

https://dspace.org/

A (case) study of newly qualified teachers' experiences of support in a foundation phase literacy classroom.

De Jong, Debbie

2013-01-11
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/12268

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

A (CASE) STUDY OF NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF SUPPORT IN A FOUNDATION PHASE LITERACY CLASSROOM

Debbie de Jong

A research report submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of education.

Johannesburg

February 2012

Abstract

This case study research explores the effects of emotional support on four newly qualified Foundation Phase teachers in their first year of teaching, and how this affects their ability to teach reading. The research is qualitative and draws on data from from four sources to construct and interpret the different experiences of support within a conceptual framework derived from literature on the subject.

The literature review is presented in two sections. Section 1 investigates the essential components of a reading programme to establish if the teachers were adequately prepared during pre-service training. Section 2 investigates the effects of support on newly qualified teachers' ability to teach. A key theme from Section 2 suggests that appropriate support positively affects first year teachers' ability to teach and implement the skills and knowledge acquired during pre-service training.

Each teacher kept a journal, completed a questionnaire and was observed and interviewed between April and November 2008. The research draws out themes from the data about the support experienced by the participants during their first year and then correlates these experiences to their teaching of reading. Key findings suggest that these newly qualified teachers perceived themselves to be adequately prepared to teach reading but, without adequate support, they struggled to implement their newly acquired skills and knowledge and resorted to less effective strategies.

This research seeks to add to the literature on how to support newly qualified teachers in their first year as a means to improving the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase. in South African schools.

Key words: support, reading, newly qualified teachers, mentorship, emotional, teaching

Dedication

Dedicated to my dad Stan de Jong, an innovator, an explorer, and a fine educator.

.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degrees or examinations at any other university.

_____

Deborah Loren de Jong

Day of _____

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study **7**

1.1 Aim 7

1.2 Critical questions 7

1.3 Rationale 8

1.4 Summary 11

Chapter 2: Literature review **12**

2.1 Introduction 12

2.2 The essential components of effective reading programmes 12

2.3 An elaboration of the essential components of the reading process 14

2.3.1 The reader 14

2.3.2 The text 15

2.4 The subject of teacher support 17

2.5 Summary 22

Chapter 3: Research Design **24**

3.1 Introduction 24

3.2 Research approach 24

3.3 Data collection 26

3.4 Data collection tools 27

3.4.1 Questionnaires 27

3.4.2 Non-participant observation 28

3.4.3 Interviews 28

3.4.4 Journals 29

3.5 Data collection plan 30

3.6 Data analysis 31

3.7 Choice of participants and sampling procedure 32

3.7.1 Sampling strategy 32

3.7.3 Criteria for sample selection 32

3.7.3 Sample size 32

3.8 Ethical issues 33

3.9 Assumptions held by the researcher 33

3.10 Delimitations/scope of this study 34
3.11 Validity and reliability 34
3.12 Summary 34

Chapter 4: Data presentation and discussion of findings 36
4.1 Introduction 36
4.2 Settings and participants 36
4.3 Data presentation 37
4.4 Reading preparation 37
4.5 Levels of support 39
4.5.1 Participant 1 (P1) 40
4.5.2 Participant 2 (P2) 46
4.5.3 Participants 3 and 4 (P3 and P4) 52
4.6 Summary 60

Chapter 5: Conclusion 62
5.1 Critical question 1 62
5.2 Critical question 2 62
5.3 Critical question 3 63
5.4 Recommendations 64
5.4.1 For schools 64
5.4.2 For pre-service training institutions 65
5.4.3 For government education departments 65
5.5 Suggestions for further research 66
5.6 Conclusion 67

References 68

Appendices 74
Appendix i Communication with principals and participants 74
Appendix ii Data collection tools 78

Letter of approval from the Gauteng Department of Education

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The intention of this chapter is to state the aim, list the critical questions, and explain the rationale for the study.

1.1 Aim

Despite literacy improvement initiatives, such as the *Masifunde Sonke* campaign and QIDS UP (Quality Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment Programme) statistics from the evaluation of Intermediate Phase learners' language competence conducted by the Department of Education, indicate that approximately 63% of these learners are "not achieving" in terms of their language competence. Of these, 51% are not able to read at an age appropriate level (National Reading Strategy, 2008, p. 5). The apparent lack of improvement in primary school literacy skills despite a number of government interventions invites analysis and provided the stimulus for this research.

Up to now, government interventions tended to focus more on teachers' classroom practise with regards to the teaching of reading. This research has sought a different perspective, that of analysing the relationship between appropriate teacher support and how it affects their ability to teach reading effectively.

In an effort to fulfil this aim, this study has proceeded along two integrated tiers of investigation. First, it endeavoured to examine the support experienced by newly-qualified first year Foundation Phase teachers to help them cope with their first year of teaching. Second, the study investigated the link between these teachers' experiences of support and its effect on their ability to implement the theory and practice regarding reading acquired in pre-service training.

1.2 Critical questions

Responses to the following three critical questions are considered key to fulfilling the aim of this research:

1. What components of reading are considered essential to pre-service teacher education reading programmes?

2. What types of support are considered critical to integrating newly qualified teachers into the 'real world' context of their first year of teaching?
3. How does the support experienced by first year teachers affect their implementation of their recently acquired knowledge and skills regarding the learning and teaching of reading?

1.3 Rationale

The rationale for this research originated in the connection between emotional support and learning. In the process of becoming a Learning Support Specialist, I came to understand the value of providing appropriate support to struggling learners to help them cope at school. This included academic support to develop their reading skills and knowledge, and usually more importantly, emotional support. As research suggests a clear connection between learners' emotional states and their ability to pay attention and learn (Cole 1991; Dobson & Dobson, 1981; Zins et al, 2004; Ingelton, 2004; Protheroe, 2007), reducing anxiety, providing experiences for success and bolstering confidence and self-esteem were necessary elements of any support session.

After running my learning support practice for a year, it became apparent that offering support to learners was not sufficient. Teachers also often needed help to manage these learners in the classroom. To this end, I collaborated in developing a series of teacher training workshops focusing on enriching teachers' skills and knowledge about reading, thereby enabling them to offer additional support to learners with barriers.

Anecdotal feedback collected from the teachers who attended these workshops, in particular teachers within their first two years of teaching provided unexpected information about the apparent lack of support available to teachers in schools. It became evident that many of the newly qualified teachers had experienced the metaphorical "collisions" described by Whitelaw, de Beer and Henning (2008, p. 29) that can occur when a newly qualified teacher enters into a school system and confronts the differences in perspectives, beliefs and practices between their pre-service training and the practices in the school (Flores, 2006 in Whitelaw, et al., 2008). As is the nature of a collision, damage often occurs, and in many cases, the

damage appeared to be a perceived inability by the newly qualified teacher to teach reading effectively. While many of these teachers described feeling equipped with good skills and knowledge about reading, they struggled to implement this knowledge. For some, this struggle was due to their experience of their first year of teaching being emotionally overwhelming, unhappy, lonely, and chaotic, and not what they had expected. For others, the struggle was due to being expected to fall in line with the established reading practices of their school and receiving neither encouragement nor support in implementing what they had learnt during their training, and which they frequently felt was 'good practice'. One teacher described an occasion where she was advised to 'forget what you learnt in college' because 'this is the real world'. In listening to teachers' stories and experiences, both negative and positive, the theme of support, with particular regard to emotional support and encouragement, began to emerge as an important component of effective teaching.

While access to appropriate support has a positive impact on teaching, (Hanuscin & Michele 2008; DeWert et al., 2003; Chubbuck, et al., 2001; Flores, 2001; Moore 2003; Whitelaw et al., 2008) there appears to be poor access to support in schools for newly qualified teachers. In addition, while governmental intervention programmes readily describe how to support learners, scant reference is made to supporting teachers.

This is borne out from an analysis of the documents from the *Masifunde Sonke* and QIDS UP interventions, as well as more recent strategies such as the National Reading Strategy (2008) and the Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy (2010).
The *Masifunde Sonke* project established by the Department of Education in 2000 focussed on encouraging reading, and promoting the value of reading in schools, libraries and homes. Whilst this project was not specifically aimed at teachers, it failed to articulate and acknowledge the role of teachers in the promotion of reading in schools and libraries.

The QIDSUP programme (2007) focussed on providing teacher development and teaching and learning resources. Notes from the Department of Education's portfolio committee meeting conducted in 2008 listed the objectives of this programme as the

distribution of a teachers' handbook, training on effective strategies and assessment frameworks to help teachers teach and track learner progress. Although the word 'support' appears in the notes, it is with reference to teacher training and the provision of resources.

The National Reading Strategy (2008) describes teachers as …"[K]ey to the successful teaching of reading" (p. 13) and lists teacher training, development and support as a key pillar for success in schools (p. 13). While the word support is used, this is only in relation to the provision of resources such as a manual on reading, a reading assessment tool kit, a catalogue of appropriate learning and teaching materials and professional development where teachers are encouraged to attend accredited training courses in strategies for teaching reading at tertiary institutions.

The Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy also promotes a focus on teacher learning and teaching practices in the classroom, as suggested in this extract,

> 'In order to improve learner achievement, we need to transform classroom practice. Sustained shifts in classroom practice are largely dependent on teachers learning new practices. Each component of the Strategy thus is designed in the first instance to offer teachers opportunities to learn aspects of the new practice. This includes learning from the school results on the Annual National Assessment, learning from the Curriculum Guidelines, and learning from the high quality learner workbooks and resource packages.' (p. 13)

Although the word 'mentoring' is used (p.17), it refers to helping teachers use resources, not as a source of more interpersonal or emotional support.

In summary, an analysis of the four government interventions revealed that focus in each is on teacher development and on the provision of resources to support learners. These interventions did not refer to the needs of teachers, nor did they outline support other than in the form of training and resources.

To conclude, despite evidence supporting the notion that adequate teacher support lends itself to effective teaching, this appears to be a variable that is overlooked in

the greater context of teaching reading in South Africa. Drawing from this conclusion, this research endeavoured to examine the factors within school contexts that functioned either as barriers or sources of support for first year teachers in the Foundation Phase, and how these affected their implementation of the reading knowledge and skills acquired in their pre-service training.

The findings from this research could be useful to:

- Institutions providing initial teacher education programmes for Foundation Phase teachers.
- Head teachers, Heads of Department (Foundation Phase), and mentor teachers at schools informing them of the needs of newly qualified teachers.
- Government plans for teacher retention.

1.4 Summary

In this chapter, the framework for the study was described through discussion of the aim and rationale for the study, and listing of the critical questions.

In Chapter 2, findings from literature relating to the essential components of reading and the subject of teacher support will be presented.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The intention of this chapter is to present findings from current research on first year teacher support as a means to providing a broader context for this study.

This literature review is organised around the three themes central to the critical questions, these being:

1. What components of reading are considered essential to pre-service teacher education reading programmes?
2. What types of support are considered critical to integrating newly qualified teachers into the 'real world' context of their first year of teaching?
3. How does the support experienced by first year teachers affect their implementation of their recently acquired knowledge and skills regarding the learning and teaching of reading?

2.2 The essential components of effective reading programmes

"Reading is a complex skill" (Roberts, 1989, p. 118) that has excited much research in an effort to "ascertain its fundamental nature" (Alexander & Fox, 2004, p. 33) and to understand better the components that make for successful teaching and learning.

According to literature on the subject of reading, there is no dispute that the core outcome of an effective reading programme is comprehension (Goodman & Goodman, 1980; Dechant, 1991; Clay, 1991; Flanagan, 1995; Heilman et al., 2001; Johns and Lenksi, 2005). The most efficient means to achieving this core outcome has stimulated vigorous debate around different reading models each articulating different perspectives on reading and learning (Alexander & Fox, 2004).

One of the earliest models of reading developed in the USA in the 1950's, termed the 'bottom up' model is a text-driven, code-emphasis approach described by Dechant (1991) as a hierarchical model where learners begin by learning the smallest linguistic units of text and gradually compile these units in order to decode

higher, more sophisticated language structures. The ‘bottom up’ model was informed by the theory of psychological behaviourism where the process of reading was conceptualised as a set of discrete skills, taught and practised until “reflexively demonstrated” (Alexander & Fox, 2004, p. 37). Only once these skills were mastered, could comprehension be achieved.

In the 1960’s, a contrasting model of reading emerged that was strongly influenced and informed by the work of the linguist, Chomsky. In his research, Chomsky (1968) concluded that humans are innately predisposed to learn language and will do so given opportunities for its meaningful use. This assumption established the framework for the construction of the ’top down’ model of reading, favoured by psycholinguists such as Kenneth Goodman. According to the ‘top down’ model, children have the innate ability to learn how to read given appropriate opportunities, resources, and purpose (Goodman & Goodman, 1980). Practitioners employing a ‘top down’ approach to teaching reading focus primarily on comprehension and make extensive use of a reader’s background knowledge to construct meaning from the text first (McCormick, 1981) and then hone in on smaller and smaller text features and linguistic units.

Current research tends to suggest, however, that neither model used exclusively constitutes best practice, but that reading programmes based on a combination of these models provide the most effective reading instruction. This ‘integrated' approach is articulated in the interactive model of reading, a model advocated in the work of pre-eminent researchers such as Rumelhart, (1980); Schwartz, (1988); Adams, (1990); Dechant, (1991); Wray & Medwell, (1991); Honig, (1996), Pressley, (1998); Heilman et al., (2002); and Wray et al, (2002).

The ‘interactive’ approach of reading is described by Heilman et al (2002) as a model that,

> recognises the role of both the reader and the written text in reading comprehension. It depends neither on only what the reader brings to the text nor on only what is written on the page. Essentially readers simultaneously use many areas of background knowledge as they read, ranging from print features (such as letters, word parts, and words) to facts, to strategies. The

> interactive view of reading considers the importance of both written text and background knowledge in comprehension of print (p. 247).

It is from this 'interactive' model of reading that the essential components of a successful reading programme, which should form part of initial teacher education programmes, have been drawn.

2.3 An elaboration of the essential components of the reading process

The literature reviewed relating to the components of reading (Wray & Medwell, 1991; Heilman, et al., 2002; Ehri, 1998; Hornsby, 2000; Rumelhart, 1984) suggests the following to be key components of the reading process; prior learning of the learner, vocabulary, fluency, choice of texts by the teacher, decoding skills, phonemic knowledge, phonological knowledge, use of context, and the learners' interest and motivation.

In the following section, these components have been categorised into two groups: the reader, and the text. Pre-service teachers need to have an understanding of what readers bring to the reading experience in terms of their language skills, prior learning and knowledge, decoding skills (incorporating phonemic skills, phonic knowledge, analysis and synthesis and the use of contextual cues) and fluency. In addition, they need to know how texts affect reading and comprehension in terms of a) how they relate to learners' vocabulary and prior knowledge and b) how they function to stimulate interest and motivation. These two categories will now be elaborated upon in more detail.

2.3.1 The reader

One essential element in the process of reading and comprehension is a reader's level of expressive language and vocabulary (Wray & Medwell, 1991; Ehri, 1998; NICHD, 2000; Act, 2001; Wray et al., 2002; Beck, et al., 2002; Heilman, et al., 2002; Johns & Lenski, 2005). According to Anderson et al., (1985):

> …"[R]eading instruction builds especially on oral language. Children must have at least a basic vocabulary, a reasonable knowledge about the world around them and the ability to talk about their knowledge. These abilities form the basis for comprehending text." (p. 30)

Another component that is essential for successful reading and comprehension is the reader's range of existing or prior knowledge (Anderson, et al., 1985; Schwartz, 1988; Flanagan, 1995; Hornsby, 2000; Wray et al., 2002). This existing knowledge is referred to by Heilman, et al. (2002) as 'schemata' and is based on the 'schema theory' proposed by Rumelhart (1984). 'Schemas' are arrangements of knowledge around a central concept and are important as comprehension occurs when we "make links between our existing knowledge to the knowledge presented in a book or text" (Heilman, et al., 2002, p. 17).

The readers' ability to decode written text and be familiar with text features is a further component of effective reading and comprehension. This requires phonemic awareness and phonic knowledge, coupled with decoding strategies such as the ability to analyse and synthesise sounds into words, recognise high frequency words and make use of context and visual cues to decode unfamiliar words (Schwartz, 1988; Wray & Medwell, 1991; NICHD, 2000; No Child Left Behind Act, 2001; Heilman, et al., 2002; Ehri, 2002; Wray, et al., 2002).

Building upon the mechanics of decoding is reading fluency as defined by Harris and Hodges (1995, p. 85) "freedom from word identification problems that might hinder comprehension." Much research attests to the importance of decoding fluency for comprehension (NICHD, 2000; Teale & Yokota, 2000; No Child Left Behind Act, 2001; Wray et al, 2002; Heilman, et al., 2002; Pressely, 2002; Pikulski & Chard, 2005). The relationship between fluency and comprehension originates in La Berge and Samuel's work on attention (La Berge & Samuels, 1974). They suggested that to construct meaning, readers need to attend to both the text features as well as the content. If a reader is not fluent, then attention is focused primarily on decoding which leaves "little or no capacity for the attention-demanding process of comprehension" (Pikulski & Chard, 2005, p. 511).

2.3.2 The text

The choice of text is critical to the reader's comprehension of the text (Roberts, 1989). Wray, et al. (1989) suggest that teachers should endeavour to match texts to children. Appropriate text choices establish coherence between the reader's expressive language and vocabulary and the content of the text (Smith & Alcock,

1990). This allows readers make predictions about the text and to identify and self-correct decoding errors. Texts also need to relate to learners' personal contexts (Schwartz, 1988) as the closer the match between the subject matter of the text and the reader's existing knowledge of that subject (schemata) the stronger the comprehension.

The choice of text can also improve motivation, an important affective component of reading and comprehension (Flanagan, 1995; Heilman, 2002; Wray, et al., 2002). This is substantiated in the work of Johns and Lenski (2005) who point out that readers who read texts with a high interest level will be more motivated to spend more time reading. Adding to this, Johnston, et al. (1995) suggest that a way of getting children to want to read and increase their motivation is to surround them with a lot of stimulating written material, or to quote Poapoulis-Tzelepi (1995) in order to stimulate motivation teachers must strive to create "a provocative literacy environment" (p. 55).

At this juncture, it is worth mentioning that the 'interactive' model of reading, which represents an integration or balance between the 'bottom up' and 'top down' models, underpins the National Curriculum Statement (2005) which provides teachers with guidance as to what skills, knowledge, values and attitudes learners need to become successful readers. To quote from the document:

> "…[a] 'balanced approach' to literacy has been used. It is balanced because it begins with children's emergent literacy, it involves them in reading real books and writing for genuine purposes and it gives attention to phonics. These are the things that children need to know and do in order to learn to read and write successfully. In reading, this means moving away from the "reading readiness approach" which held that children were not ready to start learning to read and write until they were able to perform sub-skills such as auditory discrimination and visual discrimination and had developed their fine and gross motor skills to a certain extent. With the balanced approach these skills do not have to be in place before a learner can start to read and write, and can and should be developed during children's early learning experiences (p. 22).

To conclude, the literature reviewed as to the essential components of reading suggest the integration into a balanced reading programme of the following components; prior learning of the learner, vocabulary, fluency, choice of texts by the

teacher, decoding skills, phonemic knowledge, phonological knowledge, use of context in the text, and learners' interest and motivation accorded to reading. As "there is no single method or single combination of methods that can successfully teach all children to read" (International Reading Association, 1999) pre-service teacher training in South Africa, needs to focus on developing teachers, "who have an understanding of learning theory, an understanding of the reading process, insights into the children's strengths and needs, and a knowledge of the texts to be used. Nothing can take the place of teachers who have strong professional knowledge and a commitment to children's learning" (Hornsby, 2000 p. 12).

2.4 The subject of teacher support

In this section, literature on the subject of teacher support will be reviewed.

It is important to note here, that although the research reviewed originated from data involving teachers from different grades and subjects, knowledge extrapolated from this data has application to teachers of reading in the Foundation Phase.

International studies are unanimous in their conclusions that the first year of teaching tends to be stressful and fraught with difficulties (Veenman, 1984; Moir, 1990; de Paul, 1998; Le Maistre, 2000; Flores, 2001; Chubbuck, et al., 2001; Hamilton, 2003; De Wert, et al., 2003; Moore, 2003; Long, 2004; Fayne & Ortquist-Ahrens, 2006; Liston, et al., 2006; Kardos & Moore-Johnson, 2007). The first year can be, "sudden, stressful and tiring," (Flores, 2001, p. 139) as new teachers negotiate the change of role from being a student to a teacher. They appear to occupy a zone where they feel they are "not yet a student and not a teacher (Hamilton, 2003, p. 84) and find themselves "living in the gap between the ideal and the real" (Liston et al, 2006, p. 356). During this time, many new teachers begin to come to terms with the, at times, disillusioning and overwhelming gap between their personal expectations or visions (Hammerness, 2003) and aspirations and the reality of the school context. (de Paul, 1998; Le Maistre, 2000; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Flores, 2001; Chubbuck, et al., 2001; Meijer, et al., 2002; Moore, 2003; De Wert, et al., 2003;; Long, 2004; Fayne & Ortquist-Ahrens, 2006; Liston, et al., 2006; Kardos & Moore-Johnson, 2007). According to Moir (1990) "beginning teachers are instantly bombarded with a variety of problems and situations they had not

anticipated. Despite completing teacher preparation programmes new teachers are caught off-guard by the realities of teaching" (p. 1). In addition, newly qualified teachers are frequently deemed ready (Le Maistre, 2000) and are "expected to be prematurely expert and independent" (Kardos & Moore-Johnson, 2007, p. 283).

Studies on the experiences of first year teachers indicate that in order to survive this gruelling year, newly qualified teachers must have access to appropriate support and guidance (Veenman, 1984; De Paul, 1998; Le Maistre, 2000; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Chubbuck, et al., 2001; Meijer, et al., 2002; Hamilton, 2003; Moore, 2003; DeWert, et al., 2003; Fayne & Ortquist-Ahrens, 2006; Liston, et al., 2006). This support can range from emotional (Chubbuck, et al., 2001; Hamilton, 2003) to professional (Le Maistre, 2000; Flores, 2001; Long, 2004) to operational or administrative (Flores, 2001; Chubbuck, et al., 2001; De Wert, et al., 2003; Liston et al 2006). The support can also originate from a number of sources. These include informal support from peers and colleagues (de Paul, 1998; Long, 2004; Fayne & Ortquist-Ahrens, 2006) to more formalised support in the form of mentorship (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Meijer, et al., 2002; Mueller & Skamp, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2005).

Despite the need for support being well documented, the first year of teaching is often described as lonely and isolated with little support and guidance offered in terms of lesson planning and implementation, classroom management, and discipline (Chubbuck, et al., 2001; De Wert, et al., 2003; Long, 2004; Kardos & Moore-Johnson, 2007). Many teachers struggle on alone and seldom ask for help for fear of embarrassment as asking for help feels like a sign of failure and a lack of competence (Le Maistre, 2000; Hamilton, 2003). According to Liston, et al. (2006), the inherent difficulties faced by newly qualified teachers have implications for their classroom practice, a situation exacerbated by a lack of appropriate support (DeWert, et al., 2003).

Without appropriate support, newly qualified teachers experience a loss of confidence and self-doubt in their skills and knowledge (de Paul,1998; Le Maistre, 2000; DeWert et al, 2003; Long, 2004; McKenzie, 2005) and do not feel competent enough to "implement instruction in ways consistent with their philosophy of teaching" (Chubbuck et al, 2001, p. 367). Furthermore, they may experience "a

collapse of ideals formed in pre-service training and lowered motivation" (Chubbuck, et al., 2001, p. 367). As a result, newly qualified teachers often resort to survival techniques that are neither necessarily effective nor conducive to good classroom practice (Chubbuck, et al., 2001). One of these survival techniques is the tendency to revert to "prior schooling experiences" learnt though the "apprenticeship of observation" (Flores, 2001, p. 145) occurring when they themselves were at school. According to Flores (2001), one's own experiences of being taught becomes powerfully internalised and this 'formative experience' can become the lens through which classroom realities are interpreted. This lapse into what has been internalised tends to occur even if the ensuing practice is incongruent with what was learnt during pre-service training (Zeichner & Gore, 1990; Knowles, 1992 as cited in Flores, 2001, p. 145). This finding is supported by McKenzie (2005) who found in her research that, "the personal history, specifically the school experiences that these teachers carried with them into their new career was an important measuring stick for the way they perceived themselves as teachers and for their whole experience as beginning teachers"(p. 117). Adding to this argument, Moore (2003) stated that the practices of newly qualified teachers often, "reflect the way in which they themselves learned" which "can impede their ability and willingness even to consider new approaches and practices, much less transform theory into effective practice (Agee, 1997, p. 400 as cited in Moore, 2003, p. 32).

A second survival technique employed by newly qualified teachers who lack support is to "play it safe" (Chubbuck, et al., 2001, p. 374) and succumb to the established practices within the school, even when these are inconsistent with prior beliefs about theory and practice (Long 2004). These teachers can also become compliant with the status quo of the institution (Flores, 2001; Moore, 2003) and start "applying others' knowledge uncritically to survive" (DeWert et al, 2003, p. 318). Veenman (1984) referred to this conformist or compliance technique as, "internalised adjustment" meaning a process where "the individual complies with the constraints and believes that the constraints of the situation are for the best" (Veenman, 1984, p. 163). Whitelaw, et al. (2008) describes this strategy as the creation of an "illusion of consensus" where the teachers act in ways that will please the group, rather than assert themselves and their beliefs about teaching. In this state, newly qualified teachers struggle to maintain their self-confidence, motivation, convictions and

ideals about teaching and fail to implement what they believe to be sound theory and practice (Long, 2004). Chubbuck, et al. (2001) lend substance to this argument by suggesting that newly qualified teachers who retreat into conformity and the safety of the *status quo* are at risk of employing practices that can "calcify into ineffective teaching methods" (p. 373).

While Long (2004) acknowledges that, "the ongoing study of teaching and learning through supported interaction with other professionals is integral to the growth of educators "(p. 141), themes emerging from the literature suggest that the nature and style of support can hinder or enhance this professional growth (le Maistre, 2000; Flores, 2001; Chubbuck, et al., 2001; Moore, 2003; McKenzie, 2005).

It is the impositional, or prescriptive support, that which exerts pressure on newly qualified teachers to conform (Chubbuck et al, 2001) that disallows personal expression, requires teachers to follow mandated practices (Long, 2004), bars change and thwarts innovation, tends to hinder newly qualified teachers' attempts to implement their recently acquired skills and knowledge (Long, 2004). This type of negative support, which is restrictive in terms of new ideas (Chubbuck et al, 2001), is focussed primarily on moulding or restructuring as opposed to guiding and growing newly qualified teachers (Chubbuck, et al., 2001). It tends to be ineffective as it inhibits newly qualified teachers' abilities to explore and experiment (Kardos and Moore-Johnson, 2007) and interferes with their ability to develop a sense of their professional self (Long, 2004). This type of prescriptive, rigid support tends to retard rather than promote growth (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) as:

> "simply copying the behaviour of experienced teachers will probably result in inappropriate conservatism and is limited to imitation or cloning, devoid of insight and initiative" (Meijer et al, 2002, p. 406).

According to Fayne and Ortquist-Ahrens (2006), effective support should reduce newly qualified teachers' stress and feelings of helplessness and enhance their confidence, motivation, feelings of professional and personal competence which in turn will impact positively on their work efficiency. This is supported by DeWert, et al. (2003), who suggest that effective support should, in part, function to reduce anxiety and stress thereby enabling newly qualified teachers to focus on work competency

rather than survival. Effective support should also promote the development of an individual's own teaching style (Feiman-Nemser, 2001) through interactive and reflective exchanges with colleagues (Chubbuck, et al., 2001) and "practical exchanges with practising teachers" (Long, 2004, p. 147). Through these exchanges they should be able to "develop and understand the reciprocal relationship between educational theory and practice" (Moore, 2003, p. 31) and "explore their own teaching styles without fear of colleagues' disapproval or attempting to restructure their ideas" (Chubbuck, et al., 2001, p. 371). It is through effective support that newly qualified teachers can be encouraged to be self-reliant (Le Maistre, 2000), to question and understand their own process of teaching (Hamilton, 2003), to move into a position of self-constructed knowledge and practice (DeWert et al, 2003) and to be guided towards finding their own solutions to problems (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). This process of exploration should occur within a context that is encouraging and inspiring (Chubbuck, et al., 2001), comfortable and safe (Feinman-Nemser, 2001; Chubbuck, et al., 2001) and empathetic and non-judgemental (Fayne & Ortquist-Ahrens, 2006). According to Chubbuck, et al. (2001), effective support hinges on the "need to work in tandem to create the type of environment that enables novice teachers to grow as their needs are being met (p. 374).

To conclude, according to Flores (2001):

> "…[B]eginning teachers in supportive and informative settings are more likely to seek advice and to overcome their doubts and difficulties more effectively" (p. 145).

Supporting this statement, DeWert, et al., (2003) found that newly qualified teachers who received effective support had "increased confidence, more enthusiasm for work and the ability to adopt a more critical perspective and improved problem solving skills" (p. 317). Other evidence suggests that with effective support, newly qualified teachers are better able to focus on developing their teaching skills and meeting the needs of their students (DeWert, et al., 2003) by learning how to reflect on and assess themselves as teachers (Le Maistre, 2000). A further outcome of effective support is that newly qualified teachers are more successful at maintaining their convictions and grow professionally (Long, 2004), more persistent in trying new practices (DeWert et al, 2003) and more able to resist

the dominant culture of the institution and not conform to antithetical theories and practices (McKenzie, 2005).

Whilst the literature review is by no means comprehensive, it has endeavoured to identify factors that, according to recent research, inhibit or support newly qualified teachers' ability to implement what they have learnt in pre-service training. The research used to construct the framework for the research is international and presents "voices" from predominantly western, first world countries. This research project will attempt to present a South African "voice" by exploring the concept of newly qualified teacher support in a range of schools in South Africa. This research will focus specifically on newly qualified teachers who will teach reading in the Foundation Phase. This research seeks to add to the body of research on teacher support in a South African context and how this impacts on their practice. This in turn may provide new insights into the low literacy levels experienced by South African learners.

2.5 Summary

Chapter 2 was presented in two sections. Section one described the components of reading considered essential to a pre-service teacher-training programme. These components include knowledge and skills pertinent to the readers such as phonology, expressive vocabulary, fluency, and text features such as contextual appropriateness and relevance. In Section two, issues of support were described. Findings suggest that in order to manage the gruelling experience of first year teaching, newly qualified teachers need support. This support can be in the form of professional development, help with operational/administrative procedures, and emotional support. The nature of support needs to be aimed at growth and development and not be impositional or prescriptive. Newly qualified teachers who lack support tend to resort to survival strategies such as giving in to the prevailing practices of the school, or teaching as they were taught – even if these contradict their beliefs about best practice teaching. Teachers who receive support, in particular emotional support, tend to be able to explore and experiment with their newly acquired skills and how they can be implemented in the classroom. The ideal combination for effective literacy teaching in the first year appears to be a strong

knowledge of the essential components of reading coupled with a supportive teaching context.

In Chapter 3, the research design will be described.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The intention of this chapter is to describe the research plan which includes the design, the approach, the sample, and the data collection tools. In addition, reasons to support these choices are provided. Included in this chapter is a discussion of the reliability and validity of the study, the delimitation of the study, and the ethical issues surrounding the confidentiality of the data and participants.

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach taken is qualitative and will be written up using three case studies.

Qualitative research methods tends to focus largely on understanding and interpreting social phenomena as suggested by Snape and Spencer (2003, p. 5) who state that:

> "Qualitative methods are used to address research questions that require explanation or understanding of social phenomena and their contexts. They are particularly well suited to exploring issues that hold some complexity and to studying processes that occur over time."

Qualitative research takes place in the social context of the research participant, as explained by Patton (2002) who stated that qualitative research is a way to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as the "real world setting [where] the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (Patton, 2002, p. 39). Neuman (1997) also refers to context as critical to qualitative research, and emphasises the importance of the social context as integral to understanding the social world.

Data generated through qualitative research tends to be collected through methods that require personal interactions such as observations, interviews, and journals. As such, the data tends to provide a rich description of social phenomena. This data is analysed through systematic sifting, coding and categorisation, and not through statistical procedures. This is clearly explained by Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.11) who define qualitative research as "[A]ny type of research that produces findings not

arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification." The ultimate aim of qualitative research is therefore to capture aspects of the social world for which it is difficult to develop precise measures expressed as numbers (Neuman 1997).

Merriam (1998) encapsulated the themes common to qualitative research in a list of the following five characteristics: use of participants' insights and perceptions; interaction between the researcher and the participant; fieldwork; grounded theory and descriptive reporting. This research can be described at qualitative as it embodies all of these characteristics. The data collected through the interviews and journals allows for the use of the participants' insights and perceptions. The non-participant classroom observations and interviews resulted in interaction between the researcher and the participants. The study involved examining educational practice done in the field and the conclusion of this study was reached inductively from the data collected in the field thereby embodying grounded theory (Borgatti 2011). The data presentation and interpretation made use of the participants' own words and descriptions, and included descriptive details of the participants' contexts which satisfied the need for descriptive reporting.

While the research design was qualitative, the methodology used was the case study method which "is strongly associated with qualitative research" (Lewis, 2003, p. 51). A case study is defined by Eisenhardt (1989) as, "a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present in a single setting" (p. 534). This definition is augmented by Davey (1991, p. 4) who describes a case study as a "method of learning about a complex instance through extensive description and analysis" and Yin (1984, p. 23) who defines the case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context." In addition, Yin (1984) suggests that case studies are suitable for studying complex social phenomena when research questions ask "how," when the researcher has no control over the events studied, and when the phenomena to be studied occur in a real life context. He states further that in a case study, the data to be collected and conclusions to be drawn are linked to the initial questions of the study.

Lewis (2003) states further that, “[T]he particular features associated with case studies are variously seen as:

- the fact that only one case is selected, although it is also accepted that several may be (Bryman, 2001; Stake, 2000)
- the fact that the study is detailed and intensive (Bryman, 2001; Piatt, 1988)
- the fact that the phenomenon is studied in context (Cresswell, 1998; Holloway and Wheeler, 1996; Robson, 2002; Yin, 1993,1994)
- the use of multiple data collection methods (Creswell, 1998; Hakim, 2000; Holloway and Wheeler, 1996; Robson, 2002; Yin, 1993,1994)”

The use of the case study was appropriate for this study as it fulfilled the criteria inherent in the descriptions listed by both Yin (1994) and Lewis (2003). Regarding Yin, the study asked the question: “How does the support experienced by first year teachers affect their implementation of their recently acquired knowledge and skills regarding the learning and teaching of reading?”, the researcher had no control over the study which was situated in the real life context of the classroom. In addition, the data and conclusions of this study were linked to the initial research questions. Regarding Lewis, this study fits the criteria of a case study in that it made use of several cases (four in total), it was detailed and intensive as a small sample of participants were studied regularly over nine months, and the researcher made use of multiple data collection methods including non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and journals.

To conclude, the emphasis of this study was to provide an extensive description and analysis of the support experienced by teachers in authentic contexts, using multiple methods of evidence to understand the dynamics occurring between the support, the teacher, and her ability to teach.

3.3 Data collection

Four tools were used to collect data for this study, these being questionnaires, interviews, non-participant observation, and journals. The reason for these choices was two-fold. First, by studying a phenomenon from more than one standpoint, one revealed “more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 233) which lead to an ‘in depth understanding’ (Davey, 1991, p. 1)

of the participants' experiences. Second, multiple tools were employed as a means to triangulate data in an effort to produce a valid and credible study. The threats to validity include for example researcher bias and subjectivity surrounding the collection and interpretation of data (Burns, 2000), is a recurrent theme relating to the credibility and validity of qualitative research. A strategy for overcoming this threat is the use of triangulation which refers to the use of multiple methods to study a single phenomenon (Denzin, 1978) to authenticate and strengthen a study (Patton, 2002) and enable the researcher to demonstrate that the study is credible and its findings are trustworthy (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The purpose of triangulation is also to check for consistency in the general themes found in data from different sources' and to provide 'reasonable explanations for differences in data from various sources' thereby contributing to the 'overall credibility' of the findings presented in the evaluation report (Patton, 1987).

3.4 Data collection tools

The four data collection tools chosen tended to complement each other and allowed for progressively more detailed focusing of the data, as well as for the corroboration of data.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are a part of the arsenal of data collection strategies used for multi method qualitative research (Patton, 1987; Silverman, 1993; Bell, 1993; Opie 2004). Questionnaires were used as these are cost and time effective, easy for participants to complete and reduce bias as there are no verbal or visual clues to influence the participant (Walonick, 2000).

A questionnaire (Appendix iiia) was employed in the initial stage of this study and was completed by the participants. The data collected from this tool provided background to the emotional and theoretical contexts of the participants. The questionnaires contained a selection of closed (How many learners are in your class?) and open questions (Why did you want to become a teacher?). Care was taken to test the questionnaire to avoid ambiguity, double questions, leading questions and hypothetical questions (Bell, 1993). The questionnaire was designed to collect objective and subjective data. Objective data related to class size, free

time in the timetable and extra murals. Subjective data related to issues of support. The data generated via the questionnaires was used as baseline information. Issues emergent in the questionnaires were probed, understood, or authenticated through non-participant observations, in depth interviews and journals.

3.4.2 Non- participant observation

Direct non-participant observation is where the researcher has 'no interaction with the subjects during data selection' (Obie, 2004, p. 129). This tool was used to observe classroom practices. As explained by Bell (1993), direct observation is useful to collect additional data to corroborate interview data and in this study were used to corroborate data generated via the questionnaires. In an interview, participants may reveal what they 'perceive' to be happening in their classrooms, while direct observation will reveal what is actually happening. The researcher made use of multiple observations (between three and six) of a limited duration with a focus on reading lessons. These observations were guided by, but not limited to an observation schedule (Appendix 2).

3.4.3 Interviews

Interviews, are defined by Kvale (1996) as "attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world" (p. 24). Interviews were used in conjunction with observations as, "the interview provides leads for the researcher's observations. The interaction of the two sources of data is enriching and provides a basis for analysis that would be impossible with only one source" (Erlandson, et al.,1993, p. 99).

In this study, the semi-structured and unstructured interview formats (Bell 1993) were considered appropriate as these are "replete with open ended questions, whose answers should take the form of a narrative by the respondent about his/her experiences" (Weiss, 1994, p. 1). Denzin (1970) supports the use of semi-structured and unstructured interviews as contexts within which respondents can communicate their experiences in their own way. Added to this, unstructured interviews are valuable as they are flexible and adaptable, therefore allowing respondents to bring up or include issues that may be lost in a structured interview (Denzin, 1970; Bell, 1993).

The questions and points for discussion which framed the interviews originated from questionnaire data, classroom observations, and journal inputs which needed to be probed, understood, or authenticated.

Interviews were undertaken with the participants after they completed the questionnaire (Appendix iii) to probe their responses for more detail. Interviews also followed observation sessions, when issues emerging during observations were explored in more depth. During the interviews, the researcher took notes and tape-recorded some of the sessions (with permission). The recordings were transcribed by the researcher and returned to the participants to verify the integrity of the contents.

3.4.4 Journals

Journals are written records focusing on a particular topic of interest. According to Plummer (1983) in Bloor & Wood (2006) journals are,

> "frequently used alongside qualitative interviews with the same respondent. The diary can then become the *aide memoir* for both the respondent and the researcher, with the interview serving to amplify and clarify events recorded in the subjects' diary" (p. 51).

Journals were chosen as a data collection tool to complement and enrich observation notes as they provided access to, 'naturally occurring sequences of activity which might otherwise be inaccessible' (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 51). A semi-structured journal format (Appendix iii) was used for participants to document key activities and emotions (Plummer, 1983) relating to their experiences of support.

The data collection process proved to be cyclical in nature, with data feeding from one collection tool to another. For example, questionnaire data informed themes for interviews and data from observations led to corroboration of information through questionnaires and interviews. Through this process, the primary issues for research were explored in ever deepening detail and a clear, focused credible study emerged.

3.5 Data collection plan

It was envisaged that the collection of data would begin in 2008 during the participants' first year of teaching and continue for at least nine months. The following was an outline of the data collection plan according to each critical question.

Critical question 1	**What components of reading are considered essential to pre-service teacher education reading programmes?**
Collection methods	Questionnaire
Why is this data being collected	This data is being collected in order to ascertain whether the reading knowledge acquired during pre-service training articulated the essential components of reading, and to understand that participants' understanding of this knowledge.
Data sources	The participants
Frequency of collection	Once
Critical question 2	**What types of support are considered critical to integrating newly qualified teachers into the 'real-world' context of their first year of teaching?**
Collection methods	Questionnaires Non-participant observation Semi structured interviews Journals
Why is this data being collected	This data is being collected in order to develop a deep understanding of a) the school context and b) the functioning of the teacher within the school context and how factors within this context negatively influence her teaching of reading.
Data sources	The principal/HOD/ other Foundation Phase teachers Newly qualified teachers.
Frequency of collection	One interview with the HOD but as the researcher proposed to visit each school more than once; it was possible that more data would be collected via informal conversations and observations. First year teachers were interviewed and observed at least once every two weeks.

Critical question 3	How does the support experienced by first year teachers affect their implementation of the recently acquired knowledge and skills regarding the teaching of reading
Collection method	Questionnaires; non-participant observation; interviews; journals.
Why is this data being collected?	This data is being collected to explore and understand how first year teachers are perceived in the school context. Added to this, data will establish how confident and safe the first year teachers feel about implementing what they believe to be good reading practice.
Data sources	HOD (and other teachers within the Foundation Phase if this is permissible), Newly qualified teachers.
Frequency of collection	At least once every two weeks week.

3.6 Data Analysis

"Data analysis is the most difficult and most crucial aspect of qualitative research. Coding is one of the significant steps taken during analysis to organise and make sense of textual data " (Basit, 2003, p.143). Coding or categorising refers to a process of organising the data and assigning it to categories (Dey, 1993). Seidel and Kelle, 1995 in Basit 2003) describe the use of coding as "noticing relevant phenomena; collecting examples of those phenomena and analysing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures."

The data analysis procedures used in this study were similar to those employed by Henning et al. (2006) and Moore (2003), both of whom are referred to in the literature review. The data from the four participants was initially organised using the three research questions as primary categories. Data from each participant was listed individually. This data was then "read and reread" (Borgatti 2011) to uncover patterns and emergent themes and colour coding was used sort this data into related subcategories. For example, words, phrases, or sentences relating to reading skills and knowledge pertaining to pre-service training were coded in one colour. Any data referring to the school's reading methodology was coded in another. Other subcategories included; initial aspirations, administrative support, professional development support, emotional support, useful support, stressors (home and school), and classroom management. Using the colour in this step of the

analysis allowed the researcher to filter useful from irrelevant data. The subcategories were then charted onto a graphic organiser which listed the subcategories down the left hand side and the four participants along the top. The data was written, in colour, into this organiser. This resulted not only in well-organised data, ready for further analysis, but it also provided a coherent structure for writing up the data presentation and discussion.

3.7 Choice of participants and sampling procedure

3.7.1 Sampling strategy

Participants were chosen according to purposeful sampling. This refers to the deliberate selection of participants for a study based on the assumption that what they can provide may be of more use or of a better quality than what could be gained by other participants (Patton, 1987).

3.7.2 Criteria for sample selection

The criterion used in sampling the participants was participant-sampling criterion was as follows:

- Participants must have achieved a high academic standard (70% or higher) during their final year in pre-service training.

The reason for this choice is that these participants were more likely to succeed in the implementation of their pre-service reading methodology. It was posited that if these participants struggled to cope in the classroom, what were the implications for other newly qualified teachers.

3.7.3 Sample size

Four newly qualified teachers were chosen from the Bachelor of Education (Foundation Phase) student body at the Wits School of Education. Four participants were chosen for the following reasons:

- There was a limited number of newly qualified teachers who fit the criterion. Of the possible six candidates, one worked in a different province and another worked in a school that was inaccessible to the researcher.

- As three participants are considered a suitable number for a case study sample, initially choosing four participants provided for any participant having to leave the study.
- The choice of four, while not a large sample, provided information from four different contexts which provided a rich sample of data for analysis.

3.8 Ethical issues

The following procedures were followed in order to protect human rights:

- Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were returned to the participants to check for accuracy.
- All work was undertaken when informed consent from the relevant parties had been obtained. These parties were:
    - The participants
    - The school principal
    - The Gauteng Department of Education
- All notes and findings were open to the participants involved thus creating a sense of transparency.
- Participants' names and identities were to be protected and pseudonyms were used for the names of teachers and schools.
- All raw data is being be kept under lock and key at the researcher's personal residence (97B St George's Road, Bellevue East, Johannesburg) and will be destroyed two years after the research project has been finalised and assessed.
- The protocol number for this research, as supplied by the the Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities is 2008ECE 11

3.9 Assumptions held by the researcher

It was assumed that first year teachers had a strong need for support because the first year of teaching is difficult as the teachers had to negotiate the difference between the world of studying and the world of the classroom. Access to appropriate support would benefit them both emotionally and in terms of their teaching practise.

3.10 Delimitations/Scope of this study

The delimitations of this study were related to size, location, and gender. This case study used a sample of four teachers which allowed for the exploration of four teaching institutions. Furthermore, these schools were all located in Gauteng Province. A further delimitation is that the participants were all female therefore no definitive male perspective could be deduced from this data. As a case study, this research had a narrow focus which was intended to offer insights rather than rules that could be applied generally, thus fitting the expectations of a qualitative study. The overarching findings extrapolated from this research could relate to other school contexts but specific details relating to the participants and the contexts within which they work were limited to this study. This, however, was not seen as a threat to minimise the importance and relevance of this research.

3.11 Validity and reliability

The researcher employed the following techniques to establish validity and reliability of content, and to ensure the integrity of the research:

1. Triangulation: using at least four data collection instruments and comparing the congruency of the data collected by each instrument. The stronger the correlation between the responses of the respondents within each instrument, higher the validity.
2. Multiple observations of the same classrooms.

3.12 Summary

In summary, this chapter described the study as qualitative in design and using a case study approach. The data collection tools included a questionnaire, non-participant observation, semi structured interviews and journals. A description of these tools provided information for the reliability and validity of the study – i.e.: the use of four data collection tools allowed for the triangulation of data and provided a structure to identify correlating data. The sample criterion and size was discussed which also informed the delimitations of the study. Procedures relating to ethics were listed.

In Chapter 4, the data gathered will be presented and discussed in relation to the argument presented in the literature review.

CHAPTER 4 DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The intention of this chapter is to present the data generated by the study and discuss the findings in the context of the conclusions of the literature review – this as a means to answering the critical questions defining this study. This chapter begins with a description of the school settings and a brief biography of the participants. Then the aspirations and expectations held by participants during their pre-service training will be described. Then their knowledge of the essential components of reading is evaluated to understand the extent to which they were prepared during pre-service training. Thereafter, Participant 1 (P1) Participant 2 (P2) and Participants 3 and 4 (P3 and P4) are discussed together. Experiences of their first year will be presented in the context of the three levels of support described in the literature review. These are professional development, operational/administrative procedures, and emotional support.

4.2 Settings and participants

Four female participants were purposefully chosen for this study. They were chosen according to their achievement during their final year of pre-service training. In this section, the participants and their schools will be described briefly to provide some context for the data presentation that follows. The participants remain anonymous and are referred to as P1, P2, P3 and P4.

P1 taught at a government Model C School on the East Rand. The school had a full complement of qualified staff. The Home Language and Language of Learning and Teaching was for the most part, English. The classes were not overcrowded and each classroom was in good condition and well equipped, containing enough desks and chairs, a carpet, visual aids and displays, and a CD player. The school had a library and full sets of graded readers and recreational reading books. The socio-economic status of the area and the majority of parents were described by the principal as middle class and literate.

P2 taught at a private church-based school in the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg. The class sizes were under 20. The school was well resourced and

offered many extra murals and additional lessons. The parent body was described by P2 as upper-income earners and well educated overall. The Home language and Language of Learning and Teaching was for the most part English.

P3 taught in a Model C government school in a middle class suburb in the north of Johannesburg. The majority of families spoke English as their Home Language and the Language of Learning and Teaching was English. The school was adequately resourced and had a library and sets of readers. The class sizes were between 28 and 35.

P4 taught at a government Model C which catered for middle to lower income families. There was a mix of Home languages but English was the language of teaching. The classes were large, in excess of 30 learners. The library was closed for repairs and was not available for the whole of 2008. There were graded readers available in class but not enough to cater for the different levels of a class over a year.

4.3 Data Presentation

As a starting point to the study, as well as to establish rapport, the research began with an exploration of each participant's aspirations and expectations of teaching. Findings from this data were unanimous and indicated that the participants all had similar aspirations and expectations prior to beginning teaching. They all wanted to become teachers out of 'a love for children' and a desire to 'make a difference.' They also believed that teaching was an important and rewarding profession. Each participant had enjoyed school and two of the participants had been inspired to follow a career in education by teachers encountered during their schooling. Furthermore, the participants, although expecting some difficulty integrating with staff, tended to expect their introduction to their schools to be 'supportive and professional'.

4.4 Reading preparation

Added to this positive emotional start, the participants also appeared to begin their first year with a strong knowledge of the essential components of reading as described in the literature review. In order to establish the participants' knowledge of

reading acquired in their pre-service training they were required to complete *Checklist 1: The critical components of reading w*hich was based on findings from the literature review. The table below indicates their answers from the checklists. The differences in uptake, while not within the scope of this study, could be due to filters such as differences in the participants' learning styles, their experience of schooling and being taught how to read or their currrent experiences of reading. In addition, the questionnaires were completed well into the first term, so the context of their schools could have had an influence on their perception or memory of their pre-service training.

Checklist 1: The essential components of reading

How much training did you receive on the following components of reading?					
Components	Very little	Medium to little	Medium	Medium to a lot	Extensive
Link between spoken language and reading				P1	P2,P3,P4
Activation of prior knowledge			P1, P4	P2,P3	
Choice of texts				P1,P2,P3,P4	
Choosing text levels			P1,P4	P2,P3	
Assessing reading			P1,P4	P2,P3	
Decoding			P4	P1	P2,P3
Phonemic awareness				P2,P4	P1,P3
Encouraging motivation and interest				P2,P4	P1,P3
Comprehension strategies				P2	P1,P3,P4

In addition to the essential components of reading, each participant demonstrated an understanding of reading strategies such as Guided Reading and Shared

Reading as well as the essential characteristics of an integrated model of reading as described in the literature review. As well as being able to articulate their knowledge of reading and reading strategies, the participants also reported feeling reasonably confident about planning reading lessons and choosing reading texts and resources.

In summary, the participants embarked on their first year of teaching with lofty aspirations and positive expectations of the year ahead. They looked forward to the support of their colleagues and the autonomy of managing their own class wherein they envisaged forging happy, supportive, and nurturing relationships with learners in environments that were, 'relaxed, yet conducive to learning.' They also appeared to feel well prepared and confident about their skills and knowledge regarding reading.

Despite this positive and seemingly equitable start, the participants' experience of their first year in general, and with specific regard to teaching reading differed significantly. For two participants, the 'collision' between their aspirations and the reality of teaching was more of a 'bumper bashing' which did not significantly affect their teaching of reading. For the other two, however, the 'collision' was very apparent and appeared to be damaging to themselves and to their teaching of reading. The differences in experiences and resultant impact on teaching appeared to be strongly related to their experience of support.

4.5 Levels of support

Literature on the issue of first year teacher support concludes that the first year of teaching is stressful and can be littered with unanticipated barriers. The literature also suggests that in order to negotiate this difficult terrain newly qualified teachers must have access to appropriate support and guidance or there could be negative implications for their classroom practice. According to the literature, appropriate support and guidance can refer to emotional, professional, and administrative and /or operational support. For the purposes of this report, these levels of support will refer specifically to the following;

- *Professional Development support* includes mentoring and collegial support by more experienced teachers and refers to issues of professional

development and guidance with regard to factors such as lesson planning, classroom management and discipline.

- *Administrative support* refers to issues such as filling in forms, managing files, managing extra mural details and learner portfolios.
- *Emotional support* in this report refers to support that functions to alleviate feelings of isolation and loneliness often experienced by newly qualified teachers as they navigate 'the gap between the ideal and the real' and that enhances their self-confidence and belief in their professional competence.

The researcher initiated this study by contacting the principals of each school, and participating in a meeting with each of them to discuss the study. During each meeting, each principal reported their awareness of the need to support first year teachers and each participant was allocated a more experienced mentor or teacher to whom they could turn for advice.

In the remainder of this section, the participants' experiences will be described and interpreted using the three levels of support emergent in the literature review, namely emotional, professional, and administrative and/or operational support. The impact of this support will then be correlated to their ability to implement their newly acquired knowledge and skills with specific reference to reading.

4.5.1 Participant 1 (P1)

Experience of support

P1 appeared to have the most enjoyable year with her initial personal expectations largely met. A comparison of data revealed that P1 did not have an easier situation than her counterparts in this study. She had the second largest class which included learners who were experiencing barriers. She had the most face-to-face time with a total of only one and a half hours a week free in her timetable. During her free time she prepared lessons and caught up with administration. She also participated in extra murals 3 times a week and Saturdays. Despite her heavy load, P1 always appeared cheerful and happy. This was reflected in her description of her first year as, "at times stressful and overwhelming but also exciting and rewarding" (Questionnaire 2008).

Using the three levels of support as a framework for discussion and interpretation, the following information emerged.

Emotional support

P1 expected "interacting with other teachers" (Questionnaire, April 2008) to be an area of difficulty when she started teaching. This appeared to be wholly unfounded as she found "the teachers easy to interact with and very supportive." (Interview, May 2008) This included more experienced teachers such as her Grade Liaison Teacher, her Head Of Department (HOD) as well as her less experienced colleagues and other first year teachers. During interviews, P1 tended to refer to her colleagues in a positive way, describing them as "supportive" and "a nice group of people." (Interview, May 2008) She described herself as feeling emotionally supported by her colleagues and appeared to feel safe in her school context. An informal discussion with the principal and observations of staff interactions suggest that the school encouraged collegial relationships and a general school ethos based on respect and support which certainly seemed to impact positively on P1's first year of teaching.

Professional support

P1's school had an induction programme for first year teachers which included "discussions around discipline and reward methods" (Interview, May 2008) with colleagues. During the discussions, she felt "included as an equal" and her input was well received. P1 found these discussions "very useful and helpful." (Interview, May 2008) Although receiving a measure of professional support, P1 described lesson planning as an area of stress where she felt she needed more help. Lesson planning in her school took place once a week and was done grade by grade. It was also somewhat prescriptive as revealed by the following interview excerpt:

R: *I want to find out more about how you plan. When you get together, do you have an HOD with you?*

P1: *No because each grade has a liaison teacher so she is in charge. She liaises with the HOD.*

R: *And then do you discuss and plan what to teach for the next week or the next month*

P1: *No, they tell us what to do.*

R: *So they give you the structure.*

P1 : No they give you what you need to cover. Like literacy for the week you need to cover such and such. Then I go home and think OK, how am I going to teach this?

R: No one tells you how to teach?

P1: No you just get the worksheets.

R: In other words, you don't have to actively plan you just have to do what she says you must do.

P1: Yes.

R: Is there one person that makes the decision about what to teach?

P1: I think it's her and the HOD.

R: Is your liason teacher an experienced teacher? Is she older?

P1: She has been teaching for about four years.

This excerpt indicates that P1 had no say in initial lesson planning. Her role was to implement the plans generated by her Head Of Department and the Grade Liaison Teacher. This proved to be an ambiguous situation. On the one hand, P1 was relieved not to have to plan from scratch, "I find it easier to be given the plan. I don't know what we need to teach, I know how to teach something that's given to me. If I had to plan everything, I wouldn't know where to start." (Interview, May 2008) On the other hand, P1 was not in agreement with the number of worksheets she was required to do. She reported that if she was involved in the planning from scratch, she may teach somewhat differently. What was fortunate, however, was that P1 felt confident and motivated enough to redesign some of the worksheets to suit the beliefs and practices she had acquired in her pre-service training. While making these changes was fully acceptable and encouraged by her colleagues, she was not actively supported in that she had to make these changes on her own. This added to P1's workload which she already found overwhelming.

Administrative support

A further area of stress related to administration and a lack of administrative support. P1 felt that much of her free time was spent filling in forms and catching up files of which she felt there were "like a million." (Interview, May 2008) P1 appeared to be wholly unprepared for the volume of administration required of her and this proved to be one of the "variety of problems and situations they had not anticipated"

(Moir, 1990). She reported that she felt overwhelmed by the administration and never felt up to date, “I am never up date. I can’t keep up. I just do what they say.” (Interview, May 2008) Between her extra murals and her administration, P1 was concerned that she had little time to redesign her lesson plans and teach her lessons effectively. P1 was so overwhelmed by her administration that she believed preparation for, or at least a warning about, the possible amount of administration should have featured in her pre-service training.

Teaching in general

Observations and ongoing interviews indicated that P1’s concerns around lesson planning and administration did not impact negatively on her teaching in general, and she was observed to provide consistently successful lessons which were well planned, interesting, and which engaged her learners.

Ongoing observations suggest that P1 taught with confidence. She also seemed to have established a warm, trusting rapport with her learners. Due to this, she had the respect and trust of her learners and there was a high level of co-operation in her class (Observations: 5 May 2008, 27 May 2008, 5 June 2008, 17 September 2008), A combination of excellent lesson planning, a positive emotional climate and her projected confidence resulted in P1 seldom having to spend time disciplining her learners. A reason for her success, in addition to receiving multiple levels of support was the apparent congruence between strategies employed by the school and strategies with which P1 was equipped during pre-service training as indicated by the following excerpt:

R: *Does she (Liason teacher) ever ask you to do things you don’t agree with or that are different to what you were taught?*

P1: *Sometimes, like during Life Skills I don’t really like the way they do it. They just focus on L.O. so they don’t do the other, like Natural Sciences. They make it fall into Literacy*

R: *Do you teach your literacy in themes?*

P1: *Yes, that’s how we bring in other stuff from Life Skills.*

R: *If there is something that you don’t really agree with, do you feel or can you can say no or I have a different idea?*

P1: I don't really need to. The thing is I feel like I only have a problem in Life Skills. Everything else is done my way.

'My way' was observed to mean working in themes, organising her class in groups, and planning workstations. P1 frequently implemented these strategies successfully in her classroom. For example, one observed lesson (September, 2008) was organised around the theme of the Big Five. The lesson began with the whole group listening to and answering riddles relating to the Big Five. This was followed by questions and discussion about these animals. Following the listening and speaking, group leaders collected workbooks wherein learners filled in application forms to become a game ranger. Learners were organised in groups but had to complete their worksheets individually. There was a lot of peer support and discussion as learners grappled with the answers and some spelling. Learners then moved into co-operative group work and moved around 5 stations, each focusing on detailed information about one of the Big Five. Activities included reading comprehension exercises, problems solving around what to pack in a backpack for a safari, and other cognitively stimulating tasks. Despite the amount of movement required from the learners, their self-regulation was excellent. They co-operated with P1 and were observed to support each other. While the groups were doing their station work, P1 monitored the learners and spent extra time with those who needed extra support.

Teaching of reading

P1's general success as a teacher included her teaching of reading as exemplified by a lesson observed on the 5 June 2008. The lesson began with learners singing the round, "*Row row row your boat*." After reviewing 'Parts Of Speech' orally, learners identified Parts Of Speech from the round and filled them in on a worksheet. While the majority of learners were busy with this task, a small group joined P1 on the carpet for a Guided Reading session. Due to the co-operative and respectful climate of the classroom, the other learners stayed on task and helped each other complete the worksheet, without interfering with the Guided Reading session. P1 was observed to to focus on the small group, but maintain awareness of the rest of the class.

While P1 entered teaching with a sound array of reading knowledge and skills, a further reason for her ability to implement these successfully was that she entered a school which, to a large degree, supported her beliefs and newly acquired knowledge around reading. This is evident from the following excerpt from the questionnaire;

R: Which reading programmes were you exposed to during your teacher training?

P1: THRASS, Guided Reading, Shared Reading

R: What reading programmes are used at your school?

P1: THRASS and Guided Reading

R: Does your training correlate with your school's policy?

P1 Yes

R: Do you feel confident enough to assert your beliefs about what you think is good teaching?

P1: Yes

R: Are you able to teach reading in the way you were taught during teacher training?

P1: Yes, but often I don't have enough time in class.

This was clear in observations of her successful implementation of Guided Reading as previously described, but was most pronounced by her ability to employ THRASS in her classroom as she had been trained, as this was the school's chosen reading and spelling programme. P1 was fortunate in that most of her beliefs, knowledge and skills about teaching reading were in line with and therefore supported by the school's established literacy programme.

Conclusion

Overall, P1 had a positive first year. She received much informal and more formal collegial support; and she reported that she felt included as an equal among the staff body. Changes to current work were appreciated if not actively sought. Of significance, however, was that there was little difference between how she was trained and how she was expected to teach. Therefore, she did not experience much in the way of a 'collision' and appeared to become seamlessly integrated into the 'real world' of her school's teaching context.

4.5.2 Participant 2 (P2)

Experience of support

P2 also enjoyed her first year of teaching with her initial expectations largely met. This is evident in her description of her first year as “learning, exciting, motivating, exhausting, and rewarding” (Questionnaire, April, 2008). P2’s teaching context differed significantly from the other participants’. She taught at a private school which is well resourced. She had only 19 learners in her class. She had less face-to-face time as her learners went to classes such as computer skills, library and P.E. In addition, her extramural load was much lighter.

Using the three levels of support as a framework for discussion and interpretation, the following information emerged;

Emotional Support

There was much data to suggest that P2 felt that she received sufficient emotional support. In her questionnaire (April, 2008) she wrote:

> “My grade leader is there to support me. I really have enjoyed how much support I have received from the other teachers. There is a pastoral teacher who has guided me through some things that I think would have been difficult to deal with had I not had the support.”

She also reported in an interview that:

> “I really enjoyed speaking to the pastoral head. She helped and guided me with situations that are more emotional”

and

> “There is also a collective support for emotional problem-solving with the parents.” (Interview May 2008)

This feeling of being emotionally supported was again revealed in a journal entry (November 2008) where she described a sensitive issue involving a parent where she received immediate support from the other two teachers in her grade as well as the pastoral care teacher.

Professional Support

An analysis of the data suggests that the emotional support P2 received was helpful, but it tended to extend to behavioural difficulties involving learners and conflict

situations involving parents. She therefore received emotional support primarily when she was challenged with an emotionally or behaviourally charged situation. Interview data suggests that P2 often felt alone, isolated and frustrated in terms of her professional development and she exhibited a keen need for more regular input from her senior colleagues as exhibited in the following interview excerpts:

> "I would like more meetings where everyone is included, like the HOD and principal and where we can bring up problems and ask for help and get feedback every week."
>
> "If my HOD and principal really know what is going on I won't feel so alone in a situation."
>
> "I would like a closer more personal guiding touch."

Interestingly, at times during interviews P2 seemed to feel quite confused and tended to say:

> "I wonder if I am being too critical" (Interview, November, 2008).

As with P1, lesson planning was an issue. P2 repeatedly discussed her frustrations around the lack of time spent with colleagues to plan and prepare lessons in ways she felt were appropriate, and in line with her training. Planning occurred in her school in a similar way to P1, in that they were accorded a short amount of time (on average 25 minutes a week), where Assessment Standards and worksheets were handed out. P2 struggled enormously to work in this way and she continuously redesigned worksheets and lesson plans to accommodate her beliefs about and knowledge of teaching and learning. Her colleagues were positive about these changes, and were even keen to use her work as revealed in an interview on 22 May 2008 where P2 stated:

> "they are so open to ideas and encourage me to share things with them" and "they are willing to try new things."

She too was not an active participant in initial lesson planning. Due to time constraints P2 was not always able to "adapt and change their (her colleagues) work" (May, 2008) which resulted in a level of despondency and at times even guilt when she felt she was letting her learners down. P2 felt "like I don't have enough control over planning" which was frustrating as she "'likes to have input on

everything". (Interview, June, 2008) This was supported by a diary entry in November where she wrote:

> "I just think I have high expectations of myself" and "I have a strong sense of insecurity with something new."

Administrative support

P2 seldom referred to administrative issues as being an area of difficulty. This may be due to the fact that she had a much smaller class than the other participants thereby reducing time taken, for example, to take registers or write reports. She also had a lighter extra mural load than the other participants which lessened her administrative burden. P2 also had a class mother who helped with day-to-day tasks such as collecting money for class trips. In addition, being in a private school meant that her administrative duties were different, and less than, those of her peers in government schools as was evident from comparison of data from the four participants.

Teaching in general

Despite her protestations and concerns, P2 did not appear to allow her frustrations to interfere with her teaching. Classroom observations indicated that she consistently produced well-planned, interesting lessons which were cognitively rich. She engaged in a lot of facilitation and her discussions with her class were peppered with phrases such as, "What do you think?", "What would you do?" and "Why do you think that is the answer?" (Observation, May, 2008) P2 also described herself as a pre-emptive teacher who tried to plan for problems before they occurred. This was evident in her clearly defined, democratically negotiated rules which she maintained consistently. She also made effective use of groups, "I like groups, they are logistically useful. I think groups improve behaviour" (Interview, September, 2008), which she regulated effectively by using rewards.

In addition to pre-emptive classroom organisation and discipline strategies, P2 paid careful attention to her lesson preparation as well as how the lesson would translate into practise. She tried to ensure that her learners were usefully engaged on tasks which limited off task behaviour and any need for discipline. P2's relationship with her learners was respectful and she presented as calm and contained. Her classroom was organised and tidy and recent work was displayed and updated. The

combination of her excellent classroom management, carefully planned lessons and positive and enriching interpersonal relations resulted in stimulating lessons such as the following:

> *"*All the learners were seated on the carpet in front of the class while 3 learners had turns to present posters on animals they had researched. After the presentations, learners were encouraged to ask questions. P2 was observed to guide rather than dictate the process. She encouraged independence. During the question time, she modelled questions and helped learners reframe complicated questions, highlighting new vocabulary. Although this was a short lesson, it was richly layered and learners had the opportunity to learn independence and autonomy, patience, respectful listening, questioning techniques as well as the factual information presented on animals.*"* (Observation, 29 May 2008)

As observed with P1, P2's implementation of co-operative work, and her theme-based work were in line with the school's prevailing policy so, in many ways, her pre-service training was congruent with practices within the school. This was, however, not true with regards to literacy.

Teaching of reading

P2 made an effort to assimilate her pre-service knowledge and skills around reading into her practice. Her classroom illustrated her attempts to bring to the fore activities and strategies that she believed important. For example, she had a Word Detective chart and a poster describing word attack strategies on display. P2 also made excellent use of Shared Reading and, when resources allowed, Guided Reading. She had a well-stocked reading corner which was used regularly by the learners. However, in contrast to P1's experience, P2's school did not appear to follow a structured reading programme. P2 found this difficult and frustrating as indicated by the following extract from the questionnaire;

R: Which reading programmes were you exposed to during your teacher training?

P2: I was exposed to DRTA and Guided Reading, Shared Reading, SSR and THRASS

R: Which reading programme is used at your school?

P2: Letterland is used in Grade O and Grade 1. It is not really a focus in the other grades. They use core readers, Ginn.

R: Does your training correlate with your schools reading policy?

P2: No

R: Do you feel confident enough to assert your beliefs about what you think is good teaching practice?

P2: Yes and no. Yes because I know what kind of reading should be taking place in the classroom and why. No because I am not confident to say I know how to actually teach reading.

R: Are you able to teach reading in the way you were taught during teacher training?

P2: Not with regard to any THRASS materials. However as mentioned before I encourage the word detective which I believe really works. We also sing songs for phonemic awareness. In my reading time (which is only once a week) I try to use aspects of both Guided Reading and DRTA. I have done some Shared Reading. However, this is done seldom due to time.

P2's apprehension and misgivings about teaching literacy was further consolidated by the following interview excerpt:

R: What reading methodologies did you learn about at University?

P2: We did Guided Reading, DRTA, Sustained Silent Reading, Shared Reading with the teacher using a big book but we focused on THRASS. We did one assignment on the differences between methodologies. We did our own research on Letterland and Jolly Phonics in third year. I feel under prepared to teach phonics – even with THRASS I still don't have a great knowledge of phonics

R: What does your school use this year?

P2: Nothing specific. The Grade 1's use Letterland. I've done Word Detective. I haven't used THRASS much this year. I don't want to try and use another approach because I'm not sure about it. My research on THRASS said rules are confusing to children. I'm trying not to mix other rules with THRASS because it's even more confusing

R: Do you feel competent to teach phonics?

P2: No. There are no fixed phonic rules. I would have felt better if THRASS was used.

R: Do you think this has affected the way you teach reading?

P2: I don't know.

R: Did you ask what your reading programme is?

P2: Yes. Grade 0 and 1 do Letterland. For us (Grade 3) it's very vague. We have weekly spelling and one sound. We discuss the sound for a week. I don't feel I have done a great job but the Word Detective works brilliantly. They have been motivated to put words onto the chart to earn beans. The competition has been very motivating

R: Describe some of the literacy you do in your class

P2: We do phonics. Once a week I listen to individual reading. I don't feel this is too useful because it's too stressful. I do Paired Reading once a week as well. I don't have enough class readers. The worst thing this year is finding enough basal readers. We use the Ginn, some Oxfords. There is also incidental reading with other subjects. The one place that has been really useful is the library corner. It has worked brilliantly. When the kids are finished work, they move to the reading corner

R: Tell me more about your THRASS training.

P2: We went for a two-day training course.

R: Do you feel properly equipped to teach reading?

P2: No, I don't feel equipped to teach reading. No. I don't know where I am. I don't know how I teach reading.

As indicated by these excerpts, there was limited congruence between the skills and knowledge P2 brought from her pre-service training and the reading context of her school. Her beliefs and practices around reading, while not discouraged, were not supported due to the school's lack of a specific methodology. P2 did not have to try and assert her beliefs against a prevailing status quo as there was little for her to assert herself against. In some ways, this was positive in that it gave P2 the freedom to explore and develop her own way of teaching reading – which she did, but the lack of structure affected P2's confidence and she did not always feel that her learners were getting the best education from her.

Conclusion

Overall, P2's experience of her first year was more difficult that P1's, although due to the emotional support she received she described her year in mostly positive terms. While many of her expectations were met, and there was a degree of congruence between her pre-service training and the 'real world context' of her first year, there were areas of dissonance which, whilst not resulting in a painful 'collision' were nonetheless uncomfortable. P2 worked hard to assimilate what she had been taught in pre-service training and the work planned in her school. In terms of her general teaching, she was able to incorporate many strategies and practices she had acquired during her pre-service training such as theme-based work and co-operative work as these replicated practices in the school. As such, she felt supported and confident in implementing these practices which allowed her to feel a measure of success and satisfaction.

The teaching of reading was, however, an area where P2 felt less confident. It was within the context of reading that a dissonance emerged between her pre-service training and the school's (lack of) reading programme. P2 was able to implement broad-based strategies such as Shared Reading and Guided Reading, as these were strategies used in the school. She was, however, completely unsupported in implementing the THRASS programme in which she had been trained, as her colleagues had neither experience of, nor resources relating to this programme. This resulted in her feeling out of her depth, unsupported and dissatisfied with aspects of her teaching of reading.

4.5.3 Participant 3 and Participant 4 (P3 and P4)

Experience of support

P3 and P4 had similar experiences in their first year and are therefore discussed together. Both participants taught in government schools that were closely matched in terms of their Language of Learning and Teaching, the school size, resources and class size. They had an average of 30 learners in their classes, a number of whom had barriers to learning. Both participants had heavy teaching loads with approximately 95% face-to-face/contact time in the classroom, one planning session a week, and extra mural duties four afternoons a week. Although P3 and P4

appeared to have similar schooling contexts to P1, the experience of their first year of teaching was significantly different. Despite starting with positive expectations, P3 and P4's first year appeared to be a largely negative experience. This is evident in their descriptions of first year as; tiring, overworked, underpaid, no time, angry, (P3, Questionnaire, April, 2008) and; frustrating, alone, tiring, overworked, overwhelmed. (P4, Questionnaire, April, 2008).

Using the three levels of support as a framework for discussion and interpretation, the following information emerged.

Emotional support

P3 and P4 both appeared to lack adequate emotional support. They reported experiencing little time to communicate with senior teachers or colleagues about their frustrations, worries, and general feelings of being overwhelmed. They also felt that they had to ask for help or support and, as suggested in the literature review, were not completely secure in 'admitting' their feelings. P3 appeared to receive little in the way of guidance despite being allocated a mentor teacher. When asked on the questionnaire (April 2008) what support she received from her colleagues, she replied, "None, unless you ask." This experience was mirrored by P4 who replied to the same question:

> "My HOD comes and sits in my class once a term but I haven't had any feedback. I have to ask for help."

Their responses to interview questions on the issue of support tended to be overwhelmingly negative. P4 summed up her lack of emotional support in the following way:

> "It would be nice if they would check on me once in a while – after all I am a first year. I feel I have to ask for everything. No one comes to you. This is what you're here to do but no one tells you how." (Interview, May, 2008).

When asked if she ever requested help, she replied "No" and after a period of contemplation she added:

> "It's easy to fall into the trap of keeping quiet and calm. If I keep to myself, they think I'm coping."

Regarding their initial expectation of their relationships with their colleagues, these participants expected supportive and professional relationships with their colleagues but both reported that these expectations were not met. Despite apparently not receiving support from more senior colleagues, or in P3's case the mentor teacher, both P3 and P4 found some "informal support from peers" (de Paul 1998, et al.) including other first year teachers on the staff. Despite receiving some support, P4 stated that:

> "Sometimes we chat, but all the teachers are doing their own thing." (Interview, May, 2008)

Professional support

Lesson planning, as with P1 and P2, was an issue of concern. In both schools, planning only received approximately half an hour a week. During these meetings, Assessment Standards for the Learning Areas for the following week were given out together with associated worksheets. There was little "interactive and reflective exchanges with colleagues" (Chubbuck, et al., 2001). This was a concern as in both schools there appeared to be little opportunity for teacher development through "practical exchanges with practising teachers" (Long, 2004, p. 147). This was of particular concern to P3 who wrote in her questionnaire (April, 2008):

> "If they share what they are doing, how they are teaching then it helps with ideas and experience."

Similar to P1 and P2, neither P3 nor P4 were comfortable with the number of worksheets they were using. They felt that this practice was contrary to their training. As with the other participants, P3 and P4 were not prevented from redesigning the worksheets or interpreting the Assessment Standards in their own way, but time was an issue. This was evident from interview data. In response to questions on daily lesson planning P4 replied:

> "Some days I don't even plan. I have no time to do new stuff. I feel guilty. I don't have the energy or the enthusiasm. I feel creatively dry. I use the worksheets because of time. I am battling to keep going"(May, 2008).

She stated in a later interview on lesson planning that:

> "It's easy to fall into this trap. I can't do fancy work like at 'varsity, so I do the same old thing everyday – worksheets – they are boring – always the same structure designed by the school" (June, 2008).

P3 mirrored this perspective as indicated by her response to the same question which was:

> "I rely on the worksheets they give me due to a lack of time. I haven't got time to prep. I teach on the hop. I never have time to prep." (Interview, May, 2008). Although P3 found the worksheets a "waste of time" and the method of teaching which was " ask a few questions and give a worksheet" not in line with her beliefs about teaching, so many worksheets had been printed that she felt "obliged" to use them so as "not to waste paper." (Interview, May, 2008). As mentioned previously, P3 and P4 were free to integrate what they had learnt in pre-service training into their lesson planning and teaching in general. This was similar to P1 and P2's experience.

However, while P1 and P2 tended to try and do this and were often very successful, P3 and P4 seldom rearranged the planning given to them. The difference appears to be that, while P1 and P2 received some recognition of their efforts, P3 and P4 were working in contexts where their colleagues displayed little interest in their newly acquired knowledge and skills. P3 said she was "just ignored" while P4 felt that anything new "fizzled out and was forgotten." (Interview, May, 2008) Furthermore, P4 felt that she could implement her own ideas, not out of a sense of support and nurturing, but because everyone in the school "did their own thing." (Interview, April, 2008) This dissonance between how she was trained to teach and how she was teaching added to P4's already heavy emotional load. She often said that she felt guilty about not planning creative and interesting lessons which is reflected by the statement:

> "I feel I am forgetting everything I did at college. I feel like I'm letting them [learners] down" (Interview, June, 2008).

Administrative support

Similar to P1, P3 and P4 were unprepared for the avalanche of administrative work placed on them in the first term. P4 had a rotation teacher who substituted for her one out of every six days which she found "very helpful" (Interview, May, 2008) as she then had a free day to catch up on filing. Overall, despite this, she seldom felt "on top of things" (Interview, May, 2008). She was also frustrated in that, in contrast to P1 who went through an induction programme which helped her understand the

administrative system, including small but important factors such as how to get photocopying done, P4 largely had to find this more operational information out by herself. This lent to her sense of isolation: “I’m just told to do it, I find it really annoying,” is one quote from a diary entry (November 2008) which described her frustration with the school’s communication around administration and operational procedures. In support of this, when asked during an interview (May, 2008), in response to the question on what she would want to make her teaching easier? she replied:

> “More guidelines of what to expect. Like with administration. How do we do it? Everything is a bit wishy-washy, the communication is so poor.”

Observations of P3 and P4’s classes confirmed the administrative concerns especially in early morning classes, in which an inordinate amount of time was spent collecting forms, sorting out tuck orders, collecting tuck money, and organising teams for sporting events.

Teaching in general

The lack of support parlayed differently into these two participants’ classroom management, teaching style and interpersonal relationships with learners, with observations suggesting a more negative impact on P4 than P3.

P3 was observed to conduct her lessons meaningfully and for the most part successfully. This was demonstrated by a lesson in which she was teaching colours in Afrikaans. The introduction to the lesson included singing a song with the words to the song written on the board. After two repeats, some learners took turns to point to the words as they were sung. The learners enjoyed the activity and there was a high level of co-operation and on-task behaviour. P3 paced the lesson well, switching tasks quickly to sustain attention and motivation. In the final few minutes of the lesson, five learners were charged with handing out a worksheet designed to consolidate the knowledge of colours. The class settled to this quickly and, after the excellent scaffolding, most learners coped with the activity easily.

P3’s interaction with her learners was firm but fair and she did not allow her general feelings of frustration to impact on her relationship with her learners. She was

observed to teach with confidence, she was respectful towards her learners, and she tended to use humour resulting in a light-hearted classroom climate. In terms of discipline, she clapped or clicked her fingers for attention and used a clock timer to help learners understand time limits for tasks. When probed, P3 could not explain why she used these strategies and they did not appear to be an overt part of her pre-service training. She appeared to be a highly instinctive teacher who genuinely liked her learners.

P4 was more affected by her lack of support as indicted by her classroom management, teaching style and interpersonal relationships with learners. She was observed to be less confident. She lacked authority and leadership in her classroom. Her body language and vocal tone was defensive and she tended to stand next to her desk and fold her arms as she taught which created emotional distance between her and the learners. She often looked tired, defeated, and unenthusiastic. She was also frequently ill. Her feelings and experience of being overwhelmed influenced her relationship with her class. She became easily frustrated and angry with her class and tended to punish negative behaviour rather than praising or acknowledging positive behaviour. She had no effective discipline strategy. She attempted to use the robot system to manage individual behaviour, but a lack of class rules together with daily inconsistency of what was and was not acceptable resulted in the strategy working erratically. P4 tended to nag her learners frequently as they were often noisy, disruptive and off task. P4's concerns about not being an effective teacher appeared to be accurate as her lessons were in many ways unsuccessful learning experiences.

Teaching of reading

While P3's general teaching skills appeared to be more successful than those of P4, they both struggled to implement the knowledge and skills around reading acquired during their pre-service training.

Observations of the classrooms revealed that P3 displayed a lot of literacy- based materials that were updated according to what she was teaching. During one stage of the observations, she displayed stories written and illustrated by her learners and made into little books. While on display, the learners read and commented on, each

other's stories. P4's class lacked visual vitality. She had on display some artwork by the learners, an alphabet chart, and an animal poster. There was a Reading Corner which was a wheelie shelf containing a few books. The books were not changed as the library was being renovated and books were not available.

In terms of broad based strategies, while all the participants had been exposed to the same strategies such as Shared Reading and Guided Reading, P3 and P4 struggled to implement these strategies during their literacy teaching. P3 stated in her questionnaire that she expected teaching reading to be one of the most enjoyable aspects of teaching in her first year. After a few months, however, these expectations were not met and she reported that she had no time to employ these strategies as she had been trained. Notwithstanding the time factor, P3 was not supported in attempting to implement these strategies by her mentor, or other more experienced staff. As previously mentioned P3 was uncomfortable asking for help and as such was not sure if these strategies were even used by other Foundation Phase teachers as there appeared to be a limited forum for discussing and sharing teaching strategies.

P4 was observed to make some use of her pre-service strategies. On a few occasions, she attempted Guided Reading with a small group of learners. This worked in part although due to her poor classroom management she spent a lot of the reading time focussing on the rest of the class who became noisy and disruptive quickly. There were, however, periods of useful work on the carpet. Despite these pockets of success, she said in an interview:

> "I hate Guided Reading. It doesn't work" (September, 2008).

As in the case of P2, neither P3 nor P4's school had a clearly articulated reading programme. When asked to describe the reading programmes used in their schools, P3 replied that she did not know but thought it might be Letterland. P4 replied, "This school does not have a specific programme but the teachers use Letterland" and a "mix of whatever" (Interview, May, 2008). Both of these participants felt strongly that the focus on THRASS in pre-service training led them to feel insecure with regards to teaching reading. This was revealed by P4 who declared that she did not, "feel prepared to teach reading." She further stated that:

> "I don't know where I am. I don't know how I teach reading. I don't think it has been useful to focus on THRASS. Not all schools use it" (Interview, September, 2008).

P4 had similar concerns, and made no use of THRASS at all, but appeared to have no alternative strategy. Both of these participants, together with P2 felt that they were "muddling along and doing the best we can."

As a way of coping with teaching reading in these vague, largely unsupported teaching contexts, P3 and P4 exhibited two of the survival strategies described in the literature review.

P3 tended to "play it safe" (Chubbuk, et al., 2001) by replicating what other teacher appeared to be doing which was "swapping books and hearing each child read once a week." While this is what she did, she made it explicitly clear that this was "definitely not ideal." P3 was not comfortable with her "compliance with *the status quo*" (Flores 2001, Moore 2003) and her interviews were thick with concern about this as indicated by the following statements; "I just do what I'm told" and, "I have no time to do what I know I should be doing" (Interview, May, 2008).

P4 coped by reverting to her "prior schooling experience" (Flores 2001) and taught reading using the programme she remembers being used by her own Grade 1 teacher when she was in that grade, which was Letterland. During an interview, P4 was asked how she knew how to teach Letterland. She replied:

> "I am teaching in a way that I learnt. I am teaching in the way I was taught how to read. I'm just kind of trying to remember it. I went back to what I did in Grade 1. Letterland is familiar to me – it's what I know – it makes sense to me." (Interview August 2008).

P4 used Letterland to introduce one sound a week. Although she was resorting to her own experience of learning to read which was certainly not ideal, these lessons were at times successful as illustrated by the following example when introduced the Q sound.

The lesson began with learners sitting around her on the carpet. P4 encouraged them to say words they knew beginning with the targeted letter. She then read a

story about the Queen of Letterland which included Q words. Following that, she held up a picture which contained characters and items from the story for learners to identify. Learners went to their desks where they received a sheet of pictures each relating to the letter Q. Learners talked about each picture. They then had to construct sentences about the pictures, using the Q word. Although a simple lesson, P3 taught with confidence and was able to capture her learners' attention. Her pace was good and, until the worksheet, learners had little time to go off task. Learners generally seemed to enjoy and benefit from these lessons.

Despite some observed successes, P4 struggled with teaching literacy. She was frustrated by the lack of structure around literacy in general. She had no programme to guide her and she was unsure what other teachers were doing. She was also disappointed with her pre-service training which she felt had not been generic enough to enable all newly qualified teachers to understand and adapt to a wider range of reading programmes. "After all" she said:

> "I am a top student and I am not coping. What is happening to everyone else?" (Interview, August, 2008)

Conclusion

P3 and P4 appeared to experience the full extent of the 'collision' between their aspirations and the real world context of teaching. They received little support on any level. While P3 was able to rise above her disappointment and continue to teach well, even in the context of a poorly defined reading programme, P4 struggled to assert herself and as such her teaching, in particular her teaching of reading, was not optimal.

4.6 Summary

In summary, the data presented and discussed in this chapter supports the findings of the literature review which suggests that newly qualified teachers in their first year are at risk for developing inefficient teaching practices unless they receive appropriate support. Considering the three levels of support described, emotional support appears to have the most impact. This finding emerged through the data coding process where feelings of isolation and abandonment and the need for

emotional support emerged more than the need for either administrative or professional development support.

The data presented described the experiences of four first year teachers, all of whom had high expectations and were excited to begin teaching. Each participant appeared to have the same understanding of teaching reading and was well prepared for this task during pre-service training. Despite these initial similarities, the levels of support experienced by each participant were different and this affected their teaching. An analysis of the data revealed that the participant who received the most support, tended to teach well, and was observed to implement much of her knowledge gained in pre-service training. The participants who received limited or no support were observed to resort to the survival strategies described in the literature review and in one participant's case in particular, resulted in less than optimal teaching.

In Chapter 5, the conclusion of the study will be presented, along with recommendations and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

The intention of this chapter is to use the data from the study to answer the critical questions posed in Chapter 1, and to reach a conclusion concerning the findings. Furthermore, recommendations, based on the conclusion, will be suggested for pre-service training institutions, schools, and government education departments. Finally, suggestions for further research will be listed. These suggested are critical issues which emerged through the study, but which were beyond its scope.

5.1 Critical question 1: What components of reading are considered essential to pre - service teacher education reading programmes?

Literature on the essential components of reading indicate that an effective pre- service literacy programme should expose pre-service teachers to: the link between spoken language and reading, the activation of prior knowledge in learners, choice of text, effective assessment, decoding, phonemic awareness, comprehension strategies, and the ability to encourage and motivate learners to read. Data from the interviews, questionnaires, and observations indicate that the four participants involved in this study were well equipped, with skills and knowledge relating to literacy, to teach reading in the Foundation Phase.

5.2 Critical question 2: What types of support are considered critical to integrating newly qualified teachers into the 'real world' context of their first year of teaching?

The research findings support the suggestion that the first year of teaching is gruelling as newly qualified teachers begin to assimilate and accommodate the difference between their hopes and aspirations and the reality of their school's context. This was evident in data from the participants whose initial aspirations were not entirely congruent with their initial experiences of their first year. A strongly emergent theme from the literature review is that in light of this dissonant situation, newly qualified teachers need support as they negotiate the stresses of their first year. Three types of support considered essential are professional development support, operant or administrative support, and emotional support. In addition to the types of support, the

literature also refers to effective support as that which serves to reduce stress, and boost feelings of personal and professional confidence and competence. The need for each type of support was frequently voiced by the participants, but what emerged from the data was although the participants found administrative or operational support and professional development support necessary, it was emotional support and personal recognition that was craved. Except to some extent in the case of P 1, each of the participants voiced the need to be “seen” “heard” and “noticed” and not to feel so alone. These participants were also often angry at having to ask for help, and tended to feel lonely and isolated.

5.3 *Critical question 3: How does the support experienced by first year teachers affect their implementation of their recently acquired knowledge and skills regarding the learning and teaching of reading?*

The literature suggests that adequate support enables newly qualified teachers to focus on work competency rather than survival (deWert, et al., 2003), while inadequate or no support can result in “a collapse of ideals formed in pre-service training and lowered motivation” (Chubbuck, et al., 2001, p. 367) with teachers resorting to survival techniques that are not necessarily effective nor conducive to developing good classroom practice (Chubbuck, et al., 2001). This collapse of ideals coupled with ineffective classroom practice was evident in the data, and was strongly evident in the participants for whom emotional support was unavailable.

Participant 3 and 4, who appeared to feel the least emotionally supported, seemed to have lowered resilience against prevailing practice and had less motivation to implement their newly acquired knowledge and skills in general, but with particular regard to teaching reading. Each participant exhibited survival strategies described by the literature with P3 succumbing to ‘established practices within the school’ (Long, 2004) despite disagreeing entirely with the practises, and P4 resorting to ‘prior schooling experiences’ (Flores, 2001, p.145) in her attempt to teach phonics.

Participants 1 and 2, both of whom experienced a stronger collegial network of support and who felt more emotionally contained and satisfied, were observed to cope more readily with the daily stresses of their first year. While they did struggle, they were more resilient and less overwhelmed by their first year as they did not have to fight for emotional survival in addition to teaching. They seemed more confident and in both cases they were observed to apply what they had learnt in the classroom with good results.

5.4 Recommendations

The findings from this study have implications for the teaching of reading and resultant level of literacy achieved by South African learners. In light of the findings, the following tentative recommendations can be made:

5.4.1 For Schools

Recommendation for first year teacher support

An induction programme for first year teachers to familiarise them with administrative and operational procedures in the school is recommended.

This suggestion is based on P1's experience of an induction programme where administrative and operation procedures were explained. P1 found this useful as when she started her year; she did not have the additional load of finding out basic procedures such as how to make photocopies, or when to collect tuck-shop money. With this information already in place, she had more time to focus on her teaching.

Recommendation for the Foundation Phase literacy programme

Schools must consider adopting clearly defined Literacy programmes for the Foundation Phase. Except for the school where P1 taught, the literacy programmes at the schools were vague and fragmented. This resulted in the participants spending a lot of time trying to make sense of the literacy system in which they had to teach, and in attempting to correlate and integrate what they had learnt at university with prevailing practices at the school. This left the participants feeling frustrated, overwhelmed, and at times defeated, which impacted negatively on their teaching.

5.4.2 For pre-service training institutions

Recommendations for support

Pre-service training should include stress management courses. The newly qualified teachers in this study experienced high stress loads, but demonstrated few strategies to deal with this. Topics such as identifying symptoms of stress, designing prioritised “to do’ lists, and how to maintain physical health would be useful.

Teacher training institutions could also offer post training monthly discussion and support groups for first year teachers wherein they could share their experiences. A face-to-face support group for first year teachers, guided by a member of staff, would allow them to voice their anxieties in an emotionally safe forum.

Recommendations for literacy

Teacher training institutions should consider more generic literacy training rather than limiting students to one programme. Although the participants in this study referred to exploring other literacy programmes during their course, all but one participant felt the adherence to THRASS limiting, and in fact detrimental to their teaching as they did not have sufficient knowledge to adapt to other programmes in place in schools.

5.4.3 For government education departments

Education departments could make it compulsory for schools to develop and conduct short induction programmes for first year teachers. Participation in such a programme which simply outlined operational procedures within the school proved very useful for P1, and served to lessen some of her stress.

Introduction of yearlong induction programmes such as those running in the United Kingdom would be enormously beneficial. Newly qualified teachers in these programmes receive the following support:

- A 10 per cent reduction in their teaching timetable which gives them time to develop their teaching skills away from the classroom.
- Support from an induction tutor/mentor.

- Regular progress assessments and discussions at the end of each term with the tutor/mentor.

Although this recommendation describes a significant departure from current practice in South Africa, a teaching induction programme, where newly qualified teachers start their first year with a smaller teaching load, and are paired with a more experienced teacher would be beneficial in helping first year teachers negotiate their entry into the real world of teaching with appropriate support.

In addition, government should introduce an online e-mentoring system. One example is the “e-mentoring for Student Success,” developed by the New Teacher Centre in the U.K. This system pairs up first year teachers with suitable mentors and they communicate online. The benefits are that the time and place that mentoring occurs is flexible, the electronic forum suits students who are technologically attuned, and students appear to be more open about their difficulties within this forum. This form of mentoring and support is seen to be effective as stated in the research conducted by DeWert et al. (2003) which concluded that, “an online support community is an effective means of providing social, emotional, practical, and professional support to beginning teachers” (p. 319).

5.5 Suggestions for further research

The relationship between temperament and stress management emerged unexpectedly through this research, and while well beyond the scope of this report and therefore not presented in the data findings and presentation, suggests an avenue for further research. While observing the participants negotiate their first year, their different temperaments became increasingly apparent and tended to have an intriguing influence on their ability to cope. P1 presented with an easy-going, laconic and flexible temperament which allowed her to be realistic about what she could and could not achieve. P2 presented as an over-achiever with perfectionist tendencies. She needed to be in control, and struggled to accommodate change. She tended to be overly critical of herself and her colleagues. Observations and interviews revealed that her more rigid temperament added to her stress, and made the year more difficult. P3 was easily irritated and exhibited a lot of anger and frustration. This was not evident in her relationship with

her learners, but seemed to impact her collegial relationships. P4 presented as somewhat pessimistic and this coupled with virtually no support resulted in a difficult year for her and her learners. A study of how different temperaments affects one's ability to cope with stress would be useful in helping newly qualified teachers gain insight into how their temperaments contribute to their experience of their first year of teaching. Such a study could also provide recommendations about how to manage stress in ways congruent with their temperament.

5.6 Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore the relationship between the support received by newly qualified teachers and their ability to teach reading successfully, in the broader context of understanding the low literacy levels in South Africa. In response to this aim, this study concludes that a solid foundation of knowledge about reading, coupled with adequate and appropriate, professional, operational or administrative and most importantly emotional support results in newly qualified teachers being able to negotiate their first year more easily, and being able to implement their newly acquired skills and knowledge about reading effectively. Conversely, even with a good pre-service grounding, newly qualified teachers who receive inadequate or inappropriate support can resort to survival tactics which, as demonstrated by the data, negatively affects their ability to teach reading effectively.

The final statement of this study was voiced compellingly by P1, who wrote:

> "The more support I get, the more confident I feel, the better I teach and interact with my children" (Questionnaire, April, 2008).

References

Adams, M. J. (1990). *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print.* Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Alexander, P. .A. & Fox, E. (2004). *A Historical Perspective on Reading Research and Practice. From Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading* (5th ed.) International Reading Association.

Anderson, R.C. (1985). *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading*. Washington DC: The National Institute of Education.

Basit, T.N. (2003). *Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis.* Educational Research. 45(2), 143-154

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Bell, J. (1993). *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First Time Researchers in Education and Social Science*. Buckingham: OUP.

Bloor, M. & Wood, F. (2006). *Keywords in Qualitative Methods.* London: Sage Publications.

Borgatti, S. (2011). *Introduction to Grounded Theory*. www.analytictech.com. Accessed on 14 December 2011.

Burns, R. B. (2000). *Introduction to Research Methods.* New South Wales: Longman.

Chubbuck, S. M., Clift, R.T., Allard, J. & Quinlan J. (2001). Playing it Safe as a Novice Teacher: Implications for programs for new teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education.* 52(5), 365–376.

Chomsky, N. (1968).*Language and Mind*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.

Clay, M. (1991). *Becoming Literate: The Construction of Inner Control*. Auckland. Heinemann.

Cohen, L. & Manion, L. (1994). *Research Methods in Education*. London. Routeledge and Kegan Paul.

Cole, D. A. (1991). Preliminary support for a competency-based model of depression in children. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology,* 100(2), 181-190.

Creswell, J. W. & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry. *Theory into Practice:* 39(3), 124-131.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2005). Teaching as a Profession. International Lessons in teacher preparation and teacher development. *Phi Delta Kappa*. 87 (3), 237–240.

Davey, L. (1991). *The Application of Case Study Evaluations. Practical Assessment.* Research and Evaluation. 2 (9), 1-4.

Dechant, E. (1991). *Understanding and Teaching Reading: An Interactive Model.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The Research Act in Sociology*. London, Butterworth.

Denzin, N. K. (1978). The Logic of Naturalistic Enquiry. In N.K. Denzin (Ed.), *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Department of Education, (2002). *Revised National Curriculum for Grades R-3* (Schools), Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education (2008). *National Reading Strategy.* (Schools), Pretoria: Department of Education.

De Paul, A. (1998). *What to Expect Your First Year of Teaching*. U.S. Department of Education. Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

DeWert, M.H. et al. (2003). Safe Passages: Providing Online Support to Beginning Teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education.* 54(4), 311-320.

Dobson, D. J., & Dobson, K. S. (1981). Problem-solving strategies in depressed and nondepressed college students. *Cognitive Therapy & Research,* 5(3), 237-249.

Ehri, L.C. (1998). *Grapheme–phoneme knowledge is essential for learning to read words in English*. In J. L. Metsala & L. C. Ehri (Eds.). Word recognition in beginning literacy (pp. 3 – 40. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Ehri, L.C. (2002). *Phases of Acquisition in learning to read words and implications for teaching.* In R. Stainthorpe, P.Tomlinson (Eds.). Learning and Teaching Reading(pp. 7–28). London. British Diary of Educational Psychology.

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989). Building Theories from Case Study Research. Academy of Management. *The Academy of Management Review*. 14(4), 532-550.

Erlandson, D. A., Harris, E. L., Skipper, B. L., & Allen, S. D. 1993). *Doing naturalistic enquiry: A guide to methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Fayne, H.R. & Ortquist-Ahrens L. (2006). Entry year teachers inside and outside the academy. *College Teaching*. 54(4), 320-323.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001). Helping Novices Learn to Teach. Lessons from an exemplary support teacher. *Diary of Teacher Education*. 52(1), 17-30.

Flanagan, W. (1995). *Reading and Writing in Junior Classes.* Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Flores, M. A. (2001). Person and Context in Becoming a New Teacher. *Journal of Education for Teaching*. 27(2) 135-147.

Gauteng Department of Education, (2010). Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy. Gauteng, Gauteng Department of Education

Goodman, K. S. & Goodman, Y. M. (1980). *Learning to read is natural*. In L. B. Resnick & P. A. Weaver (Eds.), *Theory and practice of early reading.* (Vol. 1, pp. 137-154).Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hamilton, G. (2003). First-year teaching*. English Diary.* (High School Edition). Urbana. 93(2), 84-85.

Hammerness, K. (2003). Learning to Hope, or Hoping to Learn? The Role of Vision in the Early Professional Lives of teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 54(1), 43–56.

Hanuscin D. L., Michele L. H., (2008). *Mentoring New Teachers.* Science and Children. Summer. 45(9). Proquest Educational Journals. Pp. 56- 57

Harris, T. L & Hodges R. E. (1995). *The literacy dictionary: The vocabulary of reading and writing*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Heilman, A. W., Blair, T.R. & Rupley, W.H. (2002). *Principles and Practises of Teaching Reading (10th ed.)* Upper Saddle River, N.J. Merrill Prentice Hall.

Honig, B. (1996). *Teaching our children to read: The role of skills in a comprehensive reading programme*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc.

Hornsby, D. (2000). A *Closer Look at Guided Reading*: Australia: Eleanor Curtain Publishing.

Ingleton, C. (1999). *Emotion in Learning: A Neglected Dynamic*. HERDSA Annual National Conference, Melbourne, 12–15 July.

International Reading Association. (1999). *Using Multiple Methods of Reading Instruction*. Delaware.

Johns, J. L. & Lenski, S. D. (2005). *Improving Reading: Strategies and Resources.* Dubuque. USA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Johnston R. Connelly, V., & Watson, J. (1995). Chapter 2: Some effects on phonics teaching on early reading development, in: *Emergent Reading Messages for Teachers*. Editors: Owen P. Owen & Pumphrey P. London: The Falmer Press.

Kardos S.M. & Moore-Johnson S. (2007). On Their Own and Presumed Expert: New Teachers' Experience with Their Colleagues. *Teachers College Record* 109(9) 2083-2106.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Inter Views: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

La Berge, D. & Samuels, S. J. (1974). Towards a theory of automatic information processing in reading. *Cognitive Psychology*. 6, 293–323.

Le Maistre, C. (2000). Mentoring neophyte teachers: Lessons learned from experience. *Journal of Education*. 35(1), 83-87.

Lewis, J, Ritchie, J. (2003). Qualitative Research Practice: A guide for Social Science Students and Researchers. London: Sage Publications.

Liston, D., Whitcomb, J., & Borko, H.(2006). Too Little or Too Much: Teacher Preparation and the first years of teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(4), 351–358.

Long. S. (2004). Separating Rhetoric from Reality*. Journal of Teacher Education*. 55(2), 141–153.

McCormick, S. (1981). *Instructing Students Who Have Literacy Problems.* USA: MacMillan.

McKenzie, M. L. (2005). *Stories of Buoyancy and Despair. Five Beginning Teacher's Experiences In Their First Year In the Teaching Profession.* Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Australian Catholic University, Victoria, Australia.

Meijer, P. C., Zanting, A. & Verloop, N. (2002). How can student teachers elicit experienced teachers' practical knowledge? Tools, Suggestions and Significance. *Journal of Teacher Education.* 53(5) 406-419.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Moir, E. (1990). Phases of first year teaching. *California Department of Education*

Moore, R. (2003). Re-examining the field experiences of pre-service teachers. *Diary of Teacher Education.* 54(1) 31-42.

Mueller, A. & Skamp, K. (2003). Teacher Candidates Talk. Listen to the unsteady beat of the unsteady heart. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 54(5) 428-440.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office

Neuman, L. W. (1997). '*Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches'.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, http://edworkforce.house.gov/issues/107th/education/nclb/nclb.htm accessed on 15 December 2007

Opie, C. (2004). *Doing Educational Research: A Guide for First Time Researchers*. London: London.

Patton, M. Q. (1987). *How to use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation.* Newbury Park: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pikulski, J. .J. & Chard, D. .J. (2005). Fluency: Bridge between decoding and comprehension. *The Reading Teacher.* 58(6)510-519.

Plummer, K. (1983). *Documents for life.* London: Allen and Unwin.

Poapoulis–Tzelepi, P. (1995). Chapter 3: Making Sense of Writing. *Emergent Reading Messages for Teachers*. Editors, Owen P. & Pumphrey, P. London: The Falmer Press.

Pressley, M. (1998). *Reading instruction that works. The case for balanced reading.* New York: Guilford Press.

Pressley, M. (2002). *Metacognition and self regulated comprehension*. A.E. Farstrup & S.J. Samuels (Eds.). What research has to say about reading instruction (3rd ed., pp. 291 – 309). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Protheroe, N. (2007). *Emotional Support and Student Learning.* Principal, March/April, pp. 50–54.

Roberts, G. (1989). *Teaching Children to Read and Write*. Opus, Oxford.

Rumelhart, D. E. (1980). *Schemata: The building blocks of cognition*. In R. J. Spiro, B. C. Bruce, & W. F. Brewer. (Eds.), *Theoretical issues in reading comprehension: Perspectives from cognitive psychology, linguistics, artificial intelligence, and education* (pp. 33–58). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Schwartz, J. I. (1988). *Encouraging Early Literacy: An Integrated Approach to Reading and Writing in N3*. New Hampshire. Heinemann.

Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. Sage: London.

Smith, J. & Alcock, A. (1990). *Revisiting Literacy: Helping Readers and Writers.* Buckingham. OUP.

Snape, D. & Spencer, L. (2003). The foundations of qualitative research. In J. Ritchie & J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers* (pp. 1-23). London, Sage.

Strauss, A. L. and Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques, (*2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Stuurman, A. (1999). 'Case Study Methods', in J.P. Keeves & G. Lakomski (Eds) *Issues in Educational Research*. Oxford: Pergamo.

Teale, W. H. & Yokota J. (2000). Beginning reading and writing: perspectives on instruction. *Beginning Reading and Writing*. Strickland, D. S. and Mandel Morrow, L., (Eds.) Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

Veenman, S. (1984). Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers. *Review of Educational Research.* 54(2), 143–178.

Walonick, D.S. (2000). *Survival Statistics*. Bloomington: Statpac.

Weiss, R. (1994). *Learning From Strangers; The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press.

Whitelaw, S. De Beer J., Henning E. (2008). *New Teachers in a Pseudocommunity of Practitioners. Education as Change.* 12(2), 25–40.

Wray, D. & Medwell, J. (1991). *Literacy and Language in the Primary Years.* London, Routledge.

Wray, D., Medwell, J., Poulson, L. & Fox, R. (2002). *Teaching literacy effectively in the Primary School*. London Routledge Falmer.

Yin, R. (1984). *Case study research: Design and Methods* (1st ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing.

Zins J. E., Weissberg R.P., Wang M.C. & Walberg H.J. (2004). *Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning.* Teachers College Press. New York.

Appendices

Appendix i: Communication with principals and participants

Appendix i (a): Letter of permission: School principal

Date_____

Dear _____

I am a registered Masters student, currently busy with the completion of my research project in the area of Curriculum Issues. The purpose of my research study is to investigate how newly qualified students in their first year of teaching integrate their ability to teach reading in the context of the existing reading practice of a well-resourced school. In order to achieve my purpose, I am requesting permission to track first year teachers as they embark on their teaching practice at your school.

This process may entail:

- In depth interviews with the first year teacher and a brief interview with the principal and HOD to ascertain details regarding the school's context;
- Questionnaires to be completed by these teachers;
- Class visits to observe the first year teacher whilst she is delivering reading related lessons.

I am working under the supervision of Dr Jean Place (Principal Tutor) who has recommended both the first year teacher as well as your school as being suitable for my research project.

I would like to state on record that this research is in no way intended to interrogate or comment on, in any way, the school's current reading practices nor the first year teacher's performance. Added to this, as part of the ethical practises of a research project, confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained at all times by use of pseudonyms and restricted access to all raw data.

Yours sincerely

_____

Debbie de Jong

Student number: 84/1337/8

Appendix i (b): Research outline: School principal.

Date_____

Dear_____

Thank you for allowing me access to your school and teachers for my research study. In brief, this is the procedure envisaged for the study to provide you with a full understanding as to the extent of the participation of yourself and your teachers as well as the data collection procedures I hope to use.

Questionnaires

Either the Principal or HOD of the Foundation Phase will be encouraged to complete one questionnaire. The participant teacher is also requested to complete a questionnaire.

Interviews

There will be one follow up interview for the respondents of each questionnaire for no longer than an hour. The participant teacher will be interviewed regularly throughout the study. It is envisaged that I will meet with her at least once every 10 days. These interviews will take place on the school premises.

Observations

The participant teacher will be observed at least once a week for no longer than an hour. This observation will take the form of non-participative observation where the researcher will not become involved in the classroom activities.

Journals

The participant teacher will be encouraged to keep up a weekly journal.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Debbie de Jong
Masters student (84 1337/8)

Appendix i (c): Participants' Information Sheet

Date _____

Dear _____

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of my research is to investigate how you, as a newly qualified teacher in your first year of teaching integrate your newly acquired ability to teach reading in the context of the existing reading practice of your school.

I hope that you can assist me with the following requirements for my study:
1. Completion of a questionnaire at the beginning of the study.
2. Permission to observe you in the classroom for an hour at least once a week over a period of approximately 4 months.
3. At least one interview every two weeks (at a venue of your convenience). These interviews will be tape recorded (with your permission) and transcribed by me. A copy of the transcription will be forwarded to you for verification.
4. A weekly journal entry where you write down your experiences of support for the week. (These can be emailed).

Please note: your identity will be protected at all times by use of a pseudonym. Furthermore, access to the data you provide is restricted to myself and my supervisor.

Your involvement and time are greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

_____

Debbie de Jong
Masters student (84 1337/8)

Appendix i (d): Participants' Consent Form.

I _____(full name and surname) hereby agree to participate in the research project, *A case study of newly qualified teachers' experiences of support in a literacy classroom.*

I understand that the information collected from this study is for research purposes only.

I hereby agree to

- Completing a questionnaire.
- Being observed in my classroom.
- Being interviewed and having these interviews tape recorded and transcribed. I understand that I have access to these transcriptions.
- Complete a weekly journal.

I understand that my responses will be treated with confidentiality and that my identity and that of my school will be protected by use of pseudonyms.

I understand that my participation is purely voluntary.

Signature_____Date: _____

Researcher: _____Date: _____

Appendix ii: Data collection tools

Appendix ii (a): School Context Questionnaire

<table>
<tr><td>Name</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Position in school</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Date</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td>School</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td>In which suburb is the school situated?</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td>How many learners attend your school?</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">How many classes are there per grade?</td><td>Grade R</td><td>Grade 1</td><td>Grade 2</td><td>Grade 3</td></tr>
<tr><td>Grade 4</td><td>Grade 5</td><td>Grade 6</td><td>Grade 7</td></tr>
<tr><td>What is the approximate number of learners per class?</td><td>Foundation phase</td><td colspan="2">Intermediate phase</td><td>Senior Phase</td></tr>
<tr><td>What is the Foundation Phase LOLT?</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">Approximately how many learners speak English as a First Additional Language? (please circle)</td><td colspan="4">81% - 100%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">61% – 80%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">61% – 80%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">21% – 40%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">0% – 20 %</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Does your school have a library?</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td></tr>
</table>

Are learners allowed to borrow books from the library to take home?		YES		NO
Are learners allowed to borrow books to read/do research at school?		YES		NO
Are learners allowed to use the library only during library/media lessons?		YES		NO
Does your school have a computer centre?		YES		NO
Do learners have access to the internet at school?		YES		NO
Does your school have a computer-based reading support programme?		YES		NO
Does your school have in place a set practice for teaching reading? For example Thrass, Jolly Phonics or Letterland?		YES		NO
Do all teachers in the Foundation Phase follow this programme?		YES		NO
Do Foundation Phase teachers make use of sets of graded readers? If so, which series?		YES		NO
Are there enough graded readers for all learners?		YES		NO
Do the Foundation Phase classrooms have a reading corner?		YES		NO
Do learners have access to reading materials in the classroom which they can read in their free time?		YES		NO
Is there a designated recreational reading period built into the school's timetable?		YES		NO
Are learners' parents literate?	100%	75%	50%	25%
Do learners have access to reading materials at home?	100%	75%	50%	25%
Are learners members of public libraries?	100%	75%	50%	25%
Does your school offer parents with guidance as to how to help their children with reading homework? If YES, how is this done? (parent workshops, individual discussion etc)				

Thank you for your time. Your help is much appreciated.

School context questionnaire: Completed example

learners attend your school?				
How many classes are there per grade?	Grade R 0	Grade 1 4	Grade 2 4	Grade 3 4
	Grade 4 4	Grade 5 4	Grade 6 4	Grade7 4
What is the approximate number of learners per class?	Foundation phase 27	Intermediate phase	Senior Phase	
What is the Foundation Phase LOLT?	English			
Approximately how many learners speak English as a First Additional Language? (please circle)	81% - 100%			
	61% – 80%			
	61% – 80% 50-60% ✓			
	21% – 40%			
	0% – 20 %			
Does your school have a library?		YES ✓	NO	
Are learners allowed to borrow books from the library to take home?		YES ✓	NO	
Are learners allowed to borrow books to read/do research at school?		YES ✓	NO	
Are learners allowed to use the library only during library/media lessons?		YES	✓ NO	

Does your school have a computer centre?		YES ✓		NO
Do learners have access to the internet at school?		YES		NO
Does your school have a computer-based reading support programme?		YES ✓		NO
Does your school have in place a set practice for teaching reading? For example Thrass, Jolly Phonics or Letterland?		YES		✓ NO
Do all teachers in the Foundation Phase follow this programme?		YES		✓ NO
Do Foundation Phase teachers make use of sets of graded readers? If so, which series? mixed		YES ✓		NO
Are there enough graded readers for all learners?		YES		✓ NO
Do the Foundation Phase classrooms have a reading corner?		YES ✓ some		NO
Do learners have access to reading materials in the classroom which they can read in their free time?		YES ✓		NO
Is there a designated recreational reading period built into the school's timetable?		YES		✓ NO
Are learners' parents literate?	100%	75%	50%	25%
Do learners have access to reading materials at home?	100%	75% ✓	50%	25%
Are learners members of public libraries?	100%	75%	50%	✓ 25%

Does your school offer parents with guidance as to how to help their children with reading homework? If YES, how is this done? (parent workshops, individual discussion etc)

If it is done, then only in a letter format.

Thank you for your time. Your help is much appreciated.

Appendix ii (b): Participant's Questionnaire

Name: _____Date:_____

1. What grade do you teach?

   _____

2. How many learners are in your class?

   _____

3. How many free periods are scheduled into your timetable?

   _____

4. How many afternoons per week are you involved in extra murals?

   _____

5. Approximately how many hours a day to you spend planning lessons?

   _____

6. Do you plan alone?

   _____

Aspirations and expectations

What made you want to become a teacher?
Were your experiences of school as a young learner positive or negative?
What kind of relationship did you envisage with your learners before you started teaching?
What did you expect the learners to be like?
Have these expectations been met?
What did you expect to be your main areas of difficulty when you started teaching?
Has this been true?

What did you expect to be the most enjoyable part of teaching in your first year?
Has this been true?
What did you expect from your relationship with colleagues, HOD's and/or principals?
Write down 5 words that describe your experiences as a first year teacher so far this year.
Issues of support
Do you have a mentor or a designated support teacher?
What kind of guidance and support have you be given by your school?
What kind of support has been the most helpful so far?
Are you supported in implementing what you learnt in pre-service training?
How do you think the amount and type of support you receive affects your relationship with your learners?
How do you think the amount and type of support you receive affects your ability to teach?

Knowledge of reading

Part a: Checklist

In your reading training programme, how much information did you receive on the following aspects of reading?

	1 Very little	2 Medium to little	3 Medium	4 Medium to a lot	5 Extensive
Link between spoken language and reading					
Activation of prior knowledge					
Choice of texts					
Choosing text levels					
Assessing reading					
Decoding					
Phonemic awareness					
Encouraging motivation and interest					
Comprehension strategies					
Support for LSEN learners.					

Knowledge of reading

Part b

Which reading programme were you exposed to during your teacher training?
Which reading programme is used at your school?
Does your training correlate with your school's reading policy?
If not, what do you do?
Do you feel confident enough to assert your beliefs about what you believe is good teaching practice?
Are you able to teach reading in the way you were taught during teacher training?
What do you consider the 5 essential components of reading?
Did you feel prepared to teach reading?
Do you feel confident about what reading materials to choose?
Do you feel confident about planning reading lessons?
How do you assess reading?
How were you taught to assess reading?
How do you feel your learners are responding to and learning from your lessons?
Is there anything that you feel you are discouraged to do that you think would improve your teaching of reading?

Thank you for your time. Your help is much appreciated.

Participants' questionnaire: Completed example

Please note, the final question in Reading Part b was left incomplete by the participant.

Aspirations and expectations

What made you want to become a teacher?
I love children & music. I wanted to make a difference I met a wonderful, motivated teacher and wanted to be the same.
Were your experiences of school as a young learner positive or negative?
positive
What kind of relationship did you envisage with your learners before you started teaching?
friendly but firm. could confide in me if needed. Learn through experiences & having fun.
What did you expect the learners to be like?
full of energy. eager to learn & do fun things.
Have these expectations been met?
Yes + No. They are full of energy but never settle; get over excitied at anything not boring and can't concentrate.
What did you expect to be your main areas of difficulty when you started teaching?

Instructions

Has this been true?

No. I picked it up pretty quickly

What did you expect to be the most enjoyable part of teaching in your first year?

Reading
station learning (in groups at 4-5 areas → rotate).

Has this been true?

No. Don't have time for reading (groups)
No time to compile station activities

What did you expect from your relationship with colleagues, HOD's and/or principals?

Professional
supportive.

Write down 5 words that describe your experiences as a first year teacher so far this year.

Tiring
Overworked
Underpaid
No time
Angry

Issues of support

Do you have a mentor or a designated support teacher?
Yes
What kind of guidance and support have you be given by your school?
None unless you ask
What kind of support has been the most helpful so far?
Speaking to the other 1st year teacher. Asking PF HOD (Carol Thomas gr 2T)
Are you supported in implementing what you learnt in preservice training?
No. everyone thinks they are good ideas and want to learn but no time.
How do you think the amount and type of support you receive affects your relationship with your learners?
about 50% if you are stressed, not prepared, irritable. you take it out on them if they don't listen.
How do you think the amount and type of support you receive affects your ability to teach?
Yes. If you get planning a while in advance, you can try to be prepared. If they share what they are doing/how teaching x then it helps with ideas/experien

Reading

Part a

In your reading training programme, how much information did you receive on the following aspects of reading?

	1 Very little	2 Medium to little	3 Medium	4 Medium to a lot	5 Extensive
Link between spoken language and reading					✓
Activation of prior knowledge				✓	
Choice of texts				✓	
Choosing text levels				✓	
Assessing reading				✓	
Decoding					✓
Phonemic awareness					✓
Encouraging motivation and interest					✓
Comprehension strategies					✓
Support for LSEN learners.					

Reading

Part b

Which reading programme were you exposed to during your teacher training?
Thrass
Which reading programme is used at your school?
? I don't know. I think letter land.
Does your training correlate with your school's reading policy?
No
If not, what do you do?
I just try to get through swapping books and hearing each child read once a week (def not ideal!)
Do you feel confident enough to assert your beliefs about what you believe is good teaching practice?
yes
Are you able to teach reading in the way you were taught during teacher training?
sometimes (TIME)
What do you consider to be 5 essential components of reading?

Appendix ii (c): Observation schedule

Date: _____

Time:_____

Lesson content: _____

Materials used (worksheets, basal readers/other texts)

_____

State of the classroom

_____

Arrangement of learners (groups, individual, pairs)

_____

Possible influence of being observed

Teacher:

_____

Learners:

_____

Sequence of activities

- Interpersonal relations
- Information flow (one way/two way)
- Non-verbal communication (Tone, body language)
- Learners' time on task
- Learners' response to lesson

Probe questions arising from the observation

Observation schedule completed example

Date: 5 June 2008

Time: 10: 30 am

Lesson content: Grade 2. Literacy: Parts of Speech

Materials used (worksheets, basal readers/other texts)

Each learner has a worksheet divided into columns headed with 4 parts of speech.

Arrangement of learners (groups, individual, pairs)

The learners are arranged in groups. In the groups they work collaboratively and individually depending on the demands of the task.

Possible influence of being observed

Teacher: This teacher is calm and confident. She is not exhibiting any overt influence, but she may be a little anxious.

Learners: The learners have been observed previously and other than saying hello, they are ignoring the observer. At times they ask for help or ask a question from the observer, so are don't seem to feel threatened.

Sequence of activities

1. The lesson begins with an introduction of what the learners are expected to do.
2. Activity 1 is learning to sing "Row Row Row your Boat." The whole class practises the words and then each group sings as a round. The words to the round are on the board.
3. All but one group then categorise the words from the song onto a worksheet. They do this in groups, and are encouraged to help each other.
4. At the same time, one group moves to the carpet where the teacher conducts Guided Reading. Each group member has the same book (The Magic Porridge Pot) based on their ability level. The teacher does some predication from the front cover. Each learner then reads a section alone quietly, but can ask for help from a peer.
5. After this practice time, each learner gets a chance to read a section aloud – and has to answer questions. Then each learner reads their section to a partner.

6. As the learners practise their reading, the teacher moves between the rest of the class and her small reading group, offering help and having to discipline some rowdy learners.

- **Interpersonal relations:**
  Warm respectful, polite, kind but firm.
- **Information flow (one way/two way).**
  Two - way. This is an interactive learning environment
- **Non-verbal communication: (Tone, body language)**
  Match between verbal and non-verbal language.
- **Learners time on task.**
  High – at least 80%
- **Learners' response to lesson**
  Happy and absorbed. This is a successful lesson.

Probe question

How do you assess the learners' ability and know which level of books to use for each ability group.

Appendix ii (d): Journal format

Week _____

Support I felt I needed this week

(When and why)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Support I received this week. (Who from and what type)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Journal format: Completed example

Week November

Support I felt I needed this week

(When and why)

Last week I got lumbered with a grade 0. This family was given a favour and a child in grade nought is in my class. I have to babysit. Because of who I am I am trying to get activities like perceptual and play dough to help her. I wasn't told what I must do and I wasn't told how to do it. I don't think this is very fair. I'm not specialized in ECD. I was just told to do it. Here we go there she is with no indication of what to do. I asked if she needed a report that was told not to worry about it. That a child comes from outside the school and is here as a special favour. I have no idea why. There was no discussion now a input from the principle just the Secretary spoke to me about. I find this really annoying.

Support I received this week. (Who from and what type)

No one helped me with this, no none.

Appendix ii (e): Example of interview

Interview 10th June 2008

R: Researcher

P1: Participant 2

Transcript

R: How many frees do you have in a week?

P1: We get about 6 frees of 25 minutes long.

R: How long?

P1: Of 25 minutes, but three of those are used for meetings with the HOD and another meeting with the other staff. We only actually have 3 frees.

R: So the rest of that is what we call fact-to-face. That's a lot.

P1: Ja, It's very intense.

R: Do they go to other lessons?

P1: No, that's actually been my frustration, I'm, it's been extremely frustrating for me. They go to CAMI maths for an hour a week, then PE for 50 minutes week and a lesson where the Grade 11's take them for bible, they have media, they have drama, they have music, they have Zulu. When I calculate the amount of time they are out of class, it's a whole day and a bit and 2 assemblies - one main one with the high school on a Tuesday and Wednesday a Foundation Phase assembly. So they are hardly ever in class – it's extremely difficult. (FRUSTRATED THAT HER TIME WITH HER LEARNERS IS SO FRAGMENTED. SHE FEELS THAT SHE DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO IMPLEMENT WHAT SHE HAS LEARNT.)

R: So just as you start teaching they wander off somewhere.

P1: Like today's been fine because they've been out only once but it was between breaks. So like I started a comprehension and they had to finish after break – and they're tired. I don't think they get the best.

R: It's very fragmented.

P1; Ja, ja and then Tuesday's the same and Wednesdays I only see them for the morning and the rest of the day they are out.

R: Some teachers would be jumping for joy.

P1: That's another thing. I have to take Grade 3 drama which is difficult. I did do drama – I studied drama but the lecturer was terrible. We put on plays and things but I still don't know how to teach drama. I find it extremely difficult, I'm having to plan my own lesson and having to plan the drama lessons and try and do, an finish things.

(SENSE OF BEING VERY OVERWHELMED)

R; So it loads you.

P1; Ja, even though your kids are not always here, you still have a lot of teaching to do.

R: Tell me more about the drama.

P1: My one subject was drama but there doesn't seem to be a syllabus.

R: You don't have outcomes?

P1: No, um, drama yes. I can see my outcomes, but they're very vague.

R: Do you work with the NCS curriculum?

P1: Yes.

R: So you do, there are very few outcomes.

(SEEMS VERY UNSURE AND HESITANT WHEN TALKING ABOUT THE NCS DRAMA OUTCOMES)

P1: I would have been fine if we had learnt how to teach drama at varsity. I think my teachers were ridiculous.

R: Do you teach and plan drama with anyone?

P1; No. at the beginning of the year there was this guy who took drama. He showed me his file but it's his work and it's hard to work off.

R: So you really are on your own here.

P1: And what's really difficult there – while I'm off loading – is that I don't have a classroom and because I only see the children 25 minutes a week I don't know their names. I'm still struggling – and it's in the foyer that echoes and the high school cooking is there and the teachers walk in and out, 'cos the bathrooms are right there and I mean the classes are going wild.

R: That's horrible.

P1: I feel like I'm getting nowhere.

R: Mmm – and do you feel as if anyone is going to turn around and say "What are you doing? Why aren't you doing it properly?"

P1: No (laughs) thank goodness.

R: Is it an assessed subject?

P1: Ja.

R: So that's the drama on your own. And the planning for your day to day teaching?

P1: It's been hard. We have 25 minutes when we actually - all the teachers have frees so we try to make that out prep meeting. But in 25 minutes you can't get anything done.

R: Do you try and prep for a week or a month?

P1: Ja- for a week – the longer we have been going – it's not working – and so like - we try to each take a subject – which is difficult for me because I like to have input on everything – I don't like to just get something – but it seems like that's what we are having to do.

R: So that's definitely not by choice.

P1: Ja.

R: So, if you have to go ahead and do the numeracy are they prepared for you to just go ahead and do your own ideas?

P1: Ja, Ja.

R: So if you create a worksheet or activity and say here we are, they're not going to say we don't like this is not how I did it before.

P1: No not at all. Although, my teacher – um – is also very - she likes her things …

R: What's your teacher?

P1: (name) – sorry - my support teacher – she's the grade head – and she's – well - we discussed it – she likes – you know, she's its difficult for her to get worksheets – she likes her worksheets – and I must admit I feel the same – I like my fonts this way and I like this format , you know what I mean. Ja, I'm ok with not having not do it all by myself, and then next year look at things I haven't looked at this year

R: But it's not ideal for you obviously. So do all the classes do the same work?

P1: Ja we do but it's very….there is a lot of freedom - if I want – for example at the beginning of the year I did – um - we were doing the national symbols and I was able to prepare a whole thing where we had groups and I gave the work and I emailed all the pictures and all the different work cards that I wanted to

the other teachers – and we all landed up doing this – and if I want to do the numeracy I could, but as I mentioned before time is a problem.

R: Um, so the planning sounds like it's quite equal, you don't have someone saying this is what has to be done in this style in this way.

P1: No, no.

R: That's great.

P1: And I mean like if (name) was to do the Maths - um – she could give it to me and I could redo the whole worksheet, I could do whatever, as long as there's some standard.

R: The concepts.

P1: Ja, are the same, but the problem is because everyone is just going day-by-day – so you get the worksheet on the day.

R: So you don't have the time.

P1: Yes – to change it.

R: Do you – or the school – do you teach in themes?

P1: Yes we do.

R: So you do Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills around a theme?

P1: Ja.

R: Do you enjoy that?

P1: Um, it depends. Like we did water for 4 or 3 weeks.

R: That's long.

P1: Ja, but then it a seems like it's not long enough – like I had a whole lot of experiments that I did with water. I went and did them all nicely- I feel terrible – I've never got around to doing them in class – and then I thought fine, I'll send them home, and I've never got 'round to doing that either. So, um – there are other things I would like to tackle – even though we are doing water – it would be nice to do something else.

R: Like?

P1: I dunno, I'm still getting used to it I think.

R: There is a lot.

P1: I struggle to - um – I think because it is my first year I can't always see where we are going with it – I feel forced to …..

R: Do you have a year planner?

P1: We do, we do… um..ja.I'm contradicting myself – it's on there but it's not - it doesn't tell me when I will be doing adjectives.

R: You don't feel it's a proper road map.

P1: Ja, I feel a bit at odds. But last week, 2 weeks before were my worst 2 weeks, I got (and you were sick) Ja I think it contributed - but I got up thinking oh my goodness – I'm terrible I just thought, I have to have good day – and then the last week was brilliant – so..

R: Teaching has a lot to do with attitude.

P1: And planning,…..I planned – as soon as I don't know what I'm doing – actually that's what also contributed – we missed a prep meeting – so I didn't know what we were doing and I didn't even know what I was doing the next day. I had no idea.

R: Planning is really important. If you are not organised and planned everyone gets irritated, the kids and teacher.

P1: Ja, I feel like I do not have enough control over the planning.

R: Do you think it's because you are a first year?

P1: I don't know, - no I feel it's time – because of time – if we could sit for like and hour and say this is what we are doing ...

R: Other schools seem to have specific planning times.

P1: Ja – like during hymn singing – ja – like we work and we're planning outside of school but because we've all got different extra murals um we all do 4 hours of extra murals a week. So, like if I'm doing netball then it's (name) free day.

R: Management should plan this better.

P1: Ja, and I was, I've always – I'm already complaining - in the beginning – I think – I don't know. I felt bad that I'm like – a first year teacher and I'm moaning – but (name) is now actually speaking to the head and maybe take drama for 6 months and music for the next 6 months so that it not all new drama and all new music.

R: It would be great to have solid blocks of planning time to bring your ideas and your concerns.

P1: Ja but I've got nothing to bring yet.

R: You've got ideas.

P1: No I only generate ideas through the meetings. In my first term I was more enthusiastic than I am now.

R: Do you think you're being valued enough with your ideas and what you bring from last year.

P1: Um...

R: Are they calling on you for ideas?

P1: Yes shame they are – and they are – um in the first term I was definitely more enthusiastic - and they – um - we actually, we all got going - we were on like a high. But this term just seems to be different and I think I'm definitely feeling frustrated and that's why I think that next year - once I know everything – I know this is what we are doing.

R: This is how it works.

P1: I'll just feel much better and I just keep telling myself that.

R: You get a bigger picture.

P1: Ja that's it.

R: How many extra murals do you do?

P1: I'm doing the netball now – um then a Monday and Thursday and on a Tuesday and Wednesday I take my class on my own for extra murals.

R: Do you have to do that?

P1: Um – no we don't – but they've never come to me because I was doing, only doing 2 hours – and they never ever came to me and said I wasn't doing 4 hours – but I just wanted to do extra murals anyway.

R: What do you do?

P1: On a Tuesday I do extra maths and literacy – I did guided reading with them and we look at punctuation and just – ja, and then with maths we do what we will be doing – I introduce them – so that they are ahead. Actually I only have one little girl – that's the problem – they're all doing extra murals - so I can't organise the support class properly - so it's almost feeling like a waste of time

R: I promise you it's like this in all schools. You try to get stuff organised – you tried to get on track and you just can't because everyone is running around. You've actually got very little time to plan.

P1: Mmmm, and it extremely difficult - that's why – sometimes I get – I just think I have high expectations of myself.