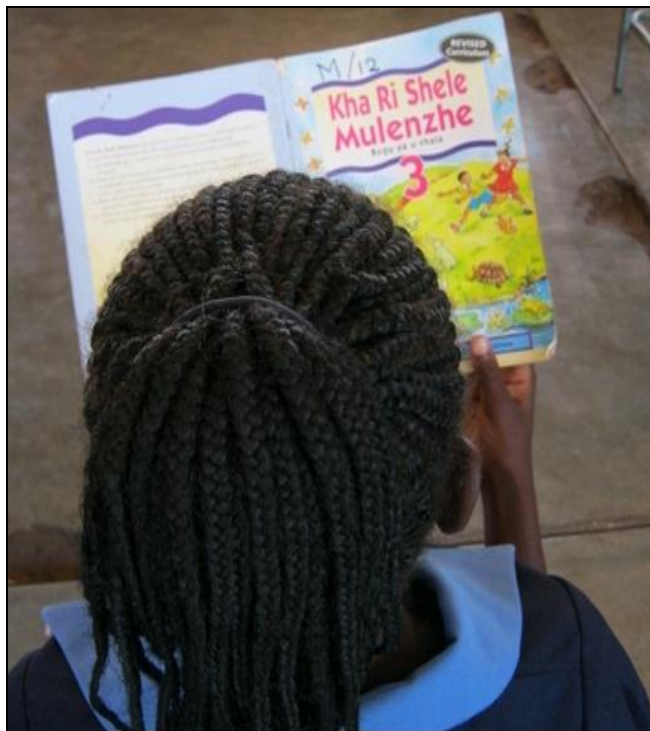


# TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION TO GRADE 3 TSHIVENDA-SPEAKING LEARNERS

NDILELENI PAULINAH MUDZIELWANA

2012





**TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION TO GRADE 3  
TSHIVENDA-SPEAKING LEARNERS**

*by*

**NDILELENI PAULINAH MUDZIELWANA**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

**PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR**

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2012  
PRETORIA



## CASE STUDY SCHOOLS



**SCHOOL A**



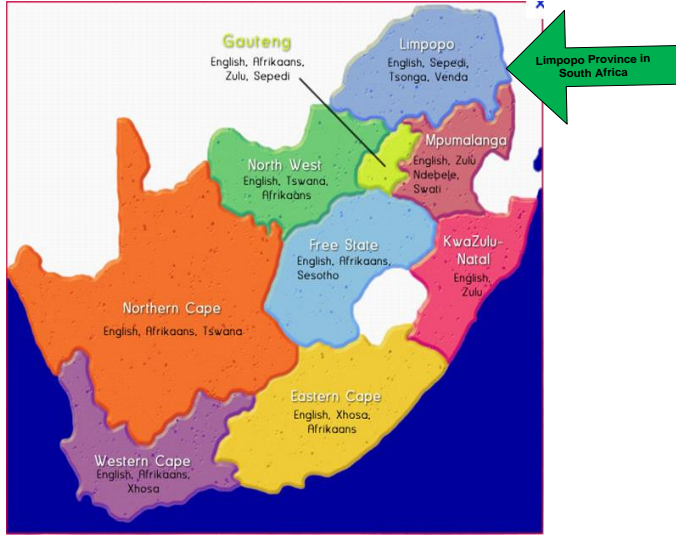
**SCHOOL B**



**SCHOOL C**



# MAP OF SOUTH AFRICA WITH LIMPOPO PROVINCE AS ONE OF THE PROVINCES



Map of Limpopo Province, with the Vhembe District in the North

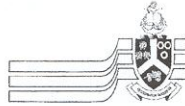


Vhembe District Map





## ETHICS CERTIFICATE



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**DEGREE AND PROJECT**

**INVESTIGATOR(S)**

**DEPARTMENT**

**DATE CONSIDERED**

**DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**CLEARANCE NUMBER :**

EM 10/06/02

PhD

Teaching of reading comprehension to Grade 3 Tshivenda-speaking learners

Ndileleni Paulinah Mudzielwana

Early Childhood Education

27 February 2012

APPROVED

Please note:

*For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years*

*For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.*

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS  
COMMITTEE**

Prof L Ebersohn

**DATE**

27 February 2012

**CC**

Jeannie Beukes  
JC Joubert

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to:

My husband and my children for the support and love they gave me during the arduous journey of putting this research project together. Without your invaluable tolerance and patience this work would not have been accomplished. Your support is greatly valued and appreciated.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere and deepest gratitude goes to all the people who proved to be indispensable in the selfless way they supported me throughout my studies. I am sincerely indebted to the following people for their advice and support during my journey on this road that at times seemed to be long and lonely. They are:

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My mother who taught me the value of education and the importance of working hard to achieve objectives in life. My dear husband Tshitereke Ronald Mudzielwana, for his tolerance and understanding of my absence from home when working on the project. My children, Mukhethwa, Mudzunga, Khathutshelo and their families for the understanding and support given to me in pursuit of this study.

I am also greatly indebted and thankful to the following people:

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- Serofo Elizabeth Vhengani
- Shonisani Agnes Mulovhedzi
- Professor Emmanuel Oseifuah
- The principals and teachers who participated in the study
- The education officials who gave me permission to access the schools
- My colleagues

Above all, I thank God, the Almighty, who sustained me throughout my studies. Praise be to HIM! Psalm 28:7.

The following poem by Antjie Krog (from her speech delivered at UWC Principals' Evening, April 2006) opens the research project by illustrating how reading is important in the lives of children.

### **A CHILD WHO READS**

There is not a single thing that one can teach a child  
that has such prevailing value as to teach a child to read.

No matter how poor  
a child who reads is a privileged child.

No matter how bad the education  
a child who reads is a well educated child.

No matter how neglected or abandoned  
a child who reads is a natured child.

No matter how degraded and deprived the surroundings  
a child who reads has a moral support.

No matter how lonely or rejected  
a child who reads has many friends.

No matter how intolerant a society  
a child who reads will be a child who understands.

No matter how mean and aggressive a neighbourhood  
a child who reads will be a generous child.

No matter how impoverished and destroyed the area  
a child who reads lives in luxury.

No matter how dangerous a neighbourhood  
a child who reads is in a safer place.

No matter how mentally challenged a family  
a child who reads will become an intelligent and informed child.




## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Ndileleni Paulinah Mudzielwana, declare that the thesis hereby submitted to the University of Pretoria for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

I understand that all rights with regard to intellectual property in the work vest in the University of Pretoria who has the right to produce, distribute and/or publish the work in any manner considered fit.

My supervisors and I agree that, subject to the authorisation of the university as owner of all intellectual property rights in the work, the approved version may be placed in the UPetd archive with the following status: *Release the entire work immediately for worldwide access.*



**NDILELENI PAULINAH MUDZIELWANA**

30 March 2012

## ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research was to explore how teachers teach reading comprehension to Grade 3 Tshivenda-speaking learners. The research was prompted by the low performance of reading amongst these Grade 3 learners in this area.

This study was a qualitative study. The paradigmatic position of the study was the interpretive paradigm. Data was collected through individual teachers' interviews, focus group interviews, classroom observations and content analysis. Interviews and focus group discussions were taped, transcribed, analysed, and data was categorised into themes. Three schools, each with two Grade 3 classes, were selected. Learners were involved because the main aim was to observe teachers teaching reading comprehension to them. This study did not attempt to measure learner performance, but investigated the teaching of reading comprehension to Grade 3 Tshivenda-speaking learners. The aim of this was to investigate how teachers teach reading comprehension in their classrooms.

The study developed a conceptual framework from the literature review, consisting of five phases. These phases were identified and developed as it became clear that, in order to teach reading comprehension effectively, various parties involved in schools need to be actively involved in the different phases when teaching reading comprehension education of learners. In addition, the learning and developmental theories consulted in this study were related to the conceptual framework. The research implies that reading comprehension can be taught and learnt, which further supports the development of the conceptual framework for this study.

The findings of the study revealed that the participating teachers had limited understanding of reading comprehension strategies. They regarded teaching comprehension as a challenge as they do not know what comprehension strategies are and how to apply them. Additionally, they are stressed, confused and frustrated, because learners cannot read and understand the text. Furthermore, responses showed that teachers are uncertain of how to teach reading comprehension.

Teachers spent little time on reading comprehension with learners, with no uniform approach amongst them on how to teach reading comprehension. Guided practice and time to practise comprehension strategies were absent in classrooms. The teachers also showed a lack of theoretical knowledge and practical experience about teaching comprehension strategies, which seems to result in teachers' developing a negative attitude towards their learners (who struggle to read). Interviews and classroom observations revealed that, although the participating teachers said they understood what reading comprehension was, there was no correlation between what they said and what they did in practice in their classrooms. The results measured against Zimmerman's (1998) applied social model of self-regulated learning, show that teachers lack the theoretical knowledge of teaching reading comprehension.

In addition, participants were not satisfied with the intervention strategies and policies provided by the Department of Education. They felt neglected because guidelines were only in English and not in African languages, like Tshivenda. As such, no guidelines to teachers written in Tshivenda with Tshivenda examples exist. Workshops had not been helpful to Tshivenda teachers either. The study also revealed a lack of learning support materials, no variety of reading materials for learners and, in some schools, no readers at all. Lastly, the study shows that these teachers do not have access to research literature on the teaching of reading comprehension and rely on their own experience.



## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

FP	Foundation Phase
GET	General Education and Training
HL	Home Language
FAL	First Additional Language
DoE	Department of Education
LDoE	Limpopo Department of Education
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
FFLC	Foundations for Learning Campaign
NRS	National Reading Strategy
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Progress Statement
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
C2005	Curriculum 2005
LO	Learning Outcomes
ASS	Assessment Standards
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
SASA	South African Schools Act
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
SACMEQ	South African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development



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