

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### OVERVIEW, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a summary of the literature review and the results of the empirical study are presented. Thereafter, an account is given of how the problem has been addressed, resulting in the conclusions of the study. A discussion of the contributions that the study has made to the theory and practice of language teaching has also been presented in this chapter. Certain recommendations are made regarding teaching practice and future research. The chapter ends with a presentation of the shortcomings of the study.

The first aspect to be dealt with is a summary of the literature review.

#### 7.2 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to present a summary of the literature review, it will be necessary to recap the research problem.

Prior to the twenty-first century, South African schools functioned in a less complex environment than that of today. As a result, school managers of contemporary organizations are faced with the challenges of coping with over-crowded classes, ill-qualified educators, shortages of physical and human resources, and a mismatch between the curriculum and the current market place. According to Owings and Kaplan (2003:267), schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be able to prepare all students for economic viability, advanced education and well-paying careers.

These have resulted in a need for the involvement of a number of language support programmes such as those offered by organizations like READ Educational Trust. This view is supported by Russel and Cook (1993:5), who note that South African schools that receive support through educational interventions have developed rapidly in the new dispensation. These collaborative approaches to language teaching are geared towards the general improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools. Furthermore, the literature study clearly shows that educator expertise is also regarded as

one of the most important school factors influencing student achievement (Owings & Kaplan, 2003:267).

In order to address the problem as stated above, this study was outlined as follows:

**Chapter One** dealt with the following:

- The justification and scope of the study;
- A statement of the problem;
- The aims of the research;
- Locating a theoretical framework;
- The clarification of concepts; and
- The research methodology.

Theories and models that are relevant to the study were discussed in **Chapter Two**.

**Chapter Three** describes factors that might influence the implementation of language programmes in primary schools.

**Chapter Four** focuses on READ's training model.

**In Chapter Five**, the conceptual framework and the research design were highlighted. The ROI model that underpins this study has assisted in addressing the research problem, which is:

What is the impact of teaching and learning programmes offered by service providers such as READ Educational Trust on the writing performance of Grade 4 learners?

The four levels of the ROI model guided the whole research project as illustrated in Chapter Five.

### **7.2.1 Problems Related to Learning Theories and the Realization of Effective Language Teaching**

The following problems regarding the above-mentioned aspects of school life have been identified:

- Many educational theories and models have been developed and implemented in primary schools;
- Many educationists present different definitions of the concept of learning;
- Many factors affect the general implementation of READ's language programmes in the primary schools; and
- READ's training model determines its mode of operation and the extent to which writing skills are acquired.

These problems have been highlighted in the literature review, and are indicative of the need to develop a common ground when it comes to the development of intervention programmes that are geared towards the improvement of classroom practice. A worrying factor though is that the effective enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning is still questionable despite the many advances in the field of education. The function of educational theories and models is to guide classroom practice. So, there is a need to make the many theories and models of educational practice more relevant as shown in the second chapter.

According to Watson (1958, in Weiten, 1992:7), behaviourism is a theoretical orientation based on the premise that scientific psychology should study only observable behaviour. From the behaviourist's perspective, learning involves a very wide range of human behaviour and should be related to corresponding laws and principles that apply to those situations. Thus language learning may include such activities such as acquiring vocabulary, memorizing a poem, grasping a scientific principle, as much as it may involve such skills as writing, reading, speaking, and listening.

Behaviourism has educational implications for language teaching and learning in the sense that it emphasizes the importance of conditioned reflexes (Hodgkinson, 1998:52). It is also vital for educators to use some rewards during the teaching and learning process. Kruger (1989:26) supports this view when postulating that educators must be aware of the fact that a stimulus is something which elicits a response, and that a response is something elicited by a stimulus. Rewards cause both satisfaction and performance (Osborn, *et al.*, 2000:120). The literature study clearly shows that there is a close correlation between the availability of rewards and the enhancement of effective teaching and learning in schools (Rebore & Ronald, 1998:21).

It was also revealed in the Second Chapter that the Gestalt theory puts emphasis on the theory of organization and reorganisation within the structure of the organization itself. According to the Gestalt theory, language educators are expected to create a classroom atmosphere which is in line with the learners' mental sets, including needs, attitudes, interests, and motivation (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1987:13).

The literature study also indicates that the Information Processing Model is relevant to the process of teaching and learning. According to Carole and Carole (1993:241), information is actively processed in a series of subroutines between inputs and outputs. This view is supported by Atkinson and Shifrin (1968, in Louw and Edwards, 1995: 286) who note that memory processing takes place in a series of three stages, namely encoding, storage, and retrieval and that memory itself is dependant on three different systems of storage, namely sensory storage, short-term storage, and long-term storage. This also implies that educators should have a better understanding of these stages and systems if they are to offer quality language teaching in primary schools.

Unlike the behaviourists, the Gestaltists and the cognitive psychologists, who place more emphasis on external stimuli, the building of associations and the theory of organization and reorganisation respectively, Piaget emphasizes the importance of maturation, experience and practice, social interaction and transmission, and equilibration as indicated in section 2.2.1.2 (Louw *et al.*, 1999:71). The above theory also suggests some educational implications that need to be observed by educators as well.

According to Behr (1990:16), no system of education can be effectively implemented without understanding how children grow and develop. It is, therefore, equally important for language educators to be knowledgeable about the level of development of their learners. It also implies that the learning content should be suitable to the learner's level of development if effective teaching and learning is to take place.

Different forms of learning such as classical conditioning and operant conditioning were also discussed in the Second Chapter. Watson (1958, in Weiten, 1992:7) stipulates that classical conditioning is a type of learning in which a stimulus acquires the capacity to evoke a response that was evoked by a similar previous stimulus. Classical conditioning is relevant to our understanding of the learning process because it provides the basis for emotional, psychological, and cognitive responses. On the other hand, operant

conditioning is defined by Louw and Edwards *et al.*, (1999:71) as a mechanical process by means of which successful responses are learned gradually as a result of a favourable outcome being obtained. According to Atkinson and Shifrin (1968, in Louw, 1995:286), external influences, and not internal thoughts and feelings, control human behaviour, at home, at school, in the work situation, and in society. It is therefore important for educators to use rewards or reinforcement in the classroom.

In addition to the above theories, the social learning theory was also discussed in the Second Chapter. The key assumption of social learning is that modelling influences learning chiefly through their informative function (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1987: 13). The social learning theory has very important educational implications. For instance, educators should model good writing skills if primary school learners are to master these skills with ease. It is also important to note that the above theories are relevant to the enhancement of quality teaching and learning in general.

READ's approach to language teaching is based on the observational theory, which is the crux of the social learning theory. Language educators involved in the implementation of the programme are trained in such a way that they are able to model the skills well. It is for this reason that READ Educational Trust uses teaching methods such as modelled writing, shared writing and independent writing.

READ holds the view that the more learners write, the quicker their writing skills develop. The link between reading and writing is not disputed, nor is the importance of writing meaningfully. To promote this, language educators involved in the implementation of the language and literacy programme have to include writing activities on a daily basis. READ also makes use of rewards or reinforcement in the classroom as discussed in the Second Chapter.

Generally, READ's mode of delivery is holistic in nature. The organization gives equal attention to all aspects of language development through the balanced language and literacy programme. Seemingly, there is a strong link between READ's approach to language teaching and the requirements of the National Curriculum Statement.

Based on the findings of the literature study, this research adopts a holistic approach to language teaching. It also attaches more value to the incorporation of intervention

programmes into teaching in general. It is envisaged that a holistic approach to the teaching of skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening would yield better results than a fragmented approach that was promoted by the traditional method of teaching.

### **7.2.1.1 The concept of learning as it applies to language development**

The literature study has revealed many connotations that are attached to the concept of learning, which present a challenge to redefine the concept if relevant language programmes are to be developed and implemented. It is evident that different scholars view educational concepts from different perspectives. For example, Jacobs *et al.*, (2004:3) maintain that a currently accepted view of learning is that learners bring their own individual understanding of reality to the classroom, and that the educator's role is to assist them to reconcile their existing knowledge with the new information through reflective thinking.

The literature clearly shows that learning is a change in human disposition or capability that persists over a period of time and that it is not simply ascribable to processes of growth (Gagne', 1985:2). Chapman and Gale (1988:127) support this view when maintaining that learning occurs when the learners' mental ability to manipulate his/her psychological field (i.e. the inner world of concepts, memories, etc.) in response to his/her experiential knowledge. The cognitive approach to learning views the individual not as a somewhat mechanical product of the environment, but as an active agent in the learning process as indicated in Section 2.2.

On the contrary, the constructivist movement views learning as a process that must enable the learner to engage in meaningful, authentic activities which will ultimately lead to the construction of understanding and development of skills (Wilson, 1996:3). It was also revealed that the constructivist viewpoint emerged as a catalyst as it encourages students to construct their own knowledge in a context where the provision of education entails creating appropriate learning situations that afford the learners opportunities to develop personal knowledge that can be used in their daily lives (Wilson, 1996:3).

It is against this background that organizations such as READ Educational Trust developed training programmes that encourage critical thinking on the part of the learner.

The literature study also shows that the many definitions of the concept of learning are complementary in the sense that educators and education specialists can draw useful information and apply it to any teaching and learning situation. It also implies that educators must be knowledgeable about different approaches to learning if they are to improve the quality of teaching in general. However, what has become a case for great caution when considering constructivist options for primary school language learners, would be by now a general emerging opinion that sound meaningful reception learning should form the basis or foundation to more advanced constructivist thinking in the language classroom (Ausubel, 1968:533). The message is becoming clear from a South African point of view. Constructivist thinking, as well as poor classroom facilitation practices supposed to support constructivist learning, remain futile and a waste of time and money if a sound basis had not been put into place by traditional ways of teaching and learning. Language development also depends on knowing and understanding. Good quality classroom teaching based where behavioural and cognitivist approaches such as rote learning, memorization, drill and transmission are necessary to bring about these outcomes.

Along with this complexity, non-traditional forms of knowledge such as the feminist theories have emerged, and new ways of knowing have come to the fore, thereby removing the myths that knowledge is objective and impartial (Jacob *et al.*, 2004:3). In short, the learning content, or the knowledge that is selected for inclusion in school curricula, is contested terrain. This contestation has resulted in academic debates and discourses.

Furthermore, learning theory has informed this investigation that relevant language programmes should be developed and implemented if sound meaningful reception learning is to occur. Based on the literature study, the investigation propagates a holistic approach to language teaching in general. In other words, equal attention should be given to the teaching of all aspects of language development such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Of note is the fact that READ is also playing a pivotal role in as far as the development and implementation of language programmes is concerned. The organization uses a balanced language and literacy programme so that reading and writing are linked and that the development of one language skill fundamentally supports the other.

With regard to the provision of language education, READ had used the book-based, integrated approach to language and literacy learning in South African schools long before it became adopted by the national department. The instructional strategies for developing reading and writing followed the best practice models from countries in which OBE models had been in operation for many years.

#### **7.2.1.2 Factors that affect the implementation of language programmes**

A number of factors affect the implementation of intervention programmes offered by organizations like READ Educational Trust. Factors such as school culture, rewards, human factors and motivation, leadership and ideological differences are cited as the most significant factors in the literature study. For instance, it was revealed that there is a mutual relationship between school culture and the provision of quality education (Badenhorst, 1997:197). The literature study shows that schools with strong positive cultures rate high in educational achievement. It is therefore imperative for management teams to ensure that schools adopt a positive, moral culture that will eventually lead to the development of a tranquil environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. It is then also for this reason that a number of schools had originally been identified by the Provincial Department of Education as so-called ‘under performing schools’ and that it was this sample of schools that became involved in the READ project.

Furthermore, the literature study has revealed that human factors such as personality and work, ideological differences and work, perceptions and work, and stress and work have an impact on organizational effectiveness as discussed in Section 3.3 (Van Fleet & Peterson, 1994:339). It was also revealed that rewards cause high levels of performance (Osborn *et al.*, 2000:120). According to Armstrong (1996:557), reward management is an activity that is geared towards designing, implementing, and maintaining pay processes or philosophy systems that are aimed at the improvement of organizational performance.

A variety of theories and models has been used to illustrate the relationship between the above factors and the implementation of language programmes in schools. For instance, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs has been used to show the relationship between motivation and basic needs in Chapter Three. In a nutshell, organizational factors such as the culture of the school, International Standards Organization: ISO 9000, affirmative action,



leadership, failure to delegate authority, confusion of lines of authority with lines of information, granting authority without exacting responsibility, misuse of functional authority and the failure to plan properly were discussed in the third chapter.

In addition, human factors such as personality and work, ideological differences and divisions in schools, ideological differences and human relations, ideological differences and absenteeism, perceptions and work stress were also discussed in the third chapter as indicated earlier on.

Basically, the impact of organizational factors, human factors and motivation and rewards on the implementation of language programmes in primary schools was highlighted in the Third Chapter. The literature study clearly shows that all these factors might impact on the implementation of language programmes in primary schools, and the enhancement of quality teaching and learning in general.

### **7.2.1.3 READ's training model**

READ's training model determines its mode of operation and delivery. This view is supported by Bouman and Ireys (1991, in Baker, 1994:54), who posit that a theory informs the design of a programme, its implementation and evaluation. The literature study has revealed that READ's model puts the teaching of writing at the centre of its practice and that reading and writing are closely linked. Basically, the development of one language skill fundamentally affects the other. Reading improves writing, as reading texts improves the learner's syntactic, semantic and grapho-phonetic knowledge systematically as indicated in section 4.2.2 (South African National Department of Education, 2003:78).

According to Northedge (1997:10), writing is the most demanding and challenging aspect of learning. He goes on to justify his argument by explaining that the reason why writing is especially demanding is that it forces one into a very deep and powerful kind of learning. Thus, writing remains the most difficult skill to learn. The literature study also shows that shared writing is an effective method of teaching writing as discussed in Section 4.2.2. Shared writing enables learners also to summarize the text they have read. It is evident that READ's theoretical model describes outcomes and predictors of outcomes and suggests how intervention programmes could be affected.

It is also clear that READ's training model suggests the cascade model is being followed. The cascade model is a training method which is also known as the "train the trainer" approach. This method works well for READ as it is cost-effective. National and international experts train READ's trainers on the methodology to be used during training. READ trainers also train language educators, who in turn impart the acquired knowledge to the learners at school level.

#### **7.2.1.4 Educational theory about teaching/learning in general that might be applied when teaching writing in English**

A number of important aspects have been identified for the language educator who wishes to assist primary school learners with writing. In the first place, the importance of teaching in a friendly classroom atmosphere was highlighted in the third chapter. Schools should set out deliberately to devise the right environment for children, to allow them to be themselves, and to develop in the way and at the pace appropriate to them. In other words, there should be a strong element of fun and enjoyment while fostering respect for the language and culture (Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R-9 (Schools):2003:9). Primary school learners should work in groups, where different projects and activities are undertaken. Moreover, the significance of using participative teaching methods was mentioned in the fourth chapter. Participative methods give learners the opportunity to participate actively and fully in classroom activities (Jacob *et al.*, 2002:176).

### **7.3 FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL STUDY**

The overall aim of the research is to gauge the impact of a teaching and learning programme offered by external service providers such as READ Educational Trust on the writing performance of Grade 4 learners and the influence it has had on the classroom practices and professional development of educators who were involved in the implementation of such programmes. Basically, the degree to which the READ programme was successful and the effect of the programme was evaluated both quantitatively and qualitatively. Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the ROI model, namely, reaction, learning, application and business impact were used in this study.

This study uses the Return on Investment Model of Programme Evaluation (ROI) as a basis for understanding the process of programme development and evaluation. The ROI model consists of five levels that are closely related. These are:

- Level 1: Reaction;
- Level 2: Learning;
- Level 3: Application;
- Level 4: Business impact; and
- Level 5: Return on Investment.

The theoretical framework provides four sequential steps that need to be followed when conducting programme evaluation. The various steps are:

- Planning;
- Data Collection;
- Data Analysis; and
- Reporting.

Important to note is the fact that the evaluator should not feel compelled to go through all the steps. If some can be skipped in a particular situation without jeopardizing the validity of the evaluation, the evaluator should do so. It is for the same reason that level 5 of the ROI model was not used in this study because it is an impact assessment study. Therefore, the outline of the process is meant as a broad guideline and not a prescription.

As indicated in the graphic presentation of the ROI model, all the various levels of programme evaluation (reaction, learning, application and business impact) are executed by following a series of steps of a process described by Phillips (2003:33). These levels are the essence of the ROI model. Therefore, it can be concluded that this study has made a contribution in the sense that the ROI model can be used to evaluate the impact of programmes such as those offered by organizations like READ. For instance, government officials and curriculum specialists can use the model to evaluate the impact of educational programmes like OBE and those that are offered by organizations such as READ as already indicated. A detailed discussion of the steps as well as the levels of the ROI model that has been used in this investigation are presented in the fifth chapter.

A summary of the findings of the quantitative and qualitative design follows.

### **7.3.1 Summary of the Findings of the Quantitative and Qualitative Design of the Study**

This thesis reports on a case study of educators' experiences with a READ Educational Trust's language programme in primary schools. A summary of the findings of the quantitative study is presented first, with the qualitative findings thereafter. The quantitative study focused mainly on the perceptions of Grade 4 language educators towards language programmes offered by READ Educational Trust. A questionnaire was used as a quantitative data collection method in this investigation. A total number of 150 Grade 4 language educators participated in the quantitative study.

A summary of the quantitative results is based on the five factors, namely Grade 4 educators' opinions, of the READ programme, impact of programme on school effectiveness, impact of programme on Grade 4 learners' writing competences, impact of READ's training method on Grade 4 educators' ability to apply the acquired knowledge and school resources.

The findings of the quantitative study clearly show that male and female educators held different views of the READ training programme. Possible explanations for these differences have been highlighted in section 6.3.4. However, a total mean score of 3.82 was obtained by both male and female educators in respect of factor one, namely Grade 4 educators' opinions of the READ programme. In view of these findings, one would argue that READ Educational Trust does have a high customer satisfaction and great potential for growth and sustainability. The above findings suggest that hypothesis 2 be accepted and indicate that there is a correlation between READ's training programme, staff development and their professional growth.

In respect of factor two, namely impact of programme on school effectiveness, the quantitative data suggest that male and female educators have different opinions of the impact of READ's language programme on school effectiveness as indicated in section 6.3.4. A total mean score of 3.60 was obtained by male and female educators. The results suggest that both male and female educators have a positive view of the impact of READ's training programmes on school effectiveness..

Based on the above findings, one would conclude that READ's training programmes have an impact on school effectiveness and language teaching in primary schools.

In respect of factor three, namely impact of programme on Grade 4 learners' writing competencies, female educators obtained a mean score of 3.82 whilst male educators obtained a mean score of 3.43. The results suggest that male and female educators have different views of the impact of READ's programme on Grade 4 learners' writing competencies. The results also show a statistically significant difference between male and female educators in respect of factor three, namely impact of programme on Grade 4 learners' writing competencies. An explanation for these differences could be that female and male educators held different views of the READ programme in this study. It would also appear that the READ programme has impacted differently on female and male educators' opinions in respect of factor three, namely impact of programme on Grade 4 learners' writing competencies.

The above findings also suggest that hypothesis 3 be accepted and indicate that educators regard READ's language programme contributory to Grade 4 learners' language development in general and their ability to write and design text (writing skills).

The above results also suggest that hypothesis 4 be accepted and indicate that female and male educators have different opinions regarding the value of READ's training programme on the performance of primary school children with specific reference to the impact of the programme on children's writing competencies.

In respect of factor four, namely the impact of READ's training method on Grade 4 educators' ability to apply the acquired knowledge, the results show that male and female educators had different opinions of the impact of READ's method on their ability to apply the acquired knowledge in the classroom as indicated in section 6.3.4. These findings are in line with the results of the qualitative study where the majority of Grade 4 educators who participated in the study mentioned that they were of the opinion that READ's training programmes impacted on their ability to apply the acquired knowledge. In view of these findings, one would argue that training methods offered by READ Educational Trust have an impact on educators' ability to apply the acquired knowledge in the classroom. These findings suggest that hypothesis 1 be accepted and indicate that

READ's language programme impacts on language teaching with expected correlations between its training method and the improvement of learners' language skills.

However, the findings of the qualitative study show that both male and female educators held the same view in respect of factor five, namely school resources. A total factor mean score of 3.24 was obtained by both male and female educators in respect of factor five, namely school resources. The implications of this finding is that both male and female educators agree that there is a correlation between school effectiveness and the availability of resources. The findings of the qualitative study clearly show that both rural and deep rural schools are not well-resourced. Based on these findings, it would still not be justifiable to conclude that all rural schools are not well-resourced and that all urban schools are well-resourced as indicated in the sixth chapter.

In addition, the findings of the quantitative study show that educators from rural and urban schools had different perceptions of the impact of READ's language programmes in respect of factors 1,2,3 and 4 as indicated in section 6.3.4. It was also revealed that educators from rural schools obtained higher mean scores in respect of factors 1, 2, 3 and 4 as compared to those in urban schools. The above findings suggest that hypothesis 5 be accepted and indicate that external training programmes such as those offered by READ Educational Trust have more significant impacts on teaching and learning in rural schools as compared to urban schools.

The findings of the quantitative study clearly show that female educators had consistently higher mean scores than male educators in all the five factors as indicated in section 6.3.4.

Worth mentioning is the fact that the qualitative study was also geared towards assessing levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the ROI model that was used in this investigation, namely reaction/customer satisfaction, learning, application and business impact. Open-ended interviews were used as the qualitative data collection method. Grade 4 educators and READ staff participated in the qualitative study. The findings of the qualitative study clearly show that the majority of the respondents, mentioned that they were of the opinion that READ's training programme was integrated into the current curriculum. This important finding suggests that READ's training programmes are aligned with the National Curriculum Statement. The qualitative study has also revealed that from the eight respondents who were interviewed at READ, all of them mentioned that they were

of the opinion that READ's training programmes achieved the national aims and outcomes specified by the national curriculum statement. The results of the qualitative study show that from the eight respondents who were interviewed at READ, all of them mentioned that they were of the opinion that READ's approach to language teaching is OBE based. The above-mentioned findings are also in line with the literature review in the fourth chapter, which shows that READ's training programmes incorporate the theoretical foundations of learning, language acquisition and literacy acquisition (Du Plessis, 2002:18). In view of the above findings, one would argue that training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust are not an 'added on' activity as they are integrated into the curriculum.

The findings of the qualitative study clearly show that the majority of the respondents, mentioned that they were of the opinion that READ's training programmes had an impact on their application skills. These findings are supported by the literature review which indicates that learning is the extent to which participants change attitudes, improve knowledge, and or increase skill as a result of attending the training programme (Kirkpartrick, 1998:20). The above finding is also in line with the views of READ staff who participated in the qualitative study. In fact, the study shows that from the eight respondents who were interviewed at READ, seven of them, mentioned that they were of the opinion that the implementation of READ's training programmes was achieved according to the set objectives. In the light of these findings, one would argue that READ's training programmes have impacted on Grade 4 educators' application or implementation skills. The above-mentioned findings also relate to the second level of the ROI model that has been used in this investigation.

Another important finding that emanated from the qualitative study is the fact that the majority of the respondents, indicated that they were of the opinion that READ's training has impacted on their teaching practices. This finding is supported by Phillips (2003:34), who postulates that learning as the second level of the conceptual framework, focuses mainly on what participants learned during training, using tests, skill practices, role plays, simulations and group evaluations. This view is also supported by Kirkpartrick (1998:20), who postulates that it is imperative to determine the extent to which change in behaviour has occurred because the participants attended training workshops. Based on the above finding, one would conclude that READ's training programmes have impacted on Grade 4 language educators' teaching practices. The above finding addresses the

third research sub-question, namely how do language programmes such as those offered by READ Educational Trust contribute to effective language teaching?

The findings of the qualitative study show that the majority of the respondents, mentioned that they were of the opinion that there were some notable changes at their schools that could be attributed to READ's training programmes. This finding is corroborated by the literature review which indicates that it is important to measure the actual results achieved by programme participants as they apply the acquired knowledge (Phillips, 2003:35). Brown and Seidner (1998:107) also support this view when postulating that it is imperative to measure the actual results achieved by the participants after going through training. The above findings are also in line with the views of READ staff who participated in the qualitative study. In fact, the qualitative study shows that from the eight respondents who were interviewed at READ, all of them mentioned that they were of the opinion that there were notable changes in the last three years of organizational success in acquiring new projects.

It was also revealed that all respondents who were interviewed at READ, mentioned that they were of the opinion that there are many success stories that could be linked to READ's training programmes. According to Brown and Seidner (1998:106-107), it is imperative to assess the impact of training programmes on organizational growth and success. This important aspect of programme evaluation was achieved through level 4 of the ROI model that was used in this investigation. In view of the above findings, one would argue that language programmes offered by service providers such as READ Educational Trust have an impact on Grade 4 learners' writing performances. This finding addresses the fifth research sub-question, namely to what extent does READ Educational Trust's training programmes impact on Grade 4 learners' writing competencies?

The qualitative study has also revealed that the majority of the respondents, indicated that they were of the opinion that READ's training programmes had an influence on their professional development. It is very important to determine whether the training programme has an impact on participants' professional development when conducting programme evaluation (Phillips, 2003:37). In the light of these findings, one would argue that training programmes offered by service providers such as READ Educational Trust have an impact on participants' professional development. These findings address the



fourth research sub-question, namely how do the methodologies of service providers such as READ Educational Trust advance staff development?

The qualitative study has revealed that the majority of the respondents, mentioned that they were of the opinion that READ's training programmes had an impact on the level at which Grade 4 learners developed their writing competences. The above finding is also in line with the views of READ staff who participated in the qualitative study. This finding addresses the sixth research sub-question, namely how do intervention programmes offered by organizations such as READ Educational Trust impact on the level at which Grade 4 learners develop their language competencies?

The results of the qualitative study also show that the majority of the respondents as illustrated in Table 6.24, mentioned that they were of the opinion that the monitoring of READ's training programmes was effectively implemented. This view was supported by READ staff who participated in the qualitative study. Basically, the study shows that from the eight respondents who were interviewed at READ, all the respondents mentioned that they were of the opinion that READ Educational Trust has a consistent monitoring system in place to sustain its training programmes. This important aspect is also highlighted in READ's annual report which clearly shows that the organization has a consistent monitoring system in place to sustain its training programmes (READ Educational Trust, 2006:10). In the light of the above findings, one would conclude that the monitoring of READ's training programmes was well undertaken.

The qualitative study has also revealed that the majority of the respondents, mentioned that they received some incentives as a token of appreciation for their ability to implement READ's training programmes at their respective schools. This finding is in line with the literature review which suggests that it is necessary to check whether participants are being rewarded for implementing the training programmes or not (Kirkpartrick, 1998:21-22). In view of the above-mentioned findings, one would argue that service providers such as READ Educational Trust provide educators with some incentives as a token of appreciation for their ability to implement its training programmes.

The findings of the qualitative research show that the majority of the respondents, mentioned that they were of the opinion that READ's training covered all aspects of

writing. This view was supported by READ staff who participated in the qualitative study. The study shows that from the eight respondents who were interviewed at READ, seven of them, mentioned that they were of the opinion that READ's training programme covered all aspects of writing at Grade 4 level. These findings are also corroborated by the literature review which indicates that it is vital to determine whether service providers cover all aspects of learning with a view to checking whether they have to improve specific areas of their training programmes or not. Based on the above findings, one would conclude that READ's training covered all aspects of writing. However, some Grade 4 educators mentioned that it is necessary for READ Educational Trust to improve on aspects such as sentence construction, letters and compositions and handwriting. These findings address the fifth research sub-question, namely to what extent does READ Educational Trust's intervention programmes impact on Grade 4 learners' writing competencies?

Another significant finding that emerged from the qualitative study was that the majority of the respondents, indicated that they were faced with different challenges during the implementation of READ's training programmes. This view was also supported by READ staff who participated in the qualitative study. The above findings are also in line with the literature review which suggest that it is important to determine whether the participants work in the right climate or not (Kirkpartrick, 1998:21). In the light of the above findings, one would conclude that the implementers of language programmes offered by service providers such as READ are faced with different challenges.

When respondents were asked whether READ's mission statement is relevant to the development, implementation and maintenance of training in schools, all of them mentioned that they were of the opinion that READ's mission statement guides the development, implementation and maintenance of training in schools. This finding is supported by Basarab and Root (1992:4), who purport that it is imperative for programme evaluators to determine whether the organization's mission statement articulates and take into account the diversity of general and public interests and values that are related to the concept of training. In view of the findings of the qualitative study, one would conclude that READ's mission statement serves as a guide for the development, implementation and maintenance of training in project schools.

Finally, it is important to mention the fact that the qualitative study has revealed the teaching and learning theories on which READ's training programmes are based. For example, it was revealed that from the eight respondents who were interviewed at READ, seven respondents indicated that they were of the opinion that READ's training programmes are based on the theories of Vygotsky and Bernstein. A discussion and an illustration of the relevance of these theories to READ's training programmes is presented in the second chapter.

### 7.3.2 Hypotheses

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of a teaching and learning programme intervention offered by external service providers such as READ Educational Trust on the writing performances of Grade 4 learners and on the classroom practices of educators involved in the application of such programme.

The study aimed to:

- (a) Determine the nature of intervention programmes offered by service providers such as READ Educational Trust;
- (b) Investigate the perceptions of educators towards intervention programmes such as those offered by organizations such as READ;
- (c) Determine how language programmes such as those offered by READ contribute to effective language teaching;
- (d) Establish how methodologies employed by service providers such as READ Educational Trust advance staff development;
- (e) Gauge the extent to which intervention programmes offered by organizations such as READ impact on Grade 4 learners' writing skills;
- (f) Determine how intervention programmes offered by organizations such as READ impact on the level at which Grade 4 learners develop their language skills;
- (g) Establish how intervention programmes offered by service providers such as READ Educational Trust contribute to effective language teaching; and
- (h) Study the issues involved in productivity management with a view to ensuring that organizations like READ Educational Trust are capable of improving their productivity strategies in such a way that they adequately meet the needs of the target groups and the entire corporate market.

In order to achieve the above goals, the following hypotheses were investigated:

Hypothesis 1: READ's language programme impacts on language teaching with expected correlations between its training method and the improvement of learners' language skills. Hypothesis 1 was intended to test the third research sub-question, namely how do language programmes such as those offered by READ contribute to effective language teaching? The results of the quantitative research suggest that hypothesis 1 should be accepted and indicate that READ's language programme impacts on language teaching and learning in the primary schools.

- Hypothesis 2: There is a correlation between READ's training programme, staff development and their professional growth. The classroom interventions therefore contribute significantly to educators' performance measured in terms of the development of their language teaching competences, classroom practices and professional skills. Hypothesis 2 was aimed at addressing the fourth research sub-question, namely how do the methodologies of service providers such as READ Educational Trust advance staff development? The findings of the quantitative research suggest that hypothesis 2 should be accepted and indicate that there is a correlation between READ's training programme, staff development and their professional growth.
- Hypothesis 3: Educators regard READ's language programme as contributing to Grade 4 learners' language development in general and their ability to write and design text (writing skills). Hypothesis 3 was intended to test the sixth sub-research question, namely: How do intervention programmes offered by organizations such as READ impact on the level at which Grade 4 learners develop their language skills? The results of the quantitative study suggest that hypothesis 3 be accepted and indicate that Grade 4 educators regard READ's READ's language programme as contributing to Grade 4 learners' language development in general and their ability to write and design text (writing skills).
- Hypothesis 4: Female and male educators have different opinions regarding the value of READ's training programme on the performance of primary school children with specific reference to the impact of the programme on children's writing competences. Hypothesis 4 was aimed at addressing the second research sub-question, namely what

are the perceptions of Grade 4 language educators towards language programmes offered by organizations such as READ Educational Trust on the achievement of the curriculum outcomes? The findings of the quantitative study suggest that hypothesis 4 should be accepted and indicate that female and male educators have different opinions regarding the value of READ's training programme on the performance of primary school children with specific reference to the impact of the programme on Grade 4 learners' writing competencies.

- Hypothesis 5: READ's training programmes have a more significant impact on teaching and learning in rural schools than urban schools. Hypothesis 5 was geared towards addressing the fifth research sub-question, namely to what extent does the READ Educational Trust's intervention programmes impact on Grade 4 learners' writing competencies? The findings of the quantitative research suggest that hypothesis 5 be accepted and indicate that external training programmes such as those offered by READ have more significant impacts on teaching and learning in rural schools as compared to urban schools.

The above findings also show in general that Grade 4 language educators have a positive reaction towards READ's training programmes.

### **7.3.3 Attainment of Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives of this research project have been achieved as follows:

- The perceptions of educators towards READ's language programme were gauged by means of a questionnaire and open-ended interviews (see the results in Section 6.3.5, 7.3.1 and 7.3.2);
- The relevance of educational theories to READ's training model and language teaching and learning was determined in the Second Chapter;
- The nature of language programmes offered by READ Educational Trust have been discussed in Chapter Four; and
- The issues involved in productivity management have been discussed in Chapter Three.

### 7.3.3.1 Conclusions

In order to draw a conclusion to this study, it is necessary to revisit the research questions and highlight the research problem. The research questions are:

1. What is the impact of a teaching and learning programme interventions offered by external service providers such as READ Educational Trust on the performances of Grade 4 learners and what influence does it have on the classroom practices and professional development of educators involved in the application of such programmes?
2. How are supplemental language programmes structured in order to support and complement formal classroom teaching and learning environment?
3. What are the perceptions of Grade 4 language educators towards language programmes offered by organizations such as READ Educational Trust on the achievement of the curriculum outcomes?
4. How do language programmes such as those offered by READ Educational Trust contribute to effective language teaching?
5. How do the methodologies of service providers such as READ Educational Trust advance staff development?
6. To what extent does the READ Educational Trust's intervention programmes impact on Grade 4 learners' writing competencies?
7. How do intervention programmes offered by organizations such as READ Educational Trust impact on the level at which Grade 4 learners develop their language competencies?
8. How do intervention programmes offered by service providers such as READ Educational Trust contribute to effective language teaching?

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- That Grade 4 educators reported that they were of the opinion that READ's language programme impacts on language teaching and learning in the primary schools;
- That Grade 4 educators mentioned that they were of the opinion that there is a correlation between READ's training programme, staff development and their professional growth;
- That Grade 4 educators reported that they were of the opinion that classroom intervention programmes offered by READ Educational Trust contribute significantly to their language teaching competencies, classroom practices and professional skills;
- That Grade 4 educators reported that they regard READ's language programme as contributing to Grade 4 learners' language development in general and their ability to write and design text (writing skills);
- That female and male educators mentioned that they have different opinions regarding the value of READ's training programme on the performance of primary school children with specific reference to the impact of the programme on children's writing competencies;
- That Grade 4 educators reported that they were of the opinion that external training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust have more significant impact on teaching and learning in rural schools as compared to urban schools;
- That Grade 4 educators indicated that they have a positive reaction towards language programmes offered by READ Educational Trust;
- That Grade 4 educators reported that they were of the opinion that language programmes offered by READ Educational Trust are implemented according to its training objectives;
- That Grade 4 educators and READ staff reported that they were of the opinion training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust have an impact on the organizational growth of both the schools and READ as the service provider;
- That Grade 4 educators mentioned that they were of the opinion that language programmes offered by READ Educational Trust are not an 'added on' activity as they are integrated into the learning area curriculum;
- That Grade 4 educators and READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that READ Educational Trust uses a consistent monitoring system to sustain its language programmes;

- That Grade 4 educators and READ staff mentioned that READ Educational Trust gives some incentives to individual educators and deserving schools as a token of appreciation for their ability to implement its training programmes;
- That Grade 4 educators and READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust are OBE based;
- That Grade 4 educators and READ staff indicated that they were of the opinion that training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust achieve the national aims and outcomes specified by the national curriculum statements;
- That READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that READ's mission statement guides the development, implementation and sustenance of training in schools;
- That Grade 4 educators and READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust cover all aspects of Learning Outcome four, namely writing at Grade 4 level;
- That Grade 4 educators mentioned that they were of the opinion that English as a medium of instruction is a barrier to the implementation of training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust;
- That Grade 4 educators and READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that the social milieu has an impact on the implementation of training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust;
- That Grade 4 educators and READ staff mentioned that school principals and READ's top management are supportive of the implementation of training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust;
- That Grade 4 educators and READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that there are measurable or tangible results in project schools that can be attributed to training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust as the service provider;
- That READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that there are success stories in schools that can be linked to the implementation of READ's intervention programmes;
- That Grade 4 educators reported that they were of the opinion that some rural and deep rural schools are not well-resourced; and
- That Grade 4 educators mentioned that they were of the opinion that intervention programmes offered by READ Educational Trust contribute to effective language teaching in general.



#### 7.3.4 Contributions to the Theory and Practice of Language Teaching

A new synthesis of various aspects that are addressed by the study has led to contributions in a number of areas that are discussed below.

- **Theory building: Educational Theory**

A contribution has been made to the building of educational theory in certain areas. For example, through the utilization of theory methodology in the form of a literature review, the problems and factors affecting the implementation of language programmes were realized. South African language policies therefore need to be reviewed to include the selection criteria as well as the procedures for the implementation of language programmes in schools. Moreover, the problem was highlighted from a global perspective. In so doing, theory about how effective implementation of language programmes and the methodology of English can be realized has been generated. This theory can be applied in other educational situations, and even internationally.

Although this study has its own limitations and reports on one case study, namely READ Educational Trust, it is hoped that it will stand within the literature as an example of how programme evaluation could be undertaken.

A contribution was made as far as the background of READ Educational Trust is concerned. For example, it has been revealed that the READ's mission statement guides the development, implementation and monitoring of its training programmes. It also became evident that the implementation of training programmes offered by READ have an impact on its organizational growth and sustainability. Moreover, it was revealed that language programmes offered by READ have an impact on educators' performance in terms of language teaching. This also implies that alternative or additional interventions are likely to make an impact on the methodology of English in primary schools.

- **Contribution to educational practice**

The research project adds a lot of insight on the subject been investigated, namely the impact of language programmes on learner performance;

- Advance theory on the impact of language intervention programmes on the concept of language development in general;
- Advance theory on the undertaking of a systematic programme evaluation;
- The integration of theories leads to the construction of new theory, which will also guide the whole process of language teaching in South African schools; and
- In turn, the new theory can be useful to persons such as language educators, school managers, parents, language specialists and policy makers and service providers such as READ Educational Trust; and
- In a nutshell, the investigation came up with new knowledge and insights and has the potential to give guidance to different stakeholders in the educational context.

- **The development of research methodology**

The study demonstrates that programme evaluation research and the use of the ROI model can be an effective method for the assessment of language programmes in educational settings. Similarly, the value of utilising the process of triangulation whereby various data collection methods are used to increase the reliability of observations was realised. Qualitative research, such as the use of open-ended interviews was employed. The research method utilised in the study can guide other research endeavours as far as the implementation of language programmes is concerned.

### **7.3.5 Other Contributions to the Theory and Practice of Language Teaching**

Ten other important aspects or components have emerged during the investigation. The first was once again the great emphasis placed on constructivist learning strategies and approaches suggested for the teaching of language in the classroom at the expense of the traditional reception learning approaches that had always been very prominent in the classroom. However, postmodernism has brought new challenges to the classroom not

only in terms of changes and challenges to the curriculum, but also in terms of the teaching and learning strategies to be followed and assessment practices to support these new changes. Outcomes-based education has brought its own dimension of successes and failures to the South African school environment. Outcomes-based education has changed the teaching and learning environment in the sense that it requires a shift from educator input to a focus on learner outcomes. The proponents of OBE believe that learners are taught too much theoretical knowledge that they do not need in the labour market and which they instantly forget after they have written their examinations. In the past, important skills that learners need for employment purposes, such as business and technical skills, were not adequately taught to learners. OBE suggests that educators should no longer base their learning programmes on objectives, but rather on helping learners to achieve learning outcomes. Basically, OBE is learner-driven and knowledge and skills can be drawn from any source and the role of the educator changes accordingly to provide guidance for the learners to achieve their outcomes.

One of the expectations and new approaches in terms of learning brought about by OBE was the change and challenge of the educator's role of learning facilitator as opposed to the traditional and trusted educator and transmitter of information and skills. The outcomes-based model is a transformational approach to the curriculum that was necessitated by technological advancement, changes of societal needs and goals, new political dispensations, and many other factors. Therefore, any educational system based on outcomes gives priority to the end results of learning.

Closely linked to this was the move away from the traditional use of textbooks and learning material. OBE was supposed to allow the educator to use a broad base of learning materials not supplied by the DoE but collected by the educator from service providers for language programmes. For example, READ Educational Trust has been providing schools with additional learner support material such as videos, posters, reading and writing starter packs, etc. As a result, learning facilitation encourages constructivist thinking based on the assumption that learners have to engage in meaningful, authentic activities that will lead to the construction of understanding and development of skills. In the light of this, one would say that the foundations of language education had not been achieved by means of traditional approaches in South Africa.

Unfortunately, the consequences of the traditional method of teaching are more detrimental to humanity than was envisaged (du Plessis *et al.*, 2007:40). The main problem with this approach to teaching is that schooling seems too internally focused and does not prepare people for life. The traditional view simply assigns the learners the role of passive recipients of facts, and the educator that of presenter of factual knowledge. Teaching which reduces the learner to an empty vessel into which the educator pours content and expects the learner to pour it out during testing time, continues to draw criticism from educational theorists who maintain that learners are responsible for their own learning. This particular study has made a contribution to the theory of language teaching and learning in the sense that it has revealed that READ Educational Trust's training programmes are OBE-based. The findings of this study also show that Grade 4 educators and READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that READ's training programmes do achieve the national aims and outcomes specified by the National Curriculum Statement.

The second problem exposed by this investigation is that READ's training programmes, and all other programmes built upon the same assumptions, are not 'added-on' interventions as they are integrated into the learning area curriculum. The 'added-on' characteristics of programmes is a manifestation of many of the fragmented teaching and learning interventions we have experienced in South Africa during the past ten years with the commencement of OBE. Take for example outcomes-based assessment workshops, classroom teaching strategies and education management. Fragmented teaching does not work irrespective of the amount of money and time going into the programmes. There is little capacity building in the training component of the programmes and educators do not take ownership for the approaches.

It is for this reason that READ Educational Trust bases its assumptions on the premise that learning is behavioural at primary school level. Therefore, the organization emphasizes the use of drawings and projects in the implementation of its training programmes. Educators are shown how to use big books, sets of group readers and classroom resource collections. In addition, learners learn how to complete simple work cards, and how to do group project work. Emphasis is also placed on primary school learners' ability to design interactive posters, curriculum vitae, reports, etc. On the other hand, learners' phonic skills, word-attack skills, sight words, knowledge of grammatical and spelling conventions and familiarity with common sentence patterns are developed.

All these language teaching tactics would enable language educators to integrate the training programmes of organizations such as READ in an effective manner. The findings of the qualitative research clearly show that Grade 4 educators and READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that READ's training programmes are integrated into the learning area curriculum. It is, therefore, evident that READ Educational Trust does offer training programmes that are easy to integrate into the learning area curricula as they are aligned with the National Curriculum Statement.

The third contribution that has been made by this investigation is that it has revealed that Grade 4 educators reported that they were of the opinion that the general coordination of READ's training programmes is undertaken according to its specifications. In fact, the findings of this study show that grade 4 educators and READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that READ's language programmes are well-implemented and monitored. Grade 4 educators and READ staff also mentioned that they were of the opinion that school managers and READ's management are supportive of the general implementation of language programmes in schools. It appears that the overall coordination and implementation of training programmes offered by READ Educational trust depends on management support. In view of these findings, one would argue that it is necessary for the stakeholders to take a holistic view of aspects of school life such as the mission statement, school management, school climate, staff development, parental involvement, curricula and assessment measures if effective language teaching and learning is to be a reality in South African schools.

The fourth contribution that has been made by this investigation is that it was revealed that READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that the development, implementation and sustainance of training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust are guided by its mission statement. The mission statement is an important aspect of training as it emphasizes the philosophy of the organization. These two concepts link up with one another in the sense that they both highlight the values and ethos of the organization which in turn, determines the quality of training provided by READ Educational Trust as the service provider.

The fifth contribution that has emerged from this investigation is that it has revealed that Grade 4 educators and READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that the implementation of training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust have a

business impact on both the schools and READ's growth and sustainability. This is a very important contribution because it is necessary to know whether the implementation of language programmes lead to organizational growth or not. Based on the findings of the business impact, one would be able to determine whether the implementation of language programmes is worth pursuing or not.

The sixth contribution that has been made by this study is that it has shown that Grade 4 educators reported that they were of the opinion that READ Educational Trust uses some incentives to motivate and encourage the implementers of language programmes in schools. It is imperative for service providers to have an effective reward system in place.

However, it should be noted that the involvement of service providers such as READ in the provision of support through language programmes does not serve as a panacea for all the problems related to language teaching in South Africa. The fact of the matter is that intervention programmes offered by organizations such as READ Educational Trust have a critical role to play in the enhancement of effective language teaching in South African schools. Certainly, there is a pressing need to continuously involve service providers such as READ Educational Trust in the provision of intervention programmes if the enhancement of effective language teaching and learning is to be realized. In essence, professionalism and the development of professional scholars in teaching and learning do not lie in 'first-aid' type of practices, These send out the wrong message, namely that things are not working in South Africa and that corrective measures have to be put into place to rectify teaching and learning that has gone wrong.

The seventh aspect that has emerged from this investigation is that Grade 4 educators reported that they were of the opinion that English as a medium of instruction can become a barrier to the implementation of language programmes offered by READ Educational Trust in schools. The extent to which the performance of second language speakers can be affected by the usage of English as a medium of instruction has been illustrated in the literature review. Moreover, the findings of the qualitative research also show that English as a medium of instruction can to a greater extent become a barrier to the implementation of language programmes in the primary schools.

It is, therefore, very important for the service providers to develop and implement their language programmes in the learner's mother tongue, especially in the lower grades. Educators are also expected to adhere to the stipulations of the home language policy.

The eighth contribution that has been made by this investigation is that Grade 4 educators and READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that the social context within which language programmes are implemented has an impact on the general implementation of such programmes. This necessitates the creation of a positive school environment if effective language teaching and learning is to be enhanced. In addition, the creation of a tranquil home situation is very important as the family remains an important support system. It should also be remembered that the school is one element of the entire social context within which language programmes are implemented.

The ninth contribution that emerged from this investigation is that Grade 4 educators reported that they were of the opinion that READ's training programmes advance staff development. It was also revealed that Grade 4 educators mentioned that they were of the opinion that READ's training method enables language educators to apply or implement the acquired knowledge in the classroom. Basically, the study showed that READ's training programmes contribute to educator efficiency and effectiveness. It is for this reason that one would conclude that READ's training programmes enhance effective language teaching and learning in schools.

The tenth and last contribution that has emerged from this study is that Grade 4 educators and READ staff reported that they were of the opinion that READ's training programmes do yield measurable or tangible results in the project schools. This is an important contribution in the sense that it will enable school managers and other educational authorities to determine the effectiveness of training programmes of organizations such as READ Educational Trust. It would also assist in the effective administration of quality assurance mechanisms and the implementation of performance management systems at school level. It is imperative to determine the extent to which the set milestones have been achieved if effective language teaching and learning is to be enhanced in the South African schools. The findings of this investigation show that Grade 4 educators reported that they were of the opinion that READ's training programmes have an impact on Grade 4 learners' writing competencies. It was also revealed that Grade 4 educators have a positive reaction towards training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust. In

fact, this is a major contribution of this particular investigation because these findings do answer the fifth and sixth research sub-questions as illustrated in Section 7.3.4.1.

Although the majority of the respondents indicated that they were of the opinion that training programmes offered by READ Educational Trust cover all aspects of Learning Outcome Four, namely writing, the study has revealed that there is a need for READ to put more emphasis on aspects of writing such as sentence construction, letters and compositions and handwriting during the implementation of language programmes in the primary schools. These three aspects emerged as areas that need to be improved in the roll-out of language programmes at the intermediate phase.

Basically, language teaching has to be integrated into the formal and non-formal curricula. Therefore, there should be continuity in the involvement of service providers such as READ Educational Trust in the provision of support through language programmes.

## 7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations follow from the findings and conclusions of this study:

### ▪ **The Role of Government Education Departments**

Provincial Departments of Education should implement a uniform language policy and provide support to districts. District support teams will have to be established to take a leading role in the monitoring of the language programmes that are implemented in their respective districts. Such support teams would also check whether the language programmes are in line with the language policy, and the administration thereof, as well as programme implementation. For example, it would be necessary for the task teams to check whether service providers such as READ Educational Trust ensure that their training programmes cover all aspects of learning areas. It would also be necessary for the district support teams to determine the extent to which language programmes achieve the national aims and outcomes specified by the national curriculum statements.

In addition, the support teams would check the extent to which English as a medium of instruction becomes a barrier to the implementation of language programmes in



schools. Aspects such as the extent to which the school principals are supportive of the implementation of language programmes as well as the impact of the social milieu on the implementation of language programmes would also be tackled by the district support teams.

Apart from establishing the district support teams that would work closely with the language educators and trainers, the Provincial Departments of Education should continuously review educator learner ratios to minimize problems such as overcrowding. Coupled with that, one would also recommend that the whole issue of resources be taken into consideration if effective teaching and learning is to be enhanced in South African schools.

- **Sensitising the Service Providers**

It is important for service providers to be sensitized to their role in the provision of support programmes in public schools. It is vital for the service providers to realize that they only have a supportive role and that government has the responsibility to provide quality education to all the learners in schools. This would alleviate unnecessary tensions between the trainers and language educators, unhealthy competition by different service providers, and disruptions of lessons by trainers, for example. It would also be necessary to ensure that service providers such as READ implement their language programmes according to the initial agreement that was signed by the Department of Education and the service providers. However, the findings of this study show that training programmes offered by organizations such as READ are implemented as expected. Furthermore, an attempt would be made to ensure that service providers are aware of the fact that they are expected to yield measurable or tangible results through the implementation of language programmes in public schools. This would still be necessary even though the findings of this study has revealed that there are measurable results in the project schools that could be attributed to language programmes offered by service providers such as READ. Another important recommendation that one would like to put forward is that READ Educational Trust needs to ensure that more attention is given to aspects of writing such as sentence construction, handwriting and letters and compositions as was revealed by this investigation.



- **Sensitising the project schools**

It is essential that the attitudes of language educators and school management towards intervention programmes should change. For instance, educators should be made aware of the fact that language programmes offered by organizations such as READ Educational Trust are not an ‘added on’ activities and that they must be continuously integrated into the learning area curriculum as one of the important findings of this study. It is also important to sensitise all the parties involved in the implementation of language programmes. For instance, they should realize that the trainers are the facilitators of the projects and not the “inspectors” as they are sometimes perceived. It would also be necessary to reinforce the need for of all the stakeholders to work collaboratively with a view to ensuring that the language programmes are successfully implemented in schools. Although this study has revealed that school principals and management are supportive of the implementation of training programmes offered by service providers such as READ, it would be necessary to reinforce the involvement of parents as important stakeholders. In addition, an attempt would be made to ensure that the general implementation of training programmes offered by organizations such as READ is based on the principles of OBE as an important finding of this investigation. This would assist in ensuring that there is uniformity in the implementation of training programmes offered by service providers such as READ Educational Trust in all the project schools.

## **7.5 FUTURE RESEARCH**

This research project is not an end in itself, but opens the door to further research. Further research projects could be carried out in the following aspects of language development:

- Research will have to be conducted by language specialists in order to determine the impact of incentives on the implementation of language programmes in public schools within the South African context. This study has revealed that service providers such as READ Educational Trust gave some incentives to individual educators and deserving schools as a token of appreciation for their ability to implement their training programmes, but it still not clear whether the incentives had an impact on the implementation of such training programmes or not;

- The extent to which the integration of language programmes is enhanced should be researched. This particular study has only established that intervention programmes offered by organizations such as READ Educational Trust are not an ‘added on’ activity and that they are integrated into the learning area curriculum;
- Problems associated with the use of English as the medium of instruction in schools where English is not the learners’ first language should be identified and investigated. Future research should also focus on the planning and implementation of language programmes to address these problems in schools. The findings of this study suggest that English as a medium of instruction may be a barrier to the implementation of training programmes offered by service providers such as READ in schools;
- The problem of resources would also have to be investigated, particularly those that are cheap and easy to use as there is a scarcity of resources in almost all public schools, particularly in rural areas. The findings of this study show that almost all the rural and deep rural schools are not well-resourced;
- Ways of best enhancing collaborative management that is geared towards effective implementation of language programmes will also have to be researched. In fact, this is a fertile area for research given the importance of partnerships to the enhancement of quality teaching and learning in schools. The findings of this study only show that school managers and READ’s management are supportive of the implementation of training programmes offered by service providers such as READ in the project schools. It would therefore, be necessary to conduct research on aspects such as parental involvement; and
- The extent to which training programmes offered by service providers such as READ achieve the national aims and objectives specified by the national curriculum statement also needs to be investigated. This study has revealed that training programmes offered by service providers such as READ achieve the national aims and outcomes specified by the revised curriculum statement but it does not address this aspect.

## 7.6 SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STUDY

This study has the following shortcomings:

- The lack of similar studies in South Africa made it difficult for the researcher to draw from the research of others which always has the possibility of leading to ways of clarifying the research results. However, it is believed that with government's commitment to the involvement of service providers in schools, the number of studies will increase in the future;
- Constraints related to time were experienced by the researcher when she was conducting qualitative research. This resulted from the national strike that affected all the public schools in South Africa. The situation was exacerbated by the availability of READ staff as they could only be interviewed during school holidays;
- The Educators' questionnaire does not make provision for other options, particularly with regard to aspects such as Learning area taught, Phase taught etc.; and
- The limitation of basing the research on the opinions of educators rather than on hard data about their classroom performance.

## 7.7 SUMMARY

Environmental and organizational changes are putting new demands on training. Training must change to support new organizational structures within a complex and changing business and social environment. Training is changing in who we serve, how we serve them, and why we serve them.

Forces of change in the global environment, knowledge-based economy, the information explosion, advances in technology, changes in the workforce, and evolving organizational architecture have resulted in pressure on training organizations to justify their costs in terms of improvement in individual and organizational performances. Therefore, there is pressure to be customer focused, high quality, in time, and cost effective. Training organizations are required to facilitate the changing roles of an aging, international, and culturally diverse work force. Training is also expected to facilitate the application and

creation of new knowledge and the integration of ever-changing technology in work processes.

All these factors have resulted in new roles for training organizations, such as change consultants, vendor managers, and information synthesizers. New organizational structures, which are smaller, flexible and have permeable boundaries, with external vendors have been adopted. Training is seen as one of many performance enhancing interventions. There is movement away from the classroom towards less costly, more decentralized delivery, including electronically distributed delivery.

The implications are that training evaluation has had to focus on achievement of strategic initiatives, organizational performance, and return on investment on training expenditures. Training organizations have had to demonstrate that they are well-managed organizations that make decisions based on results, costs, and other organizational business concerns. The definition of customers has been expanded from the employees in the classroom to include their managers and business units, and evaluation has had to expand from employee-in-the-classroom satisfaction to individual and organizational performance. This has meant not only a change in the level of evaluation but in evaluation becoming multilevelled. While these evaluative processes should be made easier by the availability of information and technology, they have often added levels of complexity to them.

To meet these challenges, evaluators must move with the environmental and organizational changes. These changes create a need to look at evaluation differently. Evaluation of training must be multilevelled, customer focused, and support continuous improvement of training. Evaluation should demonstrate its effect on a targeted business problem. The challenge is to provide meaningful data that enables organizations to assess customer satisfaction and business impact.

Finally, it is imperative to mention the fact that this investigation was geared towards assessing the impact of a teaching and learning programme offered by external service providers such as READ Educational Trust on the writing performances of Grade 4 learners and the influence it has had on the classroom practises of educators involved in the application of such programmes. Basically, the study aimed to determine Grade 4 language educators' experiences with a READ Educational Trust training programme and

the extent it has impacted on their classroom practices and professional development. It is hoped that the study provided useful data that would enable READ's management and government officials to assess customer satisfaction and the business impact of READ's training programmes on organizational growth and sustainability. It is also believed that this research project adds a lot of insight on the subject been investigated, namely the impact of intervention programmes on learner performance, and that it came up with new knowledge and insights and has the potential to give guidance to different stakeholders in the educational context.