Teachers' understanding and experiences of the Gauteng primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics strategy

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**Teachers' understanding and experiences of the
Gauteng primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics strategy**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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PRETORIA

Dedication

I dedicate this study to my family:

my husband Logan Chetty

and my children Ruvishka and Prishni.

Your support, endless patience and sacrifices inspired me to stay

positive and motivated me throughout this arduous journey.

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DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITOR

Certificate

I herewith certify that I language edited the dissertation

How Teachers understand and experience the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy

submitted by Magesveri Somasoondram Chetty

Dr Bêrend Badenhorst

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

"I declare that this thesis which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis at the University of Pretoria is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution."

Magesveri Somasoondram Chetty

April 2015

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ABSTRACT

Post 1994 policies failed to positively influence teaching and learning in most South African schools. The poor performance of learners from township schools in national and international tests prompted the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) to take proactive steps to address the issue of chronic learner underperformance in literacy. Hence the Gauteng Primary Schools' Literacy and Mathematics Strategy was developed and introduced to 792 underperforming schools in the province. Teachers were then orientated and trained to teach literacy according to the requirements of the strategy (GPLMS). The GPLMS entailed providing teachers with continuous guidance and support from coaches. Schools received access to structured lesson plans, learning materials, regular support, Department of Basic Education workshops and a phonic plan.

This study set out to investigate how Grade 3 teachers in three selected underperforming schools understood and experienced the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS). The sub-questions that guided the study were:

- What are the policy, curriculum requirements and components of GPLMS?
- How are the perceptions and experiences of teachers in underperforming schools influenced by the implementation of literacy according to the requirements of GPLMS?
- What is the relationship between policy, curriculum provision and educational practices regarding GPLMS?

The investigation followed a qualitative case study research approach. The Concerns Based Adoption Model guided the investigation on how teachers understand and experience GPLMS. Data were collected through individual interviews, observation of literacy lessons and the Professional Learning Group (PLG) sessions. The results revealed that teachers were interested in the strategy from the onset. Teachers showed commitment, dedication and enthusiasm by actively participating in the well- planned in-service training including the PLG sessions. A close relationship was forged between teachers and coaches. The guidance and support by coaches and regular supply of resources enabled teachers and learners to benefit from the strategy. The teachers acquired knowledge and skills from in-service training and applied the new knowledge effectively in the classroom.

The competent use of GPLMS resources to teach literacy effectively improved teachers' attitudes, professional identity as well as learner performance in the Annual National

Assessment (ANA). The study concluded with recommendations promoting included the incorporation of coaches by the Department of Basic Education in order to provide teachers with valuable support, guidance and insight into the teaching of literacy.

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KEY WORDS

- Gauteng Primary Schools' Literacy and Mathematics Strategy
- Curriculum change
- Teacher
- Underperforming school
- Implement
- Experience

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ACRONYMS

GPLMS .... Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy

DoE .... Department of Education

DoBE .... Department of Basic Education

GDE .... Gauteng Department of Education

OBE .... Outcomes Based Education

RNCS .... Revised National Curriculum Strategy

NCS .... National Curriculum Statement

CAPS .... Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

FFLC .... Foundations for Learning Campaign

PIRLS .... Progress in International Reading Studies

ANA .... Annual National Assessment

SACMEQ .... Southern African Consortium for Monitoring

PLG .... Professional Learning Group

NRS .... National Reading Strategy

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CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

This study investigated teachers understanding and experiences of the Gauteng Primary Schools' Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS). In order to transform education and uplift the quality of teaching and learning the Department of Education (DoE) has embarked on a series of curricular changes since 1994 aimed at transforming education in South Africa. The first such intervention was Outcomes Based Education (OBE) through the medium of Curriculum 2005 (DoE, 1997). The OBE curriculum was based on achievement of outcomes, rather than content to "promote creative and critical future citizens who will be equipped with skills, knowledge, values and attitudes for future success" (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:15). Realities relating to poor policy implementation prompted a review and in 2002 OBE was replaced by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) which was not a new curriculum but a more streamlined and reinforced version of Curriculum 2005 (DoE, 2002 a). The RNCS was replaced by National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2006 which focused on what the learner should achieve at the end of each grade (DoE, 2007) and in 2012 the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was introduced in the Foundation Phase (DoBE, 2011). As a provincial response to poor performance in literacy among township learners in the province the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) introduced the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) 2010-2014 in order to raise literacy and Mathematics levels (DoBE, 2014). The focus in this study is only on the literacy component of the GDE's strategy (GPLMS).

The introduction of new policies reflected expectations that were challenging and demanding for teachers in South African schools (Howie, Venter, Van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Scherman & Archer, 2007). Research in the field conducted by (Guiltig, Hoadley & Jansen, 2002; Jansen, 1999; Potenza & Monyokolo, 1999; Mosia, 2011) confirms that teacher misunderstanding, confusion, uncertainty, insufficient instructional materials, lack of support and professional development impacted negatively on the implementation of new policies. Guiltig et al. (2002) conclude that while most experienced teachers in well-resourced former model C schools were able to reflect OBE principles and adapt their teaching their practice, teachers in poor under-resourced schools experienced challenges. This could be one of the

reasons why many years later learners in township schools were still unable to read and write (DoE, 2008c)

In the course of time the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has collected results on learners' literacy performance. Evidence from Systematic Evaluation (2005), Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) and Progress in International Reading Studies (PIRLS) reveal that learners in townships cannot read and write (DoE, 2011a, DoBE, 2014). The Annual National Assessment results for 2009 show that 8 out of 10 learners were functioning at below 50% in literacy tests while 2011 ANA results indicate that more than 95% of learners in township schools achieved less than 35% (Level 1) in the literacy tests (DoE, 2011).

Zimmerman (2011) cautions that if the reading difficulties in the country were not addressed, it would begin to endanger all educational reform and widen the gap between reading skills and demands of the curriculum. The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) in response to continuous underperformance of learners in township schools, has introduced the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) to 792 underperforming schools. The main purpose of GPLMS was to raise literacy levels in underperforming schools (DoBE, 2014). The main purpose of this study, therefore I investigated how teachers in underperforming schools experienced, understood and implemented the GPLMS.

1.2 RATIONALE

As the Head of Department at an underperforming school in Mamelodi I have witnessed teachers' frustration, uncertainty and confusion when implementing prescribed policies for the past fifteen years. Secondly this uncertainty, confusion and lack of understanding has resulted in learners achieving low scores in their tests (DoE, 2009) tests. Teachers at my school were demotivated and less enthusiastic about policy changes. This lack of enthusiasm exacerbated over the years as the initial Outcomes Based Education (OBE), Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and National Curriculum Statement (NCS) workshops organised by educational authorities did not facilitate the implementation of skills and knowledge proposed by the prescribed curriculum. Literacy levels at the school remained low. Hence, the school has been identified as underperforming.

Research by Clasquin-Johnson (2011) Jansen & Christie (1998) and Mosia, (2011) reveals that teachers' response to the curriculum implementation was influenced by various factors such as inadequate training, absence of supervision, lack of a support strategy, learning materials and basic equipment. Mosia (2011) suggests that the implementation of OBE was not effective as teachers were not trained to implement learning techniques. She further reveals that teachers

were frustrated, confused, and uncertain about the interpretation and implementation of the curriculum. Therefore, teachers resisted change as they perceived it as confusing and difficult to understand. A series of short workshops planned for teachers also failed to motivate teachers and address their concerns (Motseke, 2005).

Mugweni (2012) maintains in her study of curriculum implementation in Zimbabwe found that teachers become disillusioned if they do not receive support when implementing the new curriculum. The problems that teachers experience with curriculum implementation could be the reason why South African learners continue to underperform in local as well as international assessments. The above-mentioned problems that teachers experienced with change in curriculum have led to the ineffective implementation of policies resulting in low achievement in the Annual National Assessment (DoE, 2009).

As mentioned earlier, in order to improve literacy levels in underperforming schools the Gauteng Department of Education has developed the GPLMS which was a new strategy to supplement the National Curriculum Statement and required teachers in the Foundation Phase in the identified underperforming schools to adapt and change to the requirements of the new curriculum. Teachers received continuous training, support, mentoring and materials to implement the GPLMS. In the light of the above- mentioned problems that teachers experienced in the past with regard to curriculum change and implementation, it was interesting to investigate how teachers in identified underperforming schools understood and experienced the GPLMS in classrooms.

This study provides a scientific report on teachers' experiences and implementation of the GPLMS to the National Department of Education, the Gauteng Department of Education, school heads, heads of department and teachers in the Foundation Phase. The results provided evidence of the effectiveness of the GPLMS in uplifting literacy results.

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

The introduction and implementation of OBE was met with opposition and challenges (Jansen, 1999). Teachers found making the shift to OBE extremely challenging as they lacked support, knowledge and skills to plan, teach and assess effectively (Vandeyar, 2005). Confusion and a lack of curriculum understanding by teachers continued to impact negatively on learner performance over the years especially in township schools. Mugweni (2012) believes that teachers' attitudes towards curriculum change played a fundamental role in understanding reforms as these affected teachers' behaviour in class. Teachers' understanding of policy reforms and innovative programmes were critical in determining their classroom practices.

This study investigated whether teachers' experiences and understanding to the implementation of the new GPLMS are the same as revealed in the researched literature referred to as above.

1.3.1 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do teachers understand and experience the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS)?

1.3.2 SUB-QUESTIONS

- What are the policy, curriculum requirements and components of GPMLS?

- How are the perceptions and experiences of teachers in underperforming schools influenced by the implementation of Literacy according to the requirements of GPLMS?

- What is the relationship between policy, curriculum provisions and educational practices regarding GPLMS?

1.4 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

1.4.1 BACKGROUND TO GPLMS

The DoE introduced several initiatives in the past years to address the problems relating to quality (Meier, 2011). The first initiative was the Foundations for Learning Campaign (FFLC) aimed at increasing learner achievement in literacy. Research conducted (Meier, 2011) on the practical implementation of FFLC highlighted an implementation reality in the country where well-resourced schools with relatively small classes, with well- trained and experienced teachers are able to successfully implement FFLC, while under-resourced schools with large classes and less experienced teachers still had learners struggling with literacy as revealed by the 2009 ANA results. The National Reading Strategy was the second initiative introduced to improve the teaching of reading but the DoE discovered teacher competency as one of the greatest challenges in implementing the National Reading Strategy (DoE, 2008b). The DoE claimed that teachers in South Africa had an underdeveloped understanding of teaching literacy, especially reading and writing (DoE, 2008b). For this reason the GDE initiated and introduced the GPLMS to provide a supportive approach to teachers and to ensure that all learners in underperforming schools are exposed to high quality resources and teaching instruction thus making it possible for learners to read and write (DoBE, 2014).

1.4.2   THE PURPOSE OF THE GPLMS

Learners' repeated underachievement in literacy shows that current policies have not been effectively and fully implemented (DoBE, 2014). To improve the implementation of policies the GDE introduced the Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy 2010-2014 (DoBE, 2014) The introduction of GPLMS aims to improve literacy teaching in the 792 identified underperforming schools and to ensure that 60% of the learners in the province perform at 50% and above.

1.4.3   OBJECTIVES OF THE GPLMS

The fundamental objective of the GPLMS is to improve literacy. In order to achieve these objectives the GPLMS will focus on four main areas, namely improving the:

- literacy teaching;

- use of literacy tests to improve ANA results;

- support in literacy both in and out of classroom;

- parent support programmes;

- management and control of literacy teaching.

1.4.4   IMPLEMENTATION OF GPLMS

The Gauteng Primary School Literacy and Mathematics Strategy emphasises "decoding", "comprehension" and phonic activities to ensure effective implementation All 792 schools are provided with:

- daily/weekly lesson plans;

- a reading programme together with high quality reading materials;

- a comprehension and language programme;

- a language and homework reading programme;

- GPLMS workbooks and Department of Basic Education workbooks that need to be used three times a week;

- a reading for enjoyment programme;

- a regular mentoring and monitoring strategy by school management teams to ensure that the educator is supported in his/her efforts to raise literacy levels,

- district officials who will visit the school once a term and check that educators are following the core programme for coverage, sequence and scope regarding literacy teaching and learning;

- a report from the district official once a term;

- a GPLMS coach who will conduct quarterly training with teachers in clusters (DoBE, 2014:6).

1.4.5   TEACHERS' RESPONSE TO CURRICULUM CHANGE

Mosia (2011) and Mugweni (2012) assert that one of the main reasons for ineffective teacher understanding of the curriculum can be ascribed to the lack of resources, in-service training and support. Teachers find it difficult to cope with change if they do not understand the process of change (Rogan, 2004). Existing research (Clasquin-Johnson, 2011; Mosia, 2011; Mugweni, 2012; Wood & Olivier, 2007) reveals that teachers respond to change in the following ways: resisting, ignoring, adapting or adopting. Teachers ignore change when there is inadequate resources and professional development (Clasquin-Johnson, 2011).

Mosia (2011) reports that if teachers viewed curriculum change as a top-down hierarchy their immediate reaction would be to reject the change and continue as before and this usually happened when policy makers failed to communicate the values of the policy and need for change. According to Kennedy (2005) teachers perceive change differently. While some passively resist change, others aggressively undermine the required change. Resistance is a negative reaction and surfaces when teachers feel that their personal freedom is threatened. Mosia (2011) suggests that the DoE should be responsive to teacher needs and clarify expectations by explaining purpose and vision of the new curriculum.

With the implementation of GPLMS, the GDE emphasises regular teacher support and mentoring of implementation. This study interestingly reveals how the supportive approach to the implementation of GPLMS impacted on the teachers' experiences and responses to the implementation of the strategies for teaching and learning literacy in the Foundation Phase.

1.4.6   PREVIOUS FINDINGS ON LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICAN LEARNERS

Studies conducted in South Africa on primary school reading (Lessing & Mahabeer, 2007; Manyike & Lemmer, 2008; Matjila & Pretorius, 2004; Pretorius & Machet, 2004) confirm that learners have underdeveloped reading skills. The studies mentioned above focus attention on literacy development among learners in townships schools with English as Second Language (ESL). The findings express a concern for solutions to problems with reading development. Studies by Scheepers (2008) and Manyike and Lemmer (2008) confirm that learners displayed

poor reading skills both in English as second language and home language. Lessing and Mahabeer's (2007) study investigated barriers that hindered Zulu speaking learners from acquiring reading and writing skills. Teachers who participated in the study identified disadvantaged backgrounds, lack of understanding of the English language structure, inadequate knowledge of phonetic skills, fear of responding to tasks and a lack of parental involvement as barriers contributing to learners' inability to read and write in English.

Matjila and Pretorius's (2004) posit that Grade 8 learners in disadvantaged schools enter high school with poor reading skills in their home language and in English. Their study supports claims that inadequate attention is given to the promotion of reading in primary schools. However an out -of -school literacy enrichment programme conducted by Pretorius and Machet (2004) with Grade 1 learners shows remarkable gains in reading. This study reinforces claims by Taylor (2008) that effective reading instruction can impact positively on classroom practice.

1.5   DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following definitions of key terms used in this proposal are relevant to this study. Outside the context of the study, the terms may take of a completely different meaning.

1.5.1   GAUTENG PRIMARY SCHOOL LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS STRATEGY

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2011) the Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy is a strategic literacy plan for underperforming primary schools in Gauteng introduced by the provincial government as an initiative to ensure that all primary school learners in Gauteng can read and write. The goals, targets and features of GPLMS (2010-2014) include testing for all learners in Grade 3, clear policy guidelines, provision of textbooks, learner workbooks, readers and teacher guides. The main aim of the GPLMS is to raise the literacy levels among learners in township schools.

1.5.2   TEACHER

The word "teacher" is a noun that means "instructor, tutor, coach, professor, lecturer, mentor educator and a pedagogue" (Collins Contemporary Dictionary, 2005). Fraser, Loubser and Van Rooy (1990) define a teacher as someone who is responsible for inducting a learner into adulthood and an expert to the novice he is leading. A teacher is trained in the art of teaching within the school context. For the purpose of this study, a Grade 3 teacher is an educator who is responsible for teaching (tutoring, coaching) learners to read and write fluently using the GPLS methodology.

1.5.3   EXPERIENCE

Simpson and Weiner (1989) define experience as a general concept that comprises knowledge of, or skill in, or observation of something or an event gained through involvement in or exposure to that thing or event. For the purpose of this study' the term experience means the knowledge gained and refers to personal encounters of Grade 3 teachers after exposure to GPLMS.

1.5.4   IMPLEMENT

To" implement" means to make that which has been officially decided upon happen, to carry through, apply, perform, realise, fulfil, and execute (Collins Contemporary Dictionary, 2005). In this study implement means applying the Gauteng Primary School Literacy and Mathematics Strategy into effect in primary schools in order to uplift literacy teaching in the classroom.

1.6   THEORICTICAL FRAMEWORK

The Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) was selected to guide the empirical inquiry since it provides explicit explanations of the empirical phenomenon (curriculum implementation), its scope and how the phenomenon will be analysed. This theoretical framework guided the process of finding how teachers understand and implement the curriculum according to the GPLMS.

The Concerns Based Adoption Model is a theory commonly used when studying the process of implementing educational change and curriculum implementation by teachers (Anderson, 1997; Hall & Hord, 2001; Sweeny, 2008). The aim of the theory is to discuss, measure and explain levels of implementation experienced by teachers when implementing new instructional practices (Anderson, 1997; Bellah & Dyer, 2007; Sweeny, 2003). The Concerns Based Adoption model states that when teachers embrace change they usually ask questions of concern (Hall & Hord, 2001; Loucks-Horsley, 1996). The CBAM identifies teachers and heads of schools as change facilitators with regard to the ultimate success or failure of curriculum implementation (Hall & Hord, 1987:11). In this study, the CBAM helped to establish teachers' understanding, experiences, responses to and implementation of GPLMS. A more detailed description of the theoretical framework is stated in Chapter 2.

17   METHODOLOGY

1.7.1   RESEARCH APPROACH

The intention of the qualitative research is to "explore and understand the complex meaning individuals attribute to a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2009:14) Since the concept of "emergent design" allows for deviation from the "initial plan" for research, this study is positioned in the qualitative research paradigm, specifically within schools in order to gain insight into teachers' experiences to the implementation of the concomitant literacy strategies (Creswell, 2009:175). While choosing to proceed from an interpretivist paradigm I intend to arrive at interpretations from what I see, hear and understand. Universal laws are not deemed the only influential factors to impact human behaviour, because individuals choose to be creative and deliberate in their actions when ascribing meaning to their activities (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Creswell, 2009). I have realised that situations in schools are neither static nor fixed, but rather fluid and constantly changing which reveals the crucial influence of the immediate context on teacher behaviour (Cohen et al., 2000).

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007) qualitative research concerns the manner in which research participants interact cognitively within the social environment and in terms of the themes in question. This process facilitates the gathering of pertinent information while talking to participants, observing their behaviour and actions within the context. The approach allowed me to interact with and interpret the new situation that teachers find themselves in when implementing Literacy according to the Gauteng Primary School Literacy and Mathematics Strategy. I therefore investigated the problem within the naturalistic context of the school seeking to determine meaning to the complex views expressed by participants (Creswell, 2007:36). The interpretative qualitative approach helped me to allow participants to be heard and not silenced, distorted, disengaged or marginalised to enable me to grasp the views of participants regarding the topic under study (McMillan, 2006:29; Creswell, 2007:212; Nieuwenhuis, 2007:51).

The qualitative research approach provided me with a more lucid insight and an opportunity into understanding multiple and varied meanings, experiences and perceptions of teachers, heads of department and coaches regarding their understanding and experiences of GPLMS (Creswell, 2009). I relied on the participants' viewpoints on the topic under study. Various empirical data were collected from multiple data sources, which entailed a thorough examination of documents, observing behaviour and holding discussions as this allowed participants to construct meaning of the implementation of Literacy according to the GPLMS.

The use of open ended questions enabled me to listen carefully to the views of participants on their perceptions GPLMS (Creswell, 2009). The interpretivist paradigm allowed me to negotiate these subjective meanings socially through interaction with participants (Creswell 2009:8). The "thick descriptions" offered by teachers were of immense value in this study as new insights were revealed with regard to the topic of discussion (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005:22).

My task according to a qualitative research approach was to gather volumes of information while acknowledging patterns, trends and themes in the manner in which teachers implement GPLMS (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Throughout the entire process my focus revolved around establishing recurring themes and identifying challenges experienced by teachers when implementing the GPLMS (Creswell, 2009).

1.7.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

Creswell (2009) states that the purpose of a research design is to plan the intended research which involves the highlighting a philosophy, identifying strategies of inquiry and determining appropriate methods to pursue. Informed by the interpretivist paradigm I considered a qualitative case study design as an appropriate approach for the study. A case study provided an opportunity to interact with "real people in real situations" (Creswell, 2009:24). The study investigated the case of three underperforming primary schools in Mamelodi, Pretoria, South Africa. I conducted an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon (teaching literacy) within its real contexts bounded by time and activity, using a variety of data collection strategies (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2003). A multiple case study design (three schools in Mamelodi) has been chosen because a case study embodies the opportunity to probe situations in ways that a numerical analysis fails to do (Cohen et. al., 2000). This design complemented my study, because I aimed to address the phenomenon, viz: Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of and response to the implementation Literacy according to the GPLMS in the Foundation Phase at underperforming schools.

The multiple case study design afforded me the opportunity to gather rich, clear and detailed descriptions from participants on the topic under study. The case studies afforded me the opportunity to gather a chronological narrative of the process being studied. I therefore included quotations from participants, anecdotes and personal experiences of teachers to illuminate the complexity of the variables present in the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2009; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

The case study allowed me as a researcher to become involved in the case so that I could investigate in detail, through in-depth analysis, how Grade 3 teachers in underperforming schools responded to and implemented Literacy according to the requirements of GPLMS.

1.8 TYPES OF DATA TO BE COLLECTED

The aim of this study was to investigate and establish how Grade 3 teachers understand, respond to and implement Literacy according GPLMS in Mamelodi. The types of data collected include teachers' understanding of GPLMS, their experiences using prescribed lesson plans and assessment tasks that are made available to them as well as their coping mechanisms when implementing the GPLMS.

1.8.1 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Data were collected from Grade 3 teachers who were implementing GPLMS (Literacy) in order to raise the literacy levels in their schools. Triangulation of methods was employed to ensure reliability and validity (Creswell, 2007). Cohen et al. (2000:112) deem triangulation as a powerful way of demonstrating present validity in qualitative research as the method involved are seen to "complement each other in a unified research design". The components of this approach included in-depth semi structured interviews, observation, document examination and a research journal. The journal was used to record my observation and informal discussions on lived experiences in the field.

1.8.2 IN-DEPTH, SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

In-depth, semi-structured interviews afforded me the opportunity to engage in face- to- face interaction with participants in order to observe both verbal and non-verbal behaviour and to be able to motivate participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:269). I conducted face- to- face interviews with three grade three teachers and three heads of departments (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:269). Rich and meaningful data were gathered using an interview schedule with questions and semi-structured open ended questions to elicit the participants' views and opinions (Creswell, 2007:130; Creswell, 2009:181).

1.8.3 RESEARCH JOURNAL

While undertaking the study I maintained a research journal to record all personal observation, informal discussions with the Grade 3 teachers, heads of department, principals and coaches. The discussions and recordings were involved in an endeavour to add value to the study. The field notes helped in making inferences as all the relevant information could not be obtained during interviews. The field notes were used to supplement the participants' perspectives, in

order to achieve a detailed description of the data, since the aim with notes was to add the finer nuances not picked up during interviews. Regular reviewing of field notes helped in directing the study, providing the necessary links to fill in the gaps (Schwant, 2007).

1.8.4 OBSERVATIONS

A unique feature of observations as a research process is that it gives a researcher the opportunity to gather "live data from naturally occurring social situations" (Cohen, 2000:456). Observation were used to strengthen the interviews as some teachers are not free to talk about certain issues during the interview. According to Robson (2002) what people do may slightly differ from what they say therefore observation provide confirmation to what has been said. I used non-participant classroom observations to enhance my understanding of teachers' experiences using GPLMS and its implications on learning. An observation schedule was designed and used a form of guidance to establish whether teachers were following the prescribed lesson/phonic plans and resources provided by the GDE. I observed the Professional Support Group (PLG) sessions conducted by the coaches. The PLG sessions were initiated to support teachers to implement the GPLMS. The coaches conducted the PLG sessions.

1.8.5 POLICY DOCUMENTS

The GPLMS 2010-2104 document by the Gauteng Department of Education, circulars and memoranda on the implementation of GPLMS, GPLMS resources and the Department of Educations' Workbooks have been reviewed as criteria establish whether the GPLMS policy guidelines regarding the implementation of Literacy in Gr 3 were followed in the classroom.

1.9 POPULATION AND SAMPLING STRATEGIES

1.9.1 PURPOSEFUL SAMPLING

The sample was drawn from a population of Grade 3 teachers in Mamelodi who implemented GPLMS. Cohen et al (2000) maintain that purposeful sampling is recommended when researchers conduct research with a specific purpose in mind. Purposeful sampling was used because primary school teachers and heads of department participating in this study have been deliberately chosen (Creswell, 2007:125). The cases selected for the in-depth study of the phenomenon are regarded as "information rich informants" because of the knowledge and information they possess (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:401). Purposeful sampling is done to improve the value of information obtained from a small sample. In this study, the sample was drawn from the population of Grade 3 teachers and heads of departments implementing GPLMS.

1.9.2   SAMPLE SIZE

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:401) propose to follow a guiding principle be followed when selecting the size of the sample. The purpose of the study, research problem, data collection strategies and availability of informants should guide the researcher. To address my research question three Grade 3 teachers and three heads of department from the three schools were selected.

1.10   THE RESEARCHERS' ROLE

As a researcher following the qualitative perspective, I followed the guidelines of Creswell, (2007:39).

1.   Participants were informed that my role was both of an observer and interviewer as I was seeking to assume a better understanding of the topic under discussion. I availed myself to establish a close relationship between my participants and myself yet there was a need for me to be impartial;

2.   It was important that I focused on participants' conceptions, perceptions, meanings and subjective opinions of the GPLMS;

3.   As a researcher, I collected data using semi-structured interviews, observations, documents, a research journal (field notes), and organised all data collected according to themes and categories to make meaning of the data. The idea was to develop a complex depiction of the investigation showing multiple and complex perspectives and issues that emerged from the inquiry;

4.   I also focused on ensuring that participants' answers were consistently representative of their experiences.

5.   I made sure that participants were comfortable and trusted in me. I also ensured that they understood that they could withdraw at any time and the principle of confidentiality was maintained.

1.11   DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the last inductive process of organising, narrowing, accounting for and interpreting data from participants' viewpoints (Cohen et al., 2000:103; Sarantakos, 2000:210). Data collection, recording and analysis were approached as an interrelated, simultaneous process that is on-going (Creswell, 2007:150). As suggested by McMillan & Schumacher, (2001) qualitative data analysis necessitates organising the data into categories, identifying relationships and emerging patterns among the categories. Therefore, I organised and prepared data for analysis by transcribing all interviews, typing field notes, assigning codes to

transcribed interviews to assist in identifying prominent themes that emerged from the data in order to conduct final analysis and to discuss interpretations (Creswell, 2009).

1.12 ADDRESSING CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Golafshani (2003:360) the hallmark of any qualitative study lies in its quality while validity is referred to as trustworthiness in qualitative research and may be "addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the objectivity of the researcher". The following strategies suggested by (Creswell, 2009:191) were used to establish trustworthiness in this study

1.12.1 TRIANGULATION

Multiple methods of data collection have been used namely interviews, observation, document analysis and field notes "to build a coherent justification for themes" and add to the trustworthiness of the study (Creswell, 2009:191).

1.12.2 MEMBER CHECKING

Member checking was used to establish accuracy of findings. Final reports were given to participants to review and to comment on the findings and accuracy of my recording. There was no need for follow- up interviews.

1.12.3 USE OF RICH THICK DESCRIPTIONS

I used "rich thick descriptions" to highlight the findings (Creswell, 2009:175). The descriptions provided perspicacity with regard to the interpretation of the themes that added to the realism and credibility of results.

1.12.4 PROLONGED ENGAGEMENT

By spending prolonged time in the field I have been be able to gain an intense understanding of the phenomenon. I attended the Professional Learning Group sessions from June to October 2013. The Professional Learning Group sessions were in-service training workshops on the implementation of GPLMS. I had to spend more time to attend these workshops to have a better understanding of how teachers were trained and understand the implementation of Literacy according to the requirements of GPLMS. During this period, I observed teachers' interaction with the coaches.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Researchers need to protect their research participants at all times to build a trusting relationship with them, promote the integrity of the research, guard against misconduct that might reflect on their institutions and be able to cope with any new challenges that may arise (Creswell, 2009). In keeping with these guidelines and rendering the study ethically sound I applied for ethical clearance from the ethics committee at the University of Pretoria after successfully defending the research proposal. The ethics committee granted permission to conduct the research in April 2013. The following aspects were covered in the application.

1.13.1 INFORMED CONSENT

Before the commencement of data collection I obtained permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct this study at schools. Once approved, I contacted the schools and made appointments with participants. I obtained consent from participants and explained the purpose of the study, informed them that their participation was voluntary and assured them that they could withdraw from the study at any time (Clasquin-Johnson, 2011).

1.13.2 ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All participants in the study were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Throughout the study participants' concerns, confidentiality and anonymity were taken into consideration (Mugweni, 2012).

1.13.3 DECEPTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

I have informed the participants that their privacy would be protected at all times.

1.14 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

An outline of the chapters from the research report is provided below.

CHAPTER 1:

Background and orientation

The chapter gives a background and orientation of the study by defining the key constructs followed by the aim and statement of the problem. The main research question and the theoretical framework are mentioned. A preliminary review of literature is stated. I indicated the research methods, design and data collection strategies implemented.

CHAPTER 2:

Literature study and theoretical Framework

In this chapter the literature reviewed commenced with the history of township schools to contextualise the study. The introduction of the new policies and the various interventions to improved reading standards are discussed. Literature review also included teachers' response to curriculum change and the factors that influence teachers' response to curriculum change. The theoretical framework, the Concerns Based Adoption Model that offers an organised plan and an analytical tool to fathom what promotes teachers understanding and implementation of GPLMS is discussed.

CHAPTER 3:

Research Methodology and Research Design

The research approach, methods and design are captured in this chapter. The data collection strategies, analysis and interpretation are discussed. The ethical considerations that informed the study are clarified.

CHAPTER 4:

Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this chapter the results from the empirical findings are compared with policy provision and educational practices of teachers implementing the GPLMS.

CHAPTER 5:

Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations

I presented and discussed the findings of the study in relation to the key research questions. Recommendations for the provincial department of education, district offices, schools with reference to the GPLMS programme and implementation are presented. Recommendations and possible areas for further research are suggested.

1.15   CONCLUSION

The chapter is consolidated with an overview of the study regarding implementation of GPLMS in selected underperforming schools. The various constructs used are outlined. The background to the study, aim of the research, data analysis, clarification of concepts and primary research questions were formulated. Conclusions reached are shared.

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CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   INTRODUCTION

2.1.1   THE BENEFITS OF A CURRICULUM

A clearly designed curriculum with well-planned learning experiences has the potential to unlock learners' potential. Learners are guided to adulthood and during this process they become good citizens with the ability to think critically and independently (Carl, 2009). The Department of Education has launched several interventions to ensure that these aims become a reality for the future generation.

The post-apartheid governments' vision for a democratic state was to eradicate all forms of inequality, divisions and separateness enforced by the apartheid ideology. With the key areas entrusted in education to enforce non-racial, non-discriminatory, and equal quality of education for all, the Department of Education (DoE) suggested a wide-range of imperatives to transform education (DoE, 1996). Harley and Wedekind's (2004) suggests that as apartheid policies caused divisions among the different races and allowed different groups to either occupy dominant or subordinate positions in social, political and economic life. The new vision embraced uniting all citizens as equals. Empowered with an array of new reforms, curriculum policies, teacher education programmes, the DoE felt assured in its efforts to achieve the goals of quality education for all.

 Currently with two decades of democratic schooling learners continue to lag behind in international assessments and the government's failure to raise the performance of learners in historically disadvantaged schools has become a cause of great concern. This cycle of continuous underperformance can be traced back to the years of apartheid schooling that advocated inequalities, separateness and underdevelopment in South African township schools (Adhikari, 1993).

The review of literature in this chapter explores past policies specifically the history of township schools under apartheid. The new curriculum which includes Curriculum 2005 (C2005), Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) as new policies are reviewed. The chapter also includes reading strategies that were introduced to uplift reading

levels such as the Foundations for Learning Campaign (FFLC), National Reading Strategy (NRS), Teaching Reading in the Early Grades, and the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS). The Annual National Assessment was introduced to establish an objective national benchmark (DoE, 2009). The content displays past and present policies that influenced learner achievement in historically disadvantaged schools and teachers' response to curriculum change is further discussed to contextualise the study. This study aims to explore teachers' understanding and experiences of the GPLMS. Therefore, apartheid and post-apartheid education policies will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 HISTORY OF TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

Adhikari (1993) asserts that in the nineteenth century, most black people lived in rural areas. The discovery of minerals, diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1886 led to an influx of African races into the mining areas, ports and stations as labourers and the need for housing increased (Adhikari, 1993). People began to live in squatter camps and shanty towns close to where they worked (Maasdorp & Humphreys, 1975). In 1913 the Native Land Act was passed to control the influx of labourers and further prohibited Africans from owning land in any part of South Africa other than a small area allocated for their use (Maylam, 1986). These areas later became known as black townships, characterised by "overcrowding, poor infrastructure, lack of facilities and high crime rate" (Thompson, 1990:163). Inadequate funding, overcrowding, undertrained, underpaid, overworked teachers and a lack of materials depicted education for Africans (Blacks) (Adhikari, 1993). The lack of funding and the neglect of townships over the years led to huge backlogs in infrastructure development. As a result these communities did not thrive and remained economically underdeveloped. These problems continued to exist in townships (Bipath, 2005). The provision of education in township schools proceeded according to the dictates of Bantu Education Act of 1953, strictly enforcing the prescribed discriminatory and racially divided policies (Kallaway, 1984). The inferior quality of education implemented in black African schools was a deliberate attempt to limit their potential so they formed part of the unskilled labour force and continued to occupy inferior positions in society (Kallaway, 1984). Quality education enforced in schools for Whites prepared them to occupy dominant positions in society (Lemmer & Badenhorst, 1997).

A centralised curriculum that comprised nineteen education departments with glaring inequalities continued to undermine education for Africans (Kallaway, 1984). Allocations to schools were granted on the basis of race. The minority groups of Whites received the highest funding for schooling while, the majority of blacks Africans the least. The unequal funding created astounding disparities in the learning environment. Township schools operated without libraries, sports fields and curriculum support (NEIP, 1993:27). Township schools were further

disadvantaged as most teachers were under or unqualified, while more than 98% of white teachers completed matric and were in possession of three years of post-matric training but only 26% Department of Education and Training (DET) and 22% of homeland teachers fell into this category which further strained teaching quality (Kallaway, 1984). Homelands were established during apartheid for blacks to prevent them from living in urban areas. Ten homelands were created for the different ethnic groups (Kallaway, 1984). Bipath (2005) further adds that unequal and unfair distribution of resources may have been one of the reasons for poor school attainment. Nxumalo's (1993) study with a group of teachers in Kwa-Mashu, north of Durban revealed that teachers were dissatisfied with the system of Bantu Education and they believed that the core of all problems facing schools today was the direct result of an oppressive education system.

Township residents were dissatisfied with the inequalities of Bantu Education and participated in boycotts, strikes, and stay-aways to vent their frustrations. These frequent disruptions in township schools resulted in the production of a school environment that was not conducive to teaching and learning (Dekker & Van Schalkwyk, 1995). Schools experienced teacher as well as learner absenteeism, unrests, violence and destruction of school facilities. The learners developed un-academic attitudes towards teaching and learning as learners' performance was not a priority during this period. During this point in time most students lost their dedication and enthusiasm to learn (Dekker & Van Schalkwyk, 1995). The new constitution of South Africa clearly articulated rules and obligations to instil a culture of teaching and learning. Given the nature of the apartheid legacy such a task became too demanding and unrealistic (Bipath, 2005).

2.3   POST APARTHEID SCHOOLING

The striking disparities of apartheid schooling were passed onto the post-apartheid schooling that reflected two types of schools within the education system. Taylors' (2006) study refers to the two types of schools in South Africa as either "dysfunctional", or "functional". The first school represents a dysfunctional state of schooling where at least 80% of the learners fail, however, the majority of dysfunctional schools are situated in townships. The learners struggle to read in the first additional language (English). The vast majority of children who attended schools in townships did not acquire a basic level of mastery in reading and writing (Fleisch, 2008). Van der Berg's (2008) findings further reflect that education quality in historically black schools failed to improve since the political transition, while Bergman, Bergman and Gravett (2011) cite learner performance as an important indicator of school quality. Dysfunctional schools in South Africa are the result of the breakdown of teaching and learning combined with material deprivation, poverty and disruption of communities (Christie, 1998). The second type

of schools identified is the functional schools. Townsend (1994) defined functional schools as schools of excellence. There is strong leadership and management in these schools. Learners excel in curricular co-curricular and community activities. These schools are well resourced and seen to produce large percentage of learners who qualify with university exemption (Goyocohea, 1998).

School context plays a formidable role and many schools located in disadvantaged communities inherited a legacy of dysfunction and this dysfunction continued despite governments' attempts to rebuild a culture of teaching and learning (Weeks, 2008). This dysfunction further inhibits learning and the building of strong classroom communities. In a report by The National Educational Infrastructure Management Systems (NEIMS, 2011) poor infrastructure was identified in township and rural schools. Out of 24 793 ordinary public schools 3,544 schools still without electricity, 804 schools have unreliable electricity, 2,444 were without water supply, 11,450 used pit latrine toilets, only 21% had libraries 10% were with a computing system and 2 703 schools did not have any fencing. Most of the inequalities created during apartheid continue to exist in schools to date. In 2010 the DoE (2009) reported that 1,209 schools had an average size of over 60 learners in class.

Potenza and Monyokolo (1999) rated historically disadvantaged schools as dysfunctional, failing schools while Christie (1998) identifies four categories of dysfunctional schools. They are schools with:

- Poor physical and social facilities;
- Organisational problems;
- Poor school/community relations;
- A poor relationship between school and the education department.

Similar categories of dysfunctions also emerged in Bergman, Bergman and Gravett's (2011) study of dysfunctional schools in Gauteng. Most of the dysfunctional schools operated with dysfunctional rules where teachers for example fabricated learner's marks. There was chronic unpunctuality and absenteeism of learners and teachers. Dysfunctions were found in teacher incompetence which included teachers' inability to teach a subject was evident. Teachers were also unable to maintain discipline and cope with the teaching load. Resource dysfunction was intensified by a lack of qualified staff, deficient facilities and infrastructures. Extrinsic dysfunctions that manifested outside the school entered directly or indirectly and further inhibited teaching.

"Underperforming" schools in this study refer to schools that have underperformed in the Annual National Assessment and are now given the opportunity of uplifting the achievement of

Literacy through GPLMS. Schools have been declared as underperforming by the GDE because of poor performance in Literacy. The GPLMS is an intervention strategy which ensures that teachers are adequately trained so that they implement the GPLMS effectively in their classrooms.

2.4   INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

In order to advance the teaching and learning the National Department of Education devised various initiatives to uplift the quality of teaching. In the next section OBE, RNCS, NCS, CAPS, FFLC and NRC will be discussed.

2.4.1   OUTCOMES BASED EDUCATION (OBE)

Outcomes Based Education (OBE) was the first initiative introduced by the post-apartheid government in 1998 to transform education. Matier and Hart (2007) argue that although the legacy of apartheid education policies contributed to the state of turmoil and crises that the education system is presently in, the roll out of a number of new policies in schools can also be blamed. OBE implementation in schools demanded new approaches to teaching, learning, assessment and management within the classroom and school. Teaching and learning focused on a "decentralised curriculum. Educators had to guide learners to co-operate and work in teams. Learners were to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes for future success and achieve academic success" (Van der Horst & Mc Donald, 1997:15).

These outcomes were not achieved in the township schools due to intricate past policies that allocated limited funds to the township schools. Mboyane (2000) ascribes poorly trained teachers with limited proficiency in English who struggled to understand complex language used in OBE documents to past education policies.

OBE training did not adequately train teachers for the implementation of the new curriculum (OBE) as their professional training was not aligned to the OBE approach (Onwu & Mogari, 2004; Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999). This non-alignment of professional training created gaps in the execution of critical activities such as lesson preparation, methods of lesson facilitation and assessment strategies. Therefore, teachers remained rooted in their old methods of teaching (Jansen, 1999; Motseke, 2005; Onwu & Mogari, 2004; Vandeyar, 2005 & Pudi, 2006). Teachers were also unable to implement OBE due to large learner numbers at township schools (Chisholm, 2005; Motseke, 2005). Kokot (1997) argues that highly trained teachers are needed to handle 40 or more learners. The teachers were unable to handle large classes and this led to ineffective teaching and poor results in township schools (Motseke, 2005).

Motseke (2005) is of the opinion that a lack of teaching resources in township schools seriously inhibited learner participation and self-discovery. Most schools in townships do not have libraries. Vandeyar (2005) postulates that the absence of teaching and learning material is stressful for educators as this impacts negatively on teaching, learning and learner performance Motseke (2005) reveals that the majority of learners from township schools also come from poor backgrounds. Most learners live in shacks; parents are unemployed and therefore cannot afford educationally stimulating resources. Fiske & Ladd (2006) maintain that the poor home backgrounds of black learners hinder their progress in the classroom. Motseke (2005) further maintains that in order to bridge the gap in learner backgrounds, township schools should be equipped with functional resource centres with a variety of books.

The OBE approach emphasised parental involvement as parents were expected to assist their children with homework projects, monitor progress and attend meeting (Onwu & Mogari, 2004). Most parents from townships are from the working class with low educational levels, unemployed, poverty stricken and therefore fail to become involved in school matters (Vally, 2005). Motseke (2005) argues that provision of resources, improvement of facilities, intensive retraining in the OBE teaching approach, regular in-service training could assist teachers from township schools to transform their classroom practice.

2.4.2   REVISED NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT (RNCS)

The National Curriculum Statement was the second initiative introduced in 2002. The policy aimed to transform teaching and learning. It was then referred to as the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) (DoE, 2002a). According to the RNCS (DoE, 2002a) the Foundation Phase teacher had to teach learners to read and 40% of the teaching time in the phase should be dedicated to the teaching of literacy. The RNCS required teachers to develop well-structured learning programmes followed by systematically arranged activities to promote the alignment of learning programmes. The teacher had to guide the learners to find information and understand a text (DoE, 2002a). According to Mankveld and Pepler (2004) the Revised National Curriculum Statement emphasised language development for Foundation Phase without clear directives given to teachers on how to teach and facilitate language acquisition. Most of the emphasis was placed on communicative language and literacy teaching. Therefore, the teacher envisaged by the policy was not the same teacher in the classroom (Mudzielwana, 2012).

2.4.3   THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT (NCS)

The RNCS was revised once again in 2006 to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (DoE, 2006). The NCS was introduced as the third initiative aimed at improving teaching and learning. The time allocated for reading in the Foundation Phase increased and guidance on a balanced approach to teaching reading was provided. The NCS included a yearlong schedule, a learning programme, lesson plans and assessment guidelines. The outcomes emphasised skills, knowledge and values that learners should acquire and demonstrate during the learning process. However NCS was not effectively implemented in the classroom as PIRLS (2006) reports that South African learners were placed at the bottom of the list internationally in the reading assessments (Howie, Venter, VanStaten, Zimmerman, Long, Scherman & Archer, 2007). This low achievement suggested that South African learners had reading problems (Mullis, Kennedy, Martin & Sainsbury, 2006).

This finding were supported by Scheepers (2008:33) who proclaims that little attention was paid to acquisition of vocabulary and less emphasis was placed on meaning of text. Therefore, low reading levels among South African leaners continued to exist. According to JET Education Service (2010) the main weaknesses identified were the lack of specificity and examples as teachers were required to develop learning programmes based on the National Curriculum Statement. The lack of support and guidance to teachers made this activity an almost unattainable task in most township schools. This resulted in a lack of logical progression of teaching and learning. Additionally, Mudzielwana (2012) reports that teachers in township schools were unable to interpret language in policy documents.

2.4.4   CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT (CAPS)

In 2012 the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement was introduced to the Foundation Phase. CAPS is a refinement of the NCS. Therefore, a similar rationale to situating the curriculum with the aims of the South African Constitution remains. The Critical and Development Outcomes are infused in the CAPS document. Literacy in the Foundation Phase is called Language. The three main skills for Language include listening and speaking, reading and phonics, writing and handwriting (DoE, 2011).

The listening and speaking skills for the Foundation Phase involve the incorporation of themes. Teachers also need to embrace oral activities daily in order to give learners the opportunity to talk about special events and themes that are selected for them. They should also listen to stories told or read to them. The reading and phonics component of CAPS requires learners to become involved in shared reading, group guided reading, paired reading, independent reading and phonics. The CAPS explains that teachers may use various ways to start questions that

could help learners to develop lower-order and higher-order comprehension skills. These include literal comprehension, reorganisation, inferential skills, evaluation and appreciation. Teachers are expected to model fluent reading and work on metacognitive skills to teach learners to monitor themselves when reading. The teachers should use the text to develop vocabulary, decoding skills, and further the understanding of text structure, grammar and punctuation. The writing and handwriting skills introduce learners to guided writing in the Foundation Phase. Learners are guided in shared writing, group writing, independent writing as well as grammar and spelling activities (DoE, 2011).

2.5 INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT IMPROVING LITERACY

Due to the challenges experienced by teachers with understanding new policies the Department of Education introduced several curricular directives to improve the teaching of literacy and more specifically the teaching of reading.

2.5.1 FOUNDATIONS FOR LEARNING CAMPAIGN (FFLC)

The FFLC was the first intervention launched and announced in the Government Gazette on 14 March 2008 to uplift literacy levels of all learners in the country (DoE, 2008c). The campaign was introduced in response to the findings of national, regional and international studies that indicated that South African children were not able to read, write or count at expected levels (DoE, 2008c). The aim of the campaign was to improve learner performance in literacy among Foundation Phase learners. The launch of the campaign aimed to provide directives to schools and teachers in the expected levels of achievement. The focus of the campaign was on primary schools with the goal that by 2011 all learners should be able to demonstrate age appropriate levels of literacy in all South African schools. All primary schools were expected to increase average learner performance in literacy to not less than 50% indicating a foreseen improvement of between 15% in learner achievement in 4 years of the campaign. The teachers were provided with four documents that contained directives regarding the use of methodologies when teaching literacy, designing the timetable, resourcing the classroom and assessing learners and documents on the teaching of reading (DoE, 2008c). The implementation of FFLC increased the workload of teachers. Teachers struggled to design their own learning programmes and work schedules as required by the NCS and the added task of incorporating the FFLC milestones into the term plans challenged them further (Meier, 2011). They were not given clear directives by the DoE or the school management team. The integration of FFLC milestones in weekly lesson plans and work schedules required teachers to rethink how FFLC could be incorporated into the work schedules (Meier, 2011).

2.5.2 TEACHING OF READING IN THE EARLY GRADES

Teaching Reading in the Early Grades DoE (2008a) served as the second intervention to address the crippling state of reading among South African learners. This document provided practical teaching guidelines on how to implement language development and covered aspects relating to reading characteristics of skilled readers, stages of reading, and stages of reading development, phonemic awareness and word recognition. Teachers were expected to promote shared reading, group guided reading, independent reading and reading aloud with learners. The shared reading activities required learners to share the reading task with the teacher and gradually allowed learners to take over the task of reading (DoE, 2008(a)). The group guided reading was to be conducted as a teacher-directed activity. This activity allowed the teacher to observe reading behaviours, identify areas of need and allowed learners to develop more independence and confidence as they read. The learners were allowed to choose their own books to promote independent reading (DoE, 2008a). According to the DoE (2008a) learners must read aloud daily to stimulate interest in the written text.

2.5.3 THE NATIONAL READING STRATEGY (NRS)

The National Reading Strategy (NRS) was the third intervention introduced in 2008 to enhance reading in South African Primary Schools (DoE, 2008b). The vision of the NRS was that "every South African learner would be a fluent reader who reads to learn and read for enjoyment and achievement" (DoE, 2008:3). The NRS was developed to clarify and simplify curriculum expectations and promote reading across the curriculum. Schools were provided with resources such as the "100 Storybook Project", "Drop All and Read Campaign", "The Reading Toolkit Project", "Systematic Method for Reading Success" (SMRS) and " Project, Early Grade Reading Assessment" (EGRA) to promote reading. The DoE (2008b) emphasised the importance of strong teacher knowledge on multiple methods for teaching reading. The DoE (2008) in its efforts to enhance the pedagogical and didactic capacity for all teachers in reading, developed the "Reading Handbook", "Teaching Reading in Early Grades" (2008b) together with a Digital Video Disc (DVD) on "Getting Literacy and Numeracy Teaching Right in the Foundation Phase". The NRS also called on principals to be more proactive in promoting and managing the teaching of reading at their schools. However, the DoE discovered that teachers' had an insufficient understanding of teaching literacy, reading and writing which became barriers to the effective implementation of the NRS (DoE, 2008b). Teachers could not adapt to the instructional demands of learners.

2.6 INTRODUCTION OF STANDARDISED TESTING: ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSESSMENT (ANA)

The Annual National Assessment was introduced by the Department of Education in 2008. The ANA was used as a strategic tool to monitor and improve the quality of basic education.

2.6.1 PURPOSE OF ANA

The main purpose of ANA was to provide regular and standardised testing of learners in primary schools especially during transitional stages (Grade 3). This means that improvements could be continuously assessed and appropriate interventions could be designed and implemented where needed. The introduction of ANA was regarded as one of the most ambitious assessments ever to be have been undertaken by the Department of Education that informed planners, teachers and parents about the best way of tackling underperformance of learners in Literacy and Mathematics (DoE, 2009). In 2008 and 2009 trial runs of ANA were conducted to expose schools to better assessment and marking practices. A further decision was undertaken to make ANA participation compulsory in 2011 for all schools. ANA results would be used to inform the DoE on the quality of teaching and learning because as a country we faced formidable challenges with international assessments. The statistics from previous assessments revealed that there was cause for concern because critical skills were fundamental to further learning. Many learners lacked basic reading skills and therefore struggled to proceed beyond the system and in post-school education. This was regarded as unacceptable for a nation whose democratic promise was to promote quality education and skills in the global world (DoE, 2008).

2.6.2 OBJECTIVES OF ANA

The main objectives of ANA was to serve as a diagnostic tool to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and to expose teachers to better assessment strategies. ANA results provided districts with information to target schools in need. Parents were kept informed as they were given information on progress on their children's performance in Literacy (DoE, 2014)

2.6.3 ANA RESULTS

The 2008 ANA results gave a measured picture of current levels of performance at primary school levels. The results provided an important baseline in relation to targets set by DoE for 2014 which was 60% attainment for Literacy from Grade 3 learners. The 2008 ANA results

were consistent with earlier results that showed that almost half of Grade 3 learners achieved below 30%. Some of the explanations for these trends included:

- New policies were not adapted;
- Changes in policy were ineffective, inappropriate or underdeveloped;
- The poor learner achievement (DoBE, 2014).

There was ample support for the second explanation that new policies were not effectively implemented by teachers. Therefore, Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) was introduced by the GDE. The latter is explained next.

2.7   GAUTENG PRIMARY SCHOOL LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS STRATEGY (GPLMS)

2.7.1   INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study and GPLMS will be discussed in detail. The aspects relating to teacher training, allocation of resources, coaching and parental involvement are discussed. According to DoBE (2014) the persistent underperformance of schools in townships forced the Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) of Gauteng to request for the development of a strategic plan for underperforming primary schools so that they could have access to quality training and resources. The mission statement for the strategy highlights four key goals:

- All schools in Gauteng should be effective;
- The GDE offices will support teachers;
- To successfully integrate learners into the work environment;
- To improve collaboration among stakeholders with concurrent educational priorities (DoBE, 2014).

The purpose of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy was to translate the GDE vision and mission into achievable outcomes for all learners. The vision emanated from the GPLMS strategy that "by the end of the primary school all Gauteng learners can read and write fluently for purpose and enjoyment" (DoBE, 2014:5).

2.7.2   GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF GPLMS

The primary objective of the GPLMS was to improve the teaching of literacy. The following imperatives guide the new approach to literacy.

2.7.2.1 Provincial Partnerships

Over the past 20 years strategic education partnerships provided valuable resources to schools. The DoBE (2014) urged that these partnerships must be sustained and deepened to add that value and enhance the GPLMS. Closer attention was to be paid to alignment and coherence regarding resource allocation and approaches to teaching reading.

2.7.2.2 Dynamic Internal Moderation and External Evaluation

All schools involved in the GPLMS were to be monitored on a continuous basis to identify problems with regard to the teaching of literacy. The monitoring was to take place at a multiple level, irrespective of whether teachers taught using structured lesson plans, followed the GPLMS pedagogical approaches, marked and assessed regularly. Teachers would be given regular feedback weaknesses to be addressed. External evaluations were conducted to test whether goals and specific targets were achieved. This was critical to promote essential learning and building public trust in the departmental strategy (DoBE, 2014).

2.7.2.3 Importance of Alignment and Consistency

The focus of the Literacy Strategy was alignment and consistency was imperative (DoBE, 2014). The DoE's five -year curriculum plan emphasised linkage to teacher and learning support material (LTSM) as well as teacher development. Attention was given to vertical alignment between the national and provincial government. Moreover, the strategy stressed coherence between various aspects including primarily, evaluations, curriculum policy guidelines, textbooks, workbooks, teacher training and work of external partners such as Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and library services. Elements of coherence were evident both at policy level and experienced by teachers in practice (DoBE, 2014).

2.7.2.4 Teacher Training

The most important principle of the GPLMS was teacher training to uplift learner achievement and transform classroom practice. Each component of the strategy was designed to offer teachers opportunities to learn aspects from ANA results, following departmental directives and using resources (DoBE, 2014).

2.7.2.5 Simple Literacy Approach

The Simple Literacy Approach informed GPLMS and emphasised decoding, understanding and reading with a purpose. The Simple Literacy Approach steered children from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" and "reading for a purpose" (DoBE, 2014). Primary school learners

were provided with books and other reading material. The material was age- and language - appropriate that enabled them to become fluent readers. Phonics should be taught as a daily activity. This ensured keeping pace and contributed to becoming a critical component during the "learning-to-read phase" of language acquisition (DoBE, 2014). The emphasis was directed to letter and sound recognition by learners. The phonics lesson was followed by numerous activities both oral and written texts with emphasis on a variety of texts. Learner vocabulary should be extended daily. An effective way to develop vocabulary of the child was to read aloud to children (DoBE, 2014).

2.7.2.6   Pillars of GPLMS

The GPLMS followed a suggested plan of identifying a number of targets to shift classroom practice. Past policies and interventions had shown promise or were implemented somewhere in the world but never tested in South African school context. The GPLMS used multiple overlapping components that emphasised classroom practice in terms of sequences and timing. This was to emphasise new policies at classroom level. The various aspects were included to help teachers understand the new strategy which promoted learner achievement in Literacy (DoBE, 2014).

2.7.2.7   Measuring Literacy and Raising Expectation

One of the key elements of GPLMS was the effective use of ANA for all Grade 3's. While building on the National Systematic Evaluation and provincial learner evaluation the ANA was used as a strategy for self- generated improvement (DoBE, 2014). Schools were provided with ANA results that formed part of their daily functioning. The assessments provided schools with information to improve performance (DoBE, 2014). The head office of the DoE was to constantly monitor and adjust the strategy based on the ANA evaluation for Grade 3. The comprehensive assessment was used to inform districts of poor performing schools (DoBE, 2014).

2.7.2.8   Strengthening the Teaching of Literacy

The DoE, over a medium term, provided more focused leadership to educators to improve literacy achievement. The daily lessons were supplemented by well-structured lessons (DoE, 2014).

2.7.2.9   Allocation of Resources to Schools

The teaching of reading and writing was at the centre of GPLMS. Therefore, the focus shifted to valuable resources in the targeted 792 schools. The interlinked components textbooks,

workbooks, readers and teacher guides provided detailed guidance to teachers not only in the logical sequence of lessons but also made available distinguished and developmentally appropriate classroom activities. These activities included new knowledge and consolidated learning through class tasks and provided appropriate homework assignments. The advantage of a single set of textbooks, workbooks, readers and teacher guides across the entire primary school was that it allowed for consistent and planned progression. The sets of material or programmes that followed the simple literacy approach required integrating "decoding" and comprehensive word recognition process and language cognition processes (DoBE, 2014)

2.7.2.10 Provision of coaching to support textbooks

Although the primary sources, highlighted for capacity building for improving the teaching of literacy, were enforced by the aligned curriculum guidelines and literacy materials, teachers also participated in direct teacher training. The teacher training approach according to (DoBE, 2014) focuses on improving literacy achievement. In the past the top down cascade material proved to be unsuccessful and the GDE had opted for the mentoring and coaching approaches to capacity building. This incorporated groups of people working closely around new teaching practice.

2.7.2.11 Improving Programmes

Although the focus of GPLMS was on shifting the classroom practice, the strategy also recognised that to improve reading and writing for all children required engagement both in and out of the classroom. The programme of learner support was extended to parents and to reading at home and in the community, coordinating activities of the various literacy NGOs currently working in the field of aligning the classroom reading focus that enhanced links and support with library services. Parents could assist by insisting that their children spend at least 30 minutes a day on reading at home (DoBE, 2014).

2.7.2.12 Homework and Parent Support

The GDE ensured that a variety of printed texts were available to add value to reading. The homework and parent support component of GPLMS included social aspects to inform parents of the centrality of supporting children's homework and reading to children within the home environment. Parents were invited to parent meetings and informed about the strategy. Parents were informed about the importance of assisting their children with homework. In addition teachers were to assign homework to learners daily particularly in Grade 3 (DoBE, 2014).

2.7.2.13 Linking with Community and Education Libraries

All children were given access to good quality books in order to instutionalise a culture of reading for primary schools. To accomplish this, school libraries were established and extended at all schools implementing GPLMS. This included basic infrastructure, library stocks, library management systems and school library systems (DoBE, 2014).

2.7.2.14 Improving the Management of Literacy Teaching and Learning

The main element of the strategy was to improve classroom teaching and ANA results. Therefore, strong leadership and management of classroom practice was stressed to provide support and to emphasise the purpose of accountability (DoBE, 2014).

The GDE ensured that all the requirements for the strategy were in place. Teachers had continuous support and guidance from their coaches, received resources and structured lesson plans. The identity of a teacher cannot be overlooked when new policies are implemented. The following discussion examines the identity of teachers with specific reference made to policy implementation.

2.8   TEACHER IDENTITY AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Jansen (2001:241) states that teacher identities refer to "their sense of self as well as their knowledge, beliefs, dispositions, interests and orientations towards work and change." Therefore, teachers' identities are the way teachers feel about themselves professionally, emotionally and politically given the conditions and demands of their work. Spillane (2000) agrees that with teacher learning and change "situation" were more complex than organisational arrangements in other words how they learn or what they teach was shaped by and is situated in their identities both as teachers and learners. Spillane (2000) conducted a case study with ten elementary school teachers to understand the role of subject matter as a context in the construction of teacher identities when teaching literacy. Subject matter served as a salient context for the construction of teacher identity and the teacher's efforts to reform their classroom practice. According to Spillane (2000) the story identities shared by teachers revealed that their literacy identities were forged in many sites and opportunities both in and out of school. Therefore, it can be gathered, that support for teachers and in-service training helps to strengthen teachers understanding of the curriculum. These multiple opportunities contribute towards the continuing cycle of learning new literacy skills and activities that teachers use to inform their teaching of literacy. These teachers were at ease to experimenting with literacy instruction and used the prescribed literacy texts or curricula merely as guides. All the teachers worked constantly towards reforming their literacy instruction. Two teachers in the

study revealed that their passion for literacy dominated their identity. They believed that connecting literacy to learners' daily lives helped overcome the language challenges they faced.

Jansen (2001:242) argues that the relationship between "policy images" (projections through policy texts) of what a reformed teacher should look like and their "personal identities" become problematic at times. Hence, a gap between policy and practice increases. Jansen (2001) explains this as the disjuncture between the demands the policy makes on teachers and their personal identities.

A teacher's beliefs about subjects, themselves, prior training are all important aspects of teachers' identity (Jansen, 2001). This construct is responsible for concerns about how teachers conceptualise their capacity to implement a proposed policy. Thus of relevance to this study is how teachers as professional actors view their capacity in relation to GPLMS. In this regard, Jansen (2001) points out that policy image brings about drastic role changes for teachers.

The Norms and Standards (2001) is a document that describes the roles together with their associated set of applied competencies (norms) and qualifications (standards) for the development of educators. The document further prescribes seven new roles for teachers that extended beyond classroom practice. These roles include learning mediator, interpreter and designer of learning programmes, subject specialists, and assessor, together with social responsibilities such as a teacher, administrator, scholar, researcher and lifelong learner (DoE, 2000). Most teachers are incapable of making such a transition to new expectations and multiple roles expected of them (Samuel, 2001; Sayed & Jansen, 2001).

Jansen (2001) refers to the emotional basis of teacher identity as the way in which teachers understand their capacity to handle emotional demands made on them by a new policy in the context of existing stresses and pressures. Such challenges present themselves in the form of large classes, managing and disciplining learners and coping with the demands from school management on learner performance.

The political basis for teacher identity refers to the way in which teachers understand and act on their value commitments, personal backgrounds and professional interests in the context of change demands. The point of reference might directly or indirectly undermine a policy mandate without it being easily detected (Jansen, 2001). The teachers then act on their authority and withhold actions in response to a particular reform at a school and classroom level.

2.9   POLICY IMPLEMENTATION BY TEACHERS

Pudi (2002) states that the implementation of NCS gave rise to serious challenges. This becomes more difficult to negotiate than the actual curriculum planning and development stage. Deception takes place as people think that once a curriculum was developed, implementation would follow. Therefore, they do not foresee any challenges. The planning and design of a curriculum is the theory while implementation demands converting theory into practice. Making both coincide leads to new problems that curriculum designers as theorists fail to anticipate. Pudi (2002:5) asserts that the "proof of the pudding (curriculum) was in the eating (implementation) and not in the cooking or making (design)." Therefore, teachers need to be supported and guided.

While the planning of a curriculum is regarded as stable and documented, curriculum implementation is dynamic and ever-changing. (Pudi 2002). Therefore, the gap between the intended curriculum and implemented curriculum consequently, continued to exist. Rogan (2004) defines this gap between the intended curriculum and the implementation thereof as a "mismatch" between expectation and reality. Drake (2002) is of the opinion that there is a "dislocation" between intended policy and implemented policy. These terms are used to describe the manner in which the policy is stipulated in policy documents but rarely articulated in practice. Therefore Vulliamy, Kimoner, Nevalainen and Webb (1997:101) believe policy implementation should be part of policy formulation and should   not a "add on".

Despite the launching of numerous programmes to assist teachers in understanding of curriculum and changing teacher practices, little change is seen in schools. Since curriculum implementation is accompanied by change, it is important to understand meanings teachers attach to curriculum change as this determine the success of newly implemented reforms (Bantwini, 2010:89; Zimmerman, 2006:239). Rogers (2003) indicates that for teachers to change their practice they need to understand the process. Successful implementation of innovative programmes and their sustainability requires inherent change in people (Slabbert, 2001:291). Swanepoel and Booyse (2006) as well as Mugweni (2012) stress the importance of active teacher involvement as key agents for change and implementation in schools and classrooms as part of the process of educational change. Their studies reveal that teachers who demonstrate an interest became involved in responsibilities regarding school change.

Researchers such as Giltine and Margonis (1995) as well as Fullan and Miles (1992) believe that a range of elements, which include teachers' understanding and acceptance of the new curriculum, impact on implementation. Teachers who recognise the need for change cope better with the process and understand the implications of the policy for teaching and learning (Carless, 1998:356). People derive a sense of security from doing things in familiar ways and

disrupting a teacher's well- established professional structure or pattern results in the fear of unknown (Fullan, 2001). Teachers are often threatened by the prospect of change and their acceptance of change is seen as an impediment to their expertise. They believe that they lacked knowledge skills to implement change effectively (Fullan, 2001). When teachers participate in responsible school change, they develop into positive recipients of the change process and show willingness to participate in future changes (Poppleton & Williamson, 2004:289). Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) also agree that teachers who are involved in planning and implementation of change assume the responsibility for the change process and cope better. Zimmerman (2006) asserts that successful curriculum change depends on a strategy that incorporates professional development, peer coaching, support for the new vision to raise self-confidence and self-efficacy. A teacher's effort should be recognised and incentivised for trying to implement change.

2.10   TEACHERS' RESPONSE TO CURRICULUM CHANGE

Teachers' response to change manifests in different ways as the social context of the school exerts a powerful influence on teachers' interpretation frames and their decision about how they enact or resist change (Penuel, 2007). Teachers cope with change in their own ways and according to individual analysis of the situation as teacher meaning is diverse and variance in the implementation of curriculum is inevitable (Margaret, 1986; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

A teacher is regarded as a key role player in policy implementation who serves as a vehicle through which policy goals are attained. However literature reveals that huge investments is made in policy formulation but very little or no change is observed in the daily routines of schools and classroom practice (Hall & Hord, 2001; Jansen, 1998). Teachers often reflect on change that is complex as they lack the understanding of what needs to be implemented (Rogan, 2007). Rogan and Grayson (2003) recognise the need for diversity in quality education of a schooling system as it builds on the strengths of teachers. They further allude that teachers should take a number of small steps from their current practice towards curriculum goals and the implementation process. This should be an ongoing effort as teachers decide of their own accord where to start and how to manoeuvre through the process.

Datnow and Castellano (2000) acknowledge that teacher agency in curriculum change can be either active or passive. Datnow and Castelllano (2000:777) further reveal that teachers respond to change in the following ways:

- Anger due to frustration and lack of knowledge
- Exiting the profession without regret
- Using reform as an opportunity to advance their career prospects

- Resisting, ignoring, adopting and adapting change".

Existing research (Clasquin-Johnson, 2011; Mosia, 2011; Mugweni, 2012; Zimmerman, 2011) reveal that teachers respond to curriculum reform in the following ways by:

- resisting
- ignoring
- adapting
- adopting curriculum reform.

2.10.1 RESISTING CURRICULUM CHANGE

According to Kennedy (2005) not all teachers perceive change in the same way; some teachers passively resist change while others aggressively undermine the required change. Curriculum change needs to be managed as teachers begin to fear and resist change when they feel that their personal freedom is threatened (Kennedy, 2005).

According to Stone (2002) people resist change because of the following reasons:

- Fear of the unknown – did not understand what is happening or why.

- Disrupted habits causing them to feel upset when old ways of doing things are not followed;

- Loss of confidence, feeling inept to perform well when new ways of doing are required;

- Loss of control as they feel that things are being done to them bereaving them of the opportunity to give their opinion;

- Poor timing and not afforded the chance to develop in the course of time causing them to feel inadequate or humiliated, because the old ways are no longer acceptable;

- Lack of purpose not fathoming a reason for change or following its benefits.

Hargreaves (2005:11) argues that resistance to change can be the result of a fear of change or loss of motivation. This is a common response to mid-career teachers to change as they may have accumulated a wealth of experience. Gitline and Margonis (1995) find teachers who resist change feel that their self-esteem is undermined and this induces emotions of self-doubt and fear.

Teachers' resistance to curriculum change was well- documented in Mosia's (2011) study on teacher perceptions towards the Life Orientation curriculum. The findings indicate that a lack of understanding, misconceptions about the subject, uncertainty and confusion were critical

factors that can constrain implementation. The misconceptions that teachers were faced with resulted in them becoming deeply frustrated, demotivated and despondent towards the new curriculum. Teachers in the study were unable to implement the new curriculum successfully due to low self-confidence, lack of in-service training and guidance. Teachers were unable to show commitment and dedication because of the low status given to the subject and allocated to teachers seen as ineffective in the system. The teachers in turn responded by delaying implementation, blaming poor attendance by learners and lack of support by officials. The study further reveals that when departmental officials do not support teachers, they become negative and frustrated.

The teachers investigated further resisted the subject area as they claimed to be unqualified. Their poor understanding of the Life Orientation curriculum and demotivation prompted resistance and compliance with requirements. These internal and external factors restricted teachers from making an effort and commitment to acquire new skills and knowledge to implement the curriculum (Mosia, 2011).

Mosia's (2011) findings are consistent with Margaret (1986), Hargreaves (2005) McLaughlin, (1987) who maintains that that teachers become resistant when they are expected to implement mandated curriculum change and their perception of change becomes a threat to their comfort. A lack of motivation and uncertainty often discourage teachers. They fail to see the merit in curriculum change when they are overloaded with new teaching responsibilities and several innovations leave them in a confused state. Bantwini (2010) argues that a lack of understanding of curriculum reforms became a hindrance to positive curriculum change and implementation.

Mugweni's (2012) asserts that teacher resistance to change displays certain characteristics. During the study conducted a few crucial observations were made. I became evident that teachers showed misconceptions, uncertainties and lack understanding of the new initiatives. While conducting the study she observed that, as teachers were not supported in their efforts to implement the new curriculum they became demotivated and despondent. The lack of resources, support and professional development became barriers to the effective implementation and a critical factor in teachers ignoring and resisting implementation. The unavailability of textbooks, policy documents caused fear and frustration among teachers Teachers experienced difficulties in translating policy into practice. Subsequently teachers developed negative attitudes. Another critical factor contributing towards teacher resistance was the lack of guidance and support. In some instances teachers became easily demotivated, lacked direction and reluctantly complied (Mugweni, 2012). Datnow and Castellano (2000) are of the opinion that the concerns of teachers who resist change should be addressed as

discontent and frustrations from a few teachers can disrupt the entire groups' effort to adopt change.

2.10.2   ADAPTING TO CURRICULUM CHANGE

Drake and Sherine (2006) believe that adaptation to curriculum change depends on the seniority of teachers. The more experienced, skilled and knowledgeable teachers do not easily adapt to change or they react by passively responding to calls for curriculum change (Drake & Sherine, 2006). Teachers implement curriculum in varying degrees depending on the resources available, their understanding of materials, and the nature of the students and constraints of time (Remillard & Bryans, 2004).

When teachers work with a complex, conceptually rich curriculum different teachers make different choices and adaptions. While some display resistance to adapt to requirements others merely adapt and change their behaviour but their attitudes remain the same. This reinforced the view that values and attitudes are important components of motivation and performance at work (Crump, 2005). With every new policy initiated teachers need to balance multiple issues that include their own ideologies and pedagogical practices. Curriculum implementation and practice require mutual adaption and time to grasp (Drake & Sherine, 2006:1830).

McLaughlin's (1989:80) Rand Change Agent study highlights the critical role of local capacity, motivation of teachers as well as innovation passing through numerous modifications during its practice translation. The study found that an innovation is seldom implemented "as is" in schools, but go through a process of "mutual adaption or mutation" with local conditions and constraints. Through mutual adaption deviation from the aims of the change occurs. The initiative then results in an unintended effect on the goals of curriculum developers. Therefore, close collaboration between curriculum developers and teachers can facilitate the process of mutual adaption (Guskey, 2002:387).

By exploring teachers' patterns of adaption when using new curricula, provides valuable insights into the way in which teachers incorporate reforms into their instructional practice (Drake & Sherine, 2006). Clasquin-Johnson's (2011) study demonstrates these patterns of mutual adaption by Grade R teachers when involved with with the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). She did research on curriculum implementation and arrived at a few conclusions. Although teachers appeared to adapt curriculum change, they expressed concerns about what they were doing. Teachers reluctantly complied with curriculum change, as most were not in agreement with the formal academic programme of NCS for Grade R. Teachers were of the opinion that a flexible play based curriculum was an appropriate approach for Grade R. The beliefs of teachers played a significant role in how they implemented NCS. They

further disagreed with the learning support materials offered to them by the Department of Education in the form of worksheets and reluctantly incorporated them into their classroom activities. Teachers adapted their lesson plans according to NCS requirements that were demanding. The lessons planning increased the workload of teachers and was time- consuming as teachers were required to include more details. Although teachers adapted planning according to NCS requirements but they failed to implement changes in practice.

Positive attitudes impacted positively on the initiative as teachers began to adapt to the implementation of the new approach in their classes. They showed the promise of operating at higher levels. Teachers began to collaborate with others. In the absence of support from management and district they started to take the initiative of designing a subject syllabus which was followed by the objectives in the policy. They took responsibility to share knowledge and transform policy guidelines into practice (Mosia, 2011; Mugweni, 2012).

However, the findings of Ballet, Kelchtermans and Loughran (2006) serve as a warning that externally imposed teaching behaviours, defined competences and objectives can strain teachers' meaningful involvement in planning and reduce their extent of professional control. This reduced teachers' abilities to fully reflect on, collaborate with and their willingness to adapt to change. Grade 3 teachers implementing GPLMS need to follow the carefully designed lesson plans in order to achieve outcomes and adapt their classroom practice according to the suggested methodologies.

2.10.3   ADOPTING CURRICULUM CHANGE

Teachers' response to policy changes often reveals frustrations with policy implementation (Hargreaves, 2005:9). Datnow and Castellano (2000:778) postulate that a series of imposed changes could have created a "culture of compliance" among teachers forcing teachers to search for ways to implement the new initiative as painless as possible. Clasquin-Johnson's (2011) study reveals that although grade R teachers adopted certain aspects of NCS they were not in agreement with the suitability of such a complex curriculum for grade R. They still supported a flexible, informal play based curriculum for Grade R. Although the new curriculum was too rigid teachers were compelled to adopt the new curriculum otherwise their contracts would not be renewed by the schools that employed them. The participants in the study adopted the departmental directives but their instructional practice revealed little change. This occurred due to the lack of buying in from the teachers.

Clasquin-Johnson's (2011) study is confirmed by McLaughlin's (1987) and Stoffels' (2004) findings which suggest that with regard to curriculum change teachers usually adopt superficial features of a curriculum. In other words, this occurs when as teachers believe that NCS is not

appropriate for the learners. Teachers' attitudes exert an influence on their behaviour in class. These attitudes develop through their own experiences, interaction with colleagues and the values and norms of the society in which they work (Carless, 1998). Limited professional development hampers adoption as workshops emphasise policy without providing teachers with adequate strategies change classroom implementation. Successful adoption to change is dependent on acknowledgement of prevailing classroom conditions and initiatives undertaken by the education department to match and support teacher needs. This process enables teachers to move from the initial information seeking stage and to become effective in their implementation of the subject area (Mugweni, 2012; Bellar & Dyer, 2007).

Adoption of change can be negatively influenced, when the subject is not afforded the same status as other subjects on the timetable. The expected reaction from teachers is to delay adoption of the initiative and blame other sources for non-compliance to policy. Mosia (2011) and Mugweni (2012) both claim that in their studies learners tended to abscond. There was inadequate support and resources to drive the new initiative. In some cases the time allocated to the new programme was used for other examinable subjects (Mosia, 2011; Mugweni, 2012).

2.10.4   IGNORING CURRICULUM CHANGE

Datnow and Castellano (2000) are of the opinion that the most common reaction to a top down mandate is for teachers to reject the change and continue as before. According to Rowan and Miller (2007:256) teachers ignore change as a result of failure of policy makers to obtain teacher co-operation or moral purpose.

Studies conducted by Clasquin-Johnsons (2011), Mosia (2011) and Mugweni, (2012) reveal that a lack of resources as well as inadequate professional development hindered effective curriculum implementation and these aspects become critical factors in teachers ignoring curriculum change. Mugweni (2012) asserts that while some teachers displayed a basic understanding of the new initiative others totally ignored new policies' requirements as they were not adequately trained to implement the new policy. The unavailability of the syllabus and a lack of prescribed textbooks forced teachers to ignore the new initiative even though they acknowledged the significance of the subject for the learners. They used the additional time for examinable subjects allocated on the timetable. Teachers ignore implementation of the official curriculum due to disparities between policy and implementation (Kallery & Psillos, 2002).

2.11 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TEACHERS' RESPONSE TO CURRICULUM CHANGE

There are external factors that influence teachers' response to curriculum change. The external factors relevant to this study include professional development, teacher support and resources (Bantwini, 2010; Carl, 2002; Jansen, 1998).

2.11.1 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Carl (2002:8) defines professional development as a process of development and growth through which an individual teacher is able to make independent decisions and act autonomously, to contribute towards the development of his or her particular environment. Bakar, Amin Embi and Hamat (2006) view teacher development as an on-going learning opportunity must be available to teachers through schools, district regions, states or at a national level. Carless (1998:355) includes the following four elements as critical factors to consider when change in developing countries.

- Permanent and locally available in-service training for example through a cascading model.

- Adjustment of effective systems for supervision and support of teachers.

- Adjustment of content of teacher training to teachers own level of knowledge and experience.

- Encouragement of teacher motivation and commitment for example through improved working conditions or opportunities for professional development.

Carless (1998) furthermore suggests that for curriculum change to be successful, training needs must be continuous and developmental. A teacher requires both on and off-site training. The on-site training relates closely to the innovation and the realities of the school context. The off-site training should give the teacher the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the innovation away from the pressures of the daily routine. Traditional external professional development sessions such as train-the-trainer can induce change as these sessions assist teachers to understand the content of a curriculum initiative and may influence their decision to initiate engagement with innovators (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992).

Cohen and Hills (2001) warn that expecting teachers to embrace a new curriculum without adequate training and information explaining why change is necessary, leads to inadequate support to adopt the initiative. In the same vein, Sweeny (2003) argues that if professional development needs of teachers are not met, teachers will remain at the lower levels of growth for their entire careers. Prinsloo's (2007) study on the implementation of Life Orientation

programme indicates that insufficient formal training constrains implementation. The short training programme of between one to three days focused on the main content and aims of the programme. However teachers were left discouraged as facilitators appointed by the department of education to train them possessed limited understanding of the didactic methods in the learning area. Facilitators who were assisting in the training showed a lack of understanding of present classroom practice and also lacked skills and knowledge (Prinsloo, 2007).

The absence of professional development restricts teachers from becoming effective implementers of change (Mosia, 2011). Bantwini's (2010) study reports that teachers were uncertain and confused when implementing the Revised National Curriculum Statement due to lack of on-going professional development. Teachers in the study believed that their misconceptions could have been clarified if subject advisors set up regular meetings with them. Teachers could not find time to collaborate with colleagues to clarify critical issues and devise ways to effectively implement the new curriculum. Hence 95% of the teachers were not implementing RNCS. Their misconceptions of the new curriculum were revealed in their classroom practice as they only allowed learners to work in groups and take control of their own learning. Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) warn against such teacher development approaches that do not recognise these factors. They argue that teacher development should take the teacher's voice into account. Heidermann, Chang and Menninga (2005:86) are of the opinion that with "professional development, teachers move from a stance of confusion and tentativeness to one of confidence". Professional development can reduce the state of confusion in a teacher and allows their self-confidence to flourish.

2.11.2 TEACHER SUPPORT

Rogan (2004) indicates that teachers in developing countries are dependent on the quality of leadership from the district officials. Teachers require more structure and guidance to support new innovation. The support from the district officials could help teachers build their self-confidence. Hertberg-Davis and Brighton (2006:90) further agree when stating that principals can help create the organisational structure that supports curriculum change in schools as they influence the teachers' capacity to implement change by demonstrating critical support, a desire for change and a belief that change is possible. Principals can nurture a supportive culture for change by promoting professional development through teacher collaboration. By encouraging teachers to share their success during meetings and their common planning times respected, teachers cultivate self-efficacy among their peers and help them refocus (Zimmerman, 2006:243). Bechtel and O'Sullivan (2007:221) believe that the collaboration and

support that teachers receive from their fellow teachers, principals and students facilitate their adaption to change.

Bantwini (2010) suggests that districts must invest in providing support structures, monitoring, inspections and evaluation and promote teacher collaboration within the schools. This practice can ensure that teachers develop the appropriate understanding of the reform and receive help as challenges arise.

According to Sweeny (2003) the following may occur if teachers are not adequately supported:

- They cannot continue to grow,

- Implementation problems will often overwhelm them and the innovation practices will be discarded, and

- Weaker coping strategies may be adopted.

In the context of this study the Gauteng Department of Education opted to provide continuous professional development, support structures in the form of mentoring, coaching, monitoring, evaluation, peer learning groups and school based workshops to build teacher capacity while working with the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy Strategy.

2.11.3 RESOURCES

Jansen (1998) in his argument as to why curriculum reforms would eventually fail, indicates that non-implementation of new reforms, is a direct result of a lack of detailed plan on how new reforms will be implemented in under-resourced schools. Studies conducted on the implementation of OBE and RNCS identified the lack of resources as barriers to curriculum implementation (Clasquin-Johnson, 2011; Mosia, 2011; Zimmerman, 2011). The GPLMS aimed to shift from past practices by ensuring high quality textbooks, Department of Basic Education (DoBE) workbooks, age appropriate readers, detailed literacy lesson plans, assessment activities and posters that should be distributed and used in schools

Unlike the OBE where the teacher could use any textbook to derive learning content for classroom activities the interlinked components namely textbooks, workbooks, readers, teacher guides provided detailed guidance to teachers not only to logically sequence lessons but also to provide learners with linguistically and developmentally appropriate classroom activities. These activities helped teachers to introduce new knowledge and consolidate learning through class tasks and homework activities. The advantage of prescribed workbooks, readers and teacher guides is that it allowed for consistent and planned progression (DoBE, 2014).

The DoE implemented new strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However research shows failure due to insufficient teacher support, professional development and resources. Teachers are still confused, and uncertain. GPLMS is also a new intervention but provides resources, coaches, regular monitoring, and a chance to improve ANA results. The Concerns Based Adoption Model of Hall and Hord (1987; 2001) will be used as the theoretical framework and the literature will be discussed according to the Stages of Concern and Levels of Use.

2.12   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Anfara and Mertz (2006:XV11) indicate that "a useful theory is the one that tells an enlightening story about some phenomenon. It is a story that gives you new insights and broadens your understanding of the phenomenon." According to their belief a theoretical framework can be used to analyse, interpret and make sense of the "social setting being studied" (Anfara & Mertz: XV11).

The theoretical framework selected for the understanding of Grade 3 teachers' conceptualisation and implementation of the GPLMS programme is Hall and Hord's Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (1987; 2001) which is a widely applied theory and methodology for studying the process of implementing educational change. According to this theoretical framework teachers have certain concerns that need to be addressed for them to advance to higher levels of curriculum implementation following a process during which process they ignore, resist, adopt, or change depending on the support given to them (Sweeny, 2003; 2008).

The CBAM was originally developed in 1973 specifically for teachers. This model was primarily concerned with measuring, exploring, describing and understanding the process of change experienced by teachers who were attempting to implement new curriculum materials and instructional practices (Anderson, 1997:331; Bellah & Dyer, 2007:68; Sweeny, 2003:1). The model describes how people develop as they learn about an innovation. By using this model I was able to explore the understanding and experiences of Grade 3 teachers who were utilizing the new resources and suggested teaching practice.

 The Concerns Based Adoption Model is a complex, multi-party system, of which the Stages of Concerns consists of two parts. Firstly the stages are a framework that describe the feelings a teacher might have about change. Secondly, the Levels of Use describe teachers' behaviour as they experience and implement change (Hall & Hord, 2001). These two parts which are relevant to this study are discussed.

Hall and Hord (1987) characterise teachers, principals and district personnel in an education system as change facilitators who serve as key factors in the success or failure of an innovation. Within the context of CBAM it is critical that teachers should be provided with guidance so that they understand, adopt and adapt change (Loucks-Horsley, 1996). The use of CBAM in my study enabled me to discover whether teachers, can make a positive contribution to curriculum change when provided with adequate resources and mentoring as in the case of GPLMS

2.12.1   STAGES OF CONCERN (SOC)

According to Hall and Hord, (2001) the CBAM consists of seven stages of concern which directly relate to how teachers feel about an educational change and include the following stages of concern, namely awareness/unconcerned, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration and reinforcing. These stages range from feelings of little concern, knowledge or involvement in the innovation to a teacher's focus on further exploration of more universal benefits or alternative forms of change (Bellah & Dryer, 2007; Hall & Hord, 2001). Sweeny (2003) believes that the stages of concern commences with early concerns about self (what is it and how will it affect me) then proceeds to concerns about a task (how can I best manage myself) and finally concerns about impact emerge (is this change working for students and is there something that will work better?). These critical stages of concern were used to guide my study in ascertaining concerns Grade 3 teachers have about their self, the tasks and the impact of implementing GPLMS.

The stages of concern have major implications for teacher practice, and advocate the importance of identifying where teachers are positioned with the new curriculum and addressing their concerns when they experience them (Hall & Hord, 1987; 2001). Often policy makers and administrators focus on student learning before ensuring that teachers are comfortable with an innovation and its components such as objectives, content and strategies (Loucks-Horsley, 1996). The GPLMS emphasise continuous teacher development and support prior to implementation therefore it would be of interest to acknowledge whether the supportive approach promoted effective curriculum implementation. The stages of concern range from the lowest level that was unconcerned to the highest level of refocusing. Throughout the seven stages of concern teachers go through a process of ignoring, resisting, adopting and adapting change based on their understanding of the innovation and support given (Hall & Hord, 2001). The following figure 2.1 explains the stages and expressions of concerns which range from the lowest level awareness or unconcerned to the highest level refocusing.
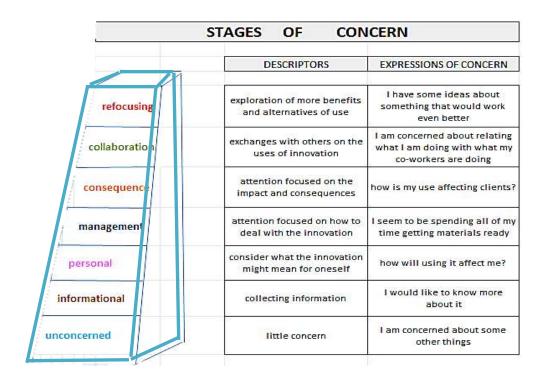
STAGES OF CONCERN		
	DESCRIPTORS	**EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN**
refocusing	exploration of more benefits and alternatives of use	I have some ideas about something that would work even better
collaboration	exchanges with others on the uses of innovation	I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what my co-workers are doing
consequence	attention focused on the impact and consequences	how is my use affecting clients?
management	attention focused on how to deal with the innovation	I seem to be spending all of my time getting materials ready
personal	consider what the innovation might mean for oneself	how will using it affect me?
informational	collecting information	I would like to know more about it
unconcerned	little concern	I am concerned about some other things

Figure 2.1:   Stages and Expressions of Concern (Adapted from Hall & Hord, 2001)

The lower three stages, namely unconcerned, information and personal stages focus on oneself where a teacher uses "I "and "me" as in "I am frustrated (Sweeny, 2003). During these stages a teacher may ignore or resist change (Mugweni, 2012). The middle stage which is the management stage is more task-orientated and focuses on mastery of the task. A teacher who is struggling at the management level would use a statement like "Prioritising my use of time and managing paper work is killing me" (Sweeny, 2008:3). At management level the teacher has some understanding of the innovation and has adapted it, but still experiences implementation challenges (Mugweni, 2012). The upper stages of concern focus on result and impact of the innovation such as participants who received the benefits of the innovation. The teacher may say learners are now learning to read and write ever since I started using GPLMS.

2.12.2   LEVELS OF USE

	Levels of use	Behavioural indication
8	Renewal	The user seeks more effective alternatives to the established use of the innovation.
7	Integration	The user makes deliberate efforts to coordinate (collaborate) with others in using the innovation.
6	Reinforcement	The user makes changes to increase outcomes
5	Routine	User makes few or no changes and has an established pattern of use.
4	Mechanical	The user makes changes to better organise use of the innovation.
3	Preparation	The user has definite plans to begin using the innovation.

Levels of use		Behavioural indication
2	Orientation	User takes the initiative to learn more about the innovation.
1	Non-Use	No action is being taken with respect to the innovation.

Figure 2.2: Teachers' levels of use of an innovation and typical behaviours (Adapted from Hall & Hord, 1987)

The CBAM Level of Use framework focuses on the patterns of teachers' behaviour as they prepare to use, begin to use and gain further experience implementing curriculum change (Anderson, 1997). Hall and Hord (2001) outline the eight levels at which a teacher is positioned in terms of the extent to which the innovation is implemented. These are non-use (0), orientation (1), preparation (2), mechanical use (3), routine (4a), refinement (4b), integration (5) and renewal (5). Newhouse (2001) argues that these levels are the sequence through which teachers pass during the change process as he or she gains confidence in adopting educational change. Hall and Hord (1987) agree that the eight levels show how a teacher adapts to implementing an innovation starting from the low level of mechanical use to higher levels of integration and renewal.

The Concerns Based Adoption model shows that individuals first use an innovation at mechanical level as their planning is short-term and their organisation and co-ordination of the innovation are disjointed. Experience and familiarity with the innovation move the individual to the routine level of use and refinement where changes are made based on the needs of students. At this stage the teacher is able to adapt the innovation in the implementation process. The CBAM acknowledges that when change is well planned, experienced users develop concerns at the consequence, collaboration and refocusing stages (Loucks-Horsley, 1996; Sweeny, 2003). According to Sweeny (2003) as soon as teachers attain the collaboration level, they realise the value of the innovation and given the opportunity and time they give collaborative support to their colleagues. These behaviours are consistent with a positive response to policy and curriculum implementation.

According to Hall and Hord (1987, 2001) levels of use of an innovation, change in predictable ways. Generally individuals' develop from level one / non-use through to routine use at level 5 up to renewal which is level 8. At this point individuals move to any of the higher levels, back to level three at mechanical use or remain at routine level indefinitely. The knowledge about how concerns and levels of use of teachers involved in an implementation attempt are likely to develop over time, equip policy drivers with a guiding framework.

Hall and Hord (2001) further add that teachers often face the situation of having to implement innovations with limited usage instruction and without a clear understanding of the

innovations' purpose or role in what they are asked to do. As a result the teacher is motivated to move from an awareness stage of concern and orientation level to the mechanical level. Teachers then return to the classroom and implement the innovation in a manner that is not in line with what the developers of change originally envisioned (Bellah & Dyer, 2007; Hall & Hord, 2001).

In this study the stages of concern and levels of use will be used as analytical tools to evaluate how Grade 3 teachers understand, respond to and implement the GPMS in their classroom.

2.13   CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy and teachers' response and understanding to curriculum change. The initial phase of investigating literature focused on the introduction of Outcomes Based Education followed by the different revisions and interventions to improve teaching and learning. Literature reveals that with two decades of democratic schooling learners continue to lag behind in international assessments and the government's failure to raise the performance of learners in historically disadvantaged schools has become a cause for great concern.

Literature on teacher identity and teachers' response to policy change was explored to understand why some teachers adopt and adjust to policy changes while others choose to resist and ignore any form of change. The consulted literature suggests that although the Department of Education invested heavily in policy formulation little change was noticed in the implementation phase (Jansen, 2001) and therefore a "mismatch" between policy and implementation. The lack of professional development, a lack of motivation, support, inadequate resources and lack of collaboration became barriers in effecting curriculum change (Bantwini, 2010). The teachers' lack of knowledge and skills in the new curriculum and interventions of the past were the reasons why they were unable to adopt and adjust to new policies. Of significance to this study is the implementation of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) and its policy guidelines and principles. The inclusion of GPLMS as a provincial initiative showed the concerns and commitment of the GDE towards the improvement of learner achievement.

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CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 2 a background on schooling in black townships under apartheid laws was outlined. This was followed by the post- apartheid governments' introduction of Outcomes Based Education (OBE). The on-going revisions and interventions to transform education contributed little towards increasing literacy levels among township learners but widened the gap between performing and underperforming schools. Literature reviewed aimed at validating and contextualising the study. In chapter 3, I justify the selection of the epistemological interpretivist view to explore how teachers in underperforming schools experience the implementation of Literacy according to the requirements of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS). I further explain my choice of the research paradigm and design, provide intricate details on the procedures involved in data collection and the steps taken to render the study ethically sound. Participants selected for the study comprise of Grade 3 teachers in the selected underperforming schools who share their encounters of reality in terms of their experiences and interpretations as primary evidence via the spoken word (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Silverman, 2005). It was also indicated how issues relating to validity and reliability will be addressed which adds quality to the study. The Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) by Hall and Hord (2001) was employed as the theoretical framework of the study.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

I decided to conduct my study from a qualitative research perspective to gain deep insight into teachers' perceptions of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (Creswell, 2007). The qualitative approach is pursued, as it allows humans to ascribe meaning to a social problem. Qualitative research is concisely described by Merriam (2001:12) as "an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomenon with as little disruption to the natural setting as possible".

Creswell (2008:2) describes qualitative research as "an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a social or complex holistic picture formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants and conducted in a natural setting, qualitative research focuses on human behaviour and experiences." The utilisation of the qualitative

research method allowed me to explore and interpret the world from the participants' perspectives (Mouton & Marias, 1994:205). I relied solely on participants' views by asking open-ended questions during the interviews and while observing the Professional Learning Groups (PLG) that involve the in-service training for schools implementing GPLMS as I asked questions in an informal way to seek clarification. They eagerly answered questions that provided detailed descriptions about their experiences and views on the new approach that they were using in their classes to teach literacy (Creswell, 2008).

Creswell (2009:175) lists characteristics relevant to a qualitative study that allows a researcher to incorporate the traditional, participatory and self-reflective perspectives of qualitative inquiry. I used the characteristics to indicate how these applied and related to the inquiry. See the following aspects considered as part of my qualitative research approach:

- Qualitative research occurs in a natural setting where human beings and events occur. Data were collected from teachers in their classrooms as most of the teachers preferred to be interviewed in their classrooms after school. Teachers were comfortable in their own settings as they pointed to the relevant GPLMS resources that they were using in their classes as they answered some of the questions. In this time I also observed the teacher lesson plans in files on the tables which the teacher made reference to.

- The qualitative interpretivist form of analysis helped in interacting with participants so that they voluntarily assisted me to construct the themes that emerged. In this study I was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data were collected through interviews, observation of teachers, jotted notes on what was observed and documents were examined. I did not have to rely on instruments or questionnaires compiled by other researchers.

- Instead of relying on a single data source I reviewed multiple forms of data to capture the underlying meaning and categorise data into themes and to declare the interpretations that emerged from the study as reliable and valid. In this way the multi-dimensionality and complexity involving teaching experiences were grasped.

- Inductive data analysis assisted in the building of patterns, categories and themes. This form of analysis helped in interacting with participants so that they allowed construction of patterns, categories and themes that emerged.

- The meanings derived from participants helped to structure this study. Throughout the data collection process I focussed on the meaning participants held on the problem and not the meaning I had already established.

- I followed an emergent design as the research process for a qualitative design changes frequently. The process could change as qualitative research highlights learning about the problem from participants.

- I pursued a holistic perspective to develop a complex picture of the problem. I gave a detailed account of what was observed and collected (information);

Cohen et al. (2005) indicate that humans can actively construct their own meaning from social situations and are subjected to the interpretative process. My study investigated teachers' perceptions and experiences of GPLMS with the main focus directed towards the meaning that teachers give to the events they experience.

3.3   RESEARCH DESIGN

Since my investigation incorporated an interpretivist lens, I employed a qualitative case study design with six teachers, three Grade 3 teachers and three heads of department in the Foundation Phase to gather comprehensive data from teachers on how they responded to the latest intervention for literacy improvement (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). A qualitative case study was considered as this empirical inquiry allowed the researcher to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context as the boundaries between phenomena and the context were not clearly evident. Therefore, I used multiple sources of evidence which included semi-structured interviews, document analysis, field notes and observation (Yin, 2003). According to Creswell (2007) and Nieuwenhuis (2007) the use of a case study allows the researcher to step into a bounded system (as in the case of this study the three schools implementing GPLMS), and collect detailed data to achieve triangulation of data sources and methods.

The use of a qualitative research design made it possible for me to compile thick, rich and context laden descriptions of real people involved in the study (teachers at the schools teaching the literacy according to the new strategy of GPLMS). I also interacted with teachers over a prolonged period of time. I attended all the quarterly in-service training, Professional Learning Group sessions and DVD training to get a better understanding of the training. I wanted to observe how teachers interacted with the coaches. I was further empowered to come to terms with specificity of teacher understanding and implementation of GPLMS in the schools (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The approach complemented my overall aim to discern and deepen my understanding into issues that were intrinsic in the case itself (Schwandt, 2007). The case study helped in the answering of the how and why questions providing multi-perspective analysis where interaction with other relevant groups is welcome apart from the involvement of participants only.

3.4   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions help in the identification of participants and dictate the nature of the study (Creswell, 2007) while Jansen (2007:3) indicates that: "a good research question directs the researcher to appropriate literature and keeps the researcher focussed during the data collection process". Jansen (2007:12) further posits that "secondary research questions should be more specific and should enhance focus of the primary research question and that there should be progression in the sequence of questions from basic to advance levels of questions". I have applied the above-mentioned advice, as it is applicable to my study. The research questions directed my methodology and choice of participants and data collection strategies as described in this chapter. The research questions are mentioned below.

3.4.1   MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

How do teachers understand and experience the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy?

3.4.2   SUB-QUESTIONS

- What are the policy, curriculum requirements and components of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy?

- How are the perceptions and experiences of teachers in underperforming schools influenced by the implementation of Literacy according to the requirements of GPLMS?

- What is the relationship between policy, curriculum provision and educational practices regarding GPLMS?

The research questions were aimed at providing an interpretation of policy and curriculum with regard to the way teachers implement GPLMS. I explored how teachers in townships schools understood the latest approach to teaching Literacy their implementation thereof in their classes. The teachers' knowledge, skills and practice provided insight into their attitudes, practices and beliefs. The knowledge that teachers gained and their beliefs in their teaching abilities positively influenced their attitude towards change and curriculum implementation (Mugweni, 2012).

3.5 RESEARCH CONTEXT

3.5.1 INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

Cohen et al. (2005:28) define interpretivism as a paradigm that seeks to "understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors." This statement suggests that the interpretive paradigm is guided by the researchers and the way in which reality is perceived. This view is consolidated by Nieuwenhuis (2007:4) who contends that "a paradigm is a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular world-view – and it addresses fundamental assumptions on faith, such as the beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology), the relationship between knower and known (epistemology)". Nieuwenhuis (2007:48) contends that researcher's beliefs cannot be separated from the research as the researcher's own interpretation of reality matters. My beliefs about GPLMS allowed myself to become totally immersed in the study and to extract the most illuminating information from teachers' experiences for the purposes of analysis and interpretation purposes.

I included the assumptions on which an interpretivist perspective is based according to Nieuwenhuis (2007:59-60). See the following crucial aspects:

- "Human life can only be understood from within", therefore we study the subjective experiences and interpretations of people and their interaction with the social environment. The subjective nature of interpretivism gave me the opportunity to concentrate on the experiences of the Grade 3 teachers. Teachers were given the opportunity to share their experiences, understanding and interaction with the Literacy content and pedagogy according to GPLMS.

- "Social life is a distinctively human product" and the meaning given to a particular phenomenon is linked to the uniqueness of the context. Since underperformance is prevalent in most township schools it would be of interest to hear from teachers how they interact with learners engaging with the new GPLMS.

- "The human mind is the purposive source or origin of meaning." Thorough exploration of the complexity of a phenomenon, leads to a better understanding of the meaning it has for people. I took cognisance of the nature of the paradigm and collected data from participants and literature to explore the complexity of GPLMS. I endeavoured to reveal the experiences encountered by participants.

- "Human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world." Our understanding of reality can strengthen the link we provide between the concrete and abstract world. My understanding of the phenomenon deepened as I interacted with teachers about

their understanding of the phenomenon through dialogue to build a "meaningful reality" collaboratively (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006:3).

- "The social word does not 'exist' independently of human knowledge." The researchers prior knowledge, values, beliefs and intuitions have an influence on the researchers understanding of reality. The knowledge I accumulated over the years and experiences with various intervention strategies provided the lens through which I conducted my study on the implementation of GPLMS.

I kept a close interaction with participants and stayed focused on their perceptions. I could also empathise with participants and recognise subtle meanings in their responses. The collection of comprehensive data from an interpretivist perspective facilitated the emergence of rich description from the investigation. The findings were limited to the specific research context which could not be generalised (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

3.5.2   THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

Nieuwenhuis (2007) depicts the role of a researcher in qualitative research as the key research instrument in the data gathering process and it becomes accepted that researcher subjectivity is something that cannot inevitably, be eliminated from the study. As suggested by McMillan & Schumacher (2001:348) a qualitative study is usually conducted in the natural setting where participants "live and work". Therefore, the role of the researcher is established by the position of the researcher and more importantly the researcher's relationship with the participants. In my case I could not enter the research site as a complete outsider and leave immediately after collecting data. I had to establish my role as a researcher prior to collecting data.

My role as the HOD and cluster leader is significant. In this study I had to fulfil a dual role as a cluster leader and as a researcher. I had to assure participants that it was an external study and was not being conducted for the purpose of departmental requirements. Being familiar with the participants increased the issue of trust as I noticed that during the informal discussions and interviews participants were free to share their experiences with me. My role as a researcher in the school meant that teachers were not intimidated by my presence as the participants were at ease during the interviews. They were able to provide accurate accounts of how the teaching of Literacy according to GPLMS was unfolding in their classes. The participants freely expressed themselves as they made reference to some of the support materials that they were proudly using in their classes as well as the way they stored support materials in the class. They were also pleased with having a brightly coloured library trolley in their class that they pointed at during the interview.

My professional experience of the phenomenon under investigation made it easier for me to identify with participants. During the interviews I was also able to put myself in their situation and tried to understand their concerns, challenges, frustrations and victories that they shared with me. I also had to ensure that I keep track of what participants explicitly revealed to achieve reliability and validity of the study. In addition I recognised my personal role in the study, and guarded against biases and prejudices to ensure precise interpretations (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:47).

3.6   SAMPLE SELECTION

Stake (1995:450) is of the opinion the success of a study lies in "choosing knowledgeable and well-informed participants to gain an in depth understanding of the phenomenon". For the purpose of this qualitative study I purposively chose "a portion of the population for study" while the research site and participants were specifically selected for the purpose of collecting the best data that would answer the research question (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:79). Patton (1990:109) further argues that the "logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information- rich cases for study in depth". Information rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of research, thus the term "purposive sampling." My selection of participants included criterion-based selection whereby I decided on the attributes for my study and then proceeded to locate participants who could provide insight into the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:79-80).

In this study, three Grade teachers and three Heads of Department in underperforming schools were selected as the participants for the study. I specifically used six teachers because this was an in-depth qualitative investigation All three schools were implementing GPLMS therefore the schools were purposively selected. The Grade 3 teachers in all three schools were older teachers. None of the schools had younger teachers. These samples were considered as they became rich samples for the in-depth study of the topic under investigation and to acquire deep perceptions of teacher understanding and implementation of the GPLMS (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

3.7   RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANTS

All teachers selected to participate in this study taught at previously disadvantaged township schools. Teachers were trained at teacher training colleges during the apartheid era and received Primary School Teachers Certificate (PTC) which is a certificate to teach. It was only after 1994 that teachers were urged to improve their qualifications. All participants for the study included teachers who had more than 20 years of teaching experience and were within the age group of 40 years and above. Presently they all have three years of experience with the

GPLMS programme that is aimed at exposing teachers to methodologies that improve classroom practice. Below is a table that depicts all the participants in this study.

Table 3.1:   Composition of semi-structured interviews

Participant	School /Post held	Age	Years of experience	Qualification
Participant 1	School A Grade 3 teacher	54	30	Primary Teachers Certificate PTC) Diploma in Education BA Degree
Participant 2	School A Head of Department: Foundation Phase	51	28	PTC Diploma in Education
Participant 3	School B Grade 3 teacher	58	36	PTC Diploma in Education
Participant 4	School B Head of Department: Foundation Phase	56	33	PTC BA B.ED (Hons.)
Participant 5	School C Grade 3 teacher	59	35	PTC Diploma in Education
Participant 6	School C Head of Department: Foundation Phase	45	22	PTC Diploma in Education B.ED (Hons.)

3.8   DATA COLLECTION

As a researcher working within the interpretive paradigm I sought to collect "rough materials" from the world I was studying (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992:106). Multiple methods of data collection utilised for this study included semi-structured interviews, observations and field notes. These various methods of data collection contributed towards the achievement of triangulation. I also made use of multiple strategies sequentially and simultaneously while studying a single research problem to acquire methodological triangulation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:322). Data triangulation was achieved by interviewing Grade 3 teachers and the heads of departments in the Foundation phase, observing Literacy lessons, analysing lesson plans, and probing records of teachers. I drew "rich data that was embedded in the context and provided depth to descriptions" (Mugweni, 2012:82). These strategies "incorporated complemented each other in a unified research design" (Cohen, 2005:228). The data collection strategies below were used for data collection.

3.8.1   SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The aim of qualitative interviews is to "see the world through the eyes of the participant" (Maree, 2007:87) as participant's can become an invaluable source of information when used correctly. I used interviews in this study to obtain rich descriptive data to help in understanding of "participants' construction of knowledge and social reality" (Maree, 2007:87). According to Flick (2014:217) participants have "complex stock of knowledge" about the topic under study. Their knowledge includes assumptions that are clear and immediate, therefore they can express themselves spontaneously when answering an open question.

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005) and Maree (2007) both acknowledge that semi-structured interviews assist the researcher in constructing a comprehensive picture of participants beliefs, opinions, views, behaviours, ideas and perceptions of a particular topic. I asked the participants questions from my predetermined interview schedule which allowed me to probe and seek clarity. These questions initiated dialogue between the researcher and participant. Participants were given the opportunity to answer "freely and extensively" (Flick, 2011:112). Probing was used at an appropriate moment when answers were unclear (Flick, 2011). As a researcher I paid attention to suggestions and was attentive to participants' responses to "identify new emerging lines of inquiry" (Maree, 2007:87) as they link to the phenomenon that would be studied.

Nieuwenhuis (2007) suggests that when participants trust the researcher and when they find the topic under investigation interesting and important they will then provide the researcher with rich information that would not be obtained in any other way. The authenticity of this statement dawned on me personally as the trust that I established with participants prior to the interviews allowed them to provide rich information that I was looking for. For the purpose of this study interviews proved to be the most valuable source of information as it was interesting to see how teachers were adapting to this latest strategy (GPLMS) with ample resources, teacher manuals, prepared lesson plans, coaching and regular monitoring. This was deliberately done as it was known that teachers in township schools struggled to implement the new curriculum and preceding intervention with the absence of these elements. I posed specific questions which allowed some measure of control over the information received (Creswell, 2012:218). All interviews were recorded and transcribed to analyse responses. The tapes of interviews were handed to the supervisors.

3.8.2   OBSERVATIONS

For the purpose of this study observations were included to strengthen interviews and became an important source of data. I observed Professional Learning Groups and school based

workshops as conducted in the natural field i.e. the teacher training centre and the schools where the study was conducted. The data gathered from the observations represent a first-hand experience with the phenomenon of interest instead of a second hand encounter of the participants' world (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). In the real world where data are extracted from participants the informal interviews and conversations can be interwoven with observation (Bipath, 2005). The unique feature of observation for this study was that it allowed me to gather "live data from naturally occurring situations" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, and 2011:456). Robson (2002) argues that what people do often differs from what they say therefore observations serve as a reality check. I used observations to triangulate findings, as they were used with interviews and document analysis to substantiate research findings (Bipath, 2005). I used participant observation to observe the peer learning group to enhance my understanding of how teachers experience Literacy implementation according to GPLMS. Observations made it possible to record behaviour as it occurs (Merriam, 2001).

I chose to direct my observations using the guideline proposed by Le Compte and Preissle (1993) which informed me on the elements that are likely to be present in any setting which are as follows:

a. Classroom setting: How was the classroom set up? What is the context like? What objects, resources and technologies are used in the setting?

b. Participants: Describe the people in the scene. How many people are there and what role do they play? What bind these people together? Who is allowed there? What are the relevant characteristics of the participants?

c. Activities and interactions: What is going on? Is there a definable sequence of activities? How do people interact with the activity and with one another? How are people and activities "connected and interrelated – either from participants view or from researchers' perspective'? When did the activities begin? How long does it last? Is it a usual activity or unusual?

d. Conversation: What is the content of conversion used in this setting? Who speaks to whom? Who listens? Quote directly, paraphrase and summarise conversations. If possible use a tape recorder to back up your note taking. Note silences and non-behaviour that add meaning to the exchange.

e. Subtle factors: Less obvious but perhaps as important to the observation were:
    - Informal and unplanned activities
    - The meaning of words
    - Nonverbal conversations such as space in the classroom
    - Physical clues and its meaning

- What did not happen especially if it should have happened?

f.   Behaviour of researcher: How is your role indicated? Are you an observer or as an intimate participant affecting the scene you are observing? Did you say anything? In addition, what thoughts are you having about what is going on? These become observer's comments, and important part of field notes.

Once I became familiar with the scene I began my observations. I used a field journal to record my personal observations, reflections and perceived body language while interacting with teachers during the peer learning group sessions, impromptu discussion with participants and coaches (Mugweni, 2012:87). During data collection while present at the school setting I recorded methodological decisions, feelings and thoughts in the field journal (Lincoln & Cuba, 1985:327). The field notes became a valuable source during data analysis as I was able to draw inferences which could not be obtained during interviews with teachers as teachers were unable to express verbally. According to Mosia (2011) field notes constitute descriptions of the who, *what, where* and *how* of a research context.

3.8.3   DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Various resources and documents made available for GPLMS were used for the purpose of triangulation. As advised by Merriam (1998) the presence of documents does not alter the setting in any way which the presence of an investigator does. The following documents that were made available to teachers for the implementation of GPLMS were analysed. These documents included:

- Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (2010- 2014)
- Literacy Lesson plans
- Readers
- Department of Basic Education Workbooks (DBE)
- Readers

3.9   DATA ANALYSIS

In qualitative research data collection, recording and analysis occurs as an interrelated on-going process involving organising data into categories, comparing, synthesising identifying patterns, relationships and interpreting and eventually giving explanations of the phenomenon of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:462). The data analysis and interpretation for this study included Creswell's (1998) analytical spiral for acquiring deeper understanding and interpretation of data as reflected in (De Vos, et al., 2005).

I recorded all data in a systematic manner appropriate to the setting and participants. I ensured that I use techniques to record data that did not intrude on the "on-going flow of activities" (De Vos et al., 2005:334). During the observations I made rough notes and concentrated fully on events occurring. Detailed notes were compiled immediately after the observations. Data were analysed at the research site, during the interviews and observations. The second phase of analysis took place away from the site to generate a rich array of data. This process helped to build a coherent interpretation of the data. During this process I was also aware not to make premature conclusions (De Vos et al., 2005:335).

The voluminous data collected from interviews, document analysis and observation were organised into manageable units. I made an inventory of all data accumulated. I began updating parts that were stored for later capturing. All data were correctly labelled reflecting dates, place and interviewee identifying information. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, field notes typed as this process provided me with the opportunity to become fully immersed in the data while generating emerging insights. I then began reading transcripts several times to get a sense of interviews before creating patterns and categories. I then asked questions in the hope of shedding light on the underlying meanings (Mugweni, 2012). Notes were written in the margins of field notes.

Thereafter a list of themes for each transcript was identified, while "recurring ideas, patterns of belief that linked participants and setting together were noted" (De Vos et al., 2005:338). As the categories emerged I ensured that they were "internally consistent depicting fixed categories of meaning held by the participants in setting" (De Vos et al., 2005:338). Creswell (1998) and McMillan and Schumacher (2010) believe that finding patterns in data facilitates the process of examining the relationship between categories and themes. These themes and categories enabled me to reflect on the purpose of the study as well as the research questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). In addition I applied a coding scheme to the emerging categories and themes by allocating abbreviations to key words. The most descriptive wording for each theme served as the theme of the data (Mugweni, 2012).

Once themes were developed and fully described answers to the research questions emerged leading to an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon, which ultimately relates to the aim of the study (Creswell, 2008:254). Finally, my data analysis also included "thick description vignettes (Ely, Vinz, Downing & Anzul, 1997:70) and direct quotes from the interviews. This strategy enriched images in the setting and demonstrated the complexities involved in how teachers experience, understand and respond to the teaching of Literacy according to the requirements of GPLMS (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:16).

3.10   ADDRESSING CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

"Validity and reliability" in this study refer to credibility and trustworthiness. Therefore, priority was given to validity, reliability and truthfulness as they are viewed as key requirements to an effective study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The truth or internal validity, and the transferability or external validity is ultimately the extent to which the findings of the researcher match reality (Merriam, 2001:61). Validity refers to trustworthiness of inferences of a particular description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation or other sort of account (Maxwell, 2005; Wiersma, 2000:199). Adhering to this statement I guarded against any tampering of the audio tapes, interview transcripts and the way field notes were captured.

I ensured data for this study were accumulated according to the research design. I was careful in that I presented accurate, precise descriptions of accounts imparted by the participants. As suggested by Gay and Airasian (2003:213) I showed an awareness to threats to validity which included "observer bias" when data are skewed as a result of dominance from researcher's perspective and "observer effect" when data are deformed as a result of the impact the observer has on respondents. It then became my responsibility to find mechanisms to "recognise, minimise, record and report them" (Gay & Airasian, 2003:214). I sought to mention personal biases and the possible effect it might have on the interpretation and findings (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:66). Nieuwenhuis (2007:114) believes that as the researcher's interaction with participant develops, the possibility of bias filtering into the study becomes inevitable. I made participants aware of my beliefs and possible bias with regard to GPLMS. This self-disclosure helped me to remain impartial and objective when interpreting data. I included Lincoln and Cuba's (1985) four criteria for trustworthiness of the study which suggest that data should be, credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable. The following strategies were including enhancing credibility of the study.

I included triangulation as the first and most vital step in the process of validating research. Mouton and Marais (1990:91) refer to triangulation as "the use of multiple methods of data collection. In this study triangulation was achieved through the use of several data collection techniques to validate the study. I triangulated interviews, observation (field journal kept) and document analysis. The different data sources became useful in building a "rich and comprehensive picture" for the themes (Creswell, 2012:536). If themes are established through converging different data sources then such a process can be declared as adding validity to the study (Creswell, 2008). The different strategies deepened my insight about the topic of interest and in the process increased the credibility of the findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:408).

Member checking was done to secure "verification by participants" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:330). Participants were involved to verify whether transcribed data, interpretations, themes extracted through data analysis reflected their intentions accurately. This process helped to clarify uncertainties with them. Participants were requested to comment and elaborate on the findings. It was important to include participants as mutual constructors of the findings (Lincoln & Cuba, 1985).

I utilised rich thick descriptions to validate findings. These descriptions transported the reader on a journey to the setting. As a qualitative researcher I sought to provide detailed accounts of the context. The school context, peer learning group activities, class size, and availability of resources were described comprehensively. This procedure added validity to the study.

By spending extensive time in the field I was able to develop an in-depth-understanding of the GPLMS phenomenon. The observations of peer learning groups gave insight into the setting, activities that teachers participated in, duration of these activities and teacher behaviour. This strategy increased validity of the findings. Peer debriefing was pursued to enhance the accuracy of the accounts provided. For this process I involved my supervisors who critically reviewed the detailed accounts. Participants were included in the review of interview transcripts and were granted permission to adjust or modify and reflect on the interpretation from the data. Through the application of transferability I was able to provide a description of the data collected. I referred to the theoretical framework to indicate how data collection and analysis would be guided by the existing concepts. Dependability was achieved through comprehensive review by supervisors.

3.11   ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

As a researcher involved in social science I became cautious of the complexity surrounding ethical issues. It was therefore necessary to ensure that any data extracted from human beings should never be done at their expense (De Vos et al., 2005). Ethical issues were another pillar on which this study was founded to strengthen integrity and quality. I accepted ethics as a set of moral principles by adhering to the rules, behavioural expectations about correct conduct towards respondents (De Vos et al., 2005). As outlined by Cohen et al. (2005:49) issues on ethics could arise from problems that social scientists investigate especially with regard to the methods that were used to obtain valid and reliable data. While Flick (2009) adds that an ethical issue could arise at every single stage of the research process it is therefore imperative to apply ethical measures to avoid harming participants.

My awareness of the requirements for an ethically sound study meant that I had to comply with the ethical principles laid down by the University of Pretoria. I took the first step to apply for

ethical clearance once my proposal was successfully defended before entering the field. My application covered aspects relating to protection of the human element. The following aspects were covered in the application:

3.11.1 INFORMED CONSENT

I obtained informed consent from participants as this is a necessary condition. Each participant was thoroughly informed of the goals of the investigation. I explained the time required for participation and my noninterfering and non-judgemental role during data collection. Participants were provided with accurate detailed information to enhance their understanding of the investigation. The participants were informed "in a manner to encourage free participation" (McMillian & Schumacher, 2001:421). I undertook to respect the autonomy of participants as they were treated as unique individuals within the context of their schools (Mugweni, 2012:91). They were made aware that participation is voluntary and they were at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time (Clasquin-Johnson, 2011).

3.11.2 ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

As suggested by De Vos et al. (2005) confidentiality involves the handling of information in a confidential manner. Therefore, I chose to assure participants that all data collected from them would be treated in a confidential manner as their identities would be masked. Participants were made aware that the actual location would be disguised with imaginary settings coming to the fore which might transport the readers to several possible sites. However I remained fully aware of all those who reveal data but such information but concealed their identities as no participant was identifiable in the findings (Cohen et al., 2005).

3.11.3 DECEPTION AND PRIVACY

Necessary steps were taken to avoid violating informed consent and privacy of participants by making use of correct information offered and not misinterpreting information. De Vos et al. (2005) define privacy as that which is not intended for others to observe and examine in detail. An individual's right to privacy can be violated in a number of ways, therefore I ensured to safeguard respondents' identities by not identifying them during the dissemination of data.

3.12 CONCLUSION

Included in this chapter was a detailed account of the selected methodology which was recognised and accepted as the most appropriate way to describe the complex nature of respondents in their natural setting. The qualitative case study became my source of motivation guiding the selection of enthusiastic, passionate and experienced teachers in Mamelodi for the

interviews and observations. The multiple data collection strategies proved to be an effective way of strengthening validity in a qualitative study. The procedure to be followed in data analysis discussed in this chapter becomes the foundation for the next chapter where data will be presented, analysed and interpreted.

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CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION OF DATA, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1   INTRODUCTION

My rationale for undertaking the empirical study emerged from my interaction with teachers in the township who struggled with curriculum implementation since 1997. Their lack of understanding and interpretation of the complex Outcomes Based Education (OBE) was aggravated by the lack of support and resources from the Department of Education. Hence the schools literacy results continued to decline over the years. Therefore, the school I am presently teaching at was included in the Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) programme which aims to offer support to schools that do not perform satisfactorily.

Since GPLMS offers a supportive approach to teaching Literacy I became motivated to explore how teachers experienced this approach. School literacy results (Clasquin-Johnson, 2011; Jansen, 1998; Mosia, 2011) suggest that a teacher's negative response to curriculum implementation is influenced by lack of support, resources and supervision. The theoretical framework enabled me to follow the process teachers undertake when implementing educational change (Hall & Hord, 1987; 2001). The selection and justification of the research design and methodology embarked upon in Chapter 3 facilitated the exploration of teachers' experiences and perceptions of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS). Data were accumulated through semi-structured interviews and observations, and were then concurrently analysed to establish how teachers construct meaning of the innovation they were working with (Ely et al., 1997). The focus of this chapter is to elaborate on themes and categories derived from Grade 3 teachers. The idea is to critically analyse data and discuss the findings.

4.2   ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

Data Analysis proceeded according to the suggestions by Nieuwenhuis (2007:337) that "Qualitative data analysis tries to establish how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon by analysing their perceptions and experiences in and attempt to approximate their construction of the phenomenon." Data were also analysed by following steps outlined by Creswell (2012:287) (see section 3.9). All data from interviews, observations and field notes were prepared and organised for analysis. The process commenced with a verbatim transcription of audio recorded interviews into text data. After several readings of the

transcripts my thoughts and first impressions were noted. Codes were allocated to the data. The recurring expressions articulated by participants were extracted and methodically arranged into themes and categories. A thematic discussion which followed took cognizance of the research questions. The emerging patterns were evaluated against the levels of concerns and levels of use that teachers may exhibit during the implementation of a new innovation as described by Hall and Hord's (1987, 2001) Concerns Based Adoption Model. The presentation in Chapter 4 is a description of the interpretative nature of qualitative data analysis with the presentation of "meaningful and symbolic data" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:99). Data acquired through classroom observation and field notes form part of the thematic discussion. I spent prolonged periods in the field gathering data by attending all the Professional Learning Support sessions to get a better insight of how teachers interacted with the professional development activities.

Grade 3 teachers in the Foundation Phase and their Heads of Departments of Foundation Phase from three schools were selected to participate in the study. The participants' identities are not revealed in the study to maintain anonymity. A coding system is used to refer to the responses from transcripts. The following codes were used.

Table 4.1:   Coding of Participants

Code	Explanation	Yrs experience
SA – P1	School A: *Grade 3 Teacher*	30
SA – P2	School A: *Foundation Phase HOD*	28
SB – P3	School B: *Grade 3 Teacher*	36
SB – P4	School B: *Foundation Phase HOD*	33
SC – P5	School C:*Grade 3 Teacher*	35
SC – P6	School C: *Foundation Phase HOD*	35

A summary of themes and associated categories emerging from the empirical data follow.

Table 4.2:   Research Themes and Categories

Themes		Category
Theme 1	Teachers' understanding of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy Strategy	▪ Goals and benefits ▪ Training, support and implementation ▪ Coaching model ▪ Resources
Theme 2	Teachers' experiences with the implementation of GPLMS	▪ Lesson plans ▪ Marking ▪ Creativity

	Themes	Category
Theme 3	Teachers' response to GPLMS	▪ Attitudes ▪ Teachers adoption of implementation ▪ Teachers adaption of implementation

4.3   THEMATIC DISCUSSION

In this section the themes and categories which emerged from data analysis are presented.

4.3.1   THEME 1

Teachers' understanding of the teaching of Literacy according to the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS)

This thematic category reveals that participants demonstrated an understanding of the Gauteng Department of Education's (GDE) goals, intentions and motivation behind the introduction and development of GPLMS. The initial meetings and road shows scheduled to disseminate information about the strategy alerted teachers on the poor state of literacy in township schools. Therefore, GPLMS was introduced with the intention of raising literacy levels of township schools. Rogers (2003) maintain that it is important that teachers understand and accept new curriculum implementations because it is critical to successful change. In order to uphold teachers' attitudes positively, the Department of Basic Education introduced orientation sessions and workshops. The interest generated from these orientation sessions held by the head office, district and appointed coaches evoked teachers' willingness and preparedness to embrace the innovation.

4.3.1.1   Goals and Benefits

For the purpose of clarity I wish to reiterate what was stated in Chapter 2 that GPLMS is an innovative strategy which targeted schools in the province that showed low levels in literacy achievement. In 2011 the innovation started as GPLS which included only mentoring literacy and in 2012 Mathematics was also included and it is now called GPLMS. GPLMS did not replace the official curriculum but remained aligned to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and is steadfast in promoting the aims of CAPS and the Foundations for Learning Campaign (FFLC).

In exploring teachers' understanding of GPLMS it became evident that participants showed an understanding of the goals and intentions suggested by Gauteng Department of Education. Most participants in this study are recipients of the departments "one size fits all curricula" (Clasquin-Johnson, 2011) and innovations introduced by the Department of Education.

However their professional training was not aligned to the new curricula and approaches to it. Therefore, this non-alignment of professional training created gaps in the execution of critical activities such as lesson planning, methods of facilitation and assessment. Most teachers from schools in townships remained uncommitted to change (new curricula) and were attached to old methods (Jansen, 1999; Motseke, 2005).

The introduction of the GPLMS was seen as a breakthrough to past interventions that were not effective in township schools. The design of the GPLMS for underperforming township schools convinced teachers that the initiative was designed to address teaching challenges in Literacy unique to township schools. Participants were well informed about the goals and principles of GPLMS and shared the GDE's vision on the implications of change for township schools (see section 2.7). The provision of resources, active involvement and support of teachers by coaches were cited as a key agents for change and implementation (Mugweni, 2012) (see section 2.10). One of the participants from School B understood GPLMS as:

> *"This programme has been designed to the underperforming schools in the township with the aim of trying to uplift English standards and with this programme they want to improve the reading of the learners."* (SA-P2)

Participants in the study referred to schools in the township schools as "underperforming schools". Therefore, the goal of trying to uplift literacy levels for their schools was appreciated and accepted with much enthusiasm.

Another participant was optimistic that GPLMS offers teachers the much awaited support to improve literacy levels. This understanding of support is consistent to GPLMS goals (2010-2014) that continuous teacher learning and support would be given to teachers to uplift learner achievement. One participant mentioned that:

> *"This programme supports us teachers to improve literacy levels in class."* (SB-P3)

A participant acknowledged that teachers would be supported to acquire the core methodologies and reading skills necessary to implement GPLMS. The participant stated that:

> *"This programme wants teachers to use the GPLMS methodology for listening and speaking, group guided reading so that learners become better readers, write good sentences and that they are able to understand the text so that comprehension skills can improve. The reason why many learners fail ANA is that they cannot read and understand a simple text."*(SB-P4)

This participant was also of the firm belief that teaching strategies were essential for literacy facilitation.

"It supports us with different methods and methods are important." (SB-P3)

The intention to support teachers to use the correct pedagogical approaches was accepted as a priority in township schools. A participant at School B mentioned that the disparity that existed in teacher training during the apartheid years seriously affected the teaching quality in township schools seriously. This statement corroborates with the findings of Kallayway (1984) that teachers from townships received poor quality training at teacher training colleges during the apartheid regime (see section 2.2). This participant showed readiness to embrace GPLMS by stating that:

> *"The standard in township schools is very low because most of us teachers did not get the same training like teachers in the former model C schools did, that is why we are unable to teach literacy as well as they do. They need to empower us to change and become better teachers, so we need to use the correct methodology; so now is the time."* (SB-P4)

Participants in the study were of the opinion that GPLMS would steadily improve Annual National Assessment (ANA) results in schools as the 2011 ANA results revealed that more than half of Grade 3 learners scored below level 1 (less than 35%) in the national literacy assessment (see sections 2.6.3). A participant mentioned that through GPLMS better results in ANA and reading and writing could emerge:

> *"The ANA results are very poor so this programme is only for underperforming schools to help us improve the ANA results so that learners can read better, comprehend, write good sentences, speak and listen."* (SC-P5)

The poor ANA results in literacy were what forced the GDE to introduce GPLS (which later became GPLMS when Mathematics was added) according to this participant.

> *"The ANA results in the township schools are very, very poor therefore GPLMS was introduced to township schools with the hope of improving ANA results.''* (SB-P4)

The absence of teaching and learning materials impacted negatively on teaching in schools for many years (Vandeyar, 2005) (see section 2.4.1). Therefore, participants expressed appreciation that the resources are available to support teaching and learning. A participant mentioned that the provision of resources was a good strategy because:

> *"We are now using GPLMS for three years and this is a good strategy because they give us all the resources to teach literacy like the DBE (Department of Basic Education) books, posters for listening and speaking activities, reading lists, lesson*

plans, graded readers and a library trolley for each class. The lesson plans have daily lesson plans so we are no longer writing preparation." (SC-P5)

Teachers' understanding of GPLMS goals is consistent with the GDE's intention to bring lasting improvement in learner's reading and writing across the system (DoBE, 2014). These intentions when evaluated against Hall and Hord's (1987, 2001) Concerns Based Adoption Model indicates that teachers with a basic understanding of GPLMS were more likely to adapt and adopt curriculum implementation at higher stages of CBAM (Stage 5 and 6, Consequence and Collaboration). The teachers collaborate with each other especially with their colleagues, heads of departments and other stakeholders to gain more information to implement GPLMS effectively. An important principle supporting the Concerns Based Adoption Model is that when an innovation is implemented, the task of a knowledgeable teacher is to guide others in ways that are consistent with their concerns so that they become effective in teaching the strategy and embrace the prescribed procedures (Hall & Hord, 1987:10) (see section 2.14).

4.3.1.2 Training and Support

The focus of quarterly training planned by the coaches for teachers was to equip teachers with knowledge and skills so that GPLMS could be effectively implemented (DoBE, 2014). Teachers were given opportunities by coaches to understand curriculum implementation. In my experience coaches promptly communicate with the school management teams. They would inform the HOD on training dates for the new term. At these training sessions learner support materials like reading lists, posters for the term would be distributed and explained. Teachers were given the structured lesson plans. Clear teaching directives on use of learner support materials and lesson plans were given to teachers. The coaches discussed the overview of lesson plans. Teachers interacted with the coach and were able to clarify uncertainties and misconceptions that they had (see section 2.11). Participants responded positively to the training sessions held. A participant responded:

> *"I was adequately trained. With this GPLMS we get a lot of training and support. At the beginning of every term we get our training from the coach. She gives us the lesson plans, the reading lists, the phonic plans and the flash cards. She trains us on how to use the lesson plans. We were trained on how to use the listening and speaking activities using big posters."* (SC-P5)

Teachers referred to training sessions as the "Just in time" which means teachers were trained just before the new school term commences. These sessions equipped teachers with the basic understanding of curriculum requirements for the school term. The teachers' knowledge and

skills relating to GPLMS increased which is integral to teacher change (Mosia, 2011). A participant's reply to the training suggested that:

> "*They workshop us at the beginning of the terms to give us the knowledge about teaching literacy according to GPLMS.*" (SB-P1)

At the training sessions teachers were also urged to follow the lesson plans and keep up with the weekly lesson plan. The teachers' ability to keep pace with the GPLMS programme was regarded as one of the essential criteria. A participant stated:

> "*We are told to follow the lesson plans and keep pace*" (SB-P3)

Schools implementing GPLMS were clustered into groups of six to eight schools. A cluster of schools were referred to as Professional Learning Groups (PLG). These groups met regularly under the supervision of their coaches. The quarterly training, DVD training and workshops were conducted during the scheduled sessions for Professional Learning Groups (PLG) workshops. Participants mentioned that the training and support offered to teachers enhanced their understanding of content (DoBE, 2014). According to Hall and Hord's Concerns Based Adoption Model when teachers are motivated they move from the lower levels of concern (awareness, informational and personal) to higher stages of concern (management, consequence and collaboration) (Hall & Hord, 2001). At this stage teachers are willing to adapt and adopt change. During this stage teachers were meaningfully engaging with GPLMS (Hall & Hord, 2001). This was gathered from the field notes captured during classroom observations, observation of Professional Support sessions and during interviews as they were knowledgeable about GPLMS. They also showed a positive attitude. As the teaching practices of Literacy was learnt at the training one of the participants, a Foundation Phase Head noticed some changes in the way teachers managed the activities at school after training. Teachers incorporated GPLMS pedagogy into the class due to comprehensive and systematic training. The participant stated:

> "*They have been more than adequately trained to implement GPLMS with the result I have noticed a change in their entire teaching style. A teacher is now using GPLMS methodology (pedagogy) to teach listening and speaking, to teach phonic activity, group guided reading, shared reading and even how to teach spelling words.*" (SP-P4)

During the PLG training sessions I observed coaches stress the importance of teachers following the correct strategy as proposed by the lesson plans. During the training the coach urged teachers to use the methodology for shared reading as indicated in the lesson plans. A

participant took it seriously and stated that the coach stressed the importance of modelling good reading so that learners could understand the meaning of text and improve pronunciation.

> *"With shared reading the coach wants us to use the methodology in the lesson plans. We must model good reading during these lessons and use the correct intonation so that learners can learn from us; they can understand the story, pronounce words and know the meaning of those words. We are trained to teach learners to read with good expression."* (SC-P5)

The knowledge and skills (to teach literacy) gained from regular/weekly training sessions encouraged teachers to enter the classroom being more confident with the methodology. The benefit of the training was stated by a participant as:

> *"Training was beneficial because we take back what we learnt at the training and put it into practice in the classroom. We know the correct methodology to teach reading. I will never forget this methodology. We were trained on how to use the components for reading like the teaching of phonic, flash words. The learners benefitted from our teaching because we know what to do in reading and there is progress, good resources.*" (SB-P5)

The off-site training (Professional Learning Groups) gave teachers the opportunity to relate to the meaning of the GPLMS away from school (Carless, 1998:355). When the professional needs of teachers are met, they become familiar with the innovation and move to the refinement level where changes are made based on the needs of learners. This is an indication that teachers are able to adapt the innovation in the implementation process (Sweeny, 2003). When evaluating the results of sufficient resources and teacher support against Hall and Hord's (1987; 2001) Concerns Based Adoption Model it became evident teacher support turned out to be a critical external factor for the effective implementation of GPLMS (see sections 2.11.1, 2.11.2).

At the training teachers were also given the opportunity to view Digital Video Discs (DVD) that were compiled for schools that implemented GPLMS. During the Professional Learning Groups training the coaches would show teachers' clips of an episode from the DVD. For each of the DVD training session teachers received an accompanying manual with practical activities. The teachers were trained how to implement the DVD activities during the Professional Learning Group sessions. Participants mentioned that the DVD training empowered them to teach literacy confidently and effectively. The participant stated that:

"The coach also shows us the DVD and in the DVD they show us how to teach the listening and speaking activities, group guided reading using flash cards and how to organize the classroom and follow activities effectively." (SC-P5)

The manual for the "listening and speaking" episode outlines the methodology checklist that teachers have to follow when teaching the listening and speaking activity (DoE, 2013). The coach reminded teachers that she would use the checklist when observing teachers in practice. I attended all the Professional Support Group sessions where the coach indicated to teachers what was expected of them in the class.

4.3.1.3   Coaching Model

The coaching of teachers is a new initiative introduced by the GDE to support and intensify the implementation of GPLMS (DoE, 2010-2014). Coaches were recruited on the basis of their experience and knowledge in the field of education. All coaches were professionally trained teachers who were appointed by the GDE to provide coaching and technical support to teachers in schools. This support from the coaches enabled teachers to implement the teaching of Literacy more effectively in their classroom. During interviews teachers often mentioned support from coaches as the life line for this strategy. Coaches were to act as a 'critical friend' to the teachers regarding literacy teaching. Participating teachers indicated that coaches adhered to their duties allocated to them and guided them throughout the process of implementation. A participant from school A confirmed that the coach visited the school regularly.

> *"Yes the coach comes to our school twice a month. She observes our lessons. She gives us feedback. She checks the learners' book."* (SA-P1)

The purpose of the lesson observation was to ensure that teachers teach according to the GPLMS strategy and whether they were using the prescribed methodology. Teachers were given feedback after observation of lessons in the afternoons, a duty which the coach had to fulfil. Participants also indicated that during the visit the coach checked their workbooks to support teachers further. A participant indicated that:

> *"She monitors our workbooks and classwork books so the coach does support us."* (SA-P1)

Participants found the presence of the coach to be supportive because they were assisted in managing and implementing GPLMS and was considered to be a mentor according to one participant the Foundation Phase HOD:

> *"She coaches us. She supports the teachers. She even workshops them, demonstrates during workshops. She is our mentor."* (SC-P6)

A participant mentioned that teachers should keep up with the structured lesson plans and should not fall behind with the programme. The amount and quality of the written work are monitored by the coach. The role of the coach was summed up by one of the participants as:

> *"Well the coach is there to provide professional support to the teachers, to make sure that they are teaching according to this strategy and teachers must keep up with this programme, because if they fall behind it becomes difficult for them to complete. Learners won't benefit from this programme if a teacher falls behind too far and also makes sure that learners are given homework, the marking is complete and some days she comes to check the written work of the learners."* (SB-P4)

The teachers had welcomed and accepted the presence of the coach into their classes. The response from participants on coaching was positive and no participant mentioned that the presence of the coach was hindering implementation but regarded support as motivating and developmental. A participant from School B the phase HOD responded to the support from the coach *as:*

> *"The coach has been there throughout this programme to support the teachers to make sure they are implementing this programme according to its requirements. The teachers share a very close relationship with the coach because they have realized that she is there to support and encourage them."* (SB-P4)

Another area in which teachers were supported by the coach was during preparation for the ANA which a participant found as helpful. The participant a teacher from School C indicated that*:*

> *"Before the learners write the ANA tests they come with the pre ANA assessment which learners write and helps us prepare for the ANA test.*" (SC-P5)

The DVD training that I attended provides teachers a guide explaining, step by step, how to follow the lesson plans. The teachers also watched video clips on listening and speaking, teaching group guided reading and shared reading and classroom and resource management. Teachers found the DVDs helpful:

> *"We even watch the DVD on how to use the lesson plans."* (SA-P1)

Teachers worked closely with the coaches and valued the regular support from coaches. They were also of the opinion that during the implementation of GPLMS it was not even necessary

to have support from the district officials for curriculum guidance. A participant stated that the coach assisted teachers with curriculum needs and recording of assessment tasks.

> *"In my opinion I don't feel it's necessary to include district officials from the district because we have coaches who develop us and when the district officials come to our schools, when they come they get everything in place, they get the implementation, they get the assessment. We are taught how to assess, on how to record our assessment tasks. I don't feel it's necessary more especially because of the coach. Those coaches come to us frequently to the school so I don't think it's necessary for them to come and monitor us."* (SC-P6)

The participant from School B appreciated the invaluable support offered to the school by the coach. However, she concluded that the officials from the district did not share the same interest in the programme like the coaches did. This is what the participant revealed:

> *"Well support from the district officials could have helped teachers in a sense that they could be given guidance and support but unfortunately the support did not take place since GPLMS was introduced. At one stage I found out through my interaction with district officials that they were not particularly interested in this programme. Teachers I think did very well with the support of the coaches. The coaches stepped in and did what officials could have done to help improve the literacy levels. To that we say well done to the coaches. They came into the schools at the right time a made a difference to the teaching of language as well as the methods.*" (SB-P4)

4.3.1.4 Supply and Utilisation of Resources

The availability of resources is crucial to effective implementation and the production of good quality learners (Jansen, 1998). However the non-availability of resources in township schools when Outcomes Based Education was introduced contributed to poor teaching, poor quality of learners and poor results (Vandeyar, 2005). When the GPLMS was introduced the GDE made provisions to have all materials needed for implementation delivered to schools. Participants from all three schools indicated that they had most of the resources at their disposal to improve literacy in their classroom. A HOD agreed that most of the resources were delivered to school:

> "*We have received most of the resources like we have the DBE books, the lesson plans are given to teachers, there is a library trolley with supplementary readers, there are group guided readers although there are some shortages with the group guided readers because of the big classes."* (SB-P4)

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) introduced and delivered literacy workbooks to primary school learners. The purpose of these workbooks was to improve quality of teaching and learning literacy in primary schools. The different methods and techniques built into these workbooks enabled learners to acquire language skills in the Foundation Phase. According to

the teachers the DBE workbook was one of the most valuable resources for implementing GPLMS. With regard to the availability of DBE workbooks a participant indicated that:

> "*This year all the learners have DBE books. We are not sharing DBE books. We have a few extra because sometimes during the course of the year we get new learners and they don't come with the DBE books from their previous school. So we are fortunate to have DBE books this year and the learners do not have to share a DBE book with another learner.*" (SB-P4)

At School B a participant mentioned that they experienced shortages with the readers as they were delivered in packs of 10, and some GPLMS classes had an average of 60 learners. A participant mentioned that:

> "*But the readers are not 100% delivered in our school, so that's a bit of a challenge there. So, but we do discuss how to overcome that problem.*" (SA-P2)

With regard to shortages and non-delivery of some of the resources participants mentioned they received training on how to overcome shortages so that implementation was not compromised. A participant's response from School B to shortages was:

> "*I normally contact the coach and if she has surplus material she delivers them to the school. We are also allowed to purchase additional resources from the Learning and Teacher Support Material (LTSM) budget. So I inform the LTSM committee and they purchase books on our behalf.*" (SB-P4)

A similar procedure was taken to overcome shortages experienced at another school (school A.) and the participant proclaimed:

> "*We did mention to our coach, our principal about the shortages and the LTSM co-ordinators, so they are busy working on that by using the allocation from the department to place orders for those books.*" (SA-P2)

The shortages of some readers did not deter participants from continuing with the implementation. Teachers explored different avenues to secure resources. This proactive decision taken by participants demonstrates the teachers' seriousness and positive attitudes about the effective implementation of Literacy at their schools. The programme (GPLMS) was not put on hold or ignored because of shortages of resources. According to one participant from school A the Foundation Phase HOD mentioned that, they made copies of the material at the school while awaiting delivery:

> "*But in the interim we visit nearby schools and we borrow their books and make copies so that learners have these copies.*" (SA-P2)

Photocopies of readers were also used at school A, B and C so that learners had their own copies when group guided reading was conducted. Participant from School B the Foundation Phase HOD responded as follows:

> "*So while we are waiting for delivery I make photocopies of the reader, so that learners have readers when they do group guided reading.*" (SB-P4)

The fact that participants made photocopies of the unavailable readers and worked closely with teachers from neighbouring schools shows teachers' concerns for teaching and learning. This collaboration with other schools according Hall and Hord (2001), is indicative of a teacher operating on the upper Stage of Concerns at the consequence and collaboration level because the teacher focuses on the impact of GPLMS.

Participants were also satisfied with the quality of DBE literacy workbooks which impacted positively on teaching and learning. A participant's evaluation of the DBE books was as follows:

> "*I think DBE books are extremely good. The materials are extremely good. DBE books are well illustrated. A variety of activities that a learner can use to improve the literacy levels in FAL (First Additional Level).*" (SB-P4)

The standard of readers was of a good quality and teachers could use them according to the reading abilities of the learner. A participant mentioned that:

> "*The readers are also excellent because they have been graded from simple to more complex books. So in our classes we do have learners who like in grade 3, their level of reading are not at grade 3 level. We also use simple books for them to read and the brighter ones we give them level 3 books to read the more complex ones.*" (SA-P2)

One participant rated the readers as a good quality and of a good level, because the learners enjoyed the repetition of sight words and the interesting content. The participant stated that:

> "*Readers are good. Little Red Hen, lots of repetition. Learners enjoyed Wanjiro and the Giant.*" (SB-P4)

Classroom observations also revealed that DBE and other GPLMS resources were fully utilised in the classroom. The DBE books were used for shared reading, language and writing activities. A participant confirmed that DBE books were used at least two to three times a week. When questioned on how often the resource was used, a participant responded:

> "*Two to three times because the lesson plans tell us the activities to do in the workbook. And we use the DBE workbook for homework. The activities in the DBE books are very good. There are themes that the learners enjoy.*" (SA-1)

The above-mentioned statement was also confirmed by another participant at School B who carried out activities making use of the DBE books according to the directives from the lesson plans. The participant had the following to say:

> "*We are instructed on which activity to do and sometimes we also do the shared reading from the DBE books which are excellent.*" (SB-P4)

When evaluating the results of adequate resources against Hall and Hord (1987; 2001) Concerns Based Adoption Model it was found that an adequate supply of resources, curriculum learning materials and teacher support improved the teaching of literacy in township schools. The teachers were functioning on the Upper Stage of Concern, the Consequence Level (Stage 5) of Hall and Hord (2001). Teachers were concerned about improving learner's Literacy levels as they followed the activities in the lesson plans. According to Hall and Hord (1987), effective curriculum change depends on teachers' willingness to change. Mosia (2011) and Mugweni (2012) both reflect on support and resources. They indicate a lack of support and resources is a problem for most teachers causing them to ignore or resist change and this is the opposite for teachers implementing GPLMS. The GDE enabled teacher change through training and support to teachers. Therefore, the provision of resources, support from the coach and capacity development of teachers served as a gateway to effective implementation.

Literature revealed that inadequate in-service training, resources and a lack of support impact negatively on teaching and learning and ultimately on learner performance. Teachers become demotivated, frustrated and uncertain about curriculum change. A number of internal and external factors detract teachers from committing to the process of acquiring skills and knowledge to implement the new curriculum (see sections 2.4; 2.4.1; 2.10; 2.10.1; 2.10.2; 2.10.3).

4.3.2   THEME 2
Teachers experiences with the implementation of GPLMS

The aim in exploring this theme was to obtain an understanding of teachers' experiences when implementing Literacy according to GPLMS. The emotions expressed by teachers during interviews were analysed to obtain insight into the topic under investigation. Data collected from teachers on their experiences were meaningful in terms of the study as teachers' views regarding their experiences were important in understanding how they were engaging and responding to the GPLMS. The CBAM (Hall & Hord, 2001) contends that the experiences of teachers and their initial concerns are essential in understanding of a new curriculum.

4.3.2.1 Lesson Plans

The DoE (2014) assured teachers that they would be relieved from the difficult task of lesson planning. Teachers only needed to follow the lesson plans in the correct sequence, pace and adhere to the time allocation so that learning outcomes could be achieved. However, during interviews participants confessed to keeping pace with the structured lesson plans as overwhelming. Teachers were faced with new challenges as they struggled to keep up with the well planned lessons. A participant's response to keeping up with the pace was as follows:

> "*We are supposed to follow what is in the lesson plans in the correct sequence but we cannot, some of the learners are absent on some days, and we are behind. Some learners are slow and they take longer to finish.*" (SB-P3)

Despite the challenges experienced with not being able to follow lesson plans in the correct sequence and at the required pace participants did not show signs of resisting implementation. According to Hall and Hord's (2001) Concerns Based Adoption Model the teachers had reached the middle stage of concern (Management, Stage 4) when at this stage he/she shows orientation towards the task and focuses on the mastery of the task. However at the management level the teacher shows some understanding of innovation and has adopted it but still encounters some implementation challenges. This participant was adamant that it is not possible to rush through the programme in the interest of the learners. She stated that:

> "*If I am fast they are going to suffer and they won't learn. I won't just rush and you find that at the end of the day the learners have learnt nothing.*" (SB-P3)

The participant to the contrary, had undertaken to continue with the strategy at the pace of the learners.

> "*I have to work at their pace.*" (SB-P3)

According to the CBAM (Hall & Hord, 1987; 2001) the teacher shows signs of adopting the innovation but displays concerns on how to manage the innovation.

Another factor hindering progress in townships was the background of the learners. A participant committed to implementing the GPLMS described the pacing as:

> "*I try my best but sometimes it's a challenge because lessons are fast tracked to make sure we cover everything for the term. So most learners in the township are slow learners. They come to school with their own problems. Some of them live with grandparents, and there are no parents. So emotionally the children are not strong. So it's a challenge to follow these lesson plans in the correct sequence but all the teachers are trying their level best.*" (SC-P5)

Another participant from School B, the Foundation Phase Head of Department also confirmed that learners' social conditions in the township constrained teachers' capacity to keep up with the lesson plans. The participant confirmed that:

> *"Well the teachers can keep pace but the problem lies with the learners we have. One must understand the school has been declared as underperforming so most of these learners underperform because they come from disadvantaged backgrounds. We have high levels of poverty, unemployment, drug abuse and single parents in the townships and it's a struggle for most of these learners to concentrate fully in the classroom. So it's easy for a teacher to fall behind because the concentration levels and abilities of these learners are much slower than maybe a child attending school in the suburbs so it's difficult for a teacher to keep up with such learners."* (SB-P4)

This participant responded that pacing presented a challenge to both teacher and learner because of the speed:

> *"Ah this is a great challenge you know because the programme is too fast for both the learner and the teacher. Teachers find it difficult to keep pace because learners have got different levels in their classes. Some are more gifted, some are just average, some you know are less gifted and those are the ones who are being disadvantaged by this programme because they cannot keep pace. So that is the most challenge we are faced with."* (SA-P2)

A participant from School C, the Foundation Phase Head of Department, revealed that prepared lessons have new lesson each day so if a teacher falls ill or is absent, it becomes stressful to catch up. The participant revealed a practical challenge experienced with implementing structured lesson plans:

> *"…….the pacing is a serious challenge, but if you are not at school maybe one day or two days, you fall behind and the programme needs a teacher to be in the classroom every day following the lesson plans so the pacing is very fast and there is no time for a teacher to go back and even slow learners don't cope with this pacing, so pacing is still a challenge."* (SC-P6)

A participant from School A indicated that while bright learners excelled the weaker learners continued to lag behind due to lack of support from parents. Most teachers in the township did not get cooperation from parents. The lack of parental involvement meant that activities given as homework are not attempted.

"The bright learners can cope but slow learners don't – even if you give them activities for homework, they don't finish. We don't get support from their parents even when we give them homework." (SA-P1)

Teachers were also pressurised to keep up with the pace of the coach. Participants indicated that the coach insisted they kept up with the pace of the lesson plan. This participant commented on what was expected from them when the coach visited the school.

"When the coach comes the first thing she checks is where we are with the lesson plans. She does not want to see us behind with the lesson plans. We must not be more than 2 weeks behind at least one week she understands." (SA-P1)

Teachers also found the allocation of time for some activities as insufficient and challenging. A participant expressed concern over limited time

"It's a challenge because the slow learners don't cope. We cannot do everything in that short space of time, that is a problem." (SA-P1)

Participants indicated that the time allocated for some of the GPLMS activities were sufficient. One participant however, found the time allocation for the written activities and group guided reading to be limiting. The participant's responded to the allocation of time of the activities as follows:

It depends on the type of activity. If it is a listening and speaking activity or a shared reading then the 30 minutes is sufficient; but if it is a writing lesson or a group guided reading the time is not sufficient. Learners take much longer with the writing activities and with group guided reading we are supposed to finish up with a group in 12 minutes. The group is big. We have to teach the methodology, follow the methodology that is in the lesson plans for the "look and say method", and then we have to listen to each learner read at least two sentences, so 12 minutes for group guided reading is not sufficient." (SB-P4)

The Concerns Based Adoption Model of Hall and Hord (2001) shows that teachers were using the GPLMS at the reinforcement level (Level 6). Teachers understood the importance of the innovation and adjusted the pacing according to learner needs in order to increase outcomes.

4.3.2.2 Marking

The introduction of literacy according to GPLMS increased marking of scripts, assignments and assessment tasks. A teacher has to mark many activities daily. During classroom time the focus was on keeping pace with programme and teachers spent the afternoon trying to catch up with marking. Participants claimed that they could not cope with the huge loads of marking:

> "*Oh no, with GPLMS there is a lot of marking. I don't cope with the marking this means that I have to remain in school in the afternoons or mark at home because we do corrections in the morning.*" (SB-P3)

Teachers found marking to be stressful as work needed to be taken home. There are classwork books, DBE books and assessment tasks that needed to be marked. The marking was also monitored by the coaches during school visits. The participant mentioned a numbers of books that had to be marked to assess the Literacy aspects.

> "*We have a lot of marking. We have learners' classwork, DBE books, and assessment tasks. So we have to take marking home and this is exhausting and stressful. We have to mark daily because we do corrections in the morning and when the coach visits us she wants the marking to be completed.*" (SC-P5)

Teachers found marking to be an exhausting task due to the high learner numbers in the class. When conducting the investigation most of the classes in the Foundation phase were still overcrowded and that impacted on the number of books, assignments and tests a teachers had to mark each day. A participant's (HOD) response to whether teachers cope with marking was:

> "*Not at all because of the rolls in the classes are very high. We have an average of 60 learners in some of the classes and it's not easy for a teacher to mark some of these activities. Ja it's a great challenge that one too.*" (SA-P2)

The above-mentioned extract on large classes was also supported by the HOD from School B who stated that:

> *There is a lot of marking to do as well as its difficult for a teacher to cope because she has to mark the DBE books, classwork activities, the assessment tasks and our classes are very big in the township so marking is a challenge.*" (SB-P4)

4.3.2.3 Creativity

Most of the participants in the study were experienced teachers who were autonomous within the confines of their classroom. However, the GPLMS dictates how every minute of the contact time should be used, hence teachers found this highly structured programme to have

reduced their own creativity and flexibility in the class. A participant's response to being creative in the class was even followed by a question:

> "*We must follow everything in the lesson plan. Where is the time for creativity?*" (SB-P3).

This plea for more opportunity to be creative was also shared by another participant who experienced the need to follow the lesson plans rigidly rather restrictive. The coaches closely monitored whether lesson plans were followed. This participant enjoyed music in the class to break the monotony but found it impossible to engage in this activity because of the workload.

> "*We have to follow the lesson plans as they are. The coach also checks to see if we are following the lesson plans. We are also singing in the class but we cannot because there is no time for fun in the classroom. It's just reading and writing all the time.*" (SA-P1)

The teachers' ability to be creative was put on hold as another participant also expressed the close monitoring by the coach of the teaching strategy that reduced her ability to be creative in class. The coach used a checklist to monitor the listening and speaking activities as well as the shared reading. Since the GPLMS revealed change that was well-planned, the teachers developed more concerns during the collaboration and refocusing stage (Stages 5 to 7) of the Concerns Based Adoption Model (Hall & Hord, 1987, 2001) as their attention focused on the impact of the GPLMS and the direct consequences. Another participant from School C remarked that:

> "*Everything is planned for us. Lesson plans are there, resources are there. The coach uses a checklist to see if we are following the methodology for listening and speaking and for listening and speaking we are not allowed to repeat the sentences for more than 3 times. Shared reading we must read the story at least twice. They tell us everything so we can't be creative or flexible.*" (SC-P5)

However, the participant expressed she enjoyed being flexible in the class for the sake of the learners. The participant went on to say:

> "*But in my class I like to be flexible because with the Foundation Phase time table they should be flexible, if learners are becoming tired or bored we must be free to change to another activity, take a break come back when learners are refreshed, but with GPLMS you must follow everything they have written in the lesson plans otherwise you are going to fall behind and when the coach comes, if you are behind she becomes very upset so you can't be creative, nor can you be flexible.*" (SC-P5)

The participants' concerns regarding pacing, increased marking and rigid timeframes were not addressed, as they were pressurised to continue to keep pace. These results when measured against the Concerns Based Adoption Model reveal that if concerns relating to workload are not resolved, the result may be a teacher functioning at the lower levels of use. Teachers' inability to keep pace and increased workload may resort to day-to-day adoption of the GPLMS at a surface or mechanical level (level 4) of use. A teacher functioning on the mechanical level may adopt superficial aspects of the curriculum (Hall & Hord, 1987:8). However, the intensity of GPLMS prevented teachers from adopting a superficial level because from the responses and observations I could determine that the teachers were much more confident in their teaching skills.

Teachers implementing the GPLMS did not have to plan lessons and this helped in reducing the workload and made teaching more manageable although the admin was a lot.

4.3.3   THEME 3
Teachers' responses to the implementation of the GPLMS

All participants in the study responded positively to the implementation of the GPLMS. They considered the GPLMS to be an effective programme that contributed positively to literacy achievement.

4.3.3.1   Attitudes

Teachers from all three participating schools accepted the teaching of Literacy according to the GPLMS with a positive attitude and further revealed that the learners benefitted from the GPLMS. Evaluated against Hall and Hord's (1987; 2001) Concerns Based Adoption Model the teachers were implementing the GPLMS at the levels of collaboration and refocusing. Strong commitment dedication, professional development and good resources contributed to an improvement in learner achievement. A participant indicated that reading levels improved. She said:

> "*Learners have benefitted in many ways because we can see there is an improvement in the reading abilities of these learners, even the slower learners can read.*" (SB-P4)

The enthusiasm and active involvement by teachers to implement the GPLMS made the goals outlined for the GPLMS achievable, as a participant stated that:

> "*Learners are reading confidently. They are speaking with confidence. They now understand English better. In fact they speak English well. They cope with comprehension activities. They have a good understanding of the language. Their vocabulary is increasing.*" (SC-P5)

The participant noticed that the learners were more motivated and enthusiastic to learn, because of the availability of quality resources. Teachers also made maximum use of resources which contributed to an improvement not only in reading but also in the quality of written work:

> *"Learners are more motivated to learn because of the availability of resources and we see the quality of written work has improved. They write more meaningfully."* (SC-P5)

The resources that were made available to schools helped sustain the programme and teachers helped to keep the learners actively involved. A participant from School B found learners enjoying resources supplied to schools. The extract below by participant B also reveals that good resources can make a difference to learning. The participant responded:

> *"They enjoy the resources that GPLMS have given to them. They are motivated to read because of lots of resources, the library trolley has a variety of books and bright learners benefit from these resources and the slow learners I think just by observing bright learners they become motivated in the reading activities, also motivates them to try and improve. There has been an improvement in comprehension, because the teacher explains the words and does many activities to improve the learners' understanding of the text. We can see an improvement in the comprehension levels of these learners and the other thing is with this shared reading activity we find that the learners can identify the title of the story, the characters in the text. They can retell a story in their own words."* (SB-P4)

A participant who was keen and willing to learn the GPLMS approach to teaching Literacy felt confident and claimed that her experience of the training improved her teaching ability. The participant stated that:

> *"I think the method of approaching phonic er…benefitted the learners because before we didn't know how to approach the phonic, on how to teach phonic, but know how to teach the phonic." (*SC-P6)

All participants accepted the innovation with a positive attitude as they proclaimed learners benefitted from the GPLMS. According to Hall and Hord (1987; 2001) when teachers' attitudes are congruent with the initiative, they are more likely to implement the innovation at higher levels such as collaboration and refocusing. The Professional Learning Groups sessions enabled teachers to share knowledge and experiences. Therefore, teachers could adapt and adopt the GPLMS. This is also opposite of Mosia (2011) and Mugweni (2012) findings which found that teachers had negative attitudes due to the lack of support, therefore, some teachers

reluctantly complied while others complied with constraints. The lack of direction created self-doubt in teachers.

4.3.3.2   Teachers' Adoption of Implementation

In this study adoption means that teachers have accepted, approved and embraced and applied the knowledge and skills they had learnt at the training sessions and benefitted from the guidance of the coach. The rigorous formal training that teachers were exposed to enabled them to acquire knowledge and skills critical to the teaching of literacy. The workshops conducted by coaches during Professional Support Groups sessions and DVD Training enhanced knowledge and skills of participants. Through observation I noticed coaches guided teachers through the process on how to use theme posters to build and reinforce good language use. Teachers were instructed to teach sentences that appear in the lesson plans and not to use their own sentences. As teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching listening and speaking activities grew, they became more capacitated and confident to adopt the GPLMS in the classroom. Teachers were able to teach Literacy and could incorporate all the strategies they learnt. A participant's reply to how the manner in which listening and speaking were taught was:

> "*This is the best GPLMS activity because learners, they enjoy the theme poster. I put the poster on the chalkboard so that learners can see them, but the poster is large so everybody can see the poster from where they are seated. I give them a change to look at the poster. Then I start with the sentence that is in the lesson plan. The poster on the Zoo I start with sentences. I point to the group of giraffes on the poster. I say the sentence. The learners repeat after me. I say the sentences two more times.*" (SC-P5)

The above extract is a demonstration of teachers' understanding of the teaching strategies as indicated by the coach during the Professional Learning Group. The teachers' understanding and use of the correct teaching strategy was in line with requirements when I observed the listening and speaking activity. The knowledge and skills that a teacher from School C gained from the support sessions were practised in the classroom as she (teacher during my observation) taught a theme poster on "The Hospital". It was evident that the teacher thoroughly prepared for the activity. The poster was displayed on the writing board in front of the class. Learners were seated in front of the class. The teacher used the sentences from the lesson plans and pointed to the poster showing the particular sentence. The teacher said the sentence three times using actions and gestures to advance meaning of the sentence.

After learners repeated the sentence the teacher asked the questions from the lesson plan. She then answered the question with the learners. When the question was asked for the second time, individual learners were given the opportunity to answer. All learners were enthusiastic about answering questions. The teacher encouraged learners to answer in full sentences. Participants understanding and use of the correct methodology revealed that the training from the coach, DVD trained impacted positively in the classroom as teachers adopted the GPLMS in their classes.

Participants mentioned that the theme posters were a valuable resource to teach listening and speaking. Learners were also given A4 size drawing of the poster. A participant's response to the teaching of listening and speaking activities is proof that teachers benefitted from demonstrations by the coach as the method according to the GPLMS was adopted by the teachers. Teachers felt more confident and empowered. A participant from School B elaborated on the teaching of the lesson by asserting that:

> "*I teach it just like the coach showed us. I put the big poster on the chalkboard. I give learners the small poster. We talk about the picture. I use the same sentences from that are in the lesson plan….er the children repeat the sentence and I ask the question. They answer in full sentence.*" (SB-P3).

Classroom observation was consistent with what was revealed during the interview as the participant from School B followed the same procedure in the classroom. The learners were given A4 size drawing of the poster. The teacher used sentences from the lesson plans. The new vocabulary was emphasised. The learners were shown pictures of animals in the zoo.

The training sessions equipped teachers with skills and knowledge on how to conduct shared reading which was adopted as an effective approach in the classroom. Participant teachers understood the importance of pre-reading skills, which requires a teacher to teach new words from the text. The GPLMS referred to the pre- reading as the look and say method. A participant gave an account her competence of what the look and say method entailed:

> "*The look and say method is where we teach learners a list of words that appear in the shared reading activity. We drill them just like the flash cards. We discuss the meaning of these words and once the learner has grasped these words and can recognise them we begin with our shared reading activity so that the whole text becomes more meaningful to the learner.*" (SB-P4)

The above-mentioned statement was consistent with what was observed in the participants' class during teaching. The knowledge and skills acquired from training was used in class as the teacher gave learners maximum support as they read a text from the DBE book. The teacher

taught the few sight words on the flashcards before commencing with the reading the words were read aloud followed by the learners who repeated the indicated words. All learners had their own copies of the DBE books. The teacher read the text aloud while learners followed. The text was read fluently and with expression by the teacher and meaning was embedded as the text was read. The support given to teachers enabled them to succeed in implementation (Sweeny, 2003). A participant teacher claimed to have been supported by the coach on how to teach group guided reading. A participant acknowledged that the coach guided her through the process of group guided reading:

> "*Yes we were shown how to teach group guided reading by the coach. In my class she did demonstrate once to, but it was a challenge.*" (SA-P1)

Practical demonstration helps to increase teachers with understanding of the reading strategy as a participant from School B replied:

> "*Yes the coach showed us how to teach group guided reading. At the beginning I was not sure but now I am empowered and I can teach group guided reading.*" (SB-P1)

Another participant from School B agreed that the coach empowered her to understand and acquire the skill of teaching group guided reading. Participant noted that:

> "*Oh yes the coach showed us how to teach it and I can do it but before I could not do it. I put the learners and groups and the others will be writing. I read a few pages and drill the flash card and correct the pronunciation.*" (SB-P3)

The above extract reveals teachers adopted the GPLMS. DVD training gave teachers a step by step guide on teaching how to conduct group guided reading. During observations I noticed that teachers placed learners in same ability groups so that they could read at a level that was appropriate to their groups. This experience allowed learners to enhance their language and comprehensive skills with the unique guidance from the teacher. The positive attitude displayed by teachers enabled them to appreciate the teaching of Literacy according to the GPLMS with regard to its benefits rather than becoming discouraged about personal and implementation challenges. Measured against Hall and Hord's (1987; 2001) Concerns Based Adoption Model the teachers were likely to be implementing the GPLMS at levels of collaboration and refocusing use. Since GPLMS was planned teachers developed more concerns at collaboration and refocussing stages. Teachers were concerned about attending PLG sessions and applying knowledge and skills in to classroom to improve Literacy levels.

4.3.3.3 Teachers' adaptation of implementation

"Adapt" in the context of this study means that teachers understood, adjusted to and implemented the literacy approaches according to the GPLMS. Teachers also became familiar with the GPLMS. All participants in the study adapted the GPLMS methodologies and lesson plans. Through adaptation there was an improvement in ANA results. Evidence presented by the three heads of department during the interviews revealed that the ANA results of the schools improved. The participant added:

> *"Gradually we are getting there because you know the ANA results have shown that there has been an improvement because previous years ANA results were not good and this year the results have improved."* (SA-P1)

The HOD from School B proudly presented the ANA results and stated:

> *"There has been an improvement in our results in 2012 and 2013. We noticed a big improvement in our ANA results. I am pleased to note that in 2013 the Literacy average for Grade 3 was 62 %."* (SB-P4)

The participant from School B attributed the improvement in results to dedication from teachers and they were able to adapt to the demands of assessment. The GPLMS had also exposed them to better assessment strategies. According to the participant's beliefs:

> *"I think we have achieved because teachers are much more dedicated and they got used to the style of testing in the ANA papers. So learners are exposed to better assessment activities. ANA results are improving and we hope it continues to improve in future and I can say thanks to this GPLMS programme. We can see the fruits of it because learners are benefitting from the programme.*" (SB-P4)

The participant from School C related to how adaptation of GPLMS has improved reading skills of Grade 3 learners. One of the requirements during the assessment is that Grade 3 learners should read the question paper independently and answer the paper. According to the participant from School C learners were able to read the question paper. She said:

> *"The results are better especially in language because during ANA, more especially the Grade 3. They need to read instructions on their own. So this programme is improving their reading skills, the learners read now, so they can even read the instructions from the ANA so the results are better than last year's results 2012."* (SC-P6)

The participants from all three schools agreed on the improvement of the ANA results. The HoD's from all three schools indicated that they collaborated with teachers and parents to

transform policy guidelines into practice. Schools held parents meetings once a term with parents. During these meetings they discussed the GPLMS. The HOD worked closely with teachers and parents to share knowledge regarding the GPLMS. The participant stated:

> *"I make sure that teachers attend the GPLMS programme and workshop and I also monitor their lessons. I go to their classes. I check if they have challenges regarding the programme and I report the challenges to the coach and we also discuss the challenges. We discuss progress and we share ideas on how to overcome challenges."* (SA-P4)

The participants (HoD and teachers) mentioned that they collaborated with parents while adapting the GPLMS. Parents were invited to meetings as the strategy was discussed and parental involvement was encouraged. This participant took the opportunity to discuss the GPLMS during the parent evening:

> *"We do have parent evening every term where parents are being briefed about GPLMS. What is GPLMS? Why was it introduced? How can it help their children at home? Ja (Yes) every term we do involve the parents."* (SA-P2)

Analysis of results reveals that participants in the study were adapting and adopting the GPLMS as learners' Literacy skills improved. Comparing the learners' progress against Hall and Hord's (1987) Concerns Based Adoption Model it can be stated that the teachers made changes to adjust to the GPLMS and were operating at higher levels of collaboration and refocusing where changes were made to improve learning outcomes. Teachers were able to adapt and adjust the GPLMS because of their active involvement (see sections 2.17, 2.18). Unlike the participants who battled to progress in Mosia's (2011) study due to a lack of guidance and support, the involved in this research project showed good progress.

4.4   DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings from this empirical study reveal that teachers accepted and understood the importance of the GPLMS resulting in positive implementation at classroom level. Consistent with literature findings a teacher's initial understanding and acceptance of a new curriculum becomes the basis for successful implementation (Giltine & Margonis, 1995; Fullan & Miles, 1992). Teachers recognised and appreciated the need for change and they were directly involved with the new curriculum. According to Hall and Hord's (1987; 2001) Concerns Based Adoption Model teachers who are actively involved with the implementation of an innovation are classified as users of an innovation. They operate on higher levels of use – Level 7 (Integration) and Level 8 (Renewal). Hence teacher enthusiasm and eagerness to embrace the innovation increased. Literature (see section 2.17) indicates that if teachers participate in

initiating roles in school curriculum change, they become positive recipients of the change process and show willingness to participate in future change.

In this study teachers were motivated to follow the GPLMS methodologies as the lesson plans provided the content and context. Teachers were provided with adequate support from their coaches. There were multiple opportunities for interaction with the coach, colleagues, professional development and availability of resources of a high quality. The training and support given to teachers enabled them to succeed in implementation. Teachers continued to grow over time with the support and resources they received (Sweeny, 2003).

Within the context of the Concerns Based Adoption Model the guidance and support that teachers receive allow them to understand, adopt and adapt to change and move quicker to higher levels and stages of CBAM Level 6 Collaboration (Hall & Hord, 1987). Teachers become comfortable working in groups as a team.

Sweeny (2003) asserts that once teachers attain the collaboration level, they realise the value of the innovation and with time will be able to give collaborative support to their colleagues in change programmes. Teachers were focussed on the results and impact of the GPLMS. Teachers regularly attended Professional Learning Group sessions (training sessions with peers) and taught according to the new requirements and followed the suggestions given by the coaches. I noticed a change in the way teachers taught literacy since the introduction of GPLMS. Teachers' confidence and improvement in their teaching can be ascribed to their cooperation with coaches, school management teams and regularly attended support sessions. The Gauteng Department of Education's turn-about to the GPLMS implementation accompanied by continuous opportunities for professional development changed the way teachers taught Literacy in their classes. Investment in teacher development helped transform classroom practice. Spillane's (2000) findings found subject matter to be the most valuable context in teachers' efforts to reform classroom practice. Teachers benefited from quarterly training, on-going professional development and availability of resources. The findings from earlier research (Motseke, 2005) show that the provision of resources, improvement of facilities, intensive retraining in teaching approach, regular in-service training can enable teachers from townships to transform their classroom practise. Vandeyar (2005) maintains that a lack of resources in schools can seriously hinder implementation and can impact negatively on teaching and learning (Vandeyar, 2005). This study proved Vandayer's (2005) statement as correct as the support and resources in the GPLMS impacted positively on teaching and learning in underperforming schools.

Teachers experienced keeping up with the pace involving highly structured lesson plans to be overwhelming. Teachers therefore had to adapt the curriculum so that they could accommodate

all learners otherwise slower learners would have been disadvantaged by the high speed of the suggested lesson plans. They began to work according to the pace of the learners. Literature findings show that no curriculum is used without adaptation (Drake & Sherine, 2006). Teachers do not implement a curriculum "as is" but go through a process of "mutual adaptation" with local conditions and conditions. They make numerous modifications during practice translation (McLaughlin, 1998:80). Teachers had to fast track lessons on days that they were absent. The environmental background of learners impacted on teachers' ability to keep pace. Learners received little supports from their parents as they did not assist their children with homework completion. The home background, economic and social circumstances of learners in township constricted lesson facilitation in township schools (Motseke, 2005). The Concerns Based Adoption Model shows that through experience and familiarity with the innovation teachers moved to the routine and refinement level of use where changes are made on the needs of the learners (Hall & Hord, 1987).

Teachers experienced an increase in workload especially the marking of the GPLMS. Teachers found the marking of the GPLMS activities to be stressful because of the large classes. Some of the classes still have over sixty learners per class. Research by Chisholm (2005) found overcrowding in township schools as a barrier to effective implementation of Outcomes Based Education. Years later despite several changes made to the curriculum township schools still remain overcrowded. Teachers found the highly structured lesson plans restrictive of their creative capacity in class. Since the day to day planning was done teachers were not allowed to deviate from the given plans. Teachers found themselves operating strictly according to the dictates of the GPLMS as the coaches used a checklist to monitor whether the correct methodology was followed by teachers

Teachers responded to the implementation of the GPLMS with positive attitudes and were able to achieve the goals outlined for the GPLMS. They adapted and adopted the implementation of GPLMS in their classes. They taught lessons according the prescribed methodologies. The on-going training equipped teachers with knowledge and skills. Their involvement, enthusiasm and optimism contributed to learners' development of positive attitudes towards reading. The bright learners excelled at the GPLMS while the slower learners were motivated by the confidence shown by their peers and teachers. Teachers were able to motivate learners because of resources available. They were trained on how to use the materials and readers were on appropriate levels of the learners. The DBE workbooks were a valuable resource to use for shared reading and language activities. Remillard and Bryans (2004:364) indicated that teachers implemented a curriculum in varying degrees depending on the resources available, their understanding of the materials, the nature of the students and constraints of time (see section 2.17). According to Hall and Hord (1987, 2001) teachers are able to implement an

innovation at levels of collaboration when there is adequate support. The teachers' attitudes in this study were positive about the innovation and were able to operate at the levels of collaboration and refocusing which means that they were meaningfully involved with the effective implementation of the GPLMS in their classes. Collaboration with coaches and peers during training session in monitoring contributed to a better understanding of the curriculum. The teachers were able to reach the collaboration level as they realised the value of the innovation. There was strong commitment to teaching according to GPLMS. I found the improvement in ANA as one of the greatest achievements of the GPLMS.

The findings differ from Mosia (2011) and Mugweni's (2012) study on teacher implementation of change which revealed that teachers were uncertain, confused and lacked commitment, with regard to implementation of the new curriculum. They did not have a clear understanding, knowledge and competence of the new innovation due to lack of empowerment in the form of support and resources. Teachers therefore resisted, ignored or delayed implementation. Mosia (2011) posits that teachers developed anger and frustration because of a lack of resources and support from officials. However results from this empirical study reveal that literacy teaching strategies according to the GPLMS were adapted and adopted by all participants and both learners and teachers developed positive attitudes towards curriculum implementation. The teachers were able to successfully implement the GPLMS in their classes because resources were provided and the coaches played an important role with regard to the training and implementation of the curriculum.

4.5   CONCLUSION

In this chapter the analysis focused on Grade 3 teachers' understanding, experience and response to the implementation of Literacy according to the GPLMS. Semi-structured interviews and observations featured as key research strategies which enabled data to be collected from Grade 3 teachers. Analysis of data revealed that teachers accepted the curriculum implementation according to the GPLMS with a positive attitude. When measured against the theoretical framework of Hall and Hord's (1987; 2001) Concerns Based Adoption Model, results indicated that teachers were working at the levels of consequence, collaboration and refocusing Teachers were able to acquire higher levels of concerns as they realised the importance of the GPLMS for learners Literacy achievement. They responded positively to policy and curriculum implementation. The provision of resources and support are important for successful and effective implementation of a curriculum. In Chapter 5 I discuss the conclusions and recommendations of my study and recommendations in relation to the results obtained in Chapter 4. The main research question and sub-questions will be answered.

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CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This study investigated teachers' understanding, experiences, response to and implementation of Literacy according to the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy Strategy GPLMS). In Chapter 4 the findings from teacher participants were presented according to the three broad themes that emerged. The themes and sub themes were further analysed and chronologically presented. The findings were compared to previous literature on policy implementation and research done on teachers' response to curriculum change. The theoretical framework of Hall and Hord's (1987; 2001) Concerns Based Adoption Model on how teachers understood the implementation of Literacy according to the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy as a new approach to curriculum implementation was examined to determine the levels at which teachers were engaging with the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy. Results showed that teachers who implemented the GPLMS revealed traits such as commitment, dedication and understanding (see section 4.3.3.1). Commitment and understanding of the process of change in the implementation of the curriculum were fostered as teacher development, supervision, support and relevant learning materials to ensure that curriculum transformation was in place for effective implementation. The purpose of Chapter 5 is to provide a summary of the study and to share conclusions, findings and answers for research questions. Recommendations emanating from the study are also mentioned.

An overview representing each of the preceding chapters in relation to research results and research questions that guided this study will follow below.

5.2   SYNOPTIC OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The overview highlights the synopsis of this study. A summary of the first four chapters and the key findings from each chapter with regard to the literature and the empirical research will follow.

CHAPTER 1

In this chapter an outline of the study was established. The rationale, problem statement, research questions, preliminary literature review, research approach and definition of key concepts were determined to guide the study in terms of its originality and background. The

details surrounding the background information about relationship between teachers' understanding, experience and implementation of policy and curriculum innovation were elaborated on. Schools were identified by the Gauteng Department of Education as underperforming because of their poor results in the Annual National Assessments (ANA). Assessment evidence gathered by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) on literacy performance revealed that learners especially from township schools underperform in Literacy (DoE, 2010-2014). The chapter reveals that the problems teachers experience with curriculum implementation is one of the reasons why learners' underperform. Literature (see section 1.4.5.) revealed that teachers were demotivated, confused and frustrated as a result of inadequate training, support and resources. The Gauteng Department of Education's response to underperformance was therefore to introduce the GPLMS to raise literacy levels in underperforming schools (DoBE, 2014).

CHAPTER 2

In Chapter 2 a discussion on the history of township schools was included to contextualise the study. The literature revealed that the introduction of Outcomes Based Education (OBE), Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and National Curriculum Statement (NCS) brought little transformation to teaching and learning because of the lack of training, skills, knowledge, inadequate resources and overcrowding in township schools (see sections 2.4, 2.5, 2.9; 2.10; 2.11). The Foundations for Learning Campaign (FFLC), Teaching Reading in Early Grades (2008) and National Reading Strategy were described as interventions to support the NCS (see sections 2.7, 2.8). My literature research (see section 2.4,) into these interventions however, found that it failed to improve learning due to poor teacher support and understanding of the curriculum. Hence, the gap between policy and implementation continued to widen in township schools.

Literature (Clasquin-Johnson, 2011) revealed that teachers in townships schools were found to respond to change by resisting and ignoring implementation when they failed to see the merit in the change. Research by Mosia (2011) reveals that teacher uncertainty and misconception forced teachers to become demotivated, despondent and adopt negative attitudes towards curriculum change and implementation. This chapter describes that the Annual National Assessment was introduced to uplift underperformance and expose teachers to better assessment practices but instead the poor literacy results from 2008 and 2009 Annual National Assessments forced the Gauteng Department of Education to take steps to uplift quality of teaching and learning in underperforming schools. Information from Gauteng Department of Education (2010-2014) confirmed that the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) was introduced as a strategic plan to raise the literacy levels in selected underperforming schools in Gauteng Province (see section 2.7).

CHAPTER 3

In this chapter an explanation of the research design, research methods, and data collection strategies concerning the topic under investigation was provided. An argument on the relevance of a qualitative and interpretative research paradigm for this study was provided. The interpretative nature of the study enabled me to understand the subjective meaning of the participants' experiences. The qualitative case study design is described as the most appropriate approach for the study as I was able to interact freely with teachers in Mamelodi to obtain rich information on the topic under study. The semi-structured interviews, observations and field notes were discussed as data collection strategies to engage with participants in their natural setting (the school). I elaborated on the importance of a research journal to record all informal discussions with teachers, coaches and heads of department. The chapter ends with a discussion of my ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 4

The focus of this chapter was on analysis, presentation and interpretation of data. The results and findings of the study were compared to literature reviewed and Hall and Hord's (1987; 2001) Concerns Based Adoption Model relating to teachers' understanding, response to and implementation of the GPLMS. The analysed data revealed that teachers' access to professional development activities, guidance, support, coaching and the availability of good resources enabled them to improve in their understanding and implementation of the curriculum. Findings from the research proved that teachers were able to change and adopt new strategies in classroom teaching and consequently managed to improve the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results. Analysed data revealed that teachers understood, adapted and adopted the GPLMS with compliance.

5.3   FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

❖   **Finding 1: Teachers understanding of the Gauteng primary school Literacy Strategy**

The participating teachers were informed about the goals, principles and intentions of teaching Literacy according to the GPLMS and supported the introduction of the GPLMS for township schools (see section 4.3.1.1). Teachers believed that the strategy was specifically designed to assist schools in the township with the intention of improving literacy standards. The teachers also indicated that they have been waiting long for support in the form of workshops and training and that the support and training improved learners' achievement. The GPLMS encouraged teachers to use the different components from the lesson plans to teach the listening and speaking activities, group guided reading, shared reading, language, phonic and

writing (see section 4.3.1.1). Teachers shared the Gauteng Department of Education's vision on the need to improve learner achievement in literacy and the results of the Annual National Assessments (see section 4.3.1.1).

The training and support from coaches improved teachers' understanding of the implementation of Literacy and the manner to use lesson plans (see section 4.3.1.2). Teachers interacted with coaches to clarify uncertainties and misconceptions (see section 4.3.1.3). The availability of good quality resources supported the implementation of the GPLMS. Participants were satisfied with lesson plans, readers, Department of Basic Education (DBE) workbooks and phonic plans they received (see section 4.3.1.4). According to the participants the resources were of a high quality and improved learner participation (see section 4.3.1.4). Teachers mentioned that they understood and were able to use the resources effectively when teaching group or guided reading, shared reading, language and reading activities (see section 4.3.1.4).

❖ **Finding 2: Teachers' experiences with the implementation of Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS)**

The GPLMS provided teachers with structured lesson plans. This initiative relieved teachers from spending long hours with planning. Teachers experienced the training and coaching as advantageous as it improved their understanding of the implementation of Literacy (see section 4.3.2.1). The only problem teachers experienced with the GPLMS was the pace at which teachers had to work with the structured plans and schedule for the completion of the curriculum (see section 4.3.2.1). Most learners in township schools experienced personal problems at home. The majority of learners came from poor backgrounds as some lived in shacks and lacked support due to illiteracy and long working hours of their parents which impacted negatively on children's ability to do homework and to study (see section 4.3.2.1). Therefore, teachers struggled to keep up with the pace of the GPLMS as required by the coaches. Teachers were of the opinion that structured lesson plans reduced their ability to be creative in the classroom (see section 4.3.2.3). They had to account to the coach on how they utilised every minute. According to one participant this was a strict programme, was fast-paced and it had no time for "fun" in class (see section 4.3.2.3). Teachers argue that the time allocated to some of the written activities and group guided readings was not adequate (see section 4.3.2.2). The marking and administrative work of teachers increased due to large classes and the requirements of the GPLMS but the fact that they received lesson plans, resources and guidance helped the teachers to manage the administrative work. Teachers nevertheless experienced the teaching of Literacy according to the GPLMS as effective and as a strategy that could improve learners' literacy performance.

❖ **Finding 3: Teachers' responses to the Gauteng primary schools' Literacy Strategy**

Teacher participants responded positively to the implementation of the GPLMS (see section 4.3.3). Guidance and support from coaches improved teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes and competence. Teacher commitment, enthusiasm and active involvement with the GPLMS improved learner performance in Literacy. They eagerly attended the "Just in Time", Professional Learning Group and DVD training and applied skills in class (see section 4.3.1.2) Through adoption of GPLMS teachers were able to show an improvement in ANA results and reading skills of learners in 2012 and 2013 (see section 4.3.3.2). The Heads of Department in all three schools were also involved in the training and encouraged and supported teachers to implement the GPLMS effectively (see section 4.3.3.2). The participants acknowledged that they held parent meetings to discuss the GPLMS as this was a new initiative. They discussed the strategy at these meetings and urged parents to assist their children with reading and completing activities in the DBE workbooks (see section 4.3.3.3). Unfortunately, not all parents were able to support their children due to their challenges such as poverty, long working hours and illiteracy (see section 4.3.3.3.)

5.4 THE FINDINGS IN TERMS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the following section the research questions and sub questions as outlined in Chapter 1 are answered.

5.4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What are the policy, curriculum requirements and components of the GPLMS that need to be addressed?

A study of the literature and relevant documents from the Department of Education revealed that the GPLMS curriculum required teachers to complete the listening and speaking, group guided reading, shared reading, language, comprehension and creative writing activities planned for each week. Teachers were trained by the coaches on how to use each of the components. The teacher lesson plans indicated the "core methodology" that teachers had to follow when teaching the different components. Participants acknowledged that a good supply of high quality resources supported the implementation of the GPLMS. However teachers became overwhelmed by the fast pace at which lessons were to be conducted and planned and provided to them as most learners in township schools experienced difficulties viz.; poor housing conditions, poverty and lack of parental support. There was a new lesson planned for each day of the week and teachers struggled to keep up with this highly structured and fast pace of the lesson plans. Teachers nevertheless found the approaches of the GPLMS effective.

5.4.2   RESEARCH QUESTION 2

How are the perceptions and experiences of teachers in underperforming schools influenced by the implementation of Literacy according to the requirements of the GPLMS?

Research done (see Introduction and Rationale in Chapter 1) on teachers' understanding and experiences of curriculum implementation revealed that most teachers were uncertain and lacked understanding about the implementation of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and subsequent interventions aimed at improving teaching and learning rather confused and demotivated them further. All teacher participants in this study responded positively to the implementation of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS). The teachers were guided throughout the implementation process and felt empowered, as they were fully capacitated to teach Literacy according to the guidelines and support provided by the GPLMS.

Empirical data of this study revealed that teachers perceived and experienced the implementation Literacy according to GPLMS as an effective approach to improve learners' literacy levels and adapted and adopted their teaching according to the requirements of GPLMS. They gained knowledge and skills to teach Literacy effectively and were confident in their teaching abilities and competence. They mentioned that they had the knowledge and skills to incorporate listening and speaking activities, group guided reading, shared reading and the phonic approach to teach Literacy Teachers showed commitment and taught Literacy with enthusiasm as they were empowered and fully supported by coaches to implement the GPLMS effectively.

Teachers accepted and responded positively to the support from their coaches. It is evident from the positive way in which teachers responded in the interviews and their excitement observed that participating teachers were confident and their self-esteem was good as they acquired content knowledge and skills to teach Literacy. All teacher participants emphasised a proactive attitude towards the strategy.

5.4.3   RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What is the relationship between GPLMS policy provision and educational practices regarding GPLMS?

The study found a coherence between policy and curriculum implementation. According to participants in this study they understood and accepted the GPLMS policy guidelines and curriculum provisions. Teachers were supported by coaches to implement the GPLMS which

helped to strengthen teachers' Literacy teaching. Teachers were therefore able to adjust and adapt their teaching accordingly to the GPLMS policy guidelines because of effective and sufficient support. The teachers revealed that they understood policy requirements because of the professional development activities provided by their coaches. They acknowledged that they were supported through curriculum workshops, school based workshops, Professional Learning Groups (PLG) sessions and Digital Video Disc (DVD) training. These activities contributed towards their growth and development. They enabled teachers to translate policy guidelines into educational practice. Participants also admitted to teaching according to curriculum guidelines provided to them by the coaches. Participants' teaching of Literacy improved with support from coaches as revealed in the interviews and the ANA results.

The study established that adequate supply of resources, on-going professional development and support and guidance by coaches led to the effective implementation of literacy and became motivating factors in teachers' adapting and adopting of the new strategies for curriculum implementation. Teachers effectively improved learner achievement in the Annual National Assessment (ANA) as shown in the schools ANA results.

5.4.4   MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

How do teachers understand and experience the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics?

All teachers were certain, confident, empowered and highly committed with regard to the implementation of the GPLMS. Consequently the teachers became confident, proactive and enthused to enhance learner achievement. Teachers showed an understanding of the goals and principles outlined by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE).

The appointment of coaches to support teachers proved to be effective. Teachers co-operated, trusted and formed close relationships with their coaches who were regarded as their mentors. They were motivated, trained and empowered with knowledge and skills to comply with competence as required by the new approach (GPLMS) to teaching. Through continuous support, guidance and professional development opportunities teachers were able to effectively implement the GPLMS in their classrooms. The coaches assisted teachers with understanding and managing the GPLMS materials.

The teachers supported the Gauteng Department of Educations' strategy to improve Literacy in Grade 3 and understood the benefits of GPLMS for underperforming schools. Since all participants were qualified Foundation Phase teachers with more than twenty years of teaching experience, they were able to quickly grasp and adapt their teaching in the new approach

prescribed by GPLMS at the appropriate rate. Teachers were supported continuously in their efforts to raise literacy levels. The Professional Learning Groups (PLG) and DVD training were effective in building collaboration among groups of teachers.

Teachers remained committed to the implementation of the GPLMS even though they experienced the pacing of the structured lesson plans as challenging. The highly structured nature of the lesson plans and learners' unique contextual problems inhibited teachers' ability to keep up with the lesson plans and the pace of working. Teachers found learners to be slow in progressing and grasping contents from the lesson plans yet there was an improvement in the children's literacy skills. Teachers indicated that the background of learners often hindered their academic progress. They also experienced that the GPLMS caused an increase in marking but the fact that all materials and lesson plans were supplied helped them to overcome the marking challenges of large classes.

The coaches and Heads of Department in the Foundation Phase were committed and responsive to the needs of teachers. Subsequently teachers developed positive attitudes towards the implementation of the GPLMS because they understood how to translate the curriculum into practice effectively.

5.5   RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the research findings the following recommendations are suggested:

5.5.1   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

❖   **Recommendation 1**

Since the use of coaches has been stopped in 2013 it is recommended that the Department of Basic Education should continue to employ the coaches who provide teachers with valuable support, guidance and insight into the teaching of literacy (GPLMS) in Grade 3. In this way more teachers will continue to grow professionally and will be able to teach the various components of literacy. The training from coaches will ensure that teachers will implement the GPLMS according to policy. Teachers will remain positively motivated towards the implementation of literacy and the Annual National Results will improve.

❖   **Recommendation 2**

I recommend that the Gauteng Department of Education should review the pace of the lesson plans since all participants indicated that they were not able to cope with the pace of the structured lessons plans. The teachers should not be given specific literacy tasks with rigid timeframes to complete in a week but provided with suggested guidelines on how to teach the

different components for Literacy within the unique context of the school and learners. Schools especially in townships could extend the school day by an extra hour to allow leaners to complete homework in class. Many children live in poor housing conditions where there is no space for doing homework and they lack parental support.

❖ **Recommendation 3**

The finding from the teachers indicated that they collaborated with each other in their schools and in their clusters. They were co-operative and committed towards achieving goals. They regularly attended Professional Learning Group sessions and they enthusiastically participated in training sessions, discussions, demonstrations and shared resources. I therefore recommend that schools continue working collaboratively in Professional Learning Groups (PLG). During these sessions concerns regarding assessment, recording, and classroom management, pacing and preparation for the Annual National Assessment should be addressed.

5.5.2   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings of this research further research should be conducted in the following:

❖ **Experiences and educational effect of the GPLMS on learners reading development**

Further research should be conducted on the experiences and educational effect of GPLMS on learners' reading comprehension practices, writing and their performance in the Annual National Assessment.

❖ **The impact of the Extra School Support Programme (ESSP) on learner performance**

The findings from my study revealed that most learners do not get support with homework at home. The GDE has employed part-time students to assist learners in schools implementing GPLMS with homework. A study on the implementation of the Extra Support Programme (ESSP) and the impact of learner performance could be conducted.

❖ **The implementation of the GPLMS without the support of coaches**

From the findings it was gathered that teachers responded with positive attitudes to the implementation of GPLMS. A research study on how teachers cope without the support from coaches would be interesting. It will provide insights whether teachers can cope when all the resources are supplied but without support.

5.6   CONCLUSION

The study showed that teachers understood the importance of the GPLMS. Teachers were able to perform at higher levels of implementation through on-going professional development, good resources and support from their coaches. Research also revealed that teachers were well informed about the goals and benefits of the GPLMS for underperforming schools. Teachers were guided on the use of support materials according to the GPLMS. They gained valuable skills and knowledge and were able to adapt their teaching according to the GPLMS requirements. Schools showed an improvement in the Annual National Assessment (ANA) as this was a major achievement for the Gauteng Department of Education. As I reflect on the study I have realised the importance of addressing learner underperformance through a well-planned strategy and clearly defined goals. The GPLMS has helped the teachers in underperforming schools to commit to the components of teaching literacy. By paying attention to the different components, following guidance offered by the coaches and attending workshops teachers were able to improve ANA results. The support throughout the implementation process over 3 years has made teachers aware of the importance to collaborate with their colleagues and develop better understanding of the curriculum. Teachers begin to develop stronger identities as they experienced success with the strategy. The use of coaches and professional development helped to break down barriers that teachers had to achieve success in the teaching of Literacy. However, at the end of 2013 coaches' contracts were abruptly terminated. The teachers nevertheless indicated that they would continue with the strategy as trained.

Well-planned in-service teacher training, regular support and provision of resources resulted in improvement of teachers' knowledge and skills, positive attitudes to curriculum implementation and confidence in their teaching. In March 2015, the Gauteng Department of Education informed schools that were implementing the GPLMS through a memorandum (DoE, 2015) that the GPLMS as an intervention strategy was successfully implemented in "priority schools", which was previously referred to as "underperforming schools" when the strategy was first introduced. Teachers were thanked for their dedication and commitment to quality education as the Annual National Assessment showed an improvement.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Letter to Principal with consent form

APPENDIX B
Letter to Teacher with consent form

APPENDIX C
Letter of explanation to Grade 3 learners

APPENDIX D
Letter of explanation to Parents

APPENDIX E
Questions to be asked in the interviews: Teachers

APPENDIX F
The Head of Department: Foundation Phase interview protocol

APPENDIX G
Observation Schedule

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APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear Principal

I am a student currently studying through the University of Pretoria. I am currently enrolled for my MEd in the Faculty of Education. I am required to complete a research module and one of the requirements is that I conduct research and write a research report about my work. I would, like to ask whether you will be willing to allow me to conduct a part of my research in your school. My topic examines teachers' understanding and experiences of the implementation of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy Strategy (GPLS).

As an educator at a township school I am deeply concerned about learners' underperformance in national and international literacy assessments. Most learners are unable to read and write and the recent Annual National Assessment results indicate that more than 95% of learners from township schools attain less than 35% in the tests. With the introduction of GPLS as an initiative to raise literacy levels of learners in township schools I am eager to understand how you and your educators experience this new initiative.

If you agree to allow me to conduct research in your school I will interview you, two Grade 3 educators and the Head of the Foundation Phase. The interview will take place at a venue and time that will suit you but I will not interfere with any of the school activities or teaching time. The interview will not take longer than an hour and will be audiotaped and transcribed for analytic purposes. I would also like to observe the two Grade 3 educators literacy lessons for at least 60 minutes on two occasions and the researcher's role will be objective during this process. Notes will be taken during the lesson observation. The notes will be transcribed by me for analytical purposes. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the information.

Your identity, the identity of the educators and the school will be protected as names will not be used in the study so you can be assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The information you provide will be used solely for academic purposes. In my research report only pseudonyms will be used and no other identifying information will be given. Should you decide to withdraw at any stage, you will not be penalised in any way. You may have access to the results from this study.

Should you agree to participate, please sign the letter of consent?

Yours truly

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MS Chetty (student)   M.G. Steyn (supervisor)

Consent form

I_____ (your name). Principal of_____ agree/do not agree (delete which is not applicable) to conduct research in this school. The topic of the research is "**Teachers understanding and experiences of the Gauteng Primary schools Literacy and mathematics Strategy**" I understand that the Grade 3 teacher and the Head of Department in the Foundation Phase will be interviewed. The interview will be audiotaped and transcribed. I understand that the educators' literacy lesson will be observed on two occasions. The observation will last for at least an hour and notes will be taken by the researcher and transcribed for analytical purposes only

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

Voluntary participation in research, implying that I may withdraw from the research at any time. Informed consent, meaning that the research participants must be fully informed about the research process and purposes and must give consent to their participation in the research.

Safety in participation, put differently, that human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind, e.g. research with young children.

Privacy, meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity with human respondents should be protected at all times. Trust which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception

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APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear Teacher

I am a student currently studying through the University of Pretoria. I am currently enrolled for my MEd in the Faculty of Education. I am required to complete a research module and one of the requirements is that I conduct research and write a research report about my work. I would, therefore like to invite you to participate in a study that explores teachers' understanding and experiences of the implementation of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy Strategy (GPLS).

As an educator of at a township school I am deeply concerned about learners' underperformance in national and international assessments. Most learners are unable to read and write and the recent Annual National Assessment results indicate that more than 95% of learners from township schools attain less than 35% in the tests. With the introduction of GPLS as an initiative to raise literacy levels of learners in township schools I am eager to understand how you experience this innovation.

If you declare yourself willing to participate in this study, you will be interviewed about this topic and I will observe your literacy lesson. The interview will take place at a venue and time that will suit you but I will not interfere with any of the school activities or teaching time. The interview will not take longer than hour and will be audiotaped and transcribed for analytical purposes.

Your identity will be protected as your name nor will the name of your school be used in the study so you can be assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The information you provide will be used solely for academic purposes. In my research report only your pseudonym will be used and no other identifying information will be given. Should you decide to withdraw at any stage, you will not be penalised in any way. You may have access to the results from the study.

Should you agree to participate, please sign this letter of consent.

Yours truly

_____   _____
M.S. Chetty (student)   M.G. Steyn (supervisor)

Consent form

I_____ (your name) agree/do not agree (delete which is not applicable) to conduct research in this school. The topic of the research is "Teachers **understanding and experiences of the Gauteng Primary schools Literacy and mathematics Strategy**" I understand that I   will be interviewed. The interview will be audiotaped and transcribed. I understand that the educators' literacy lesson will be observed on two occasions. The observation will last for at least an hour and notes will be taken by the researcher and transcribed for analytical purposes only.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

Voluntary participation in research, implying that I may withdraw from the research at any time. Informed consent, meaning that the research participants must be fully informed about the research process and purposes and must give consent to their participation in the research.

Safety in participation, put differently, that human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind, e.g. research with young children.

Privacy, meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity with human respondents should be protected at all times. Trust which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception

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APPENDIX C

Faculty of Education

Department of Early Childhood Education

13 June 2013

Dear Grade 3 Learner

Letter of Information

I am a student at the University of Pretoria. I will be visiting your class twice this term. I wish to see how you answer questions, read from your readers and complete your work in the workbooks.

I will be seated at the back of the classroom while you are busy in class. I will not talk to you while you are learning.

Yours truly

_____   _____

MS Chetty   Dr. MG Steyn (Lecturer)

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APPENDIX D

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

Department of Early Childhood Education

13 June 2013

Dear Parent

Letter of Information to parent

I am a student in the Masters of Education programme at the University of Pretoria. I have to complete a research module and write a report on how children answer questions, read and write during the language lesson in the Grade 3 class. Therefore I will be observing the language lessons in your child's class on two occasions.

The purpose of this study is to gain understanding of how children respond to questions, participate in discussions, read and write in the language lessons so that children can be helped to become better readers.

On the days of the observation I will be seated at the back of the classroom. No discussion will take place with the children. Your child's identity will not be protected as the name of the school nor will the child's name be not mentioned in any of the final written reports.

Yours sincerely

_____   _____
MS Chetty   Dr MG Steyn   (Lecturer)

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APPENDIX E

QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IN THE INTERVIEWS: TEACHERS

Questions related to teachers understanding of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy?

- ❖ What is your understanding of GPLS?
- ❖ What are the goals for the programme?
- ❖ Why has your school been included in the GPLMS programme?
- ❖ Do you think you were adequately trained to teach literacy using GPLMS?
- ❖ What are some of the aspects you were trained on?
- ❖ Did you find the training beneficial? Could you explain?

Questions related to teachers experiences of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy

- ❖ Do you follow the lesson plans in the correct sequence/
- ❖ Could you cope with the pace of the lesson plans/
- ❖ Could the learners cope with the pace of the lesson plans/
- ❖ Does GPLMS cater for your own creativity as a teacher?
- ❖ Is the time allocated for each activity sufficient/ Could you explain?
- ❖ Were you adequately trained to teach group guided reading/
- ❖ How do you teach the listening and speaking activities?
- ❖ Did you receive all the resources to implement GPLMS?
- ❖ How do you deal with shortages?
- ❖ Does the coach visit and support you regularly?
- ❖ What are some of the aspects you were trained on during the Professions learning Group session
- ❖ How have you involved the parents in the programme?
- ❖ What are some of the challenges regarding GPLMS that you have experiences

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APPENDIX F

The Head of Department: Foundation Phase interview protocol

Questions related to the Heads of departments understanding and experiences of the Gauteng Primary Schools Literacy and Mathematics Strategy

- ❖ What is your understanding of the GPLS?
- ❖ What are the major goals of GPLMS?
- ❖ Why has you school been included in the GPLMS programme?
- ❖ Have the Grade 3 teachers coping with this innovation? explain
- ❖ Do you have the necessary resources?
- ❖ How does the GPLS coach support the educators?
- ❖ How do you support the educators?
- ❖ Do you receive support from the district officials?
- ❖ Have you noticed any improvement in the Annual National Assessment results?
- ❖ Was it necessary to have received support from the District officials during this time
- ❖ What were some of the achievements of GPLMS?

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APPENDIX G

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Research Topic

TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING AND EXPERIENCES OF THE GPLMS

This observation schedule is aimed at gaining insight into the real-life experiences of the teachers when implementing GPLMS. I will observe the classroom setting and professional learning group sessions.

A   Classroom Setting

- Seating arrangements in classroom
- Resources available in classroom
- Classroom milieu, is it warm/welcoming
- Classroom activity
- Learner participation

B   Interaction between teacher and learner

- Introduction of lesson
- Resources used
- Does the teacher follow the lesson plans accordingly
- Learner participation in lesson
- Learners response to questions

C   Professional learning support group session/school hall

- Physical setting in the hall
- Seating arrangements
- Number of participants in the scene
- Relevant characteristics of participants
- Resources used
- Duration of activity
- Interaction with coach

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