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DISSERTATION FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

**Observing literacy pedagogies: A comparison of
how first- and fourth-year preservice teachers
analyse practice**

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Abstract

South Africa is facing a literacy crisis. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2021 found that 81% of the country's 10-year-olds are unable to read for meaning. If learners do not acquire literacy competence in the Foundation Phase, the rest of their schooling may be adversely affected. To improve literacy outcomes in South African schools, future teachers must do more than replicate ineffective practices. They need to notice and interpret the literacy pedagogies used and be able to think about their effectiveness. This research offers insights into the extent to which by their final year of study, preservice teachers have developed the capacity to describe, interpret and appraise reading pedagogies. Importantly, this includes an examination of what they consider significant and how they leverage specialised insights to interpret their observations.

This is a comparative study of three cohorts of South African Foundation Phase pre-service teachers at different levels of their training, all watching and commenting on the *same* lesson. I use Legitimation Code Theory to compare lesson observation reports written by Foundation Phase preservice teachers who were at the start and end of their teacher education. The findings indicate that seventy percent of final-year participants demonstrated a deeper and more nuanced understanding of reading pedagogies, showing a progression in their ability to describe, interpret, and appraise literacy teaching practices. They demonstrated an ability to recruit theoretical insights to “delve deeper,” bringing bodies of knowledge they have learnt in their coursework to bear on observations of practice. Only 34% of first-year participants demonstrated this ability. However, approximately 30% of final-year participants did not offer a deeper analysis of what they observed. The findings point towards difficulties with “untangling” word recognition from language comprehension whilst at the same time being able to recognise their connection to one another, and their equal contribution to reading comprehension.

These findings suggest that preservice teachers require greater guidance to see theory in practice, and practice in theory when it comes to the teaching of reading. Teacher educators should find ways to design interactions that shape preservice teachers' ways of thinking about the teaching of reading. In addition, the content and delivery of the language and literacy coursework offered within ITE programmes should be consistently evaluated to ensure an alignment with evidence-based practices and the most recent advances in reading sciences.

Declaration:

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a horizontal stroke at the end.

15th day of March, 2024

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List of Abbreviations:

BEd	Bachelor of Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education, Republic of South Africa
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LCT	Legitimation Code Theory
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications
PrimTEd	Primary Teacher Education Project
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background to the study

The preparation of Foundation Phase teachers who can enable the learning of languages and literacies is a national priority (Van Staden & Roux, 2022). After the release of the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy assessment (PIRLS), which found that the majority of the South African learners (78%) could not read for meaning at the end of Grade 4, President Cyril Ramaphosa asserted that the ability of South African children to read with comprehension by the age of 10 is of utmost importance. In 2021, the PIRLS results revealed that 81% of South African learners in Grade 4 could not read for meaning. This confirms that reading proficiency in South Africa remains in a crisis.

Reading for meaning is a fundamental and complex literacy skill, and effective reading instruction “requires extensive knowledge and skills across the components of word recognition, language comprehension, spelling, and writing” (Moats, 2020, p. 6). An inter-province study of language and literacy paradigms and practices in Foundation Phase classrooms found that teachers were unable to “conceptualise age-appropriate and challenging exercises and writing tasks, within the confines of the curriculum” (Prinsloo et al., 2015, p. 142). Therefore, a “dominance of low-order literacy” (*ibid.*, p.139) in both reading and writing prevailed. Similarly, Hoadley’s (2012 and 2016) analyses of small-scale research studies show a consistent pattern of classroom practices affecting language learning and teaching in South African primary schools. Hoadley identifies specific practices that reveal teachers’ knowledge limitations and impact learning. These include minimal use of books or written material by learners, the dominance of oral discourse, the slow pace of teaching, and inadequate assessment methods. With regards to the teaching of reading in particular, it was found that although teachers had a number of methods and procedures at their disposal, they “failed to integrate these procedures into evident *principles* for the teaching of reading ... [therefore], [learners] in these classes were being given access to an extremely basic and impoverished notion of what it means to read and a restrictive set of resources with which to critically and pleasurably engage with text” (Hoadley, 2016 p. 199 - 200 emphasis in original). Some instructional shifts have occurred in the reading landscape over the past few years, however, there are aspects to reading pedagogy that appear “resistant to

change” (Hoadley & Boyd, 2022, p.127), such as slow pacing, a lack of appropriate feedback, and a lack of differentiation. With prevalent literacy practices such as these, future teachers may perpetuate the problem if they observe teaching practices uncritically and merely replicate these kinds of ineffectual practices in their own classrooms.

While various international assessments confirm that South African *learners* demonstrate poor academic performance in literacy, of equal concern is the Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality’s (SACMEQ) finding that South Africa’s *teacher* reading score is in decline (Department of Basic Education, 2017). This suggests a crisis in Foundation Phase teaching and learning that affects the foundations of the entire education system. Several factors contribute to the aforementioned challenges, including long-standing socio-political issues in the country (Pretorius, 2002) and the fact that most learners are not taught in their home language. However, there is mounting proof that unstructured teaching methods play a significant role in the low levels of learner achievement in South African schools (Fleisch & Schöer, 2014; Hoadley, 2017; Shalem et al., 2018). As stated by Pretorius & Spaull (2022):

The smoking gun at the crime scene of South Africa’s literacy crisis is the fact that our learners do not acquire the most elementary building blocks of the literate world when they need to: in Grades 1 and 2. Policy attention must turn to what is happening in [Foundation Phase] classrooms that prevents this most basic knowledge from being acquired (p.16)

This study analyses differences in how first and final-year preservice teachers describe, interpret and appraise the reading pedagogies in a lesson they observe. Table 1 shows that paired with phonics, reading is one of the core language and literacy skills that must be taught in the Foundation Phase, as outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011):

Table 1.1: Literacy skills as outlined in the Home Language Curriculum (DBE 1 p. 8)

<i>Listening and Speaking</i>	<i>Thinking and Reasoning and Language Structure and Use</i> are integrated into all four language skills
<i>Reading and Phonics</i>	

Writing and Handwriting	
-------------------------	--

Reading and phonics encompass a multiplicity of subskills (see Hochman & Wexler, 2017; Graham & Harris, 2019, Hennessy, 2021; Moats, 2020). For example, in order to facilitate learners' comprehension of written text, teachers must support the development of background knowledge, word meanings, sentence structures and abstract reasoning (Moats, 2023, p. 9). The ability to convert print to speech (orally or silently) is equally complex, involving letter-sound knowledge, phonemic awareness skills and phonological blending skills to name but a few (Kilpatrick, 2014). All of these skills must be developed and strengthened at Foundation Phase level, and beyond.

If South Africa is to achieve an upward trajectory in reading outcomes, the literacy crisis must be addressed. Reading is the foundation for all academic learning, and success in learning to read is largely dependent upon how well learners are taught (Willis et al., 2022). If future teachers observe and adopt ineffective practices without critical examination, they may inadvertently perpetuate the existing problems in reading instruction, thereby contributing to the ongoing challenges facing the country, rather than facilitating positive change.

1.2. Different approaches to addressing the crisis in early grade reading

In this section, I focus on two distinct approaches to addressing the crisis in early-grade reading in South African education. I discuss the potential limitations of relying on prescriptive protocols, emphasising the importance of a knowledge-based approach to teacher education for impactful intervention and long-term professionalisation.

There have been numerous interventions to address the reading crisis in South African education: one directed mainly as an in-service teacher intervention, the other is part of a pre-service teacher initiative. Two of them will be considered here. One approach foregrounds what Bernstein (1975) called 'rules of realisation,' whereas the other foregrounds both 'rules of realisation' and 'rules of recognition.' The rules of recognition "enable the recognition of a context as a specialised kind" (Moore, 2013, p. 138). Recognition rules (within the context of teaching) relate to the perception of practice. Teachers who have acquired the rules of recognition will be

able to *recognise* and determine the appropriate use of pedagogies within a classroom context. Realisation rules enable the capacity to realise, within [a] context, the practice appropriate to it. (Moore, 2013). Teachers who have acquired the rules of realisation are able to *enact* specific pedagogic practices (Bernstein, 2000). Bernstein does not claim that one rule is more important than the other, instead, he argues that one without the other is insufficient.

He states that “recognition rules are a necessary condition for producing a legitimate context-specific text or practice” (Bernstein, 2000, p. 105) but emphasises the importance of knowing how to exact the specific practice. Therefore, it is crucial to recognise that the distinction between the two approaches is not a simple binary. Both approaches offer valuable insights, and in some cases, could work in tandem to address the challenges facing the education system.

1.2.1. Prescribed and scripted lessons

The first approach to addressing the crisis, such as the one adopted by the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS), involves highly prescriptive protocols for enacting effective practices. This approach combines “scripted lesson plans, provision of instructional materials, and conventional teacher training with one-on-one instructional coaching” (Fleisch et al., 2016, p. 166). Scripted lessons (developed by literacy specialists) are said to “encourage teachers to incorporate practices of new and effective lesson strategies” (*ibid.*, p. 158). It is thought that by “bringing in a greater degree of specificity and/or prescriptiveness ... a greater degree of consistency [may be achieved]” across the education system (*ibid.*, p. 206). This approach foregrounds Bernstein’s rules of realisation. A limitation of this approach is that improving teaching methodology relies on prescriptive protocols developed by others. As such, teachers’ professional knowledge and capacity for reasoned judgment and discretion remain underdeveloped (De Clercq, 2014). This could be considered to be a way of “designing a ‘teacher-proof’ curriculum, [reducing] the work of teachers to mere technicians” (Msibi & Mchunu, 2013, p. 25). The implication is that teaching practice improves “by drilling into teachers ‘preferred’ instructional practices” (*ibid.*, p. 307).

When teachers are shown what to do without necessarily having access to the underlying conceptual tools required to make sense of what they are teaching, the expertise lies outside of the teacher’s practice. This intervention offers elements of

consistency and stability, but “do[es] not generate sufficiently improved teaching practice because [it] pay[s] insufficient attention to improving teacher knowledge” (Shalem et al., 2018 p. 220). Even when teachers use a well-designed scripted intervention programme, they *must* be able to rely on background knowledge of their *own* if they are to tailor lessons to address the needs of individual learners (Moats, 2014). Therefore, while it may yield immediate results, relying solely on a highly prescriptive strategy may not be sufficient for the long-term advancement of professionalisation. Despite this critique, when the impact of this approach was assessed, it was found that the intervention led to gains in reading and mathematics and that it “facilitated the emergence of new, more effective instructional practices.” (Fleisch et al. 2016, p. 448). However, it was also found that the intervention did not and could not address deep-seated gaps in teachers' content knowledge (De Clercq & Shalem, 2014).

1.2.2. Specialised literacy knowledge and pedagogies

The second approach to addressing the crisis requires that teacher educators prepare preservice teachers for transforming the education system by giving them access to specialised bodies of knowledge that inform their core literacy practices. In the year 2000, teacher education was declared a graduate profession and moved into the Higher Education sector (Department of Education, 2000). The *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (henceforth, MRTEQ) (DHET, 2015) adopted a knowledge-based approach in its vision of producing professional teachers. The challenges facing the South African education system are broadly addressed, and teacher education is required to:

...address the critical challenges facing education in South Africa today especially the poor content and conceptual knowledge found amongst teachers, as well as the legacies of apartheid, by incorporating situational and contextual elements that assist teachers in developing competences that enable them to deal with diversity and transformation (DHET, 2015, pp. 10 – 11).

Significant emphasis is placed upon preservice teachers learning the pedagogical knowledge and skills needed to teach literacy and numeracy. The policy stipulates that a minimum of 50% of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) credits for a Foundation Phase B.Ed. degree should be focused on “developing the teaching

specialisation phase and/or subject including subject-focused disciplinary, pedagogical and practical learning” (DHET., p. 23). In addition, MRTEQ acknowledges the specialised nature of teachers’ work and views mimicry of prevalent practices as insufficient for impactful intervention. It states that preservice teachers must learn to “draw reflexively from integrated and applied knowledge, so as to work flexibly and effectively in a variety of contexts” (DHET, 2015. p. 9). Initial teacher education (ITE) programmes are mandated to provide preservice teachers with opportunities to develop increasingly specialised ways of seeing and thinking about teaching (Rusznyak & Bertram, 2021). Although recent studies have examined ITE curricula (CHE, 2010; Deacon, 2016), as well as the content and pedagogic knowledge of final-year preservice teachers (see Bowie & Reed, 2016; Mort & Roberts, 2023), the knowledge-based approach has not undergone extensive cross-institutional empirical analysis within ITE. This is where my study has the potential to make a contribution.

1.3. A knowledge-based approach to teacher education

In this section, I argue that there is value in tracking preservice teachers’ capacity to notice and interpret the complex work of teachers. What they notice and don’t notice and how they interpret what teachers are doing and why is important for assessing if recent changes to teacher education is beginning to address the reading crisis in Foundation Phase education.

This study takes a knowledge-based approach, which seeks to offer a longer-term intervention in addressing the literacy crisis in South African schools. Teacher education programmes are expected to emphasise the development of teachers as thinking and reasoning practitioners. The importance of teachers’ ways of noticing, thinking and reasoning has come to the fore in preparing teachers for a transforming education system (Loughran, 2019). When preservice teachers are skilled in noticing and interpreting the teaching they observe, they should be able to

... translate the practical devices which are such an important part of the equipment of a good teacher over into their psychological equivalents; to know not merely as a matter of brute fact that they do work, but to know *how and why* they work. Thus, [they] will be an independent judge and critic of their proper use and adaptation (Dewey, 1904, p. 15, emphasis my own).

This is particularly relevant when it comes to the development and enactment of reading pedagogies. As Moats puts it, “Teaching reading is rocket science” (2020, p. 5). Teaching reading requires knowledge and specialised reasoning about what to do, when, and how. It is crucial that, through their teacher preparation, preservice teachers notice more and more what literacy practices are used and how they create opportunities for children to advance their literacy levels.

This study uses the concept of “gazes” introduced by Bernstein to theorise the specialised noticing and perception of what matters in teachers’ work. Bernstein (2000, p. 164) referred to a gaze as “a particular mode of recognising and realising what counts as authentic reality”. Preservice teachers enter their ITE programmes with a gaze on teaching that is informed by their previous schooling experiences, and everyday knowledge. Through the ITE process, it is expected that their gaze will allow them to notice parts of teaching that they did not find significant previously and make sense of teachers’ work in new insightful ways. If the knowledge-based approach to teacher preparation is functioning as intended, my study should reveal significant differences in how first and final-year preservice teachers respond to the same pre-recorded lesson. Final-year preservice teachers should be able to articulate core reading and other pedagogies in more specialist ways than first-year preservice teachers.

1.4 Problem Statement

The problem that my study investigates is rooted in the understanding that the work of teachers is “not only unnatural but intricate” (Loewenberg Ball & Forzani, 2009, p. 501). Teaching requires deliberate choices that are both conceptually informed and contextually responsive (Rusznyak & Bertram, 2021). It goes beyond the mere transmission of knowledge, and deeper than the application of protocols and outer routines (Grossman et al., 2009; Langsford, 2020). Coupled with a robust understanding of early grade reading instruction, Foundation Phase preservice teachers should:

...learn how to make appropriate pedagogical choices depending on the... learning needs of diverse [learners], and what is possible and desirable in the context. These judgements depend on a well-grounded contextual

understanding and are constitutive of what the teacher seeks to achieve (Rusznyak & Bertram, 2024, p. 14).

For teacher education to prepare knowledgeable and reflective teachers who are well-equipped to address the reading crisis, there must be a *shift* in how preservice teachers perceive and interpret the teaching they observe from the time they enter Initial Teacher Education (ITE) to the time that they graduate. This shift can be gauged by their perceptions of common-sense understandings of teaching; more specialised work of the teachers in terms of their organisation of knowledge and learning opportunities, and then the specialist work of reading pedagogies. As they progress through their studies it is expected that preservice teachers' gazes should become increasingly specialised. If they continue "to notice things they always have, opportunities for deeper pedagogic learning are severely curtailed" (Langsford & Rusznyak, 2024, p. 3). However, by developing "noticing expertise" (Sherin, 2017), they are more likely to enact salient reading pedagogies responsively once they qualify. If final-year preservice teachers are not noticing and accounting for teachers' actions with increasing insight and complexity, they may qualify only to mimic prevalent (but often ineffective) practices.

1.5. Purpose of this study

The current study offers insight into changes in the *noticings* of preservice teachers during teaching practice sessions with specific reference to reading pedagogies. It will establish empirically the extent to which South African teacher education programmes in three institutions are achieving the aims of producing knowledgeable, thinking practitioners who are able to fulfil an expectation that "[t]eachers make thoughtful choices about their teaching that lead to learning goals for all learners," (South African Council of Educators, 2018 p. 10).

1.6. Objectives of this study

The main objectives of this study are:

To examine the differences in how first-year and final-year preservice teachers notice, describe, and interpret reading pedagogies during teaching practice, and the implications this has for teacher education preparation programmes.

1.7. Research questions

Main question:

What differences exist between the ways that first-year and final-year preservice teachers notice and interpret reading pedagogies in a lesson they observe?

Sub questions:

1. How do first-year Foundation Phase preservice teachers describe, interpret and appraise teachers' reading pedagogies in a lesson they observe?
2. How do final-year Foundation Phase preservice teachers describe, interpret and appraise teachers' reading pedagogies in a lesson they observe?
3. What similarities and differences exist between the way first and fourth year preservice teachers describe, interpret and appraise a teacher's reading pedagogies in a lesson they observe?
4. What implications for Foundation Phase teacher preparation programs arise from the differing ways in which first and final-year preservice teachers notice reading pedagogies?

1.8. Rationale

If future teachers are to improve reading outcomes in South African schools, they must first learn to *notice* and interpret effective reading pedagogies. Therefore, "understanding how preservice articulate noticing is important for knowing how to support their development and implementation of effective pedagogical practices" (Estapa et al., 2017, p. 2). This study will serve to fill a gap in the literature. Where previous studies of preservice teachers' observation of lessons have been limited to small-scale case studies, this will be a comparative study, looking at different cohorts of South African Foundation Phase preservice teachers at different levels of their ITE, all watching and commenting on the *same* lesson. The findings will have the potential to speak to the structure and efficacy of ITE across institutions, shedding light on whether preservice teachers are developing increasingly specialised ways of observing and analysing reading pedagogies as they advance through their teacher preparation.

1.9. Personal interest and positioning of researcher

My interest in this study stems from a desire to see preservice teachers equipped and empowered to teach reading effectively through the acquisition of specialised knowledge. As a preservice teacher, I struggled to interpret and critically evaluate the teaching I observed. This may have affected my ability to thoughtfully consider the reasons for the pedagogical choices that I made in my first few years of teaching. I completed my Bachelor of Education degree when the Norms and Standards for Educators was national policy (DHET, 2000). Outcomes were specified in terms of preparing preservice teachers for Seven Roles they would perform as educators. In many ways, knowledge was hidden in favour of meeting learning outcomes. I now realise that as a newly-qualified teacher, I had limited insight into the specialised thinking that underpins the work of teaching. It has taken me many years to develop what Maton (2014) calls a 'specialised gaze' on practice. I am interested to see if the shift away from Outcomes-Based Education to a knowledge-based approach to teacher education empowers preservice teachers to notice and account for teachers' pedagogies, especially in relation to the teaching of reading.

1.10. Structure of this thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the study, providing the contextual background for the research. It aligns the study with a knowledge-based approach to solving the crisis in South African education, where preservice teachers are taught to notice and reflect upon the reading pedagogies they observe. It explores two prevalent approaches to addressing the crisis in early grade reading: prescribed and scripted lessons and professionalisation through the acquisition of specialised knowledge. The problem statement underscores the intricate nature of teaching and the need for a shift in how preservice teachers perceive and interpret teaching practices as they progress through their training. The chapter also outlines the purpose, objectives, research questions, and rationale for the study, which seeks to investigate differences in the noticings of first- and final-year preservice teachers, particularly in relation to reading pedagogies.

Chapter 2 situates the study in existing literature. It explores how Foundation Phase teachers' poor conceptual knowledge and pedagogic practices may contribute to the reading crisis in South Africa. Then, it examines different approaches to the teaching of reading. Next, it moves from a broad consideration of teachers' professional

learning towards a focused discussion of the specialised knowledge needed to teach reading. It argues that the acquisition of specialised knowledge supports noticing expertise and a deeper understanding of practice, and it connects theoretical insights and ITE policy, showing the alignment between Shulman's (1987) categories of knowledge, MRTEQ's five knowledge bases for teachers in South Africa (DHET, 2015, p. 10-11), and the Primary Teacher Education Project's (PrimTEd) knowledge and practice standards (DHET, 2020). It discusses the complex knowledge base required for the teaching of reading, drawing on Scarborough's Reading Rope (2001) and other models. Furthermore, it underscores the necessity of developing a shared language of practice – the acquisition of the metalanguage for the teaching of reading. As the chapter draws to a close, concerns about language and literacy curricula variability in South Africa are discussed. Finally, the focus shifts to literature on teacher noticing, looking at studies which discuss conceptualisations of the noticing construct, as well as the development of preservice teachers' noticing skills.

Chapter 3 introduces the conceptual and analytic framework of the study. It highlights the vital role of pedagogical noticing in preservice teacher professionalisation, aligning with a cognitive-psychological perspective on noticing. The chapter explores different facets of noticing, looking at how teachers describe, interpret and appraise practice. The chapter also develops an argument for the use of Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) as the analytic framework. It outlines the conceptual tools that LCT offers to understand and analyse the development of pedagogical noticing in preservice teachers, particularly in relation to the teaching of reading. It explains the use of translation devices to understand how the theory talks to the data, and how the data explains the theory.

Chapter 4 describes the research design for this study. It discusses reasons for the adoption of a cross-sectional case-study approach with a qualitative methodology grounded in the realist tradition. It then moves to discuss the dataset, which comprises lesson observation reports produced by preservice teachers who were engaging with the Teacher Choices in Action module. In addition, it explains the comprehensive five-layer data analysis process. Ethical considerations, constraints and the reliability of coding using a translation device are also addressed.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the research. The findings for word recognition and language comprehension noticings are addressed separately. Findings related

to word recognition noticings are presented in terms of the research questions which guided the study, and according to the methods of analysis. Conceptual tools from LCT are employed to operationalise semantic gravity and semantic density in participants' word recognition noticings. This provides insight into the depth of their reflections. Additionally, the chapter explores the terminology used in word recognition noticings. The findings related to language comprehension noticings are presented in a narrative format. Certain misconceptions which were prevalent in both cohorts' noticings are highlighted.

Chapter 6 presents an analysis of the findings with reference to the theories about pedagogical noticing, teacher knowledge and training, and reading acquisition reported in Chapter 2.

The dissertation concludes in **Chapter 7** by drawing conclusions about each research question and considering implications for theory, policy and practice. The Appendices and References follow.

Chapter 2. Literature review

This study rests on the premise that preservice teachers' noticing skills may be useful indicators of their level of insight into teaching practices. To address the “inadequate distribution of [specialised literacy] knowledge' among Foundation Phase teachers” (Taylor, 2019, p.263), ITE programmes must provide preservice teachers with access to the knowledge base and conceptual tools essential for recognising and understanding salient reading pedagogies. The line of argument now moves in the direction of locating the study within existing literature.

The literature review will highlight the complex nature of teacher preparation. I will argue that preservice teachers require access to specialised knowledge of reading pedagogies if they are to play a role in improving reading outcomes. In addition, the literature will show that preservice teachers generally lack proficient noticing skills at the outset of their teacher preparation. The review will emphasise the need for conceptual tools and explicit guidance to enhance preservice teachers' ability to recognise and interpret crucial aspects of teaching. It will argue that the specialised knowledge acquired through coursework serves as a lens which influences how preservice teachers notice and interpret salient pedagogies.

2.1. The Reading Crisis in South Africa

The consistently low rankings in both national and international literacy assessments suggest that South Africa has “lost the plot in the teaching of reading” (Rule & Land 2017, p.1). Most recently, the PIRLS 2021 results revealed an overall decline in South Africa's reading outcomes (Pretorius & Spaull, 2022). By the end of grade 3, most South African learners cannot read for meaning. This indicates a failure at Foundation Phase level, resulting in “catastrophic lapses in critical teaching and learning phases of schooling” (Pretorius, 2023, p.57). The lack of development concerning Foundation Phase teachers' knowledge of reading pedagogies emerges as an “overriding concern” across many studies (Hoadley & Boyd, 2022, p.127). According to Madikiza et al. (2018), many teachers are unable to teach reading and “have an underdeveloped understanding of teaching literacy [and] reading ... “(p. 2). This points to inadequate teacher preparation and training in reading pedagogies.

2.1.1. Concerns and challenges surrounding the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase

Several international studies of teacher knowledge about early grade reading indicate that many teachers are under-prepared to teach reading (Moats, 2020; Walsh et al., 2006). A common finding is that teachers in lower primary grades often lack awareness or hold misconceptions about literacy concepts (Moats, 2009). Moreover, research indicates that teachers' content knowledge about elements of written language such as phonemes, graphemes, syllables, morphemes, and parts of speech, tends to be low. The lack of foundational language concepts may impede teachers' ability to provide appropriate reading support and intervention to learners (*ibid.*).

South Africa presents a very complex environment to explore understandings of reading instruction in schools (Hoadley, 2018). In the South African context, complex issues surround the teaching of reading, particularly in relation to curriculum reforms over the past two decades. These rapid changes in the key messages about reading instruction have made it challenging for teacher professional development to keep pace with the evolving educational landscape. The country has undergone significant shifts, transitioning from an impoverished drill and rote recitation approach to reading during apartheid, to a whole language approach in the post-apartheid Curriculum 2005. Subsequent reforms, such as the National Curriculum Statement (2002), attempted a balanced approach to reading, but faced challenges due to contradictory messaging and insufficient articulation. The latest reform, CAPS (2011), has moved towards a highly specified 'proficiency' approach, leaning more towards basic skills. It explicitly states that teachers should focus on the five components of reading, which align with reading science (van der Merwe & Nel, 2012). However, a review of the CAPS document has found that it is fraught with mixed messages about reading instruction (Pretorius et al., 2022). This presents further challenges for teaching and learning, as teachers who do not possess specialised knowledge of reading acquisition will not be able to effectively critique the instructional guidance provided in the document. In light of this, ITE programmes should be developing preservice teachers' "critical sensibilities" (Walton & Rusznyak, 2014) not simply preparing them to teach the current curriculum. Instead, they should:

... [focus] on preparing teachers to teach children to read. In order to do this, teacher preparation programmes need to provide preservice foundation phase

teachers with a rigorous language discipline knowledge base (van der Merwe & Nel, 2012, p. 138)

Aside from difficulties arising from curriculum reform, there are socio-educational issues which present barriers to teaching and learning. More than a decade ago, Pretorius and Machet (2004) identified what they called the 'paradox of the primary school professional' in the South African context. Many of the issues they mention still persist today (Hoadley & Ensor, 2009). As Pretorius and Machet put it:

Although Primary school teachers are professionals who are supposedly deeply involved in developing literacy skills in their learners. Yet it is precisely in the domain of literacy that many teachers are themselves unskilled. Many primary school teachers come from communities with a strong oral culture and so they are not inclined to be readers themselves, nor are they familiar with the traditions of storybook reading or books for young people. Furthermore, many of them teach in disadvantaged schools where the non-delivery of books, lack of supplementary reading materials and lack of access to libraries are common features (2004, p. 58)

In the last seven years “a new generation of research projects” has emerged in South Africa (Pretorius & Spaull, 2022, p. 3). Much of this growing body of research is dedicated to early-grade reading. In the Foundation Phase, a gap exists between policy and implementation (Pretorius, 2022). A lack of teachers' understanding of the reading policies and methodologies needed to successfully teach reading has led to “superficial compliance” (*ibid.*, p. 56), low expectations and confusion about effective pedagogies. Despite interventions, reading pedagogies in many South African classrooms remain communalised (Hoadley & Boyd, 2022). Moreover, there is very little evidence of differentiation, and learners are seldom seen reading individually. Foundation Phase teachers in lower-performing schools often have limited views on reading, lack familiarity with children's literature genres, and face challenges in guiding and supporting learners to engage with texts and enhance comprehension skills beyond literal interpretations (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). All of this impacts literacy performance in schools.

2.2. What constitutes a knowledge base for the teaching of reading?

Due to this study's focus on noticing reading pedagogies, it is pertinent to acknowledge the different approaches to the teaching of reading. This section considers the contentious issue of reading pedagogy: What constitutes good teaching in the domain of reading instruction? I will aim to provide an overview of the prevalent (and often conflicting) schools of thought and will discuss the CAPS document's alignment with the balanced literacy approach.

For many years, there has been a profound interest in understanding how children acquire reading skills (Castles et al., 2018; Rayner et al., 2001). This has led to contentious debates, which are commonly referred to as the "reading wars" (Kim, 2008). Decades ago, Jeanne Chall (1967) captured the essence of the reading wars in one question: "Do children learn better with a beginning method that stresses *meaning* or with one that stresses *learning the code*?" (Kim, 2008, p. 372, emphasis my own). Similar, but perhaps slightly more specific are these two questions posed by Snow and Juel (2005):

Using what unit of language should the rules of reading and writing be taught? And to what degree can we trust children to induce an adequate understanding of the system themselves, without explicit instruction about its character? (*ibid.*, p. 505).

I will now consider research that has sought to answer these questions. The question of what unit of language should be used for the teaching of reading and writing refers to the vastly different approaches to teaching reading. These contrasting approaches will now be discussed.

2.2.1. The Whole Language Approach

The Whole Language approach to teaching reading is known as the top-down (or whole-to-parts) approach. Frank Smith and Kenneth Goodman (1979) are considered to be two of the founders of this approach. They argued that:

...reading is not a process of combining individual letters into words, and strings of words into sentences, from which meanings spring automatically. Rather the evidence is that the deep-level process of identifying meaning

either precedes or makes unnecessary the process of identifying individual words (*ibid.*, p.179).

In short, the Whole Language approach is concerned with *meaning*, rather than the mechanics of decoding. It is based on the premise that “reading and writing will develop as naturally as oral language” (McKenna et al., 1994, p. 18). Reading is approached as a memorisation exercise, where learners learn to recognise words as wholes “without any analytic strategy of breaking words into their components” (Pretorius et al., 2022, p. 149). The primary rationale behind minimising direct language structure instruction is to maintain an unbroken or continuous emphasis on reading for meaning (Moats, 2000). Moreover, advocates of this approach assert that because language follows a predictable pattern, children “learn to read [by] predicting and confirming and making sense as they go” (Smith & Elley, 1994, p. 142). From this perspective, learning to read is mainly about children using various *cues* to identify words. Text-based cues, such as picture clues, semantic information, syntax cues as well as the context of the previous passage, are used to make predictions about upcoming text. When they come across a challenging word, learners are encouraged to make educated guesses as to what the word might be. In some cases, words are covered up “to promote thinking about meaning and guessing the word” (Snow & Juel, 2005, p. 507). Drawing on letter-sound information is generally the last resort.

The core ideas and strategies of the Whole Language approach are contradicted by evidence that shows that learning to read is not natural (Moats, 2000). Humans are “not born with neural hardware for reading” (Pretorius et al., 2022, p.148; Dehaene & Cohen, 2011). It is a complex skill that we are not biologically predisposed to acquire (Dehaene, 2010; Ehri, 2020). While there have been numerous generic critics of the Whole Language approach over the years (Stanovich, 2000; Tunmer et al., 2013; Seidenberg, 2017; Castles et al., 2018), Pretorius and Spaul (2019) specifically address the challenges of implementing it in the South African context. They suggest that:

...the most pertinent [issue]...is that this method does not readily work for agglutinating languages, especially those with a conjunctive orthography resulting in long words (Pretorius, 2019). Furthermore, it is unlikely to work outside of an extremely print-rich environment and intensive individual

attention, both of which are in scarce supply in high poverty contexts with large classes and limited resources, as in South Africa.” (p. 151)

This underscores a need for South African teachers to critically evaluate Whole Language practices, not only in light of scientific evidence, but also with regards to cultural and linguistic factors, and the practical constraints of their teaching environments. It emphasises the need for a well-rounded and evidence-based approach to reading instruction that takes into account the complexity of the skill and the diverse contexts in which it is taught.

2.2.2. The Science of Reading and Systematic Phonics Instruction

It has been established that the Whole Language approach focuses on recognising whole words as units of meaning (Bester et al., 2008). In contrast, *systematic phonics instruction* emphasises the explicit teaching of letter-sound correspondences. The “smaller units of letters and single syllables are taught first, followed by the larger units such as multiple syllable words and finally sentences” (Wyse & Bradbury, 2022, p. 7). The systematic phonics approach is based on reading science. The science of reading encompasses a comprehensive understanding of how humans learn to read and how reading should be taught (Ferguson & Dernikos, 2023). It involves the accumulation of reliable evidence about reading development and best practices for reading instruction (Hudson et al., 2021). What extensive research tells us is that all children can benefit from systematic phonics instruction (Castles et al., 2018; Galuschka et al., 2014; Kilpatrick, 2015; Seidenberg, 2017; Slavin et al., 2009; Snow et al., 1998). Studies in neuroscience support the notion that the automatic decoding of phonics skills, such as recognising and sounding out letter-sound relationships, are crucial preliminary steps for comprehension (Dehaene, 2010). This perspective is described as “reductive” by certain critics (Ellis & Bloch, 2021, p. 158). In addition, there are those who challenge the dichotomy between context cues and decoding/phonics, advocating an inclusive strategy. They emphasise a nuanced approach that integrates meaning-making strategies with explicit instruction in decoding and phonics (Scanlon and Anderson, 2020). Section 2.5 of this literature review will show that reading science does not eschew the meaning-making process or contextual factors that may affect reading acquisition. It asserts that equal attention should be paid to comprehension strategies, language development, and exposure to diverse literature (Moats, 2000; 2020).

2.2.3. Approach to reading used in the CAPS curriculum

Historically, South African curricula (such as C2005 and the revised NCS) have embraced Whole Language practices (Pretorius et al., 2022). However, CAPS (published in 2011), has been found to adopt a more eclectic, or *balanced* approach to reading instruction. The *balanced literacy approach* for teaching reading is, essentially, another approach to reading instruction. It combines essential elements from whole language and systematic phonics approaches. It merges a significant focus on meaning, comprehension, and genuine reading encounters, with the specific phonics instruction and emphasis on decoding skills found in systematic phonics (Mondesir & Griffin, 2020).

Discussing the balanced approach to reading instruction, Pearson (2004) suggests that

... balanced approaches seem to share slightly more in common, at least on a philosophical plane, with whole language than with phonics approaches. The teacher is both facilitator and instructor. The teacher facilitates learning by establishing authentic activities, intervening where necessary to provide the scaffolding and explicit instruction required to help [learners] take the next step toward independence. The [learner] is, as in whole language, an active meaning-maker from day one of preschool. Reading is a process of constructing meaning in response to texts encountered in a specific context, and the emergent literacy metaphor, not the readiness metaphor, characterizes the acquisition process. (p. 243)

The concept of a balanced reading approach can vary and be interpreted in different ways. At the practical level of teaching reading, interaction, or balance, is “one of those elusive concepts that means different things to different people” (Vacca et al., 2003, p. 51). Therefore, when a curriculum promotes a balanced or “integrated” approach to reading, it is important to clearly define what it means by those terms. (Pretorius et al., 2022). Pretorius et al. (2016) state that “for the teaching of reading in the [Foundation Phase], CAPS specifically states that a balanced approach to reading must be followed. However, many teachers don’t really know what this means” (pp. 5–6). Research has shown that many advocates for balanced reading often misunderstand the development of reading and, as a result, deliver poorly conceived and ineffective instruction (Moats, 2000). One of the important implications of balanced reading instruction, (however it is defined), is that effective

pedagogic practice requires extensive teacher knowledge about reading (Verbeek, 2011). South African teachers who possess only a casual acquaintance with the research may have persuaded themselves that balanced reading instruction simply means incorporating a little of this and a little of that. In the name of "balance" or "consensus," there is a risk that the worst practices of whole language may persist (*ibid.*). This has the potential to affect the trajectory of early-grade reading in the country.

So far, this literature review has provided a brief overview of the complex issues surrounding the teaching and learning of reading in South Africa and has aligned the CAPS curriculum with a balanced approach to reading.

2.3. Acquiring specialised knowledge of reading pedagogies

This section considers the complex knowledge base that preservice teachers must acquire if they are to teach reading effectively. The CAPS curriculum (although problematic in terms of its ambiguity) incorporates many strategies employed in systematic phonics. Although it specifies reading methods such as shared, and group-guided reading (aligned with whole language), it also specifies the teaching of decoding skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, and word recognition (Wildsmith-Cromarty & Balfour, 2019), and emphasises the importance of comprehension. Thus, I provide a brief account of the scientific approach to reading that is guided by “converging evidence about reading acquisition” (Pretorius et al., 2022, p. 146). In specific, I draw on Hoover & Gough’s *Simple View of Reading* (1990) which explains the relationship between word recognition and reading comprehension, and Hollis Scarborough’s *Reading Rope* (2001) which outlines skills involved in developing the core components of skilled reading. Scarborough’s model can be used to reinforce CAPS’ balanced view of skilled reading – in particular, the need for teachers to attend to both the bottom-up decoding and top-down comprehension skill ‘strands’ (Pretorius et al., 2016) when teaching reading at Foundation Phase level.

This study looks at how preservice teachers from around the country, (and at different stages of their ITE) observe, interpret and appraise the same lesson. The focus of the lesson in the artefact of practice is *reading*. My hypothesis is that final-

year preservice teachers will be better equipped to notice salient elements of reading instruction, (such as pedagogies that contribute to the development of word recognition and language comprehension skills) than first-year preservice teachers. However, this is contingent upon their access to specialised, theoretical knowledge about reading, and an understanding of the teaching strategies that support its development (Kilpatrick, 2015). In essence, the theories that preservice teachers are exposed to in coursework will have a direct influence on their ability to notice and understand reading pedagogies.

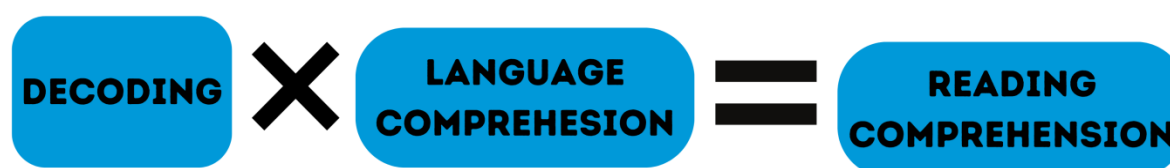
2.3.1 Understanding the components of skilled reading

After decades of multidisciplinary research on reading development, there is extensive empirical and scientific evidence available on the causes of reading difficulties, and the essential components of effective reading instruction (Dehaene, 2010; Kilpatrick, 2015; Moats, 2020). However, this research is not always incorporated into teacher preparation programs, leading to a gap between evidence-based practices and actual classroom practices (*ibid.*). Given the crucial role of teachers' knowledge in promoting effective literacy instruction (Hudson et al., 2020; Moats, 2020), I suggest that a possible lack of depth of literacy knowledge in ITE is cause for concern.

The capacity to support learners' reading development requires teachers to have sophisticated knowledge about language. (Eßling et al., 2023). Reading for meaning encompasses a multiplicity of underlying skills. A critical issue that needs to be clarified for many South African teachers and researchers alike is word decoding and language comprehension, and their strong relationship to reading comprehension (Pretorius & Spaull, 2022). *The Simple View of Reading* (Hoover & Gough, 1990) explains this relationship. It is a research-validated framework with important pedagogic implications (Moats, 2020). It states that reading comprehension is the product of *word recognition* (or decoding) and *language comprehension* (the ability to understand spoken language). Poor skills in either domain will compromise an individual's reading comprehension (*ibid.*).

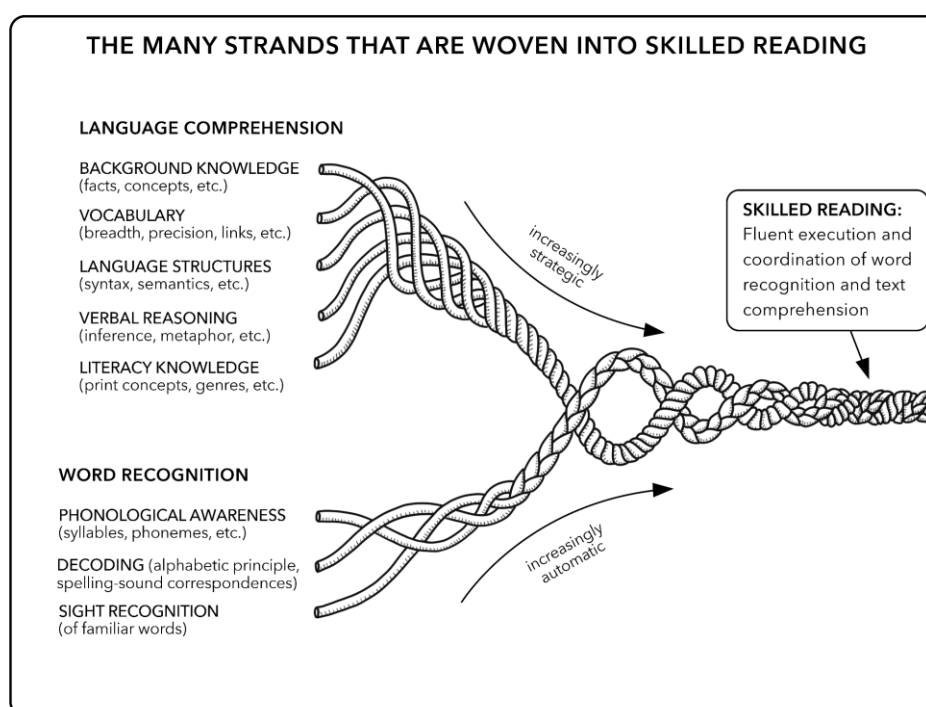
Figure 1.1. The Simple View Of Reading

(Adapted from Hoover, W. A., & Gough, P. B. (1990). The simple view of reading. *Reading and writing*, 127-160.



In 2001, Hollis Scarborough developed the Reading Rope (see Figure 1.2). The rope is connected to "The Simple View," and provides a powerful illustration of the complexity and interdependence of all the components of skilled reading. Word recognition and language comprehension are the two main components, and these are broken down into eight sub-skills, or *strands*.

Figure 1.2: Scarborough's Reading Rope



Taken from: Scarborough, H. S. (2001) in Moats & Davidson, 2009

One of the primary strengths of Scarborough's model is its emphasis on the interdependence of distinct reading skills. The model suggests that effective reading is not merely a function of decoding abilities but also heavily relies on language comprehension. This dual focus is corroborated by research indicating that oral

language skills are foundational for literacy development, as they significantly contribute to both word recognition and comprehension (Wise et al., 2007). Language comprehension encompasses five sub-skills: background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning and literacy knowledge. Tunmer and Hoover (2019) describe language comprehension as the ability to “extract and construct literal and inferred meaning” from spoken language (*ibid.*, p. 78). Knowledge of spoken language is essential for reading (Silverman et al., 2020). Reading involves converting written language into an understandable form based on pre-existing knowledge of spoken language. As we read, we must identify written words to access meanings already acquired through prior learning.

Word recognition encompasses three strands: Phonological awareness, decoding, and sight word recognition. Broadly defined, it is the ability to accurately decode printed words. Rapid word recognition “frees up mental resources for thinking about ...the meaning of the text rather than what word the print represents” (Roberts et al., 2011 p. 229). As the language comprehension subskills are strengthened, reading becomes increasingly strategic, and as the word recognition subskills strengthen, reading becomes increasingly automatic. Together, they allow reading comprehension to occur. Preservice teachers who have access to this specialised knowledge (coupled with knowledge of appropriate teaching strategies for developing each *strand*) are more likely to *notice* the intentional choices that teachers make to develop specific foundational reading skills. Equally, they are more likely to notice what may be *missing* from the lessons they observe and may be able to suggest possible alternatives as they reflect upon how a lesson could be strengthened.

2.3.2 Potential limitations of Scarborough’s Rope and the Simple View of Reading :

Duke & Cartwright, (2021) argue that despite its strengths, the Simple View of Reading and Scarborough’s rope do not fully account for the dynamic interactions between cognitive processes and contextual factors that influence reading. For instance, comprehension assessments can vary significantly in their demands on decoding and language comprehension, suggesting that a more nuanced understanding of these interactions is necessary.

Moreover, the focus of the Reading Rope on specific strands may inadvertently result in an under emphasis on other critical factors influencing reading success,

such as motivation and engagement. Research has demonstrated that these affective dimensions play a crucial role in reading development, particularly among struggling readers (Khor et al., 2014). Therefore, while Scarborough's model provides a valuable framework for understanding the components of reading, it could perhaps benefit from integrating insights related to the emotional and motivational aspects of literacy.

Now, attention turns to the ways in which preservice teachers articulate their acquired knowledge. I suggest that for preservice teachers to deconstruct practice, notice the significance of different teacher choices and then reflect on them, they require “a language and structure for describing practice” (Grossman et al., 2009, p. 2075). I will argue that without access to conceptual tools and a specialised language of practice, preservice teachers are “unlikely to interpret observations in a classroom any differently to how they had as learners” (Rusznayak & Walton, 2014, p. 348). Conversely, a specialised language of practice may allow them to articulate their noticings more precisely, in a more sophisticated or nuanced manner.

2.4. A language of practice for the teaching of reading

Grossman et al. (2019) suggest that “the improvement of teaching, and in turn learner learning, hinges on developing a common language that can support efforts to build shared understandings around the specification of core practices” (*ibid.*, p. 158). Part of learning a professional practice involves learning and internalising the shared *language of practice* associated with a specific field. Yinger (1987) describes a language of practice as:

...the “vocabulary and jargon that practitioners use within a profession. It more importantly refers to the modes of thinking and acting employed by practitioners to effectively accomplish the tasks at hand. [A] language of practice includes a logic or “grammar” for thought and action, a system of meaning...” (p. 295).

When a preservice teacher has acquired the complex and specialised knowledge of reading acquisition, it is assumed that they will have developed a language of practice specific to the teaching of reading. A language of practice is shared amongst practitioners. The vocabulary of the language of practice for teaching

reading [is] “not invented by teachers; it is the outcome of the complex interaction between personal sense-making,” (Biesta et al., 2019, p. 40) specialised and practical knowledge, policy and research. The terms used to describe linguistic components are technical in nature, and generally condense more meanings (Maton & Doran, 2017). For example, when teachers work to develop the phonological awareness skills of their learners, they may be focusing on one more of the sub-skills that this term encompasses (phonemic awareness, rhyming, onset and rime to name but a few.). Terms such as phonemes (the smallest units of sound in a language), graphemes (written representations of those sounds), morphemes (the smallest units of meaning) and digraphs (two letters which make one sound) form part of the pedagogical metalanguage (Geoghegan et al., 2013) for the teaching of reading. This specialised way of talking about reading acquisition and instruction can be used as a vehicle for describing how knowledge is used in practice (Yinger & Hendricks-Lee, 2000), as well as to test and elaborate on the components of professional activity.

Expert teachers of reading are distinguished by their ability to articulate and justify their pedagogy. They have an awareness of how the methods they use for teaching are successfully put into practice (South African Council for Educators, 2019, p. 11), and they “demonstrate a deep understanding of effective literacy teaching through their literacy dialogue” (Geoghegan et al., 2013, p. 128). Noticings that are recorded in a lesson observation report may be compared to a dialogue – a one-way conversation between the preservice teacher and the reader. If preservice teachers describe and interpret noticings using technical and precise terms, this may help to avoid ambiguity and the loss of subtle nuances. A shared language would serve to support and enhance the discussion and analysis of observed pedagogies. However, “the real challenge in teacher preparation is how to use this knowledge effectively in complex interactions with learners” (Wharton-McDonald, 2008, p. 354). Thus, the emphasis should be on developing a deep understanding that underpins the acquisition of technical terms.

2.5 Preparing competent teachers for the South African classroom

In this section, I look at teacher preparation more broadly, proposing that to improve reading instruction in South African schools, teacher education must adopt a knowledge-based approach (Taylor, 2014). I suggest that a firm grounding in

specialised knowledge opens up possibilities for preservice teachers to recognise and develop a nuanced understanding of specialised reading pedagogies and “demonstrate competence and responsibility” (DHET, 2015, p. 18) in their own practice once they qualify. The path to becoming a competent teacher of reading is intricate and involves multiple layers. To highlight the complexities of acquiring expertise in teaching, I will now take a broader perspective on teachers' professional learning. I will discuss the significance of developing pedagogical noticing expertise, which is central to this study. Subsequently, I will narrow the focus to delve into the specific aspects of learning to teach reading.

As a knowledge practice, teaching “demands more than just tricks of the trade” (Alter & Coggshall, 2009, p. 4). Teachers must possess a “depth of knowledge, including content and pedagogical knowledge, and understand how to be socially just and culturally responsive in their practice” (Hudson et al., p. S287). However, when preservice teachers first enter their teacher training, they may not appreciate the complexities of practice, nor recognise the vast array of skills and knowledge which expert teachers possess (Loughran, 2006). In the following section, I suggest that when seeking to understand the misconceptions and entry competencies of preservice teachers (Morris, 2006), one must consider the impact of time spent in an “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975).

2.5.1. The impact of the apprenticeship of observation on preservice teachers' initial conceptions of teaching

The apprenticeship of observation (time spent in school as a learner) is a preservice teacher's first socialisation into teaching. It is useful in that it “acquaints [learners] with the tasks of the teacher” (*ibid.*, p. 67). However, it can be considered partial or incomplete, as learners “are not privy to the teacher's private intentions and personal reflections on classroom events [during this time, and] are not pressed to place the teacher's actions in a pedagogically-oriented framework” (*ibid.*, p. 62). Lortie asserts that the knowledge about teaching learnt during this time is “gained from a limited vantage point ... and does not represent [the] acquisition of the occupation's technical knowledge” (*ibid.*, p. 61). Because they are not yet able to understand the pedagogical intentions that underpin practice, “[preservice teachers] may develop narrow conceptions about the nature of teaching” (Rusznyak, 2009, p. 264). In this way, the apprenticeship of observation may reinforce the perception that teaching is simple. It follows that personal opinions and informal conceptions constructed by

preservice teachers during this apprenticeship can provide a skewed lens through which to observe teacher actions during periods of work-integrated learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Feiman-Nemser warns that “the images and beliefs which preservice teachers bring to their teacher preparation influence what they are able to learn” (*ibid.*, p. 1017). These limitations must be critically analysed to be reconsidered (Hammerness et al., 2007). If left unchallenged, they stand to compromise the development of preservice teachers’ professional identity and developing practice (Botha, 2020; Hammerness, et al., 2005; Russel & Loughran, 2007). Through “[engaging] in the ongoing work of becoming an educator in the spaces of university and school classrooms’ (Zoss et al., 2014, p. 67), preservice teachers can reconsider assumptions and develop new, more specialised gazes of understanding and thinking about practice.

2.5.2. Developing a properly grounded conception of teaching through professional knowledge

As preservice teachers recognise that teacher’s “decisions about what to do are ... based on professionally justified knowledge...” (Loewenberg Ball & Forzani, 2009, p. 500), they will begin to develop a “properly grounded conception of [the core work of] teaching” (Morrow, 2007, p. 92). Preservice teachers who recognise pedagogic practices as being intentional and conceptually informed are less inclined to view teaching as a set of fragmented routines and procedures that are implemented in mechanical ways. A firm understanding of the specialised nature of practice may support their ability to discern between the knowledge-building work of teachers and other demands that may not be directly related to facilitating learning (Rusznyak & Walton, 2014).

This study situates itself in the understanding that teaching involves patterns of socially-constructed activity directed towards the organisation of *systematic learning*. Morrow (2007) argues that the organisation of systematic learning lies at the core of teachers’ work. The term “systematic learning” encompasses both the learning of academic knowledge and “the learning of anything that takes time” (*ibid.*, p. 20) and requires support, where learning is typically scaffolded by someone more knowledgeable. It is facilitated through the enactment of “deliberate choices that are both conceptually informed and contextually responsive” (Rusznyak, 2018, p. 2). The core work of teachers is informed by categories of integrated professional knowledge. MRTEQ recognises this, asserting that “teaching is a complex activity

that is premised upon the acquisition, integration and application of different types of knowledge practices or learning.” (DHET, 2015 p. 9). However, making real connections between theoretical input and practice is difficult, and preservice teachers need support to “consciously connect them” (Bakker et al., 2024 p. 1; Bakker et al., 2022). Globally, the nature of teacher knowledges (as presented within ITE) tends to be segmental (Hoban, 2005). What this means is that courses within ITE tend to run in isolation from each other with very little overlapping or connection to one another. The result of this is that preservice teachers often acquire theoretical knowledge in silos. Generally, they do not automatically see the relationship between one type of knowledge and another (Bakker et al., 2022). This is concerning, because it is the “degree of connectivity” (Liakopoulou, 2011, p. 69) between the different categories of teacher knowledge that will ensure teaching effectiveness (Roberts & Mort, 2023). If preservice teachers are to successfully bring these bodies of knowledge together “in the moment of practice” (DHET, 2015, p. 9), they need to *notice* how the parts come together (Rusznyak & Bertram, 2021).

Core teaching practices consist of the “enactment of knowledge,” (Grossman et al., 2019, p. 158). Linking “the focus on skill with the focus on knowledge required for the complexity of teaching, [leads] to a view of teaching practice as the application of knowledge in action” (*ibid.*). Intentional noticing (comparing, analysing, and evaluating teacher practice alongside theoretical ideas) opens possibilities for preservice teachers to integrate different knowledge types, and understand the connections between practical knowledge with theoretical ideas (Linn & Eylon, 2015).

2.6. Knowledge bases for teaching

In his seminal work, Lee Shulman (1987) developed a typology of knowledge that underpins teachers’ work. Discussing the need for transformative teacher preparation, he emphasised the need for preservice teachers to “learn to use their knowledge base to provide the grounds for choices and actions” (*ibid.*, p. 234). He defines seven categories of knowledge that teachers should draw from to inform their practices: a) content knowledge; b) general pedagogical knowledge; c) curriculum knowledge; d) pedagogical content knowledge; e) knowledge of learners and their characteristics; f) knowledge of educational contexts, and g) knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values (*ibid.*, p. 8). The policy governing teacher

education in South Africa, (MRTEQ), incorporates some of these when defining 5 knowledge bases that should be included in curricula for teacher preparation in South Africa (DHET, 2015, p. 10–11). MRTEQ outlines “types of learning associated with the acquisition, integration and application of knowledge for teaching purposes” (p. 11). Because the current study is concerned with what preservice teachers notice when observing practice, *Pedagogical Learning* and *Practical Learning* are particularly relevant. Pedagogical learning includes general and specialised pedagogical content knowledge. Practical learning involves learning *from* practice (using discursive resources to analyse different practices, drawing from case studies, video records and lesson observations), and learning *in* practice (teaching in authentic classroom environments) (*ibid.*).

Due to this study’s interest in how preservice teachers notice *reading* pedagogies, it is pertinent to introduce the Primary Teacher Education Project’s (PrimTEd) knowledge and practice standards for graduate language and literacy teachers (DHET, 2020). In the next section, I will explore their alignment with Shulman and MRTEQ’s respective categories of knowledge.

2.6.1. Knowledge and practice standards for literacy teachers

Shulman’s distinction between different kinds of teacher knowledge underscores the interconnectedness of subject matter expertise (content knowledge) and the ability to effectively teach that content (Dyches & Boyd, 2017). Discussing the content and pedagogical knowledge for teaching reading, Moats (2009) states that:

Teachers must have considerable knowledge of language structure, reading development, and pedagogy to differentiate instruction for diverse learner. [M]andates for improvement of reading achievement should provide for more effective teacher education, as the knowledge base is not learned casually or easily. (*ibid.*, p. 9)

Producing teachers who are knowledgeable about the teaching of reading implies “building up literacy content knowledge as well as literacy pedagogic content knowledge, namely, how to teach [literacy] effectively and meaningfully” (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016, p. 15). PrimTEd’s knowledge and practice standards (see *Table 2.1*) for graduate language and literacy teachers (DHET, 2020) came about as a response to the PIRLS research team’s first recommendation to “strengthen the

teaching of reading literacy and training of pedagogical content knowledge of teachers across all languages in the Foundation Phase ...” (Howie et al., 2017, p. 12). In a paper outlining the preliminary position taken in the Literacy Teaching Core Competency Standards Project of the Consolidated Literacy Working Group of PrimTEd, Aitchison et al. (2018) discuss what literacy teachers need to know, stating:

[Teachers require] knowledge about pedagogy, i.e. evidence-based pedagogic principles underlying the effective teaching of literacy, including the sequence of teaching and creating an enabling environment in which literacy might best be learnt. (*ibid.*, p. 1)

Of particular interest to this study are the relations between Shulman and MRTEQ’s knowledge categories mentioned above, and the PrimTEd standards, which fall into the following categories 1) Knowledge (comprising 21 competencies); 2) Practice (comprising 6 competencies); 3) English as First Additional Language (comprising 6 competencies), and 4) First Additional Languages (comprising 6 competencies). The PrimTEd standards are not yet written into official policy. However, once issued, it is hoped that they will influence the future curriculum, courses, modules and teaching practice in initial teacher education. The following table highlights the correlation between the respective knowledge bases as defined by Shulman and MRTEQ, and a selection of the competencies outlined in the PrimTEd standards (See addendum for the full list of PrimTEd standards). It highlights the extensive knowledge base required for teaching.

Table 2.1: Table of comparison showing articulation between Shulman's categories of knowledge, MRTEQ’s knowledge bases and the PrimTEd literacy competencies

Shulman’s categories of knowledge (1987 p. 8)	Knowledge bases as defined by MRTEQ (DHET, 2015 p. 10-11)	PrimTEd Literacy Competencies (paraphrased) (DHET, 2020b)
Content knowledge Knowledge of	<i>Disciplinary knowledge</i> Knowledge of educational theory (such as the philosophy of education and	Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical and research-based foundations of home language acquisition and additional language learning.

educational ends, purposes and values	educational psychology)	
	Knowledge of the teaching subject that is relevant to the specialisation of the preservice teacher	Understanding of the range of types and multiple purposes of assessment in literacy.
General pedagogical knowledge Curriculum knowledge	<i>General pedagogical knowledge</i> Knowledge of learners, learning, curriculum and general instructional and assessment strategies.	Knowledge of and ability to use a range of instructional strategies and methods to support the development of orality and literacy in FAL.
Knowledge of learners and their characteristics Pedagogical Content Knowledge	<i>Specialised pedagogical content knowledge</i> Knowledge related to inclusivity - how to adapt content and teaching strategies in order to meet the needs of diverse learners.	Understanding of the need to teach all the components of reading and writing in a purposeful, systematic and structured way.
	<i>Learning in and from practice</i> - The “study of practice” component (<i>ibid.</i>, p. 11). - The practicum aspect of the qualification.	Implement multimodal forms of instruction and evaluate instructional practice in each of the key components of reading and writing.
	<i>Fundamental learning</i> Acquisition of fundamental, necessary skills and abilities, such as ICT proficiency and conversational proficiency in a second South African language.	Sound knowledge of, and ability to use, the FAL.
Knowledge of educational contexts	<i>Situational learning</i> “[K]nowledge of the varied learning situations, contexts and environments of education [...] as well as [...] prevailing policy, political and organisational contexts” (<i>ibid.</i>, p. 11)	Demonstrate an understanding of the role of bi- and multilingualism and of standard and non-standard varieties of languages in communication and learning in South Africa.

The PrimTEd standards espouse a knowledge-based approach to teaching. Many of the competencies relate to knowledge of *reading* acquisition (see PrimTEd Knowledge Standards 6, 10, 11, 12 & 13). It highlights some of the complexities in learning to teach reading, and suggests that preservice teachers should be exposed to specific and specialised reading pedagogies.

2.7. South African Teacher Preparation: The case of language and literacy

In this section, I examine the current state of teacher education in the country, touching on studies that reveal significant curricular variability and disputes over best practices.

This study is underpinned by an assumption that if preservice teachers graduate having acquired sound theoretical insights into teaching, and an understanding of the pedagogies that support reading acquisition, they are likely to teach with more intention and have better-developed critical sensibilities to resist ineffective practices. However, research has revealed a wide variability of teacher education curricula in South Africa in terms of early reading pedagogies (Taylor & Mawoyo, 2022). Indeed, there are certain disputes in the field about best practice, and much of the discourse in reading education centres around “what constitutes scientific evidence, how much value we should place on scientific evidence as opposed to other forms of knowledge, and how preservice teachers should be instructed to teach reading” (Petscher et al., 2020, p. S269).

In a study examining how universities in South Africa incorporate Work Integrated Learning into the reading literacy component of their foundation phase teacher preparation programmes, Barends (2015) found that the organisation of teaching practice sessions is deemed insufficient to bridge the “theory-practice gap” (*ibid.*, p. 192) in the reading literacy component of teacher education programmes. Moreover, in a study of five universities offering ITE programmes, the Initial Teacher Education Research Project (ITERP) found

...a very wide variation in all dimensions of the curricula examined. And while there are some excellent practices, it is clear that, as a whole, none of the five institutions studied is rising fully to the challenge posed by the country’s low quality school system. (Taylor et al., 2014, p. 22)

Many programmes seem to “lack a strong underlying logic and coherence, with limited staff collaboration and module integration” (Deacon, 2016, p. 17). Moreover, there is a “lack of a self-regulating teacher education (and teaching) profession [that is] able to clearly delineate a common, agreed set of ITE knowledge and practice standards and curricula to which all universities should conform” (*ibid.*, p. 25). A more recent study on the Foundation Phase language and literacy curricula of South African B.Ed. programmes (Reed, 2020), found that only seven of 16 universities give “more than passing attention” to reading pedagogies (Taylor & Mawoyo, 2022, p. 168; Reed, 2020). This is concerning, as teachers who lack specialised knowledge about reading and its development can “seriously impede learners’ early reading trajectories” (Pretorius, 2022, p. 2). Rigorous teacher preparation aligned with reading science, as proposed by Moats (2020), could mitigate this issue. Therefore, it is necessary to explore potential connections between reading science and South African education policy.

2.7.1. Connecting reading science to South African education policy

In this section I look at correlations between the strands of skilled reading in Scarborough’s Rope, the CAPS document, and the PrimTEd competencies. The CAPS document references what it considers to be the main components of reading instruction and suggests that they be “taught explicitly and practised on a daily basis” (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p.14). The following table highlights the correlation between these components, the components of skilled reading as defined by Scarborough and a selection of the PrimTEd competencies for literacy teachers which outline the knowledge and skills that teachers require to foster and develop language comprehension and word recognition skills in learners thoughtfully and effectively.

Table 2.2: Literacy skills as outlined in the Home Language Curriculum

(DBE, 2011 p. 8)

TEACHER KNOWLEDGE: PrimTEd (DHET, 2020b)	CURRICULUM: CAPS (DBE, 2011 p.14-17)	COMPONENTS OF SKILLED READING: Scarborough’s Reading Rope (2001)
	Language Comprehension:	

Demonstrates knowledge of comprehension		Background Knowledge
Demonstrates vocabulary and word study knowledge.	Vocabulary	Vocabulary
Demonstrates knowledge of basic grammatical concepts	Language structure & use	Language structure
Demonstrates knowledge of comprehension	Inferential skills	Verbal Reasoning
Displays knowledge of literature for children	Concepts of print; Text features (<i>ibid.</i> ,p.12)	Literacy Knowledge
		Word Recognition:
Demonstrates phonological awareness including phonemic awareness.	Phonemic awareness	Phonological awareness
Demonstrates basic knowledge of phonics, e.g. knowing letter shapes, and knowing that written words are built up from letters and letter groups with sound values	Word recognition Phonics	Decoding
Demonstrates knowledge of how to develop fluency	Fluency	Sight-Recognition

Table 2.2 reveals that South Africa's curriculum statement recognises many of the skills that underpin reading comprehension. However, despite its references to research-based components of reading, CAPS has been found to adopt many aspects of the Whole Language approach to early reading (Pretorius et al., 2022). Pretorius et al. (2022) conducted a review of the instructional clarity that the CAPS curriculum offers with regarding to reading instruction and looked at the soundness of evidence underpinning its instructional guidance. This study acknowledges that the “mixed messages in CAPS” (*ibid.* p. 151) may impact the pedagogical decisions of Foundation Phase teachers, as well as the choice of content in South African ITE language and literacy curricula.

So far, this literature review has addressed the reading crisis, curriculum disparities, and the crucial role of preservice teachers' specialised knowledge in learning to teach. In the following section, the focus shifts towards studies of *noticing*. I will

discuss some of the literature on teacher noticing, using findings from relevant studies to highlight the relationship between knowledge and noticing, and to support the argument that learning to notice plays an important role in the development of teaching expertise.

2.8. Noticing in practice:

Teacher noticing has garnered significant attention in the field of teacher education and professional development. Researchers have collectively advanced understanding of teacher noticing by exploring various aspects such as the relationship between teachers' knowledge and noticing skills (Kaiser & Konig, 2019), and the impact of providing preservice teachers with a framework for noticing (Santagata and Angelici, 2010; van Es & Sherin, 2022).

Research has found that for the most part, preservice teachers do not enter ITE with well-developed noticing skills. As they progress through their teacher preparation, they should become more adept at “[noticing] nuances of teaching and [making] sense of what teachers do and why” (Langsford & Rusznyak, 2024 p.3). In an early US-based study comparing the noticing skills of experienced high school teachers and preservice teachers, researchers found evidence to suggest that preservice teachers often find it difficult to know what aspects of teaching are worth focusing on when observing lessons (Carter et al., 1988). Similarly, Star & Strickland (2007) found that “many preservice teachers [struggle] to focus their attention on key features of teaching while observing” (*ibid.*, p. 108). Like the current study, their research made use of recorded lessons to investigate preservice teachers’ pedagogical noticing skills.

While it may be true that teachers “see classrooms through different lenses depending on their experiences, educational philosophies and cultural background” (Jacobs et al., 2010, p. 171), it is equally true that noticing expertise can be “sharpened, developed [and] refined” (Mason, 2002, p. 38). Santagata and Angelici (2010) explored the impact of guided perspectives or “lenses” (*ibid.*, p. 337) on preservice teachers' ability to interpret and reflect upon pre-recorded lessons. They found that the effectiveness of exposure to recorded lessons (and the depth of preservice teachers’ noticings) depended on the specific lens through which the

preservice teachers viewed and analysed the teaching in question. In addition, the findings indicated that when preservice teachers are guided by a noticing framework, there is an observable increase in their exploration of alternative instructional strategies and an enhancement in their critical thinking, although not all differences were statistically significant. Van Es and Sherin's (2002) study supports these findings. They conducted an intervention for preservice teachers using the Video Analysis Support Tool (VAST). What they found, was that without specific guidance, preservice teachers struggled to interpret teachers' actions and bring their theoretical knowledge to bear on their observations. Conversely, when preservice teachers were offered the use of a support tool, they were more able to make connections "between specific events in the video segment and key ideas of teaching and learning" (*ibid.*, p 590). Similarly, Rusznyak (2022) found that with the support of explicit, well-thought-out prompts to guide their thinking, preservice teachers are more likely to effectively utilise concepts learned in university coursework to interpret classroom observations and draw on conceptual knowledge to identify incidents worthy of deeper consideration.

Not all reflection on practice leads to learning from practice (Davis, 2006; Rusznyak, 2022; Santagata & Guarino, 2011; Santagata & Yeh, 2015). Without guidance, preservice teachers can easily "miss" salient teaching moments. With the right support, this can be mitigated. In their analysis of lesson observation reports written by a group of preservice teachers, Langsford and Rusznyak (2024) found that access to specialised theoretical insights and "opportunities to observe the various considerations influencing teachers' reasoned choices in the classroom [enabled] a deeper understanding of the intentions and reasoning behind teachers' practices" (*ibid.*, p.2). Providing explicit opportunities to bridge the theory/practice divide can lead preservice teachers to generate more nuanced interpretations of practice.

This section of the literature review has argued that preservice teachers require access to conceptual tools (Bakker et al., 2022; Grossman et al., 2009) and explicit guidance (Rusznyak, 2022; Santagata & Angelici, 2010) if they are to "recognise and articulate significant moments in the busyness of classroom life, interpret them and deduce patterns or implications that transcend the particularities of that lesson". (Rusznyak, 2022 p. 20). The findings of the aforementioned body of research support the current study's argument that the specialised knowledge that preservice teachers are exposed to through coursework provides a "lens" through which

preservice teachers view practice and may influence the ways in which they notice and interpret salient pedagogies.

2.9. Summary

The literature review has highlighted the complex nature of teacher preparation, with a particular focus on addressing the pressing reading crisis in South African schools. I argued that the knowledge about reading acquisition that preservice teachers are exposed to in coursework will have a direct influence on their ability to notice and understand reading pedagogies, and I touched on concerns around the variability in language and literacy curricula in South Africa (Taylor & Mawoyo, 2022). Moreover, I have stressed the imperative for preservice teachers to acquire specialised knowledge of reading pedagogies, drawing on frameworks such as the Simple View of Reading and Scarborough's Reading Rope. I also underscored the importance of developing a shared language of practice and precise terminology in describing and discussing these pedagogical observations.

Looking broadly at teacher education, I made the claim that preservice teachers may enter ITE with preconceived ideas that are "largely one-dimensional, imaginary, unexamined, and remarkably resistant to change and do not encompass the true complexity of teaching" (Botha, 2021, p. 3). I drew on Lortie's (1975) *apprenticeship of observation*, arguing that prior classroom experiences may influence what preservice teachers notice and how they interpret the teaching that they observe. I suggested that as they gain insight into the core work of teachers (Morrow, 2007), preservice teachers should begin to cultivate a more specialised way of seeing and thinking about practice (Rusznyak & Bertram, 2021). I have aimed to show that the acquisition of a specialised knowledge base supports the development of pedagogical noticing expertise and underpins the ability to make informed choices about teaching. To support this notion, I connected theoretical insights and ITE policy, showing the alignment between Shulman's (1987) categories of knowledge, MRTEQ's five knowledge bases for teachers in South Africa (DHET, 2015, pp. 10–11) and the Primary Teacher Education Project's (PrimTEd) knowledge and practice standards for graduate language and literacy teachers (DHET, 2020b).

It explored the foundational question of what constitutes a knowledge base for effective reading instruction and discussed CAPS' alignment with a balanced literacy

approach. An examination of the literature on the apprenticeship of observation revealed its potential limitations and the necessity for critical analysis of prevalent misconceptions about teachers' work. This underscored the need for preservice teachers to recognise the intentional, conceptually informed nature of pedagogical practices. The alignment between knowledge bases for teaching (as outlined by Shulman (1987) and MRTEQ (DHET, 2015)) with the PrimTEd literacy competencies, further emphasised the extensive knowledge base required for effective teaching. Moreover, the literature has shown that preservice teachers' ability to notice how different knowledge types come together in practice cannot be assumed and that these connections should be intentionally facilitated during ITE.

Additionally, the literature underscored the need for explicit conceptual tools and guidance in preservice teacher education, asserting that the specialised knowledge acquired through coursework serves as a "lens" through which preservice teachers interpret classroom practices, thus influencing their noticing skills. The overarching conclusion is that intentional exposure to conceptual tools and explicit guidance is crucial if preservice teachers are to notice intentionality in teaching and produce nuanced interpretations of practice. The synthesis of these insights calls for robust teacher preparation programs that fosters the acquisition of specialised knowledge of reading and develops pedagogical noticing skills.

2.10. Identifying gaps in the literature:

Despite the "growing calls for teachers who are adequately prepared to teach reading for meaning, little is known about how South African teacher education institutions prepare Foundation Phase preservice teachers to teach reading..." (Dlamini, 2022, p. 159). The majority of research on literacy pedagogies has been conducted with in-service teachers, with limited attention given to understanding the progression of learning for preservice teachers. This study makes a substantial contribution by addressing this underexplored aspect. The professional discourse on reading acquisition in South Africa reveals a gap between the extensive empirical research into reading development, initial teacher education and classroom practice (Castles et al., 2018). In addition, while there seems to be much literature on teachers' abilities to attend to and interpret [*learners'*] thinking and interactions (Carter et al., 1988; Santagata & Yeh, 2015; Star & Strickland, 2007; Van Es & Sherin, 2008) there is little research on how preservice teachers engage in noticing

when observing the work of *teachers*. Much of the research into the latter has been conducted within the context of mathematics. (Van Es & Sherin, 2002). In 2022, König et al. confirmed this in a systematic review of the literature on teacher noticing published over the past two decades. When examining the content of the literature, they found that most studies focused on mathematics education, some attention was given to science education, and a minority addressed language education (*ibid.*, p. 12) In addition, many studies in teacher education rely on interviews where preservice teachers and other stakeholders share their opinions on what they liked about a lesson (or did not like); how they benefited or did not. In contrast, this study offers an opportunity to study how preservice Foundation Phase teachers enact specialised ways of perceiving that they acquire through teacher preparation, with a particular focus on reading pedagogies. What follows in the next chapter is an acquaintance with the conceptual and analytic framework that guides the analysis of the data arising from this study.

Chapter 3: Noticing reading pedagogies: A conceptual and analytic framework

The literature review provided the foundation from which a conceptual framework for an in-depth analysis of the way that preservice teachers describe, interpret, and appraise reading pedagogies can be built. In this chapter, I explore the critical role of pedagogical noticing within the context of teacher professionalisation. After exploring the multidimensional nature of pedagogical noticing, I introduce Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) as an appropriate analytic framework for my study. In this chapter, I lay the groundwork for how I go about analysing the extent to which preservice teachers develop increasingly specialised ways of noticing and interpreting reading pedagogies as they progress through their teacher preparation.

3.1. The necessity of noticing for teacher professionalisation

This study looks at the ways in which preservice teachers *notice* and make sense of reading pedagogies. It suggests that what preservice teachers notice and deem to be significant in an observed lesson is indicative of how they think about teaching, and that a well-developed capacity for noticing may assist preservice teachers in making effective pedagogical choices once they transition into practice (Rooney & Boud, 2019).

Noticing' is seen as a critical competence in many professional domains (Barnhart and van Es, 2016; Kutsch and Hall 2016; Watson & Rebar, 2014). In the teaching profession, learning to notice in intentional ways "is part of the development of expertise" (Jacobs et al. 2010 p. 170). The skills involved in intentional noticing are knowledge-based, as teachers' knowledge and experiences guide their interpretation of important classroom events (Stahnke & Blömeke, 2021). Not only is noticing expertise developed through the acquisition of knowledge but knowledge can also be *built* through providing opportunities for guided observation and intentional noticing. This process involves comprehending the specialised knowledge underpinning professional practice, drawing insights from personal observations, and making sense of these observations within the context of the classroom (Rooney & Boud, 2019). The idea of disciplined perception in teaching will henceforth be referred to as *pedagogical noticing*.

Ideally, as they progress through their teacher education, preservice teachers should become attuned or sensitised to the salient aspects of teaching (Mason, 2011), becoming increasingly adept at noticing how teachers:

... process a myriad of information during instruction and decide, sometimes instantaneously, what to attend to, what to ignore, how to make sense of their actions, their positioning and participation, their written work or questions, and how to move the lesson forward (Santagata et al., 2021 p. 119)

By noticing the actions of other practitioners, preservice teachers may build up a store of “alternative actions and an awareness of situations in which these actions would be preferable” (*ibid.*, p. 38). In this way, those who learn to notice significant classroom interactions may gain valuable insight into practice, and when reflecting upon what they have noticed, may be inspired to “act differently (to respond rather than to react) in future [teaching] situations.” The capacity to “act differently” depends upon a preservice teacher’s ability to not only describe observed practice, but critically evaluate it as well. When preservice teachers are able to evaluate practice, they are more likely to “recognise injustices and identify (and possibly resist) the exclusionary pressures and practices that prevail in schools” (Walton & Rusznyak, p.958). Recruiting specialised knowledge to appraise or evaluate observed practice develops “critical sensibilities that allow preservice teachers to question what is being done, for the benefit of whom’ (*ibid.* p. 959). This opens up possibilities for transformative thinking, and in turn, transformative practice.

Pedagogical noticing can also be linked to Basil Bernstein's (1975) rules of recognition. Recognition rules guide what teachers notice and deem to be important, while realisation rules shape how they respond and enact teaching strategies based on those observations. The interplay between recognising what is pedagogically important and realising how to act on it is crucial for adaptive and effective teaching.

3.1.1. Conceptualising pedagogical noticing

The construct of noticing has been conceptualised and explored in various ways in literature (Amador, Bragelman & Castro Superfine, 2021; Bakker et al., 2002 & 2024; Dewey, 1933; Fredriksen et al., 1998; Jacobs, Lamb & Philipp, 2010; Mason, 2002;

Rooney & Boud, 2019; Rogers, 2022; Sherin, 2017; Star & Strickland, 2008). Gibson and Ross (2016) suggest that:

Noticing ability...is central and integrated within instruction that is appropriately adapted to [learners'] immediate needs. Moreover, study of the characteristics of teacher noticing holds promise for deeper understanding of adaptive teaching itself. Noticing supports needed conditions for teachers' growth by expanding their ability to learn from practice (p.183).

Despite the recent surge in research aimed at distinguishing different aspects of pedagogical noticing, understanding of the cognitive processes involved in pedagogical noticing remains limited, both in theory and in practice (König et al., 2022). There are a number of perspectives that have shaped teacher noticing research over the past two decades (Konig et al., 2022). Some researchers have described pedagogical noticing as involving only that which “teachers attend to—what catches their attention, and what they miss” when observing a lesson (Star & Strickland, 2008 p. 111). Others conceptualise pedagogical noticing as a more complex process. Drawing from expert–novice literature, Davis (2006) distinguishes between unproductive and productive noticing and reflection, emphasizing the analytical and interconnected nature of the latter. Productive noticing integrates aspects such as learners and learning, subject matter knowledge, assessment, and instruction, providing reasons for decisions, generating alternatives, and evaluating teaching. Van Es and Sherin (2022) suggest that noticing entails:

(a) identifying what is important or noteworthy about a classroom situation, (b) making connections between the specifics of classroom interactions and the broader principles of teaching and learning they represent, and (c) using what one knows about the context to reason about classroom interactions. (*ibid.*, p. 573)

The cognitive-psychological perspective is particularly useful to this study, as it centres on individual mental processes in perceiving and interpreting classroom events (van Es & Sherin, 2002; Sherin, Jacobs, & Philipp, 2011).

3.1.2. *Ways of noticing*

A common thread that runs through many studies is the acknowledgement of multifaceted nature of pedagogical noticing, and the notion that teachers enact noticing in three or more distinct ways. In the relevant literature, the most prevalent

of these ways of noticing appear to be *describing* an event, *interpreting* an event and *evaluating* an event. For example, Bakker et al. (2022) suggest that when preservice teachers notice things, such as the intentional strategies employed by teachers, they are not engaged in passive observation but rather in an “active process in which their *identifications* [and] *interpretations*... are interconnected” (*ibid.* p.1). They go on to describe the nature of noticing as inherently discursive, implying a cognitive engagement in the noticing process. Similarly, Van Es and Sherin (2002) have suggested that preservice teachers should “learn to first *notice* what is significant in a classroom interaction, then *interpret* that event, and then use those interpretations to *inform* pedagogical decisions.” (*ibid.*, p. 575, emphasis my own). Recently, they have expanded on their prior conceptualisations of pedagogical noticing, identify three general stances that teachers use to interpret what they noticed—“descriptive, evaluative, and interpretive” (van Es & Sherin, 2021 p. 22). This study draws on components from van Es and Sherin’s recent framework, discerning three facets of noticing: *describing*, *interpreting*, and *appraising*. These facets were discerned through the data analysis conducted for this study. In the Research Design chapter, I elucidate how these facets were applied during the coding of the data.

Having discussed pedagogical noticing, I now turn to Maton’s (2014) concept of developing a *gaze*. This concept, tied to teaching expertise, emphasizes cultivating a specialised way of thinking and seeing.

3.2. Developing a gaze

Loewenberg Ball and Forzani (2009) regard teachers’ work as “intricate and unnatural”, and give examples of how teachers need to learn to think and act in ways that are different to an “everyday” approach. Literature has shown that preservice teachers enter their ITE programme with individual conceptions about teaching (see section 2.2.1). Therefore, over the course of their studies, they must develop an increasingly specialised way of seeing and thinking about practice (Rusznyak & Bertram, 2021). Maton (2014) refers to this process as developing a gaze, which is closely linked to the development of pedagogical noticing. Maton builds on the sociological theories of Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu, both of whom discuss the concept of gazes. Bernstein (2000) regarded a gaze as a particular mode of recognising and realising what counts as an “authentic”... reality”. Maton (2016)

draws on the work of Bourdieu to emphasise the importance of “producing a ‘new gaze’ as a means of moving away from a “common sense view” of the world (ibid., p. 8), thus developing a new, more specialised way of thinking and seeing. It is through “immersion in a way of being, seeing or acting” that one may “attai[n] legitimacy” within a field (ibid., p.96). Maton suggests that newcomers into a practice can cultivate a trained gaze through conceptual means and prolonged engagement with “significant others.” A significant other may be an object or a subject (*ibid.*, p. 185). This has important implications for the preparation of teachers. For example, preservice teachers will interact with concepts from coursework, skilled educators and examples of practice, to name a few. All of these significant others have the potential to shape their gaze. In this way, preservice teachers become knowers and cultivate a gaze which will prepare them for practice. While extended interactions with significant others *may* develop preservice teachers’ gazes within the field, this is not always the case, and the quality of preservice teacher learning is “dependent on the extent to which the messages about what counts as worthwhile are explicit and accessible to preservice teachers” (Rusznayak & Bertram, 2021 p. 42). It is therefore necessary for teacher educators to design appropriate interactions that shape preservice teachers’ ways of knowing and thinking about teaching, opening up possibilities for preservice teachers to work with both context-dependent and abstracted meaning in more complex ways.

My study analyses what first-year preservice teachers and final-year preservice teachers pay attention to when responding to the same lesson. In the context of this study, preservice teachers are social actors who bring to their observations a particular gaze. Over time, that gaze is expected to become more specialised. Thus, if teacher education empowers the development of a more specialised gaze on practice, one would expect that final-year preservice teachers would observe teaching in a much more nuanced way than first-year preservice teachers. To identify, analyse and interpret any changes, I require a framework that is suitable for analysing practice. The focus now pivots towards a discussion on the analytic framework and coding for my study. I will show how Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) adopts a realist approach that is a suitable analytic framework for tracking the development of expertise over time.

3.3. Legitimation Code Theory: Operationalising pedagogical noticing

Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) (Maton, 2014) provides conceptual and analytic tools that can be used to reveal how knowledge works in practice and how knowers develop expertise over time. It currently has three dimensions (namely Specialisation, Semantics and Autonomy) each one analyses a different aspect of knowledge practices and how they are enacted by social actors. LCT provides conceptual tools that are suitable for analysing the differences in how preservice teachers notice and interpret teaching practices at different points in their teacher education programmes. LCT has been used extensively to explore the development of expertise in a wide range of practices such as nursing (see Brookes & Monbec, 2021); chemistry (see Blackie, 2014) and academic literacy (see Kirk, 2017). It is also being used to analyse the lesson observation reports written by preservice teachers at the beginning and end of a module which provided preservice teachers with “a framework for observing and interpreting classroom practices and guided analysis of lessons recorded in diverse classrooms” (Langsford & Rusznyak, 2024, p.8).

The Semantics dimension of LCT is used to explore meaning in knowledge claims. It can be used to track the forms of knowledge that are used to convey meaning and how these forms can change over time. The Semantics dimension is appropriate for this study because it offers two concepts that reveal the organising principles of how meanings are constituted at different points in the development of more specialised practices, such as at different stages of a professional (see Wolff, 2022) and vocational (see Shay & Steyn, 2015) preparation programme. The organising principles that underpin the code of different forms of knowledge are provided by semantic gravity, a measure of the context-dependence of knowledge claims, and semantic density, a measure of their complexity.

3.3.1. *Semantic gravity (SG)*

The concept of *semantic gravity* describes the degree of context-dependence of the meaning conveyed in practice. In this study, semantic gravity refers to the degree of context-dependence that preservice teachers enact in their responses to the lessons they have observed. It is expected that their observations would generally be strongly linked to the happenings in a lesson. However, I am interested in finding out whether final-year preservice teachers are more able to see principles and specialised techniques in the teachers' work they observe.

Semantic gravity can be defined at various strengths, from more context-dependent to less context-dependent. This continuum enables me as researcher to code the extent to which the noticings in preservice teachers' Lesson Observation Reports are tied to the particulars of the lesson or transcend the specifics of the lesson. This is important because of the transfer that is enabled by insights with weaker semantic gravity and the extent to which insights from their coursework can be recruited and recontextualised to observe and interpret a teacher's practices. An example of *stronger semantic gravity* (SG+) would manifest when a preservice teacher refers to an interaction entirely within a specific context and does not generalise it out of the context of that lesson's time and space. Conversely, a preservice teacher's response would exhibit *weaker semantic gravity* (SG-) when they are able to move beyond the particular events or interactions in a lesson and recognise the principles or procedures underpinning the teacher's practices.

A key challenge in research is connecting theoretical concepts to empirical data, making it clear how theory is reflected in real-world observations and how empirical data can inform theory. To address this challenge, Basil Bernstein (2000) introduced the idea of an external language of description, which provides a way to explicitly link high-level theoretical concepts to their empirical manifestations. For example, in her study on how social class differences are perpetuated through pedagogy, Hoadley (2007) developed an external language of description to analyse data, using Bernstein's concepts to create practical indicators within a dataset. In the context of her study, framing relates to the level of control over the teaching and learning process: strong framing indicates significant teacher control, while weak framing allows for more student autonomy (ibid). Bernstein's external language is valuable because it enables researchers to apply theory to empirical data, facilitating clearer analysis. Maton (2016) builds on this idea in Legitimation Code Theory (LCT), where external languages are termed 'translation devices' (Maton & Chen, 2019, p.15). Maton suggests that empirical indicators characterise different strengths of an organising concept, such as semantic gravity, by linking them with specific categories and providing empirical examples. Because concepts like semantic gravity and semantic density manifest differently across studies, a translation device is required. This tool allows researchers to define how these concepts manifest within a particular study, ensuring consistency in applying theory to empirical data.

Table 3.1 illustrates how a translation device allows me to define four strengths of semantic gravity within preservice teachers' lesson observations.

Table 3.1: A translation device for coding four strengths of semantic gravity in participants' Lesson Observation Reports

Concept	Categories	Indicators	Examples from the data
↑ weaker semantic gravity ↑ ↓ ↓ stronger semantic gravity	SG - -	Student draws out generalised principles for teaching literacy making statements without referring to specific contexts.	Grammar is fundamental if one will be able to understand the usage of language.
	SG-	The student refers to patterns of teaching that may include techniques, strategies or protocols.	The focuses on how these words are constructed (morphology), and the way they are pronounced phonology.
	SG+	The student refers to general aspects of a particular lesson or teacher's work in that lesson. The student does not give specific details.	The teacher teaches the words through their phonics
	SG ++	The student includes specific details of the particular lesson such as specific actions, interactions or incidents.	Learning is promoted through the use of sentence starters being offered as to ensure that learners know what the task requires from them as well as information on what should be discussed.

3.3.2. Semantic density (SD)

The second organising principle in the Semantics dimension is semantic density. Semantic density measures the degree of complexity that manifests in the enactment of practice. This complexity can manifest in two ways, either through a networking of ideas (such as seeing relation, locating a claim within a broader system of knowledge or meaning), or the condensation of meaning (such as the packing of very precise technical meanings into a term or a symbol) (Maton & Doran, 2017). Semantic density also can be defined along a continuum of strengths from weaker to stronger. In this study, I employ the concept of *semantic density* to operationalise the degree of complexity in the reports written by preservice teachers in response to a lesson they observed. The extent to which knowledge is connected to broader theories of education and learning, frameworks for teaching and strategies for literacy practices would enact stronger semantic density. I will define

four levels of semantic density, the “simplest” being atomistic statements of general description, and the most complex being technical descriptions or theorised explanations of the teachers’ pedagogy. It is expected that first-year preservice teachers may focus on describing the context-specific elements of a lesson. I am interested in seeing the extent to which final-year preservice teachers observe and interpret the teacher’s literacy practices in light of a wider, more complex body of theoretical and practical knowledge. This would suggest that they have acquired a more specialised gaze on teaching.

The following three tables show my separate translation devices for the *description*, *interpretation* and *appraisal*. The translation devices define four strengths of semantic density that I use to analyse preservice teachers’ lesson observation reports.

Table 3.2: A translation device for coding four strengths of semantic density in participants’ Lesson Observation Reports that were classified as *descriptions*:

Concept	Categories	Indicators	Examples from the data
stronger semantic density 	SD ++	The student describes precise aspects of teachers’ work. Typically uses technical terminology to pinpoint specific concepts, strategies and their constituent parts.	- Gradually, they learn aspects of reading and word recognition and phonics and phonemic awareness. The teacher is teaching using the segmentation of letters; sounds; pronunciation and blending the word back together. - She demonstrated the following concepts in an easy, simple understandable way: Consonant digraphs (two consonants making one sound) Vowel digraphs (two vowels making one sound) Trigraphs, decoding of CVC, ccvc, cvcc words.
	SD +	The student describes aspects of the teaching, typically using technical terms to identify strategies or concepts. Does not necessarily give precise details on how the strategies or concepts are applied.	- Before reading the book she has a segment of the lesson dedicated to phonics and word decoding strategies. - She points focuses mainly on phonics, the letter-sound relationships.
	SD -	The student provides a description of what the teacher is doing giving detail about how, but does not link to educational ideas or specific literacy strategies	- She explains techniques for proper pronunciation of vowels in words. She does this by referring to some previous lessons to remind the learners - Before reading the book, the teacher takes out certain words from the book that she reads from and goes over the various spelling and pronunciation of the words. She takes her time to pronounce the sounds of the different

weaker semantic density			words, as well as the spelling of the words.
	SD - -	The student provides a description of what the teacher is doing, typically sticking to observable actions without reference to educational ideas or literacy strategies.	• She showed the learners words that are found in the storybook. • The educator breaks down 15 more words.

Table 3.3: A translation device for coding four strengths of semantic density in participants' Lesson Observation Reports that were classified as interpretations

Concept	Categories	Indicators	Examples from the data
stronger semantic density	SD ++	The student makes use of educational ideas and principles, to explain precisely what the teacher is doing and suggests why. Typically uses technical terms to pinpoint specific strategies or practices.	• The [teacher's] demonstrations taught learners that there are predictable relationships between sounds and letters and that this knowledge can be applied to both familiar and unfamiliar words. This knowledge aids in improving fluency in reading • This lesson shows that reading is a step-by-step process because it shows the beginning with learning phonemic awareness and eventually ends with children being able to not only read words but comprehend their meaning.
	SD +	The student mentions some technical terms when suggesting the teachers' intention. Typically, the interpretation is not fully elaborated and /or meaningfully connected to theoretical concepts or strategies,	• The teacher does so because she knows that learners need to know how to decode phonics out of context. • She wanted the learners to understand the rules of phonics within each word. Once that was done, she knew that the reading of the story would be easier
	SD -	The student suggests what the teacher is doing and why, but does not recruit educational/literacy ideas or strategies. Typically, they don't use technical terms.	• Once she notices that learners can perfectly pronounce the teacher reads the words separately, like f.....o....x. That way learners know the sound of f, o, and x so they do not find it difficult to read the word once.... Like "fox". • "The teacher [is] helping the children with the words they are going to come across while reading the story so they can manage
weaker semantic density	SD - -	No interpretation of practice provided by the student	

Table 3.4 A translation device for coding four strengths of semantic density in participants' Lesson Observation Reports that were classified as *appraisals*:

Concept	categories	Indicators	Examples from the data
stronger semantic density 	SD ++	The student offers an appraisal that pinpoints exactly what is working or not working in the lesson, drawing on theoretical insights to substantiate the judgement. Their appraisal may include alternatives or what should happen.	- The primary [teacher] uses the basal reading program that does not follow a strong sequence of phonics instruction. In early reading, the child's reading material should feature a high percentage of new words that use the letter-sound relationship they have been taught. - This is effective because when the teacher uses this pace, this reveals that she understands that the learners have not fully developed automatic decoding skills, as well as the vocabulary to understand certain phrases and interpret events properly therefore it is important to give them time to process parts of the story.
	SD +	The student offers an appraisal on an aspect of the lesson giving a detailed justification for their appraisal. Typically, they link their justification to educational concepts or literacy strategies.	- It would have been nice if Mrs. McGee spoke more about the title of the book and what they see on the front cover of the book. This could have assisted the learners not only with the reading process but built on the learner's comprehension skills as well. - She teaches in a good and appropriate way to teach Grade 1's because they learn gradually aspects of reading and word recognition and phonics and phonemic awareness.
	SD -	Student provides an evaluation of an aspect of the lesson and/or the reasons given for the appraisal. Typically, they do not draw on educational ideas or literacy strategies to support their appraisal.	- I think she explains it nicely to the learners by breaking the words up for them and putting them together, e.g. some/thing makes something. - The method that this teacher uses is the best for the grade 1 learners because she is not fast. My comment on this lesson is positive because the method that the teacher is using to teach learners is the best and will accommodate all learners even the ones that are slow. If all the teachers in South Africa can use this method to teach grade1 learners I think almost all of them will pass.
Weaker	SD - -	Student provides an evaluation of an aspect of the lesson without providing reasons	- The teacher had selected words central to the lesson and appropriate to the Foundation Phase learner. - I feel that this lesson was creative.

Ideally, in effective teacher preparation programmes, fourth-year preservice teachers' interpretations of the teacher's intentions and actions should demonstrate more complexity (indicated by a stronger semantic density) than that of first-year preservice teachers who have just started their initial teacher education. In addition, one could expect that fourth-year noticings will exhibit a greater range of semantic gravity focusing both on the principles of practice and how they are enacted in the context of the observed lesson.

Although the organising principles of semantic gravity and semantic density can be used independently from one another, we can also look at them relationally using positions on a plane. The positions on a plane reveal the underlying semantic codes that preservice teachers enact when they observe lessons.

3.3.3. The semantic plane: Revealing semantic codes

To reveal the differences in the complexity and context-dependence of noticings produced by first and fourth-year preservice teachers, respectively, it was necessary to plot their strengths of semantic gravity and semantic density on the axes of a Cartesian plane (see Figure 2). This enables me to analytically distinguish four codes (Maton, 2016) that legitimatise preservice teachers' noticings in the lessons they observe. The four strengths of semantic gravity and semantic density generate 16 distinct positions on the semantic plane, each that gives rise to different forms of knowledge that range from simple and highly context-dependent (bottom left part of the semantic plane) to those that are more complex and less context-dependent (top right part of the semantic plane). Instead of simply seeing this as a practice-theory distinction, the distribution patterns also reveal instances where preservice teachers' lesson reports are more simple and general (top left), and complex and focused on the particulars of the observed lesson (bottom right)

Figure 3.1: The semantic plane with 16 positions and 4 distinct codes

rarefied code: <i>less context-dependent with simpler meanings</i>		SG--	rhizomatic code: <i>less context-dependent with more complex meanings</i>	
		SG-		
SD--	SD-	SG+	SD+	SD++
prosaic code: <i>more context-dependent with simpler meanings</i>			worldly code: <i>more context-dependent with more complex meanings</i>	
		SG++		

Within the context of this study, the four codes (which take into account both semantic density and semantic gravity) can be described as follows:

- *rarefied* (SG-/SD-): In this code, noticings exhibit less context dependence (weaker semantic gravity), and they carry simpler meanings (weaker semantic density).
- *prosaic* (SG+/SD-): In this code, noticings exhibit a greater degree of context-dependence, resulting in stronger semantic gravity. The meanings remain relatively simple, exhibiting weaker semantic density.
- *rhizomatic* (SG-/SD+): In this code, noticings exhibit weaker semantic gravity (less context-dependence), and a greater level of complexity (stronger semantic density)
- *worldly* (SG+/SD+): Noticings in the worldly code are characterized by stronger semantic gravity, implying greater context-dependence, and stronger semantic density, which implies a greater level of complexity.

Crucial to their ability to enact pedagogical noticing is the ability of preservice teachers to bring theoretical concepts or complex practice-based insights to bear on their observations of a specific lesson or teacher's practices. An important indicator of preservice teacher learning is the ability to shift from operating within codes characterised by context-dependence and simpler ideas, to codes which are characterised by greater complexity, both with abstraction and insights into the particulars of a given lesson. This ability is developed through the acquisition of

specialised knowledge and conceptual tools. The findings of this study will show how these shifts are enacted in preservice teachers' noticings.

3.3.4. Semantic range in lesson observation reports

The ability to move from specific classroom events to general principles of practice and from simplistic descriptions to complex interpretations is enacted as an increase in the *semantic range of the organising principles either separately or together*. Eßling et al. (2023) posit that:

...preservice teachers [who are] developing deep understanding...will constantly demonstrate surface level knowledge ...but will readily move beyond this to present more generalised and abstracted forms of understanding that include sophisticated connections between different aspects of theory and bodies of knowledge (p. 12-13).

A single lesson observation report may contain units of noticing that range in complexity from SD- to SD+, and in context-dependence from SG+ to SG-. It is expected that noticings produced by final-year preservice teachers will have a greater semantic range than those of first-year preservice teachers.

3.4. Summary

Chapter 3 highlights the significance of intentional noticing in the professionalisation of preservice teachers. It aligns the study with the cognitive-psychological perspective, emphasising the multifaceted nature of noticing and the various ways teachers engage with this process. The chapter discusses how preservice teachers actively perceive and make sense of events in the classroom through noticing. The literature cited in the chapter suggests that pedagogical noticing involves describing, interpreting, and evaluating events in the teaching and learning process. Examples from studies by Bakker et al. (2022) and Van Es and Sherin (2002; 2019) are used to illustrate the active and interconnected nature of noticing, as well as the cognitive engagement required in the process. This chapter also outlines how concepts from Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) serve as the analytical framework for the study. I explained how I have used the concepts of semantic gravity and semantic density to reveal the basis of how meaning shifts in context-dependence and complexity of preservice teachers' noticings. Moreover, I showed how LCT allows me to track preservice teachers' semantic range - their ability to shift from specific events within

the observed lesson (SG+) to overarching principles of practice (SG-), and from simple ideas (SD-) to complex, networked reasoning (SD+). I have also indicated the kinds of distribution patterns that one could expect to see as preservice teachers become more knowledgeable about literacy practices and more adept in observing and interpreting classroom practices over the course of their initial teacher education.

Chapter 4: Research Design

The main objectives of this study are twofold. Firstly, the aim is to compare how South African preservice teachers from three different institutions and at different levels of their ITE, describe, interpret, and appraise reading pedagogies they observe. This involved examining differences in the context-dependence and complexity of their noticings. Secondly, the study seeks to assess whether differences in the ways first and final-year preservice teachers perceive reading pedagogies carry implications for Foundation Phase teacher preparation. By exploring these objectives, the research aims to contribute valuable insights into the developmental progression of preservice teachers' perspectives on reading pedagogies.

In order to address the research aims described above, it was necessary to analyse, describe and ultimately understand preservice teachers' pedagogical noticings. Therefore, the most suitable methodology involves a qualitative research design. A qualitative approach enables me to "describe ... document, to understand, and to discover" (McMillan and Schumacher 2010, p. 324) how participants observe, describe and analyse the reading pedagogies they observe. Qualitative research typically studies the meanings and interpretations of people or systems (Holloway & Wheeler, in Maree, 2007). Yilmaz (2013, p.312) describes qualitative research methodology as "an emergent, inductive, interpretive and naturalistic approach to the study of people, cases, phenomena, social situations and processes in their natural settings in order to reveal in descriptive terms the meanings that people attach to their experiences of the world." Similarly, Cohen et al. (2007), suggest that it "focuses on generating understanding through rich descriptions, "prob[ing] issues that lie beneath the surface of presenting behaviours and actions" (p. 287). In this case, employing qualitative methods allows for a nuanced examination of how South African preservice teachers describe, interpret, and appraise reading pedagogies.

This study is in a realist tradition, which regards practices to contain more than what can be revealed perceived empirically. The study regards observing and interpreting lessons as a knowledge practices. Insights from coursework and classroom experiences shape (and are shaped) by preservice teachers who are social actors operating in a field of practice, situated at a point in time and space. There are codes that underlie the empirical manifestations of practice - and in this case, the codes are

generated by context dependence (enacted as different strengths in semantic gravity) and in complexity (enacted by different strengths of semantic density). The codes reveal what lies beneath the empirical data. As it focuses on the pedagogical noticings of preservice teachers from different institutions at one specific point in time, this study has made use of a cross-sectional case-study approach to research. The case study design allowed for a deep and nuanced analysis of preservice teachers' noticings. Hitchcock and Hughes (in Cohen et al., 2007 p. 253) outline one of the hallmarks of a case study, suggesting that it "focuses on individual actors or groups of actors, and seeks to understand their perceptions of events". This characteristic was evident in my case study, as I focused on noticings produced by two different cohorts of preservice teachers and sought to understand their perceptions of reading pedagogies.

4.1. Data sources

During the Covid-19 pandemic, a diverse group of teacher educators from various universities developed the *Teacher Choices in Action* module to provide an alternative to school-based learning. (Bertram & Rusznyak, 2024). It provides conceptual tools to analyse lessons and teacher thinking underpinning practice. The module was intended as an intervention that prepares preservice teachers for work-integrated learning. The module brings to the foreground the considerations and choices that teachers make in every lesson they teach (Hugo, 2013) and through guided lesson analysis and independent lesson observation, preservice teachers have opportunities to see how these choices are enacted in a diverse range of lessons, across different subjects and phase specialisations and school contexts (Bertram & Rusznyak, 2024). MRTEQ (DHET, 2015) outlines "types of learning associated with the acquisition, integration and application of knowledge for teaching purposes" (p.11). Practical learning involves learning *from* practice (using discursive resources to analyse different practices; drawing from case studies, video records and lesson observations). Crucially for this study, the module offers a unique opportunity to analyse how preservice teachers from around the country (and at different stages of their ITE) observe, analyse and evaluate *the same* lesson. Preservice teachers are required to analyse pre-recorded lessons selected from 250 lessons in a lesson library relevant to their phase/subject specialisations. The data for the study is drawn from the Lesson Observation Reports that preservice teachers produce as a means of reflecting on observed practice.

Each lesson observation report consists of 3 parts:

1. Description of the lesson.
2. Preservice teachers' understanding of what the teacher does and why.
3. The preservice teacher's own thoughts and comments on the lesson.

A selected pre-recorded lesson and the corresponding Lesson Observation Reports served as the empirical data for this study. I coded preservice teachers' observations of *specialised reading pedagogies*. Of the recorded lessons that the Teacher Choices in Action Lesson Library offers, there are approximately six that focus on reading in the Foundation Phase. Some of these are presented in languages other than English. I chose a lesson that focused exclusively on reading, is presented in English, and had been observed by many students, thereby providing a sufficient number of Lesson Observation Reports to analyse. It is an online lesson, and so there are no learners present. The recorded lesson centres on reading a levelled reader, "A Picnic For Tortoise." The teacher strategically emphasises letter/sound correspondence to develop word-level skills, aligning with Scarborough's Reading Rope's bottom strands (word recognition). Approximately 40% of the lesson is dedicated to these word-level skills, while the remaining time is spent reading the story aloud. Language comprehension development is implicit in this lesson. The observed lesson was conducted in a public primary school, in an upmarket suburb of South Africa. The language of learning and teaching is English, and it is likely that there are both first and second language speaking English-speaking learners in this Grade 1 class. More detail on this lesson is provided in section 5.1.1.

4.2. Participants

Because the pedagogical noticing of first and final-year preservice teachers was the object of study, participants who fitted specific criteria were purposively selected. The participants needed to be studying towards a B. Ed (Foundation Phase) degree at a South African university. They needed to be in their first or final year of study when they completed the Teacher Choices in Action module. The selection of participants was, in some ways, self-selecting because it was dependent upon their decision to view (and write a lesson observation report on) the Grade 1 reading lesson.

Table 4.1 shows the number of participants selected from three South African universities situated in different provinces in South Africa. All three are public institutions. One institution is historically advantaged, one is historically disadvantaged and one is a relatively new university. All offer degrees in teacher education and specialisations in Foundation Phase teaching.

Table 4.1: The number of participants selected from three South African universities

Cohort	Institution A	Institution B	Institution C	Total
First year Foundation Phase preservice teachers	17	9	16	42
Final year Foundation Phase preservice teachers	4	9	4	17

In section 4.6.1, I will address the discrepancy between the number of first and final-year participants.

4.3. Data analysis

In this section, I will explain the data analysis process. I engaged in a five-layer analysis, which will now be discussed.

First Layer: Content (thematic) analysis

I conducted an analysis of what it was that the preservice teachers were focused on when watching the observed lesson. I identified five prevalent themes that emerged from the data. They were noticings related to (in no particular order):

- *Word recognition*: Noticings which made reference to, or alluded to phonological awareness, decoding or sight recognition
- *Language comprehension*: Noticings which made reference to, or alluded to background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning and literacy knowledge

- *General observations relating to language and literacy:* Noticings which made reference to general aspects of literacy teaching such as “In Foundation Phase, the teacher should read with expression.”
- *Specific reference to the text used in the lesson* such as “The duck, the rabbit and the tortoise were having a picnic.”
- *Other:* Noticings which were not directly related to the teaching of reading, such as “I think that the teacher make use of a online classroom because she is not in a class with learners.”

Second Layer: Selection of themes

From the outset, I chose to exclude noticings that focused on general pedagogical aspects of teaching such as classroom management. Of the remaining four themes identified in the data, I found that the noticings related to the two main components of skilled reading instruction (*word recognition* and *language comprehension*) were of particular significance to this study. Therefore, I selected those two themes for further analysis

Identifying different facets of noticing within the lesson observation reports

Analysis of the data revealed that one lesson observation report often contained references to several different “teaching moments.” In addition, preservice teachers were found to enact noticing in three different ways. Thus, it became necessary to separate the noticing construct into three facets: *description*, *interpretation* and *appraisal*. The lesson observation reports were separated into units of data. Each unit was focused on one facet of noticing. The three facets of noticing have been used in the translation device for semantic density (see section 3.3.2). Each facet has its own indicators.

Third Layer: Coding Word Recognition noticings using tools from the Semantics dimension of LCT

I used indicators from the translation devices to code the data - first in terms of the relative strength of its semantic density, and then in terms of the relative strength of its semantic gravity (see section 3.3.1). Having coded the data, I plotted the strengths of semantic gravity and semantic density on a semantic plane (see section 3.6.3). This enabled me to highlight differences in the complexity and context-dependence of observations made by first and fourth-year preservice teachers.

As I coded the data, it became necessary to refine each translation device so that the indicators closely reflected the patterns that were emerging. The more data I coded, the clearer those patterns became. Moreover, when developing my translation device for semantic density, it was observed that participants engaged in the act of noticing in different ways. This is in line with van Es and Sherin's (2021) findings that teachers use three general stances to discuss what they notice. In some instances, participants *described* what they observed, articulated in statements such as, "The teacher read the book 'A Picnic For Tortoise'." In other instances, preservice teachers *interpreted* the teachers' actions, exemplified by statements like, "She breaks down the sounds in the words so the learners can read them independently in the story." Some preservice teachers *appraised* what they noticed, pointing out what they felt were positive or negative elements of the lesson. For instance, "I think the story was appropriate for this age group." For ease of analysis, I separated each lesson observation report into *units* of noticing, and each unit generally reflected one specific *facet* of noticing.

Final Layer: Conducting a narrative analysis of Language Comprehension noticings

In the observed lesson, explicit language comprehension development is largely implicit. Therefore, I felt it pertinent to conduct a narrative analysis of this theme in order to unpack any misinterpretations made by the participants in this regard.

4.4. Ethical considerations

This study made use of secondary data. Secondary data analysis is often considered a safer and less intrusive research approach compared to primary data collection methods. This study is considered to be low-risk, as I received an anonymised dataset drawn from the MS Access database. The names of participants and all other identifying details were removed. The database generated a unique numerical identifier to each participant, ensuring complete anonymity. An ethics waiver has been obtained (*waiver letter number: HRECNMW23/06/02*) in order to ensure compliance with ethical obligations (see *Appendix*). The project leader, having obtained ethical clearance (see *Appendix*), gave me permission to utilise the data for this study. Furthermore, all participants provided informed consent for their involvement in the research.

4.5. Limits

This section acknowledges the limitations of this study.

4.5.1. Limitations of video analysis

Grossman (2011) cautions that when watching a video of a lesson, the viewers only see “... the interactions between teacher, [preservice teacher] and content that make up the lesson”, but [are] not privy to “... the planning that preceded the lesson, or the interactions with colleagues and curriculum materials that shaped that planning” (*ibid.*, p. 2838). In addition, viewers are not privy to the contextual priorities and needs of the learners in the class. Moreover, due to the absence of actual learners during the observed lesson, the teacher did not need to make real-time accommodations or modifications. The absence of real-time interaction limits the ability to assess learner engagement and the dynamic nature of teaching. This absence introduces an additional layer of complexity that remains unexplored in the study. The conceptual tools that Teacher Choices in Action provides for preservice teachers to support the analysis of lessons and teacher thinking, should serve to circumvent some of these limitations.

4.5.2. Data

The data analysed was collected as preservice teachers completed the Teacher Choices in Action project. An undertaking of the project is that research would only commence once each academic year had been completed and that all identifying biographic details of participants would be removed. For these reasons, I did not have the opportunity to interview participants, and as a result, I was unable to probe their responses or ask them to elaborate on the comments they made in their lesson observation reports. The dataset contains “their enacted lesson observations and reflects what they noticed and deemed significant to articulate in their written response” (Langsford & Rusznyak, 2024 p. 12). Furthermore, the participants were self-selecting in that selection was dependent upon their decision to view (and write a lesson observation report on) the selected artefact of practice. For this reason, a significantly smaller number of final-year preservice teachers were available for selection than first-year preservice teachers, as fewer of them had chosen to review the specific lesson. To circumvent this challenge, I brought the data to scale using

percentages. The findings, although partial and provisional, nevertheless reveal how participants from these three universities observed and interpreted the same recorded lesson. The patterns will still provide a useful litmus test about the way they are drawing on their teacher education to make sense of teachers' work. It must be acknowledged that the observed lesson lacked context about the learners' environment and learning challenges, and the absence of immediate feedback may have made it difficult for students to evaluate how effectively the lesson addressed learners' needs. Additionally, the finding that very few students suggested improvements to enhance the lesson may be attributed to the fact that such a directive was not clearly stated in the question prompts.

4.6. Reliability and validity

Cohen et al., (2007) suggest that in qualitative research, ensuring the strength of a study involves a careful examination of reliability and validity. While complete elimination of threats to these aspects is impractical, I have worked to minimise their impact throughout my research process. I have taken advantage of every opportunity to share my work and coding system with a knowledgeable audience who were familiar with LCT including fellow students, lecturers, and my supervisor. Together, we repeatedly reviewed and tested my coding, ensuring everyone agreed on its application. We coded the same sections of the data separately until we were confident in consistently assigning the same codes. This collaborative process not only strengthened the study's validity and reliability but also validated the coding system, enhancing the overall integrity of the research. Moreover, the use of a translation device not only supports the interaction between theory and data but also improves the reliability of the coding. By clearly defining the criteria for coding, it promotes consistency in the coding process. This contributes to the overall strength of the study, ensuring that the interpretation and application of concepts remain reliable and consistent throughout the research. Despite recognising the importance of triangulation as a mechanism to ensure data accuracy, a limitation of this study is my reliance solely on the participants' written responses. I did not have the opportunity to triangulate the data which may have allowed me to cross-verify information.

Chapter 5: Findings

This chapter presents the results of my analysis of the lesson observation reports written by preservice teachers in response to the same observed lesson.

Firstly, I will discuss the prevalent themes that were identified in the data. Following this, I will deal with the themes of word recognition and language comprehension separately, as I have analysed them in different ways. With respect to word recognition noticings, I will show how semantic codes have revealed differences in the preservice teachers' noticings between first and fourth year participants . For noticings coded as language comprehension, I will present a narrative analysis of the data.

5.1. What preservice teachers notice

In order to identify data that would be the most significant for this study, it was necessary to identify prevalent themes that emerged from the lesson observation reports. Table 5.1 provides information on each theme as it appears in the data. The percentage reveals what each cohort focused on the most (and the least) when observing the lesson.

Table 5.1: The percentage of comments made by first and fourth-year preservice teachers on different aspects of the observed lesson

Key::			Percentage of overall lesson observation reports	
		= Themes selected for further analysis		
Themes:	Illustrative examples from data		First-year	Fourth-year
1	Word recognition	She made use of phonemic awareness to help learners to know how to read and segment words for good pronunciation.	17%	22%
2	Language comprehension	The teacher has begun the lesson using vocabulary as unlinked ideas and worked them together to form a full idea in the	19%	21%

		reading of the book.		
3	General observations relating to literacy teaching and learning	This lesson reminded me of the importance of being a good reader as a foundation phase teacher. The teacher read to the learners with expression	7%	11%
4	Specific reference to the text used in the lesson	a) The storybook is about a tortoise, duck and a rabbit. b) The pictures helped to keep the learners engaged	32%	31%
5	Other	I think that the teacher make use of a online classroom because she is not in a class with learners.	24%	17%

Both first-year and final-year preservice teachers dedicated approximately one-third of their lesson observation reports to discussing the details of the story that was used in the lesson. Many first-year preservice teachers were inclined to recount the actual storyline (SG++ and SD- -), whilst fourth year participants tended to comment on pedagogically focused aspects, like the appropriateness of the story for foundation phase learners. Fourth-year preservice teachers spent less time discussing elements of the lesson which were unrelated to literacy pedagogies (see *theme 5: "Other"*). A slight increase was observed in the percentages dedicated to word recognition and language comprehension pedagogies from first year to fourth year. Of the five prevalent themes identified in the data, I found that the noticings related to the two main components of reading (*word recognition* and *language comprehension*) were of particular significance to this study, and were aligned with the teaching taking place in the observed lesson. These themes are crucial for literacy practices, and therefore, I selected those themes for further analysis. To further exemplify the selection of those two themes, it is necessary to understand how they manifest in the observed lesson.

5.1.1. Word Recognition and Language Comprehension in the observed lesson

In the recorded lesson, the teacher reads *A Picnic For Tortoise*, (a levelled reader). Before reading, she strategically draws learners' attention to the letter/sound correspondence of words in a particular story. The majority of the lesson (at least

40% of the contact time) is spent on developing word-level skills, which align with the bottom strand of Scarborough's Reading Rope (*word recognition*). The rest of the lesson is dedicated to reading the story aloud. The teacher does not unpack the meanings of the words, but the use of pictorial clues may have aided comprehension. Language comprehension development is largely implicit in this lesson, but cannot be excluded, as both word recognition skills and language comprehension skills are *always* drawn upon when engaging with text (although one capacity may be developed to a more sophisticated level than the other)..

Table 5.2 Outline of how Language Comprehension and Word Recognition manifests in the recorded lesson

Components of Language Comprehension		Explicit development of language comprehension in the observed lesson?	Implicit use/development of language comprehension in the observed lesson?
	Background knowledge	No discussion on topic prior to or after reading the story. At the end of the lesson, the teacher asks the learners to discuss the story with their parents.	Learners will automatically draw on any prior knowledge and experience to help them understand the story. In turn, listening to stories can help to build background knowledge.
	Vocabulary	No reference made to the meanings of the words except for a brief mention of “I” meaning “ourselves”	Learners will have learnt the meanings of these words indirectly through everyday experiences, and must use this knowledge to comprehend the text. In turn, listening to stories can help to build vocabulary.
	Language structure	Contractions and apostrophes are explained (I’m and I’ll). Suffixes “ing” and “ed” are touched on, but only in relation to decoding the words in question – not in	Learners will be unconsciously drawing on their knowledge of grammar and syntax as the story is read to them.

		terms of how they modify the words	
	Verbal reasoning	No explicit teaching strategies observed.	There is no figurative language in the story, and it does not require learners to “read between the lines. “However, it is possible that some learners may draw inferences about what the characters are thinking, and what might happen next.
	Literacy knowledge	No explicit teaching strategies observed.	Any exposure to stories helps to develop print awareness and print knowledge.
Components of Word Recognition	Phonological awareness	Explicit attention paid to the sounds (phonemes) in words	
	Decoding	Over 40 % of the lesson is dedicated to this strand. Explicit attention paid to letter-sound correspondence.	
	Sight recognition	The development of phonemic awareness and decoding skills will support sight recognition	The learners in the class who are already skilled readers will be able to recognise many of the words instantly.

It is important to note that *fluency* - often considered a combination of accuracy, rate, and prosody—is not represented as its own strand in Scarborough’s Rope, but it is closely related to the word recognition strand. As learners develop automaticity in word recognition, their reading fluency improves. During the lesson, the teacher modelled fluent reading for her learners.

Table 5.2 reveals that the main focus of this lesson appears to be the development of word recognition skills. . The teacher in question does not employ many explicit, *observable* teaching strategies that focus on the development of language

comprehension. It is for this reason that I felt that a narrative analysis would be more appropriate for noticings related to that theme.

5.2. Word recognition

As the development of word recognition skills is the focus of the observed lesson, I intentionally selected this theme for further analysis. I turned to a Semantics analysis using Legitimation Code Theory to find out whether differences exist in preservice teachers' ability to transition from the specifics of the lesson to the underlying principles of practice, as well as in the complexity of their descriptions, interpretations, and appraisals.

To address sub-research questions 1, 2, and 3, an in-depth analysis was necessary. Consequently, I focused on exploring how degrees of complexity and context dependence manifest within the three separate facets of noticings: *descriptions*, *interpretations*, and *appraisals*. This more granular analysis provided a nuanced understanding of the underlying patterns. The results of this analysis will now be presented.

5.2.1. Describing word recognition pedagogies of the lesson:

The first thing that participants were asked to do when writing their lesson observations is to describe the lesson. Descriptions accounted for 44% of first-year participants' noticings (see *Figure 5.1a*), and 51% of final-year participants' noticings (see *Figure 5.1b*). However, as my analysis will show, there are significant differences in how first year preservice teachers and fourth year preservice teachers described the observed lesson.

The following extracts from lesson observation reports illustrate how the same lesson can be described in vastly different ways, revealing the level of a preservice teacher's insight into practice. The first two are produced by first-year participants, and are simple accounts of practice in prosaic codes: "Before she could read she showed the learners words that are found in the storybook." This participant has used everyday language to describe the teachers' actions. The word "show" lacks specificity about the instructional strategies employed by the teacher. Without this information, the description remains ambiguous and does not suggest a precise understanding of *how* reading is being taught. This weakens the semantic density

(SD - -). In the next extract, a first-year participant is recounting the teacher's actions at various stages in the lesson as a list of discreet competences rather than a cohesive, integrated literacy practice:

In this lesson, the teacher goes through pronouncing new and unfamiliar words that learners will encounter in the story they are going to read – “A picnic for tortoise”. After the teacher breaks down the pronunciation of the words she reads the story out loud for the learners.

Although it provides slightly more detail than in the previous example, this description could easily have been provided by a non-teacher. The process of decoding words is described simplistically using everyday language.

In contrast, the following fourth-year preservice teachers give more complex accounts of the teacher's practices:

[The teacher] is focusing on phonemic awareness where she explains the different words with different sounds...The teacher also explains to the learners to remember that if the word does not make sense they can try to change the vowel to its long or short sound.

The above description includes the teacher's emphasis on crucial elements of reading development, such as phonemic awareness and strategic decoding strategies involving vowel sounds. Similarly, the next final-year extract exhibits stronger semantic density due to its more detailed and precise technical nature: “The teacher promotes learning through the segmentation of letters; sounds; pronunciation and blending the word back together.”

Pronunciation is an everyday term, and in the context of specialised linguistic constructs, it is imprecise. However, in the context of the above description, it is recognised as just one element within an intricate process along with segmentation and blending (more precise terminology).

The following example (also produced by a final-year preservice teacher) suggests an understanding of different approaches to reading instruction, drawing on theoretical knowledge (SD+). : “The teacher is utilizing an integrated approach a whole word and phonics approach.” Here, the final-year preservice teacher describes the instruction as an “integrated approach” where both phonics and whole-language

elements are at play. Generally speaking, first- year participants did not reference specific instructional approaches to reading.

Figure 5.1.: Shifts in context-dependence and complexity from first year (5.1a) to fourth year (5.1b) in noticings coded as descriptions of practice:

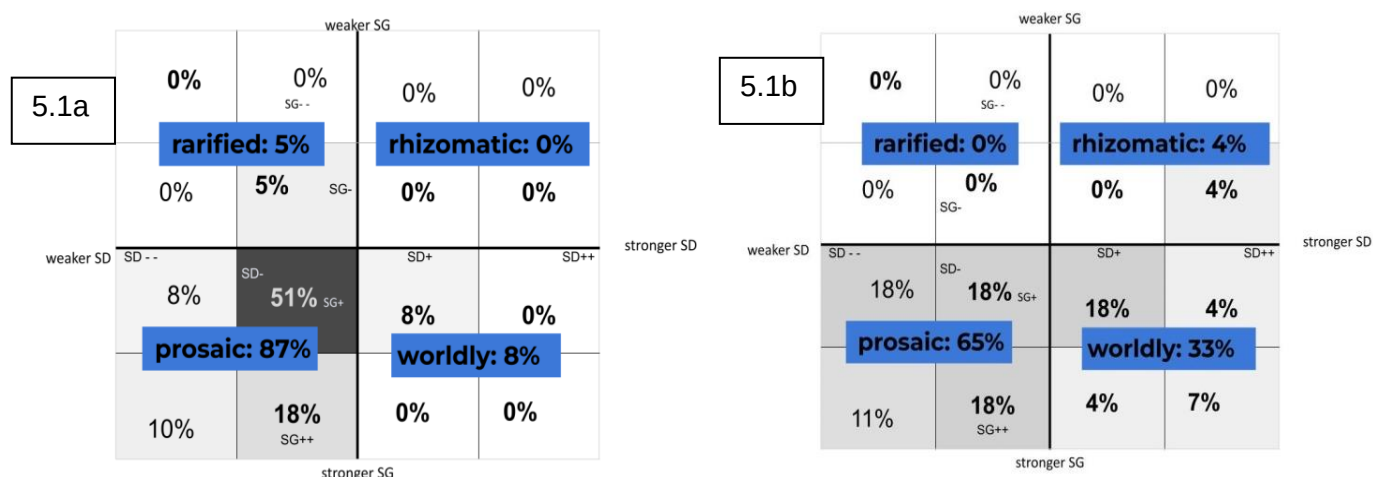


Figure 5.1 shows that in both data sets, the majority of the descriptions fall into the prosaic code, characterised by both simplicity and context-boundedness. Teaching strategies were described simplistically, with little attention paid to the nuances of the teacher's carefully thought-out words and actions (SD-). However, for descriptions of practice, a higher percentage of final-year noticings fall into the worldly code. This code is characterised by greater complexity and context-boundedness. Contributing to the increased complexity of final-year noticings was their use of technical terminology to describe aspects of teachers' work. In addition, fourth-year preservice teachers were more likely to unpack a specific teaching strategy into its constituent parts, drawing on concepts covered at university (SD+).

5.2.2: Interpreting teachers' word recognition pedagogies

Interpretations accounted for 46% of first-year participants' noticings (see Figure 5.2a), and 38% of final-year participants' noticings (see Figure 5.2b). Interpreting what the teacher is doing and why is crucial because it reveals the awareness of intention and reasoning that informs teaching and alludes to a knowledge base. It is perhaps for this reason that both first and final-year year interpretations have a higher percentage of noticings characterised by greater complexity than in other facets of noticing. Nevertheless, the prosaic code (SG+/SD-) still dominated the first-

year interpretations, characterised by every day, (often vague) explanations of practice. For example: "The teacher [is] helping the children with the words they are going to come across while reading the story so they can manage." Here, the use of the phrase "so they can manage" does not convey whether this preservice teacher recognises how the teacher's actions create opportunities for learning. A similar pattern of vagueness and / or everyday discourse is observed in these first-year interpretations:

Participant 1: She breaks down the words so that learners can understand the sounds of letters and how to pronounce the words. This is her way of actively teaching her learners new words and how to read them, how to say them and what they mean.

Participant 2: She listed the words on her screen and made sure to explain them very well by spelling them as slowly as she can so that the learners are able to understand and apply their knowledge.

Participant 3: At the beginning of the lesson the teacher used words and spelled them out for the learners, this was to help them spell out words and to also know that there are some words in books that can be separated into two.

These three extracts are slightly more detailed than the first example. Participant 1 interprets the reasons for the teacher's actions as a way of "actively teaching her learners new words and how to read them, how to say them and what they mean". This offers greater insight than the phrase "so they can manage." However, some elements of this interpretation are inaccurate, as the teacher did not explicitly reference the meaning of the words during the observed lesson. Participant 2 does not explain the rationale behind the teaching strategy mentioned in terms of *how* it supports learners in understanding and applying their knowledge. Furthermore, although one can assume that the participant is referring to decoding, he or she does not specify the nature of the knowledge that the learners are expected to apply. Clarification of these aspects would have increase the complexity of the noticing. Participant 3 mentions that "some words in books that can be separated into two" without specifying whether this refers to syllabication, compound words, or another linguistic aspect. Incorporating more specific technical terms may have enhanced the precision of the noticing.

Thirteen percent of first-year participants provided more generalised, conceptually-informed noticings such as “Practicing things like sight words and phonics rules will give first graders the skills they need to read in groups and independently.” The statement suggests that this preservice teacher understands the importance of incorporating foundational reading skills into their teaching approach, but no further elaboration is provided. Similarly, the following first-year extract contains generalised principles which are applicable across different contexts:

Learners need to know new words and understand them. Learners need to understand the punctuation rules used in the new words. Learners need to know how to decode phonics out of contexts

This noticing suggests that the participant understands reading instruction as a multifaceted process. However, it reads like a list of discreet competences rather than a cohesive, integrated literacy practice.

Compared to first-year noticings, more than half (73%) of final-year interpretations exhibited greater complexity (see *Figure 5.2*). In the following two extracts (produced by final-year participants), the preservice teachers draw on their theoretical knowledge to interpret the reasons for the teacher’s choices. They share similarities, both highlighting the crucial role of understanding sound-letter relationships.

Participant 4) The [teacher’s] demonstrations taught learners that there are predictable relationships between sounds and letters and that this knowledge can be applied to both familiar and unfamiliar words. This knowledge aids in improving fluency in reading

Participant 5) Children’s reading development is dependent on their understanding of the alphabetic principle-the idea that letters and letter patterns represent the sounds of spoken language. Because learners must develop a sense of the purpose of letters if they are to learn to read words out of context

Participant 4 emphasises the practical application of this knowledge and its relationship to reading fluency, while the Participant 5 refers to the broader context of learners’ reading development, stressing the importance of understanding the alphabetic principle in order to decode words. The alphabetic principle is a fundamental and specialised concept in literacy. It involves the recognition that there

is a systematic relationship between the letters in the alphabet and the sounds they make. Both extracts discuss the *implications* for learners' reading development (a layer of complexity not often present in first-year noticings), which strengthens the semantic density.

Both first and final- year participants were inclined to misinterpret the purpose of the word analysis activities in the lesson, suggesting that by decoding the key words, the learners would “understand the storyline” better, or enhance their vocabulary. The extract produced by Participant 6 (first-year example) and Participant 7 (final-year example) illustrate this, where relevant phrases are shown in italics:

Participant 6) She has set aside key words that are in the reading book and that learners might be unfamiliar with, to analyse in preparation for reading the Picnic for Tortoise. This lesson preparation helps learners to *understand the words* that they are reading when they read the book which will result in the learners' *understanding the story line* of the book

Participant 7) The teacher promotes learning in her lesson by thoroughly ensuring that the learners will *understand the story* by outlining and explaining a few words that may be new to the learners or words that they may find difficult to read or pronounce. *This helps the learners fully understand what is happening in the story.*

The implications of this misconception will be discussed in greater detail in section 5.3.; however, I felt it pertinent to include at this point, as it pertains specifically to interpretations of word recognition pedagogies.

Neither cohort recognised or critiqued the Letterland approach to teaching reading, but the strategies and the underlying principles were occasionally mentioned, as illustrated in extracts produced by Participant 8 (first-year example) and Participant 9 (final-year example) illustrate this:

Participant 8) The teacher promotes learning as she adds details to the letters such as giving the letters names like Annie Apple for the letter A and Oscar Orange for the letter O. This helps the learners to identify the letters.

Participant 9) The teacher does this by sounding out the word slowly emphasising which letters make certain sounds, relating each letter back to their names in the alphabet

rhyme they have previously learnt such as “lmpy ink “for “l” and “Annie apple “ for “A” which is helpful to create memory of that letter but is also fun and enjoyable for the learners . The teacher uses the alphabet rhyme names of letters to create a story as to why certain letters are silent or make different sounds than usual; a child will remember this in the future.

A few anomalies, though rare, emerged in the dataset. The following extract was produced by a *first-year* preservice teacher:

The teacher learns to balance various components of reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. The teacher teaches the first components of reading before they attempt to read. She teaches learners to become fluent with reading, spelling and sentence construction. The teacher promotes learning by using intensive strategies for reading and writing. Developing reading skills and knowledge is important because it provides learners with the foundation for reading.

Although this preservice teacher is at the beginning of her teacher education, she has developed a language of practice. She uses technical terminology such as *phonemic awareness* and can elaborate and explicate the reasoning behind the teacher’s actions, which increases the complexity of her noticings (SD+). She shows an understanding of the steps involved in the teaching and learning pathway, and is able to abstract this beyond the context of the observed lesson (SG-).

Figure 5.2: Shifts in context-dependence and complexity from first year (5.2a) to fourth year (5.2b) in noticings coded as interpretations of practice

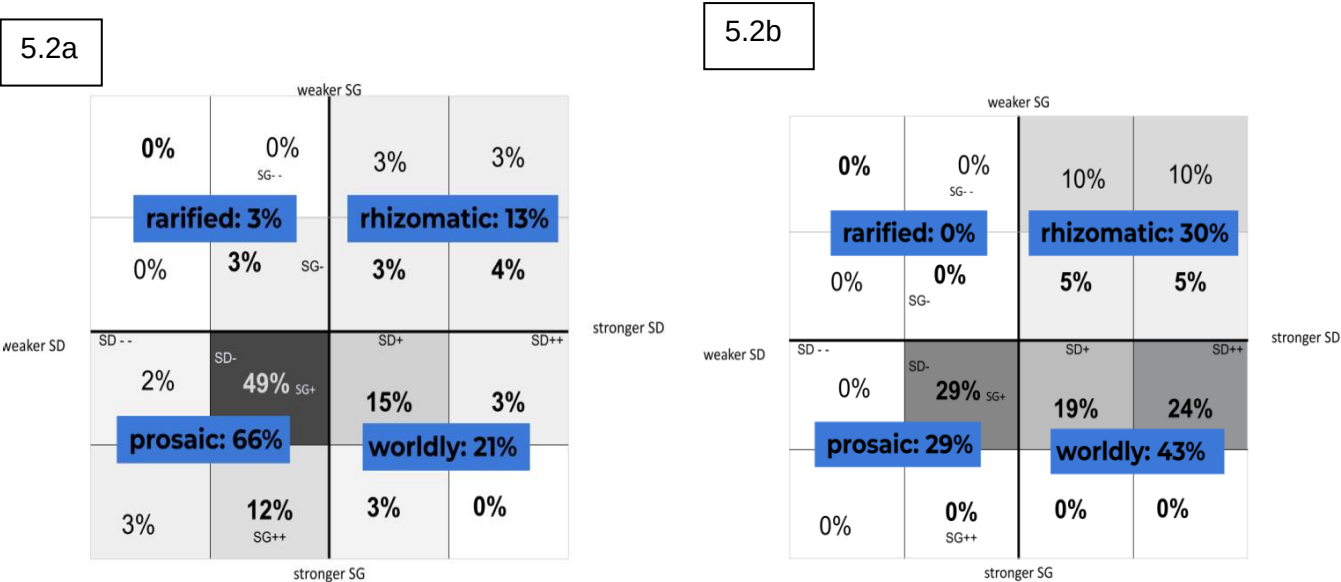


Figure 5.2 reveals that for both cohorts, *interpretations* of practice have the highest percentage of noticings that fall into the worldly (SG+/SD+) and rhizomatic (SG-/SD+) codes, characterised by greater complexity. This is to be expected, as the nature of interpretation is inherently complex. It requires an understanding of the reasoning behind practice. In addition, a shift is observed from first year to fourth year, with a significantly greater percentage of final-year noticings falling into those two codes than first-year noticings. This difference indicates that final year participants have developed a greater capacity to not only draw on theory but also to use it to make sense of what they are seeing in an observed lesson.

5.2.3. *Appraising the lesson*

Appraisals accounted for 10% of first-year participants' noticings (see 5.3a), and 13% of final-year participants' noticings (see 5.3b). This low percentage indicates that proportion to the other facets of noticing, neither cohort was particularly inclined to assess the effectiveness of the teaching methods they observed. They were more likely to describe or interpret practice than make judgments about what worked well, what did not, and how the teacher might have approached pedagogical challenges differently.

When appraising practice, first year participants commonly produced vague justifications, seldom drawing on their theoretical knowledge base to support their reasoning. For example:

The method that this teacher uses is the best for the grade1 learners because she is not fast. My comment on this lesson is positive because the method that the teacher is using to teach learners is the best and will accommodate all learners even the ones that are slow. If all the teachers in South Africa can use this method to teach grade1 learners I think almost all of them will pass.

This extract contains uses simple, everyday words and offers common sense insights. The participant foregrounds one element of practice – the pace of the lesson. She refers to learners as “slow”, and does not consider possible barriers to their learning that may be at play. Other than describing the pace of the lesson as “not fast,” the above extract does not detail the specific aspects contributing to the

perceived effectiveness of the teaching method. Additionally, this participant makes no reference to theoretical knowledge or pedagogical principles to justify the appraisal. The sweeping generalisation about the effectiveness of the teaching strategy indicates a potential lack of understanding of the complexities involved in teaching and learning.

The following extract is another example of an appraisal with a generic justification (SD-). Much like the previous example, this appraisal is simplistic in nature, and is not supported by specialised knowledge: “It was also very interesting to see how the teacher explained the pronunciation of the words to the children, it was very creative.” This participant has appreciated a creative approach to explaining what is referred to as word pronunciation. While creativity is acknowledged, the preservice teacher has not included the observed techniques or strategies that made the explanation creative. A detailed explanation of the reasoning behind her appraisal may have increased the complexity of the noticing.

In contrast, final-year participants were more likely to draw on their conceptual knowledge to justify their appraisals, which increased the complexity of their noticings. For example: “In all fairness it was a good lesson because it included all the important aspects of reading, listening, word recognition and pronunciation.” The more detailed nature of this appraisal (highlighting specific elements that contribute to its effectiveness) strengthens the semantic density of the noticing. It offers a clearer understanding of why the lesson was considered effective. Additionally, this appraisal suggests that the preservice teacher recognises the importance of addressing multiple aspects of reading development, indicating a more nuanced understanding of effective teaching practices. However, if more specific details about how each of the mentioned aspects were effectively incorporated into the lesson were provided, this may have served to further increase the complexity of the appraisal.

To imagine possibilities and alternatives, one requires critical sensibilities. The findings revealed that although final-year participants could identify the elements that were *present* in the lesson, they found it difficult to see what was *not there*, or what may have been “missing” from the lesson. Overall, very few suggestions were made as to what could have been done differently to enhance the lesson, and no comments were made with regard to the teachers’ lack of focus on language comprehension or meaning making.

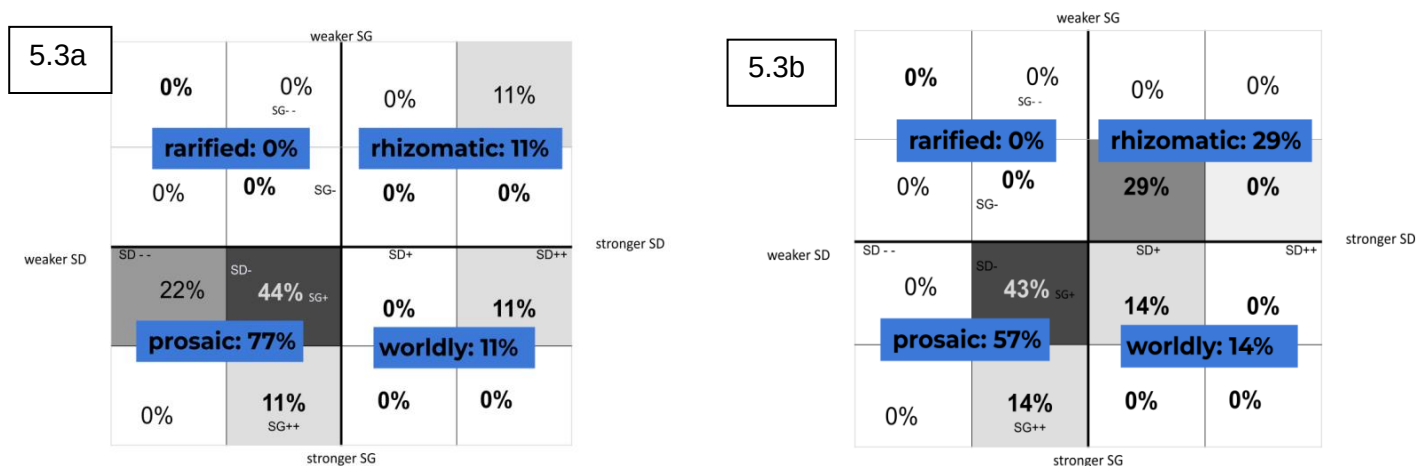
The following appraisal of practice (produced by a final-year participant) reveals a level of critical reflection seldom reflected within the data:

It would have been nice if Mrs. McGee spoke more about the title of the book and what they see on the front cover of the book. This could have assisted the learners not only with the reading process but build on learner's comprehension skills as well.

This participant has provided an elaborate justification for her appraisal (SD+). The depth of reflection in this noticing indicates a higher level of critical thinking and analysis. It demonstrates the preservice teacher's ability to imagine alternatives for improvement. The ability to suggest alternatives hinges on access to a store of pedagogical strategies and conceptual tools. The participant goes beyond merely stating a preference or need; they offer a detailed justification for their appraisal and express how the suggested improvements could benefit learners.

Looking at a comparison between the basis of the appraisals done by first and final year preservice teachers, a few noteworthy differences arise, as shown in Figure 5.3 below:

Figure 5.3: Shifts in context-dependence and complexity from first year (5.3a) to fourth year (5.4b) in noticings coded as appraisals of practice



Most first and final-year appraisals were in the prosaic code, characterised by both stronger semantic gravity and weaker semantic density. However, a higher percentage of final-year appraisals fell into the worldly (SG+/SD+) and rhizomatic

(SG-/SG+) codes compared to those produced by first year preservice teachers. This difference is attributed to the fact that a greater number of final-year preservice teachers added more depth and detail to their appraisals.

5.2.5. The terminology used to describe, interpret and appraise practice

The specialised work that teachers do to facilitate skilled reading can be described in everyday language or in more precise, technical terms. For example, a strategy could be described as the act of “breaking down the pronunciation” (taken from a first-year participant), or more precisely as “the *segmentation* of letters, sounds, pronunciation and *blending* the word back together” (a fourth year participant’s response). ” The use of everyday discourse in the first example is *not incorrect*, but it is less precise and simpler in meaning than in the latter example. The second example suggests that the participant may be further along in developing a language of practice, allowing for a more precise explanation of pedagogy.

It is important to note that complexity can manifest in a preservice teachers’ noticing even *without* the use of technical terminology: However, the use of more specialised knowledge and conveying more precise meaning often requires the use of technical terms related to reading instruction. These should be acquired during ITE (Moats, 2014), as they are the “the meat and potatoes of explicit instruction” (*ibid.*, p.81). Below is a table of technical terms which form part of the metalanguage for the teaching of reading. Included, is the corresponding ‘everyday’ language that was prevalent in the data. It shows the percentage of preservice teachers who included them in their noticings:

Table 5.3: Outlining the prevalence of technical and everyday terminology in word recognition noticings

Technical terms	First Year cohort	Final Year cohorts	Everyday terms	First Year cohorts	Final Year cohorts
Decode	5%	24%	Pronounce or sound out	57%	47%
Segment	3%	6%	Break up	35%	35%
Blend	0%	12%	Putting back together	0%	6%
Phoneme	0%	6%	Sounds	24%	53%
Phonics	14%	47%			

Fluent	5%	6%			
Phonemic awareness	11%	12%			
Word recognition	0%	18%			
Vowel	11%	29%			
Consonant	3%	12%			
Digraph	0%	6%			
Letter-sound knowledge	0%	6%			

Table 5.3 shows an increase in usage for technical terms from first to fourth year. Overall, the findings revealed that 39% of first-year preservice teachers used one or more example of the technical terminology shown above in their word recognition noticings. In contrast, one or more technical terms were present in 70% of final-year preservice teachers' lesson observation reports. The high percentage of preservice teachers (in both cohorts) who used everyday terms indicates that they are more comfortable using accessible, common language to describe, interpret and appraise practice than using specialised terms. This indicates that a significant number of first and final year preservice teachers are still acquiring a language of practice. Complexity can manifest in preservice teachers' noticing even *without* the use of technical terminology, as can be seen in the account of teacher's actions in the lesson observation report written by a fourth-year participant:

The teacher goes through each word one by one, she first reads the word and then spells it out letter by letter. Where a letter makes a different sound to what it usually makes, like the letter 'o' making an 'u' sound in the word "coming", the teacher goes through this and explains why this happens...The teacher also tells the learners that if a word does not make sense when pronounced the way it is spelt, then they will need to change the sound of the word's vowel. She also goes over the two sounds the letters 'th' makes. *The teacher also knows that some learners probably struggle with the longer words, and letter sounds that do not relate to the visual representation of the letter*, and so this affects her teaching as she decides to spend more time going over these words before reading the story

This is not a particularly sophisticated extract. There are not many specialised, technical terms, and yet the sentence in italics implies that the preservice teacher has understood the teachers' intentions, and that she is aware of the challenges that arise from the inherently complex nature of English spelling patterns. It suggests a more specialised understanding of the relationship between graphemes and phonemes – For example, the letter c can be pronounced in various ways (e.g., *cat*; *ice*). The complexity lies in anticipating the misunderstandings that learners could face, and the reasons for why these misconceptions arise.

Careful word selection is crucial for conveying intended meaning. The findings showed that poor syntax, grammar and word choice impeded the meaning of some of some preservice teachers' noticings. For example:

They can now articulate the words adequately without botches since they have been instructed. My remark depends exceptionally on the educating of word pronunciation since that is the test that most learners face with regards to perusing. So subsequent to having this exercise it will be simpler for them to articulate words. The issue with them is that they realise the word yet don't have a clue how to approach articulating it. This will really add towards their visual proficiency learning since they will figure out how to peruse. They will actually want to peruse any book given to them consistently and they will utilize the right tone for the vowels.

Upon examining this response written by a first-year preservice teacher, it is possible to work out that the preservice teacher has some understanding of the underlying reasons for the teachers' choices. However, the ambiguity that arises from this example highlights the importance of understanding the *meaning* of the words that you use to describe practice. Clarity and coherence should always be prioritised over the use of ornate language. Although it cannot be assumed, it is possible that the participant who produced this reflection is including "flowery words" as a way of emulating a particular style of writing without fully understanding their meanings. Despite the formal-sounding response, this participant is still enacting a weaker semantic density. The use of the term "peruse" is presumably intended to convey the idea of reading or decoding words, but instead, it may give the impression of a detailed examination of an entire text. The use of the term "articulate" may be subject to interpretation, as it can have multiple meanings. In addition, it is unclear what is meant by "visual proficiency." Overall, this extract underscores the significance of word selection in conveying the intended meaning.

The following extract is another example that illustrates how word choice can reveal possible gaps in a preservice teachers' knowledge: "They breakdown the word into the alphabet so that the learners can understand the words that sound the same at the end." The word "alphabet" is imprecise in this context. The use thereof implies that this preservice teacher does not fully understand the nuanced difference between "the alphabet" and letter-sound correspondence.

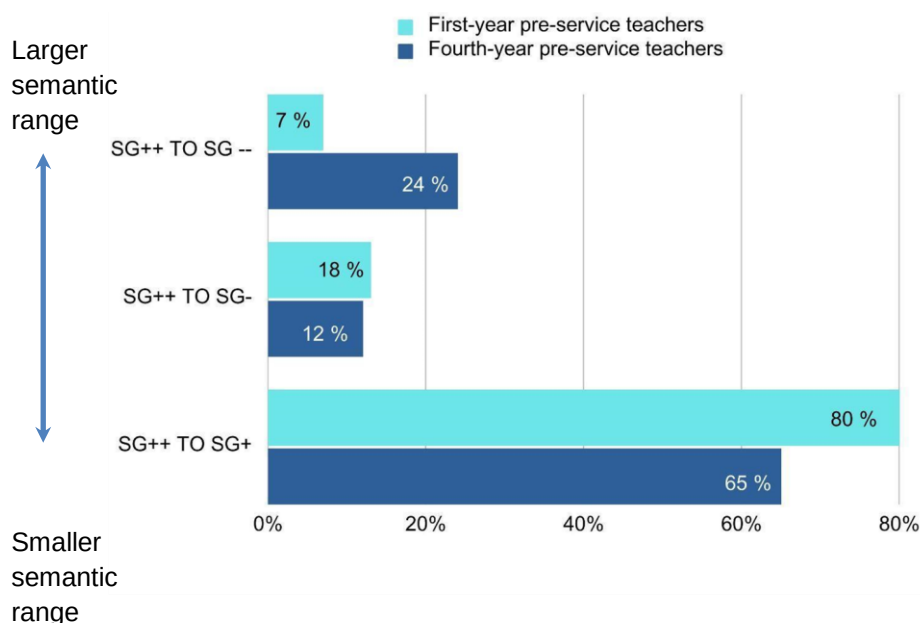
5.2.6 Semantic ranges in preservice teachers' noticings from first year to fourth year.

In this section, I will show how I used Semantics to consider the *range* of context dependence and complexity of responses in first and final-year preservice teachers' noticings. This is important, as it reveals the percentage of first-year and final-year preservice teachers who were able to operate within a wider range of context dependence and complexity when reflecting on observed lessons.

Range of context-dependence:

The findings displayed in Figure 5.4 show that a moderately greater number of fourth-year preservice teachers were able to shift regularly between principles of practice (SG-) and how they are enacted in the context of the particular observed lesson (SG+). However, the majority of preservice teachers in both cohorts were operating within a smaller range of semantic gravity.

Figure 5.4: Range of semantic gravity in first and fourth-year word recognition noticings:



Percentages shown in Figure 5.4 do not signify *consistent enactment* of context dependence in preservice teachers' coded noticings. Instead, they indicate that a greater level of abstraction was noted in at least *one or more* units of analysis within individual lesson observation reports (see *Tables 5.4 and 5.5*).

Table 5.4: Degrees of context-dependence in a fourth-year participant's (Participant 4A) word recognition noticings

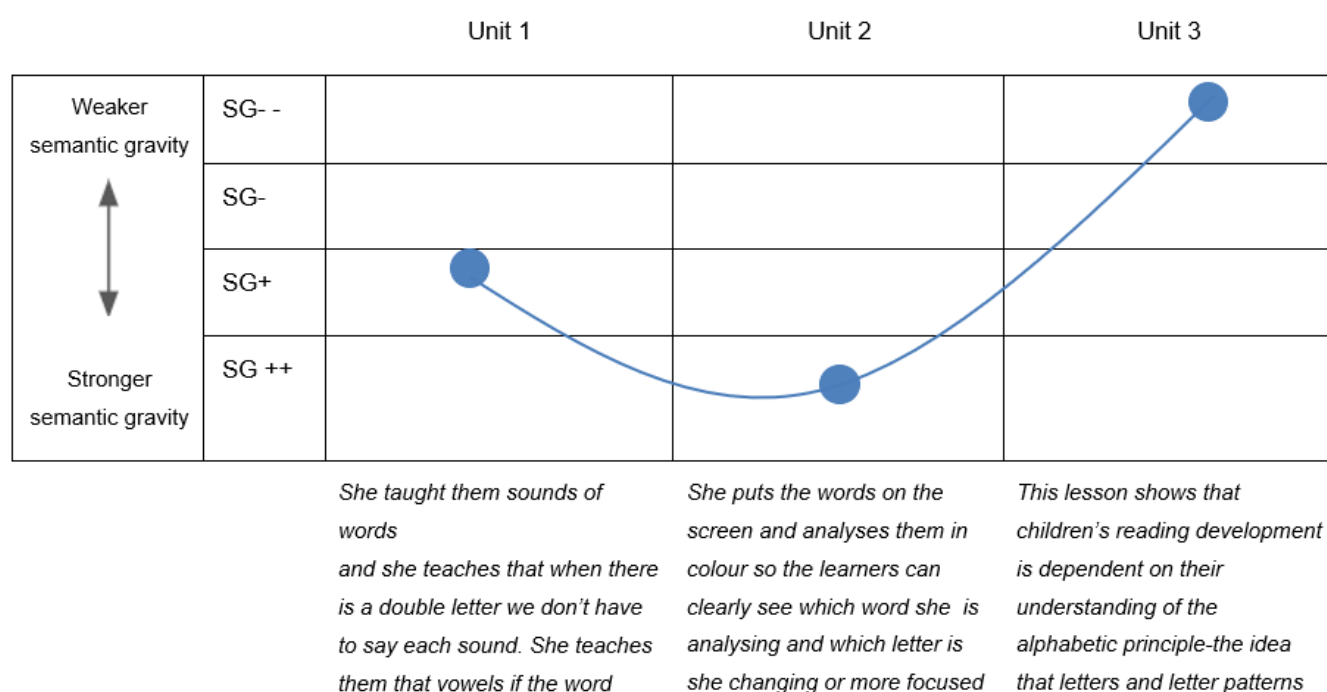
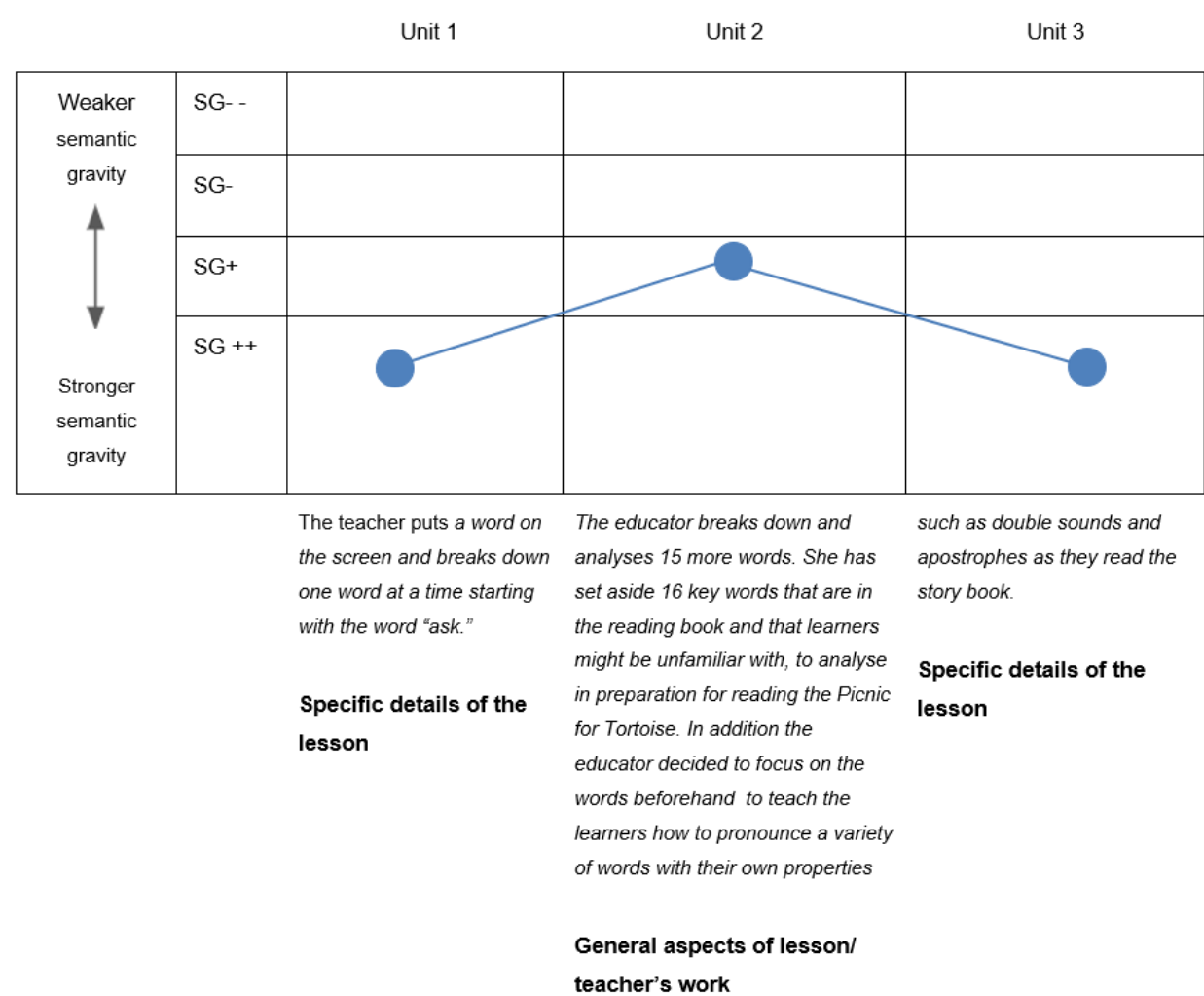


Table 5.4 illustrates the range of semantic gravity within a single fourth-year lesson observation report. Whilst Participant 4A's does not mention the *specific* words or sounds used by the teacher (which would have been coded as SG++), her description in unit 1 describes the teacher's actions during the observed lesson, strengthening the semantic gravity. In unit 3, the semantic gravity of Participant 4A's noticings weakens significantly. She makes a complex and abstracted observation, referring to the underlying principles of practice which have relevance beyond the observed lesson.

In contrast to Table 5.4, Table 5.5 reveals a smaller range of semantic gravity:

Table 5.5: Degrees of context-dependence in a first-year participant’s (Participant 1A) word recognition noticings:



In this first-year example, Participant 1A refers to specific actions, words or concepts used within the observed lesson (SG++). In unit 2, she weakens the semantic gravity slightly by referring to more general aspects of the teachers’ work. Overall, the noticings are strongly grounded within the context of the lesson and shift between SG+ and SG++.

Range of Complexity

The findings show that a greater number of final-year preservice teachers were able to work within a larger range of semantic density than first-year preservice teachers, moving from simple, everyday noticings (SD - -), to detailed, theorised accounts of practice (SD ++)*(see Figure 5.5).*

Figure 5.5: Range of semantic density in first and fourth-year word recognition noticings:

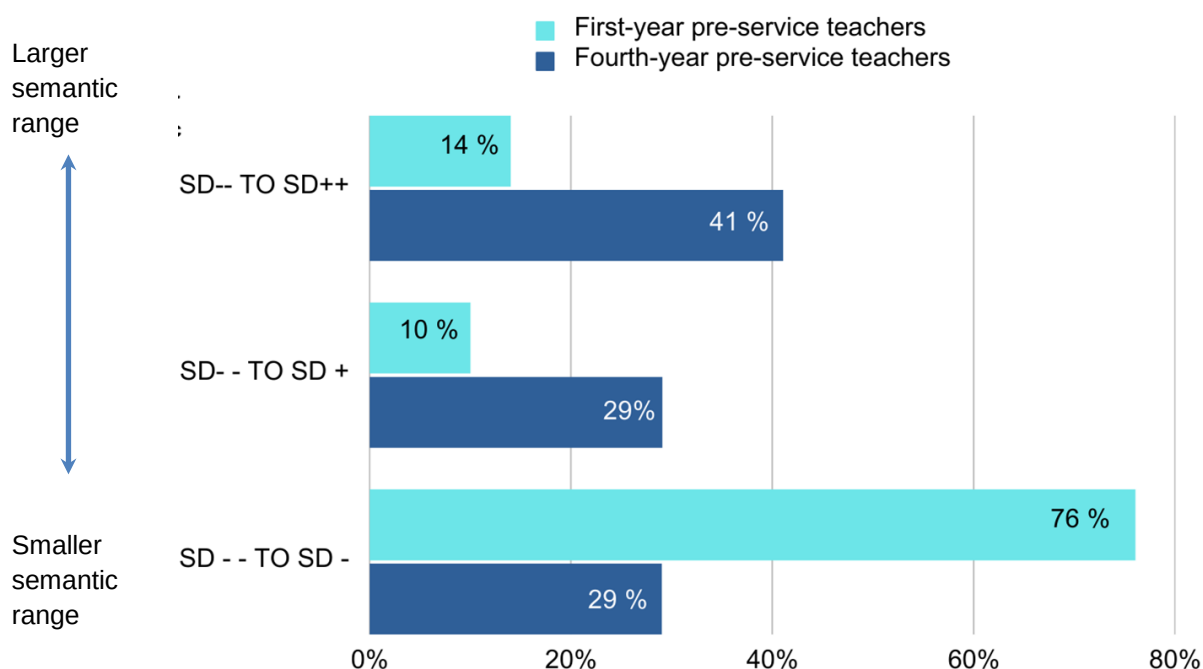


Figure 5.5 shows the *range* of complexity in first and fourth-year participants' noticings, respectively. Only 14% of first-year preservice teachers were able to provide *elaborated, theorised* descriptions, *theorised, technical* interpretations and appraisals *with principled, theorised justifications* (SD ++). In contrast, 41% of final-year participants exhibited this more advanced level of proficiency.

The percentages shown in Figure 5.5 do not signify *consistent enactment* of complexity in preservice teachers' coded noticings. Instead, they indicate that a greater degree of complexity was noted in at least *one or more* units of analysis within individual lesson observation reports (see *Table 11*). The findings show that it is common for the majority of a preservice teacher's noticings to be characterised by simple, everyday observations of teaching (exhibiting weaker semantic density) with a single episode of complex reasoning (strengthening the semantic density).

Table 5.6: degrees of complexity in a fourth-year participant's first-year participant's (Participant 4B) word recognition noticings:

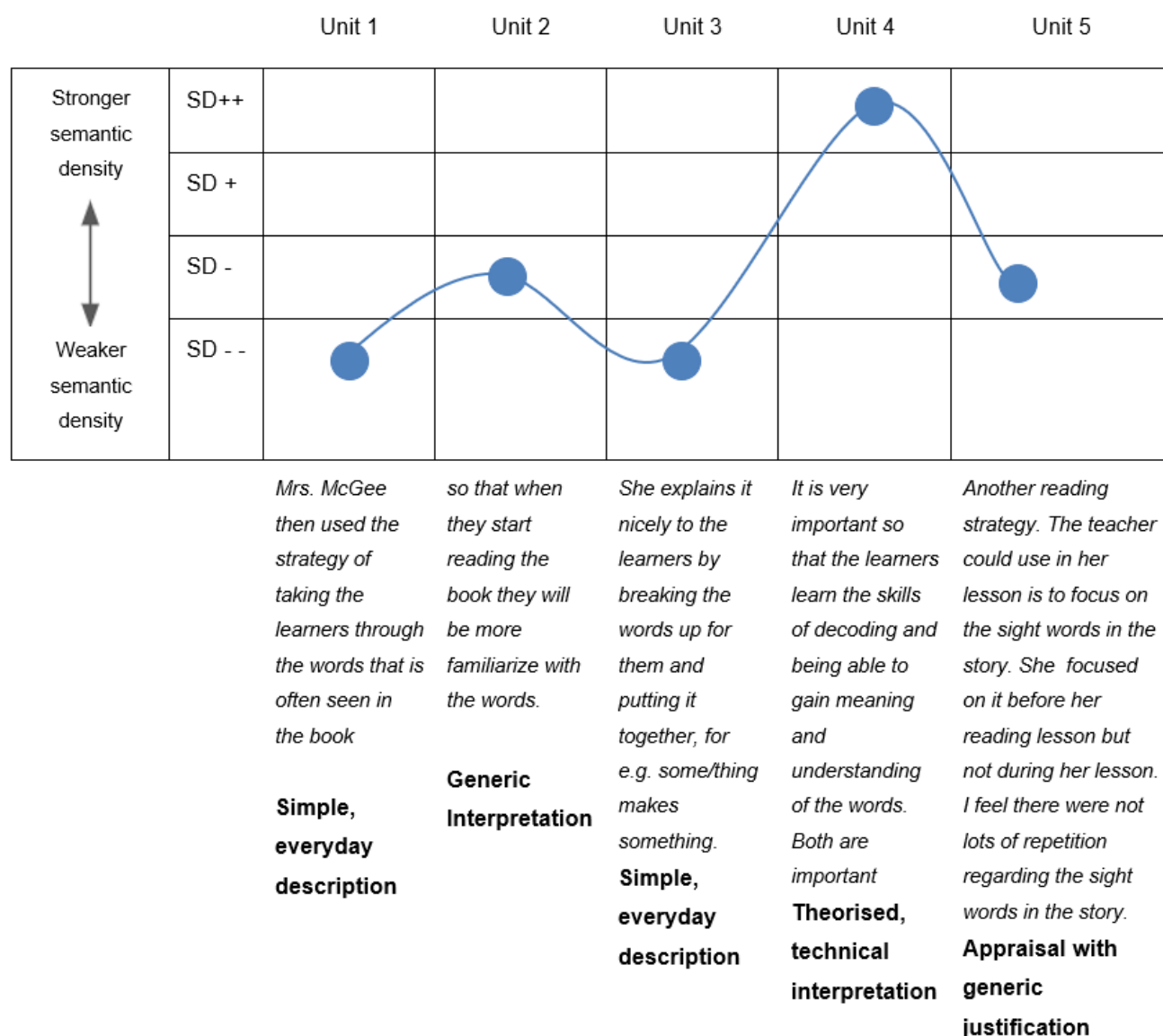
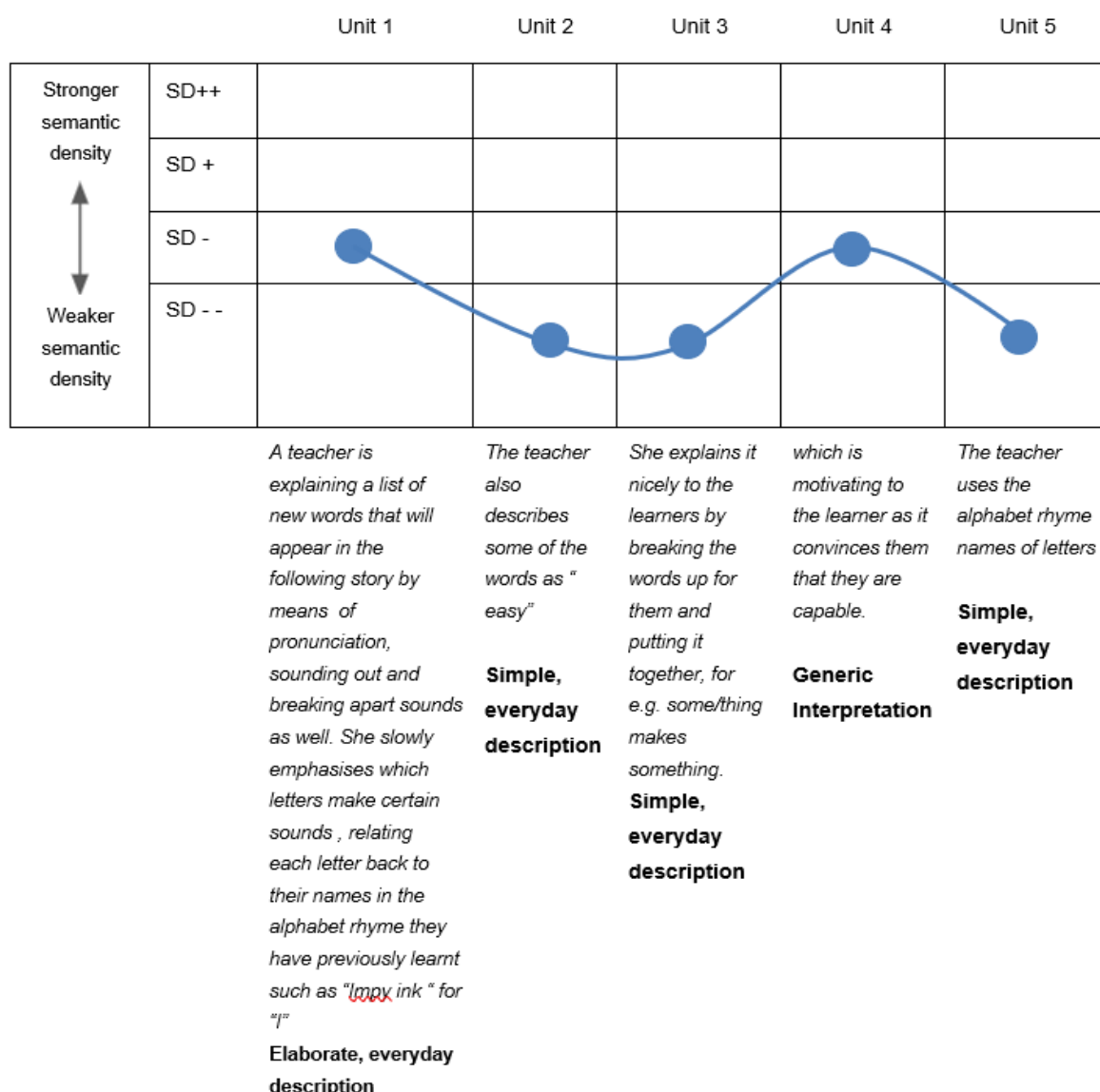


Table 5.6 illustrates the range of complexity within a single fourth-year lesson observation report. In units 1, 2 and 3, Participant 4B reflects on an instructional strategy that the teacher has employed. She begins by describing the strategy as “taking the learners through the words.” This is a simple, everyday description, with weaker semantic density. In the next unit, Participant 4B increases the complexity slightly by providing a generic interpretation of the described teaching strategy. She briefly mentions its purpose - to “familiarise” learners with the words. Unit 3 offers another simple description of pedagogy, but in unit 4, she provides a theoretically informed, technical interpretation of the teacher’s practices. The use of the technical term “decoding” increases the complexity. The word “familiarise” (unit 2), does not inherently convey this level of complexity or specificity. In addition, Participant 4B acknowledges that both decoding and language comprehension skills are necessary

for skilled reading to occur. In unit 5, the complexity weakens. Participant 4B suggests that there was insufficient repetition of sight words in the lesson. Potentially, she could have strengthened the semantic density here by drawing on concepts from her university-based coursework to justify her appraisal,.

Table 5.7: degrees of complexity in a first-year participant's (Participant 1B) word recognition noticings



This extract has a smaller semantic range, and is characterised by simpler, straightforward reflections on practice. Participant 1B provides a straightforward account of classroom events, strengthening the semantic density *slightly* by including an elaborated account (unit 1) and providing a generic interpretation of the teachers' actions (unit 4). No attempt has been made to connect the observations to a wider body of theoretical knowledge.

Significantly, approximately 30 per cent of final-year preservice teachers produced noticings with a smaller range of semantic density (SD –), characterised by simple, atomistic accounts of practice. Those preservice teachers did not connect their observations to theoretical concepts and ideas.

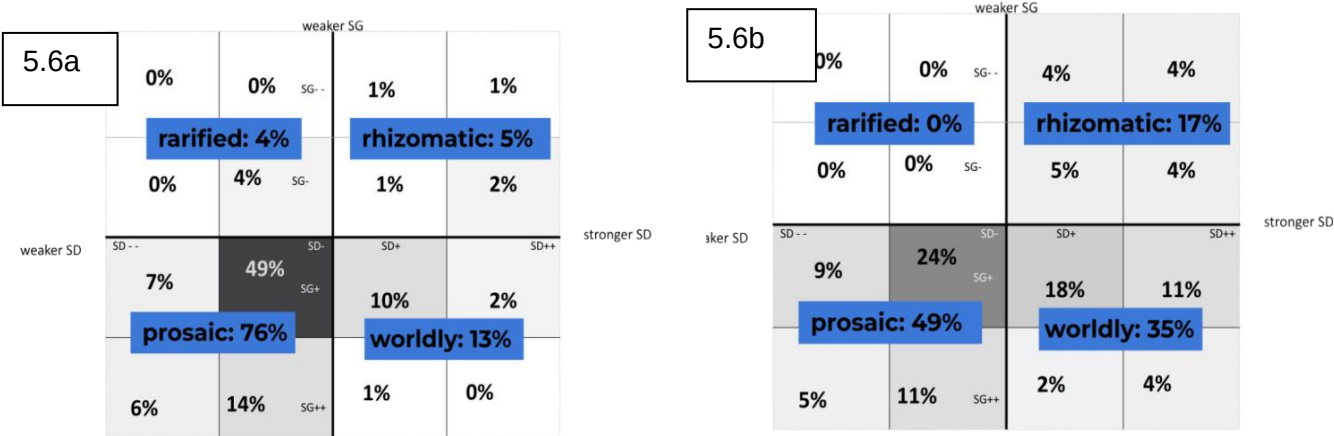
5.2.7. Overall trends

For the analysis of word recognition noticings, I began with a detailed investigation, focusing on each facet of noticing individually. In this section I examine the overall trends. I have drawn together an amalgamated table of the results for each facet of noticing for ease of reference:

Table 5.8: Amalgamated table of results:

		Less complex		More complex	
Cohort	Noticings:	Rarefied codes <i>Less context dependent. Simpler meanings (SG-/SD-)</i>	Prosaic codes <i>More context dependent. Simpler meanings (SG+/SD-)</i>	Rhizomatic codes <i>Less context dependent. More complex meanings (SG-/SD+)</i>	Worldly codes <i>More context dependent. More complex meanings (SG+/SD+)</i>
First Year	Describing teaching	5%	87%	0%	8%
Final Year		0%	65%	4%	33%
First Year	Interpreting teaching	3%	66%	13%	21%
Final Year		0%	29%	30%	43%
First Year	Appraising teaching	0%	77%	11%	11%
Final Year		0%	57%	29%	14%
First Year	OVERALL	4%	76%	5%	13%
Final Year		0%	49%	17%	35%

Figure 5.6: A composite analysis of all facets of Word Recognition noticings showing the distribution of code that formed the basis of how first year students described and analysed the lesson (5.6a) compared to four year participants (5.6b):



Overall, 76% of first-year participants’ noticings (Figure 5.6 a) fall within prosaic codes (SG+/SD-) Generally, they described the happenings of the lesson using common everyday language and terminology in their noticings, which condensed less meaning, and did not incorporate insights that could have connected meaning to bodies of knowledge acquired from university coursework. (SD-) Their noticings were predominantly tied to the context of the lesson in the video, exhibiting stronger semantic gravity. (SG+) For example: “Teacher applies a reading strategy and enhances the ability of the child.” This preservice teacher uses vague language to give an account of practice. She mentions “a reading strategy”, but does not elaborate on which ones. The nature of the strategies used, and the way that they “enhances the ability” of the child are unspecified.

In contrast, Figure 5.6 b (final year noticings) shows proportionately more noticings in the rhizomatic and worldly codes. Final-year participants were more likely to focus on both principles of practice and how they were enacted in the context of the observed lesson. For example: “She made use of phonemic awareness to help learners to know how to read and segment words for good pronunciation.” This noticing remains within the context of the observed lesson (SG+), but contains specialised terminology to describe and interpret practice, such as *phonemic awareness* and *segment* (SD+). It is in the worldly code (SG+/SD+). The use of these terms strengthens the semantic density. The terminology used in this extract implies that the preservice teacher is developing a specialised language of practice

to describe pedagogy, and suggests an awareness of the sub skills involved in reading acquisition.

5.3. Language Comprehension

This section presents the results of the analysis of the language comprehension noticings. The Simple View of Reading (see section 2.5.) holds that the ability to extract meaning from written words hinges on two essential and equally significant cognitive capacities: *word recognition* and *language comprehension* (Turner & Hoover, 2019). In section 5.1.1, I established that the development of language comprehension skills was largely implicit in the observed lesson. Nevertheless, this theme accounted for 19% of first-year noticings, and 21% of fourth-year noticings. For both cohorts, the findings revealed some confusion regarding the underlying skills of language comprehension and how they are developed. However, it is significant that both first and final-year participants place value on both components of skilled reading. This section presents a more in depth analysis of what first year and fourth year preservice teachers noticed about the language comprehension pedagogies in the lesson.

5.3.1: Difficulties in “untangling” explicit teaching of Word Recognition from Language Comprehension development

The percentage of lesson observation reports dedicated to both language comprehension (19% of first-year noticings and 21% of final-year noticings) and word recognition (17% of first-year noticings and 22% of final-year noticings) suggests that ITE programmes are including aspects of both components of skilled reading in their coursework. However, insights gained from the findings show that there are pervasive misconceptions among both cohorts regarding what constitutes as the *explicit teaching* and development of language comprehension skills, particularly regarding vocabulary development.

Nineteen percent of first-year participants and 21% of final-year participants suggested that the teacher was engaging in specific vocabulary work. Vocabulary knowledge refers to knowing the *meaning* of words in order to comprehend text (Jibran, 2022). The findings revealed that a significant number of participants (in both cohorts) conflated teaching strategies related to decoding, with vocabulary

development. Extracts a and b (first year examples), and extracts c and d (final-year examples) illustrate this, where relevant phrases are shown in italics:

- a) The teacher uses these strategies to increase learners' vocabulary and communication skills. The teacher was not only focusing on reading a story but to *increase learners' vocabulary and read to learn so that their language is enhanced*. The teacher understand that learners should be able to use spoken words to express knowledge and ideas
- b) The educator first shows the learners *how to understand words*.
- c) The teacher *integrated vocabulary expansion with word analysis*. Learners engaged in word analysis tasks, breaking down complex words into their constituent parts, which increased their vocabulary and greatly improved their comprehension skills.
- d) The story book in this lesson served as role of *building vocabulary and concept development*

In order to understand the misconception, it is necessary to take a look at the words which were analysed as part of the lesson. Figure 5.7 is a still image captured from the virtual lesson, showing the focus words:

Figure 5.7: A still image captured from the virtual lesson, showing the focus words



The observed lesson was conducted in a public primary school, in an upmarket suburb of South Africa. The language of learning and teaching is English, and it is likely that there are both first and second language English speaking learners in this Grade 1 class. Given the context of the school, aside from the word “fox”, the words displayed in Figure 9 should be familiar to the learners. Arguably, they are words that learners would hear and use on a daily basis, and would already form part of their

personal vocabularies. However, if the teacher had wanted to focus on semantics and reinforce an understanding of the words in question, she may have chosen to explicitly highlight their meanings, or use them in context before reading the story. She did not do this during the lesson. During the lesson, she focused entirely on decoding the words and the sounds, and on reading the story.

5.4. Differences between the three institutions

My dataset was partial, comprising a relatively small sample of self-selecting participants. There were very few examples where *first-year* preservice teachers deviated from the general pattern and produced more complex noticings using technical terminology (see section 5.3.3). The majority of those anomalies were produced by preservice teachers from institution A, suggesting that this university may offer a more robust reading module. However, beyond this, the analysis of the noticings from the self-selecting participants indicates no significant difference in the way preservice teachers from the three institutions focus on aspects of teaching, their ability to transition from specific lesson details to underlying principles of practice, and the complexity of their descriptions, interpretations, and appraisals. It's important to note that making generalised claims from this limited dataset is not possible, however, the findings of my study suggest a reasonable consistency in how fourth year preservice teachers across the three institutions analysed and interpreted the observed lesson. A larger-scale study would be necessary to draw more conclusive statements.

5.5. Summary

The main question raised by this research was: "What differences exist between the way that first year and final-year preservice teachers notice and interpret the literacy teaching practices they observe?" The general pattern that emerges from the findings is that there are moderate differences. Overall, analysis of the data revealed that first and fourth-year preservice teachers' lesson observations share similarities in terms of the *aspects* of teaching on which they focus. However, differences exist in their ability to transition from the specifics of the lesson to the underlying principles of practice, as well as in the complexity of their descriptions, interpretations, and appraisals. Preservice teachers in their final year of study were twice as likely to shift from the particulars of a lesson to underlying principles of practice. They were also twice as likely to generate more complex, conceptually

informed descriptions, interpretations, and appraisals. Moreover, the findings reveal certain misinterpretations shared by both first and final-year preservice teachers regarding the teaching of language comprehension, and vocabulary development in particular.

Chapter 6. Discussion:

There is an urgent need for teacher preparation programmes in South Africa to produce teachers who have been “appropriately inducted into the knowledge they need to be effective [in the classroom]” (Muller & Hoadley, 2019 p. 123). The literature review established that the work of teachers is “not only unnatural but intricate” (Loewenberg Ball & Forzani, 2009 p. 501). and thus requires as Morrow (2007) insisted, a strong and properly grounded conception of teaching. Moreover, it argued that in addition to acquiring a specialised knowledge base, as they progress through their ITE, preservice teachers should be increasingly able to draw on the discursive tools and conceptual insights to make sense of the reading pedagogies they observe. Although researchers such as Hoadley, Pretorius (and others) have produced exceptional work on the pedagogies of in-service teachers, there is a dearth of studies about how preservice teachers enact their developing literacy practices, and particularly what is enabled through their initial teacher education. In response to this gap, this study contributes to the field by offering insight into whether preservice teachers become more attuned to the salient aspects of literacy teaching as they progress through their teacher education.

The previous chapter provided a comprehensive analysis of the word recognition and language comprehension noticings. I will now discuss the results in detail.

6.1. Word Recognition Noticings:

In Chapter 5, I showed how the semantic plane can be used to represent the strengths of semantic gravity and semantic density in the Word recognition noticings of each cohort. This allowed me to compare the complexity and context dependence in first and final-year reflections on practice. I began with an examination of the overall trends, followed by a more detailed investigation, analysing each facet of noticing individually. This chapter aims to respond to the remaining sub-questions posed by this research. Firstly, I will articulate the differences between the way that first and fourth-year preservice teachers described, interpreted and appraised reading pedagogies in the observed lesson. Secondly, I will discuss possible implications for Foundation Phase teacher preparation programs that arise from these differences.

6.1.1. Approximately 70 % of preservice teachers in their final year of teaching demonstrated their ability to use insights from university coursework to analyse and make sense of the literacy practices in an observed lesson

The reviewed literature suggests that they progress through their teacher education, preservice teachers should ideally become attuned or sensitised to the salient aspects of teaching (Mason, 2011). Overall, the findings of this study support this, revealing that preservice teachers in their final year of teaching enacted a more specialised gaze on practice than first-year preservice teachers. The composite analysis of word recognition noticings revealed a discrepancy of 34% between first-year and final-year observations in terms of the complexity of their noticings. Specifically, 52% of final-year noticings were coded as SD+ or SD++ (indicating a greater degree of complexity), whereas only 18% of first-year noticings received this code. This finding suggests that final year participants were better able to see how the theoretical concepts they have learnt related to and informed classroom practice. This opened up conditions of possibility for them to *notice* what the teacher was doing, and to understand *why* she was doing it.

The findings also suggest that there are a significant number of preservice teachers who may qualify *without* having learnt to re-contextualise their theoretical knowledge. More precisely, thirty percent of final-year participants were still in the process of learning to reason and reflect on practice in a specialised way (SD+). While they could recall specific teaching moments, there was a lack of evidence demonstrating a deeper analysis of what they noticed. For these preservice teachers, the theoretical knowledge they have acquired may remain in silos (see section 2.2.2), viewed as separate from the classroom experience. They may not yet have developed to ability to *notice* how the parts come together in practice (Rusznyak & Bertram, 2021). In contrast, there were a limited number of examples where *first-year* preservice teachers deviated from the norm and produced more complex noticings using technical terminology and making connections between parts of teachers' practices (see section 5.3.3). It is not possible for this study to account for a first-year preservice teacher's specialised insight by attributing it to one particular aspect of their training. However, the prevalence of these anomalies from preservice teachers attending University A suggest that with well-designed coursework, preservice teachers even at the initial stages of ITE *can* develop a framework that allows them to consider not only *what* teachers do in their daily practice but also *why*

they do it. This finding warrants further investigation, as it implies that certain institutions are providing their first-year preservice teachers with particularly solid input.

6.1.2. Although final-year preservice teachers used more technical terminology than first year preservice teachers, neither cohort showed significant evidence of a well-developed language of practice:

Preservice teachers who have acquired a language of practice, along with specific knowledge about how skilled reading occurs (Grossman et al., 2009), will be more able to use *precise, technical* terminology effectively in describing and interpreting pedagogy. It is expected that at fourth-year level, preservice teachers will have acquired a specialised language of practice. Indeed, the findings showed that a higher percentage of final-year preservice teachers used correct, specialised terminology in their lesson observation reports than first year preservice teachers. This indicates a progression in the use of technical language over the course of the four-year degree. However, the overall use of specialised terms by both cohorts was generally low, with many first and final year participants showing preference for everyday language.

When specialised terms were present in a preservice teacher's reflections, this generally increased the complexity of their noticings. For example, when a preservice teacher used the term "decoding" to correctly describe a teaching strategy, this strengthened the semantic density. The specific meaning of the word "decoding" varies depending on the field or context in which it is applied. In this instance, "decoding" is a *technical* term because of its location within a "specialised domain of social practice" (Maton & Doran, 2017, p. 58). It is a term that condenses more meaning because it is tightly connected to the specific processes and priorities of reading acquisition. It represents a specialised aspect of instruction. For example, only 5% of first year participants used word "decode" (or inflected forms of the word), correctly in their noticings. In contrast, 24% of final-year preservice teachers used this specialised term to describe or interpret observed pedagogy.

Many of the precise terms used to describe the skills and sub processes of reading and the instructional strategies that support their development are unfamiliar to non-educators. The literature shows that teachers require both conceptual knowledge and a language of practice (Grossman et al., 2009) if they are to meaningfully

interrogate observed reading pedagogies. However, “becoming analytical about reading for the purposes of systematic instruction is no more “natural” for a teacher than it is for [learners]” (Moats, 2009 p.388). Where participants provided simple or vague descriptions of practice (*see section 5.3.5*), it is possible that they were unaware of the expectation to provide deeper, detailed descriptions. After all, the use of specialised language was not outlined as a prerequisite for writing the lesson observation reports. However, it is equally likely that their choice of language aligns with their current level of understanding. It suggests that they have yet to develop “conceptual resources and a language of practice to interrogate the ‘what, how and why’ of teachers’ practice” (Bertram & Rusznyak, 2022 p.17).

The findings show that complexity can manifest in a preservice teachers’ noticing even *without* the use of technical terminology (*see section 5.2.5*). Although the goal is undoubtedly for preservice teachers to develop a language of practice along with theoretical insights; the ability to *use* one’s conceptual tools effectively to deconstruct, *understand* and interrogate practice is equally (if not more) important.

6.1.2. Neither cohort demonstrated a pronounced inclination to appraise the effectiveness of the observed lesson

The literature review established that the capacity to “act differently” depends upon a preservice teachers’ ability to not only describe observed practice, but critically evaluate it as well. The findings revealed that both first and final-year preservice teachers preferred description and interpretation over the appraisal of reading pedagogies (*see section 5.3.4*). When participants *did* evaluate the lesson, they often did not provide any justification for their thinking, and displayed the tendency to offer a simple, generic appraisal which was not backed up by theoretical insights. This suggests that their understanding of teaching may not yet be “integrated into a coherent practice” (*ibid.*, p.19). Bailin et al., (1999) suggest that “the depth of knowledge, understanding and experience persons have in a particular area of study or practice is a significant determinant of the degree to which they are capable of thinking critically in that area” (p. 290). Therefore, it may also point to an underdeveloped knowledge base with regards to the teaching of reading, and a lack of confidence in applying theoretical concepts to practical teaching situations. However, the findings may have been different if the question prompts had stated a clear directive to suggest improvements to enhance the lesson (*see section 4.5.2*).

The literature review suggested that the evaluation of an observed lesson requires critical sensibilities (Walton & Rusznyak, 2014). To justify one's reasoning using knowledge of theoretical concepts requires complex thought and insight, and a measure of confidence in what you know. The outcome of this study suggests that preservice teachers do not find it easy to identify strengths and weaknesses in observed lessons, or to envision alternative pedagogical approaches. Moreover, it suggests that even at fourth-year level, preservice teachers may not yet inherently possess the necessary criteria for evaluating teaching (Rusznyak, 2022). Preservice teachers who are able to engage in the critical evaluation of practice have learnt to carefully scrutinise decisions and methodologies, drawing on insights gained from coursework. In reflecting on observed practice, they will often engage in "imagining possible consequences, generating original approaches, and identifying alternative perspectives" (Bailin et al., 1999 p. 288). Preservice teachers who cannot yet enact this reflective approach may struggle to see the connections between theory and practice, and be less inclined to actively seek alternative solutions to problems that may arise within the classroom (Tican & Taspinar, 2015).

6.2. Language comprehension noticings

Moats (2009) describes vocabulary as the learners' knowledge of and memory for word meanings which is not only demonstrated through reading and writing but also through oral language (listening and speaking). In other words, "vocabulary does not refer to the words which learners can decode and recognise but refers to words which learners fully understand the meaning of" (Barends, 2015 p.51). The findings revealed that participants from both cohorts placed emphasis on what they interpreted to be explicit vocabulary development. This suggests that preservice teachers may experience difficulties with "untangling" word recognition from language comprehension whilst at the same time being able to recognise their connection to one another, and their equal contribution to reading comprehension. The literature review established that in order to correctly interpret the intention behind reading pedagogies, preservice teachers must have a clear understanding of relevant concepts (Rusznyak, 2022). The data shows that preservice teachers have difficulty understanding the difference between teaching strategies that focus on *decoding* a word, and strategies that involve unpacking the *meaning* of that word in context. Was vocabulary knowledge utilised in the observed lesson? Certainly, yes.

Learners would have accessed their knowledge of the meanings of the words in the story in order to comprehend it. Did the teacher engage in purposeful teaching of vocabulary in the observed lesson? I would argue that she did not. Her focus was on decoding the words and correct pronunciation. If preservice teachers cannot accurately interpret reading pedagogies in their final year of study, it suggests that they may not have acquired the specialised knowledge and the analytic capacities required to do so. This may have implications for their own practice once they qualify. If teachers are to select appropriate strategies to target and support discreet areas of reading development, they must possess in-depth *knowledge* of the different teaching strategies available to them in order to make informed decisions that are learner-specific and contextually appropriate. The fact that vocabulary development was the most prevalent concept mentioned across all language comprehension noticings begs the question: Are the purposes underpinning these teaching and learning strategies being robustly taught and reinforced in ITE if many preservice teachers in their final year of study are still misinterpreting them?

Studies have shown that teacher knowledge is resistant to change (Hoadley & Boyd, 2023). It “creates a low ceiling which South Africa, as a country, cannot circumvent” if reading outcomes are to improve (Van Der Berg et al., 2016 p. 9). In the words of Van Der Berg et al.:

Teachers cannot effectively teach what they do not know themselves. Until South African teachers are better equipped with content knowledge, learning gains in [learners] through other interventions will be marginal. (p.9).

Cultivating a strong foundation in specialised knowledge about reading pedagogies requires robust teaching and reinforcement of pedagogical *purposes*. The findings of this study highlight the necessity for ITE programmes to provide preservice teachers with access to comprehensive knowledge of diverse teaching strategies for reading. If preservice teachers understand the rationale behind strategies focusing on word decoding and those that support vocabulary development, they should be better equipped to select appropriate activities tailored to specific learner needs.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

This research study set out to compare how preservice teachers at the beginning and end of their teacher preparation *describe, interpret and appraise* reading pedagogies they observe, and to consider the implications that arise for Foundation Phase teacher preparation in this regard. Considering the analysis of my empirical data, it is now possible to provide answers to the research questions. It is important to note that in answering these questions, I am referring to the overarching, general patterns that emerged from the data. Exceptions to the norm have been discussed in previous sections of this dissertation.

How do first-year Foundation Phase preservice teachers describe, interpret and appraise a teachers' reading pedagogies in a lesson they observe?

For first-year participants, the prosaic code was dominant across all three facets of noticing, characterised by everyday discourse and simple, (often vague) accounts practice. Typically, first-year descriptions of practice did not reflect a precise understanding of how reading was being taught. This weakened the semantic density (SD - -) of the noticings. In many examples, the teacher's actions would be recounted as a list of discreet competences rather than a cohesive, integrated literacy practice. Although a greater percentage of interpretations of practice were complex in nature, a similar pattern of vagueness and everyday discourse was observed in these noticings. When discussing the rationale underpinning pedagogy, it was not always clear whether the first-year preservice teachers recognised *how* the teacher's actions supported learners in understanding and applying their knowledge. Moreover, first year participants were not inclined to appraise the lesson, or to make suggestions for improvements. When they did, they typically offered common sense insights, and they very seldom made reference to theoretical knowledge or pedagogical principles to justify their appraisals.

How do final-year Foundation Phase preservice teachers describe, interpret and appraise a teacher's reading pedagogies in a lesson they observe?

It must be noted that thirty percent of final-year participants were found to be still in the process of learning to reason and reflect on practice in a specialised way (SD+). However, overall, a greater percentage of final year descriptions, interpretations and

appraisals exhibited stronger semantic density than first-year examples. A higher percentage of final year preservice teachers gave complex accounts of the teacher's practices, commenting on crucial elements of reading development, such as phonemic awareness and strategic decoding strategies. They were more likely to include technical terms in their noticings, and to unpack a specific teaching strategy into its constituent parts, drawing on concepts covered at university. As with first-year participants, appraisals accounted for a small percentage of final year noticings. Their appraisals were generally simplistic, and contained common sense insights.

What similarities and differences exist between the way first and fourth year preservice teachers describe, interpret and appraise a teacher's reading pedagogies in a lesson they observe?

Overall, final-year participants demonstrated a deeper and more nuanced understanding of reading pedagogies compared to first-year participants, showing a progression in their ability to describe, interpret, and appraise teaching practices. Final-year preservice teachers were more likely to work within a larger range of semantic density than first-year preservice teachers, moving from simple, everyday noticings (SD - -), to detailed, theorised accounts of practice (SD ++). The findings suggest that both cohorts struggled to identify strengths and weaknesses in the observed lessons, and to envision alternative pedagogical approaches. Both cohorts show recognition of the key components of skilled reading (word recognition and language comprehension). However, the findings point towards difficulties with "untangling" word recognition from language comprehension whilst at the same time being able to recognise their connection to one another, and their equal contribution to reading comprehension.

What implications for Foundation Phase teacher preparation programs arise from the differing ways in which first and final year preservice teachers notice reading pedagogies?

In response to this question, I will make six recommendations for teacher preparation programmes to consider:

1. Addressing the disconnect between theory and practice:

The findings of this research supports Barend's (2015) findings regarding the disconnect between reading theory and practice in teacher preparation programs. Although final-year preservice teachers had access to a greater store of theoretical concepts than first-year preservice teachers, many found it difficult to *recontextualise* these in relation to what they observed in the particular lesson. Darling-Hammond (2010) suggests that the most impactful ITE programmes require preservice teachers to engage extensively in work-integrated learning whilst the examining and applying the concepts and strategies concurrently learned in their reading literacy coursework, thereby bridging the theory-practice divide. In light of this, ITE programmes may need to reassess and adjust their curriculum to ensure that it adequately integrates theoretical knowledge of reading with practical application.

2. Providing structured opportunities for analysis and discussion of observed lessons:

In looking at the ways that pre-service teachers noticed reading pedagogies, it is suggested that ITE programmes consider exploring and incorporate teaching strategies that actively engage preservice teachers in applying theoretical knowledge of reading during their training, perhaps through more facilitated discussions, analysis of lessons, simulations, or practical exercises. This suggestion is supported by the finding that by the time they reach the end of a four-year teacher education programme, just under one third of preservice teachers may *not yet* have internalised or understood the intricate nature of practice. Some of these preservice teachers may “know” the theories related to reading instruction, and they might even understand the specialised terminology. However, it is important to understand that knowledge of reading pedagogies alone is insufficient – preservice teachers must also know how to *operationalise* this knowledge (Binks-Cantrell et al., 2012). The issue lies with whether or not they are able to *recognise* how the theory comes alive during practice, whether their knowledge base supports their capacity to *notice* an important element that may be missing from a specific lesson, and whether or not they are able to imagine possible alternatives for a lesson.

3. Cultivating a strong foundation in specialised knowledge about reading pedagogies

This study supports Hoadley and Boyd's (2023) findings with regards to the lack of development of teacher's knowledge of reading instruction. The findings suggest that preservice teachers may not be secure in their understanding of the different components of skilled reading, and the teaching strategies that strengthen them. It is necessary for ITE programmes to provide preservice teachers with access to comprehensive knowledge of diverse teaching strategies for reading to equip them to select appropriate activities tailored to specific learner needs.

4. Re-evaluating assessment strategies within ITE programmes

It may be useful for teacher educators to employ PrimTEd's assessment instruments to diagnose gaps in preservice teacher knowledge about reading, and to track the efficacy of intervention strategies employed by teacher educators over the course of the four-year degree. Assessments should not only focus on theoretical understanding of reading pedagogies, but also on the ability to translate that understanding into effective teaching practices.

5. Supporting the development of preservice teachers' pedagogical noticing skills, and their critical sensibilities

Preservice teachers require support in order to engage in purposeful and productive noticing (Davis, 2006). In order to support preservice teachers in achieving a more significant level of critical reflection, greater facilitation may be required (Jones & Ryan, 2014). I suggest that emphasis should be placed on supporting preservice teachers to recognise how theory comes alive during practice, notice important elements that may be missing from reading lessons, and imagine possible alternatives.

6. Making pedagogical reasoning explicit:

This research speaks to the efficacy of ITE programmes in terms of and developing their capacity to *recognise* the complex reasoning that underpins teachers' reading pedagogies. The findings suggest that preservice teachers may struggle to identify and articulate the underlying reasons for teaching reading in a specific way, or for selecting a specific teaching strategy. If the "why" of practice remains hidden from view, preservice teachers may find it difficult to gain new insights when learning from practice (Bakker et al., 2022; van Veen & Van de Ven, 2008). I suggest that if 'learning from practice' is to be truly meaningful, teacher education programmes should consider placing greater emphasis on developing an understanding of the

principles guiding teachers' actions (Langsford & Rusznyak, 2024) along with thoughtful and deliberate examinations of reading pedagogies.

7.2. Opportunities for further research

A limitation presented by the online context of the selected lesson was that participants were unable to respond to adjustments made by the teacher during the course of the lesson, as there were no learners present. Consequently, the teacher was not required to make accommodations or modifications to support learners in real-time. The online nature of this lesson was an advantage for this study because participants could focus their attention entirely on the work of the teacher during the lesson. Using a lesson recorded live in a classroom setting would have introduced an additional layer of complexity that could be further explored if the study were replicated. With a recording of live interactions, preservice teachers would also be able to examine and reflect on teacher-learner interactions, classroom dynamics and the responsiveness of teaching strategies to the needs of diverse learners in the class. Further research could conceptualise the notion of complexity not only in terms of theoretical applications but also in terms of relational thinking and exploring conditions of possibility. This study looked at the development of noticing expertise within the context of reading instruction. It would be beneficial to conduct a longitudinal research project that investigates whether noticing expertise transfers into the preservice teachers' classroom practices— whether it *does* in fact support effective teaching and learning of reading once preservice teachers qualify. A comparison could be made between the practice of newly qualified teachers who were identified as having well-developed noticing skills and those who were not. In addition, a longitudinal version of this study may allow for a thorough exploration of the factors influencing pedagogical noticing. In addition, replicating this study using a combination of lesson observation reports and interviews may provide a more comprehensive picture of preservice teachers' noticings. Interviews with participants may offer further insights into understanding why certain moments of the lesson were selected by the participants for discussion and others were ignored. The literature review established that the knowledge that preservice teachers are exposed to in coursework will influence their ability to notice and understand reading pedagogies. A comparative study comparing differences in preservice teacher noticing across the three institutions could offer insight into the efficacy of their respective ITE programmes. Further research could be conducted into the quality

and specifics of the coursework offered by the universities in question. This study revealed no significant differences in how preservice teachers from the three institutions notice and interpret reading pedagogies. The dataset of this research had limits, and as a result, the findings are partial. Therefore, to enhance the validity of this study's findings, a larger-scale study could be conducted.

7.3. Concluding thoughts

In response to the literacy crisis, the PIRLS research team recommended that the teaching of reading and training of pedagogical content knowledge of teachers be strengthened across all languages in the Foundation Phase (Howie et al., 2017, p.12). Although positive changes are occurring in research, curriculum development, and assessment, there is still a long way to go (Taylor & Mawoyo, 2022).

The motivation for this study stemmed from a national need to strengthen the teaching and learning of reading in South African schools, and to understand whether ITE programmes are meeting this need. This research offers insights into whether, by their final year of study, preservice teachers have developed the capacity to describe, interpret and appraise reading pedagogies in more complex ways than first-year preservice teachers. Importantly, this includes an examination of what they consider significant and how they leverage specialised insights to interpret their observations. The findings suggest that preservice teachers may require greater guidance in order to connect theory to practice when it comes to the teaching of reading. It is suggested that teacher educators should endeavour to find ways of supporting preservice teachers' development by designing interactions that shape their ways of knowing and thinking about the teaching of reading, opening up possibilities for preservice teachers to work with both context-dependent and abstracted meaning in more complex ways. In addition, the content and delivery of the language and literacy coursework offered within ITE programmes should be consistently evaluated to ensure an alignment with evidence-based practices and the most recent advances in reading science.

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Appendix A: Ethics Permission



Ethics Committee
Human Subjects Research
University of the Witwatersrand

06 April 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Re Lindy James 2629880

I write to confirm that I grant permission for MEd Diss student Lindy James to conduct analysis of video data collected within the Teacher Choices in Action (TCiA) project with ethical clearance number H19/ 09/ 47 R14/49 (Rusznyak).

Participants have given consent for secondary data analysis by researchers working under my supervision. I am the supervisor of Mrs James and her dissertation falls under this provision.

All anonymity and confidentiality requirements will be adhered to in the writing up of Mrs James' Masters dissertation study.

Yours truly,

Professor Lee Rusznyak (00100619)

Principal Investigator: Teacher Choices in Action

A/Professor Lee Rusznyak

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Appendix B: Ethics Waiver



HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

Registration number: REC-101114-044

15 May 2023

Re: Mrs Lindy James (2629880)

Waiver letter number: HRECNMW23/06/02

To whom it may concern,

Mrs. James is a registered Masters student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. This letter is to confirm that, at the time of writing, Mrs James does not need ethical clearance for her Masters study entitled '*Observing literacy pedagogies: A comparison of what first and fourth-year preservice teachers notice about teachers' work*'. This decision has been reached based upon a description of the project supplied by Mrs James to the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), which has been evaluated by the Chairs and Deputy Chairs. If, however, if Mrs James changes the methods of data collection and analysis for this study, this decision may no longer be valid. If such changes take place, this should be communicated to the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) as soon as possible. This waiver letter is valid until 14 May 2026.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any further information.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,
S Schoeman

Appendix C: Transcript of the observed lesson

7. Hi there, Grade Ones. This is The teacher speaking. Today we're going to do a new book from our Blue Book series. It's called A Picnic for Tortoise. As always, Grade Ones, we need to go through the words so that you can be familiar with them before you start reading the book. I hope that you guys are really practicing your Blue Book words and I can't wait to hear them when we get back.
8. The first word is ask. Remember the first sound is Annie Apple but in South Africa many times she has a sad sound so we say ah, ss, kk, ask. Fox, ff, ah, ks. A nice easy one. I'm. Now, I'm is a contraction. Remember we spoke about that a couple of weeks ago. It's when we have two words that are joined together by this little apostrophe.
9. So the first word is I. And that we know because it refers to ourselves, I. Then that little apostrophe tells us that there's a sound missing. And in this case, it's am. is missing. So I am, but we read the word as I'm. Hello. H...E..LL...O. Remember when there's a double letter, we don't have to say each sound. And then O, Oscar Orange is saying his name. Back. B...A...CK
10. There's another double sound at the end. Going. We learnt this last week already. G O, ask orange is saying his name. I N G , and that last three sounds we see often at the end of our words. Going. Just. J U S T. Just. Another easy one. Into. Into is broken up between two words. In and to. I, n, t, o. But we always hear that u sound at the end, in two.
11. Coming. Now before we take a look at the word coming, I want us to just revise and remind ourselves about the word come. Can you remember that Eddie Elephants reaches over Munching Mike and he says to Oscar Orange, Oscar Orange, you are not going to say up. You must say uh instead and then Eddie Elephant doesn't say a single sound.
So now let's go back to the word coming. Kuh, uh, remember because Oscar Orange has been told he needs to say uh. Kuh, uh, um, and then we have our i, ng again. That's sound ng. takes the place of the e in the word come. Come, ing. So the

e falls away and we are left with ing, coming. Next we have hid. H, e, d. Nice and easy.

12. Looked. Let's watch out for this one at the end. L, u. Remember two oscar oranges say u or u. K, e and d. We don't say look, ed. We say, look, together. They make it sound off here. I don't know what Oscar and just thinking, cause he's going, Oh, he should actually be saying, Oh, but we don't say off. We say, Oh, a double sound just needs one.
13. Find, f, i, n, d, find. Grade Ones, remember, vowels, if the word doesn't make sense, you can always try and change the vowel to try and figure out what it would say. So if you spelled this one, f, i, n, d, and you said fiend, you'd realize, but that doesn't really make sense. If you change impy inc into his name, I, f, i, n, d, it makes a lot more sense. Find.
14. Here we have another contraction. There's our apostrophe giving us a clue that two words are joining. I, there it is, and then the apostrophe is saying that will, uh, is missing. Will, I will. But instead of writing out two long words, we join them together with the apostrophe to say I'll, something. Now this is a long word grade once, but we can break it apart.
15. We can put it into some and thing. Let's first take a look at some. S, a, o. What's happening here? It's the same as the word come. Eddie Elephant is reaching over and saying um, um. Oscar Orange, you will say a. You're not allowed to say a. You must say a. And then Eddie Elephant is quiet. Followed by m. S, a, m.
16. Then we can move on to the word thing. We've got th, which you should know quite well already, i. And there's those sounds again, ng, thing. Can you see, great ones, so many patterns in English? Our last word is that's. L, talking to Harry Hatman, remember they can make either a soft th sound or the hard ticklish l sound.
17. And then there's an apostrophe. Who remembers what the apostrophe means? Here we've got a few of them. There's a sound missing and it could be that is. So it's m p i n k that's missing and then that's that is. And that is the end of the words. So let's get on with picnic for tortoise. What an adventurous story this one is Grade ones.

18. Where can we go for our picnic? said Rabbit. Let's go up the hill, said Duck. Have you got the picnic? asked Rabbit. Here it is, said Duck. That's a good picnic, said Rabbit. Let's ask Tortoise to come with us. Yes, let's ask Tortoise, said Duck. He is slow, but he can take the picnic for us. So Duck and Rabbit went to look for Tortoise.

Duck and Rabbit found Tortoise. Duck and I are going out, said Rabbit. Come with us. I want to sleep, said Tortoise. Come on, said Duck. We're going up the hill to have a picnic. Tortoise said, A picnic? That will be fun. I don't want to sleep now. I can't go fast up the hill, but I will take the picnic on my back.

Good, said Duck. Let's go now. And off they went. Duck and Rabbit ran up the hill. Rabbit said, Let's stop here and have our tea on the grass. Duck shouted, Come on, Tortoise. You are slow. We want our tea. I'm coming. I'm coming, said Tortoise. Can't you wait? Then Fox ran up the hill. A duck and a rabbit for my tea, he said.

Look out, shouted Rabbit. Help, shouted Duck. Let's hide. So Duck and Rabbit hid. Fox did not find Duck and Rabbit. So he ran down the hill. He ran up to Tortoise, but Tortoise just hid in his shell. You can't eat me, said Tortoise. You can eat the picnic. Fox did not want to eat the picnic. So he ran on down the hill.

Duck and Rabbit came back. I want my tea now, said Duck. Come on, Tortoise. Tortoise came up the hill. Did you see Fox? said Rabbit. Yes, said Tortoise. He went down the hill to look for something to eat.

I want something to eat, said Duck. Let's have tea now. Yes, let's, said Rabbit and Tortoise. So they got the picnic out. That looks good to eat, said Duck. Look out! Shouted Rabbit. Help! Shouted Duck. You look good to eat, said Cat. Hop, Rabbit! Shouted Tortoise. Swim, Duck! So off they went, and Tortoise just hid in his shell.

Cat looked at the picnic. I'll have that for my tea, said Cat. But Fox came back up the hill. I'll have you for my tea, said Fox. Help! shouted Cat and ran away down the hill. I'll get you! shouted Fox and off he went. I like picnics! said Tortoise. Picnics are fun. Oh great ones, I hope you enjoyed that story.

13. What an adventure it was. Today, I'd like you to think of some questions that you

could ask and answer about the story. Perhaps you can even ask mom and dad to read the story, and then ask them your questions to see if they understood the story. And as always, Grade Ones, go back and find all these words.

Make sure that you can understand them and read them easily and carefully. Well done, Grade Ones!

Appendix D: Examples of coded data

First year example:

	It was an English reading lesson, a story from a PICNIC FOR TORTOISE book. The teacher is a female (Mrs McGeer). She is well prepared, she starts by going through the glossary at the last page of the book. She then starts reading the story about the tortoise, duck and rabbit. the rabbit and duck wanted to have a picnic so they invited tortoise so he carry the picnic for them. The teacher is teaching grade 1 learners. The lesson was a reading lesson where the teacher was reading a book called 'PICNIC TORTOISE'.
	When she is done with the glossary she start reading the story. she does thing changing to so it helps the learners to differentiate the voice of the character and that of the narrator.
	The story about the tortoise that was invited to come for a picnic because of the strength to carry the picnic up the hill. the other animals who invited it was rabbit and duck..The duck and rabbit gave the tortoise the picnic and the rushed to the hill, on their way they met fox on their way up and the fox was delighted to for it thought it has found its meal but the duck and rabbit ran for their lives leaving the tortoise with its slowness fortunately its shell helps it in situations like this. after it has passed the told the tortoise to hurry up as they were hungry and wanted to eat the picnic. As they were about eat the cat appear wanting to eat them they ran and tortoise hid inside the shell and as the cat was about to eat the picnic the fox had returned and it started chasing the cat as its potential next meal this left the tortoise with laughed and him saying he loves picnics.
	I think the lesson went well and the learners did not have the challenge of not following through the story. i like the way she choose a short story so she would avoid learners to be bored and destructed while she still reading she kept it short and interesting.
Language	the teacher goes through the glossary so it simplifies the understanding of the

Comprehension	learners so they would understand the story better while she reading narrating it to them.		
Word Recognition	The teacher promotes learning by helping the learners with pronunciation of words and She explains techniques for proper pronunciation of vowel on words.She does this referring to some previous. lessons to remind the learner, this continues until last word on glossary.	SD -	SG +
	The lesson was online, it was recorded and made available to the lesson,it was not live.		

Final-year example:

	She supports her main idea visually through the Grade 1 storybook about the “Picnic for Tortoise”. Part 1:.		
	The teacher introduces the story by reading the story title which is Picnic for Tortoise. She then continues reading the entire story for the Grade 1. At the end of the story The teacher encourage learners to think about question that they will be able to answer about the story		
	The teacher tells the learners that they will be reading a new book that comes from the blue series. She informs learners that they need to practices their words in the blue book. She offers encouragement to the learners by informing them that “she is excited to hear the new words learners have learnt when they return to school/class.” She also suggests that learners must find all thirteen words in the story; carefully understand and read them. She concludes the lesson by positively encouraging the Grade 1 learners.		
	The teacher promotes learning in this lesson when she reads and shows the title and illustrate of the storybook to the learners.		
LANGUAGE COMP,	The teacher goes through words that occur in the story book. She does this so learners can become familiar with the words, there spelling, correct pronunciation of the words before the reading of the story commences. The teacher is building learners’ knowledge about words.		
	The teacher goes through words that arise in the story book. This promotes learning in this lesson which enables learners to become familiar with the words before reading the story. The teacher promotes learning in this lesson through introducing learners to thirteen prominent words that occur in the story.		
WORD RECOGNITION	The lesson I will be analysing is an English Shared Reading lesson integrated Phonics taught by The teacher. She is teaching an English Shared Reading integrated with Phonics lesson	SD+	SG+
	She wants to help learners understand that each word can be segmented into letters; the unique sound each letter makes and teaches learners the correct pronunciation of each word.	SD-	SG+
	She works through thirteen words in total. In the first part of this lesson learners will interact with vowels, consonants; double vowels; apostrophes; end sounds like “ing”	SD-	SG+

	and big words like “something” etc.		
	The teacher promotes learning through spelling and formation of words in this lesson. These thirteen words promote learning through the segmentation of letters; sounds; pronunciation and blending the word back together. Furthermore The teacher teaches and promotes learners knowledge by engaging with words that have vowels, consonants; double vowels; apostrophes; prefix and suffix sounds and simple to complex words like “fox” & “something” etc. This promotes learning in the lesson because learners build on their previous knowledge about letter sound relationship, etc.	SD+	SG+
	The teacher reviewed the course curriculum which she broke down into manageable content chunks. She thought careful about the content that she wanted to teach. She thought about lesson The teacher is a Grade 1 teacher who is employed by Rand Park Primary school. She is teaching her lesson online from the comfort of her home due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The teacher is teaching her Grade 1 learners English. The teacher starts her lesson with positive encouragement and enthusiasm. This promotes learning in her lesson because it makes the learners feel welcome, loved, happy and excited to learn. This is a very important aspect because learners do not get face to face encouragement anymore due to the Covid-19 pandemic. topic; the purpose of this lesson; the needs of the Grade 1 learners and the context. The teacher starts her lesson by welcoming the learners to the online lesson.		

Appendix E: PrimTEd Knowledge and Practice Standards for primary teacher education graduates: language and literacy.

Teacher Standards: Knowledge

Anchor statement	Graduate teachers have knowledge of language and literacy and of how to teach learners to read and write.
Purpose and rationale	Language and literacy teachers need to have knowledge of: - the theoretical, historical, and research-based-foundations of reading and writing - language structures and conventions - speaking, listening, viewing, reading, and presenting, and the processes and phase appropriate instruction used in teaching and developing these - the role of the language and literacy teacher within and across subjects.
General competencies assumed to be in place	Knowledge of at least two official languages, one as home language and another as first additional language (FAL). In most cases, one of these will be English.
Level descriptors	National Qualifications Framework level 7 (See South African Qualifications Authority. 2012. <i>Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework</i> . Pretoria: South African Qualifications Authority, p. 10).
Related SACE Professional Teaching Standards	- Teachers understand that language plays an important role in teaching and learning. - Teaching is fundamentally connected to teachers' understanding of the subject/s they teach. - Teachers understand how their subjects are taught and learnt effectively.
Standards	Evidence of achievement
1. Demonstrate basic knowledge of the key components of language .	1.1 Explanations can be given of six basic components found across languages: phonology, morphology, grammar, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. 1.2 Essential simple language terms can be used. 1.3 A basic comparative knowledge of similarities and differences in the components across the South African languages is described.

2. Demonstrate knowledge of basic grammatical concepts that are necessary for language and literacy teaching.	2.1 Knowledge of, and the ability to explain the following grammatical features, is demonstrated: - word classes (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives, articles, conjunctions, pronouns) - grammatical functions in sentences (e.g., subject, verb, object) - grammatical constructions (e.g., subject-verb agreement/concordial agreement, conjunctions) - syntax (e.g., word order and the relationship between words and sentences). 2.2 Knowledge of when it is appropriate to teach elements of grammar. 2.3 Basic differences in the grammatical structures of English and Afrikaans (as analytic or isolating languages) and African languages (as agglutinating languages) are identified and explained.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical and research-based foundations of home language acquisition and additional language learning .	3.1 Explanations can be given about the differences and similarities between the natural acquisition of a home language and the formal learning of another language in an educational context (i.e. a FAL). 3.2 The implications of young learners speaking a different language or languages at home, how this may impact on their learning, and what this means for working with varied linguistic repertoires in the classroom can be discussed. 3.3 The implications of young learners learning non-cognate languages can be discussed. 3.4 Current theories of language acquisition can be applied in multilingual contexts of South African schools.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of bi- and multilingualism and of standard and non-standard varieties of languages in communication and learning in South Africa.	4.1 An understanding that learners have a variety of linguistic repertoires can be demonstrated. 4.2 An awareness that working of the importance of working with these varied repertoires to scaffold learning can be demonstrated. 4.3 The multilingual nature of the South African school system is recognised and its value described. 4.4 Concepts of bilingualism can be explained.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of oral language in literacy development and of the influence of written language on oral language.	5.1 The reciprocal relationship between spoken language and written language can be explained. 5.2 The distinction between the language of everyday Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and that of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is described. 5.3 Ways of developing listening and speaking in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases are described. 5.4 The relationship between orality development and literacy development in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases is explained. 5.5 The importance of vocabulary development in home language and first additional language can be discussed. 5.6 The importance of reading aloud and its role in the encouragement of reading for pleasure can be articulated.
9. Shows understanding of the need to teach all the components of reading and writing in a purposeful, systematic, structured, and integrated way.	9.1 An outline of a systematic, structured and integrated approach to learning to read and write teaching programme can be described. 9.2 Awareness of the need to make explicit to learners the purpose and functions of what is being taught is exhibited. 9.3 Awareness that a purposeful, systematic and structured approach also incorporates pleasure, play and fun in learning is shown. 9.4 How literacy activities at the word, sentence and whole text levels contribute to meaningful reading and writing can be described. 9.5 Ways of creating a classroom environment that emphasizes reading and writing as meaning making processes are outlined.
10. Demonstrate phonological awareness including phonemic awareness	10.1 A basic awareness of the sounds of languages is displayed. 10.2 Definitions, explanations and demonstrations of phonological awareness (syllabification, onset and rime (onset and rime are important in English but not in agglutinating languages), and phonemic awareness) are given. 10.3 The use of activities such as phoneme isolation, identification, categorization, addition, deletion, substitution, and segmentation is demonstrated. 10.4 An understanding of the developmental continuum of phonological awareness and an ability to use this knowledge in reading instruction appropriate to each grade and learner is demonstrated.
11. Demonstrate basic knowledge of phonics , e.g. knowing letter shapes, knowing that written words are built up from letters and letter groups with sound values	11.1 Phonics is defined. 11.2 The use of phonics and decoding strategies appropriate to the particular language and grade are identified. 11.3 Awareness of the similarities and differences in phonics strategies in analytic/isolating and agglutinating languages is shown. 11.4 The importance of syllables and word morphology in the African languages is recognised. 11.5 Explanations of the principles underpinning particular phonics approaches are given. 11.6 Knowledge of resources available to support particular approaches/programmes is demonstrated.

12. Demonstrate vocabulary and word study knowledge, e.g. know how to help learners extend vocabulary for communication and academic purposes	12.1 The role of vocabulary in learning across and beyond the curriculum in expanding the learner's conceptual world is articulated. 12.2 A variety of research-based ways to introduce and build new language and vocabulary in both home and additional languages (e.g., word study, word parts, word associations, etc.) throughout the curriculum and across different subjects and grade levels is described, including: ▸ Word features and their structures, for example, syllables, prefixes, infixes, suffixes, roots, inflections, etc., are explained. ▸ A list of high frequency words (and sight words in English) for the grade level is presented. ▸ A appropriate vocabulary list with the words in the particular language that should be spoken and written by the end of a particular grade (and which take into account necessary subject specific vocabularies) can be presented. 12.3 The distinction between expressive and receptive vocabulary is explained.
13. Demonstrate knowledge of comprehension, strategies to develop comprehension and strategies to develop comprehension across a range of genres	13.1 An understanding of the role of full comprehension as the goal of reading is articulated. 13.2 An understanding of the interrelated roles of vocabulary, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and background knowledge in comprehension can be demonstrated. 13.3 Types of comprehension (lexical, literal, inferential, analytical, applied, affective, integrative, evaluative) are defined and examples given. 13.4 Comprehension teaching strategies that can be taught explicitly (such as main ideas, summarising, clarifying, question-asking, visualisation, predicting, making inferences, making connections, monitoring comprehension, etc.) for use with different genres and types of texts are outlined. 13.5 The contribution to comprehension of learners' ability to read visual representations (tables, diagrams, maps, photographs, drawings and other artwork) can be explained. 13.6 The importance of the development of critical literacy is articulated, in which the meaning of texts, the kind of text and the versions of reality they present are examined.
14. Demonstrate knowledge of how to develop fluency in reading through a flexible use of strategies.	14.1 An understanding of the role of fluency in relationship to vocabulary, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, comprehension and text difficulty can be demonstrated. 14.2 Taking into account the relationship of fluency to the other components of literacy and the variety of texts used, flexible fluency benchmarks for the particular grade and language are stated. 14.3 Strategies which will help learners to develop fluency in reading in a variety of genres are described. 14.4 Appropriate texts are chosen so that learners can independently comprehend them as tasks become more complex and the text demands increase.
15. Identify the level of reading competences learners have attained and can provide appropriate responses.	15.1 Cognitive, linguistic, affective and contextual factors that influence reading success and means of addressing them can be described. 15.2 Different ways to identify reading competences along the literacy continuum of individual learners can be identified. 15.3 Means of matching reading competences to socially and culturally appropriate reading texts can be explained. 15.4 Assessment can be undertaken in each of the following areas: oral language development, concepts of print, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, critical thinking, motivation, and writing, all in meaningful contexts. 15.5 Knowledge of the reading norms for the various languages in which reading is taught is demonstrated and used constructively in analysing and reporting on assessment of reading competencies.
16. Demonstrate knowledge about typical sequences of development in children's spelling.	16.1 The role of knowledge of spelling strings and patterns and morphemes in spelling accurately in the particular language orthography is demonstrated. 16.2 Knowledge of the role of morphemes in spelling is demonstrated (e.g. in Nguni languages, <i>um, aba, isi, izi, ile</i>, etc. and in English, <i>-ed, -ing, sub-, pre-, in-</i>, etc.). 16.3 Knowledge of spelling strings and patterns is demonstrated (knowing the patterned basis to spelling (there are a limited number of possible spellings for individual syllables) (e.g. in English <i>ight</i> (as in <i>height, light, night</i>), <i>ei</i> (as in <i>their, weigh</i>, etc). 16.4 Understanding the role of invented spelling and influence of the learners' linguistic repertoire on spelling development is demonstrated.

17. Demonstrate knowledge of phase appropriate features of page or screen-based visual texts , of how the relationship of verbal and visual features of texts affects meaning and of strategies to teach learners to become firstly, visually literate and subsequently, critically visually literate.	17.1 Features of page or screen-based visual texts in relation to the meaning they are communicating or expressing (e.g. through layout, colour, image choice) can be explained. 17.2 The effects of the relationship between words and images of various kinds on meaning can be explained. 17.3 Strategies for teaching learners how to read and view visual texts or texts that combine words and images for particular effects can be described.
18. Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical, historical, and research-based components of writing development and the writing process through the grades.	18.1 A basic understanding of a theoretical, historical and research-based approaches to the teaching of writing is articulated. 18.2 Knowledge of the functions of writing in society and schooling is demonstrated. 18.3 The role of writing in 'writing to learn' and in documenting learning is articulated. 18.4 The role of writing in developing learners' imagination and creativity is discussed.
19. Demonstrate practical knowledge of the teaching of writing and the creation of a writing-rich environment.	19.1 The distinction between handwriting (a skill) and writing (communication of meaningful written information) is explained. 19.2 Evidence-based knowledge of effective instruction in the following is demonstrated: ▸ handwriting (print script and cursive script) ▸ typing (keyboarding and wordprocessing) ▸ handwriting for left-handed learners 19.3 The role of spelling, sentence construction, paragraph construction, and writing conventions, etc. in the development of writing for communication is explained.
20. Display knowledge about writing genres and text types .	20.1 Knowledge is demonstrated about appropriate literacy education texts in multiple genres, formats and degrees of complexity within various settings and cultural contexts, for various audiences taking into account learners' background knowledge, stage of reading development and any reading difficulties. 20.2 The purposes, functions and structure of various kinds and genres of texts (such as messages, stories, poems, and informational texts) are explained. 20.3 The ability to talk with learners meaningfully about the different genres is demonstrated. 20.4 Means of creating a classroom environment in which learners can communicate in writing using a range of genres, including creative writing, are described.
21. Display knowledge of literature for children, e.g. knowing a range of suitable literature and authors for particular children, having some understanding of quality in children's literature (fiction and non-fiction), and of how to enhance children's responses to literature.	21.1 The need is understood to provide opportunities for learners to listen to and read and respond with enjoyment to a variety of interesting, engaging, social justice informing, and conceptually rich texts. 21.2 Ways of using different genres and text types with children are described. 21.3 Engaging ways of using information texts for mathematics and life skills in the Foundation Phase and various subjects in the Intermediate Phase are described.

Teacher Standards: Practice

Anchor statement	Teacher graduates can organise systematic languages and literacies instruction with a focus on reading and writing, guided by the requirements of the curriculum.
Purpose and rationale	Teachers need to demonstrate the foundational knowledge and practical skills required to teach languages and literacy, to select teaching approaches and strategies, and to determine the sequence and pace in accordance with the curriculum, diverse multilingual contexts and learner needs.
General competencies assumed to be in place	Graduate teachers should already have some basic knowledge of the theoretical and evidence-based foundations of home language acquisition, additional language learning and literacy learning. They have good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and this is evident in lesson planning, preparation and presentation. They have general pedagogical knowledge and skills, including lesson preparation skills. They have general classroom management skills.
Level descriptors	National Qualifications Framework level 7 (See South African Qualifications Authority. 2012. <i>Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework</i> . Pretoria: South African Qualifications Authority, p. 10).
Related SACE Professional Teaching Standards	- Teachers understand how their subjects are taught and learnt effectively. - Teachers are able to plan and organise coherent sequences of learning experiences. - Teaching involves monitoring and assessing learning.

Standards	Evidence of achievement
1. Demonstrate the foundational knowledge required to teach a language and literacy curriculum.	1.1 A critical understanding of the approaches taken by the curriculum can be articulated. 1.2 How the curriculum can be implemented (and adapted when necessary) using available materials and resources, appropriate evidence-based teaching strategies, and planned suitable learning activities, is outlined. 1.3 How the assessment requirements of the curriculum are understood, implemented and adapted is demonstrated.
2. Select and organise content into a coherent, well-sequenced instructional design using knowledge of the curriculum, learners' strengths and weaknesses, and assessment and reporting requirements.	2.1 Sound knowledge of the instructional design of the curriculum is demonstrated. 2.2 Explicit, challenging and achievable goals are set for all learners from curriculum down to lesson level. 2.3 Instructional designs include a range of phase appropriate small group and individual instruction activities (e.g. shared reading/shared writing, group guided reading, paired reading, silent reading/reading aloud, guided writing, independent reading/independent writing). 2.4 Phase appropriate assessment of learners' language and literacy progress is planned in the home and/or the first additional language. 2.5 Formative assessment is foregrounded in the design in order to inform instruction.

3. Implement multimodal forms of instruction and evaluate instructional practice in each of the key components of reading and writing.	3.1 Implement and evaluate phase appropriate instructional practice in the following key areas: ▸ speaking and listening ▸ concepts of print, ▸ phonological and phonemic awareness ▸ phonics (sound-letter correspondence) ▸ word recognition ▸ vocabulary (including word roots, prefixes, infixes, suffixes, word derivations, etc. [as appropriate for the particular language]) ▸ fluency ▸ comprehension ▸ visual literacy ▸ handwriting ▸ writing/designing texts in a range of modes and genres ▸ critical engagement with texts. 3.2 Appropriate and varied instructional approaches are used, including those that develop decoding, comprehension and text analysis skills as well as fostering the enjoyment of reading and writing. 3.3 Lessons are logically sequenced and conducted at an appropriate pace to keep learners engaged and focussed on tasks. 3.4 Learner strengths and weaknesses are diagnosed in order to develop and adapt teaching strategies. 3.5 Scaffolding to support the process of learning to read and write (prompting, demonstrating, modelling, praising, describing strategies, offering feedback, or using particular instructional frameworks, etc.) is used. 3.6 Focussed tasks matched to the abilities of learners are provided. 3.7 The systematic and continuous monitoring and assessment of learners' progress is undertaken.
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4. Select and plan the use of a range of instructional materials and resources, including a variety of print and digital texts, to engage learners in the learning process.	4.1 Opportunities are created on a regular basis every day to use books and written language in a variety of ways (reading corners, small groups, independent reading/writing) so children hear and use language (oral and written) for a variety of purposes. 4.2 Books and texts are provided in different genres for different purposes that are high-interest and culturally appropriate 4.3 Ample time is provided for the reading of texts and for learners to interact with others to express their ideas about the texts to develop comprehension and vocabulary. 4.4 The demands of texts are matched to readers and they are helped to identify texts that they can read independently. 4.5 Materials from the learners' own successful literacy outcomes, including texts which the teacher and children either read or wrote together, are used. 4.6 A language and literacy rich learning environment is created by arranging classrooms to provide easy access to texts, time to read, and specific areas designed for a variety of individual, small-group, and whole-class speaking, reading and writing activities. 4.7 An accessible, multilevel, and diverse classroom library is made available, that contains traditional print, digital, and online classroom materials that include poetry, songs, rhymes, and oral stories designed to promote literacy development. 4.8 Familiarity is displayed with new technologies that learners may have access to in the home situation and with ways of harnessing these for learning.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the range of types and multiple purposes of assessment in literacy, including for selection (screening), diagnosis, guidance, grading, prediction, motivation and standard maintaining.	5.1 Knowledge of the reading norms for the various languages in which reading is taught is demonstrated and used outcomes. 5.2 Assessment is undertaken in each of the following areas: oral language development, concepts of print, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, critical thinking, motivation, and writing, all in meaningful contexts. 5.3 Sufficient evidence from use of formative assessment techniques (including observation, oral reading, silent reading, writing, questioning, etc.) is gathered. 5.4 Assessment data is used to determine: ▸ whether the learners use meaning, visual and structural cues when reading. ▸ what skills and strategies they individually and collectively use to problem solve. ▸ what adjustments in instruction, and the development of new assessments are required.

6. Plan instructional collaboration with other teachers and education professionals in designing, adjusting, and modifying the curriculum, instructional approaches and practices to meet learners' language and literacy needs.	6.1 Plans for instructional collaboration with other teachers in and across phases and with educational professionals are outlined. 6.2 Clear understanding is demonstrated of the roles of the language and literacy teacher and their instructional and leadership dimensions to ensure all learners, especially those experiencing language and literacy difficulties, have equitable access to high quality, comprehensive instruction. 6.3 Understand of the need to play an active role in creating a school culture that values reading and writing is made evident.
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