4.2.2) Grade 3 learners should be able to comment on a story or poem they have read, and demonstrate an understanding by answering questions on the main idea, key details such as main characters, sequence of events, setting, cultural values, cause-effect relations and conclusions.

c. Assessment standard 3: uses a variety of strategies to make meaning

Word recognition, reading comprehension and reading fluency are some of the important strategies that need to be taught (see 2.4.3). A learner cannot understand what he or she is reading if he or she is unable to recognise most words in the story. Reading fluency facilitates the good understanding of the story (see 2.4.3.4).

Teachers did concentrate on assessing word recognition. But it was evident that teachers did not use a variety of strategies when teaching and assessing reading fluency. Teachers focused on asking simple questions to assess learners’ comprehension ignoring questions that would make learners to think about and relate what they are reading with their real-life situations.

d. Assessment standard 4: phonetic knowledge and vocabulary

Emphasis on Assessment standard 4: phonic knowledge

It was found that teachers spent much time on phonic knowledge while neglecting skills such as understanding and reading fluency.

Data collected indicated that Teacher C spent time teaching learners about words with the following sounds, “nhl, tsh, ndw and khw”. She asked the learners to pick words with these consonants from the story and thereafter requested them to give her the ones that did not

appear in the story. No attention was given to any other assessment standards, including understanding the story.

Teachers indicated in interviews that the reason for focusing on phonics is that many learners come to Grade 3 not having mastered most triple and four consonants sounds, for example, hlw, thw, tsh, ntsh, nhlw, ntsh. Teachers indicated that it becomes difficult for learners to read with understanding if they cannot recognise most of the words that carry the meaning of the story. Teachers pointed out that there was no guideline for sounds a Grade 1 learner should know before he or she progresses to Grade 2. Teachers indicated that it was important for foundation phase teachers to teach the knowledge of sounds, ranging from single consonants, double consonants, triple consonants and four consonants sounds. They regarded knowledge of sounds as the building blocks for reading in isiZulu. They argued that a learner must be equipped with the skill to blend sounds from the foundation phase onwards.

e. Assessment standard 5: read for information and enjoyment

According to the Department of Education (2003: 10) learners in the foundation phase should be exposed to various kind of information – fictional and non-fictional. Teachers asked questions that required learners to look for information from what they have read although it was done in a very limited scale and required simple answers. Teacher A asked learners in this way: “Kungenzekani uma ulokhu uqhubeka nokujova umuntu”. (What can happen to you if you keep on provoking a person?) She wanted the answer based on the story.

It was also found that assessing reading for enjoyment was lacking. Learners were not given the opportunity to select the reading material of their choice. There was no form of motivation for further reading also at home.

5.2.3.2 Assessment methods

Learners have different learning styles (see 2.3.3). It is crucial for a teacher to employ a variety of assessment methods to enable learners to demonstrate their abilities more fully. According to the Department of Education (2002a: 127) the chosen methods for assessment activities

must be appropriate to the assessment standards to be assessed, and the purpose of assessment must be clearly understood by all the learners and teachers involved.

a. Oral questioning

It was observed that teachers mostly used oral questioning as method to assess. Oral questions are mainly used to generate evidence of learners' ability to listen, interpret, communicate ideas and sustain a conversation in the language of assessment (see 3.5.8).

Teachers asked learners simple questions throughout the lesson to answer orally. It is not sufficient for teachers to ask simple questions; they need to include questions that encourage critical thinking to develop the learners thinking and to involve them in dialogue. During interviews, teachers stated that they use oral questioning most of the time because they are used to it and are able to establish if the learners understand what they are learning in a short space of time. Teachers also stated that oral questioning enable them to give learners immediate feedback.

b. Lack of a variety of assessment methods

It was evident from the collected data that teachers did not apply different methods of assessing as advocated in the outcomes-based approach. It was found that teachers use only oral questioning on a basic level and limited observation of reading.

According to the Department of Education (2002a: 127) competence can be demonstrated in a number of ways. Thus a variety of methods is needed to demonstrate the learner's abilities more fully (see 3.3).

5.2.3.3 Forms of assessment

a. Continuous assessment

“Continuous assessment is a process of gathering information about a learner's performance on an ongoing basis, against clearly defined assessment standards, while using a variety of methods, tools, techniques and contexts” (see 3.2.1). It became clear from the data that was collected that teachers' assessment was not well integrated with teaching because teachers

used oral questioning at the beginning and end of the lesson, neglecting to assess learners during the presentation stage to check their understanding and reading skills. Teachers observed learners during choral reading and indicated that they are not used to other methods such as role-playing, summarising, dramatising because in most cases they concentrate on teaching learners to read and to recognise the words that they are reading. Teachers pointed out that the low level of reading ability prevented them from using all assessment methods.

b. Lack of assessment

As stated before, a lack of assessment of the total reading process was evident from the research. For example, Teacher B excluded assessment as part of the reading lessons. After reading while the learners listened she spent most of the lesson asking learners to do choral reading.

According to the literature (see 3.2.4), teachers should plan assessment before any teaching begins and they should continue to use assessment throughout the instructional process to guide their actions and decisions.

c. Record keeping

According to the Department of Education (2007: 10) recording is a process during which the teacher documents the level of a learner's performance in a specific assessment task and indicates learner progress towards the achievement of the learning outcomes in the National Curriculum Statement.

It was evident from the collected data that teachers experienced no problems with record keeping. Most teachers were up to date with their recordings. It was observed that teachers differed on the topics they used for assessing reading, for example some used the five prescribed assessment standards as topics and others used topics such as phonic knowledge, word recognition, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. It is, however, not clear how teachers were able to record learners' level of competence without the use of a variety of assessment methods in a variety of reading contexts.

5.2.3.4 Interpretation

According to the Department of Education (2007: 1) assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and should be included at all levels of planning. Teachers need to ensure that they focus on assessing the assessment standards they expected to assess during the lesson.

It was found that teachers struggled with assessing reading using the assessment standards. This is evident from the fact that teachers were not able to specify clearly which assessment they were focusing on and learners therefore did not know what was expected of them.

Teachers did not focus on all the assessment standards but were inclined to focus on phonetic knowledge. Subsequently teachers did not emphasise learners' understanding of the text. Assessment of their comprehension was done by means of questions that did not encourage critical thinking. It was observed that Assessment standard 2 (to make meaning) was neglected. The assessment of whether learners demonstrate an understanding by answering questions on the main idea, key details such as main character, sequence of events and cause-effect relations seem to be neglected.

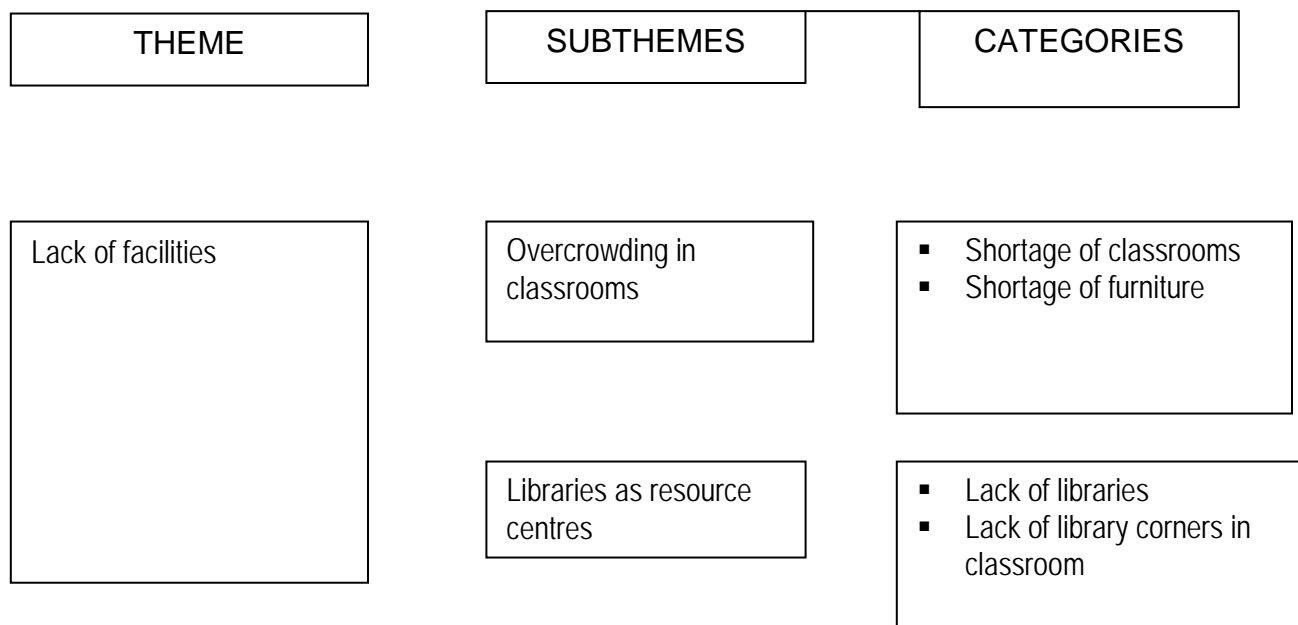
The assessment of the most important aspect of reading instruction, namely the learner's ability to read printed text fluently and with understanding was done on a very limited scale.

The teacher should assess the learners throughout each lesson. This means that assessment should take place continuously (see 3.2.1). The Department of Education (2002b: 127) contends that continuous assessment is the chief method by which assessment takes place in the Revised National Curriculum Statement.

Teachers should make use of a variety of assessment methods to assess the learners' reading ability see (3.5). According to the Department of Education (2003: 17) a wide range of assessment strategies may be used to assess learner performance in reading. Teachers can select the strategies depending on the purpose of assessment.

FIGURE 5.4 SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION OF MAIN AND SUBTHEMES

MAIN THEME: Lack of facilities



5.2.4 Lack of facilities

5.2.4.1 Overcrowding in classrooms

a. Shortage of classrooms

The challenge of schools facing a shortage of classrooms was found in five of six schools visited. At one school Grade 2 and grade classes shared one classroom, at another school two Grade 3 classes shared a classroom. This situation did not contribute to effective teaching and learning as classrooms were overcrowded. Teachers also indicated that the overcrowding made it difficult for them to assist or assess individual learners.

b. Shortage of furniture

The researcher observed a shortage of furniture in all six schools. The classroom furniture were generally in a bad condition. It was found that schools still used old-fashioned desks for learners, which made it difficult to accommodate group work as encouraged in outcomes-based education.

5.2.4.2 Libraries as resource

a. Lack of libraries

None of the six schools in the research project had libraries. It is very difficult to enhance the reading levels of learners without easy access to good and suitable reading material. The lack of libraries is therefore a source of concern.

b. Lack of library corners in the classrooms

The classrooms that were observed had no reading corners containing additional reading materials and story books to supplement the learners' reading materials and story books to enhance the learners' reading performance. Teachers complained that the problem was that they did not have story books, shelves and even benches that they could use to display books.

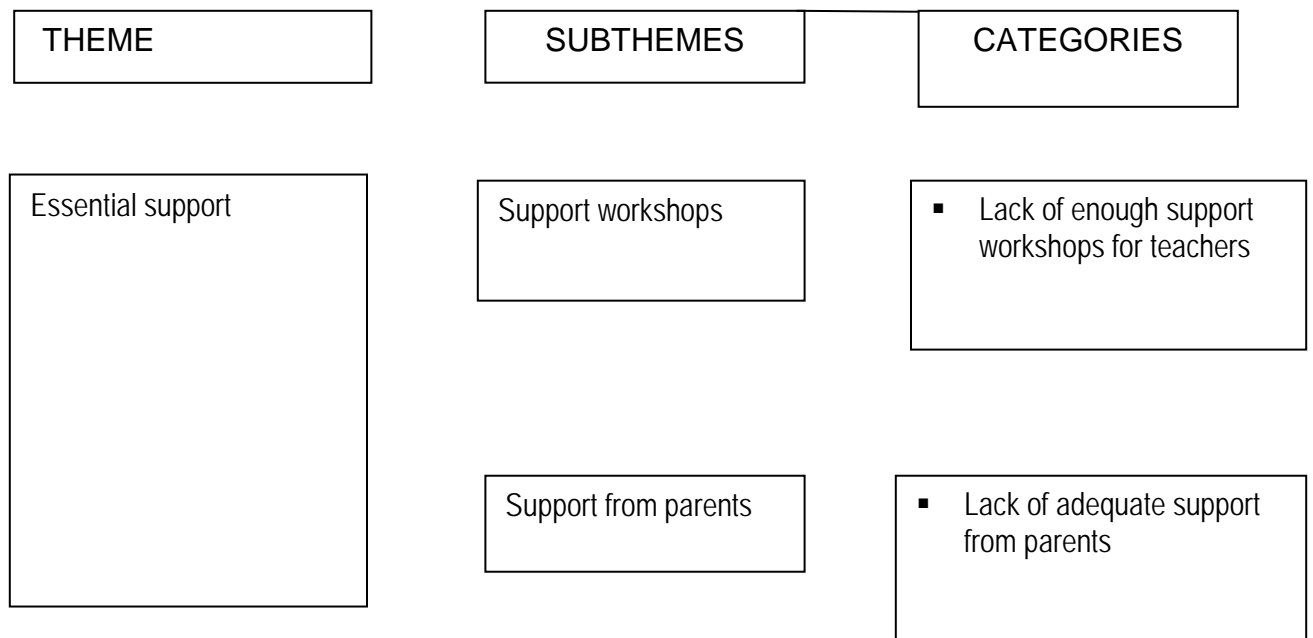
5.2.4.3 Interpretation and guidelines concerning facilities

The situation of overcrowding is not conducive to effective learning. Effective teaching and learning cannot take place when learners do not have a suitable working area as learners can distract each other.

The Department of Education and the school governing bodies should work together to try and address the problem of the shortage of classrooms and libraries in schools. This issue needs to be addressed as a priority. Libraries play a significant role in motivating learners to love reading. Libraries will help to decrease the number of learners who have problems reading and will provide reading materials in the learners' home environment.

Although schools lack facilities, teachers should try to create a print-rich environment. According to the findings of the empirical research, this was not happening in many schools. It is therefore important that resources should provide a rich literacy environment for learners to develop their reading skills, especially if learners do not have easy access to reading material outside the classroom (Pretorius & Machet 2004: 60).

FIGURE 5.5 SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF MAIN THEME AND SUBTHEMES
MAIN THEME: Essential Support



5.2.5 Essential support

5.2.5.1 Support workshops

a. *Lack of enough support workshops for teachers*

During the interviews the teachers pointed out that they needed support to apply assessment policies. The older teachers said they attended a one-week workshop when outcomes-based

education was introduced and after that they attended a one-day workshop on Revised National Curriculum Statement in 2002. Some teachers had completed teachers' training but they had remained unemployed for a long period and were therefore not trained in the outcomes-based approach.

According to teachers, the training workshop they attended focused on planning and recording assessment but very little guidance was given on the practical application of theory in the classroom situation. Teachers were particularly unhappy with the lack of knowledge and skills of the facilitators who had trained them.

b. Lack of adequate caregiver support

Teachers indicated that some learners do not progress well because they do not get support from their caregivers. When they receive homework to read at home they come back to school without having done the homework. Teachers indicated that caregivers were expected to provide learners with reading material at home.

c. Lack of support for caregivers to enhance reading

Not one of the teachers indicated that parents need guidance on the importance of reading at home for their child's reading ability. Teachers can expect caregivers to take part in their learners' reading ability only if caregivers are able to read and if they are informed about suitable reading materials for young learners. Caregivers should be encouraged to read to their learners, sing songs and say rhymes with them in their home language.

5.2.5.2 Interpretation and guidelines on essential support

Teachers cannot succeed in assisting and assessing learners properly without essential support, namely support workshop for teachers, support for caregivers and suitable reading material. School governance and the Department of Education have the challenge to ensure that they provide teachers with the essential resource material.

Teachers need workshops to develop their knowledge in reading instruction and assessment. Teachers need to be motivated to appreciate the importance of reading. They need to network with other teachers to discuss the challenges they encounter in their teaching practice.

Caregivers should support children by providing them with a variety of reading material at home. Caregivers should also receive support from teachers and the Department of Education to help and support children.

5.3 SUMMARY

In this chapter the findings of the study were presented and discussed. The findings were divided into five themes, namely language policy document, teaching of reading, assessment of reading, lack of facilities and essential support. According to the findings teachers still struggled with assessment of reading at the end of the foundation phase. Teachers indicated that they needed support on assessment strategies. As stated in the literature study, assessment enables the teacher to see how the learner progresses and to offer support where it is needed. It is important for teachers to be conversant with teaching approaches and assessment methods to enhance their practice.

The Department of Education should work with schools to ensure that teachers get the appropriate training so that they can teach the way they are expected to teach according to an outcomes-based approach and to be able to assess learners' reading abilities in a well planned and coherent way with the purpose of improving the learners' reading ability. Parents should ensure that they provide their children with relevant reading material at home.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the conclusions based on the findings contained in the previous chapters. The conclusions will relate to the main research question: *How do teachers assess isiZulu as a home language in an outcomes-based approach at the end of the foundation phase?* In finding out how teachers assess the reading of isiZulu, the researcher is hoping to present recommendations that will enhance the reading skills of the learners and also benefit the Department of Education's policies on assessment and reading instruction in the foundation phase.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this study are based on research done using two main methods, an in-depth literature study and empirical research. The empirical study involves information collected by observing and interviewing teachers of six classrooms regarding outcomes-based assessment of reading of isiZulu as a home language at the foundation phase.

6.2.1 Conclusions from literature

6.2.1.1 Policy on language teaching

A policy document is a resource document that a teacher should consult to select the learning outcomes and assessment standards that he or she will use in his or her lesson. According to Department of Education (2002a: 6) there are six main home language learning outcomes, namely listening, speaking, reading and viewing, writing and thinking and reasoning (see 2.4).

There are five assessment standards for the “Reading and Viewing” learning outcome, with detailed information concerning the criteria for the assessment of each. Teachers must use the detailed information of each assessment standard as guideline to plan the content of activities.

Assessment standards define the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes that learners will be required to demonstrate as evidence that they have achieved each phase outcome to an appropriate depth and breadth (see 1.2.6).

6.2.1.2 *Teaching of reading*

The **purpose of reading** is to get the message from a written text (see 3.3). This means that teachers need to teach learners as soon as they begin reading, that a written text represents meaning. According to the literature mentioned in chapter 2 (see 2.1) reading in the foundation phase requires the teacher to purposefully teach learners the strategies that they can use to read meaningfully. If learners cannot understand what they are reading, it means they have not mastered reading.

It is important that teachers employ **different approaches** to teach learners how to get meaning from a text. A teacher can use different approaches that are in line with the outcomes-based approach. In this study the whole language approach, integrated approach, individualised instruction and cooperative learning reading programme are identified (see 2.2.5). According to the literature the *whole language approach* acknowledges the fact that learners use reading to help them write, writing to help them talk and talking to help them read – the one ability helps to develop the other (see 2.2.1). The *integrated approach* maintains that reading is a synthesis and integration of two processes: recognising words and comprehension (see 2.2.3). In the *individualised approach* learners choose their own reading materials so that their reading is directly related to their interests and knowledge (see 2.2.4). In the cooperative learning reading programme, learners work together in groups small enough for everyone to participate in a collective task that has been clearly assigned.

Teachers need to employ **different methods** of teaching reading to accommodate learners' different learning styles. According to the literature while understanding must occur for the reading process to be fully activated, **comprehension** is facilitated when words are

appropriately identified and the author's message is decoded (see 2.4.3.1). This means that although the learners in Grade 3 should be able to get meaning from what they are reading in isiZulu, teachers should still give attention to word-recognition strategies.

According to the literature (see 2.4.2.1), various researchers have identified the six main comprehension strategies that should be taught at all grade levels, namely predicting prior knowledge use, answering and forming questions, thinking aloud, using text structures features, visualising and creating visual representations and summarising.

As discussed in chapter 2 (see 2.4.2.2) to enhance **word recognition** and **vocabulary**, the literate environment should provide a word-rich environment. This means that each and every class should display written words, such as the names of various objects, funny words, strange words and so forth.

Reading fluency is another important aspect that needs to be taught to learners. This refers to the ability to read with accuracy, speed and expression (see 2.4.3.4). A learner who reads fluently is a learner who reads without hesitating, smoothly and without mistakes. As discussed earlier in the literature review (see 2.4.3.4) not only are fluency and comprehension highly correlated, but fluency practice also results in higher levels of comprehension. A learner who has a problem in recognising words in a text will fail to get meaning from the text. This is because a learner spends his or her time focusing on recognising words.

Phonics teaching aims to achieve different kinds of knowledge, namely to help learners master the letter names and sounds, including the sounds related to common letter combinations such as sh, ch, th and ng; to recognise words easily and accurately, they will be better able to focus on the meaning of text (see 2.4.4).

Learners need to read for a variety of books to **acquire information** and to develop his or her reading skills. As discussed in literature (see 2.4.4) for students to gain deep, conceptual knowledge, they must be taught strategies for making sense of what they read.

6.2.1.3 Assessment of reading

Assessment of reading should be done continuously. This means that it should take place throughout every lesson. Assessment is the important factor that can promote the instruction and mastering of reading (see 1.1). According to the literature reading assessment is the gathering of information to determine a learner's developmental reading process; it answers the question "At what level is this learner reading?" (see 3.1). This study identifies six of the principles that underpin outcomes-based assessment as applied in the assessment of reading, namely that:

- outcome-based assessment must be continuous
- outcomes-based assessment must be directed by outcomes and assessment standards
- outcomes-based assessment must be integrated with teaching and learning
- the process and not only the product should be assessed
- assessment must be authentic
- assessment must be multidimensional to accommodate the various learning styles of learners so that they utilise their abilities (see 3.1).

The National Curriculum Statement for Grade R-9 requires the use of a variety of appropriate assessment strategies that adequately assess learner achievement and develop skills for lifelong learning (see 3.2). Although the principal function of assessment is to improve the existing level of reading there are a number of other purposes for undertaking assessment, all of which are relevant to reading, namely to monitor the learners' progress, identify barriers to learning and development, assess teacher and instructional effectiveness and grading (see 3.3.).

As discussed in chapter 2 (see 3:5), the use of a variety of **assessment methods** is vital to accommodate learners' abilities and different learning styles. The purpose of the assessment will also dictate the most appropriate assessment method to be used. The chosen methods must provide a range of opportunities for learners to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. The methods chosen for assessment activities must be appropriate to the assessment standards.

After any form of assessment, it is important for the teacher to **interpret the assessment results**. Interpreting assessment results enables the teacher to establish whether the learner is progressing especially compared to his or her previous performances (see 3.9).

6.2.1.4 Importance of reading facilities

All learners should have **access to libraries** and if possible schools should have school libraries. Teachers are encouraged to create a **print-rich classroom** environment (see 2.3.1). This can be done by creating library corners where books are available to learners to read, display posters, charts, maps and other print materials. Learners should be provided with a variety of books, newspapers, magazines and other print material and have access to the printed word and books. It is important to enhance young learners' reading abilities in an authentic context (see 3.2.5).

Schools, teachers and the Department of Education should work together to acquire the necessary **reading material**. Teachers should also be more attentive to collect and improvise their own reading media from waste and other inexpensive resources. It is evident from the literature study that the unavailability of reading material can have a negative impact (see 1.3.3) on learners' development. For learners to perform well in reading they should be provided with a variety of reading material both at school and at home (see 1.3.4). Learners who are in well-resourced environments perform better than those in poorly resourced environments (see 1.3.3). According to Flippo (2002: 278), McQuillan's review of the research (McQuillan1998) provides evidence that access to print and the amount of reading students do are the best predictors of reading achievement.

6.2.1.5 Essential support

According to the literature, teacher education, qualification, training experience, classroom management and discipline, instructional approaches to reading and the personality of the teacher and his or her attitude can influence learner outcomes (see 1.3.2). Therefore teachers in the foundation phase need to be well trained and able to attend continuous in-service training to keep updating their skills and knowledge concerning the assessment and teaching of reading. Caregivers need to ensure that they foster literacy activities at an early age of their

children. This can be done, for instance, by providing reading material suitable for learner's reading level at home. According to the literature (see 1.3.4) caregivers should be encouraged to read to their children, sing songs and say rhymes with them in the language they speak at home.

6.2.2 Conclusions from empirical study

6.2.2.1 Policy on language teaching

The issue that schools use different **policy documents** (see 5.2.1.1) for assessing isiZulu as a home language indicates that there is poor coordination between the Department of Education and schools. It also indicates insufficient workshops had been provided, and that essential factors had not been sufficiently discussed. The discrepancy regarding the correct policy document to be used for isiZulu as Home Language should have been identified and rectified to eliminate any confusion by the teachers.

The assessment standards for the home language were also not discussed in detail in the workshop, as this could have resulted in clearer guidelines for teachers concerning the most recent documents. The implementation of the policies in the practical day to day teaching practice, in the case of this study, the teaching of reading, is often lacking. There was also evidence of a lack of support by subject specialists to address the problem and to support foundation phase teachers sufficiently.

6.2.2.2 Teaching of reading

It was evident from the research that teachers still needed to acquire knowledge about the teaching approaches that are in line with outcomes-based education. The researcher observed that teachers still use traditional methods of teaching and assessing when teaching reading. There was little or no **integration of basic literacy skills**, namely reading, speaking, listening and writing.

There was little integration of **word recognition and comprehension**. Teachers tended to emphasise only phonics. They focused on teaching new consonants, for instance double

consonants and trigraphs. Teachers spent little time on developing the learners' comprehension and reading fluency. The use of reading for enjoyment, the use of authentic reading material and reading for information was lacking.

6.2.2.3 Assessment of reading

The empirical research brings the following key problem areas concerning the assessment of reading of isiZulu to light. Although teachers did include assessment standards in their planning, not all teachers used the prescribed assessment standards during their teaching effort.

- Teachers neither specified to their learners the assessment standards at the beginning of the lesson, nor made learners aware of the evidence they would be looking for at the end of the lesson.
- Teachers created their own assessment standards, for instance “I want to see whether you will be able to read words with triple consonants”, instead of using the prescribed assessment standards.
- Teachers mentioned assessment standards at the beginning of the lesson but did not stick to them as the lesson progressed.
- Too much time was spent on assessing phonic knowledge, with very little evidence of reading for meaning, enjoyment and knowledge.
 - The lack of asking open-ended questions that enhance critical thinking skills and comprehension.
 - Teachers still use only basic questioning and observation as main methods of assessment and there was very little evidence of the use of assessment methods associated with an outcomes-based approach, such as:
 - interpreting pictures to predict a story
 - a brief verbal summary of a written text
 - dramatisation of a written text

- Pre-selected readers were used and the books mainly contained narratives. The teachers did not apply different teaching to enhance meaning And to encourage learners to imitate different characters. The stories were also long and seemed uninteresting to learners. Learners did not get an opportunity to choose books that they liked because of a lack of or the unavailability of a variety of books in the classrooms. Reading for enjoyment and information were therefore not considered.

6.2.2.4 Lack of facilities

Schools did not have libraries and no classroom had a library corner. Learners need to learn to use a library as early as the foundation phase. There is a shortage of a variety of interesting isiZulu story books in schools. According to teachers, the Department distributes a catalogue with lists of books they are compelled to order from. This leads to a situation whereby teachers end up buying books they have not seen or do not like.

6.2.2.5 Essential support

It was evident from the research that there were teachers who still needed urgent support in how to assess reading in an outcomes-based approach. Teachers still used traditional methods to teach and assess reading. It also transpired that the few workshops they attended focused mainly on planning and recording, ignoring the important part, namely, guidance on practical classroom assessment and activities.

Teachers also could not succeed without the support of caregivers. Caregivers needed to involve themselves in their children's progress at school by supervising additional home activities concerning reading and providing reading opportunities at home. Caregivers should provide their children with reading material.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study discovered that some teachers had serious problems in assessing reading in an outcomes-based approach. There is an urgent need for intervention so that improvement can take place. The following can be recommended:

6.3.1 Policy on language teaching

- The department officials should ensure that schools use the same policy documents for assessing a home language. This may be done by organising workshops to discuss the policy document in detail.
- The Department of Education needs to consider distributing the policy document for isiZulu as a home language written in isiZulu, because the one written in English provides examples that are not applicable to isiZulu.

6.3.2 Teaching of reading

- Teachers should commit themselves to promoting reading ability to learners. They should acquire the appropriate methods to teach and assess reading in an outcomes-based approach.
- Teachers should integrate all basic literacy skills, namely reading, speaking, listening and writing.
- Teachers should integrate the two processes, namely word recognition and comprehension.
- All learners should get an opportunity to be assessed individually concerning their reading ability and progress.
- The school should include a whole school reading programme. This can be done by organising reading competitions within the school and encouraging learners to write their own stories and books.
- Learners should be given reading tasks to do in cooperative groups. The teacher must ensure that each learner has a role to play in the group.

6.3.3 Assessment of reading

- The Department of Education must see to it that more workshops in the assessment of reading in an outcomes-based approach are organised for the benefit of teachers who still experience difficulties in this area.

- The workshops should focus mainly on purposes, principles and methods of assessment. Most teachers seem to be doing well as far as the planning and recording of assessment are concerned. The problem is to put their plans into practice.
- Teachers need to know the importance and practical use of assessment standards to guide them during the teaching and assessment of reading.

6.3.4 Lack of facilities

- The Department of Education should assist schools that have a shortage of classrooms by building more classrooms. Effective teaching and learning cannot take place when two classes share one room.
- The Department of Education should build libraries in all schools. Most schools, especially the ones that belong to previously disadvantaged communities, have no or very limited library facilities.

6.3.5 Essential support

- Caregivers should be encouraged to provide reading material at home for their children, for example magazines, daily newspapers and other reading material. They should ensure that their children are also exposed to reading at home. Parents should also be informed about the importance of listening to their children reading at home and assisting them to visit public libraries.
- The Department of Education should provide schools that do not have libraries with books. Teachers should be given a chance to select the books that they need and feel they are suitable to motivate learners to read and not be compelled to buy books that have been pre-selected from publishers.
- The Department of Education should help to organise readathon competitions and reading programmes in schools.
- The subject specialist should supervise reading programmes in schools and assist teachers where there is a need, especially concerning the assessment of reading using a variety of suitable assessment methods.
- The Department of Education should organise a series of reading instruction and assessment workshops to assist teachers in the practical application of official policies.

- The Department of Education should keep a database of teachers who have attended a workshop on the outcomes-based approach. Attendance certificates must be given as proof of attendances to those who have attended so he or she can produce when applying or anytime when it is needed as proof that he or she attended workshops for outcomes-based education. The department should use well trained facilitators with in-depth theoretical and especially practical knowledge to train teachers during workshops.

6.4 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following are recommendations for future research:

The assessment standards for isiZulu need to be analysed and checked to determine whether they are appropriate or not, for the teaching of isiZulu. It should be determined whether the assessment standards for the foundation phase constitute all the necessary aspects that a learner should know at the level of the foundation phase. This information could be gathered from educators, subject specialists and other information-rich persons. The purpose should be to develop assessment standards that teachers will easily understand and that will assist learners to develop effective reading skills.

6.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

A comprehensive study of the analysis of assessment standards for home language for Grade 3 needs to be done. The purpose of this research would be to investigate whether the assessment standards for Grade 3 are suitable, at the level, easily understood and whether they embrace all the essential elements that a Grade 3 learner should know. Teachers in the foundation phase can contribute by giving their ideas on what they feel are the strengths and the weaknesses of the assessment standards that are used now. Teachers can suggest what can be added and what can be deleted.

The policy document for home language that was officially distributed to schools (written in English) needs to be investigated to see if it is easily transferable to isiZulu and whether the examples are applicable to isiZulu.

6.6 LIMITATIONS

The research was conducted in one district. The rurality, vastness and difficulty to access schools were the limiting factors. This resulted in a limited number of participants. The other limiting factor was that the researcher struggled to get recent books on teaching and the assessment of reading.

6.7 SUMMARY

This research focuses on how teachers assessed reading in an outcomes-based approach at the end of the foundation phase. Six teachers from six different schools were chosen as setting within which qualitative research was conducted. Findings indicated that some teachers still struggled with teaching and assessment of reading in the outcomes-based approach. They stated that they needed more support workshops on how to teach and assess reading in an outcomes-based approach. Most teachers seemed to be experiencing no problems regarding lesson planning and recording of assessment. Recommendations were made on the role which should be played by teachers, the Department of Education and caregivers to promote reading ability.

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