

**Managing the implementation of reading policies
in the Foundation Phase in the
Lichtenburg Circuit
in the North West Province**

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DECLARATION

I, Ann-May Marais, declare that this study titled, *Managing the implementation of reading policies in the Foundation Phase in the Lichtenburg circuit in the North West Province* is my own work. This Masters dissertation has never been submitted for any degree at any other university.

Marais

Signed

May 2018
Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Bushy and Ann Fourie, my parents-in-law, Lood and Marthie Marais, and my husband, Chris Marais, who supported and motivated me throughout the study. Their understanding and encouragement really meant the world to me and inspired me. I would like to thank them for the special people they are.

Most of all, I dedicate this to God Almighty, who gave me the understanding, knowledge, strength, health and endurance to finish this study. Praise the Lord!

"Be strong and courageous! For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Josh. 1:9

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DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

ANA: Annual National Assessment. Both public and state-funded independent schools participate in these assessments. These assessments serve as a proxy for the quality of education and provide detailed information on the knowledge and skills that learners display or fail to display in each grade. They are conducted in languages and mathematics.

Assessment: The systematic measurement that educators use to determine learners' level and how they are developing and progressing throughout a grade and in a particular subject.

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS): The document used in South African schools to guide educators on the subjects that are included in a course of a study or that are taught at a school. The CAPS document is used at all South African schools.

DBE: Department of Basic Education – since 2010.

DOE: The Department of Education (DOE), changed to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in 2010.

Educators: In this dissertation, I am using the term “educators,” while some literature use the term “teacher.” I am aware of this difference, but I want to align myself with the majority of documents and use the term “educators.”

Educator's knowledge: The knowledge that an educator must have about teaching reading and learning.

Foundation Phase: The Foundation Phase ranges from Grade R (reception year) up to Grade 3 and accommodates learners from the age of five up to the age of nine. The Foundation Phase is the first phase of formal schooling in South Africa.

Implementation: Specified set of activities/guidelines to put into practice according to a certain programme.

Interpretation: The act of deciding on the particular meaning of a document, understanding it in a certain way and clarifying the intention of the document.

Learners: Someone who is learning about a certain subject or how to do something to gain knowledge or skills.

Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT): The language medium in which learning and teaching, including instructions and assessment, take place. For most learners in South Africa it is not a first language.

Management: School governing bodies, as well as the individual who sets the strategy and coordinates the efforts of employees to accomplish certain objectives.

Policy: A system of principles that guide decision making to achieve certain outcomes. A policy must be implemented as a procedure that is adopted within an organization.

Reading policies: Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. Learners learn how to integrate these facets to make meaning of print.

Reading: Reading is a versatile process that involves word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. Reading is to make meaning of print, to look at and understand the meaning of written or printed words or symbols, to go through written or printed words in silence or speaking them to other people.

Teaching reading: *Teaching of reading* refers to the approach used to teach reading. It includes the five components of reading: phonemic awareness; phonics; vocabulary; fluency and comprehension.

ABSTRACT

There is growing international awareness of the dividends of early reading success and the consequences of early reading failure. A number of studies have shown in recent years that the educational achievement of learners in South African schools is unacceptably poor. The 2014 Annual National Assessment results indicated a 56% for home language for South African learners in Grade 3, while the ANA results of 2015 clearly indicated that learners struggle to read with comprehension. The aim of this study was therefore to identify policies that guide the teaching of reading and to investigate the management of the implementation of these reading policies, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of how educators manage the implementation of reading policies in the Foundation Phase. The study adopted a qualitative case study design to understand how subject advisors, principals, HoDs, and Foundation Phase teachers manage the implementation of reading policies during this phase. This study was underpinned by sense-making theory which was used as a theoretical framework. Sense-making theory describes processes of how people think about certain things, how they understand them and how the meaning they give leads to action or inaction. Three primary schools in the Lichtenburg circuit were selected as study sites. Participants were selected purposively and numbered 13 in total. Data were collected through document analysis, observations and interviews. The data collected were analysed by means of theme identification. The results indicate that the CAPS document is the only policy document that teachers use as a guideline for the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase. However, this document lacks explicit guidance with regard to teaching reading. As a result, most participants indicated that they struggle to interpret and implement the CAPS document. Policy management is also problematic at schools where the principals and HoDs are not present to support the Foundation Phase educators. Teaching policies were better managed in one school where both the head of department and principal were present and involved. The study concludes that effective management of reading policies requires the collaboration of educators with the support of the heads of departments, the principals and the subject advisors. The study recommends that CAPS be revised so that

it provides clearer guidelines and that educators are given appropriate training so that they can implement reading policies with understanding.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1. 1 Background

The focus of the study is on reading and reading policies, and how educators interpret and implement these policies in the Foundation Phase. In recent years (from 2010), the educational achievement of learners in South African schools has been reported as unacceptably poor (Wium & Louw, 2011). In 2001, 2004 and in 2007 the former Department of Education (DOE) conducted two National Systemic Evaluations to establish language levels in primary schools. These studies indicated low levels of reading ability across South Africa and that many of the learners in the Foundation Phase could not read appropriately (DOE, 2008:4). The first cycle (2001 and 2004) of the former DoE's Systemic Evaluation showed that scores for Grade 3 learners averaged 39% for reading comprehension (DOE, 2003). The second cycle of the Systemic Evaluations conducted in 2007 revealed little change in learners' achievement in home language; namely 36% for language overall (Buhlungu, Daniel, Southall & Lutchman., 2007). The evaluations were confirmed again by the results of the 2011 Annual National Assessments (ANA), conducted by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Collectively, these studies show that performances of Foundation Phase learners stay poor in language year after year and attempts to facilitate language in the Foundation Phase needs to be improved drastically to overcome the barrier of learners that cannot read at an appropriate level.

At the provincial level, the North West Department of Education and Sport Development (NWDESD, 2011) regards underachievement as an important matter, because it was within the public view (in the media), where learners' achievement was debated by parents, educators, experts as well as reporters. The provincial target for 2013 for language had been set at 53.8% in Grade 3, and 54% for language within the North West Province overall (NWDESD, 2011). According to the NWDESD Lichtenburg circuit (2014), the ANA and Standard Baseline Assessment (SBA) target for 2013 and 2014 was set at

60% in language. Furthermore, the DBE ANA should be seen as a tool for educators to use in their own assessment processes in order to diagnose learning problems and design remedial strategies. It also measures the progress of the country (or of smaller sub-groups such as provinces) towards improving language and numeracy outcomes. Standard Baseline Assessment (SBA) was the mark at the end of the year combined with all the other terms to determine if a learner may progress to the next grade. In 2013 and 2014, 11 of the 19 schools in the circuit did not meet the target. The report showed that there was no improvement from 2013 to 2014 in language. One can therefore conclude that there was a problem with performance levels of language as a subject in general and reading in particular, and it has been a challenge to lift the performance level. A circuit in the North West Province report emphasized that language and reading were essential building blocks that enable learners to be promoted to a higher grade (NWDESD circuit, 2014).

According to the CAPS document, language is divided into four language skills: listening; speaking; reading and writing. The focus of this study is on teaching reading as a sub-skill in language. The Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, in a speech made on 11 December 2014, indicated that the assessment of South African learners' language and numeracy capabilities are one of the main priorities of the education department (Motshekga, 2014). Assessment of language capabilities and specifically reading skills are essential to achieve a higher level of reading fluency. In addition, these assessments of learners should be a curriculum-based measurement to set a standardized procedure for assessment to monitor the learners' reading ability and progress. Thus, the results from the assessment should inform educators on how to adjust their teaching of reading to ensure improvement. The National Reading programme for Grade 1 to 3 – Reading Norms (2013), complement the CAPS document and provide classroom indicators for the teaching of effective reading. The purpose of the National Reading Programme for Grade 1 to 3 - Reading Norms is to pair with a curriculum-based assessment instrument like Annual Teaching Plan (ATPs) or Programme of Assessment. These instruments enable

educators to design useful intervention to support learners to ensure reading progress for all learners.

Wessels (2011) established that educators are under extreme pressure to cater for the individual needs of all the learners who attend their classrooms. The Grade R learners come to school with a need for beginning reading. This place pressure on the educator who need appropriate knowledge to deal with all the different aspects of reading. Developmentally appropriate activities can be used to teach fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. Wessels (2011) indicated that educators lack knowledge of phonological awareness activities in the Grade R classroom. Rose (2006:5) has argued that educators should be better equipped through training in order to work with beginner readers and to understand the basic principles and strategies. Rose (2006:5) continued to say that there is room for improvement and educators should have knowledge and understanding of reading content so that they can plan and implement the policies of their programmes (Rose, 2006). Furthermore, Rose (2006) stated that proper and skilful teaching supports and motivates learners. Such teaching does not happen by chance, but rather through well-trained educators who are skilled in teaching reading, observation skills, assessment, planning and preparation (Rose, 2006).

In an attempt to provide educators in the Foundation Phase with guidance to assist beginner readers, the DBE, provincial departments and schools have several policies and guidelines in place, which are relevant to teaching reading. These policies include the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) – home language, including supplementary documents like programme of assessment, formal tasks Grade 1 – 3, moderation reports, intervention, timetable, reading and phonics programme, annual teaching plan (ATPs), lesson plans and examples of work sheets, reports (monitor and control) and planning (class visit and meetings). Further, the policies consist of the National Reading Programme for Grades 1 to 3 – Reading Norms; Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA); area office policies, subject policies and internal school policies.

The intentions of these policies are to address the teaching of language, including reading. In addition, the policies provide guidance with regard to learner support when learners do not meet the appropriate reading levels. Understanding the process that guides Foundation Phase educators in teaching reading requires that one should understand how the subject advisors from the department, the principal of the school and the head of department (HoD) of the Foundation Phase manage the applicable reading policies and how and to what extent educators interpret and implement these reading policies appropriately.

The former South African Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, emphasized the importance of the Foundation Phase during a Foundation Phase conference held on 30 September 2008, stating that quality teaching in the Foundation Phase will provide the corner stone for learning (Pandor, 2008). She acknowledged that educators constantly battle to interpret the curriculum into acceptable classroom practices and said that educators should be assisted to interpret and implement the curriculum in their daily teaching. In 2009, a panel of professionals was appointed to inspect the challenges related to the implementation of the CAPS document. One fact that became evident from the inspection is that clarity about what to teach and how to teach will help restore confidence in and the stability of the system (DOE, 2009:61). The report stated that it might be achievable to analyse whether educators know what to teach or even how to teach reading in the Foundation Phase. Furthermore, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006 and 2011 reports show that South African children's reading ability is below average (50%) compared to other countries (Howie *et al.* 2008; Howie *et al.* 2011:129). The PIRLS report (2011) highlights the significance of reading in both foundation and intermediate phases, concluding that, "unless children are fully functional in the language of teaching and learning they are at considerable risk of failure or repeated failure in primary school and dropping out of school at secondary level" (Howie, *et al.*, 2011:xviii).

In the draft on the National Integrated Plan for Early Childhood Education (DoE, 2005), the former DoE acknowledged the shortcomings of instruction for Foundation Phase educators and promised to focus on “ongoing professional developmental opportunities to attract and retain high quality educators” (2005:11). Even though the document is available to educators, the extent to which it assists educators has not been established. Furthermore, the DoE has published a booklet: *Teaching reading in the early grades – a teacher’s handbook*, with the aim of guiding educators who teach grades R to 6 by means of proper guidelines on how to teach reading and writing. The booklet (DoE, 2008) attends to practical problems, such as time allocation per day, the learning outcomes, the importance of planning and the use of learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs). However, it is not clear whether this booklet is available to or implemented by educators.

1. 2 Problem statement

The ANA results of 2015 clearly indicate that learners struggle to read with comprehension. Van der Merwe (2011) has levelled the criticism that educators lack depth and interest and do not have the knowledge required to teach reading. The former minister of education, Naledi Pandor (2008), noted that educators must receive support to implement the different reading policies, starting with the knowledge and skills that are necessary for teaching reading. The DoE also stated that educators do not know how to interpret and implement the different reading policies so that they provide clear instruction to learners. Howie *et al.* (2011) highlight the necessity of constant interrogation of the quality of reading instruction in schools and the effect that language and reading policies have on instruction and learners’ ability to read. These factors make it important to understand how subject advisors, principals and HoDs manage the implementation of reading policies and how teachers interpret and implement the reading policies for the Foundation Phase. The proper interpretation and implementation of reading policies is essential for successful teaching. The purpose of this study is therefore to understand how educators interpret and implement reading policies for the Foundation Phase and

how these processes are managed. The study is guided by the research questions presented in the section below.

1.3 Aim and objectives of the study

The main aim of this research is to determine how educators interpret, implement and manage reading policies for the Foundation Phase.

1.3.1 Aim

The aim of this study can be better reached by pursuing the following objectives:

- to determine what policies and documents guide the teaching of reading during the Foundation Phase;
- to determine how educators, interpret, manage and implement these policies;
- to identify the factors that have an influence on how educators interpret, manage and interpret the reading policies;
- to identify how the interpretation, management and implementation of reading for the Foundation Phase policies can be improved.

1.4 Research question

The problem statement presented above prompts the main question that this investigation seeks to address, namely:

How are Foundation Phase reading policies interpreted, implemented and managed in the Foundation Phase?

1.4.1 Sub-questions

The main research question divides into the following sub-questions:

1. What policies and documents guide the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase?
2. How do educators interpret, manage and implement these policies?
3. What factors influence educators' interpretation, implementation and management of reading policies?
4. How can the interpretation, implementation and management of reading policies for the Foundation Phase be improved?

1.5 Chapter outline

Chapter 1: Introduction and problem statement

This chapter provides an overview of the research, including an introduction, problem statement, research question and objectives of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter gives an overview of the relevant literature on reading, teaching reading and reading policies, their interpretation, implementation and management.

Chapter 3: Design and methodology

This chapter focuses on the design and methodology, including the population, site selection and sampling.

Chapter 4: Empirical findings

This chapter offers a detailed description of the analysis process and presents the findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter discusses and interprets the findings and compares the findings with the existed literature.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter summarizes the research findings, draws conclusions, provides recommendations and identifies areas for additional research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the theoretical and empirical literature underpinning the research project. The literature relevant to the interpretation, management and implementation of education policies was reviewed. The chapter starts by defining the concept “theory” as a key element in this chapter, and then moves to define other key concepts before explaining the theoretical framework of the study and providing an overview of studies conducted in the field. It concludes with a summary of the key issues and highlights the gaps emerging from the literature.

According to Tennis and Sulton (2008), theory is a set of concepts used to explain a phenomenon. Ndou (2015) states that theory is a system of assumptions used to develop an understanding for the phenomenon. Newby (2010:211) notes that a literature study is where the researcher connects the research intentions and outcomes to what other researchers have done in their field. Creswell (2008:116) explains that a literature review is a summary of past and current articles, books and other relevant documents on a topic. The main purpose of the literature review is to establish a relationship between the existing research studies. Neuman (2011:123) states that the review of literature is very important because it guides the researcher to identify what is already known about the topic to avoid duplication. Gora (2014:26) affirms that a literature review deals with “the study of literature related to one’s topic of research.” This means that the literature review helps the researcher to gain an understanding of existing research, to identify the gaps and to refine the focus of the new topic of research.

2.2 Defining concepts

2.2.1 Policy

There is no single correct definition for policy as different authors view policies differently and define them differently. According to Ndou (2015:29), “the term policy is central to the operation and activities of both private organizations and public institutions.” A private policy is made by an individual or private institution, while public policy is made by the government or an institution (Ozor, 2004). Rundell, Fox and Hoey (2002:109) define policy as the action or set of plans that is adopted or agreed on by the government, business and individuals, while Kani (2000:10) defines school policy as “an official action taken by the school for the purpose of encouraging or requiring consistency and regularity.” It is clear from the definitions that policy involves action or plans of action to be taken by government or by institutions on behalf of the government. In this study, policy is used to refer to legislation and generic education policies formulated at national, provincial and school levels that have to be implemented to meet the goals and objectives of the education system in South Africa. Bell and Stevenson (2006:i) state that education policy is always high on the agenda of governments across the world, as the experience of each learner is shaped by the policy environment.

2.2.2 Curriculum

Mullis and Martin (2015:4) define curriculum as the way in which educational opportunities are provided to learners, and the factors that influence how learners use these opportunities. Learners are expected to learn according to the curriculum. The curriculum determines how the educational system should be organized to facilitate this learning; what should be taught in classrooms; the characteristics of those teaching it and how it should be taught; and, finally, what it is that learners have learned and what they think about learning these subjects (Mullis & Martin, 2015:4).

According to Heenop (2007), a broad description for a curriculum is that it covers both the content and the process of what is happening in the school. The curriculum can also be understood as the content that a learner should learn to gain a better understanding. Furthermore, the aim of the curriculum is to adapt to the different needs and development stages of each individual learner. Moodley (2013:14) defines curriculum in the field of study as a plan for action for learners' experiences at school and as a course or a race to be run. The explanation is that a learner needs proper knowledge to run the race of life and to be successful. Moodley (2013:15) notes that a curriculum is a formal document that educators must use to give learners knowledge, in other words it determines what should be taking place in the classroom.

In this study, curriculum is defined and used according to Cross and Conn-Powers' (2014:631) definition that a curriculum is the big plan that connects all the content areas together in an integrated structure. The curriculum places all information into a sequence so that educators know when to introduce what to teach the learners. The curriculum also suggests different methods, activities for teaching reading, manipulatives as well as learning and teaching support material (LTSM) to support the learners' learning. Haris and Ghazali (2016:683) note that to achieve success, the curriculum must be implemented properly to ensure that learners understand, master a lesson, and change in behaviour. Proper implementation also improves the effectiveness and quality of education and promotes learners. In addition, Root (2013:1) explains in detail that a curriculum includes things such as the educators' lesson planning, discipline and standards, content knowledge and resources that are suitable for educators to use in their classroom. A curriculum presupposes an understanding of the needs, interests, backgrounds and the priorities of the educator, learners and the context of the classroom.

2.2.3 Reading and teaching reading

A simple view of reading, according to Moats and Hennessey (2005:11), is to understand that reading is a big concept, but also a very easy concept that includes a product of two

intellectual domains: printed word recognition (decoding) and higher-level thinking processes (language comprehension). Moats and Hennessy (2005) make this clear by using a figure (*Figure 1.1*) called *The “Simple view” of reading: two domains and five essential components*. If language comprehension or word recognition is undermined or reduced to less important than the other one, the overall reading development will be damaged (Moats & Hennessy, 2005:11).

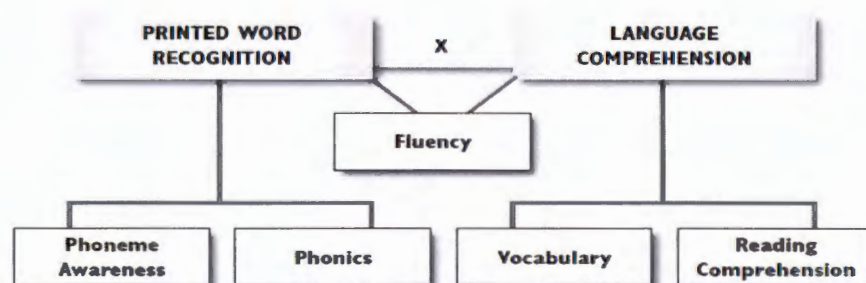


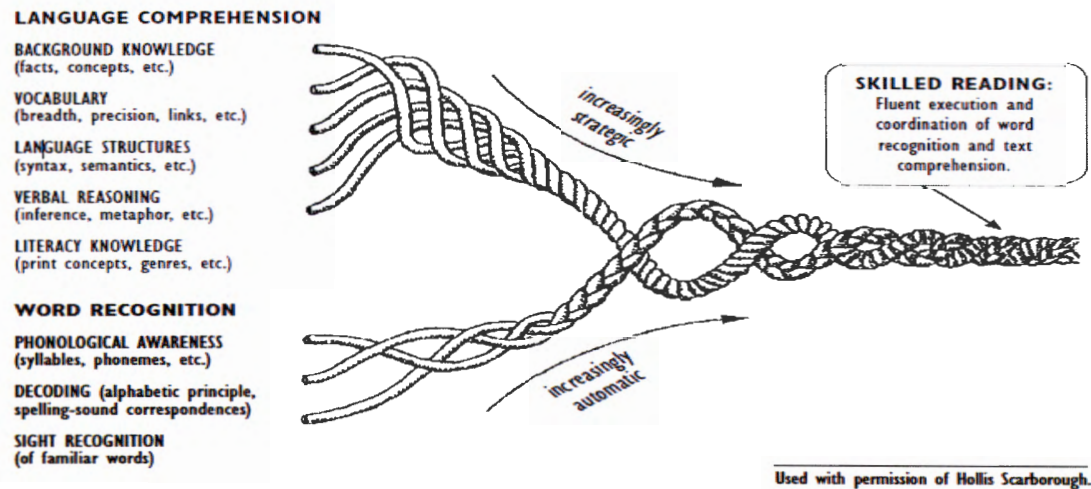
Figure 1.1 The “Simple view” of reading: two domains and five essential components

In addition, the National Reading Panel (2000) identified the five principal components of reading instruction. These are phoneme awareness, phonics, reading fluency and text comprehension. According to the Minnesota Department of Education, **phonemic awareness** refers to the manipulation of phonemes in spoken words. Wessels (2011:3) defines phonemic awareness as the “understanding that the sounds of spoken language work to make words.” Teaching learners phonemic awareness provides the foundation for reading and spelling. Phonemic awareness is also an auditory skill and educators must teach it explicitly for 10 to 15 minutes a day (Minnesota Department of Education, 2011:7). **Phonics** is described as an instructional approach that focuses on letter–sound relationships and that guides pronunciation. Phonics teaching makes it clear that there is a “systematic and predictable” connection between written letters and spoken words (Minnesota Department of Education, 2011:8). **Vocabulary** assists learners to identify words and understand them, and to know how to use these words to communicate efficiently. According to the Minnesota Department of Education (2011:10), **fluency** is a

learner's ability to read a certain text with speed, accuracy and proper voicing. The National Reading Panel (2000) suggests that reading fluently enhances learners' ability to identify new words. Fluent reading entails increases in reading speed, accuracy, expression or voicing, and reading with understanding (Minnesota Department of Education, 2011). The Minnesota Department of Education (2011:12) indicates that reading **comprehension** is an active process where learners have to use thinking where meaning is created through interaction between the text and the reader. A useful definition for educators is that comprehension is a process where readers build meaning by interacting with different kinds of text based on what the learner already knows, previous experience, information in the text and the attitude the reader has towards the text. Comprehension takes place when there is a connection between the reader and the text (Minnesota Department of Education, 2011:12).

Another helpful description of comprehension is Scarborough's (2001) model of the development of fluent reading with comprehension (*Figure 1.2*). This figure uses the image of a rope. The two strands of the rope, representing the two domains of reading, each divert into several ends that indicate the different skills within each of the two domains. This description depicts how fluent reading relies on a number of subskills within the two domains, namely word recognition and language comprehension. As reading develops, these subskills become more dependent and rely on each other, but the contribution of each end relies on the capability of the reader (Moats & Hennessy, 2005:12).

Figure 1.2 Scarborough's Rope Model (2001)



(Scarborough, H. 2001).

The Scarborough's rope model has been used and found helpful as a metaphor to understand reading and literacy development in many studies like Moats and Hennessey (2005:12), Williams (2012) and Fox (2008). It is not used in this study as this study is more concerned with policies that inform the teaching of reading, rather than the development of reading itself.

2.2.4 Implementation

Swanepoel, Erasmus and Schenk (2008:144) define implementation as the "execution of strategy that entails creating the necessary architectural configuration, including structures, systems, processes and policies." According to Fox (2007:27), implementation refers to the techniques, tools and strategies that are being used to improve quality in different ways. Implementation is to apply or execute a plan, idea, design and standard from a policy. Brynard (2005:9) submits that the most common meaning for implementation is leaders and managers in public schools making use of and putting policies into practice, including the rules and procedures stated in the legislation.

Ekpiken and Francis (2015:40) state that education policy implementation is the process of carrying out education objective or plans of action. It is when the policy formulation is tested to see how it works in reality. Ekpiken and Francis (2015:4) also claim that it is at the policy implementation stage that the policy becomes workable through the passing of legislation.

2.2.5 Management

Bush (2007:292) defines management as maintaining policies efficiently and effectively under certain arrangements. While management works hand-in-hand with leadership skills, the overall functions is toward maintenance rather than change. Armstrong (2006:495) defines management as a systematic process of performance improvement by developing the performances of the individual person and the teams. According to Van der Waladt (2004:390), management is all the processes and systems designed to manage and develop the performance at different levels. According to Monroe (2011:1), "Management is the theory and practice of the organization and administration of existing educational establishments and systems." Management implies the orderly way of thinking; it is a method of how to operate.

Khuzwayo (2007:8) mentions that management ensures that resources are used optimally; it determines the direction and adaptability of an organization in any changing environment and relates the aims and impact on society. Referring to the education context, Bush and Heystek (2003:45) affirm that management is a set of activities toward the efficient and effective use of the resources to achieve certain goals. Ngwenya (2006:10) argues that the term education managers refer to people who are officially appointed by the department to manage schools according to the procedures. These managers have authority and are responsible for management, planning, directing, controlling and coordinating the activities of the educators and other stakeholders in that institution. In the school context, these managers are referred to as the principal, school head or administrator.

According to Kimani (2010:16-17), the term management means that a person manages and plans, coordinate and controls. It is a set of activities directed by resources and one or more goals. Furthermore, management is a problem-solving process to achieve certain goals and objectives by using resources in the environment. It also involves planning, controlling, coordinating and motivating. Kimani (2010:19) claims that management is a process of designing; developing and organizing objectives and resources to achieve a certain goal.

It is evident from the above definitions that authors define management in similar ways. In this study therefore, management of policy refers to the process of maintaining the policies within the school. For this to happen, subject advisors, HoDs and principals must have proper knowledge, skills, methods and an understanding of how to manage the implementation of policies. Proper school management is a key factor for success in schools. Without proper management, there is no guidance and support for educators and that means the school would run on its own, which can lead to chaos in the classrooms.

2.2.6 Interpretation

Colebatch (2014:350) is of the opinion that the way people understand a certain problem depends on how they are drawn to the different interpretation that are open to them. In other words, there are different modes of interpretation for understanding a problem. Colebatch (2014:355) furthermore posits that interpretation is not just a cognitive process, but rather interaction with other people, “making sense together” and relating this to the policy practices. In this sense, interpretation does not only refer to how policy meaning is made, but it also involves asking questions about actions and processes put in place to communicate the meaning of policy.

The meaning-making process of policy talks directly to sense-making theory which was deemed a logical choice as an underpinning theoretical framework in this study. Sense-making theory is explained in detail in the following section.

2.3 Theoretical framework: Sense-making theory

The study draws from sense-making theory to explain the experiences of interpretation, implementation and management of reading policies. Maitlis and Christianson (2014:58) describe “sense making” as a process where individuals work to understand unexpected, unexplained or confusing events. When an individual experiences a problem or uncertainty, they try to clarify the problem by extracting and interpreting leads from their immediate environment to make sense of what is happening. Root (2013:2) holds that sense making is a process of integrating knowledge, practice and understanding. It includes consideration of policies, curriculum standards, assessment, and educators’ vision for their curriculum work. Maitlis and Christianson (2014:89) explain that there are three prominent bodies of the sense-making theory: organizational sense making to strategic change; organizational learning and innovation and creativity, and sense making to interpret policy messages within the context of education (Coburn, 2001). Sense making has thus been linked to many other outcomes, but these three prominent bodies are intriguing because they facilitate a process that requires the disruption of order. This approach focuses on the making and unmaking of sense of the phenomenon and seems very appropriate for this study. Thus, sense making is found relevant and important in framing this study as it explains how educators interpret and implement reading policies.

McCauley-Smith *et al.* (2015:316) describe the process of sense making as the way in which people think about certain things and the meanings it carries. Sense making is described as a retrospective process that reduces vagueness and addresses the problem. Further, McCauley *et al.* (2015) explain that to make sense of vagueness, we have to go through a continuous process of improvement. Seven characteristics identified

in the sense-making framework enable us to do this. These are: identity; retrospect; enactment; social cues; ongoing cues; extracted cues and plausibility.

Identity entails characteristics of identity construction and refers to “how our identity is continually shaped by social interaction and experiences” (McCauley-Smith *et al.*, 2015:318). When different issues of identity are involved, like when people have to face unnerving differences, the experience asks the questions of who we are, what we are doing, what matters the most and why it matters. This is connected with a sense-making recipe of “how can I know who we are becoming until I see what they say and do with our actions?” (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005:416).

Retrospect indicates that sense making is a relative process where similarities and differences are compared and previous events and behaviours are used to provide meaning and to make sense of new or current situations (Mills, Thurlow & Mills, 2010). McCauley-Smith *et al.* (2015:38) did research among student-leaders and they found that some of the student-leaders realized the changes in their leadership style when they looked at their earlier leadership behaviours (i.e. look at the past to make sense of the present). Students-leaders stated that after the leadership programme they experienced calmness and objectivity, where in the past they felt anxious and stressed.

Enactment is to make sense of experiences in the immediate environment around you at a given time (McCauley-Smith *et al.*, 2015:320). Sense making can be created by the environment, e.g. the student-leaders noted the importance of having time with colleagues to build a sense of community. Enactment has a “combination of openness and confidence” that supports sense making (McCauley-Smith *et al.*, 2005:320).

Social cues imply that sense making is a social activity that is guided by different situations and circumstances. Transformation and change provide a challenging setting (McCauley-Smith *et al.*, 2015:320). In the research of McCauley-Smith *et al.* (2015:321), student-leaders named a few examples of social cues: feeling of belonging; support

networks where problem sharing and solving could take place; the ability to spend time together; a better understanding of the other person; interaction among members; and the importance of bonding.

Ongoing cues are related to sense making in that sense making is an ongoing process where we make sense of what is happening around us daily (McCauley-Smith *et al.*, 2015:321). The study indicated that the student-leaders are more open to criticism from others, to share their opinions, and to boost their self-esteem and confidence. They also had the ability to reflect on problems and to make proper decisions.

Extracted cues are where one focuses on the elements that make sense of a situation or event" (McCauley-Smith *et al.*, 2015:322). The research indicates that theoretical cues such as style, understanding and knowledge of leadership, awareness of theoretical underpinning were mentioned by the student-leaders. The theory helps them to shape their own behaviour, actions and how they influence other members in their team.

Plausibility and sense making is to write an emerging story, such as for example a new leadership structure (McCauley-Smith *et al.*, 2015:322). This example would involve a process of deconstructing and reconstructing leadership stories within the peer sense-making sessions of the student-leaders. The respondents in the research were able to work together to get a better understanding and knowledge of each other.

The framework of sense-making deals with how individuals and organizations make sense of their immediate environment so that they can interpret and contextualize. Dörnyei (2012:466) asserts that studies in sense making focus on what policy means, not only from knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes, but from the context and the learning situation and interaction that happens in that context. Sense-making processes also develop over time, just like a policy and its understanding develops over time and place. Jacobs, Knoppers and Webb (2013:4) note that sense making involves individuals making sense of their situation by using knowledge and experiences and through interactions with others. It can

be a social activity, it is never an individual matter, but is rather shaped by what other people say and do. Each individual makes sense by integrating previous knowledge and experiences related to their context of practice or by creating a new understanding of these experiences.

Root (2013:8) explains that each day educators must choose what resources to use, what knowledge to add, and how to engage the learners in the context. Thus, educators must make sense of the curriculum and decide what content to teach and the purpose of that content. They must decide what to teach and how to determine what perspectives the learners must learn and why. Although it appears simplistic, the whole process of sense making is complex. Whether a small or a large decision must be made, it must be quick and thoughtful each day. Root (2013:35) furthermore observes that not much research has been done on sense making about policies and how educators reflect in their day-to-day work in the classroom environment, either as individuals or collaboratively.

Marz and Kelchtermans (2013:15) contend that sense-making theory implies the interpretation process is important during policy implementation. Nordholm (2015:534) explains that sense making is made up of events that disrupt ongoing work in an organization. According to Nordholm, people within organizations work smoothly most of the time, but if something disturbs their daily pattern, they tend to go over to a conscious process to handle the situation to the best of their knowledge. Coburn (2001:145) avers that educators shape policy, rather than policy having an impact on the educators' practice. Educators interpret, adapt and shape the policy as they use it in their teaching. Coburn (2001:146) notes that educators play a very important role in the sense-making process as they mould the policy in their professional teaching. The process contributes to the educators' understanding and knowledge of the relationship between the policy and classroom teaching. Coburn (2001:147) comments that sense making is not only about individual affairs, it includes social affairs. It is social in two ways: first, it is collective in the manner that it is situated in social interaction and negotiation. Educators make sense of "messages in the environment in conversation and interaction with their

colleagues, constructing shared understanding, organization, beliefs and routines along the way.” Second, sense making is social in the sense that it is “deeply situated in educators’ embedded contexts. Norms and routines of organizational subunits such as departments or workgroups, values and traditions, broader professional culture and provide a lens through which educators make sense of new messages, shaping the responses and structuring priorities” (Coburn, 2001:147).

Given the above, sense-making theory is appropriate and helpful to explore how educators interpret reading instructions as classroom practices and how they implement this. Sense-making is also suitable for examining how these processes are managed to shape the educators’ teaching practices and improve learners’ experiences.

2.4 Policy implementation

According to Ndou (2015:71), implementation literally means to carry out, to accomplish, to produce or to complete a given task according to certain policies. Dorner (2012:461) indicates that implementing policies relies on the design, the implementers and the capacity of the implementers, the organization where the implementation takes place and the individuals’ own discretion. Policy implementation may therefore be seen as a process of interaction between setting goals and achieving those goals (Ndou 2015:71).

There are different approaches to policy implementation. The main categories are “top-down” versus “bottom-up” approaches, which focus on different aspects of the implementation process (Sabatier, 2005; Chunna-Brayda, 2012:27). According to Chunna-Brayda (2012), the top-down model sees policy designers as the important role players, while the bottom-up accepts policy as it is delivered at the local or ground level. Cerna (2013:18) identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the top-down and bottom-up approaches: On the one hand, a significant “strength of the top-down approach is that it seeks to develop generalizable policy advice and come up with consistent recognisable patterns in behaviour across different policy areas.” On the other hand, the top-down

approach is criticized for “taking statutory language as a beginning point” and ignoring previous actions. In considering the strengths and weaknesses of the bottom-up approach, Cerna (2013:18) alleges that the “bottom-up approach focuses on central actors who devise and implement government programmes, contextual factors within the implementing environment are important.” The goals, strategies and activities of the actors should be clear in order to comprehend implementation. A considerable benefit of the bottom-up approach is that it describes factors that have an influence on reaching the goals, as well as factors that are problematic. However, the bottom-up approach is criticized because of its tendency to over-determine the level of local independence.

Teaching reading also entails different approaches in the classroom. According to Abraham (2001:6), the bottom-up approach means that educators focus on decoding skills and not on assisting the emergent readers to identify what they as readers must bring to the text. The top-down model of reading does just the opposite. The educator focuses on what the reader brings to the process, the reader must search the text for information and must associate the information with their prior knowledge to assist them to make sense of what is written in the text (Abraham, 2001:6). Morrow and Gambrell's (2011:8) research indicates that there is consensus that early reading experiences should contain a balance of a variety of activities and experiences. Nugent *et al.*, (2016:9) defines a balanced reading approach as a research-based, assessment-based, comprehensive and integrated. A balanced approach allows the educators and specialists to reply to the assessed needs of the learners as these needs link with the development levels of decoding, vocabulary, reading comprehension and motivation. The purpose is learning to read with meaning, to understand, and for fun and enjoyment. According to the CAPS document, teaching and learning must make use of an integrated approach (balanced approach). All the subjects in the Foundation Phase are integrated. Language is used across the curriculum and includes oral work, writing and then finally reading. Listening and speaking skills are developed in mathematics and life skills.

Siraj-Blatchford *et al.* (2005) explain that overall policy implementation refers to the effective and sustainable strategies that are required to ensure that adequate resourcing; training and guidance are available before national roll-out commences. They argue that without these factors in place, the quality of children's learning may be compromised. Siraj-Blatchford *et al.* (2005) further note that the government should establish and develop effective communication systems to improve the implementation process. According to Winkler (2005:55), educators are aware of the general stages of development in learners. Educators have to accept all learners as they develop at their own pace. Educators and parents must support and encourage this development. A great number of educators realize that there are learners in their classrooms who are well developed in some learning areas, but who need more attention in others.

Ndou (2015:72) attests that educators may implement the policies as they are expected to, but sometimes there may be faulty implementations. Faulty implementation occurs when the objectives of each causal link are not met. This usually happens due to a lack of funds to carry out the tasks; a lack of will; a lack of capacity to carry out what is stated in the policy statement or if the policy is inappropriate. In addition, the causal chain is too long and this sometimes leads to wrongful or faulty implementation of policies (Ndou, 2015:72).

According to Fredriksen (2007:15), the successful implementation of education policies depends on leadership, proper planning, communication and building partnerships with colleagues. Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002:389) declare numerous explanations for how policy is implemented focus on problems like the design of the policy, the governance system and organizational arrangements, and how the people implement the policy. Furthermore, Spillane *et al.* (2002) insist that some reasons for implementation failure include the inability of the principal to formulate the policy outcomes and the supervision of the implementation of the goals.

Dorner (2012:463) writes that “recent work in policy implementation argues that studies must go beyond an examination of outcomes, which hides how the process is uneven and significantly affected by context.” Furthermore, research must analyse what works for who, where, when and why. Policy implementation takes place in schools and districts every day. Educators work with policies in many different forms and must decide how to implement the ideas in a proper manner. Different policies rarely indicate what must happen in the schools and classrooms, but the policies do give guidelines for the daily work of the educators (Rigby, Woulfin & Marz, 2016:295).

In this study, policy implementation implies the daily job of educators to make sense of policies and to create new ideas, to decide on the right things to do, being accountable for their own actions and taking into consideration the specific needs of the learners. Colebatch (2014:349) explains it very simply as people “make[ing] sense” of the circumstance where they are working. They do this with knowledge that is appropriate for the current situation.

2.5 Policy interpretation

Chase (2016:959) states that policy interpretation focuses on the work of educators and that policy has an influence on educators’ practice, yet educators are more likely to shape policies. According to Chase (2016:296), when the power of interpretation is taken into consideration, there are two factors that must be included: formative contexts and organizational rules. Formative contexts are “structures that limit what can be imagined and done within the society” and allow for a debate in which the individual actions influence interpretation. However, organizational rules are also an important aspect since the “basic characteristic of a rule is to control, constrain and define actions.”

Colebatch (2014:349) argues that interpretation is a very important element in analysing and accomplishing of governance and in the interpretation of policies, but warns that it must not be taken lightly as a methodology option for consenting adults, but rather as an

element of political analysis. How people understand policies depends on how they understand the different interpretations, professional training, institutional positions, different values, experiences and how they “make sense” of the policies (Colebatch, 2014:350). In addition, interpretation is not a just a tool that people use to make sense of practices and policies, but an integral part of the policy process. One factor greatly affects an individual’s interpretation, is perceptions of policy coerciveness (Siddiki, 2014:284).

Herr (2015:3–4) professes that local and state policies give guidelines to school administrators with “implementation space” and the ability to interpret and understand the policies so that it will work to their advantage. Herr (2015:5) expands by saying that “policies are open to interpretation” when they are very vague, have different agendas, are used with insufficient resources, contain different opinions and are influenced by stakeholders and professional interests and values. Once educators implement policies relevant to teaching reading, these policies have to be managed. In South Africa, these policies are managed by the subject advisors, principals and HoDs.

2.6 Policy management

Faleni (2005: iii) surmises that the most important matter is the capacity of a school and the school’s response to the circumstances that have an impact on the curriculum. Faleni’s research (2005) indicates that school management often lacked strategies to manage the curriculum. Schools have to develop different strategies to improve policy management. In addition, Faleni (2005:12) proposes that policy management includes a curriculum planning process just like any other planning. This is regarded as one of the key tasks in the management role.

Bush (2007:391) points out that there is increased recognition that schools need effective leaders and managers to provide the best possible education for the learners. Schools need trained and committed educators, but they also need the leadership of highly effective principals and the support of senior and middle managers. Bush (2007:391–392)

notes that the process of deciding on the aims of the school is at the heart of education management. In most schools, the aims are decided by the principal together with the senior management team (SMT) and the school governing body (SGB), while policy implementation is carried out by educators.

Mbanjwa (2014:12) comments that a school's success depends on how the school deals with all education stakeholders, including subject advisors. Success in this respect will lead to effective management and leadership. Mbanjwa (2014:12) adds that subject advisors have a very important role to support and assist schools, the principal, the HoD and educators by conducting workshops on the curriculum and to develop them as far as possible. Baruth (2013:37) highlights that a manager is the person who plans, organizes, leads, control and delegates the interpretation and implementation of teaching reading and learning at a school.

Managers are there to assist educators to reaches the school's goals, to understand the curriculum, to strengthen teaching reading and learning and to improve (Harris, 2004:13). Ramalepe (2010:37) remarks that managers must give guidance to educators on different aspects like assessment, validity, reliability, examinations, marking of tasks, marking of exam papers, internal and external examination, using different teaching methods, and recording and reporting learners' performances. Kruger and Steinman (2003:67) comment that effective education is only possible through proper leadership and management and any challenge that hampers the implementation and interpretation of the curriculum remains the responsibility of the managers.

DeMatthews (2014:195) state that educators are involved in management through engaging and thinking about how the policies can be improved and adjusting policies to their current situation. Manea (2015:311) points out that innovation in management is to have managerial skills, to take responsibility for the implementation, which determines performance and progress. Furthermore, Manea's (2015:315) results indicate that the curriculum and policies should focus more on the learners' needs and that managers

should participate to ensure the competence of educators in the schools. In this study, policy management refers to the different roles of managers, such as forecasting and planning, organizing, interpreting and managing, controlling and coordinating all policies.

2.7 The roles of education managers and other stakeholders

2.7.1 Subject Advisors

Mbanjwa (2014:1) submits that district offices have the responsibility of developing and arranging the curriculum to identify the needs of the educators. In other words, the subject advisors should complement, assist and strengthen educators. Mbanjwa (2014:2) adds that subject advisors have specific roles and should give supportive leadership and assist with the implementation of policies and the curriculum to schools. Teaching reading and learning must be at the top of the subject advisors' list because they are responsible for the curriculum development in schools (Mbanjwa, 2014:12). Subject advisors must share the vision of the school, give holistic support, have the required materials to assist educators to perform their tasks better and with ease, and monitor the development of the learners. Mason (2004:21) affirms that managers must provide curriculum directions to the school, inspire and motivate, mediate the education policies, mentor and support, and finally monitor the process of curriculum implementation and interpretation.

2.7.2 Principals and HoDs

According to Robbins *et al.*, (2009) and Williams (2011), managers have five functions to ensure that the interpretation and implementation of policies take place successfully: planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and commanding. According to Dewey and Cummins (2013:15), effective principals have to make good use of the resources at hand, in other words they must be excellent managers. In addition, the principal must carry out important leadership responsibilities: planning, implementing, managing, supporting, advocating, communicating and monitoring policies. Ngwenya (2006:10) argues that the relevant education managers, which forms the school management team (SMT), includes

the principal, head of department and education specialists. The principal is in charge of the SMT and is the most important education manager at school level. According to Baruth (2013:39), a school manager is an educator that is appointed or acting as head of a school. A school manager is a person who manages, plans, organizes, leads, controls and delegates the teaching and learning in the school.

All relevant stakeholders are vital for the successful implementation of policies. According to Ndou (2015:53), a stakeholder of any school is a person who is involved at the school and with learners' welfare and success. This includes the administrators, educators, staff, learners, parents, community members, school board members, city councillors and state representatives. Stakeholders is therefore a "group or an individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization objectives, constituencies in the organization's external environment that are affected by the organization's decisions and actions" (Ndou, 2015:35). Educators are therefore important stakeholders, and in Ndou's (2015:54) view, an educator provides knowledge and skills to the learners and serves as a facilitator. Therefore, educators must understand the reason why learners are at school, what their objectives are and how the policies must work. This is central to the role of an educator as a stakeholder in education.

2.8 Factors that influence the management, implementation and interpretation of policies

According to Phajane's (2012) research, educators indicated that they experienced frustrations in implementing policy due to lack of clear guidelines. These educators recommended more workshops on approaches to interpret the curriculum correctly. The educators said that, "we did not choose this curriculum (CAPS), we only receive a word from the top, that is on national level and is served on a tray that must be implemented." According to Dunn (2010:1), a key aim of the new curriculum was to provide more specific guidance for educators so that they can implement it better. Educators must have clear guidelines to interpret and implement the CAPS document, and this is not provided in the

policy. It is essential to provide teachers with guidance on how to work with the new documents. The key concepts, depth, scope and range should be specified in each of the documents and more guidance should be provided on how to interpret and implement it. Dunn (2010:6) is of the opinion that extensive workshops must be held regularly to make sure that educators understand the curriculum and what is expected of them when they engage with the learners in front of them. Contact time is very important and the educators must focus on teaching reading and best practices with regards to teach reading.

Dunn (2010:6) has the view that the time allocation of six hours a week for the home language is insufficient. Two hours a day will ensure that all the different areas in home language are covered. Twenty minutes a day for group guided reading for two groups is not realistic. Each group must get at least 20 minutes for phonics, comprehension and discussion of the book/material. More time spent on group guided reading will ensure progress in reading (Dunn, 2010:6). Theron (2006:157–158) explains that the layout, size, and content of the classroom have an influence on teaching reading according to the policies and on the needs of the learners. The layout of the classroom, proper furniture also learning and teaching support materials are all part of the classroom environment. Wessels (2011:78) suggests that all classrooms must have different kinds of books that learners can use freely. This will help to create a rich literature environment. Zama (2014:4) contents that there is a huge problem with reading because the learner environment that the learners are exposed is inadequate. It should include for instance stories and posters. A lack of environmental support in the classroom leads to different kinds of problems. Zama (2014:2) mentions that educators should employ different methods and approaches to assist learners with their home language and the educator should then build from there to assist them with English First Additional Language (EFAL) by making it language friendly. Mzimela (2016) claims that learners struggle to read and write in English very much if they cannot even do it in their own language.

The Wits Education Policy Unit (2005:17) comments that educators have poor knowledge, do not understand the content (subject), and make mistakes with concepts in

their lesson plans. Schools must take curriculum interpretation, implementation and planning very seriously because the curriculum gives guidelines about what must be taught in class and what must be covered on a term-by-term basis. Wessels (2011) points out that planning includes implementation of the policy, the learning outcome and activities that are aligned with the outcomes and the learning and teaching support material (LTSM). The time allocation and attention span of the learners must be taken into consideration when activities are planned. According to Wessels (2011), educators neglect their planning.

According to Dunn (2010:6), it is important that educators receive the resources, skills and tools to implement the CAPS document. Not all educators know what is expected of them. A number of terms in the CAPS document need unpacking and clarification, e.g. modals, orthography, disjunctive, conjunctives, register, spelling rules. A backup teacher's guide or resource manual that is user friendly and simple could be key when implementing the curriculum. Ekpiken and Francis (2015:37) observe that most of the problems and crises within education are mainly issues related to the policy itself and the implementation of the programmes. Opinions in academic circles on whether the problem in education is due to the inappropriateness of the policy framework, due to the quality of the administration or due to the policy implementation, differ. This can be due to the application of poor administrative strategies (Ekpiken & Francis, 2015:37). According to Spaul (2013:6), the gaps between what the learners should know and what the learner knows grow over time. This means that as time goes by, learners fall further behind and the curriculum leads to a situation where remediation is almost not possible since the learners' gaps have been left unaddressed for too long.

Moodley's (2013:16) personal observation is that there are problems in the following areas: educator training and development; educator consultation and participation; additional educator workload and lack of resources. The mentioned factors lead to stress, frustration and disempowerment, which have a negative impact on the implementation of policies and documents in the classroom. According to Mchunu (2010:24), schools still

suffer because of poor management and poor learner academic performance because the managers do not handle the policy change properly.

Most of the studies conducted on reading in South Africa are revealing poor reading skills and the denunciation is directed at the teachers. Zama (2014:1) explored the teaching of reading in South African schools and realized that educators lack teaching skills and approaches to assist learners to read. Nehal (2013), who also conducted a study on reading, reveals that most of the educators in that study were aware of the methods in the CAPS document, but did not put them into practice.

In other words, for effective policy implementation, policy guidelines should be used to make decisions about learner needs; the needs of groups of learners; the quality and level of implementation; intervention programmes; and about teacher support and professional development needs. Education reading policies are in place to assist educators to teach reading in a comprehensive manner. However, few studies deal directly with this issue as it manifests in the Foundation Phase. Educators must know and be able to apply a variety of teaching techniques when they teach reading. Policy must be implemented at national, provincial and school levels to make sure that the goals and objectives that are stated in these policies are met. Educational managers play an important role in management, planning, directing, controlling and coordinating policies (Ngwenya 2006:10). Educators know about the different methods mentioned in the policies, but have no idea how to use it in their teaching (Nehal, 2013). In addition, poor school management leads to poor learner performance (Mchunu, 2010:24).

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the available literature on concepts central to this study. As a starting point, the chapter defined relevant concepts and discussed the use of sense-making theory as the theoretical framework, which is used in this study to understand the process of policy interpretation, implementation and management (Marz & Kelchtermans,

2013:15). The chapter continued with an overview of policy implementation; policy interpretation; policy management; the roles of different educational managers/stakeholders; and factors that influence the management, implementation and interpretation of policies. The literature on the interpretation, implementation and management of policies in schools in general is rich, but there is a paucity of research on the policies and documents that focus specifically on reading in the Foundation Phase.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As described in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study is to determine how educators interpret, implement and manage reading policies in the Foundation Phase. In an effort to respond to the research question and to reach the aim of this study, this chapter provides a clear description of the research approach and strategies. The discussion starts with the research design, methodology, and procedures. This research design and methodology are described according to the following topics: research design, methodology (including the site; participant selection, data collection strategies), data analysis, trustworthiness, role of the researcher, ethical considerations and contribution of the research.

3.2 Research paradigm

Adam (2014) contends that we largely create the world we later discover through our assumptions and choice of method. This study takes interpretivism as a point of departure. Maree (2009) states that interpretivism is about a perspective on a specific situation. It is a way to analyse a situation, to gain insight into certain people or a group of people and to attach meaning to the situation. In this case, a deeper meaning can be explored, the situation can be better understood and thereafter recommendations can be made. Wessels (2011:101) posits that interpretivism is a way to gain knowledge to enrich our comprehension of the whole. Dudovskiy (2016) adds to this by saying that interpretivism means that the researcher interprets each element of the research and integrates human interest in a study. Interpretivism supposes access to the reality through language, consciousness, shared meaning and different instruments. According to the interpretivist approach, it is important that the researcher acts as the social actor to see and appreciate the differences between people.

3.3 Research design

Creswell (2014) explains that the research design describes the nature of the research and the path that the researcher intends to follow to complete the study. This qualitative study made use of a multiple case study design. According to Creswell (2014), a case study is a design where the researcher has an in-depth look at a process or individuals. Case studies are bound by time, activity and the need to collect detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures over a period of time. De Vos *et al.*, (2006:34) suggest that case study meets the purpose of understanding situations that are very complex. Creswell (2014) highlights that case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system. A case study can be described as the investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Creswell, 2014). The case study method “explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bonded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information.... and reports a case description and case themes” (Creswell, 2013:97). If a study has more than one single case study, it is often referred to as a multiple case study. The difference between a single case study and a multiple case study is that the researcher is studying multiple cases to understand the similarities and differences between the different cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The researcher made use of a multiple case study to gain broader understanding of the findings and to compare the case studies with each other to see the similarities and differences. The multiple case study allowed wider exploration of the research questions and enabled the development of a more convincing argument.

This is a suitable approach to investigate educators’ knowledge on how to interpret, implement and manage reading policies in the Foundation Phase. The multiple case study design is preferable because it gives a detailed picture of an individual and this may form a platform for new ideas and future research.

This study set out to understand how schools manage reading policies and how educators interpret, implement and manage reading policies in their daily teaching. As such, the goal of the study was to probe deeply into and analyse the phenomenon under study. This was done by observation and with the intent to provide a rich, thick description and holistic account of this phenomenon. The resulting full description creates a clear picture of what the participants experience in the working environment and how they give meaning to their experiences (Creswell, 2013:80).

3.4 Methodology

The methodological design is the logic with which a researcher collects data for the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and addresses the research questions (Adam, 2014). Research methodology encompasses the complete research process: the literature review, the research approach, design, procedures, data collection methods and data analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Therefore, the aim of the research methodology is to understand the processes and not the product of scientific inquiry. Heugh (2005:3) emphasizes that it is “concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants.” The goal of the research frames the way the researcher approaches the research and influences the research decisions taken. Creswell (2014) notes that the nature of the issue addressed influences the choice of approach. The chosen approach determines strategies for inquiry, methods for data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, try to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Adam, 2014). Adam (2014) notes that qualitative research intends to dig deeper into the significance that the subject of the research ascribes to the topic under research. This study utilized an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter and gave priority to what the data contribute to the research questions. Qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding aspects of social life. In addition, qualitative researcher

generates words rather than numbers as data (Adam, 2014). In qualitative research, the researcher may concentrate on the process of how and why a phenomenon prevails, rather than just to focus on the outcome of the phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:323). The strength of qualitative research is the ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. Qualitative research provides information about the human side of an issue, such as the contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals. An advantage of the qualitative approach is that the participants can be interviewed more than once, or questions can be elaborated on or another question can be asked to provide in-depth information and deeper understanding (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:106).

3.4.1 Site

The researcher identified three primary schools in one of the circuits in the North West province of South Africa. The selected schools are the only three schools in this circuit that uses English as their language of instruction. Each school has one class per grade. The schools are government schools and each school has more or less the same number of learners, about 300. Each class has between 45 and 60 learners. There are two subject advisors for the circuit and each school has a principal and HoD with one educator per classroom from Grade R to 3. The circuit was conveniently chosen for its proximity to the researcher since this could ensure access to the type of data needed for the study. According to Maree (2007), the research site must be convenient and suitable to answer the research question. The research site for this research was suitable because it provided the opportunity to select different educators from different schools as potential participants. The researcher deemed the three English primary schools as sufficient for in-depth information and as suitable for a qualitative case study design.

3.4.2 Participant selection

The research participants were chosen using purposive sampling, which was found to be appropriate for several reasons. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), purposive sampling is based on the awareness of the researcher, who in this case chose the participants purposively so that they either reflect the most essential characteristics of the population or are more familiar with the phenomenon. Jackson (2003:19) defines sampling as “decisions about where to conduct the research and whom to involve, an essential part of the research process,” and adds that sampling “usually involves people and settings as well as events and processes.” The logic of purposeful sampling is that a case study is in depth and this gives many insights about the topic (Mouton, 2003:135). The sample is purposeful because it allows access to the classrooms where reading policies are supposed to be implemented to allow the researcher to collect data. The researcher decided which people and research sites would provide the most relevant information.

Adam (2014) remarks that the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find participants who can and are willing to provide the information based on their knowledge or experience (Lewis & Sheppard, 2006). The participants in this study are all Foundation Phase educators from the three identified schools in a circuit in the North West province.

The following participant features applied in this study:

- One educator from each grade from Grade 1 to Grade 3 in the Foundation Phase in each school.
- The HoD of the Foundation Phase (one HoD per school).
- The principal of the school (one principal per school).
- Two subject advisors for home language in the Lichtenburg circuit.
- The entire Foundation Phase participants in this study, n=9 (educators), n=1 (HoDs), n=1 (principals), n=2 (subject advisors). In total (n=13).

3.4.3 Data collection strategies

The main purpose of data collection in research is to address the study question (Mouton, 2003:145). Although qualitative research is not based on fixed and rigid procedures, it provides the researcher with a set of strategies to organize the research and to collect, process and interpret the data (De Vos *et al.*, 2006:356). Ellenwood (2007:21) explains that data collection involves certain strategies for the study, like collecting data through observation, interviews and documentary data collections. Gall and Borg (2007:227) and Mouton (2003:133) both claim that data collection is a process of getting facts and information about the research problem to answer the research questions.

In this study, the data collection methods had to be in line with qualitative research. The researcher decided on document analysis, observations, field notes and interviews as data collection strategies. The methods are discussed below.

3.4.3.1 Document analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic (Bowen, 2009). Documents contain text and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention. Documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding and discover insights relevant to the research problem (Wessels, 2011). Researcher-generated documents are documents prepared by the researcher after the study has begun. The specific purpose for generating documents is to learn more about the situation, person or event being investigated.

Document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation (Adam, 2014). By triangulating data, the researcher attempts to provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility (Adam, 2014). Adam (2014) declares that the sources of data should be triangulated to ensure credibility. Therefore,

the researcher used triangulation to ensure the credibility of this qualitative research. The data received from the different sources – document analyses; observations, interviews and field notes – were used together to add credibility, objectivity and validity to the interpretation of the data.

Adam (2014) points out that documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem. Documents, therefore, provide background and context, additional questions to be asked, supplementary data, a means of tracking change and development, and verification of findings from other data sources. Moreover, documents may be the most effective means of gathering data when events can no longer be observed or when respondents have forgotten the details. In this study, the researcher analysed all Department of Basic Education (DBE) documents and policies, including the internal school reading policies and documents. The part of the educators' language file dedicated to reading was investigated to establish if the work done in the schools was according to prescribed policies. The researcher looked for a programme of assessment, work schedules, a reading Programme, formal tasks (pre- and post-moderation), a list of learning and teaching support material, a time table, daily/weekly preparations, minutes of meetings and interventions. The document analysis offered information about the educators' application of policies; about what kind of policies and documents they use with respect to reading; and about how the educators interpret and implement these policies and documents.

The following policy and documents were analysed: the CAPS document – home language, programme of assessment, work schedules and annual teaching plan (ATP) from the subject advisors and formal tasks.

3.4.3.2 Observations

The observations took place in a natural setting in the relevant classrooms. De Vos *et al.* (2006:334–356) warn that observation should take place in a natural setting to allow the observer to get a clear picture of what is happening. The researcher developed an observation schedule to observe the teaching of reading in the classroom. The time allocation was arranged so that observation could take place during the language periods on the timetable and the dates of site visits were scheduled according to the participants' convenience, the school's schedule, and the researcher's own time availability. According to Creswell (2014:193–194) an observation protocol is a plan for recording information while observing. This can be a single page with descriptive notes on the participants, setting and particular events or activities. It can also include the time, place and date of the field setting where the observation takes place (see Appendix A; Appendix B).

The researcher deliberately tried to stay detached to observe and analyse during class visits. Detailed, highly descriptive notes and recordings were made during the observations.

The observations took place in August 2016. The researcher visited each school for two days. During these visits, the Grade 1, 2 and 3 educators' teaching practices with regard to reading was observed to establish how these practices align with guidelines in the relevant policies and documents. The principals and HoDs were also interviewed during these school visits. Subject advisors were interviewed at different times that suited them.

The researcher observed the classroom during the language period when reading was incorporated. The observations included the classroom environment (posters on the wall, language in the class) and resources available (big books, reading books, flashcards and other appropriate learning and teaching support material). The researcher also observed whether the participant made use of different kinds of reading strategies and assessment strategies. These observations informed the researcher on whether the educator interpreted and implemented the reading policies and documents that guides the reading

in the Foundation Phase. The researcher observed and took detailed field notes during the related lessons, in particular the reading lessons.

3.4.3.3 Interviews

According to McKeown and Beck (2006:298), an interview is a dialogue lead by the interviewer with the specific aim of obtaining relevant information. They further state that the interview should focus on the content specified by the research objectives of the description, prediction or explanation. The interview, even if it is time-consuming, is one of the most important data collection tools as it gives in-depth information and provides for follow-up questions if the initial question allows (McKeown & Beck, 2006:299). Bourne (2003:19) notes that “interviews allow the interviewer to probe areas of interest as they arise during the interview.” It also helps the researcher to establish a confidential relationship, making it an appropriate method to obtain information from an interviewee.

According to Pressley (2006:11–27), the ability to interview effectively cannot be taken for granted, so the interviewer needs proper preparation and practice to develop skills and the ability to analyse and evaluate the data that has been collected (Pressley, 2006:28–30). Brand (2006:148) points out that an interview is based on talking and that data could be gathered through the direct oral interaction. It involves the person who asks the research questions and how the interviewer phrases them, and, on the other hand, the interviewee who answers the questions. In this case, the natural setting was the classrooms and the relevant offices, with the aim being to obtain first-hand information about the activities that take place in these environments.

Interviews are regarded as one of the most powerful ways to understand human behaviour. For this reason, interviewing was also used in this research (Koshy, 2005). Interviewing is necessary when the relevant behaviour cannot be observed, like how people interpret the world around them. Interviewing as a data gathering method was also included to (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:697–698):

- obtain additional information;
- clarify vague statements;
- permit exploration of topics; and to
- yield a deeply experiential account of educators' knowledge on how to interpret, manage and implement reading policies in the Foundation Phase.

Interviews were conducted with educators (HoDs, principals, Grade 1, 2 and 3 educators and subject advisors). According to Bush (2012:79), interviews can be used as the primary means of gathering information. In this case, the interviews took place individually and face-to-face. The interview is a direct way of getting the research participants' view on a particular issue. It also gives the researcher an opportunity to ask probing questions and to observe non-verbal cues, thus providing further insights into the participants' view on the issue being researched (Bush, 2012:79).

In this study, the interviews were conducted individually to enable engagement through prompts and gestures. The interviews were semi-structured and where the questions were predetermined, the interviewer allowed flexibility. Flexibility ensured that the participations could talk freely as the interviewer did not stick rigidly to the predetermined questions.

For this study, a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was chosen to create an opportunity to probe further to allow more clarifying, probing and crosschecking questions. The interviewer had the freedom to alter, rephrase and add questions according to the nature of responses from interviewees (Best & Kahn, 2003). The semi-structured interviews provided opportunities for the recording of idiosyncratic and more free-flow responses. Mouton (2003:140) states that in a semi-structured interview, issues and questions are prepared in advance. However, the wording of the questions is not pre-specified, but their sequence and actual wording are adapted to respondents in the interview itself. The interviewer, who is using the general interview guide approach, can probe and expand the subject's responses (Mouton, 2003:148). An interview guide was

used to guide the researcher and to probe on some areas of interest and an appropriate method to lead the interviews (see Appendix C; Appendix D; Appendix E; Appendix F).

Interview skills involve a high order combination of observation, empathic sensitivity and intellectual judgement of the interview situation and the person being interviewed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The initial task was to establish a friendly, secure and cooperative relationship with the interviewee by a word of thanks for being willing to partake in the research. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of their participation in the interview and the background of the research and related aims were explained to provide the interviewees with the relevant information about the research. The format and sequence of questioning were also explained before the actual interview. The pace and time during the interview were continuously monitored (Best & Kahn, 2003; Breen, 2006).

Interview procedure: The recording of the interview data had taken place by means of note-taking and audio recording as recommended by Huberman and Miles (2002) and De Vos *et al.* (2005). Furthermore, the researcher conducted the interviews privately in the appropriate classrooms or offices. Interviews with the educators took place after observation. The observations allowed the researcher to “read between the lines” and allowed for data that would otherwise have been lost. All educators elaborated in detail on each question, irrespective of whether it would expose limitations in their schools or heads of department. After the interviews, the researcher thanked each respondent personally for their contribution to the study and emphasized that every response was truly valued and confidential.

3.4.3.4 Field notes

The researcher did not only record what was seen and heard, but also reflected additional activities that occurred during class visits. The researcher made use of field notes to document observations and preliminary interpretations to follow up on during the interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

3.4.4 Data Analysis

The researcher made use of inductive analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Creswell (2014) describes inductive analysis as follows: “Qualitative researchers build their patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up, by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information. This inductive process illustrates working back and forth between the themes and database until the researcher has established a comprehensive set of themes. The data analysis may also involve collaborating with the participants interactively, so that the participants have a chance to shape the themes or abstractions that emerge from the process.” In the case of data collection through interviews, this meant that once the interviews had been completed, the data were analysed. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher utilized the information from the observations and field notes, documents and interview transcripts to gain a better understanding of the information. The researcher followed a systematic process to analyse data by recording data, transcribing data and coding data into themes and categories. Once the data had been coded and after extensive collaboration with the supervisor or external coder, the researcher organized the data according to the themes and categories.

3.4.5 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was guided by Bush (2012:81–86), who points out that different aspects should be considered when investigating the reliability, validity and triangulation of a qualitative study. Furthermore, triangulation means that the researcher compares many kinds of evidence to determine the accuracy of the phenomena, in other words to crosscheck the data to establish trustworthiness. According to Creswell (2014), triangulation involves a process of corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective.

Wood (2012) suggests that it is important that the research should be confirmable. The extent to which the research can be supported by the researcher contributes to establishing whether the research is credible. A description of the research process, including what was done, how it was done and why it was done, as well as implementation according to criteria for qualitative research, ensures that the authenticity and trustworthiness of the research was increased. The legitimacy of the interview was assured with a clear conceptualization, a purposeful design of an interview schedule, as well as a set plan or protocol to conduct the interview.

3.4.6 The role of the researcher

According to Maree (2007), during the data collection stage, the researcher should observe and pay very close attention by creating a connection and social relationship with the participants. The researcher was an objective observer who recorded all information carefully and raised additional questions of the phenomena under study (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher followed all ethical guidelines. The responsibilities of the researcher included:

- constructing and conducting the interviews;
- analyses and triangulation of data; and
- maintaining a professional relationship with the participants.

In qualitative research, the researcher stands central to the data collected (Wood, 2012). Furthermore, Wood (2012) suggests that researchers should develop or already possess the following skills when pursuing truths through qualitative research: the ability to ask the right question and interpret answers; the willingness to be flexible and the ability to read the situation; and the distance to be unbiased. Creswell (2014) states that the researcher is key in collecting data and should clarify any existing bias from the outset of the study.

The researcher should comment on all past experiences, biases and prejudices that may shape the interpretation of the study.

3.4.7 Ethics considerations

Ethics is concerned with what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in terms of the research process. It is about the trust relationship between the researcher and the participant. Before the study commenced, the ethics committee of the Faculty of Education and Training of the North-West University Mafikeng Campus was approached for ethics clearance (see Appendix G; Appendix H). The researcher then obtained permission from the NWDoE, the respective school principals and all the participants.

Basic ethics principles that were adhered to in this study included:

- assuring participants that the aim of this study is not to expose, stress or humiliate them;
- obtaining consent from participants and permission from the NWDoE, Lichtenburg circuit office (Ditsobotla), the three primary schools and the Foundation Phase teachers;
- ensuring confidentiality; and
- protecting data.

In accordance with standard, accepted principles of ethical research procedures, all relevant authorities were contacted and the research took place with the informed consent of all participants. All participants took part in the research voluntarily and they could withdraw at any time. In addition, the individual's right to privacy was respected. As stressed in the consent forms, all participants took part in the research project voluntarily and the individual's and school's privacy was respected. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained at all times. The researcher also maintained academic objectivity at all times.

3.4.8 Contribution of the research

In view of the research problem identified in Chapter 1, the study would hopefully contribute to the available body of knowledge. This research may lead to a better understanding of how educators in the Foundation Phase manage, interpret and implement reading policies. Such an understanding may contribute to possible solutions for the problems experienced with the management, interpretation and implementation of reading policies and may serve to improve the implementation of policies that guide the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research methodology and methods for this study. The reasoning behind the adoption of qualitative approach was discussed, followed by a detailed description of the implementation of research methods. This description included information about aims of the study, participant selection, data collection and data analysis procedures for this study. In the last instance, the ethics considerations for this study were outlined in this chapter.

The following chapter reports in detail on the findings of this qualitative research study.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology followed in this research. The main purpose of this chapter is to present the findings. The data were gathered by means of document analysis, observation, interviews and field notes. The interviews were voice recorded and the data were analysed and direct verbatim quotations are used to report the findings. Data generated were analysed according to the themes and subthemes from the questions that guided the research.

4.2 Themes and sub-themes

The data revealed five main themes with sub-themes, presented in Table 4.1 below. The themes and sub-themes are presented and used as sub-headings, with evidence given in the form of verbatim quotations.

Table 4.1: Identified main themes and sub-themes

	THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1	The interpretation of policies and documents guides the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase	• Reading policies used in the Foundation Phase • Weaknesses of the CAPS document • Analysis and interpretation of educators' home language files • Interpretation of policies and documents
2	Implementation of policies and documents	• Skills and knowledge educators need to implement reading policies and other documents • Teaching methods and strategies educators use to teach reading
3	Management of policies and documents	• Management at circuit level – Subject advisor • Management at school level – Principal and HoD

4	Factors that influence educators' interpretation, management and implementation of reading policies and documents	• Overcrowded classes • Learning environment and materials • Language issues • Not qualified/proper training • Other factors that influence teaching

4.3 Cases

4.3.1 School A

4.3.1.1 Description of the context and the research participants

School A is a full service school situated in a quiet suburban part of Lichtenburg. It is located in an area that was formerly exclusive to whites and was the only English medium school in the old dispensation. School A has 320 learners and 14 staff members. The staff consists of the principal, 10 educators teaching from Grade R to Grade 7; a Grade R assistant; a learner support educator and the administrative assistant (AA). The table below presents a profile of the school:

Table 4.2: Profile of School A

<u>School details</u>	<u>Number</u>
<u>Learners in school</u>	<u>330</u>
White learners	1
Black learners	316
Coloured learners	13
Grade 1 learners	46
Grade 2 learners	44
Grade 3 learners	44
<u>Educators in school</u>	<u>12</u>

White	8
Black	4
Language of learning and teaching at the school (LOLT): English	

Learners attending the school come from different socio-economic backgrounds. They come from the townships surrounding the town and from the town itself. The majority of learners are dropped off by taxis and buses, while a smaller percentage of the learners stay in town close to the school where the parents drop them off or they walk from their homes. The parents of the learners have jobs in town or outside town and do jobs like being educators, police men/women, personal assistants, business owners, secretaries, city planners, accountants and doctors. There is rarely a case of exemption of school fees for a learner since all the parents can pay school fees. Most of the learners and parents speak Setswana or another African language at home. It is only at school or at their work places where they speak English.

The school is fenced in safely, with one gate to enter the school leading directly to the administration building. The trees provide shady places where the learners can sit and eat. The neat garden creates a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The administrative staff also gave a warm welcome, as the administrative assistant assisted the researcher and the principal welcomed her. The Foundation Phase block is at the end of the school building, where the classes are located next to one another. The first room is the Grade 1 classroom, then the Grade 2 and lastly the Grade 3 classroom.

Document analysis was conducted first. The researcher examined each of the educators' home language files to get an overview of what policies and documents the participants use to teach reading. The files were neatly covered, looked after and kept up to date according to the list (see Table 4.3). The files of the Grade 1 and 2 educators were correct according to the list (see Table 4.3). All the relevant documents were in the educators' home language files. The Grade 3 educator was new and had only started teaching in the

year the study was conducted. Her home language file was neat, but some documents were not in the file or were incomplete.

Thereafter, the researcher observed the Grade 1, 2 and 3 classrooms. Each grade was observed during the language period for one day according to the observation schedule (see Appendix A and B). The Grade 1 classroom has an extra storeroom where all the learning and teaching support material (LTSM) was packed away. Learners only have access under supervision. The other two classrooms do not have any storerooms. The Grade 1 and 2 learners each had their own chair cover and pencil case with stationery. All the learners in the Foundation Phase were seated two at a table, facing the chalkboard. All the learners spoke English during their lesson time, but when they went for break and after school, they spoke Setswana or another African language. Field notes were made during the observation of the lesson that the participants presented. After the observations, interviews were conducted with the Grade 1, 2 and 3 educators, the HoD and the principal of the school.

Table 4.3: Profile of participants

	Age	Gender	Race	Teaching experience	Qualifications
Grade 1	35	Female	White	13 years	3 years' teachers diploma ACE
Grade 2	63	Female	White	33 years	HNOD (Hoër Nasionale Onderwys Diploma) Pre-primary VDO Pre-primary
Grade 3	51	Female	Black	27 years	Diploma ACE
Principal	52	Male	White	28 years	B.Ed. Honours
HoD	45	Female	Black	23 years	Diploma in Junior Primary

					H.Ed. in Pre-primary ACE – Curriculum development
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4.3.1.2 Theme one: interpretation of policies and documents guiding the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase

Reading policies used in the Foundation Phase

During the interviews, participants identified the CAPS document as the main policy applied in the classrooms to guide the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase. This confirmed the classroom observations as educators were mostly using the CAPS document in class. The interviews with subject advisors confirmed that the CAPS document is the main policy to guide teaching and reading in the Foundation Phase. When they were asked to mention the documents they use to guide the teaching of reading, all educators mentioned the CAPS document. The following extracts illustrate this:

“I think only CAPS but there are other documents like readers, big books and ATPs that we must have and also follow what the subject advisors give to us” (Grade 1 educator).

There was consensus among all of the participants that the CAPS document was the main policy that guides the teaching of reading. The Foundation Phase educators identified other supplementary documents that they were aware of and that also help them with their teaching of reading. Some of these were:

- a reading programme (document where educators must show what they have read in a term, what kind of phonics, sight words and spelling had been covered);
- different readers and big books;
- programme of assessment;

- DBE workbooks;
- annual teaching plans (ATPs) to indicate what the educator must do each week; and
- the internal reading policy (guidelines that is drawn up by the subject advisor in line with the CAPS document).

As far as policies and documents were concerned, the HoD made sure that educators use the CAPS document to guide their teaching of reading and that all the supplementary documents stipulated by the subject advisors are implemented, even if it was not mentioned in the CAPS document. The subject advisors said that the CAPS document is the main policy, but the reading norms are still in a draft form and must be used with it. However, this document (reading norms) was absent from all the files of the educators.

Weaknesses within the CAPS document

Although the CAPS document was deemed an important document, document analyses and interviews revealed that the CAPS document lacks explicit and systematic guidance with regard to the teaching of reading in the classroom. The CAPS document was explicit about the “what” of teaching reading, for example the time allocation and kinds of reading, as well as assessment. However, the CAPS document lacks explicit information about the how of teaching reading, and educators were not sure about how the CAPS document should be implemented.

“There is no clear guidance how to implement reading, I follow my own methods and hope that it is on the correct path” (Grade 3 educator).

The Grade 2 educator further stated that:

“There is no time for repetition and they are running too fast with the curriculum, it includes a lot of work where there is no time to complete it and work on the basics

and NO but no reinforcement that can be done, if the child is behind sorry, that child stays behind".

The HoD confirmed that:

"The CAPS document needs to be clear on how to teach reading and give proper guidelines on how to do it. The work amount in a week is just too much, there is no time for drilling and grasping what has been done for that week."

The HoD was concerned that educators end up using their own methods because of lack of guidance and sometimes there is no way of verifying these methods. These concerns were further acknowledged by the principal, who said;

"It is a case that the educators do not understand the CAPS document, when they do weekly planning, it is a case that the work is so vague and a lot of work must be included in that week, there is no time to go into depth with the learners."

and the subject advisor, who confirmed that:

"Educators find it difficult to work with the CAPS document, they struggle to implement the bullets and like group guided reading the educators interpret it totally wrong."

It is evident from the extracts that the CAPS document, as the main policy document guiding reading, lacks proper guidance on how to implement the actual teaching of reading. This leaves the educators to their own devices and it is not always possible to verify their methods. The educators made use of the CAPS document in their daily teaching and the researcher could see that they interpret and implement it into their weekly planning, even though the guidelines in the CAPS document are not clear. The educators made use of their own methods and this showed some differences and inconsistencies in the approach to the teaching of reading.

Analysis and interpretation of educators' home language files

School A had files for home language that included reading from Grade 1 to Grade 3. According to the subject advisors who led a workshop for the HoDs at the beginning of

2016, they gave the instruction that the home language file must be divided into two parts: (1) assessment file and (2) planning file. The subject advisors also commented that there must be a Foundation Phase meeting book containing all the agendas and all minutes. According to the principal, the meetings must take place at least once a month. An interesting fact was that the participants from School A all contributed to drawing up internal school policies like subject policies and Foundation Phase policies that are aligned with the CAPS document. This was only evident at School A and the other two schools did not have these internal policies. The participants from School A discussed the policies and then implemented them to assist and guide them.

Grade 1, 2 and 3 educators made use of the timetables provided by the CAPS document. However, the educators grouped home language periods together. The timetable allocated for instance period 3, 5 and 7, but educators grouped them together. This allows them to save time on handing out books and explaining tasks, but they stick to the time allocation on the timetable. The educators offered interventions to support struggling learners and strictly adhered to the CAPS document and White Paper 6 (2001). The year plan and phase plan was according to dates, but could be changed if needed.

The following table indicates the policies and documents that the participants must have in their home language files according to the subject advisor.

Table 4.4: Document analysis

<i>Documents</i>	<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Grade 2</i>	<i>Grade 3</i>
<i>Assessment file</i>			
<i>Assessment policy (NPPR, NPA)</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Programme of assessment</i>	✓	✓	x
<i>Formal tasks</i>	✓	✓	x
<i>Informal tasks</i>	✓	✓	✓

<i>Moderation reports</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Intervention</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Record sheets</i>	✓	✓	✓
Planning file			
<i>Time table</i>	✓	✓	x
<i>CAPS – Home language</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Reading norms</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>EGRA (Early grade reading assessment policy statement)</i>	Only from Grade 2	✓	✓
<i>LAIP (learner attainment for assessment)</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>National protocol for assessment</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Programme and promotion requirements</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Area office policies</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Subject policies</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Internal school policies</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Reading and phonics programme</i>	✓	✓	x
<i>Annual teaching plans (ATPs)</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Lesson plans and examples of worksheets</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Report (monitoring and control)</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Plans (class visits, meetings)</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Minutes of meetings</i>	Meeting book	Meeting book	Meeting book
<i>Circulars</i>	x	x	x

Key:

✓ – educator has it in the home language file

x – educator does not have it in the home language file

The files of the educators were up to date according to the subject advisor. The Grade 1 and 2 educators had all the documents according to the list above, except for the circulars. This could be because no recent circulars had been sent to the school that included the Foundation Phase. The Grade 3 educator was short on some of the documents in her file according to the table above, perhaps because she had just recently joined the school. The files looked neat and were well kept. The HoD had also done her part to make sure that the educators keep their files up to date according to the suggestions of the subject advisors. The following section presents what was in the educators' home language files.

Meetings: According to the educators, Foundation Phase meetings were held once each month and this was where all new information and any problems were discussed. The files contained the minutes of the meetings of each participant and they were in the Foundation Phase meeting book. The section on home language included evidence that reading as a topic had been discussed. There were items like reading workshops – EGRA – and all new information was mentioned and implemented. Educators gave feedback of all the workshops they attended at each meeting. The researcher did not attend any of the meetings, but looked at the Foundation Phase meeting book where the agenda and the minutes were noted. The participants confirmed that attendance of these meetings are very helpful since it provides them with an opportunity to discuss issues and to plan, as shown below:

“The meetings help me a lot to know what must be done for the month, what must be in and what is going to happen. The meetings are really fruitful to me, I learn a lot from the other educators if we discuss things there” (Grade 3 educator).

The HoD also confirmed as follows:

“We have each month a Foundation Phase meeting where I lead the meeting and all matters from the previous meetings and new arising matters we discuss. Dates and any problems we discuss and also how certain things must be done. This is our way how we communicate about what is happening in the Foundation Phase.”

The Foundation Phase meetings, led by the HoD, were scheduled on the year plan for every month. The meetings provide a helpful platform for the educators to discuss, plan for all Foundation Phase issues and to learn from each other.

Planning: The Foundation Phase educators had an extra file for the planning of that week. All the educators did weekly planning with examples of the work that should be done for that week, including homework. These files are submitted to the principal every Monday for moderation:

"We submit every Monday our weekly prep to the principal, he checks and sign it, there must be examples of the weeks' worksheets and also homework included"
(Grade 2 educator).

The HoD commented that:

"Weekly planning must be done according to the CAPS document, this is where the educators interpret and implement the CAPS document into their daily teaching and then send to the principal to be signed, if there is no planning, how can the educator teach and do not have all relevant resources and copies ready for that period".

The principal signs these weekly planning files every Monday before break time and confirmed that:

*"How can you teach if you do not have any planning in place for that day or week?
The educator must submit before first break their planning for the week."*

As the evidence above shows, this school regards planning as very important. Educators can ensure they have the relevant resources and are ready for the next week.

Learning and teaching support material (LTSM): Each classroom had big books (Afrikaans and English) and readers that accompany the big books. Even though the school does not have enough big books, the learners can read from the readers. During the interviews the educators said that they make use of different resources, but not one

educator used any resources during the observation time. The only resources that were used were the DBE workbooks, no extra pictures, flashcard or posters. One educator commented that there was no need for extra resources:

“Why must I add additional resources if the DBE workbook has all in that I need?”
(Grade 3 educator).

The educators made use of the chalk board to write things that learners had to copy or read. During observation, the researcher only noticed a few posters that were aligned with reading, the rest of the posters were mathematics or life skills posters. The big books were packed away or on a shelf during observation. Not one of the educators made use of the big books in group guided reading or even shared reading. During the interviews the participants stated that they made use of group guided reading, big books and different readers, but there was no evidence of these resources and methods.

Assessment: According to the CAPS document, educators must use informal and formal assessment. The educators made use of both baseline and continuous assessment, using the assessment strategies prescribed by the CAPS document, for example oral assessment, reading and written tasks. Before the educator can do any assessment activity, the HoD has to moderate it to see if the task fits the ATPs and curriculum coverage. The educators complained that oral (speaking) and reading was taking very long and there was not enough time to do it properly. They paid more attention to the writing part of assessment.

“Assessment is divided into different parts like first sounds, reading (individual reading and group guided reading) and lastly the written part, but oral and reading take very long because it is with each learner individually” (Grade 1 educator).

Assessment is done according to the CAPS document, which prescribes that educators must start with oral and reading and should start with written assessment later. The HoD

should do pre- and post-moderation for each task. At School A, the HoD takes the programme of assessment and compares it with the task to see if all the work included in that task has been covered and the mark allocation is correct. After the educator is done with the task, the HoD moderates five papers to spot-check if the mark allocation is correct and how the educator marked the paper. After the pre- and post-moderation, the educators file the assessment documents in their home language file. Assessment also indicates the level of the learners and how learners performed that term, and provides an indication of problem areas and areas for revision.

Interpretation of policies and documents

Proper policy interpretation gives direction to the curriculum and ensures effective teaching and learning in the classrooms. The participants did not complain much about the interpretation of the CAPS documents in connection with reading. However, they complained about the lack of clarity in the CAPS document on how to teach reading, as this influences their daily teaching. For example, one of the Grade 3 educator said:

"If the authority 'up there' must come to our level themselves and interpret and implement all their prescriptions, they will realize that is it impossible."

The subject advisors' comment confirmed the educators' concerns and they further added that educators also struggle with classroom management and the methodology of teaching reading.

"Methodology is the main challenge like classroom management is a skill the educators lack. Again the interpretation of the bullets in the CAPS document can be written easier that educators can interpret it with ease and then implement it correctly in their teaching" (subject advisor).

The researcher sensed during the interviews that the participants had difficulty interpreting the CAPS document, but they did not seem to have a problem with the other supplementary documents. The interpretation of the CAPS document determines largely how policies are implemented in the classroom. The subject advisors take on an important

role to provide on-going professional development and workshops to empower educators to interpret the CAPS document correctly. Despite the workshops that the subject advisors offered in the beginning of the year to assist and support educators, the researcher got the sense that subject advisors try to assist the educators, but the educators still do not know how to interpret the CAPS document.

4.3.1.3 Theme two: implementation of policies and documents

The skills and knowledge educators need to implement reading policies and other documents

The findings show that educators made use of different techniques, tools and strategies that are suitable for teaching reading as prescribed by the CAPS document. The class observations gave the impression that the participants implement the CAPS documents as part of their daily teaching and have an understanding of how it must be done. The educators made use of the CAPS document and then aligned it with the DBE workbooks. The educators stated that they make use of group guided reading, but there was no evidence in the class observation of group guided reading or reading from big books. Learners were reading from the DBE workbook individually or as a class.

However, when the researcher asked during the interviews what skills and knowledge educators must have to teach reading, the educators responded:

"You as the educator must be able to read yourself, know the basics of reading and where to start, and very early to pick up the learners that can't read to assist them from the beginning with intervention" (Grade 1 educator).

"Start with the letter sounds and make sure you also can sound it, then two to three letter words, sight words, after that comes the short sentences and this is where the learner will start to read, but make sure you do it the right way" (Grade 2 educator).

"I make use of the CAPS document and then focus on the DBE workbooks and then from there I use different ways to explain it" (Grade 3 educator).

The educators appeared to know what they were supposed to do, even though they did not do it. All three Foundation Phase educators stated that they have the skills to teach reading, but that one can always improve.

"I definitely need more skills to be able to teach reading properly to the learners. All HoDs need intensive workshops and training on how to teach reading and implement the CAPS document correctly."

This participant continued by saying that:

"The department must arrange in-depth workshops, that the HoDs can train the educators and assist them when there were problems and also can sent a whole class to the next grade to know that all of the learners can read on an appropriate level."

In the interviews, the educators claimed to have the skills and knowledge needed to teach reading, but on observation, they did not appear to use a variety of skills. They also admitted that they are open to further development and training on reading. The educators mentioned that they implement the CAPS document and then follow the DBE workbooks. From the observations, it was not clear if educators made use of group guided and paired reading, as they were only observed using shared and individual reading. This suggested that the educators may have the knowledge, but lack skills to teach reading.

Teaching methods and strategies educators use to teach reading

The Foundation Phase educators stated that they make use of pictures, flashcards with sounds and sight words on the wall, as learners like to see things visually. The HoD mentioned that most educators make use of their own methods and sometimes the methods from the CAPS document. During the interviews, the educators mentioned they made use of shared reading with the DBE books and tested comprehension to see if the

learners were listening and followed the story. The methods that the educators used were in line with the CAPS document, because the CAPS document lacks explicit methodology, according to the interviews. According to the subject advisor, each educator must try to unpack the bullets and then interpret it in his or her own way. The subject advisor also confirmed:

“Teaching aids will assist with teaching reading, most educators do the lecturing methods to the little ones, they must refrain from that and use methodology that will assist them, but the CAPS document is silent as far as methodology are concerned. Educators must try to unpack the bullets and to turn it into activities, classroom management is the main problem and this is a skill that educators lack.”

This suggests two issues: first, that the CAPS document lacks clarity in terms of methodology of teaching reading, and second, that educators are expected to interpret the bullets by themselves.

In all three the Foundation Phase classrooms, the educators made use of direct, whole class teaching (standing in front of the classroom). The learners could not work in groups because the educators arranged the classroom in such a way that the learners face the chalk board and the learners cannot work cooperatively. During the interviews, the educators stated that they make use of group guided reading and paired reading and include other resources in their teaching, but for the duration of class observation, the educators did not use additional resources, nor did they do group guided reading or paired reading.

4.3.1.4 Theme three: management of policies and documents

Management at circuit level – subject advisor

Policy management starts at the district level (subject advisor) and then devolves to the schools, starting with the principal, then the HoD and finally the educators who carry out

the implementation. Findings from the interviews suggest that training on the CAPS document is arranged by the subject advisor each year for all educators, including newly appointed educators. According to the educators, the subject advisors show the educators examples of work, weekly planning and talk about the different kinds of reading. They assist each grade on where to start with reading. The subject advisors assist educators as far as possible and come for class visits to see if they are on track and to monitor the work that has been done. The subject advisors are involved with School A because they come for monitoring, give ATPs, programmes of assessment and sometimes even examples of tasks. The documents from the subject advisors assist the educators and make the teaching of reading easier for them.

Educators were asked during the interviews what support and assistance they get from the subject advisors. Their responses all indicated that they get a great deal of support from the subject advisor, who works mainly with the HoD. The Grade 1 educator said:

"The subject advisors assist us where we need them or even come to our school if we need their assistance, they also help the HoD if she asks them for something."

This level of support was also confirmed by the HoD and the principals respectively:

"Subject advisors are not afraid to help me if I need their assistance, sometimes they will come to school to come and assist us with problems. They are friendly and always willing to help" (HoD).

"I must say the Foundation Phase subject advisors are really hands on, they phone me regularly to ask if all is fine in the Foundation Phase. They come for moderation to check if the educators are doing their work and they assist the HoD if there are any problems" (principal).

When the subject advisors visit classes, they do class monitoring and check if the HoD and educators are doing their work. The subject advisors give recommendations based on what they have seen in the classes and in the files, then give a report accordingly. After the recommendations, the educators would adjust and "fix their mistakes." It was evident from the interviews that the communication line between the participants and the

subject advisors is open and that the participants are not afraid to ask and the subject advisors are not unwilling to assist.

Management at school level – principal and HoD

At school level, the principal and HoD play a very important role to make sure that educators interpret and implement the CAPS document and other relevant documents correctly. The principal admitted during the interview that he was not as involved in the Foundation Phase as he would like to be. However, he monitors the weekly preparation every week and signs it. According to the document analysis, the HoD had been providing the necessary support to the educators. The document analysis indicated that the HoD does pre- and post-moderation of assessment, signs the programme of assessment and leads the Foundation Phase meetings, works hand-in-hand with the subject advisors, and supports and assists the educators.

The educators confirmed the HoDs support during the interviews:

“The HoD always respond and help us a lot if we need assistance, if she does not know, she will phone the subject advisor to get the information from them” (Grade one educator).

“I am new in Grade 3 but the HoD assist me at all times, when I needed advice, I went to her, when I want to know something, she will assist me. When I felt over burned she will calm me and help me where she can” (Grade 3 educator).

It therefore seems that the HoD provides effective management. The participants stated during the interviews that the principal was not involved at all in the Foundation Phase, except that he monitors the weekly preparation, confirming the principal's own assertion. The document analysis provided evidence of support and management in the Foundation Phase through for example meetings, workshops, monitoring and control. The participants receive 100% support from the HoD and she makes sure that there is management, interpretation and implementation to the best of her knowledge. There was

also evidence of a Foundation Phase year plan for the participants, book control and file control, class visits and monitoring, like the pre- and post-moderation of tasks. Effective management can lead to effective schools that can produce quality education to the learners.

4.3.1.5 *Theme four: factors that influence interpretation, management and implementation of reading policies and documents*

During the interviews, participants came up with different factors that influence their teaching of reading. These factors included among other things overcrowded classrooms; the learning environment and materials; language issues; lack of training in the Foundation Phase. The classrooms were overcrowded. There were too many learners per class and all of these learners need the same teaching and individual attention. The ratio per class, prescribed by the DoE, is 1 educator for 40 learners (1:40). Overcrowded classrooms influence discipline. In addition, language influences teaching at this school, because the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) is English and most of the learners speak Setswana at home. The learners only speak English in class, the rest of the time they speak Setswana.

Overcrowded classes

Sufficient space means that educators and learners can carry out tasks effectively. There was not enough space in either one of the three Foundation Phase classrooms to make a reading corner or to even throw a carpet for group guided reading. This was confirmed during observation and the interviews. The problem was not only the number of learners in the class, but also that the area was not big enough to accommodate all the learners.

“With the overcrowded classes, I do not have the courage to divide them into groups, move the tables and to do group guided reading. Shared reading and individual reading is the way out” (Grade 2 educator).

Learning environment as well as learning and teaching support materials (LTSM)

The Grade 1 and 2 classrooms were both painted and there was enough tables and chairs for the learners. The walls were decorated with different posters, although only a few aligned with reading. There were enough resources for teaching, but the readers were not enough to provide one for each learner. The educators had flash cards, big books, readers to share, and colourful pictures. The Grade 3 classroom needed renovations, tiles and paint were cracked. The learning environment was not stimulating because the educator could not paste posters or any other pictures for the learners to see daily. However, the educator had all the relevant materials necessary to teach.

“My classroom is in a bad shape, my walls are painted but the paint is coming off, my floor cracked and this is not exposing the learner at all to a learning environment. I cannot paste any posters on the walls or put up pictures that the learners can see” (Grade 3 educator).

Language issues

The problem that the educators are facing with language is that the LoLT is English, but most of the learners' home language is Setswana or other languages such as Afrikaans or Zulu. The activities prescribed by the CAPS document had to be adapted according to the level of the learners. This problem does not only increase the workload of educators, but also forces educators to adjust the standard to the level of the learners, even if the policy states something else.

“Because we are an English medium school where the home language is English, the learners struggle to read and sound because they speak another language at home, the learners speak a very broken English” (Grade 1 educator).

Lack of training in the Foundation Phase

During the interviews, the Grade 2 educator stated that she was not qualified to teach the Foundation Phase and the Grade 3 educator only had experience in Grade 1 teaching. This casts doubt over whether these educators can implement the CAPS document for quality teaching and learning when they are not actually qualified to teach in the Foundation Phase. Inadequate knowledge, a poor grasp of the CAPS document and making mistakes with the interpretation and implementation can lead to serious problems. From the subject advisor's point of view, the problem is slightly different as shown below:

"A huge challenge for me as a subject advisor is that I will support an educator and help where I can but next year that educator is moved to another class, then I have to do the same training, orientation and support with the new educator again."

The subject advisors stated during the interviews that it is very important for the educators to take curriculum interpretation, implementation and planning seriously, even though they are not qualified, because it provides guidelines of what must be taught and what must be done on a term-by-term basis. Baseline training in the beginning of the year from the HoD can help educators who are new or not familiar with what is going in the Foundation Phase.

Other factors that influence teaching

The timetable for Grade 1 and 2 was followed correctly, but for Grade 3 the time allocation was not correct according to the time allocation of the CAPS document. The lessons were implemented with the CAPS document in mind, but according to the ATPs from the subject advisors, some of the bullets has been done incorrectly. For example, group guided reading was not implemented during the observations in any of the classrooms.

"Education is politics, 'up there' they create the document and don't care if it is going to work down here, what was good in the past they took away, and since

then there was almost 5 curriculums that was created the one after the other is a more struggle to interpret and implement" (Grade 2 educator).

4.3.1.6 Overview of School A

The findings reveal that the main policy that guides the teaching of reading at School A is the CAPS policy. Several other documents, such as the programme of assessment, reading programme, different big books and complimentary readers, DBE workbooks, ATPs and internal reading policy were mentioned by the educators as supplementary documents, and confirmed the subject advisor.

According to the class observation, the educators made use of the CAPS document aligned with the DBE workbook. All three Foundation Phase educators used the DBE workbook, made use of shared reading and then later individual reading. During observation time the educators did not implement group guided reading or paired reading, nor used additional resources, even though they mentioned a great deal of resources during the interviews and claimed to make use of them. This leaves the researcher with questions on whether the educators really do the group guided reading in class and use other resources or whether it was just stated in the interviews. The three Foundation Phase educators and the HoD stated that they had the skills and knowledge to teach reading, but that there is always space for improvement.

The findings further reveal that the bullets (see Appendix I) in the CAPS document lead to confusion, because each term it is described in a different way. According to the participants, this lack of clarity leads to different interpretations of the CAPS document on how to teach reading. The educators were not sure how to interpret the bullets correctly and how to use them in their teaching. This causes educators to use their own methods, which they struggled to link to the CAPS document.

All three of the Foundation Phase classrooms were arranged to face the chalkboard and the educators made use of direct, whole class teaching. During the interviews, the educators mentioned things such as space, the number of learners in the classrooms and the amount of work that they have to cover as things that hinder group guided reading because of the lack of time.

School management played a very important role in this case. The HoD was reported to monitor the educators' home language files and to see to it that all relevant documents are up to date and done the correct way. The HoD received advice on how to keep and manage the home language files from a workshop that was presented by the subject advisor at the beginning of the year, confirming the presence and role of the subject advisor. The HoD implemented the index that was prescribed by the subject advisor at the workshop and made sure that all Foundation Phase educators made use of it and kept the files up to date. According to Table 4.4, the files of the educators were up to date and correct according to the index. Meetings were held every month and all the educators were present and discussed all relevant information. This helped them to solve problems. Planning was part of the educators' daily teaching. Each educator had a separate planning file where all relevant components were planned for according to the CAPS document. The planning file was sent in every Monday to the principal so that he could check and sign it.

Support from the subject advisors motivates the educators and helps create an open relationship. Although the principal is not greatly involved in the Foundation Phase, the HoD provided the necessary support. The educators spoke only positively about the HoD and said that she influences their teaching positively. It is therefore evident that there is effective management and this supports the interpretation and implementation of the reading policies in the Foundation Phase in School A.

4.3.2 School B

4.3.2.1 Description of the research participants and the context

School B is situated in a suburban area outside of town. School B has 271 learners and is full service school. The staff consists of 9 staff members: the principal; eight educators teaching from Grade 1 to Grade 7 and the administrative assistant (AA).

Table 4.5: Profile of the school

<u>School details</u>	<u>Number</u>
<u>Learners in school</u>	<u>271</u>
Black learners	267
Coloured learners	4
Grade 1 learners	42
Grade 2 learners	39
Grade 3 learners	39
<u>Educators in school</u>	<u>9</u>
White	6
Black	3
Language of learning and teaching of the school (LOLT) English	

Learners attending the school come from different socio-economic backgrounds. They come from the townships surrounding the town and from the town itself. The learners are mostly dropped off by taxis and buses; some learners are dropped off by their parents. The parents of the learners have proper jobs in town or outside town, holding positions such as educators, police men/women, administrative assistants, hairdressers, business owners and managers. At School B there are more exemptions of school fees for learners. Most parents can pay school fees, but there are parents who struggle. Most of the learners and the parents speak Setswana and languages like Afrikaans and Zulu at home. At school and at their work places they speak English.

There is fencing around the school with one gate to enter the schoolyard, leading directly to the principal's office. There are not many trees inside the schoolyard for shade. The gardens need some attention, one can see that it is only looked after now and then. The principal was not present at the school, the researcher could not interview him or go into his office. The admin office did not look like an office at all, tables were standing around and the administrative assistants from the college doing their practical's were seated everywhere and did not notice the researcher. One of the educators accompanied the researcher to the classes since there was no principal or HoD who could assist the researcher.

Document analysis was done first. The researcher looked at each of the educators' home language files to get an understanding of what is happening at the school and how the educators use their files and implement and interpret the policies and relevant documents they use for teaching reading. The files were covered, but because there was no HoD who attended the training in the beginning of the year, the educators were not aware of the new index. The paper work and index were not done properly and was not up to date. Observation was done in the Grade 1, 2 and 3 classrooms respectively. Observation took place during the language period for one day according to the observation schedule (see Appendix A and B). Learners in the Foundation Phase were seated in pairs, facing the chalkboard. All learners must speak English during their lesson time according to the CAPS document, but the researcher picked up that learners spoke Setswana to each other during their lesson time. The researcher made field notes during the observation. Interviews were done with the educators who teach Grade 1, 2 and 3. The principal was not present that day, and for the past 2 years, there has been no HoD for the Foundation Phase.

Table 4.6: Profile of participants

	Age	Gender	Race	Teaching experience	Qualifications
Grade 1	63	Female	Black	21 years	B.Ed. Honours
Grade 2	28	Female	White	5 years	B.Ed. Foundation Phase 4 years
Grade 3	47	Female	White	20 years	Diploma ACE

4.3.2.2 Theme one: interpretation of policies and documents guiding the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase

Reading policies used in the Foundation Phase

During the interviews, the participants identified the CAPS document as the main policy that guides the teaching of reading in School B. This was confirmed by the subject advisors. The subject advisor confirmed the CAPS document, but also identified other documents, such as the reading norms that educators can also use.

The educators did not mention any other document that they use in their school except the CAPS document:

“We make use of the CAPS document and that is the only policy we follow at our school” (Grade 3 educator).

The subject advisor commented:

“The educators must implement the reading norms even if there are still some gaps, it is in a draft format and not 100% align with the CAPS document. This document will make the life the educators easier.”

There was consensus among all of the participants that the CAPS document was the main policy that guides the teaching of reading and that the educators used no other documents. There was no HoD to make sure that the educators follow the CAPS

document and that the relevant documents are correctly interpreted and implemented. The educators used their own discretion. The subject advisors stated that reading norms are still in a draft format, but that the educators can use it since it is aligned with the CAPS document. However, the reading norms were absent in the files of the educators.

Weaknesses within the CAPS document

According to the interviews and document analyses, the CAPS document lacks proper guidelines for the interpretation and implementation of reading in the classroom.

The Grade 2 educator stated that:

“There are too many methods in the CAPS document and this makes us confused about what to teach. The methods are there but not clear on how to use the methods.”

The subject advisor who confirmed that:

“The CAPS document does not give clear guidelines what the educator need, there is a lot of loopholes and grey areas but the challenge starts with interpretation and implementation of the CAPS document.”

It is clear from the comments above that the CAPS document is the main policy document that guides the teaching of reading at school, even though the CAPS document provides inadequate guidance on how to implement the actual teaching of reading. The educators make use of their own methods, receive no management assistance from an HoD, and it is clear that there are differences in the way they teach reading.

Analysis and interpretation of educators’ home language files

School B did have files for home language from Grade 1 to 3. Since there is no HoD, the educators were not aware of the home language index that had been prescribed by the

subject advisors. Grade 1, 2 and 3 educators made use of the timetables provided in the CAPS document. The educators offered interventions according to the document analysis. The correct form was used, but the information was incomplete and there was no evidence of the work done to assist the learner. The intervention was not done correctly according to the CAPS document and White Paper 6 (2001). There was no year plan or phase plan that the educators could follow.

The following table indicates the policies and documents that the participants must have in their home language files according to the subject advisors.

Table 4.7: Document analysis

Documents	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Assessment file			
<i>Assessment policy (NPPR, NPA)</i>	✓	✓	x
<i>Programme of assessment</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Formal tasks</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Informal tasks</i>	x	x	x
<i>Moderation reports</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Intervention</i>	x	x	x
<i>Record sheets</i>	✓	✓	x
Planning file			
<i>Time table</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>CAPS – Home language</i>	x	x	x
<i>Reading norms</i>	✓	✓	x
<i>EGRA (Early grade reading assessment policy statement)</i>	<i>Only from Grade 2</i>	x	x
<i>LAIP (learner attainment for assessment)</i>	x	x	x

<i>National protocol for assessment</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Programme and promotion requirements</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Area office policies</i>	x	x	x
<i>Subject policies</i>	x	x	x
<i>Internal school policies</i>	x	x	x
<i>Reading and phonics programme</i>	x	x	x
<i>Annual teaching plans (ATPs)</i>	x	x	x
<i>Lesson plans and examples of worksheets</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Report (monitoring and control)</i>	x	x	x
<i>Plans (class visits, meetings)</i>	x	x	x
<i>Minutes of meetings</i>	x	x	x
<i>Circulars</i>	x	x	x

Key:

✓ – educator has it in the home language file

x – educator does not have it in the home language file

The files of the educators were not up to date according to the list in Table 4.7. The educators did have the index for the home language file that was prescribed by the subject advisors. Most of the prescribed documents were not in their files and the paper work was not up to date. The researcher got the impression that the absence of the HoD may have contributed to this, as there appeared to be no support and guidance from within the school. The principal did not assist the educators to make sure that their files and work were up to date.

Meetings: According to the educators, Foundation Phase meetings were held each month, but there was no evidence to back this. There was no record of the agendas and the minutes of the meetings.

"I think there must be more meetings in the school where we can discuss problems, but without an HoD, how do we know what to discuss and what to do" (Grade 1 educator).

"Each time another person must lead the meeting, but what we do, is it correct?" (Grade 2 educator).

"Even though I am the senior teacher in the Foundation Phase, I do not want to take the lead and the responsibility. I do not get paid extra for the work I do extra" (Grade 2 educator).

These extracts show that Foundation Phase meetings may have been held, but with a lack of direction, which may be the result of the absence of the HoD. The senior educator did not take the lead because she does not want the responsibility and do not get paid for extra work she has to do.

Planning: The Foundation Phase educators had their planning for the week and the planning was signed by another educator. For example, the Grade 1 educator signed the Grade 2 educators work and the other way around. However, this educator did not do the monitoring to ensure that educators were on the right track. The educators did weekly planning, but clearly did not have the knowledge to adhere to the CAPS document.

"We do our weekly preparation but only sent it to another educator to be signed" (Grade 1 educator).

As the evidenced above shows, the educators did their planning to the best of their knowledge and they sent it to another educator to sign the planning, which indicates a level of initiative in the absence of the HoD. Although the educators may not have the right knowledge to provide guidance, signing each other's work suggests a certain level of quality assurance and a step towards making sure that the work was covered as stipulated in the CAPS document. However, the absence of managerial support added a significant challenge to the implementation of the reading policies.

Learning and teaching support material (LTSM): The classrooms had posters on the walls, but they were not connected with reading. The researchers could see no big books in any of the classrooms. The researcher saw some readers in the classrooms, but they were not sufficient for the whole class. During the interviews, the educators said that they made use of the DBE books and they find them sufficient. The observations confirmed this.

"The DBE workbook has all we need and do not need extra material" (Grade 1 educator).

"I like working from the DBE workbook, it has all in and designed for the learners in a certain way" (Grade 3 educator).

The educators made use of the chalkboard. Learners had to copy and read from it. The educators made use of shared reading and independent reading, using the DBE workbook, but they did not use group guided reading or paired reading. No additional resources were used with the DBE workbook.

Assessment: According to the CAPS document, educators must use informal and formal assessment. Continuous assessment, baseline assessment and different assessment strategies as prescribed by the CAPS document were used in School B, including oral assessment, reading and writing. There was no moderation, because there was no HoD. The educators mentioned in the interviews that reading and oral takes much time and there was not enough time to use all the different assessment strategies.

"Oral and reading is a problem because it takes a lot of time to complete it, and you only work with one child at a time" (Grade 3 educator).

Assessment was done according to the CAPS document, but the educators focused more on the writing part than on oral and reading according to the interviews. Pre- and post-moderation was not done because of the absence of the HoD. There was no programme

of assessment and the home language files were not correct according to the document analysis.

Interpretation of policies and documents

Proper policy interpretation gives curriculum direction and effective teaching and learning in the classrooms. The educators complained about the interpretation and implementation of the CAPS document in connection with teaching reading. The educators stated that there are no clear guidelines to teach reading and this makes it difficult to plan and work according to the CAPS document.

“The CAPS document is the most frustrating policy ever, we do not have a work programme to teach and find better ways to teach the learners” (Grade 3 educator).

The subject advisor's comment confirmed the educators' concerns:

“The way the bullets are written is difficult for the educators to interpret, each educator interprets each bullet differently and then doing things differently” (subject advisor).

The interviews left the researcher with the impression that they struggle to interpret and implement the CAPS document on their own and there is no support and guidance to assist the educators. The educators struggle despite the workshops that the subject advisors held in the beginning of the year. The researcher got the sense that the principal and the subject advisors do not assist the educators and that this was the reason why the educators cannot interpret and implement the CAPS document.

4.3.2.3 Theme two: implementation of policies and documents

Skills and knowledge educators have to implement reading policies and other documents

The interviews and the class observation showed that educators make use of one way to teach reading and the DBE workbook. The researcher got the impression from the interviews and the document analysis that the educators could not implement and interpret the CAPS documents into their daily teaching and just continued with the way they taught without knowing if it was right or wrong. The educators made use of the CAPS document and then aligned it with the DBE workbooks. During the interviews the educators replied with a short yes, they did not really elaborate on the question (Do you have the skills and knowledge to teach reading?). The researcher probed for clarity or a further explanation, but the educators only replied briefly. The educators made use of shared reading and individual reading, using the DBE workbooks during class observation.

However, when the researcher asked during the interviews what skills and knowledge educators must have to teach reading, the participants responded:

"Yes I have the skills, you yourself must be able to read and then go over to the sounds" (Grade 1 educator).

"Yes, known the basic of reading and where to start" (Grade 2 educator).

"Yes, make time for drilling" (Grade 3 educator).

Although the educators felt they had the skills to teach reading in the Foundation Phase, the educators were not sure if they were teaching correctly or not. All three Foundation Phase educators stated that they have the skills to teach, but only the Grade 3 educator commented that there is room to better herself.

"I have the skill but there is space to better myself and also on reading".

The educators mentioned that they implement the CAPS document and then follow the DBE workbooks. The researcher did not observe that the educators made use of group guided reading or paired reading.

Teaching methods and strategies educators use to teach reading

The educators stated during the interviews that they make use of colourful pictures and spelling words. They also said that they make use of shared reading and individual reading with the DBE workbook. Most of the methods that the educators use were their own methods that align with the CAPS document because the CAPS document lacks proper guidelines on what methods to use to teach.

The subject advisors mentioned the following as applicable to all educators:

“Our learners cannot read fluently and comprehend what they have read, this is because 80% of the educators do not know the difference between group guided reading and shared reading all of this leads to that methodology is a problem.”

During observation time, all three educators made use of direct, whole class teaching where the educator stands in front of the classroom. The learners worked from the board and then in their books. During the interviews, the educators stated they use group guided reading and paired reading, but there was no evidence of that during class observation.

4.3.2.4 Theme three: management of policies and documents

Management at circuit level – subject advisors

Findings from the interviews suggest that there is training for all educators on the CAPS document each year. However, it seems as if the training did not help the educators to use the CAPS document and to interpret and implement the CAPS document. In the

interviews, the educators stated the subject advisors are not involved in School B, suggesting some discrepancies in the subject advisors' work. Foundation Phase educators at School B did not seem to have received any new information on the ATPs or a programme of assessment. The educators were asked during the interviews what support and assistance they get from the subject advisors. The educators responded:

"The subject advisor do not really help us; we are on our own when we teach, it is a waste of time to ask them for help" (Grade 1 educator).

"The subject advisors only see us when they do training, they do not come for school visits and we do not rely on them to assist us" (Grade 3 educator).

It was evident from the interviews that there was no communication between the educators and the subject advisors. The educators felt that it was a waste of time to phone the subject advisors to come and assist them, as they do not respond.

Management at school level – principal and HoD

At school level, management is supposed to play a very important role to make sure that educators get the proper assistance and support to interpret and implement the CAPS document. However, the interviews revealed that there has not been an HoD for two years and that the principal is not involved in the Foundation Phase in any way.

"We do not have an HoD for the past 2 years and the principal is not involved at all" (Grade 2 educator).

The documentary analysis also provided clear evidence of a complete lack of management involvement in the Foundation Phase. There were no monitoring reports, no class visit, no book control done by an HoD or principal, nor any reports of class visits from the subject advisors. The only support that the educators received was the training in the beginning of the year. This lack of management of teaching reading and learning

in the Foundation Phase at the School B affects the quality of the education as the educators do not have a clear direction.

4.3.2.5 Theme four: factors that influence interpretation, management and implementation of reading policies and documents

The educators came up with different factors that influence their teaching of reading during the interviews. These factors are overcrowded classrooms; the learning environment and materials; language issues; lack of training in the Foundation Phase and other factors that influence teaching of reading. There were more than 40 learners in a class, a shocking number for the Foundation Phase. This obviously affects the quality of the education. The ratio in a classroom is 1 educator with 40 learners (1:40). Language was also mentioned as the learners speak Setswana at home and English at school. The learners only speak English for a small part of the day.

Overcrowded classes

Due to the fact that there are so many learners (more than the ratio of 40 learners per class) in the classroom, there was not enough space (per square metre) to make a reading corner or even to through a carpet. This was confirmed during class observation and the interviews.

"We sit with a lot of children in the classroom, we struggle to do all the work as prescribed by the CAPS document" (Grade 1 educator).

Learning environment

The classrooms were all painted. There was enough tables and chairs for the learners. There were not many posters on the wall and only a few addressed reading. The classrooms were really a bit small, the learners sat on top of each other, there was barely

space to walk. The educators did not make use of any other resources. This was because the school did not buy resources as the educators asked.

"I have learned to work without any other resources, even though you budget for it, you just do not get any resources" (Grade 3 educator).

Language issues

Learners come from homes where they speak languages like Setswana, Afrikaans and Sepedi. The teaching and learning at school take place in English, but the learners only speak English for a part of the day, the rest of the time they speak Setswana. In some instances, the parents cannot help the learners with homework because they struggle to read English themselves.

"We are an English medium school where the home language is English, the learners struggle to read and sound because they speak another language at home, the learners speak a very broken English" (Grade 1 educator).

Lack of training to teach in the Foundation Phase

The interviews indicated that all the educators at this school are qualified for the Foundation Phase. However, the educators stated that they struggle to interpret and implement the CAPS document. The Grade 1 educator commented:

"Due to the fact that we have only maybe once a year training lead to that we struggle to use the CAPS document and not sure how to use it".

Even though all educators are qualified, the interviews indicated that the educators still lack training on interpretation and implementation of the CAPS document. The educators should attend training and use it in their daily teaching.

Other factors that influence teaching

The biggest problem at School B was that the educators struggle on their own and there has been no HoD to assist and support the educators for the last two years. This means that the educators do not receive guidance and are not sure of what they must teach.

“We are working on our own, no HoD for the past 2 years and the principal is not involved at all. This really makes teaching difficult if we are not sure what is going on” (Grade 2 educator).

4.3.2.6 Overview

The findings in this section indicate that the CAPS document was the main policy that guides the teaching of reading at School B. No other documents were mentioned during the interviews and educators were not observed using any other document. The educators reported that the guidelines in the CAPS document are not explicit and systematic and create confusion about how to use the bullets, causing the educators to struggle to interpret and implement the CAPS document.

The educators made use of the CAPS document and the DBE workbook. They use shared reading and individual reading, this was confirmed during the interviews and during class observation. The educators stated they use group guided reading and paired reading, something that was not observed during class observation. During class observation the educators did not do group guided reading and paired reading and the educators did not include any other resources.

The three educators felt that they have the skills and knowledge to teach reading. Only the Grade 3 educator stated there is room for improvement. The educators made use of different teaching methods according to the interviews, but the observations showed only

limited whole-class teaching with learners facing the chalkboard and working in the DBE workbooks.

The information taken from the CAPS document has to be adjusted to the level of the learners because the learners struggle to read in English and they speak another language at home. This increases the workload of the educator. The learners use a broken English when they take part in the class because of the fact that they struggle with language. It is very important for the educators to take curriculum interpretation, implementation and planning seriously, even though they are not qualified, because it provides guidelines of what must be taught and what must be done on a term-by-term basis.

Other findings suggested that overcrowded classrooms are a problem and that educators struggle to complete their work. The learners were sitting very close to each other and there was no space to walk between the learners. There was also no space for a reading corner or a carpet to sit on. The classrooms were smaller than a normal class. The three Foundation Phase classrooms were all painted, there was enough tables and chairs for the learners. Each classroom had different posters, although only a few were related to reading. The last classroom was not in that good shape and needed renovations. Language played a crucial role in reading.

What appeared to complicate the situation of the educators in School B was the absence of HoD for the past two years and the non-involvement of the principal, who was also unavailable to participate in the interviews and was absent from school during the entire period of the fieldwork. The educators' files were not arranged according to the index given by the subject advisors and were not up to date as illustrated in Table 4.4. The educators also appeared uninformed about what was happening regarding changes for this year in the Foundation Phase. Planning was however, part of the educators' daily tasks and they send their planning to one another to be signed. During class observation,

the educators did not make use of any other learning teaching support. The only resources the educators used was the DBE workbooks and the chalkboard.

The educators at School B felt that the workshop held in the beginning of the year to assist the educator on how to interpret and implement the CAPS document, on what documents must be used, the different kinds of reading and where to start with teaching in each grade, was not adequate as there was no follow-up support from the subject advisors.

4.3.3 School C

4.3.3.1 Description of the research participants and the context

School C is situated in a suburban area of Lichtenburg. School C has 342 learners and is a full service school. The staff consists of 12 personnel: a principal; ten educators teaching Grade R to Grade 7, a Grade R assistant and two administrative assistants (AA).

Table 4.8: Profile of the school

<u>School details</u>	<u>Number</u>
<u>Learners in school</u>	<u>342</u>
Black learners	331
Coloured learners	11
Grade 1 learners	40
Grade 2 learners	37
Grade 3 learners	39
<u>Educators in school</u>	<u>12</u>
White	9
Black	3
Language of learning and teaching of the school (LOLT): English	

Learners attending the school come from different socio-economic backgrounds. Some come from the townships surrounding the town, and some come from the town itself. The learners are dropped off by taxis and busses, while some learners are dropped off by their parents. The parents of the learners work in town or just outside town in jobs where they are educators, police men/women, administrative assistants, hairdressers, garden workers and domestic workers. At the school there are exemptions for learners, all the parents cannot afford to pay school fees. Most of the learners and the parents speak Setswana or another African language at home. It is only at school or at their work where they speak English.

There was fencing around the school and three gates to enter the school. Two gates lead to the sport grounds where the transport picks up the learners and one gate goes to the main office. There were not many trees in the schoolyard for shade. There was no grass on the sport ground because the town struggles with water and the school cannot water the grounds. The gardens are neat and looked after. The main building was the first building the researcher entered. There were two admin assistants who assisted the researcher. The researcher felt welcomed at the school, the HoD of the Intermediate Phase showed the researcher around. The school was neat, papers were laying around here and there around and the learners were very quiet at that time. This left the researcher with the impression that time was being used for the right tasks. The Grade 1 and 2 classrooms were painted the previous year and still look like new classrooms. The classrooms were not big, but with the new paint they gave looked like new classrooms.

Document analysis was done first. The researcher looked at the educators' home language file to get an overview of how the educators work in their classrooms, what policies and documents they used and how things work at the school. The files were covered neatly, but because there was no HoD, the index was not according to what the subject advisors stipulated in the workshop at the beginning of the year. Observation was done in the Grade 1 and 2 classrooms, the Grade 3 educator was absent that day.

Observation took place during the language period for one day according to the observation schedule (see Appendix A and B). The language of learning and teaching (LoLT) at this school is English. Field notes were taken during the observation. Interviews were conducted with the Grade R, 1 and 2 educators. The principal and the Grade 3 educator was not there that day and there has not been an HoD for the past two years. The researcher scheduled different appointments with the principal and the Grade 3 educator, but due to different meetings they had to attend, the researcher could not interview them.

Table 4.9: Profile of participants

	Age	Gender	Race	Teaching experience	Qualifications
Grade 1	51	Female	White	16 years	ACE
Grade 2	32	Female	White	2 years	NPDE

4.3.3.2 Theme one: interpretation of policies and documents guided the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase

Reading policies used in the Foundation Phase

During the interview, the educators identified the CAPS document as the main policy that they use to guide their teaching:

“We make use of the CAPS document, but we also have other documents like the reading programme, different readers and then the DBE workbooks” (Grade 1 educator).

All the educators confirmed during the interviews that the CAPS document was the main policy that the educators must use to teach reading. The educators identified other subsidiary documents that can assist with the teaching of reading:

- reading programme (document where educators must show what they have read in a term, what kind of phonics, sight words and spelling had been done);
- different readers and big books;
- programme of assessment; and
- DBE workbooks.

As far as policies and documents were concerned, the educators all used the same documents in their files. Since there was no HoD, the educators decided among themselves what documents to use and implement in their teaching of reading. These documents are mentioned above. The subject advisors stated that educators must make use of the reading norms, but this document was not in the educators' files.

Weaknesses of the CAPS document

The interviews showed that the CAPS document lacked explicit guidelines with regard to the implementation and interpretation of the CAPS document. The CAPS document is not clear on how the bullets must be interpreted. The CAPS document gives guidelines on what to teach, but not on the methodology.

"The CAPS document does not indicate on how we must teach the bullets" (Grade 1 educator).

The Grade R educator further stated that:

"The CAPS document cater for the basic, then there are learners that still cannot do it. But what about the weak learner and also the strong learner".

and the subject advisor confirmed that:

"The CAPS document is silent when it comes to methodology, teachers can use different methods, based on the type of learners they have in their classrooms."

From these quotes, it is clear that the CAPS document is the main policy that guides the teaching of reading, but it lacks in guidance on how to interpret and implement the information inside the CAPS document. The researcher could see through document analysis and from the interviews that the educators used the CAPS document in their

daily teaching, even though the guidelines are not clear. The educators made use of their own methods and interpreted and implemented the bullets differently.

Analysis and interpretation of educators’ home language files

The educators had files for home language that included reading from Grade 1 to Grade 2. During a workshop at the start of the school year, the subject advisors gave the HoDs a new index that the Foundation Phase must follow. The file must be divided into two parts: (1) assessment file and (2) planning file. Because there is no HoD, the educators were not aware of the new index. The subject advisors also stated that there must be a Foundation Phase meeting book where all agendas and minutes must be documented. According to the interviews, the Grade 1 educators stated that the principal said that they must have a meeting each Thursday. The educators made use of the timetables according to the CAPS document. The educators offered intervention according to the CAPS document and White Paper 6 (2001).

The following table indicates the policies and documents that the participants must have in their home language files according to the subject advisors.

Table 4.10: Data analysis

<i>Documents</i>	<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Grade 2</i>
<i>Assessment file</i>		
<i>Assessment policy (NPPR, NPA)</i>	✓	✓
<i>Programme of assessment</i>	✓	✓
<i>Formal tasks</i>	✓	✓
<i>Informal tasks</i>	✓	✓
<i>Moderation reports</i>	x	x

<i>Intervention</i>	✓	✓
<i>Record sheets</i>	✓	✓
<i>Planning file</i>		
<i>Time table</i>	✓	✓
<i>CAPS – Home language</i>	✓	✓
<i>Reading norms</i>	x	x
<i>EGRA (Early grade reading assessment policy statement)</i>	x	x
<i>LAIP (learner attainment for assessment)</i>	x	x
<i>National protocol for assessment</i>	✓	x
<i>Programme and promotion requirements</i>	✓	x
<i>Area office policies</i>	✓	✓
<i>Subject policies</i>	✓	✓
<i>Internal school policies</i>	x	x
<i>Reading and phonics programme</i>	x	x
<i>Annual teaching plans (ATPs)</i>	✓	✓
<i>Lesson plans and examples of worksheets</i>	✓	✓
<i>Report (monitoring and control)</i>	✓	✓
<i>Plans (class visits, meetings)</i>	x	x
<i>Minutes of meetings</i>	✓	✓
<i>Circulars</i>	x	x

Key:

✓ – Educator has it in the home language file

x – Educator does not have it in the home language file

The files of the educators had a different index, but it was close to the current index. However, some documents were not there. Even though there was no HoD, the

educators' files were up to date and the files were neat. The educators tried their best without and HoD.

Meetings: The Foundation Phase meetings are held every Thursday after school. The minutes of the meetings were in the Foundation Phase minute book. The educators discussed different matters, but reading was not mentioned in many of the discussions. The researcher did not attend any of the meetings, but looked in the Foundation Phase minute book, which contained the agendas and minutes. During the interviews, the educators confirmed that they have a meeting every Thursday:

"Our meetings are every Thursday where we must have discussed matters that happened through the week, if there were problems, find solutions for it, stuff like this" (Grade 2 educator).

Planning: The Foundation Phase educators do weekly planning according the CAPS document. Examples of the work for that current week were included. There was no evidence that any person signed the weekly preparation.

"I just do my preparation according to the CAPS document and then get worksheets and resources according to that" (Grade 2 educator).

Planning is very important because no educator can teach without planning, not even for a day. Planning includes the relevant resources, worksheets and homework.

Learning and teaching support material (LTSM): School C did not have many resources. What little resources the school had, the educators had to share. There were only a few readers and big books. During the interviews, the educators stated that the school do not have money for resources so they rely on the DBE workbooks.

The Grade 1 educator stated:

"I only rely on the DBE workbooks and the resources that I have in the classroom, the school do not have money to buy resources."

The Grade 2 educator confirmed that:

"The resources that we have in the Foundation Phase, we share among each other because there are no funds to buy what we need or what the CAPS document is prescribed."

All the educators made use of the chalkboard. They would write on it and learners have to copy or read from it. During observation time, there were only a few posters on the walls that were aligned with the CAPS document. The educators only made use of the DBE workbook and the chalkboard. No other resources were used. The educators admitted during the interviews that there were no resources to use if another class is using the resources.

Assessment: Educators must use formal and informal assessment during the year. The educators made use of baseline assessment in the beginning of the year, then continued assessment. They also used different assessment strategies to assess the learners, like oral assessment, reading and then written tasks. The tasks were not moderated by anyone because there is no HoD.

The Grade 1 educator stated:

"We use formal assessment, from oral, reading to writing and I follow the assessment in the CAPS document."

Assessment tasks adhered to the CAPS document in that the educators start with oral assessment, then progressed to reading and then written tasks. There was no pre- and post-moderation because there is no HoD. Assessment guides the educator to see what level the learners in the class are at and what they grasp so that the things they struggle with can be revised.

Interpretation of policies and documents

The educators did not complain that much about the CAPS document, but they did confirm that they struggle to interpret it. Even though training was offered at the beginning of the year, the educators still struggle to interpret the CAPS document. The CAPS document does not offer clear guidance on how to use the bullets. The bullets are contradictory and the educators are not sure how to use them.

For example:

"The bullets are really confusing me, this term is written this way and next term another way, it is double-barrelled" (Grade 1 educator).

"There is no clear methods or instructions on how to teach reading, it is like a 'guess game' and not sure if what I 'guess' is correct" (Grade 2 educator).

The subject advisor commented:

"The training for educators must be done according to the problems the educators have. To do training for a few hours and hope something sinks in, is really a waste of time, the training must be done according to the problems that the educators experience maybe then the workshop will have a purpose and educators can walk out and learned something."

The researcher noticed during the interviews that the participants have difficulty interpreting the CAPS document, but they seem to try to overcome the problem. Even though the educators went for training, there are still areas that the educators struggle with and do not know how to interpret. Training must be done in another way to make sure that each educator receives training according to the problem he/she has. This will help educators to interpret the CAPS document properly.

4.3.3.3 Theme two: implementation of policies and documents

Skills and knowledge educators need to implement reading policies and other documents

The educators made use of different teaching methods prescribed by the CAPS document. The researcher could see from the interviews and data analysis that the educators made use of the CAPS document and followed the stipulations. The educators made use of the DBE workbook, which is aligned with the CAPS document. The educators stated during the interviews that they make use group guided reading, but there was no evidence during the class observation that group guided reading was done. The learners read together with the educator or they read individually.

The researcher asked during the interviews what skills and knowledge educators must have to teach reading. The educators responded:

"Yes, I try my utter best, I know like the resources we lack and we can make a plan to make it, but there is no time" (Grade 1 educator).

"Yes, I think I have, but training would assist to develop myself to be more skilled in reading" (Grade 2 educator).

They stated that they have the skills to teach reading, although they felt that they could develop and make a plan to get the resources to teach reading better. They suggested training to improve their skill with teaching reading. During the class observation, the educators seemed to have the relevant skills, but that they are open to development. There was still no clarity if the educators made use of group guided reading or paired reading in their school.

Teaching methods and strategies educators use to teach reading

The educators stated that they make use of the DBE workbook and share big books and readers. The school does not have money for resources. The educators make use of their own methods, which they align with the CAPS document. The CAPS document lacks guidance on how to teach reading. It was observed that the educators made use of direct, whole class teaching, where the educator stands in front of the classroom and teaches. There was no clarity as to why the educators did not made use of group guided reading or paired reading. The educators did not elaborate on this issue during the interviews. They made use of the chalkboard and the DBE workbook, no other resources were used because there is no money to buy it.

4.3.3.4 Theme three: management of policies and documents

Management at circuit level – subject advisors

The interviews revealed that the subject advisors offered training to all educators at the beginning of the year, but the educators still struggled to interpret and implement the CAPS document in their daily teaching. The educators did not say much about class visits and support from the subject advisors.

“We had training in the beginning of the year but I still struggle to interpret the CAPS document, it is vague and double-barred that I am not sure what to do at the bullets” (Grade 2 educator).

The subject advisor confirmed that:

“During training, we will explain and then the educators understand and see the light, but when they get back to the school, it is as they forget and suddenly do not know how.”

Although there has been training, it did not assist the educators on how to use the CAPS document and to interpret the bullets as part of their daily teaching.

Educators were asked during the interviews what support and assistance they get from the subject advisors. The Grade 2 educator stated:

"Yes the subject advisors assist and support us, but I think they must come for school visit to identify the problems in our grades and then train us on the mistakes we made during that class visits."

During the interviews, it was evident that there is support from the subject advisor, but only with regard to training and class visits to the Foundation Phase classes. The educators do not ask for assistance and support from the subject advisors.

Management at school level – principal and HoD

At school level, the principal of School C is not involved in the Foundation Phase at all. There has not been an HoD to assist the teachers for the past two years. Document analysis indicated that no monitoring took place. At school level, there was no managerial support.

The educators confirmed:

"For the past 2 years we did not have an HoD to assist and help us and the principal is not involved at all" (Grade 1 educator).

"There is no support from the principal and we do not have an HoD at our school" (Grade 2 educator).

The educators work without any support and assistance in the hope that what they are doing is correct.

4.3.3.5 Theme four: factors that influence interpretation, management and implementation of reading policies and documents

During the interviews, the educators identified different additional factors that influence their teaching of reading. Overcrowded classroom was a problem in all the classes.

Overcrowded classes

The educators stated that they have too many learners in their classrooms to handle. The learners do not benefit from this and the weaker learners are left behind because there is no time to help them. There is not even space for a carpet or a reading corner, not to speak of group-guided reading. This was confirmed during the interviews.

“Overcrowded classrooms is a problem, where are in the Foundation Phase but not quality education can take place, just do the work and hope they understand it” (Grade 1 educator).

Learning environment

The classrooms were all painted last year and still looked like new classrooms. There were enough tables and chairs for the learners. Here and there, one could see a poster on the wall that addressed reading. There were no additional resources in the school except for a few resources that the educators have to share. The school does not have money to buy to resources. The educators rely on the chalkboard and the DBE workbook.

“The classrooms were painted last year, the resources that we had we must use because there is no money to buy any other resources” (Grade 1 educator).

Language issues

The language of learning and teaching (LoLT) is English. Most of the parents do not speak English, they speak a language like Setswana, so they cannot assist the learners. The educators have to adapt the CAPS document to the level of the learners.

"The learners come from the townships to the English mediums schools and only in class time the learners speak English, outside and break time the learners speak Setswana, then the parents cannot assist the learners because they themselves do not understand English" (Grade 1 educator).

Lack of training to teach the Foundation Phase

The interviews showed that all the educators in the Foundation Phase are qualified. However, educators confirmed that ongoing training is a problem. The educators struggle to interpret and implement the CAPS document, even though there was training in the beginning of the year. Inadequate knowledge, a poor grasp of the CAPS document and making mistakes with the interpretation and implementation, can lead to serious consequences.

"I suggest that the subject advisors must do training according to the need of the educators or add all the problems on the agenda and try to resolve it at the training" (Grade 2 educator).

Training will make a difference if educators understand it and can use it at their schools.

Other factors that influence teaching

The financial problems at School C is really a problem for the educators. The educators cannot buy any of the resources that they need in their classroom. The educators must either share the resources there are, or go without it.

"The CAPS document stipulates certain things like readers but the school do not have money to buy readers. I learn to use the resources I have and made a good job of what there is" (Grade 1 educator).

4.4 Overview

According to the class observation, the educators made use of the CAPS document the DBE workbook. The educators only made use of the DBE workbooks, shared reading and individual reading.

During observation time, the educators did not make use of group guided reading and paired reading. No additional resources were used because of financial constraints. During class observation, the educators made use of the chalkboard and the DBE workbook, but the educators stated during the interviews that the additional resources must be shared and the school does not have money to buy the resources they need. The educators rely on the DBE workbook as the only resource.

The educators stated during the interviews that they have the skills to teach reading, but they still wanted training to develop themselves. The educators made use of their own methods. Their methods do meet the requirements of the CAPS document, because the CAPS document lacks guidelines on how to teach reading. This indicates some ingenuity among the educators. These educators have to adapt the CAPS document to the level of the learners because the learners struggle to read in English and they speak another language like Afrikaans or Zulu at home. This increases the workload of the educator even. The educators pointed out several weaknesses in the CAPS document, such as that the CAPS document lacks clear guidelines on how to interpret and implement the bullets. In addition, the CAPS document only caters for the mediocre learners. The weaker and stronger learners do not receive enough attention. There are no clear instructions on methodology for teaching reading. The bullets lead to confusion because they contradict each other and have different focuses in each term.

The learners were seated in pairs facing the chalkboard and the teachers made use of direct, whole-class teaching. Overcrowded classrooms were identified as a problem in the school, the educators struggle to complete their work and have a problem with the discipline. The educators stated that the weaker or slow learners do not benefit from the overcrowded classroom because they do not get any extra attention.

As far as management at school level goes, there was no support or assistance from the principal and there has not been an HoD for the past two years. The management that the subject advisors provide at school level must receive attention so that there can be effective management at the Foundation Phase. The educators tried their best to keep their files in order and up to date without an HoD. Planning was also done weekly with worksheets and homework for that week, but the weekly preparation was not signed or monitored by any person because there has not been an HoD for the past two years.

Management plays a very important role and in School C, the principal is not involved at all and has not been an HoD for the past two years. For all this time, there has not been any management or any support. The findings suggest that educators should receive training according to the need of the educator so that it addresses what that educator struggles with. The educators stated during the interviews that they still struggle to interpret and implement the CAPS document even though they did go for training. The guidelines on what to teach are not clear and they are not sure what methods to use when they teach reading. The subject advisor suggested that the educators should receive separate training for the problems that they face. This may perhaps be a solution to all the problems and educators would be able to interpret and implement the CAPS document without any problems.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter focussed on the findings of the observations, document analyses and interviews to see how educators interpret, implement and manage reading policies in the Foundation Phase. The chapter also presented the voice of participants through the verbatim quotes. The next chapter offers a comparison of the case studies and consults literature to interpret the data.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study according to the themes that emerged from the three case studies. The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings by means of a cross-case analysis and comparison to the literature and theory to make sense of the findings. The data were gathered through document analysis, observation, interviews and field notes. Findings were reported descriptively and direct verbatim quotes were used to support the findings.

5.2 Discussing the themes

5.2.1 Theme one: interpretation of policies and documents guiding the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase

5.2.1.1 Reading policies used in the Foundation Phase

With regard to policies and documents, the findings in this theme show that the main policy that guides the teaching of reading in all three schools is the CAPS document. All the participants mentioned the CAPS document as the only reading policy that they are aware of and were following in their teaching of reading. Participants did, however, mention some supplementary documents that they use to teach reading in School A, but the other schools did not have these documents. These documents included the programme of assessment, a reading programme, different big books and the same readers, DBE workbooks, ATPs and an internal reading policy. The necessity and relevance of these documents was confirmed by the subject advisors, yet School B and C did not have these supplementary documents. The educators in School C mentioned these documents during the interviews, indicating that they were at least aware that such documents existed and that they are supposed to use them, while School B did not show any awareness of additional documents that could be used in teaching reading. This discrepancy can be explained by the absence of HoDs in both schools. The subject

advisors confirmed that the new index and relevant materials were handed out to the HoDs who attended the workshop at the beginning of the year. It is part of the HoDs' professional development. School B and C did not send an educator to attend the workshop in the absence of an HoD, and this is why the participants of these schools did not have the supplementary documents. Although this explains the differences between the schools, it does indicate a major weakness in the way materials are distributed to schools. These supplementary materials are not aimed at the HoDs' own professional development, but should have been given to all educators in the Foundation Phase. Attaching the materials to the HoD post appears problematic as schools with vacant HoD posts end up suffering for something that they have no control over.

5.2.1.2 Weaknesses of the CAPS document

All educators mentioned that CAPS lacks clarity on guidelines for teaching reading. However, in the matter of the adequacy or inadequacy of the CAPS document for teaching reading, the educators in School A did not have problems with interpreting and implementing the CAPS document in their classrooms, while School B and C educators struggled to interpret and implement the CAPS document. Ekpiken and Francis (2015:37) observe that most of the problems and crises with education are issues with the policy itself and the interpretation and implementation of the programmes. However, there are two important issues in the case of the three schools studied: on the one hand, there was the general observation that the CAPS document lacked clarity on how to interpret and implement the policy, which was acknowledged by all the educators across the three schools. On the other hand, there were issues of support and capacity in making sense of the policy – School A had this capacity through the HoD, who monitored processes and assisted the educators to understand the document and who communicates with the subject advisors to seek more clarity. Schools B and C did not have this capacity and support and they missed the training that was meant to support the HoDs in dealing with the CAPS document. Mason (2004:21) states that managers must provide curriculum direction at schools, must inspire and motivate, mediate the education policies, mentor

and support, and finally monitor the process of curriculum implementation and interpretation. Haris and Ghazali (2016:683) note that to achieve success, the curriculum must be interpreted and implemented properly to ensure that learners understand and master a lesson. This will result in changed behaviour, improved effectiveness, quality education and it promotes learners. Arguably, it is difficult for the learners to understand the lesson content when educators themselves do not understand the policy content. While the Wits Education Policy Unit (2005:17) commented that educators have poor knowledge, do not understand the subject content, make mistakes with the concepts in their lesson plans, this study argues that the educators were not able to interpret the policy properly because they did not have necessary support. Schools B and C were not able to follow some of the guidelines in the CAPS document and had no HoDs to assist with the interpretation. They did not receive the baseline training at the beginning of the year, and the subject advisors provided no training and no support. Thus, while some schools have all the support they need to interpret the policy document, enabling them to teach reading as effectively as possible, other schools appear to be neglected.

Marz and Kelchtermans (2013:15) surmise that there are factors that have an influence on policy, such as a lack of clear guidelines and educators who implement and interpret the policies incorrectly, and this influences their teaching of reading. This study confirms that the CAPS document lacks guidance on different methods and strategies to teach reading. The CAPS document gives the different components of reading and assessment, but no methodology on how to use these for teaching reading. This makes it difficult for teachers to translate content into practice. Root (2013:2) argues that sense making is a process of integrating knowledge, practice and understanding. Sense making includes consideration of policies, curriculum standards, assessment, and educators' vision for their curriculum work. Colebatch (2014:350) adds that how people understand policies is influenced by how they understand the different interpretations, their professional training, institutional positions, values, experiences and how they 'make sense' of the policies. If educators cannot make sense of the policy, they will not be able to implement it.

5.2.1.3 Planning for the teaching of reading

Analysis of home language files

A detailed analysis of the educators' home language files indicate the levels of planning involved in teaching reading. Planning was part of the educators' daily teaching in all three schools. According to Wessels (2011), planning includes the interpretation and implementation of the policy, the selection of learning outcomes, the appropriate activities that align with the outcomes and LTSM. It also includes time, as the activities must be planned according to the time allocation in the timetable and according to the attention time span of the learners. The educators in School A each had a separate planning file where all relevant components were planned for according to the CAPS document. The planning file is submitted to the principal every Monday so that he can check and sign it. In School B, planning is also done weekly, but because there is no HoD or principal involved in the Foundation Phase, the educators make the best of their situation and the planning is signed by a peer in the Foundation Phase. In School C, planning is not signed or monitored by any person. Each educator did their own planning and implemented it as they saw fit. Possible reasons for this are the absence of the HoD for the past two years and the principal who is not involved in the Foundation Phase. The findings in this regard differ from those of Wessels (2011), who found that educators neglect planning.

As far as planning is concerned, the findings also revealed some differences between the three case studies in terms of the planning meetings. At school A, subject meetings are held once a month and all the educators are present and they discuss all the relevant information and solve the problems that occurred during that month. Copies of the agenda and the minutes from the meetings were evident in the files of the educators and in the Foundation Phase meeting book. This way the educators stay up to date and informed about any new developments or information for that current month. The HoD draws up the agenda and leads the meeting. The educators support each other if there are any problems to be solved. In School B, there are also monthly meetings, and since there is no HoD to lead the meeting, the educators take turns to lead the meetings and to discuss

the matters on the agenda. The educators also support each other and try to solve the problems to the best of their abilities, making the best of their situation. There was, however, no evidence of a Foundation Phase minute book according to the document analysis. School C's planning is slightly different from the other two schools. Meetings are held every Thursday and the educators lead the meetings together – meaning there is no dedicated chair. Since there has not been an HoD for the past two years and the educators also want to make the best of their situation, the educators discuss the agenda and each educator gives their opinion and suggested solutions to different problems if there are any. All the agendas and the minutes are pasted in the Foundation Phase minute book, providing evidence of what the participants said. According to Ngobeni's (2006) research, the head of department must have regular meetings and team building activities to encourage the educators to learn from each other. For example, if there are any changes in the curriculum or any new information, the HoD must study these changes and information and then arrange a meeting with the teachers to inform and train them so that they can implement these new changes or information. The findings of School A agree with the research of Ngobeni, where the HoD encouraged and supported the educators in the Foundation Phase. In School B and C there has not been an HoD for the past two years. However, this does not appear to have affected the overall planning for teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase in any significant way. There is evidence of determination and initiative on the part of the educators, who did what they had to do regardless.

5.2.1.4 Resources, learning and teaching support material

Previous research has shown that resources and materials play a crucial part when teaching learners to read. The CAPS document provides a list of recommended resources per grade, for example, pictures, posters, phonics wall charts, logos and relevant examples of environmental print, storybooks and picture books (also in reading corner), big books, enlarged texts such as poems, songs, rhymes and a word wall. In this study, the class observations revealed that the only materials that the educators use are

the DBE workbooks and the chalk board. Only School A makes use of other resources. School B and C do not make use of any resources that were mentioned during the interviews, like big books, readers, flashcards or pictures. However, it should be noted that only one observation was made per school and the possibility exists that the use of other teaching resources or materials may not have been planned for the day of the observation. Root (2013:8) explains that educators must choose what resources and materials to use each day, what knowledge to add, and how to engage the learners in the context. Adam (2014:285) points out that schools can invest in proper resources to overcome barriers that lead to reading difficulty and failure, or schools can expand the resources they have year after year to remediate reading difficulty and failure. This study found that schools do not practise the above suggestion as there was no evidence of investment in materials and resources that support the teaching of reading. However, possible reasons for not having these resources at the schools could include a lack of funds at the school, or educators not knowing how to use the additional resources or how to combine the resources with their teaching methods. Bush *et al.* (2009:166) found that the limited supply of teaching and learning materials contributes to under-achievement. Although this study's scope does not examine achievement, one can argue that the learners' ability to read may be negatively affected if they do not have a good foundation due to limited learning materials.

5.2.1.5 Interpretation of policies and documents

Research on the interpretation of policies, such as the work by Dorner (2012:463), highlights that policy interpretation and implementation takes place in schools and districts daily. As mentioned before, Colebatch (2014:349) explains the sense making theory very simply as people making sense of the circumstances in which they are working, and they do this with different concepts and knowledge that is appropriate for the current situation. According to Dunn (2010:1), a key aim of the curriculum is to provide more specific guidance for educators to implement and interpret the policy. However,

Dunn (2010:6) feels that a number of the terms in the CAPS document needs unpacking and clarification for educators, for example modals, orthography, disjunctive, conjunctives, register, spelling rules. As discussed in Chapter 2, scholars differ on whether the problem in education is due to the inappropriateness of the policy framework or the quality of the administration or policy interpretation. Problems can also be due to the application of poor administrative strategies. The findings in this study partially agree with the above literature, as educators experience similar problems to the ones the existing literature indicates. In School A, the HoD and the subject advisors play a very important role to make sure that workshops are held. There has been baseline training in School A to assist educators to understand and interpret the CAPS document and to use it in their daily teaching. There is no management in School B and C and the educators continue without any support and assistance to improve. Dunn (2010:6) notes that extensive workshops must be held regularly to make sure that educators understand the curriculum and what is expected of them when they engage with the learners in front of them. Contact time is very important and the educators must focus on teaching and how to teach. Mbanjwa (2014:12) is of the view that subject advisors have a very important role to support and assist schools, the principal, HoD and educators by conducting workshops on the curriculum to develop educators as far as possible. In this study, such support was inadequate and in some instances non-existent.

5.2.2 Theme two: implementation of reading policies – skills, knowledge and strategies

5.2.2.1 The skills and knowledge needed to implement reading policies

The participants in this study claimed to have the relevant skills and knowledge to teach reading. All of the participating educators had the formal qualifications needed to teach reading at the Foundation Phase, except for one participant at School A. However, the range of skills that the participants claimed they had, could not be observed. In School A, the class observation showed that the three Foundation Phase educators made use of the CAPS document and the DBE workbook. During the observation time the educators

did not do group guided reading or paired reading, which could have displayed their skills. During the interviews, the HoD and the educators stated that they have the skills and knowledge to teach reading and acknowledged that there is always space for improvement and to better themselves. The HoD stated that baseline training in the beginning of the year was very important to refresh and develop knowledge and skills on the CAPS document as it pertains to reading. At School B and C, the educators made use of shared reading and individual reading during class observation, no group guided reading or paired reading. This finding agrees with Ndou (2015:72), who comments that educators can implement the policies in any way they want to. Faulty implementation occurs when the objective between each causal link are not met. Such faulty implementation may be because of a lack of funds to carry out the tasks, a lack of will, a lack of capacity to carry out what is stated in the policy, the policy is inappropriate, or because the causal chain is too long, which leads to the implementation of policies being carried out wrong (Ndou, 2015:72). Ndou's explanation agrees with Dunn (2010:6), who notes that educators' resourcing/ skills/ retooling to help effective implementation of the CAPS document is important. Not all educators know what is expected of them. Since Schools B and C had no HoDs, baseline training was not done to refresh the educators and to develop their skills and knowledge on the CAPS document. According to Fox (2007:27), implementation refers to the techniques, tools and strategies that are used to improve quality in different ways. Implementation is to apply or execute a plan, idea, design and standard from a policy.

5.2.2.2 Teaching methods, strategies and assessment

The findings show that the CAPS document lacks clarity when it comes to methods of teaching reading. However, teachers claimed awareness of a variety of teaching methods they could use in teaching, yet observations showed them using predominantly one teaching method. Nehal (2013) also claims that educators know about the different methods mentioned in the policies, but have no idea how to use it in their teaching. The participants commented that the CAPS document was not clear on methodology on how

to teach reading and this was confirmed by the subject advisors. A discrepancy was picked up at all the schools, where participants made mention of shared reading, use of the DBE workbook, chalkboard and combined or mixed methods of teaching reading. Yet, in all the classrooms, the participants only made use of direct teaching methods with learners seated in pairs at a table facing the chalkboard. It can be argued that the seating arrangement and the size of classrooms constrained the educators to the one teaching method that they were observed using. The educators did not use group guided reading or paired reading. The learners could not work in groups because of how the educator arranged the classroom as well as the overcrowding. Although the seating arrangement could enable learners to work in pairs, paired reading was not used. The participants stated a number of reasons during the interviews for not doing group guided reading. These included classroom space, the number of learners in the classrooms, the amount of work they have to do to cover the curriculum, which means that there is not enough time to do group guided reading. According to Phajane's (2012) research, educators indicated that they experience frustrations due to lack of clear guidelines. The educators recommended more workshops on approaches and methods to interpret the curriculum correctly. This is confirmed by Zama (2014:1), who explored the teaching of reading in South African schools and realized that educators lack teaching skills and approaches to assist learners to read. The subject advisors stated during the interviews that the educators must try to unpack the bullets and interpret it in their own way. They also have to make an activity out of the bullet. It is this interpretation of bullets that most educators struggle with. In this study, a number of Ndou's "causal links" seem to be at play, at least in two of the three studied schools. First, there is the lack of funds to provide educators with the necessary resources and materials, which prevents them from carrying out certain tasks. Second, there is a lack of will on the part of school managers to support the Foundation Phase educators and there is the lack of capacity on the part of the educators to carry out what is stated in the CAPS document. Third, there is lack of resources, affecting the classroom in several ways, such as classroom sizes, teaching materials, which make it difficult to group learners and use a variety of methods. All these factors

interact to show that the “causal chain (of factors) is too long,” leading to the unsuccessful implementation of the reading policy (Ndou, 2015:72).

An important consequence of this is what Spaul (2013:6) warns of, namely that the gaps between what the learners should know and what the learner know, increase over time. This means that as time goes by, these learners fall further behind and this leads to a situation where learner support is ineffective, since the learner's gaps have been left unaddressed for too long. Nehal (2013) states in his study on reading that most of the educators were aware of the methods in the CAPS document, but did not put them into practice. The findings in this regard reflect that the CAPS document lacks clarity on methodology of teaching reading and that the educators are expected to interpret the bullets on their own, and this finding corresponds to the existing literature mentioned above.

5.2.2.3 Assessment

The participating educators found assessment for reading confusing because it is supposed to be done in a variety of different ways for many different purposes. Participants at all three schools made use of a variety of different instruments to get the assessment tasks done. The participants made use of baseline assessment and continuous assessment by using oral assessment, reading and finally writing. There was consensus among the participants that oral assessment and reading takes much time, because they have to do it individually with each learner. The majority of the tasks at the three schools were worksheet based, then oral assessment and reading followed, but because the worksheets are much easier to do and not that time consuming, all the participants made use of the “easiest” method. Adam (2014:28) explains that assessment must be continuous and educators must adjust their teaching methods to meet the needs of the learner. They should not only do assessment through tests one to three times a year. Adam (2014:25) emphasizes that assessment is a corner stone of a curriculum like

the CAPS document. Educators must understand that ideal, purposeful, ongoing assessment must guide them and direct their instruction and teaching. The assessment tasks are done according to the CAPS documents just like Adam (2014:25) stated above. There are a certain number of tasks that must be done for each grade. The assessment tasks are divided into categories like oral assessment, reading and writing. The teaching content is linked with informal and formal assessment tasks. However, there is no indication that the assessment tasks must include different elements of instructional decision making, like instructional change. In this study, only School A, which has an HoD, had moderation of all assessment tasks. The HoD does the pre- and post-moderation and correlates the assessment task with the ATPs and POA to see if the participants followed the CAPS document and covered the curriculum. In Schools B and C there was no HoD to do the monitoring of the assessment tasks. As a result, the assessment of reading was not implemented as per the requirements in the CAPS document at these two schools.

5.2.3 Theme three: management of policies and documents

Ngwenya (2006:10) states that the term *education managers* refers to people who are officially appointed by the department to manage schools according to the procedures. These managers have the authority and are responsible for management, planning, directing, controlling and coordinating the activities of the educators and other stakeholders in that institution. In this study, managers are identified at two levels: circuit and school level. The managers at both levels play a crucial role as part of the management team in the schools. They are responsible for the operation of the schools, and every manager's goal is to make sure that the school and the learners perform.

5.2.3.1 Management on circuit level – subject advisor

With regard to management at a circuit level, the findings suggest that the subject advisors provide workshops to help educators to interpret and implement the reading

policy. However, only School A reported the involvement of subject advisors with their school. While the absence of HoDs at Schools B and C explains this somewhat as subject advisors appear to *laissez-faire* with HoDs, it does reveal total neglect of Schools B and C by their own circuit. At School A, the subject advisors assisted educators with examples of worksheets, weekly planning, discussed the different kinds of reading and assisted each educator on where to start with reading as a baseline. The subject advisors also did class visits, monitored the educators' work and gave positive feedback and support where there were shortcomings.

Mbanjwa (2014:12) proposes that subject advisors have a very important role to support and assist schools, the principal, HoD and educators by conducting workshops on the curriculum and by developing educators as far as possible. Dunn (2010:6) advises that extensive workshops be held regularly to make sure that educators understand the curriculum and what is expected of them when they engage with the learners in front of them. Mbanjwa (2014:12) argues that teaching and learning must be at the top of the subject advisors' list because they are responsible for the curriculum development in schools. The subject advisors must share the vision of the school, give holistic support, provide the required materials that will assist educators to perform their tasks better and with ease, and monitor the development of the learners. However, participants from Schools B and C revealed that none of these managerial actions took place at these schools. All the educators attended the workshop at the beginning of the year, with no follow-up and no further communication between the educators and the subject advisors. The subject advisors did not even come for class visits or give any support via e-mails or telephonically. Mbanjwa (2014:1) points out that district offices have the responsibility of developing and arranging the curriculum and identifying the needs of the educators, which means that the subject advisors have to complement, assist and strengthen schools so that they can improve their teaching and learning of reading. In this case, the findings do not correlate with the envisaged situation described in the existing literature, but there is some agreement with regard to School A.

5.2.3.2 Management at school level – principal and HoD

Management at school level should play a very important role in supporting teaching and learning, but in this study schools experienced different management related challenges that influenced the outcome of the implementation of the reading policy. At School A, the principal was not involved in the Foundation Phase except where he signed the weekly preparation of the educators. At School B and C, the principals were not involved at all in the Foundation Phase. A possible reason for these findings is that the Foundation Phase was not their area of responsibility, as all three the principals taught in the intermediate or senior phase. One can argue that they do not have the relevant knowledge of what is going on in the Foundation Phase as the Foundation Phase differs from the intermediate and senior phases. However, as school principals, they are still expected to play a role in ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place throughout the school. The findings in this regard concur with Bush *et al.* (2009:167), who found principals to have a “weak grasp of teaching and learning,” yet they are expected to ensure successful delivery of the curriculum policy. Although only one principal out of the three was available to be interviewed, findings generally suggest that the principals were largely unaware of the issues and requirements of the policy regarding the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase.

As Bush *et al.* (2009:167) also found in their study, the involvement of the principal in School A of this study was largely “confined to checking that work has been completed rather than making informed judgements about the quality of teaching and learning.” In this case, the principal’s role was just to sign off educators’ weekly preparation with no meaningful engagement. However, it was perhaps encouraging that the principal acknowledged his limited involvement and was prepared to do more. Indeed, Bush *et al.* (2009) assert that principals have to be more involved if the school wants to see an improvement in learner achievement. Kruger and Steinman (2003:67) comment that effective education is only possible through proper leadership and management and any

challenge that hampers the implementation and interpretation of the curriculum remains the responsibility of the managers. Dewey and Cummins (2013:15) reiterate that effective leaders like the principal must carry out important leadership responsibilities such as planning, implementing, management, support, advocating, communicating and monitoring of policies.

With regard to the HoD, School A provided an example of good practice. At School A there was evidence that the HoD did give support and management in the Foundation Phase by leading at meetings, providing baseline training, year planning, book control, file control, class visits and monitoring and control as stated in the document analysis. The HoD gave her utter best as manager. She offers interpretation and implementation, and assists where she can. This agrees with the existing literature, which suggests that HoDs play a significant role in managing teaching and learning (Bush *et al.* 2009). As pointed out in Chapter 4, there has not been HoDs at Schools B and C for the past two years to assist and support the educators. This leaves a gap in the management of teaching and learning in the Foundation Phase at these schools. Ramalepe (2010:37) argues that something that applies to all schools is that managers must give guidance to educators on different aspects like assessment, validity, reliability, examinations, marking of tasks, marking of exam papers, internal and external examination, use of different teaching methods, recording and reporting of learners' performances.

According to Dewey and Cummins (2013:15), effective leaders, like for instance a principal, should make good use of the resources at hand so that they can be excellent managers. Sadly, the findings of this study contradict what Dewey and Cummins (2013:5) are saying. At all three the schools, the principals at all three schools are not involved in the Foundation Phase and do not have knowledge of what is going on in the Foundation Phase. Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002:389) note that some reasons for implementation failure include the inability of the education managers to formulate the policy outcomes and the supervision of the implementation of the goals. It is evident in this study that school managers are hardly involved in the implementation of goals for the

Foundation Phase. Thus, although the involvement of the principal in the Foundation Phase is still far from ideal, School A provides a good example of management of policy leading towards a “collective responsibility of teaching and learning” (Bush *et al.* 2009:166) in the Foundation Phase. The two subject advisors, who both work with all three case study schools, appear more involved in school A and less involved in the other two schools. The three schools are all full service schools located in different parts of the central town area and attract learners from similar low socio-economic catchment areas. Arguably, something about School A makes it possible for the school to emerge as an example of good practice. This needs to be studied further so that other schools can learn from it and enhance their practice.

The researcher’s reflection is that there is a discrepancy between the schools: Schools B and C have not had an appointed Foundation Phase HoD for the last two years, meaning that educators must fend for themselves. They act according to their own discretion, hoping that what they are doing is correct. This leaves the educators in the dark and it is the researcher’s opinion that the Foundation Phase educators at Schools B and C are being neglected by their own school management and the subject advisors. Ali and Botha (2006) state that it is the role of the HoD to supervise teaching and learning activities on a daily basis in the respective learning areas. It is the researchers’ contention that in the absence of the Foundation Phase HoD, subject advisors should follow up with School B and C to make sure they are on track with all new developments and that they have the relevant information/documents to teach. Similarly, the school principals could play a more supportive role to ensure that the Foundation Phase educators are not left behind. This issue is revisited later in the discussion.

5.2.4 Theme four: factors that influence interpretation, implementation and management of reading policies

Besides the themes discussed above, the findings revealed several other factors that influence the reading policy and make it difficult to teach reading. These factors included

overcrowded classroom; the learning environment and materials; language issues; lack of training in the Foundation Phase.

5.2.4.1 Overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowding in classrooms was identified as a significant factor affecting the successful implementation of the reading policy. Although all teachers at all three schools mentioned overcrowding as a factor, there was no consistency and uniform description of what constituted overcrowded classrooms. The classroom sizes (per square meter) were not big enough to allow educators to have a reading corner or even throw a carpet where the learners could sit. The average teacher–learner ratio across these case study schools was 1:42, which is slightly higher than the recommended learner–teacher ratio of 40 learners per educator for primary schools in South Africa (DoE, 2010). The Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) (ELRC, 2003:33) confirms that there can be at least 40 learners in classes from Grades 1 to 6 in primary schools. According to educators, the class size prohibits them from giving individual attention or even using a range of other alternative methods, such as individual reading or paired reading. As a result, the educators choose the easiest way to teach, enabling them to handle discipline in the same time. Usually they revert to whole-class teaching. Theron (2006:157–158) remarks that the layout, size, and content of the classroom have an influence on teaching of reading according to the policies and the needs of the learners. The layout of the classroom, proper furniture and the learning and teaching support materials are all part of the classroom environment that shapes educators' view on overcrowding. The participants in this study stated that the learners are too much to handle with all the workload and the learners do not benefit from the overcrowded classes. The weaker or slow learners are left behind and the educators cannot assist them in the way they need to be assisted. At School B, classrooms were smaller than the classrooms at other schools and learners sat on top of each other with hardly any space for the educator or learners to walk. This was confirmed by Wessels' (2011:167), who states that quality teaching in the Foundation Phase cannot take place in an overcrowded classroom. In

Phajanes' (2012:87) study, the learners in the classrooms were seated in a church style, facing one direction. He observed that learners did not work together, each learner did his/her own activity (individual activity). Phajanes' research suggests that educators must encourage learners to work in a team and they must create a flexible learning environment.

5.2.4.2 Learning environment

The observations showed that the three Foundation Phase classrooms at all three schools were all painted and there were enough tables and chairs for the learners. Each classroom had different posters, although few were aligned with reading. Zama (2014:4) is of the opinion that there is a huge problem with reading and that one of the reasons for this is the fact that the learning environment does not expose learners to different stories and posters. The same posters are used year after year. In the book corner, the books are not changed or new books added. The researcher observed different resources at School A like readers, flash cards, big books and pictures. At School B and C there were no additional resources in the school. The few resources they had, they had to share. Possible reasons can be that the school does not have funds for resources, but this affects the learning environment.

5.2.4.3 Language issues

At all three schools, educators had to teach learners to read in English, as this is the language of teaching and learning at all three schools. However, the majority of learners come from homes where they speak Setswana or other languages, such as Afrikaans. This means that as an additional language, the learners only speak a small amount of English during class time and the rest of the time they interact in their home languages. Additionally, even though English is the learners' second (or third) language, there is no assistance or help to transition from home language to the language of learning. Zama (2014:2) mentions that different methods and approaches must be used to assist learners

by employing their home language and they should then build from there to help them with English (EFAL – first additional language) by making it language friendly. The learners' backgrounds suggest that they do not get help from their parents. Many of the parents do not speak English and/or are illiterate and cannot assist the learners at home. The educators have to adapt the CAPS document according to the learners' level because the learners struggle to sound and read in English. This creates more work for the educators. The learners use broken English when they speak and when they do orals and read. Homework is a problem because parents cannot assist the learners, as they themselves cannot speak English. These findings agree with those of Mzimela (2012), who states that learners struggle more to read and write in "English" if they cannot even do it in their own language. Phajane (2014:101) also confirms the problem of language. Many of the concepts that are connected with teaching reading, such as the methods or techniques, are in English and based on the structure of the English language. There is no translation into Setswana or Sepedi, which makes it difficult for educators to teach reading if teachers cannot understand the language themselves.

5.2.4.4 Lack of training in the Foundation Phase

Regarding training and qualifications to teach the Foundation Phase, the majority of the educators were qualified. However, there was no continuing professional training to develop the educators. At School A, the HoD did baseline training in the beginning of the year because the Grade 2 educator was not qualified to teach in the Foundation Phase and the Grade 3 educator had previously only taught in a Grade 1 environment. The baseline training helped all educators to refresh and recap what is going on in the CAPS document. At School B, all the Foundation Phase educators were qualified, but during the interviews the educators commented that they lack training on interpretation and implementation of the CAPS document and suggested that training could be done twice a year. This suggested the need for more professional development, regardless of whether the educators were qualified to teach in the Foundation Phase or not. Rossouw's (2014:181) research revealed that some educators do not have the correct training and

qualifications, but are aware of the standards of education required. In that study, there were some participants who felt that they were safe and just glad to be employed, regardless of the qualifications, training and level of performance. Further, Rossouw (2014:234) stated that no person without the required qualification should be appointed as an educator, because inappropriately qualified educators can harm the image of the learners and damage their own reputation. Educators in this study were mostly qualified, but needed more ongoing professional development.

5.2.4.5 Other factors that influences teaching

When we look at factors that have an influence on teaching reading in the Foundation Phase, at School A, the timetable for Grade 3 was not correct according to the CAPS document. The educator does not use the correct time allocation and subject division as stated in the policy. These findings are in agreement with Dunn (2010:6), who states that the time allocation of six hours a week for the home language is insufficient. Two hours a day will ensure that all the different areas of home language are covered. Twenty minutes a day for group guided reading for two groups is not realistic, each group must be able to get at least 20 minutes where phonics, comprehension and discussion of the book/material must be taken into consideration. The more time spent during group-guided reading, the more progress there will be in reading (Dunn, 2010:6). However, the situation in Schools B and C was much more dire than the merely timetable problems as the educators have had cope and struggle on their own for the past two years because there are no HoDs at these schools. This leaves educators with no guidance and assistance of any kind and in a state of absolute neglect.

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the similarities and differences between the schools and compared the findings to the existing literature. The chapter also provided

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter provides a summary of the findings and draws conclusions. It also makes recommendations on how the implementation of reading policies in the Foundation Phase can be managed. It then defines the contribution of the study and discusses the limitations of the study. Suggestions are made for the improvement of future research, which could add value to this field of research.

6.2 Answering the research questions

The study used a multiple case study approach to investigate the interpretation, implementation and management of the reading policies in the Foundation Phase. The selected schools were studied in depth. The approach was chosen because the researcher wanted to understand more the implementation and interpretation of reading policies as a phenomenon within a particular context better. Three case studies were involved as research sites where interviews, observations and documentary analysis were conducted. The data was analysed using a coding process and findings were presented according to the themes and sub-themes that emerged. This section gives a short summary of the key findings of this research and attempts to provide direct answers to the research questions, followed by conclusions.

6.2.1 What policies and documents guide the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase?

The findings with regard to the policies and documents reveal that the main policy that guides the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase is the CAPS document. Other supplementary documents include the programme of assessment, reading programme, formal tasks for Grade 1–3, moderation reports, a timetable, a reading and phonics programme, annual teaching plans (ATPs), lesson plans and examples of work sheets,

reports (monitoring and control) and planning (class visit and meetings). Subject advisors identified the reading norms, EGRA, area office policies, subject policies and internal school policies. However, not all case study schools possessed and used these supplementary documents. Only in one of case study schools had these supplementary documents in the educators' files and appeared to be using them. This same school also had an internal policy on teaching reading in the Foundation Phase. No other documents were used except for the DBE workbooks, which are linked to the CAPS document. Although the CAPS curriculum policy is the main document used to teach reading in the Foundation Phase, it gives no clear guidelines or directions as to how educators should teach certain areas of the policy.

6.2.2 How do educators interpret, implement and manage reading policies?

6.2.2.1 Interpretation of reading policies

In terms of the interpretation of policy, the findings suggest that the participants do not always understand the stipulations of the CAPS documents. As a result, they make partial use of the guidelines or use their own methods because they do not know how to interpret the CAPS document. The most common reason for this is that the CAPS document lack proper guidelines and clarity on how to teach reading. Participants do not understand how to change a bullet point into an activity and are not always sure whether what is stipulated in that bullet is correct. The researcher concludes that the CAPS document lacks proper guidelines for reading and educators are not sure how to interpret the CAPS document as part of their daily teaching. In this case, some educators use their own understanding, which should ideally be confirmed by a manager. However, the two schools without HoDs were not in communication with the subject advisors and therefore lacked confirmation. Additionally, there are issues like group guided reading that has not been implemented by any educator because they do not know how to interpret the relevant sections. The curriculum document states that group guided reading, paired reading, shared reading and individual reading must be done, but the findings reveal that independent reading

and whole class shared reading occurs most of the time, while group guided reading and paired reading does not take place. Although this can partly be linked to the shortage of resources within the schools that limits the educators to only one or two methods, the curriculum does not stipulate clearly how educators must implement the different kinds of reading. However, the one school that does have an HoD modelled good practice as the subject advisor was in constant engagement with the educators to help them interpret the policy.

6.2.2.2 Implementation of reading policies

The data gathered during this research shed light on the problem of the implementation of reading policies. The researcher came to a better understanding of the phenomenon in that the educators struggle to interpret the policy and can therefore not implement it as stipulated. Educators do not understand how to teach reading according to guidelines because they interpret these guidelines wrongly. With no clear guidelines, the participants from schools with no HoDs appeared to be left to their own devices to interpret policy. They lack reassurance that their interpretation is correct. During the observations, most participants made use of the DBE workbooks and no other resources. They attached great significance to the DBE workbook because it is colourful and no extra worksheets are needed. Notwithstanding the problems associated with the CAPS document itself, without proper support from the management, it was particularly difficult for the educators to implement policy as planned.

6.2.2.3 Management of reading policies at circuit level

With regard to the management of reading policies, the findings showed the significance of policy management at two levels: the Department of Basic Education through its district/circuit office and school management through the principal and the HoD for the Foundation Phase. At the departmental level, the subject advisors provided training at the beginning of the year to all educators, and constant engagement with one of the three

schools. Participants from School A benefitted from the training and general management of teaching and learning support, while the participants from School B and C did not benefit from the training and were generally neglected. It appeared that the subject advisors were only involved in one of the three case study schools. The subject advisors were not involved in the other two schools and this led to the participants not receiving all new information and not being on track with all developments. To make matters worse, the subject advisors' training at the beginning of the year was for the HoDs, but only one school had an HoD and benefitted from the training. The other two schools did not receive all the information since there are no HoDs.

6.2.2.4 Management of reading policies at school level

At the level of the school, the principals of the three selected schools were not involved in the Foundation Phase at all, except for one principal who signs the weekly preparation of the educators. The other two principals were not at school for personal reasons, and even though the researcher scheduled other appointments with them, they could not be interviewed. A possible reason for the principals' lack of involvement in the Foundation Phase is that they do not teach in the Foundation Phase and do not have knowledge of what is going on in the Foundation Phase. However, it is the responsibility of the principal and HoD to manage teaching and learning so that educators can feel supported when they implement the curriculum in the classroom. The researcher only got insight from one principal's perspective and this was not enough evidence to get clarity on this matter. In addition, only one school had an HoD, the other two schools did not have an HoD for the past two years. The school where there was an HoD also had a somewhat involved principal and it was evident that some management of teaching and learning of reading did take place. On the contrary, no management of teaching and learning of reading in the Foundation Phase appeared to be taking place in Schools B and C. Thus, the interpretation, implementation and management of reading policies are interlinked: without effective management, it was evidently difficult for educators to interpret and implement policy.

6.2.3 What factors influence educators' interpretation, implementation and management of reading policies?

Findings indicated several factors that influence the effective management of the teaching of reading. It is acknowledged that there is a gap in the CAPS document and this could be the reason for educators' uncertainties and frustration when they have to teach reading. However, there are other factors that influence the teaching of reading and these include a lack of resources, language issues, overcrowding and staff shortages. Due to the overcrowded classrooms, the educators are limited in the methods they can use successfully. Large numbers make it difficult to divide learners into groups and handle discipline at the same time. The teaching of reading is therefore influenced by the classroom environment. The matter of time is linked to overcrowding. This was also a significant problem for the educators when it comes to teaching reading. The time was not enough to teach learners to read and to divide them into groups and do group activities. After reading different worksheets must also be done, together with work from the DBE workbooks. The work was just too much to be done in the time frame the policy gives.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that there is a serious shortage of resources, both physical and human. First, the CAPS document clearly stipulates certain resources, but the schools do not always have the means to get these resources. Educators, particularly those in schools with HoDs, improvise and use whatever is available. Second, staff shortages influence the management of the reading policy significantly. The fact that two of the case study schools did not have HoDs meant that the necessary management for effective teaching of reading could not take place. Last, language itself was also discovered to play a key role because most of the learners speak Setswana at home and the curriculum is written and taught in English. This prevented some educators from interpreting the curriculum correctly and it is difficult for the learners to read properly if they cannot speak the language of the curriculum. All these factors are at play at the

same time and negatively affect the interpretation, implementation and management of the reading policy.

6.2.4 How can the interpretation, management and implementation of reading policies be improved in the Foundation Phase?

This research foregrounds several problems regarding the teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase. These problems are discussed below, together with recommendations to improve the teaching of reading.

First, the improvement of the interpretation of reading policies.

The HoD of School A suggested that the CAPS document must be revisited at national level. It should be reformulated so that it is clearer on how to teach reading and gives proper guidelines on how to teach reading. The participants suggested that a number of the terms in the CAPS document should be unpacked and clarified to enable educators to interpret the document better.

The subject advisors proposed that educators must interpret each bullet in the CAPS document and turn it into an activity. However, these bullet points in the CAPS document must be written more clearly so that educators can interpret them with ease and then implement it correctly in their teaching. The educators confirmed that the CAPS document lacks proper guidelines and clarity on how to teach reading. If the bullet points should translate into activities, the CAPS document should explain this clearly.

The educators also stated that extensive workshops should be held regularly to address the specific needs of the educators. This will help them to understand and interpret the curriculum better and to know exactly what is expected of them.

Second, improvement of the implementation of the reading policies.

The HoD suggested that baseline training in the beginning of the year is very important to refresh and develop knowledge and skills on the CAPS document and how to teach

according to the CAPS document. The participants stated that in-school training should be promoted to assist them and to keep them up to date on the new developments and on how to implement it correctly. Only School A did baseline training. Schools B and C had no baseline training at all.

The participants can have intensive workshops and training on how to teach reading and how to implement the CAPS document properly. Without adequate training, educators would still not know how to implement and interpret the CAPS document. Teaching resources and materials will help the participants with their teaching. The participants made use of the DBE workbooks and aligned it with the CAPS documents. Some of the participants regarded this as more than enough resources. The educators stated they made use of group guided reading and shared reading, but there was no evidence during the class observation that the educators did indeed use these techniques. Intensive workshops and training can teach the participants to do the different kinds of reading in class and how to go about it. The participants made use of baseline assessment and continuous assessment by doing oral assessment, then reading and finally writing. The majority of the tasks were worksheet-based as this is much easier to do and not that time consuming. At all three schools, the participants made use of the easiest method.

Most of the educators use the lecturing method, but they must refrain from this, as it is not the best method to teach reading. The educators need knowledge and assistance to help them develop different methods to implement and interpret the CAPS document correctly. Educators can share good practices among each other and at other schools. Educators can attend different workshops to help them to develop and to do research on the issues they struggle with. The HoD and participants commented that there is space for improvement and better skills to teach reading properly. The participants stated that they have knowledge about the different methods mentioned in the CAPS document, but they have no idea how to use it in their teaching. Most of the participants made use of their own methods to teach reading and some of the educators made use of the methods from the CAPS document. All the participants made use of whole-class teaching (standing

in front of the classroom) and did not use different teaching methods like combined or mixed methods

Educators should not be confined to the classroom space, the outside grounds can be used to make groups. The learners could not work in groups because the educators arranged the classrooms in such a way that the learners face the chalkboard and the learners cannot work together. A number of reasons why the educators could not do group guided reading that were mentioned during the interviews: classroom space and size, number of learners in the classrooms (ratio of 40:1), work overload, leading to the educators not having enough time to do group guided reading.

Third, the improvement of management of the reading policies.

The subject advisors can involve the principals and HoDs more, communicate with them and assist them as far as they can. Where there are no HoDs, the subject advisors and principal must work together to support the educators. The subject advisors should follow up with all schools, especially schools that don't have HoDs. Subject advisors should make sure that all new developments are implemented and that teachers have all the relevant information and documents to teach. The principals can become more involved in the Foundation Phase to stay abreast of what is going on in the Foundation Phase and to assist and monitor the educators and provide the necessary support. In addition, the principals could play a more supportive role to ensure that the Foundation Phase educators are not neglected.

Subject advisors should be in contact on a more regular basis to assist and monitor educators at their schools, even where there are no HoDs. Training must not only be offered once a year, but should be continuous throughout the year. The participants stated that there was training for all educators in the beginning of the year, but not all the needs are attended to at the training and the educators continue to struggle with training from the department.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the collected information and the resulting conclusions, the following recommendations are made to improve policy, practice and research.

6.3.1 Recommendations for policy

The reading section of the curriculum should be revised in to assist educators to interpret and implement the CAPS document and to maintain a high standard of education. There is a need for guidance in the correct interpretation of the CAPS document. Should the CAPS document be revised to provide explicit information about the teaching of reading, in the Foundation Phase, the educators might be able to interpret and implement the guidelines correctly and as a result reading outcomes might improve. It is therefore recommended that the revision of the CAPS document should involve educators and incorporate their views based on their experiences. It is further recommended that schools invest time in the development and refinement of their own internal policy and guidelines on teaching reading. These policies should be based on the CAPS document, but would ensure that the translation of stipulations is interpreted according to the context and is suitable for the resource capacity of each school.

6.3.2 Recommendations for practice

Educators cannot manage in isolation, but need assistance and guidance from the subject advisors and school managers like the HoD to interpret the CAPS document correctly. The educators interpret the CAPS document wrongly or have difficulty to interpret the CAPS document because they do not understand what they must do or do not know how to do it. It is recommended that the different methods of how to teach reading be made clear in the guidelines provided to schools by the subject advisors. The subject advisors are responsible for training and empowering the educators by helping them interpret the CAPS document and by teaching them the different approaches and methods to teach reading. Subject advisors can do training in the beginning of the year to recap all important

aspects of the CAPS document. After the training the subject advisors can do class visits to make sure that educators are on track. Follow-ups on all schools are important so that no schools are left behind. If possible, subject advisors can make recommendations that educators can work on and develop. Furthermore, the school can make sure that there is enough money for resources and materials for the educators to teach with. Without proper teaching materials and resources, educators cannot teach properly.

6.3.3 Recommendations for further research

The study recommends that more research be conducted in schools to understand the challenges educators experience in teaching reading. It would also help if future research is action-based so that effort is put into assisting educators to get the best out of their different situations.

6.4 Limitations

One of the major limitations of this study was the absenteeism of the participants, like the HoDs and principals. Only one HoD and one principal were interviewed in one case study school. This gave only limited insight into the managers' point of view and affected the depth of the data from the relevant case studies. Ideally, more time spent in the three schools would have improved the research process and the quality of data. This would give the researcher more time to observe what the participants planned for different days, among other things. However, sufficient data were collected to answer the research questions, making this study worthwhile. The findings of this study are not generalizable to the whole country, given the nature of the case study design and the uniqueness of each case. While these findings are valuable in their own right, larger survey studies would be helpful in providing generalizable findings that offer stronger direction for policy.

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Appendix A

Observation schedule

1. Are all language skills addressed? E.g. listening, speaking, reading and writing to prepare learners for assessment?
2. Does the educator work in small groups? Are those ability groups as prescribed by the CAPS document?
3. LTSM – Are there big books, readers, flash cards, pictures, word wall, sight words, alphabet, posters on the walls, flash cards, group work, picture reading big books etc.?
4. Assessment: What assessment strategies are followed? Does the educator do continuous assessment and support learners accordingly?

In-class documents suggested for document analysis

1. File for home language – focus on meetings, workshops etc. and how the educator implements the new and old information in his/her classroom discussed at meetings etc.
2. Planning: Did the educator plan, is he/she well prepared?
3. Utilization of teaching time for reading (does the time allocation adhere to policy documents? How is the lesson planning implemented? How is the LTSM incorporated into the lesson? What methods/strategies are used? Do the teaching and learning activities adhere to what the policy documents prescribe?).
4. LTSM – Are there big books, readers, flash cards, pictures, word wall, sight words, alphabet, posters on the walls, flash cards, group work, picture reading big books etc.?
5. Assessment: What assessment strategies are followed? Does the educator do continuous assessment and support learners accordingly?
6. File for home language – focus on policies and documents.

7. File for home language – focus on meetings, workshops, PSFs etc. What support the educator received and how he/she implemented the information discussed at meetings, PSFs etc. in his/her classroom (support for implementation).
8. File for home language – reports from HoD, class visits and other relevant documents (strengths and weaknesses).
9. File for home language – focus on timetable, extra and co-curricular activities, time allocation, intervention, year plan, monitoring, class visits, book control etc.).

The following official documents will be analysed:

- File for home language
 1. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) – home language
 - 1.1 Programme of assessment
 - 1.2 Formal tasks Grade 1–3
 - 1.3 Moderation reports
 - 1.4 Intervention
 - 1.5 Time table
 - 1.6 Reading and phonics programme
 - 1.7 Annual teaching plan (ATPs)
 - 1.8 Lesson plans and examples of work sheets
 - 1.9 Report (monitoring and control)
 - 1.10 Planning (class visit, meetings)
 2. National reading programme for Grade R to 3 - Reading norms
 3. Early Grade Reading Assessment Policy Statement (EGRA)
 4. Area office policies
 5. Subject policies
 6. Internal school policies

Appendix B.1

Date: _____ **School:** _____
Grade: _____ **Number of learners:** _____

Observation schedule

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Appendix B.2

In-class documents suggested for document analysis

1.	
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9.	

The following official documents will be analysed: (tick where applicable)

- File for home language
 1. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) – home language
 - 1.1 Programme of assessment
 - 1.2 Formal tasks grade 1 – 3
 - 1.3 Moderation reports
 - 1.4 Intervention
 - 1.5 Time table
 - 1.6 Reading and phonics programme
 - 1.5 Annual Teaching Plan (ATPs)
 - 1.8 Lesson plans and examples of work sheets
 - 1.9 Reports (monitoring and control)
 - 1.10 Planning (class visit, meetings)
 2. National reading programme for Grade R to 3 - Reading norms
 3. Early Grade Reading Assessment Policy Statement (EGRA)
 4. Area office policies
 5. Subject policies
 6. Internal school policies

Appendix C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

1. Do you make use of the DBE teachers' booklet *Teaching reading in the early grades* and do you implement this booklet in your classroom?
2. CAPS was developed nationally. Can you tell me how it was introduced to you as an educator by the HoD, principal and subject advisors? (e.g. in a meeting, workshop, etc.)
3. What reading policies do you implement in your school?
4. Which of these documents are you expected to use in your classroom as instructed by the HoD?
5. Please tell me which other policies or documents you have used in teaching reading and how useful do you find these policies or documents?
6. In your opinion, what do you regard as the strengths and weaknesses of the policies and documents that you as an educator use to teach reading?
7. Tell me about the specific support you get regarding the implementation of CAPS. What other support do you get from the subject advisors, principal and HoD in relation to teaching reading?
8. Which guidance and support do you get from the HoD in the Foundation Phase with regard to teaching reading? (e.g. SMT, meetings, PSF etc.)
9. In your opinion, what skills and knowledge do educators need to teach reading in the Foundation Phase? What skills and knowledge do educators need to implement reading policies and other related documents in the Foundation Phase?

10. Do you think you as an educator have the skills that you mentioned above? Are there any other skills and/or knowledge you need to help you perform your role better?
11. What teaching methods or strategies do you find useful in your classroom? Are these methods/strategies prescribed by CAPS or do you make use of your own methods/strategies?
12. Are there any challenges that you as an educator experience with regard to the interpretation of the relevant policies and documents? What support do you get from the HoD and principal and subject advisors in dealing with these challenges?
13. In the classroom educators make use of different Learning Teacher Support Material (LTSM). Which materials do you find most useful when teaching learners to read and why? (Example big books, picture reading etc.)
14. The CAPS document requires that you make use of formal assessment like baseline assessment, oral, reading and writing. Which assessment methods do you think are most useful to assess the learners in their classroom? Why?
15. What factors influence your teaching of reading in the Foundation Phase. These influences that you experience may either be positive or negative, tell me about everything that influences your teaching of reading.
16. How can the policies and your implementation of the policies be improved?
17. What opportunities do you as an educator have to contribute to the improvement of the implementation of the curriculum (CAPS) in your school? (e.g. timetable, extra and co-curricular activities, time allocation, intervention, year plan, mentoring, class visits, book control etc.) Are there any other opportunities you would like to have in this regard?
18. Is there anything else in general you want to share with me?

Appendix D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (HoDs)

1. CAPS has been developed nationally. Can you tell me how it was introduced to you as an HoD by the subject advisors and principal? (e.g. in a meeting, workshop use as prompts).
2. Which reading policies do you implement at your school?
3. In your opinion, what skills do HoDs need to manage the implementation of reading policies and documents in the Foundation Phase?
4. Do you think you as a HoD have the skills that you mentioned above? Are there any other skills and/or knowledge you need to help you perform your role better?
5. What teaching methods or strategies, prescribed by CAPS or other policy documents, do educators use? Do educators utilize other methods/strategies not prescribed? Can you name/explain these?
6. In the classroom educators make use of different Learning Teacher Support Material (LTSM). Which materials do educators find useful when teaching learners to read and why? (Example big books, picture reading etc.)
7. The CAPS document requires formal assessment like baseline assessment, oral, reading and writing assessment. What assessment strategies do you think are most useful to assess the learners in the Foundation Phase? Why?
8. Which policies or documents are the educators expected to use in teaching reading? How useful are these policies or documents with regard to teaching reading in the Foundation Phase?
9. Tell me about the specific support you get regarding the implementation of CAPS. What other support would be useful in relation to teaching reading?

10. Which guidance and support do you provide to the educators in the Foundation Phase? (e.g. SMT, meetings, PSF etc.)
11. What challenges do you as an HoD experience with regard to instructing or training your educators on how to teach reading?
12. In your opinion, what do you regard as the strengths and limitations of the policies and documents prescribed to teach reading?
13. What opportunities do you as an HoD have to contribute towards the improvement of the implementation of the curriculum (CAPS) in your school? (e.g. timetable, extra and co-curricular activities, time allocation, intervention, year plan, mentoring, class visits, book control etc.) Are there any other opportunities you would like to have in this regard?
14. Is there anything else in general you want to share with me?

Appendix E

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRINCIPALS

1. CAPS was developed nationally. Can you tell me how it was introduced to you as a principal and how it was subsequently introduced to the HoD (Foundation Phase) and educators?
2. In your opinion, what do you regard as the strengths and weaknesses of the policies and documents that Foundation Phase educators must implement to teach reading?
3. Which policies or documents are the educators expected to use in teaching reading? How useful are these policies or documents with regard to teaching reading in the Foundation Phase?
4. Tell me about the specific support the school gets regarding the implementation of CAPS for the Foundation Phase, but also general support from the subject advisors and the circuit office (Probe: Tell me about the documents / information meetings / training / discussions you attend to assist you in this matter).
5. Tell me about the guidance and support you provide to the Foundation Phase HoD and educators with regard to teaching reading (e.g. SMT, meetings, PSF etc.).
6. Are there any general challenges you experience in providing support to the HoD and the educators in the Foundation Phase?
7. Are there any general challenges that the school faces or experience in implementing the reading policies and how you deal with these challenges in the Foundation Phase?
8. What assistance or support have you received to deal with these challenges?

9. What opportunities do you as a principal have to contribute to the improvement and implementation of reading policies in your school and particularly for the Foundation Phase?
10. What opportunities do the HoD and educators have to contribute towards the improvement of the curriculum? (Probe: Educator free to make his/her own interpretations of the curriculum and do you as the principal support it?)
11. How do you as the principal ensure that the HoD does his/her work properly and give support to the educators?
12. Is there anything else in general you want to share with me?

Appendix F

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SUBJECT ADVISORS

1. CAPS was developed nationally. Can you tell me how it was introduced to you as a subject advisor by the Department of Education on a Provincial and National level (e.g. in a meeting, workshop use as prompts)?
2. Which reading policies do educators implement at their schools?
3. In your opinion, what skills do subject advisors need to manage the implementation of reading policies and documents in the Foundation Phase?
4. Do you think you as a subject advisor have the skills that you just mentioned? Are there any other skills and/or knowledge you need to help you perform your role better?
5. What teaching methods or strategies prescribed by CAPS or other policy documents, do educators use? Do educators utilize other methods/strategies not prescribed? Can you name/explain these?
6. In the classroom educators make use of different Learning Teacher Support Material (LTSM). Which materials do educators find useful when teaching learners to read and why? (Example big books, picture reading etc.)
7. The CAPS document requires formal assessment like baseline assessment, oral, reading and writing assessment. What assessment strategies do you think are most useful to assess the learners in the Foundation Phase? Why?
8. Which policies or documents are the educators expected to use in teaching reading? How useful are these policies or documents with regard to teaching reading in the Foundation Phase?

9. Tell me about the specific support you get regarding the implementation of CAPS. What other support would be useful in relation to teaching reading?
10. Which guidance and support do you provide to the educators in the Foundation Phase? (e.g. SMT, meetings, PSF etc.).
11. What challenges do you as a subject advisor experience with regard to instructing or training educators on how to teach reading?
12. In your opinion what do you regard as the strengths and limitations of the policies and documents prescribed to teach reading?
13. What opportunities do you as a subject specialist have to contribute to the improvement of the implementation of the curriculum (CAPS) in your circuit? (e.g. timetable, extra and co-curricular activities, time allocation, intervention, year plan, motoring, class visits, book control etc.) Are there any other opportunities you would like to have in this regard?
14. Is there anything else in general you want to share with me?

Appendix G



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
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Ditsobotla Area Manager
Mr C.F. Matabane

Address:
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Date: 12 August 2016

Dear Sir.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This is to confirm that **Ms A. Fourie (Student No: 26718219)** is a Masters student registered at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus. The title of the dissertation is: **Managing the implementation of reading policies in the Foundation Phase.**

Permission is hereby kindly requested to enter three schools in the Ditsobotla district: **Lichtenburg Primary School, Shukran Primary School and Yusuf Dadoo Memorial School**, to collect data from the **Principal, Head of Department (HOD) in the Foundation Phase and Grade R, 1, 2 and 3 educators**. In addition, the subject advisors will be involved in the study. Data collection will be by way of **document analysis, observation, interviews and field notes**.

Collection of data will occur outside school contact time so as not to interfere with teaching and assessment processes or office duties. The dates and times of the collections are to be agreed upon by the principal and all other participants.

Participants will participate voluntarily in the data collection. The identity of the participants, the schools and district will be kept confidential and anonymous. The information collected therefore cannot and will not be used to evaluate the District/school in terms of its performance in comparison with others, because the information collected will not be about academic results or teachers' teaching performance in specific schools.

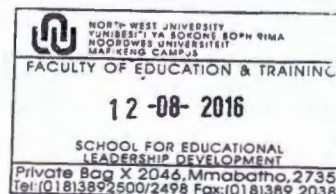
Should you enquire more information about the project, kindly contact the supervisor for this project: Prof Ponto Moorosi (+44 7964 101637) and Dr Elsabe Wessels (076 307 7581) or the student, Ann-May Fourie (072 474 1886).

Herewith permission is kindly requested to perform this research in your district. It would be appreciated if you would kindly grant **written** permission to this student. Any assistance given to the student to perform the research will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Prof P du Toit

Director: School for Education Leadership Development (School in which the Masters and PhD programme is registered)
Mafikeng Campus



Appendix H



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
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Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee

Tel: +27 18 299 4849

Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF PROJECT

Based on approval by the Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSREC) on 23/08/2016, the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IRERC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-IRERC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: Managing the implementation of reading policies in the foundation phase.															
Project Leader/Supervisor: Prof P Moorosi															
Student: A Fourie															
Ethics number:	N	W	U	-	0	0	3	8	6	-	1	6	-	A	9
	Institution				Project number					Year		Student			
Application Type: PhD Application															
Commencement date: 2016-08-15															
Expiry date: 2019-08-15															
Risk: N/A															

Special conditions of the approval (if applicable):

- Translation of the informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the HRREC (if applicable).
- Any research at governmental or private institutions, permission must still be obtained from relevant authorities and provided to the HRREC. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these authorities.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-IRERC via HRREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the HRREC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-IRERC via HRREC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-IRERC and HRREC retains the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the HRREC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
 - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- HRREC can be contacted for further information via Estie.Emtsch@nwu.ac.za or 018 299 2873.

The IRERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRERC or HRREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof LA

Du Plessis

Digitally signed by
Prof LA Du Plessis
Date: 2016.09.27
14:35:16 +02'00'

Prof Linda du Plessis

Chair NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC)