



*Grade one teachers' methods of teaching pre-reading skills to second language learners in
an Inner-city School*

By

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I, LEANNE MORGAN, declare that this dissertation/thesis, GRADE ONE TEACHER'S METHODS OF TEACHING PRE-READING SKILLS TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN AN INNER CITY SCHOOL is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other institution.

SIGNATURE

(L. Morgan)

DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my beautiful children. My love for you is unconditional. Thank you for inspiring me to be my best.

I love you

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ABSTRACT

Education is a fundamental precondition for progress and growth in South Africa (Spaull, 2011, p. 1). Literacy opens the doors to better livelihoods, improved health and expanded opportunity (UNESCO, 2011). Illiteracy is a serious constraint to improving education standards in South Africa. Prominent research studies stress the low levels of reading ability across the country. At the onset of Grade One, pre-reading skills are taught. Pre-reading skills are foundational skills and essential for later reading success. Teachers in English Second Language environments face the daunting challenge of teaching learners to read in a foreign language.

This qualitative research study, which was conducted at a low-fee private school in Pretoria Central Business district, aimed to explore the methods that educators were using to teach second language English Learners (ESL) pre-reading skills. Data collected from semi-structured interviews, lesson observations and document analysis revealed that educators had a limited theoretical knowledge of pre-reading skills due to a lack of tertiary education and curriculum training. Numerous methods of teaching pre-reading skills were identified during pre-reading lesson observations. The synthetic phonics approach, multisensory teaching, using dramatization and subtractive bilingualism were methods of instruction used to develop phonemic awareness and English oral language competency. The study highlighted the numerous challenges faced by ESL teaching working in a low-socioeconomic environment and the ways in which the teachers overcame these challenges. Based on this study's results, recommendations are provided to enhance the teaching of pre-reading skills to ESL learners.

Key Terms

English second language learner, Low-fee private school, Pre-reading skills, Emergent Literacy Skills, Curriculum Assessment Policy statement (CAPS).

LANGUAGE EDITOR

To whom it may concern

I hereby confirm that I have edited Leanne Morgan's (student number 26161908) thesis entitled 'Grade One teacher's methods of teaching pre-reading skills to second language learners in an inner city school' for submission towards being awarded a Masters degree at the University of Pretoria, South Africa.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DoE	Department of Education
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
ESL	English Second Language
PIRLS	Progress In International Reading Literacy Study
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality

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“Pause for a moment and imagine that you are an illiterate child. A textbook sits on a desk in front of you, and you cannot read it. You are surrounded by a classroom of children. Many of them do not have a book in front of them. In this regard, you are lucky. But to you, the text is still indecipherable. You are accustomed to listening to your school teacher dictate lessons, most often in a language that you do not speak or understand and that your parents do not speak with you at home. Without textbooks or training on the basics of teaching reading, your teacher has little choice but to dictate. Now you are presented with a text in an unfamiliar language. Next year, you will be expected to begin learning math and science concepts by reading more books in this language of which you cannot comprehend even one sentence. You are just one of millions of children in low-income countries around the world whose prospects of academic—and with it, economic— success are dimmed because you cannot read” (Gove, 2010).



CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

“Education is the most powerful weapon, which you can use to change the world.”
Nelson Mandela (2003)

Reading in the first few years of school is the major task children must accomplish and the main focus of teaching. If a child fails to learn to read, poor performance in school is almost assured (Vernon-Feagans, Hammer, Miccio, Manlove, & Elizabeth, 2002). Research suggests that children who learn to read early have more print exposure and, consequently, have more growth in numerous knowledge domains (Cunningham & Stanovitch, 1997). In contrast, children who lag behind in their reading skills receive less practice in reading than other children and often encounter material that is too advanced. Encountering reading material that is considered too advanced, may lead learners to develop negative attitudes about reading and learning (Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony, 2000). Failing to learn to read has enduring consequences. *“Research shows that very poor reading skills are often found among the chronically unemployed, school dropouts and juvenile delinquents”* (Lerner, 2003, p. 385).

Varied language and learning experiences are two factors that may impede on a learners’ ability to learn to read. South African children enter formal education with vastly different early learning experiences. The South African Schools Act (1997) requires that all South African children attend school from the year that the child turns seven years old (Department of Basic Education, 1997). It is therefore not compulsory for children to attend nursery school or Grade R. In order to ensure a strong emerging literacy foundation, it is imperative that teachers are able to assess learners’ current knowledge and skills. This provides the base upon which to scaffold new knowledge. Teaching and assessing for pre-

reading skills may be complicated by the fact that many children in South Africa are learning in a language that differs from their home language.

Various studies, such as the SACMEQ & PIRLS studies, aimed at monitoring the condition of schooling and the quality of primary school education in South Africa have highlighted that literacy rates are very low (Howie, Staden, Tshele, Dowse, & Zimmerman, 2012). Poor literacy rates may have alarming consequences for our youth. *“If we fail to provide relevant and effective education to the youngest citizens of our country, we will likely doom them to an almost unbreakable cycle of poverty from which only the very brightest will escape”* (Schwippert & Lenkeit, 2012, p. 211). In my experience as a remedial teacher, the majority of English Second Language learners referred to special education services experienced reading as a barrier to their academic success. Many learners referred for poor reading abilities struggled, as they had not developed the foundational pre-reading skills necessary to read.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Recent global reports indicate that large numbers of people around the world fail to learn to read. Globally, it is estimated that 17% or 796 million people lack basic literacy skills (UNESCO, 2011). South Africa is no exception and is currently facing many challenges in providing quality education for its multicultural population (Hugo, 2010). International reading studies suggest that many South African learners fail to meet the most basic literacy competencies (PIRLS, 2011; SACMEQ, 2007).

Historically in South Africa, education was central to segregation policies and featured strongly in the struggle efforts for liberation (S.A Census Bureau, 2011). The language in education policy aimed to provide full participation in society through equitable and meaningful education (Department of Basic Education [DoE], 1997). The language in education policy in South African schools operates under the structure of additive multilingualism, which promotes home language or mother tongue as the language of learning and teaching, particularly in the first few years of schooling whilst providing access to an additional language (DoE, 2011). However, English remains the language of learning and teaching for 80% of learners despite the fact that only 9,6% of the population speaks English at home (Howie, Staden, Tshele, Dowse, & Zimmerman, 2012). The stark reality is

that learners in South Africa are faced with the daunting challenge of learning a new language and simultaneously learning how to read.

1.3 RATIONALE

Early literacy skills serve as a direct foundation for later reading proficiency (de Witt & Lenayi, 2008). In other words, the early literacy skills that children begin formal instruction with will have a large impact on later reading achievement. Although a great deal is known about pre-reading skills necessary for early reading acquisition in English, the question remains as to whether the same pattern exists for children learning in a second language (Lesaux & Siegel, 2003).

A study by de Witt, Lessing and Lenayi (2008) reveals that only a very small percentage of learners possess early literacy competency in Grade R. The implication of this is that the majority of learners may not have the early literacy foundation necessary to benefit from formal instruction in Grade One. Grade One teachers can therefore not assume that basic literacy skills are in place when learners enter formal schooling. A further barrier to learners' reading readiness is second language learning. August and Shanahan (2006) highlight the consequences that learners face when learning a second language. Second language learners tend to have poorer literacy outcomes; lower academic achievement, higher-grade repetition and school dropout rates than their first language peers.

It is, therefore, clear that many learners enter formal schooling with varying, emergent literacy skills. In order for learners to benefit from literacy instruction, it is imperative that teachers assess and revisit emergent literacy skills at the onset of Grade One. This lays the way for a strong literacy foundation for all learners to be successful readers (Spira, Bracken, & Fischel, 2005). Learners who do not develop a sturdy literacy foundation may struggle throughout their academic career. Spaul (2012) states that many pervasive pedagogical problems in secondary school are rooted in educational deficits that were acquired in primary school. It is, therefore, imperative that research examines early literacy skills in primary schools in South Africa as a failure to grasp pre-reading skills early on may snowball and lead to poor achievement in secondary school. Hammer et al. (2014) concur and state that more research is required in the area of English first additional language learning.

This study is meaningful as it provides insights into the methods teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners. Thus, the research contributes to an existing body of reading research that attempts to explore the effective methods teachers use to teach reading in a multilingual society. By exploring how reading is currently being taught within the complex system it is being taught in, this study provides a glimpse into the dynamics surrounding English Second Language literacy instruction in Grade One. Exploring the methods that Grade One teachers use to overcome the barriers associated with second language learning, will make a meaningful contribution to a vast body of knowledge on early literacy instruction in South Africa.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

English is seen by many South African parents as beneficial to their children's academic and employment success. It is for this reason that large numbers of learners in South Africa learn in a language that differs from their home language. Second language learners must simultaneously learn a new language as well as important academic knowledge and skills. In order to support English Second Language learners, educators must adapt their teaching and assessment strategies. Assessment and teaching methods tailored to English Second Language learners is critical to ensuring that English Second Language learners develop a strong academic foundation on which the rest of their academic career can be built.

1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Teachers are the key contributors to improving the teaching of English in South Africa, particularly in the foundation phase (Fleisch, 2008). Student achievement is determined by what the teacher and learner do in the classroom (Hattie, 2003). Second language English teachers may have unique insights into the best practices and methods of teaching reading to English Second Language learners. It is for this reason that this case study explores and describes the methods that teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to learners in a Grade One classroom in an inner city, low-fee, private school in Pretoria. The aim of the proposed study is to provide a glimpse into the dynamics surrounding the teaching of pre-reading skills in order to gain a deeper insight into literacy teaching in South Africa.

To date, I have not found a South African study that looks specifically at the methods teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners. The context of this study is similar to many found throughout South Africa and Africa. This study, therefore, provides new practical insights into how pre-reading skills are taught in a second language Grade One classroom.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.6.1 Primary research question of the study

To what extent are teachers aware of and teaching pre-reading skills, as a prerequisite to reading, to second language learners in Grade One?

1.6.2 Secondary research questions of the study

- What methods do teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners in Grade One?
- What resources and support are available to teachers to enrich their early reading methodology?
- In what ways does the teaching of pre-reading skills interfere with the prescribed curriculum and how do the teachers deal with the interference?
- What barriers are faced when teaching pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners in Grade One?

1.7 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

Based on the literature I consulted on pre-reading skills, second language learning and teaching methodologies in the first Grade, I undertook this study with the following assumptions:

- I assumed that the information obtained from participating teachers would provide a holistic picture of the methodologies used in the classroom and the challenges teachers faced when implementing them.

- I assumed that the teachers participating in this study had knowledge of pre-reading skills and the methodologies used to teach these skills.
- I assumed that the teaching methodologies used to teach pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners might be different to teaching the same skills to first language learners.

1.8 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

In the following section, I provide a clarification of the key concepts in this study.

1.8.1 Teachers: Landsberg (2008) refers to a teacher as a person who transfers knowledge and facilitates learning while assuming the additional roles of leader, manager and administrator. For the purpose of this study, teachers refer to the two teachers teaching Grade One to English Second Language learners in a low-fee private school in Pretoria Central Business District.

1.8.2 Pre-reading skills: Whitehurst and Lonigan, (1998) refer to pre-reading skills as the skills that are developmental precursors to conventional forms of reading. Initially, learners learn to read and later they use reading to learn. In school, children go through a sequence of levels of reading development beginning with pre-reading skills. After the pre-reading stage, children develop decoding skills (Grade 1-2), fluency and automaticity (Grade 2-3) and later use reading to learn (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010). For the purpose of this study, the term pre-reading skills, refers to the skills that must be in place prior to successfully teaching a child to read.

1.8.3 English second language learner: A learner that learns in a language that is not as familiar to them as the language of their homes, their normal social interaction, and their culture (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010). For the purpose of this study, an English Second Language learner is a child that receives formal instruction in a language that differs from their home language.

1.8.4 Low-fee private school: The definition of a private or independent school differs from country to country. A low-fee private school is effectively any school that is not a public

school (state-controlled) (Draper & Hofmeyer, 2015). Low-fee private/independent schools offer an alternative schooling option in poorer communities, where public schooling is sometimes unavailable, but even when it is, it is often seen as undesirable by parents (Hofmeyer, McCarthy, Oliphant, Schirmer, & Bernstein, 2013).

1.8.5 Foundation Phase: The Foundation Phase consists of Grades one to three. The learners' age varies from age seven to nine, and teaching focuses primarily on Literacy, Numeracy and Life skills (Howie, Van Staden, Tshele, Dowse, & Zimmerman, 2012). The Literacy Learning Program in the foundation phase focuses primarily on giving children the foundation of reading, writing and basic literacy (Department of Basic Education, 2008).

1.8.6 The Language of Learning and Teaching in Grade One: According to the Language in Education Policy (1997), all learners shall learn in their mother tongue and take an additional language as an additional subject.

1.8.7 Phoneme: A distinctive unit of sound of a language. There are approximately 40 phonemes that can be distinguished in most dialects of English (The National Latin Psychology association, 2006).

1.8.8 Grapheme: A letter or group of letters representing one sound, e.g. w, ch, th (Rose, 2006).

1.9 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.9.1 Research aims

This research strives to explore the methods and experiences of teachers teaching pre-reading skills in an English second language classroom. This research also aims to uncover barriers preventing the successful acquisition of pre-reading skills and the methods that teachers used to overcome these challenges.

1.9.2 Research objectives

This research seeks to determine:

- The literacy practices in the classroom that promotes the acquisition of pre-reading skills for English Second Language learners.
- Teacher's unique experiences of teaching reading to English Second Language learners.
- The resources teachers are currently using to teach pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners.
- Challenges teachers face teaching pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners.
- The impact that teaching using the prescribed first language curriculum has on second language learning.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was guided by a qualitative research design, in which the researcher attempted to collect rich, descriptive data in a particular context, with the intention of developing an understanding of what was being observed (Maree, 2010). Qualitative data is a source of well-grounded, detailed descriptions and explanations of processes occurring within their natural context. These rich descriptions and explanations provide this study with a great deal of depth and understanding. Qualitative data preserves chronological flow and allows one to see precisely which events lead to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations (Amaratunga & Sarshar, 2002).

1.10.1 Research paradigm

The paradigmatic approach applied in this study is interpretivism. *“The ultimate aim of interpretivist research is to offer a perspective of a situation and to analyse the situation to provide insight into the way in which a particular group of people makes sense of their situation”* (Maree, 2010, p. 60). Interpretivist research is based on the desire for a deeper understanding of how humans experience their life-world through language, local and historical situations, and the inter-subjective actions of the people involved (Angen, 2000). The goal of interpretivist research is not to generalize or predict but, to understand and interpret human behaviour. This study attempts *“to make sense of teachers' life worlds by*

interacting with them, appreciating and clarifying the meanings they ascribe to their experiences” (Maree, 2010, p. 291). In order to meaningfully interact and understand the participant’s life worlds, the researcher strived to be receptive to the participant’s ideas and explanatory frameworks (Hayes, 2011).

1.10.2 Research design

The proposed study follows a case study design in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the methods teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners. A case study design is regarded as especially suitable for studying social phenomena (Yin, 2007). The strength of a case study lies in the multiple methods used to collect data. Thus, it provides a rich description of a phenomenon in order to represent it from the participant’s perspective (Stark & Torrance, 2006). This case study employs interviews, observations and document analysis as research methods. Using multiple methods of data collection may complicate how the researcher analyses the data. To overcome this, a general data analysis strategy was put in place to ensure the data collection strategies were appropriate and supported the ways in which data was analysed (Darke, Shanks, & Braodbent, 1998).

The weakness of using a case study design is that it is not possible to generalize statistically from one or a small number of cases to the population as a whole (Stark & Torrance, 2006, p. 33). It should be noted, however, that this is not the purpose or intention of this type of research (Maree, 2010). Case study research is aimed at greater insight and understanding of the dynamics of a specific situation. Maree (2010, p. 76) sums this up eloquently when he states, *“a well-selected case constitutes the dewdrop in which the world is reflected”*.

1.10.3 Theoretical framework

A number of theoretical models were applied during the course of this research. The models will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 2; however they will be briefly described below. Bronfenbrenners’ Bio-ecological Theory, Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory of human development, and Differentiated Instruction have been used as a theoretical base on which this study rests. Bronfenbrenners Bio-ecological theory was chosen in order to highlight the plethora of factors and relationships that affect the way children learn. In the same vein, Vygotsky’s Theory highlights the importance that a learner’s culture and language have on

their development. This theory also helps to explain the importance of the teacher's ability to mediate learning by teaching learners according to their unique level of development. Differentiated instruction is a pedagogical philosophy that aims to meet the diverse needs of all learners in the classroom by adapting methods of instruction and assessment to suite their unique needs.

1.11 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Purposeful criterion sampling was used in order to select the participants in this study. This type of sampling is a non-probability sample that is not used to enable the researcher to determine statistical inferences to a population, but will intentionally sample a group of people that can best inform the research problem under investigation (Creswell, 2013). Purposeful criterion sampling was best suited to this study as participants were chosen that could provide rich data. For the purpose of this study, participants had to be teaching English Second Language teachers working in a low-fee private school in Pretoria. School A was selected, as there were a high percentage of English Second Language learners enrolled in Grade One.

1.12 DATA COLLECTION

Multiple data gathering techniques were employed to collect data in this study. Maree (2010) highlights that using multiple sources and techniques of gathering data is a key strength of the case study method. Referred to as triangulation in the literature, "*multimodal data gathering techniques enhance the quality of data collected by illuminating different facets of a situation*" (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002, p. 72). I used lesson observations; semi-structured interviews and field notes to capture data on the ways teachers teach reading in a second language classroom. Observations were used to capture the methods, activities and strategies that teachers used during literacy instruction. The teachers were then interviewed in order to gain a deeper understanding for reasons provided for each method of instruction. Teachers' attitudes surrounding literacy instruction and second language learning were also explored.

1.13 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Thematic data analysis was used in this study. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing and reporting on patterns or themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The main aim of thematic analysis is to gain direct information from studying participants without imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives. “*Thematic analysis is best suited to elucidating the specific nature of a given group’s conceptualisation of the phenomenon under study*” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6).

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the textual data in order to get a deeper understanding of the ways in which teachers taught pre-reading skills in the Grade One classroom. The aim of content analysis was to attain condensed and broad description of the phenomenon. The outcome of inductive analysis in this study was to highlight categories describing the methods of reading instruction (Elo & Kyngas, 2007, p. 108). The researcher used inductive data analysis in order “*to allow research findings to emerge without the restraints imposed by more structured theoretical orientations*” (Maree 2010, p. 99).

1.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

During each stage of this research, the researcher ensured that best practice was upheld at all times. The researcher acted in a way that prioritised the safety and wellbeing of the participants. Strict ethical guidelines set out by the University of Pretoria were adhered to during each step of the research process. The correct scholarly procedure was followed and ethical clearance was granted before this study commenced. The researcher ensured the following precautions were adhered to at all times to prevent maleficence:

1.14.1 Voluntary participation

Upon meeting with the participants for the first time, the researcher ensured that all participants understood that their participation in this study was voluntary and they could choose to withdraw from the study at any time. During each stage of the research process, the researcher checked that participants were comfortable with the process and wanted to continue.

1.14.2 Informed consent

The researcher met with the principal and teachers before data collection began in order to ensure that the participants were informed of all the aspects of the study. Together with this meeting, each teacher was provided with a letter of informed consent explaining the purpose of the study, the participant's role, how and when data would be collected and how data would be stored and published. The document was discussed openly in a safe space where participants felt free to ask questions about the research. Informed consent was obtained from the learners' parents for the researcher to be an observer in their child's classroom. The parental consent letter explained the purpose of my research, concerns about confidentiality and my role as a researcher in the classroom. The researcher ensured all consent forms were returned before data collection began.

1.14.3 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

In order to ensure that the data collected could not be traced back to the school or teachers involved in the study, all documents containing information about the participants were kept locked up in a safe. All data collected during this research is stored according to strict University regulations. Pseudonyms were used to keep the names of participants and the school confidential. In addition, the researcher ensured that the school or participants could not be identified by any of the information stated in this thesis.

1.14.4 Non-maleficence

During this research, the researcher strived to uphold the strict code of ethics set out for researchers by the University of Pretoria. In each step of this research the researcher ensured that no harm was caused to any participants in this study.

1.15 QUALITY CRITERIA

The term "trustworthiness" refers to the way in which the researcher persuades the audience of the rigour and validity of the research findings (Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2012). Hayes (2011) states that good research is grounded in trustworthiness. A number of practices were adhered to in order to ensure a trustworthy study. Triangulation was used to

correlate data that was collected using multiple methods from multiple sources. Conducting member checking reduced misinterpretations of the data. Thick descriptions of the research process were recorded to ensure that the study was valuable and of high quality (Rolfe, 2006). The concepts of credibility, transferability, reflexivity, dependability and conformability will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

1.16 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Potential limitations of the study were identified. Firstly, the sample size was small. Only two Grade One teachers were observed and interviewed. The results of this study are context-specific and cannot be generalized to the wider population. Secondly, the interpretation of the interviews may have been hindered by the fact that the teachers in the study were being interviewed in a language that differed from their home language. Thirdly, the teachers were interviewed together. This may have influenced how the questions were answered. The limitations of this study were minimised by using triangulation of the data collected and by using the technique of member checking in order to guide the researcher's understanding.

1.15 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the basic orientation of the study. The researcher described the rationale for undertaking this study, stated the research purpose and clarified the key concepts that formed the backbone of the study. The conceptual framework, research design and methodology were introduced. An explanation of the ethical considerations and quality criteria that were adhered to in order to enhance the rigour of the study were clarified.

In Chapter 2, the researcher unpacks the concepts and themes of this study in the form of a literature review. Research exploring the development of reading within the South African context and the barriers learners may face in becoming successful reader is presented. The theoretical framework that was used to guide this research will also be explored in more detail in Chapter 2.



CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

"No skill is more crucial to the future of a child or to a democratic and prosperous society, than literacy" Michael Parks (1998)

In this chapter, the literature surrounding the present study will be presented. Firstly, a definition of reading and pre-reading skills will be discussed by referring to prominent international reading studies on literacy achievement in the foundation phase. Secondly, a comprehensive overview is given of the state of literacy in Southern Africa and the barriers South African children must overcome in order to be successful readers. Lastly, this chapter will discuss the theoretical framework that this research is based on and provides an integrated model of the relevant theories.

2.2 DEFINITION OF READING

Reading is a crucial life skill used throughout a child's schooling life and into adulthood. Kilfoil and Van Der Walt (2007) define reading as the ability to decode words, both print and meaning. Reading is a combination of automatic and accurate decoding, which allows for an understanding of what is being read (Leppanen, Aunola, Nieman, & Nurmi, 2008). In order for reading to be taught successfully, teachers are required to have a deep understanding of appropriate reading strategies, methods and techniques in order to scaffold new knowledge and build on a learners' previous knowledge (Kilfoil & Van Der Walt, 2007). Reading can be defined as a receptive language process. Carrell and Devine (2000) state that:

"Reading is a psycholinguistic process in that it starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning- which the reader

constructs. There is thus an essential interaction between language and thought in reading. The writer encodes thoughts as language and the language decodes language to thought” (Carrell & Devine, 2000, p. 28).

Reading requires an individual to efficiently decode unfamiliar words and automatically name well-known ones. These two skills allow for texts to be read with fluency, allowing for the ultimate goal of reading- comprehending the text (Leppanen, Aunola, Niemi, & Nurmi, 2008). Kilfoil and Van Der Walt (2007) concur and state that reading is an important language skill that every learner must acquire in order to access knowledge not readily available. Reading is not only important for individual wellbeing but for society as a whole. Economics research has established that schooling is an investment that forms human capital – that is knowledge, skill and problem-solving ability have an enduring effect (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985).

Reading not only forms the foundation of a learner’s academic success but is also an everyday skill that helps one to explore and make sense of their world. The “Mathew” effect, coined by sociologist Robert K. Merton in 1968, states that cumulative advantage leads to further advantage or, conversely, initial disadvantage is accentuated over time (Bennett, Theodore, Holahan, & Fletcher, 1995). This theory may explain the importance of effective early reading instruction and support. Second language learners begin the process of learning to read with the disadvantage of not understanding the language of learning and teaching. Over time, the gap widens and second language learners may be left behind, impeding their learning in many other academic areas (Chall, Jacobs & Baldwin, 1991).

2.3 PRE-READING SKILLS IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING HOW TO READ

The process of learning to read begins very early in life and extends into adulthood. Literature clearly highlights that there is a strong relationship between reading skills that are developed between birth and five years and later literacy skills (National Institute for Literacy, 2008). Learning to read is crucial to a child’s success throughout their lives. Initially, learners learn to read and later they use reading to learn. In school, children go through a sequence of levels of reading development beginning with pre-reading skills. After the pre-reading stage, children develop decoding skills (Grade 1-2), fluency and automaticity (Grade 2-3) and later use reading to learn (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010).



Figure 2.1- Sequence of reading development

Emergent literacy skills are typically acquired in the preschool years. *“These skills provide the foundation for children’s subsequent transitions to early or beginning reading and, ultimately, the achievement of conventional, skilled reading”* (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004, p. 202). Two studies provide clear consensus about the precursors necessary to develop successful readers. Whitehurst and Lonigan (2002) argue that learning to read is affected by the foundational skills of phonological awareness, print awareness and oral language. Research by Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) indicates similar findings and identifies weaknesses in oral language, phonological awareness, and alphabet knowledge as primary goals of intervention to prevent the occurrence of reading problems.

The ultimate aim of reading instruction is to guide learners to develop *“an intrinsic motivation to learn to read, to monitor and construct meaning from text, to use reading instrumentally for various purposes, and to read for pleasure and enjoyment”* (Paris & McNaughton, 2010, p. 11). To meet this aim, reading instruction needs to be a continuous, systematic and an enjoyable process that should start in the early years and should be re-enforced in formal schooling (Paris & McNaughton, 2010). The development of pre-reading skills- phonological awareness, oral language proficiency and print awareness will be discussed in more detail below.

2.3.1 Phonological awareness

An important distinction must be made between phonological awareness and phonemic awareness. Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti and Lonigan (2008, p. 14) offer a clear comparison between the two, *“Phonological awareness refers to a wide range of manipulation and detection skills across different sizes of sound pieces (words, syllables or sounds). Phonemic*

awareness, however, specifically refers to the ability to manipulate and detect the smallest sound pieces in words, the phonemes”. Phonemic awareness can therefore be considered a subtype of phonological awareness. Findings from several decades of research converge on the idea that most children who have difficulties learning to read have a core deficit in phonological awareness (Torgesen, Wagner, Rashotte, Burgess, & Hecht, 1997; Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, & Lonigan, 2008).

Research has revealed a developmental continuum in children’s acquisition of phonological processing skills (Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, & Lonigan, 2008). Phonological awareness begins in infancy when parents engage in verbal interactions with their baby. Initially, infants hear a babble of sounds but as they grow older they begin to hear boundaries between words (i.e. seethedog becomes see the dog) (Vukelich, Christie, & Enz, 2012). Word awareness is followed by syllable awareness, onset rhyme awareness and finally phonemic awareness as depicted below:

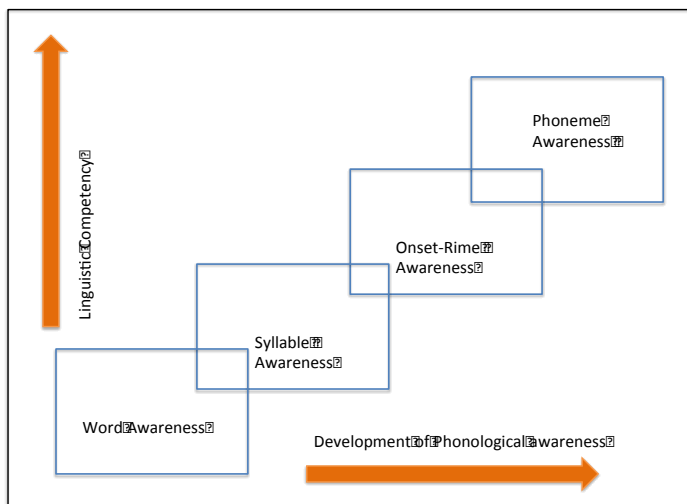


Figure 2.2- A pictorial representation of phonological awareness (Phillips, Clancy-pictorial, Menchetti (2008)

2.3.2 Phonemic awareness

Phonemic awareness, an advanced stage of phonological awareness, refers to the specific auditory skill that allows a learner to identify phonemes or individual sounds in words. Research has shown that pre-schoolers who are provided with phonemic awareness training become better readers (Ball & Blachman, 1991). Phonemic awareness is important in the development of early reading because it allows children to associate sounds with letters (Reading & Van Deuren, 2007, p. 269). When a learner is able to match sounds and printed letters, they are able to analyse unknown words or synthesise sounds to create new words.

2.3.3 Oral language proficiency

Oral language develops from a very early age through parent-child interactions. Oral language proficiency is enhanced through home literacy experiences such as shared storybook reading with parents and children. (Senechal, LeFevre, Thomas, & Daley, 1998; Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005; Justice, Chow, Capellini, Flanigan, & Colton, 2003).

There is a great deal of evidence showing that children's early progress in learning to read depends critically on their oral language skills (Muter, Hulme, Snowling, & Stevenson, 2004). Oral language is the foundation for literacy in general, and for reading comprehension specifically (Pan, 2011). Studies show that young children who demonstrate oral language proficiency learn to read [more efficiently](#) (National Institute for Literacy, 2008). A longitudinal study conducted by Muter, Hulme, Snowling [and](#) Stevenson (2004) shows that vocabulary knowledge and grammatical knowledge are significant predictors of reading comprehension.

Studies show that English Second Language learners lag behind in both breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge compared to their monolingual peers (Hammer, Scarpino, & Davison, 2011). It is, therefore, imperative that classroom interventions are designed and implemented in order to improve oral language. Graves (2006) [recommends](#) using teaching strategies that engage learners in linguistically rich experiences. A second language reading development program should providing rich and varied language experiences, teach individual words, teach word learning strategies and foster word consciousness (Graves, 2006).

2.3.4 Print awareness

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Print awareness is a broad term that refers to a learners' ability to recognise print, ranging from contextualised environmental print (e.g. recognising the word OMO on a washing powder box) to [decontextualized](#) written words (e.g. recognising words in a reader) (Vukelich, Christie, & Enz, 2012). Research has shown that young children's knowledge of concepts of print is moderately correlated with reading ability in the primary grades (National Reading panel, 2000)

Knowledge of alphabetic letters has also been shown to be a strong predictor of short and long-term literacy success. "*When a child decodes, they are essentially converting written symbols into units of sound*" (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998, p. 851). Knowing the names of letters and being able to identify the corresponding sounds allows for successful decoding of unknown words. In addition to decoding, "*letter knowledge appears to play an influential role in the development of phonological sensitivity, both prior to and after the initiation of formal reading instruction*" (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2002, p. 17). Three aspects of print awareness have received particular attention: print concepts, environmental print recognition and alphabetic knowledge (Pullen, 2003).

A child with well-developed print concepts knows: (Justice & Ezell, 2001, p. 124)

1. *Print tells the story*
2. *Text on the page is read form left to right*
3. *Progression through text moves from the top of the page to the bottom.*
4. *When one page of text is read, the story continues on the next page*
5. *The white spaces between groups of letters represent a break between spoken words*

2.4 METHODS OF TEACHING PRE-READING SKILLS

Helping young children become successful readers requires deliberate effort from first-Grade teachers. "*Demonstrating appropriate literacy behaviours, proving opportunities for practice and application, and nurturing a love of reading all help promote a positive foundation for reading success*" (Sanacore, 2010, p. 241).

The national reading panel (2000) states that reading instruction in Grades R to three must effectively address five essential components. These components are also emphasised in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (Department of Basic Education, 2011). *“Phonemic awareness, word recognition (phonics), comprehension, vocabulary and fluency are like pieces of a puzzle that must interlock in order to provide learners with the holistic instruction necessary to become successful readers”* (Barclay, 2009, p. 167).

2.4.1 A Continuum of approaches

The field of early literacy instruction has witnessed a debate between two very different views of how to teach reading (Vukelich, Christie, & Enz, 2012). On one side of the debate are the supporters of the emergent literacy approach and on the other side, the Scientifically Based Reading Research Approach (SBRRA).

Proponents of emergent literacy believe that, if learners are provided with print-rich environments, natural literacy experiences and meaningful social interactions, most children will require very little formal instruction to learn to read and write (Vukelich, Christie, & Enz, 2012). The emergent literacy approach advocates that children begin learning to read at a very early age whilst observing and interacting with adults or older children. This approach has an important implication for educational policy in South Africa. In order to enhance reading achievement, substantial investment of resources is essential to create print-rich classrooms (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2002).

At the opposite end of the instructional continuum is the Scientifically Based Reading Research Approach (SBRRA). The SBRRA differs from the emergent literacy approach as it is a skills-based approach that focuses on the core skills and abilities learners need to develop in order to be successful readers. Vernon-Feagans, Hammer, Miccio, Manlove and Elizabeth (2002) highlight that one of the most consistent research findings is that core early literacy skills can be developed through explicit, systematic instruction. Both approaches have numerous advantages and a blend of both the emergent literacy approach and the SBRRA will provide the most comprehensive early literacy instruction.

2.4.2 Developing oral language competence

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There is no dispute about the importance of vocabulary in reading (Shanahan, 2006). Oral vocabulary instruction is a valuable component of beginning reading. Learners' understanding of word meanings and how words are used in text contributes significantly to reading comprehension (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004). In *Becoming a nation of readers: the report of the commission on reading*, Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985, p. 23) state, "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children".

Studies show that learners can improve their vocabulary directly or indirectly (Shanahan, 2006). Indirect vocabulary acquisition occurs when learners engage in conversation with adults or peers or when they are read to. Read-aloud activities are especially beneficial to English Second Language learners as they foster oral language and vocabulary development. Direct vocabulary acquisition occurs when teachers actively engage learners in vocabulary activities such as teaching them new words prior to reading (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004).

Successful vocabulary instruction teaches words that are important, in terms of frequency and breadth of use but are unknown by the learners. "To really know a word, learners must learn about its sounds, how to pronounce it, its meanings, how to use it in a sentence and, later, how to read it and spell it" (Love & Reilly, 2006, p. 121). Meaningful vocabulary instruction helps children gain a deep understanding of word meanings and the connections between words (Senechal, LeFevre, Thomas, & Daley, 1998). This takes on-going practice and repetition.

2.4.3 Developing print awareness

Print awareness is a child's earliest understanding that written language carries meaning. Both teachers and parents play a vital role in developing a child's understanding that print is functional. Vukelich, Christie, & Enz (2012) state that teachers can promote print awareness by providing a print-rich environment and teaching book concepts during shared reading. Teachers should provide opportunities to play and compare print by allowing children to interact with a variety of print forms such as books, newspapers, magazines, and comics.

Parents can also promote the development of print awareness by encouraging their child's natural curiosity; following the child lead and answering questions that their child has about print (Kassow, 2006). Parents can support the development of print awareness by pointing out signs and print in the community, and discussing the colours, pictures and numbers that are seen.

2.4.4 Developing phonological awareness

Phonological activities focus on the sounds of words. Students who have developed phonological awareness are able to segment words with ease. For most children, this is accomplished in Grade R or Grade One (Shanahan, 2006). "*Segmenting activities (breaking sentences into words), rhyming activities (recognising words share the same ending sound), alliteration activities (a focus on the beginning sounds of words) and onset-rhyme activities (separating initial sound and end syllable) lay the foundation for phonemic awareness*" (Vukelich, Christie, & Enz, 2012, p. 149). Phonological awareness can also be taught through language songs and games and other activities that encourage learners to listen for sounds within words (Shanahan, 2006). Carefully planned storybook reading experiences can also promote phonological awareness skills while providing a strong foundation for comprehension and vocabulary development (Barclay, 2009).

"A complementary way of supporting word recognition growth is using high-frequency rhymes or word families" (Sanacore, 2010, p. 241). An awareness of rhyme helps learners to decode and encode words by matching the initial sound of a word with the rhyme. For example, if the teacher teaches the word family 'at', learners are then able to change the onset letter to create new words. Thus knowing the 'at' rhyme helps learners to create words such as h-at, f-at, and b-at.

2.4.5 Developing phonemic awareness

Phonemic awareness does not seem to develop automatically with age. Instead, it appears that phonemic awareness develops via direct instruction in an alphabetic orthography (Goswami, 2002). "*Explicit instruction in phonemic awareness benefits most beginning readers, including those with reading difficulties and those learning in a second language*" (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004, p. 9). Phonemic awareness is a difficult skill for many

children to acquire, as there are few clues in speech to signal the separate phonemes that make up words. Vukelich, Christie, & Enz (2012) identify four strategies for teaching phonemic awareness that are appropriate for young children. These include Phoneme isolation (focusing learners attention on individual sounds in words), Phoneme combination (combining individual sounds to form words), phoneme segmenting (breaking words down into individual sounds) and phoneme manipulation (adding or substituting phonemes in words to create new words).

Comprehensive, systematic instruction and natural meaningful experiences will provide learners with the emergent literacy foundation needed to become successful readers. It must however be acknowledged that pre-reading skills are not developed in a vacuum. A complex interplay of factors including poverty, lack of early childhood development and second language learning are interwoven into the web of poor literacy achievement in South Africa.

2.5 EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS PRESCRIBED BY THE CAPS CURRICULUM

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS) was introduced in South Africa after the revision of the National Curriculum Statement in 2009. The CAPS document strives to provide clear specifications of what should be taught and learnt on a term-by-term basis from Grade R to Grade 12 (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The CAPS document is available in all of South Africa's eleven official languages and provides guidelines for teaching in both home language and second language settings. For the purpose of this study, the English home language policy statement will be analysed as English Second Language learners are taught using the English home language policy documents.

For learners in the foundation phase, instructional time amounts to 23 hours per week. The CAPS policy states that 10 of these hours should be dedicated to teaching languages. In Grade R, these 10 hours should be dedicated to home language instruction (Department of Basic Education, 2011). In Grade One, however, seven to eight hours should be used for home language instruction and two to three hours should be used to teach second language instruction (Department of Basic Education, 2011). This implies that approximately 40 percent of teaching time should be devoted to literacy instruction.

Table 1 provides an overview of the Emergent Literacy Skills that should be taught to English home language learners in Grade R and Grade [One](#).

Table 2.1- A comparison of Emergent Literacy Skills taught in Grade R and Grade One-specified by the CAPS Curriculum document (DOE, 2011)

Emergent Literacy Skills Grade R	Emergent Literacy Skills Grade One
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises and points out common objects in pictures • Arranges a set of pictures in such a way that they form a story • Interprets pictures, e.g. makes up own story and ‘reads’ the pictures • Acts out parts of a story, song or rhyme • Holds the book the right way up and turns pages correctly • Pretends to read and adopts a ‘reading voice’ • Recognises own name and names of some other children in the class • Begins to ‘read’ high-frequency words seen in the classroom and at school, e.g. door, cupboard) • Shared reading as a class with teacher • ‘Reads’ enlarged texts such as poems, big Books and posters • Makes links to own experience when reading with the teacher • Describes characters in stories and gives opinions • Predicts what will happen in a story through the pictures • Answers questions based on the story read • Draws pictures capturing the main idea of the stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops book handling skills (holding) • Interprets pictures to make up own story, i.e. ‘reads’ the pictures • Reads logos, labels and other words from environmental print • Recognises own name and names of peers • Reads labels and captions in the classroom • Develops basic concepts of print including- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concept of a book -Concept of words and letters • Directionality - Start reading at front, end at back; read from left to right and top to bottom of a page Shared Reading as a class with teacher. • Reads big Books or other enlarged texts • Uses pictures and the book cover to predict what the story is about • Discusses the story, identifying the main idea and characters • Sequences the events in the story • Recognises cause and effect in a story, e.g. The girl got into trouble because she broke a window Gives an opinion on what was read • Answers open-ended questions based on the passage read • Interprets information from posters, pictures and simple tables, e.g. a. calendar

2.6 UNDERSTANDING SECOND LANGUGAE LEARNING IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The Department of Basic Education (2010) conducted a survey in 2007, which indicates that the most prominent languages spoken by learners in South African schools are isiZulu (25%). IsiXhosa (20%), Afrikaans (10%) and English (7%). This survey also reveals that the home languages of learners were not reflected in the Languages of Learning and Teaching in South African schools. For example, IsiZulu is the prominent home language of learners in South Africa but only 7% of schools offer IsiZulu as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). In contrast, 7% of learners in South Africa have English as a home language but 65% of the schools have an English LoLT. This is depicted below:

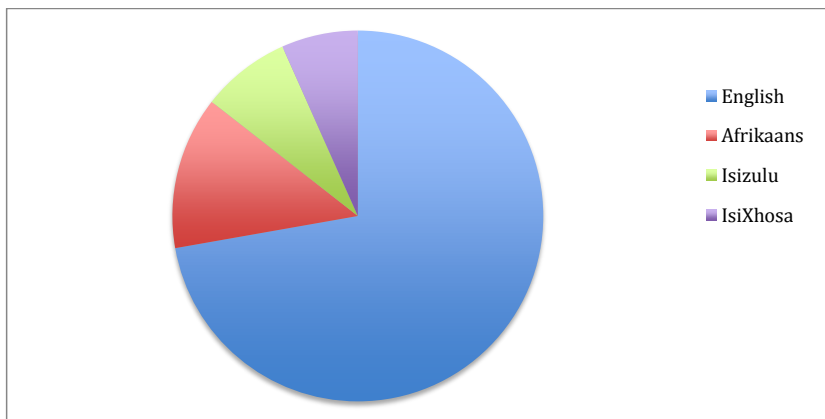


Figure 2.3- Language of learning and teaching in South Africa (2007)

Web (1999, p. 351) highlights “a mismatch between policies in South Africa that promote the national goal of multilingual pluralism and the monolingual practice of English-only instruction”. The Department of Basic Education suggests there may be four main reasons for the dominance of English instruction in South African Schools (The Department of Basic Education, 2010). English may be seen by parents as a global language and associated with economic growth. English may be viewed as beneficial by parents as most tertiary institutions only offer instruction in English. Another reason offered by the Department of Education is that English may be more prominent in the workplace. The English language has attained a symbolic value as the gateway to a better life (Van der Walt, 2006).

2.7 LOW-FEE PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Commented [FO3]: Technical editing required

The private sector is an increasingly important player in providing education services and making education accessible for communities and marginalised groups in developing countries (Hofmeyer & Mccay, 2013). No one knows the exact size of the sector, but the evidence suggests it is much larger than the 4% of total school-goers indicated in the last consensus figures (Bernstein, 2013). Bernstein (2013) states that in contrast to the public school sector, the private school sector is growing rapidly and says that there are approximately 3500 registered independent schools in South Africa.

Many low-fee private schools in South Africa can be found in abandoned factories, shopping centres, shacks and high-rise buildings (Schirmer, Johnston, & Bernstein, 2010). Private schools have fewer facilities than public schools. As in other countries, they tend to concentrate on the essentials of teaching that will provide the pass rates they need to attract more learners. Teachers in public schools tend to be better qualified and better paid than those in low-fee private schools (Schirmer, Johnston, & Bernstein, 2010). Draper & Hofmeyer, (2015, p. 4) explain that

“The nature of the independent school sector in South Africa, and especially of low-fee schools, is very different from most other developing countries. The fees of South African low-fee schools are considerably higher, girls are the majority of learners and a maze of actively implemented legislation and regulations governs independent schools.”

According to research by the Centre for Development, low-fee private schools are not utilised by the poorest of the poor; rather, many parents are working people (police officials, civil servants, and teachers in public schools) who have chosen low fee private schools as the next best option to the far more expensive former Model C schools (Schirmer, Johnston, & Bernstein, 2010). Schirmer, Johnston and Bernstein (2010) highlight that parents send their children to private schools as they feel their children will achieve better results than in public schools. Parents stated that the money paid in fees made private schools more accountable to parents. Parents felt that classes were smaller, teachers were well prepared, and follow up on learners’ performance.

The use of English as a medium of instruction is a key factor for parents choosing to enrol their learners in low-fee private schools (Schirmer, Johnston, & Bernstein, 2010). Parents believe that learning through English helps their child attain better opportunities after school in both employment and further education. Dixon (2012) explains that, parents often believe that if their children can communicate in English, it would provide them with better chance of lifting themselves and their families out of poverty.

2.8. THE STATE OF EARLY LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

“Education is a fundamental precondition for progress and growth in South Africa” (Spaull, 2011, p. 1). Literacy opens the doors to better livelihoods, improved health and expanded opportunity (UNESCO, 2011). However, prevalent reading studies conducted in South Africa indicate that literacy rates are alarmingly low. South Africa’s literacy achievement lags behind most other African countries (even many poorer ones) and well below global counterparts (Spaull, 2011). *“Educational quality in historically black schools, constituting 80% of enrolment, has not improved since the political transition, despite large resource transfers to such schools”* (Van de Berg, 2008, p. 145).

Ample studies (Winter & Kelly, 2008; Whitehurst, Crone, & Zevenbergen, 1999; de Witt, Lessing, & Lenayi, 2008; Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony, 2000) have examined the importance and state of early literacy in preschool and a vast body of knowledge also exists on the challenges faced by English Second Language learners (Lenyai, 2011; Lenyai & de Witt, 2008; Hugo, 2010). A large body of literature describing successful methods of teaching reading to preschool children can also be found (Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, & Lonigan, 2008; Barclay, 2009; Sanacore, 2010). A study by Hugo (2010) highlights the ‘battle’ foundation phase teachers in South Africa face when teaching reading. Hugo’s research identifies teaching methods in the classroom as one prominent problem to successful reading instruction (2010).

South Africa faces numerous challenges in providing quality education for its multicultural population (Hugo, 2012). The effects of poverty and second language learning have been shown to contribute to the poor development of early literacy competence (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2003). Research findings consistently show that children living in low-income environments enter school with fewer skills necessary to

become good readers (Masseti, 2009). Studies also show that early literacy experiences such as visiting the library (Vernon-Feagans, Hammer, Miccio, Manlove, & Elizabeth, 2002) and having books at home (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002) promote the development of early literacy skills.

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2011) reveals that the majority of Grade four and five learners are achieving well below their international counterparts. Results show that 71% of Grade four learners are able to read on a basic level and only a minority of South African learners (6%) are able to read on an advanced level. More than half the Grade four learners tested in Sepedi and Tshivenda could not read at the basic level required for successful reading (Howie, Staden, Tshele, Dowse, & Zimmerman, 2012). The third Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SAQMEQ III, 2007) displays similar findings to the PIRLS study (2011). The SAQMEQ report highlights that a large number (27.2 %) of South African learners in the study fail to meet the most basic literacy skills and can be considered non-readers. Of those learners who are considered non-readers, 44.7% attend Quintile 1 schools (the poorest schools) and 1.4% attended Quintile 5 schools (the least poor) (Moloi & Chetty, 2010).

“Experts warn that many children enter school lacking the fundamental skills to achieve academic success” (Winter & Kelly, 2008, p. 260). It is well documented that compared to more advantaged children, children from low-income families are more likely to enter school with fewer of the language, literacy and social skills needed to ensure school success (Winter & Kelly, 2008; Massetti, 2009). *“If developing countries aim to produce independent learners, then serious attention needs to be given to improving the reading skills of students and creating a culture of reading”* (Pretorius, 2008, p. 169).

2.9 BARRIERS TO EARLY LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The ultimate goal of English Second Language teachers is to minimise reading difficulties whilst maximising comprehension. A study by Hugo, (2010) seeking to identify the challenges teachers face when teaching reading in Grade One, concludes that the home language spoken by learners and teachers, reading methods used in the classrooms and the lack of materials in the classroom are barriers to effective reading instruction. Learners

reading achievement is further affected by a lack of quality early learning opportunities due to their low socioeconomic status. These barriers to learning to read are unpacked below.

2.9.1 A Lack of early learning experiences

Many children from disadvantaged communities have very few meaningful early literacy experiences. *“Most literacy experiences mainly occur in the schooling context and even that does not generally provide a print-rich environment”* (Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007, p. 41). In 2007, 74% of learners in South Africa had exposure to preschool (SAQMEQ III). A vast difference in preschool attendance can be seen between high and low socioeconomic groups. 89% of children who fall into the high socioeconomic status category and only 61% of children in the low socioeconomic status categories had exposure to preschool. This is an alarming statistic as children from the most disadvantaged households have the most to gain from early childhood programs, but they are often the least represented (UNESCO, 2011). Many children in South Africa do not have the opportunity to attend Grade R and come to school without the necessary skills to begin the complex task of learning how to read in Grade One (Hugo, 2010).

As recently as thirty years ago, learning to read was only thought to commence when a child began formal instruction in the first Grade. It is now abundantly clear that reading acquisition is a process that begins early in the preschool years (Scarborough, 2002). The third Southern and East Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ III, 2007) report highlights the relationship between preschool exposure and reading achievement. An exponential relationship exists between reading scores and the corresponding duration of pre-school experience (Moloi & Chetty, 2010). Children who enter school with limited reading skills are at higher risk for special education services (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2002).

The Grade R Program is fairly new in South Africa having been formalised in White Paper 5 (Department of Education) in 2001. The new focus on early childhood development aimed to address early learning opportunities for all learners, especially those living in poverty. When discussing the benefits of learners attending Grade R the DoE (2001) states:

“Children would acquire the basic concepts, skills and attitudes required for successful learning and development prior to or shortly after entering the system, thus reducing their chances of failure. The system would also be freed of under-age and under-prepared learners, who have proven to be the most at risk in terms of school failure and drop-out” (Department of Education, 2001)

In order for the Grade R Program to be successful and prepare learners for Grade One, teachers need supportive measures to be in place. A study by Lenyai, (2011) reports that virtually no content on the requirements of emergent literacy is available in teacher guidance documents, which suggests that there is very little practical guidance given to teachers on promoting emergent literacy.

2.9.2 Low socioeconomic status

“South Africa is still a tale of two schools: One which is functional, wealthy, and able to educate students; with the other being poor, dysfunctional, and unable to equip students with the necessary numeracy and literacy skills they should be acquiring in primary school” (Spaull, 2012, p. 2).

Many poor families in South Africa are unable to provide materials to promote early reading opportunities. For example, 90% of middle-income families reported visiting the library at least once a month whereas only 43% of low-income families visited the library that often (Vernon-Feagans, et.al. 2002).

“The South African Book Development Council paints a bleak picture of the reading habits of adult South Africans. More than half of South Africa’s population does not have any books in the home and only 26% read daily in their leisure time. These figures are responsible for the classification of South African adults as ‘infrequent readers’” (Snyman, 2016, p. 1).

Limited resources at home may minimise the opportunities available to develop necessary skills in order to learn to read in the first Grade. Research findings consistently show that children living in low-income environments enter school with fewer skills necessary to become good readers (Massetti, 2009). Research also indicates that for most children



reading performance over the elementary school years is remarkably stable (Spira, Bracken, & Fischel, 2005). This implies that very few children who experience reading difficulties in first-grade show steady improvement over time. It is, therefore, imperative that teachers lay a strong literacy foundation in Grade R and Grade One in order for learners to achieve academic success in higher Grades (Spira, Bracken, & Fischel, 2005).

2.9.3 English second language learning

It is the reality for a vast number of learners in South Africa to face the daunting challenge of learning a new language and simultaneously learning how to read. August [and](#) Shanahan (2006) highlight the consequences that learners may face when learning in a second language. Second language learners tend to have poor literacy outcomes; lower academic achievement, higher-grade repetition and school drop-out rates than their first language peers. The results from a study by Broom [and](#) Jewson (2013) highlight that Grade eight first language English learners perform significantly better on both vocabulary and reading comprehension tests than their second language peers (Broom & Jewson, 2013).

Each year, thousands of second language learners are placed in English classrooms across South Africa. One common reason is that English is regarded as the language of status, opportunity and education. *“The idea that learning in English is more beneficial than learning in one’s mother tongue persists among parents that believe that primary schools that offer English as a language of learning will provide the best education for their children”* (Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007, p. 40). Many children, therefore, begin formal schooling not understanding a single word of English, the language of instruction.

Learning in an additional language is often referred to as subtractive bilingualism in literature. *“It is bilingualism in that it involves learning through a second language and is subtractive in the sense that it denies the value of the home language in the context of formal learning”* (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010, p. 182).

The education debate about learning through the medium of one’s own home language or of a second language (often English) is an on-going debate in South Africa (Hugo, 2010). The Language in Education Policy (1997) recommends,

“The learner’s home language should be used for learning and teaching wherever possible. This is particularly important in the Foundation Phase where children learn to read and write. Where learners have to make a transition from their home language to an additional language as the language of learning and teaching, this should be carefully planned” (Department of Education, 2002, p. 5).

The language in education policy is grounded in research that suggests that prolonged exposure to the child’s home language in school strengthens the foundation from which to build the acquisition of the second language (Lapp, Fisher, Flood, & Cabello, 2001). However, at classroom level, the Language in Education Policy is not being implemented as recommended. Approximately 76% of the learners in South Africa indicated that their language of learning and teaching was the same as their home language. *“This implies, however, that nearly one-quarter of learners received instruction in their second or third language”* (Department of Education, 2003, p. 21). *“Second language learners have a threefold task: they have to make sense of the instructions given in the second language, they have to attain sociolinguistic competence in order to participate and they have to eventually attend to the learning content itself”* (Hugo, 2010, p. 68). A study by de Witt & Lenayi, (2008) highlights that learners diverse linguistic backgrounds, teachers expertise and the lack of learning materials compromised the success of the language of education policy in the Grade R classroom.

Poor comprehension of English appears to be the major cause of poor reading performance (Hugo, 2008; Moore & Hart 2007; Pretorius, 2002). Tabors [and](#) Snow (2001) highlight that second language learner’s accomplishments in first grade seem almost “language free”. The second language learner may be well rehearsed at recognising sight words and decoding regular words but seem to take little meaning from the text they read. The result is reading with accurate pronunciation but with little understanding of what is read. This holds many implications for a learner’s future academic success as understanding a text is crucial to learning and studying (Tabors & Snow, 2001).

2.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A number of theories or models have been used to understand the process of learning to read in a second language. The researcher will discuss each of these theories individually and

then conclude with an integrated model. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Development, Bronfenbrenners Bio-ecological model and differentiated instruction will be described in more detail below.

2.10.1 Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

Two major themes of Vygotsky's work provide support for the development of second language reading. Firstly, Vygotsky's theory highlights the importance that language and culture have on learning. According to Teal [and](#) Sulzby (1989), "*literacy is not regarded as simply a cognitive skill to be learned, but a complex socio-psycholinguistic activity*" (Robb, 2003, p. 5). Secondly, Vygotsky's theory brings to the foreground the idea that the development of concepts and higher mental functioning takes place within a learner's zone of proximal development (Antonacci, 2000).

Lev Vygotsky has deepened our understanding of ways to support children's learning by describing three zones of development (Robb, 2003, p. 17). The first is the Zone of Actual Development. In this zone, a child is able to complete tasks independently. The second is the Zone of Proximal Development. The Zone of Proximal Development can be defined as "*...the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance*" (Human-Vogel, 2004, p. 26). It is in this zone that teaching and learning occur (Robb, 2003). With continual assistance, children can learn to do a task independently. The third zone is the Zone of Frustration. Children in this zone experience frustration, as they do not have the background knowledge or skills to understand what is being taught. Children in this zone often experience anxiety and a loss of self-confidence. "*Over time, this can destroy a young learner's curiosity and motivation to learn*" (Robb, 2003, p. 18).

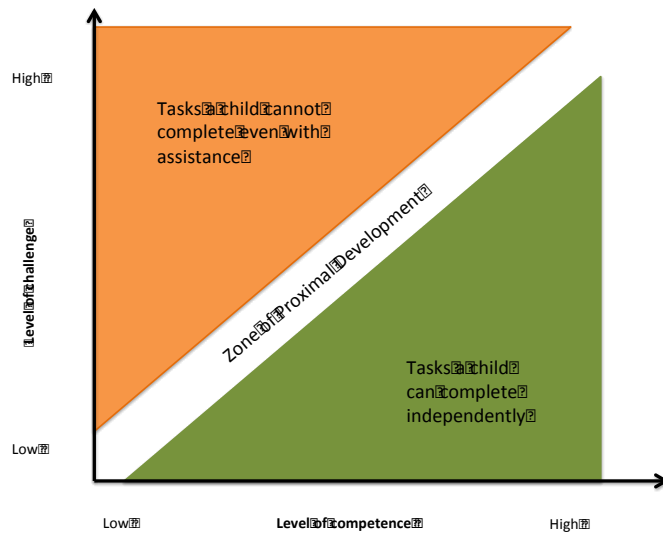


Figure 2.4- Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory adapted from Brace (2014).

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory is relevant in this study as it clearly demonstrates the importance of matching learning experiences to a child's background knowledge and skills. Learners entering Grade One with underdeveloped emergent literacy skills will be functioning in the Frustration Zone. If a second language learner is unable to understand the language of instruction, scaffolding may be difficult and the learner may remain in the Frustration Zone and may be more prone to poor literacy achievement.

2.10.2 Bronfenbrenners Bio-ecological Model

The second theory that forms part of my theoretical framework is Bronfenbrenners Bio-ecological systems theory. Bronfenbrenner conceptualised the environment as being comprised of at least four interacting systems, namely the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem and Macrosystem. These systems interact with another dimension that is time. McBride explains the systems and their implications of reading development as follows:

“The microsystem consists of a child’s individual relationships. In terms of learning to read, this may include relationships with the parents of the learner-teacher relationship. The Mesosystem consists of the associations of various relationships that the child has with others. These relationships may influence how the child views themselves or other crucial role players such as their teachers. The Exosystem consists of entities that have a direct one-way effect on how the developing child learns to read for example the language policies in place that guide education and training. The final system is the Macrosystem, this system includes the culture, language and orthography of a society” (McBride, 2016. p.17)

A child is therefore embedded in a complex system. *“Their development is a product of a constellation of forces (economic, political, social and psychological)” (Ceci, 2006, p. 174).* Literacy development, therefore, does not occur in a vacuum but is affected by a wealth of factors. Among the most prominent of these include home language spoken, classroom teaching style, home environment and socioeconomic status (McBride, 2016). By looking at emergent literacy through a systems lens it is clear that there are many intrinsic and extrinsic factors that affect the way a child learns how to read.

2.10.3 Differential instruction

The Constitution of South Africa (act 108 of 1996) is based on the values of dignity and achievement of equality. One way in which these values are promoted is through White Paper 6 (2011). The Education White paper 6 (2011) is a policy paper that promotes equal access to education through inclusive education. This policy paper aims to provide support to all learners by acknowledging and respecting the difference of learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class or disability (DoBE, 2011). One way to achieve equal access to education is by using differentiated instruction in the classroom.

Differentiated instruction can be defined as:

“An approach to curriculum and instruction that systematically takes students’ differences into account in designing opportunities for each student to engage with information and ideas and to develop essential skills. Differentiation provides a

framework for responding to difference in students' current and developing levels of readiness" (Dixon, Yssel, McConnel, & Hardin, 2014. p. 111).

Teachers who are able to differentiate effectively must strategically plan lessons and also adapt their teaching in the midst of instruction in order to meet the diverse needs of the learners sitting in front of them (Parsons, Dodeman, & Burrowbridge, 2013). This one-size does not fit all approach to learning will *"serve all learners from culturally, linguistically and academic backgrounds within the current context of the academic classroom"* (Santmaria, 2009. p. 216).

2.10.4 Presenting model

From the above theories, it is evident that second language learning is affected by a plethora of genetic, social, emotional and environmental factors. In order for teachers to teach English Second Language learners to read successfully, it is imperative that they locate each learners Zone of Proximal development. Differentiated instruction can then be used to build on each learner's unique knowledge, skills and values. *"Differentiating instruction makes sense because it offers different paths to understanding content, process, and products, considering what is appropriate given a child's profile of strengths, interests, and styles"* (Dixon, Yssel, McConnel, & Hardin, 2014, p. 111). The graphic representation below shows the integration of all three theories.

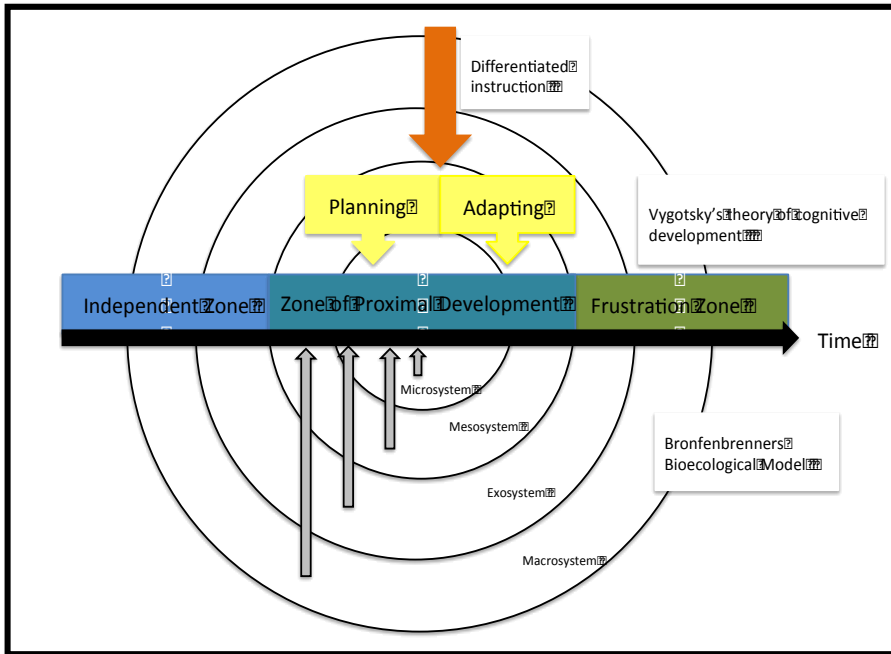


Figure 2.5- Graphic representation of my presenting model

2.11. CONCLUSION

Children will not grow to be successful readers unless schools, families and communities work together to provide learning environments and experiences that address the development of the whole child, within a context that embraces diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. First-grade teachers that teach second language or socio-economically disadvantaged learners have a greater responsibility to provide continuous systematic literacy instruction. Meaningful, high-quality instruction will give second language learners the best opportunity to become successful readers.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH STRATEGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

“Literacy is not a luxury. It is a right and a responsibility. If our world is to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, we must harness the energy and creativity of all citizens.” Bill Clinton (1994)

This chapter addresses the research strategy applied during the course of the investigation. Firstly, the epistemology and methodology underpinning this study will be examined. A discussion of the research design, data collection strategies and data analysis will then be presented. This chapter will be concluded with a discussion of the quality criteria and ethical considerations that were adhered to.

Table 3.1 summarises the research strategy I employed in this study:

Table 3.1- Research strategy table adapted from Caddy (2015, p. 47)

RESEARCH STRATEGY		
Epistemology	Interpretivism	
Methodology	Qualitative research	
RESEARCH DESIGN		
Case study		
DATA COLLECTION		
Semi-structured interview, observation of literacy lessons, field notes, documents		
Primary research question	Value	Data collection methods
To what extent are teachers aware of and teaching pre-reading skills, as a prerequisite to reading, to second language learners in Grade One?	To explore teacher’s perspectives on their understanding of the nature of pre-reading skills and the methods they currently employ when teaching pre-reading skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi- structured interview • Lesson observations • Field notes • Document analysis



Secondary research Questions	Value	Data collection methods
What methods do teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to second language learners?	To establish which methods of teaching pre-reading skills is most successful in second language classrooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interview • Lesson observation • Field notes • Document analysis
What resources and support are available to teachers to enrich their early reading methodology?	To establish what resources will be beneficial to the teaching of pre-reading skills in Grade One.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews • Lesson observations • Field notes
In what way does the teaching of pre-reading skills interfere with the prescribed curriculum and how do teachers deal with this challenge?	To gain a deeper understanding of the context pre-reading skills are being taught in and challenges teachers may face.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interview • Lesson observation • Field notes
What barriers are faced when teaching pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners in Grade One?	To assess the barriers faced by teachers and learners in a second language classroom and explore ways of overcoming them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interview • Lesson observation • Field notes
DATA ANALYSIS		
Content analysis		
QUALITY CRITERIA		
Trustworthiness- credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability		
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS		
Anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation		

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research Paradigm provides the basic assumptions made by the researcher and serves as a lens for arranging principals by which reality is organised (Creswell, 2009). The research paradigm impacts how the researcher approaches the study theoretically and methodologically. An appropriate epistemological stance for this study was that of interpretivism. An interpretivist stance allows the researcher to gain a deep understanding of

participant's experiences through communicating with them (Ebersohn & Eloff, 2004). The ultimate goal of this paradigm is to collect data that is in-depth and rich in detail.

“The interpretivist paradigm considers the meaning that individuals or communities allocate to their experiences to be foreground to understanding social phenomena” (Jansen, 2010, p. 15). Interpretivist research is based on the desire for a deeper understanding of how humans experience their life-world through language, local and historical situation, and the inter-subjective actions of the people involved (Angen, 2000). The goal of interpretivist research is not to generalize and predict but to understand and interpret human behaviour. The interpretivist paradigm understands that human beings and their behaviours are not so easily measured and cannot be understood in a vacuum. Human beings are not reducible or inanimate objects that exist independently of the historical and social contexts (Parry, 1997). Rather than ignoring the multiple influencing variables that impact on the validity and reliability of qualitative research, interpretive research acknowledges the relationship between the researcher and what is being explored, and the situational constraints shaping this process (Rowlands, 2005).

One of the challenges of interpretivist research is that the study is time and context bound. The results cannot be generalized; rather, the intent is to understand the deeper structure of a phenomenon, which can then be used to inform other settings (Rowlands, 2005). Throughout the research process, the researcher strived to understand participants within their context by exploring their behaviour, experiences, feelings and perspectives regarding the teaching of pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners.

3.3 PURPOSE STATEMENT

A qualitative study was chosen to explore the methods teachers used when teaching pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners in Grade One. The primary purpose of this research was to use a case study to document existing English teaching practices in a low fee private school in Pretoria. This was achieved by using non-participative observations, a semi-structured interview as well as the collection of documents. This research is vital, as learning to read forms the core of any First-Grade curriculum. *“A poor reading foundation forms a weak base and therefore learners with poor reading skills initially, are likely to have poor reading skills later on”* (Good, Kaminski, Simmons, &

Kame'enui, 2001, p. 9). The results of this study highlighted some of the challenges First-Grade teachers experienced and the methods they used to overcome them when teaching English Second Language learners to read.

3.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was guided by a qualitative research design, in which the researcher attempted to collect rich, descriptive data with the intention of developing an understanding of what was being observed (Maree, 2010). Qualitative research is defined by Schwandt (2001) as a diverse term covering an array of techniques seeking to describe, decode, translate, and somehow come to terms with the meaning, rather than the measurement or frequency of phenomena in the social world. Qualitative data provides rich descriptions and explanations of processes in local contexts.

Qualitative research attempts to provide a thorough understanding of the human experience (Lichman, 2010). The key aim of qualitative research is to understand the intricacies of a setting and appreciate the meaning that participants assign to their setting. This was an appropriate approach as the study focused on exploring the experiences of Grade One teachers, when teaching reading to English Second Language learners. Qualitative research relies on participants' views and asks general questions that are broad, in order to collect data in the form of narratives from participants (Creswell, 2009). This is in line with the data collection strategies (semi-structured interviews, observations and collection of documentation) that were employed in this study.

Qualitative research is a flexible approach to collecting information in a natural setting. In this study, the researcher conducted observations in Grade One classrooms in order to capture specific teaching methodologies. *"The qualitative approach demands that the world be viewed with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied"* (Slavin, 2007, p. 121). It is for this reason that rich field notes were made and as many documents as possible were collected to ensure that the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the context and the teachers' perspectives.



Mays & Pope (1995) state that qualitative research is often criticised in literature for lacking scientific rigour. It is argued that qualitative research methods yield data that cannot be reproduced in different contexts. However, this is not [the](#) aim of qualitative research, as Maree (2010, p. 60) highlights that *“one of the greatest strengths of qualitative research is the richness and depth of explorations and descriptions it yields”*. In this study, qualitative descriptions may not be generalizable but [could](#) provide a deep understanding of teachers’ experiences [of](#) teaching reading.

During this study, I followed Mays & Pope’s (1995) goals for rigorous qualitative research. The first goal was to create detailed accounts of the methods used to collect and analyse data, so that another trained researcher could analyse the same data in the same way and come to essentially the same conclusions. Detailed accounts of the research methodology were recorded by: keeping detailed notes, transcribing the interview and including all documentation collected during this research. The second goal was to reduce bias by producing plausible and coherent explanations of the phenomenon under scrutiny (Mays, Pope, 1995). A deep understanding of the data was ensured by using member checking, triangulation and by thoroughly analysing the data that was collected.

3.5. CASE STUDY RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a specific plan that outlines the process to be followed in the selection of participants, data collection and data analysis (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). It clarifies the type of study and is guided by the research questions and the purpose of the study (Ferreira, 2012). A Case study research design was selected for this research as it employed a variety of data collection strategies to create a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied. A case study can be defined as *“a strategy for doing research that involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its context using multiple sources of evidence”* (Runeson, 2012, p. 11).

“Case studies are distinguished from other types of qualitative research in that they are intensive descriptions and analysis of a single unit or bounded system such as an individual, a program, an intervention or a community” (Henning, 2004, p. 41). Case study research investigates a predefined phenomenon that does not involve explicit control or manipulation of variables: the focus is on the in-depth understanding of a phenomenon and its context

(Darke, Shanks, & Braodbent, 1998). For the purpose of this research, the case being investigated was the teaching of pre-reading skills by two teachers in a second language classroom. To ensure a deep understanding of this research was gained, the researcher submerged herself in the classroom setting using non-participatory observation to investigate the methods that teachers were using to teach pre-reading skills. This allowed for the phenomenon of teaching reading to be observed in its natural, everyday environment.

Commented [FO4]: Include a sentence or two that delineates what your case is. Your case here is the teaching of pre-reading skills by 2 teachers??

There has been major growth in the last decade in ecological psychology (a study of humans in interaction with their environment), a growth that corresponds with the increased importance of non-experimental case study research (Gillam, 2000). Case studies are conducted with the objective of not only increasing knowledge, but also bringing about change in the phenomenon being studied (Runeson, 2012). This statement by Runeson (2012) highlights the importance of creating knowledge that can be used to benefit society as a whole. In the case of this study, the aim was to add to an existing body of reading research in order to improve the teaching of English Second Language reading in similar contexts.

3.6 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This research took place in Pretoria Central Business District. Many children that attend this school are from surrounding townships such as Mamelodi, Atteridgeville and Soshongu. The school that took part in this research is a low-fee private primary school operating from a block of residential flats. The school is poorly maintained and has limited resources. Classrooms are small and have few teaching and learning materials. Due to the close proximity of the classrooms and play area, the noise level in the school is very high. During break time the learners play in an empty concrete room. The first two images below show one of the Grade One classrooms at School A. The third picture shows the type of area that School A is situated in.



Image 3.1- A picture of the Grade One classroom in School A



Image 3.2 - A photo showing the limited literacy resources in School A



Image 3.3- A photo showing the type of area School A is situated in

3.7. DATA COLLECTION

3.7.1 Sampling method

Purposeful criterion sampling was used in order to select the participants in this study. *“This type of sampling is a non-probability sample as it is not used to enable the researcher to determine statistical inferences to a population, but will intentionally sample a group of people that can best inform the research problem under investigation”* (Creswell, 2013, p. 147). Purposeful criterion sampling was best suited to this study as participants were chosen that would provide rich data directly related to the research question. For the purpose of this study, participants were selected as they were ESL teachers working in a low-fee private school in Pretoria. School A was chosen, as there are a high percentage of English Second Language learners enrolled in grade One.

3.7.2 Data collection strategies

The researcher collected data for this study from an inner city school in Pretoria. Observations, interviews, field notes and a self-reflective journal was used to capture data. Observations were used to identify the methods, activities and strategies teachers employed during literacy instruction. An interview was held in order to gain deeper insights into the reasons why teachers used specific methods of instruction. During this interview, the teachers' attitudes surrounding literacy instruction and second language learning were also explored. Field notes and the self-reflective journal promoted mindfulness and reflexivity. Table 3.2 highlights the sources of data used in this research.

Table 3.2- Data collection strategies used in this study

a)	Observation of two reading lessons.
b)	Semi-structured interview with two Grade One educators
c)	Documents
d)	Field notes
e)	Self-reflective journal

a) Observation of reading lessons.

Two reading lessons were observed and videotaped in order to aid in the identification of the methods used to teach pre-reading skills. Observation is argued to be one of the most important methods of data collection (Maree, 2010; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). “*When using observation the researcher becomes the primary research instrument and consciously gathers sensory data from the environment*” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 139). Non-participant observation was used in this study. This meant that the researcher did not actively pursue the role of the participant but merely observed what naturally unfolded. Observations were recorded as running records. “*Running records were used to capture actions in the context in which they occurred*” (Maree, 2010, p. 85).

Ethological observations were used in this study to capture behaviour in a natural setting. Perhaps one of the biggest challenges of ethological observations is observing unobtrusively (Hayes, 2011). Observing unobtrusively minimises the effect that the researcher has on the environment. This allows for the collection of accurate data. It may be difficult for participants in the study to act naturally when they are aware that they are being observed. In order to overcome this, the researcher familiarised herself with the participants and observed in the most unobtrusive way possible, as described by Hayes (2011). Hayes (2011, p. 58) suggests “*...sitting quietly in an unobtrusive place and being as uninvolved as possible during ethological observations*”. Another difficulty noted in literature surrounding ethological observation is selective perception (Hayes, 2011). In order to overcome this, a

video recorder was used in this study to capture and revisit observations. Recordings were converted into text-based data for analysis.

b) Semi-structured interview with grade one teachers

Semi-structured interviews were used to facilitate an intensive exploration of the ways teachers teach pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002). *“This type of interviewing allowed for flexibility during data collection and created an opportunity to explore the uniqueness and complexity of the context”* (Rule & John, 2011, p. 65). The interview took place outside of school hours in the classroom setting. An interview questionnaire was designed in order to guide the interview; however, deviation occurred when the researcher probed for more information.

Using interviews as a method of data collection has many benefits. Large amounts of data can be obtained quickly. *“Interviews also allow for immediate follow-up and exploration”* (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 145). Using interviews in data collection may however, pose some challenges. Interviews are often intimate experiences that rely on a trusting relationship. Many challenges associated with interviewing are closely related to challenges with human relationships. The researcher followed the suggestions offered by O’Leary (2010) in order to overcome the challenges that may have occurred when using interviewing as a data collection method. Rapport was established with participants prior to the study. Additionally, the researcher was prepared for the interview and approached it in a professional manner.

c) Documents

Documents provide a rich source of data in qualitative research and are commonly used in case study research (Seabi, 2012). The learners’ workbooks, homework books and remedial books were photographed to allow for the triangulation of the data. The documentation collected supported what was noted in the lesson observations and lesson plans. The school and surrounding environment were also photographed in order to provide a rich context to the study. Teachers’ lessons were video recorded and those recordings were transcribed. This was done in order to contribute to the information obtained in the focus group interview. These [transcriptions](#) can be found in appendix D.

d) Field notes

The researcher used field notes to capture observations made whilst in the field. Mulhall (2003) describes field notes as playing a central role in observational studies. Field notes provide in-depth sequential descriptions of events in the field and allowed the researcher to record details that they are likely to otherwise forget. *“Field notes describe not only the researcher’s experiences and observations such as those made while engaged in participant observation, but also his or her reflections and interpretations”* (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson, 2002. p. 728). The researchers’ field notes were used in conjunction with the self-reflective journal to capture a holistic picture of how teachers teach pre-reading skills to Grade One learners.

e) Self-reflective journaling

“Keeping self-reflective journals is a strategy that can facilitate reflexivity, whereby researchers use their journal to examine their own goals, beliefs systems and assumptions” (Ortlipp, 2008, p. 695). The researcher used a self-reflective journal as a tool to reflect on the research process allowing for adaptations and changes to be made where necessary (Maree, 2010). The self-reflective journal was used order to capture personal thoughts and feelings throughout the duration of the proposed study. This reflective journal promoted reflexivity and mindfulness by making the researcher more aware of her biases and preconceived ideas.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis attempts to understand how participants make meaning of a phenomenon by analysing their knowledge, attitudes and experiences (Caddy, 2015). Inductive data analysis was used to analyse data in this study. Inductive data analysis is a process of decoding data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher’s analytic pre-conceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Maree [and](#) van der Westhuizen (2010), [this analysis](#) is more likely to provide the researcher with multiple realities than any other data analysis strategy.

The researcher followed the three phases of thematic analysis suggested by Elo [and](#) Kyngas (2007), namely the preparation phase, the organisation phase and the reporting phase. Below is a description of the three phases used to analyse the data.

3.8.1 Preparation of data

The data was prepared by transcribing the verbal data from interviews and lessons into textual data. Field notes, self-reflective journal and observations were clearly transcribed and organised. The researcher then immersed herself into the data by reading through it several times. This allowed her to gain a deeper understanding of the raw data and paved the way for a deep analysis.

3.8.2 Organising the data

In order to organise the data the researcher followed the steps of inductive thematic analysis suggested by Hayes (2011). The researcher used inductive thematic analysis to identify emerging themes from the transcripts. Emerging themes were identified by carefully reading through all of the data and noting down any items of interest or other information that [seemed](#) to be relevant to the topic (Hayes, 2011). The researcher did this by transcribing the data into a tabular format and noting relevant topics next to each line. This can be found in appendix D. The topics were noted and grouped in order to identify themes.

A second ‘trawling’ of data was then completed by thoroughly examining the transcripts again for anything that was relevant to the themes that had emerged (Hayes, 2011). Each theme was then labelled and defined. All supportive data in the form of quotations and observations was placed with the corresponding theme. Relevant data was then selected for the reporting of each theme.

3.8.3 Reporting the analysing process and the results

Finally, the researcher conveyed a detailed account of the process used to analyse the data in order to ensure trustworthiness of the study. The findings of this study are reported on in chapter 4.

3.9 QUALITY CRITERIA

“The term *‘trustworthiness’* refers to the way in which the researcher is able to demonstrate that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to and that the research is of a high quality” (Maree, 2010, p. 113). The trustworthiness of a study relates to the measures put in place by the researcher to ensure that all decisions made are visible and auditable (Rolfe, 2006). Trustworthiness is imperative to a successful qualitative research study. The following section describes how the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, reflexivity and conformability have been used to ensure a trustworthy study.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the researcher’s confidence that they have accurately recorded the phenomena under scrutiny (Shenton, 2004). A number of steps were taken to ensure that this research adhered to credible standards. Firstly, the researcher increased the credibility of the findings by being involved in a prolonged engagement with the participants (Flick, 2009). Secondly, substantial time was spent in the field, collecting data in order to build trusting relationships with the participants and to ensure a deep understanding of the context. Lastly, triangulation was used to increase the credibility of the study. The researcher triangulated the findings by gathering data through multiple methods (observations, interviews and field notes) from multiple sources (two Grade One teachers) (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the generalisability of the research findings to similar contexts (Rule & John, 2011). Due to the small sample size and context of the study, we are unable to generalize the findings as the context, environment and individuals differ dramatically. However, as Shenton (2004) states, generalisability is not the purpose of qualitative research. Readers and fellow researchers may find value in the results of this qualitative study if they compare the findings of this study with others or with their own research. The school context, as well as the language of teaching and learning, could share similarities with a number of other schools around South Africa. A comparison of research within the

field of emergent reading literature may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the context of teaching reading in South African schools.

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the degree to which the data, that has been captured and reported correctly, depicts what has taken place in the field. The quality of documenting and recording of data are an integral part of the research's dependability (Flick, 2009). In order to ensure the dependability of this study, the participant interview and reading lessons were recorded and precisely transcribed. Dependability of the study was also assured by providing in-depth methodological descriptions to allow the study to be repeated (Shenton, 2004). Triangulation of data was also used [to](#) increase the reliability of the study (Maree, 2010).

3.9.4 Confirmability and reflexivity

The concepts of conformability and reflexivity refer to the influence that the researcher and the research process have in shaping the data (Mays & Pope, 2000). Before the study commenced, the researcher identified her prior experiences, values and biases in order to be more mindful of possible subjectivity. Feelings and experiences were carefully documented during data capturing in order to remain more self-aware and reduce personal bias. Another method used to reduce the effects of researcher bias was to use thematic data analysis.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics are concerned with the protection of the rights and interests of the research participants (Mouton, 1998; Hayes, 2011). The researcher must make every effort to maximise benefits and minimise harm to the research participants. Allan (2011) states that research cannot be justified unless participants or society as a whole will benefit from it. Research is only ethically justifiable if it has scientific merit, if the methodology is appropriate and if the study is feasible. (Allan, 2011)

In order to ensure that the researcher preserves and protects the respect and dignity of all participants in the study, it is imperative that strict ethical guidelines are adhered to from the onset of the research (Allan, 2011). Initially, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from

the Ethics Committee of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria. Amendments were made to the study in response to the conditional acceptance of the committee.

The researcher then met with the principal of the school. In this meeting, a comprehensive explanation of research process was explained. Upon acceptance of the research, the principal co-ordinated a meeting in which the researcher met with the research participants. The research, the role and the value of the research were clearly explained to the participants. A question and answer session followed in which the participants gained a deeper understanding of the research process. The principal and the teachers then signed letters of informed consent. Letters of informed consent were also sent home to ensure that the parents were informed of and gave permission for the teacher to be observed in the presence of their children. All participants were made aware that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point.

Keeping the [school](#) and the participants' [identities](#) private ensured anonymity and confidentiality [for](#) all involved. When referring to the school and the participants in this study the researcher made use of pseudonyms to protect their identity. The school and the participants are not identifiable in this research report. The original data collected during this research is stored in a secure storeroom in line with university regulations. Only specific university personnel have access to this data.

Non-maleficence of the participants was the top priority for the researcher. A concerted effort was made to ensure the physical and psychological well-being of all participants. The researcher made every effort not to intrude on the teachers' time and space (Litchman, 2010). Interviews took place at a time and place that was convenient for the teachers. The researcher [attempted](#) to put the research participants at ease by explaining that it was not their skills that were being assessed but the unique ways that they taught reading to English Second Language learners. During the observations the researcher maintained a neutral body language in order to prevent the teachers from feeling critiqued.

3.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a description of the research process that was followed as well as a discussion of the pragmatic approach, the research design, methods of data collection and data analysis that [were](#) used throughout the study. The chapter was concluded with a description of the ethical considerations that guided the research process.

CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in a modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development, an essential component to investment in roads, dams, clinics and factories..." Kofi Anan

In Chapter 4, the results of the data analysis are presented. The results of the thematic analysis are presented according to themes that emerged. Within each theme, subthemes are explored and reported on.

The following abbreviations were used in this chapter:

Table 4.1- Table of meaning

Abbreviation	Meaning
TTI	Transcribed Teacher Interview (Appendix D)
LO	Pre-Reading Lesson observation (Appendix E)
FN	Field Notes (Appendix F)
T1	Teacher 1
T2	Teacher 2
L	Line
P	Page

Commented [FO5]: What about documents and field notes you spoke about in chapter 3?

4.2 RESULTS OF THE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the data include:

1. Methodological elements of teaching pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners in Grade One.
2. Barriers to effective second language reading instruction in Grade One.
3. Strategies used to encourage and support English Second Language children and English Second Language teachers.

Table 5 provides a summary of the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the data analysis. The teachers' perspectives depicted in Table 5 are a collection of verbatim statements that were made by the teachers during the semi-structured interview and the lesson observations. Table 4.2 has been included in order to provide an overview of the themes, and offers a glimpse of the pertinent statements made.

Table 4.2- A list of themes, subthemes and pertinent statements made by the participants

Theme	Sub- Theme	Pertinent Statements
Methodological elements of teaching pre-reading skills to English Second Language learners in Grade One.	Multisensory synthetic phonics approach	“So everything is about the phonics “ (TT1, T1: L167)
	Subtractive multilingualism	“Ja, they are not allowed to speak other languages.” (TTI, T1: L292)
	Actions and dramatizations	“Some of the days you’re making a clown of yourself. Like when I did the emotions, I said this one’s afraid of the dog and the dog is attacking you so she must be afraid because the dog is going to bite you and this and this and this. Some of the times you sweat more than the children but” (TTI, T2: L180)
	Questioning, elaboration and prompting techniques.	What does the word bit mean? Yes, to bite someone. You must not bite people it is very sore. It is like when a dog bit John on the ear. (TTI, T2: L180)
	Repetition of reading tasks.	“Everyday the same work. Repeat over and over and over until it’s stuck in their heads.”(TTI, T1: L280)



Barriers to effective second language reading instruction in Grade One	Varied language experiences of learners in the classroom	“Also, some crèches they don’t actually learn anything. I had parents this year they complained so much about the crèches their kids were in. They don’t do any stories with them. They just let them play.” (TTI, T1: L30)
	Poor parental involvement	“The learners is not practicing phonics enough. We will send letters home telling the parents that the child don’t know his phonics. He can’t even spell a three letter word, so please help this child with the phonics and when a child is reading you can actually see who knows his phonics and which parents helps their child with phonics and which parents don’t help their child.” (TTI, T2: L164)
	Lack of teaching resources	“Because we don’t have enough readers and things.” (TTI, T1: L220)
	Prescribed curriculum challenges	“That’s why with CAPS we try to do the themes but we don’t go lesson by lesson because we will never get finished and they will never understand what you did in the first place.” (TTI, T2: L241)
Strategies used to encourage and support ESL children and ESL teachers.	Positive re-enforcement	“If a child that fails a test gets 59% you praise that child and give him hugs kisses, stickers on the hand, on the book and that encourages them to do better and better.” (TTI, T2: L284)
	On-going support	“We used to start with remedial in the middle of the year but now we start at the beginning.”(TTI, T1: L272)

The results of this research indicate that teachers were using a variety of methods in the classroom to develop ESL learners’ pre-reading skills. The synthetic phonics approach was used to develop phonemic awareness and provided the learners with the skills necessary to analyse and synthesise English words with a regular orthography. Multisensory teaching was used to keep the learners fully engaged in the lesson and aided the learners in memorising and recalling phonemes and graphemes. Acting and dramatisations were used by the teachers to encourage English oral language competency. Subtractive bilingualism was implemented as the teachers were of the opinion that forcing learners to speak in the language of learning would promote the development of vocabulary and a better

comprehension of English. Barriers to learning and teaching were identified and support strategies were explored. These findings will be explored in more detail below.

4.3. THEME 1: METHODOLOGICAL ELEMENTS OF TEACHING PRE-READING SKILLS TO ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN GRADE ONE

The first theme that was identified during thematic data analysis was the methodological elements that the educators used in order to teach pre-reading to English Second Language learners. In this research, teaching methodology refers to a theoretically consistent set of teaching procedures that define good practice (Richards & Rodgers, 2008). In this theme, any reference that was made regarding pedagogical methods that were used to teach pre-reading skills was included. The following subthemes were identified: Multisensory synthetic approach to teaching reading, the development of English language competence through the use of subtractive bilingualism, using actions and dramatisations to promote understanding, developing vocabulary using the techniques of elaboration, questioning and prompting and the importance of task repetition. Table 4.3 summarises this.

Table 4.3- Definition, inclusion and exclusion criteria related to the theme of methodological element of pre-reading Instruction.

Definition	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
A method refers to a theoretically consistent set of teaching procedures that define good practice in language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2008).	Any reference made/ suggested regarding pedagogical methods teachers used to achieve successful reading instruction.	Any references that were made that are not linked to the methods of teaching reading in Grade One.

There are no easy answers or quick solutions for optimising reading achievement (Armbruster, 2010). Coherent reading programmes, quality teaching and systematic intervention strategies, provide English Second Language learners with the best chance of becoming successful readers. Learners from diverse backgrounds need to be actively engaged in order to learn to read successfully. Teachers should ideally provide instruction and support that matches the instructional learning needs of the learner (O'Meara, 2011). To date, there is no policy in South Africa that guides teachers on how to teach English Second

Language reading. The CAPS policy provides detailed guidelines on teaching home language literacy to home language learners, but policy fails to account for English Second Language learners, who currently learn in English. A teacher's experience in the classroom thus becomes the compass that steers their choice of methodological instruction.

4.3.1 Subtheme 1: Multisensory synthetic phonics approach

Both teachers 1 and 2 identified phonics as an important precursor to learning to read. When asked to identify the pre-reading skills that they taught, both teachers identified phonics. The teachers stated that the phonics approach allowed English Second Language learners to sound out unfamiliar words, which ultimately lead to more fluid, independent reading. *“So when children see words that they don't know then they sound out each letter, so that's how they learn” (TTI, T1: L157)*. In order to support learner's phonics development, both Grade One teachers made use of phonetic based readers to practice the phonetics that were being taught. *“We start with a thin boekie (book): fat cat, red hen, dotty dog. And it's all phonics books, and they can sound out all the words” (TTI, T 2: L189)*. It is widely agreed that phonics work is an essential part of successful reading instruction. Phonics however, is not all it takes to become a fluent reader (Rose, 2006).

Both teachers taught phonics using the synthetic phonics method. The synthetic approach is a method of teaching reading by training an individual to pronounce sounds associated with particular letters in isolation and then blending them together (Cecil, 2011). Teacher one explains that the synthetic phonics approach is beneficial because *“when the children see words that they don't know, then they sound out each letter” (TTI, T1: L157)*. Initially, both teachers taught the learners to re-sight and identify the letters of the alphabet. The teachers then introduced individual phonemes by highlighting the initial phoneme of familiar words. Teacher 2 explains *“We get them to understand an “a” and what types of “a” words do you get” (TTI, T2: L153)*. Learners are then required to learn a variety of English words that start with the 44 graphemes of the alphabet. The words were then paired with pictures in order to facilitate understanding and a deeper connection.

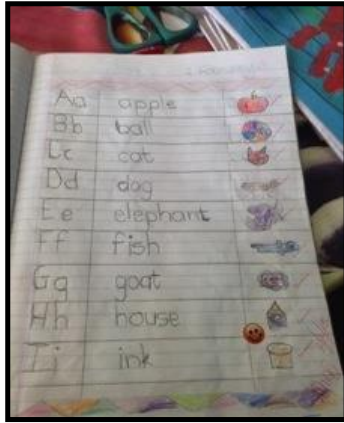


Image 4.1- An example of work showing how sounds are paired with pictures to facilitate the development of phonological awareness.



Image 4.2- An example of work that illustrates how words are paired with pictures to promote understanding.



Image 4.3- Learner's work showing the use of the -am and -an word family.

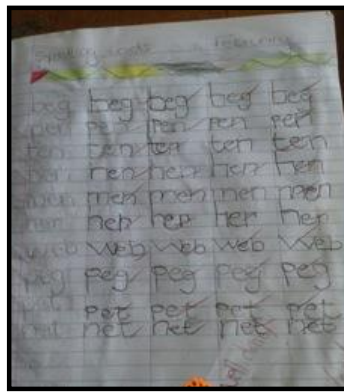


Image 4.4- Learner's work showing a combination of word families being practiced.

Subsequently, learners were taught to blend phonemes together to form words. Teacher 2 describes blending phonemes when she stated, “In the beginning they read, t-h-e c-a-t i-s f-a-t. So they spell out every letter of the word” (TTI, T2: L158). A strong emphasis was placed on the use of word families (groups of words that share a common feature) to drill rhyming words.

Teacher 1 and 2 both acknowledged that initially the CAPS first language lesson plans were beneficial; however, as the pace and volume of literacy worked increased, they felt that lesson plans needed to be adapted in order to accommodate their unique circumstances. Teacher 1 stated that “*some of the things (in the CAPS document) can help you. Later on (in the year) it’s much more difficult*” (TTI, T1: L157). Teacher 2 highlighted that the phonics lesson plans were very useful as they were able to use the prescribed phonics curriculum, to teach their English Second Language learners to read. Teacher 2 stated “*Like in the beginning, they give you stuff that can help, like the phonics and with the phonics we’re using is the one’s they made up from*” CAPS (TTI, T1: L107)

A number of multisensory activities were used in order to support learners with letter identification. Visual, auditory and tactile teaching methods were used to keep learners fully engaged in the lesson. Visual sensory teaching methods included activities such as: cutting letters out of old magazines, drawing letters on the chalkboard and identifying letters on flash cards (FN: P2). Teachers emphasised tactile experiences by providing a range of sensory materials that learners used to form letters- such as string and play-dough. Auditory activities were used through-out the lesson and included activities such as demonstrating the sounds of letters, asking learners to repeat sounds and practicing words with the target sound. Teacher 2 described the process of using the multisensory method as follows: “*Show them, make it so they recognise it, make it, draw it, things like that also. So you can see it, know how it looks like and how to make it as well*” (TTI, T2: L170).

Heugh (2002) states that it is reasonable to argue that to teach a language, the teacher must understand and speak the language of instruction confidently. This however was not the case in School A. During lesson observations, it was evident that both teachers were second language English speakers themselves. This meant that second language English teachers were teaching a first language English curriculum to second language learners. Teaching in a second language impacted the manner in which educator 1 and 2 pronounced the English phonemes. During the observation of both educators reading lessons, it was noted that an Afrikaans phoneme was often used in place of an English one. For example, Teacher 1 indicated that the letter I made the sound “u”. When learners synthesised the phonemes, the sound of the individual phonemes often did not match the sound of the phoneme in the whole word, for example, the learners sounded out the word tin as “t, u, n” (FN: P1).



During the phonics lessons it was also observed that there was no clear distinction made between the name of a letter (grapheme) and its corresponding sound (phoneme). This caused confusion, as the class was often unsure whether to give the grapheme or the phoneme. Confusing phonemes and graphemes made it difficult to sound out unfamiliar words. It was noted during the lesson observations that learners used graphemes to synthesise words. An example of this was when a learner sounded out the word cat as “Kay, Ay, Tee - KATE” (FN, P: 1). In this instance, the teacher corrected the learner’s incorrect phoneme use, but failed to give an explanation as to why the learner’s answer was incorrect.

4.3.2 Subtheme 2: Subtractive multilingualism

Teacher 2 estimates that around two percent of the learners in her class communicate fluently in English (TTI, T1: L32). The majority of the learners have a basic grasp of the language, but cannot speak or fully comprehend English instruction at the onset of Grade One. Teacher 1 states, “*they know basics from home, and talking to their family and from Grade R and stuff like that*” (TTI, T1: L33). The teachers also reported that a small percentage of children (often immigrants), enter Grade One and cannot understand or communicate in English.

In South Africa, learning in one’s mother tongue is recognised as having a place, “*particularly at the policy level, but strong assumptions about the colonial languages—made by parents, teachers, and education officials alike—hinder the implementation and use of the mother tongue in education*” (Ginkel, 2014). For a range of historical, political and economic reasons, two language policy models have become dominant in disadvantaged primary schools in South Africa. The first is subtractive bilingualism (teaching only the dominant language at the expense of the mother-tongue), and the second, transitional bilingualism (an early transition from mother-tongue to learning in a second language) (Fleisch, 2008).

School A practices subtractive bilingualism. Teacher 1 and 2 expressed a belief that the best way to encourage second language learners to learn English, was to forbid the learners from speaking their home languages during teaching time. Teacher 1 stated, “*we don’t let the learners speak their own languages so they are forced to learn English*” (FN: P3). During

my observation at the school, I also noted that teachers on break duty also encouraged the children to speak in English (FN: P3).

Teacher 1 stated that allowing the learners to speak in their home language caused conflict in the classroom. This happens because

“In this language say for instance the word MIKANDA means clever man, in another language the word MIKANDA means thief. So now this one talks about the word MIKANDA and this one tells me he is swearing. They fight when they start speaking their languages in the class and so they are not allowed to speak their languages in the class” (TTI, T1: L 292).

Forcing learners to speak English at school seems to be the teacher’s way of maintaining control and order in the classroom. Being unable to understand the home language of the learners in their classes is confusing and Teacher 1 expresses that it is *“easier when teachers and learners are on the same page when it comes to language” (FN: P4).*

Teaching and learning in a second language puts additional pressure on both teachers and learners.

“The learners come into the class and now you’re teaching English, so they don’t understand it so well so when it comes to tests and spelling and everything they fall back, they struggle a lot to understand and it affects the English a lot. The tests and the way you teach, half the time they don’t understand” (TTI, T1: L48).

Teachers must develop strategic teaching methodologies in order to accommodate and support English Second Language learners’ language development and oral competence.

At the onset of the year, oral assessment was used in order to assess the learner’s English proficiency and early literacy skills. The teachers devote the first few weeks of the school year to activities that develop the learners’ basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS). Reading and discussion activities form the backbone of the classwork done in the initial weeks. Teacher [2](#) states:

“In the morning we do Bible and ask questions about the Bible like why did this and this and this happen and how did it happen. The Bible helps with their religion but it also helps them to remember better” (TTI, T2: L 253).

The teachers also *“do a little bit of talking about a picture or talking about a story, you know things like that. Let the children talk to their friends about it, you know discuss what they heard” (TTI, T1: L250).*

4.3.3. Subtheme 3 - Questioning, prompting and elaboration

During the reading lesson observation three techniques namely questioning, elaboration and gesturing, were used to expand the learners’ vocabulary and encourage oral expression. Questioning was used to elicit prior knowledge and determine the learners’ current understanding. The teachers used questioning to direct their lessons and set the pace. It was observed that both teachers used questioning to ensure that all learners were actively engaged in the lesson. Questioning opened up dialogue between the teacher and her class and between peers.

Prompts were used to urge the learners to give a response in English. Visual, spoken, and written prompts were used by both teachers to encourage the learners to participate in the lesson and increase the likelihood that the learner will make a correct response. Prompting was used when the teacher could see that the learner was about to give an incorrect answer or when the learners did not know the answer to a question. Table 4.4 highlights examples of prompts that were observed during the reading lessons.

Table 4.4- Types of prompts used in observed reading lessons

Type of prompt	Examples as observed in reading lesson
Visual Prompts	Pointing, gesturing, nodding, smiling, tapping on the shoulder.
Auditory Prompts	Providing the learners with the first phoneme of a word, voicing time schedule.
Written Prompts	Using flash cards and the alphabet chart, teachers write letter in the learners’ books in order for learners to copy.

Both teachers used elaboration in order to broaden the learners' vocabulary and understanding of a subject. Due to limited language proficiency, learners often gave short answers void of descriptive words. The English Second Language teacher repeated the sentence by correcting any errors and adding adjectives and adverbs. Table 4.5 provides examples of how elaboration, questioning and prompting were used to promote the development of English during the reading lessons.

Table 4.5- Elaboration, question and prompting techniques recorded during reading lesson observations

Name of teacher	Type of technique used	Examples from reading lesson observed
Teacher 1	Elaboration	<i>"What does the word bit mean? Yes, to bite someone. You must not bite people it is very sore. It is like when a dog bit John on the ear. Okay so bit means when someone or something bites you."</i>
Teacher 1	Questioning	<i>"The word is bit, what does bit mean? Sarah can you can tell me because you bit Thabo once!"</i>
Teacher 1	Prompting	<i>"Okay lets spell (teacher points to the word written on the chalk board) b, I, t – bit"</i>
Teacher 2	Elaboration	<i>"Okay let's do the alphabet. A..... (learners continue)"</i>
Teacher 2	Questioning	<i>"Another word with a B is bib. What is a bib?"</i>
Teacher 2	Prompting	Teacher: <i>What is a bib?</i> Child: <i>It is for a baby</i> Teacher: <i>Yes, a baby put it on so he doesn't mess his food on his clothes.</i>

4.3.4. Subtheme 4: Actions and dramatizations

During the observed reading lessons, the teachers used actions and expressive body gestures in order to help convey meaning. The teacher made use of actions when she became aware that the learners were having difficulty understanding the content of the lesson. Actions such as the use of exaggerated facial expressions, acting out verbs and highlighting the meaning of prepositions were observed. She also used dramatizations to convey important ideas during reading and explained words that she deemed difficult to understand. Teacher 1



explained the meaning of the word ‘scared’ by pretending a dog was chasing her. The dramatization helped to maintain the learners’ interest in the lesson and encouraged interactive learning. In many instances during Teacher 1’s lesson, she asked the learners to respond with an action. For example, she asked the learners to demonstrate what the word “hit” means.

Teacher 1 confirms what was observed in the lessons when she stated that: “*everything has to have an action especially with the small ones*” (TTI, T1: L183). Teacher 2 also expressed that on:

“Some of the days you’re making a clown of yourself. Like when I did the emotions, I said this one’s afraid of the dog and the dog is attacking you, so she must be afraid because the dog is going to bite you and this and this and this. Some of the times you sweat more than the children but....” (TTI, T2: L 180).

Teacher 1 demonstrated an example of how she uses actions in order to help her second language learners to remember and differentiate between phonemes. She explains that in order to help the children understand the M sound:

“I say Mommy makes yummy food (Using gestures to show a hungry tummy). So every time I say a word I will say jammm so they can see ok and every time if I ask them okay spell this word then they will say j-a-mmmm, because they remember that sound” (TTI, T1: L176).

Teacher 2 explained that she uses actions in order to convey the meaning of the lesson. When she has determined that the learners understand the content, she then moves on to a more abstract approach. She explains

“If you do this, this must have an action, if you see that they don’t understand. But this morning I walked into class and I said okay, open your books let’s do this work. Yesterday I had to jump up and down in this class just to help them, let them understand. Some of the days you’re like very stupid in front of the class but that’s the only way they get it” (TTI, T2: L185).



4.3.5. Subtheme 5: Repetition of reading tasks

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Both teachers stressed the importance of repetition when teaching second language learners to read. There are comments such as, “Everyday the same work. Repeat over and over and over until it’s stuck in their heads” (TTI, T1: L280) and “The teachers get so tired of doing it over and over but it’s the only thing that benefits them, that’s why it also takes us so long” (TTI, T2: L282). It would seem that repetition of reading tasks slows the pace of reading instruction, allowing time for learners to learn to read, whilst simultaneously learning a new language. “What I have realised is that when you go too fast, they lose track of what you say. So you may count one until 10 until you are blue in your face. Same goes with reading. Sometimes you get moederloos (crazy) but you see the results at the end. That is the only thing that works. Repeat it” (TTI, T1: L283). Repetition seems to be particularly useful to support those learners who have difficulty learning to read. Teacher 1 explains, “we focus on the ones that struggle and then give the lesson again, repeat it” (TTI, T1: L268).

4.4 THEME 2: BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE SECOND LANGUGAE PRE-READING INSTRUCTION IN A LOW-FEE PRIVATE SCHOOL

The second theme that was identified during thematic data analysis was barriers to effective reading instruction in a low-fee private school. Barriers to learning were conceptualised as any factor that prevents a child from accessing a full range of learning opportunities. In this theme, any reference that was made regarding barriers to learning, whether intrinsic or extrinsic in nature, which prevented a child from fulfilling their potential was included. The following subthemes were identified: *Varied language experiences in the classroom, poor parental involvement, lack of teaching resources and prescribed curriculum challenges*. Table 4.6 summarises this.

Table 4.6- Definition, inclusion and exclusion criteria related to the theme of Barriers to effective instruction

Definition	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Any obstacle that prevents children accessing a full range of learning opportunities.	Any reference made/suggested regarding obstacles, whether intrinsic or extrinsic in nature that prevents a child from learning and meeting their full potential.	Any references that were made that are not linked to the factors that impede learning in the English Second Language classroom.

Teachers face countless challenges teaching English First Additional Language learners. These challenges are not only experienced by the teachers, but by the learners simultaneously (O'Connor & Geiger, 2009). The challenge of teaching ESL learners to read is often compounded by other barriers such as socio-economic challenges, large class sizes and poorly resourced schools. These barriers manifest themselves in different ways and only become obvious when learning breakdown occurs, when learners 'drop out' of the system or when the excluded become visible (DOE, 2007).

Many of the challenges faced by ESL learners have a serious impact on their academic achievement. The effects of these barriers can be felt throughout the secondary and tertiary education sectors. If learners are successful at learning to read in the primary school Grades, that success lays the foundation for the high-level reading comprehension that is expected of them during secondary school and beyond (Hugo, 2012). Millin (2015) concurs and states that academic literacy development within the secondary schooling system in South Africa has reached crisis proportions, with a large number of students exiting the system unable to function adequately within the tertiary sector or labour market.

4.4.1 Subtheme 1: Varied language experiences of learners in the classroom

Teaching reading is a very complicated task in the South African context due to the diversity and backgrounds present (Hugo, 2010). The learners in school A come from myriad contexts and arrive on the first day of school with profoundly different English language experiences. This can be seen when Teacher 1 stated, *"some of the kids went to Grade R in School A, so the teacher already taught them there to talk English. She helped them a lot"* (TTI, T1: L24). Teacher 2 then explains, *"other kids that come from outside schools, they struggle, um, because in the crèches they talk their own languages so they come here and they struggle a lot"* (TTI, T2: L28).

The quality of early literacy experiences varies greatly in different crèches. *"Some crèches they don't actually learn anything. I had parents this year they complained so much about the crèches their kids were in. They don't do any stories with them. They just let them play"*(TTI, T1: L30). Teacher 2 explained that when the learners enter Grade One, *"some of them still turn the book upside-down, or write from left to right. They have no idea. Where to start or how to start"* (TTI, T: L79).



The English Second Language teachers in this study encountered the enormous challenge of assessing and teaching reading in English, to learners with vastly different early literacy experience. Coupled with large class sizes (averaging 35), limited teaching resources and support, this is a very daunting challenge to undertake. Teacher 1 explains the impact of varying experiences when she says, *“it actually keeps the kids that’s actually more forward, behind”* (TTI, T1: L51). In order to ensure the majority of the children in the class understood the content, educators planned activities to accommodate the learners with an average English understanding. The learners with a better grasp of the language were often under stimulated and become bored with the basic content. The learners with below average English proficiency were overwhelmed by the content and were at risk of becoming frustrated and developing a passive attitude towards learning (FN: P2).

The educators put measures in place in order to support the learners that fall either side of the English proficiency average. Early intervention in the form of remedial lessons is planned for the learners who have a very weak grasp of English.

“We start immediately with remedial. We go back to basic, basic stuff. Not jumping into the deep end and saying now you have to do it. We start from the beginning. We have Monday to Thursday remedial. That is after second break at 13:10. We drill maths and reading (TTI, T2: L273).”

In order to ensure that the learners with a strong grasp of English remained stimulated; the educators supplied them with extra work. Teacher 2 stated, *“I give extra work to them and ask them to bring it back to see what they have done”* (TTI, T2: L275).

4.4.2 Subtheme 2: Poor parental involvement

Both teachers highlighted that they were dissatisfied with the lack of parental involvement regarding academic matters. The teachers felt that most parents did not provide their children with adequate reading support at home. Teacher 1 stated:

“We will send letters home telling the parents that the child don’t know his phonics. He can’t even spell a three letter word, so please help this child with the phonics and



when a child is reading you can actually see who knows his phonics and which parents helps their child with phonics and which parents don't help their child"
(TTI, T1: L164)

Teacher 2 stated that she felt that one of the reasons for the lack of parental involvement was the fact that most parents did not understand English and therefore could not provide assistance. Teacher 1 was quoted as saying, *"I had so many parents last year who couldn't even speak English themselves. So we are expecting them to go and practice at home and teach them at home but they cannot"* (TTI, T1: L244). In this case, a lack of parental involvement could be attributed to a lack of parental education. Uneducated parents may be unable to identify potential learning opportunities in the child's environment and therefore many of these children are not prepared for the academic demands of formal education (Pretorius & Naude, 2002).

Teacher 2 suggested that the reason for the lack of parental involvement might be due to poor socioeconomic status and a lack of resources. She stated, *"I think in some black homes there is not that (pause) the facilities isn't there"* (TTI, T2: L244). Many learners enrolled in low-fee private schools come from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. Low-socioeconomic environments, in which these children are raised, are not favourable to acquiring early literacy skills. Children are not introduced to reading activities in their homes; as a result, this becomes the duty of the school and teacher (Hugo, 2010). Many parents living in low-socioeconomic environments work long hours in order to meet their families' basic needs, and may not have time to participate in their children's education.

4.4.3. Subtheme 3: Lack of teaching resources

Both teachers agree that School A is under resourced and felt that the lack of resources negatively affected their ability to provide quality education. School A did not have an annual budget for teaching supplies and resources and, as such, educators depended on fundraising activities to buy new materials. Teacher 1 reported:

"Some of the times like this year, but it was unsuccessful, we have a bash, like a valentines bash. The teachers sell something and the money that comes in, every teacher that gets part of the money, we split it up" (TTI, T1: L223).



If no money is made through fundraising, teachers use their own money to buy resources. *“So that’s the way we buy things for our classes. Otherwise you must go with your own money and you go buy something for your class” (TTI, T2: L 224)*

When asked about what literacy resources the teachers would buy on an unlimited budget, Teacher 1 reported that she would like to have big books that she could read out aloud to the whole class. Teacher 2 stated that she would like phonics blocks that the children could manipulate to form phonics words. Both teachers concurred that more resources would be beneficial; however, they also acknowledged that making use of inexpensive resources is just as effective. Teacher 2 explained that if they *“don’t have something we make our own so you can cut out of a magazine everyday and paste it on the board and it will be the same as doing something fancy” (TTI, T2: L247)*

Teacher 1 and 2 both made use of phonics readers in order to support their second language learners reading development. At the onset of the year, worksheets with basic phonics sentences were given to read for homework. The learners then progressed to reading phonics readers. Teacher 1 indicated that sentences are *“placed in the homework books” (TTI, T1: L187)*. Learners then moved on to phonics readers. Due to the lack of readers, if a child could not read a book, he/she had to keep that book, until they were able to read it fluently. The learner then moved onto to a more difficult book. Teacher 1 explained that *“if the one child’s finished with it, then he gets to move on, but if that child still struggles with it we stick to it” (TTI, T1: L187)*. Learners are therefore getting very limited reading exposure, due to the limited number of readers available.

4.4.4. Subtheme 5: Prescribed curriculum challenges

Although School A is a private school, the CAPS curriculum is being used. CAPS training workshops are offered during school holidays and all teachers that teach the CAPS curriculum are expected to attend. Teacher 1 attended the CAPS workshop in 2012 but Teacher 2 has not yet attended. Teacher 1 stated that the CAPS training provided was drawn-out and suggested that workshops that are more practical in nature would be better suited to their needs. Teacher 2 admits that she has never opened the CAPS manuals, but has

made use of the lesson plans provided. Teacher two admits *“to be honest, I haven't even opened it”* (TTI, T1: L93).

Both teachers agreed that using the first language English curriculum to teach second language English learners was problematic. The teachers stated that at the beginning of the year the phonics lesson plans were helpful for their second language learners. However, the learners cannot keep up with the pace and increased difficulty of the first language curriculum. Teacher 2 stated that at the beginning:

“Some of the things can help you. Later on it's okay, much more difficult. Like in the beginning they give you stuff that can help, like the phonics and with the phonics we're using is the ones they made up from CAPS” (TTI, T2: L107).

As the content and difficulty increased the teachers simplified the lesson plans in order to accommodate the learners. Teacher 1 stated that they *“just go and make our own little thing out of it”* (TTI, T1: L96) Eventually, the teachers became frustrated and stopped referring to the curriculum altogether.

Another challenge experienced by the teachers was the length of time each activity took. Teacher 1 and 2 both expressed that teaching second language learners required more time for explanation and demonstration. Teacher 1 explains *“you have to repeat everything. You have to do everything double”* (TTI, T1: L53) This extended teaching time means that teachers are not able to keep up with the stipulated curriculum. *“Some of the time they give you like say for instance like we're doing our house, they say a box and build this and this and this because we can't do it”* (TTI, T1: L101). Teacher 2 continues:

“Because we don't have enough time. And the thing is the learners don't always finish the project and we can't give marks for unfinished projects. So what do we do? We will rather draw a house in our books and give a mark, and mark the house for that mark” (TTI, T1: L102).

Both Grade One teachers were unable to complete the CAPS literacy curriculum the previous year. *“What we are doing is a bit, it's not like on date, everything so I think it took*

last year's kids longer to complete. So we did not finish, we did not get everything on time” (TTI, T2: L91)

4.5. THEME 3: STRATEGIES USED TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND TEACHERS

The third theme that was identified during thematic data analysis was strategies used to encourage and support the ESL child and the ESL teacher. Support strategies were conceptualised as strategic methods designed to encourage the development of ESL child and teacher. In this theme, any reference that was made regarding the conscious manner in which ESL learners and teachers were encouraged to learn and develop was considered. The following subthemes were identified: *positive reinforcement and feedback and on-going teacher training and support*. Table 4.7 summarises this.

Table 4.7- Definition, inclusion and exclusion criteria related to the theme of support strategies for the ESL teacher and learner

Definition	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Strategic methods designed to encourage the development of the ESL child and the ESL teacher.	Any reference made/suggested regarding the manner in which ESL learners and teachers were encouraged to learn and develop.	Any references that were made to factors that were barriers to growth and development of teachers and learners were excluded <u>from</u> this theme.

It was evident that both teachers in this study experienced teaching ESL learners to be very demanding. Teacher 1 stated, *“There are days when you think you can't do it anymore. It feels like you want to jump in front of a bus. The children don't understand me” (TTI, T1: L297)*. Teacher 2 compared her experience of teaching ESL learners with a previous position when she states:

“Prepare yourself for difficult times. Before I worked here I worked at a crèche. That was easy. You could plan five minutes before you gave the lesson. Here you must go home and plan for the whole term. Be sure teaching is what you want to do because it is hard” (TTI, T2: L299).



It is not only the ESL teachers in this study who have had this experience in the second language classroom. Teacher 1 states, “*they struggle*” (TTI, T1: L48). Learners learning in a foreign language can experience feelings of confusion and frustration. These negative feelings could possibly cause learners and teachers to disengage and approach learning and teaching with a passive attitude. To ensure that learners and teachers experience success, it is imperative they have the necessary support.

4.5.1. Subtheme 1: Positive re-enforcement and positive feedback

Both Teachers 1 and 2 believe that the best way to motivate their learners to succeed at learning to read in English is by using positive reinforcement. That is, if a learner is receiving positive re-enforcement when doing something correctly, they will be encouraged to continue to do it correctly (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Positive reinforcement can therefore be defined as “*the offering of desirable effects or consequences for behaviour with the intention of increasing the chance of that behaviour being repeated in future*” (Manzoor, Ahmed, & Gill, 2015, p. 33) Teacher 2 stated, “*We try to motivate them with small things. Like today you are the leader of the class. When you are done with your work you can go and help them (the other learners). When they get 10 out of 10 for a test they get a sticker and a sweet*” (TTI,T1: L285)

The idea that positive feedback reinforces actions and behaviours is also used extensively in both Grade One classes in order to encourage the learners to do their best. Teacher 1 explains that, “*If a child that fails a test gets 59% you praise that child and give him hugs kisses, stickers, on the hand on the book and that encourages them to do better and better*” (TTI, T1: L284) Teacher 2 concurs when she says, “*So they get used to all that extra work and praise - they want to do it to see you happy*” (TTI, T2: L284.) During the lesson observation, it was clear that the learners responded encouragingly to the positive feedback. The learners waited in anticipation for their turn to give an answer and were always praised for their efforts. This positive class environment seemed to encourage all the learners to participate, despite their lack of English proficiency.

4.5.2. Subtheme 2: On-going teacher training and support

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Teaching English Second Language Learners to read in English is a complicated task. In order for teachers to successfully teach English Second Language learners to read, much training, preparation and support on the part of the educator and the school must continuously occur (Hugo, 2010). Neither Teachers 1 nor 2 had obtained a formal teaching qualification at the time that this research was taking place. Without a formal qualification, the teachers lacked instructional knowledge and curriculum knowledge to apply during instruction (Leask, 2014, p. 126). In order to broaden their understanding of reading pedagogy, teacher training should be on going and provide teachers with practical methods and strategies to implement in their classrooms. Teacher 1 stated that she did not benefit from the CAPS Training as it was very theoretical in nature. She also felt that that the extended length of training was impractical. Teacher 1 stated, *“It’s not just a one day, two hour thing. It’s a whole week thing”* (TTI, T1: L132)

Although Teacher 1 did not feel she benefited from CAPS training, she stated that she had learnt a great deal from attending workshops at various schools organised by the Department of Education. Teacher 1 is quoted as saying:

“We do go to other types of meetings where they discuss like Maths and they discuss what you can do in English, what you can do in Life Skills, you know what you can do to make it interesting and fun and help. We went to one a while back also and it was interesting” (TTI, T1: L110).

Teacher 2 has also attended these departmental meetings and concurred with Teacher 1 when she stated, *“It’s very nice information that you get and it helps you, it is very practical”* (TTI, T1: L126). The difference between the CAPS training and the departmental training is in its practicality. Both teachers felt that the departmental training provided them with methods and strategies that could easily be implemented in their specific context. Meeting with teachers who taught in similar context provided the teachers with support and encouragement.

Teachers 1 and 2 agreed that there are very few measures in place to support them. They felt that the main support they received was from each other. Teacher 1 explains *“so the only*

help is from Grade One A to Grade One B. Otherwise there is none at all to help with pre-reading skills” (TTI, T1: L261). Later in the interview, Teacher 2 stated that the head of Department provided support in the form of mentorship. Teacher 2 explained:

“Before I started having my own class I was her assistant teacher. So I started actually learning from her. She helped and guided me by my ideas and then it’s actually very nice. I actually learnt a lot since being here. Every day you learn something else” (TTI, T2: L263).

4.6 CONCLUSION

Chapter 4 focused on the results of the thematic data analysis. The themes and related categories were discussed in order to address the research question. In the following chapter, the data from this will be used in conjunction with second language reading research to answer and discuss the findings.

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CHAPTER 5
INTEGRATED FINDINGS,
RECOMMENDATIONS AND
CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

“Learning is not attained by chance. It must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence” Abigail Adams

This final chapter integrates the findings of this research study with prominent literature surrounding early reading research. The findings will be discussed in response to the research questions. The potential contributions, limitations and recommendations of the study are explored. The chapter ends with a brief conclusion and a personal reflection.

5.2 FINDINGS

This chapter aims to unpack the findings from the research study, *Grade One teacher’s methods of teaching pre-reading skills to second language learners in an inner city school*. The secondary research questions will be addressed first as these informed the overall response to the primary question that guided the study. Below is a list of the secondary research questions that guided this study:

- *To what extent are teachers aware of and teaching pre-reading skills, as a prerequisite to reading, to second language learners in grade One?*
- *What methods do teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to second language learners in grade One?*
- *What resources and support are available to teachers to enrich their early reading methodology?*
- *In what way does the teaching of pre-reading skills interfere with the prescribed curriculum and how do the teachers overcome this challenge?*



- *What barriers are faced when teaching pre-reading skills in the English Second Language classroom?*

5.3 WHAT METHODS DO TEACHERS USE TO TEACH PRE-READING SKILLS TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN GRADE ONE?

In order to provide quality-reading instruction, ESL teachers need a deep understanding of a variety of teaching methods and know when to apply each one. The teachers in this study emphasised the importance of using the synthetic phonics approach to develop phonemic awareness. The teachers stressed that repetition of reading tasks was key to promoting understanding of new language and skills. Subtractive multilingualism was encouraged in the class as teachers were of the belief that exposing learners exclusively to English would improve their language proficiency. Dramatizations encouraged class participation and supported understanding and the development of oral language proficiency.

5.3.1 The synthetic phonics approach

How reading should be taught remains a hotly debated topic amongst educationalists (Machin, McNally & Viarengo, 2016). *“In education, particularly in the teaching of reading over the years, the choice of instructional methods has been heavily influenced by many factors, not only teachers’ own frontline experiences about what works, but also politics, economics, and the popular wisdom of the day”* (Hall, 2008 p. 34). Positive past experiences have led both ESL teachers in this study to exclusively use the synthetic phonics approach when teaching ESL learners to read. The teachers both highlighted the importance of developing phonemic awareness for the development of both reading and writing.

A synthetic phonics approach is a bottom-up approach that involves learners having knowledge of individual sounds and letters, and later learning to blend sounds in order to compose whole words (Davis, 2012). Research has consistently and comprehensively shown that systematic phonics instruction is the most effective and successful way of teaching children to read (Grove, 2013). Findings of [the](#) National Reading Panel (2000) revealed that not only did phonological awareness help learners learn to read, but phonological awareness instruction was effective under a variety of teaching conditions with a variety of learners - including second language learners and those at risk of developing future reading problems

(Yatvin, 2000). Johnston, McGeown & Watson (2011) found that, after six years at school, children taught using the synthetic phonics approach read words, spelt words and had reading comprehension skills significantly in advance of those taught by the analytic phonics method. Research even suggests that the best method of instruction could depend on gender. Research shows that boys benefited more from a synthetic phonics teaching method, as their scores in this study were superior to the scores of the girls (Johnston, McGeown, & Watson, 2011).

Rose (2009) also argues strongly for the inclusion of a vigorous programme of phonics in order to teach reading. However, the report states that in order for phonics instruction to be successful, it should be securely embedded within a broad language rich curriculum (Rose, 2006). According to Condy (2010), literacy approaches that use phonics may seem efficient in the short term, but unless they are embedded in focused texts and reading activities they may well be analysed as drills for school and not as reading for authentic purposes. Teaching phonics is therefore only one component of a successful reading program. Phonics work is a necessary but not a sufficient part of the wider knowledge, skills and understanding which children need to become skilled readers and writers, capable of comprehending and composing text (Rose, 2006).

The teachers in this study relied solely on a synthetic approach and did not make use of the whole word approach to teaching reading. Analytic phonics, often referred to as the whole word approach, is viewed as a top down process. Learners first read single words and then progress to sentences and then finally to reading stories (Hugo, 2010). It was evident during this study that solely relying on a synthetic phonics approach was problematic. An example of this occurred when the teacher sounded out the word “the” as T-H-E. Blending these three phonemes together does not sound like the word “the”. It was evident that this mismatch of letter names and sounds caused a great deal of confusion for the learners. A whole word approach may have been a more appropriate strategy for teaching sight words than a phonemic approach. Blunden-Greef (2014) suggests that solely relying on the phonics approach may compromise comprehension and fluency of reading. Combining the phonics approach with the analytic approach may reduce the confusion of the irregular nature of the English spelling system (Blunden-Greef, 2014).



Learning to read in a second language is by no means an easy accomplishment; however, research suggests that learning to read in a second language may be similar to developing the ability to read in one's mother tongue. Lesaux [and](#) Siegel (2003, p. 1005) state "*that it is evident that the development of reading skills in children who speak English as a second language is very similar to the development of reading skills in native English speakers*". In this study, Lesaux [and](#) Siegel, (2003) demonstrated that if provided with a balanced literacy program, English Second Language children, who entered kindergarten with little or no English, were able to attain a level of achievement in areas of reading and spelling comparable to that of their native English-speaking peers.

Learning to distinguish between letters and their corresponding sounds is one of the very first activities that learners are required to master in grade [One](#). Both the teachers in this study agreed that many of the ESL learners experience a breakdown in developing the alphabetic principle. Dilorenzo et al. (2011) offer three reasons why a learner may face difficulty learning the alphabetical principal. Dilorenzo et al. (2011) explain that learners must master the enormous task of learning 40 sounds for 52 random symbols as well as the sounds formed by combining these arbitrary symbols. The English language also uses a system in which the association between letters and sounds are totally arbitrary. There are also several letters in the alphabet that are confusing and look alike (Dilorenzo et al. 2011).

Both teachers planned multisensory lessons in order to support the development of ESL learner's ability to remember the names and sounds of the alphabet. Although they felt that the school had limited recourses, both teachers prioritised the teaching of phonics using an array of sensory materials such a play dough, chalk and paper. The teachers expressed that learners were more engaged and were able to remember the letters more readily when provided with hands-on sensory activities.

5.3.2 Subtractive multilingualism

Both educators in School A believed that ESL learners would overcome the language barriers faster, and learn more efficiently if they were forced to speak English during school hours. English was, therefore, the only language allowed in and around the classroom. Research strongly contradicts the belief that Subtractive Bilingualism is beneficial to English Second Language learners' development. Naidoo, Reddy [and](#) Dorasarmy (2014)

state that some studies in South Africa have blamed the poor achievements of learners from African language speaking homes on the early transition to English. Fleisch (2008) states that an early shift to a second language means that second language learners never master the knowledge and skills required by the school.

Research from primary schools in East Africa, where English is used as medium of instruction in the early grades - but is barely spoken if at all outside the classroom - shows that very little learning is taking place (Uwenzon, 2010). Additional research from sub-Saharan Africa shows that starting education in a language children do not understand does not yield high learning results, nor does it help children to learn the new language well (Alidou et al., 2006). South African research reveals similar results. Research indicates that teaching in a language that students do not understand, or have not learned well, yields poor cognitive results; the students lag behind their peers who receive education through a method of instruction that they understand (Taylor & Coetzee, 2013).

It is vital to ensure that learners in the entry level of school are taught in their mother tongue and gradually introduced to English (Naidoo, Reddy & Dorasarmy, 2014). Research by Taylor and Coetzee (2013) supports this idea and demonstrates that receiving mother tongue instruction (rather than English instruction) in grades [one](#), [two](#) and [three](#) leads to better English proficiency in grades [four](#), [five](#) and [six](#).

5.3.3 Actions and dramatizations

Both teachers in this study drew attention to the importance of using dramatization to facilitate understanding. Using dramatization in second language classrooms helped to bring written materials to life, by infusing the lifeless print with feeling, imagination, and thought for the learner (Wessels, 1987). Research indicates that drama can be used as a successful teaching methodology for teaching ESL learners. Sam (1990) states that drama helps to extend, retain and reinforce vocabulary and sentence structure through role-play and communication games. Belliveau and Kim (2013) add that drama in second language learning has numerous benefits including: fostering communication competence, creating an engaging learning environment as well as boosting confidence and motivation in the classroom.



Whilst observing [Teacher 2](#)'s pre-reading lesson, it was clear that her use of dramatisation encouraged learners to maintain focus and encouraged full participation in the lesson. This observation is seconded by Heldenbrand (2003) when she states that drama allows students to become active participants in the learning of English. Not only did the dramatisation bring much joy to the learners, [Rieg and Paquette \(2009\)](#) add that using drama in the English Second Language classroom may have the added benefit of increasing learner motivation and reducing anxiety.

5.3.4 Questioning, elaboration and prompting

Questioning, elaboration and prompting were used extensively in the ESL classroom to expand the learners' vocabulary and improve English oral language competency. [Shiel, Cregan, McGough and Archer \(2012\)](#) state that oral language may be especially important since it functions as a prerequisite for success in many aspects of reading and writing. Children need frequent encounters with vocabulary and other elements of language before they acquire a deep understanding of word meanings ([Shiel, Cregan, McGough, & Archer, 2012](#)). English Second Language learners who experience slow vocabulary development are less able to comprehend text at grade level than their English first language peers. ESL learners may be at risk for being diagnosed as learning disabled when in fact, their limitation is due to limited English vocabulary and poor comprehension that results, [in part](#), from this limitation ([August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005](#)).

5.3.5 Repetition of reading tasks

Repetition is the first principal of all learning ([Bruner, 2000](#)). Repetition as a method of teaching reading was stressed numerous times during the teacher interview. [Teachers 1 and 2](#) expressed that repetition ensured that all learners understood the learning content. Research backs this, and indicates that repetition in a variety of forms increases the likelihood of reaching children with different learning styles and provides a more comprehensive understanding of concepts ([Anderson & Baker, 2010](#)). Findings by [Baleghizadeh and Derakhshesh \(2012\)](#) confirm the idea that repetition can enhance learning and demonstrate the positive effect task repetition has on the accuracy of learners' oral performance. The re-reading of reading passages was a common practice in this ESL classroom; for example, learners were required to read a basal reader fluently before the next

level reader was issued. Research suggests that re-reading is effective in increasing reading fluency, comprehension and motivation to read (Yeganeh, 2013).

5.4 WHAT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT ARE AVAILABLE TO TEACHERS TO ENRICH THEIR EARLY READING METHODOLOGY?

Teachers in this study felt that there were limited support structures in place to help them teach pre-reading skills. Teacher 1 expressed that the curriculum workshops held were lengthy and impractical. Both teachers did, however, attend literacy and numeracy workshops held at various schools in the area. Both teachers agreed that these workshops were more beneficial as they were practical in nature and had a narrow focus on a specific topic. Teacher 1 stated that she received support from an older teacher, which helped her with practical ideas to teach reading.

5.4.1 Teacher training

Both teachers in this study had no formal qualification at the time this research was undertaken. Teacher 1 had no formal qualification and Teacher 2 was studying through distance education for a diploma in foundation phase education. Results of this study confirm the findings of the National Teacher Education Audit, which took place in 2014. Results from this audit indicated that many educators in South Africa were under-qualified or unqualified (Naidoo, Reddy, & Dorasarmy, 2014). The findings of the audit also showed that there were a significant number of educators that received no training in teaching reading and a majority of the respondents indicated that they did not attend workshops on teaching reading regularly (Naidoo, Reddy & Dorasarmy, 2014). Another study conducted by Van Staden (2010) also highlights that teachers in South Africa have low subject knowledge and have not received sufficient training to teach English (Van Staden, 2010). A lack of teacher education and training is detrimental to teaching second language learners to read as teachers require a detailed knowledge and understanding of the teaching content so that they can plan and implement high-quality programmes (Rose, 2006).

5.4.2 Support from mentor teachers

A great deal of research literature documents the extent to which beginning teachers struggle in their early classroom years (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000; Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Teacher 1 expressed that at the onset of her career, mentoring by a senior teacher helped her to develop effective reading strategies and methodologies. Research supports the use of mentoring programs for beginning teachers. Mentor programs help beginning teachers make a successful transition into teaching by relying on the expertise of veterans to provide a clinical, real-world training process (Virginia Department of Education, 2000). A study by Ingersoll and Strong (2011) demonstrates that of the 15 empirical studies that their research was based on, most of the studies reviewed provided support for the claim that assistance for beginning teachers has a positive impact on three sets of outcomes: teacher commitment and retention, teacher classroom instructional practices, and student achievement. In order for mentor support to be most effective, prospective mentors should participate in professional development to learn about the mentoring process and what is expected of them before assuming their duties (Holloway, 2001).

5.5. IN WHAT WAY DOES THE TEACHING OF PRE-READING SKILLS INTERFERE WITH THE PRESCRIBED CURRICULUM AND HOW DO TEACHERS OVERCOME THIS CHALLENGE?

School A has chosen to implement the CAPS first language English curriculum. Most learners in School A face a double challenge - learning to read without a solid grade R foundation and being presented with learning content in a foreign language. The CAPS First language literacy curriculum document offers very clear guidelines about the teaching of pre-reading skills (referred to as emergent literacy skills in the policy document). The pre-reading skills in the grade 1 policy document build on from the skills specified in the grade R document.

The CAPS first language document specifies that pre-reading skills should be taught during shared or group guided reading activities. Daily phonemic awareness and oral language activities are encouraged. It is obvious, however, that the first language curriculum is not suitable for second language learners. A study conducted by Moodley (2013) highlights that even teachers of home language English speakers find the pace of the CAPS curriculum too



rapid. Moodley (2013) states that educators rush through the syllabus in order to complete the content. In doing so they are not able to spend much needed time with those that struggle. Teachers 1 and 2 both adapt the curriculum in order to accommodate their learners. The teachers both find the emergent literacy skills set out in the curriculum very useful in their classroom. In order to ensure the ESL learners understand the content of the pre-reading skills lessons, the teachers operate at a much slower pace than indicated in the CAPS document. Due to increased time spent on each activity, the teachers do not finish the curriculum. An incomplete curriculum puts second language learners at a further disadvantage when they enter grade 2.

5.6 WHAT BARRIERS ARE FACED WHEN TEACHING PRE-READING SKILLS IN THE ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM?

It is imperative that barriers to learning in a second language are identified in the school system. If not addressed and supported, learning deficits that children acquire in their primary school career grow over time to the extent that they become insurmountable (Spaull, 2013). In School A, the teachers identified varied language experiences, poor parental involvement, a lack of resources as well as prescribed curriculum challenges as barriers to teaching reading.

5.6.1 Varied language experiences in the classroom

A study by Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, (2000) highlights that even with the most successful English Second Language teaching, oral proficiency takes three to five years to develop and academic English proficiency takes four to seven years to develop. This means the majority of learners in School A will be faced with the challenge of learning in a language in which they are not proficient for a large portion of their primary years. Teachers 1 and 2 noted that although teaching learners with limited English proficiency was complicated, they found it most challenging to accommodate the vast discrepancy between the learners' English language proficiency.

In an attempt to support those with poor language proficiency, Teacher 1 paired a learner with weak language proficiency with a learner that had a better grasp of the language. Research suggests that pair work provides learners with opportunities to use the second

language for a range of functions, and in turn for language learning (Storch, 2007). Research has also shown that, in small groups, learners have more opportunities to use the second language for a range of functions than in teacher-led classroom activities (Storch, 2007). Teacher 1 expressed that the learners collaborate and support each other when working together. Research supports this claim as scaffolding does not necessarily only occur through teacher- learner interactions. Storch (2005) showed evidence of ‘collective scaffolding’, a process whereby learners pool their linguistic resources in order to reach resolutions to language-related problems they encounter (Storch, 2005).

The effect of second language learning was further compounded by the fact that the teachers were not mother tongue English speakers themselves. Hugo (2010) states that many educators in South Africa use English since it is the language of learning and teaching of most schools; however, English is a first, additional language for these educators. In a study conducted by Nel and Muller (2010) it was found that teachers who were not proficient in the language of teaching, in this case English, had a negative influence on their learners’ academic achievement as well as their English language proficiency. The lack of adequately proficient teachers to teach through the medium of English has been cited as one of the major barriers to effective learning in South Africa (Evans & Cleghorn, 2010). Uys (2006) states that one of the most critical requirements for improving the level of academic literacy among South African learners is effective pre-service teaching preparation in the language of teaching and learning.

5.6.2 Inadequate parental involvement

Both teachers in this study felt that the learners’ low-socio economic status (SES) negatively affected their ability to learn. Research substantiates this and indicates that children from low socioeconomic families consistently tend to score lower than high socioeconomic status children on tests of academic achievement. Teacher 1 stated that learners from poor backgrounds receive very little parental involvement with respect to academics. Parental involvement is defined by Lemmer, Meier and Van Wyk (2006, p. 132) as “*the engagement of the parents in the child’s learning at home and also in school activities, by working together with the teacher*”. Research suggests that while parent involvement positively affects a student’s academic achievement, low socioeconomic families are least likely to be involved in their children’s education (Al-Matalka, 2014).

Parental involvement is crucial to academic success; however, students from a low socioeconomic status may benefit more from this positive engagement. Dweyer and Hecht (1992) found that when parents become actively involved in their child's education, the academic improvement in the student is more dramatic for low SES children, even though that child will still tend to test lower than their higher SES counterparts. Studies also indicate that parental involvement decreases the likelihood of learners being placed in special education classes, repeating a grade or dropping out of school (Willems, Doan & Holbien, 2005). It is not only academic benefits that children reap when their parents support them home. Research reveals that parental involvement increases learners' motivation and decreases behavioural problems at school (Domina, 2005).

5.6.3 A lack of classroom resources

Both teachers expressed that limited resources negatively impacted their ability to teach pre-reading. Teacher 1 noted that a lack of graded readers contributed to inadequate reading practice. Research by Hugo (2010) mirrors this finding and highlights that there are limited readers and appropriate reading materials in many schools in South Africa. Research by Kruizinga and Nathanson (2010) confirms these findings as their research shows that a lack of leveled reading books makes it very difficult for teachers to implement the Guided Reading Approach correctly. Ironically, precisely where education is most needed to help break the cycle of poverty is where infrastructure, administrative and teacher capacity are least impressive (Khumalo, 2011).

Research suggests what both teachers expressed - a lack of resources may be a barrier to learning. A report by UNESCO (2008) stresses that teaching or learning materials such as textbooks, teaching aids, stationery and laboratories affect academic performance of the learners. This research was affirmed by Jimenez-Castellano (2008) when he states that educational resources impact a school's achievement by promoting or hindering the ability to develop a school culture and high-quality instruction (Jimenez-Castellano, 2008). Another study by Willms (2000) confirms that limited resources may hinder learning and demonstrates that children whose schools lacked classroom materials and had an inadequate library, were significantly more likely to show lower test scores and higher grade repetition than those whose schools were well equipped.

Teacher 1 stated that not having access to big books hindered her teaching of reading. Big books have proven effective in directing children's attention to concepts such as the directionality of English print, parts of books, picture-print relationships and connections between the sounds of oral language and the marks of written language (Hiebert, Pearson, Taylor, Richardson, & Paris, 2014). In an attempt to overcome the lack of resources and its subsequent negative impact on learning, both teachers made their own literacy resources. Singh (2009) supports the idea that teachers have a large role to play in disadvantaged schools and should be proactive in creating a stimulating reading environment. Singh (2009) goes on to recommend that learners should be involved in the creation of reading resources, such as writing their own books and charts to place in the reading corner.

5.7 TO WHAT EXTENT ARE TEACHERS AWARE OF AND TEACHING PRE-READING SKILLS, AS A PREREQUISITE TO READING, TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN GRADE ONE?

Many learners in Africa sit through six years of formal full-time schooling yet do not acquire even the most basic numeracy and literacy skills (Spaull, 2013). A teacher's theoretical and pedagogical knowledge is critical to a learner's academic success. Research indicates that second only to a children's background factors (which are largely beyond the control of education policy), factors to do with teachers and teaching are the most important influences on a child's learning (Spaull, 2013). The trajectory of a child's reading progress at the end of first grade hold fairly steady through the course of primary school: a poor reader in the first-grade continues to be a poor reader in fourth grade - unless instruction improved (Gove, 2010). It is therefore imperative that first-grade teachers have a deep understanding of various reading methods and should be able to use various reading methods in their classroom as the need arises (Hugo, 2012).

It is estimated that 19% of teachers in South Africa are unqualified (The Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2013). Both teachers in School A form part of this statistic. Due to a lack of tertiary education and curriculum training, both teachers in this study had limited theoretical knowledge of pre-reading skills. Nevertheless, during the lesson observation, it was observed that the teachers were teaching pre-reading skills to their English Second Language learners. Techniques such as elaboration, prompting and

questioning were observed during pre-reading lessons. These techniques were used to develop the ESL learners' oral language proficiency by developing and expanding their English vocabulary.

Monolingualism in an official or dominant language is the norm around the world (UNESCO, 2011). Although education policy in South Africa encourages the use of a learners home language as the language of learning and teaching, School A promoted second language learning by encouraging subtractive multilingualism. Both teachers were of the belief that exclusively hearing and speaking English would help the ESL learner to develop better English language proficiency and improve academic results. It was for this reason that the educators promoted English in and around the school and prevented learners from communicating in their home languages.

Both teachers in this study stressed the importance of using the synthetic phonics approach to develop phoneme awareness. The teachers stressed that sensory activities helped the learners to be fully engaged whilst learning their phonics and helped the learners to remember the phonics more readily. The teachers expressed that constant repetition of phonics activities (and reading activities in general) was critical to the development of phonemic awareness.

A number of barriers preventing the successful teaching of pre-reading skills were uncovered during this research. Learners' vastly different English language experiences at the onset of grade One complicated assessment and teaching. A lack of parental involvement left teachers feeling overwhelmed and unsupported. Limited teaching resources exacerbated these challenges as teachers had to use their own income to buy teaching resources and classroom supplies.

The CAPS curriculum also posed a number of challenges for the ESL teachers. Due to the time constraints imposed by following the first language English curriculum, the teachers reported that they felt that the ESL learners could not reap the benefit of the structured curriculum. Teachers often had to repeat pre-reading skills lessons to re-teach important knowledge and skills that were missed due to the language barrier that existed in the classroom. Re-teaching lessons meant that the educators were not able to keep up with the

pace of the first language curriculum and, as such, were unable to teach and revise many pertinent pre-reading skills.

The results of this study clearly mirror the results of another South African study conducted by Navsaria, Pascoe and Kathard (2011) which identified teacher training, a lack of support for teachers and difficulties with language as major challenges identified at school system level in South Africa. Both teachers in this study felt that a lack of resources, training and support were three factors that hindered their ability to teach pre-reading skills in the English Second Language classroom. Both teachers expressed a willingness to attend more workshops in order to develop and improve on their teaching methodologies. The teachers also expressed a desire for more reading resources as they felt that in order for the ESL learner to be engaged and excited about reading and learning, materials needed to be ones in which they could relate to and enjoy.

5.8. CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY

There are various potential contributions of this study. Firstly, this study adds new knowledge to the sparse body of research looking specifically at the development of pre-reading skills in the ESL classroom in South Africa. Researching the current state of teaching pre-reading skills may deepen our understanding of reading in the South African context and provide solutions for improving standards of reading and learning. Secondly, although schools cannot change the economic status of its learners, they can create meaningful opportunities for literacy development (Pretorius & Mchet, 2004).

This research investigated the methods teachers used most successfully to teach pre-reading skills to ESL learners. Other teachers, in similar contexts, could adapt these methods in order to better their teaching of pre-reading skills. Lastly, this study may inform policy development as it provides insights into the difficulties English Second Language teachers face when teaching using a first language curriculum. Taking careful note of teachers' experiences is key to creating an accessible, user-friendly curriculum.

5.9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Firstly, due to the small number of research participants in this qualitative research, the results of this study may have limited transferability in similar contexts. Thick descriptions regarding the context of the study were provided so that the reader could make judgements regarding transferability (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, 2012). The second limitation arose due to the different languages of the researcher and the research participants. Although the teachers were able to adequately express themselves in English, communicating in their mother tongue may have provided richer data. Lastly, the focus of this study was very narrow, focusing specifically on the methodology used to teach second language learners to read. Incorporating the roles parents and the school may hold in supporting learners to read, would have given this study a broader focus.

5.10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this research highlighted several barriers to learning to read for ESL learners. When looking at the barriers [wholly](#) they may seem insurmountable; however, measures must be put in place to begin to reduce the effects of barriers to learning to read for ESL learners.

5.10.1 Pre-service and in-service training for teachers

Hugo (2010) states that along with effective resources, teacher training and education is an area of concern in South Africa. Taylor (2008) states that in order to improve academic results, teachers need to take responsibility for the learner results and not blame poor performance on external factors such as a lack of resources or support. Teacher training is essential [for](#) developing competent teachers. In order for ESL teachers to successfully teach reading, they must have an array of teaching methods and know when to use each one. Pre-service training in the form of ESL language workshops and practical experience should be compulsory for all students training to become educators in South Africa. With continual teacher training, development and support an environment most conducive to English first additional language learning can be created and maintained.



Practical in-service training workshops aimed specifically at developing the ESL educator should be provided to all educators teaching in a second language environment. On-going in-service training is beneficial in refining teacher's skills and providing teachers with the latest knowledge of successful reading pedagogies. Collaboration with teachers from other schools should be encouraged. Teacher collaboration will aid in the sharing of resources and provide mutual support for all educators involved (Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007).

5.10.2 Additional community based reading initiatives

Due to financial constraints, under-resourced schools are a reality in South Africa. An insufficient amount of necessary resources causes teachers to be restricted in the teaching activities that they make use of in the classroom (Beukes, Moyo, & van Rensburg, 2010). Ideally, culturally appropriate readers, textbooks and posters designed specifically for the English Second Language learners should be readily available in all classrooms across the country. Literacy resources at home are also critical to developing successful readers. A study by Newman (2010) highlights those learners who have access to books and have verbal engagement with a caregiver about the books had significantly increased receptive language skills, concepts of print and narrative competence as compared to those children with no books.

Parents should be well-informed about the importance of reading at home and should be encouraged to actively seek reading materials for their children. In order to promote access to reading materials, parents should be encouraged to make use of national libraries. Community reading initiatives are also an essential component in ensuring that learners from low SES backgrounds are engaged in constructive activities after school. Reading clubs, run by volunteers, could be set up in order to help learners with homework and listen to them reading.

5.10.3 Literacy enrichment programs

Enrichment is often regarded as something extra, a nonessential frill that is not considered during serious discussions about student achievement (Beecher & Sweeny, 2008). However, studies indicate that enrichment programs at home and school positively affect learning outcomes (August & Hakuta, 1998). Enrichment activities should be designed to actively

engage learners in unique and enriched learning experiences and to provide children with opportunities to apply the skills they had learned during the school day in new settings (Beecher & Sweeny, 2008). Enrichment programs may be most beneficial in the early years, as findings of a study by Brooks-Gunn [and](#) Duncan (1997) suggest that interventions during early childhood may be most important in reducing [poverty's](#) impact on children.

An approach, such as the Whole School Approach, that supports reading across all systems is required in order to improve literacy results. The Whole School Approach aims to build meaningful partnerships with parents, families and the community in order to support sustained reading development for all learners (Response Ability Initiative, 2015). Heugh (2002) emphasises that parental and community support is essential in developing literacy skills in learners. It is for this reason that literacy enrichment programs should extend into the home environment. When parents establish partnerships with their children's schools they extend school learning effectively into the home and reinforce academic values outside school (August & Hakuta, 1998). A series of workshops communicating with parents about the importance of encouraging reading at home on a regular basis can be presented (Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007). Wells (1981) demonstrated that listening to a story being read from a book was strongly related to early reading success at school.

5.10.4 Differentiated instruction

Teachers in [School A](#) expressed that varying degrees of English proficiency in their classes negatively affected their ability to teach reading. Differentiated instruction could be used to overcome this barrier. Although the notion of differentiating instruction is not new, it has become increasingly important in schools where large numbers of students are not achieving the highest levels of literacy (Watts-Taffe, Broach, Marinak, Conner, & Walker-Dalhouse, 2012). Differentiated instruction sometimes referred to as mixed-ability teaching, is a process-oriented approach most suitable to classrooms in which students have a wide range of ability levels (Santamaria, 2009). Differentiation encourages teachers to move away from planning whole-class, generic lessons and to consider the learning needs of small groups of students or individuals (Beecher & Sweeny, 2008).

In order to create an effective differentiated environment, the teacher should concentrate on five areas, namely: the learning environment, curriculum, assessment, [in](#)struction and

classroom management (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). Research supports the use of differentiated instruction and demonstrates that reading achievement of primary school students can be improved if differentiated instruction is used (Baumgartner, Lipowski, & Rush, 2009; Reis, Little, Muller, & Kaniskan, 2010).

5.11. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study on the methods that teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to ESL learners to read has highlighted several topics that could inspire future research. I feel that the following topics would deepen our understanding of second language learning and would inform early literacy research in South Africa:

- English Second Language learners' experience of being taught in a second language classroom.
- The learners' emotions and attitudes associated with second language learning and how this affects learning and development in the early years.
- The influence of parental attitudes and beliefs of English and how this affects learners' attitudes and perceptions of learning in a second language.
- Factors of resilience that buffer the effects of second language learning in the early years.
- Extending this research by exploring the teaching of pre-reading skills to ESL learners in Grade One on a much larger scale. Researching the teaching of pre-reading skills to ESL learners in rural communities may provide unique insights into the teaching of reading to ESL learners.

5.13. CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

This research project has not only helped me to gain deeper insight into the challenges faced by teachers and learners in second language environments but has broadened my understanding of the education system as a whole. Both teachers showed passion and commitment to doing the best they could with what they had available. Although the teachers in this study did not have the required training, they must be commended for their hard work and dedication to teaching ESL learners to read. I am inspired by the positivity of

the learners in School A. The learners arrived at school each day with a smile on their face, ready to overcome the challenge of learning in a second language. Their resilience was inspirational- I am humbled by my experience.

As a researcher, I have gained valuable knowledge about the research process and the significance of research. This dissertation has highlighted the importance of reading research, especially for second language learners in South Africa. It is my hope that this research may inspire further research and intervention programs in the future.



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APPENDIX A
LETTER TO SCHOOL



Department of Educational Psychology

Dear Principal,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN XXX SCHOOL

I am currently a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am enrolled in the Educational Psychology Masters programme. In order to complete the requirements of this degree, it is necessary for me to conduct research and write a dissertation on my work.

I therefore wish to apply for permission to conduct research in XXX Primary School. My research project will involve Grade Oneteachers. My research topic is "***A case study of the methods teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to second language learners in Grade one.***"

This study will involve the observation of two Grade Oneteachers during literacy lessons. I will be a passive participant who will do video recordings and make field notes whilst the teachers are busy in their classes. It is anticipated that two literacy lessons per teacher would be observed. During this period, I would also like to go through learners' workbooks and prescribed books and view the resources teachers may use in their literacy lessons. I would like to take photographs of some of the resources used in class as well as a few examples of learners' work in their workbooks.

This research project will also involve semi-structured interviews with the two Grade Oneteachers I have observed. The interviews will take place after school hours and should last approximately 40 minutes and would be audio recorded. The information obtained during this research project will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and will be used solely for this research. Only my supervisors and I will have access to this information. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the school, teachers and learners. All information collected will be securely stored in line with the University of Pretoria's regulations. The video recordings made during this time will only be viewed by my supervisor and myself and will be stored securely at all times. The recordings will never be reproduced or broadcast to any third party now or in the future.

Participation is voluntary and teachers may withdraw at any time during the process. The learners in the class will not be interviewed during the classroom observations. The learners and parents/guardians will receive informed consent



letters indicating the details of the research.

It is my belief that the research findings will make a creditable contribution to identifying effective methods and strategies of teaching pre-reading skills to second language learners in Grade one. If you agree to conduct research in your school, please fill in the consent form below. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me, or my supervisor.

Yours sincerely,

Leanne Morgan
Student researcher
082 957 9128
leannemorgan0123@hotmail.com

Dr Funke Omidire
Supervisor
funke.omidire@up.ac.za

.....
Declaration of consent

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. Signing this letter indicates that you understand that your participation in this project is voluntary and that you may withdraw from the research project at anytime. Under no circumstances will the identity of the school or research participants be disclosed or published to any party/organisation that may be involved in the research process.

I, _____ (your name), principal of _____ agree to allow Leanne Morgan to conduct research in this school. The topic of research being: **“A case study of the methods teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to second language learners in Grade one.”** I agree to allow the researcher to take video/audio recordings of lessons and interviews with the participating teachers. I understand that the researcher subscribes to the following principles:

- **Voluntary participation**, - participants may withdraw from the research at [any time](#) during the study.
- **Informed consent**- research participants will at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in this research.
- **Safety in participation**- Participants will not be placed at risk or harm of any kind.
- **Privacy**- meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents will be protected at all times.
- **Trust**, Participants will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Principal's signature: Date:



APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORMS



Department of Educational

Psychology

Dear Teacher,

I am currently a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am enrolled in the Educational Psychology Masters programme. In order to complete the requirements of this degree, I must conduct research and write a dissertation on my work.

I would like to warmly thank you for considering participating in this research project being undertaken at your school. I will be conducting the research at your school with Grade One teachers. My research topic is “**A case study of the methods teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to second language learners in Grade one.**”

This study will involve the observation of two Grade One teachers during literacy lessons. I will be a passive participant who will do video recordings and make field notes whilst the teachers are busy in their classes. During this period, I would also like to go through learners' workbooks and prescribed books and view the resources teachers may use in their literacy lessons. I would like to take photographs of some of the resources used in class as well as a few examples of learners work in their workbooks.

This research project will also involve semi-structured interviews with the teachers whose classes were observed. The interviews will take place after school hours and will be audio recorded. The interview should take approximately 40 minutes and will be scheduled when you are available. The information obtained during this research project will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and will be used solely for this research only. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the school, teachers and learners. All information collected will be securely stored in line with the University of Pretoria's regulations. The video recordings made during this time will only be viewed by my supervisor and myself and will be stored securely at all times. The recordings will never be reproduced or broadcast to any third party now or in the future.

Before commencing with any data collection, I will first come to the school and explain the background of the research and the role you will play. I will explain how I will go about the research and answer any queries you may have surrounding the study.



I would again like to warmly thank you for your participation in this study. I hope that that the research findings will make a creditable contribution to identifying effective methods and strategies of teaching pre-reading skills to second language learners in Grade one.

Yours sincerely,

Leanne Morgan
Student researcher
082 957 9128
leannemorgan0123@hotmail.com

Dr Funke Omidire
Supervisor
funke.omidire@up.ac.za

Declaration of consent

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. Signing this letter indicates that you understand that your participation in this project is voluntary and that you may withdraw from the research project at [any time](#). Under no circumstances will the identity of the school or research participants be disclosed or published to any party/organisation that may be involved in the research process.

I, _____ (your name), teacher at _____ agree to take part in this research. The topic of research being: **“A case study of the methods teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to second language learners in Grade one.”** I agree to allow the researcher to take video recordings of my lessons and audio record the interviews for the duration of the proposed study. I understand that the researcher subscribes to the following principals:

- **Voluntary participation**, - participants may withdraw from the research at [any time](#) during the study.
- **Informed consent**- research participants will at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in this research.
- **Safety in participation**- Participants will not be placed at risk or harm of any kind.
- **Privacy**- meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents will be protected at all times.
- **Trust**, Participants will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Teachers signature: Date:



Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am a second year educational psychology student from the University of Pretoria. I have been granted permission by the school to conduct research at XXX School. The topic of the research is ***“A case study of the methods teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to second language learners in Grade one.”***

Your child will be in the class that I observing for two lessons. I will not be teaching your child but I will be present in the classroom whilst the teacher teaches. I will not be talking to any child in the class and will be merely observing the teachers lesson. I will be making a video recording of the lesson in order to analyse it later. I will also be taking photos of some of the classwork your child has completed. The videos and photos captured will be safely stored and only viewed by my research supervisor and myself. The information obtained from this study will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and will be used for this research project only. The name of the school, the teacher and your child will not be included in any way in this study. To ensure the strictest confidentiality, I will be making use of fictitious names to protect the identity of all involved.

I would like to sincerely thank you for your assistance with this research and I hope that this research can make a valuable contribution to an existing body of knowledge that aims to improve reading readiness in South Africa.

Yours sincerely,

Leanne Morgan
Student researcher
082 957 9128
leannemorgan0123@hotmail.com

Dr Funke Omidire
Supervisor
funke.omidire@up.ac.za

If you are willing to allow your child to participate in this study and for a video recording of two lessons to be captured, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. Signing this letter indicates that you understand that your participation in this project is voluntary and that you may withdraw from the research project at [any time](#). Under no circumstances will the identity of the school or research participants be disclosed or published to any party/organisation that may be involved in the research process.

Parent/Guardian’s Name: _____

Signature:

Date:



The Chairperson
School Governing Body (SGB) of XXX School

Dear Sir/ Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN XXX SCHOOL

I am currently a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am enrolled in the educational psychology masters program. In order to complete the requirements of this degree, I must conduct research and write a dissertation on my work.

I therefore wish to apply for permission to conduct research in XXX Primary School. My research project will involve Grade One learners. My research topic is ***“A case study of the methods teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to second language learners in Grade one.”***

This study will involve the observation of two Grade One teachers during literacy lessons. I will be a passive participant who will do video recordings and make field notes whilst the teachers are busy in their classes. I would like to observe each teacher as she teaches a literacy lesson to Grade One learners. During this period, I would also like to go through learners’ workbooks and prescribed books and view the resources teachers may use in their literacy lessons. I would like to take photographs of some of the resources used in class as well as a few examples of learners work in their workbooks. Photographs captured during this study will not be published or printed in any form during or after this study has taken place.

This research project will also involve semi-structured interviews with the two Grade One teachers I have observed. The interviews will take place after school hours and should take approximately 40 minutes to complete. The interviews and observations will be videotaped and transcribed by me for analytic purposes. The information obtained during this research project will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and will be used solely for this research. Only my supervisors and I will have access to this information. Pseudonyms will be used throughout this research to protect the identity of the school, teachers and learners.

In order to transcribe and analyse the data I have collected I will also have to



make video recordings of the observed lessons and the interviews. The video recordings made during this time will only be viewed by my supervisor and myself and will be stored securely at all times. The recordings will never be reproduced or broadcast to any third party now or in the future. After the study is complete the recordings will be stored at the University of Pretoria in line with the ethics policy.

The learners in the class will not take part in the research but will be in attendance of the class, together with the researcher. The learners and parents/guardians will receive a letter to inform them about the research that will be conducted. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the school and the teachers. All information collected will be securely stored in line with the University of Pretoria's regulations.

It is my belief that the research findings will make a creditable contribution to identifying effective methods and strategies of teaching pre-reading skills to second language learners in Grade one. If you agree to conduct research in your school, please fill in the consent form below. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me, or my supervisor at the numbers given below.

Yours sincerely

Leanne Morgan (researcher)

Contact details

Leanne Morgan
leannemorgan0123@hotmail.com

082 957 9128

Declaration of consent

If you give XXX School permission participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent. Signing this letter indicates that you understand that the participation in this project is voluntary and that your school may withdraw from this research project at [any time](#). Under no circumstances will the identity of the school or research participants be disclosed or published to any party/organisation that may be involved in the research process.



I, _____(your name), principal of _____
agree/disagree (delete word that is not applicable) to allow Leanne Morgan to conduct
research in this school. The topic of research being: **“A case study of the methods
teachers use to teach pre-reading skills to second language learners in Grade one.”**
I _____, agree/disagree to allow the researcher to take video recordings of
lessons and interviews with teachers at this school for the duration of the proposed study.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the following principals:

- **Voluntary participation**, - participants may withdraw from the research at [any time](#) during the study.
- **Informed consent**- research participants will at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in this research.
- **Safety in participation**- Participants will not be placed at risk or harm of any kind.
- **Privacy**- meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents will be protected at all times.
- **Trust**, Participants will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Full name of the head of the school governing body of XXX school

Head of School governing body’s signature: Date:

.....

Researchers signature: Date:



APPENDIX C INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The purpose of this schedule is to elicit the teachers' understanding of the term pre-reading skills, what they perceive it to be, the methods and strategies they employ to teach pre-reading skills to second language learners. This schedule also aims to elicit what policy and curriculum provisions and requirements are currently in place to assess and teach pre-reading skills to second language learners in the first Grade.

1. How long have you been teaching? How long have you been teaching Grade one? How long have you been teaching at X school?
2. What first attracted you to the teaching profession?
3. What teaching qualifications do you hold? Have you attended any post qualification training programs?
4. Can you tell me a little bit more about the learners in your class (their ages, home language, class size, etc.)?
5. Is English the second language of most of the learners in your class? Which language do most children speak at home? (Percentage)
6. How does second language learning impact learning to read in your classroom?
7. What is your understanding of pre-reading skills?
8. How do you assess the learners' early literacy skills when they enter Grade one? Is there a baseline assessment done on admission to Grade one?
9. Do you believe that the majority of second language learners are equipped with the skills necessary to learn how to read successfully? Please explain your answer.
10. Does the CAPS curriculum provide guidelines for teaching pre-reading skills in Grade one? If so where can this information be found?
11. Does the CAPS curriculum place adequate emphasis on the teaching pre-reading skills?
12. Can you examples of the pre-reading skills that you are aware of and teach to your second language Grade One learners?
13. What strategies or methods do you use in your classroom to teach pre-reading skills?
14. What resources do you currently have in your [classroom that aids](#) you in teaching pre-reading skills?
15. Do you regard teaching pre-reading skills as imperative to your learners' reading success?
16. Are [there](#) any barriers that you face to teaching pre-reading skills?
17. What support would you like to receive that is currently unavailable to you?



18. Do you get any guidance from senior teachers or your head of Department with regards to teaching pre-reading skills in Grade one?
19. How will you select the necessary pre-reading skills to teach to your second language Grade One learners?
20. How do the learners who have had very limited early literacy experiences cope in Grade one? What support strategies are available to support them?
21. What really works for you? What gets the best results? What has worked in the past?



OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1. Does the teacher display resources that may promote the acquisition of pre-reading skills?

Remarks:

2. What work has already been completed in the learners' classroom book that promotes pre-reading skills to second language learners?

Remarks:

3. How does the teacher teach alphabet identification during the literacy lesson?

Remarks:

4. How does the teacher teach phonological processing skills? (Word awareness, onset rhyme awareness and phonemic awareness)



Remarks:

5. How does the teacher develop oral language proficiency in the literacy lesson?

Remarks:

6. How does the teacher develop print awareness in the literacy lesson?

Remarks:

7. Are there barriers that prevent the teaching of pre-reading skills in this classroom?

Remarks:

Processes followed in teaching literacy

Notes:

Classroom – physical environment

Interaction

Others' observations



APPENDIX D
TRANSCRIBED TEACHER INTERVIEW

|



No.		Interview questions and responses	Code
1.	R	Let's start with question no 1.	
2.	R	How long have you guys been teaching?	
3.	1	Second year now	Experience
4.	R	And how long have you been teaching Grade one?	
5.	2	Second year (laughing)	Experience
6.	R	Have you always been in Grade one?	Experience
7.	1	Always been in Grade one	Experience
8.	2	I've done for six months four, five, six and seven. That's just before I started with Grade one's.	Experience
9.	R	Okay. And then have you been teaching here the whole time? Or have you taught somewhere else? Or just been here?	
10.	1	Yes	Experience
11.	2	I taught somewhere else. But not as a teacher. An aftercare class. And then I came here.	Experience
12.	R	Okay. And what, at first, attracted you to the teaching profession? Why did you become teachers?	
13.	2	I'm a softy for the little ones. Too cute. To help them understand stuff in a better way. So I think that's why I have a soft spot.	
14.	1	I don't know. Ah, when I was done with school I didn't know what I wanted to do. I went overseas and I came back and I, I always been good with kids. So I wanted to actually to make a difference.	
15.	1	So I thoughts, that's cool, why not?	
16.	R	Okay, then can you just talk me through what you guys have studied or are currently studying.	
17.	2	I'm studying BED foundation phase at UNISA.	Current Studies
18.	1	I will be starting this year at UNISA, studying a BED degree.	Current Studies
19.	R	So both correspondence?	
20.	1	Yes	Current Studies
21.	R	Cool. Okay, can you tell me a little bit more about the kids in your class?	
22.	2	Okay, um.	
23.	R	So, things like their home language, how they speak in the class, things like that.	
24.	1	Okay, some of the kids went to Grade R in School A so the teacher already taught them there to talk English. She helped them a lot. Ja, she helped them a lot with basics and because she is also talking in other languages so she can talk their language and help them to understand what she is saying.	School Demographics Code Switching Oral language competence
25.	2	Explain actually. Explain in English and then go and explain in another language.	Code Switching
26.	1	So the Grade R's that come from School A Grade R they are very clever, you can't say clever but they know what you are talking about.	Children's early literacy experiences Stimulating environment

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27.	1	Their English is better.	Children's early literacy experiences
28.	2	Then the other kids that come from outside schools, they struggle, um, because in the crèches they talk their own languages so they come here and they struggle a lot.	Oral language competence
29.	2	But some of the time the crèche will help to explain what you are saying.	Children's early literacy experiences
30.	1	Also, some crèches they don't actually learn anything. I had parents this year they complained so much about the crèches their kids were in. They don't do any stories with them. They just let them play.	Children's early literacy experiences Limited literacy experience
31.	R	How many come in speaking only their mother tongue? So like a percentage, how many children come into your class speaking English?	
32.	2	Maybe two percent.	Demographics
33.	1	Then it's actually proper fluent good English. The rest is basically they know basics from home. And talking to their family and from Grade R and stuff like that. Otherwise...	Demographics
34.	R	And how many children speak no English at all? The first time they hear English is probably you.	
35.	1	This year we don't have much problem, ja. I have one child, when I ask her to do something she understands what I'm asking but if she wants to tell me something she speaks her language, her own home language. She can't talk English but she can understand.	Children's early literacy experiences Demographics
36.	R	Cool. Which language do most of the children speak?	
37.	2	North Sotho, Tswana, some speak Zulu	Demographics
38.	R	Ok then do you have any foreign children that speak French or any different languages?	
39.	1	I should talk to you about yesterday? She...	
40.	R	Oh! Okay.	
41.	1	But I've never heard her actually speak.	Children's early literacy experiences
42.	R	Okay, so they're not all South African children	
43.	2	Zimbabwe	Demographics
44.	2	Botswana	Demographics
45.	2	Nigeria	Demographics
46.	R	Okay, so how do you guys think that second language learning, so all those children that we were just talking about, affects the learning in your classroom?	
47.	2	A lot	
48.	1	Okay, um, I'll start it off with they grew up the their language, so now they come into the class and now you're teaching English so they don't understand it so well so when it comes to tests and spelling and everything they fall back, they struggle a lot to understand and it affects the English a lot. The tests and the way you teach, half the time they don't understand.	Affects second language learning
49.	2	It takes longer also	Affects second language learning Extended time teaching

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			curriculum
50.	2	They do the wrong work some of the times, um, it takes very long for them to understand what you are talking about.	Affects second language learning
51.	1	And that actually keeps the kids that's actually more forward, behind.	Affects second language learning Language difference challenges
52.	R	Okay	
53.	1	So now you have to wait with this one and explain the question again. On the first question. So that's also difficult. You have to repeat everything. You have to do everything double. We have to stick to a plan, the curriculum that we have.	Affects second language learning Lack of flexibility curriculum
54.		Okay, so you, so you're following Caps?	
55.	2	Yes	Curriculum
56.	R	Okay, so what you're saying is that if you don't follow step by step every day.	
57.	1	No	Curriculum
58.	2	No	Curriculum
59.	R	That you do a slower version to accommodate all the children.	
60.	1	We try, from the Caps we work with, the work that we give them, we try different ways to get them to understand.	Curriculum
61.	2	So we use our own	Curriculum Lack of flexibility curriculum Personal experience
62.	R	So can you tell me what you understand by the term pre-reading skills?	
63.	1	That's like preparing them for formal reading, starting off with a small basic letter, a sound, a picture, what the picture explains about the word, about the story. That's what I know about it.	Pre-reading skills
64.	2	The sight words, the phonics, all the small things before they can even start reading a word.	Pre-reading skills
65.	1	Ja, they have to know the word that they're actually looking at.	Pre-reading skills
66.	R	And then how do you guys assess the learners' early literacy skills when they enter Grade one? So what are the first things, maybe in the first couple of weeks or the first couple of days that you guys get to see where they are? How much they can read, how much they can't read.	
67.	1	Mostly verbal.	Strategies teaching pre-reading skills. Verbal assessment
68.	R	Okay, then what kind of verbal things?	
69.	2	We do counting, flash cards	Strategies teaching pre-reading skills.
70.	R	Okay	
71.	1	Flash cards as well.	Strategies teaching pre-reading skills.
72.	2	Then we'll just talk about what happens in the family. And can that child speak to you in English, can he speak	Strategies teaching pre-reading skills.

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		proper English? Does he struggle to talk to you or speak in English	Oral language competence
73.	1	From there we know, ok, this child has struggled with this; this child can count up to five hundred; this child can do this. So basically for the first two weeks its only verbal.	Strategies teaching pre-reading skills. Verbal assessment
74.	2	They also have homework book of phonics that we set. That's what they have to start learning basically in the first term. They don't start reading immediately.	Strategies teaching pre-reading skills.
75.	R	Do they learn a little bit of pre-reading in Grade R?	
76.	1	I doubt it hey. With Margaret they did with our Grade R. Because I saw when we started with the phonics the learners could tell me this was a U, B, CH.	Children's early literacy experiences
77.	2	So they knew the alphabet but not the big letters. So she started with that but I think the kids that come from other crèches they struggle a lot and they still up to now struggle with the phonics.	Children's early literacy experiences Alphabet identification
78.	R	And then you guys when you see them handling books and maybe following on lines, do they come into Grade one , are they competent with handling books? Do they know where the front is, where the back is, where the words are?	
79.	2	No, some of them still turn the book upside-down, or write from left to right. They have no. Where to start or how to start.	Children's early literacy experiences Limited early literacy experienced
80.	1	That's why we also do step by step on the board with them. So when we write sentences in our books, we go, okay, first line, start there by your line. Then we basically draw them on the board. You do monkey work with them.	Strategies teaching pre-reading skills. Physical demonstration- Total physical response
81.	1	And then in the books, you make dots where they must write. So you will start with letter for the first sentence. Or for the number names you skip a line, so if they don't know how to skip a line, you will make a dot everywhere they must write, just to show them okay that's how you must skip a line and that's how you must literally leave a line open.	Strategies teaching pre-reading skills. Visual Aids
82.	R	Are there any children that have come into the class that already know how to read a little bit?	
83.	2	I have the one because her mother's a teacher. So that also helps a lot. And she also does good in her spelling tests, and she can also talk to me fluently and answer me in the correct way also. So that's also quite nice. But not really any, no.	Parental academic support
84.	R	Do you believe that the majority of the second language learners in your class are equipped with the skills necessary to learn how to read successfully?	
85.	1	I don't know. I don't think so because if they don't have that foundation of the Grade R or pre-school, they're not gonna know how to read.	Experience
86.	1	And for us, we only have that much time with them to start. We are the ones teaching them how to start.	Experience
87.	2	By the time they go to the next Grade, it's a whole new...	Experience
88.	2	I don't know, I don't think if you keep on practicing it every day and them going on without the teacher, I think it's ongoing...	Strategy teaching pre-reading skills
89.	R	And then by the end of Grade One they can read sentences, they can read words. Do you guys finish the whole of Caps or do you stop, where, you know what I mean, where you at the end of the year? Do you finish the whole document?	

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90.	1	Last year we did not finish everything. But we started, I was not here.	Curriculum challenge. ESL learning in L2
91.	2	So I saw the Caps file where we are and what we are doing is a bit, it's not like on date, everything so I think it took last year's kids longer to complete. So we did not finish, we did not get everything on time.	Curriculum ESL learning in L2
92.	R	Okay, does the Caps curriculum provide guidelines for teaching pre-reading skills to Grade one's and if so where can I find it to go and look at it?	
93.	1	No.	Curriculum
94.	2	To be honest, I haven't even opened it.	Curriculum
95.	R	Okay, so when you guys use Caps, do you like just read through the lessons?	
96.	1	Ja, then we just go and make our own little thing out of it.	Curriculum Previous experience
97.	R	So you guys go choose what's important for you.	
98.	2	So now and then there will be a little thing out of it that you can use. For practical, verbally, non-verbally, playful and stuff like that.	Curriculum
99.	2	Specific to your lesson	Curriculum
100.	1	But the Caps, they will explain this one sentence into 20 pages	Curriculum Curriculum not user friendly
101.	1	Some of the time they give you like say for instance like we're doing our house, so now we do, they say a box and build this and this and this because we can't do it.	Curriculum Lack of resources Limited time
102.	2	Because we don't have enough time. And the thing is the learners don't always finish the project and we can't give marks for unfinished projects. So what do we do? We will rather draw a house in our books and give a mark, and mark the house for that mark.	Curriculum Limited time to complete curriculum
103.	R	So you pick the same kind of theme?	
104.	1	Yes. We do go according to a theme.	Curriculum
105.	2	Yes.	Curriculum
106.	R	Thank you. Do you think the Caps document places adequate emphasis on teaching pre-reading skills? Like all those things that you said, like phonics and handling books.	
107.	2	Yes it starts at the beginning. Some of the things can help you. Later on it's okay much more difficult. Like in the beginning they give you stuff that can help, like the phonics and with the phonics we're using is the one's they made up from CAPS	Curriculum Phonics approach recommended curriculum
108.	R	Okay and then did you guys go to Caps training? Did you have to...	
109.	1	What happened is we do have meetings that we go to. I think in 2012 we had Caps meeting. I think it was in the holiday, it was like a whole process. A week, two weeks there. And in 2012, no.	Curriculum experience
110.	2	I think in 2012 we did go to one and then not again but we do go to other types of meetings where they discuss like Maths and they discuss what you can do in English, what you can do in Life Skills, you know what you can do to make it interesting and fun and help. We went to one a while back also and it was interesting.	Curriculum experience
111.	R	Who are the workshops organised by?	

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112.	1	Some schools does it and they will phone you and say okay we're doing it.	Support
113.	R	Okay	
114.	2	And then also the department.	Support
115.	R	So if you're a private school you can still go to departmental workshops.	
116.	2	Yes, they send you if you're interested.	Support
117.	R	Okay	
118.	1	Yes	Support
119.	R	Oh, I didn't know that.	
120.	2	I know of a school the other day, me and a lady were talking.	Support
121.	2	And I told her about the meeting we went to and they don't send, they send the principal to those meetings, not the teachers themselves. The HOD.	Support
122.	R	Okay.	
123.	1	She said when we go again we must tell her. Some schools don't know about these meetings and the nice thing is they send us e-mails and say are you interested and we go.	Support
124.	R	So that's a really good resource?	
125.	2	And it's very nice information that you get that helps also for you.	Support
126.	1	So it's very practical.	Support
127.	2	Yes, and then how you can maybe help them with reading. They discuss that with you.	Support
128.	R	And are those meetings more beneficial to you guys than attending Caps training?	
129.	1	I wasn't here for the CAPS training.	Support
130.	2	Caps is a very hard meeting, like a uitgetrekte meeting. The rest is actually doing each subject separately is better.	Support
131.	R	Okay.	
132.	1	Than going to one long boring... because it's not just a one day, two hour thing. It's a whole week thing. You go two days here, a day here.	Support
133.	1	But it's quite interesting to know, to go to these things.	Support
134.	R	Of course.	
135.	2	Even Caps.	Support
136.	R	And how often do you attend those meetings with other schools?	
137.	2	Quite a lot.	Support
138.	1	First one we went to was now in January.	Support
139.	R	January?	
140.	1	Ja.	Support

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141.	1	So it's not every... They also divide them into Grade ones or Grade twos. Sometimes there will be something for Grade <u>one</u> , two and three Maths, or Grade <u>four</u> and then they go, but it's not like there's every...	Support
142.	R	So there's not like a weekly or monthly thing?	
143.	2	Ja, I say it depends. Ja like a month, say every month end. No every term. Ja ja. Every term there's something like that happening.	Support
144.	R	Cool	
145.	1	Once or twice.	Support
146.	R	Okay, and then can you give me like different examples of the types of pre-reading skills that you teach at the beginning of the year? Before you start reading.	
147.	2	Phonics	Pre-reading skills
148.	R	Okay.	
149.	1	Flash cards	Resources
150.	R		
151.	1	Um	Strategies teach reading
152.	R	Okay.	
153.	2	We get them to understand an "a" and what types of "a" words do you get.	Strategies teach reading Initial sound taught first
154.	R	Okay.	
155.	1	And then from there we'll start with the word and then take each letter from that and work from that. Because what we also do is we sometimes hand out on Friday's magazine papers and they must go and search for words that have a "h" in it or a "d" in it and then they must circle it also.	Strategies teach reading Words are then broken down into phonemes
156.	2	So I've also noticed that quite helps. It also quite helps with they write spelling tests.	Strategies teach reading
157.	1	So when the children see words that they don't know then they sound out each letter, so that's how they learn.	Strategies teach reading
158.	2	Even when they learn how to read as well, if they come stand at the table they may not say if they read "the cat is fat". In the beginning they read, t-h-e c-a-t i-s f-a-t. So they spell out every letter of the word. To start with. So they can hear this letter is making this sound.	Strategies teach reading
159.	R	Sorry to interrupt you. Do the children struggle with that?	
160.	2	Some of them.	Children's experience
161.	1	If they haven't picked up...	Children's experience
162.	1	What I also wanted to say what we're doing... now I've forgotten.	
163.	R	Phonics, work cards? Laughs. We'll come back.	
164.	2	But you will see that the learners is struggling. The learners is not practising phonics enough. We will send letters home telling the parents that the child don't know his phonics. He can't even spell a three letter word, so please help this child with the phonics and when a child is reading you can actually see who knows his phonics	Children's experience Parental academic support

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		and which helps their child with phonics and which parents don't help their child.	
165.	1	Because we help them as well. We don't send everything home but that child when they come home they have to learn that again and again and again. It's like a spelling word. We do our spelling words from a Monday and Friday we write a test. So every day, in the mornings, they write a spelling test and the first five words of the spelling list and I can see from now this one don't know his phonics, this one doesn't know his phonics, because if you say b-e-d, bed, he's writing b-e-t, bet or b-e-c- bec.	Children's experience
166.	R	Okay	
167.	2	So everything about the phonics...	Strategies teach reading
168.	1	What they also do in the beginning with that; we let them make a letter on the board so they can recognise it first because if you have to ask them what that because they mix the "u" and the "e". So most of them mix their letters so we get them to recognise it first so we do like a little quiz and a test and write me a "p" and if they can't then we'll make something work.	Strategies teach reading Initial strategy letter recognition
169.	R	Okay	
170.	2	So we also do that to get them to recognise it in the beginning so they'll know this is the "a", this is the "b", this is the, then we can go from there. So we're trying to do that also with the flash cards; we have like an "a" and a "b" and a "d" and we'll do that. Show them, make it so they recognise it, make it, draw it, things like that also. So you can see it, know how it looks like and how to make it as well.	Strategies teach reading Letter recognition
171.	R	Okay, so first you guys teach how the letter looks; then you teach the sound that goes with it.	
172.	1	With it, and how you pronounce it.	Strategies teach reading
173.	1	Then you put the words together.	Strategies teach reading
174.	2	But the other thing I saw this year is they struggle a lot with the "m" and "n."	Strategies teach reading Similar sounding vowels
175.	1	Ja.	
176.	2	So what I did to help them to understand, I said Mommy makes yummy food. So every time I say a word I will say jammm so they can see ok and every time if I ask them okay spell this word then they will say j-a-mmmm because they remember that sound with the action and the N is for the mosquito nnnnnnnnn. So we do those actions to help them with the m and the n, to see how that letter works. And the "p" also. The bed as well. I will sit at the back of them and tell them okay if you sit like this, this is your "b", this is your "d". This is a bed. If you turn the bed around you are going to fall out. So if they are to write, I saw with last year's kids, if I say okay bag, then they will say b-a, bag so they know the "b" is facing the right way and the "d" is the left way.	Strategies teach reading Total physical response
177.	R	Cool	
178.	1	So that's how they recognise...	Strategies teach reading

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179.	1	We must try anything actually that we notice is working. We'll use that. So every day is different. One day we'll try this okay then let's try something else. That works.	Teachers' experience
180.	2	Some of the days you're making a clown of yourself. Like when I did the emotions, I said this one's afraid of the dog and the dog is attacking you so she must be afraid because the dog is going to bite you and this and this and this. Some of the times you sweat more than the children but...	Strategies teach reading Total physical response
181.	R	Laughs. Yes I saw when you were teaching you were very animated.	
182.	1	Ja.	Strategies teach reading
183.	2	Everyone is, especially with the small ones. Everything has to have an action.	Strategies teach reading Total physical response
184.	R	Okay	
185.	2	If you do this, this must have an action, if you see that they don't understand. But this morning I walked into class and I said okay, open your books let's do this work. Yesterday I had to jump up and down in this class just to help them, let them understand, help them understand. Some of the days you're like very stupid in front of the class but that's the only way they get it.	Strategies teach reading Total physical response
186.	R	Do you guys have readers that you send home or do you just send sentences home?	
187.	1	We're gonna start, we have placed them in the homework books then we start with that. So if the one child's finished with it, then he gets to move on but if that child still struggles with it we stick to it.	Strategies teach reading Differentiated pace
188.	R	Okay.	
189.	2	But we send, I think it's three or four; then we start with a thin boekie; fat cat, red hen, dotty dog...	Strategies teach reading
190.	1	Glad cat...	Strategies teach reading
191.	2	Ja, and then there's Max cat, the little boekie.	Strategies teach reading
192.	1	Okay, and then they go home and then they come back and they read it.	Strategies teach reading
193.	2	And it's all phonics books, and they can sound out all the words.	Strategies teach reading
194.	1	Yes, it's also the basic words like cat, the, is.	Strategies teach reading
195.	R	Okay.	
196.	2	He sat on his. The basic ones.	Strategies teach reading
197.	R	Okay.	
198.	2	Because in tests, what happens more closer to the end of the year, our last assessment they also have to start writing sentences. They get a picture then they must write it out.	Curriculum
199.	2	About my family. Like I love my family,	Curriculum
200.	1	So we also have to explain to them, the, in, the, vowels.	Strategies to teach reading
201.	R	Cool. Would it be a good resource to have more readers that you could swap and send out?	
202.	1	Yes, because you know they call it the big books. We asked for them last year. Nice big stories. We don't get	Resources

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		those books.	
203.	1	Like the CAPS big books.	Resources
204.	2	I have got these small ones that you saw on my desk.	Resources
205.	R	So it would help to be able to sit in front of the whole class?	
206.	2	And show and see the same thing instead of going like this all of the time. We don't actually have that if we don't buy it out of our own pockets.	Experience
207.	R	Okay, so you don't get it from the Department?	
208.	1	No, we must buy it ourselves.	Experience
209.	R	Okay, what resources do you guys have in your classroom that helps you teach these pre-reading skills?	
210.	2	Posters. Most of things in my class is actually for Maths because, ja, they struggle a lot with Maths as well. But with the English we have posters, we have flash cards, and then puzzles.	Resources
211.	3	They even go to the board and write. If it's spelling words they will write on the board and show everyone. So we use the board, worksheets. That's all.	Resources
212.	R	Okay so if you had an unlimited budget, what would you like to have in your class?	
213.	1	A lot, Laugh, everything.	Resources
214.	1	Um I once saw a reading book but it has blocks inside. So now the book on the one side has a picture, like a bear on a picnic blanket in the park. So then with the blocks you must build your own sentences next to the bear. In the book, you must build the sentences. At the crèche we had that but it was Afrikaans. They did not build sentences but they built the picture again. It was like a puzzle. It was there and they had to put the blocks together to make the bear. But I saw one that you must build sentences. So you call a child to your table and tell him okay do you see this picture. Make one sentence about this picture. Like the bear is sitting on the blanket or he is having a picnic. So I think that would be very nice.	Resources
215.	2	Yes, because they can see it. They can see it and touch it and know how to put the words together. To teach English with a picture is very easy for them to understand.	Strategies to teach reading Visual cue
216.	1	We take a picture and say "this is a cat" spell the word cat. With a picture I think kids learn more faster, and stuff like that where you can create the things like that on your own. You can even take a paper with a picture on and say make a sentence with this picture, what is going on in this picture. But the thing is with writing they all can't write, well some of them. Some of them cannot spell. So with the blocks you can show then okay that's how to do it. You can ask them for an U and if they get it wrong you can ask them to look in the bag again.	Strategies to teach reading Visual cue
217.	R	Do you feel limited by the circumstances at the school?	
218.	2	A lot	Resources



219.	1	Yes	
220.	2	Because we don't have enough reader and things.	Resources
221.	R	What keeps you going?	
222.	1	We make use of the things we have, and that's just basically it.	Resources
223.	1	Some of the times like this year, but it was unsuccessful, we have a bash, like a valentines bash. So then the teachers sell something and the money that comes in, every teacher that gets part of the money, we split it up.	Resources
224.	2	We must go buy something for our class. So that's the way we buy things for our classes. Otherwise you must go with your own money and you go buy something for your class. The school at the beginning of the year gave us stuff like clay, puzzles.	Resources
225.	1	Clay is also a nice thing for English because you can form the letters.	Resources Visual tactile cue
226.	R	Do you regard teaching pre-reading skills as imperative to your learner's success?	
227.		-Long silence-	
228.	R	In other words, if you didn't teach them, they wouldn't learn how to read.	
229.	1	Pre-reading helps a lot. Because that's the only way they are going to have to learn how to do it, of they start at the basics. So it helps a lot.	
230.	R	Can you give me an idea of what the Grade ones are able to read at the end of the year? Say at their last assessment.	
231.	1	Last year I had a girl who could read a piece out of a magazine. But that's one out of the 20. The one or two in the class that can actually by the end of the year go and say I can read each word without saying a, b, c d (sounding out). They can read it fluently.	Learner achievement
232.	R	So many of the learners still sound out as they go?	
233.	2	Yes but I know when they go to Grade two they are not supposed to do that. They can still point the word but they are supposed to be able to say it.	Learner achievement
234.	2	What we do before we start reading, like the Grade twos and threes, I don't know about the threes, first we read it together, we show them, then they have to practice it on their own at home and then they have to come back and do it on their own. So you show them how to do it, or you read the story to them, then they are supposed to take it further and do it on their own, and not as a group.	Learner achievement
235.	2	Last year I started with the reading one by one so they came to my table and start reading, but spelling the words. At the end of the year I wrote the whole story on the board so each one had to read a sentence and the next one had to read a sentence without me helping them.	Strategies teaching reading Whole word approach
236.	1	Yes that's also what helps.	Strategies teaching reading
237.	1	Even if you take a line. For instance this group of children must go stand in front and start reading and then you say stop and you go on. So they must follow and the next child must go on from where that one stopped. That's what helps them a lot and that's what you get at the end of the year. They can stand up and	Strategies teaching reading Whole word approach



		read those sentences.	
238.	1.	They are able to read quite nicely.	Learner achievement
239.	R	If the learners are sounding out all the words, do they comprehend what they are reading?	
240.	1.	Yes, if you ask them questions afterwards they will be able to. Now at the beginning we do the Bible story. Small nice stories they will be able to tell you bits and pieces of it. So I think they grasp it a little later in the year. That's what I have noticed.	Strategies teaching reading
241.	2.	So everything is step by step with them. It takes time. It's like you cannot expect a child to read a YOU magazine when he doesn't even know his own name. I think in general the people are expecting too much of the Grade ones these days. Way too much, because the same as when we go to meetings they say they have to do this and this and this. But where do you get to just finish the one paragraph or subject or theme. They expect the child to know so much and he is only five years old. He is still a baby. So they are pushing the Grade ones too much. That's why with CAPS we try to do the themes but we don't go lesson by lesson because we will never get finished and they will never understand what you did in the first place.	Strategies teaching reading Curriculum difficulty Curriculum
242.	R	Do you think first language English learners would be able to keep up with CAPS?	
243.	2.	Ja.	
244.	1.	Yes, The nice thing is, is that they start learning in their home language. Parents help them, read to them, show them the pictures. I think in some black homes there is not that... the facilities isn't there. I had so many parents last year who couldn't even speak English themselves. So we are expecting them to go and practice at home and teach them at home but they cannot. So that's also why, I think normal first additional language will know. So that's why when you go to other schools and they already have English as the home language they will know what to do. Here it is a whole different story.	Experience Lack assistance at home
245.	2.	It is like putting an English born child in an Afrikaans household for the first time and you speak Afrikaans. The child will not have a clue what you are saying. But if you put an Afrikaans child in an Afrikaans household they are very fast and they can communicate. So with the English it will be the same. If you take an English child and put him in an English class he will keep up.	Experience
246.	R	Do you experience any barriers to teaching pre-reading skills? You mentioned resources. Is there anything else that prevents you from teaching pre-reading skills?	
247.	2.	No, if we don't have something we make our own so you can cut out of a magazine everyday and paste it on the board and it will be the same as doing something fancy.	Resources
248.	1.	We try every day or let's say every second day to do small pre-reading activity, just to get them settled down and calmed down. So that also helps in the morning when we start.	Strategy teach reading
249.	R	Cool, can you tell me a little bit more about what you do there?	
250.	1.	We do a little bit of talking about a picture or talking about a story, you know things like that. Let the children	Strategies teaching reading Visual cue

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		talk to their friends about it, you know discuss what they heard.	
251.	R	Do you read stories everyday?	
252.	1	No.	Strategies teaching reading
253.	2	We try at least but we don't get there. About three days a week. But only in the afternoon. I will say okay the ones who are tired can sleep and don't irritate me and the ones who wants to listen to the story can listen and after I will ask questions and they will answer and they will reply and some of the of the other times I will say no one is sleeping today because this is a nice story so I want you to reply to my questions. I want you to tell me okay this and this and this happened. Like what did this man do to the cat, what happened there and there? So I will do that but it is three day a week. Some of the time they are so tired, but in the morning we do Bible and ask questions about the Bible like why did this and this and this happen and how did it happen. The Bible helps with their religion but it also helps them to remember better.	Strategies teaching reading Visual Cue Oral assessment
254.	1	Even when we show the pictures, they remember even more than just reading.	Strategies teaching reading Visual Cue
255.	2	Ja, if we only read the book and we just read and read and read they don't... what do you call it? Gedagtes?	Strategies teaching reading
256.	R	Thoughts...	
257.	1	Yes their thoughts are not there. So if you show them a picture and talk about the picture and close the book when you are done and ask them the same question again. They will be able to know more than if you just had to read a normal paragraph.	Strategies teaching reading Visual Cue
258.	R	What support is currently available to help you teach pre-reading skills?	
259.	2	It's just basically you going home and wondering and then thinking let's try this. So the only support is from Grade OneA to Grade OneB.	Support Teaching based on experience
260.	R	So you support each other?	
261.	1	Ja, now they give us the CAPS this and this and this and this and there is no more information. Either she or I will go home and think about ideas and then we will start with a theme. We add or we take away for the next year. So the only help is from Grade OneA to Grade OneB. Otherwise there is none at all to help with pre- reading skills.	Curriculum Teaching based on experience Support
262.	R	Do you get guidance from other teachers or HOD with regards to pre-reading skills?	
263.	2	Ja, our HOD. Before I started having my own class I was her assistant teacher. So I started actually learning from her. She helped and guided me by my ideas and then it's actually very nice. I actually learnt a lot since being here. Every day you learn something else.	Support
264.	R	And in your studies have you addressed second language learning or how to teach reading to second language learning?	
265.	1	Not yet, I am busy with literacy now and I have learnt what kind of stories to read to six year old or eight your olds.	Current studies
266.	R	How do you know which skills to teach? Which skills are necessary?	

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267.	2	We look at where the children struggle. We give it to the class and cause all of the children will hear it again.	Awareness pre-reading skills
268.	1	Ja, we focus on the ones that struggle and then give the lesson again, repeat it.	Awareness pre-reading skills
269.	2	Basically who is struggling with what. If there is only one child struggling then I will just call him to my table.	Awareness pre-reading skills
270.	2	You look at the way the children are learning and what they do and don't understand.	Awareness pre-reading skills
271.	R	How do the learners with very limited literacy experiences cope in Grade one? What support strategies are in place to support them?	
272.	1	They struggle. We used to start with remedial in the middle of the year but now we start at the beginning.	Learner experience Strategies to teach reading
273.	2	If you pick up he is struggling or he doesn't know his name or where he comes from. We start immediately with remedial. We go back to basic, basic stuff. Not jumping into the deep end and saying now you have to do it. We start from the beginning. We have Monday to Thursday remedial. That is after second break at 13:10. We drill maths and reading.	Strategies to teach reading
274.	R	Do all the children stay for that?	
275.	2	Yes, so it benefits the clever ones too. I give extra work to them and ask them to bring it back to see what they have done. You see so then not leave the other ones but I give extra to the ones that are struggling. It works by the end of the year. Say there are nine. Then there are two less and by the end of the year we will have two or one. So it also helps.	Strategies to teach reading Differentiation
276.	R	So there are only usually one or two that fail and the rest are promoted?	
277.	1	Yes.	Learners experience
278.	R	What really works for you? What has worked in the past and what would you tell a teacher who has never taught second language children how to read? What would your advice be?	
279.	2	Start with the basics.	Teaching reading
280.	1	Everyday the same work. Repeat over and over and over until it's stuck in their heads.	Teaching reading
281.	2	What I have realised is that when you go too fast they lose track of what you say.	Teaching reading
282.	2	So you may count one until 10 until you are blue in your face. Same goes with reading. The teachers get so tired of doing it over and over but it's the only thing that benefits them. That's why it also takes us so long.	Teaching reading
283.	1	Sometimes you get mooderloos but you see the results at the end. That is the only thing that works. Repeat it.	Teaching reading
284.	2	If a child that fails a test gets 59% you praise that child and give him hugs kisses, stickers, on the hand on the book and that encourages them to do better and better. I had a remedial child last year that was a possible failure. She came to me one day and asked me am I not getting extra work anymore. I said no it wasn't necessary and she said she wanted another sticker. So they get used to all that extra work and praise that they want to do it to see you happy.	Teaching reading Positive re-enforcement
285.	2	We try to motivate them with small things. Like today you are the leader of the class. When you are done with your work you can go and help them. When they get 10 out of 10 for a test they get a sticker and a sweet.	Teaching reading Positive reinforcement

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286.	R	I noticed when I spent time in your class that the learners sometime sit in groups and sometime on their own. Which is the best strategy?	
287.	1.	I like to put them in group when we do group work. Like when we were doing remedial and they had to cut out letters of words beginning with an "A". So in the group they help each other. So in a group there will be four that struggle and two very clever ones. So that these two can help these four. This group at the end of the day gets noisy then I move the tables back again. I can be at six groups at one time so they help a lot. So the groups work better when they have to work together.	Teaching reading
			Group work
288.	2.	It also builds team building and what I also do. I have noticed my good kids and put them next to one that struggles. It also helps putting a clever kid with one that struggles. It helps a lot to do that also. I tell them that they are the leaders of the class and I will tell them that they must help their friends. That works, the writing, spelling and math gets better.	Teaching reading
			Group work
289.	R	I noticed that when the children are in your class they speak English to each other.	
290.	1.	Ja, they are not allowed to speak other languages.	Learner experience
291.	2.	Ja.	
292.	1.	Because in this language say for instance the word MIKANDA means clever man, in another language the word MIKANDA means thief. So now this one talks about the word MIKANDA and this one tells me he is swearing. So I saw when they talk different languages. They fight when they start speaking their languages in the class and so they are not allowed to speak their languages in the class.	Teachers' experience
293.	2.	What I also noticed is that when they are on the playground and they speak their own language which is usually Tswana some of them or most of them, they will rather talk Tswana. But in the classes only English.	Learner experience
294.	R	What would you like to tell teachers about your experience here. Say teachers overseas that have never done this.	
295.	1.	I would say it is more difficult to teach a second language child than a first language child. You are going to get sick and tired of the same thing every day but it is important. Be prepared to do the same work for a few weeks long. So every day is a different day but the same work.	Teachers' experience
296.	2.	Be sure teaching is what you want to do because it is hard. Everyday you learn something but you go home crying sometimes. You must take everything into consideration before you to the university and say I want to be a teacher. I will never go back and say I will stop now. You have to make sure you know what you want because it is not easy. It is a lot of work. People think you have holiday but it is not holiday.	Teachers' experience
297.	1.	There are days when you think you can't do it anymore. It feels like you want to jump in front of a bus. The children don't understand me and I have this one child that sleeps all day. At the end of the year when they go to Grade two you want to cry your eyes out because they came from scratch.	Teachers' experience
298.	1.	And also to see the difference you have made in 12 months.	Teachers' experience

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299.	2	Prepare yourself for difficult time. Before I worked here I worked at a crèche. That was easy. You could plan five minutes before you gave the lesson. Here you must go home and plan for the whole term. To sit and find all the work for the whole term because you don't know if the children are going to struggle with this or this.	Teachers' experience
300.	1	Yes you need a few boxes of tissues.	Teachers' experience
301.	2	I would recommend to people become teachers. The children become part of you. Like I tell the parents when they step into my class I become their mother. So the children walk into your class and greet you. There are a lot of pros of teaching. It is the best feeling ever that these children knew nothing and now they are going to Grade two.	Teachers' experience
302.	R	Thank you so much for you time today.	

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APPENDIX E

SUMMARY OF PRE-READING LESSONS



LESSON 1- TEACHER 1

Teacher introduces the lesson by saying “at the back of the door are phonics, let’s start with the alphabet”.

Children initially begin sounding out the letters.

The teacher corrects them and uses the letter names. The children follow the teacher and continue using the letter names. The learners say the letters A-N written on the board and then continue to Z on their own.

Teacher “who can give me a word that starts with the letter ‘u’ (sound). A learner responds with the answer Apple and the teacher confirms she is correct.

Teachers asks learners to identify the word next to the letter A- Learner says ant.

Teacher points to the letter B and asks the learners “what is this letter?”

A learner correctly responds with B and the teacher asks for a word using letter B. A learner says Ball. Teacher says, “Another word with ‘b’ is bib. What is a bib?” Learners reply that it is used for a baby. Teacher elaborates that it is used so the baby does not mess food on his clothes.

Teacher says “C is for?” First learner answers cat. Second learner answers kite. Third learner answers car.

Children start talking. Teacher reprimands them by asking them to put their hands on their head.

Teacher asks “what is this” Children say “d”. Teacher says “d for?” Children respond dog. Teacher asks for another word beginning with the letter d. First child answers incorrectly. Second child answers dog and third answers dad.



Teacher poses the question “Here is the letter?” Children first answer “a” and the teacher corrects them and says “e”. Teacher says “e for egg, now give me another word”. The learner answers ice-cream. Teachers says “no its “u” um I”. The next child answers correctly and says elephant.

Teacher asks the next letter. The children reply “f” for fan, fish and frog.

Then we have the letter “g” (sound). Teacher asks “g” is for carrot. Teacher corrects child and says it is a c for carrot. The teacher tells the children “g” is for grapes. She asks for another word that starts with “g”. The children answer with grass, gate, gun and goat.

The teacher says the next letter is “h” for hat. She asks for other examples. First child responds correctly with horse. Second child incorrectly states elephant. Teacher says no “a” for elephant. Third child says h for hand. Another child answers phone. Teacher says ‘f’ is for phone. A child says home.

The teacher points to the I and says letter “u”. U for ice-cream and the children respond ink.

The teacher say “j” is for jam. She asks for more examples. The first child answers cow. The second answers Jik. The third jug. The fourth jacket. The fifth peanut butter.

The next letter is K for kite. The first child says king. The second says kitten.

The letter L is for lion and lamb. Teacher settles the learners again. First child answers lamp. Second is for laugh.

Teacher points to her stomach and says m. M is for? Learners say man, mouse, monkey, moon, meat and me.

The teacher revises the lesson by saying “a for apple, b for bib, c for cat, d for dog...)

Teacher explains learners must write the letter, then a word with that letter and then a picture.



LESSON 2- TEACHER 2

Teacher starts lesson by sounding out the word bib. Teacher and children sound out together. Teacher asks the learners to read the next word “bit”. She asks a learner what the word bit means. Teacher explains that bit is when you bite someone. She gives an example of a child in the class who bit another child. The teacher sounds bit out again and asks the learners to identify the letter in the middle of the word bit.

Teacher asks the learners to sound out the word fit. She demonstrates the meaning of the word by asking if the learners pull over would fit her. She explains a [baby's](#) shoe or a nappy would not fit the learners because they are big now.

Teacher says “let's spell” and points to the word sit. The learners sound out the word sit.

Teacher asks the learners the next word- “hit” She explains that she always hits the children when they are naughty. She explains further by saying when you fight you hit each other. She explains you should never hit your friend because it is very sore and you will make someone cry.

Teacher points to the word him and asks the class what it means. One learner raises his hand and says it's a boy. The teacher is very happy with his response and gives the learner a high [five](#). Teacher sounds out the word him with the class.

Teacher asks the learners the next word and they correctly respond with pig. She asks what noise a pig makes. A learner explains that a pig lives in the water. The teacher asks what colour a pig is. She suggests it's orange and then green. The learners oppose this and tell her a pig is pink. The teacher asks where you can find a pig. The learners say on a farm or at the zoo. The teacher asks the learners to spell the word again.

The teacher asks the learners what the next word is. They answer [is](#) dig. She then asks all the learners to repeat the word dig. The teacher asks what the word dig means. The learner answers “down, down, down, down” The teacher says yes, but what do you use to go down? She tells the learners a shovel. Learners sound out dig twice more.



The teacher asks what the next word is. The learners answer his. The teacher asks “what is his”. A learner answers it is a boy. She explains, “it is his crayons, they belong to him, it is his lunch box”.

The teacher asks the next word. The learners do not know so she tells them the word is lid. She asks the learners what a lid is. The boy answers “the lid of a skaftin (lunchbox). Teacher picks up a container and asks if it has a lid. She shows the learners what a lid looks like.

The teacher asks what the last word is. The learners say big. The teacher asks what big means. The learners say it means fat. She asks the girls if they want to be big one day and the learners say no. The teacher asks the learners to spell the word big again.

The teacher then says the list of words one at a time and the learners repeat them after her.



APPENDIX F
FIELD NOTES

Page 1

X Learners grouped

X limited resources

- few posters
- no books visible
- no charts etc
- alphabet not visible

X Learner confusion with letter names / sounds

Learner + u N = tin

X Errors when using letter name instead of sound

example → Cat sounded out

↓ ↓ ↓

kay Tee

 ↓

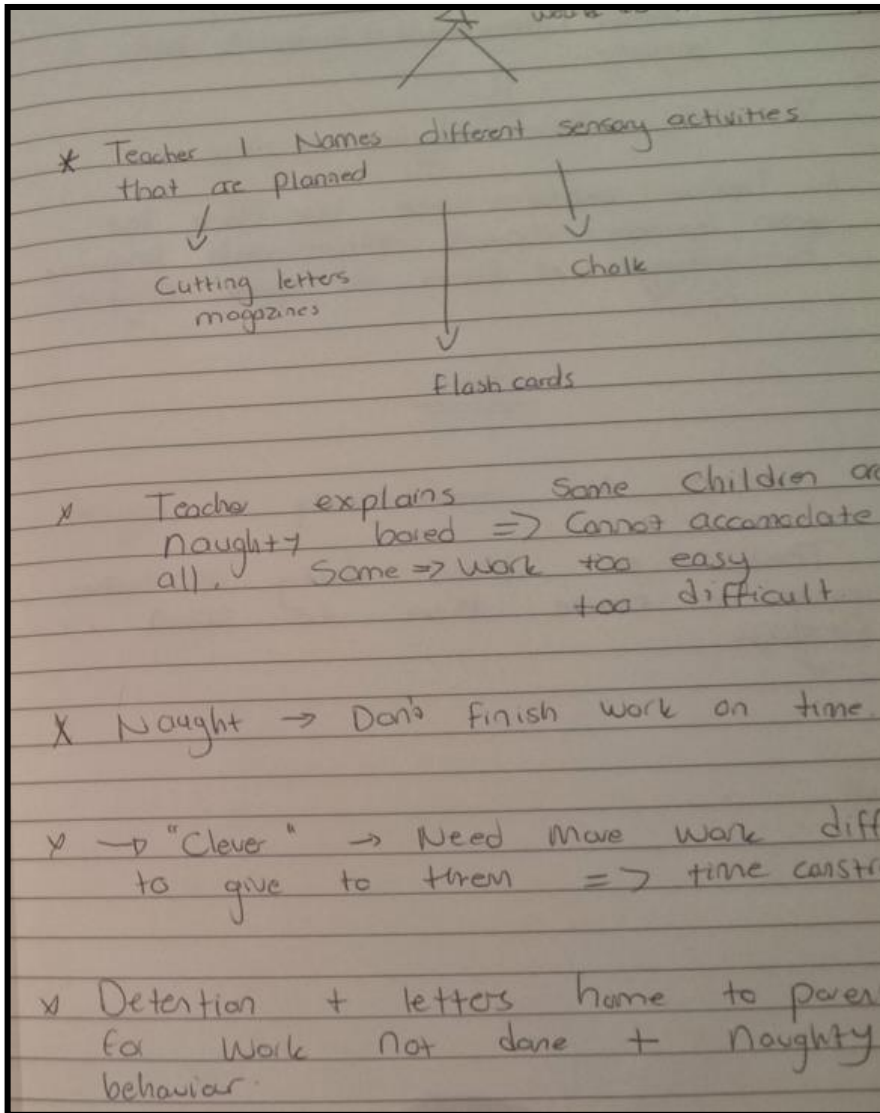
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 ▽

Little explanation as to why learner was incorrect

①

Page 2





Page 3

x Prob → why children must speak English

||
∪ Response

"It is easier when teachers and learners are on the same page when it comes to language"

Page 4

x Learners discouraged to speak home language.

x Only speak English in class

x Teacher explains → We don't let the learners speak their own language so they are forced to speak English.

Break

x Learners still communicate in English.

x Teacher on break duty approaches learners to remind them to speak in English.