

**Reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms in a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district**

**By**

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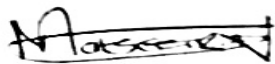
## DECLARATION

I, Matsea Rudzani Agnes, student no 47679190, studying degree in a Master's in inclusive education, declare that:

This mini-dissertation, titled **"Reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms in a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district"**,

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Date: 15 January 2026

## **Key Terms describing the topic of the dissertation**

### **Topic of the study:**

## **Reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms in a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district**

### **Key terms:**

Read-aloud with finger-pointing, Visual aids/pictures/questions, Cosy reading nooks, Peer discussions/noise control, limited reading materials, Learner motivation challenges, Balanced literacy model, SBST referrals, Ability-grouping, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Socio-constructivist theory, Graphic books/visual literacy, Time allocation gaps, CPTD deficiencies.

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Thank you.

## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated

- To my beloved Mom Matseha Elelwani Rosina, whose spirit continues to guide me even after your passing during the midst of my studies your love and sacrifices remain my eternal inspiration.
- To my Father who always make me believe that I can do more than as an educator. You always call me “principal” due to the dedication to my work.
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your community. Thank you for believing in me and inspiring me to be a resilience teacher.

Your collective faith in me made this achievement possible.

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** South Africa's persistent literacy crisis, as evidenced by Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS 2021, which indicates that 81% of Grade 4 learners are unable to read for meaning, underscores the systemic challenges within inclusive classrooms of resource-constrained rural primary schools, such as Maquassie Hills in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. This qualitative exploratory descriptive study, theoretically anchored in Vygotsky's socio-constructivist framework, investigated Grade 4 teachers' reading instructional approaches, adaptations for struggling readers, and barriers/facilitators to reading comprehension proficiency in a multilingual Setswana/English instructional context.

**Methodology:** Employing purposive sampling, five female educators (aged 29-38 years, 5-14 years' experience, B.Ed./PGCE qualified, SACE-registered) participated in semi-structured interviews. Deductive thematic analysis, guided by a priori codes derived from extant literature and CAPS documentation, generated six salient themes, ensuring methodological trustworthiness through member-checking, peer debriefing, constant comparison, and supervisor validation.

**Finding of the current study:** Key findings reveal: (1) instructional approaches comprising read-aloud, phonics instruction, peer-mediated support, and visual aids; (2) barriers including time constraints, material scarcity, and classroom noise; (3) facilitators such as visual aids and cozy reading nooks; (4) interventions featuring delayed School-based Support Team referrals and suboptimal co-teaching; (5) professional development deficits; and (6) inclusive management challenges. Resource limitations undermined partial CAPS congruence on balanced literacy and multilingualism, constraining proximal development scaffolding.

**Conclusion of the current study:** The study concludes that systemic impediments, with professional development and inter-professional collaboration as pivotal enablers, temper approach viability. Recommendations advocate prioritising differentiated instruction,

resource diversification, extended reading allocations, streamlined SBST/co-teaching protocols, regular CPTD in inclusive pedagogies, and parental literacy seminars.

**Keywords:** inclusive education, Grade 4 literacy, socio-constructivism, CAPS implementation, differentiated instruction, rural South Africa, Zone of Proximal Development.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|        |                                                               |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| CAPS   | Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement                    |
| EFAL   | English First Additional Language                             |
| EGL    | Early Grade Literacy                                          |
| LoLT   | Language of Learning and Teaching                             |
| PIRLS  | Progress in International Reading Literacy Study              |
| SASA   | South African Schools Act                                     |
| SBST   | School-based Support Team                                     |
| SMT    | School Management Team                                        |
| UNESCO | United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNISA  | University of South Africa                                    |

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The success of inclusive education largely depends on the effectiveness of teaching approaches used to address diverse learning needs in classrooms. In inclusive settings, teachers must adopt reading approaches that not only support general learners but also accommodate those with learning difficulties or disabilities. This study focuses on the reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms at a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. Given the developmental significance of reading skills in Grade 4, it is essential to explore how teachers in inclusive classrooms tailor their instruction to enhance reading proficiency for all learners.

Research has shown that inclusive education is most effective when teachers use differentiated reading approaches that cater to learners' diverse abilities (Shakal, 2023). Teachers must adopt strategies such as phonics, balanced literacy, and whole language approaches, ensuring that learners with varying reading skills can access the curriculum. However, there is limited research on how these approaches are implemented in South African inclusive classrooms, mainly in Grade 4, where learners transition from learning to read to reading to learn.

Reading is a thought-provoking approach as it requires integrating a variety of reading strategies, including Cognitive Reading Strategies (Ali & Razali, 2019). Although reading is a fundamental of academic performance, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2021) report reveals that 81% of South African grade 4 learners are struggling to read with understanding. Since its inception in 2001, the PIRLS has incorporated the Learning to Read Survey administered by parents or caregivers as a crucial element of the assessment process. The participation of 57 countries and eight benchmarking entities in the continuous PIRLS assessments has been instrumental in enhancing the programme and shaping its inclusive and pioneering approach to

assessing reading with meaning (Mullis et al., 2017). The PIRLS (2021) report on Grade 4 raised questions about the kinds of support learners are receiving to overcome reading challenges as a learning difficulty.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Statistical Institute (2017), more than half of children and young people worldwide are not learning. The report also emphasises that Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest number of youngsters and minors who are not achieving minimum proficiency levels, with nearly 202 million affected. In this region, almost nine out of ten children between the ages of 6 and 14 will not meet these proficiency levels. The data breakdown shows that in Central and Southern Asia, 81% of minors and youth, or approximately 241 million, are not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. This highlights the significant educational challenges faced by low- to middle-income countries. Research in Sub-Saharan Africa indicates serious concern about poor basic reading skills (Kim, Lee & Zuilkowski, 2020). Low- to middle-income countries, such as India, were also observed to be underdeveloped in literacy, raising concerns among parents of learners (Amin, 2019). According to Amin's (2019) study, reading approaches are becoming increasingly important for improving the reading skills of Bangladeshi learners.

The South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 represents a new era in education in South Africa. It follows the principles outlined in the country's Constitution and education policies. The SASA (1996) provides significant mechanisms to recognise the revelations and philosophies of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services. In the process, the country also developed Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) to provide additional educational support services (Department of Education, 2001)

Despite South Africa's adoption of the 12 official languages, including sign language, English remains the dominant Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in many South African Schools. This creates a learning barrier for learners whose first language is not English. According to Ahmed (2019), the LoLT can create learning barriers for learners if not properly taught and if approaches are not inclusive of diversity. The South African

Human Rights Commission (2021) states that everyone has a right to read and write. The World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, adopted in 1990, highlights various aspects of education, including learning tools and subject areas (UNESCO, 1990). It provides a roadmap for ensuring that everyone has there is mandatory for right to quality education.

Currently, almost all content areas consist of digital or printed material, which requires reading. Reading plays a central role in acquiring knowledge, skills and competences for language development (Sunbula, Bakhodurovna & Norboyevna, 2022). Therefore, languages must be taught effectively with appropriate grade-level approaches to enhance reading comprehension.

The present study explored the reading approaches adopted by grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms. The current study further focused on challenges the teachers face when enhancing reading comprehension. Although learners' academic performance is influenced by progressive reading ability as part of their development, the language must be developed using appropriate approaches. As literacy increasingly becomes essential for active participation in society, many learners may face barriers to accessing education. Proficiency in reading enables learners to benefit from educational activities while actively participating in societal and cost-effective activities (Roestenburg, Kruger, Nel, & Janse van Rensburg, 2024). The proposed study also contributed to thoughtful consideration of the challenges in teaching reading in inclusive classrooms, with the aim of improving literacy achievement among grade 4 learners. This study, therefore, aims to determine the reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers.

## **1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Within the South African context, reading with comprehension challenges many Grade 4 learners. The researcher's experience as a member of the School Management Team (SMT) and the School-Based Support Team (SBST) has shown that learners with reading challenges do not receive appropriate interventions from teachers. Struggling learners are not participating in individual reading programmes due to a lack of motivation or inclusive reading approaches that stimulate reading skills; as a result, they exhibit poor

academic performance and/or limited reading comprehension. The researcher was motivated to generate an extensive and thoughtful examination of the nature of reading support that is currently given to learners having trouble in reading with comprehension

### **1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Inclusive classrooms include learners with diverse abilities, learning styles, and needs (Shoakhmedova, 2022). The role of the teacher becomes crucial in creating an inclusive environment that supports reading development and understanding. Research suggests that inclusive classrooms with collaborative learning opportunities and differentiated instruction can positively impact the reading skills of Grade 4 learners (Meng, 2023).

Reading remains a critical skill that Grade 4 learners should develop to become successful readers. However, within inclusive classroom settings, where learners with diverse learning needs and abilities are present, it can be challenging. The success of reading can be influenced by the adoption of reading or learning approaches in inclusive settings. For that reason, exploring reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers remains important. This literature review aims to provide a theoretical framework that serves as the bedrock of the study and to examine current research on reading with understanding for Grade 4 learners within an inclusive classroom. The focus is on the various reading approaches adopted by teachers and their effectiveness in fostering understanding in reading.

#### **1.3.1 Theoretical Framework**

The study was grounded in socio-constructivist theory to explore the reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in an inclusive classroom (Shah, 2019). The socio-constructivist theory emphasises that learning is a social process, and knowledge is constructed through interactions with others (Mkhitaryan & Hayroyan, 2022). It is within this framework that the teacher's role appears to be one of facilitating learning.

#### **1.3.2 Reading Approaches: Global Perceptive**

Despite the international emphasis on ensuring quality education for all, Eastern African countries continue to face the inaccessibility of core learning materials (UNESCO, 2023).

Progress in the PIRLS (2021) report reveals that 81% of South African Grade 4 learners are struggling to read with meaning (Department of Education, 2023). Teachers continue to face challenges in teaching learners in inclusive classrooms, particularly those who experience learning challenges (Turan & Atila, 2021). Although competence with language typically develops in spoken contexts, individual differences persist in the accuracy of verbal language used in reading ability (Lou & Noels, 2020).

In trying to help countries explore the benchmarking option in defining minimum proficiency levels for reading, a new dataset was designed that allows the countries to use their own definition of minimum proficiency levels. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2017) highlighted a learning crisis through new datasets, noting that 617 million minors and youth worldwide fail to achieve minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics, threatening global education progress

The UIS (2017) further argues that to eliminate the gaps, commitment, resources, and new approaches are needed to advance the quality of education. Although good practices in transforming education and delivering quality education for all are evident in Eastern Africa, the region is still facing challenges, such as the inaccessibility of core learning materials (UNESCO, 2023).

Educational approaches in Eastern African countries often fail to recognise the various learning styles that benefit different learners, including learners with learning barriers (UNESCO, 2023). Failure to acknowledge inclusive education can continue to create learning barriers. Learners can also feel left out, at some point, become frustrated, less engaged and less motivated to learn. To alleviate the reading crisis, UNESCO (2023) stated that Thailand has been successfully building reading skills. Reading habits were also cultivated through the Learning Coin project in Thailand. Through the Learning Coin project, learners were motivated to read daily and earn points to qualify for scholarships (UNESCO, 2023).

In developed countries such as Germany, digital literacy has been recognised as significant in helping bridge the gap created by the COVID-19 pandemic (König, Jäger-Biela & Glutsch, 2020). Learning should not be a barrier for learners facing various

challenges; rather, teachers should provide support and avoid teaching merely to complete the curriculum without providing a significant learning experience (Asri et al., 2021). Recently, teachers had to find ground-breaking and resourceful techniques for replying to connected facts (Stylianidou et al., 2020). For example, the realities entail learners' immersion in a constant interaction among different digital media from a young age and the increasing, diversified nature of learners' educational needs (Stylianidou et al., 2020). Germany has also adopted several approaches to enhance reading with understanding. Germany places a significant emphasis on building a strong foundation in phonics and letter-sound relationships (Eikel-Pohen, 2019). Silent Sustained Reading was adopted in Germany.

In Silent Sustained Reading, learners are expected to choose their own books or texts and read silently without interruption or teacher-directed activities (Fesi & Mncube, 2021). The Silent Sustained Reading allowed learners to choose books and read silently for a sustained duration. In Eastern African countries, the scarcity of textbooks and reading materials poses a significant challenge, particularly given the diversity of languages and stories that could be explored. The Silent Sustained Reading approach can develop reading fluency, expand vocabulary, improve reading skills, and nurture a love for reading. Silent Sustained Reading can also promote the idea that reading is a pleasurable and valuable activity, encouraging lifelong reading habits. I argue that the Silent Sustained Reading can be effective in countries like South Africa, where reading materials and textbooks are readily accessible without struggle.

Indonesia, in the Papua and West Papua provinces, has implemented the Early Grade Literacy (EGL) programme to address the reading crisis (UNESCO, 2023). The EGL programme was adopted to improve the literacy learning environment. Effective literacy improvement depends on the provision of culturally sensitive reading materials that meet learners' varied requirements. The reading material should be made available for learners in the classroom reading corners. The EGL programme was also promoted through community and parents' engagements in activities and events that increase demand for education and improve learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2023).

Reading approaches in Jordan's Irbid region for Grade 4 learners have incorporated response activities, such as writing summaries or creating book reviews (Obeidat, 2024). Similar strategies to enhance reading comprehension appear in international programs, including those in South Africa and Canada for primary learners (Fesi, 2017; Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2013). These include reading intervention programmes, small group instruction, and the integration of technology to engage learners in reading activities. Although there is a common global goal to foster interest in reading, improve reading skills, and understand and analyse texts effectively. African countries are still facing challenges of learners who cannot read with understanding (PIRLS, 2021).

### **1.3.3 Reading Approaches: South Africa**

The CAPS was introduced in 2005 to alleviate the challenges arising from inclusive classrooms (Department of Education, 2011). The CAPS document serves as a guide on how learning and teaching language must be carried out (Department of Education, 2011). Although the CAPS policy and Annual Teaching Plan are provided to teachers as a guide, learners continue to underperform and struggle to comprehend what they read.

The South African Human Rights Commission (2021) acknowledges the right to read and write as a fundamental right for everyone. The World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, developed in 1990, identifies the components of education, including learning tools and many learning content areas. Currently, almost all content areas consist of digital or printed material, which requires reading. Reading is central in acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies for language development (Sunbula et al., 2022). Therefore, languages must be taught properly with appropriate grade-level approaches to enhance reading and understanding.

South Africa implemented various reading approaches to enhance reading comprehension for Grade 4 learners. It is necessary to build on the reading skills learners have already accumulated from Grade R to 3. Therefore, the use of shared reading at the beginning of Grade 4 is necessary to guide learners (DoE, 2011). The choice of a reading approach can vary depending on factors such as educational philosophies, cultural context, and research evidence. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS),

Intermediate Phase, Grade 4-7, English Home Language, highlighted the reading process to be followed when enhancing reading skills. The procedure comprises three stages: pre-reading, reading and post-reading (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The question arises as to whether teachers are enthusiastic about adopting inclusive approaches to enhance reading instruction.

South Africa also adopted the National Reading Strategy in 2015 to deal with the reading crisis. The National Reading Strategy offers guidelines and strategies for teachers to improve reading instruction and promote reading with understanding (Mahatma & Mashamba, 2022). Although the National Reading Strategy provided the guidelines, there was no clear indication that the original strategy was not manageable; execution was split and lacked consistency and direction across South African provinces. For example, taught, the methods of teaching reading and the resources were unclear.

#### **1.3.4 Common Challenges that can Influence Reading with Understanding**

African countries have faced challenges in providing learners with sufficient books and other reading materials (UNESCO, 2023). Limited access to libraries, bookstores, and digital resources can hinder learners' exposure to a wide range of reading materials (Soulen & Tedrow, 2022). Although national reading strategies have been implemented to enhance reading, African countries continue to struggle to foster a reading culture in households and communities (Maja & Du Plessis, 2023). Factors such as low literacy rates among adults, limited parental involvement in reading activities, and a lack of emphasis on reading outside of school can hinder learners' reading development (Jabbar, 2021; Ha et al., 2023; Vruong et al., 2021). In African countries such as South Africa, where multiple languages are spoken, or learners come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, language barriers can affect their reading skills (Ju & Hu, 2022).

Learners may struggle to understand texts in a language that is not their first language, leading to difficulties in grasping the content and context of what they are reading (Fauziningrum et al., 2023). Most public schools are overwhelmed by overcrowded classrooms. The latter can also make it challenging for teachers to provide individualised support and attention to each learner (Meier & West, 2020). No individualised support

can further impact learners' reading progress, as they may not receive the necessary feedback and guidance.

Building learners' vocabulary is an essential part of structured reading lessons. Vocabulary instruction often includes direct teaching of word meanings, word study activities, and exposure to a range of texts (Elleman et al., 2019). Vocabulary enhancement can also supplement reading skills. This can be done through structured reading lessons. Structured reading lessons can provide opportunities for guided practice (Fisher & Frey, 2021). Teachers used a variety of assessments, such as running records, comprehension checks, and oral reading fluency assessments, to determine learners' strengths and areas needing improvement (Alowais, 2021).

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Reading with meaning in an inclusive classroom should be achieved through effective reading approaches and appropriate reading support strategies adopted at the grade level to support both learners and teachers (Allington, 2018)

However, in the identified primary school, many learners struggle to read and understand texts at grade level, as reflected in low reading assessment scores and limited engagement in reading activities (Pretorius & Spaul, 2016).

As a result, learners experiencing reading challenges are unable to perform adequately at school without sufficient instructional support from teachers, which negatively affects their academic progress (Lonigan et al., 2018).

#### **Purpose of the Study**

Against this background, this study explores how Grade 4 teachers in a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District teach reading to support learners' meaning-making in inclusive classrooms.

#### **1.5 Aims and objectives**

The main aim of the study is to explore the reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms in a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District.

Below are the research objectives for the proposed study:

- i) To ascertain the types of reading approaches adopted by the Grade 4 teachers to support learners who are struggling to read in an inclusive classroom.
- ii) To establish how these identified reading approaches are adapted to accommodate Grade 4 learners struggling to read, and to stimulate their interest in reading.
- iii) To identify barriers and facilitators that may influence reading with understanding among Grade 4 learners in an inclusive classroom

## **1.6 Research questions**

The following main research question was posed for this study:

What reading approaches were adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms at a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District?

The following sub-questions were developed to address the primary research question:

- i) What types of reading approaches are adopted by Grade 4 teachers to support learners who are struggling to read in an inclusive classroom?
- ii) How are the identified reading approaches adapted to accommodate Grade 4 learners struggling to read, and stimulate their interest in reading?
- iii) What barriers and facilitators may influence reading with understanding among Grade 4 learners in an inclusive classroom?

## **1.7 Research methodology and design**

The researcher employed an exploratory, descriptive qualitative research design to investigate the reading approaches used by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms. The qualitative approach was chosen for its strength in capturing rich, in-depth insights into social phenomena (Mwita, 2022; Rosyada, 2020; Truong et al., 2023), particularly the practices and experiences of teachers in real-world settings. The study centred on social situations to enhance the quality of actions within them and assess the practicality and validity of any theories or hypotheses (Nopiyadi et al., 2023).

### **1.7.1 Research Approaches and Design**

In this study, the qualitative research approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) was used. The advantage of using qualitative research was the possibility of gathering detailed, in-depth information through interaction with participants (Taherdoost, 2022). Qualitative research allowed for addressing complex issues by providing flexible structures and giving participants the freedom to explore. Despite its disadvantages of lacking a focus on contextual sensitivities and an emphasis on experiences and meanings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Flick, 2014). It has been deemed suitable for this study. Additionally, low credibility may have been a limitation in fields like policymaking, and generalising findings could be challenging due to small sample sizes. The qualitative research design also presented difficulties in interpretation data analysis, as well as being time-consuming (Taherdoost, 2022). Nevertheless, the advantage of getting firsthand experiences outweighs the disadvantages. Therefore, the qualitative approach was implemented through an exploratory, descriptive qualitative research design.

An exploratory, descriptive qualitative research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) was used. A qualitative descriptive research design focuses on providing a detailed description of a phenomenon or situation in the environment (Truong et al., 2023; Mwita, 2022; Rosyada, 2020). This approach enabled the researcher to explore how inclusive reading practices are implemented and understood by teachers, offering a focused understanding of their methods, challenges and adaptations (Fadhillah et al., 2023; Rosyada, 2020).

In exploring reading approaches in inclusive education for Grade 4 learners, this research design involved gathering descriptive data to address the study's questions. The aim was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the reading approaches used by teachers in inclusive education settings. The qualitative research design enabled the researcher to gather rich, in-depth data that captured the complexity and nuances of the teachers' practices (Woodeson et al., 2023).

## **1.7.2 Population and Sampling**

### **1.7.2.1 Population**

The population for this study is Grade 4 teachers employed in primary schools situated within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district. The Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality, where the study will be conducted, has a population of 186,947. This district is predominantly rural, with 88% of residents living in traditional areas. Given this context, the study population consists of Grade 4 teachers in primary schools within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district. These teachers operate in a largely rural setting, with a predominantly Black African (99.4%) and Setswana-speaking population. The district's demographic characteristics, such as a high proportion of young people (30.9% under 15) and a significant rural population, may influence the teaching environment and experiences of these Grade 4 teachers (Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality, n.d).

### **1.7.2.1 Sampling**

The choice of sampling technique depended on various factors, including research objectives, time, resources, and access to the population (Mocănașu, 2020). For this study, non-probability, purposive, convenience sampling (Stratton, 2021) was used to select participants with expertise or experience in implementing inclusive reading approaches. Only one large primary school in Wolmaransstad offers inclusive education. The school uses English as the home language and Afrikaans as the first additional language. The school has five Grade 4 classes, each with a range of 40 to 50 learners. Five Grade 4 teachers from the selected school's different inclusive classrooms consented to participate in the study. Selecting these participants ensured that the sample was diverse, including teachers with different backgrounds, experiences, and teaching styles (Alpert et al., 2023). Purposive non-random sampling helped the researcher collect detailed information from teachers who were well-informed about inclusive education and had successfully implemented effective reading strategies in their classrooms (Ginja & Chen, 2020). The following criteria were used to select the potential participants:

- i) Professionals with teaching degrees or Post Graduate Teaching Diplomas or Post Graduate Certificates in Education.
- ii) Teachers who could communicate in English or Afrikaans, as these were the languages used in the schools in this area.
- iii) Teachers who were teaching Grade 4 classes at the time of data collection.
- iv) Teachers with expertise or experience in implementing inclusive reading approaches.
- v) Teachers had to be affiliated with the South African Council of Educators (SACE).

## **1.8 INSTRUMENTS AND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

The materials utilised for this study included an Ethical Approval Form from the University of South Africa (Appendix A), written permission from the Northwest Department of Education (NWDoE) circuit manager (APPENDIX B), which facilitated communication and collaboration between the school principal and the researcher, allowing the recruitment of potential participants for the study. A permission letter to the school (Appendix C) was also obtained. Additionally, a letter of informed consent was obtained from participants (Appendix D), which provided details about the purpose, duration, procedures, and ethical considerations of the research. Participants were asked to provide written consent on the response slip included with the informed consent letter and then complete a biographical questionnaire (Appendix E) to gather background information. Furthermore, a semi-structured interview guide and checklist (APPENDIX F) were used for data collection, featuring open-ended questions prepared in advance to gather in-depth information on the subject matter. An audio recorder was used to record the interviews.

The researcher employed semi-structured interviews to gather data. The study aimed to develop a holistic, multifaceted understanding of the research topic (Hendren et al., 2023). The semi-structured interviews provided participants with the opportunity to offer nuanced insights and suggestions for improving literacy learning approaches. (Yang et al., 2023). The interviews were recorded with participants' consent, and the recordings

were categorised for easy access. Interview recordings were categorised for easy retrieval. Semi-structured interviews allowed for targeted questions on challenges, approaches, and improvement suggestions (Yang et al., 2023).

### **1.9 Data analysis and interpretation**

Transcripts of the recorded interviews were prepared by the researcher and reviewed by a member of the SMT from a selected school who was not involved in the study for accuracy. Thematic analysis was used, which entailed identifying recurring patterns in the data through detailed analysis to gain insight into participants' diverse experiences (Sun, 2023). Once the data were collected and coded, they were categorised using keywords, patterns, or themes within paragraphs and sentences. Data analysis and interpretation for the study involved several steps. The process of data analysis was conducted systematically (Khoa, Hung & Hejsalem, 2023). Data collection was organised and prepared for analysis, which included transcribing interviews. Qualitative data, such as interview transcripts, were subjected to thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). This approach enabled the researcher to conduct a detailed analysis of the data, uncovering underlying meanings and insights that might not be immediately apparent. Responses were coded and categorised into meaningful categories through a systematic data analysis, allowing the identification of patterns and themes (Saldaña, 2021). Once the data had been analysed, the findings were interpreted in relation to the research objectives and the existing literature. Key findings and overarching themes were identified, and interpretations were provided to explain them. Based on the findings, conclusions were drawn about the reading approaches, interventions, and challenges Grade 4 teachers face in supporting struggling readers. This study's findings, interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations aim to inform and improve reading comprehension instruction for Grade 4 learners at the sampled primary school. Specifically, the recommendations are tailored for Grade 4 teachers, providing actionable insights to enhance their instructional practices and support the learning needs of these learners. By disseminating this information to relevant stakeholders, including teachers and policymakers, this research seeks to contribute to ongoing efforts to improve learners' reading comprehension

outcomes. By following rigorous, systematic processes for analysing and interpreting data, the validity and reliability of the findings were ensured (Arthurs et al., 2023).

## **1.10 Credibility, reliability, and trustworthiness**

### **1.10.1 Credibility**

To enhance the credibility and validity of the study, the researcher employed rigorous research methods, including validated data-collection instruments and appropriate sampling techniques (Sürücü & Maslakçı, 2020). The researcher analysed the participants' interviews confidentially, identifying themes that emerged from the data. Although involving multiple analysts or coders would have further strengthened the study by allowing for inter-rater reliability checks (Braun & Clarke, 2021), the researcher took steps to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings through a thorough examination of the phenomenon under study.

### **1.10.2 Trustworthiness**

Member-checking was used to discuss key results with participants and obtain their input, ensuring accuracy. Trustworthiness was also established by having another person review the transcriptions for accuracy, comparing findings from different data collection methods, and assessing the reliability and credibility of the research process. Clear documentation of the research methodology, addressing potential bias or conflicts of interest, and maintaining confidentiality were all important in establishing trustworthiness (Sürücü & Maslakçı, 2020). The researcher used consistent research methods and instruments, and rigorous data collection procedures, including an interview checklist, to ensure the reliability and consistency of the data. By employing a standardised approach to data collection, the researcher increased the likelihood of obtaining consistent and replicable results over time. This methodological rigour helps to establish trustworthiness and credibility in the findings (Sürücü & Maslakçı, 2020).

## **1.11 Ethical considerations**

Research ethics involve the moral standards and guidelines that govern the conduct of studies involving human participants. These principles aim to protect participants' rights, interests, and well-being (Goodwin, Mays, & Pope, 2020). To obtain ethical approval for

the study at the University of South Africa, the researcher received ethics approval from the institutional Research Ethics Committee (Appendix A, REF 2024/08/12/00000120/03/RB). Additionally, permission to conduct the study was obtained from Dr Kenneth Kaunda District in the North-West, and the School Principal. In the study at hand, the researcher explored the reading approaches used by Grade 4 teachers. Throughout the study, the researcher adhered to ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, including learners, teachers, and parents. Participants were thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives, methods, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality protocols, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. For participants below the legal age of consent, parental consent was necessary.

The confidentiality of participants, including those assigned pseudonyms, was maintained, with all collected personal data safeguarded and anonymised to prevent individual identification. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw without facing any negative consequences. Participants' privacy was respected by conducting the research in appropriate settings and handling personal data with caution. The researcher treated participants with respect and sensitivity, ensuring their comfort and welfare during data collection. Necessary measures were taken to minimise potential harm or risks to participants. This included avoiding sensitive or intrusive questioning, implementing data protection measures, and carefully evaluating and mitigating any potential risks.

## **1.12 Limitations and delimitations of the study**

### **1.12.1 Limitations**

The study's findings were constrained by several factors (Nikolopoulou, 2020). Firstly, the results applied only to Grade 4 teachers in one school, limiting the generalisability of the findings to other schools or grade levels. Furthermore, the study's duration was limited, which may have restricted the depth of analysis and hindered the ability to observe any long-term effects of the reading approaches. It was important to consider external factors beyond the researchers' control, such as learners' contact teaching time (Baloyi, 2020). Additionally, the teachers were interviewed after hours to avoid disruptions to teaching

and learning time, and they may have been fatigued at that time, which could have influenced their responses compared to earlier in the day.

### **1.12.2 Delimitations**

This research focused on a primary school located in the Northwest Province in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. Specifically, the study aimed to investigate the reading approaches Grade 4 teachers use to support struggling readers in inclusive classroom settings. The participants in this study were limited to the five Grade 4 language teachers at the primary school. It is worth noting that this school was in an urban area of Wolmaransstad. The findings of this research were not intended to apply to all teachers or grades within the school. However, these findings laid the groundwork for future studies on similar topics. Therefore, the results of this study should be interpreted with caution and not generalised to a larger population.

## **1.13 Key concepts**

### **1.13.1 Grade**

Learners are typically grouped by grade level based on age and academic ability. The specific organisation and duration of primary school grades vary across educational systems and local policies. In the current study, the focus was on Grade 4 learners to assess their reading comprehension skills and the reading approaches used by their teachers.

### **1.13.2 Inclusive classrooms**

Inclusive classrooms refer to learning environments that aim to provide equal opportunities and support for learners with diverse learning needs, including those with disabilities, learning difficulties, or special education requirements (Department of Education, 2001). These classrooms promote a sense of belonging and collaboration for all learners (Shakal, 2023). In this study, inclusive classrooms were examined to determine their impact on learners' academic achievement and social-emotional development.

### **1.13.3 Reading approaches**

Reading approaches refer to the various methods and strategies that teachers use to teach reading skills to their learners (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). These approaches may include phonics instruction, the whole language approach, balanced literacy approach, and others (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022). In this study, reading approaches were examined to analyse reading approaches and impact on learners' reading with understanding.

### **1.13.4 Teachers**

A teacher is a person responsible for supervising and instructing learners in a particular subject or skill (SACE, 2020). They facilitate learning by generating lesson plans, delivering lectures and demonstrations, assigning and grading assignments, providing feedback, and guiding learners. Teachers are also responsible for creating a positive and inclusive classroom environment, managing learners' behaviour, and fostering personal development and critical thinking skills (Muchamad, 2022). In this study, the term “teachers” referred to Grade 4 teachers at a specific school who were responsible for creating an inclusive classroom environment and supporting diverse learners in both their academic and personal growth.

## **1.14 Chapters to be covered in the study**

### **Chapter 1: Orientation**

This chapter introduces the problem statement, which outlines the approaches teachers use to help struggling readers. The study's goal has been established, and the objectives and research questions are presented. A concise explanation of the research design and methodologies, along with the organisation of the chapter summary, is provided.

### **Chapter 2: Literature review**

This chapter explains the theoretical framework underlying the current study. It further reviews the literature on the topic of exploring the reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive education.

### **Chapter 3: Research design and methodology**

The chapter provides an overview of the research structure and approach. It also incorporates a discussion of the research perspective and approach, along with an examination of the study's data-gathering tools and the target group and selection process.

### **Chapter 4: Presentation and analysis of findings**

In this chapter, the process of data analysis and presentation of findings is elucidated. Information will be obtained through both observations and interviews. The data will be examined through six stages of thematic analysis, namely becoming acquainted with the data, assigning codes, exploring patterns, reviewing themes, defining and labelling themes, and documenting the results.

### **Chapter 5: Summary of findings, recommendations and conclusion**

In this chapter, the recommendations for actions will be based on the findings. The strategies for making recommendations and the potential benefits of these recommendations will be shared. The conclusion will include a recap of the study and research objectives, a summary of the findings, and a contribution to the field. In this chapter, the suggestion for future research will be presented.

#### **1.15 Conclusion**

The first chapter presented an introduction to the study, outlining its background, rationale, problem statement, research aims and objectives, and research questions. It also included a literature review and detailed sections on the population, sampling methods, data collection approaches, data analysis processes, ethical factors, limitations, delimitations, key term definitions, and an outline of the chapters. Chapter 2 will focus on a detailed literature review for this study.

## CHAPTER 2

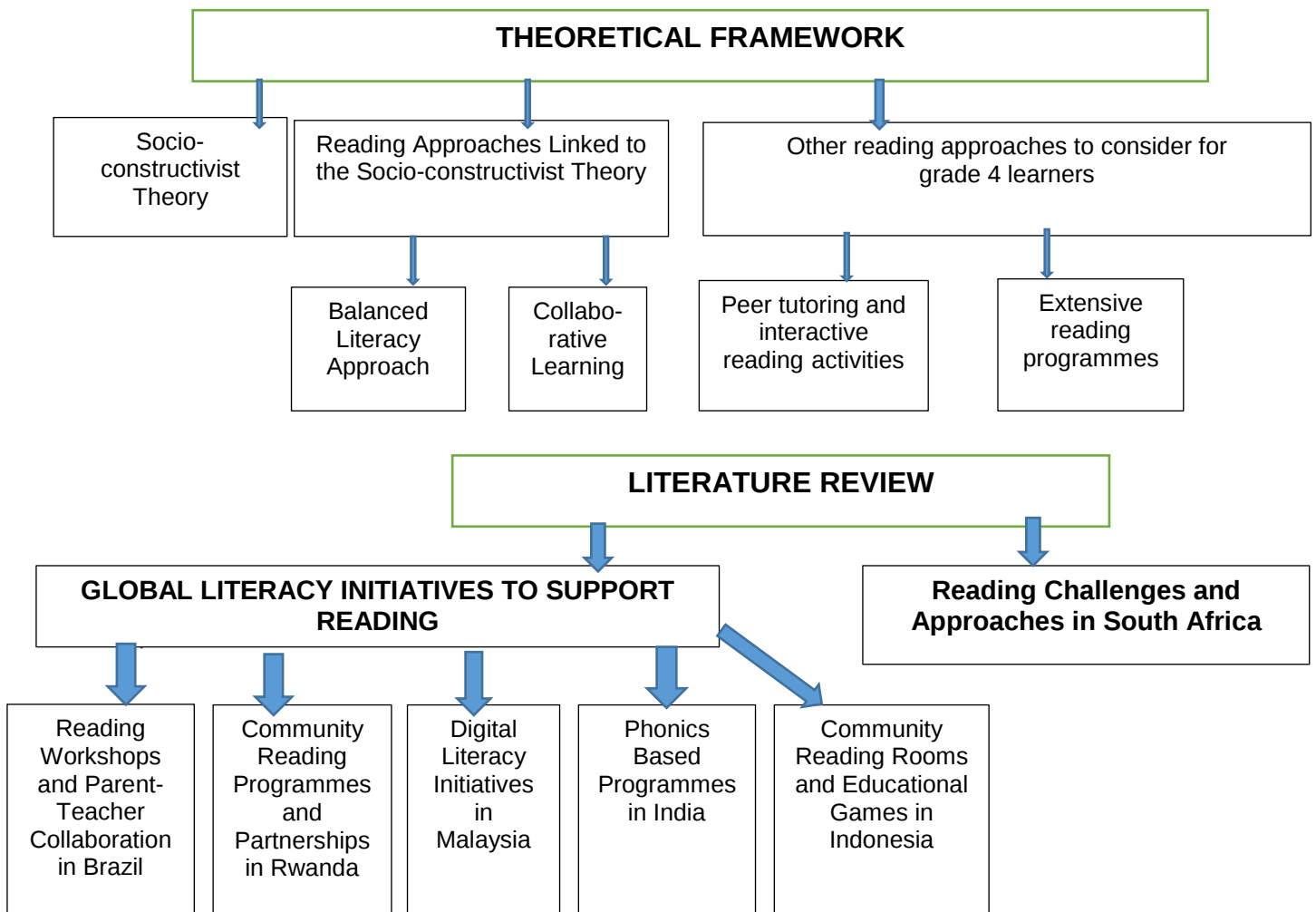
### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the socio-constructivist theory as the theoretical framework behind this study, providing a foundation for analysing the challenges and opportunities in teaching reading to diverse learners. The chapter focuses on reading approaches grounded in socio-constructivist theory and on effective strategies to enhance reading instruction for Grade 4 learners. Figure 2.1 provides an overview of the content in Chapter 2.

Figure 2.1

*Overview of Chapter 2*



## **2.2 Socio-constructivist theory: a framework for understanding reading instruction**

The socio-constructivist theory, rooted in the works of Lev Vygotsky (1978), suggests that knowledge and meaning are constructed through social interactions and cultural contexts. This theoretical framework is crucial in understanding the complexities of reading instruction in Grade 4 inclusive education settings, as it highlights the role of collaboration, dialogue, and shared experiences in shaping individual understanding and learning. By exploring the principles of socio-constructivist theory, this study aims to investigate its relevance and application in reading instruction, ultimately enhancing teaching practices and learner outcomes. Following, relevant reading approaches are discussed, shedding light on how learners acquire reading skills and how teachers can support this process in inclusive classrooms.

## **2.3 Reading approaches linked to the socio-constructivist theory**

Reading approaches grounded in the socio-constructivist theory highlight the learner's active role in constructing meaning through social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). This perspective posits that reading is a collaborative process in which learners engage with texts, peers, and teachers to co-construct understanding rather than a solitary activity. Social contexts facilitate the sharing of insights, challenging of perspectives, and development of deeper understanding (Mercer & Howe, 2012). Consequently, this approach fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and knowledge co-construction, leading to a more engaging and effective reading experience.

### **2.3.1 Balanced Literacy Approach**

This study is grounded in the socio-constructivist theory, which posits that learners build knowledge through social interactions and experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). Building on this theoretical framework, the balanced literacy approach is employed as a pedagogical model that aligns with the theory's emphasis on collaborative learning, scaffolding and learner centred instruction.

The balanced literacy approach integrates a range of reading methods, including read-aloud, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading, to meet the diverse

needs of Grade 4 learners (Manak et al., 2022; Smith & Johnson, 2021). It provides a comprehensive method for exploring how teachers implement reading approaches in inclusive education settings, with the goal of enhancing teaching practices and literacy outcomes (Manak et al., 2022).

By combining whole language and phonics instruction, balanced literacy supports both the development of decoding skills and the creation of meaning-making approaches (Fletcher et al., 2021; Pressley et al., 2023). This dual focus is particularly effective in inclusive education settings, where learners benefit from personalised instruction, flexible grouping and ongoing assessment. The approach also promotes learner autonomy by offering choice in reading and writing activities and fosters engagement through exposure to a variety of literary genres (Pressley et al., 2023).

Balanced literacy aims to develop well-rounded literacy skills by incorporating speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Through methods such as group reading and independent reading, learners can enhance their literacy skills, like fluency, vocabulary, and critical thinking (Guthrie & McRae, 2011). The inclusion of engaging activities and learner-selected texts helps cultivate a passion for reading, while teachers can adapt instruction to suit individual progress and needs. The variety of reading experiences and interactive activities included in the balanced literacy approach enhances learner engagement and motivation and prepares learners for real-world reading tasks. Successful implementation of the balanced literacy approach requires resources and training (Manak et al., 2022). With the right support and professional development, teachers can create interactive and impactful learning environments that foster a love of reading and promote academic success among learners. Adapting the approach to diverse classroom settings can be challenging, particularly in balancing whole-language and phonics instruction. However, with thoughtful planning, teachers can enhance their instructional approach and more effectively address the diverse requirements of Grade 4 learners in inclusive education settings.

Ultimately, the balanced literacy approach serves as a comprehensive instructional framework that aligns with socio-constructivist principles. It is a valuable tool for supporting diverse learners and improving literacy teaching in inclusive classrooms.

### **2.3.2 Collaborative Learning**

Collaborative learning, rooted in socio-constructivist theories, is an instructional approach that prioritises peer interactions, group work, and cooperative learning tasks to enhance learners' educational experiences (Manak et al., 2022). According to Vygotsky (1978), knowledge is constructed through social interactions and collaborative dialogue, making this approach particularly relevant to the development of literacy.

In this study, collaborative learning provides a structured approach to promoting teamwork, critical thinking, and communication skills among Grade 4 learners. These skills are essential for reading comprehension as learners engage in discussions that promote deeper understanding and interpretation of texts. In practice, collaborative learning entails learners collaborating in groups or pairs to achieve common goals. Through active engagement in discussions, collaborative problem-solving, and the exchange of ideas with peers, learners deepen their understanding and facilitate knowledge acquisition (Qureshi et al., 2023). This process fosters a supportive learning environment that enhances academic success, social skills, and a love of reading.

Moreover, collaborative learning encourages learners to express their thoughts, listen attentively, and exchange feedback, thereby strengthening their communication skills (Ghavifekr, 2020). It also promotes knowledge, sharing diverse perspectives and the development of teamwork, leadership, and conflict resolution skills (Olaya & González-González, 2020). All these skills are essential for academic and practical success.

Despite its benefits, collaborative learning presents challenges such as uneven participation and difficulties in assessing individual contributions (Manak et al., 2022). Effective implementation requires skilled facilitation, clear group management strategies and balanced assessment practices that recognise both group dynamics and individual accountability.

When thoughtfully implemented, collaborative learning can enhance learners' educational experiences by supporting cognitive, social, and emotional development (Ghavifekr, 2020). It creates supportive and inclusive learning spaces that promote academic success and personal growth among Grade 4 learners.

The theoretical foundation is central to this study's exploration of reading instruction in Grade 4 inclusive classrooms. Jones and Garcia (2019) examined the characteristics, benefits, and drawbacks of collaborative learning, and their analysis provides the basis for identifying approaches that enhance literacy development and foster collaboration among learners. These insights will inform the development of reading instruction strategies that leverage the strengths of collaborative learning while addressing its challenges.

## **2.4 Other reading approaches to consider for Grade 4 learners**

The Grade 4 reading curriculum is a critical phase in learners' literacy development, and various approaches can be employed to enhance reading comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary acquisition (DBE, 2023). This section explores four reading approaches that have shown promise in improving reading outcomes for learners, including Grade 4 learners. These reading approaches include (i) peer tutoring and interactive reading activities, (ii) reciprocal teaching and read-aloud sessions, (iii) extensive reading programmes, and (iv) literature circles and book clubs. These approaches are supported by research and policy documents as instructional strategies that enhance reading comprehension, fluency, and engagement (DBE, 2011; ECDoE, 2022; Fernández-Martín, et al., 2022; Sytsma, Panahon, & Houlihan, 2019; Tenenbaum et al., 2020).

### **2.4.1 Peer tutoring and interactive reading activities**

Peer tutoring and interactive reading activities are effective in promoting collaboration and improving reading comprehension among learners (Lee, 2020). These approaches enable learners to engage in peer-to-peer learning, group discussions, and hands-on tasks, thereby enhancing their comprehension skills (Wang, 2020).

In Sweden, peer tutoring and interactive reading activities have shown positive results in improving literacy skills among Grade 4 learners (Swedish Ministry of Education, 2021). Peer tutoring enables learners to support one another with reading tasks, fostering a sense of community and teamwork. Peer tutoring enables learners to work together to discuss texts, ask questions, and provide feedback, thereby enhancing their understanding and engagement with the material (Slavin, 1995; Topping, 2018).

Interactive reading activities, such as guided discussions and group projects, promote critical thinking and comprehension skills. Interactive read-aloud sessions with guided discussions further support vocabulary development and comprehension skills, highlighting the importance of dialogue and collaboration in the reading process (Johnson, 2019). This collaborative approach to reading instruction creates a dynamic, interactive learning environment that supports literacy development among Grade 4 learners. Similarly, reciprocal teaching approaches, which involve predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarising text content collaboratively, can enhance fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension skills in learners (Smith, 2021).

However, the potential limitations of these approaches must be considered. Peer tutoring may be ineffective if learners lack the necessary skills or confidence to support their peers. Reciprocal teaching may also require significant teacher support and scaffolding to ensure learners understand the strategies and can apply them effectively.

#### **2.4.2 Reciprocal teaching and read-aloud sessions**

Reciprocal teaching is an instructional approach in which learners alternately assume the role of the teacher to participate in a cooperative exchange of ideas that fosters thoughtful monitoring strategies such as predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarising (Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Recent empirical work underlines both its resilience and flexibility. Johnson, Smith, and Brown (2022) led a three-year longitudinal study with a large group of elementary learners, assigning them to a weekly reciprocal-teaching programme rooted in the regular literacy curriculum or to a control situation receiving standard reading instruction. Controlling for baseline performance, the authors found that the intervention group consistently outperformed the control group at each follow-up assessment, with moderate effect sizes that persisted after a six-month hiatus, suggesting that the method fosters long-term comprehension skills rather than merely providing a passing advantage. Participants were randomly assigned to a technology-enhanced reciprocal-teaching condition or to conventional teacher-led instruction. The digital group achieved significantly higher scores on a standardised reading comprehension test. It exhibited greater frequencies of predicting and clarifying

behaviours, indicating that an online platform can support faithful implementation of the strategy.

In addition to reciprocal teaching, read-aloud sessions have been widely employed to support early literacy development. A read-aloud is a teacher-led activity in which the instructor models fluent reading while learners follow along, often accompanied by discussion of vocabulary, story structure and inferential meaning (Anderson, 2019). Research indicates that regular read-aloud enhances learners' vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension and motivation to read (Brown & Lee, 2020). Moreover, when teachers pause to think aloud, learners are exposed to metacognitive strategies that mirror those used in reciprocal teaching, such as predicting outcomes and clarifying ambiguous phrases (Miller, 2021). However, read-aloud sessions are typically more teacher-centred than reciprocal teaching, offering limited opportunities for learners to practise the full range of comprehension-monitoring strategies themselves (Thompson, 2018). Consequently, while reading aloud provides a valuable model of fluent reading and enriches the linguistic environment, it may be most effective when combined with more interactive approaches, such as reciprocal teaching, that require learners to generate questions and summarise text.

These findings highlight several advantages of reciprocal teaching. First, it encourages active engagement and collaborative learning, thereby motivating learners and developing higher-order thinking (Johnson, Smith & Brown, 2022). Second, its structured dialogue appears to facilitate long-term retention, as evidenced by the maintenance of gains after the intervention ceased. Third, the approach is adaptable; the digital adaptation reported by Lee, Kim and Park (2021) demonstrates that reciprocal teaching can be effectively realised in computer-mediated contexts, extending its reach to settings where face-to-face instruction is limited. However, notable disadvantages emerge from literature. Successful implementation demands considerable teacher training and ongoing support to ensure fidelity, which can be resource-intensive (Johnson, Smith & Brown, 2022). The digital version, while promising, requires reliable technology infrastructure and may exclude learners without adequate access, thereby risking discrimination (Lee, Kim & Park, 2021). Moreover, the strategy may be less effective for

learners with very low language proficiency without serious support, suggesting that it is not a solution for all reading difficulties.

Reciprocal teaching offers significant benefits, especially in fostering lasting comprehension and collaborative metacognition; however, its successful implementation depends on adequate professional development for teachers, suitable technological resources, and careful attention to each learner's needs. Once combined with balancing practices such as read-aloud sessions, teachers can deliver a more comprehensive literacy programme that balances modelling fluent reading with opportunities for learners to practise and internalise deliberate comprehension processes (Johnson, Smith & Brown, 2022).

### **2.4.3 Extensive reading programmes**

Extensive reading programmes prioritise learner autonomy and enjoyment, encouraging learners to explore diverse texts at their own pace (Kimura, 2020). Mixed results have been yielded globally from the implementation of these extensive reading programmes (PIRLS, 2021). Countries like Finland, Poland, China, and South Africa have experienced lower average reading achievement despite implementing reading programmes (PIRLS, 2021). This outcome highlights the importance of carefully considering learners' specific needs and contexts when implementing extensive reading programmes. However, Japan is an example of a successful implementation of extensive reading programmes.

Japan's implementation of extensive reading programmes has demonstrated effectiveness in strengthening Grade 4 learners' reading comprehension skills. The extensive reading programmes in Japan are designed to encourage learners to explore a wide range of texts appropriate for their skill level, resulting in improved fluency and better understanding of the content (Ateek, 2021). Furthermore, these activities, which focused on vocabulary development, have played a significant role in advancing learners' language proficiency (Japanese Ministry of Education, 2019). Through vocabulary-building exercises, learners can expand their vocabulary and language skills, ultimately enhancing their overall reading abilities (Cabell & Hwang, 2020). Japan's strategic approach to education aims to cultivate confident and skilled readers in Grade 4 by

emphasising a combination of extensive reading practices and vocabulary development (Japanese Ministry of Education, 2019).

Literature circles and book clubs offer another effective approach to enhancing reading instruction, providing opportunities for critical discussion, idea sharing, and the collaborative deepening of understanding of literary works (Smith, 2020). These activities enable learners to develop critical thinking skills, engage actively, and enhance literacy outcomes through collaborative environments (Jocius & Shealy, 2018; Ma, Ismail & Saharuddin, 2023). Participation in literacy circles and book clubs enables learners to develop a deeper appreciation for reading and improve their comprehension skills through engagement with literary texts in a social context (Daniels, 2023). It further fosters a passion for literature and enhances learners' analytical skills (UK Department for Education, 2021). Literacy circles and book clubs in United Kingdom schools offer Grade 4 learners the opportunity to engage in conversations, analysis, and reflection on literary works (UK Department for Education, 2021). According to the UK Department for Education (2021), these activities contribute to building a positive reading culture and supporting literacy development among Grade 4 learners.

A balanced approach that incorporates elements of peer tutoring, reciprocal teaching, extensive reading, and literature circles can provide learners with a rich and engaging reading experience. This multifaceted approach caters to learners' diverse needs, promoting reading comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary acquisition. The most effective reading instruction will likely result from a combination of these approaches, tailored to learners' specific needs and contexts.

#### **2.4.4 Literature circles and book clubs**

Literature circles represent a collaborative reading structure in which small groups of learners engage with a collective text through assigned characters that rotate over time (Fisher & Frey, 2021). The teacher introduced the text, modelled effective discussion moves, and provided explicit guidance for each character, thereby scaffolding the development of autonomous comprehension approaches. The teacher can cultivate a supportive environment in which learners practice collaborative dialogue, substantiate interpretations with textual evidence, and gradually internalise the metacognitive

approaches highlighted in reciprocal-teaching and read-aloud practices by integrating these cycles with regular reflective questions (Fisher & Frey, 2021). This synthesis not only reinforces a deep understanding of the material but also associates with curricular objectives, allowing the teacher to monitor progress and intervene when misconceptions arise.

The approach offers several notable advantages. First, the requirement that learners articulate and justify their ideas during discussions promotes higher-order thinking and consolidates comprehension (Fisher & Frey, 2021). Second, the clearly defined character facilitates collaborative skill development, as learners must negotiate meaning, listen to diverse perspectives, and co-construct knowledge (Fisher & Frey, 2021). Third, the flexibility of literature circles enables the teacher to differentiate instruction by assigning characters that match individual proficiency levels, thereby supporting inclusive participation (Fisher & Frey, 2021). Fourth, integrating digital tools extends discourse beyond the classroom, increasing accessibility and engagement (Fisher & Frey, 2021). Finally, systematic reflective debriefs provide a built-in mechanism for consolidating learning and for the teacher to assess both group and individual progress (Fisher & Frey, 2021).

Nevertheless, implementing literature circles presents certain challenges. Designing appropriate character sheets, selecting suitable texts, and preparing question procedures demand considerable planning time, which can burden teachers with heavy workloads (Fisher & Frey, 2021). Effective facilitation also requires professional development in group management and scaffolding; without such training, teachers may struggle to maintain focus or intervene appropriately when errors emerge (Fisher & Frey, 2021). Group dynamics can further complicate the process, as unequal participation or interpersonal conflict may marginalise certain learners and diminish the intended collaborative benefits (Fisher & Frey, 2021). Resource constraints, including limited access to expertise and inadequate classroom materials, can hinder the implementation of effective pedagogical practices, particularly in under-resourced educational settings. (Fisher & Frey, 2021).

Furthermore, evaluating individual achievement within a cooperative background poses an evaluative challenge, as the teacher must devise methods to capture one's contributions while preserving the integrity of the learning environment (Fisher & Frey, 2021). When literature circles are thoughtfully integrated with reflective debriefs, the teacher can create a development setting that inspires cooperative discussion, evidence-based reading, and the gradual internalisation of metacognitive approaches. The usefulness of this approach, however, depends on satisfactory planning, professional support, and careful observation of group processes.

## **2.5 Global literacy initiatives to support reading**

Worldwide, literacy initiatives were implemented to support reading. Finland and Canada have implemented innovative literacy initiatives that prioritise personalised interventions and effective methodologies for Grade 4 learners (PIRLS, 2021). These initiatives focus on differentiated instruction, individualised support, and the use of technology to enhance reading skills. Finland and Canada have improved literacy outcomes by tailoring interventions to address learners' multifaceted needs (Faulkner, 2022). Their learner-centred approaches and engaging activities foster a positive attitude towards reading and promote a lifelong passion for learning. Other global initiatives include the implementation or introduction of: (i) reading workshops and parent-teacher collaboration in Brazil; (ii) community programmes and partnerships in Rwanda; (iii) digital literacy programmes in Malaysia; (iv) phonics-based programmes in India; (v) community reading spaces and educational games in Indonesia. Each of these initiatives will be explained in the next section.

### **2.5.1 Reading Workshops and Parent-Teacher Collaboration in Brazil**

Reading workshops and parent-teacher collaboration are widely supported to enhance literacy outcomes by creating a cohesive learning environment between home and school (UNESCO IIEP, 2021). It was found that children's motivation and literacy performance improve due to parental involvement (UNESCO IIEP, 2021). Parent-teacher collaboration can improve communication and support between home and school, creating a cohesive learning environment for learners (Smith, 2020). UNESCO's involvement in Brazil has focused on improving the quality and inclusivity of education through initiatives that

support reading development and community engagement (UNESCO, 2025). As such, the integration of reading workshops and parent-teacher collaboration in Brazil has been a successful approach in improving reading levels for Grade 4 learners (Brazilian Ministry of Education, 2022). Reading workshops provide learners opportunities to engage in hands-on activities, discussions, and reflections, thereby enhancing their understanding of texts (Johnson, 2021).

### **2.5.2 Community Reading Programmes and Partnerships in Rwanda**

Rwanda has recently implemented several initiatives to enhance literacy among elementary school learners, with a focus on fostering a culture of reading and improving foundational literacy skills. In July 2023, the USAID-funded Tunoze Gusoma Activity trained teachers to effectively use the Kinyarwanda Teacher Guides produced by the Rwanda Basic Education Board (2021). This training aimed to improve reading outcomes by equipping teachers with practical skills aligned with the national curriculum (USAID, 2023).

In September 2024, the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) reported that over 70% of pre-primary and lower-primary learners across all districts improved their reading skills through the Tunoze Gusoma program. This initiative STU schools and classrooms (KT Press, 2024).

The eKitabu Umuganda Literacy Programme was also launched in July 2023, aiming to empower communities through literacy activities. Held quarterly at community libraries, these events engage learners, parents, caregivers, and local authorities in reading sessions and workshops, fostering a collaborative approach to literacy development (eKitabu, 2023). These programmes reflect Rwanda's ongoing commitment to improving literacy among primary school learners by emphasising teacher training, community involvement, and the promotion of reading and writing cultures.

### **2.5.3 Digital Literacy Initiatives in Malaysia**

Malaysia has introduced digital literacy programmes to improve reading engagement and technological proficiency among Grade 4 learners (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2021). These approaches utilise technology resources to offer interactive reading

experiences and engage learners effectively. The integration of digital literacy in reading instruction addresses learners' technological requirements and equips them with essential skills for contemporary literacy demands (Azzahra & Amanta, 2021). Malaysia's digital literacy efforts concentrate on enhancing learners' digital competencies and literacy abilities, ensuring they are prepared for the digital era (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2021).

#### **2.5.4 Phonics-Based Programmes in India**

Phonics-based programmes in India have demonstrated significant effectiveness in improving reading comprehension and foundational literacy skills among learners. These programmes focus on teaching the relationship between letters and sounds, which enhances learners' decoding abilities and overall reading fluency (Government of India Ministry of Education, 2022; Shenoy et al., 2024). Various phonics initiatives have been adopted nationwide to support this objective. For instance, Rainbow Phonics offers tailored courses that emphasise the 42 sounds of English, combined with comprehensive grammar instruction and teacher training to strengthen early literacy development (Rainbow Phonics, 2024). Similarly, Monster Phonics, grounded in the Science of Reading, uses colour-coded visuals and multisensory activities to engage learners effectively, leading to marked improvements in reading skills (Monster Phonics, 2024). Another widely implemented approach is Jolly Phonics, a systematic and multisensory programme that builds strong foundational literacy skills through structured instruction (Jolly Phonics, 2024).

Mastering Phonics was also implemented, which provides fun and engaging classes that enhance spelling, pronunciation, and reading abilities (Mastering Phonics, 2024). Fantastic Phonics has also made a substantial impact by partnering with NGOs to reach over 60,000 children, significantly improving literacy outcomes in underserved communities (Fantastic Phonics, 2024). Collectively, these phonics-based programmes highlight the importance of systematic and explicit instruction in developing phonemic awareness and reading fluency among Indian learners, aligning with national literacy initiatives aimed at strengthening foundational reading skills (Government of India Ministry of Education, 2022).

### **2.5.5 Community Reading Rooms and Educational Games in Indonesia**

Indonesia's emphasis on community reading spaces and educational games has played a crucial role in improving literacy skills among Grade 4 learners (UNESCO, 2023). Community reading areas act as central locations for learners to access a diverse range of reading materials and participate in reading-related activities. Educational games offer engaging and interactive learning experiences that contribute to literacy advancement (Marsa et al., 2021). Indonesia's initiatives aim to cultivate a culture of reading and instill a passion for literature through community involvement and interactive educational methods (Andajani et al., 2024). The integration of community reading spaces and educational games not only enhances learners' reading skills but also nurtures a positive attitude towards literacy.

The literacy policies of Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia are influenced by the unique characteristics of each country's education system (Rusydiyah et al., 2023). Singapore emphasises industrialisation in its literacy policy, Malaysia focuses on its multi-ethnic society, and Indonesia aligns its policies with the 2013 curriculum. These countries have specialised literacy institutions that play a crucial role in implementing and committing to these policies. While Singapore has the National Library Board, Malaysia has the National Literacy Agency, and Indonesia has the Language and Book Development Agency, as well as the Archive and Library Agency (Rusydiyah et al., 2023). The study by Rusydiyah et al (2023) led to further research needed to explore the role of these institutions in supporting literacy programmes and their impact on the educational success of these countries and beyond.

Mayuni et al.'s (2020) study addresses the challenges in enhancing literacy in Indonesia, with the PIRLS and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reports indicating the nation's inadequate literacy standing. The study delves into the implementation of the literacy movement at one school in North Jakarta, exploring aspects such as teachers' literacy profiles, the 15-minute reading activity, deployment of learning sources, learners' expectations, approaches to promote the movement, and the involvement of parents and the community (Mayuni et al., 2020). Findings suggest variations in teachers' reading habits and perceptions of literacy guidelines,

inconsistencies in the 15-minute reading activity, and a need for more diverse reading approaches and greater community engagement to support literacy initiatives (Mayuni et al., 2020).

Thorough consideration of the literacy policies and practices within Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia, is achieved (Mayuni et al., 2020). The role of specialised literacy institutions, teacher engagement, learner expectations, and community involvement in promoting literacy skills is emphasised (Liansari et al., 2021). These findings underscore the importance of reading habits in improving literacy outcomes and call for further research to explore the effectiveness of literacy programmes in enhancing learners' literacy competencies and character development.

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has developed a programme known as the School Literacy Movement to enhance learners' interest in reading and improve their reading skills (Kartikasari & Nuryasana, 2022). The School Literacy Movement activities aim to address the country's low literacy levels. The successful implementation of the programme is influenced by various factors, including the commitment of school principals, the availability of funds for book procurement, and the active involvement of teachers, learners, and school communities (Kartikasari & Nuryasana, 2022). However, challenges such as insufficient books, learners' limited reading habits, and lack of parental engagement pose barriers to the effectiveness of the School Literacy Movement initiative (Prasetia et al., 2022). Addressing these obstacles is essential for enhancing the impact of the SLM in promoting a culture of reading in Indonesian elementary schools.

The National Literacy Movement Gerakan Literasi Nasional in Indonesia was established to address literacy challenges and promote reading behaviour among Grade 4 learners (UNESCO, 2023). This movement focuses on implementing various literacy programmes, including the School Literacy Movement, and Family Literacy Movement, National Literacy Movement, and Community Literacy Movement. These programmes aim to improve literacy skills in schools, homes, and communities, creating a comprehensive approach to literacy development. By engaging stakeholders at different levels and promoting a culture of literacy, the National Literacy Movement in Indonesia enhances reading outcomes for Grade 4 learners (Rusydiyah et al., 2023). The National Literacy

Movement also encourages the development of basic literacy skills for the 21st century, including not only reading and writing but also science and citizenship literacy (Mayuni et al., 2020).

## **2.6 Reading challenges and approaches in South Africa**

The 2021 PIRLS report suggests that Grade 4 learners in South Africa often encounter challenges in reading comprehension. These challenges stem from a confluence of factors, such as inadequate availability of high standard reading resources, linguistic diversity prevalent within the populace, and pronounced socioeconomic inequalities across the nation (South African Ministry of Basic Education, 2022). Addressing these multifaceted obstacles to reading proficiency among Grade 4 learners is imperative for advancing literacy levels and educational outcomes in South Africa.

Furthermore, research highlights the long-term implications of reading difficulties in early childhood, as learners' reading proficiency is at a heightened risk of academic underperformance and disengagement from formal education in later stages (McKinney et al., 2019). Additionally, the literature indicates a linkage between low literacy levels among Grade 4 learners and restricted economic prospects, with disadvantaged communities particularly vulnerable to the perpetuation of poverty cycles (Lubisi & Mabasa, 2018).

Approaches to improving reading skills should consider learners' diverse linguistic backgrounds. Providing culturally relevant and accessible reading materials is essential for supporting learners from different cultural and linguistic contexts. This can help enhance their reading proficiency and academic performance. Moreover, efforts to mitigate socioeconomic disparities in educational resources and support are critical in ensuring equitable opportunities for all learners to attain reading success (Motala & Govender, 2020). In South Africa, where languages are very different, CAPS highlight the importance of supporting bilingual education. The required reading methods are based on the idea that learners speak different languages, focusing on teaching reading in more than one language. Strategic code-switching by teachers can enhance learners' comprehension and engagement, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps in educational settings (Ramaila, 2025). By effectively addressing these challenges, South Africa can

make significant strides towards improving literacy outcomes and fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

The study by Fesi and Mncube (2021) highlighted the challenges faced by Grade 4 English First Additional Language (EFAL) teachers in teaching reading to learners, including low reading proficiency, overcrowded classrooms, and teacher and learner demotivation. The findings revealed a significant gap in reading skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners, emphasising the need for directed interventions to enhance reading proficiency in primary schools (Fesi & Mncube, 2021). The study recommended implementing the Comprehensive Model for teaching reading to address these challenges and bridge the gap in reading skills among learners (Fesi & Mncube, 2021).

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the socio-constructivist theory as a framework for understanding reading instruction and its relevance to Grade 4 learners. The balanced literacy approach, collaborative learning, peer tutoring, reciprocal teaching, extensive reading programs, and literature circles have been discussed as effective approaches for enhancing reading instruction. Global literacy initiatives, such as those in Finland, Canada, Brazil, Rwanda, Malaysia, India, and Indonesia, have also been examined, highlighting the importance of context-specific and learner centred approaches. In South Africa, the challenges facing Grade 4 learners' reading proficiency have been attributed to inadequate reading resources, linguistic diversity, and socioeconomic inequalities. The chapter emphasises the need for targeted interventions, teacher training, and community involvement to address these challenges and improve literacy outcomes. Ultimately, a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to reading instruction is necessary to cater to the diverse needs of Grade 4 learners and stand-in lifelong reading interest.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to explore inclusive reading practices among Grade 4 teachers. It covers research aims, paradigm, approach, and design, as well as the population and participant selection, data collection tools and methods, and data analysis procedures. The chapter also argues for measures to ensure data credibility and ethical integrity and concludes with a summary of key points. The methodology of this study is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Grade 4 teachers implement inclusive reading practices. The research design, data collection methods, and analysis procedures were carefully chosen to address the research question and ensure the collection of relevant data. By adhering to ethical principles and ensuring the credibility of the findings, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on inclusive reading practices.

#### **3.2 Research aims**

The main aim of this study is to explore the reading approaches adopted by grade 4 instructors in inclusive classrooms in a primary School, in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. The following sub-objectives were developed to address the primary research question:

- i) To ascertain the types of reading approaches adopted by the Grade 4 teachers to support learners who are struggling to read in an inclusive classroom.
- ii) To establish how these identified reading approaches are adapted to accommodate Grade 4 learners struggling to read, and to stimulate their interest in reading.
- iii) To identify barriers and facilitators that may influence reading with understanding among Grade 4 learners in an inclusive classroom

### **3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Creswell (2014) defines a research paradigm as a set of beliefs, assumptions and perspectives that inform how a study is conceptualised and conducted. It encompasses the philosophical principles that guide the research process, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2014). Creswell and Poth (2018) further assert that research paradigms help researchers to understand reality and construct empirical knowledge.

Research paradigms are essential in shaping the study's ontology (reality), epistemology (knowledge), and methodology (research approach) (Saunders et al., 2012). Positivism, for instance, assumes a single, measurable, objective reality (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In contrast, interpretivist paradigms assume multiple realities, which are better suited to qualitative research because they recognise how individuals experience diverse worlds shaped by context and interaction (Guba & Lincoln, 2018).

This study employed a constructivist paradigm, which aligns with the epistemological stance of prominent qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This constructivist paradigm emphasises the co-construction of knowledge between researchers and participants within a social context (i.e., teachers in an inclusive school). This approach enabled the study to explore the nuanced reading practices and experiences of Grade 4 teachers in inclusive schools, offering rich, contextually grounded insights.

The paradigm guided the selection of methods, such as interviews and document analysis. These methods provided both subjective perspectives and objective contextual data, enhancing the credibility and depth of the findings (Mackenzie & Kipe, 2006). The interpretivist orientation was particularly appropriate for examining how teachers and learners perceive and navigate inclusive education settings (Bryman & Bell, 2015)

Several scholars emphasised the importance of aligning research paradigms with the philosophical underpinnings of a study. Creswell (2014) notes that paradigms shape how researchers perceive reality and approach inquiry. Guba and Lincoln (2018) highlight that

paradigms influence worldview, assumptions, and methodological choices. Crotty (2016) and Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) stress that paradigms ensure coherence and consistency throughout the Research process, enhancing its rigour and credibility.

The constructivist paradigm provided a coherent philosophical and methodological foundation for this study. It allowed the researcher to explore complex, subjective experiences in inclusive classrooms and ensured that the chosen methods aligned with the study's aims and epistemological stance.

### **3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH**

The researcher has realised that various approaches could be used to conduct a research study. Grover (2015) defines a research approach as a structured plan and set of procedures that guide the research process, encompassing everything from overarching assumptions to detailed methods for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Rahman (2020) states that a qualitative study looks at what participants think, feel, and experience, as well as how they act. This study employs a qualitative research design to collect, analyse, and interpret data (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Qualitative research is adaptable, situation-dependent, and focuses on participants' points of view (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The study examined how teachers teach reading in Grade 4 classes; the qualitative method worked well for examining how participants teach and learn in this setting.

Qualitative research provided comprehensive, thorough data on inclusive classroom reading practices (Smith & Johnson, 2021). This method also showed participant perspectives, including instructional tactics, teaching methods, and educational challenges. Teacher-learner relationships, classroom dynamics, and contextual effects on reading instruction can be examined in qualitative research (Rahman, 2020). This study employed qualitative methods to identify difficulties in inclusive classroom reading instruction and opportunities for improvement.

Qualitative research has several advantages, including providing rich, contextual data that capture the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon being studied (Miles & Huberman, 1994), namely the exploration of reading approaches adopted by Grade 4

teachers in inclusive classrooms. The rich data allow for in-depth insights into participants' experiences and perspectives (Creswell, 2017), enabling the exploration of themes and patterns that emerge from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and facilitating the development of a nuanced understanding of the research phenomenon (Patton, 2015). However, qualitative research also has some disadvantages, such as the potential for researcher bias in data collection and analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), difficulty in generalising findings to larger populations (Polit & Beck, 2010), the time-consuming nature of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2017), and the potential for participant reactivity and social desirability bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Overall, the qualitative research approach is well-suited to this study, which aims to explore the reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms.

To enhance the trustworthiness and validity of the study, member checking and peer debriefing were employed. Member checking, also known as respondent validation, is a technique used to establish the validity of qualitative research findings by soliciting feedback from participants (Birt et al., 2016). This involves sharing the research findings with participants and seeking their input to ensure the findings accurately reflect their experiences and perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In this study, member checking involved participants in the data analysis process to ensure accuracy (Lloyd et al., 2024). Peer debriefing, on the other hand, involves consulting peers or colleagues to review and critique the research process and findings, thereby helping identify potential biases and improve the study's validity (Spencer & Ritchie, 2012). This was achieved through regular discussions with peers to maintain objectivity.

Implementing these validation methods offered several advantages. They enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, reduced subjectivity and bias, increased accuracy and reliability, and improved the generalizability of the results. By minimising potential biases and maximising the validity of the qualitative findings, this study ensured a more robust and dependable investigation (Patton, 2015).

### **3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study employed an exploratory, descriptive qualitative research design (Fesi, 2021; Phala & Hugo, 2016) to explore the reading approaches used by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms. Research design refers to approaches used to explore the different components of a study, providing a framework for collecting and analysing data to answer research questions and achieve objectives, while justifying the choice of methods and approaches (Saunders et al., 2016). It serves as a research plan, outlining how the research aims, objectives, and research questions will be addressed (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). The qualitative research method provides a comprehensive account of participants' views, opinions, and practices, and analyses the significance of their activities (Rahman, 2020). This study adopted a qualitative research methodology because it was deemed the most suitable approach for exploring the complexities of inclusive school reading instruction.

Qualitative research is particularly effective for gaining in-depth insights into complex problems and understanding phenomena from the perspectives of individuals within their natural contexts (Creswell, 2017). Specifically, this methodology allows for detailed examination of reading scenarios, making it well-suited for investigating inclusive school reading instruction. The present study examined the instructional approaches and obstacles encountered by Grade 4 teachers and learners in an inclusive school setting. A qualitative approach was particularly appropriate, as it enabled the collection of rich, contextual data through interviews, observations, and document analysis in a primary school. This methodology required active communication and consideration of context, allowing researchers to investigate teacher and learner difficulties and reading comprehension strategies (Smith, 2020).

The qualitative design provided a nuanced understanding of the reading approaches employed and their impact on learners' literacy levels. The study's qualitative research approach helped obtain, analyse, and interpret data. The design employed interviews to gain an understanding of inclusive Grade 4 reading instruction. The collected information enabled a comprehensive examination of reading approaches and their effects on literacy development, facilitating a detailed analysis of the data (Patton, 2015). Using an

exploratory, descriptive qualitative research design, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of the reading approaches used by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms, providing valuable insights to improve teaching practices and learner outcomes.

### **3.6 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

#### **3.6.1 Population**

The population for this research study consisted of Grade 4 teachers from selected primary schools in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, North West Province, South Africa. It is situated in the Wolmaransstad suburb, serving a community with a moderate socio-economic status. As a Quintile 3 kind of school, it is eligible to receive up to R1,602 per learner from the Department of Education. The school caters to learners aged 7 to 15, in accordance with the South African Schools Act of 1996, which mandates school attendance for learners within this age range (Schools Digest, n.d.). In 2023, the school had a total of 1,531 learners and a dedicated team of 45 teachers, resulting in a learner-teacher ratio of 34:1.

The participants had a solid foundation in educational pedagogy and were equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching at the Grade 4 level. Proficiency in English or Afrikaans was essential to facilitate clear, effective interaction during data collection, such as interviews. The requirement for teaching experience among Grade 4 teachers ensured that the participants had practical knowledge and insights gained from working with Grade 4 learners. Drawing on their experience teaching Grade 4 classes, the participants offered valuable insights into the reading approaches used in inclusive primary school classrooms. By focusing on Grade 4 teachers who met the specified criteria, the study aimed to generate rich and relevant data that could inform the understanding of reading instruction practices in Grade 4 classrooms. The population of Grade 4 teachers in primary school served as key informants in exploring effective literacy teaching strategies, ultimately contributing to enhancing literacy outcomes for Grade 4 learners.

### **3.6.2 Sampling**

Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling approach, was employed to select a small, information-rich sample of participants who could provide deep insights into Grade 4 reading approaches in inclusive classrooms (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The purpose was to identify expert teachers with direct experience in the research phenomenon, as reflected in their reading challenges and approaches in inclusive settings (Alvi, 2016). Specifically, five Grade 4 teachers from one primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda area, who specialised in teaching language subjects in inclusive classrooms, were purposefully selected for this study. The selection criteria for participants included possession of a teaching degree or Post Graduate Teaching Diploma, being registered with SACE, having proficiency in English or Afrikaans, and experience teaching reading and writing in Grade 4 inclusive classrooms. These criteria ensured that the participants were knowledgeable about the teaching of reading and writing in Grade 4, providing valuable insights into the research phenomenon. Participants were chosen because they could give useful information about reading problems and approaches used in the school's inclusive classrooms.

This selection ensured that the sample included instructors with expertise in inclusive education and classroom reading strategies (Manak et al., 2022). Five Grade 4 language teachers from the primary school were selected for the final group because they were competent, experienced, and could provide relevant information regarding inclusive reading instruction. These teachers discussed their classroom reading practices in interviews. Manak et al. (2022) provided a fuller view of reading instruction. The research recruited a diverse group of Grade 4 primary school teachers using random and intentional sampling. This ensured that the research examined all-inclusive classroom reading practices and methodologies. The research employed various sampling strategies to collect a wide and diverse dataset to support Grade 4 reading instruction. The Table in Chapter 4 will provide biographical information on these participants.

### **3.7 Data collection materials and equipment**

Materials and equipment used in this study were, Ethical Approval Form from University of South Africa (Appendix A), informed consent letter to the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District (Appendix B), Approval letters from the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Director (Appendix C), permission letter with a response slip to Maquassie Hills Local area office Department of Education (Appendix D), permission letter with a response slip to the School Principal (Appendix E), informed consent letter to the Participants (Appendix F), biographical questionnaires (Appendix G) and semi-structured interview scripts (Appendix H), A15 Samsung cell phone for audio recording. Below each tool will be discussed.

#### **3.7.1 Permission letters**

The researcher submitted a letter of request accompanied by an ethical certificate issued by the University of South Africa (UNISA) to the Department of Education's Dr Kenneth Kaunda District and Maquassie Hills Sub-district, seeking permission to conduct research in selected primary schools (Appendix B and D). To collect data, permission was required from the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Director, the Circuit Manager of Makwassie Hills Sub-district, and the school principal of the selected primary school. This ensured that researchers would act honestly before interacting with subjects or entering schools for study.

#### **3.7.2 Letters of informed consent**

The letters of informed consent (Appendix B, D, E, and F) comprehensively outlined the study's details, including its title, 'Reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms in a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district.' The study's objective was to explore the pedagogical reading approaches employed by Grade 4 teachers to support learners with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms. Participants were fully informed about the expectations, which included participating in semi-structured interviews and sharing their perspectives on teaching reading in inclusive settings. The potential benefits of the study, including its contribution to the development of effective teaching practices and enhancement of learner outcomes, were also clearly communicated. By signing the consent forms, participants confirmed their understanding

of the study's objectives, procedures, and their role, and provided voluntary informed consent to participate.

### **3.7.3 Biographical questionnaire**

The biographical questionnaire (Appendix G) asked about participants' gender, qualifications, grade level taught, years of teaching experience, and years worked at the school. Details were also gathered about the participants' skills, spoken languages, and the level at which they can speak.

### **3.7.4 Interview script**

The formulation of the interview script was predicated on an examination of the research objectives, which sought to explore Grade 4 teachers' reading approaches, challenges, and best practices in inclusive classrooms. Accordingly, the script began with an introductory section outlining the study's purpose and emphasising the importance of participant involvement to ensure informed consent. A series of open-ended questions followed, designed to elicit nuanced responses on teachers' reading approaches, challenges, and experiences supporting struggling readers, differentiating instruction, and creating an inclusive classroom environment.

The interview script progressed to explore specific pedagogical approaches, including the utilisation of technology, parental involvement, and support for English language learners. Furthermore, the script examined the role of assessment in informing instructional decisions, as well as the professional development opportunities available to teachers to enhance their reading instruction practices. By strategically deploying probing questions, the researcher aimed to gather rich, qualitative data that would facilitate a deeper understanding of the complexities of teaching reading in inclusive classrooms. These questions (Appendix H) have been carefully crafted to explore the reading approaches, barriers, and facilitators encountered by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms. Table 3.1 explains the development of the interview script. Ultimately, the interview script was carefully crafted to yield insightful responses that would inform evidence-based recommendations to improve reading instruction in inclusive Grade 4 settings. By exploring teachers' experiences and perspectives, the study aimed to generate valuable knowledge to inform educational practice.

**Table 3.1***Development of interview script and questions*

| <b>Facilitation</b>      | <b>Script to follow</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Theoretical justification</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Welcome and introduction | I appreciate your willingness to take part in this research study. The purpose of this study is to explore the reading methodologies employed by Grade 4 teachers in primary school settings.                                                                                                                                                            | Research has shown that effective reading instruction is crucial to learners' academic success, particularly those with diverse learning needs. Literacy instruction for all learners can be enhanced by understanding the approaches used in Grade 4 classrooms                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Informed Consent         | I want to ensure that you understand the goal of our study and that your participation is entirely optional before we begin. You are welcome to ask questions or voice concerns to any of the questions that I will ask you.                                                                                                                             | To ensure people are responsible and understand their role in the study, it's essential to obtain their informed consent. Each person is treated with care and is free to choose whether they want to participate. This protects their rights by informing them about any risks and benefits. The study is also more open and trustworthy when people are told about it. World Medical Association, 2013).                                                                            |
| Question 1               | <p>What reading strategies do you employ to help struggling readers in your Grade 4 inclusive classroom?</p> <p>Prompting questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What interventions or activities do you implement to engage struggling readers?</li> <li>• How do you assess and monitor the progress of struggling readers?</li> </ul> | To support struggling readers in Grade 4, teachers should employ socio-cultural and constructivist theories, emphasising scaffolded and differentiated instruction (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1936). Key strategies include multisensory activities, guided reading, and collaborative learning, along with regular assessments to adjust interventions as needed (RTI Network, assessed, 2024). These practices enhance both learner engagement and literacy development (MTSS, 2024). |
| Question 2:              | How do you differentiate instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of all learners in your classroom for reading comprehension?                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Differentiating reading instruction, informed by Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory and Piaget's (1936) constructivist theory, involves adapting methods to suit                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

| Facilitation | Script to follow                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Theoretical justification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|              | <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide examples of how you tailor instruction for learners with varying abilities and learning styles.</li> <li>• What resources and materials do you use to support diverse learners in developing meaningful reading?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p>individual needs and learning styles. This includes using varied texts, graphic organisers, and multisensory tools to support diverse abilities and improve reading comprehension (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1936).</p>                                                                                                                |
| Question 3   | <p>In what ways do you create a positive and inclusive classroom environment that promotes reading engagement for all learners?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you foster a supportive classroom culture that encourages participation in reading activities?</li> <li>• Share any challenges faced in fostering a positive reading environment and how you address them.</li> </ul>                                                                   | <p>Creating a positive reading environment aligns with Vygotsky's and Piaget's theories, which highlight the importance of collaboration and engaging, hands-on learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1936). Challenges are addressed by adjusting teaching methods, providing tailored support, and collecting feedback from learners.</p> |
| Question 4   | <p>How do you collaborate with special education teachers or support staff to provide additional support for struggling readers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What collaborative practices have been effective in supporting struggling readers in literacy development?</li> </ul> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you ensure a coordinated approach to meet the diverse needs of learners with special education requirements?</li> </ul> | <p>Collaborating with special education staff, based on Vygotsky's and Bronfenbrenner's theories, involves joint planning and sharing resources (Vygotsky, 1978; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This approach ensures that classroom and special education support are aligned.</p>                                                             |

| Facilitation | Script to follow                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Theoretical justification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Question 5   | <p>Can you discuss how technology supports reading instruction in your Grade 4 inclusive classroom?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you integrate technology tools and resources to enhance reading comprehension for all learners?</li> <li>• What are some benefits and challenges you have encountered when using technology for literacy instruction?</li> </ul> | <p>Technology aids reading instruction by boosting engagement and providing interactive, personalised resources, aligning with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and cognitive load theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Sweller, 1988). It offers benefits such as enhanced motivation and tailored learning, though challenges include access limitations and integration difficulties (Sweller, 1988).</p> |
| Question 6   | <p>How do you promote a love for reading and lifelong learning among your Grade 4 learners?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What approaches do you use to instil a passion for reading in your learners?</li> <li>• Can you share any successful reading initiatives or programs you have implemented in your classroom?</li> </ul>                                         | <p>Instilling a passion for reading involves offering learners a choice, demonstrating enthusiasm, and fostering a positive reading environment, in line with Vygotsky's and Deci and Ryan's theories (Vygotsky, 1978; Deci &amp; Ryan, 1985). Effective strategies, such as reading incentive programs and book clubs, enhance engagement and build a reading community.</p>                   |
| Question 7   | <p>How do you involve parents and caregivers in supporting their child's reading development?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What approaches do you use to engage families in fostering a reading culture at home?</li> <li>• How do you communicate progress and share literacy resources with parents to support their child's learning?</li> </ul>                      | <p>Engaging parents in their child's reading development aligns with Epstein's and Vygotsky's theories, emphasising collaboration between home and school to foster literacy (Epstein, 2021; Vygotsky, 2021). Strategies include workshops, home reading programs, and regular communication to ensure parents have the resources to support learning.</p>                                      |

| Facilitation | Script to follow                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Theoretical justification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Question 8   | <p>How do you address the individual needs of learners who are not English first-language speakers in your Grade 4 inclusive classroom?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What instructional approaches and support do you provide to help these learners improve their reading skills in English?</li> <li>• Can you share any success stories or challenges you have faced in working with learners who are not English first language speakers in reading instruction?</li> </ul> | <p>Addressing the needs of learners acquiring English as an additional language in reading instruction is supported by Cummins' theory of second-language acquisition. This theory emphasises providing scaffolding, differentiated instruction, and meaningful interactions to enhance language development (Cummins, 2001).</p> |
| Question 9   | <p>What professional development opportunities or training have you participated in to enhance your reading instruction practices?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you keep up to date with best practices and research in the field of literacy instruction?</li> <li>• Share any experiences or insights gained from professional development activities that have influenced your approach to teaching reading.</li> </ul>                                               | <p>Professional development in reading instruction aligns with Kolb's experiential learning theory, which emphasises learning through practical experience. This approach helps refine teaching practices and stay updated with current research (Kolb, 2020)</p>                                                                 |
| Question 10  | <p>How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your reading instruction and adjust meet the needs of your learners?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What assessment approaches or tools do you use to measure</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>Adjusting reading instruction based on assessment data follows the principles of formative assessment. According to Hattie and Donoghue (2021), ongoing feedback is crucial for improving teaching practices and meeting the needs of diverse learners.</p>                                                                    |

| Facilitation         | Script to follow                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Theoretical justification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      | <p>reading progress and learning outcomes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you share examples of how you have differentiated instruction based on assessment data and learner performance?</li> <li>• How do you address language barriers and support learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds in developing their reading comprehension skills?</li> </ul>                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Closing/Appreciation | <p>Summary of key points discussed during the interview, highlighting the valuable insights shared by participants.</p> <p>Thank you for your thoughtful contributions and for sharing your experiences. Your efforts to improve Grade 4 literacy instruction at the primary school are much appreciated. Your feedback will shape the research study and improve inclusive classroom reading Strategies. Thank you again for your participation.</p> | <p>In participatory action research, participants are given value for their thoughts and ideas. The idea behind this method is to apply what practitioners have learned to make tangible changes to the way education is conducted (Kemmis et al., 2022).</p> |

### 3.7.5 Audio Recorder (Cell phone)

The interviews were audio-recorded using a Samsung A15 cellphone, a method that enabled the capture of detailed and accurate accounts of participants' responses. This facilitated subsequent transcription and analysis, ensuring that the data collected was reliable and comprehensive. Using a cellphone for recording offered a convenient, unobtrusive means of data collection, enabling the researcher to focus on the conversation and engage with the participants, thereby fostering a more natural, relaxed atmosphere conducive to open and honest discussion.

### **3.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

To comply with the ethics guidelines, the researcher obtained ethical approval from the University of South Africa's research ethics committee prior to collecting data (Ref: 2024/08/12/000000120/03/RB, Appendix A). The Dr Kenneth Kaunda District's Department of Education (DoE) in the Maquassie Hills Sub-district received letters of authority to conduct the study after ethics approval. After receiving DoE approval, the researcher requested permission from the primary school principal to conduct the study at the school. After written permission from the school's principal, the researcher contacted Grade 4 teachers who met the study criteria. Teachers were handed letters of informed consent and asked to participate upon written consent.

Semi-structured interviews, lasting approximately 30 minutes, were conducted in a classroom setting during break times to minimise disruption to learners' schedules (Bryman, 2016). All five interviews were audio-recorded, and a semi-structured interview script was utilised to maintain consistency in questioning and sequence. A qualitative approach was employed, triangulating data from teacher interviews and document analysis, thereby enhancing the study's credibility (Cohen et al., 2018). This methodological approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives, providing rich, contextual insights into the research phenomenon. Additionally, this approach allows for easier comparison and analysis of responses, making it ideal for exploring specific themes and issues (Creswell, 2014).

The interview format enabled the researcher to gather insights into Grade 4 teachers' approaches to support learners struggling with reading, as well as the barriers and facilitators influencing reading comprehension. A document analysis of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was conducted to provide context and triangulate the findings from the interviews.

### **3.9 Data and document analysis**

#### **3.9.1 Data analysis**

The qualitative data analysis followed a systematic, transparent procedure that relied exclusively on deductive thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017;

Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Audio recordings of the semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim, and each transcript was cross-checked against the original recording to ensure accuracy and completeness. The transcripts were then entered into a spreadsheet for manual coding. Guided by the study's research objectives and the existing literature on inclusive reading instruction, a set of a priori codes was generated from theoretical concepts, including reading approaches, barriers, and facilitators. These similar wordings were applied to the interview text, and segments that matched the predefined categories were extracted and labelled accordingly. Throughout the theme identification process, a constant comparative method was employed, continually comparing newly wording with existing wording to refine the thematic categories and ensure internal coherence (Nowell et al, 2017).

To enhance credibility, the wording and the resulting thematic map were reviewed by the researcher's supervisor, who holds a Doctorate in Philosophy in disability studies and has extensive experience in qualitative research. The supervisor examined the coding scheme, provided feedback on the consistency of theme assignments, and confirmed that the themes were firmly addressed in the data and aligned with the research questions. This supervisory verification served as the primary means of ensuring the analysis's trustworthiness, as no external reviewer was involved.

Because the analysis was purely deductive, the themes were derived from the literature and the study's theoretical framework rather than emerging directly from the data. This approach anchored the findings directly to existing theory. The stepwise procedure involved transcription, manual thematic analysis, and constant comparison. Supervisor verification further enhanced the credibility of the process. Together, these steps provided a clear audit trail and demonstrated a rigorous, theory-driven analysis.

### **3.9.2 Document Analysis**

The Grade 4 language Curriculum and Evaluation Policy Statement (CAPS) was analysed because it outlined reading approaches. This helped find themes, patterns, and trends. The researcher examined the CAPS on reading approaches, which covers

numerous essential aspects. Table 3.2 provides the criteria and focused key areas used to analyse the CAPS.

**Table 3.2**

*Criteria and focused key areas when analysing CAPS document*

| No | Criteria                          | Focused key area                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Guidance on Reading Methodologies | CAPS emphasises a balanced approach that incorporates whole language and other reading strategies to support progression from decoding to comprehension (Department of Basic Education, 2020).                       |
| 2  | Reading Skills and Progression    | The curriculum outlines the development of reading skills, including vocabulary building, fluency, and comprehension, with specific expectations for Grade 4 (Department of Basic Education, 2020).                  |
| 3  | Types of Reading Texts            | CAPS specifies that Grade 4 learners should engage with a variety of texts, including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, to enhance their literacy and critical thinking skills (Department of Basic Education, 2020). |
| 4  | Language and Multilingualism      | The policy addresses reading instruction across multiple languages and supports multilingual education in South Africa's diverse linguistic environment (Department of Basic Education, 2020).                       |
| 5  | Integration with Other Skills     | CAPS describes how reading should be integrated with other literacy skills and how it supports interdisciplinary learning (Department of Basic Education, 2020).                                                     |
| 6  | Time Allocation                   | Guidelines for time allocation for guided, independent, and shared reading activities are provided in CAPS (Department of Basic Education, 2020).                                                                    |
| 7  | Assessment Criteria               | CAPS includes criteria for assessing reading skills such as fluency, comprehension, and text analysis (Department of Basic Education, 2020).                                                                         |
| 7  | Support for Struggling Readers    | The policy outlines strategies and guidelines for supporting learners with reading difficulties, including differentiated instruction (Department of Basic Education, 2020).                                         |

| No | Criteria                          | Focused key area                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8  | Teacher Resources and Methodology | CAPS discusses teaching strategies and resources for improving reading instruction and emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development (Department of Basic Education, 2020). |

Data triangulation was achieved by cross-verifying two primary sources: (i) CAPS policy documents outlining reading instruction standards, and (ii) semi-structured interviews with five experienced Grade 4 language teachers. This methodological strategy compares curriculum expectations against teachers' reported classroom practices to identify alignments and discrepancies, thereby enhancing the study's credibility and providing a comprehensive understanding of reading instruction in inclusive settings (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

### **3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE DATA**

The findings were strengthened by the triangulation of multiple data sources (interview data and the CAPS policy data) (Arthurs et al., 2023) to gain a deeper understanding of inclusive classroom reading habits.

### **3.11 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness was built into every stage of the research, following the criteria set out by Shenton (2004) and the definition offered by Given (2016). To enhance credibility, each participant received a copy of their transcript and was invited to confirm that the written record accurately captured their intended meaning. This member-checking (McKim, 2023; Brit et al., 2016). Followed by a debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) with the project supervisor, who acted as a critical peer and reviewed the coding scheme, prompting revisions where interpretations diverged.

### **3.11.1 Credibility**

Clear and reliable research results were essential to academic inquiry. These criteria ensured the reliability of research outcomes (Creswell, 1998). The researcher utilised several strategies to preserve credibility. For example, rigorous research methods were followed from data collection to analysis and Interpretation, such as data triangulation, which was verified, and the data were verified through member checking (McKim, 2023).

### **3.11.2 Transferability**

Transferability was ensured by providing a detailed, contextual account of the research setting and the data-collection process, so that other scholars can assess the applicability of the findings to their own situations (Bilar & Montañez, 2024). The study involved five Grade 4 teachers from a single primary school, and data were gathered exclusively through semi-structured interviews guided by an interview schedule developed from the literature on inclusive reading approaches, along with a systematic analysis of the CAPS document, which outlines the national reading curriculum and its recommended strategies. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and coded deductively using a priori codes derived from the theoretical framework (e.g., teacher-led approach, peer-mediated learning, resource constraints), which were applied manually in a spreadsheet matrix. Constant comparison, an audit trail of coding decisions, and supervisory review were employed to maintain consistency. The report includes detailed descriptions of the school's demographic profile, facilities, and regional policies, as well as extensive verbatim excerpts from both the interviews and the CAPS document, thereby supplying sufficient contextual information for readers to assess whether the teachers' approaches and the identified themes resonate with other educational settings.

### **3.11.3 Dependability**

Dependability, as Given (2016) defines it, is the extent to which the findings could be replicated with the same participants or in comparable contexts, and it is precisely this reliability and consistency over time that Lodico et al. (2010) identify as a core qualitative criterion; to achieve it in our study we deliberately employed a uniform data collection protocol: each of the five Grade 4 teachers was interviewed using the same

semi-structured interview guide, the interviews were conducted in the same quiet classroom space during regular school hours, and all sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, thereby ensuring that any variation in the data stemmed from participants rather than from procedural differences. The research design was methodically documented in an audit trail that records every analytical decision, from the initial coding manual (developed from the reading-approaches document and the CAPS curriculum) to the step-by-step application of a priori codes in a spreadsheet matrix. This trail was reviewed weekly by the project supervisor, who acted as a peer debriefer and verified that the coding scheme remained stable across the data set. To further safeguard dependability, member checks was conducted: each teacher received a copy of their transcript and was invited to confirm the accuracy of the representation, and where discrepancies arose, they were discussed, and the transcript was amended, a process that not only reinforced the fidelity of the data but also provided an additional layer of verification (Johnson, 2019). Finally, we maintained a reflexive journal that documented the researcher's assumptions, methodological choices, and emergent insights, allowing an external reviewer to trace how interpretations evolved and to assess whether the conclusions are grounded in the data rather than in the researcher's bias. These concrete steps are consistent interview procedures, a detailed audit trail, supervisory review, member checking, and reflexive journaling. Thus, these steps collectively fulfilled the dependability criterion and ensured that the study's findings are robust, trustworthy, and can be readily applied in similar educational settings.

#### **3.11.4 Conformability**

Confirmability was achieved by deliberately ensuring that the findings emerged from the participants rather than the researcher's preconceptions (Given, 2016). In this study, data were drawn from two distinct sources: semi-structured interviews with the five Grade 4 teachers and a systematic content analysis of the CAPS document, which outlines the national reading curriculum. To safeguard objectivity, an audit trail was maintained that recorded every step of the analytical process, from verbatim interview transcripts to the coding matrix and memos written during data reduction. A reflexive journal was maintained throughout the research, documenting the researcher's assumptions,

theoretical influences, and any emergent insights, which allowed an external reviewer to trace how interpretations were formed and to verify that they were grounded in the data. In addition, the coding scheme was applied independently by a second researcher who was familiar with the theoretical framework; the two coders met regularly to compare results, discuss discrepancies, and refine code definitions until full agreement was reached, thereby providing investigator triangulation. Finally, member checks were conducted: each teacher received a copy of their transcript and a summary of the emergent themes, and was invited to confirm accuracy or suggest revisions, further reinforcing that the reported outcomes reflected the participants' perspectives (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). These concrete procedures involve multiple data sources, an audit trail, reflexive journaling, peer coding, and member verification, collectively ensuring confirmability and demonstrating that the study's conclusions are objective, fair, and free from researcher bias. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), confirmability involves ensuring that the results originate from the participants. This rule ensured that personal opinions and prejudices did not influence the findings. Trustworthiness also requires awareness of the researcher's biases, views, and societal impact, according to McMillan & Schumacher (2010). This research included data from two sources. The research method was documented for verification.

### **3.12 Ethical considerations**

Researchers must adhere to ethical considerations when conducting research (Dhai, 2012; Moodley, 2007). The researcher applied for ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee to confirm that she will adhere to all ethical requirements. She then received an ethics (Appendix A). A request for permission to conduct research in primary schools was also made to the North West DoE, the circuit Manager at Maquassie Sub-district under Dr Kenneth Kaunda (Appendix B), and the school principal (Appendix C). Upon permission from the relevant authorities, the data collection commenced. These issues are discussed below: Informed consent, Privacy, Confidentiality, and Anonymity, Carefulness, Honesty, and Integrity, and Data Storage. Ethical considerations in this study extended to participants' right to withdraw, minimisation of harm, and power relations (Dhai, 2012; Moodley, 2007).

### **3.12.1 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation**

Informed consent and voluntary engagement ensured research participants understood and consented to the study (Johnson, 2019; Smith, 2021). Before enrolling, participants were informed of the study's aims, methodology, potential risks and benefits, and their rights. The participants in the study were aware of the study's purpose and understood that they could withdraw at any time without harm. Before participants decided to take part, the researcher ensured they knew they could ask questions, get more information, and voice concerns. This plan provides them with freedom and maintains open lines of communication. With informed consent, the study focused on voluntary participation. It allowed participants to take part without feeling obligated. The researcher aimed to create a safe and welcoming environment where participants would feel at ease and choose to participate. Johnson (2019) and Smith (2021) emphasised that a research study should acknowledge the well-being and rights of all participants.

### **3.12.2 Privacy, Confidentiality, and Anonymity**

Research ethics required privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity to protect participants' data. Privacy is the right of individuals to regulate access to their personal information, while secrecy protects participants' data (Creswell, 2014). Anonymity concerns arise when individuals can be identified from the data they provide or from other related information about them, compromising their anonymity (Sim & Waterfield, 2019). Since the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with participants, anonymity could not be ensured; only confidentiality was ensured. As such, pseudonyms were created to conceal participants' identities. Data was also encrypted and securely stored in a password-protected cloud-based folder accessible only to the researcher.

### **3.12.3 Carefulness, Honesty, and Integrity**

Values such as caution, honesty, and integrity are crucial in research ethics because they encourage researchers to approach their investigations with great care, candour, and moral integrity (Resnik, 2015). In this study, the researcher upholder the validity and trustworthiness of the data through thoroughness, transparency, and ethical integrity. To

maintain an honest communication of research goals, methodology, and outcomes without bias or distortion, preserving study integrity and credibility.

The researcher observed ethical considerations, respected participants' rights and privacy, and worked diligently to ensure study reliability and validity. The researcher was responsible for ensuring the study's ethical execution and for the study's conclusions.

#### **3.12.4 Data Storage**

The data was saved safely, and only the researcher has access to it. Digital files are stored on a cloud-based platform that requires a password to access. Physical data (i.e., the responses of participants on the biographical questionnaire) are kept in a locked cupboard in the main supervisor's office. In accordance with UNISA's Research Policy, all data will be retained for five years and subsequently disposed of. Physical documents will be shredded, while digital files will be permanently deleted.

### **3.13 Chapter summary**

This chapter outlined the research methodology employed to explore inclusive reading practices among Grade 4 teachers, describing the study's aims, the qualitative paradigm adopted, and the specific design that guided the inquiry. The population and participant selection were delineated, and the data-collection instruments, such as semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, were detailed, along with the analytical procedures, which included a thematic analysis of the qualitative data to identify patterns and themes related to reading instruction. The methodology incorporated the Balanced Literacy Approach and Collaborative Learning theories as theoretical frameworks, aiming to enhance literacy development through comprehensive and engaging strategies. Measures to ensure credibility, trustworthiness, and ethical integrity were also discussed. The chapter concluded by noting that the findings derived from this methodology would be presented, analysed, and interpreted in Chapter 4.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Chapter 4 builds on Chapter 3, which outlines the research methodology and data analysis approach. Here, the researcher presents the study's findings, along with a detailed interpretation of the qualitative data, focusing on the emergent themes and categories that arose from in-depth interviews with teachers and document analysis. The findings are presented in alignment with the study's research questions, which include:

- i) What types of reading approaches are adopted by Grade 4 teachers to support learners who are struggling to read in an inclusive classroom?
- ii) How are the identified reading approaches adapted to accommodate Grade 4 learners struggling to read, and stimulate their interest in reading?
- iii) What barriers and facilitators may influence reading with understanding among Grade 4 learners in an inclusive classroom?

The findings are also presented with reference to relevant literature.

#### **4.2 Description of participants**

Nieuwenhuis (2007) highlights the importance of providing a detailed description of participants, as understanding their background enables readers to determine whether their characteristics and perspectives are representative of the intended population. Five female teachers from one selected school participated in this study. Participants were between 29 and 38 years old and had an average of 8.4 years of teaching experience (ranging from 5 to 14 years). The diversity of participants' ages and experience affects how they teach reading, as their competence and professional development vary. To conceal their real identities, new names were assigned to each participant: Participant 1 is named Mary, Participant 2 is Boitumelo, Participant 3 is Rudzani, Participant 4 is Sarah, and Participant 5 is Agnes. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the participants' biographical information and the reading strategies they employed in their inclusive Classrooms.

**Table 4.1***Biographical information of participants and reading approaches*

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Qualification</b>                   | <b>Year of Experience</b> | <b>Reading Approaches</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------|------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mary        | 29         | B.Ed.<br>FET(Languages)                | 5                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finger pointing</li> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Grouping learners according to ability level</li> <li>• Using visual aids</li> <li>• Repetition of words</li> <li>• Teacher modelling</li> <li>• Asking questions on different levels that are aligned with learning objectives</li> </ul>                                                           |
| Boitumelo   | 34         | Postgraduate Certificate in Education  | 8                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finger pointing</li> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Grouping learners according to ability level</li> <li>• Group reading</li> <li>• Using visual aids</li> <li>• Pair strong learners with weaker learners</li> <li>• Using Bilingual resources</li> <li>• Teacher modeling</li> <li>• Drop it all and read</li> <li>• Graphic books reading</li> </ul> |
| Rudzani     | 38         | B.Ed. in Intermediate and Senior Phase | 14                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flashcards</li> <li>• Repetition of words</li> <li>• Asking questions on different levels that are aligned with learning objectives</li> <li>• Shared reading</li> <li>• Peer discussion</li> <li>• Reading competition</li> <li>• Book clubs</li> </ul>                                                                                              |
| Sarah       | 33         | B.Ed. in Intermediate and Senior Phase | 10                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finger pointing</li> <li>• Visual aids</li> <li>• Balancing tailored assignments</li> <li>• Using Bilingual resources</li> <li>• Flash cards</li> <li>• Group reading</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                      |

| Name  | Age | Qualification           | Year of Experience | Reading Approaches                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------|-----|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|       |     |                         |                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair strong learners with weaker learners</li> <li>• Phonics-based reading approach</li> <li>• Cozy reading nooks</li> </ul>                          |
| Agnes | 30  | B.Ed.<br>FET(Languages) | 5                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Phonics-based instruction</li> <li>• Peer discussion</li> <li>• Graphic books reading</li> <li>• Reading competition</li> </ul> |

Table 4.1 shows that all participants are well-educated, with four participants holding B.Ed degrees (two in FET languages and two in intermediate and senior phase), with one having a postgraduate certificate in education. However, no one mentioned specific training in inclusive education.

The five participants mentioned a total of 25 reading approaches. The most frequently mentioned approaches were finger pointing, read aloud, using visual aids, and group reading (n=3 each). Additionally, grouping learners according to ability level, teacher modelling, bilingual resources, graphic books reading, flashcards, repetition of words, asking questions on different levels, phonics-based reading strategies/instruction, reading competition, pairing strong learners with weaker learners, and peer discussion were each mentioned by two participants (n = 2). The remaining approaches: drop all and read, shared reading, book clubs, balancing tailored assignments, cosy reading nooks, and reading discussion, were each mentioned by one participant.

Mary and Agnes, both with five years of teaching experience and a B.Ed. in FET languages, employ distinct approaches to reading instruction. Mary mentioned the read-aloud and finger-pointing approach, which she finds efficient, but struggles to capture learners' attention and engage them. Her brief experience suggests that she is still developing her methods and adjusting to the principles of inclusive education. Agnes prioritises phonics-based education yet finds measuring learner development challenging. Her systematic approach is commendable, but her limited experience may hinder assessing varied pupil progress.

Boitumelo, with eight years of experience, finds that pairing stronger learners with weaker ones is effective, but motivating weaker learners in group reading sessions is challenging. She recognises the value of peer assistance in inclusive classrooms but acknowledges that it cannot meet individual needs. Rudzani, with 14 years of experience, relies on flashcards and text repetition, but laments the time constraints. Her expertise suggests a deep understanding of reading tactics, but structural issues hinder implementation. Sarah, with ten years of experience, finds group reading and phonics-based approaches beneficial but struggles to balance individualised training with whole-class teaching.

These findings highlight the importance of tailored education in inclusive settings, but implementing it in large, diverse classes is challenging. Participants cited obstacles like inadequate resources and engaging struggling readers. Notably, none had specialised training in inclusive teaching, which research suggests is crucial for effective implementation. Studies show that targeted professional development enables teachers to create accessible reading environments and meet diverse needs (Brown & Lee, 2019). Ongoing inclusive education workshops enhance teacher confidence and reduce learner disengagement (Thompson et al., 2022).

#### **4.3 Emerging themes**

Six main themes were identified from the data, namely:

Theme 1: Reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers.

Theme 2: Barriers influencing reading comprehension.

Theme 3: Facilitators influencing reading comprehension.

Theme 4: Existing reading intervention plans.

Theme 5: Professional development on reading approaches.

Theme 6: Challenges in creating an inclusive reading environment.

These six themes will now be discussed in detail, along with their associated subthemes. They are listed below, and a detailed description of each major theme that emerged from the analysis, along with evidence in the form of transcribed quotes, will also be added.

### 4.3.1 Theme 1: Reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers

Five sub-themes were identified under this theme: i) Read-aloud practices and finger-pointing techniques, ii) Group reading, iii) Flashcards use, iv) Phonics-based instruction, and v) Challenges in assessing and monitoring learner progress.

Table 4.2 provides a summary of the sub-themes, codes and direct quotations for Theme 1. Thereafter, each of the five sub-themes will be discussed in detail.

**Table 4.2**

*Theme 1: Reading Approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers*

| Sub-themes                                                                      | Codes                                                                                  | Direct Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Read-aloud practices and finger-pointing techniques                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read-aloud practices</li> </ul>                 | <i>"I read aloud and have them repeat what I've read. We also use finger-pointing, but it is challenging to keep learners engaged....." (Mary)</i>                                            |
|                                                                                 |                                                                                        | <i>"We use the read-aloud technique..... but finger-pointing only works with those who are already somewhat engaged. For others, it becomes less effective over time" (Agnes).</i>            |
|                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finger-pointing</li> </ul>                      | <i>"Finger-pointing helps learners follow the text, but keeping them focused, especially in an inclusive classroom, is tough" (Sarah)</i>                                                     |
|                                                                                 |                                                                                        | <i>"....but finger-pointing only works with those who are already somewhat engaged. For others, it becomes less effective over time" (Agnes)</i>                                              |
| Group reading and peer support (pairing stronger learners with weaker learners) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pairing stronger and weaker learners</li> </ul> | <i>"Group reading and pairing stronger learners with weaker ones can work well, but ensuring both learners benefit is challenging" (Boitumelo).</i>                                           |
|                                                                                 |                                                                                        | <i>"We group learners by their reading abilities and have stronger readers help the weaker ones. It helps, but we often run out of time to monitor all the groups effectively" (Rudzani).</i> |

| Sub-themes                          | Codes                                                                     | Direct Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                     |                                                                           | <i>"Pairing with stronger readers and finger pointing are very effective." (Agnes)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Flashcards use                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual aids, repetition</li> </ul> | <i>"I use flashcards, repetition of words and um, we read together as a group. Sometimes it is less effective due to the limited time of the periods." (Rudzani)</i>                                                                                                                            |
| Phonics-based instruction           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual aids, repetition</li> </ul> | <i>"Phonics based instruction read aloud. Effective but struggling to assess learners' progress." (Agnes)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Assess and monitor learner progress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment, monitoring</li> </ul>  | <i>"Assessing progress is difficult, particularly when learners are still struggling with basic sounds, and that current assessments are insufficient to identify areas of weakness." (Agnes)</i>                                                                                               |
|                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formative assessment</li> </ul>    | <i>"I'm using formative assessment as they can give me a clear picture on the learner's progress and standardised tests. But even though I implemented all those strategies like group reading, third reading, finger pointing, but still in grade four, learners cannot read." (Boitumelo)</i> |
|                                     |                                                                           | <i>"Although we tried all outline readings approaches, we are still facing learners who cannot identify single words." (Sarah)</i>                                                                                                                                                              |

#### 4.3.1.1 Sub Theme 1: Read-aloud practices and finger-pointing techniques

Grade 4 teachers utilised read-aloud and finger-pointing methods to support struggling readers. These approaches engage learners visually and verbally, promoting interest and

improving speech and comprehension. However, teachers faced challenges in maintaining learners' attention, particularly in diverse classrooms with varying levels of interest. While read-aloud methods facilitate repetition and understanding, finger-pointing is less effective for more complex reading skills. As Mary, Sarah, and Agnes noted, despite the benefits, these methods can be inconsistent, finger-pointing struggles to engage learners who are not already invested, and both approaches require significant effort to maintain learner focus in inclusive classrooms.

By examining these samples, it is clear that read-aloud and pointing are often used, but they do not always yield the desired results. Participants say it is hard to keep learners interested for long periods, which suggests that these methods might work better for beginning readers who learn best through hearing and seeing (Ehri, 2020). These methods might not work for learners who need more individualised or scaffolded teaching in open schools where learners have a range of skills. It may not be enough to improve overall understanding, especially for learners with more challenging reading difficulties.

The results of the study on read-aloud methods and finger-pointing techniques are similar to what is known about how children learn to read early on, but there are some differences regarding inclusive education. Rasinski and Hoffman (2018) noted that while read-aloud techniques can enhance reading speed and fluency, they may not assist learners who struggle with understanding more complex parts of the text. Biemiller (2016) argues that read-aloud activities are most effective for younger learners and beginner readers, but their impact diminishes in higher grades unless paired with other reading activities. The challenge of engaging learners, as reflected in the responses, aligns with Kintsch and Rawson's (2020) findings. They suggest that while finger-pointing can aid word recognition, it does little to enhance comprehension or critical thinking. Therefore, the data supports aspects of existing research, especially the benefits of early phonetics instruction. However, it also indicates that these methods are insufficient in inclusive classrooms without additional strategies tailored to learning needs.

The research showed that participants used read-aloud, phonics-based, and group-reading practices. Participants Mary and Agnes said that read-aloud sessions, when teachers read and pupils repeat, worked well. Studies demonstrate that read-aloud

sessions improve oral fluency and comprehension (McGee & Schickedanz, 2017). Agnes's phonics-based teaching is also highly recommended for early reading instruction, especially for struggling word readers (Ehri, 2020). Participants Boitumelo and Sarah cited group reading as an effective peer learning method. However, weaker learners felt overshadowed by stronger peers, which is consistent with Vygotsky's social learning theory, which emphasises peer interactions in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978).

#### 4.3.1.2 Sub Theme 2: Group reading and peer support (pairing stronger learners with weaker learners)

Group reading and peer assistance are valuable strategies for supporting learners who struggle with reading. Teachers pair stronger and weaker learners for collaborative learning, allowing successful readers to model accurate pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension for their peers. However, challenges arise in ensuring balanced participation among paired learners and managing limited classroom time to maximise these interactions (Kyndt et al., 2013). As Boitumelo, Rudzani, and Sarah noted, while this approach can be effective, it requires careful monitoring to ensure both learners benefit, prevent weaker readers from becoming overly reliant on their stronger partners and manage time constraints to provide adequate support.

It is clear that reading in groups and getting help from other learners are effective ways to create a welcoming learning environment. The teacher needs to monitor these exchanges between learners closely. Concerns about weaker readers depending too much on their better friends show that group reading may not help learners learn how to read on their own enough, even though it can get them more involved. The short time in the classroom exacerbates these problems because teachers cannot keep an eye on every learner at all times, leaving some behind (Popov et al., 2021).

Compared to other research, peer-supported reading fits with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development, which says that learners learn more when they communicate with peers who know more than they do. However, as Topping (2015b) says, organised and closely watched actions are very important for peer teaching to work. This was a concern for the participants. Additionally, Fuchs and Fuchs (2016) suggest that peer-assisted learning techniques can enhance reading speed; however, the lack of

sufficient time to set them up correctly and observe their implementation, as noted in the participant responses, can render them less effective. The data support what was already known, but they also show that more teaching time and teacher participation are needed to fully reap the benefits of peer-supported learning in inclusive classes.

#### 4.3.1.3 Sub Theme 3: Use of flashcards and repetition of words

Teachers adopted flashcards and a word-repetition approach to enhance vocabulary and reading fluency, utilising visual aids to facilitate word recognition and repetition, thereby reinforcing retention and pronunciation. Flashcards have been shown to enhance vocabulary acquisition and retention, with retrieval practice and spaced repetition emerging as key strategies for effective word learning (Lei & Reynolds, 2022; Strong, 2023). However, time constraints during structured reading sessions limit the effectiveness of this approach. As Rudzani, Mary, and Agnes noted, despite the benefits of flashcards and repetition, insufficient time hindered consistent implementation and coverage of material, restricting the impact of these approaches on learner progress.

The data show that participants agree that flashcards and repeating words are effective in helping learners remember things immediately and build their knowledge, but that their short time to teach makes them less useful in the long run. The reliance on hearing and seeing memories in these methods may help learners in the short term, but it does not always lead to a better understanding or critical thinking. Participants were upset that they could not spend enough time on these techniques, which led to reading skills not being fully reinforced.

When it comes to literature, using flashcards aligns with research on integrated learning, which suggests that visual tools can enhance reading skills, particularly for younger readers or those struggling with reading (Ehri, 2017). Nation (2018) observed that repeating words is an essential part of building vocabulary, especially for learners who frequently encounter new words. However, the time limits that people brought up are similar to what Sénéchal and LeFevre (2016) observed: these kinds of methods may only give you shallow learning gains if you do not use them regularly and for a long time. The data shows that notes and practice are important, but they are not enough on their own and need to be paired with additional time or more advanced teaching methods.

#### 4.3.1.4 Sub Theme 4: Phonics-based instruction

Grade 4 teachers increasingly employed phonics-based teaching to help struggling readers. This strategy helps learners decipher unknown words by sounding them out by emphasising letter-sound relationships. Participants noted difficulties in judging learner development, particularly for those who struggle despite repeated phonetic training. Phonics education is complemented by its systematic approach to reading. Agnes, Sarah, and Mary indicated that phonics-based instruction has its limitations. Agnes noted that while phonics helps learners, assessing their progress can be challenging, particularly for those struggling with basic sounds. Similarly, Sarah observed that phonics instruction is useful for building and still fall behind despite having a strong reading foundation. Mary added that phonics works for some learners, but those who struggle with comprehension require more than just phonics to catch up with.

The results show that phonics teaching is very important for developing basic reading skills, but it is not the only way to help all learners. Some learners may excel at the basic parts of reading but have trouble with higher-level skills like understanding. The diverse needs of learners in an inclusive classroom make it more challenging to measure success. This makes it hard for teachers to provide individualised help in a short amount of time.

There is extensive research that demonstrates the importance of teaching phonics in helping children learn to read and write. Ehri (2018) states that teaching phonics is essential for helping learners develop understanding skills, especially those who struggle with reading quickly. According to Castles, Rastle, and Nation (2018), however, phonics may not be sufficient to address all reading problems, especially when learners struggle to understand certain words. The participant's concerns about how hard it is to judge success align with Pressley and Allington's (2019) findings, which suggest that we need a well-rounded reading method that combines phonics and comprehension strategies. So, even though phonics is important for reading, the data show that it should be used alongside other teaching methods in inclusive schools to meet the needs of all learners.

#### 4.3.1.5 Sub Theme 5: Assessment and monitoring learner progress

Participants found it challenging to evaluate and track problematic readers. Due to classroom literacy levels, formative evaluations and standardised examinations were typically deemed insufficient. Teachers worry that these evaluations do not adequately reflect learners' reading growth, especially those with learning challenges, making intervention difficult. Agnes, Boitumelo, and Sarah highlighted challenges in assessing learners' reading progress. Agnes indicated that assessing progress is difficult, particularly when learners are still struggling with basic sounds, and that current assessments are insufficient to identify areas of weakness. Boitumelo noted that despite using formative assessments and standardised tests and implementing strategies such as group reading and finger-pointing, some learners continue to struggle with reading. Similarly, Sarah found assessing progress challenging, noting that standardised tests often fail to reflect learners' real struggles, despite efforts to use diverse assessment methods.

The results indicate that teachers are generally dissatisfied with the current review tools. Teachers were upset that they could not tell how well their learners were doing, especially those who were having a lot of trouble reading. Formative tests are helpful because they provide immediate feedback, but they don't always delve sufficiently to fully understand the needs of learners who are struggling with reading. On the other hand, standardised tests were seen as too rigid and unable to adapt to the different learning needs that arise in inclusive classes.

Existing research supports these concerns by highlighting that standardised tests cannot fully assess learners with diverse needs. Black and Wiliam (2018) argue that formative exams are important for providing instant feedback, but they often need to be paired with more diagnostic tools to address learners' problems. Shepherd and Rose (2019) also say that too much emphasis is put on standardised tests, especially in inclusive situations where learners have a wide range of learning styles. Some argue that different kinds of tests, such as performance-based tests, might give us a clearer picture of how learners are doing (FairTest, 2023). The participants' answers show that we need to use more

complex, adaptable testing methods to meet the needs of learners who are having trouble reading in inclusive classes.

#### 4.3.2 Theme 2: Barriers influencing reading comprehension

The interviews revealed several challenges to teaching reading effectively, including limited resources, limited time, and diverse learning styles. Table 4.3 provides a summary of the sub-themes derived from Theme 2, along with the codes and direct quotes from participants. Thereafter, each of the four sub-themes will be discussed in detail.

**Table 4.3**

*Barriers influencing reading comprehension*

| Sub-themes                                                 | Codes                                                                                           | Direct Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Time constraints                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited instructional time</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Sometimes it is less effective due to the limited time of the periods” (Rudzani)</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                            |                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“....but due to long briefings and staff meeting is a challenge.” Mary</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Insufficient resources                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of materials</li> <li>Outdated resources</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“....but it is also challenging as we have limited resources” (Boitumelo)</i></li> <li><i>“We use visual aids and they are very effective, but we have limited resources.” (Mary)</i></li> <li><i>“I am using posters in my classroom, but there are less effective due to the limited space in our classrooms.” (Boitumelo)</i></li> </ul> |
| Balancing tailored assignment with whole class instruction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differentiated instruction</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“I group learners by ability level. It is effective but difficulty in creating groups due to different learning styles.”( Mary)</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom management</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Tailored assignments. Grouping learners by ability is effective, but balancing tailored assignments with whole class instruction is a challenge.” (Agnes)</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                   |

| Sub-themes                                 | Codes                                                                       | Direct Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Managing learners' engagement and interest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement and motivation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>"Keeping learners engaged is difficult, particularly in classrooms with diverse abilities."</i> ( Sarah)</li> <li><i>"Encouraging discussions and making reading fun is effective, but maintaining learners motivated is a challenge."</i></li> <li><i>"... It is difficult to engage struggling readers."</i> (Mary)</li> </ul> |

Rudzani and Agnes stated that insufficient tools, such as comic novels and visual guides, made it challenging to teach reading effectively. This aligns with an earlier study that demonstrates the importance of effective learning tools in helping learners comprehend what they read, particularly when resources are limited (Mullis et al., 2016). Time limits were another recurring issue. For example, Rudzani complained that there was not enough time for reading lessons. According to research (National Reading Panel, 2000), longer reading sessions are necessary to enhance reading speed and comprehension. However, many South African schools still struggle to manage time effectively.

Peer help, visual tools, and tailored instruction, on the other hand, made reading teaching more effective. Mary and Boitumelo stated that pairing better learners with weaker ones was effective. This method has been shown to enhance group learning and encourage classroom collaboration (Slavin, 2015). However, it is still challenging to ensure that learners who struggle with learning do not lose motivation when they see their peers. Also emphasised were visual guides, like pictures and graphic organisers, as important ways to help readers understand, especially those learning English (August & Shanahan, 2017).

#### 4.3.2.1 Sub Theme 1: Time constraints

A time constraint is the limited time available to complete specific tasks or activities. In the context of reading periods, this limitation significantly hinders teachers' ability to deliver effective instruction. The brevity of these sessions makes it difficult to fully

implement group reading activities or closely monitor individual learner progress. Despite efforts to engage all learners, teachers often find they have insufficient time to complete all necessary tasks within the allotted time. This lack of time frequently leaves teachers feeling rushed, especially when providing additional support to learners who need extra help. Recent research highlights the critical role of instructional time in improving learner outcomes. For example, Ma et al. (2025) found that increasing instructional time can lead to substantial gains in learners' performance, with an additional hour of daily instruction associated with notable improvements in academic achievement. Similarly, the National Institute for Direct Instruction (assessed 9/10/2025) recommends a daily 90-minute reading block to ensure learners have adequate time to master reading skills. These findings underscore how time constraints in reading periods can limit comprehensive teaching and personalised attention, ultimately impacting learners' learning and progress.

Insufficient instructional time for reading in Grade 4 inclusive classes hindered effective reading assistance. Teachers felt pressured to cover the curriculum within limited timeframes, leaving little room for individualised interventions or extended practice. This constraint impacted their ability to implement group reading and phonics teaching, which require sufficient time for meaningful learner participation. Balancing reading instruction with other curricular demands further exacerbated the challenge. As Rudzani, Agnes, and Mary noted, time constraints limited their capacity to implement effective reading approaches, monitor individual progress, and provide extra support to learners who needed it, ultimately affecting the quality of reading approaches.

These findings reveal that teachers often feel frustrated because they lack sufficient time to assist learners who are struggling with reading. The answers show that teachers want to use effective methods like group reading and phonics, but they are unable to do so because they do not have enough time to teach. When learners in inclusive classes have diverse learning needs and require more time for diversity and individualised support, time constraints have a significant impact. The problem of insufficient time aligns with research by Guthrie et al. (2007, 2012), which shows that extended reading sessions enhance literacy engagement and comprehension, particularly benefiting diverse learners in inclusive settings. Allington (2018) suggests that there should be sufficient

time for direct teaching, practice, reflection, and individual feedback. These are all issues that are often missing in settings with limited time. Al Otaiba and Fuchs (2016) agree with the results and note that time is one of the biggest challenges to successful reading solutions, especially in schools with diverse learner populations. This means that many learners in inclusive classrooms may continue to fall behind unless schools can change their schedules or add more reading time.

#### 4.3.2.2 Sub Theme 2: Insufficient resources

Insufficient resources posed a significant challenge to an effective reading approach. Teachers identified a lack of materials, such as graphic books and specialised resources, as a major obstacle to engaging learners and meeting diverse needs. Without these essential tools, delivering varied, interesting, and suitable content proved difficult. Despite recognising the importance of diverse resources, teachers often lacked access to them, hindering their ability to tailor instruction and engage learners with different reading skills and interests. As Boitumelo, Mary, and Sarah noted, limited resources constrained their capacity to provide individualised support, keep learners interested, and cater to diverse reading levels, ultimately affecting the quality of teaching and learners' learning experiences. The participants' answers reveal the challenges they face, as they lack sufficient tools, which hinder their ability to vary their lessons and make the topic engaging. For example, the lack of picture books makes it harder for learners to learn visually, which is especially important for those who struggle with standard text-based teaching. Also, because they cannot make customised tools, teachers often must use methods that work for everyone, which do not work as well in inclusive classes.

Graphic books and visual aids could help address these challenges, as research by Kress and van Leeuwen (2020) shows that visual aids enhance comprehension, while the use of pictures and questions can facilitate understanding. Visual literacy and media texts also support learners in interpreting and creating meaning. These tools are especially beneficial for struggling readers, with adapted texts and technology providing accessible pathways to literacy. Incorporating graphic novels, illustrated texts, and visual aids like diagrams and charts can enhance engagement and comprehension. These results support the work of Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), who emphasise the importance of

providing a diverse range of materials tailored to each learner's needs, particularly in inclusive classrooms. The lack of tools aligns with Tomlinson's (2014) work, which states that it is hard to use differentiated education successfully when there are not enough suitable and varied teaching materials. Also, Fuchs et al. (2016) highlighted that customised tools are very important for improving involvement and understanding, especially for readers who are having difficulty. Literature supports the idea that a lack of tools is a significant problem for reading comprehension. Filling in this gap would help learners do better.

#### 4.3.2.3 Sub Theme 3: Balancing tailored assignments with whole-class instruction

Teachers in inclusive classrooms faced significant challenges in balancing individualised activities with whole-class teaching. The struggle to reconcile tailored support with whole-class instruction hindered their ability to provide effective reading help. As Sarah, Mary, and Agnes pointed out, the difficulty lies in catering for struggling learners while keeping the entire class engaged. They found it tough to manage tailored activities for different groups while teaching the whole class, highlighting the complexities of meeting diverse learner needs within a single classroom. This challenge underscores the need for an effective approach to balance individualised support with whole-class instruction.

There are many challenges teachers face when they try to meet the needs of all their learners while keeping the classroom organised and welcoming. It can be challenging to balance personal tasks with teaching the entire class. As a result, learners who are having trouble often do not get enough one-on-one help, and the rest of the class does not get enough interaction. Due to this constraint, both groups of learners may not receive the help they need.

The current study's findings align with Tomlinson and Imbeau's (2010) work, which emphasises the challenges of balancing diversity with whole-class teaching. Carolan and Guinn (2017) say that personalised tasks can help learners who are having trouble, but they often take a lot of time and work, which can make it harder for the teacher to teach the whole class well. Additionally, McLeskey and Waldron (2015) note that it can be challenging to balance personal learning with broader educational objectives in inclusive classes, especially when teachers lack sufficient time or resources. According to the

interview data, this balancing act poses a significant challenge for teaching reading effectively in inclusive classes. This means that teachers may still struggle to meet the needs of all learners without additional support and resources.

#### 4.3.2.4 Sub Theme 4: Managing learner engagement and interest

The interviewees concluded that learner involvement and reading interest are difficult to manage. Teachers said group reading and interactive activities may interest learners, but they struggle to encourage learners to engage. In inclusive classrooms, where children have various interests and abilities, it is hard to apply tactics that appeal to everyone. Sarah, Agnes, and Rudzani emphasised the challenges of maintaining learner engagement during reading activities. Sarah noted that keeping learners engaged is difficult, particularly in classrooms with diverse abilities. Agnes shared a similar sentiment, stating that making reading fun is a struggle, especially for learners who are having difficulty. Rudzani also found managing engagement challenging, noting that even with group activities and discussions, some learners quickly lose interest.

These examples demonstrate the challenges teachers face in keeping learners engaged in reading, particularly those who are already struggling. Approaches like group reading and engaging talks can spark short-term interest, but sustaining engagement over time is challenging, especially in schools where learners have diverse needs and abilities (Gillies, 2021). The findings show that, even though teachers try to use engaging methods, they often struggle to keep all their learners interested and motivated in reading.

It is well known that controlling learner involvement is challenging. Guthrie and Wigfield (2018) say that desire is a key part of understanding what you read, and that learners, especially those who are having trouble reading, are less likely to make progress if they are not actively involved. Deci and Ryan's (2017) study also demonstrates that internal drive is crucial for maintaining learners' interest in reading activities over time. However, it can be hard to encourage this in schools with lots of different kinds of learners without using individualised methods. Schiefele et al. (2016) also note that involvement is closely related to how well the teacher connects the material to learners' interests and skills, as well as to how well the materials are designed to facilitate learning. The conversations

and study results show that teachers recognise the importance of interaction, but they often lack the necessary tools and knowledge to maintain it in an inclusive classroom.

### 4.3.3 Theme 3: Facilitators influencing reading comprehension

Five sub-themes were identified under this theme: i) Differentiating instruction for learners with diverse abilities, ii) Professional development, iii) Use of graphic books and visual aids, iv) Co-teaching and collaboration with special education teachers. Table 4.4 provides a summary of the sub-themes, codes and direct quotations for Theme 1. Thereafter, each of the five sub-themes will be discussed in detail.

**Table 4.4**

*Facilitators influencing reading comprehension*

| Sub-themes                                                      | Codes                  | Direct Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Differentiating instruction for learners with diverse abilities | • Ability grouping     | <i>"I group learners by ability level. It is effective, but difficult to create groups due to different learning styles." (Mary)</i>                                                                   |
|                                                                 |                        | <i>"Grouping learners by ability level is effective, but balancing tailored assignments with whole class instruction is challenging." (Sarah)</i>                                                      |
|                                                                 | • Tailored teaching    | <i>"I am using graphic books and grouping learners by ability levels." (Boitumelo)</i>                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                 | • Questioning approach | <i>"I asked questions on different level form, more higher order questions to lower questions. And but it is less effective due to ensuring questions aligned with learning objectives." (Rudzani)</i> |
| Professional development                                        | • Teacher training     | <i>"I am busy with my studies, I am doing inclusive education training that teaches us on how to deal with learners..." ( Boitumelo)</i>                                                               |
|                                                                 | • Workshops            | <i>"We attend workshops, but we have limited funding." (Mary)</i><br><i>"... attending workshops. It is effective, but time is a problem as it is limited." (Boitumelo)</i>                            |

| Sub-themes                                                           | Codes                    | Direct Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                      |                          | <i>"We participate in seminars and workshops, but I find that they have limited relevance because the people who are present at the seminars and workshops do not really know about all the challenges." (Rudzani)</i> |
| <b>Use of graphic books and visual aids</b>                          | • Visual support         | <i>"I use pictures and questions before they can read the story. It is effective, but it is difficult to engage struggling readers." (Mary)</i>                                                                        |
|                                                                      | • Graphic novels         | <i>"I am using graphic books and grouping learners by their ability levels." (Boitumelo)</i>                                                                                                                           |
|                                                                      |                          | <i>" ....Offering choices using graphic books is effective, but managing learners' choices and interests is a challenge." (Sarah)</i>                                                                                  |
| <b>Co-teaching and collaboration with special education teachers</b> | • Collaborative teaching | <i>" We normally have regular meetings where we discuss strategies on how to help those learners who are struggling, and we are doing co-teaching and also, we refer them to the SBST." (Boitumelo)</i>                |
|                                                                      | • Shared expertise       | <i>" We do co-teaching and have regular meetings. It is effective, but sometimes we are struggling to find a common goal." (Agnes)</i>                                                                                 |

#### 4.3.3.1 Sub Theme 1: Differentiating instruction for learners with diverse abilities

Participants emphasised the importance of differentiating instruction to cater to learners with varying reading skills in inclusive classrooms. However, they struggled to adapt their approach to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Despite recognising the value of differentiated instruction, participants faced challenges in implementing it effectively because of the complexity of meeting diverse learning needs. As Mary, Boitumelo, and Rudzani noted, specific difficulties included creating effective ability-based groups due to diverse learning styles, managing limited resources, and providing individualised attention. The teacher found it challenging to develop a questioning approach that

effectively engaged learners across different reading levels. These challenges underscore the need for targeted support and resources to enable teachers to implement differentiated instruction effectively.

Research suggests that differentiated instruction is crucial in inclusive classrooms (Tomlinson, 2017). However, teachers often face significant challenges in grouping learners and tailoring instruction due to time, funding, and classroom management constraints (Rubio, 2024). The current study supports these findings, highlighting the need for professional development and sufficient resources to support differentiated instruction.

#### 4.3.3.2 Sub Theme 2: Professional development

Effective professional development is crucial for enhancing teacher efficacy and instructional quality. Participants highlighted the importance of relevant and sustained professional development opportunities. However, they faced challenges in accessing workshops and training due to limited funding and time constraints. As Boitumelo noted, "I am busy with my studies, I am doing inclusive education training that teaches us on how to deal with learners..." Research supports the importance of professional development in improving teacher effectiveness and learner outcomes (Desimone & Garet, 2015). The current study highlights the need for targeted, sustained professional development opportunities to support teachers in addressing learners' diverse needs.

#### 4.3.3.3 Sub Theme 3: Use of graphic books and visual aids

Participants recognised the value of using graphic books and visual aids to support learners with diverse reading abilities. However, they faced challenges in managing learners' choices and interests and ensuring that these resources were effective in engaging struggling readers. As Mary noted, "I use pictures and questions before they can read the story. It is effective, but it is difficult to engage struggling readers." Research suggests that visual aids can be effective in supporting reading comprehension, but teachers need to consider learners' individual needs and interests (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020).

#### 4.3.3.4 Sub Theme 4: Co-teaching and collaboration with special education teachers

Participants highlighted the importance of co-teaching and collaboration with special education teachers in supporting learners with diverse reading abilities. However, they faced challenges in finding common goals and ensuring effective communication. As Boitumelo noted, "We normally have regular meetings where we discuss strategies on how to help those learners who are struggling, and we are doing co-teaching and also we refer them to the SBST." Research supports the importance of collaboration and co-teaching in improving learner outcomes, but it also highlights the need for effective communication and planning (Friend & Cook, 2016).

#### 4.3.4. Theme 4: Existing intervention plans

Four sub-themes were identified: i) Grouping learners by ability levels, ii) Use of graphic books and visual aids, iii) Co-teaching and collaboration with special education teachers, iv) SBST Support. Table 4.5 provides a summary of the sub-themes, codes and direct quotations for Theme 1. Thereafter, each of the four sub-themes will be discussed in detail.

**Table 4.5**

##### *Existing intervention plans*

| Sub-themes                           | Codes                                                                             | Direct Quotes                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grouping learners by ability levels  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ability grouping and peer support</li></ul> | <i>"I group learners by ability level. It is effective, but difficulty in creating groups due to different learning styles." Mary</i>                          |
|                                      |                                                                                   | <i>"I am using graphic books and grouping learners by their ability levels." (Boitumelo)</i>                                                                   |
|                                      |                                                                                   | <i>"Grouping learners by ability is beneficial, but ensuring all groups progress at the right pace is tough, particularly with limited resources." (Sarah)</i> |
| Use of graphic books and visual aids | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Visual support</li></ul>                    | <i>"Visual aids greatly benefit struggling readers but emphasised the need for more diverse graphic</i>                                                        |

| Sub-themes                                                     | Codes                                                                               | Direct Quotes                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graphic novels</li> </ul>                    | <i>books to maintain learner engagement.” (Agnes)</i>                                                                                                               |
|                                                                |                                                                                     | <i>“I am using graphic books and grouping learners by their ability levels.” (Boitumelo)</i>                                                                        |
|                                                                |                                                                                     | <i>“Graphic books are effective in helping learners visualise concepts, but resources constraints often lead to shortages.” (Sarah)</i>                             |
| Co- teaching and collaboration with special education teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative teaching</li> </ul>            | <i>“... We refer them to the SBST .” (Boitumelo)</i>                                                                                                                |
|                                                                |                                                                                     | <i>“We do co-teaching and have regular meetings. It is effective, but sometimes we struggle to find common goals.” (Agnes)</i>                                      |
|                                                                |                                                                                     | <i>“Co- teaching is beneficial, but in scheduling regular meetings and find solutions that fit everyone’s schedule can hinder effective collaboration.” (Sarah)</i> |
| SBST Support                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared expertise</li> </ul>                  | <i>“We normally have regular meeting where we discuss strategies on how to help those learners who are struggling...” ( Boitumelo)</i>                              |
|                                                                |                                                                                     | <i>“Referring learners to the SBST committee is valuable, but the long referral process can be ineffective.” (Agnes)</i>                                            |
|                                                                |                                                                                     | <i>“The SBST committee offers specialised help, but the referral process is slow and causes learners to fall further behind.” ( Sarah)</i>                          |
|                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referral process Support services</li> </ul> | <i>“We refer learners to the SBST, but the process is often delayed, preventing struggling readers from receiving timely intervention.” (Rudzani)</i>               |

Findings confirm that certain intervention plans are in place, but the participants are partially executed and constrained by numerous issues. Friend and Cook (2016) state that inclusive education policies encourage general and special education professionals

to work together via meetings and co-teaching. Boitumelo and Sarah noted such cooperation. Mary and Agnes observed that referrals to support services, such as the SBST, were frequently delayed, preventing struggling readers from receiving timely interventions. According to Engelbrecht (2019), school referral systems are often inefficient in South Africa. Boitumelo indicated that inclusive education training could be beneficial, noting that it was effective in helping them address learners' diverse needs. However, time was limited. Meanwhile, Mary reported attending workshops, noting that they had limited funding. Professional development is essential to teacher effectiveness; however, research shows that not all teachers have access to it, thereby restricting their capacity to integrate new strategies and approaches (Desimone & Garet, 2015). Existing intervention plans for struggling readers included SBST referrals, co-teaching with special education staff, the use of adapted texts and technology, and high-impact tutoring approaches. These approaches of embedding part-time tutors into classrooms for short, one-to-one instruction bursts have been shown to significantly improve reading outcomes for young learners, with 70% of learners reaching target reading levels (Cortes et al., 2025).

Implementing effective reading comprehension interventions in South Africa's multilingual classrooms requires a multifaceted approach. A systematic review of 17 intervention studies identified reading strategy instruction, including vocabulary development and content integration, as a key feature of successful multigrade, multilingual classroom interventions (Carter et al., 2024). Vocabulary development, taught in context through visuals, discussions, and examples, enhances learners' understanding of texts (Wright, 2021). Content integration, linking vocabulary and reading skills to subject themes, renders reading more relevant and meaningful (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2020). In South African schools, leveraging learners' home languages alongside English or other instructional languages can support comprehension, with teachers utilising multilingual texts or providing summaries in multiple languages (Probyn, 2015). Collaborative learning, regular formative assessments, and parental involvement further reinforce reading development, ultimately contributing to improved reading comprehension outcomes (Archer & Hughes, 2020).

#### 4.3.3.1 Sub Theme 1: grouping learners by ability levels

Findings show that participants help struggling readers by categorising abilities. Four Participants mentioned that grouping learners by reading ability helped them adapt lessons and build peer support. For example, Mary stated, "...we group them according to their reading levels, it helps me plan my lessons better, and the stronger ones can assist the weaker ones." Similarly, Rudzani noted, "I categorise them by ability; it is easier to give targeted support." Sarah and Agnes echoed similar sentiments, highlighting the benefits of ability grouping in managing classroom reading instruction. Teachers may address learner issues by pairing with comparable abilities. Due to the variety of learning styles and skills in a classroom, developing and sustaining these groups can be challenging. Mary, Boitumelo, and Sarah indicated that grouping learners by ability is an effective approach, but it presents several challenges. Mary noted that while grouping by ability is effective, creating groups can be challenging due to the diverse learning styles. Boitumelo also found that grouping learners by ability works well, but effectively monitoring each group is challenging due to time constraints. Similarly, Sarah observed that grouping learners by ability is beneficial but ensuring that all groups progress at the right pace is tough, particularly with limited resources.

These examples demonstrate that grouping learners by ability is often considered a good approach. However, it does not always work due to variations in learning styles and the need to closely monitor them. Teachers are frustrated that they cannot manage groups effectively within the time constraints of a typical school day. Additionally, grouping learners by ability can make it difficult to provide equal attention to both high-performing and struggling learners, potentially leaving some learners without sufficient support.

Grouping learners by ability is a well-established method for differentiating instruction. Tieso (2016) supports the idea that ability grouping enables teachers to meet the unique needs of each learner, thereby helping learners who are struggling. McCoach and Siegle (2018) warn, however, that ability groups can sometimes exacerbate the problem if groups that do not perform as well receive less attention or resources. From the participants, we can see that teachers know ability grouping is helpful, but they only know it works when they have enough time and money to keep an eye on and properly support

all the groups. Without these, the potential benefits of ability grouping may not be fully realised.

#### 4.3.3.2 Sub Theme 2: Use of graphic books and visual aids

Data shows that the use of graphic books and visual aids is another significant reading strategy. Participants said these products help struggling readers by offering visual cues that improve comprehension. Graphic books help learners who struggle with text-heavy materials understand topics through graphics. However, classroom resource shortages limit the usefulness of this approach. Boitumelo, Sarah, and Agnes highlighted the effectiveness of graphic books and visual aids in supporting struggling readers. Boitumelo noted that these resources work well, but the school lacks enough for all learners. Similarly, Sarah found graphic books to be effective in helping learners visualise concepts, but resource constraints often lead to shortages. Agnes also observed that visual aids greatly benefit struggling readers but emphasised the need for a wider range of graphic books to maintain learner engagement. Based on these answers, teachers believe graphic novels and other visual aids are effective ways to support learners who struggle with reading. Text and pictures together help close the gap between reading quickly and understanding what you read, allowing learners to connect with the material at a level they can comprehend (Shanahan, 2025). However, teachers cannot provide enough tools to meet the needs of all their learners, which keeps this strategy's full potential from being realised.

When these results are compared with other studies, they strongly support the use of graphic novels and other visual aids as effective teaching tools for learners who are having difficulty reading. Kress and van Leeuwen (2020) suggest that incorporating images into writing makes it easier for learners to understand and remember what they are learning. Additionally, Serafini (2017) says that picture books are especially helpful for learners who are having trouble reading because they use a variety of media to teach literacy, engaging multiple brain processes. However, the data shows that many schools do not have easy access to these kinds of tools. This aligns with what Jiménez et al. (2018) found, who state that a lack of resources is a common problem that hinders the effective use of visual-based solutions. So, while the research supports the use of graphic

novels and other visual aids as a successful remedy, their effectiveness depends on access to the right tools.

#### 4.3.3.3 Sub Theme 3: Co-teaching and collaboration with special education teachers

Co-teaching with special education teachers has proven essential in supporting struggling readers in inclusive classrooms. Participants highlighted that collaborating with special education experts enables them to provide more focused and specialised assistance to learners with diverse needs. This collaborative approach facilitates tailored support, particularly for learners requiring customised attention. However, teachers also noted challenges in implementing co-teaching, including finding common goals, maintaining consistent communication, and aligning approaches. As Sarah, Rudzani, and Boitumelo pointed out, despite the benefits of co-teaching, difficulties in scheduling regular meetings and finding solutions that fit everyone's schedule can hinder effective collaboration. These challenges can impact on the consistency and effectiveness of co-teaching, underscoring the need for an approach to support seamless communication and coordination among teachers.

Co-teaching with SBST members and emphasising pre-, during- and post-reading scaffolds can further support diverse learners. Research by Friend and Cook (2017) indicates that co-teaching improves outcomes for learners with diverse learning needs, enabling targeted assistance and diverse teaching approaches. By collaborating with SBST members, teachers can provide more effective scaffolding and cater to different learning styles, ultimately boosting reading comprehension and engagement. Friend and Cook (2017) suggest that co-teaching facilitates collaboration between teachers from diverse backgrounds, enabling all learners to benefit. This teamwork is especially helpful for learners who struggle with reading because it allows them to use specific techniques. Scruggs et al. (2019) say that for co-teaching to work, teachers need to talk to each other often and share the same goals. This can be hard to do in real life. The study's findings highlight this problem and suggest that co-teaching is a good idea, but it will only work if teachers consistently work together and share the same goals.

#### 4.3.3.4 Sub Theme 4: SBST support

The interviews reveal that SBST is a useful resource for learners with severe reading difficulties. Teachers often refer to the SBST when classroom interventions prove insufficient. The committee provides access to external specialists who assess and intervene in cases of serious reading difficulties. However, teachers expressed frustration with the lengthy referral process, which delays support and causes learners to fall further behind. Agnes, Sarah, and Rudzani noted that while the SBST offers valuable specialised help, the long referral process can render it ineffective. To address this issue, it is essential to expedite the referral process and ensure learners receive timely and appropriate support. This would enable teachers to provide effective interventions and prevent learners from falling further behind.

Referral systems, such as the SBST, are recognised as important components of inclusive education research. According to Engelbrecht et al. (2016), school-based support teams play a crucial role in identifying and assisting learners who require specialised support. However, the study by Van der Berg et al. (2019) shows that delays in bureaucratic processes can render these kinds of systems less useful. This is supported by the current study's findings, which show that, although the SBST is a useful tool, its effects are often limited by the slow recommendation process. Streamlining this process could make it easier to assist people who are having trouble immediately.

#### 4.3.5 Theme 5: Professional development on reading approaches

Four sub-themes were identified under this theme: i) Importance of Professional development, ii) Challenges in accessing professional development, iii) Limited relevance of training, iv) Need for more training. Table 4.6 provides a summary of the sub-themes, codes and direct quotations for Theme 1. Thereafter, each of the four sub-themes will be discussed in detail.

**Table 4.6**

*Professional development in reading approaches*

| Sub-themes                                       | Codes                                                                                   | Direct Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Importance of Professional Development           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher training, inclusive education</li> </ul> | <p><i>"I am busy with my studies, I am doing inclusive education training that teaches us how to deal with different needs of learners..... it is effective, but time is a problem as it is limited." (Boitumelo )</i></p> <p><i>"We attend workshops, but we have limited funding." (Mary)</i></p> <p><i>"We participate in seminars and workshops, but I find that they have limited relevance because the people who present the seminars and workshops do not really know about all the challenges." (Rudzani)</i></p> |
| Challenges in accessing professional development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduling constraints</li> </ul>                | <p><i>"I am busy with my studies, I am doing inclusive education training that teaches us how to deal with different needs of learners..... it is effective, but time is a problem as it is limited." (Boitumelo)</i></p> <p><i>"We participate in seminars and workshops, but I find that they have limited relevance because the people who present the seminars and workshops do not really know about all the challenges." (Rudzani)</i></p>                                                                           |
| Limited relevance of training                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of practical application</li> </ul>         | <p><i>"I find that it has limited relevance because the people who present the seminars and workshops do not really know about all the challenges." (Rudzani)</i></p> <p><i>"They do not know about the challenges that we have in the class every day with learners, so I find it less effective because it is not always relevant to what we experience in the class." (Rudzani)</i></p>                                                                                                                                 |
| Need for more training                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher support, reading instruction</li> </ul>  | <p><i>"We are having difficulty finding suitable coaches." (Sarah)</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

| Sub-themes | Codes | Direct Quotes                                                                                                    |
|------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            |       | <i>"I also have never been trained with CPTD.... It is hard for us to improve our teaching methods." (Agnes)</i> |

#### 4.3.5 Professional Development Challenges

##### 4.3.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Importance of Professional Development

Professional development is crucial for enhancing teacher efficacy and instructional quality (Desimone & Garet, 2015). As Boitumelo noted, "I am busy with my studies, I am doing inclusive education training that teaches us how to deal with different needs of learners... it is effective, but time is a problem as it is limited." This suggests that participants value professional development opportunities, but face challenges in accessing them. Mary added, "We attend workshops, but we have limited funding," highlighting the resource constraints that limit access to professional development.

##### 4.3.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Challenges in accessing professional development

Despite the importance of professional development, participants faced challenges in accessing these opportunities. As Boitumelo stated, "I am busy with my studies... it is effective, but time is a problem as it is limited." This is consistent with research that suggests that teachers often struggle to access professional development opportunities due to time and resource constraints (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

##### 4.3.5.3 Sub-theme 3: Limited relevance of training

Participants noted that the training they received was largely irrelevant because the presenters did not understand the challenges they faced in the classroom. As Rudzani noted, "I find that it has limited relevance because the people who present the seminars and workshops do not really know about all the challenges." Rudzani further explained her perceptions, "They do not know about the challenges that we have in the class every day with learners, so I find it less effective because it is not always relevant to what we experience in the class." This highlights the need for professional development programs to be tailored to the specific needs of teachers and schools (Guskey, 2014).

#### 4.3.5.4 Sub-theme 4: Need for more training

Participants emphasised the need for more training and support to improve their teaching methods and effectively support struggling readers. As Agnes stated, "I also have never been trained with CPTD.... It is hard for us to improve our teaching methods." Sarah added, "We are finding difficulty finding suitable coaches." This is consistent with research suggesting that teachers require ongoing support and training to address learners' diverse needs (Tomlinson, 2017).

Professional development is obligatory for enhancing teacher efficacy and instructional quality. However, challenges in accessing professional development opportunities, the limited relevance of training, and the need for more training are significant barriers to effective professional development.

#### 4.3.4 Theme 6: Challenges in creating an inclusive reading environment

Five themes were identified: i) Use of pictures and questions to engage struggling readers, ii) Creating cosy reading nooks to foster engagement, iii) Classroom management and noise control during peer discussions, iv) Limited availability of suitable reading materials, and v) Maintaining learners' motivation and interest in reading activities. Table 4.7 provides a summary of the sub-themes, codes and direct quotations for Theme 1. Thereafter, each of the four sub-themes will be discussed in detail.

**Table 4.7**

*Challenges in creating an inclusive reading environment*

| Sub-themes                                                 | Codes                                                                         | Direct Quotes                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Use of pictures and questions to engage struggling readers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Visual aids, guided questions</li></ul> | <i>"I use pictures and questions before they can read the story. It is effective, but it is difficult to engage struggling readers. (Mary)</i> |
|                                                            |                                                                               | <i>"Encouraging peer discussion using pictures it is effective, but it is difficult to manage the classroom noise." (Rudzani)</i>              |

| Sub-themes                                                          | Codes                                                                                      | Direct Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Creating cozy reading nooks to foster engagement                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading spaces, learners' motivation</li> </ul>     | <i>"Creating a cozy reading nook, encouraging instructions and discussion it is effective, but finding super suitable reading materials is a challenge."</i> (Sarah)                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                         | I am using posters in my classrooms, but there are less effective due to the limited space in our classrooms." (Boitumelo)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Classroom management and noise control during peer discussions      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer interactions, noise management</li> </ul>      | "Encouraging peer discussion using pictures it is effective, but it is difficult to manage the classroom noise." (Rudzani)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Limited availability of suitable reading materials                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources scarcity, reading levels</li> </ul>       | <p>"The availability of reading materials is a big issue. We do not have enough suitable books for all the different reading levels in the classroom." (Boitumelo)</p> <p>"Finding super suitable reading materials is a challenge." (Sarah)</p> <p>It is hard to keep learners engaged when we do not have enough materials that match their reading abilities. (Sarah)</p> |
| Maintaining learners' motivation and interest in reading activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners' engagement, reading motivation</li> </ul> | <p>"Maintaining interest in reading is a big challenge, and we do not always have the right materials to keep them engaged." (Sarah)</p> <p>I try to make reading fun, but it is difficult to keep learners motivated, especially when they do not see themselves making progress." (Rudzani)</p>                                                                            |

#### 4.3.4.1 Sub Theme 1: Use of pictures and questions to engage struggling readers

Findings show that participants utilise visuals and focused questions to engage struggling readers. Visuals assist pupils in absorbing reading. Participants indicated that utilising visuals while reading helps learners link words to pictures, making learning and remembering simpler. Guided questions help learners grasp what they read and observe. Participants stated this approach works for some learners but not for those with major reading issues.

Mary, Sarah, and Agnes noted that using pictures and visual aids is an active approach for engaging struggling readers. Mary found that while using pictures and questions is effective, it can be challenging to engage learners who are significantly behind in their reading skills. Sarah noted that pictures are helpful, but the real challenge lies in getting learners to think beyond the images and connect them to the actual text. Similarly, Agnes observed that using pictures works, but keeping struggling readers focused and ensuring they grasp the material remains challenging. Based on these answers, it is clear that pictures and questions are an effective way to engage people in learning, especially those who struggle with reading. However, different learners are not always as interested, and those with serious reading problems often need more than visual aids to understand. Even though pictures and questions help learners learn, it can be challenging for teachers to maintain learners' attention when they are struggling and to help them understand more deeply.

Compared to existing literature, the study demonstrates that visual tools can enhance readers' comprehension, particularly for those who struggle with reading. Kress and van Leeuwen (2020) argue that visual features are crucial for reading development, as they enable learners to connect what they see with what they read. However, Serafini (2017) suggests that using pictures should be paired with techniques that promote higher-order thinking. This is to ensure that learners do not rely solely on visual cues but also learn to comprehend what they read. The current study supports this finding, indicating that while pictures and questions are helpful, they are insufficient for learners with more severe reading difficulties. Teachers need to provide additional support within their lessons.

#### 4.3.4.2 Sub Theme 2: Creating cosy reading nooks to foster engagement

Participants said that creating cosy reading nooks in the classroom can be an active way to engage learners, especially struggling readers. These spaces aim to make reading more enjoyable and immersive, reducing anxiety and encouraging learners to read more. However, they face challenges sustaining these reading nooks, particularly in acquiring diverse and engaging content and in retaining learners' interest over time. Sarah, Boitumelo, and Rudzani highlighted specific difficulties, including finding suitable reading materials, maintaining learners' motivation to use the space regularly, and accommodating diverse reading levels and interests. Despite these challenges, teachers believe that reading nooks have the potential to foster a love for reading but require ongoing support and resources to maintain their effectiveness.

Research supports the idea that environmental factors can have a significant effect on how engaged learners are in their work, such as making reading areas comfortable and inviting. Duke and Cartwright (2016) suggest that providing learners with a designated reading space increases the likelihood that they will read in a less formal, stress-free setting, which is especially beneficial for learners who struggle with reading. Fisher et al. (2019) stress that the success of these kinds of places rests on having a wide range of interesting books available. If people cannot get to these tools, cosy reading nooks might not have as much of an effect in the long run. Therefore, this study's findings support the view that reading nooks are effective in sparking interest, but their success depends on being consistently stocked with appropriate books to maintain engagement over time.

#### 4.3.4.3 Sub Theme 3: Classroom management and noise control during peer discussions

Participants faced a dilemma in balancing the benefits and challenges of peer discussions in the classroom. On one hand, peer interactions promote collaborative learning and engagement through shared reading activities. However, the participants noted that managing noise levels and keeping the classroom focused can be a significant challenge, sometimes disrupting the learning environment and making it hard for learners to concentrate. Rudzani, Mary, and Agnes highlighted the difficulties of regulating classroom noise and ensuring learners remain on task during peer discussions. Despite these challenges, they acknowledged the value of peer discussions in promoting engagement

and motivation. To harness the benefits of peer discussions while minimising disruptions, teachers need to develop effective classroom management strategies that foster a productive and respectful learning environment. By striking this balance, teachers can create an atmosphere that supports learner engagement, motivation, and overall learning. The results show that while peer talks help learners be more involved and work together, the noise and problems with classroom control can make this approach less useful. When working with large groups of learners who are all interested in different things, it can be challenging for teachers to find a balance between the benefits of shared learning and the need for a safe school environment.

Effective classroom management is crucial to successful peer-based teaching. According to Pianta et al. (2016), peer interactions are important for the development of social and cognitive skills. However, they need to be managed in an organised way to maintain a productive learning environment. Marzano (2017) also highlights the importance of effective classroom management, particularly in inclusive settings where diverse learners' needs can exacerbate issues such as noise and off-task behaviour. These findings are supported by interview data, which show that peer discussions are beneficial for learner engagement but only work when teachers have strong classroom control methods in place. Approaches like peer tutoring can significantly boost comprehension (Topping, 2015a), and ability grouping can be effective when well-monitored (Tieso, 2016), further emphasising the need for structured classroom management to maximise these approaches.

#### 4.3.4.4 Sub Theme 4: Limited availability of suitable reading materials

Participants often mentioned the lack of sufficient reading resources for inclusive Grade 4 classes. They complained about the absence of reading resources for varied reading levels and interests. Some resources are available; however, they are typically obsolete, inadequate, or not tailored to learners' requirements. This scarcity of reading resources prevents instructors from engaging struggling readers by providing information that is both accessible and engaging. Teachers expressed concern about the lack of reading materials, which they said posed a significant challenge. As Boitumelo noted, "The availability of reading materials is a big issue. We do not have enough suitable books for

all the different reading levels in the classroom." Sarah added, "It is hard to keep learners engaged when we do not have enough materials that match their reading abilities." Rudzani emphasised, "We do not have enough diverse or suitable materials, and that makes it difficult to support struggling readers."

These findings reveal an issue many teachers face: their schools lack a sufficient variety of reading tools. Because of this limitation, they cannot provide tailored teaching, as they are restricted to using tools that do not fully meet the needs of each challenging reader. Not having enough tools not only makes it harder for learners to stay engaged but also slows the development of their reading skills.

The research supports the claim that having access to a wide range of high-quality reading materials is crucial for effective reading instruction, particularly in inclusive settings. Guthrie and Klauda (2014) say that having a variety of interesting reading materials available is one of the most important factors in helping readers understand and enjoy what they read. Similarly, Allington (2018) states that teachers cannot provide effective differentiated instruction without the right tools tailored to different reading levels. The interview data support this, making it clear that schools need to spend immediately on a variety of reading materials to better support learners who are having trouble.

#### 4.3.4.5 Sub Theme 5: Maintaining learner motivation and Interest in reading activities

Finally, the findings revealed the difficulty of keeping learners interested in reading. Participants said they use several methods to engage learners, but maintaining motivation is tough. Readers, especially those struggling to read, often lose interest, making learning more challenging. Participants commented that finding interesting, compatible materials and activities that align with learners' reading skills is crucial yet difficult, given time and resource constraints.

Participants shared their challenges in motivating learners to read, particularly those who struggle the most. Agnes stated, "It is hard to keep learners motivated to read, especially those who struggle the most. They often lose interest quickly." Sarah echoed this sentiment, saying, "Maintaining interest in reading activities is a big challenge, and we don't always have the right materials to keep them engaged." Rudzani added, "I try to

make reading fun. Nevertheless, it is difficult to keep learners motivated, especially when they do not see themselves making progress."

Responses like this show how hard it is for teachers to keep struggling readers motivated over time. Teachers try different things to make reading fun, but these efforts often go to waste because learners are not making enough progress, and there are not enough interesting materials available. A lack of long-term drive undermines the effectiveness of reading programmes, as learners who are not interested in reading are less likely to participate in reading activities. Wigfield and Guthrie (2018) suggest that natural motivation plays a significant role in learners' completion of reading assignments. They say that without continuous motivation, learners, especially those who struggle, are unlikely to make significant progress. Deci and Ryan (2017) also suggest that a learner's motivation is closely linked to their perceived competence; if a learner does not think they are improving, they are less motivated to engage in reading tasks. This aligns with the current study's findings, which support that teachers recognise the importance of motivation but often struggle to maintain it due to factors such as resource shortages and learners who appear to be making little progress.

#### **4.4 Document analysis results**

##### **4.4.1 Criteria 1: CAPS Guidance on Reading Methodologies**

Analysis of the CAPS document reveals that Grade 4 teachers are guided towards balanced reading methodologies incorporating whole language, phonics, fluency, and comprehension skills (Department of Basic Education 2011: 22–24). The framework explicitly highlights pre-reading, reading, and post-reading exercises designed to scaffold learners' reading experiences and foster critical language awareness. Visual literacy receives particular emphasis to enhance comprehension of visual texts, including posters, cartoons, and advertisements (Department of Basic Education 2011: 28).

This balanced approach underscores the integration of diverse methods to address multifaceted learning demands. Whole language techniques are advocated to emphasise meaning and context, complemented by phonics for effective word decoding. Concurrent development of fluency and comprehension is prioritised, with explicit recognition that

reading instruction must transcend mere word recognition to cultivate deeper comprehension (Department of Basic Education 2011: 24).

Pre-reading approaches, such as activating prior knowledge and effective prediction, engage learners from the outset. While reading, approaches such as pausing for comprehension checks and utilising contextual cues are foregrounded, while post-reading activities focusing on summarisation and inference-making consolidate understanding. Such integrative methodology demonstrably cultivates enthusiastic and proficient readers (Department of Basic Education 2011: 26).

#### 4.4.2 Criteria 2: CAPS Reading Skills and Progression

The CAPS document delineates precise progression targets for Grade 4 reading skills, encompassing language proficiency, fluency, and comprehension (Department of Basic Education 2011: 19–21). Grade-specific learning outcomes establish a robust foundation in both spoken and written vocabulary, with Grade 4 targets specifying 1,700–2,500 common spoken words and 800–1,900 new vocabulary words for reading. This structure underscores the imperative of sustained vocabulary expansion. A pivotal transition from decoding to comprehension is evident, with explicit objectives for fluent oral reading, text evaluation, and inferential reasoning. Ample practice opportunities are recommended to enhance reading speed, while skills development extends beyond basic decoding towards profound textual understanding (Department of Basic Education 2011: 21).

Oral reading assessments evaluate prosody, expression, and intonation as indicators of comprehension. Mastery of summarisation, conclusion-drawing, identification of main ideas, and intertextual connections exemplifies the emphasis on higher-order thinking skills, marking a pedagogical shift from rote memorisation to sophisticated reading instruction (Department of Basic Education 2011: 22).

#### 4.4.3 Criteria 3: CAPS Types of Reading Texts

CAPS mandates systematic exposure to diverse textual genres, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, folklore, drama, and media texts, to cultivate critical literacy and analytical capacities (Department of Basic Education 2011: 29–31). Visual texts such as advertisements, posters, and comics are integrated to advance visual literacy in tandem

with reading proficiency (Department of Basic Education 2011: 30). Genre-specific instruction facilitates nuanced language function comprehension: informational texts develop fact extraction and synthesis; narrative forms elucidate structure and characterisation; persuasive texts hone argument evaluation. Within contemporary digital contexts, media text analysis equips learners to critically interrogate visual information amidst pervasive media saturation (Department of Basic Education 2011: 31).

#### 4.4.4 Criteria 4: CAPS Language and Multilingualism

Within South Africa's multilingual landscape, CAPS strategically positions linguistic diversity as an instructional asset, grounding reading methodologies in learners' home languages (Department of Basic Education 2011: 12–14). Classroom multilingualism is reframed as an advantage through strategic incorporation of home languages. Bilingual approaches bridge home and school literacies, leveraging existing competencies while scaffolding acquisition of additional languages. Providing multilingual reading materials alongside LoLT, texts enhance learner confidence, facilitating progression to more complex second- or third-language materials (Department of Basic Education 2011: 14). Targeted linguistic scaffolding ensures equitable access to meaningful reading experiences for all learners.

#### 4.4.5 Criteria 5: CAPS Integration with Other Skills

CAPS advocates seamless integration of reading with writing, speaking, and listening skills, predicated on linguistic interdependence (Department of Basic Education 2011: 15–17). Cross-curricular articulation with Natural Sciences and Social Sciences renders reading instruction contextually relevant. Thematic integration optimises vocabulary recycling and conceptual reinforcement, as exemplified by environmental conservation units incorporating pollution-related reading, conservation essay composition, and resource protection debates (Department of Basic Education 2011: 16). This interdisciplinary paradigm renders reading both purposeful and engaging, forging connections to learners' academic and lived experiences.

#### 4.4.6 Criteria 6: CAPS Time Allocation

CAPS prescribes 30–40 minutes daily for guided reading alongside 20–30 minutes for independent reading, balancing scaffolder support with autonomy development (Department of Basic Education 2011: 9–10). A flexible two-week instructional cycle accommodates pacing adjustments, conceptual re-visitation, and differentiated support. Supplementary high-impact tutoring (20–60 minutes, multiple sessions weekly) yields substantial gains in fluency and comprehension, with participants twice as likely to attain grade-level proficiency (Cortes et al., 2025).

#### 4.4.7 Criteria 7: CAPS Assessment Criteria

Comprehensive assessment rubrics target fluency, comprehension, and textual analysis through triangulated formative (reading journals, comprehension tasks) and summative (examinations, extended writing) instruments (Department of Basic Education 2011: 88–104). Higher-order competencies, such as summarisation, inference, and main idea identification, receive primacy (Department of Basic Education, 2011: 42). Inclusive Grade 4 classrooms leverage differentiated instruction and formative data analytics to calibrate interventions, fostering learner self-regulation (Department of Basic Education, 2011: 43; Dixson & Worrell, 2016).

#### 4.4.8 Criteria 8: CAPS Support for Struggling Readers

CAPS prioritises early identification and tiered intervention for at-risk readers, advocating adapted texts, assistive technologies (such as text-to-speech software and audiobooks), and remedial programmes (Department of Basic Education 2011: 46–48). Prompt, individualised responses ensure instructional material alignment with learners' reading levels.

#### 4.4.9 Criteria 9: CAPS Teacher Resources and Methodology

CAPS furnishes educators with diverse resources, newspapers, magazines, posters and mandates continuous professional development to optimise reading instruction (Department of Basic Education 2011: 50–52). Culturally congruent, interest-aligned texts underpin inclusive classroom ecologies accommodating varied proficiency levels.

#### **4.5 Merging themes and document analysis**

Table 4.8 summarises how data for each research objective were obtained from the two sources, namely interviews and document analysis. It also indicates supporting evidence drawn from the literature review and its application to the socio-constructivist theory that underpins the study.

**Table 4.8**

*Integration of Data Sources, Literature, and Theoretical Framework based on the three objectives*

| Research objectives                                                     | Teachers' reading approaches (Data source 1: interviews)                                                     | CAPS document (Data source 2: Document analysis)                                                                                                                                          | Literature review findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Application to theory                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| i) Approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers to support struggling readers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read-aloud &amp; finger-pointing</li> </ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balanced literacy model (phonics, whole-language, fluency, comprehension)</li> <li>Time allocation for guided &amp; independent reading</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read-aloud improves oral fluency (McGee &amp; Schickedanz, 2017)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>Socio-constructivist alignment: All practices (read-aloud, peer support, visual aids, co-teaching) provide scaffolding within the ZPD, enabling learners to construct meaning through social interaction. CAPS' balanced approach mirrors this framework, while the literature validates each strategy; together, they demonstrate that effective inclusive reading instruction combines explicit instruction, collaborative dialogue, and culturally relevant tools.</p> |
|                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group reading &amp; peer support</li> <li>Ability-grouping</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer tutoring boosts comprehension (Topping, 2015b)</li> <li>Ability grouping is effective when well-monitored (Tieso, 2016)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flashcards &amp; word repetition</li> </ul>                           |                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retrieval-based techniques, such as low-stakes quizzes and flashcards, are effective strategies for English second language vocabulary acquisition to foster long-term retention and comprehension (Strong, 2023).</li> <li>Using flashcards significantly enhances receptive vocabulary learning and knowledge of word form and meaning (Lei &amp; Reynolds, 2022).</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phonics-based instruction</li> </ul>                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phonics essential for decoding (Ehri, 2020)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| Research objectives | Teachers' reading approaches (Data source 1: interviews)                                                                   | CAPS document (Data source 2: Document analysis)                                                                                                        | Literature review findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Application to theory |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graphic books &amp; visual aids</li> <li>Use of pictures &amp; questions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual literacy &amp; media texts</li> <li>Support for struggling readers (adapted texts, technology)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual aids enhance comprehension (Kress &amp; van Leeuwen, 2020)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                              |                       |
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-teaching with SBST</li> </ul>                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasis on pre-, during-, post-reading scaffolds</li> </ul>                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-teaching improves outcomes for diverse learners (Friend &amp; Cook, 2017)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                   |                       |
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cosy reading nooks</li> </ul>                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A.</li> </ul>                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cosy reading spaces increase engagement (Duke &amp; Cartwright, 2016)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                          |                       |
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom-management strategies</li> </ul>                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multilingual support</li> </ul>                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ramaila's (2025) systematic review finds that strategic code-switching by teachers or learners enhances learners' comprehension, engagement, and bridges linguistic and cultural gaps in educational settings.</li> </ul> |                       |
|                     |                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated reading across subjects</li> </ul>                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A meta-analysis by Hwang, Cabell, and Joyner (2022) finds that integrated literacy across disciplines significantly improves vocabulary and reading comprehension outcomes.</li> </ul>                                    |                       |
|                     |                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time allocation for guided &amp; independent reading</li> </ul>                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocating structured independent reading time (e.g., 15 minutes daily)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                        |                       |

| Research objectives                                           | Teachers' reading approaches (Data source 1: interviews)                                                                                                      | CAPS document (Data source 2: Document analysis)                                                                       | Literature review findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Application to theory                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                               |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                        | boosts word recognition and reading attitudes (Bus et al., 2024)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                               |                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formative &amp; summative assessment criteria</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formative assessment has a stronger influence on learning because it allows for immediate instructional adjustments and learners' self-regulation. Summative assessment, while essential for accountability, does not directly improve learning; instead, it provides a measure of overall achievement (Dixson &amp; Worrell, 2016).</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| ii) Barriers & facilitators influencing reading comprehension | <b>Barriers</b>                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time constraints (short reading blocks)</li> </ul>                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time allocation guidelines (30-40 min guided, 20-30 min independent)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time for instruction linked to achievement gains (Ma et al., 2025)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Merged insight: Barriers (time, resources, class size) limit the implementation of socio-constructivist practices, while facilitators (peer collaboration, visual tools, co-teaching) leverage the ZPD to support learners. CAPS provides the structural framework, but |
|                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited availability of suitable reading materials</li> </ul>                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasis on multilingual resources</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource scarcity hampers inclusive practice (Darling-Hammond et al, 2017)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient resources (few graphic books, limited levelled texts)</li> <li>Visual aids &amp; graphic books</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for struggling readers (adapted texts, technology)</li> </ul>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual aids improve comprehension (Kress &amp; van Leeuwen, 2020)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

| Research objectives | Teachers' reading approaches (Data source 1: interviews)                                                                                                                                                                    | CAPS document (Data source 2: Document analysis)                                        | Literature review findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Application to theory                                                                                                          |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing learner engagement &amp; interest</li> <li>Difficulty balancing individualised tasks with whole-class instruction</li> <li>Large class sizes &amp; noise control</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A.</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Muchena &amp; Moalosi (2018) conducted a meta-analysis across several Sub-Saharan African countries, confirming that high teacher self-efficacy (especially in classroom management and instructional strategies) is strongly linked to higher levels of learners' engagement, motivation, and behavioural outcomes.</li> <li>With large class sizes and high noise levels, teachers resort to large groups and teacher-led approaches (Adamu, Tsiga &amp; Zuilkowski, (2022)</li> </ul> | without adequate resources and sustained professional development, teachers cannot fully realise the theory-driven strategies. |
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate professional development</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional-development expectations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional development boosts teacher confidence (Desimone &amp; Garet, 2015)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                |
|                     | <b>Facilitators</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                |
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer support &amp; ability grouping</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A.</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability grouping is effective with monitoring (Tieso, 2016)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | See application above.                                                                                                         |
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-teaching &amp; SBST referrals</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A.</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-teaching improves outcomes (Friend &amp; Cook, 2017)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                |

| Research objectives                                     | Teachers' reading approaches (Data source 1: interviews)                                          | CAPS document (Data source 2: Document analysis)                                                                                                                                                        | Literature review findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Application to theory                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differentiated instruction (when feasible)</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated reading across subjects</li> </ul>                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A systematic review of 17 intervention studies conducted in South Africa found that reading strategy instruction, including vocabulary development and content integration (e.g., linking vocabulary with subject themes), was consistently a feature of effective multigrade, multilingual classroom interventions (Carter et al., 2024)</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| iii) Existing intervention plans for struggling readers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SBST referrals (delayed)</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early identification &amp; intervention</li> </ul>                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early intervention improves outcomes (Torgesen, 2009)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>Merged insight: Intervention plans align with CAPS' support mechanisms but are hampered by delayed referrals and limited resources, hindering timely scaffolding. Socio-constructivist theory underscores the need for timely, mediated support within the ZPD; current gaps reflect systemic constraints rather than theoretical inadequacy.</p> |
|                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-teaching with special-education staff</li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-teaching enhances support (Friend &amp; Cook, 2017)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of adapted texts &amp; technology (limited)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for struggling readers (adapted texts, technology)</li> <li>Multilingual resources</li> <li>Teacher-resource expectations (diverse materials)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology aids comprehension (Sweller, 1988)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After-school tutoring (infrequent)</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individualised, consistent tutoring sessions (20–60 minutes, multiple times per week) could lead to</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

| Research objectives | Teachers' reading approaches (Data source 1: interviews)                                    | CAPS document (Data source 2: Document analysis)                                        | Literature review findings                                                                                                            | Application to theory |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
|                     |                                                                                             |                                                                                         | measurable improvements in reading achievement (Cortes et al., 2025)                                                                  |                       |
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional-development workshops (rare)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional-development expectations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional development needed for inclusive practice (Desimone &amp; Garet, 2015)</li> </ul> |                       |

## 4.6 CAPS-interview linkages

The table below links key CAPS (Intermediate Phase, Grades 4-6) reading principles to themes drawn from the interview, highlighting alignments and gaps across the 10 questions. CAPS emphasises phonics reinforcement, comprehension, differentiation, inclusion, assessment, collaboration, technology, parental involvement, and professional development. In Table 4.9, p = participants and Q = question.

**Table 4.9**

*CAPS – interview linkages*

| <b>CAPS Principles</b>                                             | <b>Interview Evidence (Example by Question)</b>                                    | <b>Link status</b> | <b>Discussion of Gap/No link</b>                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phonics/ Shared Reading (Q1: Core decoding approach)               | Read-aloud, repetition, finger pointing flashcards, group/paired reading (p1-p5).  | Strong Alignment   | Effective but challenged by engagement/time; supports CAPS fluency-building.                      |
| Differentiation ( Q2; tailored instruction for abilities/styles)   | Ability grouping, graphic books, levelled questions, tailored assignments (p1-p5). | Partial Alignment  | Limited resources/styles hinder full implementation; CAPS assumes multimodal access.              |
| Inclusive Environment (Q3: Motivation through visuals/ activities) | Pictures, posters, reading nooks, discussions (p1-p5)                              | Partial Alignment  | Space/noise/material shortages are not aligned with CAPS engagement goals.                        |
| Collaboration/support (Q4: Co-teaching, SBST referrals)            | Meetings, co-teaching, referrals (p2,p4); none/limited for others (p1, p3,p5).     | Weak/ No link      | Ineffective due to resources, communication, and processes; CAPS mandates coordination unachieved |
| Technology Integration (Q5:Digital tools for comprehension)        | Apps, interactive stories (p2, p4, p5); limited/none (p1, p3).                     | Weak/ No link      | Electricity/internet/technical issues block CAPS enhancement tools.                               |

| <b>CAPS Principles</b>                                              | <b>Interview Evidence<br/>(Example by Question)</b>           | <b>Link status</b> | <b>Discussion of Gap/No link</b>                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lifelong reading culture (Q6: Modeling, initiatives)                | Activities modelling, clubs, competitions (p2-p5).            | Partial Alignment  | Time/meetings/materials limit demotivates strugglers per CAPS inclusivity.                                               |
| Parental involvement ( Q7: Conferences, workshops)                  | Conferences updates, workshops (p1-p5).                       | Weak/ No link      | Illiteracy, language barriers, scheduling sever CAPS home- schooling partnerships                                        |
| ELL Support (Q8: Visuals, bilingual aids)                           | Visuals, bilingual resources, repetition (p1-p5).             | Partial Alignment  | Staff shortages, home-language mismatches gap CAPS multilingual scaffolding.                                             |
| Professional Development (Q9: Workshops, training)                  | Workshops, seminars, studies (P1-P5)                          | Weak/ No link      | Irrelevant, underfunded, time- poor; CAPS assumes context- specific CPTD                                                 |
| Assessment/ Monitoring ( Q10: Formative/ standardized for progress) | Test, monitoring (p1-p5); listening/ speaking suggested (p3). | No link            | Learners still cannot read single words despite approaches; exposes foundational deficits contradicting CAPS progression |

Alignments cluster around basic approaches (Q1-Q3), while systemic gaps dominate resource-dependent areas (Q4-Q10), revealing CAPS disconnect from under-resourced Intermediate Phase realities like unresolved prior-phase weaknesses. This tabular view confirms superficial policy adoption.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings, data analysis, and discussion of the data collected from the in-depth interviews and document analysis. It concluded with a table that summarises how data for each research objective were obtained from the two sources, namely interviews and document analysis. It also indicates supporting evidence drawn from the literature review and its application to the socio-constructivist theory that underpins the study. The next chapter will discuss the summary of the research findings and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Understanding Grade 4 teachers' reading practices in inclusive classrooms is crucial to supporting varied learners. Teachers must meet the needs of struggling readers while encouraging literacy in inclusive education when learners with different abilities are included in mainstream classes. This study examines how primary schools address Grade 4 reading challenges in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda region.

This chapter summarises the literature review and empirical data analysis, concluding the research project. The goal is to summarise how primary school instructors use reading methods, the obstacles and facilitators that affect reading comprehension in inclusive settings, and the intervention plans for difficult learners. The chapter will also discuss the study's main findings and provide suggestions for educational policy and research.

For many reasons, understanding how Grade 4 teachers teach reading in inclusive classrooms is crucial. First, it demonstrates how various educational methods can help South African schools address reading difficulties. Second, it emphasises individualised education and teacher- and learner-support tools. Ultimately, this research contributes to the discussion on inclusive education and its role in creating equitable learning environments where all learners can thrive.

The chapter summarises the literature review and empirical investigation. A study of the data's findings and suggestions for enhancing inclusive classroom reading education follows. The research aims to explore the reading approaches employed by primary school Grade 4 teachers and their implications for future schooling.

#### **5.2 Summary of the findings**

##### **5.2.1 Findings from the literature review**

This chapter highlights the reading approaches from literature and from the study. It shows the adaptations observed to meet diverse learner needs and stimulate interest in reading, as well as the key barriers and facilitators that shape reading

comprehension in inclusive classroom contexts, relating them to the three questions of the study.

### **What types of reading approaches are adopted by Grade 4 teachers to support learners who are struggling to read in an inclusive classroom?**

The findings show Grade 4 teachers employ a range of reading approaches to support learners who struggle to read in inclusive classrooms. Most common strategies include 1) phonics-based instruction, 2) read-aloud sessions, 3) group reading, 3) peer-assisted learning, and 5) the use of visual aids like picture books and flashcards. "Phonics instruction" primarily supports word decoding and reading fluency, while read-aloud strategies model fluent reading and expose learners to rich vocabulary. Group reading and peer support foster collaborative learning, and visual tools assist learners with comprehension, particularly those with language or learning difficulties.

### **How are the identified reading approaches adapted to accommodate Grade 4 learners struggling to read and stimulate their interest in reading?**

The study shows teachers adapt reading approaches by modifying instruction to suit 1) learners' varying abilities and 2) learners' needs. For example, Phonics instruction is adjusted through targeted support for unfamiliar words, while read-aloud sessions model fluency, encourage discussion, and enhance learner engagement. "Group reading" is adapted by pairing stronger readers with weaker ones to scaffold weaker readers' participation and build their confidence. Visual aids helped make complex texts simpler and enhance meaning-making, especially for learners with limited language proficiency. All these adaptations aim to increase learner motivation, improve comprehension, and create inclusive learning experiences that stimulate interest in reading despite learners' difficulties.

### **What barriers and facilitators may influence reading with understanding among Grade 4 learners in an inclusive classroom?**

The findings show four barriers that influence reading or Grade 4 learners: i) limited instructional time, ii) shortages of appropriate reading resources, iii) large class sizes, and iv) delays in accessing specialised support services. These combined or in isolation from each other limit teachers' ability to provide individualised reading

support. Also, the facilitator enhanced reading through i) professional development opportunities, ii) inclusive education training, iii) collaboration with special education teachers, and iv) access to learner support programmes. When present, these facilitators enhance teachers' capacity to implement effective reading strategies and support learners with complex reading needs. Overall, the study highlights that while effective reading approaches exist, their success depends largely on contextual factors within the inclusive school environment.

The literature review provided an inclusive overview of the reading approaches teachers use in inclusive classes, along with the challenges and opportunities that impact their effectiveness. Some of the most important reading techniques that have been researched include phonics-based instruction, reading aloud, group reading, and the use of visual tools such as picture books. These methods are known to help learners, especially those who struggle to understand what they read, by providing a variety of ways to interact with text (Ehri, 2020; McGee & Schickedanz, 2017).

One of the most effective and successful methods for teaching reading to learners who struggle, particularly in the early stages of literacy development, is through phonics-based instruction. Ehri (2020) stated that phonics helps learners determine the meaning of words by focusing on how letters and sounds work together. This method works especially well in schools where everyone is welcome and where learners may be at different reading levels. However, the research also reveals that phonics teaching has some limitations, particularly when used in isolation. It helps with word recognition, but it may not be sufficient to address the understanding problems that learners with more severe reading difficulties encounter (Castles et al., 2018).

Read-aloud sessions are a powerful tool for boosting oral fluency, with research by McGee and Schickedanz (2017) highlighting their benefits for learners. Numerous studies have shown that reading aloud is an effective way to improve speaking and comprehension (McGee & Schickedanz, 2017). When teachers read aloud, learners can hear how to read quickly and easily, which can help them improve their own reading skills. In addition, learners discuss the book with each other during these lessons, which can help them better understand it and think critically. Specifically, read-aloud sessions enhance phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and critical thinking, while modelling fluent reading and filling comprehension gaps. However, Rasinski and

Hoffman (2018) caution that read-aloud activities only work if the teacher can maintain the attention of all learners, especially those who may struggle to follow along due to reading or attention difficulties.

Findings about reading in groups and getting help from other learners were also very important. Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social learning highlights the significance of peer relationships in brain development. Pairing stronger readers with weaker readers can provide learners who struggle with reading with direct support from their peers. This method has been shown to enhance both reading speed and comprehension, as learners assist one another in reading correctly (Slavin, 2015). However, as Topping (2015a) notes, peer-assisted learning only works when it is well planned and the teacher closely monitors it. If weaker readers do not receive sufficient support, they may rely too heavily on their stronger friends, which could hinder their ability to learn to read independently.

It was found that using visual tools, especially picture books, can help learners understand what they are reading, particularly those who have difficulty with dense text (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020). Graphic books use pictures to help kids understand the story and relate to the words in ways that regular books might not. This method works especially well for individuals from diverse language backgrounds or those who struggle with learning, as it employs a variety of learning approaches. However, the research also highlights the challenges many schools face in accessing the necessary resources, particularly in countries like South Africa that lack sufficient resources (Jiménez et al., 2018).

A big theme in the books was also how to teach reading effectively in inclusive classes despite barriers. Teachers often must balance reading instruction with other curriculum demands, which can be challenging due to limited time (Allington, 2018). This problem worsens in inclusive schools, where teachers must adapt their teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of all their learners. It was also noted that a lack of essential tools, such as suitable reading materials and easy access to professional development, hindered effective reading instruction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The research also identified guides that could help learners understand what they are reading in inclusive schools. It was decided that professional development classes and inclusive education training were crucial for equipping teachers with the skills and

knowledge they needed to employ effective reading methods (Desimone & Garet, 2015). Additionally, collaboration between general and special education teachers, as well as strategies to support learners who are struggling, were identified as essential components of an effective inclusive education system (Friend & Cook, 2016).

The literature review revealed several useful reading strategies that can assist learners experiencing difficulties in inclusive classes. These tactics often fail, though, because of factors outside of their control, such as insufficient time or resources. To improve reading results in inclusive classes, these problems must be addressed through targeted strategies, such as increased professional development and easier access to tools.

### **5.2.2 Summary of study findings**

Through semi-structured interviews with Grade 4 teachers in primary school, the empirical study revealed several key findings about inclusive classroom reading approaches, reading comprehension barriers and facilitators, and struggling learner intervention plans.

#### **Findings Related to Research Question (i): Reading Approaches Used in Inclusive Grade 4 Classrooms**

Under the theme Reading Approaches Used to Support Struggling Readers, the study found that Grade 4 teachers employ a range of instructional strategies to address learners' diverse reading needs in inclusive classrooms. The sub-themes that emerged include read-aloud instruction, phonics-based teaching, group reading and peer-assisted learning, and use of visual aids. In addition, teachers used group reading and peer support by pairing stronger readers with weaker learners to foster collaborative learning. Also, Visual aids, such as graphic books and flashcards, were utilised to support comprehension, especially for learners with limited language proficiency. These findings indicate that teachers rely on multiple, complementary reading approaches to support struggling readers in inclusive Grade 4 classrooms.

#### **Findings Related to Research Question (ii): Adaptation of Reading Approaches to Meet Learners' Needs**

In relation to the theme Adaptation of Reading Approaches for Learner Engagement and Support, the study revealed that teachers modify their instructional practices to

accommodate struggling readers and stimulate interest in reading. Sub-themes included teacher modelling and scaffolding, differentiated phonics instruction, structured peer support, and use of visual scaffolds. Read-aloud sessions were adapted through teacher modelling of fluent reading, interactive discussions to improve comprehension and engagement. "Phonics instruction" was adjusted to focus on decoding skills, although teachers acknowledged that phonics alone was insufficient due to its complexities. Group reading activities were adapted by pairing learners to provide scaffolded peer assistance, promoting confidence and participation. These adaptations demonstrate teachers' efforts to make reading instruction engaging within inclusive classroom contexts.

### **Findings Related to Research Question (iii): Barriers and Facilitators Influencing Reading with Understanding**

Regarding the theme Barriers and Facilitators to Effective Reading Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms, the findings highlight several factors that influence reading comprehension among Grade 4 learners. The identified sub-themes, in this study, are time constraints, resource limitations, professional development, and collaboration with support services. Teachers reported that the limited time allocated for reading instruction prevents them from providing individualised support to struggling readers. These constraints made it difficult to differentiate instruction and engage learners at varying reading levels. In addition, professional development workshops and inclusive education training were identified as important facilitators that enhanced teachers' instructional skills. Collaboration with special education teachers and referral to learner support programmes further supported teachers in addressing complex reading difficulties, although delays in referral processes were noted. Overall, the findings suggest that while effective reading strategies are available, their successful implementation in inclusive classrooms is strongly influenced by barriers and facilitators.

One of the most prevalent reading tactics in this study was read-aloud, when participants read literature aloud to learners to encourage participation. It was especially useful for struggling readers since the instructor modelled fluent reading. However, participants expressed concerns about engaging all learners during read-aloud sessions, especially in inclusive classes with diverse reading abilities. This study

also found phonics-based training to be another crucial method. Participants emphasised the importance of phonics for decoding unfamiliar words and developing reading fluency. However, participants noticed that phonics training alone was sometimes inadequate for those with more complicated reading issues. Participants also used group reading and peer help. Participants recommended matching stronger readers with weaker ones for peer-assisted learning. This technique proved helpful in facilitating collaborative learning and improving the fluency of struggling readers. However, concerns were raised that weaker learners would become overly dependent on their more capable classmates.

Visual aids, such as graphic books and flashcards, help readers who struggle with comprehension, especially those with limited language skills. Visual clues helped learners engage with the material and deepen their understanding, according to teachers. This method was hampered by a shortage of graphic novels and other visual aids, according to numerous participants. Reading instruction barriers were a major subject in this study. Participants commonly complained about the time allocated for reading instruction. Felt hurried during reading sessions and could not provide customised attention to difficult readers. Insufficient resources also hindered reading education. Participants noticed a lack of reading resources, especially for learners with varying reading levels. They struggled to differentiate lessons and engage all learners in reading due to resource constraints, as they did not "have enough suitable materials for all the different reading levels in the classroom" (Sarah).

Though challenging, the findings offered various facilitators of successful reading teaching in inclusive classrooms. Professional development seminars and inclusive education training helped instructors assist struggling readers. Participants complained that these courses were too infrequent to keep them up to speed on best practices. As Mary said, "The training I have received has been helpful, but we need more regular workshops to keep improving our skills."

Participants included working with special education instructors and referring challenging learners to assistance programmes. Working with special education specialists helped teachers tailor their assistance to learners with complex reading issues. However, numerous participants complained about the lengthy referral procedure, which delayed specialised help. The empirical research found that time

and resource limitations limit the implementation of numerous successful reading techniques in inclusive primary school classes. However, professional development and cooperation with special education personnel were regarded as essential facilitators of inclusive classroom reading teaching.

### **5.3 Conclusions of the study findings**

Research on the reading strategies used by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms in primary schools yields important insights into how well these strategies work and how difficult it is for teachers to support learners who are struggling with reading.

First, teachers use a variety of reading techniques, including reading aloud, teaching phonics-based reading, and reading with groups. These methods align with best practices in reading instruction and have been shown to help learners improve their reading speed and comprehension. The study, however, does show that these tactics have their limits, especially when used in isolation. For example, phonics training is good for helping kids learn to recognise words, but it might not help kids with more complex reading problems understand what they are reading. Similarly, read-aloud activities keep learners engaged and demonstrate how to read quickly; however, they may not be sufficient to support learners who struggle with reading independently.

Second, the study identifies several issues that hinder effective reading instruction in inclusive classes. Time limits are a big problem. Participants often feel rushed during reading time and cannot provide the one-on-one help that learners who are struggling with reading need. Previous studies have shown that longer reading lessons are needed to improve reading speed and comprehension, especially for learners who have trouble reading (Allington, 2018), supporting the current study's finding. A lack of tools, such as suitable reading materials and easy access to professional development, was also identified as a significant obstacle to effective reading instruction.

Third, the study reveals that primary schools have several intervention plans in place to support learners who are struggling with reading. However, issues with the schools' organisational structure often hinder these plans. For example, referring learners who are having trouble is useful, but it takes a long time, so learners do not get the help they need right away. In the same way, working together with special education staff is thought to be helpful, but poor communication and not having the same goals can

make this method less useful. These results show that intervention plans do exist, but they need to be used more regularly and effectively to make sure that learners who are having trouble reading get the help they need right away.

Even with these problems, the study also identifies several factors that could enhance the effectiveness of reading instruction in inclusive classes. Participants believed that professional development classes and training in inclusive education were useful tools for teachers because they provided the skills and information, they needed to support learners who were having difficulty reading. However, the study emphasises the need for more regular, accessible professional development opportunities and for staff in both general and special education to collaborate more effectively. When used correctly, these special education teachers can help teachers overcome the problems they face and help all their learners improve their reading.

Finally, the study demonstrates the importance of teaching reading in inclusive classes that cater to all learners' needs and employ a range of instructional methods. Primary schools already use several successful reading strategies. However, the success of these strategies is often limited by external factors, such as a lack of time or resources, or problems with the building itself. Addressing these issues through targeted solutions, such as enhanced professional development and simplified access to tools, is crucial for ensuring that all learners, regardless of their ability, can succeed in inclusive classes and achieve improved reading outcomes.

#### **5.4 Clinical implications of the study**

This section provides clinical suggestions to improve reading teaching in Grade 4 inclusive classes in primary school. These suggestions address teaching, resource allocation, professional development, and coordination of support services.

Firstly, differentiated instruction should be a bigger part of how instruction is delivered in the classroom. Teachers need to employ a range of teaching methods to cater to the diverse needs of all their learners. As Mary mentioned, grouping learners by skill level helps them learn from one another. Nevertheless, the process needs to be improved by having more help and tracking. Teachers should use formative exams to monitor each group's progress daily. This helps ensure that learners who are struggling with reading receive the help they need. Adaptive learning technologies can

also help provide them with personalised information quickly. These include digital platforms that adapt reading materials to each learner's level (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2016).

Second, to deal with the problem of insufficient resources, primary schools should prioritise diversified, high-quality reading resources. Graphic books, online tools, and visual aids can help struggling readers improve reading comprehension. As Boitumelo said, poor resources impair teachers' capacity to engage learners. Expanding the school library and adding interactive, multimodal books for various reading levels should be funded (Jiménez et al., 2018). Partnerships with local companies or NGOs may help literacy initiatives secure additional funding.

Another suggestion is to extend the reading periods they need to ensure there is enough time for both guided and solo reading. Time limits, as Rudzani and Agnes said, make it harder for teachers to give each learner who is having trouble reading the time they need. This problem can be solved by allocating more reading time or adjusting the schedule to allow for focused changes. Long-term, focused reading practice is crucial for enhancing reading skills, particularly in inclusive settings (Guthrie et al., 2017).

The effectiveness of reading approaches in inclusive classrooms is influenced by teachers' ability to manage diverse learner needs and create a supportive learning environment. Research suggests that high teacher self-efficacy, particularly in classroom management and instructional approaches, is strongly linked to improved learner engagement and outcomes (Muchena & Moalosi, 2018). However, professional development is an important area for improvement. Teachers require regular professional development in inclusive education, differentiated instruction, and reading intervention workshops. Boitumelo observed that professional development sessions are valuable yet infrequent. Continuous training can help teachers refine their teaching methods and stay current on best practices in reading instruction. To encourage teacher learning and cooperation, schools could use online training and peer mentoring (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), ultimately enhancing their ability to implement effective reading approaches in inclusive classrooms.

Collaborating with special education teachers and support services is another important suggestion. Reading support for learners who are struggling can be significantly improved through co-teaching and daily collaboration with special

education professionals. Nonetheless, as Rudzani and Sarah said, this collaboration needs to be better organised and more frequent. The partnership will work better with joint planning meetings, clear lines of communication, and agreed-upon learning goals. Additionally, schools should make it easier for learners to access help from the SBSTs, ensuring that those who require extra support receive it promptly (Engelbrecht, 2019).

Ultimately, parental involvement should be expanded to promote reading outside of school. Teacher seminars may teach parents how to help their kids read at home. Parents' involvement in their children's education has been shown to improve academic performance (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2016). Teacher-parent contact via newsletters or digital platforms may help connect home and school learning contexts.

## **5.5 Strengths and limitations of the study**

The study's strengths include establishing rapport with participants, which likely facilitated the collection of rich, in-depth data. The use of member checking, in which participants verify the findings, adds credibility to the results. The thematic analysis was also thorough, with clear themes and sub-themes emerging from the data. Additionally, the analysis of relevant documents aligned with the study's findings further supports the themes identified.

While this study provided valuable insights into the reading approaches used by teachers in Grade, it had some limitations that need to be addressed to better understand its findings. The small sample size of five grade 4 teachers from one primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district provided light on inclusive classroom reading strategies, but these strategies cannot be applied to other schools or districts without further study. A more extensive study encompassing numerous schools in various locations would depict inclusive reading, teaching problems and triumphs.

Another constraint was the reliance on self-reported data. The primary method of data collection was through semi-structured interviews with the teachers, which may have introduced bias. It is possible that teachers' ideas about how they teach and how well their methods work might not fully reflect classroom reality. Because people want to be liked, there may have been a trend to downplay problems or exaggerate achievements (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In the future, researchers may use video

recordings or classroom notes to obtain more reliable information about how teachers perform their jobs.

The lack of learner perspectives hindered the depth of the results. The research provided useful insights into teachers' tactics and challenges, but it did not incorporate learners' perspectives. Understanding how learners, especially struggling readers, interpret various teaching strategies would have given a more complete picture of reading comprehension problems and facilitators in inclusive classrooms. Learner interviews or surveys should be used in future studies to acquire this vital data.

Furthermore, the investigation was limited by time limitations. The data collection period was relatively short, which may have limited the depth of the findings. Longer-term studies, such as longitudinal studies, would provide a better understanding of how reading programmes and strategies evolve. This would be especially helpful in determining how different methods impact learners' reading skills and overall school success over time.

The limited availability of resources in the selected school life further complicated the research. Teachers regularly complained about a shortage of reading materials, visual aids, and other teaching resources, which may have limited their ability to implement effective strategies. Thus, the results may not fully represent the potential efficacy of these techniques if applied with sufficient resources. To assess how material access affects reading treatments, future research should examine schools with varying resource levels (Mullis et al., 2016).

Finally, the focus on a single grade level (Grade 4) further limited the study. Even though fourth grade is a very important time for literacy development, especially as students move from learning to read to reading to learn, it would be helpful to examine how reading techniques change from grade to grade. The problems that younger or older learners face, and the ways their teachers teach them, may be very different from what was seen in Grade 4. To provide a more comprehensive picture of reading instruction in inclusive settings, future studies should examine multiple grade levels.

## **5.6 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Given the study's limitations, several study approaches may be recommended to expand our understanding of inclusive classroom reading practices. Firstly,

longitudinal studies are necessary to determine how different reading strategies affect people over the long term. These studies help us understand how early Grade 4 programmes affect learners' reading skills as they move on to higher schools. This would also help to determine which methods have long-lasting benefits for reading and writing development and which ones might need to be changed over time (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Also, future studies should broaden their scope to include larger and more diverse samples. Including schools from diverse locations and socioeconomic backgrounds will help identify the hurdles and facilitators of reading comprehension in inclusive classrooms. Urban and rural research would also show how resource availability affects reading techniques (Guthrie et al., 2017).

Future studies should also include learner perspectives. Understanding how learners, especially those who struggle with understanding, feel and respond to different reading techniques would help us determine which are most effective and useful. Interviewing learners as part of the study process could also help identify problems that teachers might not see right away (August & Shanahan, 2017).

Additionally, future research should explore integrating technology into inclusive classroom reading instruction. New digital learning tools may enhance reading comprehension by leveraging interactive and adaptive technologies. Research should investigate how these technologies can be effectively incorporated into teaching practices to benefit diverse readers (Jiménez et al., 2018).

## **5.7 FINAL REMARKS**

This study provided us with valuable insights into how Grade 4 teachers in primary schools teach reading in inclusive classes. The results revealed both the positive and negative aspects of current teaching methods, as well as the challenges teachers face when assisting learners who are struggling with reading. Teachers want to help all their learners improve in reading and writing, but they need more support in the form of tools, professional development, and opportunities to collaborate.

The study shows the importance of differentiating instruction in inclusive environments and the need for customised teaching methods to meet learners' diverse needs. Group reading, phonics-based training, and visual aids are beneficial, but they are not

enough. To support all learners, particularly those who struggle with reading comprehension, a comprehensive strategy that incorporates continuous assessment, adaptive learning tools, and tailored interventions is necessary (Ehri, 2020).

This study urges schools and politicians to prioritise inclusive education and to provide teachers with the tools and training they need to create learning spaces that are welcoming to all learners. By addressing the problems this study identified and implementing its suggestions, primary schools and similar institutions can enhance fourth graders' reading skills and help make schools more equitable and inclusive for everyone.

## **5.8 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 5 summarised the study's findings, its clinical implications, its limitations, and recommendations for future research. The chapter concluded with the study's final comments.

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## APPENDIX A: Ethical Approval form



### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 12 August 2024

Ref: **2024/08/12/000000120/03/RB**

Name: **Ms Rudzani Agnes**

Student No.: **47679190**

**Decision:** Ethics Approval form

Dear Ms Rudzani Agnes

**Researcher(s):** Name: Ms Rudzani Agnes

E-mail address: 47679190@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Telephone: **064 394 8237**

**Supervisor (s):** Name: Dr MC Sadike

E-mail address: [sadikmc@unisa.ac.za](mailto:sadikmc@unisa.ac.za)

Telephone: **012 4841694**

**Title of research: Reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms in a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district.**

**Qualification: Master's in Inclusive Education**

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period **2024/08/12 to 2027/08/12**.

*The **write risk level** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on **12 August 2024** in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2027/08/12**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2024/08/12/00000120/03/RB** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Prof RB Monyai  
Acting Head: CEDU Research  
[monyarb@unisa.ac.za](mailto:monyarb@unisa.ac.za)



Prof Mpine Makoe  
Executive Dean: CEDU  
[gakisme@unisa.ac.za](mailto:gakisme@unisa.ac.za)



Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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## APPENDIX B : Letter of consent to Dr Kenneth Kaunda District



### Letter to Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Director

I am Matsea Rudzani Agnes, a student at UNISA, currently conducting a research study on the reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms at Trotsville Primary School in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district. The aim of this study is to explore the impact of these teaching methods on learners reading with understanding and engagement.

As the District Director overseeing educational practices in the in Dr Kenneth Kaunda district, I am reaching out to seek your support and permission to conduct this research study within your jurisdiction. The insights gained from this study will contribute valuable information to the field of inclusive education and can potentially enhance teaching practices for learners experiencing reading difficulties.

The research methodology involves interviewing Grade 4 language teachers to gather their perspectives on reading strategies and approaches used to support struggling readers. By understanding the challenges and effective interventions in place, the study aims to improve educational practices for the benefit of all learners.

Your authorization and support for this research project would be greatly appreciated as it aligns with the goal of promoting quality education and inclusive practices in the district. If you have any questions or require additional information about the study.

Queries or concerns can be directed to the supervisor, Dr. MC Sadiki, at [sadikmc@unisa.ac.za]. Your support in this research endeavor is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for considering this request, and I look forward to the possibility of collaborating with you on this important research initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matsea Rudzani Agnes", is written over a horizontal line.

**Matsea Rudzani Agnes**  
Student no 47679190



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## APPENDIX C : Approval letter from Dr Kenneth Kaunda District

| <b>OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR<br/>DR KENNETH KAUNDA DISTRICT</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                   |                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Enq: Mr T.P Motumi                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Cont: 018 299 8100                                                                | Email: TPMotumi@nwpg.gov.za |
| To:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Matsea Rudzani Agnes<br>Student no: 47679190                                      |                             |
| From:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | [REDACTED]<br>[REDACTED]                                                          |                             |
| Date:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 09 September 2025                                                                 |                             |
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN DR KENNETH KAUNDA DISTRICT AT [REDACTED]</b> |                             |
| <p>This letter serves as formal confirmation that the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District hereby grants permission for you to conduct your approved academic research as a registered candidate of UNISA College of Education: Inclusive Education. However, arrangements must be made with the school so that teaching and learning should not be interrupted unnecessarily. It is acknowledged that the research follows the UNISA Policy on research and the standard operating procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.</p> <p>Your research, titled: <i>"Reading approaches adopted by grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms in a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district."</i></p> <p>Please note the following conditions of approval:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Scope of Participants:</b> This research is strictly limited to Grade 4 teachers. No data collection involving learners/children is permitted under this approval.</li><li>2. <b>Location of Study:</b> The research must be conducted only in rural schools within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, as aligned with the approved ethics clearance.</li><li>3. <b>Confidentiality and Anonymity:</b> All data collected must be handled with strict confidentiality. The identities of participating teachers, schools must remain anonymous in all reporting, publications, or presentations of the findings.</li><li>4. <b>Voluntary Participation:</b> Participation by teachers must be strictly voluntary, with informed consent obtained prior to engagement.</li><li>5. <b>Non-Disruption of Teaching and Learning:</b> The study must be conducted in such a manner that it does not disrupt teaching, learning, or any official school programmes.</li><li>6. <b>Reporting and Feedback:</b> A copy of the final research report or dissertation must be submitted to the District Office upon completion of the study for record-keeping and possible use in future academic or policy reference.</li></ol> |                                                                                   |                             |
| <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"><div style="text-align: center;"><br/><b>G20</b><br/><small>South African Presidency</small></div><div style="text-align: center; flex-grow: 1;"><p><i>"Let's Grow North West Together"</i></p></div><div style="text-align: center;"><br/><b>NDP</b></div></div>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                   |                             |

## APPENDIX D : Letter to circuit managers

### Letter to the Circuit Manager

#### Request for permission to conduct a research

I am Matsea Rudzani Agnes, a student at UNISA, currently conducting a research study on the reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms at Trotsville Primary School in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district. The aim of this study is to explore the impact of these teaching methods on learners reading with understanding and engagement.

As the Circuit Manager overseeing educational practices in the Maquassi hills Sub-district at Dr Kenneth Kaunda district, I am reaching out to seek your support and permission to conduct this research study within your jurisdiction. The insights gained from this study will contribute valuable information to the field of inclusive education and can potentially enhance teaching practices for learners experiencing reading difficulties.

The research methodology involves interviewing Grade 4 language teachers to gather their perspectives on reading strategies and approaches used to support struggling readers. By understanding the challenges and effective interventions in place, the study aims to improve educational practices for the benefit of all learners.

Your authorization and support for this research project would be greatly appreciated as it aligns with the goal of promoting quality education and inclusive practices in the district. If you have any questions or require additional information about the study.

Queries or concerns can be directed to the supervisor, Dr. MC Sadiki, at [sadikmc@unisa.ac.za]. Your support in this research endeavor is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for considering this request, and I look forward to the possibility of collaborating with you on this important research initiative.

Sincerely,

Matsea Rudzani Agnes  
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## APPENDIX E: Letter to principals



To: School principal of Trotsville Primary School

Request for permission to conduct a research

I, Matsea Rudzani Agnes, a student no 47679190 at UNISA, am conducting a research study on the reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms at Trotsville Primary School in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district. The study is aimed at exploring the impact of these teaching methods on learner understanding and engagement.

Supervised by Dr. MC Sadiki and Prof E Johnson, the research project will involve interviewing five Grade 4 language teachers at Trotsville Primary School to gather insights on their reading approaches used to support struggling readers. Data will be analyzed to identify common challenges, effective interventions, and potential barriers to reading with understanding.

The study seeks to contribute valuable insights to the field of inclusive education and improve practices for learners experiencing reading difficulties. The research methodology involves a qualitative approach, including interviews and thematic analysis to explore the teachers' experiences and perspectives.

I kindly request your consent to conduct this study within your school and with the participation of the teachers. Participation is voluntary, and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research process. The findings will be shared to benefit both the school and the broader educational community.

Queries or concerns can be directed to the supervisor, Dr. MC Sadiki, at [sadikmc@unisa.ac.za]. Your support in this research endeavor is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Matsea Rudzani Agnes  
Student no 47679190



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## APPENDIX F: Letter to participant (teacher)

### Letter to grade 4 Language teachers

I am Matsea Rudzani Agnes, a student at UNISA conducting a research study on the reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms at Trotsville Primary School in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district. The study aims to investigate the impact of these teaching methods on learners reading with understanding and engagement.

Your participation in this study is invaluable, as your insights and experiences as educators are crucial to understanding the effectiveness of different reading approaches in supporting struggling readers. Your feedback through interviews will provide valuable information that can enhance reading practices for grade 4 learners in inclusive settings.

Participation in the study is voluntary, and all data collected will be kept confidential. Your contributions will help improve teaching practices and support the academic success of learners facing reading challenges. Your dedication and commitment to education are greatly appreciated, and your involvement in this research project will make a significant impact.

Queries or concerns can be directed to the supervisor, Dr. MC Sadiki, at [sadikmc@unisa.ac.za]. Your support in this research endeavor is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for considering participating in this study and for your dedication to the education and well-being of your learners.

Sincerely,

Matsea Rudzani Agnes  
Student no. 47679190



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## APPENDIX G: Consent form

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

**Study Title:** Reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms in a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district

**Researcher:** Matsea Rudzani Agnes

**Participant's name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Number:** 47679190

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor:** Dr. MC Sadiki

**Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Co-Supervisor:** Prof E Johnson

**Position/ Role:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Year of Experience:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Qualifications:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method>.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname..... (please print)

Participant Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname.....(please print)

Researcher's signature.....Date.....



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## APPENDIX H: Interview script

| Facilitation             | Script to follow                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Welcome and introduction | It is great to meet you and thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. The purpose of this study is to explore the reading methods used by primary school teachers of Grade 4.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Informed Consent         | I want to ensure that you understand the goal of our study and that your participation is entirely optional before we begin. You are welcome to ask questions or voice concerns to any of the questions that I will ask you.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Question 1               | <p>What reading strategies do you employ to help struggling readers in your Grade 4 inclusive classroom?</p> <p>Prompting questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What interventions or activities do you implement to engage struggling readers?</li> <li>• How do you assess and monitor the progress of struggling readers?</li> </ul>                                                                                                       |
| Question 2:              | <p>How do you differentiate instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of all learners in your classroom for reading comprehension?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide examples of how you tailor instruction for learners with varying abilities and learning styles.</li> <li>• What resources and materials do you use to support diverse learners in developing reading comprehension skills?</li> </ul> |
| Question 3               | <p>In what ways do you create a positive and inclusive classroom environment that promotes reading engagement for all learners?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you foster a supportive classroom culture that encourages participation in reading activities?</li> <li>• Share any challenges faced in fostering a positive reading environment and how you address them.</li> </ul>                          |
| Question 4               | <p>How do you collaborate with special education teachers or support staff to provide additional support for struggling readers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What collaborative practices have been effective in supporting struggling readers in literacy development?</li> </ul> <p>Prompting questions:</p>                                                                                                                                |

| Facilitation | Script to follow                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you ensure a coordinated approach to meet the diverse needs of learners with special education requirements?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Question 5   | <p>Can you discuss the role of technology in supporting reading instruction in your Grade 4 inclusive classroom?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you integrate technology tools and resources to enhance reading comprehension for all learners?</li> <li>• What are some benefits and challenges you have encountered when using technology for literacy instruction?</li> </ul>                                                                                           |
| Question 6   | <p>How do you promote a love for reading and lifelong learning among your Grade 4 learners?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What approaches do you use to instil a passion for reading in your learners?</li> <li>• Can you share any successful reading initiatives or programs you have implemented in your classroom?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                |
| Question 7   | <p>How do you involve parents and caregivers in supporting their child's reading development?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What approaches do you use to engage families in fostering a reading culture at home?</li> <li>• How do you communicate progress and share literacy resources with parents to support their child's learning?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                             |
| Question 8   | <p>How do you address the individual needs of learners who are not English first-language speakers in your Grade 4 inclusive classroom?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What instructional approaches and support do you provide to help these learners improve their reading skills in English?</li> <li>• Can you share any success stories or challenges you have faced in working with learners who are not English first language speakers in reading instruction?</li> </ul> |

| Facilitation         | Script to follow                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Question 9           | <p>What professional development opportunities or training have you participated in to enhance your reading instruction practices?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you keep up to date with best practices and research in the field of literacy instruction?</li> <li>• Share any experiences or insights gained from professional development activities that have influenced your approach to teaching reading.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                    |
| Question 10          | <p>How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your reading instruction and adjust meet the needs of your learners?</p> <p>Prompting questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What assessment approaches or tools do you use to measure reading progress and learning outcomes?</li> <li>• Can you share examples of how you have differentiated instruction based on assessment data and learner performance?</li> <li>• How do you address language barriers and support learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds in developing their reading comprehension skills?</li> </ul> |
| Closing/Appreciation | <p>Summary of key points discussed during the interview, highlighting the valuable insights shared by participants.</p> <p>Thank you for your thoughtful contributions and for sharing your experiences. Your efforts to improve Grade 4 literacy instruction at the primary school are much appreciated. Your feedback will shape the research study and improve inclusive classroom reading Strategies. Thank you again for your participation.</p>                                                                                                                                            |

## APPENDIX I: Certificate of English editing

### CERTIFICATE OF ENGLISH EDITING

*This is to certify that the manuscript titled 'Reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers inclusive classrooms in a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district' by Matsea Rudzani Agnes (Student No. 47679190) has been edited by Writewell Editors for grammar, spelling, and punctuation to ensure that the language is clear. The content of the author was not altered in any way.*

*The quality of the edit has been guaranteed with the assumption that the suggested changes have been accepted by the author(s).*



WRITEWELL EDITORS

## APPENDIX J: Registration letter



1655

MATSEK R A MS  
P O BOX 537  
WOLMARANSTAD  
2630

STUDENT NUMBER : 47679190

ENQUIRIES TEL : 0800 001 870

eMAIL : mands@unisa.ac.za

2026-01-21

Dear Student

I hereby confirm that you have been registered for the current academic year as follows:

Proposed Qualification: MED (INCLUSIVE EDUCATION) (90067)

| CODE                                           | PAPER | S NAME OF STUDY UNIT                   | NQF crdts | LANG. | PROVISIONAL EXAMINATION<br>EXAM DATE | CENTRE(PLACE) |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------------|-----------|-------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Study units registered without formal exams:   |       |                                        |           |       |                                      |               |
| # DLIED95                                      |       | Mini Dissertation: Inclusive Education | 84        | E     |                                      |               |
| # DLIED95                                      |       | Mini Dissertation: Inclusive Education | 84        | E     |                                      |               |
| # Exam transferred from previous academic year |       |                                        |           |       |                                      |               |

You are referred to the "MyRegistration" brochure regarding fees that are forfeited on cancellation of any study units.

# Your study material is available on [www.my.unisa.ac.za](http://www.my.unisa.ac.za), as no printed matter will be made available for the research proposal module.

Study material can be accessed on the Unisa website. You must register on MyUnisa (<https://my.unisa.ac.za/portal/>) for this purpose. You are also reminded to activate your myLife email address since all electronic correspondence will be sent to this email address.

# Your attention is drawn to University rules and regulations ([www.unisa.ac.za/register](http://www.unisa.ac.za/register)).

Please note the new requirements for reregistration and the number of credits per year which state that students registered for the first time from 2013, must complete 36 NQF credits in the first year of study, and thereafter must complete 48 NQF credits per year.

Students registered for the MBA, MBL and DBL degrees must visit the SBL's E5Online for study material and other important information.

Readmission rules for Honours: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy academic activity must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the University during each year of study. If you fail to meet this requirement in the first year of study, you will be admitted to another year of study. After a second year of not demonstrating academic activity to the satisfaction of the University, you will not be re-admitted, except with the express approval of the Executive Dean of the College in which you are registered. Note too, that this study programme must be completed within three years. Non-compliance will result in your academic exclusion, and you will therefore not be allowed to re-register for a qualification at the same level on the National Qualifications Framework in the same College for a period of five years after such exclusion, after which you will have to re-apply for admission to any such qualification.

Readmission rules for MEd: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy, a candidate must complete a Master's qualification within three years. Under exceptional circumstances and on recommendation of the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (fourth) year to complete the qualification. For a Doctoral degree, a candidate must complete the study programme within six years. Under exceptional circumstances, and on recommendation by the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (seventh) year to complete the qualification.

RECEIPT NUMBER: 20260121-6757-048

STUDY FEES: 3845.00

BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT: 7800.00

CASH: 3845.00 (Straight)

CHEQUE:

CARD:

POSTAL ORDER:

MONEY ORDER:

FOREIGN:



Payable on or before:

Immediately: 0.00

2026/03/31: 0.00

2026/11/15: 0.00

2026/05/15: 3900.00

2027/03/15: 0.00

2026/06/15: 3900.00



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## APPENDIX K: Similarity report

| Similarity Report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| PAPER NAME                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | AUTHOR                      |
| Reading approaches adopted by Grade 4 teachers in inclusive classrooms in a primary school in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district.docx                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | RUDZANI AGNES MATSEA        |
| WORD COUNT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | CHARACTER COUNT             |
| 45252 Words                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 281260 Characters           |
| PAGE COUNT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | FILE SIZE                   |
| 182 Pages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 1.4MB                       |
| SUBMISSION DATE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | REPORT DATE                 |
| Jan 25, 2026 10:48 PM GMT+2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Jan 25, 2026 10:53 PM GMT+2 |
| <p>● <b>23% Overall Similarity</b></p> <p>The combined total of all matches, including overlapping sources, for each database.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 13% Internet database</li><li>• 20% Publications database</li><li>• Crossref database</li><li>• Crossref Posted Content database</li><li>• 14% Submitted Works database</li></ul> <p>● <b>Excluded from Similarity Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Manually excluded sources</li></ul> |                             |
| Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                             |