Thesis

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A CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF LEARNING AND TEACHING SUPPORT MATERIALS FOR LITERACY IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

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ESMÉ PRINSLOO

submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

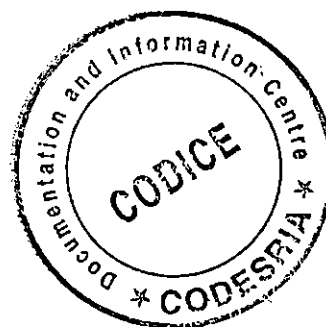## DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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SOLI DEO GLORIA

Lord, when I started this thesis, I wondered whether I would be able to do it. You reminded me of the following scriptures and these remained my pillars of strength throughout:

Psalm 121:1: I-2

I look to the mountains; where will my help come from? My help will come from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Matthew 7:7

Ask, and you will receive.

Philippians 4:13

I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me.

Lord, you said it; I believed it and that settled it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to

my late parents,
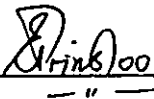
MICHAEL AND ANNATJIE NIEUWENHUIS,

who would have been extremely proud of me.

DECLARATION

Student number: 5938422

I declare that *A CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF LEARNING AND TEACHING SUPPORT MATERIALS FOR LITERACY IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE* is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been included and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Prinsloo

Mrs E Prinsloo

9 December 2003.

Date

ABSTRACT

This study was prompted by the Report of the Review Committee on C2005 that found OBE was not being successfully implemented in many schools because of the lack of sufficient or appropriate LTSMs. The main aim of the investigation is to provide a critical overview of the nature of the problems experienced by many Foundation Phase teachers from previously disadvantaged schools. The problem is investigated by means of an extensive literature review and an empirical investigation, using a qualitative approach and action research. The literature review gives an overview of the role and historical development of LTSMs in key developmental eras as well as the use of LTSMs in the light of the theories of four selected learning theorists, namely Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky and Gardner. The literature review reflects the investigation into the different types of reading material most suitable for Foundation Phase learners as well as criteria that pertain to the selection of suitable reading material for Foundation Phase learners. The research design entails focus group and individual (face-to-face) interviews as well as the researcher's personal observations as data collection methods. One of the most pertinent problems that came to light was that Foundation Phase teachers in Soshanguve lacked reading material with which to implement the whole language approach. In addition, they had a limited variety of reading material available and seldom created a print-rich environment. The problem is expounded by the fact that many schools do not have libraries that function effectively. Teacher-authored and teacher-learner-authored reading material is one solution to the problem. Criteria that would empower Foundation Phase teachers to produce developmentally appropriate reading material are given. To establish the effectiveness of the criteria, action research is undertaken. A detailed report is given on the process and outcomes of the three cycles comprising the action research component. Teachers who are empowered with this skill will be contributing towards the national ideal to address the high rate of illiteracy among the youth.

Key words: Foundation Phase; learning and teaching support materials; literacy; Piaget; Bruner; Vygotsky; Gardner; criteria for book selection; types of reading material; teacher-authored reading material; whole language approach; literature-based curriculum

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Outcomes-based education (OBE) is a given within the South African education system and forms the foundation of the curriculum. Despite the recommended changes to Curriculum 2005 (C2005) to develop an improved curriculum for the twenty first century, the underlying principles of OBE will stay (*Sunday Times*, 4 June 2000:7).

The introduction of OBE brought about a paradigm shift that has made many demands on both the education system and teachers. Foundation Phase teachers were the first group to undergo training with regard to the implementation of OBE. Although many of these teachers had little difficulty making the paradigm shift, there are several instances where teachers experienced many difficulties with the implementation of OBE. One of the factors that hampered their ability to implement OBE has been the availability of appropriate learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs).

LTSMs play a pivotal role in the successful implementation of C2005 and will continue to do so with the introduction of the Revised National Curriculum Statements for Grade R-9 (Schools) (RNCS). Findings in the Report of the Review Committee on C2005 (2000:3) have shown that the success of OBE depends centrally on the quality of the teachers, which includes their content knowledge, their facility with different teaching methods and their access to LTSMs. Better resourced schools cope reasonably well with the implementation of OBE and C2005. In contrast, inadequately resourced schools carry an extremely heavy burden as they lack the essential LTSMs to implement OBE and C2005 effectively. In this report, it was concluded that

> *these teachers need textbooks along with other learning support materials and they need to be trained to use them effectively. Teachers generally do not have the time, the resources and the skill to develop their own materials, although this should be encouraged* (Report of the Review Committee on C2005: 2000:5).

A task team, under the leadership of Professor Linda Chisholm, studied related aspects to the implementation of the new curriculum (http://www.teacher.co.za/200007/emilia.html). The team recommended that the RNCS should, *inter alia,* improve the situation regarding LTSMs, as it is one of the restraining factors that have been a barrier in the successful implementation of OBE and C2005.

Other professionals in South Africa as well as researchers from other countries have noted the dilemma surrounding LTSMs. One such professional in South Africa is Ms Pauline Kgobokoe, currently the principal at Molamu Early Learning Centre (a Tswana medium pre-school outside Mmabatho) and finalist in the Department of Education's (DoE) National Teacher Awards. In a media interview, she was asked what the three most common problems were that she experienced during her 37 years as a teacher and principal. She responded as follows:

> *The lack of resources like decent buildings, equipment and qualified people* (*Sunday Times,* June 10, 2001).

(The researcher believes that her reference to a lack of equipment also implies a lack of LTSMs.)

In reply to the question whether OBE has been working in her classrooms she said:

> *Yes and no...No, because of lack of resources and parental support* (*Sunday Times,* June 10, 2001).

Saunders (1996:18) identified a similar situation during his involvement in a research project in black primary schools in South Africa. One of his observations reads as follows:

> *... but what I found was alarming: no teaching aids whatsoever...*

Abroad, Sunal (1992:77) found that in American schools where teachers saw less need for LTSMs, learners lack basic academic skills. Moreover, teachers tend to overlook opportunities to develop their own curriculum materials.

The empowerment of teachers to develop their own LTSMs is an essential requirement for the future. The introduction of the Curriculum for the 21st century envisages teachers who

are able to fulfil the roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for Teachers (Republic of South Africa 2000:13, 16-17). One of the seven roles of teachers that are of particular interest to this study is that of a designer of materials, which implies that teachers should be able to design or develop their own LTSMs. This is necessitated by the kind of learner that is envisaged, namely one who is, *inter alia,* a life-long learner and one who is literate (DoE 2002a:3; 2002b:3).

Although the quandary surrounding LTSMs is now receiving urgent attention within the South African education system, it is a worldwide problem that has existed ever since the first developmental era (which is discussed in Chapter 2). However, before continuing, it is necessary to ensure a common understanding of the basic concepts referred to in this study.

1.2   CONCEPTUALISATION

The following concepts are of importance to this study:

1.2.1   OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

OBE is defined as a design for education. It is a learner-centred, results-oriented (achievement-oriented) and activity-based education approach, based on the belief that all individuals can learn (DoE 1997e:3; 2002b:55; Van der Horst & McDonald 1997:7; 2003:5). In following this process, C2005 and the RNCS aim to encourage life-long learning (DoE 2002b:55). OBE is not planned around specific prescribed subject matter that learners are required to learn. In OBE, the main aspects of C2005 are the critical outcomes (see 1.2.6.1) and the eight Learning Areas or Learning Programmes (see 1.2.4), each with their own learning outcomes (DoE 1997e:14; Gous & Mfazwe 1998:iv). OBE makes clear statements about what knowledge, skills and values learners should attain after learning has taken place. These statements are referred to as *outcomes* because they indicate what the result of learning should be. It includes a realisation that learners differ and that some of them may need additional support to enable them to reach their maximum potential (Lubisi, Parker & Wedekind 1998:3).

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1.2.2   CURRICULUM 2005

The new education system is a key to changing the old commonly-held values and beliefs. Critical thinking, rational thought and deeper understanding form the central principles thereof. It also aims to conquer class, race and gender stereotyping. Not only does it introduce life-long learning but also it is also people-centred. At the heart of these changes lies C2005 (DoE 1997e:2).

Tiley and Goldstein (1997:5) say that C2005 is based on the following beliefs about learners:

♦ Learners should progress along their own paths of achievement.
♦ Learners should experience satisfaction, confidence and growth in learning situations.
♦ Learners should be able to apply what they have learnt to real-life situations.
♦ Learning and teaching should focus on holistic, integrated development.
♦ Learners should be assessed on what they can do, not on what they cannot do.
♦ Learners should be given many opportunities to become actively involved in constructing knowledge, understanding and skills.

C2005 is the first version of the post-apartheid National Curriculum Statement implemented in 1997. It provides a framework for Early Childhood Development (ECD), General Education and Training Certificate (GETC), Further Education and Training (FET) as well as Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). The RNCS aims to strengthen C2005 (DoE 2002b:54).

1.2.3   THE REVISED NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT

In 1996, the first major curriculum statement of a democratic South Africa was issued. The Report of the Review Committee on C2005 (DoE 2002c:2) recommended that an amended National Curriculum Statement should be produced which should reduce the curriculum design features from eight to three, namely critical outcomes (see 1.2.6.1), developmental outcomes (see 1.2.6.2), learning outcomes (see 1.2.6.3) and assessment standards (see 1.2.7). It should also align curriculum assessment, improve teacher orientation and training, improve provision of LTSMs, improve provincial support and relax time-frames for implementation.

In June 2000, the Council of Education Ministers accepted the curriculum recommendations made by the Review Committee on C2005. A National Curriculum Statement was to be developed giving clear descriptions of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes expected at the end of the GET band. The revision of C2005 resulted in a Draft Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (Schools) and was made available for public comment during 2001/2002.

The RNCS builds on the vision and values of the Constitution of South Africa and C2005. These principles include social justice, a healthy environment, human rights and inclusivity, OBE, a high level of skills and knowledge for all, clarity of purpose, accessibility as well as progression and integration (DoE 2002c:10). When the RNCS becomes policy, it will replace the Statement of the National Curriculum for Grades R-9 approved in 1997. The RNCS is to be introduced in the Foundation Phase in 2004 (DoE 2002c:5; Van der Horst & McDonald 2003:17).

1.2.4 LEARNING PROGRAMMES

The RNCS will be implemented by means of Learning Programmes (DoE 2002d:8; Van der Horst & McDonald 2003:49). These are structured and systematic arrangements of learning activities that include content and teaching methods that promote the attainment of learning outcomes (see 1.2.6.3) and assessment standards (see 1.2.7) for each phase.

The DoE (2002d:8) says the following:

> *Whereas the Revised National Curriculum Statement stipulates the concepts, skills and values on a grade-by-grade basis, Learning Programmes specify the scope of learning and assessment activities per phase. Learning Programmes also contain work schedules that provide the pace and sequencing of the activities each year as well as exemplars of lesson plans to be implemented in any given period. The underlying principles and values of the Revised National Curriculum Statement also underpin the Learning Programmes.*

In addition, the Learning Programmes must ensure that all learning outcomes (see 1.2.6.3) and assessment standards (see 1.2.7) are pursued and that each Learning Programme is allocated its prescribed time and emphasis.

Although Learning Programmes are guided by the RNCS, they are developed by provinces, schools and teachers (DoE 2002b:55). Learning Programmes are the 'vehicles' through which the curriculum is implemented. In the Foundation Phase, three Learning Programmes are offered, namely Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills. In this study, the focus falls on the Literacy Learning Programme as research is conducted regarding LTSMs in this programme.

According to Olivier (1997:26), Learning Programmes serve as guides that will allow teachers to be creative and innovative in directing learners to achieve outcomes. Learning Programmes deviate from traditional syllabi, which housed rigid, non-negotiable learning content and were teacher-centred. Teachers are free to develop their own Learning Programmes as long as they take into account the various outcomes and address the needs of learners.

1.2.5   LITERACY

Language and literacy are closely linked. Literacy refers to the ability to read and write for different purposes (DoE 2002b:59; Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht 1999:79). In the new curriculum, the Literacy Learning Programme is seen as a broad concept that includes various kinds of literacies. The DoE (2002b:59) refers to various literacies, namely

♦ reading and writing;
♦ visual literacy (the reading and writing of signs, pictures, images, etc.);
♦ computer literacy;
♦ media literacy (the reading of newspapers, magazines, television and film as cultural messages);
♦ cultural literacy (understanding the cultural, social and ideological values that shape one's reading of texts) and
♦ critical literacy (the ability to respond critically to the messages in texts).

In this study, the focus will mainly be on reading and visual literacy.

The Literacy Learning Programme covers all eleven official languages as both Home Languages and First Additional Languages for the Foundation Phase, to make provision for the rich diversity that is found in South Africa (DoE 2003:20).

1.2.6   OUTCOMES

Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:21; 2003:248) define an outcome as a successful demonstration of learning that occurs at the culminating point of a set of learning experiences. Outcomes are, therefore, the end products of the learning process. These state clearly what knowledge, skills and values learners should be able to demonstrate and apply appropriately.

Furthermore, Olivier (1997:17-18) states that an outcome

♦ can be demonstrated as it is an observable process;
♦ is supported by a range of learning experiences and competences and
♦ comprises of procedures or functions, namely preparation, performance and conclusion, interaction and assessment.

There are different types of outcomes, namely critical, developmental and learning outcomes.

1.2.6.1   Critical outcomes

The seven critical outcomes are rooted in the Constitution of South Africa and lie at the heart of C2005 for the GET band (GDE 1998:16; Olivier 1997:8). The point of departure is to develop a prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice (DoE in Van der Horst & McDonald 2003:47).

The critical outcomes should be seen as the foundation on which learner outcomes rest (Van der Horst & McDonald 2003:247) as they refer to basic forms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that learners should acquire in all areas of learning. In addition, the critical outcomes should be the driving force behind the teaching and learning process.

1.2.6.2   Developmental outcomes

The DoE (2002b:1) states that developmental outcomes envisage learners who are able to

♦ reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;
♦ participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;
♦ be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts and
♦ explore education and career opportunities and develop entrepreneurial skills.

1.2.6.3   Learning outcomes

Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:48) state that learning outcomes are based on critical and developmental outcomes. (See 1.2.6.1 & 1.2.6.2 respectively). Learning outcomes describe what knowledge, skills and values learners should have achieved, for example, at the end of a phase. According to the DoE (2002d:7), learning outcomes do not prescribe content or method but should ensure integration and progression in the development of knowledge, skills and values through the assessment standards (see 1.2.7).

1.2.7   ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

Assessment standards, a new concept in OBE, have been introduced with the launching of the RNCS. The level at which learners should demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes (see 1.2.6.3) and the way in which this is done for each grade are referred to as assessment standards (DoE 2002b:54; Van der Horst & McDonald 2003:48). Assessment standards are grade specific and show how conceptual progression will occur in each Learning Programme and Learning Area. Although they embody the knowledge, skills and values needed to achieve learning outcomes (see 1.2.6.3), they do not prescribe method (DoE 2002d:7).

1.2.8   THE FOUNDATION PHASE

The Foundation Phase is the first phase of the GET band and includes Grade R (reception year), Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 (DoE 2002b:54). It focuses on primary skills, knowledge and values and in so doing, lays the foundation for further learning (DoE 2003:19). The broader aim of the Foundation Phase is to provide learners with sufficient

opportunities to develop their full potential as active, responsible and fulfilled citizens (DoE 1997c:4).

1.2.8.1   Foundation Phase teachers

Although the term *educators* is often used, the researcher prefers to use the term *teachers*. The reason for this choice is that the term *teachers* is used in the Report of the Review Committee on C2005 (see 1.1) as well as the RNCS (DoE 2002a; 2002b:2; 2002c:9; 2003:13), which are of the most recent policy documents to be issued by the DoE.

Teachers are active facilitators who mediate active participation and involve learners in the process of developing knowledge, skills, values and attitudes (GDE 1999a:1). For the purpose of this study, a Foundation Phase teacher is someone who is involved in the education of learners in Grade R, Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3.

1.2.8.2   Foundation Phase learners

The GDE (1999a:1) defines learners as

active life-long participants in their own continuous, life-long education process.

Learners, therefore, range from early childhood education to adult education. The term *learners* has replaced the term *pupils* in schools and *students* in higher education (DoE:1997e:13).

Learners in the Foundation Phase are in Grade R, Grade 1, Grade 2 or Grade 3. According to Notice No. 2432 of 1998 and the National Education Policy Act (Act No 27 of 1996), these learners range between the ages of 5 and 10 years (DoE 2003:19). Foundation Phase learners include learners with special needs such as the intellectually challenged, the physically disabled and gifted learners. They enter school from various cultural backgrounds and a range of urban, peri-urban and rural contexts.

The DoE (2003:20) describes the characteristics of these learners as follows:

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♦ The physical, emotional and intellectual development of these learners are not well synchronised. For example, a child's physical development may be well in advance of his or her social and emotional development.

♦ Most of these learners may not be able to explain their reasoning easily, but may be able to demonstrate their thinking by using counters or drawings.

♦ Each learner brings his or her own experiences, interests, strengths and weaknesses to the classroom. Therefore, the tasks for these learners need to fit their abilities.

♦ Each learner has the need to be recognised and accepted.

♦ Each learner needs his or her family and culture to be acknowledged and respected.

♦ Most learners are still egocentric and view things from their own subjective perspective.

1.2.9 RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND TEACHING SUPPORT MATERIALS

There is a clear relationship between resources and LTSMs as can be seen from the explanation that follows.

1.2.9.1 Resources

A resource is something that has the **potential** to be used to develop learning support materials. When a resource is actually developed and utilised to reach the desired outcomes, it is known as a developed form of learning support material (GDE 1999e:3). Nearly every object and every person can therefore, be useful in helping learners achieve the generic outcomes underlying OBE (Media in Education Trust 1997:2).

1.2.9.2 Learning and teaching support materials

Until very recently, LTSMs have been known as learning support materials (LSM). LTSMs express the idea that the material must **help** learners to gain knowledge and skills (Versfeld & Press 1998:3), thereby supporting real learning by participating in a dialogue between learner, teacher and materials (Claassen 1998:52).

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LTSMs are the resources that are actually used in the teaching and learning situation. Typical forms of LTSMs used in the Foundation Phase include puppets, the tape-recorder, counters, balls, hoops, pictures, worksheets, work-cards, readers and any other types of reading material designed by teachers (see 1.2.9.3). (See 2.5 for further examples of LTSMs.)

1.2.9.3 Reading material

For the purpose of this study, reading material refers to any form of printed material or text such as fiction and non-fiction books. (See 4.6.1 & 4.6.2 respectively.) These can be presented in the form of picture story books, big books, basal readers, songs in printed form, riddles and jokes, children's poetry, nursery and childhood rhymes, posters, scrap books, stories from magazines and newspapers, advertisements, dictionaries, brochures, simple recipes, books explaining how to make something such as a kite, letters and postcards to or from someone as well as labels of products. Reading material also includes any teacher-authored reading material or teacher-learner-authored reading material. (See 4.7 & 4.8 respectively.)

Reading material for **Foundation Phase learners** refers to any of the above-mentioned forms of text that is developmentally appropriate for learners in **Grade R, Grade 1, Grade 2** and **Grade 3** (albeit that the learners do not have to be able to read the text themselves).

1.2.10 PREVIOUSLY DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS

In the previous dispensation, many schools reflected the general inequalities of South African society (DoE 1997b:I). There was considerable disparity with regard to both quantity and quality of education provision in schools for different population groups This disparity was particularly evident in the areas of state funding, physical provision, teacher-learner ratio, qualifications of teachers and teachers' salaries (Reilly & Hofmeyr 1983:106). Consequently, many schools and learners were marginalised and disadvantaged. In this study, previously disadvantaged schools are all schools that were marginalised in the previous dispensation. As a result of the imbalances of the legacy of the past, these schools are still under-resourced.

1.2.11   THE LOCATION OF SOSHANGUVE AND ITS PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Soshanguve is a township ± 35 km north of Tshwane. The name, Soshanguve, is believed to be derived from the following words: Sotho, Shangaan, Nguni and Venda (So + sha + ngu + ve). The name reflects the many cultural groups which reside in this township. Consequently, the primary language taught in the Foundation Phase varies. Primary languages that are taught, include Northern Sotho, Tswana, Venda and Zulu.

At present, there are approximately fifty eight primary schools (including schools for learners with special education needs) in Soshanguve that accommodate Foundation Phase learners. Figure 1.1 shows the location of Soshanguve while Figure 1.2 indicates the approximate position of its primary schools.

FIGURE 1.1   THE LOCATION OF SOSHANGUVE

Onverwacht ⊚ ⊚ Lephalele

POLOKWANE

⊚ Mokopane

Mookgophong ⊚

Roedtan ⊚

⊚ Thabazimbi

Modimele ⊚

Bela Bela ⊚
(Warmbad)

⊚ Marble Hall

Groblersdal

⊚ Sun City

Temba
SOSHANGUVE ⊚ ⊚ Hammanskraal
Mabopane ⊚ ⊚

⊚ Ga-Rankuwa

Brits ⊚   ⊚ Cullinan   Belfast

⊚ Rustenburg   PRETORIA   MAMELODI
(TSHWANE)   MIDDELBURG

Attendgeville ⊚   Bronkhorstspruit
Centurion   WITBANK

TEMBISA

KRUGERSDORP   KEMPTON PARK
Randfontein   JOHANNESBURG   Delmas   Hendrina

SOWETO   GERMISTON   Breyten

Westonaria   KATLEHONG   Leandra
Carletonville ⊚   Lenasia

Nigel   Bethal   ERMELO

Fochville   Heidelberg   Secunda
Evaton   Meyerton
SEBOKENG

VANDERBIJLPARK   Balfour
VEREENIGING   Greylingstad   Morgenzon

Sasolburg

Parys   Standerton

Vredefort   Villiers

Compiled and drawn by Elize van As

FIGURE 1.2 LOCATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SOSHANGUVE
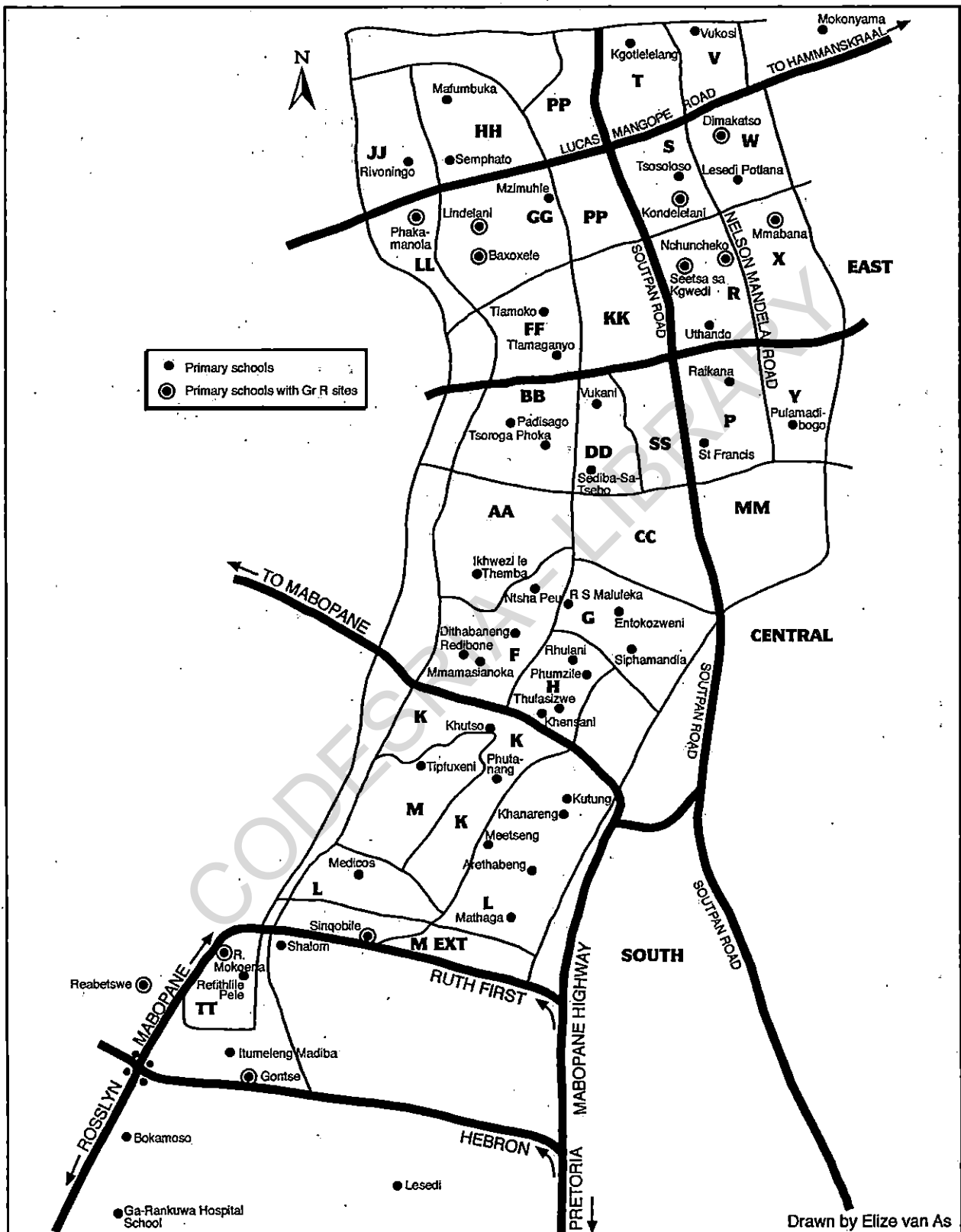
(Van Loggerenberg:2002)

1.2.12 PARADIGM

According to Van Rensburg and Landman (1988:424), the word *paradigm* originates from the Greek word *paradeigma* meaning *pattern* or *model*. The term *paradigm* literally means *something that shows.*

A paradigm indicates the overall effect of the acceptance of a particular general theoretic approach, which is often expressed as a law or a theory (Walliman 2001:87). Guba and Lincoln (in Magagula 1995:319) are of the opinion that the foundation of paradigms is axioms, which are the set of undemonstrated and indemonstrable propositions accepted by convention (intuitively or established by practice) as the basic building blocks of some conceptual or theoretical structure. When a system of laws is commonly accepted, it leads to particular ways of thinking and methods of investigation and this is known as a paradigm (Walliman 2001:87).

Lubisi *et al.* (1998:3) and Neuman (1997:62) complement this explanation by saying that a paradigm is a whole system of thinking or a frame of reference based on a particular set of ideas that are accepted by the practitioners of a specific science such as education. When researchers identify a research problem, frame research questions, articulate research designs, decide on research instruments, collect and analyse data, discuss and/or interpret the findings, they use their mind sets, world views, frames of reference, ways of seeing the world and/or other conceptual frameworks (Magagula 1995:319).

A paradigm, therefore, includes basic assumptions, important questions to be answered, problems to be solved, research techniques to be used and examples of what good scientific research looks like. Different sets of assumptions about phenomena arise as a result of the way a person sees, understands, explains, interprets and predicts phenomena (Lubisi *et al.* 1998:3; Neuman 1997:62).

Why is it important to highlight the researcher's paradigm beforehand?

Huberman and Miles (1994:4) offer an explanation to this question in the following quotation:

> *To know how a researcher constructs the shape of the social world and aims to give us credible account of it, is to know our conversational partner.*

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In their view, a paradigm enables the reader to form a global or holistic view of the research to be undertaken. (A paradigm is closely related to the *meta-assumptions*. See 1.8.)

Having clarified the key concepts related to this study, the focus now moves to how the researcher became aware of the problem.

1.3   AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM

Various situations made the researcher aware of the problem regarding LTSMs. During her former profession as lecturer at a distance college for teacher education for several years, she was responsible for various modules that were aimed at providing learning support particularly in the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phase. These modules all included a practical component that involved the provision of learning support in Literacy and Numeracy in the Foundation Phase and support in Language, Literacy and Communication as well as Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences in the Intermediate and Senior Phase. Students were required to submit their LTSMs, such as games, flash cards, worksheets and reading material, together with their assignments for assessment. On submission of these assignments, several observations related to LTSMs were made.

Firstly, it became clear that many students only **referred** to basic forms of LTSMs but no examples were included as requested. This raised questions such as:

♦   Were any LTSMs available?

♦   Were teachers sufficiently empowered to develop their own LTSMs in cases where there was a shortage thereof?

Secondly, in cases where LTSMs were included, these were often presented in an unprofessional way and were of a poor quality. For example, where attempts were made to write a reading passage, some of these were written on pages torn out of books while many words were illegible and mistakes scratched out. In most cases, the reading material was not developmentally appropriate.

Another indicator of the quandary related to LTSMs featured in the assignment assessment forms that had to be completed by students and submitted together with their assignments. After analysing the information, it became clear that one of the most common problems they experienced was related to the availability of suitable LTSMs.

To substantiate this statement, the following examples of responses (unedited) by students are included:

In our school, we don't have enough resources. I teach Grade 2 and 3 in a rural school so I found it very difficult to include the resources in my assignment

I had a problem with the reading passage you asked for. We have very few readers so I could not find something that is right for these learners to read. So I had to just take what I could find for the assignment.

The reading books in the Foundation Phase are very difficult for the learners who can't read. You will see the reading passage I wrote myself but I think it is not OK.

Our school is very much disadvantaged because we have very little teaching and learning aids.

The situation regarding LTSMs experienced by students can be regarded as the initial awareness of the problem. Shortly thereafter, the Report of the Review Committee on C2005 was issued. It highlighted, *inter alia,* that LTSMs is a barrier for the effective implementation of OBE and C2005, particularly in previously disadvantaged schools (Report of the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005 2000:5). The findings of this committee strengthened the researcher's initial awareness that some teachers are experiencing serious problems with regard to LTSMs.

1.4   MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The observations made during the researcher's lectureship regarding LTSMs, particularly with regard to the lack of reading material, together with the findings of the Review Committee for C2005 served as the initial motivation for this study. The initial motivation to undertake this study was strengthened by the first two focus group interviews, (see 6.6), where it was found that several Foundation Phase teachers, particularly from black

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schools, experienced problems with LTSMs. One of the most serious problems identified was a shortage of reading material.

The researcher was then appointed as a First Education Specialist in the district office of Tshwane North. During visits to schools, it was found that many Foundation Phase classrooms in Soshanguve lacked basic, yet essential forms of LTSMs such as number lines, pictures for oral language development, phonic charts, letter cards and reading material. These observations supported the findings of the Review Committee as well as the first two focus group interviews. The problems related to reading material in particular caused great concern.

The concern regarding reading material was strengthened by the call to action by the current Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, in order to attack the most urgent problems in education. These actions include addressing the continuing inequities in terms of LTSMs and the high levels of illiteracy amongst the youth and adults in the country (DoE S.a (a):6). In order to break the back of illiteracy and to fulfil the ideal of developing literate learners, teachers need to be empowered to develop their own LTSMs, such as reading material.

In a goal-oriented attempt to reduce illiteracy in South Africa and to build a nation of readers, the DoE launched *Masifunde Sonke* (a Zulu expression meaning *Let us all read*). This robust campaign is aimed at bridging the high level of illiteracy caused by imbalances of the legacy of the past in the provision of education (Student Talk 2003:19). *Masifunde Sonke* is also an attempt to remind people, both young and old, of the importance of reading. This idea is encouraged by the following message:

> *A nation that reads is a nation that learns.*

This message is conveyed on posters that are displayed in central points such as the district offices of Tshwane North as well as the library of the University of South Africa.

Closely linked to *Masifunde Sonke* is the point stressed by Meerkotter (2002), namely that learners have to be helped on their path towards emancipation, which implies hope. Teachers who teach against the many odds could be teaching without hope and a belief that they will succeed at the end. However, illiteracy forms a huge barrier in the process of emancipation. For this reason, there should be a total onslaught on illiteracy as it not only

affects human dignity but also implies marginalisation. Gaum (2002) agrees with Meerkotter when he says that illiterate people could be trapped in a literate society unless education strives to develop a society of literate learners. Failure to do this will not only deprive learners of the opportunity to access the wealth of information but also of their self-respect, well-being and dignity.

The importance of developing a reading nation is also emphasised by Mondi Gungubele, the current Minister for Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture (Gauteng News 2001:6).

He states that

> the country needs a reading nation that will produce an informed society to contribute to its economic growth and development.

The question can rightly be asked: *How could one contribute towards diminishing illiteracy in order to ensure human dignity and the development of each person's potential?*

It would be futile to pursue this ideal when so many schools do not have sufficient and/or appropriate reading material. This study is an attempt to contribute towards developing a literate society. There is an urgent appeal directed at Foundation Phase teachers to develop skills aimed at developing their own reading material. By doing this, teachers will not only be implementing one of the key principles of OBE, namely participation, taking ownership of a problem and creative thinking (DoE 1997c:3), but also be contributing towards the development of a literate society.

Machet (1994:65, 71-72) believes that a lack of suitable books for black children may be the underlying reason why these children hardly ever read for pleasure. Traditionally, black children grow up in an oral culture that could affect the accessibility of text written within a literate tradition. Unsuitable reading material could cause learners to become alienated from schooling and drop out of school at a young age.

This statement is reiterated by McDonald (1989:1-2) who is of the opinion that children's literature in African languages plays a key role in the education of young black South African learners. Authorities emphasise the importance of developing children's reading skills in their primary language (mother tongue). These skills prepare them to master other languages, which in turn, will promote not only their academic achievement but also their

personal development. For this reason, it is essential that all teachers responsible for language, also those responsible for Literacy in the Foundation Phase, are empowered to write their own reading material as each culture has its own stories with themes that are relevant to that particular social group.

Teachers who write their own reading material would also be fulfilling two of the seven roles of teachers and their associated competences as stated in the Norms and Standards for Teachers (Republic of South Africa 2000:12-13). One of the roles of a competent teacher is described as being a **learning mediator**. Amongst others, teachers will be expected to demonstrate a sound knowledge of strategies and **resources** appropriate to teaching in a South African context. This implies that teachers should be *au fait* with LTSMs, including suitable reading material. For example, they should have adequate knowledge of LTSMs and the skill to use these effectively within a learning experience.

Another role of a competent teacher is that of an interpreter and designer of Learning Programmes and **materials**. Not only will teachers be expected to understand and interpret Learning Programmes provided by departments of education, but also to design original and appropriate Learning Programmes. In addition, they should be able to select and prepare suitable LTSMs to enhance teaching and learning.

Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:160; 2003:160) endorse the importance of teachers being empowered to develop their own LTSMs. In their opinion, the key aspect of authentic task construction is the production of appropriate LTSMs. In fact, the creation and presentation of various LTSMs often determine the success or failure of a learning experience.

Apart from the situations just sketched, the final factor that convinced the researcher that the study should be undertaken came from the DoE. One of the recommendations made in the Report of the Review Committee on C2005 was that the implementation of the RNCS should be strengthened by providing provincial support with regard to matters such as LTSMs (DoE 2002c:5). As the researcher is appointed in a district office and employed by the GDE, she could be of assistance in this regard.

Despite the incentives already mentioned, the researcher could not undertake this study without considering the vital questions that must be asked when selecting a suitable research topic.

The following questions asked by Fouché and De Vos (1998a:60) were considered:

♦ Does the researcher have an adequate degree of personal interest in the topic in order to sustain attention?

♦ Will the findings from the study be of regional, provincial or national interest?

♦ Is the topic likely to be published in an academic journal or arouse the interest of a doctoral committee?

♦ Does this study fill a void in the South African education system?

♦ Will the results extend new ideas in literature related to effective classroom practice?

Marshall and Rossman (1989:31) suggest that the researcher asks the following questions:

♦ Will the topic contribute to existing knowledge?
♦ Will the results be useful for practitioners?

The researcher's answer to all these questions is positive.

In summary, this study was inspired by

♦ the awareness of a lack of adequate LTSMs over a long period of time;
♦ the findings regarding LTSMs by the Review Committee of C2005;
♦ the knowledge gained from the first two focus group interviews;
♦ the observations made during school visits to previously disadvantaged schools;
♦ the belief that support with regard to LTSMs on district level could enhance the support provided on provincial level;
♦ the development of two of the seven roles of a competent teacher and
♦ the questions to be asked when selecting a suitable research topic.

The next phase of the research is to specify the field within which the research will take place.

1.5   DELIMITATION OF THE FIELD

The observations made during the researcher's lectureship and visits to schools, the findings of the Review Committee on C2005 as well as information obtained during the first two focus group interviews, made the researcher acutely aware of the dilemma regarding LTSMs, particularly with regard to reading material in the Foundation Phase. As the researcher is an experienced Foundation Phase teacher, her particular interest lies in this phase. For this reason, this study will focus on the issues related to LTSMs in the Foundation Phase. The assumption was also made that black schools experienced the most serious problems with regard to LTSMs. Therefore, these schools will provide the setting for this research.

The distinct parameters within which this particular study will be undertaken, leads to the formulation of the problem.

1.6   PROBLEM FORMULATION

The aim of this section is the creation of a formal written formulation of the problem (Fouché & De Vos 1998b:64, 72) together with the relevant sub-problems.

1.6.1   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main research problem can be formulated as follows:

What is the nature of the problem experienced by Foundation Phase teachers from previously disadvantaged schools with regard to LTSMs in Literacy?

1.6.2   SUBPROBLEMS

In order to solve the problem that was stated, answers to the following questions need to be found as well:

♦ What is LTSMs and what is the importance thereof, especially with regard to the implementation of the Literacy Programme in the Foundation Phase?

- What are the views of several well-known learning theorists in education regarding LTSMs and reading?

- What types of reading material are suitable for Foundation Phase learners?

- What criteria apply when developing English reading material for Foundation Phase learners?

- What are the experiences of Foundation Phase teachers with regard to LTSMs, particularly LTSMs related to Literacy?

- To what extent are Foundation Phase teachers in Soshanguve able to apply the criteria that have been set for the writing of English reading material for Foundation Phase learners?

- How can a group of Foundation Phase teachers in Soshanguve be assisted to develop their own reading material in English using a set of given criteria?

The problem and sub-problems lead to the formulation of the goals and objectives of the study.

1.7   THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

An explanation illustrating the difference between the goal and the objectives of this study follows.

1.7.1   THE GOAL OF THIS STUDY

The terms *goal*, *purpose* and *aim* are often used interchangeably. These three terms all have a broader, more abstract meaning.

De Vos, Schurink and Strydom (1998:7) define the goal of a study as

the end toward which effort or ambition is directed.

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The goal of this study is to determine the nature of the problem with regard to LTSMs that is experienced by Foundation Phase teachers in previously disadvantaged schools and to find a possible solution for this problem.

1.7.2   THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

The term *objective* denotes a more concrete, measurable and more rapid achievement of the end toward which the effort of ambition is directed (De Vos *et al.* 1998:7). Whereas the goal of the study is regarded as the end result, the **objectives** can be seen as the steps needed to obtain the end result.

To reach the goal of the study, the following steps will form the objectives of this study:

♦ Clarification of concepts related to LTSMs, a historical overview to track the development of LTSMs, the classification thereof and the necessity of a systems approach;

♦ An investigation into the views of various well-known learning theorists regarding learning with a particular focus on LTSMs and reading;

♦ The different types of reading material (genres) that are suitable for Foundation Phase learners;

♦ Criteria that apply when developing suitable reading material for Foundation Phase learners;

♦ Exploration of the experiences of Foundation Phase teachers in previously disadvantaged schools with regard to LTSMs and the assistance of a group of Foundation Phase teachers to solve their problem.

1.8   META-THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

The meta-theoretical assumptions or paradigms (see 1.2.12) are a researcher's personal assumptions that come to light during the study of a certain field (Loock 1999:12). The researcher's paradigm or assumptions are selected in his/her conceptual framework and

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could influence the research procedures. Therefore, it is important to state the assumptions at this stage as they influence the research problem as well as the research methods that will be used.

The researcher's assumptions are based on a **phenomenological** approach within an **antipositivistic** period. Apart from these assumptions, the researcher will also follow an **outcomes-based** and **pragmatic** approach. Each of these assumptions needs clarification.

1.8.1   ANTIPOSITIVISM (POSTMODERNISM / POSTPOSITIVISM)

From an academic perspective, the current social context is antipositivistic or postmodern. Antipositivists are critical of modernists' approaches associated with conservative and positivistic schools of thought. They reject aspects such as quantitative scientific obsessions, the support of absolute knowledge and 'law-like' generalisations that govern human behaviour (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:18; GDE 1999d:26). In contrast to the positivistic view, the antipositivistic view is based on the assumption that individuals construct reality. The aim of postmodernism is to allow people to identify solutions to existing problems (GDE 1999d:25).

This study is undertaken from an **antipositivistic** perspective as it complies with the characteristics of antipositivism listed below.

♦ No fixed model is used.
♦ It is teacher-centred with the view of finding solutions to problems regarding LTSMs.
♦ The researcher is working from an OBE paradigm. The table comparing the traditional and OBE approach (see 1.8.3) clearly shows some of the links between OBE and antipositivism.

1.8.2   PHENOMENOLOGY

The word *phenomenology* is derived from two Greek words, namely *phainomenon* which means *appearance* and *logos* which means *word, method* or *disclosure* (Van Rensburg & Landman 1988:442).

Phenomenology is the method that the researcher follows to disclose or articulate the essentials of a particular phenomenon as it is. It is an attempt by the researcher to understand and interpret social phenomena from the subjects' own perspectives with the intent to describe an event or situation from the point of view of individuals. It is concerned with the structure of understanding, primarily in terms of cognitive constructs and functions (Ödman & Kerdeman 1999:185). In essence, phenomenology describes the world the way the subjects experience it with the assumption that reality is what they perceive it to be (Kvale 1996:53).

In order to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects attach to their everyday lives, researchers have to 'bracket' their assumptions of everyday life and set aside any preconceptions and/or presuppositions (what is already known about the situation) to discover subjects' social world with clarity of vision. In this way, all experiences can receive equal attention. Experiences that would normally be ruled out are thus entitled to the same amount of attention.

In this study, the researcher attempts to enter the life-world of Foundation Phase teachers. One way of doing this is by interviewing them (De Vos & Fouché 1998a:80). The researcher's systematic and wide-ranged questioning allows her to discover what these Foundation Phase teachers are experiencing with regard to LTSMs, how they interpret their experiences and how they structure the social world in which they live.

1.8.3   OUTCOMES-BASED APPROACH

OBE emphasises the need for major changes in the education and training system of South Africa in order to transform teaching and learning. Emphasis is placed on the necessity for a shift from the traditional aims-objectives approach to outcomes-based education.

This paradigm shift is an essential prerequisite to achieve the following vision for South Africa:

> *A prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country*
> *with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in*
> *a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice* (DoE 1997a:i).

In this study, aspects related to teaching and learning will be viewed within an **OBE paradigm** that focuses on aspects such as outcomes, curriculum content, instructional patterns and expanded opportunities (Spady 1993:27).

The following beliefs underpin OBE:

♦ All learners must be allowed to reach their full potential.
♦ All stakeholders in education share in the responsibility for learning.
♦ Teachers are responsible for creating an inviting, challenging and motivating learning environment.
♦ Positive and continuous assessment makes success possible.

The following is a basic comparison between OBE and the traditional paradigm (Spady 1993:22):

TRADITIONAL PARADIGM	OBE PARADIGM
When learners learn something is of greater importance than *whether* they learn it well.	*Whether* learners learn something well is of greater importance than *when* they learn it.

The paradigm shift in the South African education system can be set out as follows:

TABLE 1.1   *A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TRADITIONAL AND THE OBE APPROACH*

OLD APPROACH	NEW (OBE) APPROACH
Passive learners	Active learners
Learning is for the young	Learning is a life-long process
Exam-driven	Learners are continually assessed
Rote-learning	Critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and active learning are highly valued
Learning in isolation	Learning is collective and integrative
Content-based, rigid and non-negotiable syllabi	Knowledge is integrated; content is relevant to real-life situations
Teacher-centred; textbooks and worksheets are used most often	Learner-centred; teacher acts as facilitator; strong emphasis on group work and co-operative learning

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OLD APPROACH	NEW (OBE) APPROACH
Emphasis on what teacher hopes to achieve	Emphasis is on outcomes (what learners become, know and can do)
Teachers are responsible for learning	Teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders take responsibility for learning
Learners must already be efficient	Transformational learning
Content placed into rigid time-frames	Flexible time-frames; learning is learner-paced
Curriculum development not transparent	Curriculum development is transparent as stakeholders are involved

(DoE 1997e:6-7; Educum 1997:8; Van der Horst & McDonald 2003:5)

OBE is based on the belief that all learners can learn (see 1.2.1) Teachers who are in need of reading material and embark on the journey to develop their own reading material will be creating opportunities for their learners to learn to read, thus making a direct effort to drive the Literacy Learning Programme. In doing that, learners will be achieving the critical outcome stating that learners should be able to communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written language. At the same time, teachers themselves will be in a learning process by learning how to develop this skill and complying with the critical outcome stating that individuals must be problem-solvers.

As mentioned earlier on (see 1.8.1), there is a definite relationship between OBE and antipositivism. For example, the antipositivistic paradigm is characterised by creative thinking, problem-solving and flexibility. These are all linked to the OBE paradigm stating that knowledge should be relevant to real-life situations (as is the case with reading material that should be in line with learners' life-world experiences) and that teachers should take responsibility for learning as well as curriculum development.

1.8.4   A PRAGMATIC PARADIGM

Synonyms for the word *pragmatic* include *practical*, *realistic* and *utilitarian* (Collins Pocket Reference Thesaurus 1992:384). The term thus refers to practical matters and requirements.

The goal of this study is to investigate the nature of the problems related to LTSMs in the Foundation Phase and to find possible solutions for these problems. Both the problems

and the possible solutions would probably be of a practical nature. Furthermore, the eventual goal of identifying the problems related to LTSMs and finding possible solutions would be to improve classroom practice. Therefore, it can be said that this study is underpinned by a pragmatic paradigm.

The meta-assumptions that were addressed also have an impact on the research design.

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN

There is a void in man's knowledge and many problems are still waiting for a solution. To address this void, relevant questions are asked in search of a solution. Research is a quest for knowledge. The role of research is to provide a method for obtaining those answers by studying the evidence within the parameters of the scientific method (Leedy 1997:1).

Research is one of the many different ways of knowing or understanding. It differs from other ways of knowing such as insight or acceptance of authorisation in that it is a process of **systematic enquiry** designed to collect, analyse, interpret and use data to understand, describe, predict or control a phenomenon or to empower individuals (Leedy 1997:1; Mertens 1998:2).

The synonyms for the word *systematic* include *methodical, well-organised and precise* (Collins Pocket Reference Thesaurus 1992:494). These synonyms make it clear that research refers to knowledge gained in a methodical, precise, planned and a well-organised way.

To ensure that this study will take place in a systematic way, it is necessary to present a research design, which is a description of how the researcher plans to execute the research problem that was previously formulated (see 1.6.1). The objective of the research design is to plan, structure and execute the study in such a way that the findings are as valid and reliable as possible (Mouton 1996:175).

1.9.1 CHOICE OF RESEARCH DESIGN

Research is often categorised as qualitative or quantitative (Krueger 1994:27). This study is undertaken from a **qualitative** paradigm.

The word *qualitative* is derived from the Latin word *qualis* meaning *what kind of.* Quality refers to the essential character of something in contrast to quantity which refers to how much, how large or the amount of something (Kvale 1996:67).

The impact of antipositivism and phenomenology is reflected in the decision to work from a qualitative paradigm. The researcher believes that in order to do this study, it is necessary to report the realities experienced by Foundation Phase teachers with regard to LTSMs, in particular, suitable reading material. The researcher will attempt to understand and interpret the meaning that Foundation Phase teachers attach to their daily teaching practice by setting aside any preconceptions. With regard to an OBE paradigm, it was stated that one of the objectives of this study is to empower teachers to write their own reading material with which they can help learners to achieve the outcomes related to reading that are stated in the Literacy Programme. This venture is of a practical nature and therefore, complies with the pragmatic paradigm.

Furthermore, Schurink (1998a:252) emphasises the fact that qualitative research design is not prescriptive and that the researcher's choices and actions will determine the design. The researcher therefore, has the freedom to create the research design best suited to the study during the research process (De Vos *et al.* 1998:17).

In the light of this statement, the following types of research design will be used in this study:

1.9.1.1 Review of related literature

A literature review is often referred to as a literature study. The term literally means to *look again* (re+view) at the research reports of what others have done in a related area. Although this area is not necessarily identical with the area of study, it is often collateral with the area.

A scientific and meaningful research project cannot be planned before the literature has been reviewed regarding issues related to the research theme (De Vos & Fouché 1998b:104).

Leedy (1997:71) confirms the necessity of a literature review when he says:

> *Those who do research belong to a community of scholars, each of whom has*
> *journeyed into the unknown to bring a fact, truth, a point of light. What they have*
> *recorded of their journeys and their findings will make it easier for you to explore*
> *the unknown: to help you discover a fact, a truth, or bring back a point of light.*

A literature review will be undertaken as it is aimed at contributing towards a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem to be researched. A literature review also demonstrates the underlying assumptions behind the general research questions and reflects the research paradigm (Fouché & De Vos 1998b:64). Furthermore, the literature review should also help to acquaint the researcher with relevant research already conducted, the most widely accepted theoretical views as well as the most recent debates and/or controversies on the matter.

It is clear that a researcher cannot undertake a research project without doing a literature review at some stage of the process. In this study, an extensive literature review will be undertaken in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5.

1.9.1.2 Action research component

Apart from a literature review, action research will also be undertaken in this study. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988:5) offer the following widely accepted definition of action research:

> *Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by*
> *interviewees in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of*
> *their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these*
> *practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out.*

Cohen and Manion (1996:186) add to this definition by saying that action research is a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close observation of the effects of the intervention. Action research aims to make qualitative research more humanistic and relevant as some sort of social change is usually intended (De Vos & Fouché 1998a:80).

Action research is concerned with the identification of a problem in a specific context and

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finding solutions to solve these problems in the same context. In this study, the problem and subproblems surrounding LTSMs in the Foundation Phase in previously disadvantaged schools will be investigated. A small-scale intervention will be considered as a possible solution for the problem. In this way, the research will be made more humanistic and relevant (see Chapter 6).

1.9.1.3   Qualitative research data collection methods

Methods for data collection in qualitative research cannot be prescribed (Kamper, Schulze & Goodwin-Davey 1999:295). However, Schurink (1998a:253) emphatically states that research design and data collection methods are closely related. As this study will be undertaken from a qualitative paradigm, the data collection methods also need to be in line with qualitative research. Both Kamper *et al.* (1999:295) and Mouton (1996:156) strongly support the principle of **triangulation** (the use of multiple sources of data collection) as it enhances the reliability of the study.

The data collection methods to be used in this study are:

(a)   *Focus group interviewing*

Much of the information collected for this study was obtained through focus group interviewing that is defined by Krueger (1994:6) as

> *a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment.*

This data collection method is also referred to as an open group discussion. The discussion on a specific topic takes place between a small group of people (approximately six to twelve) with a similar background or a common interest (Schurink, Schurink & Poggenpoel 1998:314). The format of this type of group interview is not that of question-and-answer. Instead, it relies on the interaction among group members to elicit more points of view as group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion (Mertens 1998:174).

In this study, the focus group interviews regarding LTSMs will take place between selected Foundation Phase teachers from previously disadvantaged schools.

(b)   *Face-to-face interviewing*

In this type of interview, the researcher does not ask deliberate questions. Instead, these develop spontaneously in the course of interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. The interviewer does not direct the course of the interview as such. Instead, the interviewees are given an opportunity to speak for themselves (Schurink 1998b:300).

(c)   *Personal observations*

Schurink (1998d:277) underlines the value of observing interviewees in their natural settings. First-hand information can be obtained by visiting interviewees in their natural settings to see how they go about their everyday lives. In her line of duty, the researcher visits Foundation Phase teachers in their natural setting, namely their schools and classrooms. Consequently she is in a favourable position to make meaningful observations regarding the situation regarding LTSMs. Such observations will, therefore, be included as a data collection method.

1.9.1.4   Qualitative research data analysis methods

Poggenpoel (1998:337) clearly states that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' approach to data analysis in qualitative research but there are certain guidelines that should be kept in mind. With the previous statement in mind, the researcher will be combining the following two data analysis approaches:

♦   Huberman and Miles's approach (Poggenpoel 1998:340)
♦   Kvale's approach (Kvale 1996:192)

Before concluding this chapter, a preview of the chapters that will follow is provided.

1.10   CHAPTER LAYOUT

The ensuing chapters will broadly cover the following aspects:

CHAPTER 2:   Theoretical aspects related to LTSMs

CHAPTER 3:   The views of Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky and Gardner regarding LTSMs
and reading

CHAPTER 4:   The types of reading material suitable for Foundation Phase learners

CHAPTER 5:   The criteria for the development of reading material for Foundation
Phase learners

CHAPTER 6:   Research design, findings and discussion

CHAPTER 7:   Conclusion and recommendations

1.11   CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher provided the reader with an introduction and an orientation to the study. After key concepts such as outcomes, Foundation Phase teachers and learners, previously disadvantaged schools, resources and LTSMs were clarified, the researcher described her initial awareness of the problem. Thereafter, the actual factors that motivated this study were presented followed by the parameters within which the study would be undertaken.

The research question (problem) was then formulated followed by the related subproblems. Once this was done, an exposition of the goal and objectives of the study was given. The four main meta-theoretical assumptions were then discussed. It was stated that the researcher would be working from an antipositivistic, phenomenological, outcomes-based and pragmatic paradigm.

Finally, the research design was briefly described. As this study is of a qualitative nature, it will include an extensive literature review and an action research component. The main source of data collection would be focus group interviews, face-to-face interviews and personal observations made by the researcher. Lastly, the two data analysis approaches to be used were identified, namely that of Huberman and Miles and that of Kvale. This was followed by a layout of the ensuing chapters.

1.12   CHAPTER PREVIEW

In the next chapter, theoretical aspects related to LTSMs will be discussed. Firstly, a concise clarification of concepts related to LTSMs will be given which will be followed by a brief historical overview of the development and importance of LTSMs with particular reference to reading material. Thereafter, the purpose and function of LTSMs will be highlighted with particular focus on the role of LTSMs in the Foundation Phase. Finally, the classification and selection of LTSMs will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL ASPECTS RELATED TO LEARNING AND TEACHING SUPPORT MATERIALS

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The introduction of OBE to the South African education system has brought about many changes in the didactical situation. One of these changes is that learners have to reach various learning outcomes. In the Foundation Phase, learners are expected to reach outcomes in three learning areas, namely Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills (DoE 2002c:15).

In order to reach most of these outcomes, it is necessary to make use of various forms of learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs). Documents, for example DoE (1997e:25) and GDE (1999c:23), refer to the use and necessity of LTSMs to ensure effective teaching and learning. These documents make it clear that the use of LTSMs, especially in the Foundation Phase, play a key role in allowing learners to reach the outcomes for each learning programme. The ideal of the DoE for OBE clearly requires many resources that can be converted into LTSMs.

This brings about the following questions:

♦ What is understood under the term LTSMs?
♦ What was the situation regarding LTSMs in the past?
♦ What is the true value of LTSMs for the didactical situation?
♦ What criteria apply to the selection of suitable LTSMs in the Foundation Phase in particular?

The purpose of this chapter is to provide possible answers to these questions based on a literature review. Firstly, concepts related to LTSMs will be researched. Thereafter, a brief historical overview will be undertaken to determine the relevance of LTSMs in the past. The role of LTSMs within an OBE paradigm will also be discussed followed by various

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classification systems. Lastly, the focus is placed on the selection, design and evaluation of LTSMs.

2.2   CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS RELATED TO LTSMs

In the literature, different terms are used to refer to what is referred to as LTSMs in this study. Teachers, researchers and other role players in education are often confronted with different terminology that could pose a problem with regard to the interpretation of concepts. For this reason, it is necessary not only to address the controversies related to the terminology used but also to clarify certain concepts related to LTSMs that have been used over the past few decades and are still being used.

2.2.1   MEDIUM AND MEDIA

The word *medium* is the singular form of the word *media*. According to Gerlach, Ely and Melnick (1980:241), a medium, broadly conceived,

> is any person, material or event that establishes conditions which enable the learner to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Several other writers regard a medium as something that carries a message. This implies that a medium allows communication to take place.

♦   Marais, Calitz and Van Wyk (1983:2, 69) are of the opinion that media are modes of expression that provide several symbolic systems to enable a person to communicate. In their view, media include the teacher, objects, models, events and pictures as well s all printed, mechanical and electronic forms of communication.

♦   Romiszowski (1988:7-8) says that media are the carriers of messages from some transmitting source (human being or an inanimate object) to the receiver of the message (which in an educational context, is the learner). These carriers of information such as pictures, photographs, charts or the tape-recorder interact with learners through their senses. Learners use any of their senses or a combination thereof to receive information.

♦ Kachelhoffer (1993:79) regards media as an intermediary that conveys a message between people who are communicating with each other. In her view, media refers to something or someone making communication possible. Based on the views of the writers referred to, it can be deduced that the term *media* refers to any person, object, material or event that can be used to communicate a message. Reading material is also regarded as a medium through which learners can become literate.

It is, however, important to note that the purpose of using media is not always teaching and learning. For instance, a person is reading a newspaper. The newspaper is acting as a medium because communication is taking place. The **aim** of the communication in this case is not necessarily to **teach** the reader something as the reader could be looking for information or reading for relaxation. If, however, the newspaper is used during a learning experience to convey learning content, to teach a skill or values and attitudes, the newspaper becomes a teaching medium.

2.2.2   Instructional materials

Another term related to LTSMs that is often found in the literature is *instructional materials* (also referred to as *instructional media*). This term implies that these materials are suitable for instruction and should, therefore, be used by the teacher only.

Woodbury (1979:17) takes a rather broad view of instructional materials when she says:

> *To me, instructional materials are materials that can be used for instruction, not merely materials designed to be instructive. I would include all materials that can help students acquire skills, gain information, improve cognitive processes or even increase their levels of maturity in physical, emotional or value areas.*

Woodbury's view on instructional materials seems to be equivalent to the term *educational media* (see 2.2.3) as well as *teaching and learning aids* (see 2.2.4).

2.2.3   Educational media

Another term that is still preferred by many educationalists in South Africa and elsewhere is *educational media*. Fraser, Loubser and Van Rooy (1990:154) define educational media as

any person or object that can be used in a meaningful way to transfer the learning content within the didactical (teaching and learning) situation. Like Woodbury, they believe that both teachers and learners can use educational media, as these are tools for teaching and avenues for learning (Kinder 1973:17).

2.2.4   Teaching and learning aids

Duminy and Söhnge (1981:168) as well as Yule and Steyn (1982:2-3) describe **teaching aids** as structured objects that help the teacher to explain and interpret that what he or she wishes to transmit to the learners. Teaching aids help learners to interpret reality. **Learning aids** are also structured objects that represent aspects of reality. In contrast to teaching aids that are used by the teacher, learning aids are used by learners to help them in the process of learning (Duminy & Söhnge 1981:168).

It is important to point out that the word *aid* could be associated with support, which implies that it is merely a 'crutch' in the teaching and learning situation that can be withdrawn at any stage.

In this regard, Meyer and Veenstra (1980:2) believe that teaching and learning aids are

> *communication media in their own right. They impose a structure and treatment on the communication process that elevate them far beyond the realm of the teacher in search of a handy crutch with which to prop up his mediocre teaching.*

Teaching and learning aids are, therefore, not merely to be used in an *ad hoc* way but should form an integral part of the didactical situation.

2.2.5   Learning and teaching support materials

The term *learning and teaching support materials* (LTSMs) is a relatively new term in the South African education system. In the RNCS (DoE 2003:37), the term Learning and Teaching Support Materials is used. As the RNCS are of the most recent documents to be issued by the DoE, this term is accepted for this study. The term *LTSMs* replaces the term *learning support materials* (LSM) that was introduced together with OBE and C2005. (In this study, LTSMs refer to the same items previously referred to as LSM. The term LSM

was also used in the focus group interviews as these were conducted before the introduction of the RNCS.)

LTSMs encompass more than just textbooks and could be created from a variety of sources. LTSMs may also be print-based, electronic, physical, combinative, human and organisational. The lists of materials under each source are comprehensive. For example, printed sources include published workbooks and textbooks, notes, documents, newspapers, magazines, supplementary readers, et cetera. Electronic sources include video and audiotapes, computers, transparency series and educational programmes presented by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

LTSMs are, therefore, seen as essentials to a culture of teaching and learning. In fact, LTSMs can be seen as any type of material that facilitates teaching and learning (GDE 1999a:1; Meyers 2001:40). Developmentally appropriate reading material is, therefore, also a form of LTSMs as teachers can use it for reading instruction while learners can use it to read for enjoyment.

Vinjevold (1999:163, 183), however, distinguishes between materials that provide a **systematic** learning framework and **supplementary** materials used in support of the learning framework. For example, worksheets and activities such as those developed by NGO's and teachers have an important place in the classroom but cannot replace a systematic learning programme. These materials can only fulfil a supplementary role in the systematic learning programme. Systematic learning materials follow a graded sequence and learning experiences are highly structured. What is more, such materials usually include some form of assessment.

The introduction of the term containing the word *support materials* has however, not been readily accepted by all authorities in the field of education. Huygen (2001:informal discussion), for instance, believes that the word *support* implies that the learning materials do not form an integral part of the learning experience. In her view, the term *support* implies that the materials can be withdrawn after some time. This could create the wrong impression that, at some stage, the learning materials no longer form an integral part of the learning experience.

Huygen's view is in line with that of Marais *et al.* (1983:59) who state that

> *media are not supplementary to or in support of instruction, but are the instructional input itself.*

2.2.6   Conclusion

Based on the preceding discussions, the following conclusions can be drawn:

♦ The concept *media* is used as an all-inclusive term that refers to anyone or anything that could be used to promote effective teaching and learning. It includes more than just apparatus used during the teaching and learning situation. Reading material is also regarded as media.

♦ Teaching and learning aids could also be referred to as educational media. This statement is substantiated by Marais *et al.* (1983:3) who are of the opinion that educational media refers to all forms of media used by teachers in the teaching situation as well as media used by learners in the learning situation.

♦ As an all-inclusive term, LTSMs includes media, educational media, teaching and learning aids as well as instructional media, instructional materials and what has been known as LSM.

In the next section, a brief historical overview is undertaken to trace the development of LTSMs since the establishment of the first schools in ancient Egypt.

2.3   A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE AND DEVELOPMENT OF LTSMs

The history of education began when humankind was created. People did not only communicate orally but used the soil, trees, creatures of the earth as well as life itself to communicate knowledge, ideas, history and experiences (Kachelhoffer 1993:79; Power 1962:1). Knowledge and information were transmitted in many different ways. Primitive people probably drew in the sand and used stones to count their sheep. People were also first in providing their audience with an opportunity to interact in a concrete way with what

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they were supposed to learn. These first diagrams developed into more sophisticated forms of LTSMs such as books (Conradie & Du Plessis 1980:6).

A brief account of the development of what is known as LTSMs today follows.

2.3.1 AN OVERVIEW OF LTSMs DURING THE FIRST DEVELOPMENTAL ERA (± 3300 BC-1500 AD)

In this section, a brief account is given of the use of LTSMs in the first Egyptian, Greek, Roman and early Christian schools as well as schools in the Middle Ages. Particular emphasis is placed on books and other types of reading material, as these are all forms of LTSMs.

2.3.1.1 LTSMs in the first Egyptian schools (± 3300 BC – 1788 BC)

In ancient Egypt, there was a clear distinction between the higher class, common people and slaves. Education, especially reading and writing, was only available for boys from the higher class. During this era, hieroglyphics (picture writing) was used to form an association between sounds and concepts. These were written on papyrus rolls (Van Schalkwyk 1993:50-51).

2.3.1.2 LTSMs in the ancient Greek schools (± 1600 BC)

Whereas Spartans did not pay much attention to the teaching of reading, every Athenian citizen learned to read and write (Eby & Arrowood 1949:274). Ancient Greek teachers, such as Plato and Aristotle, were aware of the importance of integrating learners' senses when learning and believed that observation and experience contributed to effective learning (Pistorius 1969:45).

Although books and other tools of instruction were extremely scarce during this time, teachers made use of different forms of LTSMs to teach their learners to read, write and compute. For example, the alphabet was engraved onto wax tablets made out of wood and used to teach basic reading skills (Power 1962:55-56). Papyrus rolls were also used and formed the basis of what is today known as a library.

Reading was, however, not an easy task. Not only were books written in uniform script without any punctuation, but also words were joined together with no spaces in the line. The task was complicated by the fact that no paragraphs were used (Eby & Arrowood 1949:276).

2.3.1.3   LTSMs in the first Roman schools (± 750 BC)

The first Roman schools also emphasised reading, writing and arithmetic. Quintilian, the famous Roman philosopher, believed that perception was essential for effective learning. The emphasis on perception made it necessary for teachers to integrate different forms of LTSMs in their teaching and learning situations. Like their ancient Greek counterparts, Roman teachers made use of wax-covered tablets, manuscript rolls, a stylus and slate pencils. At a later stage, ink pens were used (Cubberley 1948:64). It can be deduced that all these were also used in the teaching of reading.

Quintilian was a strong supporter of literary education. He regarded the period from seven to fourteen as the one in which children should learn to read and write the language they can speak (Gutek 1972:59). To enhance sense experience, young children should be given ivory letters to teach letter and word recognition. They should also acquire correct reading habits such as proper eye movements and correct pronunciation (Eby & Arrowood 1949:556, 558).

Although the basic forms of LTSMs mentioned were fairly readily available, elementary schools were poorly equipped. The situation was, however, not the same in secondary education. Boys and girls, who had completed the elementary school, attended a grammar school where they were exposed to a new literary world because books were more readily available (Power 1962:138).

The importance of reading in Roman schools is underlined by the following two events: The Romans were the first to write textbooks for educative purposes (Eby & Arrowood 1949:570) and Emperor Augustus was responsible for the first library in Rome where manuscripts could be loaned (Boyd & King 1980:78).

2.3.1.4 LTSMs in the early Christian schools (±33 AD - 500 AD)

Early Christian teachers emphasised intellectual, aesthetic and physical aspects of adulthood and made ample use of concrete representations to help their learners understand abstract concepts. Jesus Christ also used concrete examples to explain abstract concepts.

Barclay (1965:103) says that

> *Jesus Christ knew that visible things of this world were designed to enable us to see through them and beyond them to the invisible things.*

For this reason, he used concrete and visual examples to teach more abstract and symbolic concepts, for example, he changed water into wine as stated in Mark 14:12-26 (Die Bybel, Nuwe Testament 1999:65).

Many other Christian teachers realised the importance of LTSMs. Two of these teachers were Hieronymus and St Augustine.

♦ Hieronymus (340-420 AD) believed that LTSMs could help to make learning more meaningful while abstract learning content could be represented more realistically (Potgieter 1974:50).

♦ St Augustine (354-430 AD) realised the importance of sensory perception in the teaching and learning process. In his view, no learner could understand reality without having perceived it first. The spoken word was not sufficient to bring the learner into contact with reality - the learner had to experience reality in some way, particularly through the visual modality (Van Schalkwyk 1993:78).

2.3.1.5 LTSMs during the Middle Ages (± 1000 AD – 1500 AD)

During the Middle Ages, a new type of material was developed, namely parchment that replaced the Egyptian papyrus rolls. Ink in different colours was used to write on these parchment scrolls. After learners had traced over letters on a wax-covered tablet, they were allowed to write the letters on these scrolls.

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Other forms of LTSMs that were used during this period included stones on which the letters of the alphabet were engraved as well as books and realia. By this time, books, models, maps and the chalkboard were more frequently used in classrooms. Despite the scarcity of books during this time, very few teachers provided their learners with an opportunity to study reality, as knowledge was mainly based on speculations regarding reality (Pistorius 1969:96).

2.3.1.6 Summary of LTSMs in the first developmental era

Teachers in this era realised the importance of sensory perception as this could promote effective learning. In addition, effective teaching and learning depended largely on teachers' creativity and ability to produce LTSMs. In most cases, learners were taught to read text that was presented on papyrus rolls and later on parchment. Despite the value that was put on reading, there was a scarcity of books for learners in this developmental era.

2.3.2 AN OVERVIEW OF LTSMs DURING THE SECOND DEVELOPMENTAL ERA (15ᵗʰ -18ᵗʰ century)

LTSMs continued to play an important role in the teaching and learning situation during the period stretching from the 15ᵗʰ up to and including the 18ᵗʰ century. An outstanding characteristic of this period was the invention of the printing press (Du Plessis 1990:30) that made it possible to increase the number of printed books. A cheaper type of paper, which was more readily available, was discovered in this time and replaced the papyrus rolls that were mostly used.

Although maps and charts were already used in the previous developmental era, the invention of the printing press made these more readily available. Other types of LTSMs that were available in printed form included sketches and pictures (Van Schalkwyk 1993:89-91).

Despite the invention of the printing press, it was mainly teachers who owned textbooks. During the 15ᵗʰ century, books for children were not yet available (Du Plessis 1990:30). It was only late in the 16ᵗʰ century that learners were able to purchase their own textbooks. Puritan views had a strong influence on children's literature during the 17ᵗʰ century.

Available literature contained warnings about the terrors of hell and the consequences of sin. At the end of the 17th century, Perrault took eight creative and vibrant fairy tales to a printer. These were in strong contrast with what was supplied by the Puritans. Of the most well-known are Red Riding Hood, Sleeping Beauty and Puss in Boots (Du Plessis 1990:31).

During the 17th and 18th century, ownership of books spread rapidly, albeit that publishers began to pirate, plagiarise and hawk aggressively for trade (Roberts 1996b:375). In the 18th century, books became somewhat cheaper but were poorly printed and contained unsuitable illustrations. Well-known works that were printed include Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe, Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift and the 'Mother Goose' books authored by John Newberry.

What follows, are the views of several leading figures of this era regarding LTSMs.

2.3.2.1 Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1536)

The use of LTSMs as well the choice thereof started to form an integral part of effective teaching and learning. This statement is substantiated by Power (1962:296) who says:

> *Erasmus considered methods something more than mere techniques involved in directing learning activities; he included the choice of material as well as the means employed in imparting it as part of the methodological problem.*

Erasmus strongly believed that textbooks, especially those with pictures, were indispensable in the teaching and learning situation. He stressed the fact that textbooks were not sufficient to ensure effective learning. In his view, teachers should start a lesson by discussing the contents of the book. Thereafter, the contents should be explained using visual material followed by consolidation in the form of games or additional reading (Coetzee 1977:164). Erasmus also wrote his own books for learners with the view to instil certain values (Van Schalkwyk 1993:94).

2.3.2.2 Martin Luther (1483-1546)

In Luther's view, the textbook, the Bible and The Catechism formed an integral part of successful learning (Coetzee 1977:173). Although Luther was an ardent supporter of the

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textbook for teaching and learning purposes, he emphasised the importance of concrete objects and pictures to make learning more meaningful (Power 1962:312). (One can assume that he would support the idea of including pictures in books and other forms of reading material). Another significant contribution made by Luther is his support for the establishment of libraries housing a variety of genres (Van Schalkwyk 1993:96), thereby emphasising that learners should be exposed to a variety of genres.

2.3.2.3   Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670)

As a strong supporter of visual education, Comenius wrote his famous book *Didacta Magna* in which he explained how sensory perception should be implemented in the teaching and learning situation (Coetzee 1977:209).

The following two quotations cited by Compayré (in Van Schalkwyk 1993:99) spell out Comenius' views regarding the importance of LTSMs in the teaching and learning situation:

> *We must offer to the young, not the shadows of things, but the things themselves, which impress the senses and the imagination. Instruction should commence with a real observation of things, and not with a verbal description of them.*

> *... the foundation of all knowledge consists in correctly representing sensible objects to our senses, so that they can be comprehended with facility...*

In his opinion, the golden rule for teaching was to place everything before a person's senses, for example, the symbolic representation (the word) should be taught together with the real object. This principle probably laid the foundation for his first picture book for children called *Orbis Pictus* (The World of Pictures), which helped them to form concepts and learn names of objects (Keating 1967:58). He encouraged teachers to make use of illustrated books (Conradie & Du Plessis 1980:10) and said that if textbooks were correctly compiled, they could be a valuable form of LTSMs for use in the classroom. In fact, he wrote his own textbooks as the available books were mostly a mere collection of facts and did not take children's true interests into account (Van Schalkwyk 1993:101).

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2.3.2.4   John Locke (1653-1704)

Locke was an advocate of the integration of LTSMs and emphasised the importance of sensory perception as well as direct experience. In his view, three steps were involved in the learning process, namely sensory perception, memory and reasoning. Sensory perception forms the basis of knowledge and can be seen as the 'channel' to the mind (Pistorius 1969:154). LTSMs should complement teaching strategies so that the learning content could be 'observed' and relayed to the mind where it is processed into ideas, principles and concepts (Eby 1952:292).

Furthermore, Locke supported the use of illustrated material, as he believed that illustrations help the reader to visualise the learning content that would enhance the learning process. In addition, illustrations make reading material more inviting. Illustrated versions of The Bible and Aesop's fables served as the first English readers (Van Schalkwyk 1993:117).

2.3.2.5   August Hermann Francke (1663-1727)

Francke was a stern supporter of conveying to children the truth, based on the word of God. For this reason, he rejected the idea of exposing children to fiction and fairy tales because these genres were not based on the truth (Coetzee 1977:223).

2.3.2.6   Johann Bernard Basedow (1723-1790)

This German tutor was a stern supporter of visual education, particularly for younger learners. In his view, LTSMs from the first developmental era should be used (see Table 2.1) as they were more suitable for younger children and would capture their attention more readily. Thereafter, they should gradually be exposed to books (Cubberley 1948:537).

Basedow (in Boyd & King 1980:308) acknowledged the importance of providing quality books when he said that

> *the possibility of achievement would depend on getting proper teachers and proper books, and more especially the latter.*

Basedow made a further contribution to children's literature by stating that the inclusion of pictures in books, particularly non-fiction books, would enhance learning as pictures supply additional information regarding people, animals, nature, science and history. His views led to a gradual increase in the number of books being used in the classroom (Coetzee 1977:238). Despite the increase in the number of books in the second developmental era, there are still many Foundation Phase teachers in the fourth and current developmental era who maintain that there are insufficient books in their classrooms.

However, despite the increase in the availability of LTSMs, not all teachers from this era shared the same views regarding LTSMs and books as can be seen from the discussion that follows.

2.3.2.7 Michel Eyquem Montaigne (1533-1592)

Although books were the most important form of LTSMs used in this time, Montaigne believed that they could have a detrimental effect on learning. Unless books were used correctly, they could actually create a distance between the learner and reality instead of bringing learners closer to reality. Pictures, for example, should reflect reality. Observation and direct experience were aspects of teaching that he regarded as more important (Monroe in Van Schalkwyk 1993:113).

2.3.2.8 Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

Rousseau believed in education according to nature. Physical activities and opportunities to develop sensory perception should take place in nature where learners can learn by doing, touching and handling things. LTSMs from the first developmental era, such as phenomenon in nature and realia, were of importance as these could be observed and/or handled. In this way, experience preceded instruction (Claydon 1969:15, 34, 50, 52, 73).

Rousseau believed that books hampered a learner's ability to think. When reading, the learner only reads words and does not acquire knowledge (Coetzee 1977:236; Pistorius 1969:163). As Rousseau underlined the importance of using the senses for learning, he did not support the use of books as can be seen from the following statement:

I have relieved them of the cause of their greatest misery, namely books. Reading is the scourge of childhood and yet is the sole occupation we find to give him (Rousseau in Claydon 1969:71).

The question that follows is whether children should remain illiterate and if not, when should reading instruction commence and what method should be used.

In answer to this question, Rousseau (in Claydon 1969:71) says:

People make great to do about discovering the best method of teaching reading; they invent special apparatus and systems until the room looks like a printer's workshop...

Superior to all of this and constantly overlooked is the child's own desire to read. Once this desire to learn is given to the child you can dispense with your . apparatus...; any method is good enough.

In essence, Rousseau is saying that learners should only be allowed to read books once they have gained sufficient sensory experience. However, he discourages the reading of fables as young learners cannot distinguish between reality and fantasy.

He asks the following question:

How can people so shut their eyes to the truth as to think of fables as supplying a morality for children without realising that the very plot and amusement it engenders misleads them; that the seduction of the story are such that the truth escapes them so that that which is intended to make instruction pleasurable is also that which prevents him profiting by it? Fables can instruct grown men but children must be told the naked truth. By wrapping it up, one gives nothing but increased difficulty (Claydon 1969:71).

2.3.2.9 Summary of LTSMs used in the second developmental era

Sensory perception and direct experience continued to play a key role in the teaching and learning situation in the second developmental era. Books (especially textbooks) gradually became more readily available, albeit that they were mostly didactic while the value of

illustrated books was acknowledged. However, contradictory views were held regarding the exposure of learners to fables. Locke, for example, suggested that Aesop's fables be used (see 2.3.2.4) but Francke criticised the suggestion, as fables were not based on the truth (see 2.3.2.5).

Despite the increased availability of books, many leading figures in education did not share the same views on the value of books.

2.3.3   AN OVERVIEW OF LTSMs DURING THE THIRD DEVELOPMENTAL ERA (±1750 - 20th century)

The third developmental era stretches from the Industrial Revolution to the first decades of the 20th century. The previous developmental era was characterised by a knowledge explosion and emphasised the role of LTSMs. The knowledge explosion continued to increase in momentum during the third developmental era. The need to transmit more knowledge to learners resulted in the appearance of sophisticated forms of LTSMs such as the typewriter, gramophone, film projector, tape-recorder, overhead projector and spirit duplicator. As these inventions were expensive and not readily available, they were hardly ever used in the teaching and learning situation. It was only at a later stage (approximately 1930) that they began to form an integral part of the didactical situation (Van Schalkwyk 1993:132, 137).

According to Du Plessis (1990:32-36), more interest was taken in the child during the 19th century and this had a positive influence on children's literature. For the first time books focusing on the separate interests of boys and girls were published. Highlights of the 19th century include Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carrol as well as the tales of Grimm and Anderson. The 20th century was marked by an increase in both the quantity and quality of children's literature. However, very little progress was made with regard to the development of children's literature in African languages. This could possibly be ascribed to the fact that it was a fairly new genre and regarded as 'less important' in the past.

Leading figures, such as Pestalozzi, Fröbel and Montessori, integrated visual education in the teaching and learning situation during this period. What follows are their views regarding LTSMs.

2.3.3.1 Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827)

Pestalozzi is regarded as one of the founders of visual education. In fact, Cubberley (1948:541) captures the essence of Pestalozzi's views regarding visual education in one sentence when he says:

Sense impression became his watchword.

According to Silber (1973:121), Pestalozzi believed that a child learns through sense perceptions and that

the course of instruction as well as material objects which are to be its instruments should correspond with the developmental order of the child's faculties.

In his view, direct experience, observation, investigation and visual media, such as models, were of the utmost importance in the didactical situation. Therefore, information gained from the immediate environment should be analysed and categorised and used in the teaching and learning process. Learners would learn more effectively when they see that the information collected by their own observations was real and meaningful. In this way, learners make the information their own instead of absorbing knowledge that has merely been transmitted via books (Pistorius 1969:177; Power 1962:390).

2.3.3.2 Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel (1782-1852)

Although Fröbel acknowledged the importance of LTSMs in the teaching and learning situation, he did not make much use of LTSMs from the third developmental era. Possibly this was due to the fact that many of these forms of LTSMs were still in the experimental stage, complicated to use and difficult to obtain (Van Schalkwyk 1993:156). Consequently, young learners were provided with wooden shapes, cubes, clay and balls of wool for the development of fine-motor co-ordination (Pistorius 1969:188).

2.3.3.3 Maria Montessori (1870-1952)

In Montessori's view, sensory functions laid the foundations of intelligence (Gutek 1972:234). For this reason, she was a strong supporter of the implementation of multisensory learning as it plays an important role in the development of learners' intellect

and motor development. The precondition is, however, that learners should have developed an intrinsic readiness to use specific types of LTSMs (Pistorius 1969:235). For this reason she did not specify exactly how and when LTSMs should be used as this would depend on each individual learner's readiness to use a specific type of LTSMs. To accommodate each learner's intrinsic readiness, there should be a variety of LTSMs displayed in the classroom from which they could select according to his/her interest and stage of development. Furthermore, Montessori was of the opinion that young children preferred to work with didactic materials rather than toys (Gutek 1972:233).

2.3.3.4 Summary of LTSMs in the third developmental era

The different types of LTSMs that were developed only began to play a more significant role in the didactical situation towards the end of the era. Teachers started to make use of items such as the tape-recorder or overhead projector when planning a learning experience while learners began to use LTSMs for self-activity.

Despite the integration of more sophisticated forms of LTSMs, much emphasis was still placed on sensory perception as well as direct experience to enhance learning. This was particularly relevant to learners in the Foundation Phase as both Fröbel and Montessori focused on this group of learners.

2.3.4 AN OVERVIEW OF LTSMs DURING THE FOURTH DEVELOPMENTAL ERA (± 1939 - current)

The fourth developmental era stretches from the Second World War up to the present day. This era not only hailed the improvement of LTSMs invented during the previous era but also the more frequent integration thereof in the didactical situation (Fraser *et al.* 1990:153). Audio-visual equipment, such as tape-recorders, as well as mechanically or electronically driven forms of LTSMs, such as computers and language laboratories, were more frequently used for teaching and learning purposes. This could be attributed to the fact that they became more readily available and were more affordable (Van Schalkwyk 1993:162). In addition, many newspapers and magazines contain valuable material that could be used in all three Learning Programmes offered in the Foundation Phase.

The following views regarding LTSMs are those of recognised authorities in the field of didactics in South Africa:

2.3.4.1 PA Duminy and WF Söhnge

The above-mentioned two writers say that one of the advantages of teaching with the aid of audio-visual forms of LTSMs is that it allows learners to memorise what has been learnt for a longer period of time because more than one sense is involved (Duminy & Söhnge 1981:145).

2.3.4.2 WJ Fraser, CP Loubser and MP van Rooy

In many cases, the learning content cannot be brought to the classroom and it becomes necessary to bring the reality to the classroom, either in its original form or as a representation thereof. LTSMs are thus representations of the original forms of reality. They provide opportunities for direct observation through the senses, thereby enhancing learning (Fraser *et al.* 1990:156).

2.3.4.3 JC Claassen

Every object and every person can be useful in helping learners attain the desired outcomes. The sources of LTSMs that are available for this purpose are virtually limitless. Claassen (1998:77) believes that in an open-ended, OBE approach, LTSMs are not limited to what can be fitted into the classroom when he says:

> *Metaphorically speaking, the walls of the classroom are knocked down to allow real-life experiences to enter the learning environment. As far as possible, real-life situations should be used.*

The purpose of LTSMs is to create opportunities for learners to experience real-life situations through their senses. This can be done through the use of video recordings, taped recordings, radio and television broadcasts (for example, educational programmes such as *Takalani Sesame,* a current production on SABC 2).

2.3.4.4 Summary of LTSMs in the fourth developmental era

The current developmental era saw the improvement of audio-visual as well as mechanical-electronic forms of LTSMs. These forms of LTSMs became relatively cheaper

and more readily available. At the same time, teachers started to realise the value of these forms of LTSMs in the teaching and learning situation. In fact, LTSMs have now become an integral part of the teaching and learning situation and are indispensable for the successful planning and implementation of an OBE learning experience. Even though LTSMs have become increasingly more sophisticated due to major technological developments, they are still needed to bring reality to the classroom so that learners can experience it through their senses.

Currently, the range of LTSMs that are available for the Foundation Phase classroom is being extended by contributions made by the SABC and certain newspapers and magazines. The SABC has made several resource kits and school programmes available, many of which are related to the programme organisers/themes used in Foundation Phase classrooms. *The Teacher* (a newspaper mainly for teachers) contains resource pages such as posters while the *Sunday Times* contains a noteworthy educational supplement. One feature in this supplement that is of particular value to enhance literacy in the Foundation Phase is the cut-out-and-keep booklet. The booklet that was published in the *Sunday Times* dated 2 November (2003:7-8) is titled *Be quiet! Sit still! Don't wriggle*. Magazines such as *You* currently contain picture and symbol associations that are based on logos of well-known products.

2.3.5 SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND ROLE OF LTSMs OVER THE FOUR DEVELOPMENTAL ERAS

The origin of what is known as LTSMs today dates back to the first developmental era. It became clear that LTSMs formed an integral part of the didactic situation all along. Prominent teachers and other involved with education in each developmental era made use of some form of LTSMs to promote effective teaching. Various individuals in each developmental era acknowledged the importance of sensory experience. At first, people themselves acted as media to transmit history, messages and ideas. As time went on, different forms of media were used for this purpose. There was a progression from simple types of LTSMs such as wax-covered tablets and pictures to textbooks and picture books to more sophisticated types of LTSMs used today such as video recordings, computers, newspaper articles, educational programmes on television, et cetera.

It became evident that the particular type of LTSMs used also formed an integral part of learners' daily lives thus enabling them to meet the demands of that particular era. This

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implies that the type of LTSMs used often reflects changes in the needs of the community. For example, computers are often used in a learning experience because they have become such an integral part of everyday life in the 21st century. Despite the variety of LTSMs that are available today and the awareness of the important role that they have played throughout the ages, many schools in South Africa remain under-resourced. The reasons for this unsatisfactory situation can be ascribed to a variety of factors, one of these being a lack of funds.

Examples of LTSMs used over the four eras are represented in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1   **THE DEVELOPMENT OF LTSMs OVER FOUR ERAS**

DEVELOPMENTAL ERA	LTSMs	SENSORY CHANNEL	USED IN SCHOOLS	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP
FIRST	♦ demonstration ♦ chalkboard ♦ dramatisation ♦ displays ♦ models ♦ maps	visual / auditory visual	Before Christ	group group group group group/individual group/individual
SECOND	♦ textbooks ♦ workbooks ♦ printed tests	visual	after 1450	individual individual individual
THIRD	♦ photographs ♦ slides ♦ episcope ♦ film strips ♦ radio ♦ film (sound)	visual visual visual visual auditory visual/auditory	19th and 20th century	group group group/individual group group group/individual
FOURTH	♦ newspapers ♦ language laboratories ♦ self-instruction kits ♦ computers and CD rom ♦ videos ♦ television	visual visual/auditory visual/auditory	1950's ±1990	group / individual group/individual individual individual group group

(Duminy & Söhnge 1981:149; GDE 1999e:2; GDE 1999f:3).

The question that comes to mind is the following: *Of what value is the literature review on the developmental eras for this study?*

2.3.6   THE VALUE OF THE HISTORICAL OVERVIEW FOR THIS STUDY

The historical overview has contributed to this study in various ways as can be seen from the following:

2.3.6.1   The first developmental era

Just like teachers in the first developmental era, many Foundation Phase teachers also experience a shortage of reading material and need to use their creativity in order to overcome their dilemma.

2.3.6.2   The second developmental era

During the second developmental era, visual education continued to play a key role in the teaching and learning process. Authorities such as Luther (see 2.3.2.2) and Basedow (see 2.3.2.6) realised the value of pictures as they appeal to the senses. For this reason, books containing pictures were loudly applauded although these books were mainly used for didactic purposes. The *Orbis Pictus,* written by Comenius (see 2.3.2.3), opened the door for picture story books as they are known today. The number of books in this genre has grown over the ages and is still of value to Foundation Phase learners today.

However, some authorities from this developmental era such as Montaigne (see 2.3.2.7) and Rousseau (see 2.3.2.8) strongly criticised the exposure of young learners to fables and fairy tales because most of them are not yet able to distinguish between reality and fantasy. This genre has, however, remained popular throughout the ages and has been a vehicle in the transmission of culture. Many contemporary writers such as Brann (1992:214) and Norton (1993:455) emphasise the value of folk literature. It can, therefore, be concluded that folk literature is a suitable genre for Foundation Phase learners.

2.3.6.3   The third developmental era

The importance of sense perception was continually emphasised by authorities in the field of early childhood education. This confirms the importance of including pictures in young learners' reading material. Consequently, the inclusion of pictures should be one of the criteria for developing reading material for Foundation Phase learners.

Of greater importance is Pestalozzi's statement that the objects, which are to be the instruments of instruction, should correspond with the developmental order of the child's faculties. This implies that LTSMs, including reading material used in the didactic situation, should be developmentally appropriate (see 5.2.9).

2.3.6.4 The fourth developmental era

The fourth developmental era saw the rapid development of mechanical and technical forms of LTSMs such as films, slide projectors, calculators, computers and books. Although it has been said that these forms of LTSMs are more readily available for didactic purposes, many schools, especially in previously disadvantaged areas, are still under-resourced. Some teachers are, however, of the opinion that the more sophisticated forms of LTSMs are indispensable for effective teaching and learning to take place. Chetty (1996:8) warns that teachers should guard against being completely 'seduced' by modern electronic media. Instead, they should think about how best to transmit the learning content.

The value of the information gained through the study of LTSMs in the fourth developmental era lies in the fact that even though mechanical and electronic forms of LTSMs are readily available, effective teaching and learning can continue by making use of other forms of LTSMs. For instance, even though under-resourced schools do not have an adequate supply of reading material purchased from publishers, Foundation Phase teachers could compensate by developing their own reading material.

The words of Woodbury (1979:17) succinctly sum up this point:

> *Almost anything in the right hands, at the right time and in the right situation, can be used to enhance the teaching and learning process.*

Having discussed the development of LTSMs over four eras, it is important to explore the role of LTSMs within an OBE context.

2.4 THE ROLE OF LTSMs WITHIN AN OBE CONTEXT

The brief historical overview that was undertaken showed that LTSMs played a key role during all four developmental eras, albeit that initially there was not a great variety to

choose from. Throughout the developmental eras, LTSMs were used mainly to strengthen sensory perception with the view of improving teaching and learning.

The question that can now be asked is the following: *What is the role of LTSMs within the paradigm of C2005 and OBE?*

Long before the introduction of OBE in South Africa, the value of LTSMs in the acquiring of outcomes has been noted. For example, more than twenty years ago, Woodbury (1979:17) stated that LTSMs (what she referred to as instructional material) should help learners gain information, acquire skills and increase their values, all of which are applicable in OBE. Various documents issued by the DoE and the GDE emphatically state that learning support materials, now known as LTSMs, are needed for the successful implementation of C2005.

Quotations from these documents motivate what has just been said, for example:

> *It is a well-known fact that adequate learning support materials are essential for the effective implementation of any education system. This is especially applicable to Curriculum 2005... Learning support materials promote good teaching and meaningful learning (GDE 1999e:1).*

> *Learning support materials are essential to a culture of teaching and learning (GDE 1999a:1).*

Furthermore, several training modules have been prepared with the view of supporting teachers to implement appropriate learning support materials or LTSMs in the planning of an OBE learning experience.

The following serve as examples:

♦ Gauteng Department of Education. 1999c. Using existing resources in the OBE classroom.
♦ Gauteng Department of Education. 1999e. How to evaluate and select learning support materials.
♦ Gauteng Department of Education. 1999f. The development of learning support materials.

♦ Gauteng Department of Education. 1999g. How to use existing resources in an OBE context.

The Revised National Curriculum Statements for Grade 0-9 (Schools) (RNCS) will be implemented in the Foundation Phase as from 2004. These policy documents strengthen and consolidate C2005 by simplifying and streamlining its main design elements such as the specific outcomes, range statements, assessment criteria and performance indicators. At the same time, it is an attempt to clarify the various learning expectations for each grade. The implementation thereof needs to be strengthened by, *inter alia,* the improvement of LTSMs (DoE 2002c:5-6).

In addition, the DoE (2001a:79) states that the

> *adequate and timeous supply of quality learning support materials is critical to the successful implementation of the revised National Curriculum Statement.*

To improve the procurement, budgeting and quality of LTSMs, key areas of policy will focus on

♦ the roles played by government and society in the development of LTSMs;
♦ quality control of LTSMs by an approved national structure to ensure better quality and more cost-effective material;
♦ training of teachers in the effective use of LTSMs;
♦ guidelines for the development of suitable LTSMs by publishers and other LTSMs developers and
♦ the improvement in the management of LTSMs in schools.

The importance of LTSMs is also spelt out in the seven competences for teachers (Republic of South Africa 2000:16). As interpreters and designers of Learning Programmes and materials, teachers are expected to be able to adapt and select learning resources that are appropriate for the age, language, abilities, culture and gender of learners.

The preceding information has made it clear that LTSMs plays a major role in the implementation of OBE and C2005 and will continue to do so to ensure the successful implementation of the RNCS. The strong emphasis that is placed on LTSMs stems from

the vision to drastically improve the teaching and learning process. The integration of appropriate LTSMs is a powerful vehicle to reach this goal.

The question that now arises is: *In what way do LTSMs contribute toward learning success in particular?* What follows is an attempt to answer this question.

2.4.1   THE ROLE OF LTSMs IN THE DIDACTICAL PROCESS

Vinjevold (1999:163) opens the discussion by underlining the importance of LTSMs. In the introduction to her chapter on current policy and provision of LTSMs, she emphatically states the view of the DoE who regard adequate LTSMs as essential to the effective running of an education system. In fact, the DoE considers these materials as an integral part of curriculum development and a means of promoting good teaching and learning.

Not only does the DoE underline the importance of LTSMs. Other researchers agree with Vinjevold and the DoE as can be seen from the ensuing discussion.

2.4.1.1   LTSMs enhance learning through sensory perception and experience

Meyer (1998:11) defines perception as

> *those processes through which we give meaning to the information that our senses receive from the environment.*

The didactic principle of sensory perception is based on Pestalozzi's view (see 2.3.3.1) that sense impression is the absolute foundation of all knowledge. Perception, therefore, concerns the observation of concrete objects as well as their representation in the consciousness or imagination (Fraser *et al.* 1990:63). In practice, this principle means that learners cannot gain an adequate understanding of the learning content by, for instance, only depending on the teacher's verbal explanation thereof. Learning content that is presented concretely and perceptibly provides learners with a firm basis for interpreting the learning content (Kruger, Oberholzer, Van Schalkwyk & Whittle 1983:35).

Steyn, Badenhorst and Yule (1988:19) refer to the principle of experiencing. The argument substantiating this term is based on the view that perception alone will not necessarily

result in effective learning as perception involves language and thought processes. The didactic principle of experiencing is based on the following quotation:

What you hear you may forget; what you write you may remember for a short time while what you experience may stay with you a lifetime (GDE 1999b:3).

One of the characteristics of OBE is that learning should be relevant and connected to real-life situations (DoE 1997e:7). Although learners only come into contact with a small part of reality within the boundaries of the school (Van Schalkwyk 1993:38), they usually have a desire to know more about the world in which they live. Many aspects of reality cannot be brought into the classroom in their concrete form and have to be represented by means of LTSMs (Avenant 1988:141-155; Steyn *et al.* 1988:112; Yule & Steyn 1982:4).

Kemp and Smellie (1989:3) as well as Kruger *et al.* (1983:265) point out that LTSMs can assist learners to form clear, accurate and vivid images of reality. Depending on the physical properties of the LTSMs presented, different perceptual systems of the learner are activated (often in combination). Avenant (1988:145) agrees with the view of these writers, as he believes that learners who perceive objects with their senses and experience different situations are more likely to obtain the correct information. Many uncertainties and misperceptions that could arise during verbal explanations are ruled out. Dijkstra (1997:139) points out that learning success is enhanced as one or more of the five senses are involved when bringing the learner closer to reality (the learning content). When learners are actively involved with an object, their senses are more active and this enables them to observe differences and similarities more readily. This, in turn, improves their ability to observe and identify relationships. Practical involvement with objects also helps to maintain learners' attention and enthusiasm, which ties up with the principle of motivation (see 2.4.2). Interaction with LTSMs necessitates learner activity, which in turn, ties up with the principle of self-activity (see 2.4.5).

In essence, LTSMs can provide opportunities for learners to experience reality, even if it is a representation thereof. In this way, they are given opportunities to expand their experiences that can form a bridge between the classroom and the real world. The core function of LTSMs is thus to allow learners to learn through a 'substituted' experience (Fraser *et al.* 1990:156).

The principle of sensory perception and experience is of **particular** importance to Foundation Phase teachers as their learners are, in Piaget's view, in the intuitive stage or in the concrete-operational phase (see 3.4.2.1). They could also be in Bruner's enactive stage (see 3.5.2.5) where they need to physically interact with concrete objects or other forms of LTSMs (Du Toit & Kruger 1993:38). The importance of LTSMs is that they should provide the external sensory impressions needed, for example, becoming aware of letters and words.

2.4.1.2 LTSMs enhance learning by increasing motivation and interest

The didactic principle of motivation and interest is based on the fact that most children have a natural desire to learn (Steyn *et al.* 1988:20). Effective teaching presupposes effective learning while effective learning presupposes that learners want to learn (Avenant 1988:211).

Therefore, the task of teachers is to

> *organise and manipulate the physical and social environment so that most students want to learn, are confident that they can learn what the teacher desires, and believe that what they learn is worthwhile for them* (Fraser *et al.* 1990:36).

LTSMs form an integral part of teaching and learning and the use thereof is one way of generating curiosity and motivating learners to learn (Kemp & Smellie 1989:4). Learners' motivation and positive attitude towards the learning content is of primary importance as these are the initial steps in the learning process. Teachers can only offer encouragement to learn, but if learners do not **want** to learn, then they will not (Blythe-Lord 1991:4).

A learner's motivation to learn is, therefore, a personal issue. Although motivation comes from within the learner, it is usually activated by some stimulus created by an object, person or event. LTSMs can enhance motivation by stimulating learners to find out more and ask meaningful questions. Extrinsic factors can then lead to intrinsic motivation (Marais *et al.* 1983:65).

The activation of learners' senses by including LTSMs (pictures, real objects, novelties, practical examples, surprises such as a visit by a famous person) should arouse their

interest and encourage active participation in the learning experience. Furthermore, the use of LTSMs can counteract monotony and boredom in learning experience.

The availability of LTSMs does not only enhance the motivation of **learners** but also that of **teachers**. More effective learning experiences could be planned if there is a variety of LTSMs available, which in turn, could enhance learning success.

2.4.1.3 LTSMs enhance learning by improving attention and memory

OBE envisages learning success that strongly depends on learners' ability to pay adequate attention. Basson (1993:61) believes that the integration of suitable LTSMs enable teachers to prepare interesting and stimulating learning experiences, which, in turn, help to capture learners' attention (see 2.4.1.2).

Kemp and Smellie (1989:14) highlight two facts that are of major importance. First, any perceptual event consists of various sensory messages that do not occur in isolation but are interrelated and combined into complex patterns. These become the basis of one's knowledge of the world. Second, a person reacts to only a small part of all that is happening during an event. The part of the event to be experienced is 'selected' by a person on the basis of desire or what attracts his or her attention at any one time. Hence, suitable LTSMs will attract the attention and hold the interest of learners because the power of pictures, words and sounds compel attention.

Kachelhoffer (1993:81) discusses the role of LTSMs in improving memory and concentration from another perspective, namely the left brain/right brain theory. She refers to the work of Sperry who discovered that each hemisphere of the brain 'thinks' in a different way and differs from each other with regard to their functions as can be seen from the following table:

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TABLE 2.2 **FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE TWO BRAIN HEMISPHERES**

LEFT HEMISPHERE		RIGHT HEMISPHERE	
FUNCTIONS	**ACTIVITIES**	**FUNCTIONS**	**ACTIVITIES**
◆ logical	◆ language	◆ random thinking	◆ rhyme and
◆ sequential	◆ logic	◆ intuitive	rhythm
◆ rational	◆ numbers	◆ holistic	◆ music
◆ objective	◆ sequence	◆ subjective	◆ pictures
◆ analytical	◆ words	◆ synthetical	◆ patterns
			◆ imagination

Moreover, research undertaken by Sperry (in Kachelhoffer 1993:81) has shown that

◆ the two brain hemispheres can operate independently from each other;

◆ the two hemispheres are stimulated by different stimuli;

◆ most people are left-hemisphere dominant as language is the medium mostly used for communication and

◆ most individuals have a definite preference for one of the above-mentioned thinking styles.

Although the two hemispheres are able to function independently, they are joined by the *corpus collosum* that allows a great deal of interaction to take place between the two brain hemispheres (Neethling & Rutherford 1996:69). It stands to reason that left brain/right brain thinking styles have a definite impact on attention, memory and learning. To foster more 'whole-brained' learning experiences, teachers should use teaching and learning strategies that will enhance the integration of the two brain hemispheres (http://www.funderstanding. com/right_left_brain.cfm).

The integration of various forms of LTSMs implies that aspects such as images, shapes, music and colour are used. These aspects stimulate the right hemisphere in particular together with the left hemisphere so that images are stored in the right hemisphere as replicas of the verbal input given. In this way retention of the learning content (memory) is increased and concentration improved which, in turn, have a positive effect on learning.

2.4.1.4   LTSMs enhance learning through compensatory measures

The following words of Malapile (1996:10) underline the value of LTSMs in the teaching and learning situation of disadvantaged learners:

> *The powerful effect of media usage in education can never be overemphasised, particularly in educating disadvantaged children. Media usage can effectively make up for the lack of facilities faced by children in the remotest areas.*

Joubert (1996:9) agrees with Malapile when he says that powerful media such as books, television and video recordings are of particular value to learners in remote and disadvantaged areas where these forms of LTSMs could uplift and strengthen education.

2.4.1.5   LTSMs enhance learning by creating opportunities for self-activity and self-discovery

The didactic principle of self-activity is loudly applauded within the OBE context (GDE 1999b:7). This principle is based on the assumption that effective teaching and learning will take place if learners are given the opportunity to be actively involved in the learning experience. In this way, the path is laid out for learner-centred activities.

The principle of self-activity is also narrowly linked to the theory of constructivism. The constructivist viewpoint is that learners should construct their own knowledge and that education consists of providing appropriate learning situations that afford learners opportunities to develop personal knowledge that will be used later in life (Gott, Lesgold & Kane 1997:221). As a result of the learners' affective involvement, the learning content acquires personal meaning for them and they usually remember the learning content for a longer period of time (Marais *et al.* 1983:67). Once the new learning content has become meaningful, the learner should be able to apply the knowledge in various situations such as solving problems. Problem-solving is imperative for attaining the critical outcome stating that learners should demonstrate their ability to identify and solve problems using critical and creative thinking (GDE 1999e:16).

In practice this means that teachers can only teach their learners; it is the learners' task to learn. Therefore, learners should be given ample opportunities to experiment, make their own observations, draw their own conclusions and find their own solutions to problems. In

this way, learners can contribute towards their own understanding and mastery of the learning content that has been presented (Fraser *et al.* 1990:65; Kruger *et al.* 1983:35). The use of appropriate LTSMs is one of the many ways in which teachers can implement this principle (Avenant 1988:129).

According to the GDE (1999e:6), the integration of LTSMs in a learning experience could lay the foundation for learner-centred activities such as

♦ independent learning;
♦ creativity;
♦ observation;
♦ experiments and problem-solving;
♦ research, recording and reporting and
♦ reading for information, comprehension, enrichment or enjoyment.

2.4.1.6   LTSMs enhance learning through co-operative learning

The principle of socialisation implies that learning involves other people such as the teacher, peers and parents (Fraser *et al.* 1990:76). Vygotsky (see 3.6.2.1) strongly emphasises this principle in his learning theory, as he believes that social interaction is an integral part of the learning process. Learning to work together is also one of the critical outcomes (see 1.2.6.1). Teachers should therefore, purposely attempt to create situations where learners can associate and interact with each other while learning (Kruger *et al.* 1983:35). Effective learning cannot only be attributed to the actualisation of a learner's potential but is also the result of constant interaction with the peer group. The social climate within the classroom and the school also has an influence on effective and successful learning (Avenant 1988:181).

The integration of LTSMs could contribute towards the actualisation of this principle (Brouette, Gallick, Lee & Morbitzer 1999:92).

The following serve as examples in the Foundation Phase classroom:

♦ Learners could be involved in a co-operative learning activity where they are busy finding a solution to a problem or working together on a group project. The group could

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be studying the life cycle of the butterfly. The LTSMs they would be using could include the larvae, paper for taking notes or doing illustrations and non-fiction books on the topic.

♦ In a peer teaching activity, one learner could help a peer to master new skills such as the syllabification of words taken from a book or building words with letter cards.

♦ Learners could read a story as a group and then dramatise it afterwards.

2.4.1.7 LTSMs enhance learning through integration

The principle of totality features very strongly in OBE as it involves integration (DoE 2002b:6-8).

LTSMs could provide opportunities for integration with themes, other learning areas and/or Learning Programmes as well as opportunities for continuous assessment (GDE 1999e:6). For instance, pictures and concrete objects used for mother tongue instruction could also be used for the teaching of English: First Additional Language, Numeracy and Life Skills. At the same time, learners' interaction with the LTSMs could create opportunities for assessment.

2.4.1.8 LTSMs accommodate learners with special education needs

The principle of individualisation (Fraser et al. 1990:60) features very strongly in planning learning experiences for learners with special education needs. Learners learn at various rates and in different ways. Consequently, factors such as intellectual ability, educational level, personality and cognitive learning styles affect learners' readiness and ability to engage in learning. The rate at which information is presented should, therefore, be considered in terms of the anticipated comprehension of learners.

Two leading American educationalists, Mercer and Mercer (1993:148), sketch the importance of LTSMs in the teaching of learners with special education needs when they say:

The instructional materials used in a classroom have an enormous effect on the quality of educational programming for students with learning problems. Academic materials influence the instructional procedures of most teachers.

In their view, LTSMs have a direct influence on what is taught to learners, how the learning content is sequenced, the quantity and quality of activities and the number of learning experiences to be planned. Moreover, LTSMs may determine whether the teacher is able to individualise instruction when necessary. In essence, they believe that academic materials readily influence whether learners who experience learning difficulties succeed or fail.

In practice this means that some Foundation Phase teachers might be in a position where they do not have suitable LTSMs such as reading material for a group of learners who experience reading difficulties. In this case, they need to develop their own reading material.

2.4.1.9   LTSMs enhance the learning of Foundation Phase learners in particular

Foundation Phase learners are not yet able to understand abstract learning content, as they are, according to Piaget (1967:41) in the concrete operational phase (see 3.4.2.1). To assist them, teachers use various types of LTSMs that concretise the learning content.

The question now arises: *How do LTSMs that appeal to learners' senses, assist them in understanding abstract learning content?*   .

Learners' thinking is mobilised when they experience something as a problem or a challenge and decide to address the problem. Learners who sense a problem, for example, in the learning content, must also relate to the learning content in a schematic and abstract way before they can find a possible solution to the problem.

This does not mean that thinking consists of a concrete, schematic and an abstract layer. Thinking is not a substance but an act and an act cannot consist of layers. The act of thinking can, however, occur in various modes. According to Bruner (1966:10), the learner can relate to the world or learning content in its concrete mode (real objects), in its schematic modes (a picture or photograph) or symbolic mode (see 3.5.2.5).

2.4.1.10 LTSMs provide for the general needs of learners

The GDE (1999e:6) adds to the list of advantages by stating that LTSMs can also provide

- contextualisation of the task/topic within the whole curriculum;
- a progression of content and skills development;
- extended opportunities to achieve outcomes;
- opportunities to consolidate or revise work and
- motivation to learn.

2.4.2   Conclusion

Sufficient evidence has been provided to indicate that LTSMs play a key role in the teaching and learning process. It is, however, important to take cognisance of the opinions of the DoE (2003:37) as well as Dörr and Seel (1997:148) who critically reviewed the learning process.

The DoE (2003:37) states that

> *teachers must be wary of using LTSMs to replace the curriculum. The success of such material is determined by the teacher's ability to use it appropriately and effectively in the learning context. The mere presence of LTSMs in a learning activity does not automatically mean that it is an effective learning tool.*

Dörr and Seel (1997:148) agree with the preceding point of view when they say that LTSMs do not influence learning under any conditions. They emphasise the fact that learning is more significantly influenced by the delivered content and the instructional method than by the type of LTSMs used. Only when the LTSMs to be used is in harmony with the learning content and has as its aim to help learners achieve the desired outcomes of the learning experience, can it be said to improve teaching and learning.

Despite the paradigm shift brought about by OBE, the three components of the didactical situation have not changed. These components are the person who is teaching, the learner (or learners) and the learning content. LTSMs can be used to promote the interaction (dialogue) between the teacher (who teaches) and learners (who learn) thus forming a 'bridge' to assist learners in acquiring the relevant knowledge, skills and values planned by

the teacher. Learners who have not had adequate experience of the learning content or do not understand the necessary concepts related to abstract learning content, should be assisted to understand it by integrating LTSMs to represent it in a concrete (perceptible, audible or tactile) manner.

As learners gain the necessary experience and form relevant concepts, they gradually progress from a concrete relationship to their world and learning content to a schematic and later an abstract (conceptual) relationship with it (Kruger et al. 1983:270). LTSMs that concretise learning content and intensify learners' experiences are of extreme importance for their progression from concrete to abstract relationships. This process can be facilitated through the use of suitable LTSMs.

Avenant (1988:143) stresses the consequences should LTSMs not be used effectively. If learners are denied the opportunity of making contact with the concrete (either by means of real objects or through visual representations), incorrect concepts or inadequate insights could be formed. To ensure that correct concretisation of concepts take place, teachers should make use of the various LTSMs at their disposal.

Dijkstra (1997:140) aptly closes the discussion on the role of LTSMs with the following statement:

Without media, education is impossible.

Much has been said about LTSMs thus far. The question that can be asked is the following: *What is the value of these findings for this study?*

2.4.3 THE VALUE OF THESE FINDINGS FOR THIS STUDY

In this section, only the value of the findings is discussed. In other sections of the study, some of these aspects are discussed in more detail. Having undertaken a study of the role of LTSMs, the following aspects can be applied when Foundation Phase teachers write their own developmentally appropriate reading material:

♦ Sense perception and experience play a vital role in the learning process. Therefore, the themes selected should fall within learners' life-world. The language experience

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approach (see 4.8.2.1) should be considered, as the stories developed fall within learners' life-world.

♦ Sense perception is enhanced by the inclusion of colourful pictures in reading material.

♦ Motivation and interest enhance learning (see 2.4.1.2). Therefore, reading material should match the interests of the learners involved and be presented in interesting ways such as in the form of novelty books (see 4.6.1.2). Learning material should also be developmentally appropriate to ensure success, which in turn, enhances motivation.

♦ Learning is enhanced by attention and memory (see 2.4.1.3). Therefore, pictures, colour, powerful words and sound words should be included in reading material while also considering learners' interests.

♦ Working together enhances learning (see 2.4.1.6). Teacher-learner-authored reading material (see 4.8) can enhance the development of reading skills.

♦ Disadvantaged learners learn best when a variety of LTSMs is used (see 2.4.1.4). Therefore, they need exposure to many forms of LTSMs such as a variety of genres and where these are not available, teachers should develop their own reading material (see 4.7).

♦ Even though learners learn effectively in a group, it is often necessary to work individually to ensure that effective learning takes place. For example, the teacher may need to write developmentally appropriate reading material for individual learners in order to meet their specific needs (see 2.4.1.8).

♦ Learners learn effectively through self-activity and self-discovery (see 2.4.1.5). Therefore, learners should be offered opportunities to be co-creators of the curriculum. This can be done by developing teacher-learner-authored reading material (see 4.8) and by allowing learners to select themes for reading material to be written by the teacher. For example, Foundation Phase learners could create their own reading books by implementing the language experience approach (see 4.8.2.1).

♦ Learning is enhanced when the principle of totality is applied (see 2.4.1.7). Therefore, reading material could be linked to the theme being dealt with. The reading material developed could also be used for other purposes such as oral language activities, the reinforcement of phonics, a theme for written language or a discussion related to Life Skills.

The next section places the focus on the classification of LTSMs.

2.5   CLASSIFICATION OF LTSMs

Integrating teaching and learning strategies and LTSMs can facilitate the learning outcomes of a specific learning experience. The classification of LTSMs provides structure and highlights the different ways in which they could be used. This knowledge could create mobility and improve the teacher's individual teaching practice (Marais et al. 1983:68).

Before proceeding, it is necessary to note that

> one would require a multi-dimensional classification and even if one could devise such a comprehensive classification, different people would no doubt wish to place particular media in different positions (Romiszowski 1988:60).

The practical implications of this statement can be seen when studying the various classification systems that are found in the literature and are discussed in the ensuing sections.

2.5.1   CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM OF YULE AND STEYN

What follows is the way in which Yule and Steyn (1982:11-64) classify LTSMs.

♦ Flat-surface visual material: These include the chalkboard, display (bulletin) boards, flannelboards, maps, charts and diagrams

♦ Three-dimensional visual aids: The sand tray, school grounds, plant and animal displays, paper-maché, wooden models, puppets and plastic models are included in this category.

- ◆ Sound and sound apparatus: Items such as the tape-recorder, record player and the language laboratory fall into this category.

- ◆ Projection and projection apparatus: These include the overhead projector and the slide projector.

- ◆ Audio-visual apparatus: Examples of these forms of LTSMs are the television and video recordings.

2.5.2 CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM OF GERLACH, ELY AND MELNICK

Gerlach *et al.* (1980:70) provide another classification system, namely:

- ◆ still pictures (photographs, transparencies, etc.);
- ◆ sound recordings (records, recordings of voices and music, etc.);
- ◆ motion pictures (films and video recordings with / without sound);
- ◆ television and radio;
- ◆ reality and representations of reality and models as well as
- ◆ computers.

2.5.3 CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM OF THE GDE

The GDE (1999e:3) classifies LTSMs under formal and informal resources.

TABLE 2.3   *FORMAL AND INFORMAL RESOURCES*

FORMAL RESOURCES	*INFORMAL RESOURCES*
◆ textbooks	◆ waste material e.g. cardboard boxes
◆ overhead projector	◆ newspapers and magazines
◆ photocopier	◆ items from the environment e.g. leaves
◆ electronic media	◆ fliers, brochures, posters, etc.
◆ library	◆ books and collections
◆ stationery	◆ animals, birds and fish
◆ apparatus, games and toys	◆ material such as wool, cloth, wire, wood
◆ visual aids	◆ learners themselves
◆ three-dimensional materials	◆ learners' possessions (e.g. clothing)
	◆ community members

2.5.4   AN ECLECTIC CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The classification system that follows is based on various systems found in the literature together with the researcher's input. This system is by no means complete. The items printed in italics are considered to be of **particular** importance for the planning and implementation of learning experiences in the Foundation Phase. (This does not imply that the remaining items could not be used with success in the Foundation Phase.)

TABLE 2.4   AN ECLECTIC CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM OF LTSMs

PRINTED MATERIAL	ELECTRONIC MATERIAL	PHYSICAL MATERIAL	HUMAN / ANIMAL RESOURCES
◆ *activity sheets* ◆ *advertisements* ◆ atlases ◆ brochures ◆ cards ◆ *dictionaries* ◆ *diagrams* ◆ documents ◆ encyclopaedias ◆ fliers ◆ *games (paper)* ◆ *'junk mail'* ◆ *letter cards* ◆ *magazines* ◆ newspapers ◆ pamphlets ◆ pictures ◆ *picture books* ◆ *picture dictionaries* ◆ *photographs* ◆ *posters* ◆ *readers* ◆ *story books* ◆ *textbooks* ◆ *wall charts*	◆ *computers* ◆ *compact discs* ◆ *CD roms* ◆ *electronic games* ◆ *film strips* ◆ *language laboratories* ◆ *the Internet* ◆ *radio* ◆ *record player* ◆ *overhead projector and transparencies* ◆ *slides* ◆ *tape-recorder and cassettes* ◆ *television* ◆ *video recordings*	◆ *balls and ropes* ◆ *chalkboard* ◆ *'jungle gym'* ◆ *collections* ◆ *counters* ◆ *flannelboards and pictures* ◆ *games* ◆ *masks* ◆ *material e.g. wool, wire, cloth* ◆ *models* ◆ *musical instruments* ◆ *paper maché* ◆ *puppet theatre and puppets* ◆ *puzzles* ◆ *realia* ◆ *sand tray* ◆ *specimens* ◆ *stationery* ◆ *toy telephones* ◆ *the environment e.g. water, trees* ◆ *waste products e.g. boxes*	◆ *animals / birds,* ◆ *teachers* ◆ *learners* ◆ *librarians* ◆ *NGO's* ◆ *parents* ◆ *community members* ◆ *peers* ◆ *personal experiences* ◆ *private sector* ◆ *professionals e.g. therapists*

(Conradie & Du Plessis 1980:11; GDE 1999c:34-35; GDE 1999e:2; Kachelhoffer 1993:83; Sema 1992:220; Yule & Steyn 1982:11-64)

2.5.5   THE VALUE OF THE CLASSIFICATION OF LTSMs FOR THIS STUDY

Knowledge of the various forms of LTSMs provided a global view of the variety that is available for use especially in the Foundation Phase. The classification of LTSMs shows that reading material is also regarded as a form of LTSMs. The other forms of LTSMs referred to could be used in combination with reading material, for instance, the story could be written in book form and also be recorded to enhance the sensory input.

Having classified the various forms of LTSMs it is necessary to answer the question: *How should a teacher go about selecting or designing the most appropriate LTSMs?*

2.6   THE SELECTION, DESIGN AND EVALUATION OF LTSMs

Teachers are responsible for the success of the learning process in the classroom (Smaldino & Muffoletto 1997:37). This task involves, *inter alia,* the selection, design and evaluation of appropriate LTSMs (GDE 1999e:1). Every form of LTSMs affects learning and understanding in some unique way. Each has its own particular educational strength, allowing alternative concepts, proposals or new ideas to be considered (Blythe-Lord 1991:5).

Jonassen (1982:19) believes that the 'golden rule' or principle of media selection, design and evaluation is the following:

> *A medium of instruction should be selected and used on the basis of its potential for facilitating accomplishment of the stated objective or instructional purpose.*

The ultimate purpose of using LTSMs is to enable learners to reach the outcome(s) stated for the particular learning experience. Effective LTSMs is vital for encouraging and facilitating the act of learning (Blythe-Lord 1991:5). For this reason, it is necessary for Foundation Phase teachers to make use of certain criteria when selecting and designing suitable LTSMs.

To carry out the LTSMs selection rule, a process consisting of four steps is recommended by Gerlach *et al.* (1980:251), namely:

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Step 1: Write down the outcome.

Step 2: Determine the domain in which the outcome can be classified, for example, cognitive, affective or psychomotor.

Step 3: Select an appropriate strategy within the domain determined in Step 2.

Step 4: Select appropriate LTSMs.

What follows are the criteria for selecting appropriate LTSMs. The words of Gerlach *et al.* (1980:251) should be kept in mind during the process:

No single medium is likely to have properties that make it best for all purposes.

Although the criteria to be discussed apply to the **selection** of LTSMs, they would, in most cases, also apply to the **design** of LTSMs when teachers need to prepare their own materials.

2.6.1   CRITERIA FOR SELECTING, DESIGNING AND EVALUATING LTSMs

As we are living in a technological era, some teachers are under the false impression that effective teaching and learning cannot take place without electronic media. Chetty (1996:8) warns that teachers should not be misled by the value of modern electronic media. Instead, teachers should think about how best to transmit the learning content. They may discover that basic forms of LTSMs such as a pencil and paper or nature walk in the school garden could be the most appropriate to teach a specific skill. In this regard, Chaptal (1998:243) reminds one that new technologies do not replace older forms of LTSMs.

The technological era has made it possible to develop many types of LTSMs that are commercially available. However, many teachers develop their own LTSMs. In fact, the DoE (2003:37) emphasises the value of teacher-generated material. During the interviews (see 6.7.7.3, 6.8.7.4 & 6.9.2.6), as well as the researcher's observations (see 6.1.0.1), it became clear that teachers need criteria to guide them in the selection and design of LTSMs.

The following criteria are based on extensive research undertaken by Chaptal (1998:243), DoE (2003:37), GDE (1999e:7-11), Jonassen (1982:374), Koopman (1997:7), Meyers (2001:40), Nunan (1998:2, 5), Peacock (1998:1), Roberts (1996a:380), Sema (1992:219), Steyn *et al.* (1988:114) as well as Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:161; 2003:161):

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2.6.1.1 OBE and C2005 compliancy

The nature and quality of relevant LTSMs will have a significant impact on the success of the implementation of OBE and the RNCS. The LTSMs to be used are always selected with a particular outcome in mind. LTSMs are selected for various purposes such as reinforcement of particular attitudes, the explanation of certain processes or the encouragement of learners to use particular learning modes.

As Grades 0-9 are now implementing OBE, the following criteria apply:

♦ The material should be compliant with OBE and C2005 and if not, have the potential to be adapted.

♦ The LTSMs should be a vehicle to enable learners to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

♦ The activities related to the LTSMs should be geared toward the expansion of knowledge and the development of cognitive and social skills as well as positive values and attitudes.

♦ The material should be learner-centred and encourage learner-activity.

♦ The LTSMs should accommodate diversity in the classroom.

2.6.1.2 Authenticity

With regard to authenticity, LTSMs should comply with the following criteria:

♦ The material should contain accurate and up-to-date facts.

♦ The material should provide actual support required in the area where it is needed most.

♦ There should be a clear link between the material and the curriculum it is designed to serve.

2.6.1.3   Anti-bias

The Constitution and the South African Schools Act forbid discrimination on any grounds. LTSMs should meet the following requirements to ensure that they are bias-free and that they support transformation:

♦ The material (text and visual) should encourage respect for diversity and be sensitive to all cultural backgrounds, avoid racism and be free of gender stereotypes.

♦ The material should refer to various social structures like family life and religious communities. For instance, if only Christian beliefs are portrayed, learners from other beliefs could feel excluded.

♦ With regard to values and attitudes, the material should be relevant to the learners' lives and recognise prior experiences. Attention must also be paid to the explicit and particularly the implicit values in materials.

♦ Textual and visual material should not be offensive.

2.6.1.4   Interest

In this regard, the specific type of LTSMs used should

♦ make an impact on the learners so that they will be motivated to learn;
♦ capture and maintain learners' interest and uphold their interest and curiosity;
♦ stimulate learners' imagination;
♦ present some form of intellectual challenge and
♦ represent positive attitudes and human values.

2.6.1.5   Developmental appropriateness

One of the most important criteria that must be considered is that the type of LTSMs used must suit the age and developmental level of the learners. Therefore, the following should be noted:

♦ Oral or written language must match the level of each learner's abilities.

♦ The content should be developmentally appropriate and relevant to a learning programme.

♦ Most aspects of the material must be in line with learners' life-world and experience.

♦ Learners must understand the type of LTSMs being used, see what it represents and accept that they can actually be of help in the learning process.

♦ Learners will understand and remember the learning content longer if it is logically structured and carefully sequenced. The rate of information to be presented is established in terms of the complexity and difficulty of the content. These suggestions apply when designing LTSMs in order to help learners synthesise and integrate knowledge to be learned.

2.6.1.6 Organisation and technical aspects

The following criteria play a role with regard to the technical aspects and organisation of LTSMs:

♦ In the case of reading material, there should be a balance between narration and dialogue.

♦ Images and sounds (in the case of auditory forms of LTSMs must not be too difficult to follow.

♦ Pictures must be clear and in focus while the colours should be used effectively and sensibly.

♦ Pictures must not merely provide relief from the text but harmonise with the text. However, the page must not be 'overloaded' with pictures and text but be well-balanced.

♦ The layout and presentation must be of a high standard, for example, the typeface and size of the print must be appropriate while the headings and sections must be clearly set out.

2.6.1.7 Cost-effectiveness

LTSMs could contribute toward cost-effectiveness if they

♦ conform to the budget and are inexpensive to replace or repair;
♦ are suitable for cross-curricular use and
♦ are flexible and adaptable.

2.6.1.8 Physical characteristics

With regard to physical aspects, LTSMs should

♦ allow easy handling for the user;
♦ allow for easy storage;
♦ be durable and
♦ require minimum instruction for individual use.

2.6.1.9 Pilot testing

Unless the teacher is convinced that the LTSMs that are to be purchased will help learners meet the desired outcomes, it is advisable to run a pilot test beforehand. This exercise could save a lot of time, money and effort in the long run (Katz 1997:44).

Questions such as the following could be asked:

♦ Are the materials sufficiently challenging?
♦ Could the materials be used across the curriculum?
♦ How do the teachers who are running the pilot test feel about the materials?
♦ Have other teachers experienced success by implementing these materials?
♦ Do teachers need excessive training to use these materials in the teaching practice?

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♦ Would the materials help learners to meet the learning outcomes of the curriculum?

♦ Are the materials worth the money to be spent?

2.6.1.10 Other features

♦ The selected type of LTSMs should be as consistent as possible with the nature or level of the learning task.

♦ Learning that involves the emotion and personal feelings as well as the intellect, is influential and lasting. LTSMs are powerful means of generating emotional responses such as anxiety, fear, empathy, love or excitement. Therefore, careful attention should be given to LTSMs design if emotional results are desired for learning or motivational purposes.

♦ The material must contain opportunities for assessment.

♦ LTSMs should not distract learners' attention nor should too many forms of LTSMs be used during a learning experience, as this could be confusing. Each type of LTSMs has certain characteristics or attributes such as colour or motion that makes it more appropriate than another for a specific learning experience.

♦ LTSMs must be user-friendly. For instance, a language laboratory that is difficult to operate could cause frustration on the side of the teacher and the learners and this could hamper effective learning.

♦ Teachers should not use certain types of LTSMs just because these items are available. Learners are often quick to realise that the LTSMs used lack importance. This could invalidate the effective use thereof at a later stage.

♦ Teachers should be able to use the LTSMs to plan an integrated approach to learning.

♦ LTSMs should be flexible. This means that it should be possible to use material for different purposes, for example, a reading passage could be used for finding information, independent study, assessment or for reinforcement purposes.

◆ Where possible, LTSMs should match learners' particular intelligence (see 3.8.1) and accommodate learners' learning style.

◆ Instead of making learners and the teacher's teaching style fit in with the classroom materials, materials should be chosen that fit in with the outcomes that the teacher wants the learners to demonstrate. LTSMs should therefore, be compliant with the particular teacher's teaching style. Moreover, the LTSMs should provide opportunities for extending the teacher's teaching style.

◆ Curriculum material should take into account the depth and breadth of learners' current subject knowledge and should help bridge the gap between existing knowledge and the needs of the curriculum.

◆ Commercially purchased LTSMs should contain descriptive notes or a manual/guide to ensure the correct implementation thereof.

◆ LTSMs should provide opportunities for learners to work actively with them thereby creating opportunities for learner-centred activities (individual and/or group activities).

◆ LTSMs should be useful, add to the enjoyment of the learning experience and enhance on-task behaviour.

Blythe-Lord (1991:9) believes that the task of selecting, designing and evaluating appropriate types of LTSMs for a learning experience is a rather daunting one. Mesmer (1999:130) aptly concludes the discussion on the selection and design of suitable LTSMs when he states:

> *With instructional materials, usefulness lies not in the material itself, but in its wise use at the proper time by intelligent professionals.*

The preceding discussion has made it clear that teachers cannot use LTSMs randomly but that they need to consider the various selection criteria that have been presented to ensure that their learners reach the desired outcomes.

2.6.2 THE VALUE OF THESE FINDINGS FOR THIS STUDY

The goal of this study is to determine the nature of the problems experienced by Foundation Phase teachers with regard to LTSMs (see 1.7.1). Therefore, when considering a solution for one or more of the problems, the LTSMs

- should help learners to reach the outcomes for Literacy (see 2.6.1.1);
- develop cognitive skills (see 2.6.1.1);
- be bias-free (see 2.6.1.3);
- match learners' interests (see 2.6.1.4);
- be developmentally appropriate (see 2.6.1.5);
- consider organisational and technical aspects (see 2.6.1.6);
- be cost-effective (see 2.6.1.7) and used in an integrative way (see 2.6.1.10) and
- meet the demands related to physical aspects (see 2.6.1.8).

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter aimed at gaining an overview of the development of LTSMs over four developmental eras as well as gaining information regarding other relevant aspects related to LTSMs. Firstly, concepts related to the term LTSMs were clarified as many of them are still in use. The term LTSMs is all-inclusive and includes other terms such as educational media, teaching and learning aids and learning support material. The reason why the term LTSMs is preferred for this study is that it is used in the RNCS (DoE 2003:7).

Thereafter, a brief overview was given of the development and role of LTSMs during the first, second, third and fourth developmental eras. The first Egyptian schools, the ancient Greek schools, the first Roman schools, early Christian schools and the Middle Ages already placed emphasis on sensory perception and on mastering the skill of reading.

In the second developmental era, many teachers and other leading figures expressed their views regarding the importance and use of LTSMs from the first and second developmental era. The purpose of LTSMs was to transmit knowledge and to enhance sensory perception. This era saw an increase in the use of books, albeit that Rousseau and Montaigne discouraged the use thereof. In their opinion, books could prevent learners

from gaining real experience or from being exposed to sufficient sensory perception. In fact, books could create a distance between the learner and reality.

The development of more sophisticated forms of LTSMs such as the tape-recorder and language laboratory earmarked the third developmental era. Only towards the end of the era were these gradually introduced into the didactical situation with the aim of encouraging self-activity. Progress was made in that more emphasis was placed on using LTSMs in a didactical-accountable way. Despite the integration of more sophisticated forms of LTSMs, much emphasis was still placed on sensory perception as well direct experience to enhance learning. This was particularly relevant to Foundation Phase learners.

The fourth developmental era is characterised by a quantum leap in the availability of different forms of sophisticated forms of LTSMs such as calculators, computers, video recordings, educational television broadcasts, educational newspaper supplements and published books. Despite the availability of these LTSMs, many under-resourced schools cannot afford to buy these. However, the more sophisticated forms of LTSMs that are currently available tend to mislead many teachers, as they believe that effective teaching cannot take place without them.

Having completed the historical overview, the role of LTSMs within the current OBE framework was discussed. It became clear that LTSMs are still fulfilling a major role in order to achieve the outcomes of each Learning Programme. The value of LTSMs was found to lie in the fact that they enhanced learning, for instance, by improving sensory perception, memory, attention, motivation and interest, by compensating for disadvantaged learners' shortcomings and by providing opportunities for co-operative learning as well as cross-curricular activities. Moreover, LTSMs could also promote the learning success of learners with special education needs.

Different classification systems were then presented. The vast amount of available LTSMs made it necessary to determine how to select the most appropriate forms of LTSMs. For this reason, criteria were identified which could also be of value for teachers who wished to design their own LTSMs such as reading material. These criteria include compliancy with OBE and C2005, authenticity, anti-bias, cost-effectiveness, appropriateness and physical aspects. In essence, teachers currently recognise in LTSMs basic values such as concreteness, enrichment and dynamic interest.

2.8 CHAPTER PREVIEW

As LTSMs clearly form an integral part of the didactic process, it is necessary to consider the views of various learning theorists regarding the role of LTSMs in the teaching and learning process. For this reason, a literature review of the views of four prominent learning theorists is undertaken in Chapter 3.

2.9 OVERVIEW: CHAPTER 2

MAIN THEME	VALUE TO THE STUDY
CONCEPTS RELATED TO LTSMs	
◆ medium / media ◆ instructional materials ◆ educational media ◆ teaching and learning aids ◆ LSM/LTSMs	The term *LTSMs* accepted for this study as it embraces related terms and is used in most recent policy documents
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW	
FIRST DEVELOPMENTAL ERA (±3300BC–1500AD) ◆ LTSMS first used in Egyptian, Ancient Greek, Roman and early Christian schools and aimed at enhancing sensory perception ◆ Primitive forms of LTSMs used, e.g. papyrus rolls, ◆ Wax-tablets, pen and ink, maps and chalkboard ◆ Limited use. of books (secondary schools only)	Many Grade 3 teachers in Soshanguve also experience a shortage of reading material and need to exploit their creativity in order to overcome the dilemma.
SECOND DEVELOPMENTAL ERA (15th – 18th century) ◆ sensory perception highly valued ◆ invention of the press lead to an increase in the number of books (mainly text books) Supporters of sensory perception and books: ◆ Erasmus: illustrated books ◆ Luther: text books, the Bible and Cathechism ◆ Comenius: *Orbis Pictus* ◆ Locke: illustrated stories ◆ Francke: opposed against fiction ◆ Basedow: picture books	◆ Visual education continued to play key role in didactic situation. ◆ Picture books in demand as pictures appeal to the senses ◆ *Orbis Pictus,* written by Comenius, opened the door for picture books. They are still of value to Grade 3 learners today. ◆ Although some teachers from this era strongly criticised the exposure of young learners to fantasy, such as fable and fairy tales, this genre has remained popular throughout the ages and has been a vehicle in the transmission of culture.

MAIN THEME	VALUE TO THE STUDY
Montaigne and Rousseau: ♦ focus should be on sensory perception ♦ books only to be introduced at a later stage	♦ Folk and fairy tales are still valuable genres for learners today
THIRD DEVELOPMENTAL ERA (±1750 – 20th CENTURY) ♦ knowledge explosion ♦ more sophisticated forms of LTSMs used e.g. radio, projector films, camera, etc. ♦ increase in quantity and quality of children's books ♦ *Tales of Grimm* and *Alice in Wonderland* were written in this time Supporters of sensory perception: ♦ Pestalozzi: sense impressions and visual education ♦ Fröbel: limited use of LTSMs from 2nd and 3rd eras ♦ Montessori: multisensory learning	Sense perception is still regarded as important in early childhood education. This confirms the importance of including pictures in reading material for Foundation Phase learners. Pestalozzi's belief that material objects, which are to be the instruments, should correspond with the developmental order of the child's faculties. This implies that reading material must always be developmentally appropriate which is one of the criteria discussed in Chapter 5.
FOURTH DEVELOPMENTAL ERA (±1939 to date) ♦ 'Growth spurt' in mechanical and electronic forms of LTSMs, e.g. calculators, computers, tape recorders, TV broadcasts, etc. ♦ LTSMs more readily available and also more affordable ♦ Duminy and Söhnge emphasise the value of audio-visual LTSMs ♦ Fraser *et al.* believe that reality should be brought to the classroom ♦ Claassen says LTSMs should enhance real-life situations	Even though mechanical and electronic forms of LTSMs are more readily available and more affordable, effective teaching and learning can continue by making use of other forms of LTSMs. For instance, Foundation Phase teachers who lack the necessary reading material could write their own.
ROLE OF LTSMs IN OBE CONTEXT LTSMs enhance learning through: ♦ sensory perception / experience ♦ motivation and interest ♦ attention and memory ♦ compensatory measures for disadvantaged learners ♦ self-activity / self-discovery ♦ co-operative learning ♦ integration / cross-curricular activities ♦ accommodation of learners with special educational needs	The following apply when teachers write their own reading material: 1. Sense perception and experience play a vital role in the learning process. Therefore: ♦ themes selected should fall in learners' life-world ♦ the language experience approach is ideal as stories fall in learners' life-world ♦ pictures are of vital importance in reading material

MAIN THEME	VALUE TO THE STUDY
	2. Motivation and interest enhance learning. Therefore, reading material should ♦ match learners' interests ♦ be presented in interesting ways such as novelty books ♦ be developmentally appropriate 3. Learning is enhanced by attention and memory. Therefore: ♦ pictures, colour, sound words, etc. should be included ♦ learners' interests must be considered 4. Disadvantaged learners learn best when a variety of LTSMs are used. Therefore, many genres should be available. 5. Learners learn more effectively through self-activity. Therefore, learners should be provided with opportunities to be co-creators of the curriculum. This can be done by ♦ the development of teacher-learner-authored reading material ♦ allowing learners to select themes 6. Working together enhances learning. Therefore, teacher-learner and teacher-learner-authored reading material can help to develop reading skills. 7. Individual work is often necessary. Therefore, teachers might need to write developmentally appropriate reading material for a specific learner or group of learners. 8. Learning is enhanced through the application of the totality principle. Therefore, reading material should be linked to the theme being dealt with and be used for cross-curricular activities.

MAIN THEME	VALUE TO THE STUDY
CLASSIFICATION OF LTSMs **Printed forms e.g.** ◆ books ◆ dictionaries ◆ newspaper ◆ text books ◆ worksheets **Electronic forms e.g.** ◆ computers ◆ radios ◆ video recordings ◆ language laboratories ◆ films **Physical forms e.g.** ◆ balls ◆ chalkboard ◆ display board ◆ hoops ◆ soil and stones **Human resources e.g.** ◆ librarians ◆ parents ◆ peers ◆ teachers **Animal resources e.g.** ◆ birds ◆ fish ◆ insects ◆ pets	◆ Knowledge of various forms of LTSMs gives a global view of that which is of value for Foundation Phase classrooms. ◆ The classification of LTSMs shows that reading material is also regarded as a form of LTSMs. ◆ Other forms of LTSMs could be used in combination with reading material, e.g. a printed text could be also be recorded to enhance sensory input.

MAIN THEME	VALUE TO THE STUDY
SELECTION, DESIGN AND EVALUATION OF LTSMs	The criteria apply to Chapter 5, e.g. reading material should:
Aspects to be considered:	♦ enable learners to reach the outcomes for Literacy
♦ compliance with OBE / C2005	♦ develop cognitive skills
♦ authenticity	♦ be bias-free
♦ anti-bias	♦ match learners' interests
♦ learners' interest	♦ meet organisational and technical demands
♦ developmentally appropriate	♦ be cost-effective
♦ organisational and physical aspects	♦ meet physical demands
♦ cost-effectiveness	♦ be used in an integrative way
♦ other, e.g. learning and teaching style	

CHAPTER 3

THE LEARNING THEORIES OF PIAGET, BRUNER, VYGOTSKY AND GARDNER

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Ever since education became formalised, teachers and other interested parties have realised that learning in school is often highly inefficient. For instance, the learning content could be presented to learners innumerable times without the desired results. As the professions of psychology and education developed, professionals began to ask questions and school practices were critically analysed by psychologists and teachers. It was found that the development of systematic schools of thought in psychology offered a handy tool for the crystallisation of their thinking about how children learn. Each of these schools of thought has contained (explicitly or implicitly) a theory of learning (Bigge & Shermis 1999:5).

From the above it is clear that teachers cannot develop a successful classroom practice without being *au fait* with the learning process. For this reason, it is necessary to know how learning takes place.

Several educationalists and psychologists have developed systematic, yet contrasting, theories of learning. Each learning theory implies a set of related classroom procedures. Everything teachers do in their teaching practice is influenced by their psychological views on learning. Consequently, teachers who support a specific learning theory, make professional decisions based on this theory, which in turn, affect their classroom procedures.

In this chapter, the learning theories of four educationalists/psychologists will be discussed with particular emphasis on their views regarding matters related to reading and reading material. Their views are of particular importance for understanding the development of Foundation Phase learners, the selection of suitable reading material as well as the ensuing criteria that teachers should bear in mind when developing their own reading material.

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As learning theories form the basis of the discussion of this chapter, it is necessary to ensure a common understanding of what is meant by a *learning theory*. The next section gives a brief exposition of this concept.

3.2   AN EXPOSITION OF THE CONCEPT *LEARNING THEORY*

Many definitions of a learning theory are found in the literature. Bigge and Shermis (1999:2-3) offer a comprehensive definition thereof when they say that it is a

> *designed plan for the development of a pattern of ideas accompanied by a planned procedure for carrying it out. Hence, it is a policy proposed and followed as a basis for action. A learning theory, then, is a systematic integrated outlook in regard to the nature of the process whereby people relate to their environment in such a way as to enhance their ability to use both themselves and their environments in a most effective way.*

A learning theory is therefore, more than just a description of how learning takes place. It comprises of a designed plan and various procedures that enable individuals to relate to their environment in the best way possible.

Before undertaking a study of the four learning theories selected for this study, a brief overview of learning theories is given.

3.3   LEARNING THEORIES: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Since the 17th century, many educationalists and psychologists have concentrated on developing systematic learning theories that were put to practice. According to the GDE (1999d:1,16), learning can take place in many ways, for example, through experience (as proposed by Dewey), through stimulus and response (as proposed by the behaviourists) or through role modeling (as proposed by Bandura).

Constructivists such as Piaget and Bruner, social constructivists such as Vygotsky and Gardner with his theory of multiple intelligences, added their contributions with the aim of throwing light on the teaching and learning situation. The central concern of constructivism is lived experience or the world as it as interpreted by social participants. While

constructivists see learning as an active process that requires learners to construct meaning for themselves, social constructivists argue that reality is created through processes involving social exchange (Au & Asam 1996:210). Supporters of multiple intelligences brought about a new dimension to the concept of learning.

It is important to note that learning theories cannot always fit into a watertight compartment as some of them often overlap. For example, developers of many theories emphasise a particular viewpoint on cognitive development. Vygotsky, for instance, emphasises the role of culture in cognitive development (Meyer & Van Ede 1998:70-71). He could, however, be grouped either with the cognitivists, as he puts the emphasis on cognitive skills or with the multiculturalists who are of the opinion that education should make provision for cultural differences amongst learners (GDE 1999d:19).

Within the scope of this study, only the learning theories of the following four theorists will be discussed:

- ◆ Jean Piaget (see 3.4)
- ◆ Jerome S Bruner (see 3.5)
- ◆ Lev Vygotsky (see 3.6)
- ◆ Howard Gardner (see 3.7)

The selection of these four particular learning theorists is based on two major factors. Firstly, the theory of constructivism is particularly compatible with OBE (GDE 1999d:23-24). Secondly, Wood (1999:15) says that the curriculum should be created at local level (which is in line with OBE). The curriculum should, however, be based on certain guiding principles, one of which is that the curriculum should evolve from a sound knowledge base. Thirdly, the research of Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky and Gardner is of particular importance as they underpin current views related to language. Information gained from undertaking a literature review on the learning theories of these four theorists should serve as a knowledge base to sustain the topic of this study.

Piaget's theory is the first of the four theories to be discussed.

3.4   PIAGET'S THEORY OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The distinguished Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget (1896-1980) is one of the best-known and most influential psychologists of the 20th century. Although he is much more a developmental psychologist than a learning theorist (Bigge & Shermis 1999:18), his theory on cognitive development has played a major role in developing today's theory of effective teaching and learning practices (Roberts 1996b:10).

3.4.1   MOTIVATION FOR THE SELECTION OF PIAGET'S THEORY

Although there are hardly any references to reading and reading material in any of Piaget's writings, he has made a major contribution to learning and development. The question may justifiably be asked: *Why include his theory in this study?*

Firstly, Piaget's theory has been chosen in the absence of an eminent South African alternative. The understanding of some of the aspects related to developmental psychology should help Foundation Phase teachers to grasp the different types of reading material that appeal to their learners while criteria for teacher-authored reading material could be based on this information. Secondly, it is reasonable to assume that the principles involved in reading instruction would not differ drastically from Piaget's general principles of learning and development because reading is a cognitive activity (Wadsworth 1978:144). Thirdly, Piaget developed his learning theory long before the introduction of OBE. Yet he already emphasised several related aspects such as experiential learning, constructivism and the facilitation of the learning process (Wakefield 1996:166), all of which are loudly applauded in OBE. Even though Piaget's research was undertaken with Swiss children, the results are relevant within the South African context (Mwamwenda 1996:107-135).

3.4.2   AN EXPOSITION OF PIAGET'S THEORY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THIS
STUDY

The focus is firstly placed on Piaget's contribution to the body of knowledge regarding children's cognitive development.

3.4.2.1 Cognitive development

Piaget's theory of cognitive development (cognitive functioning/operations) determines the forms of knowledge that are constructed by children at a given stage of development. Learning is a co-construction of the child and the teacher. This construction occurs in different ways at different ages, but it proceeds whenever children have the opportunity to think on their own or in relation to other children (Piaget 1967:8). New knowledge is the result of a creative activity in which the child builds on prior mental constructions while the teacher provides the appropriate building material. Therefore, successful learning requires a match between curriculum materials and the state of the child's understanding (Sameroff & McDonough 1994:189).

Mental growth thus implies that a child moves from simpler to more complex systems of logical operations, a process that is affected by the transformation and internalisation of action into thought (Bruner 1997:66). Both Piaget (1976:14) and Lansing (1970:231) elaborate on the concept *operations*. They see operations as internalised perceptual actions or perceptual movements that are reversible. This means that actions can return to the starting point and can be integrated with other actions also possessing this feature of reversibility.

Furthermore, Piaget (1967:8) believes that childhood is a progressive adaptation to the physical and social environment that is the ultimate goal of intellectual development. Cognitive development occurs when thought assimilates or 'takes in' an object, event or idea. Thereafter, accommodation takes place when thought adjusts to whatever has been taken in. Adaptation (cognitive development) is an ongoing process of assimilating and accommodating aspects from the environment. The result of a person's interaction with the environment results in cognitive development and is determined by the following four factors:

♦ **Maturation.** Hereditary factors determine the maturation of the nervous and endocrine systems. At a predetermined stage, these two systems reach a certain maturational level that enables one to function and interact with the environment in a particular way.

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♦ **Social interaction and transmission**. Children learn through play as well as social interaction and transmission of knowledge by teachers, parents and other persons such as peers.

♦ **Experience and practice**. Although maturation of the nervous and endocrine systems influences a person's cognitive development, experience and practice (activity) are needed for cognitive development to take place.

♦ **Equilibration**. A person's cognitive development is also influenced by his or her own attempts to solve problems and to learn new things. Piaget (1977:8) refers to this self-motivating process as **equilibration**. Equilibration is the learners' ability to regulate the process of assimilation (input of new information into existing schemata) and accommodation (development of new or modification of old schemata). Equilibration therefore, refers to the balance between assimilation and accommodation, a balance for which the brain is constantly striving. A state of equilibration is reached when a person's existing knowledge and cognitive structures are sufficient to cope with the stimuli from the environment (Wakefield 1996:506). When children come across inconsistencies in their knowledge or discover that their existing knowledge is insufficient to cope with the environment, a state of **disequilibration** sets in. Disequilibration is therefore, a state of cognitive imbalance (Wood & Attfield 1996:21). When it occurs, the brain is motivated to assimilate and accommodate information. Learners then need to adjust their thinking and knowledge in order to reach a state of equilibration again (Meyer & Van Ede 1998:73). Equilibration can thus be seen as a self-regulatory mechanism through which a person is driven to understand what has been perceived (Wakefield 1996:506).

Wakefield (1996:168) aptly uses the following practical example to explain the concept of equilibration: Equilibration acts like a 'thermostat' for accommodation. As soon as a thermostat 'senses' that the temperature of a room or an engine is too high or too low, it activates the heating or cooling system until 'equilibration' has been restored at which point the system cuts off. Intellectual equilibration works in a similar way. Disequilibration activates accommodation until equilibration is restored and a person understands what has been perceived. Equilibration does not result in the recovery of an earlier state of balance but in the achievement of a higher level of equilibration that is consistent with the person's level of maturation and experience (Meyer & Van Ede 1998:73).

Piaget views cognitive development as a constant interaction between maturation, practice and experience, social interaction and transmission as well as equilibration. His theory is based on the assumption that people try to make sense of their world and actively create their knowledge through direct experience with objects, other people and ideas. Maturation, activity, social transmission and the need for equilibration all have an influence on the way in which thinking processes and knowledge develop through adaptation (including the process of assimilation and accommodation) and changes in the organisation of thought which implies the development of schemes (Meyer & Van Ede 1998:71-72).

Maintaining that knowledge is created as children interact with their social and physical environment, Piaget (1967:5-6) postulated four stages (periods) of cognitive development, ranging from birth to adolescence. Wood and Attfield (1996:21) say that these stages are linked to the concept of readiness (critical periods when a child is ready to learn). Each stage is characterised by an increased degree of equilibration. These stages are the following:

♦ The **infancy** stage (from birth to approximately two years): This is the period prior to the development of language and thought as such.

♦ The **pre-operational** stage: This period is subdivided into the pre-conceptual stage (approximately two to four years) and the intuitive stage (approximately four to seven years).

♦ The **concrete-operational** stage: This is the stage of concrete intellectual operations or the beginning of logic (approximately seven to eleven years).

♦ The **formal operational** stage (eleven years and onward): This is the stage of abstract intellectual operations. Learners are able to perform hypothetical-deductive reasoning, which also involves abstract intellectual or scientific thinking as well as inductive reasoning.

As this study puts the focus on Foundation Phase learners, it is necessary to discuss the stage of **intuitive thought** as well as the **concrete-operational** stage in more detail as most Foundation Phase learners function in these two stages.

(a)   The stage of intuitive intelligence (4-7 years)

Intuitive thought refers to thinking that is not based on logic but on perceptions from which conclusions are drawn (Boden 1994:47; Meyer & Van Ede 1998:77; Owens 2002:301).

The following include the cognitive characteristics of children in this stage:

♦ Children do not yet understand what a concept involves. In the place of logic they substitute the mechanism of intuition, which is a simple internalisation of percepts and movements in the form of representational images and mental experiences.

♦ Children do not yet understand conservation (for instance, a litre of water remains the same volume although the container into which the liquid is poured differs in size and shape).

♦ Cognitive egocentrism is another limitation in the thinking of pre-operational children. This implies that they view the world from their own personal perspective. They cannot mentally place themselves in another person's position and have difficulty in seeing points of view of others. They also tend to focus on one dimension of a problem only.

♦ Children reason neither inductively (from the general to the specific) nor deductively (from the specific to the general). Instead, they reason from the particular to the particular, which is referred to as transductive reasoning (Piaget 1951:233).

♦ The non-permanence rule does not simply disappear after the age of two. Instead, it appears in the realism of fantasy, dreams, fairy tales, et cetera. Children also attribute non-permanence to natural phenomena such as the wind and moon as well as to objects that can be manipulated (Subbotsky 1996:237).

♦ Early in this period, children acquire semiotic functions. This means that they are able to mentally represent objects and events as can be seen in their ability to imitate some activity long after it has occurred (Piaget 1967:5).

◆ With regard to imagery, Inhelder (1976:147) points out that insufficiently coordinated centralisations and irreversibility of thought go hand in hand with static imagery. Anticipatory imagery at first leads to distortion, as does preoperational thought itself.

◆ Children are concerned with the final product because they focus on the way things look at a particular moment and not on changes of things or how things got that way. This is related to their inability to reverse their thinking (Beaty 1994:212).

(b)   The implications of cognitive development in the intuitive stage for this study

The knowledge gained thus far has certain implications for this study, namely

(i)   Implications for the selection of types of reading material

The characteristics of children in this stage should guide teachers in the selection of the various types of reading material that could be used. As children begin to use language more successfully to verbalise their mental activities, they are better able to generalise their experiences. They become more interested in realistic fiction that gives them a chance to relate to one or more of the story characters and to react realistically to the environment.

Older children in this stage enjoy non-fiction accounts as well as realistic fiction. These genres indicate the range of interests these children have. Exposure to many different genres allows them to test some of their growing knowledge about the environment and provides exercise for their creative imagination. (See Chapter 4 for a more detailed explanation of the types of reading material referred to.)

(ii)   Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material

The traits of these children play an important role in setting criteria for teacher-authored reading material (see 4.7). Towards the end of the intuitive stage, children gradually become more able to project themselves into roles and appreciate positive or negative traits depicted by characters in the story. They start to develop a sense of empathy for others such as disabled people. Their growing ability to project themselves into the situations of others could suggest a need for experiences with realism in literature. Differences between how things look and how they really are have not been completely

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worked out by children in this stage but they should be allowed to read and enjoy fantasy without being concerned about whether or not a story is 'real'. Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that children in this stage are more prone to literal belief and may understand figurative language in a literal sense. (See Chapter 5 for the various criteria referred to.)

(c)   *The concrete-operational stage (7-11 years)*

The concrete-operational stage hails the beginning of logical thinking based on past experiences and concrete evidence (Mwamwenda 1996:103). This stage marks a decisive turning point in learners' mental development as the beginnings of the construction of logic itself begin to emerge. Logic constitutes the system of relationships that permit the coordination of points of view corresponding to different individuals as well as those that correspond to the successive percepts or intuitions of the same individual (Piaget 1967:41).

Piaget (1967:38-41) believes that four important logical operations start to develop during this stage, namely

♦ conservation, which refers to the understanding that equivalencies underlie all changes in appearance (for example, two groups of three are the same as a set with six elements) and forms the basis of a child's ability to find a solution to many concrete problems;

♦ classification (which makes deductive reasoning possible), seriation (the ability to arrange objects or events according to some property) and an understanding of cause and effect relationships;

♦ reversibility where children develop the ability to see in their minds how things looked before and after change took place and

♦ mental imagery (perception, memory or imagination).

Abstract thought remains the biggest limitation in this stage. Therefore, children in this stage cannot think about abstract ideas such as democracy (Meyer & Van Ede 1998:80) but can reason in terms of concrete reality. They start to construct logical rationales for

their positions on issues dealing with topics such as the environment or social relationships.

(d) *The implications of cognitive development in the concrete-operational stage for this study*

Piaget's theory of cognitive development has the several implications for the selection of the various types of teacher-authored reading material and the criteria needed for the development thereof. The different types of reading material referred to are discussed in detail in Chapter 4 while the criteria referred to are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

(i) *Implications for the selection of types of reading material*

With regard to the selection of the types of reading material, it is of importance to note that when children enter this stage, they reach a new level of self-development that allows them to understand some of the ways in which they are related to other people. They are also better able to deal with reversibility and conservation. Through play and language, they begin to understand the physical and social world. This seems to imply the importance of realistic fiction that encourages children to interact with characters who are involved in a conflict situation. During this stage, children's time concepts have improved. Consequently, they are more ready for stories about the past, to read about real-life heroes and to read stories which move between the past and present such as legends.

Learners who find themselves in this stage also begin to apply logic to concrete experiences with the result that they begin to move beyond one-dimensional thinking. This enables them to relate one event to a system of interrelated parts. They gradually start perceiving an event from the beginning to the end and from the conclusion to the beginning. They can, however, only reason about what they have read if the material is closely related to their direct experience. For this reason, the environment should enrich their direct experience. These characteristics, together with their ability to indulge in mental imagery, enable learners to understand picture story books, folk tales, realistic fiction and books written for bibliotherapy.

(ii)   *Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material*

Piaget (see 3.4.2.1) points out that the thought patterns of children in this stage become more logical. For this reason, they are better able to understand figurative language, humour and fantasy. Therefore, these aspects could be included in reading material for Foundation Phase learners. (See 5.2.1.4 & 5.2.3 respectively.)

As can be seen, knowledge of the cognitive development of children in the intuitive and concrete-operational stage play a significant role in this study as they underpin many of the genres suggested in Chapter 4 as well as the criteria identified in Chapter 5. Knowledge of children's cognitive development also underpins knowledge regarding their social, emotional and moral development as can be seen in the next section.

3.4.2.2   Social, emotional and moral development

Kitchener (1996:28) points out that Piaget's views on affective, social and moral development have received less attention in the literature mainly because much of his research has not yet been translated from French. (Kitchener has undertaken a study in this field and has managed to make many of these translated works available in English.)

According to Piaget (1967:33),

> *there is a close parallel between the development of affectivity and that of the intellectual functions, since these are two indissociable aspects of every action.*

In support of Piaget's view, Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991:26) say that children's cognitive development and affectivity are as inseparable as the two sides of a coin. As emotional development goes hand in hand with social development, it can be deduced that children's cognitive, social and emotional development are inseparable. Closely linked with children's social, emotional and intellectual development is their moral development. Kohlberg, a well-known theorist on moral development, was inspired by Piaget's work. Kohlberg maintains that children progress through different stages of moral development that are based on cognitive development (Du Toit & Kruger 1993:127; Louw, Van Ede & Ferns 1998:376). Therefore, it can be assumed that cognitive, social, emotional and moral development are closely linked.

(a) The social, emotional and moral characteristics of children in the intuitive stage

Based on Piaget's input regarding cognitive development, it can be deduced that children in the intuitive stage portray the following social, emotional and moral characteristics:

♦ Egocentrism features very strongly with regard to children's social, emotional and moral lives. Initially, these children are not yet able to distinguish between their own point of view and that of others. Consequently, they cannot place themselves mentally in another person's position (Kitchener 1996:38). Spontaneous social relationships as well as interpersonal feelings such as feelings of affection, sympathy and antipathy only start to develop towards the end of this stage (Piaget 1967:34).

♦ The morals of the young child remain heteronymous, that is, essentially subject to an external will which is that of respected persons such as parents (Piaget 1967:37). Respect is the source of the first moral feelings and consists of affection and fear. The first moral precept of the child is obedience and the first criterion of what is good is, for a long time, the will of the parents. The moral values thus engendered are normative values in the sense that they are no longer determined by spontaneous regulations in the manner of sympathies or antipathies but rather (thanks to respect) by rules as such. They feel strongly about issues such as speaking the truth and not stealing. These feelings do not emanate from their own minds but as coming from adults and are, therefore, accepted blindly. 'Right' is to obey the will of the adult and 'wrong' is to have a will of one's own (Piaget 1932:193). This stage is also referred to as the stage of moral realism (Owens 2002:472).

♦ Closely linked to the interests or activity-related values are the feelings of self-evaluation, namely the well-known feelings of inferiority and feelings of superiority. All their successes and failures become registered in a kind of permanent scale of values. Successes elevate children's pretensions and failures lower them and influence their future actions. As a result, children are gradually led to evaluate themselves, a factor which may have serious repercussions on their whole development. In particular, certain anxieties result from real, but more often, imaginary failures (Piaget 1967:35).

(b) The implications of social, emotional and moral development in the intuitive stage for this study

Knowledge regarding the social, emotional and moral development of children in this stage has the implications for the genres and criteria that apply to teacher-authored reading material.

(i) Implications for the selection of types of reading material

The characteristics of children in the intuitive stage help to determine the types of reading material that is suitable for Foundation Phase learners. These learners have progressed toward the end of the intuitive stage. They are on the verge of entering the concrete-operational stage with the result that there is a decline in their egocentrism. Therefore, picture story books are highly suitable as they, *inter alia,* develop social skills and provide opportunities for learners to identify with characters by allowing them to feel the emotions of others. Folk tales are suitable as they provide a fantasy world in which learners can view their own fears and frustrations. Children's poetry can also be considered as this genre often appeals to children's emotions.

(ii) Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material

With regard to criteria for developing teacher-authored reading material, moral issues need to be considered. As normative issues feature strongly, children value issues such as speaking the truth. Therefore, characters should uphold normative values that are in line with a specific culture. Fantasy stories could be included as these help children to gain better insight into the lives of others and also promote self-knowledge. Multicultural reading material could be considered, as children start to develop feelings of affection, sympathy and antipathy towards the end of this stage.

(c) The social, emotional and moral characteristics of children in the concrete operational stage

Moral and social feelings of co-operation start to develop more strongly during this stage. With respect to affectivity, the same system of social and individual coordination engenders a morality of cooperation and personal autonomy in contrast to the intuitive heteronymous morality of the small child (Piaget 1967:60).

This new system of values presents, in the affective sphere, the equivalent of logic in the realism of intelligence. The mental instruments, which will facilitate logical and moral coordination, are equal to the operations in the field of intelligence and the will in the field of affectivity. These two new realities are closely linked as both result from the same inversion or conversion of primitive egocentricity (Piaget 1967:41).

Social, emotional and moral characteristics of children in the concrete-operational stage include the following:

♦ Children gradually start overcoming the limitations of egocentrism and centration when they progress to the stage of concrete operations (Owens 2002:415).

♦ Affectivity from seven to eleven years is characterised by the appearance of new moral feelings and above all, by an organisation of will, which culminates in the integration of the self and a more effective regulation of affective life (Piaget 1967:55).

♦ At the age of approximately seven years, most learners develop an enormous respect for rules that must be obeyed at all times. Children find themselves in the phase of heteronymous morality, which is also referred to as the phase of moral realism (Louw *et al.* 1998:374-375). They consider rules as moral absolutes and if violated, the 'trespasser' should be punished (Wakefield 1996:250).

(d)　　*The implications of social, emotional and moral development in the concrete operational stage for this study*

The selection of the types of material for learners in this stage is guided by the preceding knowledge.

(i)　　*Implications for the selection of types of reading material*

Picture story books are ideal because they develop social skills, values and norms, nourish the emotions and provide opportunity for coming into contact with diversity. Folk tales, especially animal tales are suitable as they allow readers to project themselves into the reality of the story. Piaget (see 3.4.4.2) believes that children in this stage are able to internalise moral values and examine rules that govern their lives. Therefore, stories

portraying characters that break rules and the consequences of their actions appeal strongly to them. Myths and fairy tales are, therefore, a good choice as one of the characteristics of these two sub-genres is that punishment for disobedience is induced. Fables are also suitable as they portray a moral lesson to be learnt.

Realistic fiction is a suitable genre as children in this stage are better able to view the world in a realistic way. Books written for bibliotherapy will appeal to most children in this stage as they deal with emotional concerns. Cartoon-style books portraying characters performing the near impossible could also be considered as children are better able to distinguish between fantasy and reality. The inclusion of children's poetry can help to convey cultural heritage that children in this stage are better able to understand.

(ii)   Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material

Moral issues should feature very strongly in the material. As these learners are better able to think logically, fear and violence, which affect the emotions, could be included, provided that the learners are emotionally ready to deal with these issues. As learners in this stage become more liberated from egocentrism, social feelings and co-operation become more prevalent (see 3.4.2.2). For this reason, learners can be exposed to multicultural literature.

Piaget's cognitive development makes a major contribution to understanding Foundation Phase learners' social, emotional and moral development. This knowledge verifies many of the types of reading material suggested in Chapter 4 as well as the criteria for the development of reading material in Chapter 5.

As reading material is a form of LTSMs, it is essential to take note of Piaget's views regarding this matter.

3.4.3   THE ROLE OF LTSMs IN PIAGET'S THEORY

Piaget (1968:5) highlights the importance of LTSMs in the didactic situation when he says:

> ... so we need pupils which are active, who learn early to find out by themselves, partly by their own spontaneous activity and partly through material we set up for them...

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A question that comes to mind is the following: *What if schools cannot fund the purchase material (LTSMs)?*

Wadsworth (1978:116) answers the question by stating that, in Piaget's opinion,

> *... the inquisitive child does not require a factory-made toy to learn, and such purchased materials will not ensure that learning takes place.*

Piaget believes that LTSMs form an essential part of young children's cognitive, social, emotional and moral development but these materials do not have to be expensive or be purchased to ensure effective learning and development. This implies that teachers should be empowered to develop their own LTSMs where necessary.

From a Piagetian perspective, Ferreiro (1990:14) believes that literacy development takes place when children build up interpretation systems in a developmentally ordered way. These systems act as schemes through which information is interpreted, permitting children to make sense of the printed word and when new information is encountered, these schemes need to be modified. Learners can develop these schemes if they are offered ample opportunities to read, which in turn, requires sufficient developmentally appropriate reading material. Where many learners live in a non-literate community, the school has the enormous task of providing learners with literacy experiences that parents cannot provide. The task of teachers is, therefore, to provide the material for reading instruction and/or reading for enjoyment.

Piaget's theory provides ample support for this study but it would not be complete without taking cognisance of the criticisms of it.

3.4.4 CRITICISMS OF PIAGET'S THEORY

Several points of criticism have been raised concerning Piaget's theory. One of these is that children are cognitively more advanced for their age and less egocentric than Piaget thought (Meyer & Van Ede 1998:82; Owens 2002:200). It must be noted, however, that the number of years of schooling is one of the many factors that determine successful performance (Mwamwenda 1996:147).

A second point of criticism lies in the question whether Piaget's research is relevant to South African learners since most of his research was undertaken in Switzerland. Research findings show that Piaget's stages of development generally follow the same sequence in all cultures, although the rate at which they occur might differ. Although the environment influences the age at which these are attained, it has been found that Western children tend to perform certain cognitive tasks at a younger age (Meyer & Van Ede 1998:82; Mwamwenda 1996:141).

Another point of criticism is that many preschoolers are already able to consider the perspective of others if the problems presented to them are both meaningful and understandable. In addition, children do not necessarily belong to either the stage of moral realism or moral relativism but may offer situation-specific responses. This implies that his theory regarding moral development is too simplistic.

A final criticism is that Piaget did not put much emphasis on cultural variables that can play a role in learning and development (Owens 2002:304).

The criticisms mentioned raises the question: *Is Piaget's theory still relevant in the 21st century?*

Perhaps Piaget personally answers this question when he states that he has laid down only a 'rough sketch' of human development. He admits that further research would certainly identify missing parts from the sketch, modify existing parts and discard some of these parts (Owens 2002:305).

Despite the criticisms, Piaget's theory remains of great value to all interested in the cognitive, social, affective and moral development of children.

As a rather detailed discussion of Piaget's theory was offered, it is necessary to highlight the most important issues that were addressed.

3.4.5   SUMMARY OF PIAGET'S THEORY

The focus of the discussion has been on Piaget's developmental theory. He was interested in the origins of logical, mathematical and scientific thought and wanted to establish the relationship between biological and cognitive development (Wood & Attfield 1996:21). He postulated four main stages of cognitive development by showing how intellectual construction begins in the sensorimotor structures of babies' intelligence, continues throughout the intuitive and concrete-operational stage, reaching its zenith in the abstract and logical structures of the formal operational stage. Knowledge of children's intellectual development is essential as it goes hand-in-hand with their social, emotional and moral development.

Despite criticisms against Piaget's theory, it still has several implications for education today. Piaget's description of the intuitive and concrete-operational stages brings about an awareness of how Foundation Phase learners generally differ in their thinking at different stages in their lives. Knowledge of children's cognitive, social, emotional and moral development in the two stages is of value to teachers who are in the process of writing developmentally appropriate reading material for Foundation Phase learners. Firstly, the knowledge can be applied when deciding on the type of reading material (see Chapter 4). Secondly, many of the criteria for writing developmentally appropriate reading material in Chapter 5 are based on information gained from Piaget's learning theory.

The next learning theory to be discussed is that of Bruner.

3.5   BRUNER'S THEORY OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Jerome S Bruner (1915-), an eminent American developmental psychologist and leading interpreter and promoter of Piaget's theory (see 3.4), proposes his own theory of cognitive development (http:www2.potsdam.edu/CRANE/camp...nitive-theories/bruner-main.1.html). His theory is, however, not as extensive as that of Piaget. Knowing that there is a vast number of learning theories, the question can rightly be asked: *Why is Bruner's theory included in this study?*

3.5.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE SELECTION OF BRUNER'S THEORY

Several reasons justify the selection of Bruner's theory for this study. Firstly, Bruner's theory of cognitive development follows closely on the work done by Piaget (see 3.4). His theory is also influenced by Vygotsky's theory (see 3.6). Although his theory differs markedly from that of Piaget, there are several similarities in the two theories that are of interest to this study. Secondly, Bruner regards human beings as primarily information processors, learners, thinkers, creators and storytellers (Bigge & Shermis 1999:133). These aspects are of importance to this study because it is expected that teachers should fulfil all these roles. Thirdly, social and cultural factors play a significant role in Bruner's theory of cognitive development (Driscoll 1994:208) and are of particular importance to this study. Fourthly, Bruner addresses the role of poverty in childhood, an aspect that is most relevant to this study as many teachers in South Africa teach learners from poverty-stricken environments. Lastly, Bruner underlines the importance of active learning (http://www.drexel.edu/academics/teachered/hdl/manual/bruner.htm), which is in line with the philosophy of OBE.

Having motivated the selection of Bruner's theory for this study, a brief exposition thereof follows.

3.5.2 AN EXPOSITION OF BRUNER'S THEORY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THIS STUDY

Bruner, like Piaget, did extensive research on the learning and development of children. As his research cannot be discussed in full within the scope of this study, only those aspects that are of particular relevance have been selected.

3.5.2.1 Bruner's view regarding the purpose of education

Bruner regards education as a key instrument of the culture through which intellectual skills are developed. In his view, the emphasis in education should be placed on

> *student skills in handling things, and performing symbolic operations, particularly as they relate to the technologies that make them so powerful in their human, that is, cultural expression* (Driscoll 1994:134).

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There is, however, a major difference between the ways in which culture is transferred within a technical society and an indigenous one where culture is transmitted in the form of actions (Bruner 1971:52-53; 1985:5-8).

3.5.2.2 Implications of Bruner's purpose of education for this study

Teachers play a key role in learners' cognitive development, which includes the development of reading skills. This becomes evident in the following two statements:

It is always the **schooling** *variable that makes qualitative differences in directions of growth* (Bruner 1971:47). (Own cursivation)

The growth of the mind is always assisted **from the outside** *and the limits of growth depend on how a culture assists the individual to use his or her* **intellectual** *potential* (Bruner 1971:52). (Own cursivation)

Teachers form part of the schooling variable and are the ones from the 'outside' that must take responsibility for intellectual growth in learners so that they can optimise their potential. One of the goals of education is to empower learners to perform symbolic operations (see 3.5.2.5) but without developmentally appropriate reading material, reading skills cannot be developed. Where there is no reading material or a lack of suitable material, it becomes the responsibility of teachers to develop their own reading material.

3.5.2.3 Patterns of growth

Bruner (1966:1) states that instruction is an effort to assist or shape intellectual growth. This process

♦ takes place through discovery learning;
♦ moves toward an increase in independence;
♦ depends on internalising events or situations into mental representations;
♦ depends upon internalising events into a 'storage system' that corresponds with the environment and makes it possible for learners to gradually 'go beyond' the information encountered on a single occasion by making predictions from their stored model of the world and

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♦ depends upon a systematic and conditional interaction between a teacher, parent or peer (someone who has already acquired the necessary skills) and the learner.

3.5.2.4 Implications of patterns of growth for this study

The ideal is for learners to become increasingly more independent readers. To achieve this goal, it is necessary for teachers to understand the various levels of reading development. This knowledge is needed to provide learners with the correct reading material (commercially available or teacher-authored). The goal can also be achieved through systematic interaction between teachers and learners. Learners can become independent readers through discovery learning. Providing ample opportunities to read together with exposure to a variety of genres allows them to discover new words, various genres, cultural similarities, et cetera.

3.5.2.5 Representations of the world

Bruner (1966:10-11) proposes three systems of processing information that enable individuals understand their world.

In particular, he suggests that humans respond to their environment

> through action or patterned motor acts, through conventionalised imagery and perception and through language and reason (Driscoll 1994:209).

Like Piaget, Bruner maintains that each child passes through three stages and that learning will depend primarily on the developmental level that the child has reached. Bruner's theory encompasses three major sequential stages that he refers to as representations or modes. These are enactive, iconic and symbolic representations and can also be described as ways of knowing (Roberts 1996b:15).

(a) Enactive representation

In this stage, children understand things best through action (motor responses). Words are defined in terms of actions that are associated with them (Bruner 1966:10). Knowing is thus related to movement, direct experience or concrete activities (Roberts 1996b:15).

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According to Behr (1980:25) and Roberts (1996b:15), this stage is comparable to Piaget's sensorimotor and pre-operational stages taken together (see 3.4.2.1).

(b)   *Iconic representation*

This form of representation involves knowing that is related to visual, spatial or graphic representations such as pictures (Bruner 1964:2; Bruner 1966:11; Roberts 1996b:15). Both Romiszowski (1988:24) and Mwamwenda (1996:105) explain that, on this level, learners deal with the mental images of past experiences with objects but do not manipulate them directly. They can interact with objects that are not physically present but are readily 'available' in their mind. For example, children who can draw a picture of their home while they are at school, represent their knowledge in an iconic way (Driscoll 1994:209). According to Behr (1980:25) and Roberts (1996b:15), this stage is comparable to Piaget's concrete-operational stage (see 3.4.2.1).

(c)   *Symbolic representation*

Enactive representation and iconic representation are followed by symbolic representation.

> *Finally, there is representation in the form of words or language. Its hallmark is that it is symbolic in nature, with certain features of symbolic systems that are only now coming to be understood* (Bruner 1966:11).

When learners reach this level, they are able to manipulate symbols and no longer need mental images of objects (Romiszowski 1988:24). The stage is referred to as 'symbolic' because learners now have a good command of language that enables them to use symbols (Mwamwenda 1996:105). Learners should now be able to reason logically and solve problems. According to Behr (1980:25) and Roberts (1996b:15), this stage is comparable to Piaget's formal operational stage (see 3.4.2.1).

Although Bruner (1966:49) believes that the usual course of intellectual development moves from enactive through iconic to symbolic representation, these stages are not linked to a learner's age because some environments can slow the sequence down or even bring it to a halt while others move along faster through the stages (Bigge & Shermis 1999:139).

In fact, Bruner (1960:33) believes that

> *any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectual way to any child at any stage of development.*

The preceding statement implies that there is no unique sequence for all learners. Factors including past learning, stage of development, the nature of the learning content and individual differences all influence intellectual development. When learners have acquired a well-developed symbolic system, it may be possible to by-pass the first two stages (Bruner 1966:49).

In essence, Bruner's learning theory suggests that teachers should teach and assess their learners on all three levels referred to in order to ensure their optimal intellectual growth (http://www.drexel.edu/academics/teachered/hdl/manual/bruner.htm).

The following serves as a practical example:

♦ Looking at a real dog would be on the concrete (enactive) level.
♦ Looking at a picture of the dog would be on the iconic level.
♦ Reading the word *dog* would be on the symbolic level.

3.5.2.6 Implications of representations of the world for this study

With regard to the types of reading material, picture story books (see 4.6.1.2) are well-suited, as the reading material should be related to a concrete reality, followed by pictures and text (visual and symbolic representation. With regard to criteria, characters should be linked to the life-world of learners.

3.5.2.7 Transferability as learning

Bruner (1971:71) believes that learners need to be taught in such a way that they will use the learning content or skills in different situations again. The following should be noted:

♦ Children should realise that they can use the acquired information and skills in different situations and that these facts and skills are linked with other facts, skills and situations.

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They should be offered opportunities to realise that the information and skills can be used to solve problems.

♦ Learners should approach new learning content in such a way that it fits in with their existing frame of reference thereby making it 'their own'. New information and skills should, therefore, be integrated with existing knowledge and skills.

♦ Learners should be activated in such a way that they realise their own capacity to solve problems and experience enough success, which will act as an incentive. Not only is competence self-rewarding but it also enhances motivation.

3.5.2.8 Implications of transferability of learning for this study

Transferability and learning are relevant to reading in that learners should be made aware that they can go beyond the information and skills taught. This means that they can use the acquired knowledge and skills (for example, word recognition skills) in other situations. However, a variety of reading material is needed to enable learners to transfer their knowledge and skills. Where there is a shortage, teachers need to develop their own reading material to enable learners to develop reading competence, which in turn, could enhance reading motivation (see 3.5.2.9).

3.5.2.9 Role of motivation, structure and reinforcement in instruction

The following factors underlie Bruner's theory of instruction:

(a) Motivation

Mwamwenda (1996:215) summarises Bruner's view on motivation when he says that most children have a desire to explore and learn. Teachers should use this phenomenon to foster their learners' intellectual growth. Almost all children possess intrinsic motives for learning. An intrinsic motive does not depend upon reward that lies outside the activity. Instead, reward is derived from the success of the activity or even in performing the activity itself. One of the intrinsic motives to learn is curiosity. A person's attention is attracted to something that is unclear, unfinished or uncertain. Attention is sustained until the matter at hand is clarified, finished or when certainty is obtained (Bruner 1966:114-116).

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Another intrinsic motive for learning is the drive to achieve competence. Cultures, however, vary in their evaluation of intellectual mastery as a vehicle to express competence (Bruner 1966:121). Motivation is also strongly linked to identification. A person has a strong tendency to model oneself and one's aspirations upon another person. Being like this other person allows one to experience feelings of pleasure.

(b) **Structure**

The learning content should be in keeping with learners' cognitive structure and understanding. For this reason, new material should be linked to learners' pre-knowledge (progression from the known to the unknown).

(c) **Reinforcement**

Feedback is of the utmost importance and can take the form of praise, rewards or good marks. Reinforcement encourages and sustains positive academic and social behaviour (Driscoll 1994:224).

3.5.2.10 Implications of motivation, structure and reinforcement for this study

The following assumptions can be made with regard to the development of reading material:

◆ Most children are characterised by their curiosity and a natural desire to read. At the same time, curiosity helps to sustain their motivation and attention. Therefore, teachers need to ensure that the available reading material stimulates curiosity and the desire to read. If not, they need to develop their own material that meets these criteria.

◆ As motivation is linked to identification, it is imperative that both parents and teachers act as positive role models. By engaging in reading themselves or reading to their children or learners, they can motivate them to read by themselves. If there is a shortage of reading material in the classroom from which teachers can read to their learners for enjoyment, they need to write their own material.

♦ Reading material used for discovery learning is likely to increase motivation and is self-rewarding. All the genres referred to in Chapter 4 could serve this purpose. A variety in the genre of books leads learners to discover the differences in genres. At the same, a variety of reading material provides opportunities to discover new interests, new worlds, cultural differences and similarities, gender equality and solutions to problems. Where there is a shortage, teachers should consider writing their own developmentally appropriate material.

Reading material should always contain several known words together with some unknown words and be linked with learners' experience and pre-knowledge. (This is in keeping with Bruner's view that new concepts should be linked to previous knowledge.) In this way, the reading material is structured as it becomes increasingly more difficult. Teachers who do not have structured reading material, for example, basal readers (see 4.6.1.9), need to develop their own basal readers or ensure that any other material that they develop, is structured as well.

Concerning reinforcement, Bruner stresses the importance of providing opportunities to allow learners to reinforce their newly-acquired skills such as word recognition skills. By providing multiple opportunities to read a variety of genres, the stage is set for providing such opportunities as many activities can be planned using the available reading material.

3.5.2.11 Bruner's views on folk psychology

Bruner (1996:46) believes that the causes of learning and the quest for meaning lie within a specific culture. He uses the term *folk psychology* to refer to a 'wired-in' human tendency that reflects some deeply ingrained cultural beliefs about the mind.

He continues his explanation when he says it is about

> *human agents acting on the basis of their beliefs and desires, their striving for goals, and their meeting obstacles which, extended over time, they either beat or are beaten by* (Bruner in Bigge & Shermis 1999:137).

In folk psychology it is the 'how', 'for whom' and 'when' that are problematic. The challenge is always to situate one's knowledge in the living context that poses the problem. With regard to education, the living context is the classroom, which is situated in a broader

culture. In theorising about the practice of education in the learning situation, one should take into account the folk theories that those engaged in the teaching practice already have. Any innovations will have to 'compete' with, modify or replace existing folk theories that guide both teachers and learners (Bruner 1996:44, 46).

It can be deduced that folk psychology involves a person's attitude when confronted by obstacles. (One immediately thinks of the paradigm shift that teachers, learners and parents had to make with the introduction of OBE.)

3.5.2.12 Implications of folk psychology for this study

Folk psychology asks the question whether Foundation Phase teachers are prepared to overcome their problems regarding LTSMs such as reading material or be beaten by it. In an attempt to overcome the problem, they could develop their own reading material. Alternatively, they could ignore the problem or rely **solely** on external sources such as the private sector to provide more funds for the purchase of books, thereby being 'beaten' by the problem.

3.5.2.13 Bruner's view on narratives

A narrative (storytelling) is a chain of events beginning with one situation followed by a series of events according to a pattern of cause and effect. Finally, a situation arises that ends the narrative (Labuschagne 1995:37).

In Bruner's opinion, a narrative is one of the most powerful forms of communication and learning among humans (Bigge & Shermis 1999:142) and brings children into the arena of human culture (Lauritzen & Jaeger 1997:37). The stories of a person's life are, however, often overlooked as they may lack scientific precision.

Bruner (1988:574) believes that each person's life is a narrative and that all learners

> have stories to tell and retell, not just from published materials but also from their own and imagined worlds.

A narrative's value lies in its inherent sequentiality. It is composed of a series of events, mental states and happenings involving human character. In addition, it can be real or

imaginary without losing its power as a story (Bigge & Shermis 1999:142). The value of narratives also lies therein that they may help learners to develop their own 'recipe' for structuring and reflecting on experiences they have had. As they become more reflective and more critical about their own stories, they become more critical readers, writers, thinkers and learners (Bruner 1996:149). In addition, narratives can contribute to a sense of identity and coherence.

3.5.2.14 Implications of narratives for this study

Narratives provide an excellent source for the development of reading material. Teachers can either generate their own stories and write them down or write down oral stories and legends passed down to them from generation to generation. In this way, teacher-authored reading material can be developed. These can be presented in the form of picture story books or big books. Alternatively, teachers could transpose or translate animal tales, myths, fables or legends.

Teacher-learner-authored reading material could be developed when learners tell a story and the teacher writes it down, thereby applying the language experience approach (see 4.8.2.1). Lauritzen and Jaeger (1997:178) believe that this approach enables learners to become co-creators of the curriculum.

3.5.2.15 Influence of poverty on learning and development

As Bruner (1971:132) is fully aware that intellectual functioning is strongly affected by a learner's social and cultural background, he addresses the impact of poverty and dispossession on learning and development. In many cases, a family that lives in poverty does not nurture education.

What Bruner (1971:152-153) is saying is that

> insofar as a subculture represents a reaction to defeat and insofar it is caught by a sense of powerlessness, it suppresses the potential of those who grow up under its sway by discouraging problem-solving.

In short: poverty is a trap that jeopardises the potential of both learners and teachers, thereby preventing them from becoming the best that they can be.

3.5.2.16 Implications of poverty on learning and development for this study

The following is one of the most significant statements made by Bruner (1996:70):

To grow, you need an environment of opportunities.

Children from poverty-stricken backgrounds fall progressively further behind once they start formal schooling, as they do not have equal opportunities to develop their reading skills. This situation could be ascribed to factors such as illiterate parents, the absence of positive role models as well as under-resourced schools. It is thus the task of teachers to ensure that there are sufficient books, not only for reading instruction and reading for enjoyment but also books from which teachers can read so that they act as role-models.

As reading material is a form of LTSMs, it is necessary to consider Bruner's views on this issue.

3.5.3   THE ROLE OF LTSMs IN BRUNER'S THEORY

In their discussion on Bruner's theory, Bigge and Shermis (1999:144, 148) say that an important task of the teacher is to convert knowledge into forms that accommodate growing minds. To achieve this goal, materials should be tailored, sequenced and presented in forms that are appropriate to respective learners' existing modes of representation.

At the same time, this would help to achieve one of the goals of education set by Bruner, namely the development of intellectual honesty. Such honesty consists of learners' willingness to use the LTSMs provided, for example, to check and correct solutions to given problems (http://www.drexel.edu/academics/teachered/hdl/manual/bruner.htm). As an ardent supporter of discovery learning, Bruner acknowledges the importance of LTSMs.

Having provided a rather lengthy discussion on Bruner's theory, it is necessary to summarise the main points that were addressed.

3.5.4   SUMMARY OF BRUNER'S THEORY

A major theme in Bruner's cognitive theory is that learning is an active process where learners construct new ideas and concepts based upon their current or previous knowledge. Cognitive structures provide meaning and organisation to experiences. Individuals progress through three different levels of representation in their intellectual development. Children learn concepts within the framework of the stage of intellectual development within which they are at that time. It is essential to support children in such a way that they progress from one stage of intellectual development to the next thereby acquiring a higher level of understanding. This process depends on successful teaching and learning, which in turn, depends on factors such as transfer of learning, motivation, folk psychology, poverty and deprivation and the use of narratives.

Like Piaget, Bruner did not address reading *per se* but all aspects of his theory that were discussed have many implications for the development of reading material as one of the over-riding goals of education is to enable learners to interpret symbols. His theory underpins the necessity to have developmentally appropriate reading material available so that learners can transfer and reinforce their newly-acquired skills.

In essence, he supports the idea that teachers need to be thinkers, creators and problem-solvers. This implies that they need to develop their own LTSMs such as reading material if there is a need and not always rely on external sources to overcome their problems. His strong belief in narratives supports the idea that teachers and learners can write their own stories or write stories passed down orally from one generation to the next. In this way, he offers support for teacher-authored and teacher-learner-authored reading material. (See 4.7 & 4.8 respectively.)

Two learning theories have been discussed thus far, namely that of Piaget and Bruner. The third theory to be discussed is that of Vygotsky.

3.6   VYGOTSKY'S THEORY OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

One of the theorists who had the greatest influence on language development is Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), a Russian psychologist and educationalist (Au & Asam 1996:201). During the 1920's and 1930's, he developed his highly innovative research but his work

was suppressed and revived only after 1956 (Garton & Pratt 1998:41). By 1980, a number of American psychologists and educationalists enthusiastically adopted Vygotsky's ideas as he represented an invigorating perspective.

Gindis (2000:333) is of the opinion that Vygotsky was put into the limelight as a result of his

> *powerful pendulum swing from biologically based understanding of human behaviour to the sociocultural explanation of human activity.*

Vygotsky's theory, therefore, emphasises the important relationship between the social and psychological worlds of children in particular (Bigge & Shermis 1999:124).

3.6.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE SELECTION OF VYGOTSKY'S THEORY

The following reasons validate the selection of Vygotsky's theory for the purpose of this study:

♦ As Vygotsky's theory differs from that of Piaget (see 3.4) and Bruner (see 3.5), it is necessary to note these differences.

♦ Vygotsky is the theorist who had the greatest influence on literary researchers working from a constructivist perspective (Au & Asam 1996:210). His views could be of particular value for this study that strives to enhance literacy development.

♦ Education, in Vygotsky's opinion, should be child-centred with the efforts of teachers directed toward organising the child's development. His views on education are compatible with OBE that underlines a learner-centred approach. As one of the meta-assumptions of this study is an OBE approach (see 1.8.3), the inclusion of Vygotsky's theory can be justified.

♦ One of Vygotsky's desires is that his work should be carried out in a society that sought the elimination of illiteracy and the founding of educational programmes to maximise each child's potential (Cole & Scribner 1978:9). As the high rate of illiteracy is one of the most urgent problems in South Africa today, Vygotsky's theory is of importance to this study.

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◆ Development cannot be divorced from the social and cultural context within which it is embedded (Vygotsky 1978:7). This view is highly relevant within the current South African context of education.

◆ As a strong supporter of inclusive education, Vygotsky believes that the entire staff of a school should be able to serve the individual needs of each learner in the class (Gindis 2000:338). Inclusive education is in the process of being introduced in South African schools. This implies that **all language teachers** must be empowered to provide suitable reading material to meet the needs of learners who experience reading difficulties.

A brief account of Vygotsky's theory now follows.

3.6.2   AN EXPOSITION OF VYGOTSKY'S THEORY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THIS STUDY

Like Piaget and Bruner, Vygotsky addressed many issues related to education but only those that are directly related to this study, namely factors that influence cognitive development, will be discussed.

3.6.2.1   Role of culture, society and language

Vygotsky (1978:27) stresses the vital role of culture and society with regard to cognitive development when he says that

> *individual functioning is determined exclusively by social functioning and the structure of an individual's mental processes mirrors the social milieu from which it is derived.*

This statement implies that individual development cannot be understood without reference to a child's social and cultural environment. Not only is individual development rooted in society and culture but learning also takes place in the form of social interaction (Vygotsky 1978:7). Cognitive development is socially mediated as a result of the interaction that takes place between children and more mature or capable members of society such as parents, teachers and peers. Qualitative changes in the social situation in which a child lives lead to

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significant changes in the mind, that is, in the child's development (Davidov & Zinchenko 1993:99).

Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978:23) states that culture is linked to language in that culture is transmitted through language. From a social constructivist perspective, he believes that learners construct their understanding of language from the whole to its parts (Dixon-Krauss 1996:19).

Language plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition as learning and development are interrelated from early in a child's life. There is also a strong relationship between language, thought, the social environment, the individual, the spoken word as well as the written word since a society's culture and history are stored permanently in the form of writing (Vygotsky 1962:51; Yaden 1984:155). Children should, therefore, be exposed to the written word, that is, reading and writing (Garton & Pratt 1998:48). Through language, valuable cultural information can be passed on to children who then internalise this knowledge and use it when necessary.

The question that now arises is: *How does the conversion of social relations into psychological functions take place?*

Social relations are converted into psychological functions through the process of mediation, which means changing a stimulus situation in the process of responding to it. Conversion from the social to the psychological is accomplished through what Vygotsky (in Prior & Welling 2001:13) refers to as **tools** or **signs**. (A tool can be used in the place of something else while a sign represents something else.) ·

The use of these signs or the transition to mediated activity

> *fundamentally changes all psychological operations just as the use of tools limitlessly broadens the range of activities within which the new psychological functions may operate* (Vygotsky 1978:55).

People use different signs and sign systems to interpret and explain their experiences. Signs that are symbolic in nature are abstract representations of objects or events. Reading is an example of such an abstract symbolic sign system. These signs are also auxiliary means of solving problems by comparing, remembering, reporting and selecting

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information. Higher psychological (mental) processes are created when mediation becomes increasingly more internal and symbolic in nature (Driscoll 1994:230).

Two concepts contribute towards an understanding of this process, namely **internalisation** and the **zone of proximal development** (abbreviated to ZPD).

(a)   Internalisation

Bruner (1997:68) believes that internalisation is the crux of Vygotsky's theory when he states that it is the major *deus ex machina* in his system. All higher psychological functions pass through an external stage in their development that initially is a social function. For example, when a child points to something, it remains an act of grasping for an object out of reach. The adult's response changes it into one involving social exchange. In that exchange, the act of grasping takes on a shared meaning of pointing (Driscoll 1994:231; Prior & Welling 2001:5).

Subsequently, when the child internalises this meaning and thereafter uses the same gesture to point, the **interpersonal** activity changes to an **intrapersonal** one (Vygotsky 1978:56-57). Children's transition from a social accomplishment of an activity to an individual accomplishment is referred to as *internalisation*. New cognitive functions take shape in a person for the first time during this process. Once internalisation takes place, children no longer need to restructure their earlier concepts separately. As soon as a new structure has been integrated into a child's thinking, it gradually spreads to previously formed concepts as they are drawn into the intellectual operations of a higher type (Davidov & Zinchenko 1993:103).

(b)   The zone of proximal development

Vygotsky (1962:104) makes a clear distinction between learning and development when he says:

> *The only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it.*

Although there is a relationship between the two processes, they do not take place simultaneously as the developmental process lags behind the learning process. This

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distinction between learning and development led Vygotsky (1978:86) to coin the term ZPD.

Vygotsky (1978:86) strongly believes that the ZPD

> defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state. These functions could be termed the 'buds' or 'flowers' of development rather than the 'fruits' of development.

The ZPD is that zone in which a person is able to achieve better results with the support of a more capable or knowledgeable person than he or she can manage alone (Bruner 1997:69; http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~gwells/NCTE.html). The lower limit of the zone is fixed by the actual development of the person while the process of instruction sets the upper limit (Antonacci 2000:19; Driscoll 1994:233). The ZPD is thus the distance or difference between persons' actual development as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable persons (Allal & Ducrey 2000:137-138; Wakefield 1996:187).

Figure 3.1 represents the ZPD.

FIGURE 3.1   VYGOTSKY'S ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

(Adapted from Elliot 1994:8)
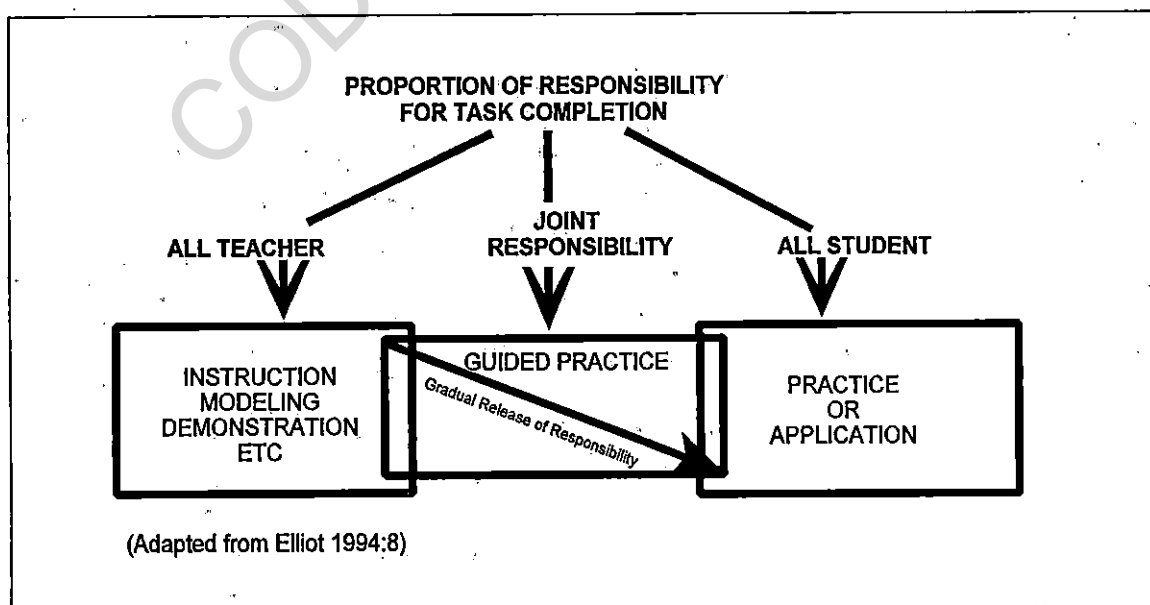
The ZPD is also in line with Vygotsky's broader theory, emphasising the social nature of knowledge acquisition. With the help of an adult or a more capable peer who uses mainly speech and/or action, the child is guided to perform more advanced tasks. What the child can achieve today with appropriate support is what he or she can be expected to do independently tomorrow (internalisation).

An important point to note is that ideal partners in an instructional situation should not be equal in terms of their present level of knowledge and skill. The more advanced partner will attempt to bring about cognitive development in the less advanced partner (Driscoll 1994:235). This support provided by a more competent person is referred to as *scaffolding*, a term coined by Bruner (Hobsbaum, Peters & Sylva 1996:17; Sylva, Hurry & Peters 1997:375).

According to Driscoll (1994:236), the following five characteristics of a scaffold used in the building industry can be applied figuratively to whoever is responsible for providing this type of support:

- ♦ It provides support.
- ♦ It functions as a tool.
- ♦ It extends the range of the worker.
- ♦ It allows the worker to accomplish a task that would not otherwise be possible.
- ♦ It is used selectively to help the worker where and when needed.

Within the teaching and learning situation, scaffolding

> *is a form of assistance provided to a learner by a more capable teacher or peer that helps the learners perform a task that would normally not be possible to accomplish by working independently* (http://cleo.murdoch.edu.au/confs/tfl/tfl2000/mcloughlin2.html).

Just as the scaffolding around a building supports its construction, a more capable person such as a teacher or a more capable peer operates as a supportive tool in helping a learner to construct knowledge (Wakefield 1996:190). As learners become more capable of performing a task on their own, the guidance or scaffold can gradually be withdrawn (Driscoll 1994:235-236).

3.6.2.2 Implications of the role of culture, society and language for this study

Vygotsky's views on culture, society and language influence the suitability of the genres as well as the criteria that apply to teacher-authored reading material for Foundation Phase learners. The different types of reading material are discussed in detail in Chapter 4 while Chapter 5 offers a comprehensive discussion on the criteria for teacher-authored reading material.

(a) Implications for the selection of types of reading material

Vygotsky (see 3.6.2.1) states that a society's culture and history can be contained in written form. It can be concluded that learners should be exposed to reading material that is based on the society's culture and history. Folk tales could all serve this purpose. The condition is, however, that the readers are made aware that these stories are not true. As many of the folk tales have been transmitted orally, these could be written down. In this way, teacher-authored reading material could be generated. Many of the folk tales could be translated into the language of learning. Alternatively, these tales could be transposed or even translated to make them developmentally appropriate, thereby ensuring that the material falls within learners' ZPD.

(b) Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material

Culture and morals are closely related (see 5.2.6). For this reason, teachers developing their own reading material need to take into account the learners' culture and the moral values that are upheld by the particular society. As South Africa is a multicultural country, learners need to learn about other cultures. Therefore, multicultural and/or multilingual reading material should be produced. Humour is culture-related and for this reason, text that contains humour must be in accordance with the readers' culture.

Apart from the role of culture, society and language, Vygotsky identified several other factors that influence learning, namely attention, memory, emotions, as well as exercise and fatigue.

3.6.2.3 Role of attention and memory

Vygotsky (1978:120-121) states that a child's attention is directed and guided entirely by interest. Teaching in general is only possible inasmuch as it is related to a child's interests. Memory is closely linked to interests in that memory functions are most effective whenever they are attracted by a particular interest. For this reason, learners learn best when they are interested in something and thus remember better.

3.6.2.4 Implications of attention and memory for this study

Vygotsky's views regarding attention and memory have the following implications for reading material in the Foundation Phase:

(a) *Implications for the selection of types of reading material*

Teacher-authored reading material (see 4.7) could provide learners with reading material that links with their interests. Non-fiction reading material (see 4.6.2) could be developed for learners who show an interest in topics such as pets, a specific type of sport or number facts. The material could be presented in the form of a picture story book with its variants, namely novelty books and lift-the-flap books, big books, or cartoon-style books. Children's poems enhance memory and should also be included.

Through the implementation of the language experience approach (see 4.8.2.1), teacher-learner-authored material could be developed that is yet another way of capturing learners' interests and enhancing motivation.

(b) *Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material*

Vygotsky's views regarding attention and memory underpin the necessity to consider learners' interests when developing reading material. It is necessary to provide developmentally appropriate reading material in order to arouse learners' attention and make it possible for them to remember and apply their newly-acquired skills.

3.6.2.5   Role of emotions

The role of emotions cannot be disregarded in any educational process. McNamee, McLane, Cooper & Kerwin (1985:230) say that in Vygotsky's view, affective processes are necessary constituents in the development of cognitive structures. Typical emotions to be considered include curiosity, interest and wonder.

3.6.2.6   Implications of emotions for this study

Vygotsky's views regarding learners' emotions influence the genres as well as the criteria that apply when selecting or writing reading material for Foundation Phase learners.

(a)   *Implications for the selection of types of reading material*

Fairy tales and poems usually portray emotions while realistic fiction and books written for bibliotherapy deal with emotional issues such as divorce, abuse and disabilities. Foundation Phase learners could, therefore, be exposed to these three types of reading material.

(b)   *Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material*

Careful consideration should be given to the inclusion of fear and violence as these aspects arouse emotions. For this reason, teachers must know the emotional state of the target group of learners. By providing developmentally appropriate reading material, emotions such as enthusiasm, curiosity and interest could be induced. Anti-bias is another criterion that must be considered. According to Louw *et al.* (1998:345), gender stereotyping influences the nature and quality of emotional expression during middle childhood. Consideration should also be given to the inclusion of multiculturalism in reading material as literature educates not only the head but also the heart (Machado 1999:226). This implies that learners' attitudes are strongly influenced by what they read.

3.6.2.7   Role of exercise and fatigue

In Vygotsky's opinion, exercise does not merely involve memory. Rather, exercise should be seen as creating a predisposition for optimal performance of an action. Exercise does

not mean the retention of individual impressions but the facilitation of the overall direction of activity. It is, however, important to keep in mind that exercise is only successful when it is accompanied by internal satisfaction. Without internal satisfaction, the activity will turn into some tiresome repetition that will defeat the objective. Moreover, mere repetition does not guarantee progress. In fact, if the same activity is repeatedly performed, fatigue will set in without bringing about the desired results (Gindis 2000:6).

3.6.2.8 Implications of exercise and fatigue for this study

Exercise and fatigue influence the types of reading material as well as the criteria for teacher-authored for Foundation Phase learners in the following ways:

(a) *Implications for the selection of types of reading material*

Various opportunities to read should be provided but the type of reading material used should be varied in order to provide internal satisfaction. All the different types of reading material referred to in Chapter 4 could be made available to ensure optimal performance in reading.

(b) *Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material*

It is essential to provide developmentally appropriate reading material for Foundation Phase learners (see 5.2.9) and to create several opportunities for reinforcing newly-acquired skills. However, aspects such as the length of the passage and the level of difficulty of the vocabulary and the theme need to be considered to avoid fatigue.

3.6.3 THE ROLE OF LTSMs IN VYGOTSKY'S THEORY

Vygotsky (http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~gwells/NCTE.html) articulates his views on LTSMs when he says that

> *theoretical knowledge building may be carried on across time and space through a dialogue that uses writing and other visiographic modes of representation. Furthermore, a similar type of dialogue can take place when one is alone, using the resources appropriated from engaging in dialogue with others.*

Human resources such as siblings, parents, peers, teachers and the learners themselves all form a crucial part of the teaching and learning situation. Learners represent a rich source of experiences, inspiration, challenge and support, which if optimally utilised, can include an enormous supply of additional energy into tasks and activities that are set.

In addition, Vygotsky acknowledges the importance of LTSMs when he refers to visiographic representations that could include maps, diagrams and written texts. One of the underlying principles of Vygotsky's theory is the relationship between culture, society and language (see 3.6.2.1). This implies that culture is transmitted through language, which could be in written form. Learners must, therefore, learn to read so that culture can be transmitted. However, without appropriate reading material (the tools), this transfer of culture cannot take place. In essence, Vygotsky regards reading material as an essential form of LTSMs without which culture cannot be transmitted.

Various issues were addressed in the discussion on Vygotsky's theory. What follows are the key points addressed in this discussion.

3.6.4   SUMMARY OF VYGOTSKY'S THEORY

One of the most outstanding characteristics that distinguish Vygotsky's theory from that of other theorists such as Piaget and Bruner, is his fundamental premise that intellectual development ideally takes place in social settings. From here, culturally appropriate intellectual, cognitive and mental structures and their functions are mainly internalised through language (Garton & Pratt 1998:43). Cognitive development, therefore, initially occurs on a social level with the aid of a more competent person. This process is known as scaffolding. Thereafter, development proceeds to an individual level where the learner can perform a task independently. The mental processes advance from interpsychological to intrapsychological functioning. By placing tasks within children's ZPD, they are sensitively challenged to perform tasks within their capabilities (Vygotsky 1978:27). Other factors that influence learning include attention, memory, emotions as well as exercise and fatigue.

Vygotsky's theory supports this study in that his views on cognitive development lay the foundation for most of the types of reading material suggested in Chapter 4 to which Foundation Phase learners could be exposed. Many of the criteria for developing teacher-authored reading material, as proposed in Chapter 5, are based on his theory.

Thus far, the theories of Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky have been discussed. The final theory to be discussed is Gardner's innovative theory of multiple intelligences.

3.7   GARDNER'S THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

When someone asks the question: *What makes a person intelligent?* one of the most common answers will probably be: *A person's ability to solve problems and to think logically and critically.*

This answer is typical of the traditional intelligence theories such as that of Piaget or Bruner (http://edweb.gsn.org/edref.sys.types.html).

Recent studies on the nature of human intelligence have, however, changed dramatically. Just as contemporary cognitive psychologists, such as Howard Gardner, have conceived a new, revolutionary way of looking at intelligence, so the purpose of education and what it means to be an educated person should be transformed in the 21st century. Education, like the latest, dynamic view of intelligence, must be understood contextually, namely in terms of the particular social and cultural context in which an individual lives (http://www.eserver.org/courses/fall96/76-100g/margulis/).

The implications of this paradigm shift regarding intelligence requires, *inter alia,* a restructuring of schools and classrooms. Society should, for example, seriously reconsider its definition of intelligence as well as the measurement thereof. The traditional definition of intelligence was too narrow as it was limited to visual-spatial, logic-mathematical and verbal linguistic performance only (http://www.eserver.org/courses/fall96/76-100g/margulis/).

In 1993, Gardner introduced his theory of multiple intelligences in his book *Frames of mind.* In this book, he suggests that an individual does not only have a single intelligence. Rather than viewing intelligence as a single capacity, he believes in the existence of **several** intelligences, hence the term *multiple intelligences* (Brand & Donato 2001:16).

3.7.1 . MOTIVATION FOR THE SELECTION OF GARDNER'S THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

As the researcher is working from an OBE paradigm (see 1.8.3), Gardner's theory is included in this study mainly due to its compatibility with OBE, which in turn, is compatible with inclusive education. Both OBE and inclusive education are policy in all South African schools. Gardner's theory supports OBE and inclusive education by acknowledging diversity, transforming the assessment system, implementing a variety of teaching and learning strategies (which require a variety of LTSMs such as reading material) as well as following a thematic approach. Yet another factor motivated the inclusion of Gardner's theory in this study. The incorporation of the theory of multiple intelligences into an education system has a dual purpose. Not only can it enhance the quality of the education system but it could also offer valuable weaponry with which the battle against illiteracy can be fought (http://edweb.gsn.org/edref.sys.types.html), which is one of the long-term goals of this study.

The inclusion of Gardner's theory is also motivated by the fact that he is a contemporary theorist in comparison to the three theorists discussed thus far, namely Piaget (see 3.4), Bruner (see 3.5) and Vygotsky (see 3.6). In addition, Gardner's theory is selected due to the absence of a contemporary South African counterpart. Lastly, the DoE (1997:21) emphatically states that teachers should be trained on the implementation of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, thereby adding to the motivation for the inclusion of this theory in the study.

As Gardner's theory puts the emphasis on intelligence, it is necessary to briefly discuss the different approaches to intelligence.

3.7.2 APPROACHES TO INTELLIGENCE

Research undertaken by Teele (2000:3) shows that there are several different approaches to intelligence, namely the psychometric, developmental and psychobiological approach as well as the theory of multiple forms of intelligence.

3.7.2.1 Psychometric approach

This approach acknowledges a single, unitary and quantitative concept of intelligence. As it focuses only on linguistic and logical-mathematical skills, the results are relatively easy to quantify. Standardised tests such as IQ tests fall in this category. Binet, Spearman and Terman are proponents of this approach (Behr 1980:95; Dryden & Vos 1997:341; Teele 2000:3).

3.7.2.2 Developmental approach

A description of how individuals develop progressively at different ages and continually shift between the assimilation of new information into existing cognitive structures forms the foundation of this approach (Teele 2000:5). Theorists such as Piaget (see 3.4), Bruner (see 3.5) and Vygotsky (see 3.6) are strong supporters of this approach (Meyer & Van Ede 1998:70-75).

3.7.2.3 Psychobiological approach

Supporters of this approach uphold a multifaceted theory of intelligence rather than a single-factor theory. Cognitive functions occur in multiple, specific areas of the brain and are strongly influenced by the emotional centres of the brain. These functions are influenced by a combination of genetics, personal life experiences and situations (Gardner 1993:36-47). Ceci and Goleman are proponents of this approach (Teele 2000:11).

3.7.2.4 Theories of multiple forms of intelligences

These theories support the fact that individuals process information in multiple, interactive and complex ways (Teele 2000:12). The focus is on individual differences among learners with the aim of promoting the fullest possible intellectual development of each one (Dryden & Vos 1997:345; Lazear 1994:191). To achieve this goal, each learner's ability profile is matched to a variety of educational methods. Although multiple intelligence theories are based on a cognitive model, they differ vastly from other approaches in that they recognise and nurture **all** human intelligences. These theories acknowledge that there are many ways in which a person can be 'intelligent'. Proponents of this approach include Sternberg and Gardner (Teele 2000:12).

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3.7.2.5   A comparison between the approaches to intelligences

A comparison between the four approaches to intelligence shows that the psychometric, developmental and psychobiological approach clearly put the emphasis on cognitive abilities only. Multiple intelligence theories differ drastically in that they acknowledge that information can be processed in many different ways, not **only** cognitively.

The preceding discussion on the different approaches to intelligence has provided an orientation so that Gardner's theory can be discussed in more detail.

3.7.3   AN EXPOSITION OF GARDNER'S THEORY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THIS STUDY

Gardner (1999a:33) breaks the traditional view by defining intelligence as

> *a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture.*

Intelligence is a term used for organising and describing human capabilities. It refers to a potential, the presence of which allows an individual access to forms of thinking appropriate to specific content (Gardner, Kornhaber & Wake 1996:205). These potentials will or will not be activated, depending on the values of a particular culture, the opportunities that are available as well as decisions made by stakeholders such as teachers, parents and learners themselves. His theory, therefore, reinforces a cross-cultural perspective of human intelligence that is partially influenced by a person's culture and can be regarded as tools for learning and problem-solving (Campbell, Campbell & Dickinson 1999:xvi; http://www.newhorizons.org/trm-gardner.html).

Furthermore, Gardner argues that intelligence cannot be adequately assessed only through paper-and-pencil measures as they are not always 'intelligence fair' (Teele 2000:27). Gardner's theory can thus be seen as a direct challenge to the widespread belief that human intelligence is a single faculty based on a score obtained through a standardised test (Campbell *et al.* 1999:xv; Gardner 1999a:34; http://www.aenc.org/KE-Intelligences.html). Therefore, Gardner (1993:69; 1999b:70) proposes that all individuals possess at least **eight** different intelligences, each with varied abilities.

Teele (2000:86) supports Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences by saying that

> *multiple intelligences should be viewed as a philosophy of education that provides a framework for examining individuals' differing strengths and developing the full spectrum of intelligences.*

To illustrate Gardner's range of intelligences and the complexity of information processing, Teele (2000:64-69) uses a metaphor of the rainbow and its relationship to colour. In her opinion, people are like rainbows in that a person's intelligences are like the spectrum of colours. Sometimes a person's intelligences are very obvious but often they are invisible and waiting to be discovered and activated. Learners represent many different ways of learning. Too often, education does not reflect these different learning styles, for example, when teachers fail to provide opportunities for learners to let their full colours shine. For many years, the education system has recognised only verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical and visual-spatial learners. Consequently, the 'mirrors' in the classroom have not always reflected the many colourful and creative ways in which learners can learn. When learners are given the opportunity to let their 'lights shine', they reveal a full prism of colours or abilities that may never be discovered if they are not allowed to use their full spectrum of intelligences.

Gardner's theory suggests that every individual has all 'seven colours in the rainbow' (all the intelligences) albeit that with the addition of naturalistic intelligence, the total is eight. The colours of the rainbow are compared to all the intelligences but those colours have different strengths like primary, secondary and tertiary colours and combinations which make every person to process information in a unique way. The goals for education should be a desire to teach content in such a way that learners can understand and at the same time, prepare them to succeed beyond the school environment thereby maximising each learner's potential.

To gain a better understanding of Gardner's multiple intelligence theory, it is necessary to take note of the following underlying principles of his theory as recorded by Armstrong (1994:1-12), Campbell *et al.* (1999:xv, http://scbe.on.ca/mit/milist.htm) and Teele (2000:45-47):

- A pure intelligence is hardly ever seen because people possess varying amounts of the eight intelligences that they combine and use in highly personal ways.

- Some of the intelligences are highly developed in one person while others are modestly developed or underdeveloped. Most people can develop each of their intelligences to an adequate level of competency.

- Each of the various intelligences must have a developmental feature, be observable in special populations, provide some evidence of localisation in the brain and support a symbolic or notational system.

- Multiple intelligences can be identified and described.

- One of the intelligences could be used to enhance another intelligence.

- All intelligences provide alternate resources and capacities to develop a person's potential.

- Everyone is entitled to opportunities to recognise and develop their intelligences.

A discussion of the eight different intelligences together with the implications thereof for this study now follows.

3.7.3.1 Gardner's eight intelligences

Campbell *et al.* (1999:xvii) place the eight intelligences in three broad categories. Four of these can be viewed as 'object-related' forms of intelligence as they are controlled and shaped by objects encountered in the environment. Logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, visual-spatial and naturalistic intelligences fall in this category. The second category comprises of the verbal-linguistic and musical intelligences. They can be viewed as 'object-free' intelligences as they depend on language and musical systems. The third category consists of the remaining two intelligences, namely the intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence, which are viewed as 'person-related' intelligences.

(a)   *Verbal-linguistic intelligence*

Verbal-linguistic intelligence refers to the ability to use language (both spoken and written words), to express and appreciate complex meanings (Armstrong 1994:2; Campbell *et al.*1999:xvi; Gardner 1999a:41). Persons with this strength have well-developed auditory skills, enjoy reading and writing, like playing word games, spell accurately and use language fluently (Teele 2000:28). Poets, authors, reporters, speakers, hosts of talk-shows, politicians, copywriters and teachers may have particular verbal-linguistic strengths (Dryden & Vos 1997:340).

(b)   *Logical-mathematical intelligence*

Logical-mathematical intelligence involves the capacity to analyse problems logically, carry out intricate mathematical operations, investigate issues in a scientific way and consider propositions as well as hypotheses (Campbell *et al.* 1999:xvi; Gardner 1999a:42). Persons with this strength enjoy exploring patterns and relationships and making connections (Brand & Donato 2001:18). Apart from being well-organised, they are usually scientifically-technologically-minded, interested in conducting experiments, solving problems and reasoning logically (Chapman & Freeman 1996:7). Learners with this strength usually experience little difficulty when expected to complete tasks that require some form of abstract thinking (http://www.eserver.org/courses/fall96/76-100g/margulis/). Detectives, researchers, accountants mathematicians, accountants and astronomers usually have particular logical-mathematical strengths (Dryden & Vos 1997:342).

(c)   *Visual-spatial intelligence*

Visual-spatial intelligence refers to the potential to recognise and manipulate patterns in both wide spaces (for instance, that used by navigators and pilots) as well as space in more confined areas such as that used by surgeons, sculptors or artists (Gardner 1999a:42). Individuals with this strength think best with the aid of pictures, images and graphic representations (Brand & Donato 2001:19; Dryden & Vos 1997:344; Lazear 1994:16; Teele 2000:34). As these people have an exceptional ability to think on a three-dimensional level (Campbell *et al.* 1999:xvi), they enjoy completing jigsaw puzzles, doing map work and interpreting diagrams and charts. Also included is the ability to visualise something and thereafter, to graphically represent what was visualised. Other

characteristics of these persons include a good sense of gestalt as well as the enjoyment of art activities such as drawing or sculpture (Armstrong 1994:2; Dryden & Vos 1997:344; http://www.eserver.org/courses/fall96/76-100g/margulis/).

An interesting point to note is that this intelligence is not dependent on visual sensation. Blind people can, for example, use it very well when they construct a mental image of their home or visualising their routes to everyday venues (Gardner *et al.* 1996:207). Other people who excel in this area are architects, graphic designers, photographers and cartographers (Brand & Donato 2001:19; Dryden & Vos 1997:344).

(d) *Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence*

The core operations associated with bodily-kinesthetic intelligence include exceptional control over gross and fine motor actions as well as the ability to manipulate objects (Gardner *et al.* 1996:209). People with this strength use their body, or certain parts thereof, in a skilled way (Gardner 1999a:42). This intelligence involves the ability to express emotions and thoughts through dance, mime, drama, charades and body language (Lazear 1994:17). People with well-developed gross-motor skills usually excel in games and sport (Teele 2000:38-39). In addition, many people with this strength are mechanically-minded and enjoy the use of manipulatives. They learn best by participating in activities as they remember best what was done rather than what was observed or heard. Actors, sportsmen, acrobats and artisans may have particular bodily-kinesthetic strengths (Armstrong 1994:3; Brand & Donato 2001:18; Dryden & Vos 1997:348).

(e) *Musical-rhythmic intelligence*

A person's musical-rhythmic intelligence is one of the earliest to emerge (Brand & Donato 2001:17). Those who excel in this area, portray exceptional skills in the performance, composition or appreciation of musical patterns (Gardner 1999a:42). People with this strength create, communicate and understand meanings made out of sound, including environmental sounds (Armstrong 1994:3; Gardner *et al.* 1996:205). These people are extremely sensitive to the emotional power of music. Singers, composers, instrumentalists, conductors, piano tuners and recording engineers usually have musical-rhythmic strengths (Dryden & Vos 1997:346).

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(f)   Interpersonal intelligence

As this intelligence involves learning through interaction with others (Brand & Donato 2001:19; Campbell *et al.* 1999:xvi), it is often referred to as 'social' intelligence (Dryden & Vos 1997:350). It also refers to the skill of solving problems as a group and understanding another person's feelings, fears, motivations, intentions, desires, beliefs and anticipations (Gardner *et al.* 1996:211; Lazear 1994:19). People with this strength have exceptional skills of caring, comforting and collaborating (Brand & Donato 2001:19). They also enjoy socialising, have many friends, enjoy group activities and often have a good sense of humour. Their other strengths include the ability to negotiate and mediate disputes. Most religious leaders, politicians, managers, public relations officers, mediators, psychologists and others in the caring professions are known to have exceptional interpersonal strengths (Dryden & Vos 1997:350).

(g)   Intrapersonal intelligence

Self-knowledge and the ability to act adaptively on the basis of that knowledge form the essence of intrapersonal intelligence (Armstrong 1994:3; Gardner 1999a:43). Skills related to this intelligence include self-awareness, self-regulation, self-assessment, self-motivation as well as metacognition (Brand & Donato 2001:19). In other words, it refers to the ability to access one's inner self, construct an accurate perception of oneself and to use this knowledge to plan and direct one's life. People with a strong intrapersonal intelligence are known to be very private and individualistic (Campbell *et al.* 1999:xvi; Dryden & Vos 1997:352). Philosophers, therapists and novelists may have particular interpersonal strengths (Dryden & Vos 1997:352).

(h)   Naturalistic intelligence

The essence of the naturalistic intelligence is the human ability to distinguish between a variety of species of fauna and flora as well as making other distinctions in nature (Brand & Donato 2001:20). People displaying this strength enjoy being outdoors, listening to sounds from the environment, classifying plants, minerals, rocks, grass and animals. They are also interested in identifying relationships in nature, exploring the relationship between nature and civilization, perceiving patterns in nature and understanding natural and human-made systems (Brand & Donato 2001:21; Campbell *et al.* 1999:xvii; Teele 2000:44). The ability to recognise cultural artifacts like cars and aeroplanes may also depend on this intelligence

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(Brand & Donato 2001:20). Farmers, gardeners, biologists, entomologists and animal handlers are people known to have exceptional naturalistic strengths (Chapman & Freeman 1996:153).

(i)   Concluding remarks

The eight intelligences that were discussed clearly show that are many ways in which a person can provide evidence of being intelligent and not only by providing evidence of their verbal-linguistic, mathematical-logical and visual-spatial skills (Gardner 1999b:72). Other approaches to intelligence, such as the psychometric approach (see 3.7.2.1) and the developmental approach (see 3.7.2.2), do not provide opportunities to determine learners' interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical-rhythmic, bodily-kinesthetic and naturalistic intelligence, as they mostly focus on the other three intelligences.

In the light of Gardner's theory, two deductions can be made. Firstly, all eight intelligences need to be developed in each learner. Secondly, learners need to be assessed to determine where their strengths lie. The implication thereof is that activities must be planned with the view to develop and assess these intelligences. These activities require, *inter alia*, a variety of LTSMs.

3.7.3.2   Implications of the eight intelligences for this study

The question that can now be asked is: *What are the implications of the eight intelligences for this study?*

(a)   Implications of verbal-linguistic intelligence for this study

The eight intelligences that were discussed have an impact on the types of reading material, as well as on the criteria needed for the development of reading material for Foundation Phase learners. (Chapter 4 offers a detailed discussion on the types of reading material referred to while Chapter 5 offers a detailed discussion on the criteria referred to.)

(i)   Implications for the selection of types of reading material

This intelligence could be enhanced through two types of reading material. Firstly, teacher-learner-authored reading material could be developed by implementing the language

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experience approach or keeping a diary. (See 4.8.2.1 & 4.8.2.2 respectively.) Secondly, teacher-authored children's poetry could appeal to learners who have a flair for language. (See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion on the types of reading material referred to.)

(ii)   Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material

An important criterion is linking the reading material with learners' interests (see 5.2.2). When implementing the language experience approach (see 4.8.2.1), learners' interests will usually form the theme of the reading material.

(b)   Implications of logical-mathematical intelligence for this study

The above-mentioned intelligence affects the reading material for Foundation Phase learners in the following ways:

(i)   Implications for the selection of types of reading material

Non-fiction books, with the focus on aspects such as number concepts and scientific facts, could be prepared to develop this intelligence. At the same time, this type of reading material could appeal to learners who have particular strengths in this field. These books could be presented in the form of big books or picture story books. Mystery stories could also be considered because they require logical thinking.

(ii)   Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material

The particular interest of the target group or the individual learner should determine the topic of the reading material. Multicultural aspects need to be considered as objects referred to in the reading material and the corresponding pictures should be representative of various cultures. In addition, reading material should be bias-free by portraying girls, women and persons with disabilities as being capable of performing scientific experiments and solving mathematical problems or mysteries.

(c)   Implications of visual-spatial intelligence for this study

This intelligence has the following impact on reading material for Foundation Phase learners:

(i)   *Implications for the selection of types of reading material*

All genres could enhance this intelligence providing that pictures, photographs and diagrams are included. The theme of non-fiction reading material could be related to constructing things such as a wire toy or a kite. Mysteries, riddles, 'why' stories, 'if-then' or cause-and-effect stories could be selected as themes for both fiction and non-fiction books. Artistic learners could illustrate the text that was developed by implementing the language experience approach (see 4.8.2.1). In this way, teacher-learner-authored reading material is developed. (See Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion on the types of reading material referred to.)

(ii)   *Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material*

Children's specific interests should be considered together with the criteria that apply to pictures. Stereotyping should be avoided by portraying girls, women and persons with a disability as being equally capable of constructing things. Multicultural reading material could be developed to show, for example, different forms of art done by different cultures.

(d)   **Implications of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence for this study**

The above-mentioned intelligence affects reading material for Foundation Phase learners as follows:

(i)   *Implications for the selection of types of reading material*

Action rhymes and non-fiction books specifically dealing with sport, dance, mechanisms, et cetera, would enhance this intelligence and also appeal to those learners' whose strength lies in this field. Animal tales often describe the physical attributes of animals and would probably appeal to learners whose strength lies in this field.

(ii)   *Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material*

Both fiction and non-fiction reading material could be developed. Fantasy stories with the theme based on bodily-kinesthetic activities could be developed. Figurative language and humour could be used to compare the movements of characters, provided that learners are able to understand the meaning thereof. Once again, children's specific interests play a key

role in the choice of a theme. The characters in the story should include both sexes as well as people with disabilities. Both sexes should be portrayed as being equally capable of participating in sport, dance and other physical activities. People with disabilities should be portrayed as being able to participate in sport. Multicultural literature is an ideal way of portraying various dances, games and sport enjoyed by different cultures. The criteria pertaining to pictures will also feature strongly in the preparation of the reading material.

(e) Implications of musical-rhythmic intelligence for this study

Reading material for Foundation Phase learners is influenced by musical-rhythmic intelligence in the following ways:

(i) Implications for the selection of types of reading material

Non-fiction reading material focusing on musical instruments could develop this intelligence and, at the same time, appeal to learners who excel in this area. Picture story books with the theme related to music, for example, Peter and the Wolf, could also be considered. Children's poetry could be developed, as the rhyme and rhythm would appeal to most of these learners. The language experience approach (see 4.8.2.1) is a form of teacher-learner-authored reading material that lends itself to the development of reading material to enhance this intelligence. Learners could bring a musical instrument such as a flute to school and the story could develop around this instrument. Reading material could also be presented in the form of a song that could fall into either the fiction or non-fiction category.

(ii) Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material

Language and vocabulary used in songs and rhymes could contribute towards the enhancement of this particular intelligence, for example, the inclusion of onomatopoeia creates richness of sound. Furthermore, the reading material should be related to children's interests and could be based on fantasy or realism while both sexes should be portrayed as being involved in musical activities. Multiculturalism is another important criterion that plays a key role as music and musical instruments from different cultures could be portrayed. As pictures should be included, the relevant criteria must be considered. (See Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion on the criteria referred to.)

(f)   Implications of interpersonal intelligence for this study

Interpersonal intelligence has a direct influence on reading material for Foundation Phase learners.

(i)   Implications for the selection of types of reading material

Learners who manifest this strength have empathy and are sensitive to the feelings of others. Therefore, fairy tales is a unique way in which learners can explore and understand the emotions and dilemmas of characters' inner lives. Picture story books that are presented in dialogue form could allow for learners to read in turns. (Plays could be dramatised to provide opportunity for the enhancement of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.) Teacher-learner-authored reading material could be developed as a collaborative project. In addition, riddles and jokes as well as cartoon-style reading material should be well-suited for learners who have a good sense of humour.

(ii)   Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material

Themes based on friendship, co-operation and loyalty are well-suited to develop this intelligence. These themes would also appeal to learners whose strength lies in this area. The inclusion of humour as a literary element should also be considered. Anti-bias and multiculturalism both call for attention as the text and pictures should portray both sexes as caring, sociable persons who interact with other cultures.

(g)   Implications of intrapersonal intelligence for this study

Intrapersonal intelligence has the following implications for teacher-authored reading material for Foundation Phase learners:

(i)   Implications for the selection of types of reading material

Books written for bibliotherapy would not only enhance this intelligence but appeal to learners who portray the characteristics referred to earlier on. Keeping a diary could enhance this intelligence while the language experience approach could provide opportunities for learners to write their own bibliography. In this way, teacher-learner-authored reading material could be created. In addition, Brand and Donato (2001:19)

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believe that folk tales and stories from the past are well-suited to enhance learners' intrapersonal intelligence.

(ii)   Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material

Stories could include characters with which the readers can identify and have empathy. Both sexes should be portrayed as having characteristics such as compassion and self-motivation. Pictures that are included should be measured against the given criteria.

(h)   Implications of naturalistic intelligence for this study

The above-mentioned intelligence has the following implications for teacher-authored reading material in the Foundation Phase:

(i)   Implications for the selection of types of reading material

Non-fiction reading material dealing with various topics in nature, explaining simple scientific facts, reading simple weather forecasts or explaining the functioning of vehicles would be extremely well-suited to enhance this intelligence. Stories from different cultures featuring animal characters and their traits or stories about the sun, moon and the wind should enrich this intelligence. Reading material could be presented in the form of picture story books, big books, cartoon-style material, poems, riddles and jokes.

(ii)   Implications for the criteria applying to the development of reading material

The setting of the story would be of particular importance for learners whose strength lies in this area. The learner or target group of learners' interests would determine the theme of the reading material while aspects such as fantasy and realism would also contribute towards the development of the reading material. Gender stereotyping must be avoided by portraying both sexes as caring about nature and being capable of undertaking nature walks or hikes. Multiculturalism is yet another criterion that would feature very strongly as learners could learn about topics of interest to other cultures such as traditional medicine or the connotations attached to certain animals.

Reading material is clearly an indispensable form of LTSMs without which the eight intelligences, as identified by Gardner, cannot be adequately developed. (Should Gardner

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identify other intelligences, it can be assumed that LTSMs, particularly reading material, would also play a vital role in the development thereof.) It can be concluded that if teachers do not have reading material to develop the eight intelligences, they should be empowered to develop their own material for this purpose.

The preceding information is based on the researcher's logical deductions. Invariably, this brings another question to mind: What are **Gardner's** views regarding LTSMs?

3.7.4   THE ROLE OF LTSMs IN GARDNER'S THEORY

Support for the necessity to include LTSMs in the teaching and learning process is found in Gardner's statements that each intelligence must support a symbolic or notational system and that opportunities must be provided for learners to read in an effort to overcome illiteracy (Gardner 1993:311, 358). Moreover, Gardner (1999b:50, 101) believes that every culture should ensure that its learners not only master certain areas of knowledge and skills but also acquire certain values. It is important for young people to develop cognitively, socially, morally, emotionally and civically. LTSMs play a key a role in fulfilling this ideal.

Table 3.1 shows various examples of LTSMs particularly suited to Foundation Phase learners.

TABLE 3.1 **LTSMs TO ENHANCE EIGHT INTELLIGENCES IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE**

INTELLIGENCE	EXAMPLES OF SUITABLE LTSMs
Verbal-linguistic	reading material, stories, puppets, plays, pictures, realia, advertisements, typewriters, computers, reading and spelling games, radio and television programmes, video recordings
Logical-mathematical	counters, mathematical games, calendars, calculators, measuring equipment, science kits, reading material
Visual-spatial	art materials, photographs, camera, collage material, computer graphics, video recordings, three-dimensional building material, maps, graphs, charts, pictures, flow charts, puzzles, posters, murals, highlighters, pattern blocks, board and card games, simulations, role-plays, music for creative dance, reading material
Bodily-kinesthetic	sport equipment (e.g. balls, bean-bags, hoops, trampoline), puppet theatre, relief maps, sandpaper letters, clay, field trips, finger plays, reading material
Musical-rhythmic	musical instruments, cassettes, tape-recorder, recoded songs, simple music scores, earphones, compact discs, musical games, items for a listening laboratory such as a stethoscope
Interpersonal	round table and/or a carpet for discussions, peers, drama, role-play, team games, reading material (activity cards,) computers with an e-mail facility
Intrapersonal	study carrels for individual work, books or journals for recording life stories, photo-album, self-assessment sheets, diaries, learning contracts, peers
Naturalistic	plants, aquarium, the museum, nature books, specimens of seeds, types of soil, shells, microscope, maps, animals, insects, magnifying glass, photographs, nature walks, collections such as leaves

(Armstrong 1994:91-92; Brand & Donato 2001:16-20; Campbell *et al.* 1999:4-251; Chapman & Freeman 1996:32; Dryden & Vos 1997:341-352; Lazear 1994:58-59).

Having studied the preceding table, five basic deductions can be made. In the first place, it is clear that the LTSMs should form an essential part of the teaching and learning process. In the second place, it is evident that without the appropriate LTSMs, learners' multiple intelligences cannot be adequately developed. The third deduction that can be made is that certain types of LTSMs can be used to develop more than one of the intelligences, for example, songs presented in written form can be used to develop verbal-linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic, musical-rhythmic as well as naturalistic intelligence. The fourth deduction that can be made is that most LTSMs that are available in classrooms can be used in some

way or another to enhance a specific intelligence. Finally, it can be deduced that reading material can be used to develop all eight intelligences.

As reading material is one form of LTSMs that could develop all eight intelligences, it has direct implications for this study. One of the principles underpinning Gardner's theory is that each intelligence must have a developmental feature, be observable in special populations, provide some evidence of localisation in the brain **and support a symbolic or notational system.**

In his book, *Intelligence reframed,* Gardner (1999a:158) addresses the issue of literacy and illiteracy. He underlines the importance of providing adequate opportunities for learners to read when he says that one of the goals of education should be to provide the basis for enhanced understanding of the several worlds that exist. These include the physical and biological world, the world of human beings, the world of human artefacts as well as the world itself, all of which are topics that people have always been interested in. The ideal is to learn to read as a means towards an end and not just as a means (or a skill). Rather, literacy skills should allow learners to access the worlds referred to and to understand important questions and topics. To achieve this goal, resources should be invested in education. He also believes that intelligences could be modified by changes in the available resources.

Gardner (1993:359) continues his argument when he stresses the importance of developing reading skills. He believes that in a non-literate society, language tends to be invisible and all that is noticed are the effects thereof. In contrast, in a literate society, the individual becomes aware that there are elements like words, that they are combined in prescribed ways and that these words (oral or in written form) enable people to communicate with one another and also establish relationships thus having profound social consequences. As a literate person is exposed to bodies of knowledge, literacy allows a person to contribute to this body of knowledge.

The implication of Gardner's views is that learners have to be linguistically stimulated. Whether learners' verbal-linguistic intelligence develops or not depends, *inter alia,* on experiences with parents and teachers who either awaken and enhance the various intelligences or prevent them from developing. An environmental factor such as inadequate resources could retard the development of a specific intelligence such as verbal-linguistic intelligence (Armstrong 1994:23).

It is clear that Gardner acknowledges the importance of LTSMs, more particularly reading material. For instance, his reference to resources indicates that he acknowledges the importance of reading material to allow learners access to the world. His views on the importance of reading material as a form of LTSMs offer direct support to the study as it stands to reason that without reading material, the eight intelligences cannot be adequately developed, particularly the verbal-linguistic skill. Teachers who lack the necessary reading material should, therefore, develop their own reading material. (Reading material that is planned to develop Foundation Phase learners' verbal-linguistic intelligence could also be used to develop this intelligence within a community, for example, that of illiterate parents.)

The importance of having sufficient reading material is summarised by Forester and Reinhard (in Dryden & Vos 1997:384) who say:

> To create a climate of delight that invites children to enjoy reading and writing, you will want to fill your classroom with books, books and more books.

In essence, they believe that intelligences can be enhanced if there is a sufficient supply of books or other forms of reading material.

A study of Gardner's theory would, however, not be complete without taking cognisance of the criticism concerning it.

3.7.5 CRITICISMS OF GARDNER'S THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Ever since the introduction of Gardner's theory, it has been frequently criticised. Gardner (1993:xxiii-xxvi) personally documented many of these criticisms. Firstly, criticism has been raised concerning the term *intelligence*. Some critics feel that the term *talents* is more acceptable and that *intelligence* should be reserved for more general capacities. Gardner's response is that if one could, for example, call musical ability a talent, then verbal-linguistic capabilities would also have to be regarded as talents, which is not true. He refutes the criticism by saying that it is unacceptable to regard some capabilities as talents and others as intelligences. For this reason, they should all be referred to as **intelligences**.

A second criticism is that Gardner's theory is purely descriptive while the task of a psychologist is to specify the processes whereby mental activity is carried out. Gardner (1993:xxvi) responds by saying that a description of the intelligences is the appropriate

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starting point in order to make a case for the existence of multiple intelligences. However, nothing prevents an exploration of the processes whereby the intelligences operate. In fact, in his book *Frames of mind* (1993), he offers suggestions about what processes and procedures are involved in the various intelligences.

A third criticism is that Gardner's theory is a repetition of intelligence testing at a time when there was a strong wave to break away from this tendency. In fact, it is now possible for a person to be tested in eight areas and be 'labeled' as inadequate in more than one. Moreover, a person could be stigmatised as being 'bodily-kinesthetic' or 'intrapersonal' while a specific group could be labeled as 'musical-rhythmic'. This type of labeling ignores other strengths that exist among individuals in the group. Gardner responds by saying that although his ideal is to develop all the intelligences, the fact cannot be denied that people all have strengths in one or more areas.

Yet another criticism came to the attention of Gardner (1999a:100). Some psychologists are frustrated because the 'new intelligences' cannot be measured in the same way as the standard 'generalised' intelligence. Traditionally, the emphasis has been on determining how 'smart' a person is by focusing on logical-mathematical, verbal-linguistic and visual-spatial tests only as these could be precisely measured. The whole rationale of Gardner's theory is to offer all learners an opportunity to prove their capabilities, which in many cases, lie in fields other than the logical-numerical, verbal-linguistic and visual-spatial fields.

The fifth point of criticism comes from critics who believe there should be some positive correlation between tests for different abilities, thereby supporting the idea of a 'general intelligence' (Gardner 1993:xxiv). He cannot accept the correlations at face value as all tests focus on linguistic and logical abilities. A person who has the skills needed for these tests is likely to do relatively well, even in other items such as those requiring spatial skills. However, a person lacking linguistic and logic skills is less likely to be successful in the other tests.

Lastly, criticism has been brought in against the confusion that could arise between the relationship between multiple intelligences and learning styles. Gardner (1993:xxv) cautions against an easy assumption that styles are independent of content or that the various intelligences can be 'collapsed' with styles. Leading authorities on learning styles, Dunn and Dunn (1990:256) argue that every person has strengths, a learning style and a particular learning style strength. Learning takes place more effectively when individuals

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are taught through their strengths. Each style encompasses similar intelligence ranges but learning takes place more effectively and recall is far better when learners are taught through their learning style preferences.

Based on the preceding information, it can be concluded that there is a definite **relationship** between multiple intelligences and learning styles. However, they are not the same because multiple intelligences are merely **an aspect** of a person's learning style.

The next section is a summary of the key points that received attention in this chapter.

3.7.6   SUMMARY OF GARDNER'S THEORY

Throughout the 20th century, psychologists have studied the nature of human intelligence as a way to predict academic performance (Teele 2000:1). For more than two decades, the use of standardised tests for the assessment of the intelligence of culturally diverse groups has been strongly criticised in literature (Sarouphim 1999:151).

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is a cognitive model that attempts to describe how individuals use their intelligences to solve problems. This theory puts the focus on how the human mind operates on the contents of the world such as objects and persons. Gardner's theory offers an effective model for understanding how all individuals learn, regardless of gender, socio-economic status or cultural background. Each individual possesses all of the intelligences but in varying degrees. Certain intelligences often dominate others and stand out as a learner's strengths. Teachers should try to identify each learner's ability profile to a variety of educational methods rather than teach in a rigid manner, expecting everyone to understand. Learners are more likely to become actively involved in the learning process and experience more success when teaching methods are directed to one or more of their strengths. It is also imperative that teachers consider their assessment methods, as these should match learners' strengths. Gardner's theory is clearly a direct challenge to the classical view of intelligence, which puts most of the emphasis on verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical skills.

Despite various criticisms against Gardner's theory, it offers support for this study in that it underlines the urgency of empowering teachers who do not have developmentally appropriate reading material in their classrooms to develop their own material. His theory is also of value in that it gives clear guidelines on the types of reading material that could

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enhance each of the various intelligences. This information is relayed to Chapter 4 where the focus is placed on suitable types of reading material for Foundation Phase learners. His theory also contributes towards the setting of criteria for the development of teacher-authored reading material in Chapter 5.

In the motivation for the selection of the different learning theories for this study, it was said that the various theories have some similarities but also differ in many ways. These similarities and differences are briefly highlighted.

3.8 A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE THEORIES OF PIAGET, BRUNER, VYGOTSKY AND GARDNER

Firstly, the similarities are highlighted.

3.8.1 SIMILARITIES IN THE FOUR THEORIES

Common factors found in the four theories are the following:

♦ Approach to learning and development: Although all four theorists focus on cognitive development, Piaget and Vygotsky both support the genetic approach.

♦ Application of theory: Both Piaget and Bruner share the view that children progress through various stages of intellectual development.

♦ Language and thought: Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky and Gardner acknowledge the role of language in learning and development (albeit that Gardner places equal value on all intelligences, not only on the development of linguistic skills).

♦ The role of pre-knowledge: Both Bruner and Vygotsky stress the importance of specific pre-requisite skills and knowledge in the learning process.

♦ The role of culture and society: Both Bruner and Vygotsky believe that individual development cannot be understood without reference to the social and cultural context of the learners. They both consider cognitive development to be the internalisation of the tools of the individuals' culture.

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♦ The role of LTSMs: All four theorists are of the opinion that LTSMs play a vital role in the teaching and learning process.

♦ Equilibration and attention: Although the two concepts are not exactly alike, there is some relationship between them. Piaget (see 3.4.2.1) says that a person's cognitive development is influenced by his or her attempts to solve problems and to learn new things. He refers to this self-motivating process as equilibration. Bruner (see 3.5.2.9) believes that a person's attention is attracted to something that is unclear, unfinished or uncertain. Attention is sustained until the matter at hand is resolved. Both equilibration and attention seem to imply a curiosity to learn and to solve problems.

♦ Contributions to the study: Many of the types of reading material suggested in Chapter 4 as well as the criteria for the development of teacher-authored reading material for Foundation Phase learners suggested in Chapter 5 are based on information gained from the four learning theories.

Despite the similarities in the four theories, the differences noted are far more extensive.

3.8.2 DIFFERENCES IN THE FOUR THEORIES

♦ Approaches to intelligence: Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky are all proponents of the developmental approach to intelligence (see 3.7.2.2) while Gardner is a proponent of the multiple intelligence approach thereby proposing that there is more than one way in which a person can be intelligent.

♦ Application of theory: Piaget believes all children progress through the same stages at approximately the same age. It would be pointless trying to teach a concept requiring logical operations to a child in a stage where these have not yet developed. In contrast, Bruner believes in the invariant sequence of stages through which children pass but not in their age dependency. For example, learners of all ages might resort to enactive or iconic representation when they encounter unfamiliar material. Although Vygotsky acknowledges the effect of maturation and development, he does not agree with Piaget and Bruner who support a stage approach. Instead of stages, Vygotsky focuses on learners' ZPD and the impact of social interaction within this zone at any age. Whereas Piaget stresses biologically supported universal stages of development, Vygotsky

(1978:123) stresses the interaction between changing social conditions. What and how learners learn depends on their social, cultural and historical experiences (Owens 2002:309).

♦ Mechanisms of development: Unlike Piaget and Bruner, Vygotsky focuses on the mechanisms of development. He rejects the idea that a single principle like equilibration could account for development. Instead, he believes that development is much more complex and that its very nature changes as it unfolds (Driscoll 1994:225).

♦ Readiness for learning: The distinction between Bruner and Piaget's theory of learning has two major implications. In the first place, it redefines what is meant by readiness for learning. Whereas Piaget refers to the cognitive readiness of learners in order to understand the logical operations inherent in subject matter, Bruner believes that one does not wait for readiness to occur - one teaches readiness or provides opportunities for its nurture. Readiness, in Bruner's opinion, consists of mastery of simpler skills that permit the learner to reach higher or more advanced skills (Bruner 1966:29). It can be concluded that Piaget asks whether the learner is ready for the learning content. In contrast, Bruner asks whether the learning content is ready for the learner to be taught. This, *inter alia*, implies that the reading material presented should suit the learners involved.

♦ Logical-mathematical and verbal-linguistic intelligence: Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky and Gardner acknowledge the importance of these intelligences. Gardner, however, stresses that the other intelligences referred to in his theory are equally important.

♦ Discovery and learning: Piaget believes that each child acquires new knowledge to achieve a state of cognitive equilibration while Vygotsky sees learning as a product of social interaction. Through social interaction with more capable peers, learners develop more sophisticated skills and knowledge. Piaget sees learners as active in manipulating objects and ideas while Vygotsky sees them as active in social contexts and interactions (Owens 2002:309).

It is noticeable that very few aspects of Gardner's theory could be compared with that of Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky. There are some similarities and many differences between the theories of Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky but Gardner does not address the issues

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related to the other three theories. Gardner's theory thus has little in common with that of Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky.

A brief summary of the chapter now follows.

3.9   CHAPTER SUMMARY

There are no final answers to questions asked about learning and no theory can be regarded as being absolutely superior to others. Each one represents a more or less comprehensive psychological system or basic outlook and each has its unique approach to learning. In spite of the differences, there are also often many similarities to be found. The scope of this study, however, limited the number of learning theories that could be studied. Therefore, a selection of learning theories had to be made to support the work done in Chapter 4 and 5 as they both are in need of a scientific foundation. Moreover, due to the comprehensiveness of the learning theories chosen, the focus was only placed on issues that are of interest to this study.

The first theory that was studied was that of Piaget. In his view, cognitive development in children consists of a succession of four stages, each one extending the previous one. Only two stages were of particular importance to this study, namely the pre-operational stage (in particular the stage of intuitive intelligence) as well as the concrete-operational stage. The reason for studying only these stages is that Foundation Phase learners belong in these two stages. During the stage of intuitive intelligence, learners start to develop their ability to represent things symbolically. On entering the stage of concrete operations (approximately 7-11 years), learners start to think logically on a concrete basis and start to deal with relations among classes.

Several other aspects of Piaget's theory are of importance to this study such as his views on learners' social, emotional and moral development that go hand-in-hand with their cognitive development. The characteristics of children in both stages play a key role in the selection of the types of reading material as well as the criteria set for the development of reading material for Foundation Phase learners. As reading material is a form of LTSMs, it became clear that Piaget acknowledges the use thereof in the teaching and learning situation. Moreover, he believes that teachers should not depend solely on commercially available forms of LTSMs but that teacher-produced forms of LTSMs are equally effective.

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The second learning theory that was studied is that of Bruner. Although his research was strongly influenced by that of Piaget, he disagrees with Piaget's innate stages of human cognitive development. In his view, learners progress through three systems of skills, which he refers to as modes of representation, namely the enactive, iconic and symbolic representations of reality. The main purpose of education is to enable learners to perform symbolic operations, which includes the ability to read.

Bruner also emphasises the role of several other factors in the teaching and learning process. One of these factors is the role of culture. He believes that intelligence is, to a great extent, the internalisation of tools provided by a given culture. In fact, he believes that 'culture-free is intelligence-free' (Bigge & Shermis 1999:134). He also values the role of motivation, structure and reinforcement in the teaching and learning situation. Another aspect that is strongly emphasised in Bruner's theory is folk psychology that is closely related to his views on culture. He believes that folk psychology is a cultural account of what makes it possible for people to live together. In addition, the role of poverty on learning and development was discussed due to its particular relevance within the current South African education system.

Bruner's theory acknowledges the role of LTSMs in the didactic process thereby supporting the purpose of the study. In particular, his theory provides evidence for the necessity for teachers to develop their own reading material and also guides the selection of the types of reading material for Foundation Phase learners. Certain criteria for the development of such material are also grounded in his theory.

Vygotsky's theory was the next to be discussed. His main theme is the relationship between language and thought. He puts the focus on children's cognitive processes as he believes the role of education is to provide experiences that are within children's ZPD's. Tasks should be kept slightly above the learners' level of independent functioning to ensure that they function within their ZPD. In most cases, the ideal is for adults (teachers, parents and more competent peers) to work collaboratively in order to improve a child's level of performance. The importance of internalisation was also stressed. Internalisation means that new cognitive functions are initially learnt in a group situation before becoming individual cognitive functions.

Other aspects that are of interest to reading in particular were addressed. These include the role of attention, emotions and memory, the role of exercise and fatigue as well as the role of culture.

Lastly, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences was discussed. His approach differs markedly from that of Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky in that he recognises eight intelligences. He proposes that all these intelligences should be developed in a particular learner. Furthermore, when a learner excels in one or more of the intelligences, it is said that the learner has a particular strength in that field. Gardner's views are in direct contrast with the traditional theories that emphasise the role of verbal-linguistic, visual-spatial and logical-mathematical intelligence only. Each of the eight intelligences has implications for the study with regard to the selection of suitable types of reading material as well as the criteria needed for developing teacher-authored reading material for Foundation Phase learners.

In conclusion, a comparison was drawn between the four learning theories to determine their similarities and differences. It became evident that the four theories that were discussed are of value to the study in that they support the necessity for teacher-authored reading material. In addition, all four theories provide relevant information for the selection of suitable types of reading material as well as the criteria that can be used for teacher-authored reading material developed for Foundation Phase learners.

3.10   CHAPTER PREVIEW

The learning theories that were discussed in Chapter 3 have provided a scientific basis for the selection of the types of reading material that are regarded as suitable for Foundation Phase learners, which is the main topic of discussion in Chapter 4. In this ensuing chapter, theoretical aspects related to reading are discussed. Thereafter, a detailed exposition of the various types of reading material regarded as suitable for Foundation Phase learners is given.

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3.11 OVERVIEW: CHAPTER 3

PIAGET: COGNITIVE, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT		
Types of reading material ♦ realistic fiction ♦ non-fiction *Criteria* ♦ characterisation ♦ realism ♦ fantasy ♦ moral issues ♦ pictures ♦ developmentally appropriate reading material	*Types of reading material* ♦ picture story books ♦ folk and fairy tales ♦ books for bibliotherapy ♦ cartoon style books ♦ children's poetry *Criteria* ♦ figurative language ♦ humour ♦ fantasy ♦ moral issues ♦ pictures ♦ developmentally appropriate reading material	*Role of LTSMs* ♦ LTSMs form an important part of cognitive, social emotional and moral development. ♦ Learners learn through material set up for them. ♦ Effective LTSMs need not be purchased.

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BRUNER: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT		
Purpose of education Where necessary, teacher-authored reading material should be created so that learners can develop the ability to perform symbolic operations	**Patterns of growth** Reading material is required for the development of independent reading *Criteria* ♦ Developmentally appropriate reading material ♦ Life-world portrayed in reading material	**Representations of the world** *Types of reading material* ♦ picture story books ♦ non-fiction *Criteria* ♦ themes based on life-world experiences ♦ pictures
Transferability as learning *Types of reading material* A variety of genres is needed to transfer newly acquired skills *Criteria* ♦ learners' interests ♦ developmentally appropriate reading material	**The role of narratives** *Types of reading material* ♦ folk and fairy tales ♦ teacher-authored reading material ♦. teacher-learner-authored reading material ♦ language experience approach *Criteria* ♦ learners' interests ♦ multicultural reading material ♦ anti-bias ♦ pictures	**Folk psychology** Teachers can solve the problem regarding a shortage of developmentally appropriate reading material by writing their own material.
Motivation, structure and reinforcement *Types of reading material* ♦ teacher-authored ♦ teacher-learner-authored language experience approach ♦ different genres *Criteria* ♦ learners' interests ♦ developmentally appropriate reading material	**Poverty, learning and development** *Types of reading material* A variety of reading material is needed to create ample reading opportunities. *Criteria* ♦ fantasy ♦ realism ♦ developmentally appropriate reading material	**The role of LTSMs** LTSMs need to: ♦ convert knowledge into forms that accommodate growing minds ♦ be tailored to meet this goal ♦ develop intellectual honesty

VYGOTSKY: FACTORS INFLUENCING COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT		
The role of culture and language	**The role of attention and memory**	**The role of emotions**
Types of reading material ♦ folk and fairy tales ♦ teacher-authored	*Types of reading material* ♦ teacher-authored ♦ teacher-learner-authored ♦ picture story books ♦ big books ♦ cartoon-styled books ♦ children's poetry ♦ non-fiction	*Types of reading material* ♦ realistic fiction ♦ books for bibliotherapy ♦ folk and fairy tales
Criteria ♦ moral issues ♦ multicultural reading material ♦ humour	*Criteria* ♦ learners' interests ♦ developmentally appropriate reading material	*Criteria* ♦ fear and violence ♦ anti-bias ♦ multicultural reading material ♦ pictures
The role of exercise and fatigue	**The role of exercise and fatigue**	**The role of LTSMs**
Types of reading material all genres	*Types of reading material* ♦ picture story books ♦ folk and fairy tales ♦ books for bibliotherapy ♦ realistic fiction ♦ teacher-authored ♦ teacher-learner-authored ♦ non-fiction ♦ pictures	LTSMs are needed: ♦ for social interaction and learning and ♦ to transmit culture in the form of symbols
Criteria developmentally appropriate reading material	*Criteria* ♦ learners' interests ♦ fantasy ♦ developmentally appropriate reading material	

GARDNER: THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES		
Verbal linguistic intelligence *Types of reading material* ♦ teacher-authored ♦ wordless picture story books ♦ children's poetry *Criteria* ♦ learners' interests ♦ pictures	**Logical-mathematical intelligence** *Types of reading material* ♦ big books ♦ picture story books ♦ non-fiction *Criteria* ♦ learners' interests ♦ multicultural reading material ♦ anti-bias	**Visual-spatial intelligences** *Types of reading material* all genres *Criteria* ♦ learners' interests ♦ anti-bias ♦ pictures
Musical-rhythmic intelligence *Types of reading material* ♦ picture story books ♦ teacher-authored ♦ non-fiction *Criteria* ♦ language and vocabulary ♦ learners' interests ♦ fantasy ♦ realism ♦ anti-bias ♦ multicultural reading material ♦ pictures	**Interpersonal intelligence** *Types of reading material* ♦ folk and fairy tales ♦ picture story books ♦ learner-authored ♦ riddles and jokes *Criteria* ♦ themes ♦ humour ♦ anti-bias ♦ multicultural reading material ♦ pictures	**Intrapersonal intelligence** *Types of reading material* ♦ books for bibliotherapy ♦ folk and fairy tales ♦ teacher-authored ♦ teacher-learner-authored *Criteria* ♦ characterisation ♦ learners' interests ♦ anti-bias ♦ pictures

GARDNER: THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES		
Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence	**Naturalistic intelligence**	**The role of LTSMs**
Types of reading material ♦ non-fiction ♦ picture story books ♦ wordless picture books ♦ big books ♦ folk and fairy tales ♦ children's poetry ♦ cartoon-styled books ♦ books for bibliotherapy	*Types of reading material* ♦ non-fiction ♦ animal tales ♦ picture story books ♦ big books ♦ cartoon-styled books ♦ children's poetry ♦ riddles and jokes	Each intelligence should support a symbolic or notational system which implies that reading material is required to fully develop all eight intelligences and to create opportunities to read.
Criteria ♦ learners' interests ♦ moral issues ♦ realism ♦ fear and violence ♦ anti-bias ♦ multicultural reading material ♦ pictures	*Criteria* ♦ settings ♦ learners' interests ♦ fantasy ♦ realism ♦ anti-bias ♦ multicultural reading material ♦ moral issues	

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL ASPECTS RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING MATERIAL

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Learners in the Foundation Phase are in need of the richest, deepest and fullest of experiences. For learners in this phase, each day should bring some new adventure, no matter what problems they are confronted with. Many rich vicarious experiences can be brought about through reading.

Learning to read is generally regarded as the most important aspect of education in the Foundation Phase. Quintilian already acknowledged this fact in the first developmental era (see 2.3.1.3). Browne (1996:119) believes that being able to read is not sufficient; it is the active use of reading that is important, as it is this competence that enables children to function in school and in a literate society. At the same time, reading offers them the opportunity to engage in a life-long and pleasurable activity. Yarrow and Millwater (1994:258) support Browne's view when they say that principals of primary schools should explicitly declare their schools as 'seats of literacy'. In addition, resources should be expended at this early stage so that valuable learning time will not be lost.

It is thus the task of Foundation Phase teachers to provide their learners with ample opportunities to read so that they can expand their experiences. Although there are many Foundation Phase classrooms with sufficient reading material to offer their learners, there are many classrooms in previously disadvantaged schools where there is shortage of reading material or lack of variety in the genres to which learners are exposed. Furthermore, observations made by the researcher have shown that there is very little multicultural reading material and virtually no multilingual reading material available in these classrooms.

The shortage of reading material is a serious barrier in the successful implementation of the Literacy Programme. Where there are such shortages, it is necessary for Foundation Phase teachers to develop their own reading material. This competency

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would be in line with Bruner's point of view regarding reading as he stressed that the learning content should be ready for the learner (see 3.8.2). Teachers should, therefore, be empowered to create developmentally appropriate reading material. Teachers also need to develop this competency to cater for an inclusive classroom where many learners who experience difficulties with reading are found. Vygotsky's view regarding inclusive education supports the preceding statement as he believes that all teachers should be able to cater for the individual needs of learners in the class (see 3.6.1). This would imply providing suitable reading material for **all** learners in Foundation Phase classrooms. Vygotsky also believes that individual development cannot be understood without reference to learners' social and cultural environment (see 3.6.2.1). The development of teacher-authored reading material for Foundation Phase learners is more likely to take learners' social and cultural environment into account.

This chapter puts the focus on various theoretical aspects that are relevant to the development of reading material for Foundation Phase learners. These aspects include an explanation of the whole language approach, a literature-based approach to teaching Literacy and the importance of reading. The major emphasis will, however, be but on the different types of reading material suitable for Foundation Phase learners, which includes teacher-authored and teacher-learner-authored reading material.

4.2   THE WHOLE LANGUAGE APPROACH

There are many different approaches to literacy instruction, one of which is the whole language approach. The whole language approach was fostered by Goodman and Smith (in Samuels 1996:125) who say that it is not a methodology but

a philosophy of curriculum, of learning, of teaching and of language.

As a philosophy about language, it emphasises the wholeness of the integrated language forms, namely oral language, reading and writing (Engelbrecht *et al.* 1999:82). A theme is used to integrate the different language forms (Machado 1999:49). One of the major assumptions of this approach is that language (oral and written) is acquired best through natural, authentic settings, social learning, child development and literature (Engelbrecht *et al.* 1999:82; Heale 1991:18).

The question can be asked: *In what way is the whole language approach of importance to this study?*

The whole language approach is rooted in Vygotsky's theory (see 3.6.2). As his theory was discussed in Chapter 2, it stands to reason that an approach that has its roots in his theory would be of importance to this study. From a social constructivist perspective, his ideas on language development, learning and instruction complement the philosophy and procedures involved in whole language teaching. This idea of language development implies that learners construct their understanding of language from the whole to its parts (Dixon-Krauss 1996:19).

Several other authorities support the implementation of the whole language approach. For instance, Boyer (1996:9) says that reading cannot be taught in isolation but should be taught as part of the gestalt of literacy, which implies a holistic concept. Heale (1991:18) supports Boyer when she says that true knowledge implies 'wholeness', not fragmented facts. Not only do the views of authorities support the inclusion of the whole language approach in this study but also its compatibility with C2005 and OBE. In the implementation of C2005, common themes are used to integrate the four language aspects. Listening and speaking skills, based on a theme such as *My family*, are taught and a reading passage that is related to the theme, for example, *Granny's birthday* could be used for reading instruction. During the writing activity, learners could describe their family members or write about *Granny's birthday*.

A holistic approach to language could, therefore, help to develop better readers and more literate citizens (Boyer 1996:9). This point of view is also in line with *Tirisano* (DoE S.a. (a):18). Reading should, therefore, not be taught in isolation but as part of the gestalt of literacy. Although the researcher fully acknowledges the importance of each aspect of language, this study puts the focus on **reading** only.

Currently, many Foundation Phase teachers are using a literature-based approach to develop literacy skills.

4.3   A LITERATURE-BASED APPROACH TO TEACHING LITERACY

The purpose of developing reading material for Foundation Phase learners is to enable teachers to drive the Literacy Programme. Spangenberg-Urbschat and Pritchard (in Bouwer & Guldenpfenning 1999:94) say that the central purpose of reading is to gain meaning from print. This process involves strategic cognitive activities that require metacognitive control by which readers consciously manage their understanding and reasoning while reading for different purposes and applying their knowledge of strategies for learning from text. During the reading process, learners bring a wide range of experiences, background knowledge and feelings to the text (Education Department of Western Australia 1996b:15).

In order to develop reading skills, many contemporary authors and authorities in the field of children's literature advocate a **literature-based approach to teaching literacy**, an approach that is gaining momentum abroad and locally. This means that 'real books' (different genres) are used in the Literacy Programme instead of basal readers only (Engelbrecht *et al.* 1999:83). Research undertaken by Cox (1996:297) has shown that all children prefer books that have a story to tell and stories that are full of suspense and action. This shows that they prefer literary to non-literary presentation of materials.

Heale (1991:18-19) substantiates these findings by underlining the value of a story. A story lays the foundation for the whole language approach, which can be used to integrate all four language skills (see 4.2) as well as other Learning Programmes and Learning Areas. Teachers who use a literature-based Literacy Programme emphasise a dynamic environment. Such an environment is a place where teachers see literature as **central** to the curriculum and not as an occasional form of enrichment that is undertaken when learners have completed their 'real work'. To ensure such a dynamic environment, teachers need to provide learners with a multiplicity of books, such as picture story books, folk literature, fantasy stories, poems and non-fiction. These books should be available for learners to read and for others to read them to learners (Machado 1999:237; Norton 1993:414; Raines & Isbell 1994:23).

Based on the preceding information, it is clear that a Foundation Phase classroom should be a print-rich environment. If this is not the case, then teachers can create such an environment by writing their own reading material.

The preceding topic reiterates the importance of reading.

4.4   THE IMPORTANCE OF READING

Machado (1999:226) opens the discussion by saying that reading

not only educates the head but the heart as well. It promotes empathy and invites readers to adopt new perspectives. It offers opportunities for children to learn to recognize our similarities, value our differences, and respect our common humanity. In an important sense, then, children need literature that serves as a window onto lives and experiences different from their own, and literature that serve as a mirror reflecting themselves and their cultural values, attitudes, and behaviors.

If one analyses the views of Machado (1999:226) regarding reading, it becomes clear that reading has cognitive, social, emotional and cultural values. This statement is shared by Cassim (2003) and De Tagle (in http://www/eserver.org/courses/fall96/76-100g/margulis/) as well as Le Roux (1996a:2-4) who all believe that being literate is not only an ontogenic issue but also a basic human right. Several other authorities acknowledge the importance of reading as can be seen in the discussion that follows.

4.4.1   THE COGNITIVE VALUE OF READING

Language is a human's most essential function and is central to a person's life. One can hardly imagine life without language due to its interrelationship with human experience (Boyer 1996:1). As reading is an important part of language, it can be argued that this aspect of language is also an essential function in life. Piaget (see 3.4.2.1 & 3.4.2.2), Bruner (see 3.5.2.2), Vygotsky (see 3.6.2.2) as well as Gardner (see 3.7.3.2) have directly or indirectly emphasised the importance of reading.

From **Piaget's** point of view, children should learn to read because of its adaptive value. The written aspects of language create a general state of disequilibration (see 3.4.2.1). The learner finds the world of written words is not readily associated into existing schemes. As with all other problems encountered by learners, there is an inclination to resolve them through normal assimilation and accommodation. Most learners strive to resolve what *they* perceive as problems. Once set in motion, the

assimilation mechanism responds to the learner's experience and tries to make sense out of that experience. This implies that a learner normally will perceive reading as a problem to be solved at some point and will spontaneously pursue learning to read.

For **Bruner**, schooling is a particularly important instrument by means of which culture is developed (see 3.5.2.1). He believes that the focus of education should, *inter alia,* be on performing symbolic operations (see 3.5.2.5), as reading is a vehicle for transmitting culture.

Vygotsky, in turn, is of the opinion that the cornerstone of each child's development lies in social interaction around activities that are regarded as important in the lives of the child's family and community (see 3.6.2.1). Development does not lead to socialisation, but toward the conversion of social relations to mental functions. The significant people in a child's life determine the reorganisation of the child's thinking and personality from one stage of development to the other. What happens during the social interaction that takes place between the adult and the child forms the foundation on which the child can build new thought processes. In this way, intellectual development is advanced. Literacy, like all mental functions, also has social origins. Firstly, it begins in a relationship between an adult and a child, which includes the use of written language. Secondly, literacy begins with activities that enable children to participate in using the written word as a means of communication through adult assistance. Thirdly, only by gaining an understanding of the social purposes of literacy, can learners effectively master the mechanics needed to read independently (McNamee *et al.* 1985:231). Vygotsky thus regards literacy as a mental function that is vitally important for the enhancement of a child's intellectual development.

Gardner would probably agree that one way of developing all eight intelligences is to provide learners with suitable reading material.

Apart from the four learning theorists, many contemporary researchers and teachers in the field of language and reading emphasise the cognitive value of reading. Garton and Pratt (1998:263-264) stress the fact that literacy enhances children's cognitive development through interactions involving spoken and written language (which includes reading). It can be deduced that reading in itself also enhances cognitive development. Being able to read and write permits further language development to take place, for example, through exposure to new vocabulary and different genres.

Many teachers acknowledge the value of reading. Jennifer Mthimkulu, a KwaZulu-Natal teacher, believes that reading is learning (Ewing 1997:10). Brand and Donato (2001:8) and their counterparts, Garton and Pratt (1998:267-277) build a strong case to support Mthimkulu. They emphasise the cognitive value of reading when they say that the exposure of learners to a variety of reading opportunities can promote life-long reading. By creating reading opportunities, learning is extended as a greater knowledge base is created from which learners can learn. Moreover, literary activities allow learners to become aware that reading is an activity that provides them with new knowledge. As learners find out about reading or 'grow' into literacy, they actually learn about learning.

In addition, Geyser (1998:12) is of the opinion that reading is communication. The accomplishment of literacy provides the opportunity for children (and adults) to contribute toward the cognitive development of others through the spoken language, including conversations, teaching and lecturing and through written language, which includes the writing of books. Reading also clarifies abstract ideas by revealing deeper levels of meaning about familiar situations, encouraging reflection, giving access to new ideas and knowledge and adding to the understanding of new concepts. Moreover, language development is enhanced in that reading allows young learners to expand their vocabulary, improve spelling and grammatical skills, learn about different writing styles and to realise the power of language (Browne 1996:121).

Bouwer and Guldenpfenning (1999:93) conclude the discussion by pointing out that by Grade 8 at the latest

> *African learners are generally expected to control English as a virtually transparent medium to acquire new knowledge and skills in all areas of their learning. Within the integrated approach of Curriculum 2005 to language, literacy and communication education, their academic reading skills in English should therefore be systematically developed in all primary schools.*

This implies that the process of developing reading skills should already commence in the Foundation Phase.

4.4.2   THE SOCIAL VALUE OF READING

Au and Asam (1996:189) emphasise the social value of reading when they say:

To be successful in modern society, it is virtually imperative that one be literate.

Both De Wet (2003) and Le Roux (1994:80) support the preceding statement when they say that reading is a life skill as it can, for instance, teach people about dealing with real-life situations. Alexander (1988:34) and Wood (1999:161) agree that reading has social value when they say that reading influences a person's social development, as a well-adapted member of society is expected to be able to read. Furthermore, reading contributes towards children understanding themselves as well as their environment, circumstances and interpersonal relationships in a better way. Reading offers opportunities to reflect on the nature of society and provides access to secondary worlds. In addition, reading enables a person to explore human relationships, to express a variety of cultural traditions/values and demonstrate different ways of viewing the world (Browne 1996:121; Van Vuuren 1994:29). In fact, Burger (SABC 2, 17 April 2003) went as far as saying that a more literate society could possibly have prevented the recent war in Iraq.

4.4.3   THE EMOTIONAL VALUE OF READING

Beside the cognitive and social value of reading, Machado (1999:226) believes that reading also has emotional value. In the discussion that follows, it becomes clear that several other authorities endorse her view. Vygotsky (see 3.6.2.5), for example, believes that emotions play a key role in learning. It can be deduced that reading enhances positive or negative emotions.

As reading involves thought and emotion in particular, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between reading and children's needs. Foundation Phase learners have various basic needs that literature can help to meet (Burke 1986:23). Many of these correlate with Maslow's hierarchy of needs ranging from basic psychological demands to the need for self-actualisation. Despite social change in modern society, children still have basic needs (Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:17), many of which can be satisfied through literature.

4.4.3.1 The need for security

Today, as in earlier times, many people lack material security. This lack of security can be satisfied through the theme of an oral or written story (Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:17). For example, a story could tell about a mother's desperate attempt to prevent her family from being separated.

4.4.3.2 The need to belong and to be accepted

Growing out of the need for security is the need of every person to belong and to be accepted (Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:18). Stories are often based on human relationships. Children need to know how to deal with such relationships so that they can experience a feeling of belonging (Burke 1986:24). For example, a story of a child who wins a respected place within the group that once rejected him or her is a satisfying theme.

Stories could also help children learn to accept diversity within an inclusive classroom. A story titled *Read my lips* (researcher's unpublished story) tells about a group of deaf learners who helped to prevent a crime from being committed, thereby showing that despite their disabilities, they have other strengths and that they are also valuable members of society.

4.4.3.3 The need to love and to be loved

Everyone wants to love someone and has a need to be loved by someone. Reading a book is one way of teaching young readers about love and affection, for example, a story about a loving relationship between people or about saving someone else or an animal from danger helps to satisfy this need (Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:17). Moreover, in stories, children often find characters to which they can relate because of similar experiences such as having lost a parent. In fact, Burke (1986:24) believes the very act on the side of parents and teachers who tell or read stories to children is proof that others care about them.

4.4.3.4 The need to achieve and to feel worthy

The need for competence, which refers to a person's capacity to interact effectively with the environment, is a strong motivating force in human behaviour. The struggle to become competent begins during infancy and continues throughout life. To be happy and well-adjusted, a person should feel competent in one area or another (Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:20).

Mastering the skill of reading can help children improve their self-esteem (Burke 1986:25). Firstly, being able to read stories written by someone else lets children feel that they have achieved and this develops positive feelings about themselves. This process can allow them to move from a state of disequilibration to a state of equilibration as suggested by Piaget (see 3.4.2.1). Secondly, the ability to create and read their own stories also instils a sense of pride within learners.

4.4.3.5 The need for beauty, order and harmony

Stories can take young children on a journey to a world of fantasy or clothe their everyday world with fresh images. Many folk and fairy tales feed children's need for beauty. Together, order and beauty could create harmony that young children can appreciate even though they cannot articulate it (Burke 1986:25).

4.4.4 THE CULTURAL VALUE OF READING

There is definite relationship between culture and language. This statement is endorsed by Bruner, who believes that narratives are one of the strongest vehicles for transmitting culture, as well as Vygotsky, who stresses the relationship between language, society and culture. (See 3.5.2.13 & 3.6.2.1 respectively.)

The cultural value of reading is further underlined by the DoE (2002a:5). This policy document states that language serves a variety of purposes. One of these is that it fulfils a cultural value by enabling one to understand and appreciate language and cultures as well as the heritages they carry. As reading is a substrand of language, it can be deduced that reading fulfils the same purpose.

Besides the cognitive, social, emotional and cultural values of reading, reading skills need to be developed in order to achieve the critical outcome (see 1.2.6.1) stating that learners should be able to successfully demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation (DoE 1997e:16).

4.4.5   THE ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Since the introduction of OBE in 1997, Foundation Phase policy documents were used wherein specific outcomes for language, literacy and communication are stated. The importance of reading is reflected in a study of the seven specific outcomes and their assessment criteria as mentioned in the Literacy Programme (DoE 1997c:13-37; GDE 1998:23).

As from 2004, the RNCS will be used in the Foundation Phase. The importance of reading and viewing is strongly emphasised in the RNCS (DoE 2002a:30-35). For example, Learning Outcome 3 for the Foundation Phase reads as follows:

> *LEARNING OUTCOME 3: READING AND VIEWING*
> *The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts* (DoE 2002a:30).

The policy document (DoE 2002a:30-35) states the various Assessment Standards for reading and viewing. In Grade 3, Learning Outcome 3 will be achieved when learners

- ♦ use visual cues to make meaning;
- ♦ are able to make meaning of written texts;
- ♦ recognise and make meaning of letters and words;
- ♦ read with increasing speed and fluency;
- ♦ read aloud, using the correct pronunciation and appropriate intonation;
- ♦ use self-correcting strategies such as re-reading, pausing and practising a word before reading it aloud;
- ♦ develop a sound phonic awareness;
- ♦ read independently and for enjoyment and
- ♦ provide evidence of being able to read between 700 and 1500 common words.

It is clear that by the end of Grade 3, learners should be in the process of developing various reading skills in both their home language and their first additional language.

Wittgenstein (in Bruner 1984:6) aptly summarises the importance of reading with the following aphorism:

> *To know a word means to know its use. To know its use is to know the language as a whole. To know the language as a whole is to know its form of life.*

Du Plessis (1990:10) closes the discussion by saying that

> *education is for South Africa the key to the future and **reading** is central in the educational process.* (Own cursivation)

Knowledge of the importance of reading is, however, not sufficient in order to support teachers who wish to develop their own reading material. They also need to have knowledge regarding the development of reading in order to write developmentally appropriate reading material.

The following poem by Tammy Dornak (1993:670), a Foundation Phase teacher, closes the discussion by illustrating how reading extends the experience of her learners:

THE WORLD OF READING

"Now sit down children and get out your books."
They all looked at me with hesitant looks.
"It's not quite so bad as you all think;
"We're going on an adventure!" and gave them a wink.
"Oh, Please, Miss Dornak, we all hate to read!
Can't we do science, maybe plant a seed?"
I told them to listen and just close their eyes;
As the reading began, so did the surprise.

The students travelled to places way out of this world;

They travelled on waters that swallowed and swirled.

They fought with aliens from far away places.

They ran from huge animals with big scary faces.

They walked and they lived in the city that doesn't sleep.

They became great pilots and fought a war,

They became the richest of rich and the poorest of poor.

I then closed the book, and their eyes opened wide.

They looked up and down and they looked side to side.

They were back in the classroom all snug in their seats.

As the bell rang, they left, and I heard one repeat:

"I never knew books could take you away;

I think I'll go home and read instead of play."

I'd succeeded because my children saw books could be fun;

Where someone failed, I finally won!

4.5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING

There are many different views regarding the development of reading and each one could be of value to this study. As this study puts the focus on the Foundation Phase, only those stages of reading development that are relevant to Foundation Phase learners will be referred to.

4.5.1 THE STAGES OF READING DEVELOPMENT

According to Du Plessis (1990:97), learners in the Foundation Phase could find themselves in one of two stages of reading, namely the **magical** phase or the **magical-realistic** phase.

4.5.1.1 The magical phase

Children who are approximately four to seven years old are still egocentric as they fall in the stage of intuitive thought as proposed by Piaget (see 3.4.2.1). Although children's thoughts are bound to their own environment, their interests gradually reach out to the unknown. The picture story book can contribute towards the extension of their knowledge of the unknown. Children start to show the first signs of becoming independent by paging through the book on their own and enjoy listening to stories that are part of their life-world. Their imagination plays a major role in the interpretation of events. Stories in which animals play the main role are very popular. Vague indications of time and places are sufficient, for instance, *"Long, long ago..."* or *"One day there was..."*.

4.5.1.2 The magical-realistic phase

Children aged approximately seven to nine years old fall into this stage. They start to distinguish between reality and fantasy but are not yet able to move consistently on the realistic level. Their thoughts are no longer only focused on themselves as they become less egocentric and more objective. Children in this stage are in Piaget's concrete-operational stage (see 3.4.2.1). Not only do they start developing their reading skills but differences in the interests of boys and girls become evident. In many cases, girls enjoy reading books where boys play the main character but the contrary is not true, as boys generally do not enjoy books where the main character is a girl.

4.5.1.3 The developmental continuum of reading in the Foundation Phase

Even though the RNCS is to be implemented in the Foundation Phase as from 2004, the developmental continuum of reading as proposed by the GDE (1998:209) is still applicable.

The table that follows indicates the seven aspects of reading (referred to as substrands), which give an indication of the **developmental continuum** of reading in the Foundation Phase.

TABLE 4.1   SUBSTRANDS   OF   READING   AND   THE   DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM OF READING IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

	ENTRY LEVEL → → → → → → → → → → →			EXIT LEVEL
READ FOR INFORMATION	♦ read notices, signs, labels, etc.	♦ read labels, signs and notices ♦ select information for specific purposes	♦ follow instructions ♦ interpret index or contents page	♦ learn and apply basic dictionary skills ♦ begin to scan for specific information
READ FOR ENJOYMENT	♦ listen to stories for enjoyment	♦ read for pleasure ♦ read a wide range of picture, story and non-fiction texts	♦ read for pleasure and be read to ♦ exposure to fiction and non-fiction ♦ opportunities for shared reading	♦ exposure to text with fewer pictures ♦ read text of appropriate length and style
READ ALOUD	♦ listen to the teacher read ♦ learn simple phonic and sight words	♦ read daily ♦ read in pairs to develop a sense of audience	♦ read daily ♦ read own stories aloud	♦ share texts with peers ♦ attend to contextual clues
DEVELOP BOTTOM-UP DECODING SKILLS	♦ learn to read a small number of sight words	♦ develop visual and auditory perceptual skills ♦ develop basic decoding skills ♦ improve meaning	♦ constantly improve skills from previous level	♦ develop advanced perceptual skills ♦ develop advanced decoding skills ♦ improve comprehension skills

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READ FOR MEANING AND CRAFT	♦ answer basic pre-reading questions	♦ answer pre-reading questions ♦ predict the outcomes of the story ♦ talk about what was read ♦ share ideas	♦ read fiction and non-fiction ♦ use cues ♦ integrate own experiences ♦ respond through drawings and simple writing activities	♦ read fiction, non-fiction and own texts ♦ sequence thoughts and ideas ♦ make inferences ♦ draw conclusions
BECOME AWARE OF GENRE	♦ pay attention to the cover and illustrations ♦ distinguish between text, illustration, story / rhymes	♦ pay attention to cover and illustrations ♦ distinguish between fiction / non-fiction ♦ distinguish between pictures / photo-graphs	♦ pay attention to markers e.g. title and chapter headings ♦ distinguish between verse and dramatic text ♦ note differences in illustrations	♦ encounter a wider range of reference and instructional materials ♦ awareness of differences in front cover, title, layout, etc. ♦ awareness of typical story structures
ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LANGUAGE	♦ know the title and author	♦ know the author, title, index and content	♦ understand simple punctuation ♦ apply simple dictionary skills	♦ identify and use fiction / non-fiction books ♦ understand use of paragraph and punctuation

In this section, the importance of reading has been emphasised. Although this knowledge is essential for all Foundation Phase teachers who wish to develop their own reading material, they also need knowledge regarding the **types** of reading material that is suitable for their learners. This knowledge will help them to prepare developmentally appropriate reading material. For this reason, the types of reading material (genres) regarded as suitable for Foundation Phase learners is the next topic to be discussed.

4.6 SUITABLE TYPES OF READING MATERIAL FOR FOUNDATION PHASE LEARNERS

The ideal is that Foundation Phase teachers follow a literature-based curriculum as proposed earlier on and to create a print-rich environment (see 4.3). To accomplish this, teachers need various types of reading material.

There are many different genres of reading material to which Foundation Phase learners should be exposed. The DoE (2002a:35) emphatically states that learners should read fiction and non-fiction books as well as poems and rhymes. Lapp and Flood (1978:121) contribute to the discussion by stating that the success of a reading programme is not measured by scores on a standardised test but by the **amount** and **quality** of the reading material that learners read. The necessity to read different types of reading material is also underlined by Muthukrishna (1995:113) who says that learners need to have knowledge of different textual materials. These include the writings not only of one's own and other cultures but also of different kinds of materials that are encountered in everyday life such as newspapers, advertisements, story books, cartoon-styled books, poetry as well as teacher-authored and teacher-learner-authored materials.

Moreover, Piaget (in Boden 1994:39) points out that children develop at their own rate. This implies that they need various types of reading material on different levels. A variety of reading material also ensures that learners are offered adequate opportunities to improve their reading skills. Exposure to a variety of reading material and expanding their opportunities to read, allows learners to develop their cognitive skills by progressing from a state of disequilibration to a state of equilibration. In essence, experience and practice are needed to develop learners' cognitive development. This statement is in line with Vygotsky's statement that exercise is needed to enhance learning (see 3.6.2.7). When learners practise their newly acquired skills, these become integrated with their existing cognitive skills.

Burke (1986:8), a more contemporary writer, agrees that learners should be exposed to different types of reading material when she says:

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In their journey to Somewhere, young children continuously exhibit curiosity, activity, experimentation, impatience, egocentrism, imagination, imitation, enthusiasm, dependence on adults, and unpredictability. To such behaviors, some genres and books are especially responsive.

Although there are many different genres of reading material, Machado (1999:221) and Wood (1999:166) point out that children's literature does not fit neatly into a single category as some fit into two or more categories. Literature that belongs to a particular genre shares characteristics that usually include overall structure and type of characters, settings and plot actions. One category that crosses genres is the picture story book (Wood 1999:166).

Burke (1986:xvi) adds to the body of knowledge regarding types of reading material when she says that, although not exclusive to young children, certain genres of reading material are especially suited to Foundation Phase learners. Picture story books, fairy tales or nursery rhymes as well as many traditional stories and concept books strongly appeal to these learners. Their interest in these forms of literature lessens and their focus of interest gradually shifts to literature that is more factual. During the transitional stage, a children's interest in genre may run concomitantly. For example, they could still be interested in fairy tales while also being interested in more factual books at the same time. Each Foundation Phase teacher should, therefore, provide their learners with a balanced and varied selection to cater for all the readers, from the more able to the least able reader.

In this section, the various types of children's literature that appeal to Foundation Phase learners will be discussed with a view that teachers could develop the same type of reading material for use in their classrooms, either for formal reading instruction, reading for enjoyment or shared reading where the teacher and the learner read together (Education Department of Western Australia 1996b:15).

Literature for children is classified into two broad categories, namely fiction and non-fiction (Jansen van Vuuren 1996:104). The RNCS (DoE 2003:25, 54) specifies that learners in Grade 2 and 3 (Home Languages and First Additional Languages) should read both fiction and non-fiction books.

4.6.1   FICTION

Fiction is defined as a type of book or story that is written about imaginary characters and events (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:515). In contrast with non-fiction books (see 4.6.2), the story is not based on real people and facts. According to Steenberg (1988:4), fiction has several benefits for children such as providing opportunities to experience different emotions, the development of empathy, an understanding of other people's way of life and their traditions as well as stimulating their imagination.

A detailed discussion on the types of fiction that are regarded as suitable for Foundation Phase learners now follows.

4.6.1.1   Wordless picture story books

Different terms are used to describe books containing pictures only. Consequently, much confusion exists among the terms used to describe books in this genre.

(a)   A description of wordless picture story books

Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991:102-103) refer to books containing pictures only as *picture story books* while *picture story books* (see 4.6.1.2) contain both pictures and text. Goforth and Spillman (1994:176) refer to books containing pictures only as *wordless text* as they require the reader to 'read' the visuals to interpret the narrative. Cho and Kim (1999:337) refer to picture books without written text as *wordless picture story books*. This term is accepted in this study.

An example of a wordless picture story book is *The hunter and the animals* (De Paola 1992 – see Addendum A).

(b)   The value of wordless picture story books

Wordless picture story books are most suitable for very young readers, as they do not require the child to be able to read text yet. Their value lies in the fact that they teach pre-reading skills such as directionality, sequencing, visual discrimination and storytelling. They also teach book-processing skills such as story construction through

sequential thinking, prediction of outcomes and inferential thinking. Furthermore, these books promote expressive language skills such as the creation of group dialogues and stories in oral and or written form. Activities such as these help to establish the interrelationship between the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Lastly, they promote learners' ability to think logically and critically and unleash their creativity (Goforth & Spillman 1994:176; Lemmer 1989:21; 1993:47; Machado 1999:222). These books do not only allow children to share experiences vicariously and help to draw children's interest toward classroom topics but also help children visualise new concepts and to solve problems. In addition, they are ideal for developing multilingualism (Baker 1995:44), for instance, by writing multilingual texts to match the pictures.

It is important to note that wordless picture story books do not only appeal to inexperienced readers. Their pictures often make them attractive even to older learners (Browne 1996:122).

4.6.1.2 Picture story books

Books containing both pictures and text are sometimes referred to as *picture books* (Day 1996:153). In this study, however, the term *picture story books* will be used as it implies that the book contains both pictures and a story in text form.

This genre only came to its own when printing techniques made it possible to publish illustrated books at a reasonable price. These books are generally intended for young children and are often young readers' first encounter with children's literature. As picture story books are known to provide much pleasure (Swanepoel 1987:233), most Foundation Phase teachers should read them to their learners and/or use them for formal reading instruction as part of a literature-based approach to teaching reading skills.

(a)   A description of picture story books

The range, content, style and design of picture story books as well as the genres with which they overlap, make a comprehensive definition rather difficult (Burke 1986:143). According to Machado (1999:216) and Wood (1999:166), picture story books rely on a

combination of illustrations and narrative (text), both being integral to the complete work.

Common themes include adventures of human-like animals, toys that come alive as well as talking trains and trucks (Raines & Isbell 1994:132-135). The number of pictures and the length of the text vary from book to book. The length of the text on each page varies from brief, repetitive sentences to long, complete paragraphs (Browne 1996:123). The term *iconotext* is used to refer to picture story books containing at least one picture on each spread or page (Nikolajeva & Scott 2000:226).

It is clear that there is a definite relationship between pictures and text in a picture story book. Day (2000:34) states that picture story books rely as much (or more) on visual meaning as they do on verbal meaning. This implies that there is a subtle relationship between two kinds of text, namely **visual** text and **verbal** text. Sipe (1998:97) use a metaphor related to music to describe this relationship by referring to a 'duet' between the text and the pictures. He also coined his own term for this relationship, namely the 'synergy' of picture and text implying that it is a relationship in which the total effect depends not only on the union of the text and illustrations but also on the perceived dynamic interaction between these two aspects.

Nikolajeva and Scott (2000:225) explain that this interaction can take place in three different ways, namely through **symmetrical**, **enhancing** or **contradictory** interaction. However, these categories are not absolute as the text and pictures in a picture story book will never be completely symmetrical or completely complementary.

♦ In **symmetrical** interaction, words and pictures tell the same story, implying that the information is repeated in different forms of communication.

♦ In **enhancing** interaction, pictures increase or amplify more fully the meaning of the text or the words expand the picture so that different information is obtained in the two modes of communication. The enhancement can be minimal or significant. In the case of **minimal** enhancement, the pictures do not add much more to what is written in the text. In contrast, **significant** enhancement means that the pictures and text hardly overlap but work together to strengthen the total effect. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter contains an excellent example significant enhancement. The opening pages show some apparent contradictions as the

verbal text tells that there are **four** little rabbits, yet only three can be seen in the picture. Closer examination of the picture reveals the hind legs and tail of another rabbit whose head is hidden underneath the tree root. This creates immediate tension between the picture and the text, as the reader wants to unravel the discrepancy. On the next page, Mrs Rabbit is talking to her children but Peter is standing with his back to her, implying that he is not listening to her. In this way, the combination of text and picture communicates a sense of lurking danger.

♦ A **contradictory** dynamic can result when words and images collaborate to communicate meaning beyond the scope of either one alone. The ambiguity created challenges the reader to mediate between the text and pictures in order to understand the story. An example of this form of dynamic could be found in a story about a royal family living in a simple home. The picture shows the family eating bread and jam for supper. This scenario is contradictory to the life-style expected from a royal family.

Pictures clearly play a key role in picture story books. Norton (1993:449) compares their role to theatre and film because they are like dramatic experiences that include 'actors' and a 'stage'. In picture story books, the characters, settings and actions are shown through the illustrations. Illustrations not only help turn words into reality but also promote children's visual literacy. Illustrations also provide pleasure, nourish the imagination, develop imagery and allow learners to explore a variety of styles and forms of communicating ideas (Machado 1999:216).

Moreover, many authorities believe that pictures will provide support where learners' language control is absent or insufficient. Noor Mahomed (1993:75), for instance, states that the use of picture-type reading comprehension activities makes it possible for learners (particularly those who are not learning in their mother tongue or are experiencing reading difficulties) to read and comprehend with greater success.

Potts (http://www.mathpower.com/brain.htm), a well-known historian and left/right brain-learning specialist, pioneered the integration of left and right brain learning concepts with the teaching and writing of history. The key was to engage both sides of the brain by presenting history in **words and pictures simultaneously**. The positive outcome of this integration resulted in a learner saying:

The pictures made it interesting and it just stuck in my mind.

Despite the importance of pictures already mentioned, Blacquiere (1988:64) extends a word of caution. In his view, it would be a dangerous assumption to believe that someone who can read text can also read pictures.

The question that now comes to mind is the following: *How does the reader form a relationship between the text and the pictures?*

In answer to this question, Sipe (1998:101) offers his theory of **transmediation**. The reader oscillates from the sign system of the verbal text to the sign system of the illustrations and from the pictures to the verbal sign system. As the reader moves across sign systems, new meanings are formed as the text is interpreted in terms of the pictures and the pictures in terms of the text. Transmediation is thus an on-going sequence.

Closely related to the concept of transmediation is the view of Nodelman (in Garrett-Petts 2000:47). He believes that literary competence required in secondary schools and tertiary institutions begins with the recognition of the essential 'doubleness' of picture story books. These books allow the reader to engage in three potential stories, namely the one told by the words, the one told by the pictures and the one that results from a combination of the two.

Various types of reading material could be presented in the form of picture story books, for example, big books (see 4.6.1.3), folk tales (see 4.6.1.4), realistic fiction (see 4.6.1.5), books for bibliotherapy (see 4.6.1.6), cartoon-style books (see 4.6.1.7), children's poetry (see 4.6.1.8) or non-fiction books (see 4.6.2). In addition, picture story books could be presented as novelty books. These include 'lift-the-flaps', pop-up books or 'concertina' books (Raines & Isbell 1994:146; Swanepoel 1987:232).

An example of a picture story book is *Klein Tom* (Mitchell 1992 – see Addendum B).

An example of a novelty book is *Ben plants a butterfly garden* (Petty & Scheffler 1998 – see Addendum C).

(b)   The value of picture story books

The advantages of illustrated stories were already emphasised during the second developmental era. Comenius (see 2.3.2.3) wrote the first picture story book for children called *Orbis Pictus*. Locke and Basedow also expressed their views on the importance of illustrated books for young children. (See 2.3.2.4 & 2.3.2.6 respectively.) Vygotsky (in Norton 1993:478) supports the use of picture story books when he says that they prepare learners for more difficult texts.

Several contemporary writers have identified additional advantages of picture story books. Burke (1986:152), Cho and Kim (1999:337), Machado (1999:210, 222), Mackworth and Bruner (1970:150), as well as Strehle (1999:214-219) believe that picture story books are of value because they

♦ form an essential step in children's journey to become literate and develop literary appreciation;

♦ enhance pre-reading skills such as visual and auditory discrimination;

♦ build positive attitudes about books and reading in that they allow children to reap enjoyment from the book;

♦ provide practice in the development of a sense for story;

♦ help to meet young children's needs, such as their need for beauty and order (see 4.4.3.5);

♦ nourish the mind and emotions and delight the eyes and the heart;

♦ explore, re-create and obtain meaning in human experience;

♦ restate children's discoveries and extend information;

♦ provide opportunity for children to come into contact with diversity;

♦ develop social skills;

♦ allow children to gain a sense of well-being;

♦ develop values and norms by teaching what is acceptable and admirable;

♦ help to preserve and communicate traditions;

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- scaffold dialogue and responses and
- offer supportive, positive attention to children's interests and comments.

In addition, picture story books are of value as they

- refine learners' language skills by making it possible for children to hear the rhythm and sound qualities of words, sharpening their listening skills, enriching their vocabulary, providing opportunities for the sharing of personal experiences, directing discussion and developing their reading skills;

- provide experiences that help children to gain self-knowledge by identifying with the characters and

- appeal to young readers because of their visual variety and the excitement, action or adventure depicted which can stimulate visual exploration, interpretation and reflection.

Du Plessis (1990:110-111) and Lemmer (1989:21-22; 1993:47) have identified yet other qualities of picture story books. In their opinion, these books provide

- a rich resource for first- or second language acquisition as they are ideal for the development of linguistic and visual literacy skills for all ages;

- an additional means of acquiring confidence in reading by familiarising learners with books;

- bridges for the development of reading skills as they usually contain pictures, repetitive structures and opportunities for participation thus providing support for meaning-making and

- valuable sources of story motivation in that they encourage both intrinsic and social solidarity during the time when a gap exists between the kinds of stories children need and their ability to access them independently.

Du Plessis (1990:45, 109) points out an important aspect regarding picture story books when she says that many black learners come from a poor socio-economic

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environment and from broken homes. It is ironic that so many of them have a need for spiritual satisfaction and security but do not come into contact with literature, especially picture story books. These books could help them build a concept of the society in which they live and of their roles in that society. Picture story books could help to shape and sharpen their concepts of other people and relationships. At the same time, these books could help them to understand themselves. In essence, these children will have lost out spiritually if they are not exposed to picture story books.

Machado (1999:212) closes the discussion by cautioning that picture story books are not 'substitutes' for children's real life experiences, interactions and discoveries as these are the aspects that make books understandable. They do, however, add another dimension and source of information to the life of children.

4.6.1.3   Big books

Big books are increasing in popularity in Foundation Phase classrooms. Many teachers regard experiences with big books as the closest approximation to family story book reading one can offer in a classroom (Machado 1999:223).

(a)   A description of big books

Machado (1999:221) refers to big books as 'oversized books'. They are presented in an unusually big size as they contain enlarged texts and illustrations (Dixon-Krauss 1996:34). Various types of reading material can be presented in the form of big books, for example, picture story books (see 4.6.1.2), folk and fairy tales (see 4.6.1.4), children's poems (see 4.6.1.8) and non-fiction books (see 4.6.2).

An example of a story presented in a big book is *Phumla grows up* (*On track with English* 1998 – see Addendum D).

(b)   The value of big books

Advantages that big books can offer to Foundation Phase learners include the following:

♦ Due to the size of the pictures and the text, the whole class or a group of learners can view the books simultaneously. They are thus ideal for shared reading (Machado 1999:221; Raines & Isbell 1994:90).

♦ The use of enlarged texts is very useful to second language learners in the Foundation Phase and learners who are not read to at home since shared reading provides a visual and oral demonstration of reading (Browne 1996:43; Raines & Isbell 1994:90).

♦ Big books can contain multilingual texts. The story could be written in the language of learning, for example, English, as well as one or more of the home languages spoken by learners in the class.

♦ The reading of big books can be a supportive and collaborative activity that is of value to all readers. Such an activity provides opportunity for practice in reading and also provides learners with a positive role model (Browne 1996:43).

♦ Big books allow learners to make associations between the spoken and the printed word because they can see the print more easily (Raines & Isbell 1994:91).

♦ Big books are ideal for learners with visual impairments as they are able to see the pictures more clearly and read the text with greater ease.

♦ Sharing big books can increase children's awareness of the layout of books, the narrative structure of stories and improve their knowledge of phonics and spelling.

4.6.1.4   Folk literature

All societies possess stories that have been passed down for centuries. These stories are known as folk literature. Generations have shaped most of these stories but somehow the core plots have been preserved (Burke 1986:166). The mere survival of folk literature is evidence that these stories satisfy some universal needs. The themes in folk literature connect with all cultures because of the apparent morals (Raines & Isbell 1994:155). The behavioural characteristics of Foundation Phase learners and the nature of early childhood development make folk literature particularly suitable for these learners.

(a)   A description of folk literature

Folk literature are tales that have been told and retold in the oral tradition and appeared in print after they became part of the cultural heritage of diverse societies (Raines & Isbell 1994:159). In recent times, much folk literature has been recorded in written form by different authors resulting in a variety of versions (Wood 1999:166).

The themes of folk literature are universal in that the poor become rich, the ugly become beautiful, good conquers evil and the unselfish are rewarded. Through folk tales, the common people's dreams, aspirations and values are expressed (Raines & Isbell 1994:159).

Internationally, folk literature encompasses many sub-genres such as nursery rhymes and childhood rhymes, folk and fairy tales, animal tales, fables, legends and myths (Raines & Isbell 1994:23; Van Vuuren 1994:117). For this reason, it is rather difficult (or virtually impossible) to offer an exact classification of the sub-genres (Goforth & Spillman 1994:185). Only the sub-genres regarded as suitable for Foundation Phase learners will be discussed.

(i)   Nursery rhymes, childhood rhymes and Mother Goose rhymes

Nursery rhymes are short, traditional verses presented in the form of lullabies, songs or rhymes. Childhood rhymes are similar to nursery rhymes but differ in that they are transmitted from child to child rather than from adult to child (Goforth & Spillman 1994:186-187). Mother Goose rhymes are derived from oral storytelling and singing, which was later collected and printed. Like many other types of folk literature, they have stood the test of time (Raines & Isbell 1994:156).

TABLE 4.2   AN OVERVIEW OF NURSERY, CHILDHOOD AND MOTHER GOOSE RHYMES

DISTINCTIVE ELEMENTS	CHARACTERS/SETTING/PLOT	EXAMPLES
◆ simple and short ◆ chants ◆ dialogue ◆ riddles ◆ tongue-twisters ◆ may be non-sensical ◆ use of rhyme, rhythm, alliteration and repetition	◆ characters are animate/ inanimate; real/ imaginary ◆ settings in palaces or everyday places ◆ children as characters in childhood rhymes	*Nursery rhymes:* ◆ One, two, buckle my shoe ◆ Now I lay me down to sleep *Childhood rhymes:* ◆ I wrote to a letter to my love ◆ One potato, two potato *Mother Goose rhymes:* ◆ Old Mother Hubbard ◆ Jack and Jill went up the hill ◆ Humpty Dumpty ◆ Little Bo-Peep

(Goforth & Spillman 1994:186-187; Machado 1999:276; Raines & Isbell 1994:156-157)

An example of a nursery rhyme is *Incy Wincy Spider* (*Playtime rhymes for the very young* 1998 – see Addendum E).

(ii)   Animal tales

Animal tales are short, prose narratives explaining the origin of animals and their physical attributes (Goforth & Spillman 1994:200). Most children are interested in animal stories whether the creatures are animals that behave like human beings or animals that behave like animals except that they are able to talk (Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:108; Swanepoel 1987:221).

Research undertaken by Du Plessis (1990:54) and Inggs (2000:2) has shown that animal tales are very popular among black children, particularly Northern Sotho

children. This could be attributed to the strong African belief in the interdependence among animals, humans, nature and between the various people in South Africa.

TABLE 4.3   *AN OVERVIEW OF ANIMAL TALES*

DISTINCTIVE ELEMENTS	CHARACTERS/SETTING/PLOT	EXAMPLES
◆ lack figurative language ◆ limited descriptions	◆ realistic animals in realistic habitats ◆ stereotyped characteristics, e.g. sly fox, slow tortoise ◆ fictional story explaining animals' physical attributes ◆ simple narrative ◆ timeless	◆ How the zebra got its stripes ◆ Why the camel has a hump ◆ How the elephant got its trunk ◆ Why the ostrich can't fly

(Goforth & Spillman 1994:200)

An example of an animal tale is *The elephant's child* (*Just so stories* 1996 – see Addendum F).

(iii)   Folk and fairy tales

Young children see reading as entertainment and enjoy listening to and reading folk and fairy tales (Cox 1996:300). Burke (1986:167) as well as Pressman and Dublin (1995:180) support the statement made by Cox when they say that early childhood is the ideal time for reading folk and fairy tales. Folk tales include fairy tales although many people think of fairy tales as a separate category (Raines & Isbell 1994:166). Folk tales mirror the values of a culture (Wood 1999:167) in that they often carry a strong-felt need by children to find answers about life in general and childhood experience in particular (Senkoro 1996:66). Fairy tales are pure fantasy and contain magical creatures, objects or happenings such as fairies, monsters, genies and flying carpets (Du Plessis, Hansen & Rau 2002:16).

TABLE 4.4   AN OVERVIEW OF FAIRY TALES

DISTINCTIVE ELEMENTS	CHARACTERS/SETTING/PLOT	EXAMPLES
◆ cultural names ◆ dialogue ◆ figurative language ◆ repetition ◆ rich description ◆ short refrains ◆ predictable/repetitive phrases often included	◆ leading characters introduced ◆ time, place and the problem or conflict are presented ◆ personified objects or animals performing predictable behaviour ◆ numbers three and seven often used ◆ setting briefly sketched, e.g. a road, bridge, hut, palace ◆ simple, linear plot – no sub-plots ◆ plot begins quickly, moves to a climax and a predictable conclusion ◆ themes: nature, people earning a living, accomplishing the near impossible; outwitting evil-doers using supernatural powers ◆ the 'good' are rewarded; disobedience is punished ◆ the main character wins	◆ Hansel and Gretel ◆ Three Billy Goats Gruff ◆ Jack and the Beanstalk ◆ Snow White ◆ Goldilocks ◆ Cinderella ◆ Sleeping Beauty ◆ Little Red Riding Hood ◆ Tom Thumb ◆ The Ugly Duckling ◆ Thumbelina ◆ The Elves and the Shoemaker ◆ The Three Little Pigs ◆ The Magic Pot

(Bosma 1992:9; Burke 1986:173-175; Goforth & Spillman 1994:194-197; Raines & Isbell 1994:24; Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:193; Wood 1999:167)

An example of a folk and fairy tale is *The ugly duckling* (1996 – see Addendum G).

(iv)   Fables

A fable is a short, supernatural story in which animals play the main role (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:490; Goforth & Spillman 1994:201). Often one animal manifests positive traits while the other one manifests negative traits. In most cases, the animals are not named. The purpose of the fable is to convey a clear, didactic message or a general truth to teach a moral or instill some type of positive behaviour (Burke 1986:171; Wood 1999:167).

TABLE 4.5   AN OVERVIEW OF FABLES

DISTINCTIVE ELEMENTS	CHARACTERS/SETTING/PLOT	EXAMPLES
◆ limited description ◆ short, simple prose ◆ some dialogue	◆ characters often unknown (unnamed / impersonal) ◆ animals portray a single human trait ◆ humans, plants, inanimate objects often included ◆ single incidents ◆ portray a 'lesson'	◆ Aesop's Fables e.g. *The Lion and the Mouse* ◆ The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse ◆ Bre'r Rabbit ◆ Just So Stories

(Bosma 1992:11; Burke 1986:171; Goforth & Spillman 1994:201; Raines & Isbell 1994:25)

An example of a fable is *The tortoise and the hare* (Watson 1982 – see Addendum H).

(v)   Myths and legends

Derived from the oral storytelling tradition, legends and myths often focus on creation and aspects of nature. The stories use symbolism to explain a significant event and to teach a lesson (Raines & Isbell 1994:26). Both myths and legends are tales that occurred in a previous age (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:809, 935).

Myths explain the cosmological and supernatural traditions of a group of people, their gods, heroes, cultural traits and beliefs (Goforth & Spillman 1994:191). The tales are sacred and concerned with the creation of the world (Bosma 1992:12; Raines & Isbell

1994:26; Wood 1999:167). **Legends** are based on a grain of truth or the lives or actions of someone real (Du Plessis *et al.* 2002:17). The story has, however, become greatly exaggerated in the retellings. Regional settings and dialect are used and often contain some humour. Although the heroes and their exploits are larger than life, most children enjoy the story (Wood 1999:167).

TABLE 4.6   AN OVERVIEW OF MYTHS AND LEGENDS

DISTINCTIVE ELEMENTS	CHARACTERS/SETTING/PLOT	EXAMPLES
◆ more formal ◆ symbolism involved ◆ didactic in nature ◆ related to culture ◆ explanation of some natural phenomenon	◆ godlike heroes/heroines with supernatural powers and traits ◆ flat, static characters ◆ humans versus gods or gods versus gods ◆ severe punishments	◆ King Midas ◆ Daedalus and Icarus ◆ The legend of the Indian paintbrush ◆ Rainbow Crow

(Burke 1986:171; Goforth & Spillman 1994:188; Raines & Isbell 1994:26; Wood 1999:167)

An example of a myth is *Dogs, cats and mice* (Hunt 1981 – see Addendum I) while Addendum J contains an extract from *The legend of the frogs* (Round the world folk tales 1981).

(b)   The value of folk literature

Folk literature is among the most popular types of children's literature. Van Vuuren (1994:117) underlines this statement when she says that these stories are most often borrowed from libraries.

(i)   The value of folk and fairy tales

The value of folk and fairy tales for Foundation Phase learners has (directly or indirectly) been supported by several learning theorists. Piaget (see 3.4.2.1) says that the characteristics of folk and fairy tales correspond with the characteristics of young children such as their curiosity, love of activity, impatience, imagination and the need

for stability. Vygotsky (see 3.6.2.1) believes that culture is transmitted through language. Folk literature in written form is a vehicle for the transmission of a society's culture.

Several other authorities in the field of children's literature reiterate the value of folk and fairy tales. The following serve as examples:

Bettelheim (in Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:200) says that

> *nothing in the entire range of children's literature - with rare exceptions - can be as enriching and satisfying to child and adult alike as the folk fairy tale.*

Burke (1986:167) believes that the behavioral characteristics of the young child and the nature of early childhood development substantiate the match of folk literature and young children when she says:

> *Indeed, early childhood is the time for folk tales and fairy tales.*

The many advantages of folk and fairy tales identified by Brann (1992:144), Norton (1993:455), Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991:199, 210) as well as Wood (1991:177) follow.

♦ Linguistic value: These tales provide words that indicate the setting, for example, *Once upon a time, Long, long ago, In a country far, far away.*

♦ Cognitive value: Information about other cultures is often provided.

♦ Holistic value: These tales teach that people have always loved or hated others, that people were born and that people died and that people have been happy, sad or angry.

♦ Emotional value: They provide a fantasy world in which young children can view their own fears and frustrations.

♦ Social value: Opportunities are created for drama, choral and group activities.

- Moral value: Folk and fairy tales are predominantly constructive in their moral lessons as emphasis is placed on values such as good will triumph, evil will be punished and virtue is recognised and rewarded.

- Satisfaction of needs: Everyone longs for security, love and acceptance. Moreover, everyone wants to feel competent. Folk and fairy tales often provide for these needs.

- Cultural identity: The enjoyment of folk and fairy tales allows children to assimilate a sense of their own cultural identity and an appreciation of the culture and identity of others. They can also share in the cultural literacy that should be the heritage of every child (see 1.2.5).

- Development of life-skills: Folk literature generally confronts the child with basic human predicaments. In this way, fairy tales can help to prepare children for some of the more violent aspects of life to which they are exposed, either in reality or through the media.

In addition, Bosma (1992:15) and Norton (1993:455) say that folk and fairy tales contribute towards

- an understanding of cultural traditions of the non-scientific mind;
- an aesthetic appreciation for the music, art, literature and dance of other cultures;
- a desire to learn about unfamiliar places all over the world;
- the desire to hear the same story in a different language;
- the imaginative identification with people living in other times and places and
- an understanding of inherent qualities of goodness, mercy, courage and industry.

Of particular importance to this study are the research findings of Machet (1994:70) regarding Western literature and fairy tales. Up to the age of approximately eight or nine, most Western children in both urban and rural areas enjoy fairy tales or stories where the main character is a trickster. School librarians have confirmed these children's preference for fairy tales. This endorses the fact that fairy tales should appeal to most Foundation Phase learners.

(ii)   The value of myths and legends

Support for Foundation Phase learners' exposure to myths and legends is provided by several writers, namely:

♦ Le Guin (in Brann 1992:64), who suggests that myths are expressive of one of the many ways the human being (body/psyche) perceives, understands and relates to the world. She believes that myths fulfill a deep human need that cannot be satisfied by pure rationality alone. Furthermore, myths are regarded as models for human behaviour and add significance as well as value to life.

♦ Brann (1992:43), who believes that enchantment forms part of young children's life as they begin by imagining that all things in the world have a will and life of their own. This perception is often found in myths and fantasy stories.

♦ Pike (in Brann 1992:166), who is of the opinion that myths externalise internal problems and by seeing the problems more clearly, helps to find a solution.

♦ Tötemeyer (in Inggs 2000:1), who believes that African mythology is being used increasingly as an agent of cohesion rather than a tool for division to emphasise the 'otherness' of traditional beliefs thereby placing a barrier between 'them' and 'us'.

♦ The RNCS (DoE 2003:54), who list legends in particular as one of the texts suitable for First Additional Languages.

(iii)   Arguments against folk literature

Despite all the positive comments made regarding the suitability of folk literature for Foundation Phase learners, there are writers who are **not** in favour of exposing these learners to this genre. During the second developmental era, Francke (see 2.3.2.5) and Rosseau (see 2.3.2.8) expressed their concerns regarding the suitability of folk literature such as fairy tales and fables for young children as these stories do not contain the truth.

More recently, Tucker (in Brann 1992:207) and Swanepoel (1987:213) expressed their concerns when they said that fairy tales should not be blindly defended as being suitable for young children. Many fairy tales contain references to harsh realities of life such as torture, violence and frightening scenes that make them unsuitable for young and impressionable minds.

In defense of the fairy tale, Brann (1992:214) points out that those who are overly concerned about the dangers in fairy tales should also question other genres to which children are exposed. While some authorities believe that children should not be exposed to fairy tales, others believe that children should not always be protected from the realities of life and that some of their own violent feelings should be reflected in their literature.

Goforth and Spillman (1994:5) summarise the benefits from experiences with folk literature as follows:

> As children discover the fantasy world of folk literature, they feel safe exploring in their minds unknown and faraway places. They delight in the antics of the imaginary creatures and their ability to move around in fanciful worlds. Students also relate to the illusory heroes who, seemingly without difficulty, accomplish the impossible. They better understand their own behavior and that of peers and adults after encountering similar actions portrayed in the folk literature of diverse societies.

It can be concluded that folk literature remains a popular genre for Foundation Phase learners. Teachers should, however, be sensitive to the needs of their learners and avoid tales depicting violence if it is in the best interest of learners.

4.6.1.5 Realistic fiction

As the word *fiction* is coupled with *realistic,* it could seem to imply some form of contradiction. The litmus test of this genre is, however, **reality** and it has been noted that this genre is growing in popularity (Raines & Isbell 1994:190).

(a)   A description of realistic fiction

Whereas folk literature is full of the truths that generations have passed on, realistic fiction deals with problems that are embedded firmly in direct and vicarious experiences (Burke 1986:194; Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:247). Cullinan (in Raines & Isbell 1994:191) describes realistic fiction as a window through which we see the world, as this genre deals with happenings of significant interest or derive some truth with which young readers can identify. The characters in realistic fiction are believable members of real-life who function in contemporary times and settings. Many such stories deal with issues such as the role that one plays in the family or peer group, learning self-control, dealing with conflict, disability, rejection, illness or bullying (Browne 1996:124; Wood 1999:168). Realistic fiction could be open-ended as the character's problems may not always be resolved (Wood 1999:168). However, Raines and Isbell (1994:192) caution against the misconception that realistic fiction only deals with problem situations, as these books also portray joyful and realistic experiences.

An excellent example of realistic fiction is the story of *Klein Tom* (Mitchell 1992 -- see Addendum B).

(b)   The value of realistic fiction

Children in the intuitive and concrete-operational stage (see 3.4.2.1 & 3.4.2.2) become more interested in realistic fiction, particularly fiction that gives them a chance to relate to one or more of the characters and to react realistically to the environment. They gradually become better at projecting themselves into the roles of others and start to develop a sense of empathy for others such as disabled persons.

Mwamwenda (1996:10) also supports the introduction of Foundation Phase learners to realistic fiction. He believes that they should learn to deal with reality because they are confronted with it every day. One way of exposing young children to reality is through realistic fiction because of the sharp reactions that are generated and the way characters are helped to cope with difficult situations (Burke 1986:194).

4.6.1.6 Books written for bibliotherapy

Literally translated, the word *bibliotherapy* means '*book therapy*'. According to Burke (1986:194) and Machado (1999:229), realistic fiction (see 4.6.1.5) and non-fiction (see 4.6.2) form the foundation of books written for bibliotherapy.

(a)   A description of books written for bibliotherapy

Since the 1970's, issues such as death, divorce, illness and abuse feature strongly in life. Therefore, literature is needed to address these issues (McGeorge 1998:29). Books written for bibliotherapy help learners to understand themselves and their problems. In bibliotherapy, a learner identifies with a character in a book that experiences similar problems, for example, rejection, abuse, the arrival of a new baby, divorce, death, obesity or a disability. The learners concerned also learn how the character solves the problem or copes with it. In this way, the book supports the learner in dealing with his or her own problems (Lerner 1993:132, 536; Machado 1999:229).

An example of a book written for bibliotherapy is *The streetwise kid* (Simeon & Stewart 1993 – see Addendum K).

(b)   The value of bibliotherapy

Books used for bibliotherapy can be of value to both learners and teachers. For learners, these books can be of value as they help them to express their feelings and at the same time, provide them with hope and encouragement (Dixon-Krauss 1996:86; Lerner 1993:132, 536; Mercer & Mercer 1993:199). In addition, these books can provide answers to some of the questions often asked by children (Machado 1999:223, 229) and teach the value of acceptance and tolerance (Ratchieva-Stratieva 1996:20).

At times, teachers need to help learners who experience real-life problems, fears, pain and who seek answers to questions. For the teacher, these books can be of value in that they present life realistically and offer positive solutions and insights. Books written for bibliotherapy address life's hard-to-deal-with-topics that are found in many Foundation Phase classrooms and could, therefore, form part of a support programme to help learners cope with social and emotional concerns (Machado 1999:229; Mercer

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& Mercer 1993:199). For instance, a book titled *What is abuse?* (teacher-authored story) could help to deal with the current escalating rate of child abuse in South Africa.

4.6.1.7 Cartoon-style books

Cartoon-style books are often referred to as 'comics'. Although many teachers and parents discourage their children from reading this genre, several authorities such as Browne (1996:123), Norton (1993:371) and Siegrühn (1991:3) have recognised the value of this form of reading material for Foundation Phase learners in particular. In addition, the DoE (2002a:31) states that one of the Assessment Standards for Learning Outcome 3 is that learners should be able to understand a picture story or comic strip.

(a)   *A description of cartoon-style books*

In cartoon-style reading material, the narrative is usually found in the captions as the dialogue or the person's thoughts or dreams are contained in the 'speech bubbles'. This form of reading material requires the reader to use cues within and around the illustrations, as well as the text, in order to make sense of the story (Browne 1996:123; DoE 2002a:31).

A typical example of cartoon-style book is *Quack! Quack!* (Edwards 1998 – see Addendum L).

(b)   *The value of cartoon-style books*

During the intuitive stage (see 3.4.2.1), children undergo what is known as 'cognitive conceit' (Tucker in Brann 1992:24-25). This refers to their dreams of independence and questioning of adult authority and superiority. For this reason, they enjoy stories involving heroic children who deal with problems without adult support. At this stage, children also need to develop a sense of their own identity with the result that stories involving one sex only are in demand. Cartoon-style books, especially those portraying characters capable of performing the near impossible (such as the actions of *Superman*), also appeal to children during this stage. These books are based on wish-fulfillment and allow the reader to gratify themselves with compensatory fantasies where they are free of social and physical limitations. An additional advantage of cartoon-styled books is that value and norms can be transferred.

The value of cartoon-style books is also emphasised by Siegrühn (1991:3). She refers to research undertaken in Germany and the United States of America that shows that this type of reading material can serve as a starting point for learners who have never read or as an incentive for learners who have a negative attitude towards reading. In addition, cartoon-style reading material reaches an audience (second language readers in particular) that would not otherwise read any other form of text. This phenomenon could be attributed to the fact that the reading material is more 'reader-friendly' because the number of words is reduced while the simple illustrations increase comprehension.

If this type of reading material had such positive results abroad, then the argument supporting the use of thereof can be applied to the South African situation where many learners are being taught in a second or even third language. In addition, the reduced number of words and illustrations could be of value for learners who experience reading difficulties.

4.6.1.8   Children's poetry

Poetry is a rather unique genre that is neglected or treated superficially in many elementary classrooms. Raines and Isbell (1994:229-230) together with Wood (1999:169) believe that children's poetry is a special genre enjoyed by many learners in the Foundation Phase, mainly because they respond to the repetitive patterns and poems that are descriptive. In addition, the RNCS (DoE 2003:25, 54) list poems as one of the recommended texts for Grade 1, 2 and 3 (Home Languages) and for Grade 2 and 3 (First Additional Languages).

(a)   A description of children's poetry

What makes the genres unique is that each word is chosen with care for sound and meaning. It is, however, imperative for teachers to discriminate between real children's poetry and mere verse and rhymes (Wood 1999:178). There is an abundance of appropriate children's poetry available suitable for these learners, namely:

TABLE 4.7   TYPES OF POETRY FOR CHILDREN

TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Lyric	Poetry that expresses the poet's personal thoughts and emotions (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:849). It is melodic, descriptive poetry that often has the qualities of a song (Machado 1999:276).
Narrative	Poetry that tells a story or describes an event (Machado 1999:276) is referred to as poem narratives and often contain a humorous element (Burke 1986:124).
Limerick	A humorous poem consisting of five lines of verse set in a specific rhyming pattern namely *aabba* (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:823).
Free verse	Poetry that does not rhyme (Machado 1999:276) but has strong descriptive qualities (Raines & Isbell 1994:240).
Nonsense verse	Poetry that is usually ridiculous and quaint (Machado 1999:276).

An example of a poem for children is *Water* (Crossland 1998 – see Addendum M).

(b)   The value of children's poetry

Vygotsky (see 3.6.2.3) believes that attention and memory play a key role in learning. As children's poetry enhances memory, it can be said that it improves learning. Many other writers emphasise the suitability of poetry for young learners. Wood (1999:179), a strong supporter of using poetry in the class, points out that poems can be linked to any Learning Programme. In addition, poetry is a good resource for early learning and for the framework on which older children can build and develop their own poems.

Machado (1999:274-277) and Norton (1993:125) have identified several more advantages of children's poetry. These include the following:

♦ Activities involving children's poetry offer many opportunities for promoting language and literacy by acquainting young learners with language in repeated pleasant patterns.

♦ The ability to discriminate sounds and words, create rhyming words and experience the rhythm of words can enhance reading skills.

♦ Rhythm is improved which encourages learners to join in orally or to execute movements to match the rhythmical sounds. Moreover, the language of rhyme becomes easily fixed in children's memory thus forming part of their linguistic and intellectual resources for life.

♦ Some poems appeal to the emotions and others to the intellect and imagination.

♦ Visual images are stimulated by the use of sensory words and figurative language.

♦ Self-worth and self-confidence is developed.

♦ Poetry can help to convey cultural heritage.

Burke (1986:84) aptly summarises the value of children's poetry when she says:

> Poetry can touch young children in many ways – their imaginations are triggered and startled by the simple images; their sense of humor is tickled by word play; their curiosity is peaked by the content or story and the rhythmic, rhyming way it is told; their intelligence is promoted by the organization and compression of the words; and their emotions are stimulated by the poem's cadence and drama.

4.6.1.9 Basal readers

Basal readers, also known as initial readers, are found in most Foundation Phase classrooms and are often learners' first encounter with reading material.

(a) A description of basal readers

Basal readers are usually found in a series (a sequential set of reading texts). The books are graded as they consist of a collection of stories in which the vocabulary is controlled. The series usually starts with pre-primers, gradually increasing in difficulty. In most cases, there are several books on one level (Mercer & Mercer 1993:452). These books are typically used with groups of learners (Reid & Hresko 1981:239). As the nature of these readers is mainly educational in that learners should learn

something from them, their purpose is mainly didactic. Usually, a variety of topics are included in the books.

Originally, basal readers were published for use in schools and churches and are regarded as the 'forerunners' of Northern Sotho picture story books. Primarily their aim was didactic and the illustrations subordinate to the text. Although the illustrations are mostly in colour, some of them still contain black and white pictures. Moreover, many basal readers used in schools have not kept up with modern society and cannot compete with modern fiction and non-fiction material published for young readers. Consequently, basal readers that are 'uninviting' can dampen learners' enthusiasm for reading and hamper the development of their reading competence (Du Plessis 1990:43).

An example of a story in a basal reader is *Sindi's yellow socks* (*Sunny day readers* 1993 – see Addendum N).

(b)   The value of basal readers

What follows are some of the advantages of basal readers.

◆ Most of the books have been approved by the DoE and are more readily available as schools can budget for them.

◆ In addition to a teacher's manual containing instructional plans and suggested activities, the package usually contains supplementary readers and a workbook to reinforce newly learned words and other reading skills (Mercer & Mercer 1993:452). As more than one copy of the book is made available, learners have their own copy or are able to share a book.

◆ A good series is characterised by a structured vocabulary. New words are introduced while words already learnt are repeated throughout the level and the series. Consequently, reading skills are developed in a systematic and sequential manner. Basal readers (together with other genres) could, therefore, be used, for learners who experience reading difficulties.

♦ Some series follow a whole language approach (see 4.2) and focus on whole word recognition and comprehension while others focus on word decoding strategies such as phonics (Mercer & Mercer 1993:452).

4.6.1.10 Riddles and jokes

The RNCS (DoE 2003:25, 54) list jokes and riddles as recommended types of texts for Grade 1, 2 and 3 (Home Languages as well as First Additional Languages). Young children love riddles as well as jokes as they often contain a great deal of humour. Although some books are targeted for older learners, many entries are suitable for younger learners (Burke 1986:129).

(a)   A description of riddles and jokes

A riddle is a type of question where something is described or a problem is stated in a rather difficult way and the answer is clever or amusing. Jokes are the briefest form of narrative and are comments about life and the ways people live it (Chambers in Burke 1986:128). They imply amusement and the purpose thereof is usually to let somebody laugh (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:768, 1221).

An example of a joke book is *My first joke book* (Anderson 1994 – see Addendum O).

(b)   The value of riddles and jokes

Piaget (see 3.4.2.1) says that during the concrete-operational stage, children's thinking starts to become more logical. This implies that they gradually start to appreciate humour and consequently start to understand jokes. Browne (1996:204), Burke (1986:13) and Demuth (in Swanepoel 1995:35), support the use of riddles as a form of entertainment as well as a form of language and social instruction. This genre, therefore, affords learners the comfort of a shared laugh, mental challenge and the fun of playing detective by looking for clues (Burke 1986:130). Another advantage is that jokes and riddles are usually short and easy to read. In many cases, a simple picture that adds to the delight of reading the joke, is included.

4.6.2 NON-FICTION

For Foundation Phase learners, the world begins at home. They are concerned with small events, the people in their immediate circle and with what is happening here and now. Although most of these learners enjoy fiction, they find non-fiction books equally stimulating, entertaining and satisfying, particularly if the topic matches the reader's interest (Machado 1999:223).

4.6.2.1 A description of non-fiction books

Non-fiction books are written with the aim of conveying information and providing explanations. Rather than telling a story, they deal with curriculum aspects. For this reason, they are often referred to as concept books (Machado 1999:223-224) or information books (Cox 1996:264; Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:111).

The appearance and presentation of text in information books differ from that of story books. For instance, these books usually contain an introduction, an index and headings. Another point of difference is the reader's purpose for reading them (Browne 1996:137). This genre includes books of facts, 'how-to' books, books about animals, sport, astrology, places, people and things, many of which children will never encounter in real life (Machado 1999:223; Steenberg 1988:3). (Also see DoE 2003:25, 54 where it is stated that Grade 2 and 3 learners should not only be able to read and follow instructions but also to use children's dictionaries and encyclopedias.)

Browne (1996:124), has identified three broad categories of non-fiction or information books, namely:

♦ Non-narrative (exposition texts): Expositionary texts that describe, explain and offer arguments within their texts are included in this category.

♦ Narrative texts: These are texts that can be written chronologically such as Bible stories, prayers, information stories, diaries, biographies or autobiographies. As they usually describe procedures such as a recipe or a set of instructions on how to make a model, they are often referred to as procedural books. Information texts have a narrower focus than true stories since their purpose is to enable the reader

to explore situations (such as going to hospital) or to find out more about topics linked to the curriculum such as facts about nature, people, places and so forth.

♦ Non-narrative texts (reference texts): This category includes counting books, alphabet books, word books (containing mostly nouns and/or verbs) as well as more advanced books such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, thesauruses or atlases. · This category includes books that provide facts through a combination of pictures and personal accounts.

An example of a narrative text is the Bible story *Jesus heals a blind* man. Another example of a narrative text is *Who am I?* (Butterfield & Ford 2000 – see Addendum P). A typical example of a non-narrative text is an extract from *My first picture dictionary* (Apsley 1992 – see Addendum Q).

4.6.2.2   The value of non-fiction books

There are several reasons why non-fiction books are recommended for Foundation Phase learners.

♦ Children have a need to know and non-fiction books are a rich source of information that can satisfy their hunger for information. As the books are usually informative, knowledge is expanded, thus providing answers to 'how' and 'why' questions (Machado 1999:222). For example, when someone starts to hiccup, the class may ask what causes hiccups (Burke 1986:24). A story titled *Hic! Here come the hiccups - again!* (a teacher-authored story) could be read by the teacher or learner in order to answer this question.

♦ Non-fiction can be enjoyable, entertaining and satisfying, particularly if the text matches a current interest. At the same time, the skill of reading to learn is developed (Browne 1996:137).

♦ Non-fiction books link very well with the theme being used and can be used to implement the whole language approach (see 4.2). The topics can also offer an opportunity for further research albeit on an elementary level.

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♦ Life-skills can be developed if the content is of a practical nature, for example, what to do if you cut yourself or when it is in order to say no to adults.

The literature review that was undertaken with regard to the various types of reading material that are suitable for Foundation Phase learners has produced valuable information. This information will be needed in the next section where the focus is on teacher-authored reading material.

4.7 TEACHER-AUTHORED READING MATERIAL

Today's teachers have a challenging task as the majority of them are working with a diverse group of learners who have a variety of needs. Therefore, an 'one-size-fits-all' Literacy Programme cannot be developed. Information gained during the focus group interviews (see 6.6, 6.7 & 6.8) has shown that, despite the rich variety of books available from publishers, many Foundation Phase teachers do not have such books. What aggravates the situation is that very few schools have a school library that house a variety of developmentally appropriate books.

Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:161) state that the **teacher** is the most important resource in an OBE classroom. This statement implies that Foundation Phase teachers could overcome the dilemma if they are empowered to develop their own material when the available reading material does not meet the needs of the learners or when there is a shortage of developmentally appropriate reading material in their classrooms. Alternatively, teachers could develop their own reading material to supplement the available books in their classrooms or school libraries.

The need to empower teachers to write their own reading material is loudly applauded by the DoE (2003:18) as can be seen from the quotation that follows.

> *While teachers make effective use of published Learning and Teaching Support Materials, **the value of teacher-generated material must not be underrated.*** (Own cursivation)

However, the statement of Vinjevold (see 2.2.5) regarding **systematic** and **supplementary** materials is of importance at this point. In the initial stage, teachers would be expected to write **supplementary** materials only.

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In order to write their own reading material, teachers need knowledge regarding the different types of reading material that are suitable for Foundation Phase learners (see 4.6) as well as the criteria that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

For the purpose of this study, reading material that is developed by teachers mainly for classroom use is referred to as **teacher-authored reading material**. Teacher-authored reading material could be developed when teachers

♦ write their original material (see 4.7.2.1);

♦ transpose an existing text, for example, a fairy tale or Bible story (see 4.7.2.2);

♦ translate an existing text (see 4.7.2.3);

♦ write a multilingual story (see 4.7.2.4) or

♦ convert an oral story into text.

Before embarking on this journey, it is necessary to note what the literature says with regard to the importance of teacher-authored reading material.

4.7.1   THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER-AUTHORED READING MATERIAL

Three real-life stories set the scene for the discussion on the importance of teacher-authored reading material.

The first scene is sketched by Mesmer (1999:130-139) who tells about her journey into discovering suitable reading material for a learner named Cametra. Her journey started off when she realised that the reading material available in her classroom was not suitable for this learner as the books contained too many new words. Her first task was to develop reading material that met the needs of this learner before trying to teach her any reading skills. She also realised that she would have to scaffold the reading material by starting with simple words containing short vowels that were easily decodable and then progressing to more advanced text that contained more story-critical words. The learner was also exposed to different types of reading material that contained many pictures, bright colours and multicultural characters. The end result of the journey was a reader who experienced far more success in reading than before.

Brassell (1999:651) sketches the second scene by telling how it came about that he established a classroom library within a very short period of time. He realised that schools often contribute to second language learners' academic difficulties rather than supporting them in their acquisition of language skills. Furthermore, he faced the situation where 80% of his Grade 2 learners spoke Spanish yet 90% of the books were written in English. Moreover, district officials expected an increase of 1.6 years in learners' reading ability within eight months. In his view, learners needed reading material in their own language so that they were able to understand what they read. The learners and their teacher began to make books about their families, the neighbourhood, pets, heroes and events that had taken place. Newspapers, comic strips and bulletins boards containing interesting articles (in both Spanish and English) were also created. The results were commendable: Within a few months, his learners' interest in books escalated as did their reading age and their attitude towards reading.

The third scene is set in Indonesia. Books for use in schools were written primarily by personnel in teacher education programmes to fill the need for reading material. Thomas (1993:141) suggests that indigenous populations, sensitive to their local needs, can develop teacher-authored materials without promoting the 'outsider-as-expert' belief system or spending large amounts of money. In his opinion, locally controlled efforts deserve support and promotion.

What is the rationale for opening the discussion with Cametra's success story together with the initiative undertaken by Brassell and Indonesian educationalists?

♦ Cametra's success story clearly emphasises the need for developmentally appropriate reading material and that teachers are able to provide such material.

♦ Brassell's initiative shows that the establishment of a classroom library is not such a daunting task as it seems. Teachers who show the same initiative could have the same positive results.

♦ The Indonesian initiative shows that teachers are in the ideal position to develop reading material that is not only sensitive to their learners' needs but that is also highly cost-effective.

The material that teachers develop can be used for reading instruction *per se*, reading for enjoyment or for shared reading. Even though the greatest need in South Africa is for books in learners' mother tongue, learners, particularly those in Grade 3 need to be exposed to developmentally appropriate reading material written in English as well. It is clear that children **need books** because literature is powerful (Strehle 1999:213).

4.7.1.1 Support for teacher-authored reading material based on learning theories

The four learning theorists discussed in Chapter 3, namely Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky and Gardner, offer direct or indirect support for the empowerment of teachers to write their own reading material. A brief discussion to support this statement follows.

(a) *Deductions regarding teacher-authored reading material based on Piaget's theory*

It can be deduced that Piaget (see 3.4.2.1) would have supported the venture of empowering teachers to write their own reading material where there is shortage of developmentally appropriate material. This assumption is based on Piaget's belief that learners' cognitive development is influenced by their attempts to solve problems and learn new things. The process involved is known as equilibration (see 3.4.2.1). It can be argued that a shortage of appropriate reading material can contribute towards **disequilibration** as learners will not acquire sufficient knowledge and not develop new skills and develop certain values and attitudes. To reinstate equilibration, teachers should ensure that there is a sufficient supply of developmentally appropriate reading material that would provide them with opportunities to regain their equilibration with regard to reading.

Furthermore, Piaget believes that children learn through 'material we set up for them' and do not need expensive 'factory-made' toys to learn (see 3.4.3). The assumption can be made that Piaget would support teacher-authored reading material because reading material need not be purchased from publishers.

(b) ***Deductions regarding teacher-authored reading material based on Bruner's theory***

In essence, Bruner (see 3.5.2.16) agrees with Piaget when he says:

To grow, you need an environment of opportunities.

In Bruner's view (see 3.5.1), humans are learners, thinkers (problem-solvers), creators and storytellers. If this is true, then Foundation Phase teachers in need of reading material can overcome their problem by writing their own reading material, thereby creating an environment of reading opportunities. Moreover, such opportunities can increase reading competence in that the mastering of simple skills permit learners to acquire more advanced reading skills.

Closely linked to the creation of reading opportunities is Bruner's view that poverty has a strong influence on learning and development (see 3.5.2.15). In schools where reading material is not readily available mainly due to financial restraints, it is imperative that teachers are empowered to provide reading material to create reading opportunities for these learners. Several years after Bruner's views were recorded, Machado (1999:163) supports him when she states that the teacher should be a provider of reading opportunities to promote literacy to ensure a literate population.

Furthermore, Bruner believes that learning content ought to be 'ready for the learners' (see 3.8.2). If teachers develop their own reading material, the product could be ready (suitable) for a specific group of learners. In this way, teachers will be complying with one of OBE's underlying principles, namely that the learning content should fit the needs of learners.

Bruner provides yet another reason why teachers should embark on the journey of developing their own reading material. He believes that children have a natural curiosity to learn and explore (see 3.5.2.9). These characteristics need to be exploited by teachers to foster cognitive growth. Almost all children possess intrinsic motives for learning that increases the demand for sufficient reading material in order to develop this competence. In addition, success heightens intrinsic motivation (see 3.5.2.9). If learners are provided with relevant reading material, they are more likely to experience reading success and thus become more intrinsically motivated to read.

In Bruner's view (see 3.5.2.2), intellectual growth is assisted from the outside and the limits of growth depend on the way in which a culture assists learners in this regard. It is the teacher's responsibility to promote such growth but without suitable reading material, this growth would be hampered. It is thus the responsibility of Foundation Phase teachers who lack suitable reading material, to overcome the shortage by writing their own.

Perhaps Bruner's strongest motivation for inspiring teachers to write their own material is his view regarding the purpose of education (see 3.5.2.2) and folk psychology (see 3.5.2.11). With regard to the purpose of education, he believes that learning is mostly a sharing of culture. One way of transmitting culture is through literature. If there is insufficient reading material, there would be a 'gap' in the ways through which culture could be transmitted. Foundation Phase teachers can try to close this gap by writing their own reading material. With regard to folk psychology, teachers need to change their attitude and solve their own problems by developing their own reading material instead of only relying on external sources to provide funds for books or to donate books.

(c) Deductions regarding teacher-authored reading material based on Vygotsky's theory

Vygotsky (see 3.6.2.1) is of the opinion that individual development is rooted in society and culture while learning takes place in the form of social interaction. Cognitive development is socially mediated as a result of the interaction that takes place between children (learners) and more mature or capable members of society (parents, teachers or peers). With these views in mind, it can be assumed that he would strongly support the development of teacher-authored reading material. Without reading material, social interaction cannot take place with the result that cognitive development is delayed. Therefore, Foundation Phase teachers in under-resourced schools need to write their own reading material to enhance social interaction with the view to augment cognitive development.

The concept of scaffolding (see 3.6.2.1) can also be related to teacher-authored reading material. Learners need reading material that is always slightly above their current level of performance. The reading material should fall within their ZPD (see 3.6.2.1). Teachers need to ensure that there is sufficient reading material to provide

scaffolds for progress in reading so that reading skills can reach a state of maturation. If there is a lack of such material, Foundation Phase teachers should attempt to write their own developmentally appropriate reading material.

Foundation Phase teachers can also learn through mediated activities by interacting, sharing ideas, working collaboratively and assessing each other's attempts. Learning for teachers can take place through scaffolding (see 3.6.2.1) provided by other teachers and through a system that provides professional development (Au & Asam 1996:202).

(d) Deductions regarding teacher-authored reading material based on Gardner's theory

Gardner (see 3.7.3) believes that all eight intelligences referred to should be stimulated and that each learner portrays strengths in one or more areas. It was deduced that reading material is one form of LTSMs that could develop all eight intelligences (see 3.7.3.2). If this is true, then Foundation Phase teachers must ensure that sufficient reading material and a variety of genres are available in order to develop the eight intelligences. If such reading material is lacking, they need to develop their own.

4.7.1.2 Further support for teacher-authored reading material

The discussion that follows shows that several other authorities in the field of reading and children's literature either directly or indirectly endorse the need for teacher-authored reading material.

(a) A shortage of suitable reading material for black learners

Many authorities have found that there is a serious shortage of reading material written specifically for black learners.

Poland (1981:31) opens the discussion with her statement:

> Books for the children of Africa, about Africa and especially those for the black African child, are something of a rarity.

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Her view is shared by several authorities such as Fairer-Wessels and Van der Walt (1999:98-99), Goodman (in Dixon-Krauss 1996:135), Khorana (1998:2), Muthukrishna (1995:108-109), Swanepoel (1995:34) and Tötemeyer 1987:15).

Research undertaken regarding the use of libraries by different ethnic groups has found that many black learners do not read for pleasure. Part of the problem may be the lack of suitable books for these children and that the black culture in South Africa is largely an oral one (Machet 1994:65; Versfeld & Dyer 1997:21).

In most cases, the existing material (written mainly for didactic purposes) has been written by white authors who are products of the previous dispensation and who have lived separate lives from black people (Poland 1981:34; Tötemeyer 1987:15). In addition, many available books are flawed with class, gender and race bias thus giving the impression that there is no diversity in society and that there are no problematic social issues to be addressed. In fact, these books do little to help South African children learn about cultural diversity and generally do not promote an understanding and acceptance of such diversity.

These books often fail in reflecting particular strains on interpersonal relationships in South Africa. Where books do, in fact, present interpersonal relationships such as those at school, they do not adequately address social issues. Some stories depict rural areas but do not address the powerful relationships in the lives of rural parents, children, teachers, schools and farm owners, all of which form an integral part of the child's life. Books that have scant personal relevance and only reflect generic experiences but not situations with identifiable ethnic content are likely to **disempower** learners instead of empowering them to cope with life in South Africa (Bouwer & Guldenpfenning 1999:94). Ideally, reading material should help learners to understand the socially constructed nature of their society and their experience.

White writers are, therefore, not really in an ideal position to write for black learners, as they cannot fully identify with the lives and experiences of people living in slums or on the street. In addition, the themes of particular relevance to black children are often overlooked or addressed from the author's perspective (Swanepoel 1987:179-193; 1995:38). For this reason, more black authors need to accept the challenge for creating material for black learners (Home Languages and First Additional Languages) as they

are in the best position to write material rooted in the realities of the community they serve.

However, if black authors do write and publish such material, many schools still would not be able to afford the books. The alternative is for teachers in such schools to develop their own reading material. Swanepoel (1987:179-185, 193; 1995:38) captures the essence of the matter when he says that the closer one is to the centre of the system, the better one's chances of having an impact on the system or society. The further one is, the smaller the chance of making an impact. Literature for children must, therefore, be strongly related to the community within which it is produced and respected. Teacher-authored reading material would be of such a nature.

(b)   A shortage of multicultural and multilingual reading material

Closely related to the previous argument is the lack of multicultural and multilingual reading material. Tötemeyer (in Swanepoel 1987:193) captures the need for teacher-authored reading material when she says:

> It is time for a new kind of children's book to emerge to meet the needs of a new non-racial South Africa.

Apart from a shortage of reading material written by black writers for black children, there is also a void with regard to multicultural reading material. Exposure to multicultural reading material is of vital importance within the multicultural society in which many South African learners find themselves. Moreover, a large number of learners find themselves in a multicultural class, which could consist of learners from different cultures. To comply with the language in education policy (DoE 1997d:2), which is based on the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, it is necessary to expose learners to multicultural as well as multilingual reading material. Teachers can comply with this instruction by developing multicultural and multilingual books (see 4.7.2.4).

(c)   Financial restraints

Financial restraints play a major role in the availability of developmentally appropriate reading material in many previously disadvantaged schools. Several participants in the

study identified financial restraints as one of the main reasons why there is a shortage of books in their schools (see 6.6). According to Van Vuuren (1994:44, 62), learners are at a disadvantage in terms of both money and reading background. Blacquiere (1998:63) points out that more care is needed in the production of LTSMs. In the light of his proposal, a possible solution to this dilemma is to empower teachers to write their own reading material.

(d)   Failure in meeting learners' special education needs

Many learners with special education needs experience difficulties in reading. Allington, Guire, Michelson, Baker and Shouming (1995:90) as well as Moody, Vaughn, Hughes and Fischer (2000:305) believe that the traditional nature of most instructional support programmes do not offer solutions to classroom dilemmas that lower-achieving learners encounter with regard to reading as the available material does not always cater for their needs.

In essence, Clark (in Le Roux 1994:2) captures this dilemma when he says:

> *The difference between good and bad reading teachers is usually not to do with their allegiance to some particular method, but to do with their relationship with children and their sensitivity in matching what they do to each individual child's learning needs.*

This statement implies that teachers need to ensure that the reading material in use matches each learner's needs. If the existing reading material is too difficult or inaccessible for the learners, teachers should write their own. For example, older learners in the Foundation Phase learners need material where the theme matches their interest and the accompanying text matches their reading ability. For learners with visual impairments, the reading material may have to be adapted by decreasing the length thereof. If there is no such material, then teachers should be able to develop their own developmentally appropriate reading material for these learners.

(e) Lack of role models

Brann (1992:6) addresses the issue of parents acting as role models. It can be deduced that in cases where **teachers** do not read to their learners on a regular basis, they also do not act as positive role models.

However, if there is shortage of reading material, the teacher will not be able to act as a role model. This situation can be overcome by developing teacher-authored reading material. In this way, the teacher can act as a positive role model for learners and also act as a role model *in lieu* of parents who cannot fulfill this function.

(f) Expansion of experiences

Lemmer (1989:3-5) supports Bruner's views regarding the creation of an environment of opportunities (see 3.5.2.16) when he says that children **need** books – they need to possess them, treasure them and handle them. Children should be exposed to books as these allow them to extend their limited life experiences by entering imaginatively into and internalising the experiences and feelings of others. Where there is a need for books, Foundation Phase teachers could write their own reading material, thereby providing opportunities for learners to expand their experiences.

(g) Increase in women's participation as authors

Michel (in Labuschagne 1995:160) recommends that there should be an increase in women's participation in the production of textbooks and readers. If Foundation Phase teachers, who are predominantly women, were empowered to write their own reading material, it would be a positive step into making this recommendation a reality.

(h) Development of a learner-centred curriculum

Currently, strong emphasis is placed on the development of a learner-centred curriculum in many education systems. Wood (1999:16), for example, believes that a language curriculum should be learner-centred when she says:

> *Children's literature is geared to young readers' social, emotional and cognitive development. For this reason, it is not enough to identify which books are excellent. We must ask: "Excellent for whom?*

A learner-centred language curriculum is compliant with the philosophy of OBE (see 1.8.3). Le Roux (1994:2) cautions that reading instruction cannot take place unless there are 'real books for real learners'. Teachers who develop their own reading material to meet the needs of a specific group of learners are in the process of developing a learner-centred Literacy Programme.

(i) *The creation of a print-rich environment*

The DoE (2003:36) emphatically states that

> *the lack of access to texts creates a significant barrier to learning.*

To progress from what the DoE (2003:36) refers to as a 'print-poor' environment to the ideal, namely a print-rich environment, teachers need to look for solutions to overcome this barrier. Teacher-authored reading material is a possible solution or part of another solution. The examples set by Mesmer and Brassell as well as the scenario sketched by Thomas (see 4.7.1) should serve as incentives for Foundation Phase teachers who find themselves in similar situations.

The different **types** of reading material that Foundation Phase teachers could write for their learners are now discussed.

4.7.2 DIFFERENT TYPES OF TEACHER-AUTHORED READING MATERIAL

Various types of material that are regarded as suitable for Foundation Phase learners have been discussed under 4.6. This information forms the basis for teacher-authored reading material.

4.7.2.1 Original reading material

In this study, the term *original reading material* refers to any type of reading material that teachers have created by using their own ideas, characters, plot, settings, pictures,

et cetera. The material that is produced is, therefore, a creative effort by the teacher. The reading material could be presented in the form of fiction stories such as wordless picture story books, picture story books, big books, realistic fiction, books for bibliotherapy, cartoon-style books, children's poetry or non-fiction books. (See 4.6.1 and 4.6.2 respectively.) For reading instruction, reading material based on the theme being dealt with should be developed so that the whole language approach (see 4.2) can be implemented. However, reading material does not necessarily have to link with the theme, especially if the purpose of the material is reading for enjoyment or for shared reading.

4.7.2.2   Transposition of existing reading material

The word *transpose* means to change the position of things or causing two things to change places (Concise Oxford Dictionary 1992:1229). The Collins Pocket Reference Thesaurus (1992:515) gives various synonyms for the word *transpose* such as *alter, interchange, exchange, rearrange, reorder* and *substitute.*

Within the context of transposing existing reading material, the word *transpose* means to either simplify an existing text or increase the level of difficulty thereof. Jansen van Vuuren (1996:58) is of the opinion that transposing a text involves aspects such as modernising the existing text and substituting behaviour, items, places and/or characters with more suitable or relevant ones. Examples of texts that could be transposed include picture story books, folk literature, basal readers and non-fiction books. (See 4.6.1.2, 4.6.1.4, 4.6.1.9 & 4.6.2 respectively.)

There are two forms of transposed reading material, namely existing text of which the level of difficulty has been **decreased** and existing text of which the level of difficulty has been **increased.**

(a)   *Decrease in the level of difficulty of an existing text*

The researcher is of the opinion that the level of difficulty of an existing text is **simplified** when

♦   difficult words are substituted with synonyms that are easier to read, for example, the word *unhappy* is replaced with the word *sad;*

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- the number of words in a sentence are reduced;
- the number of sentences in the text are reduced;
- words and phrases are repeated;
- a simple dialogue is used;
- a limited number of adjectives and adverbs are included;
- difficult words are substituted with pictures and
- the number of actions or events are decreased.

The example that follows illustrates how the level of difficulty in Aesop's fable, **The Lion and the Mouse**, has been **decreased**. The column to the left contains the original text while the column to the right illustrates how the level of difficulty of the original text has been decreased.

EXTRACT FROM ORIGINAL TEXT	EXTRACT FROM TRANSPOSED TEXT
Mr Mouse was on his way to the nearby shop when he heard someone roaring loudly. He stopped and listened. It sounded like Mr Lion. Yes, it certainly was Mr Lion. *"What could be wrong with Mr Lion? It sounds as if he is in great pain. Let me hurry there and see if I can help," said Mr Mouse to himself.*	*Mr Mouse goes to the shop. He hears Mr Lion roar.* *Mr Lion roars and roars.* *"Help me!" Help me!" he roars.* *Mr Mouse says: "I will go and see if I can help Mr Lion."*

(b)   Increase in the level of difficulty of an existing text

The researcher is of the opinion that the level of difficulty of an existing text is **increased** when

- easy words are replaced with more difficult synonyms, for example, the word *help* is replaced by the word *assisted*;
- the number of words in a sentence is increased;
- the length of the text is increased;
- suitable adjectives and adverbs are increased;
- time words and time phrases are added;
- the setting is described in more detail and
- more characters, actions and events are added to the story.

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The example that follows shows how the level of difficulty of **Nomsa to the rescue** (the researcher's own unpublished story) has been increased. The column to the left contains the original story while the column to the right shows how the level of difficulty of the original story has been **increased.**

EXTRACT FROM ORIGINAL TEXT	EXTRACT FROM TRANSPOSED TEXT
WELL DONE, NOMSA!	*NOMSA TO THE RESCUE*
Nomsa is in a wheel-chair. She sees Mary and Tumi run and play. Nomsa wants to run and play too. She is sad.	*Nomsa is watching her friends Mary, Itumeleng and Jenny running and playing a game. She cannot join them because she is in a wheel-chair. Three years ago, she was in a car accident and has been in a wheel-chair ever since.*
"I will go to Granny," she says.	
Granny lives next to the school. She walks past the tree. A man grabs her bag and runs.	*She decides to visit her grandmother who lives next to the school. She notices a man standing behind a tree. Just then her grandmother comes walking by. Suddenly the man grabs her handbag and rushes off.*
"Stop! Stop!" calls Nomsa. The man does not stop.	
Nomsa says: "Let's get him!"	
The wheel-chair goes very fast! She grabs the bag and shouts: *"Thief! Thief! Catch that thief!"*	*"Come on, wheel-chair, let's go after him!" shouts Nomsa. It is downhill so faster and faster they go. Soon she catches up with him and quickly snatches the handbag out of his hands. She pushes him over with the wheel-chair. A strong man grabs the thief and calls the police.*
A big man grabs the thief. The police come and take the man away.	
"Well done, Nomsa!" says Granny.	*Very soon, the police arrive and arrest the thief.*
Nomsa is glad. Nomsa and her wheel-chair helped Granny.	*"Thank you, my child!" says her grandmother. "You and your wheel-chair have come to my rescue today."*

4.7.2.3   Translation of existing reading material

The word *translation* is defined as the written or spoken expression of the meaning of a word, speech or book in another language (Concise Oxford Dictionary 1992:1297).

Within the context of this study, the word *translation* means to write the existing text or story in another language, for example, writing the English version of *The Rabbit and the Tortoise* in Northern Sotho or Zulu. Teachers could also translate a picture story book (see 4.6.1.2), fable or myth (see 4.6.1.4), concept book (see 4.6.2) or a Bible

story (see 4.6.2) into another language. In fact, many folk and fairy tales have already been translated with great success (Lenake 1996:111).

What follows is an extract from a translated story.

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH	EXTRACT FROM NORTHERN SOTHO
THE RABBIT AND THE TORTOISE	*MMUTLA LE KHUDU*
The rabbit said: "I can run very, very fast. Nobody can beat me!" *"O yes, I can beat you," said an old tortoise.* *"What? You are old and you walk so slowly! How can you beat me in a race?"* *"Well, let's have a race. Then you will see what I mean!"*	*Rrammutla ya re: "Ke kgona go kitima ka lebelo go se ngwe ye e mphetago."* *"Ke nna yo ke kgonago," gwa bolola khudu ye tala.* *"Eng? Wena o tsofetse le o sepela ka go nanya. O ka ntshea bjang mo mabelang?"* *"Go lokile, a re siane ke gona o tlo lebelela seo ke balelago ka ga sona."*

(Translation: M Human.)

Despite all the advantages of translated reading material, the literature provides evidence of arguments **against** translations. For instance, Du Plessis (1990:41) argues that

♦ translations could suppress original works by discouraging potential authors to create their own work;

♦ publishers could use translations mainly for financial gain as the risk of publishing new works is greater than publishing an already well-known book even though it has been translated and

♦ translated books are often not within the target group's life experience with the result that they find it difficult to identify with the milieu or characters.

However, the value of translated reading material cannot be ignored. In fact, translated books often act as an incentive for potential writers to create their own work.

4.7.2.4 Development of multilingual reading material

Based on the Constitution of South Africa, the language policy in education (DoE 1997d:1-2) compels teachers to introduce multilingualism in their classes. One way of doing this is by exposing learners to multilingual reading material. Du Plessis (1992:48) refers to **dual-language** books consisting of one set of illustrations with the text written in more than one language.

Fishman (in Machet 1996:43) also supports the development of multilingual reading material. He believes that

> *the multilingual situation in South Africa has meant that most books available to African children, besides school books, are in a second language. Children, especially young children who are not yet fluent readers, need books which are easily accessible as cultural inaccessibility may put them off permanently. Literacy must be culturally specific in order to be culturally meaningful.*

Multilingual stories can be developed by using any type of reading material discussed in this chapter, for example, picture story books, cartoon-styled books or non-fiction books. (See 4.6.1.2, 4.6.1.7 & 4.6.2 respectively.) One set of pictures could be used but the text can be written in two or more languages, depending on the languages used by learners in their classrooms. (The development of multilingual reading material through the implementation of the language experience approach will be discussed in the next section. See 4.8.2.1.)

An example of a multilingual text written in English, Afrikaans, Zulu and Xhosa is *How many monkeys?* (Rowe 1993 – see Addendum R).

Four basic ways in which teacher-authored reading material can be developed have been addressed. Teachers can play yet another role in creating supplementary reading material when they facilitate the development of teacher-learner-authored reading material.

4.8 TEACHER-LEARNER-AUTHORED AND LEARNER-AUTHORED READING MATERIAL

For the purpose of this study, **teacher-learner-authored reading material** refers to material produced through a joint effort by the teacher and a learner or learners. **Learner-authored reading material** implies that a learner or a group of learners have written the material in an independent way with minimum input from the teacher. Although it is possible for some Foundation Phase learners to write their own independent stories in their mother tongue, very few would be able to write their own stories in English. Therefore, in this study the focus will be on teacher-learner-authored reading material only.

4.8.1 THE VALUE OF TEACHER-LEARNER-AUTHORED READING MATERIAL

Various authorities have emphasised the value of teacher-learner-authored reading material as can be seen from the section that follows.

4.8.1.1 Learners as co-creators of the curriculum

There are two types of books for children, namely those approved by 'authorities' and those approved by learners. The first type of books tells what adults have decided children ought to know about and often contain morals where lessons are disguised as stories (Au & Asam 1996:203; Heale 1991:15). It can be assumed that learners have seldom formed part of the process of developing literature for children. The views of Heale (1991:15) as well as Lauritzen and Jaeger (1997:17) stress the fact that learners should **take ownership** of the process of developing reading material, thereby becoming co-creators of the curriculum. In this way, the curriculum is no longer inflexible and a barrier to learning and development (DoE 1997b:16).

4.8.1.2 Relevant material is produced

Involvement of learners in the writing of reading material helps to produce material that is more relevant as the content is related to what children have experienced. Moreover, the material is produced in a language with which learners are familiar. When learners are personally involved in the production, the material is demystified and made more

accessible as the topics are relevant to their own environment and interests (Van Vuuren 1994:173).

4.8.1.3 Enhancement of self-confidence and motivation

Both Browne (1996:85) and Machado (1999:238) believe that making books and writing stories to be read by others are highly motivating activities for all children. It allows them to feel that their writing is valued and provides an incentive for writing. Learners learn about features of published books such as a list of contents and page numbers (The DoE 2002d:33 states that Grade 3 learners should already be able to identify these aspects in books written in their Home Language.)

The type of books that could be written in a joint effort by the teacher and the learners include big books, children's poetry, imaginative stories, personal stories, information books and multilingual books. Well-known stories, such as Bible stories, can be rewritten in the learners' own words.

4.8.1.4 Additional advantages

Machado (1999:238) believes that teacher-learner-authored reading material also

- ♦ promotes interest in the classroom book collection;
- ♦ helps learners see the relationship between the spoken and written word;
- ♦ promotes learners' interests;
- ♦ personalises the reading material;
- ♦ prompts self-expression and
- ♦ stimulates creativity.

In the following section, the focus will be on the possible ways in which Foundation Phase learners can be involved in the development of teacher-learner-authored reading material.

4.8.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER-LEARNER-AUTHORED READING MATERIAL

Teacher-learner-authored reading material can be developed mainly through the implementation of the language experience approach, creating simple diaries and making scrapbooks.

4.8.2.1 The language experience approach

The language experience approach (abbreviated to LEA) refers to the process whereby a more knowledgeable person such as the teacher, a peer or a parent, records the story or sentences dictated by the learner (Cox 1996:292). This approach integrates the development of listening, speaking and writing skills, all of which are linked to the whole language approach (see 4.2).
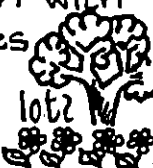
The LEA deals with the following thinking process: What learners think about, they can talk about; what they talk about, they can write and what they can write, they can read. This approach is not based on a series of reading material but on the learners' oral and written expression (Engelbrecht *et al.* 1999:81; Mercer & Mercer 1993:460).

There are different ways of implementing the LEA. For instance, the teacher writes down what the learner(s) say. Alternatively, the teacher, as a scribe and friendly editor (McNamee *et al.* 1985:231) writes what has been said in draft form, correcting grammar, choice of words and sentence construction. Thereafter, the final version is recorded in book form (Mercer & Mercer 1993:460). In this way, a text consisting of learners' ideas and language is developed that could be used for formal reading instruction (Dixon-Krauss 1996:37) or used to supplement books in the classroom library. The LEA, therefore, creates opportunities for learners to take **ownership** of the process of developing reading material and in this way, become co-creators of the curriculum (see 4.8.1.1). By doing this, teachers would be following Brassell's noteworthy example (see 4.7.1).

There are many variations of this approach. It can, for example, take the form of a group activity where each learner dictates a sentence about an event that took place or a place of interest that was visited. The pages are stapled together to form a book and learners can illustrate the events.

The text can also be recorded on tape so that learners can listen and read at the same time. In this way, a multisensory approach is used which is ideal for learners who experience reading difficulties.

An example of the LEA:

Page 1 Last week, we moved into a new house. Last week, we moved into a new house.	**Page 2** This is my bedroom. It has big windows. This is my bedroom. It has big windows.
Page 3 This is Ann and Linda's bedroom. This is Ann and Linda's bedroom.	**Page 4** Spotty and Wags sleep in their ken-nels. Spotty and Wags sleep in their kennels.
Page 5 We have a gar-den with lots of flowers and trees. We have a garden with lots of flowers and trees.	**Page 6** Dad parks his car in the garage. Dad parks his car in the garage.

An alternative way of implementing the LEA is to create a multilingual text (see 4.7.2.4). The text could, for example, be written in English using a black pen. Below the English text, the same version in Northern Sotho could be written in green pen and below this text, the Zulu version could be written with a blue pen. (See 5.2.11.5 for criteria related to the layout of multilingual texts.)

Several learning theorists would support the implementation of the LEA as can be seen from the discussion that follows.

♦ **Piaget** (see 3.4.2.1) says during the intuitive stage (4-7 years) learners begin to use language more successfully to verbalise their mental activities and towards the end of the stage, are better able to generalise their experiences. During the concrete-operational phase (7-11 years), learners can reason about what they have read about **only if it relates to their experience**. Another point made by Piaget (1967:41) is that young children in the concrete-operational stage are starting to develop the skill of co-operation. This could imply that learners can work

together on an activity such as developing a book together with the teacher and other peers. The preceding information leads one to assume that the LEA is highly suitable for Foundation Phase learners who find themselves in the intuitive or concrete-operational stage.

♦ **Bruner** (see 3.5.2.13) believes that the narrative (storytelling) is one of the most powerful forms of communication and learning among humans. The value of stories regarding a person's life is often overlooked as learners have many stories to tell and retell from published versions to stories of their own imagined worlds. Bruner is also in favour of learners being actively involved in the learning process. It can be assumed that Bruner would have been a strong supporter of the LEA as the approach explores the learner's own life-world, thereby making them active participants in the process of learning to read.

♦ **Vygotsky** believes that literacy, like all mental functions, has social origins (see 3.6.2.1). He believes that literacy begins in a relationship between an adult and a child and includes the use of written language. This implies that children should tell and retell stories that can be written down with the help of the teacher. These stories can be used for reading instruction, reading for enjoyment or shared reading. Learning to read and write thus begins at the point where adults and children participate in meaningful activities that involve the written word (McNamee *et al.* 1985:231; Wood 1999:66).

♦ **Gardner** (see 3.7.3) believes that all learners have at least eight different intelligences. One of these intelligences is the verbal-linguistic intelligence (see 3.7.3.1). As many learners excel in this area, it can be assumed that learners who have a flair for storytelling could tell a story while the teacher records it, thereby implementing the LEA.

Not only do learning theorists value the LEA but also contemporary authorities such as the following:

♦ Browne (1996:29) points out that the LEA allows learners to see the relationship between the spoken and the written word. It can also enhance reading success as the learner usually can recall what was said.

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- Mercer and Mercer (1993:163) say that the LEA allows learners to progress at their own pace. Progress is assessed in terms of each learner's ability to express ideas in oral and written form and to understand written work done by peers. The LEA is, therefore, compatible with OBE, which applauds learner-paced programmes.

- Norton (1993:190) and Van Vuuren (1994:85) believe that the LEA not only offers social and psychological benefits but also allows learners to incorporate personal experiences and thoughts. The material produced is immediately related to learners' life-worlds and is produced in a language with which they are familiar. The fact that the learners are personally involved in the production of the books ensures that the topics are relevant and linked to learners' interests thus making the material more accessible to them. Moreover, the LEA promotes a positive attitude towards reading and eliminates a possible mismatch between the spoken and written word, as it stimulates the natural flow of the language. It also motivates learners to write their own stories, accommodates cultural differences and is ideal for a multicultural classroom.

- Muthukrishna (1995:114) points out that learner's own stories can lead to dynamic dialogues and can open up new possibilities for learners in terms of the way they perceive themselves thus contributing to their own developing consciousness.

- Lessing (1995:13) believes that the value of the LEA lies in the fact that it is not only an invaluable orthodidactic technique but also a therapeutic technique to determine learners' social and emotional strengths and weaknesses. What learners experience at home, could be reflected either in the text and/or the illustrations.

Admittedly, the LEA has several limitations. For example, learners tend to use stereotyped vocabulary and teachers find it time-consuming. Despite these limitations, many Foundation Phase teachers could resort to this approach especially as it is compatible with the whole language approach (see 4.2).

4.8.2.2 Diaries

Many teachers are unaware of the value of using a diary to develop various language skills. A diary is defined as a book with a separate space or page for each day. Future

arrangements, meetings, a person's feelings or anything of interest that has happened can be recorded in the book (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:380). Learners, with the help of the teacher, can enter events or feelings experienced by the learner. The text can be read privately or to the class at a later stage.

Moleko (2000:24) and Norton (1993:365) have identified several advantages of using a diary in the classroom, for example:

♦ A diary is particularly valuable in the teaching of an additional language as learners often have a limited vocabulary and find it difficult to express their ideas and feelings. The compilation of a diary makes provision for this problem as entries into the diary are based on real events or feelings experienced by the learner. Consequently, the learner does not need to think creatively.

♦ Daily recording of events allows the learner to link new knowledge to existing knowledge, which is an important didactic principle.

♦ Learners are involved in the compilation of a diary. Such an activity is OBE compliant as learner involvement is one of the underlying principles of OBE.

♦ The compilation of a diary is an important life-skill as the use of a diary helps to structure a person's life and it enhances effective time-management.

4.8.2.3 Scrapbooks

Pictures related to a theme, for example, *PETS,* can be collected and pasted on separate pages to form a book. The teacher or in combination with the learners can formulate sentences which are written below the relevant picture. If learners are involved in the formulation of the sentences, then this suggestion could be regarded as a variation of the LEA (see 4.8.2.1).

Sufficient evidence has been found in the literature to support the need for teacher-learner-authored reading material. Foundation Phase teachers could, therefore, integrate this approach in their venture to develop additional reading material for their learners.

4.9   CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, several theoretical aspects related to the development of reading material were discussed. The first issue to be highlighted was the whole language approach (with its roots in Vygotsky's theory of learning) as reading is one of the integral components thereof. Thereafter, the focus fell on the importance of reading where it was shown that reading is not only of cognitive, social, emotional and cultural value but that reading and viewing are one of the learning outcomes specified in the RNCS.

Another aspect that was discussed was the stages of reading development. This discussion was necessary, as Foundation Phase teachers need to understand how reading develops before they start developing their own reading material. Apart from the stages that were discussed, a developmental continuum was presented illustrating the substrands of reading.

The next issue that was addressed was the various types of reading material that are regarded as suitable for Foundation Phase learners. These learners should be exposed to both fiction and non-fiction material. The fiction category includes wordless picture books, picture story books, big books, folk literature, realistic fiction, books written for bibliotherapy, basal readers and children's poetry. In the non-fiction category, narrative texts such as prayers, Bible stories and concept books, together with non-narrative texts such as children's dictionaries were regarded as suitable for these learners.

Strong emphasis was put on the development of teacher-authored reading material. Many white authors have attempted to write reading material for black children, often with little success as they do not have sufficient insight into the lives and milieu of black children (Swanepoel 1987:216). Ironically, there is insufficient reading material written by black authors for black learners. Teacher-authored reading material is one of the options that could help to overcome this dilemma. In addition, teacher-authored reading material could help alleviate the shortage of developmentally appropriate reading material, contribute towards the creation of multicultural material, accommodate learners with special education needs and increase women's participation in the development of reading material. It was pointed out that teachers have many options from which to choose. They could write their own original reading material such as

picture story books, children's poetry or concept books. Other alternatives that were identified include the translation or transposition of an existing story or to develop multilingual reading material.

Thereafter, the focus moved to the development of teacher-learner-authored and learner-authored reading material. The LEA was suggested as the most valuable way of developing teacher-learner-authored reading material. Not only is the material relevant for the individual learner or target group but also is compatible with the whole language approach. One of the most outstanding benefits of the LEA is that it allows learners to be co-creators of the curriculum.

Empowering teachers to develop their own reading material can possibly solve the solution to the shortage of reading material in many Foundation Phase classrooms. Even though the reading material developed by teachers may not always be of the same quality as those obtained from publishers, learners will at least be given extended reading opportunities and a reading culture could be developed. Failing to develop reading material could result in learners having no reading opportunities at all and that no culture of reading would be created. The task of these teachers is to fill this void by writing their own reading material or to develop teacher-learner-authored material. In this way, a print-poor environment can be converted into a print-rich one. At the same time, teachers will be better able to drive the Literacy Programme in the Foundation Phase.

4.10   CHAPTER PREVIEW

In Chapter 4, various suggestions were put forward on how to overcome the shortage of reading material in many classrooms. Teachers are not professional writers and cannot attempt this task without the necessary criteria. Chapter 5 provides criteria, based on research, for this task.

4.11 OVERVIEW: CHAPTER 4

ASPECTS DISCUSSED	KEY POINTS
Whole language approach	♦ integration of all four language aspects ♦ holistic approach to language ♦ compatible with C2005
Literature-based approach to teaching Literacy	♦ an active, continuous process of communication to gain meaning from print ♦ metacognitive activities involved ♦ 'real' books (different genres) used ♦ creation of a dynamic and print-rich environment
Importance of reading	♦ cognitive, social, emotional and cultural values involved ♦ Piaget: equilibration / disequilibration ♦ Bruner: transmission of culture ♦ Vygotsky: intellectual development through social interaction ♦ Gardner: development of multiple intelligences through reading ♦ attainment of Learning Outcome 3 (RNCS)
Development of reading	**Stages** ♦ magical (4-7 years) ♦ magical-realistic (7-9 years) **Sub-strands of reading** ♦ reading for information ♦ reading for enjoyment ♦ reading aloud ♦ developing bottom-up decoding skills ♦ reading for meaning and craft ♦ becoming aware of genres ♦ reading to acquire knowledge about language
Types of reading material (genres)	**Fiction** ♦ wordless picture story books ♦ picture story books ♦ big books ♦ folk literature (childhood/nursery rhymes, animal, folk and fairy tales, myths and legends) ♦ realistic fiction ♦ books written for bibliotherapy ♦ cartoon-styles books ♦ basal readers ♦ children's poetry ♦ jokes and riddles **Non-fiction** ♦ narrative texts (prayers, Bible stories, concept and number books, etc.) ♦ non-narrative texts (dictionaries, atlases, etc.)

ASPECTS DISCUSSED	KEY POINTS
Teacher-authored reading material	**Importance** ♦ Piaget: equilibration / disequilibration ♦ Bruner: teachers are problem-solvers, creators and story-tellers; should create reading opportunities and transmit culture through narratives ♦ Vygotsky: intellectual development through social interaction ♦ Gardner: all intelligences can be developed **Further advantages** ♦ provision of suitable reading material for all learners ♦ provision of multicultural and multilingual reading material ♦ provision of reading material where financial restraints are barriers ♦ provision of reading material to implement the whole language approach ♦ provision of reading material for learners with special education needs ♦ creation of expanded reading opportunities for learners ♦ development of learner-centred curriculum ♦ opportunities for teachers to act as role-models **Types of teacher-authored reading material** ♦ original work (different genres) ♦ translation of existing texts ♦ transposition of existing texts ♦ development of multilingual reading material
Teacher-learner-authored reading material	**Value** ♦ learners are co-creators of the curriculum ♦ reading material is more relevant ♦ enhancement of learners' self-confidence and motivation **Types of teacher-learner-authored reading material** ♦ reading material developed by means of the language experience approach ♦ diaries ♦ scrapbooks

CHAPTER 5

CRITERIA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER-AUTHORED READING MATERIAL IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

5.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the focus was placed on several theoretical aspects related to reading, one of which is the necessity to implement a literature-based curriculum in the Foundation Phase. This cannot be done unless there is a variety of reading material available in the classroom. Therefore, the literature was consulted to determine which types of reading material are suitable for Foundation Phase learners.

Knowledge of and the identification of suitable types of reading material is, however, not sufficient to develop teacher-authored reading material. In cases where there is a need, teachers should be empowered to develop their own developmentally appropriate reading material that is based on scientifically researched criteria. Therefore, knowledge of the criteria that apply when developing teacher-authored reading material forms an essential component of the process.

The aim of this chapter is, therefore, to discuss the criteria that teachers should bear in mind when they write their own reading material such as picture story books, big books, poems, non-fiction books, or when translating or transposing existing reading material such as Bible stories, folk or fairy tales. Bruner (see 3.5.2.2) underlines the importance of such criteria, as he believes that teachers play a key role in the cognitive development of learners. In his opinion, the nature of the learning content could influence their cognitive development. It can be deduced that the reading material used for activities such as reading instruction, reading for enjoyment and shared reading could also influence the cognitive development of learners.

The criteria for teacher-authored reading material that are identified in this chapter are based mainly on the various criteria that apply when evaluating and selecting published

reading material for the Foundation Phase. Before presenting the relevant criteria, an orientation related to the criteria is provided.

5.2 GENERAL CRITERIA FOR TEACHER-AUTHORED READING MATERIAL

To write suitable reading material for children is an exceptionally difficult task as both the author and the child as reader has vastly different expectations. On the one hand, adults seek answers to questions such as:

♦ What can be regarded as a 'good book' for children?
♦ What is the influence of the book on children?
♦ How can the book contribute towards the development of children?

On the other hand, children are looking for something with which they can identify on a social, emotional and intellectual level. It is thus very difficult writing for children from an adult's point of view. In order to succeed, it is imperative that the author is honest and follows a natural approach. In South Africa, this task becomes even more complicated because of context-related matters that are ideologically inspired on the grounds of racial discrimination (Swanepoel 1995:36).

From the onset it must be made very clear that the teachers for whom these criteria are intended are not professional authors and illustrators of children's books. Therefore, the criteria that apply to the evaluation of children's literature written and illustrated by professional authors cannot be applied to the same degree to teachers who are novices at this task. In fact, the researcher believes that if too many criteria are presented and if they are applied too stringently, teachers would feel threatened and not embark on the journey. For this reason, only basic criteria are presented. The researcher is of the opinion that these criteria should enable Foundation Phase teachers to provide their learners with more reading opportunities and to supplement existing reading material. In this way, progress can be made in the venture to develop a print-poor environment into a print-rich environment.

5.2.1 CRITERIA RELATED TO LITERARY ELEMENTS

Most young children know what they like or dislike and offer evaluative statements such as: *I liked the story* or *Can we read it again?* without being analytical. The importance of literary elements presented by the author determines the success of a story (Burke 1986:30). Although the final product is greater than the sum of the literary elements, it is necessary to discuss each of these in more detail.

5.2.1.1 Characterisation

With regard to the characters of a story, Norton (1993:380) says:

The characters in a story are intrinsic to the incidents that occur.

Authors must make certain choices with regard to the physical and mental attributes, personality, social standing and so forth of their characters (Bookeish 2003:12). They develop characters by describing their thoughts, actions and recording their conversations (Norton 1993:436). The characters could be people, animals or even objects. The credibility of characters depends on the author's ability to reveal both their strengths and weaknesses.

The following should serve as criteria when developing characters for the story:

♦ The reader should easily be able to identify the main character (Raines & Isbell 1994:19).

♦ Characters should be portrayed from young children's perspective (Van Vuuren 1994:55) and be clearly outlined as they generally lack the insight and experience necessary to understand complex human behaviour (Brann 1992:38). Characters should, therefore, do and say things that are typical of the age and experience of the target group of learners. The characters' actions, feelings, strengths and weaknesses should be clearly described as well as how others perceive them (Du Plessis 1990:85).

♦ A variety of characters should be included in a series of reading material, for example, males and females, people from different ethnic groups, working and

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middle class, young and old people as well as disabled and able-bodied persons (Browne 1996:127).

♦ The main characters should be the ones performing brave and important deeds (Browne 1996:125). Characters should not only be predictable (Machet 1994:71) but also be portrayed in a credible and convincing way. Therefore, they should be true to life, genuine and behave in accordance with their natural traits. This allows young readers to identify with the human qualities of characters and to sympathise with them (Browne 1996:125). Predictable characters also allow readers to develop a sense of humanity so that they can work out the conflict in the story without appearing contrived (Du Plessis 1990:85).

♦ Characters should be free of stereotypes (see 5.2.7). This means that characters from various ethnic groups should be portrayed as having the same potential, ability, preference, human weaknesses and strengths (Burke 1986:196; Machado 1999:224).

♦ Characters should be motorically and verbally active. Initially the one-dimensioned characters of folk and fairy tales are understood and loved but gradually young children learn to understand 'fuller' characters that change as the story develops (Burke 1986:30).

♦ Although the main character in the story need not be a child, young readers prefer children as main characters as this enables them to relate to the plot and identify more readily with the characters. The characters should develop during the story through the description of their thoughts, actions and records of their conversations (Norton 1993:436). The story should show clear indications of growth or development taking place (Du Plessis 1992:32).

♦ Characters should show respect for adults, peers, religion and for diversity in general.

♦ Animal characters remain popular because young learners readily identify with them. For this reason, animal characters should regularly be selected (Du Plessis 1990:85).

Research undertaken by Machet (1994:70; 1996:41) regarding the preferences of black children showed the following:

◆ There was little consensus with regard to the favourite characters preferred by young, black children. It seemed as if most black learners were satisfied with books containing either black or white main characters. There was also no clear preference as to whether these learners preferred male or female main characters. This implies that the characters need not always belong to the same ethnic group as the learners for whom the material is to be written.

◆ The least liked characters are villains or those responsible for committing evil deeds. Most young black learners prefer characters that are communally orientated but dislike those who wished to be individualistic, different and non-conforming to the group. This is consistent with the strong communal values present in most black communities and is also in line with the spirit of *Ubuntu* (the caring for others/humaneness) that is an important African value. Therefore, main characters that are caring and community-orientated should be created, showing that the 'good' are rewarded while 'evil-doers' are punished (see 3.4.2.2.).

◆ Characters must be offered opportunities to change for the better, to grow and cope with a situation if the minds and emotions of young readers are to be caught and held.

5.2.1.2   Plot

The plot of the story is also referred to as the *story line* or the *main theme* (Collins Pocket Reference Thesaurus 1992:378). The plot is the order of actions in a story that mirror the conflict generated by characters (Burke 1986:30). These actions move the story forward to a climax, which eventually leads to a resolution of the problem or conflict (Bookeish 2003:5).

The development of the plot consists of a beginning, middle and final incidents and can be represented as follows (Norton 1993:377):

FIGURE 5.1:   THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PLOT

End of conflict

↑

Turning point (final incident)

↑

Climax

↑

Middle incident leading to a climax

↑

Characters are introduced; beginning incidents
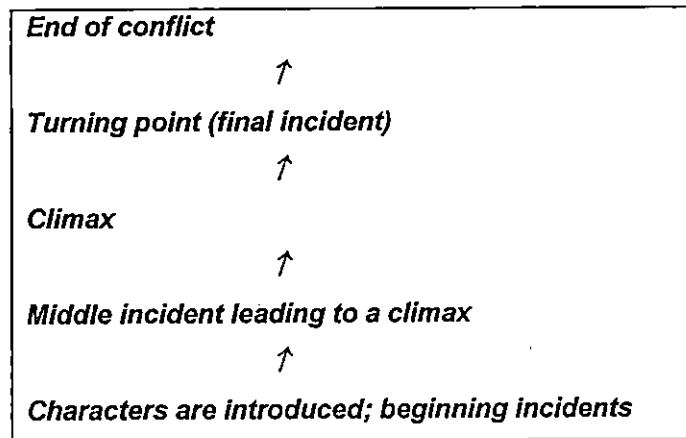
Excitement in a story is created when the main character is involved in a struggle or in a conflict situation. There are four types of conflict, namely person-to-person, person-versus-society, person-versus-nature and lastly, person-versus-self. The author should describe and develop the conflict in such a way that it is believable. A good plot lets the reader share in the action, feel the conflict, recognise the climax and respond to the resolution of the conflict (Norton 1993:436).

Continuity also adds to accessibility as this aspect distinguishes a story from a mere list of sentences. The reader should continuously wonder what would happen next. Conflict, for instance between good and evil, together with a resolution are additional ingredients that keep the story alive. Without conflict and resolution, many readers will experience reading to be a fruitless exercise (Brann 1992:41).

Based on research undertaken by Brann (1992:35, 41), Burke (1986:30-33), Du Plessis (1990:88), Machado (1999:225), Norton (1993:435-436) and Van Vuuren (1994:5), the following serve as criteria for the plot of the story:

♦ There should be a strong story line that is free from time distortions. The plot should relate to the learners' frame of reference and life-world. The content should be factually reliable and appropriate for the age of the learners.

♦ The plot should be simple and clearly outlined. For example, the cause-and-effect must be logically revealed. Many sub-plots in a story confuse young readers and are best avoided.

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♦ The story should develop and end with a satisfying culmination of events. The time sequence should be understandable with events developing in a chronological order.

♦ Accessibility is an important criterion of young children's reading material. Therefore, the style should be expressive yet concise. Although brevity must be considered due to children's limited attention span, clear images should be included.

♦ Not only should the plot provide excitement but also action, suspense and conflict. Excitement should be created by portraying the main character that is involved in a struggle or in a conflict situation as explained in Figure 5.1. In a good story, the plot follows a structure where the reader is introduced to the character(s) and the problem. Thereafter, conflict builds up until a turning point occurs and the conflict is resolved. The plot should shape the behaviour of the characters and in turn, the characters should develop the plot. As young children anticipate surprise, this element should also be included in the reading material.

5.2.1.3 Setting

Integral to the success of the plot is the setting (Bookeish 2003:7). The setting refers to the 'when and where' of the story or the specific location. It includes the geographic location of the story (for instance, the woods or a busy street) as well as the time the story takes place (Burke 1986:31; Norton 1993:378). Sometimes cultural, temporal and spatial factors are focal and sometimes they are only incidental (Burke 1986:31).

The following criteria should be kept in mind when developing teacher-authored reading material for the Foundation Phase:

♦ Young children want to know exactly where the story takes place and what the surroundings look like before the actual story starts. For this reason, the setting should be accurately described as it can contribute towards creating the mood and developing the story (Norton 1993:436). For instance, the words, *Deep in a dark forest*...already help to create the mood of the story.

- Stereotyped settings should be avoided. Instead, settings such as the following should be considered: urban/suburban, indoors/outdoors and nuclear/ single/extended families (Browne 1996:127).

- As young children's concept of time and space develops slowly, these should be selected with care. To very young children, all stories happen 'now'. The time is 'now' and 'long ago' and the space, 'here' and 'there'. As they grow older, time and space concepts become more differentiated (Burke 1986:31).

- Stories for black Foundation Phase learners should preferably take place in a known setting to enable them to identify with the text (Du Plessis 1990:85; Machet 1994:70; Van Vuuren 1994:55).

- If disturbing elements such as fear and violence are included in the story (see 5.2.5), the setting should be remote and unfamiliar as this lessens the chance of the events upsetting the young reader (Brann 1992:145).

5.2.1.4 Style

Style can be described as the collective characteristics of the writing of a particular work or story (Bookeish 2003:8) while Nodelman (1988:78) believes that style asserts identity. Style refers to the way in which the author uses language (words) to develop the story and to develop a particular mood or feeling (Bookeish 2003:8; Norton 1993:436) and is that illusive quality which defines why books written by a certain author are easy to identify (Raines & Isbell 1994:22). Through the use of figurative language, humour, imagery, rhythm, rhyme, selection of vocabulary and various literary forms, the author succeeds in presenting a story that appeals to the target group of readers.

The following criteria regarding style apply to teacher-authored reading material:

- The style should be fluent, interesting, clear and appropriate (Browne 1996:48, 128).

♦ The style should be appropriate for the characters, plot and setting (Norton 1993:436). For example, the style of a humorous story would differ from the style in a story telling about a sad event or the style in a non-fiction book.

♦ The style should be varied. This means that a variation of humorous, sincere or light-hearted content should be prepared (Browne 1996:127). Although young children are still unaware of its effect, it is the author's style that first draws their attention (Burke 1986:32).

Style also includes language and vocabulary, the use of figurative language and humour.

(a)   *Language and vocabulary*

Language and vocabulary are the most important aspects of style to be considered when writing reading material for Foundation Phase learners. The following serve as criteria:

♦ Appropriate, clear and vivid, yet simplistic language should be used to increase accessibility for learners. As the text is often of limited scope, words should be used economically. Every word   should be carefully considered and be functional (Du Plessis 1990:88; Machado 1999:225). The age, background, interests and reading abilities of the learners for whom the material is planned will determine the choice of vocabulary (Alexander 1988:36; Browne 1996:48, 128).

♦ Rhythm and repetition appeal to young children (Du Plessis 1990:88) and should form an integral part of the reading material. The repetition of words, actions and rhymes makes the story easier to remember and helps to anticipate what will happen next (Machado 1999:225). Although young readers find comfort in repetition, tedious descriptions and unnecessary repetitions could lead to boredom and are best avoided (Burke 1986:35; Du Plessis 1990:214).

- The sense of wonder, humour and delight should be expressed appropriately, for example through the use of linguistic inventions (Brann 1992:36). An example is the use of an invented word such as *The Jolly Jelly-copter* to refer to the helicopter that delivers jelly to the Jellybeans in Jellyland (researcher's own unpublished story).

- Interjections such as *'Oh no!'* and *'Shame!'* reflect emotions and create effect but must be used moderately and naturally (Du Plessis 1990:218).

- The appropriate mood and emotions should be aroused through the inclusion of sound and suspense aspects. Words that are rich in sound add to the aural element of the text. Rhyme should, however, be natural. Onomatopoeia (sound imitation) also enhances the richness of sound. An example: *Swish! Swish! said the little car's wipers. Toot! Toot! said the little car's hooter* (Du Plessis 1990:216). Creative names, for example, Chicken-Licken, Hen-Pen and Duck-Luck, illustrate rhyming words that appeal to young readers and could be included where the text allows.

- Sentences should be simplistic, easy to comprehend, grammatically correct and logically structured (Brann 1992:36; Du Plessis 1990:88). Although simplicity remains the key word, it does not imply that stereotyped words and expressions should be used.

- The length of the story should be in line with Foundation Phase learners' attention span (Machado 1999:224) and abilities. There are no clear indications as to the length of the story but the following serves as a guideline: The text planned for formal reading instruction for Grade 3 learners who experience reading difficulties in English (First Additional Language) should not exceed **approximately** sixty words.

(b)   Figurative language

Figurative language makes use of various figures of speech such as the simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration and onomatopoeia (Goodacre & Rumboll 1999:105, 207).

- A **simile** is a comparison between two things or actions that are not really alike but have something in common (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:1339). The words *like* and *as* are used when making a comparison. An example: The room was as dark as night.

- A **metaphor** is an expression used to describe a person or object in a literary way by referring to something that has similar characteristics (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:890). A metaphor is similar to a simile but the words *like* and *as* are not used. According to Walter (1996:125), metaphors involve cognitive processes and are used to paint word pictures to evoke multiple responses in listeners and readers. Ortony (in Walter 1996:125) believes that metaphors are necessary to make a connection between something known and unknown. An example: The big silver bird flew over the school. (The aeroplane is compared with a bird.)

- **Personification** is a form of metaphor in which inanimate objects are described as if they were alive (Concise Oxford Dictionary 1992:889). An example: The wind picked up the papers and scattered them on the grass.

- **Alliteration** is the technique of using a sequence of words beginning with the same sound, which is usually a consonant (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:34). An example: Sammy Snake sees Sally's six little snakes.

- **Onomatopoeia** is the figure of speech that uses words that are similar to the sounds or actions they represent (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:986). Examples include: crash, rumble, purr, clip-clop, buzz, swish.

What follows, are criteria related to figurative language that should be kept in mind when developing teacher-authored reading material.

- It is imagery in a story that gives young children the mental picture that creates a feeling of 'being there' or experiencing the actions portrayed in the story. To sustain the attention of young children, images should be simple and analogies clear.

- During the pre-operational stage as proposed by Piaget (see 3.4.2.1), children are more prone to literal belief and may understand metaphors and figurative language

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in a literal sense (Brann 1992:13). During the concrete-operational stage (see 3.4.2.1), children show a growing understanding of figurative language. Figurative language can, therefore, be included in reading material for Foundation Phase learners (Burke 1986:12, 34) on condition that the readers are able to understand it (Brann 1992:35; Du Plessis 1990:218).

(c)   *Humour*

The Cambridge International Dictionary (1995:575) defines humour as the ability to be amused by things, while Schwartz (in Burke 1986:120) defines humour as the comic quality in a person, experience or idea that makes one laugh. An exact definition of humour is, however, obstructed by the fact that it depends upon several factors. These include intellectual and emotional development, age, sex, personality, cultural and social background as well as education and experience. In addition, the development of humour is both group and individually based. Consequently, children within the same age group will probably laugh at the same things although children within any age group will laugh at different things (Burke 1986:121).

In the concrete-operational stage (see 3.4.2.1), children's thought patterns become more logical with the result that they begin to enjoy humour to a greater extent and enjoy laughing (Brann 1992:22). For this reason, humoristic stories and pictures appeal strongly to them (Du Plessis 1990:183; Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:107). Children in this stage are thus ready to be exposed to reading material containing humour on a regular basis.

Humour in literature has several advantages. Burke (1986:119) supports this statement when she says:

> *Humour is a powerful and proven bridge to literary appreciation for young children.*

Moreover, humour in literature contributes to the enjoyment of reading and developing a love for reading. It also has a healing quality as it provides release from tension (Braude 1996:96, 104). As a distancing strategy, it can break tension by making the possible dangers in the story less imminent (Jansen van Vuuren 1996:225). Furthermore, humour in a situation adds a dimension of experience (Braude 1996:96).

Seven and eight year olds enjoy humour based on wordplay (puns), ambiguity as well as phonological ambiguity. Practical examples of jokes based on wordplay and phonological ambiguity are the following (Louw et al. 1998:340):

Johnny: "Is your watch still going?"

Henry: "Yes."

Johnny: "Where is it going to?"

Later on, learners start to appreciate and understand ambiguity, for example:

"Waiter, what is this?"

"That is bean soup, Ma'am."

"I'm not interested in what it's been. I'm asking what it is now."

In addition to exaggeration and nonsense, young children enjoy disaster humour, incongruity, absurdity and humorous wordplay whether it is in the form of invented words, silly rhymes or misused words (Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:107).

Humour can be achieved in different ways by including different elements in picture story books, children's poetry and even in non-fiction books. These elements are listed in the following table together with examples of such books for reference:

TABLE 5.1   HUMOROUS ELEMENTS IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

HUMOROUS ELEMENT	EXAMPLES OF BOOKS	AUTHOR
The use of the first person	There's a nightmare in my closet	Mayer, M
A combination of verbal and visual fun	Squeeze a sneeze	Morrison, B
Surprise	Max	Isadora, R
Plot or character exaggeration	Cowardly Clyde	Peet, B
Ludicrous situations	The man who didn't wash dishes	Krasilovsky, P
Slapstick (knock-about comedy)	Hush Up!	Aylesworth, J
Exaggeration of characters' reactions	The stupids have a ball	Allard, H & Marshall, J
Surprising twist in the plot at the end	The beast of Monsieur Racine	Ungerer, T
Incongruities/illogic as contrasted with the natural state of animate/inanimate things	The Bremen Town musicians	Grimm brothers

(Burke 1986:120-122)

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It is, however, not a simple task to determine exactly what children find humorous. Braude (1996:104) reminds one that South Africa is a highly complex society and that it is neither possible nor advisable to try and fit all children into one mould, as humour tends to be culture-specific. What is regarded to be a humorous situation in one culture, could offend learners in another culture.

Based on the preceding, the following criterion applies: Humour in reading material should be age-related and culture-specific.

5.2.1.5 Theme

The theme forms the foundation or the 'heart' of the story. It is the 'golden thread' that weaves the plot, characters and setting into a meaningful whole (Burke 1986:33; Raines & Isbell 1994:21). Themes are more often implied than directly stated. The actions performed by the characters, the conversations of the characters, the conflict and the way in which the conflict was resolved usually reveals the theme of the story. In some cases, the title of the story reflects the theme of the story (Norton 1993:436).

Both Boyer (1996:6) and Burke (1986:197) advise that the author should know something about the background and general maturity of the target group of learners. Learners bring with them their own personal experiences when reading any type of reading material. They become less fluent when they read emotionally loaded passages as they not only read words but also bring meaning to the message. For instance, a reader whose father abuses him at home may find a passage dealing with paternal abuse rather disturbing. The emotions experienced by the learner could then have a negative effect on fluency as the memories preoccupy the learner's thoughts.

With regard to the selection of suitable themes for black learners, Poland (1981:33) believes that what is happening to the black child in South Africa today in both urban and rural areas is worth writing about and is far more authentic to the child himself. Machet (1994:71) cautions that, in general, these learners do not wish to see the ugly and intolerable struggle to make ends meet, which is the reality of their lives, portrayed in their literature. They want literature to show their lives as they want them to be, not specifically glossy and up-market, but a positive picture of multicultural life in South Africa.

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The following criteria related to the plot apply to teacher-authored reading material for Foundation Phase learners:

♦ There should be some relationship between the theme and the title of the story.

♦ In order to implement the whole language approach (see 4.2), the reading material that is to be used for formal reading instruction should link with the overall theme. If, for example, the theme is *My Family,* a story about parents, siblings, grandparents or a disabled family member would be a suitable choice. The reading material that is available for reading for enjoyment does, however, not necessarily have to link with the theme being dealt with.

♦ The theme should be accessible to the learners (Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:76). This means that the reading material should acknowledge learners' receiving ability by considering their psychological and emotional 'make-up'. The theme should, therefore, link with learners' previous experience, as learners need to have some 'frame of reference' about what they are reading (Mackworth & Bruner 1970:172). The theme should also have the potential to extend the experience of the reader and not create confusion (Geiger 1995:88). The learners should be able to relate to most parts of the story through their lives and past experience. For example, they should be able to identify and sympathise with one or more of the characters. This implies that the story should not contain concepts and situations that are far beyond the learners' level of comprehension but portray a more simplified vision of life that they will find easy to comprehend.

♦ Themes should not only be clearly and vividly presented but also succeed in arousing a variety of healthy emotions present in early childhood such as curiosity, a need to belong and a need to be loved. (See 4.4.3.2 & 4.4.3.3 respectively.)

♦ Various themes should be addressed in the collection of teacher-authored reading material. These include conflict and conflict-free situations, sad and happy endings, serious and light-hearted situations as well as traditional and new settings (Browne 1996:127).

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- As the story should be well worth reading, it requires material that is inspiring, entertaining, thought-provoking, coherent and convincing (Browne 1996:125; Du Plessis 1990:88).

- Children's books are a mirror of society's values, attitudes, norms and perceptions. When deciding upon a suitable theme, teachers should also consider different values such as compassion, courage, sensitivity, fear, anxiety, helpfulness, co-operation and independence.

- Themes dealing with positive issues in urban or rural life and that portray a positive picture of multicultural life in South Africa should be included.

- Reading material such as picture story books should reveal current attitudes towards family, grandparents and elderly people (intergenerational relations) and also reflect similarities and differences towards these people in various cultures (Ölen, Machet & Marchand 1998:78-79).

5.2.1.6 Dialogue and narrative

Linked to the question of style is that of narrator. The narrator is the person (or persons) speaking in the story from whose perspective the story is told. There can be one or more than one narrator in a story (Bookeish 2003:11). Wyile (1999:185) points out that there are four different kinds of narration, namely first-person, second-person, third-person limited and third-person omniscient.

Kuznet (in Wyile 1999:195) is of the opinion that a first-person narrative (where I tells his or her story) has several limitations. However, Labuschagne (1995:141) disagrees with Kuznet. In her opinion, the most effective kind of character narrator is the first person narrator as it increases the potential for reader identification.

With regard to the choice between dialogue and narrative, Du Plessis (1990:216) and Machado (1999:224) say that directly quoted conversation (dialogue) adds interest to a text. Dialogue can also be used most effectively to portray the character's personality and helps to create a more vivid text. However, a combination of dialogue and narrative can be used very successfully in a text.

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The main criteria with regard to dialogue and narrative are the following:

♦ As there are no clear directions regarding the use of first and third person narrator, the teacher could use either one. The genre, theme and plot of the story will determine the type of narrator. Diary entries could be done in the first-person.

♦ The reading material should not consist of only dialogue or only narrative but a balanced combination of these two aspects.

5.2.2   CRITERIA RELATED TO CHILDREN'S INTERESTS

Several authorities emphasise the role of children's interests in the learning process. One of these authorities is Piaget (1967:34-35) who believes that interest is, in effect, the prolongation of needs. Interest appears in two complementary forms. On the one hand, it is a regulator of energy as its intervention mobilises internal reserves of strength. Learners make infinitely better progress when an appeal is made to their interests and the reading material corresponds to their needs (see 4.4.3).

On the other hand, interest implies a system of values that become differentiated in the course of mental development by assigning ever more complex goals to action. These values depend on another system of regulations, which command internal energies without depending on them. These regulations tend to assure or re-establish the equilibration through the incorporation of new forces or new external elements. It is for this reason that during early childhood, children begin to show an interest in words, drawings, pictures and rhythms. All these realities acquire value for the person to the extent that they fulfil his or her needs. These needs, in turn, are dependent on the reader's momentary mental equilibration and, above all, on the new incorporations necessary for the maintenance of equilibration, as proposed by Piaget (see 3.4.2.1).

Machet (1994:65) acknowledges the major differences between an oral and a literate culture regarding thought processes, perceptions of the world, narrative structures and understanding as well as response to literature. It stands to reason that this must affect the cultural accessibility of text. An oral culture, such as that of black South Africans, will look for different structures, characters and types of discourse in literature. It is possible, in fact probable, that their schemata or mind-set will make Western Eurocentric literature, which is known to be highly literate, virtually inaccessible. This

factor could affect the accessibility of text written within a literate tradition to children living in an oral tradition.

Another vital reason why learners' interests should be taken into account when developing reading material is that it particularly affects learners who experience reading difficulties. Many such learners are negative towards reading but it has been found that they usually respond more positively when the reading material is in line with their interests (Alexander 1988:35).

In order to write appropriate reading material for children, it is necessary to know what their interests are. Informal discussions can supply Foundation Phase teachers with the required knowledge.

Both Brann (1992:22) and Norton (1993:421) agree that the following criteria regarding learners' interests should be considered in the development of teacher-authored reading material for Foundation Phase learners:

♦ Based on the findings of Piaget (see 3.4.2.1), learners in the Foundation Phase are initially interested in fantasy, mystery, magic, the supernatural, and in some cases, distant times and distant places. They gradually become intrigued by a world that is more vivid, exciting and unpredictable than the reader's familiar environment. Therefore, these aspects should be included in teacher-authored reading material.

♦ Sad stories are not popular and should rather be avoided. Instead, warmth should be included as it is the most outstanding quality of books preferred by young children. Reading material should, therefore, portray characters that are unselfish and express their feelings in their actions.

♦ Young readers are also interested in books that explicitly teach a lesson, realistic stories that deal with family situations, humorous animal stories, stories that develop emotional experiences, action-filled fantasies, traditional stories, counting books as well as rhymes and riddles. For this reason, different genres need to be included in the development of reading material.

♦ Reading material for over-aged learners who experience reading difficulties should be based on their interests but the text should be written on their level of ability. For

example, a ten-year old learner in Grade 3 may show an interest in technology. The reading material for this learner would deal with a related aspect but the text would consist of many familiar words, repetitive phrases or sentences and short sentences while the length of the text would not exceed **approximately** sixty words.

5.2.3 CRITERIA RELATED TO FANTASY

Despite the problem of an exact definition of fantasy, Norton (1993:451) seems to capture the essence of the concept when she says:

> *Fantasy is fiction that transports the reader into a time period and setting where the impossible becomes convincingly possible.*

Cox (1996:264) as well as Raines and Isbell (1994:26) add to Norton's definition by describing fantasy as fiction that contains some element not found in the natural world. The intrusion of the supernatural or marvellous into an ordinary world holds a special appeal for both authors and young readers as it portrays a feeling that it can happen at any time.

According to Burke (1986:194), Cox (1996:264) and Norton (1993:452), the characteristics of fantasy are the following:

♦ Fantasy is the 'anti-expected' that forms the 'hall-mark' of this genre. Children from about the age of seven begin to detach themselves from literal perceptions and start to appreciate fantasy.

♦ Fantasy is said to express otherness or strangeness through violating accepted ideas of reality.

♦ Fantasy involves the impossible as well as playing with the imagination.

♦ Fantasy involves the reversal of expectation and departs from the known in order to recreate.

♦ Fantasy is an inventive and creative attribute of the mind.

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♦ Fantasy differs from ghost or horror stories in that it has the ability to alienate what
  is familiar and to familiarise what is strange.

♦ The characters used in a fantasy story can be inanimate objects that have the
  attributes of living things, personified toys, animals and people who have various
  imaginary experiences. These characters could be contrary to reality or experience
  unusual situations. The setting, created by the author, could include the past,
  present or future as well as an imaginary world that can be inhabited for a while.

Between the ages of six and twelve, the importance of fantasy in children's reading
interests becomes more obvious and they are intrigued by fantasy or the unusual once
they are familiar with their own environment (Brann 1992:147). At first, fantasy and
reality are inseparable but thereafter, a stronger separation starts to take place and
children become more realistic (Du Plessis 1990:11).

Research has shown that there are many supporters of fantasy but that there are also
those who are opposed to exposing Foundation Phase learners to fantasy. Arguments
launched by both supporters and critics of fantasy will be discussed in brief. Firstly, the
views of those in support of fantasy will be highlighted.

Support **in favour** of fantasy in young children's literature is based on research
undertaken by Brann (1992:86-246), Bosma and Guth (1995:8), Burke (1986:195),
Didicher (1997:137), Norton (1993:451) as well as Wood and Attfield (1996:52). The
views of these authorities follow.

♦ Fantasy is characterised by rich visual images that act as symbols and are a vital
  way of communicating with young children. As visuals are concrete in nature, they
  are accessible. The concrete nature of images is important when communicating
  with children, particularly those in the concrete-operational phase (see 3.4.2.1), as
  their perception and method of expression are mainly concrete.

♦ Young children intuitively realise the difference between real and non-real things
  although they are often unable to express these differences in a theoretical way.
  Children who are already of school-going age will not, for instance, readily eat a
  mud-pie.

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♦ Fantasy literature can also be of importance to young children as they often experience feelings of anger towards their loved ones and need to deal with the resulting feelings of guilt and anxiety. Moreover, fantasy could instil courage and hope for the hardships in real-life and can serve as a type of 'survival strategy'. Many nursery rhymes, fairy tales and other forms of fantasy literature play a role in recognising and dealing with these feelings.

♦ As fantasy and reality are 'mirror-images' of each other, fantasy can be used to reflect reality. Characters may, for instance, be compared with certain animals and in doing so, express reality.

♦ Fantasy as a symbolic form of expression can help to mediate experiences for young children so that they are not submerged by the content that could be potentially frightening if dealt with directly.

♦ Fantasy can play an important role by giving young learners better insight into the psyche as images in fantasy externalise and dramatise inner experiences. Images in fantasy could, therefore, provide both increased insight and self-knowledge.

♦ Fantasy has been devalued in the current technological/rational curriculum. This is one reason why Foundation Phase learners should be given opportunities to explore a whole range of ideas, experiences, feelings and relationships. Moreover, fantasy, creativity and imagination enable young children to go beyond the boundaries of their knowledge and understanding. These capabilities are essential in more formal learning situations and even in later schooling. For example, learners have to imagine what life was like in another time or how someone else feels. In addition, fantasy, creativity and imagination are important elements as they encourage divergent ways of thinking and reasoning as they help to make novel connections and interconnections between areas of the human brain and different domains of learning.

Having discussed the advantages of exposing Foundation Phase learners to fantasy, the views of those **opposed** to fantasy are presented.

Arguments against fantasy did not arise recently. In fact, already in the second developmental era, August Hermann Francke (see 2.3.2.5) as well as Jean-Jacques

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Rousseau (see 2.3.2.8) strongly criticised the idea of exposing learners to fantasy, as it is not based on the truth.

There are three main points of criticism lodged against fantasy in children's literature, namely that fantasy is a form of escapism, a form of falsehood and a useless form of perception, lacking pragmatic value (Brann 1992:78-79, 106; Du Toit & Kruger 1993:47). The same authors provide arguments in defence of fantasy.

♦ *Fantasy as a form of escapism:* Fantasy reflects children's innate nature to fantasise and may help them to surpass problematic situations in real-life. Children have a deep need for fantasy and if deprived of fantasy literature, they could compensate by creating their own fantasies to fill the void. Although fantasy may appear to be a form of escapism in presenting other worlds, these worlds often present our own 'in disguise'. Fantasy can also provide hope and consolation, thereby contributing towards self-renewal (escape in a positive sense) and self-actualisation.

♦ *Fantasy as a form of falsehood:* This argument is based on the fact that 'truth' can be verified. Reality does not comprise only of literal truth. In fact, fantasy may be significant in expressing some of the intricacies of life and extending a person's view of reality.

♦ *Fantasy as a useless form of perception and lacking in pragmatic value:* Fantasy can have the effect of redirecting the reader to reality with a new perception. Moreover, the famous scientist, Einstein, recognised some practicality in fantasy and used it in the pioneering of scientific thought.

Although fantasy has been said to provide an irresponsible way of evading reality, such generalisations are dangerous. For some, fantasy may provide an escape from reality but for others, fantasy may provide positive or creative inspiration. However, it is important to offer children a balanced 'literary diet' and not to expose them to fantasy only. Instead, they should be exposed to material dealing with reality and non-fiction as well. In the concrete-operational stage, children begin to relinquish animistic perception and are better able to view the world in a realistic way.

Sufficient evidence has been gathered to warrant the inclusion of fantasy in reading material for Foundation Phase learners. The following criteria that are related to fantasy are based on research undertaken by Botha, Van Ede, Louw, Louw and Ferns (1998:248), Brann (1992:18-20, 145, 219), Du Plessis (1990:93), Du Toit and Kruger (1993:47, 96) as well as Raines and Isbell (1994:26):

♦ Some children still find it difficult to distinguish between fantasy and reality. In fact, for them, fantasising is as natural as eating or sleeping. However, they do not readily accept any form of fantasy. For this reason, stories should not contain fantasy that is too far-fetched. Order and logic are essential in a fantasy story while inanimate objects should be presented in a natural and acceptable way.

♦ Fantasy is influenced by culture. For this reason, careful consideration has to be given to this aspect before writing text that contains fantasy.

♦ Transposed or translated fairy tales that are emotionally charged (dealing with issues such as death and separation) should only be presented if the teacher is convinced that learners are able to cope with these.

♦ For reading material to be a significant experience, it should start where children are positioned in their psychological and emotional world. For instance, humanised animals are significant in young children's literature because they are easy to identify with and like children, they are small, vulnerable and often at the mercy of adults. Animals presented in this way fascinate children who are gradually learning about socially acceptable behaviour.

♦ Besides containing elements of animism, articificialism and magical thought, which are in line with Foundation Phase learners' perception, fantasy stories should be accessible. This implies that the stories should contain a recognisable narrative pattern, for example, *Who has been eating my porridge? Who has been sitting in my chair? Who has been sleeping in my bed?* (Goldilocks and the Three Bears).

♦ The understanding and enjoyment of the use of the metaphor should grow as children become 'detached' from the literal belief in a story. The reading material should, therefore, make provision for this growth.

5.2.4   CRITERIA RELATED TO REALISM

Realism is the antithesis of fantasy and deals with facts and attempts to eliminate all idealism, sentimentalism and prejudice and to determine what is practical as the emphasis is on observable reality (Raines & Isbell 1994:190). In realistic stories, everything that occurs **could** happen and the stories are convincingly true to life such as episodes of the everyday life of a group of street children (Burke 1986:194). Concepts of reality and fantasy differ between individuals. What a certain person views as reality, may be regarded as fantasy, superstition or illusion by another. As is the case with fantasy, it is difficult to offer an exact definition of reality (Brann 1992:75; Norton 1993:452).

The value of realistic stories lies in the fact that they appeal to young readers because many children experience similar situations and feelings (Du Plessis 1990:92; Raines & Isbell 1994:190). Creating a feeling that it is 'their story' rather than 'my story' can give young learners a sense of safety when they are confronted with a difficult issue such as death, disability, inequality or abuse. From the age of about seven, children are better able to view the world in a realistic way as they start to detach themselves from literal belief in fiction (see 3.4.2.1). These children's rich fantasy life should, therefore, be 'stabilised' by exposing them to realistic experiences so that balance is created. For this reason, learners should not only read fantasy stories but also be exposed to material dealing with reality and non-fiction (Brann 1992:20; Raines & Isbell 1994:190).

Realistic stories do not always have to transfer pure facts. A realistic story can also contain elements of mystery or exaggerated versions of a situation. Realistic stories can be based on real-life situations in the past or present (Wood 1999:168). Learners can read about characters that deal with the same elements with which they struggle from day to day such as fighting with siblings, experiencing fear, anger and insecurity. However, Georgiou (in Du Plessis 1992:92) points out that in real life, good does not always triumph over evil and that evil is not always punished. Books should, therefore, not protect children from the realities of life but also make them aware of existing conditions.

The following criteria that apply when developing realistic reading material are based on research undertaken by Browne (1996:124), Burke (1986:194), Norton (1993:452), Raines and Isbell (1994:190-191) as well as Wood (1999:168):

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- When selecting a theme, teachers must consider the connections between the young child as a learner, as a member of a culture and as an individual. The story should help learners to make associations between their lives and their ever-expanding social and real-world environments.

- As realistic fiction stories are set in contemporary times, the characters should be credible (see 5.2.1.1) and events should be likely to occur.

- The main character should be depicted as overcoming the bad to support the young child's awakening moral feelings (see 3.4.2.2).

- Realistic fiction can meet one of the basic needs of all children, namely to belong and to be accepted by others (see 4.4.3.2). Realism in a story can also be a way in which children compensate for their shortcomings. For example, if a disabled child cannot participate in sport, he or she could find some satisfaction by reading a story about sport. Stories should, therefore, focus on the importance of being accepted by others and understanding the emotions of those who are rejected.

5.2.5 CRITERIA RELATED TO FEAR AND VIOLENCE

Throughout the history of children's literature there has been a concern that certain stories may induce fear in young children. Death and violence in the media (which includes books) are regarded as the most significant causes of fear. In traditional literature, for example, death and violence are often depicted in situations where many of the stories demand strong characters performing strong actions that are often followed by justice carried out violently. However, attitudes toward death and the management of death and dying have changed markedly over the past years (McGeorge 1998:29).

An argument often posed is that many children come into contact with cruelty and violence in their real lives and need to see that these issues are addressed with perseverance and courage as in fairy tales. Another argument supported by many psychologists is that although everyone has traits of cruelty and violence within them, they need to realise that these traits can cause much trouble and unhappiness. Most young children are not overly troubled by violence when the story is told in a safe and calm environment such as the classroom or home. In fact, for many of them, the

protection from personal harm (distancing from the violence) heightens the enjoyment of the tale (Burke 1986:170).

Young children are, however, unpredictable in their responses and it is difficult to say exactly what will evoke fear in them. Many of them are afraid of supernatural creatures despite assurance that they do not exist. Moreover, they tend to believe that these creatures have special qualities that enable them to penetrate their otherwise safe environment. Even though some learners are not frightened by horrors, seemingly insignificant matters could frighten them. A child's fears may be due to initial confusion between reality and fantasy. Although children become less fearful during middle childhood, there is no noticeable decrease in their fear of supernatural creatures such as monsters (Johnson & Harris 1996:245).

Although it seems natural to avoid exposing young children to frightening stories, potentially frightening books need not be avoided at all costs. The reason for this statement lies in the fact that stories alone are not responsible for fear in young children, as it is the images that they spontaneously create in their imagination that often instigate the actual fear. Exposure to such stories (within limits) can help children to cope with fear in a structured way and also help them to articulate unconscious fears (Brann 1992:234, 237). Until children are old enough to distinguish between fantasy and reality, those who have an irrational fear of monsters and other fantasy creatures, should not be exposed to stories that contain fear and violence (Botha *et al.* 1998:272).

If Foundation Phase teachers decide that it is in order to include some form of violence or fear in the story they are writing, they should consider the following criteria that are based on research undertaken by Brann (1992:227-246), Burke (1986:171), Machet (1996:39) and Stewart (1994:96):

♦ When introducing violence and fear in a story, the teacher should take into account the particular group of learners' ability to cope with such situations. Although children should know about the realities of real-life, it is important to note that too much exposure to violence may be harmful to the uninformed mind of young children. Ideally, they should be made aware of the consequences of violence.

♦ Familiarisation with recurring themes allows young readers to experience a certain amount of emotional safety and reassurance. Familiar themes should, therefore, be selected if violence or fear is included in the reading material.

♦ As spatial dislocation is a distancing strategy, Foundation Phase learners are less distressed by actions and events that occur in settings unrelated to their immediate environment (see 5.2.1.3). Therefore, if the story includes some form of fear and violence, then the setting should not be part of the learners' immediate environment.

♦ An indication must be given that the incidents are not taking place in reality. In this way, fear is reduced. One way of doing this is by starting the story with the words *Once upon a time.*

♦ A story that could evoke fear must include hope or optimism. Fantasy, through its sustaining optimism and example of hope and courage, can assist young children in managing recurring anxiety in life. The theme 'justice triumphs over evil' is another way of reducing anxiety or fear.

♦ African folk tales in particular often have tragic and violent endings, which could ·make them unsuitable for young learners. Therefore, the teacher must ascertain whether or not the learners are ready to cope with the folk tale that she has translated or transposed.

♦ Violence that involves direct family members must be avoided. Most black learners enjoy violence such as the wolf falling into the pot of boiling water in *The Three Little Pigs* but not violence where direct family members are killed. This type of violence is disturbing because it is very similar to the violence many of them encounter in their everyday lives.

♦ Reassurance should be given in the text to defuse potentially frightening situations, for instance, the narrator should say: *"Everything will be alright."*

◆ Pictures could also evoke fear and portray violence, perhaps even more explicitly than the text. Therefore, teachers need to determine whether learners are ready to cope with such pictures before they are included in the reading material. If such pictures are included, fear and violence must be portrayed in a moderate way.

In summary: Teachers must be sensitive to the emotional state of learners before exposing them to text and pictures portraying fear and violence. This statement is based on the disturbing amount of violence to which young South African children are exposed to through the media, in some homes and communities.

5.2.6   CRITERIA RELATED TO MORAL ISSUES

Morality can be defined as a personal set of standards that enable a person to differentiate between good and bad or right and wrong. The concept also implies honesty (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:917; Le Roux 1996b:128; Louw *et al.* 1998:372).

Regarding moral development, Piaget (see 3.4.2.2) states that during the intuitive stage, the morals of young children remain essentially heteronymous (subject to an external will, which is that of parents or other respected persons). They feel strongly about issues such as honesty and being 'right' is to obey the will of the adult. Children in the concrete-operational stage agree that there should be rules that are absolutes and if violated, the 'trespasser' should be punished.

To understand why clearly delineated characters are popular in young children's literature, the child's fundamental moral perception of the world should be noted. With increasing intellectual and social development comes moral growth and the ability to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' as well as right and wrong (Du Plessis 1990:11). Kohlberg, partially influenced by Piaget's theory, (see 3.4.2.2) proposed a more comprehensive theory of moral development. In his view, most learners aged four to ten years fall into the pre-conventional level of moral development during which moral decisions are egocentric. This means that decisions are based on personal interests.

Based on rewards or punishment, children engage in self-assessment (Mwamwenda 1996:150). They believe that the world is characterised by a just order where 'good is rewarded and 'evil' is punished (see 3.4.2.2). This phenomenon is referred to as the
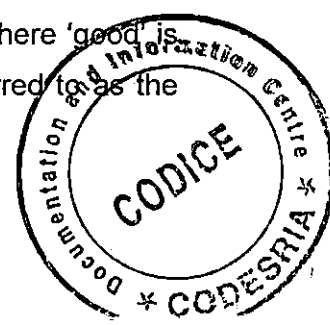
child's 'eye-for-an-eye code of ethics' and love for justice (Arbuthnot & Sutherland 1972:154; Wood 1999:162). They are, therefore, highly concerned about rules and continue to obey them in order to earn rewards and to avoid punishment. Gradually they start to realise the purpose of rules, namely to ensure peaceful co-existence. With the development of conscience, they like to ensure that everybody else obeys rules as well (Stephens 1996:138). Although reading material cannot compete with the influences of personal interaction, it can play an important role in the moral development of Foundation Phase learners (Du Plessis 1992:23).

The following criteria regarding morality apply to teacher-authored reading material:

♦ Moral values and standards differ from one culture to another and from one society to another. Being able to distinguish right from wrong is one of the most important tasks of the young child (Louw *et al.* 1998:372). Therefore, careful consideration must be given to the transmission of morals that are relevant to the specific learners' culture in the preparation of reading material.

♦ Moral and social issues addressed should be positive and constructive (Browne 1996:125).

♦ Children look to rules, codes and laws for guidance. Young children strongly believe in issues such as speaking the truth and not stealing. Consequently, they believe that there should be some form of law and that punishment is useful. Therefore, evidence must be provided that good deeds are rewarded and bad deeds are punished.

♦ The message in the reading material should not reflect moral issues too conspicuously. In fact, young children find it difficult to identify with characters that are 'perfect' as they know that all children break rules at some stage of their life (Alexander 1988:36).

5.2.7 CRITERIA RELATED TO ANTI-BIAS

In South Africa, much emphasis is currently being placed on human rights, gender equality, the empowerment of women and the elimination of discriminatory practices and stereotyping (Meyers 2001:41; Nieman 2002:63). An anti-bias approach aims to

address these issues. It assumes that bias exists and actively addresses it by challenging any form of prejudice, stereotyping, bias and discrimination that occurs at a personal, structural and/or cultural level. In addition, an anti-bias approach invites different cultural perspectives to enter into and inform discussions, activities, tasks, policies and practices. An anti-bias approach is thus inclusive, affirming all individuals, their families, cultures and experiences (Koopman 1997:10).

As reading material plays a key role in the transmission of issues related to anti-bias, it is necessary to give a brief account of related aspects such as gender stereotyping, sexism, racism and disability.

Stereotyping is defined as a fixed idea about what people of a particular group are like (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:1421). It is a type of standardised mental image that one has of a particular group of people or, as Stephens (1996:122) describes it, a preset idea about a person or group of people based on a characteristic such as gender, race, religion or nationality. Stereotypes, therefore, constitute a way of categorising people through images that generally imply that positive or negative value judgments are made. It can be said that stereotypes cast all members of a certain age, race, sex, ethnic group, religion or other background, in the same light (Raines & Isbell 1994:207). Stereotypes are accessible and influential and children are particularly vulnerable to them as their perception is basically dominated by 'absolutes' (Brann 1992:259-270).

In its most basic form, **gender** indicates the psychological, social and cultural aspects associated with masculinity and femininity. A gender role refers to the behaviour and responsibilities expected of a woman or man in the family and society (Nieman 2002:66; Stephens 1996:18). It also implies 'conditioned' differences as a result of social roles determined by society (Labuschagne 1995:4).

Gender stereotyping is, therefore, the fixed idea that family and society ascribe certain roles and responsibilities to men and women. For example, reference is often made to cruel stepmothers but seldom to cruel stepfathers. (This is particularly dangerous in the light of the many situations in South Africa where a stepmother is likely to become part of the child's life.) Men control a patriarchal society while certain roles are ascribed to women based on their biological differences. This is regarded as a form of discrimination.

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Children have already realised sex-role differentiation and gender identification by the age of four. This can be seen, for example, in their preference for gender-specific clothing and choice of toys. Children need to express their feelings but often are prevented from doing so due to gender role stereotyping. For instance, boys are often criticised for crying and girls for being aggressive (Beaty 1994:99). The suppression of their emotions, in turn, has a negative effect on their emotional development. Burke (1986:197) says that stereotypes create prejudice in young children at a time when they are most vulnerable to the conformation of stereotypes and can even 'straitjacket' their understanding and appreciation of the rich versatility and humanness in all people.

Among the most significant transmitters of gender stereotypes is the mass media, which include children's literature. Research undertaken by Browne (1996:178), Labuschagne (1995:131) and Nieman (2002:73) has shown that gender stereotyping is often found in readers, textbooks as well as in children's literature. In literature, gender differences are usually depicted in terms of physical, intellectual, emotional and occupational stereotypes. Gender stereotyping is transmitted in children's literature in terms of the explicit beliefs of the author and his or her wish to recommend them to children in the story. Such assumptions are communicated through the story. Unless children are guided with regard to these beliefs (ideologies), they will take them for granted and in the process, these beliefs will be reinforced. In learning to read, the learner does not only decode words but also has access to the value systems and behavioural characteristics of the protagonists. Furthermore, the reader is exposed to the physical and metaphysical characteristics of the fictional world presented in order to predict and comprehend the text. The author of the text transmits the worlds he or she shares. Consequently, as children (of both genders) learn to decode words, they also learn to read socially and for social meanings. The way in which they see themselves functioning in terms of the greater social narrative is different as reading is a learned activity that is inevitably sex-related and gender-reflected. In this way, the text can transmit ideology and perspectives.

The narrative structure of the story can portray gender stereotypes as can be seen in a story where women are described as being supportive of their husbands but it is not explicitly stated that men should also support their wives. Labuschagne (1995:133, 138) also points out that the use of narration can portray gender stereotypes. In the case of an **intrusive** narrator, the third person narrator makes use of direct address and speaks directly to the narratee who is often 'invisible'. In this case, the reader

tends to identify with the narratee. In a story where a character is named *'Silly Billy'*, the narrator ends by asking: *"Do you still wonder why he was called Silly Billy?"* The reader is positioned as agreeing with this judgment (condemning his stupidity) instead of accepting everyone's unique qualities. This could be regarded as an example of male stereotyping where men are ridiculed if they act stupidly because they are supposed to act intelligently. In the case of effaced ('removed') narration, the narrator is not intrusive but can guide the reader's attention, especially with regard to gender, for instance, by referring to 'the man in the car' or 'there were four children: two boys and two girls'. This type of narration is very powerful in its implication that the world is reality and that the assumptions made are common knowledge to everyone. The effaced narrator can also draw attention to gender roles as well as family roles. The attitudes and values of the narrator can be revealed through effaced narration. In the case of intrusive narration, the third person narrator may be dominant or effaced.

Van Vuuren (1994:114) points out that stereotypes in reading material affect children even at sub-conscious level and result in conditioning the reader to acceptance. For example, gender stereotyping is manifested in the numerous books intended specifically for girls and for boys. These books reinforce gender divisions. Moreover, the social norms and values of readers and authors are usually incorporated in the text. Gender stereotypes are, therefore, transmitted to children in many ways and they accept the roles implied in the texts. As readers absorb repetitive patterns such as certain chores being assigned to females or males, they absorb social codes.

It should be clear that gender stereotyping can be harmful to women and girls as well as men and boys (Browne 1996:182). For instance, gender stereotyping can result in the self-images of men to be increased at the expense of women, thus robbing the latter of their independence, ambitions and professional goals as well as curbing their development. Similarly, boys are inhibited by the idea that they are supposed to be brave, having to take the lead at all times and having to be independent (Beaty 1994:77).

Table 5.2 portrays examples of typical gender stereotypes.

TABLE 5.2   *GENDER STEREOTYPES*

	FEMALE	MALE
OCCUPATIONS	witch, nurse, housewife, teacher, receptionist, typist	farmer, lawyer, policemen, vet, doctor, scientist
DOMESTIC CHORES	cooking, washing, sewing, ironing, knitting, cleaning up, supervising homework	mowing the lawn, washing the car, making a fire, repairing things
LEISURE ACTIVITIES	shopping, reading, playing with dolls, drinking tea, dancing	playing soccer, playing with cars, mountain climbing
PERSONALITY TRAITS	fear, nurturing, motherliness, unpredictability, vanity, timidity, dependability, insecurity	bravery, wisdom, leadership, adventurousness, self-discipline, competitiveness

(Browne 1996:170-171; Labuschagne 1995:174-175; Raines & Isbell 1994:207)

Clearly, gender stereotypes need to be challenged to reflect a new and positive ideology of tolerance, reconciliation and mutual change. Reading material for Foundation Phase learners must, therefore, be regarded as a highly influential factor. Issues of gender, race or sexism do a disservice to individuals, groups and cultures and must be a prime concern when teachers have the opportunity to develop their own reading material.

With regard to **sexism**, Koopman (1997:13) says:

Sexism is gender prejudice plus power. It is based on the belief in the inferiority of women relative to men. Sexism is the intentional or unintentional use of power to isolate, separate and exploit women while giving privileges to men.

Critics denounce sexism in children's literature (Norton 1989:370). Insisting that boys should not play with dolls and that girls should not play with cars or trucks is a typical example of sexism.

With regard to **racism**, Koopman (1997:18) makes a distinction between old-fashioned racism and modern racism. Old-fashioned racism refers to the open acceptance of

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black people being less than equal while the latter refers to the feeling that black people are violating cherished values and making illegitimate demands for changes in the racial *status quo.*

Modern racism can occur through

♦ dysfunctional rescuing (helping in an unhelpful way), for example, making excuses for black people;

♦ avoidance of contact, for example, not making an effort to learn about black people's historical and current life experiences or

♦ denial of differences, for example, not describing people as black or white (a 'colour-blind approach').

Stereotyping often involves adults and children with **disabilities**. All forms of discrimination against these individuals should be avoided. Instead, attempts should be made to make everyone aware that these people are valuable members of the community. This view is directly in line with the policy of inclusion (DoE 2001b:4).

The choice of the right texts is the logical starting point for ensuring a bias-free literature curriculum. Based on the preceding information, it is clear that Foundation Phase teachers need to develop bias-free reading material.

Research undertaken by Browne (1996:172), Koopman (1997:18-25), Machado (1999:224), Nieman (2002:73-75), Raines and Isbell (1994:208) as well as UNESCO (in Labuschagne 1995:162-163, 207) lays the foundation regarding the criteria that pertain to anti-bias issues.

♦ All forms of stereotyping should be avoided in texts and pictures. Instead, both the text and the pictures should provide opportunities for the readers to learn about each other's historical and life experiences as well as their differences and similarities.

♦ A balance is needed between fiction and non-fiction reading material. Particular care should, however, be taken when writing non-fiction and realistic fiction as

these genres are based on reality and could easily portray bias in one form or another.

♦ Boys and girls, males and females should be portrayed as expressing the same basic emotions, personality traits and competences.

♦ There must be an equitable ratio of female to male characters in the title, body and pictures. Boys, men, girls and women in family, school, work or political and social roles should be clearly depicted as characters taking pride in their achievements and contributing to society in a variety of roles and occupations. Achievements of characters must be based on their own initiative, insights and intelligence.

♦ Sexism should be avoided in all aspects of language. Particular attention should be paid to the use of vocabulary and personal pronouns (he, she). The use of the plural form (they, their, etc.) is one way of bridging this problem while the use of he or she should only be used to refer to a specific person in the text and not for general purposes.

♦ Labuschagne (see 5 2.1.6) states that the first person narrator is more effective as it increases the potential for reader identification with the character. Dialogues can also help the reader identify with gender stereotypes. This implies that the author should be critical when selecting the narrator of the story or when writing dialogues as they can be used positively to reflect gender equality or alternatively, be used negatively to portray gender inequality.

♦ Main characters should act as role models who encourage positive social changes and offer new roles for all people. Fantasy is influenced by culture. For this reason, careful consideration has to be given to this aspect before writing text that contains fantasy.

♦ The material must contain a broad range of historical references to women, both those who made major and minor contributions. Girls and women should be portrayed as having positive personality traits such as intelligence, independence, warmth, strength and competence. Stories telling about brave deeds performed by women or girls, for example, the story of Rachel de Beer, is a suitable choice for Foundation Phase learners.

♦ Female characters must reflect and encourage social changes and reflect new roles for girls and mothers. Girls and women are to be depicted as active and willing to participate in adventures and exciting activities. Positive adult female roles should be portrayed and not **only** females in the traditional roles of mothers or caregivers.

♦ Care must be taken when including stepmothers or stepfathers in a story. These characters should be portrayed as being positive and caring.

♦ There must be an equal distribution of positive and negative qualities between the sexes with regard to clothing, physical appearance, intellectual abilities and disabilities. Clothing can, for example, be discussed in terms of functionality rather than gender-based terms.

♦ The main characters of fiction and non-fiction reading material should often be a person with a disability. The theme of the text and the accompanying pictures should portray their positive attributes and prove that they are valuable members of the community.

In essence, teachers writing their own reading material should bear the following warning in mind:

> *Young children are especially vulnerable to stereotypes in book characters. The fewer such characters they encounter, the better* (Burke 1986:37).

5.2.8   CRITERIA RELATED TO MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE

Yokota (in Machado 1999:225) defines multicultural children's literature as

> *literature that represents any distinct cultural group through accurate portrayal and rich detail.*

Multicultural children's literature can, therefore, be described as authentic literature that portrays the lives and different values and characteristics of various ethnic groups. Individual, family and cultural identities are exposed and celebrated in multicultural literature (Cox 1996:102; Machado 1999:113; Raines & Isbell 1994:210).

South Africa is often referred to as a 'rainbow nation' due to the many cultures represented in the country. It stands to reason that reading material should also reflect the diversity of cultures. This types of reading material could not only help to eliminate stereotypes (see 5.2.7) that may exist regarding a particular culture but also develop a better understanding of other cultures.

Lemmer and Griffin (1993:3) emphasise the importance of multicultural literature when they say:

> *Our only hope for building a 'New South Africa' is to build bridges across those racial and cultural barriers, real and invented, that have for so long separated us. So perhaps stories could provide one means of liberating our society from the fears and ignorance engendered by the group exclusivity that apartheid attempted to foster and sustain.*

An appropriate developmental task for Foundation Phase learners is to grow in appreciation of themselves as individuals, as family members and as members of a culture in their community. Children's literature is a powerful medium for understanding diversity, other cultures, their needs and emotions (Harada 1998:19; Pike 1991:568). Children are strongly influenced with regard to their intellectual development as well as their attitudes by **what** they read. Several authorities in the field of children's literature are convinced that a child's internal value systems are influenced whenever they read a book (Du Plessis 1992:224).

This implies that every book that is read, contributes towards the development of a child's attitude towards the world in which he or she lives. As the personal identity of young learners has not yet been established, they associate with characters in the story more readily. Multicultural children's literature can serve as a tool to reinforce certain values and attitudes in children, which, in turn, will contribute towards improved relationships with fellow citizens (Norton 1993:197). In addition, multicultural reading material can also be a valuable tool in the hands of the teacher to promote *UBUNTU* and pave the way for achieving Critical Outcome 4 stating that learners will be expected to work effectively with others (Educum 1997:8; Saunders 1996:18).

Literature, therefore, has a social function in that it represents society. It also has a moral function as it transmits and mirrors values of a specific society (Cox 1996:100; Swanepoel 1987:35). Children's literature such as picture story books are, therefore, ideal for creating an awareness of cultural diversity. For example, Lemmer and Griffin (1993:3) refer to Niki Daly's book *Not so fast, Songololo* where relationships are portrayed with kindness, understanding and sympathy.

Although the development of multicultural reading material is a relatively new idea, the learning theories of Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky directly or indirectly offer support for the development of this type of reading material. In addition, the views of contemporary authors together with the DoE offer support for this trend.

5.2.8.1 Learning theories and multicultural literature

Piaget (see 3.4.2.2) believes that childhood is a progressive adaptation to the physical and social world. Spontaneous social relationships and interpersonal feelings of affection, sympathy and antipathy start to develop during the pre-operational stage. During the concrete-operational stage, children become more liberated from egocentrism and social feelings of co-operation become more prevalent. They start to realise that their perceptions and thoughts differ from person to person. As they start to consider the feelings of others, they become less altruistic. The development of sensitivity towards others not only allows them to deal with social demands in a better way but also to be more aware of existing prejudice (Louw *et al.* 1998:348-349, 370). This implies that issues such as multiculturalism can be addressed in this stage.

Bruner (see 3.5.2.2) believes that schooling is responsible for the growth of the mind and emphasises the fact that narratives can transmit culture (see 3.5.2.13.). Exposing young learners to multicultural reading material is an ideal way of transmitting culture and allowing others to gain insight into one another's cultures. In this way, growth of the mind is enhanced.

Vygotsky strongly emphasises the vital role of culture and society with regard to cognitive development (see 3.6.2.1). As reading is a cognitive activity, it can be assumed that multicultural reading material would play a key role in the development of cognitive functioning.

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5.2.8.2 Contemporary authors' views regarding multicultural literature

Authors from Africa and abroad support the introduction of multicultural reading material to learners at an early age. Several South African authors and the DoE also are in favour of thereof. A brief account of their views follows.

(a) Authors from Africa and abroad

Khorana (1998:20), an author from Africa, quotes Bessie Head as follows:

Who am I? What am I? In past and present the answer lies in Africa; in part it lies within the whole timeless, limitless, eternal universe. How can I discover the meaning and purpose of my country if I do not first discover the meaning and purpose of my own life?

Machado (1999:226) and Norton (1993:201) stress the advantages of using traditional stories from various cultural sources as they help learners to accept cultural diversity. Machado (1999:226) quotes the National Council for Teachers of English as follows:

Literature educates not only the head but the heart as well. It promotes empathy and invites readers to adopt new perspectives. It offers opportunities for children to learn to recognize our similarities, value our differences, and respect our common humanity. In an important sense, then, children need literature that serves as a window into lives and experiences different from their own, and literature that serves as a mirror reflecting themselves and their cultural values, attitudes, and behaviours.

In essence, Wood (1999:176) supports Machado when she says:

Books and stories can illuminate the interesting differences among us, introducing children to the unique cultural histories, traditions, and practices that lend variety and richness to our society. Through literature, children can explore diversity in their own neighbourhood, city and country, and also gain an acquaintance with the larger world society. Perhaps most important of all, literature can provide a vehicle for developing awareness of the social

inequities and forces that impact the lives of individual members of ethnic groups.

(b) South African authors

Many South African authors are also in favour of exposing young learners to multicultural literature. Poland (1981:33), for example, says:

> *At a time when there is so much which destroys friendship, we should share experiences, thoughts and feelings of our children and bring from their world the magic, the wonder and even the sadder realities that are all part of the truth of childhood.*

Du Plessis (1992:18), Louw *et al.* (1998:370) and Swanepoel (1995:35) agree that the curriculum has to make provision for preparing and enabling learners for this task. One way of eliminating prejudice is through education. Exposing children to multicultural literature is one way of achieving this goal as literature does not originate in a vacuum but is an expression of a society. Muthukrishna (1995:113) believes that it is crucial for the cultural diversity of our society to be reflected in the literature presented to children. Books need to focus on themes that deal with the true experiences of people living in a multicultural society. The introduction of 'Africanised texts' should not only include different characters living in the society but also cater for multilingualism. Books should also present **authentic images** of society rather than uphold socially constructed ideal relationships. This appeal is based on her research, which has shown that South African books have not adequately focused on the realities of urbanisation.

Until the 1970's, myth and fantasy were perhaps the only suitable types of reading material for South African learners to subvert the reality of racial and social segregation. Recently, these issues are being strongly challenged by realistic plots that explore the new South Africa (Du Plessis 1992:48). Stories about the past can play an important role in an attempt to enhance nation-building. Inggs (2000:7) believes that literature is one of the many creative ways of achieving this goal. Rommon-Kenan (in Swanepoel 1987:37) agrees with the previous statement when he emphasises the impact that reading material has on the reader. The text and its meaning can absorb the reader or alternatively, alter the reader's previous conceptions.

The purpose of multicultural children's literature lies in the preparation of children for a multicultural society so that they can appreciate and accept cultural diversity. Moreover, multicultural children's literature can serve as a vehicle to cultivate respect, sensitivity and cross-cultural insight and understanding across cultural boundaries. When learners read multicultural literature reflecting their own cultural heritage they should also come to realise that the cultural heritage of others is equally important to a particular group of people. Multicultural children's literature, like all other forms of literature, is able to convey certain messages to the reader in a subtle way. The conveying of positive messages could contribute towards helping children gain cross-cultural insight and understanding (Du Plessis 1992:34).

In addition, multicultural literature can help to make children aware that even though not everyone shares their personal convictions, and even though different cultural groups have different value systems, people need to live together in harmony and share common values. Unless literature helps to bring about change and develop the way of thinking of its people, the many flawed values and misconceptions that prevailed in the past, will continue to exist (Swanepoel 1987:35).

All these values and attitudes are of particular importance among South African learners. Therefore, anti-bias writing should set out to correct unjust or harmful stereotypes by actively and consciously providing readers with alternative role models (Van Vuuren 1994:116). The development of multicultural reading material cannot be sufficiently emphasised, especially within the South African context as it has the potential of bringing out an understanding, appreciation and acceptance with regard to the rich cultural diversity within the South African society. Learners need to know about their history. Developing reading material depicting it is one way of achieving this goal in a creative manner (Inggs 2000:7).

The success of settings and themes related to current situations in South Africa has been investigated by Machet (1994:71). She found overwhelming positive response to *99 Sharp Street* in the Sales House Club Magazine, possibly because the stories relate to the world as it is experienced by South African youth today. The themes found in these stories are based on soccer, music and entertainment. Although many of these comics deal with the downside of life such as greed, poverty, bitterness, violence and revenge, the overall theme is positive as it puts the focus on the inner strength of ordinary people and communities to overcome adversity.

(c)   The views of the DoE

The RNCS requires learners to be exposed to multicultural literature. This statement is based on Learning Outcome 3: Reading and viewing (DoE 2002d:23) that reads as follows:

> *The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts.*

In the same document (DoE 2002d:32) it is stated that Grade 2 and 3 learners should be able to make meaning of cultural values in their home language. In the researcher's opinion, multicultural literature is one of the ideal forms of LTSMs that can be used to develop this skill.

Furthermore, the language in education policy (DoE 1997d:1-2) explicitly states that multilingualism, a term that has gained currency in South African education, must be promoted. Koopman (1997:171) believes that one way of doing this is to expose learners to multilingual texts (texts that have been written in more than one language). Therefore, a substantial amount of teacher-authored reading material should be converted into multilingual texts.

It is clear that children's literature is a powerful vehicle to promote respect and understanding across cultural boundaries. The importance of empowering Foundation Phase teachers to write their own multicultural reading material lies in the fact that white authors have written much of the available literature for children. Misconceptions are likely to occur when authors lack the experience and beliefs of another culture. Those who believe that no white author is able to write with authority about the life of people from other cultures hold perhaps a too narrow perspective. If these authors are able to write reading material with the necessary insight, empathy and state correct facts, then the literature produced could meet the requirements of suitable multicultural literature for children (Du Plessis 1992:26-34). For this reason, teachers are in an ideal position to develop multicultural reading material, such as transposed or translated folk tales, poetry, realistic fiction and fantasy stories.

Based on the preceding information, the criteria that follow apply to multicultural reading material developed by Foundation Phase teachers:

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♦ The content should emphasise the importance of building bridges across language and cultures and the benefits of sharing and respecting one another's languages and cultures (Dicker 1995:122). The content ought to be presented in an honest way and with integrity so that it can help the reader to understand and accept cultural diversity. Therefore, the content should be critically evaluated to determine the effect it would have on learners' self-respect and self-image (Du Plessis 1992:39).

♦ Reading material should tap the cultural and inter-cultural diversity present in the community (Brann 1992:277; Muthukrishna 1995:113; Mwamwenda 1996:424; Swanepoel 1987:185). For this reason, the material should come from a background that the readers can understand. The beliefs and values of characters as well as their world-views should reflect the diversity found within the particular community.

♦ The reading material should include numerous and specific references to aspects related to learners' home or community cultures (Dicker 1995:122). Learners should find their own life experiences mirrored in the reading material so that they experience themselves as important members of their culture (Raines & Isbell 1994:211).

♦ Family roles of a particular culture (Harris in Machado 1999:228) should be correctly portrayed. Furthermore, cultural facts should be correct and cultures treated with respect (Cox 1996:271; Koopman 1997:169; Norton 1989:563; Raines & Isbell 1994:211).

♦ The linguistic component of the reading material should reflect the way learners use language at school, at home and the community (Dicker 1995:122). Speech adopted by characters should reflect linguistic authenticity (Harris in Machado 1999:228). The use of 'artificial' and/or stereotyped expressions must be avoided. Instead, colourful language that is characteristic of a certain ethnic group can be included provided that it is not degrading and that it serves a definite purpose (Du Plessis 1992:37, 52). In fact, the inclusion of typical words used such as 'sekorokoro' (a Northern Sotho word referring to an old vehicle) can enhance the authenticity of the content. Names and characters should reflect the cultural traditions of a group (Harris in Machado 1999:228). However, Du Plessis (1992:35)

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cautions that the mere addition of names does not necessarily guarantee good multicultural reading material.

♦ Reading material must be free of 'covert racism' and cultural bias (Brann 1992:266). Instead, it should reflect positive attitudes (Van Vuuren 1994:10) and contain inspiring messages, particularly for those who have been inadequately presented in the past (Tötemeyer 1988:81). In addition, the reading material should engender a sense of social responsibility in which each individual realises his or her responsibility for the welfare of others (Dicker 1995:126).

♦ Stereotyping should be avoided at all costs, for example, certain groups of people must not be portrayed as being the 'criminals' and others as 'rich and enjoying life'. Instead, characters should be portrayed as individuals who have both strengths and weaknesses. There should be no stigma attached to being black or white and characters' dignity should be preserved (Du Plessis 1992:36). If the story is realistic fiction, then the characters must be measured against their qualities as individuals and not against some stereotypes of the members of the group (Raines & Isbell 1994:211). People should be portrayed as being able to function effectively in various spheres of life and being able to work and live harmoniously. Negative stereotyping can cause much harm especially if one considers the fact that many learners only come into contact with other cultures through literature (Du Plessis 1992:36).

♦ The focus must not always be on how cultures differ but also on how they are alike (Du Plessis 1992:38). This is in line with the view of Tötemeyer (1989:393-401) who believes that one of the main strategies for achieving a degree of cohesion between cultures is to bring different cultures together through literature and showing that they are able to combat evil or to solve a problem. Members of various groups should, therefore, be portrayed as intelligent problem-solvers instead of helpless and passive characters (Harris in Machado 1999:228-229).

♦ Children have a need to admire someone. Therefore, deeds performed by heroes (male and female) from various cultural groups as well as achievements accomplished by famous people such as scientists, artists and musicians (representative of different cultures) should be included. Similarly, simple biographies of people from various cultures can serve as role-models that allow the

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reader to learn how people have overcome their barriers and achieved their goals or ideals (Du Plessis 1992:46).

♦ Pictures should portray reality correctly, be realistic, authentic and not reinforce any stereotypes. They should not portray caricatures of a group's physical features but reflect the variety found among members of any group. Characters should also look natural (Norton 1993:198).

♦ The characters should never be used to foster the author's own political views (Du Plessis 1992:37).

5.2.9 CRITERIA RELATED TO THE PREPARATION OF DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE READING MATERIAL

One of the most important criteria that apply to teacher-authored reading material is that the final product must be developmentally appropriate. This implies that the reading material (the text and the pictures) should be prepared with the specific learner's abilities and needs in mind. This criterion was already emphasised by authorities such as Pestalozzi (see 2.3.3.1) during the third developmental era. Based on his view that the course of instruction as well as material objects, which are to be its instruments, should correspond with the developmental order of the child's faculties, it can be deduced that he would agree that reading material should be developmentally appropriate as well.

The term *scaffolding* plays an extremely important role in the preparation of developmentally appropriate reading material (see 3.6.2.1). The importance of scaffolding within the context of reading is strongly emphasised by Pearson (1996:272-273) who says:

> *Scaffolding to me is our only hope of helping students cope with the complexity of learning to read, especially if we reject - as I think we must - the principle of decomposition. It is better to provide extensive scaffolding to help students complete authentic, and perhaps quite difficult, tasks than it is to decompose the task into components and thereby decontextualize it to a point where students can no longer see any purpose to it.*

Scaffolding with regard to reading material refers to support, together with a challenge, offered by more capable persons to bridge the gap between a learner's current reading abilities and intended goals. The teacher needs to anticipate and plan reading material that is just slightly ahead of learners' current level of ability. Clay and Cazden (in Hobsbaum *et al.* 1996:19) believe that teachers create a lesson format or a scaffold within which they promote emerging skills and allow learners to work with the familiar before introducing the unfamiliar in a structured way. The reading material should, therefore, fall within a learner's ZPD.

The role of the teacher is to bring about expansion and development of reading ability, which implies that eventually, learners should read independently (Machado 1999:171). This implies that the reading material made available to learners has to link with their pre-knowledge. Teachers should assess their learners' current developmental level and estimate the 'span' of their ZPD. During the earliest periods of learning in the ZPD, learners have very little understanding of what the task entails. The teacher offers a sequence of precise yet simple directions and the learners observe or imitate them. As the learners gradually become more confident in what they are doing, the teacher reduces the assistance given, for example, from highly directive guidance to suggestion and encouragement. In this way, the task progresses from other-regulation to self-regulation.

Dixon-Krauss (1996:123, 155-156) aptly captures the essence of the matter by saying that learners need 'apprentice-like' learning experiences in school by being allowed to practise reading real books. As scaffolding is an essential principle for building an effective Literacy Programme, thoughtful teachers ought to scaffold the reading material to help learners cope with the complexity of learning to read (Pearson 1996:272). Simply stated, this implies that the material should be pitched at the right intellectual level (Dennison & Kirk 1990:49).

In the researcher's opinion, the following criteria should help teachers to create developmentally appropriate reading material:

♦ The types of reading material that have been selected must be accessible to learners, for example, not all Grade 3 learners are ready to understand jokes and riddles in their first additional language.

- The text should neither be pitched too far below or above the learners' instructional level as this could have a negative effect on reading motivation.

- The theme of the reading material should be in line with the age and interests of the learners.

- The number of unknown words included in a passage to be used for formal reading instruction must be limited, while many words from previous reading passages or books should be included in new reading material. This allows learners to progress from the known to the unknown. The various texts should, therefore, be well-structured.

- The level of difficulty of the words must be aligned with learners' reading abilities. Initially, more monosyllabic words would be included. As the learners progress to a higher level of competence, more multisyllabic words should be included.

- The length of the text must fall within the capabilities and attention span of the learners (see 5.2.1.4 & 5.2.2). As the level of difficulty of words increase, so the length of the text should increase.

- The amount of text and number of pictures on one page should be determined by the reading abilities of the learners. Once again, the amount of text should gradually be increased as learners reach a higher level of reading competency.

- The reading material to be used for formal reading instruction should be compatible with the assessment standards (as stated in the policy documents) for the learning experience.

- The text should lend itself to the skills to be taught, for example, word recognition, skimming, drawing conclusions and finding the main idea.

- The text should suit the type of comprehension questions to be asked, for example, answering a partially completed sentence, arranging sentences in the correct order after reading the passage or answering in full sentences.

- Pictures must not be too complex and should comply with the criteria stated in the next section (see 5.2.10).

5.2.10   CRITERIA RELATED TO THE USE OF PICTURES

The Cambridge International Dictionary (1995:1063) describes a picture as a representation of someone or something produced by drawing, painting or taking a photograph. In this study, the term *picture* will be used to refer to any drawn or painted picture, photograph or sketch.

A picture is a stimulus that appeals to the reader's sensory organs. It is an object located in a specific environment to which the reader attributes significance according to his or her social history and personal motivations. Moreover, a picture is a language in which the reader identifies or imagines the constituent signs without being able to question or answer in the same language (Swanepoel 1987:232).

Luther (see 2.3.2.2), Comenius (see 2.3.2.3), Locke (see 2.3.2.4) and Basedow (see 2.3.2.6) already emphasised the importance of pictures during the second developmental era (± 15th to the 18th century). In the current developmental age, several learning theorists also support the inclusion of pictures in reading material for young learners.

- **Piaget** (in Lansing 1970:236) is a pioneer who acknowledges the importance of pictures when he points out that they enhance concept formation as well as spatial organisation. The assumption can be made that pictures are important for learners in the concrete-operational stage as they help them to interpret reality. Although Wadsworth (1978:64) maintains that pictures are abstract, Brainerd (in Driscoll 1994:197) argues that the inclusion of pictures can help to bring some level of concreteness to otherwise exclusively abstract material (the text). Brann (1992:130) agrees with the previous author when she says that pictures are more concrete in nature thereby making them more accessible. The concrete nature of images is thus an important aspect to consider when communicating with children who are, according to Piaget, in the concrete-operational phase (see 3.4.2.1).

- **Bruner** (see 3.5.2.5) also emphasises the importance of pictures. In his view, pictures can facilitate iconic thinking by providing vicarious experiences and images that can enrich and supplement the learners' actual life experiences.

- **Gardner** (see 3.7.3.1) is of the opinion that persons who have visual-spatial strengths think best with the aid of pictures, images and visual representations.

More contemporary authors also acknowledge the importance of pictures. For example, Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991:134) say that young children are visually sensitive while Brann (1992:133), Labuschagne (1995:44), Machado (1999:217) and Swanepoel (1987:226) point out that pictures help to give words reality by providing visual information. Furthermore, Geiger (1995:38) points out that pictures foster multicultural understanding, an attitude of particular relevance in South Africa (see 5.2.8).

In addition, Labuschagne (1995:44) and Machado (1999:217), point out that pictures

- promote visual literacy;
- provide pleasure and serve an aesthetic purpose;
- develop imagery, stimulate the imagination and promote creative expression;
- explore different styles of communication, media and techniques;
- create atmosphere;
- supplement the text;
- develop and help to unfold the story;
- open the readers' lives to positive early experiences with books;
- enhance second language learning and
- allow viewing to develop as a skill.

Blacquiere (1988:61) further cautions that pictures must be designed to suit the varying needs of specific ethnic groups or, alternatively, learners from all ethnic groups must be trained to understand and use pictures. Many young black learners have difficulty with the interpretation of pictorial matter created according to Western traditions. Therefore, pictorial matter must be designed to suit the varying needs of the specific ethnic group for which the text is being prepared (Blacquiere 1988:153).

Blacquiere (1988:55) offers the following presentation to explain the levels of abstraction in reading material to support the argument that pictures are close to representing concrete representation:

TABLE 5.3   LEVELS OF ABSTRACTION IN READING

HIGH: abstract, inclusive, imaginative			LOW: concrete, exclusive, realistic
Verbal symbols: ♦ labels ♦ definitions	**Graphics:** ♦ arbitrary ♦ concept-related ♦ image-related	**Pictorial symbols:** ♦ pictures ♦ drawings ♦ paintings ♦ photographs ♦ models	**Realia:** real objects

Since there is sufficient motivation for the inclusion of pictures in the reading material for Foundation Phase learners, the relevant criteria need to be stipulated. Before proceeding, it is crucial to note the following:

Publishers of children's literature require illustrators to produce pictures that are of a high artistic quality (Du Plessis 1990:185). However, it must be kept in mind that very few teachers are professional illustrators of children's books. The researcher is of the opinion that if the criteria related to pictures are applied too strictly, teachers would be hesitant to develop their own reading material.

5.2.10.1 Harmonisation of text and pictures

Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991:133) describe the necessity for the harmonisation of text and pictures when they say:

> *Young children are stern literalists demanding a truthful interpretation of the text... Being literal, the young child also wants a picture synchronized precisely with the text.*

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Sipe (1998:98) refers to the synergy of words and pictures to illustrate the necessity for the text and pictures to complement each other. The pictures should explain and co-ordinate the text by capturing the reader's attention and inspiring them to read the story. The pictures should mainly support and clarify the text and help the reader to understand the story by elaborating on it or setting the mood of the text (Browne 1996:123, 125). Where words fall short, the pictures should supply the necessary information to help the text 'build' the story. The pictures and the text should, therefore, be in harmony, form a unit, be well-integrated and be in balance (Burke 1986:145; Swanepoel 1987:286). In essence, pictures must be functional and not be mere 'decorations' (Mackrory 1988:15).

Three different forms of interaction between pictures and text exist, namely symmetrical, enhancing and contradictory interaction (see 4.6.1.2). Whatever form of interaction is being used, the text should still be in harmony with the pictures used to illustrate it. A practical example: Unless something happens or there has been an elapse of time clearly stated, the girl wearing a red dress should be wearing the same red dress throughout the story (Du Plessis 1990:155, 167). Pictures should, therefore, be consistent with the text and not only be included to provide relief from the written word.

5.2.10.2 Number of pictures

Although it seems as if no rule can be laid down regarding the number of pictures that can be included in a book for Foundation Phase learners, there does seem to be a relationship between the age and ability of the readers, the reading time allowed, the type of reading material and the number of pictures in a book. The younger the reader, the more pictures there are likely to be and *vice versa* (Baker 1995:58; Du Plessis 1990:133). Teachers should, therefore, use their own discretion with regard the number of pictures to be included in the reading material. Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991:133) summarise the point under discussion by stating that there should be sufficient colourful, lively or action-packed pictures to capture and sustain the learner's attention.

5.2.10.3 Use of colour

Colour is one of the most important aspects of a picture as it draws the most attention among young readers.

In support of this statement, Mathieson (in Swanepoel 1987:309) says that

> the colours in a book mean as much as do the words, the substance, the purpose. Like the words and the lines, the colours fit into a rhythm in which everything together builds the book. Words are supported by colours and lines and vice versa.

In addition, Giorgis, Johnson, Bonomo, Colbert, Conner, Kauffman and Kuleza (1999:148) say that the use of colour is one of the most emotionally evocative artistic elements. Moreover, Viljoen (in Swanepoel 1987:269) believes that colour is often related to culture.

Although it has been found that there are no particular specifications with regard to the use of colour in reading material for Foundation Phase learners (Du Plessis 1990:185), colours should be used as follows to create effect:

♦ Young children are naturally drawn to bright and warm colours and it should be used to arouse their interest (Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:133; Swanepoel 1987:309).

♦ Hot or warm colours such as **reds** and **yellows** can suggest excitement (Giorgis *et al.* 1999:148). **Red** is the first colour to draw a young child's attention and should be used to portray warmth, love and intensity. **Yellow** is the conventional colour of cheerfulness and should be used (or in combination with other colours) to create this effect (Nodelman 1988:61).

♦ **Brown** should be used to symbolise warmth. Together with green it can be used to create an atmosphere of organic richness.

♦ **Grey** should be used to portray bleakness, lack of intensity and coldness (Nodelman 1988:60).

♦ The cool tones of **blues** and **greens** generally suggest calmness (Giorgis *et al.* 1999:148). **Blue** in particular should be used to portray melancholy (gloom, low spirits, sadness and rejection) but can be used to portray serenity and passivity. **Green** can be used to symbolise growth and fertility (Nodelman 1988:60).

♦ **Black, dark purple** and **dark blue** could be used to add to the disturbing and the frightening quality of a picture (Swanepoel 1987:309).

♦ Even though most children prefer bright colours, black and white pictures could be included (Alexander 1988:36; Sutherland & Arbuthnot 1991:133-134).

Other criteria that should be noted include the following:

♦ Lighter colours should be used to make a surface appear bigger and darker colours to draw attention and emphasise something.

♦ Colours must be used harmoniously and correspond with the text so that the gestalt of the pictures is aesthetically satisfying (Du Plessis 1990:184; Swanepoel 1987:230).

♦ Colours should be used to enhance relationships, for example, where the story tries to suggest the harmony between man and nature, the use of harmonious colours such as greens and browns could be used to create this effect (Swanepoel 1987:310).

♦ For motivation and ease of interpretation, pictures should be realistically coloured. In fact, many learners rely solely on colour cues to identify objects (Johnson & Myklebust 1967:275).

♦ Feelings (in Swanepoel 1987:68) is a black illustrator of children's books. He has found that black children do not only respond well to the use of prominent and bright colours but also to soft and light colours. Therefore, a variety of colours should be used in reading material for black learners.

5.2.10.4 Technique, media and texture

Technique refers to the way in which the elements of design are combined with media to create a picture. Different media such as coloured pencils, water-paint, powder-paint, lead pencil, pen-and-ink, wax crayons, 'koki' pens and computer-generated graphics could be used to illustrate teacher-authored reading material (Sutherland &

Arbuthnot 1991:133). In addition, objects such as torn paper, feathers, sand and seeds could be used to create special effects.

Although various media or visual elements can be used to create textual imagery (Giorgis *et al.* 1999:152), realistic pictures and photographs could also be used effectively since they are actual representations that can facilitate learning (Johnson & Myklebust 1967:275).

The following criteria apply with regard to technique, media and texture in the development of teacher-authored reading material:

♦ A combination of techniques could be used for illustrating reading material (Raines & Isbell 1994:142). For example, coloured pencils or water-paint could be used to shade a picture while the outlines could be drawn with a black 'koki' pen or a black artliner. A lead pencil could also be used to create a certain effect. Pastels should be avoided as the pictures coloured in with this medium tend to smudge.

♦ The medium or technique used must suit the text (Swanepoel 1987:227). For example, if the story specifically refers to colours such as a boy's red bicycle, then lead pencil will not be a suitable medium. Instead, a medium such as coloured pencils or water-paint should be used.

♦ Photographs must be clear and preferably be in colour (Raines & Isbell 1994:143).

♦ Different materials, such as cloth, feathers and paper can be used to create imagery and texture to pictures. For example, feathers could be pasted on a bird's body. Similarly, left-over pieces of cloth could be used to portray the girl's dress in a story instead of colouring it in. (These should be covered with thin plastic to last longer.)

♦ Lines should be used to give texture and substance to a picture. Although simple and delicate lines are often used, thick, strong lines can be used very effectively as well. The use of lines around, under and between pictures should be included to cue groupings and accentuate or relate elements in a picture (Johnson & Harris 1996:245).

5.2.10.5 Complexity of pictures

The interpretation of a complex action picture involves more than an ability to identify objects or persons. In fact, it also requires an understanding of relationships and general meanings. Just as the comprehension of spoken language and reading involves more than single word meanings, so the interpretation of a complex picture requires an awareness of the total experience (Johnson & Myklebust 1967:278-279).

Pitz (in Du Plessis 1990:153) offers this simple, yet valuable, advice:

A thought or a shape at a time.

With regard to the complexity of pictures, the following criteria apply:

♦ As young children attend to detail, pictures have to be accurate. Pictures must portray the characters or objects very clearly. Research has proven that young children prefer familiar objects and characters to unfamiliar ones (Swanepoel 1987:292).

♦ Pictures in reading material planned for younger readers should be simplistic and true to life while pictures for older learners in the Foundation Phase could contain more detail (Machado 1999:217). Pictures should, therefore, be simple to help the reader form a concept of what is being observed. However, too much detail in a picture should be avoided as this distracts the reader's attention from the main event or character (Dwyer in Blacquiere 1988:58).

♦ Children integrate their own emotions with what they see and read. Therefore, the emotions depicted by the characters set the mood and atmosphere of the story (Burke 1986:145). Human characters, animals or objects should be recognised with ease and show some form of emotion. The emotions displayed by the characters in the text must, however, correspond with the pictures without over-emphasising the emotional content. For example, animals illustrated with open mouths convey the message that they are 'talking' or making some sounds (Du Plessis 1990:165, 170).

5.2.10.6 Perspective

An object that is in perspective has the correct size and is correctly positioned in comparison to other things in the picture. Simply stated, perspective refers to the proportion of objects in relation to each other. If things are out of perspective, they look unreal and unnatural (Cambridge International Dictionary 1995:1053).

The illustrator uses perspective to share a view with readers (Giorgis *et al.* 1999:149). Although young children are usually aware of shape and colour before any consciousness of perspective is developed, this aspect should not be neglected (Burke 1986:141). Perspective is an important aspect of pictures as the recognition of objects plays a key role in the learning process. Even young children are critical when objects and people are not presented in the correct proportion (Du Plessis 1990:141).

The criterion with regard to perspective is, therefore, that the relationship between objects and people in the pictures should be correct, for example, a car should be depicted as being smaller than a house. At the same time, pictures should teach children that objects in the distance appear to be smaller.

5.2.10.7 Composition and design

The way the artist combines visual elements and the text to form a unified whole is referred to as composition and design. The main factors to be considered when doing the layout of a page involve the effective placing of the text and pictures on a page (Giorgis *et al.* 1999:146, 152).

Most readers look at a page from top to bottom. The inherent attractive nature of pictures draws the attention of readers first. Placing the pictures above, below or to the left or right of the text can affect the amount of time a reader spends reading the text and also creates other literary effects. For example, when the pictures have been placed above the text all along and then suddenly are placed below the text, the rhythm of the reader's responses changes. This variation in the placement of pictures could create intense action or emotion (Nodelman 1988:54).

The following criteria related to composition and design apply to teacher-authored reading material for Foundation Phase learners:

♦ The pictures must fall within the life-world of the learners for whom the reading material is written (Swanepoel 1987:233).

♦ The pictures should not blur the text.

♦ Pictures should be on the same page as the text or on the adjacent page as the picture and the text should combine to build the story (Swanepoel 1987:227, 230), thus forming a unity. The placement of pictures in this way also helps to avoid confusion. Pictures should, therefore, not be mere 'decorations' but should elaborate on the story and suggest the setting, characters, mood and movement (Mackrory 1988:15).

♦ Large pictures should be included. If a picture stretches over two pages, it should also form a unity (Du Plessis 1990:266).

♦ Young children prefer pictures that are placed on the right hand side of the page. (A possible explanation for this is that the eye usually lands on the right hand side page when it is turned over.) The placement of pictures and text can, however, be alternated to avoid boredom or to enhance emotions. For example, on one page the text can be placed above the picture while the text could be placed below the pictures on the next page (Du Plessis 1990:226).

♦ White space must be used effectively to avoid cluttered pages (Giorgis et al. 1999:152).

5.2.10.8 Avoidance of stereotypes

Pictures should correspond with the text and they should also be free of stereotypes. The following criteria, based on the research undertaken regarding matters related to anti-bias in the text (see 5.2.7), apply to pictures in particular:

♦ The picture should be authentic in its portrayal of individuals or a group of people. This also applies to children and adults with disabilities. For example, a deaf girl should be illustrated as being equally beautiful as other girls. Similarly, a boy wearing spectacles should be illustrated as looking 'natural'.

♦ Knowledge about a culture is essential. Therefore, the illustrator should understand pivotal family roles and portray these authentically.

♦ Ethnic groups or individuals should be portrayed as though everyone in that group has the same human talent, ability and features. Positive images of people from diverse cultures should, therefore, be portrayed and in this way, broaden cross-cultural awareness.

♦ There should be more or less an equal number of males and females portrayed in pictures.

5.2.10.9 Realistic and abstract representation of pictures

The following criteria apply to the realistic or abstract presentation of pictures:

♦ The functions of pictures include the portrayal of reality and the creation of a specific atmosphere or mood. Pictures should also convince the reader of the characters and the setting. The young reader should, therefore, be able to identify with the setting. For example, nowadays it is possible to find different cultures enjoying a seaside holiday although a few years ago, such a situation would not conform to reality.

♦ The teacher/illustrator should also have an authentic knowledge of the topic or theme of the book. If, for instance, an elephant is the main character in a book, then the characteristics, physical features and habits of elephants must be portrayed authentically in the pictures and the text of a non-fiction book in particular (Swanepoel 1987:303).

♦ Only if children are familiar with the characteristics of an object, human or animal, can it be presented in a different way. If a child has, for instance, seen a train or a realistic picture of a train before, he or she will probably be able to identify a train even when it is not presented realistically. The most important fact to keep in mind is that the object, animal or person (in this case, the train) must portray sufficient characteristics to allow the learner to link the picture with his or her frame of reference. Familiar objects, people and animals should, therefore, be clearly depicted but do not always have to be portrayed realistically. They can be

represented simplistically or more abstractly providing that they do not lose their basic characteristics (Du Plessis 1990:165; Swanepoel 1987:250).

5.2.10.10   Educational value of pictures

Pictures should have the secondary task of educating the reader. Although the primary task is not didactic, picture story books could be used to develop reading skills as well as viewing (which is an important skill that has been neglected in the past but is now emphasised in the RNCS). Although pictures should have a didactic function, they should not overwhelm the other aspects of reading and in this way, deprive the reader of the enjoyment of reading.

5.2.10.11   Humour in pictures

Most young children enjoy laughing and for this reason, humoristic stories and pictures appeal strongly to them. A practical example is a picture portraying a cat being terrified of a little mouse. However, Du Plessis (1990:183) cautions that humour is related to culture - what is regarded as humorous in one culture is not always regarded as being humorous in another culture (see 5.2.1.4). For this reason, the humour in the pictures should not offend individuals of a particular culture.

5.2.10.12   Violence in pictures

Violence depicted in pictures make a great impact on learners, perhaps even greater than the text itself. The reason for this could be that the impact of a visual image on a child's mind is often remembered long after the words of the story have been forgotten (Burke 1986:170). Care must be taken when portraying violence in pictures. The teacher should know her learners well enough to know whether or not violence could be included and if so, to what extent (see 5.2.5).

5.2.10.13   General criteria pertaining to the use of pictures

♦ Pictures should 'flow' naturally. By merely looking at them, the reader should be able to follow the story. Burke (1986:145) explains this idea more simplistically when she says that the pictures should move the characters and/or the plot forward.

♦ In the case of a wordless picture story book (see 4.6.1.1), the pictures should be extremely 'rich' to allow the reader to tell the story (Burke 1986:146). These books should, therefore, be colourful, depict action and contain visual variety (Machado 1999:222).

♦ Pictures that are free from background shadings and clutter are most suitable, especially for learners who experience learning difficulties. Characters should be emphasised rather than the background (Machado 1999:217). Such pictures are most suitable because of the ease with which they can be recognised. In addition, they prevent learners from responding to irrelevant lines instead of responding to the picture (Johnson & Myklebust 1967:275).

♦ Pictures should contain sufficient detail, be clear and well in focus (see 2.6.1.6).

♦ Pictures should not be too large or too small. If pictures are too large, learners fail to comprehend the whole. If pictures are too small, they cannot identify the details of the picture (Johnson & Myklebust 1967:275).

5.2.11 CRITERIA RELATED TO THE FORMAT OF THE READING MATERIAL

The format is defined as the overall and general character of the reading material. It includes the physical aspects of the book such as the cover page, the size and shape of the book, its binding, the interior pages and paper quality, size of print and the layout of text and pictures (Burke 1986:33; Norton 1993:436). In brief, it refers to the way in which the reading material has been put together. Not only do the words provide aesthetic experiences but also the visual aspects of the book. A book's format can enhance its narrative, appeal and subsequent enjoyment. On the other hand, if the format fails to reflect a thoughtful attempt, it can confuse, frustrate and even alienate the reader (Machado 1999:217).

The following criteria regarding the format should be noted:

5.2.11.1 Cover of the book

♦ The literary experience begins when the child sees the cover as it 'announces' the story and expresses the mood and feeling thereof (Raines & Isbell 1994:146). The

visual information found on the cover of the book plays a key role in the reader's response to the book. Not only does the cover help to convey the mood of the content but also creates appropriate expectations for the rest of the book and prompts the reader to look beyond the cover (Blacquiere 1988:53-54; Browne 1996:125). Moreover, the external appearance of the book cover often summarises the content of the book (Browne 1996:125; Nodelman 1988:49). For this reason, the cover should be attractive and inviting (Browne 1996:125), aesthetically satisfying and in harmony with the rest of the story.

♦ The main characters should appear on the cover. The picture on the cover should preferably not be the same as one of the pictures contained in the book. Instead, the picture on the front cover should be especially designed to attract the reader (Du Plessis 1990:224).

5.2.11.2 Binding of the book

The book itself should be bound in such a way that it can be used frequently without being overly damaged. For example, when young children sit and read a book, they often put it down flat on a carpet or a table and like to touch the pictures. The quality of paper should be of such a nature that the pages do not tear easily (Cox 1996:344).

Pages could be stapled together. Alternatively, holes could be punched on the left-hand side of the pages and then tied together with string, raffia or wool. Durability could be increased by using soft cardboard for the front and back cover of books or by keeping books in a plastic bag.

5.2.11.3 Size of the book

Sometimes size is an outstanding feature of a book (Burke 1986:72). However, no specific rules are laid down with regard to the size and shape of a book as children enjoy books of any shape and size. Lively or exuberant stories are usually found in large books to allow for better effects. Therefore, wordless picture story books are best presented in the form of big books (see 4.6.1.3) although other forms of reading material can also be presented in the form of big books. It is important that the size of these books as well as their large pictures will catch the learners' attention (Geiger 1995:42). Although smaller books put several restraints on the illustrator, they are often

easier to hold. On the other hand, larger books with larger pictures are easier to interpret (Nodelman 1988:46). The most important criterion is that the reader must be able to hold and handle the book with ease (Blacquiere 1988:54; Raines & Isbell 1994:146).

5.2.11.4 Print and typeface

Reading is related to visual input and interpretation (Johnson & Myklebust 1967:162). Therefore, the layout has to be of high standard (see 2.6.1.6). Factors such as legibility, the size of letters, type of script (cursive or manuscript writing) as well as the typeface or font must be considered as these are all important aspects of the communication process.

Basic criteria regarding print and typeface for teacher-authored reading material for Foundation Phase learners include the following:

♦ Handwritten texts must be very clear and legible (Johnson & Myklebust 1967:162).

♦ If the text is prepared on a computer, a font size of at least 14 and bigger is ideal. Big books require an even larger font size. Baker (1995:71) found that younger learners tend to associate print size with difficulty – the smaller the print, the more difficult they think it is.

♦ Manuscript is preferred to cursive writing because this is the format in which commercially available books are presented.

♦ Words should not be written in capital letters. However, capital letters could be used for headings or for other special effects such as exclamations.

♦ The relationship between lower and upper case letters must be correct. In practice this means that capital letters must be approximately twice the size of lower case letters.

♦ The text and the paper on which the text is written should form a clear contrast. For example, light-coloured pens, pencil crayons or 'koki' pens should not be used if the text is written on white or other light-coloured paper because it is very difficult to

read. Instead, a black, dark green or dark blue pen should be used. To create a special effect, black paper could be used and the text written with a silver pen to form a clear contrast.

♦ Spacing between letters, words and paragraphs is extremely important (Johnson & Myklebust 1967:162). Text prepared on a computer or typewriter should be done in double or one and a half spacing with sufficient spacing between paragraphs. Similarly, handwritten texts should allow sufficient spacing between letters, words and paragraphs.

♦ The text should be written on blank paper because ruled lines easily distract learners who experience visual foreground-background difficulties.

♦ The density or opaqueness of the paper should be of such a quality that print does not show through from one page to the other (Raines & Isbell 1994:146).

5.2.11.5 Layout of multilingual texts

Multilingual books contain text that is written in more than one language in an attempt to acknowledge different cultures (Robb 1995:20). These texts need to conform to different criteria than single language texts. The typographic treatment of the different languages and the way they are placed in relation to each other, and on the page, are likely to influence the reader's perception regarding the importance of each language.

Baker (1995:71) believes that **consistency in presentation** is the main criterion for the layout of multilingual texts as the presentation thereof has status implications. This implies that the mode of presentation should be the same. For example, if the English text is typed on a computer, then the texts in the other language(s) should also be typed on a computer. Similarly, if one text has been handwritten, then all the other texts in that book should be handwritten. If the text in one language is presented in a grid, then all the other texts should be presented in a grid. The font size should not vary either. If the text in only one language is enlarged, it could create the impression that the language of the enlarged text is more important than the other. The spacing between lines and words should also be consistent as inconsistent spacing can make one language appear more significant than the other.

The criteria presented thus far can be regarded as general criteria. The literature has, however, provided criteria regarding the development of **specific** types of reading material. These aspects are discussed in the following section.

5.3 SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR TEACHER-AUTHORED READING MATERIAL

Specific criteria apply to the development of non-fiction reading material, material written for bibliotherapy, children's poetry as well as the transposition and translation of existing texts. This section concludes with criteria for the writing of a 'good' story.

5.3.1 SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR NON-FICTION READING MATERIAL

The following criteria that pertain to non-fiction reading material are based on the views of Browne (1996:137):

♦ An introductory summary of the contents of the book must be included.
♦ Headings and sub-headings must be clear.
♦ A clear description of the characteristics of the objects, event or process must be provided.
♦ The text must be arranged around the main event or process.
♦ An annexure containing additional information could be included but is optional.
♦ An index, list of contents, glossary or another retrieval system should be included.

In addition, these books should

♦ look inviting and be clearly laid out;
♦ introduce key words;
♦ contain a factually reliable summary of information about the subject and suit the learners' age and schema;
♦ contain pictures, diagrams, photographs and drawings that complement, extend and explain the written text;
♦ be free of bias, stereotyping and misrepresentation and
♦ help young learners to expand their knowledge.

5.3.2   SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR BOOKS WRITTEN FOR BIBLIOTHERAPY

Material written for this purpose should

- ◆ focus on specific needs of learners, for example, on the social and emotional needs of learners who experience barriers to learning and development;
- ◆ be written on the learners' level of understanding;
- ◆ portray life-like characters and
- ◆ portray realistic approaches for dealing with the particular situation.

5.3.3   SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR CHILDREN'S POETRY

The following specific criteria provided by Burke (1986:85), Machado (1999:276) as well as Sutherland and Arbuthnot (1991:296) serve as criteria for the writing of poetry for Foundation Phase learners:

- ◆ The poem should be brief. Words and phrases must be rich in sensory and associative meanings to generate a mood thereby making the learner eager to read to more poems.

- ◆ Words should create clear yet simplistic images or pictures that are well within the experience of young learners.

- ◆ The diction should be distinguished, which means that the words must be rich and sensitive. At the same time, connative meanings should be memorable.

- ◆ Well-chosen, mood-generating words should be linked and chunked together so that they sound good enough to make children hungry for more.

- ◆ The poem must be rhythmical and offer the young child the predictability of rhyming words.

- ◆ The poem should have some substance. Apart from the rhyme, it should convey an idea for learners to consider or simply to delight in.

♦ Images, figurative language and word play should be used to create some humour.

♦ The format of the printed poem (type size and style, page layout, punctuation and capitalisation) should be considered as these aspects can enhance the enjoyment of the poem.

5.3.4   SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR TRANSPOSITION OF TEXT

Adapting material for learners who experience reading difficulties is an ideal way of providing support while they are learning. It involves changing the nature or amount of what is to be read. Transposition becomes necessary when there is a 'mismatch' between the design of the material and the skills of learners (Simmons, Kameenui, Schumm, Schumaker & Lenz 1998:73).

What follows are the criteria that pertain to the transposition of an existing text to develop teacher-authored reading material.

♦ Learners should be able to identify with the names of characters. Names should be easy to read and pronounce. It is also advisable to include both sexes to avoid one sex being preferred above the other (Jansen van Vuuren 1996:82).

♦ The text should suit the reading level of learners. Usually the sole purpose of transposing a text is to accommodate the various reading abilities of a learner or a group of learners.

♦ In order to keep the story 'alive' it is necessary to pay attention to the selection of words, length of sentences and the number of events taking place (Jansen van Vuuren 1996:83). The meaningless use of repetitive words should be avoided as this could hamper the natural flow of the story (see 5.2.1.4).

♦ Reading material for Foundation Phase learners should be illustrated. It stands to reason that if the text is altered, the pictures also need to be altered to match the text. The criteria that apply to the use of pictures will apply here as well (see 5.2.10).

♦ It is imperative that the teacher transposing the original text acknowledges the original author to avoid being accused of plagiarism. The transposed version should only be used for classroom activities such as creating opportunities to read for enjoyment. The material may not be used for financial gain.

5.3.5   SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR TRANSLATION OF TEXT

It seems to be a relatively simple task to translate an existing story. Consequently, there have been several attempts at translating children's literature. However, the suitability thereof has often been questioned. In fact, Klingberg (in Swanepoel 1987:334) cautions that

> *the incorrect translation may be more dangerous in a children's book, if the child reader is not able to rectify the mistakes to the same extent as the adult reader.*

In essence, Diamond (1996:117) agrees with the preceding statement when she says that

> *there is no such thing as a simple translation or even a direct translation.*

This statement is based on the fact that translators are often not fully acquainted with both languages and do not understand the idiom of the original language. She also argues that

♦ certain words and expressions cannot be translated with the same effectiveness;
♦ the translation often fails to arouse the same emotional reactions as the original text;
♦ certain values described in the original text may differ from the values honoured by readers of the translated text and
♦ an illustrator can 'make or break' the text if he or she is not sensitive to the nuances to complement the text.

Other problems with translations include determining the level of learners' general language ability, their reading ability as well as their interests and needs. Problems are also experienced with regard to humour, names of people and animals, artistic

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wordplay, culture and traditions, the environment and the presentation of pictures (Du Plessis 1990:100-103).

Translations need to meet the following criteria:

♦ Usually there is more than one way of expressing a sentence in the translated version and for this reason, the teacher-author should consider the finer nuances implied (Jansen van Vuuren 1996:93-94). The sentences should suit the level of the target group of learners and be in line with their experience in the language.

♦ Typical names with which the reader is acquainted should be selected (Jansen van Vuuren 1996:93). For example, if a text is being translated from English into Northern Sotho, typical Northern Sotho names such as **Kabelo** or **Itumeleng** should be used (unless a person from another culture is specifically introduced to the story in which case, the original name should be kept). Similarly, if the original text is written in Northern Sotho and is to be translated into English, typical English names should be used such as Peter, Mary, Ann or Tom, unless a person from a different culture is introduced in which the case, his or her name should remain the same.

♦ Repetition is important but should not be done in such a way that it makes the text 'boring'. The repetition of words, phrases or sentences should not be included just for the sake of repetition. The repeated words should, therefore, be used in a meaningful way.

♦ The text should be grammatically correct, for example, aspects such as word sequence, negatives and the use of articles should be correct. For this reason, direct translation is best avoided.

♦ Many words and phrases have no direct translation, for example, in English the phrase **O my goodness!** cannot be directly translated into another language. In such a case, a similar phrase or word that conveys the same meaning should be used. If no alternative is found, the word or phrase should be omitted or alternatively, the emotion should be described.

- The content should be scrutinised for relevance. For instance, the foodstuffs mentioned in the original text may not be well-known to those learners reading the translated version. The foodstuffs could be substituted with others, unless that particular type of food forms an essential part of the story.

- The use of time words must be considered. In Northern Sotho, for instance, the greeting **Dumela** is used during any time of the day while in English, different words are used at different times of the day (**Good morning, Good afternoon, Good evening**). Consideration should also be given to the difference in meaning between **Good night** and **Good evening.**

- Where possible, words containing the same number of syllables must be used. If learners are only able to read words containing one or two syllables, care should be taken not to replace the word with a word containing three or more syllables (Du Plessis 1990:41). (Texts existing of words containing one syllable only would be extremely boring and should thus be avoided.)

- The text should be culturally specific in order to be culturally meaningful (Machet 1996:43). For instance, certain animals are associated with evil in certain cultures. The animal could be substituted with another animal but often the animal referred to in the original text has certain characteristics that actually form the essence of the story. In such a case it would be difficult to substitute the animal and the story should rather not be translated.

- Due to the sensitivity of issues related to witches and ghosts, these aspects should only be included after careful consideration of the cultural and religious groups to which the learners belong.

- The original author must be acknowledged to avoid being accused of plagiarism. The translated version should be used for classroom activities only and not for financial gain.

Based on the preceding information it can be said that existing text can be translated into another language although certain aspects need to be taken into consideration before attempting to do so. The ideal is that the teacher involved in this exercise should not only know both languages but should also be able to keep the level of the

translation consistent with the original text. The teacher should evaluate the text beforehand and contemplate how the 'pitfalls' could be avoided or how problems could be overcome.

5.4   GENERAL CRITERIA FOR GOOD STORIES

Several authors (Browne 1996:121; Machado 1999:224; Wood 1999:50) have provided general criteria for writing good stories for Foundation Phase learners. They believe that reading material should offer these learners the possibility of personal, linguistic, intellectual and social enrichment together with the desire to read more. These criteria also apply for the writing of teacher-authored reading material.

In order to offer opportunities for **personal** development, stories should

- provide enjoyment;
- extend their imagination;
- develop empathy;
- widen their experience;
- reflect their experiences;
- present other perspectives and
- allow learners to benefit from the visual and auditory stimuli contained in the book.

Opportunities for **intellectual** development can be provided if stories

- make abstract ideas more tangible;
- reveal deeper levels of meaning about familiar situations;
- develop consideration of moral issues;
- modify or influence attitudes, values and attitudes;
- provide access to new knowledge and ideas;
- improve understanding of concepts and
- match the attention span of learners.

Social development can be enhanced if stories

- reflect the nature of society;
- give access to secondary worlds;
- explore human interpersonal relationships;
- address a variety of cultural traditions and values and
- deal with the life-world of various groups of people.

Language development can be improved if stories

- portray writing conventions and story structure;
- contain a variety of writing styles;
- are a source of ideas about a topic and writing techniques;
- demonstrate the power of language and
- allow readers to encounter models of vocabulary, spelling, dialogue and grammar.

In conclusion, general criteria for writing 'good' stories are offered.

Good stories are characterised by

- related events;
- a plot with a resolution;
- growth and development;
- substantial characters;
- sufficient suspense;
- a narrative with a clear structure and
- enjoyment, satisfaction, coherence and emotional fulfilment.

5.5   CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, criteria were identified against which teacher-authored reading material could be assessed. It was, however, emphasised that these criteria cannot be applied too strictly as teachers are not professional authors and illustrators of children's books.

The first set of criteria to be presented was related to literary elements. These include characterisation, the setting and plot, choice of theme, style, language and vocabulary, the use of figurative language and humour. Thereafter, criteria related to the matching of reading material to children's interests were presented. These criteria were followed by criteria related to fantasy, realism, fear and violence as well as moral issues.

Criteria related to anti-bias, which include gender stereotyping, sexism, racism and attitudes toward disabilities were identified. These were followed by relevant criteria related to the preparation of developmentally appropriate reading material. Although the literature provided several criteria related to pictures in reading material, only those regarded as relevant for Foundation Phase learners and within the capabilities of teacher-authors were discussed. The focus then moved to criteria related to the format of reading material. As it is expected of Foundation Phase teachers to develop multilingual reading material as well, relevant criteria for this purpose were determined.

The criteria that followed were more specific as they put the focus on particular types of reading material, namely non-fiction reading material, books for bibliotherapy and children's poetry. The penultimate set of criteria that were presented pertain to the transposition and translation of existing texts as the researcher believes that Foundation Phase teachers would often resort to this form of reading material in their quest to provide developmentally appropriate reading material for their learners.

The chapter was concluded with criteria related to enhance personal, linguistic, intellectual and social enrichment as well as the desire to read more. Finally, criteria related to the writing of 'good' stories were presented.

With these criteria in hand, Foundation Phase teachers should be well-equipped to embark on their journey of developing their own reading material They should not be threatened by experienced authors and illustrators who may have had more opportunities to develop their skills in a professional way. Instead, they should take up the challenge.

Sis (in Giorgis *et al.* 1999:153) offers words of encouragement for this task when he says:

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Everyone starts somewhere. Even if the work is not perfect, everyone has something to say, some story to tell. Just keep on trying.

Although this study puts the focus on developing reading material in English, the researcher is aware of the need for authors to write reading material in African languages. Many of the criteria provided could possibly be transferred to developing reading material in African languages but this venture warrants further research.

5.6 CHAPTER PREVIEW

Chapter 6 reflects on the actual research procedure. A detailed account is given on how information was gathered and analysed. Thereafter, the action research procedure is described where a group of Grade 3 teachers from Soshanguve demonstrate their competence in using the criteria identified in Chapter 5.

5.7 OVERVIEW: CHAPTER 5

CRITERIA AND KEY ASPECTS	CRITERIA AND KEY ASPECTS
Criteria related to literary elements ♦ characterisation ♦ plot ♦ setting ♦ style (language and vocabulary; figurative language; humour) ♦ theme ♦ dialogue and narrative	**Criteria related to children's interests** ♦ prolongation of needs ♦ oral traditions influence accessibility of text ♦ fantasy, magic, mystery, the supernatural ♦ realistic stories, humorous animal stories are ideal
Criteria related to fantasy ♦ characteristics of fantasy ♦ arguments in favour and against fantasy ♦ order and logic essential ♦ start in readers' emotional and psychological world ♦ fantasy influenced by culture ♦ use of metaphor ♦ emotionally charged stories presented at teacher's own discretion	**Criteria related to realism** ♦ stories do not always transfer pure facts but the story could happen ♦ set in contemporary times ♦ characters older than the readers themselves ♦ realistic stories meet basic need of acceptance

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CRITERIA AND KEY ASPECTS	CRITERIA AND KEY ASPECTS
Criteria related to moral issues ♦ intuitive stage: morals mainly heteronomous ♦ concrete-operational stage: rules are absolutes ♦ Kohlberg: pre-conventional level of moral development ♦ literature should reflect morals ♦ morals are culture-specific ♦ moral issues to be positive and constructive ♦ good deeds rewards; bad deeds punished	**Criteria related to fear and violence** ♦ arguments against and in support of the inclusion of fear and violence ♦ spatial dislocation relieves fear ♦ familiarisation with recurring themes ♦ feelings of guilt, fright and isolation to be avoided ♦ fear reduced by the phrase: *Once upon a time* ♦ reassurance needed ♦ violence separate from immediate family ♦ caution when introducing certain African folk tales ♦ caution when portraying violence in pictures
Criteria related to anti-bias ♦ reading material transfers issues related to anti-bias ♦ gender stereotyping ♦ all forms of stereotyping to be avoided ♦ reality and realistic fiction prone to bias ♦ both genders portrayed as able to express basic emotions ♦ equitable ratio of male/female characters in a story ♦ sexism and racism to be avoided ♦ preference for first person narrator ♦ main characters to encourage positive social change ♦ broad range of historical references ♦ girls and women should not always be portrayed in traditional roles of caregivers and mothers ♦ care to be taken with portrayal of step-mothers and stepfathers ♦ both sexes portrayed as having positive and negative traits ♦ main characters often to be a person with a disability	**Criteria related to multiculturalism** ♦ Piaget's and Bruner's theory and multicultural literature ♦ contemporary views on multicultural literature (writers from abroad, Africa and South Africa) ♦ stereotyping to be avoided ♦ names and characters to reflect cultural traditions ♦ multicultural world to be accurately represented ♦ characters portrayed in a dignified way ♦ folk tales, realistic fiction, fantasy and poetry ideal for this purpose ♦ pertinent issues to be addressed ♦ reading material to tap cultural and inter-cultural diversity ♦ content to focus on lived experiences and community related ♦ content presented in an honest way ♦ no stigmatisation and idealisation of characters ♦ linguistic authenticity of speech ♦ focus on similarities and differences of cultures ♦ heroes and bibliographies ♦ stories can promote multilingualism

CRITERIA AND KEY ASPECTS	CRITERIA AND KEY ASPECTS
Criteria related to developmentally appropriate reading material ♦ scaffolding ♦ number of words ♦ number of unknown words ♦ length of text ♦ skills to be taught ♦ level of difficulty of comprehension activities ♦ types of comprehension questions (literal/interpretive) ♦ theme of story	**Criteria related to pictures** ♦ harmonisation of pictures and text ♦ number of pictures ♦ use of colour ♦ techniques, media and texture ♦ complexity of pictures ♦ perspective ♦ composition and design ♦ portrayal of stereotypes ♦ realistic representation of pictures ♦ educational value ♦ humour ♦ violence ♦ general criteria
Criteria related to the format of the reading material ♦ cover of the book ♦ binding ♦ size ♦ print and typeface	**Criteria for specific types of reading material** ♦ picture books ♦ non-fiction material ♦ material for bibliotherapy ♦ children's poetry ♦ transposition/translation of text ♦ general criteria for good stories

CHAPTER 6

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This penultimate chapter attempts to present a clear and scientifically accountable description of the process aimed at solving the research question posed in Chapter 1 (see 1.6.1), namely *What is the nature of the problems experienced by Foundation Phase teachers from previously disadvantaged schools with regard to LTSMs in Literacy?*

In order to address this research question, it is necessary to give a detailed account of the process followed. As the research undertaken in this study is of a qualitative nature, the design is created to suit this specific study. Attention will firstly be paid to the researcher's motivation to work within a qualitative paradigm. Thereafter, the research design that is compatible with the qualitative mode will be discussed. It involves a three-fold solution to the problem stated. The literature review undertaken in Chapter 2, 3, 4 and 5 forms one part of the solution, while gathering information through interviews forms the second part. The action research that follows forms the third part of the solution. Each of these three components will be discussed in detail.

6.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE SELECTION OF A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

One of the most important reasons for selecting a qualitative approach is because it studies situations in their natural settings in an attempt to interpret phenomena in terms of meanings that people attach to them. One of the aims of this study is to determine how Foundation Phase teachers interpret the dilemma related to LTSMs in their everyday situations. As this would involve studying a situation in its natural setting in Soshanguve schools, the study justifies a qualitative approach.

A second factor that motivated the selection of qualitative research is found in the nature of the research question. A research question that requires detailed, in-depth information regarding a certain matter is among those regarded as suitable for qualitative research (Mertens 1998:162). As in-depth information about the issue regarding LTSMs in the Foundation Phase is required, the research question of this study warrants qualitative research methods.

Yet another reason for deciding on a qualitative research design is offered by Mertens (1998:163). In her view, the practical nature of the research question justifies a qualitative approach. In essence, Schurink (1998c:249) supports Mertens as she believes that a qualitative approach is preferred when research can yield results that can improve practice through problem-solving and intervention. This study is an attempt to determine the nature of the problem and the subproblems related to LTSMs in the Foundation Phase. Many of these problems are of a practical nature. Finding a solution to these problems requires some form of intervention, which also implies that the study is of a practical nature. In addition, it was stated that one of the meta-assumptions of this study is a pragmatic approach (see 1.8.4). As the intervention is of a practical nature and aims to improve teaching practice, this study justifies a qualitative approach.

The motivation for selecting a qualitative approach is followed by an exposition of the types of research design that are compatible with qualitative research and are of relevance for this study.

6.3 RESEARCH DESIGN RELEVANT TO THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH

There are differences of opinion regarding a definition of research design. For the purpose of this study, the term *research design* refers to the design of the study in its broadest sense. It refers to all the decisions made regarding the study, namely the procedures for data collection and data analysis methods.

Qualitative research design differs inherently from quantitative research in that it usually does not provide the researcher with a fixed or step-by-step plan to follow. In quantitative research, the design determines the researcher's choices and actions. In contrast, the researcher's choices and actions determine the design of qualitative

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research. Qualitative research, therefore, allows the researcher to create the research design best suited to the study (De Vos & Fouché 1998a:77, 80).

The principle of **triangulation** to determine validity and reliability was applied as a wide range of data collection methods are used in this study (Schurink 1998a:253). All the data collection methods to be discussed are compatible with a qualitative approach and include a literature review, focus group interviews, face-to-face interviews and the researcher's observations.

The research design can be outlined as follows:

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was undertaken to
- determine what is understood by LTSMs;
- follow the historical development of LTSMs;
- identify different types of LTSMs;
- determine the importance of LTSMs within an OBE context;
- identify the suitable types of reading material for Foundation Phase learners and
- identify relevant criteria for the development of teacher-authored reading material for Foundation Phase learners.

INTERVIEWS AND RESEARCHER'S OBSERVATIONS

Data collection took place through
- focus group interviews;
- face-to-face interviews (individual interviews) and
- observations made by the researcher.

ACTION RESEARCH

A group of Grade 3 teachers from Soshanguve were given the opportunity to write their own English reading material. To empower them for this task, they were presented with the types of literature that are suitable for Foundation Phase learners together with criteria that pertain to teacher-authored reading material as researched in Chapter 4 and 5 respectively.

6.4   LITERATURE REVIEW

Scientific and meaningful research is only possible if the researcher is fully conversant with the existing knowledge on the research topic (De Vos & Fouché 1998b:104; Strydom 1998:179). For this reason, it was imperative to undertake an extensive literature review in order to make this study meaningful. (See Chapter 2, 3, 4 & 5.)

To ensure a common understanding of a literature review, a definition is required.

According to De Vos (1998b:390), a literature review

> usually consists of an examination of selected empirical research, reported practice and identified innovations relevant to the particular concern under study.

De Vos and Fouché (1998b:104), Leedy (1997:71) as well as Mouton (1996:119) say that a review of the literature serves the following main functions, which were also put to practice in this study:

♦ It demonstrates the underlying assumptions of the general research questions. It should, where possible, display the research paradigm that underpins the study at hand and also describe the assumptions and values that the researcher brings into the study.

♦ It provides evidence that the researcher is thoroughly conversant with the related literature as well as the intellectual traditions related to the study. (See Chapter 2, 3, 4 & 5.)

♦ Various sources, key concepts encountered in a particular field, methodological issues and research techniques are found by undertaking a literature review. (See Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6.)

♦ The research questions are defined and refined after which they are embedded in the existing body of research (see 1.6).

According to Leedy (1997:81), an efficient literature progresses from a general to a more specific perspective. Figure 6.1 illustrates how Leedy's model was applied in this study.

FIGURE 6.1: **LEEDY'S MODEL FOR A LITERATURE REVIEW**

GENERAL

What are LTSMs?
↓ Historical overview of the development of LTSMs
↓ LTSMs within an OBE context
↓ Views of learning theorists regarding LTSMs and reading
↓ Suitable reading material for Foundation Phase learners
↓ Criteria for teacher-authored reading material

SPECIFIC
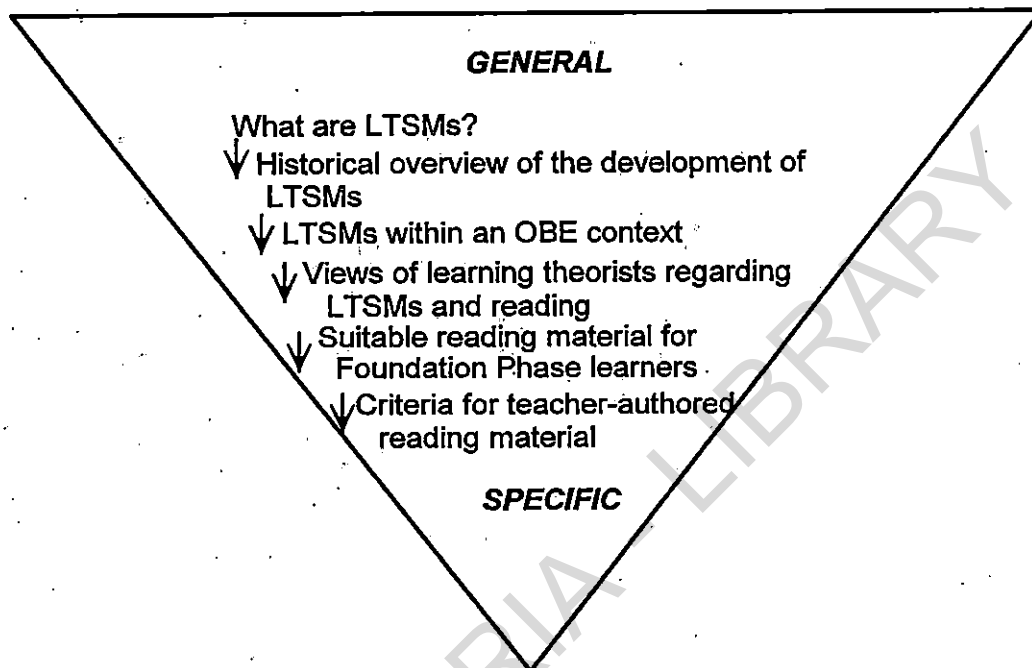
From the above, it can be seen how the literature review progressed. To answer the research problem, it was necessary to determine what is understood by LTSMs, to investigate the historical development thereof, the types of LTSMs that are available today as well the as the importance thereof within an OBE context. In an effort to find answers to these questions, the literature was consulted (see Chapter 2). The literature review undertaken in this chapter, therefore, covered general aspects concerning LTSMs.

The literature review became more specific when the focus was placed on the views of four learning theorists regarding the use of LTSMs and in particular, with regard to reading material (see Chapter 3). The knowledge that many teachers need to develop their own reading material resulted in the literature review becoming even more specific. For instance, the literature was consulted to determine the types of reading material that are suitable for Foundation Phase learners (see Chapter 4) as well as to

identify the criteria that pertain to teacher-authored reading material for Foundation Phase learners (see Chapter 5). In this way, the literature review progressed from discussing LTSMs in general to specific types of reading material for Foundation Phase learners and specific criteria for the development of teacher-authored reading material as a form of LTSMs.

With regard to the sources consulted, Walliman (2001:40) points out that reference should be made to both primary and secondary resources. Due to the vast amount of literature available on the topic of the study, it was necessary to follow a systematic process and to read perceptively, paying attention to detail that is relevant to the study.

Mainly conceptual literature was consulted, which consisted of concepts related to LTSMs, the importance of following a literature-based curriculum, the whole language approach, the development of reading, the views of learning theorists regarding LTSMs, the various types of reading material that are suitable for Foundation Phase learners and criteria that apply to teacher-authored reading material for these learners. The library catalogue, books, articles, newspapers, the Internet as well as departmental and provincial documents (including policies) were consulted. The opinions of publishers and other educationalists formed part of the variety of sources that were consulted in this study.

6.5   FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS: A THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Interviewing is one of the most commonly used methods of data collection within the qualitative mode (Walliman 2001:238). To ensure a common understanding of what is meant by focus group interviews, the concept is discussed in brief. Thereafter, other related theoretical issues are discussed.

6.5.1   AN EXPOSITION OF THE CONCEPT FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Several definitions of focus group interviews are found in the literature. The definition offered by Krueger (1994:6) captures the essence of the concept when he says that a focus group interview is a

carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment, and questions to be asked are keys to conducting effective focus groups.

Simply stated, an interview can be seen as a 'pipeline' for both extracting and transmitting information from the participant to the interviewer (Schurink 1998b:297).

6.5.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE SELECTION OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS AS A DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The reason for selecting focus group interviewing for this study is that this technique is being increasingly used in qualitative research studies (De Vos 1998a:48). Focus group interviewing is particularly effective in providing information about **why** people think or feel the way they do. In addition, Krueger (1994:19) and Mertens (1998:174) agree that focus groups provide qualitative data that elicit insights into the attitudes, perceptions and opinions of participants regarding a specific matter.

Another reason for deciding on focus group interviews for this study is offered by Blumer (in Denzin 1989:111) who says:

A small group of individuals brought together as a discussion or resource group, is more valuable many times over than any representative sample. Such a group, discussing collectively their sphere of life and probing into it as they meet one another's disagreements, will do more to lift the veils covering the sphere of life than any other device that I know of.

By bringing together small groups of Foundation Phase teachers, the researcher hoped to obtain information regarding the nature of problems related to LTSMs in the Foundation Phase.

The decision to use focus group interviews was also motivated by the following advantages thereof:

♦ Focus group interviews can be conducted without involving high costs and the results are available within a short period of time unlike procedures requiring

participants to be observed over a long period of time (Kamper 1999:252; Krueger 1994:35).

♦ Focus groups interviews have been found to be useful in assessing needs, developing plans and testing new programmes or ideas, thereby improving new programmes. Moreover, focus groups can be used together with other procedures (Krueger 1994:30, 36). In this study, focus group interviews were used together with face-to-face interviews, personal observations made by the researcher and a literature review to gather data.

♦ Focus group interviews are also used when insights, perceptions and explanations are more important than actual numbers (Mertens 1998:321). As the researcher was interested in gaining insights and perceptions regarding LTSMs and not in numbers, the selection of this data collection method can be justified.

♦ A focus group interview is a socially oriented research procedure. People are social creatures who interact with others. They are influenced by comments of others and often make decisions after listening to the advice and opinions of others. Inhibitions are often minimised in a group situation and during interaction Krueger (1994:34). Kingry, Tiedje and Friedman (1990:125) underline this fact when they say that the group may provide a stimulating and secure setting for participants to express their views without fear of criticism. At the same time, the synergy of the group has the potential to uncover valuable information regarding the research topic (Schurink *et al.* 1998:314).

♦ During such interviews, the researcher could probe for more information thus allowing room to explore unanticipated issues (Krueger 1994:35; Kvale 1996:110).

♦ Focus groups have high face validity (Kvale 1996:235). The technique is easily understood and the results seem believable to those interpreting the information. Results are not presented in complicated statistical tables but rather in terminology that can be understood by most people. Moreover, responses from the various participants underline important facts or substantiate other facts (Krueger 1994:35) and at the same time, enhance the authenticity of the information received.

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♦ Focus group interviews can form the point of departure for action research (Schurink *et al.* 1998:317), which is, in fact, undertaken in this study (see 6.13).

Furthermore, focus group interviews enable the researcher to understand how others interpret key words. The participants also provide possible reasons for the problems that they experience as well as possible solutions for these problems (Mertens 1998:174). The researcher not only wished to determine the nature of the problems that Foundation Phase teachers experienced with regard to LTSMs but also what they perceived as possible solutions for these problems. Through focus group interviews, the researcher could develop concepts and generalisations while reflecting on the views of participants by following a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down approach (Schurink *et al.* 1998:314).

6.5.3   NUMBER OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS HELD

Krueger (1994:16-20) is of the opinion that multiple focus group interviews with similar participants are needed to detect patterns and trends across groups. The results obtained from a single focus group could be unreliable as one group could be unresponsive and reluctant to participate. Mertens (1998:174) supports Krueger by saying that several focus group interviews are needed when the research is highly structured and exploratory. The group must, however, be small enough to allow everyone an opportunity to share their views, yet large enough to provide a variety of perceptions.

It is clear that one focus group interview is never enough with two groups being the minimum number of focus group interviews that should be held. In this study, **five** focus group interviews were undertaken as the researcher believed that the topic was only then, as Krueger (1994:88) puts it, 'saturated'.

Graphically, the five focus group interviews can be represented as follows:

FIGURE 6:2   *PROGRESSION OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS*

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│               FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW #1 AND #2                     │
│                 (Piggyback focus group interview)                 │
│ Purpose: To determine the nature of problems with regard to LTSMs │
│ in the Foundation Phase in more than one province in South Africa.│
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                  FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW #3                         │
│                 (Piggyback focus group interview)                 │
│ Purpose: To determine the nature of problems with regard to the   │
│ availability of reading material in the Foundation Phase in more   │
│ than one province in South Africa.                                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW #4 and #5                    │
│ Purpose: To determine the nature of problems with regard to       │
│ reading material in the Foundation Phase classrooms in Soshanguve  │
│ schools.                                                          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

6.5.4   THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER IN FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

One of the first tasks that the researcher undertook was to prepare herself for these interviews by reading some of the available literature on interviewing. Schurink (1998a:257) also suggests that the researcher should be emotionally prepared before entering the life-worlds of the participants. This was done by entering the field with an open and non-judgemental mind and being appreciative of teachers' work as well as their contributions to this study.

During all five focus group interviews, the researcher attempted to remain enthusiastic, professional and sincere as suggested by Kamper (1999:261). According to Denzin (1989:103), Glesné and Peshkin (1992:36) as well as Schurink (1998a:259), a serious attempt should be made to establish rapport (a relationship of trust and mutual respect) with the participants. This was done in each of the interviews by briefly sketching the researcher's credentials, the purpose of the interview and how the data would be used. In addition, rapport was established by listening attentively throughout the interviews thus giving participants a sense of importance and self-worth (Mertens 1998:133).

Furthermore, Glesné and Peshkin (1992:116) emphasise the importance of protecting participants' right to privacy. During the recruitment stage and at the start of the interviews, participants were assured of the strict confidentiality of the information provided, as only remarks would be noted without identifying the speaker. Once they had completed their attempts at writing reading material, their names would not be disclosed in the study. They would merely be referred to as Teacher A, B, C, et cetera (see 6.14.4.3).

The researcher had to ensure that all five focus group interviews were held in a comfortable and non-threatening environment (Kingry *et al.* 1990:124; Krueger 1994: 13). In an attempt to create such an environment, the researcher

♦ selected a quiet venue with comfortable chairs and sufficient ventilation;
♦ welcomed and thanked participants for their willingness to participate and the sacrifice of their time;
♦ gave participants the assurance that everybody's input would be of value;
♦ planned a round of introductory questions;
♦ encouraged participants to express their views (positive or negative) without the fear that their ideas would be openly criticised and
♦ encouraged alternative answers and opinions.

Another aspect that called for attention was reciprocity, defined by Glesné and Peshkin (1992:122) as

> *the exchange of favours and commitments, the building of a sense of mutual identification and feeling of community.*

In an attempt to ensure reciprocity, the researcher made it clear during all five focus group interviews that the participants were not regarded as a means to an end. Her commitment to the study and the ideal to provide the participants with knowledge and skills to improve their classroom practice was emphasised. In order to collect relevant data, it was necessary to reward them for their time and input. As a token of appreciation, participants were provided with a travelling allowance, refreshments and hand-outs containing games and other motivating ideas that could be used in the Literacy Programme.

6.5.5   QUESTIONING

The basis of all interviews are questions (Denzin 1989:106) and as Krueger (1994:69) rightly says:

Much of the success of the focus group depends on the quality of the questions.

The researcher attempted to ask understandable, logical, pre-determined and open-ended questions. These questions appeared to be spontaneous but were carefully developed after considerable reflection. The questions (called the questioning route or interview guide) were arranged in a logical and natural sequence. One of the unique elements of focus group interviews is that there is no pressure by the researcher to have the group reach consensus. Instead, attention is placed on understanding the thought processes of the participants.

To ensure a successful focus group interview, Denzin (1989:107) suggests that all interview questions should conform to the following four principles:

◆ The principle of **specification**, which requires the researcher to clarify and focus on the function of each question.

◆ The principle of **division**, which implies that the sequence of questions should fit the actual experience of the participants. The focus should be on the meaning and not the wording as such.

◆ The principle of **tacit assumption**, which requires the researcher to determine the underlying meaning of a participant's response.

6.5.6   RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW RESULTS

A critical issue in data verification is ensuring the reliability and validity of the information received. At the onset it must be noted that qualitative researchers do not always agree on how to address the issues of validity and reliability but they do express some consensus regarding the credibility of the research findings (Leedy 1997:168).

A brief explanation of the two concepts follows.

♦ **Reliability**: Synonyms for reliability include dependability, stability, consistency and generalisability (De Vos & Fouché 1998b:85). Both Kvale (1996:235) and Leedy (1997:35) state that reliability has to do with the consistency of the research. For the researcher, it means that if someone else posed the same questions to the same group of participants, they would basically draw the same conclusions.

♦ **Validity**: Ascertaining the validity of research results involves issues of truth. The validity can be determined by checking the findings and critically viewing the data analysis methods to avoid selective perception and biased interpretations (Kvale 1996:238, 242). The most basic form of assessment used in qualitative research is **face validity** where the researcher should ask the question: *Do the results look valid?* Typically, focus groups have high face validity, which is mainly due to the credibility of comments made by participants. In most cases, people 'open up' in focus groups and share their insights and experiences that may not be obtained from individual interviews or other sources of data (Krueger 1994:32).

In this study, **Guba's model** is used to ensure reliability and validity (Lincoln & Guba 1985:290-296; Schurink *et al.* 1998:331). The following four aspects, identified by Guba, ensure trustworthiness, namely truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality:

♦ **Truth value** asks whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings. Truth value is ensured by considering the credibility of the information received through experiences shared by participants.

♦ **Applicability** refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied to other contexts and settings or with other groups. It is the ability to generalise the findings to larger groups. (In qualitative research, however, the purpose is not to generalise findings but rather to describe a particular phenomenon.)

♦ **Consistency** considers whether the findings would be consistent if the enquiry were replicated with the same participants or in a similar context. Consistency can be equated with dependability.

♦ **Neutrality** refers to the degree to which the findings are a function solely of the participants and conditions of the research and not influenced by other perspectives, motivations and other biases, motivations and perspectives. Neutrality can be equated with objectivity.

6.5.7   APPROACHES TO DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis is done in search of general statements about relationships between categories of data (Poggenpoel 1998:340). The two data analysis approaches used for the focus group interviews are those of Huberman and Miles (1994:428-444) and Kvale (1996:187-203). These two approaches are, however, combined for the purpose of this study. .

6.5.7.1   Huberman and Miles's approach

Huberman and Miles (1994:428-444) are of the opinion that data analysis consists of three main steps. Poggenpoel (1998:340) summarises the three steps as follows:

♦ **Data reduction,** which means that the large amount of data received is reduced in an anticipatory way as the researcher chooses a conceptual framework and research questions. Once interviews, tape transcripts and any other data are available, data summaries, coding, finding themes and clustering are done.

♦ **Data display,** which is an organised and concise assembly of information that allows conclusions to be drawn or action to be taken. The reduced set of data is the basis for thinking about its meanings.

♦ **Conclusions and verification,** which involves the researcher making interpretations and drawing conclusions from the displayed data. Strategies include comparing data, noting patterns and themes, looking for negative cases and so forth.

6.5.7.2   Kvale's approach

Kvale (1996:187-203) is of the opinion that data analysis can be done by implementing two basic steps, namely meaning condensation and meaning categorisation.

- ♦ **Meaning condensation** entails the reduction of long interview texts into briefer statements.
- ♦ **Meaning categorisation** refers to the process whereby statements are reduced to simple categories.

A detailed explanation of the five focus group interviews now follows.

6.6   FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW ONE AND TWO

A large number of teachers were willing to participate in the first focus group interview (fourteen interviewees). The group was divided into two and the same basic questions were asked. The purpose of the interview for both groups was also the same, hence the reference to focus group interview one and two.

Both interviews progressed through the seven steps suggested by Kvale (1996:88), namely thematising (determining the purpose of the interview), designing, interviewing, transcribing, data analysis, verification of results and reporting.

6.6.1   PURPOSE OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW ONE AND TWO

Kvale (1996:89) describes thematising as conceptual clarification and a theoretical analysis of the theme to be investigated. In this first step, the purpose (the why, what and how) of the focus group interview is considered. The purpose of the first and second focus group interview (the 'why') was to determine the nature of the problems experienced by Foundation Phase teachers with regard to LTSMs. The purpose was, however, not to reach consensus but to pay attention to the perceptions, feelings and manner of thinking of the participants.

With regard to the 'what', the content had to be determined. In this case, the content revolved around the nature of the problems regarding LTSMs in the Foundation Phase. The researcher had to ensure a good understanding of issues related to LTSMs such as the clarification of the concept, the types of LTSMs and the importance thereof in the didactic situation. (This knowledge was enhanced through the literature review undertaken in Chapter 2.) The 'how' entailed the actual focus group interviews.

6.6.2   DESIGN OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW ONE AND TWO

The design of the two focus group interviews involved the selection of participants, the size of the group and planning the types of questions to be asked.

6.6.2.1   Selection of participants

One of the main characteristics of a focus group interview is that the participants form a homogeneous group. There should, however, be sufficient diversity among participants to allow for a variety of opinions. Kingry et al. (1990:124) point out that the purpose of the study determines the homogeneity of the group and that the rule for selecting participants is commonality and not diversity. It has been found that participants are often hesitant to share their views with someone else in the group who they regard as more knowledgeable, wealthy or influential. People tend to disclose more about themselves and their situation if they realise that they are alike in many ways. Focus group interviews are, therefore, conducted more successfully when the participants are grouped reasonably homogeneously (Krueger 1994:13-14).

With the preceding in mind, the researcher used on-site recruitment to identify participants for the first and second focus group interview. Both of these can be regarded as 'piggyback' focus group interviews as they were linked to another event (Krueger 1994:225), namely a three-weekly BEd (Foundation Phase) tutoring session held in Tshwane. All the participants were qualified Foundation Phase teachers from various schools situated in previously disadvantaged communities in Gauteng, the Northern Province (Limpopo), Mpumalanga and the North-West Province. The selected participants were likely to provide information-rich data relevant to the study (Kamper 1999:256). Moreover, these participants were tutored by a colleague and were thus unknown to the researcher, which allowed the principle of randomisation to be put to practice (Krueger 1994:81, 83). In this way, selection bias was prevented.

6.6.2.2   Size of the group

Traditionally, focus group interviews comprised of between seven and twelve participants (Kamper 1999:252; Kingry et al. 1990:24; Mertens 1998:271). Recently, the tendency is to form smaller groups consisting of between five and seven members to offer more opportunity to talk about the topic at hand and to make provision for a

variety of responses (Krueger 1994:ix; Kingry *et al.*1990:24). Therefore, the initial group was divided into two smaller groups, each consisting of seven members.

6.6.2.3   Questions to be asked

Before discussing the questions to be asked, it is important to note that in the focus group interviews the term *learning support material* was used and not *learning and teaching support material*. At the time when the focus group interviews were conducted, the accepted term was *learning support material* (see 2.2.5), hence the reference to this term.

Bearing the suggestions of Denzin (1989:107) in mind (see 6.5.5), the various types of questions identified by Krueger (1994:54-55) were planned.

♦ Opening questions: Participants would be asked to introduce themselves and say from where they are, what the name of their school is, the grade they teach, how long they have been teaching and why they enjoy teaching learners in the Foundation Phase.

♦ Introductory questions: These would introduce the general topic of discussion, namely the situation regarding LTSMs in their phase, for example:

What do you understand under the term 'learning support materials'?

♦ Transition questions: The aim of these questions would be to move the conversation into key questions that drive the study. These questions would also give participants a broader view of the topic under discussion, which is the nature of the problems experienced with regard to LTSMs in the Foundation Phase. An example of such a question follows.

Can you give examples of the types of learning support materials that you have in your class?

♦ Key questions: These questions would actually drive the discussion and the responses would eventually require the most attention in the subsequent analysis (Krueger 1994:55), for example:

*What, in your opinion, are the main reasons for the problems regarding
learning support material in the Foundation Phase?*
*How do you think the problem regarding learning support material could
be solved?*

◆ Concluding questions: These would have a dual function, namely bringing closure
to the discussion and providing participants with an opportunity to reflect on what
was said, for example:

*What types of learning support materials would you like to have if I gave
you a 'wish list'?* (All-things-considered question)
*Do you agree that the most important points that came out in this
discussion were the following?* (Summary question)
*Is there anything else that we have forgotten to mention regarding this
topic?* (Final question)

6.6.3   REALISATION OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW ONE AND TWO

Once the preceding steps had been completed, the researcher was ready to hold the
first two focus group interviews. Arrangements were made to hold the interviews during
the teachers' lunch break so as not to interrupt the primary purpose of the gathering,
namely the tutoring sessions.

The focus group interviews were conducted with a reflective approach to the
knowledge sought and in particular, to the interpersonal relations that form part of the
interview as suggested by Kvale (1996:88). This step was not characterised by
questioning-and-answering but relied on the interaction within the group. The
interviews were 'guided' discussions where the researcher had a list of approximately
ten questions to be asked during a session (see 6.6.2.3). The questions were asked in
a semi-structured way to ensure the coverage of important issues. The questions
allowed for flexibility in responding to concerns raised by the group.

Throughout the interview, the researcher tried to fulfil the role of the interviewer (see
6.5.4) to the best of her ability. Attention was also paid to aspects suggested by Kvale
(1996:148-149) such as posing the questions clearly and simply, (thereby applying the
principle of specification as explained under 6.5.5), allowing participants to finish what

they are saying, to tolerate pauses, to listen attentively and to indicate that each one's input is of value. Furthermore, the researcher attempted to apply the principle of division (see 6.5.5) by steering the interview. This involved posing the planned questions (see 6.6.2.3), being critical and not taking everything that was said at face value. For example, when one participant said that there were 'no teaching aids' in her class, the principle of tacit assumption was applied (see 6.5.5) whereby the researcher probed and discovered that there were basic items such as a chalkboard, exercise books, paper, magazines and readers (albeit that the latter were seemingly outdated). The researcher also observed each participant and noted aspects such as non-verbal communication and unwillingness to participate.

6.6.4 TRANSCRIPTION OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW ONE AND TWO

Following the advice of Kvale (1996:160), the information obtained during the focus group interviews was recorded using a tape-recorder and cassette. This strategy allowed the researcher to concentrate on the topic and the dynamics of the interview. After completion of the focus group interviews, transcription was done where the oral text (the researcher's questions and the participants' responses) was converted to written text. Due to the length of the transcriptions, only examples of responses (unedited) have been included. The purpose thereof is not only to enrich the study but also to add to the reliability and validity of the data received.

Examples of responses obtained in answer to the following question are recorded in Table 6.1:

What types of learning support materials do you have in your class?

TABLE 6.1   AVAILABLE LTSMs IN FOUNDATION PHASE CLASSROOMS

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
I have chalk, exercise books for learners, pencils, counters, some readers in mother tongue, which is isiZulu, and a few English readers. Our readers they are not enough. There are also balls and ropes.
There is chalk and a chalkboard, exercise books, pencils, paint, counters, a box of shapes, a few posters, old magazines, readers in Northern Sotho but nothing in English. O yes, and there is a broken tape-recorder.
We have things like exercise books and chalk, a Numeracy kit, some readers in mother tongue and English books because we belong to the READ project. We even got five computers.
In my class there are just the ordinary things – you know, like books for writing, pencils, chalk, the board, a few pictures, magazines and so on. There are readers in our mother tongue but not enough so we share. The TV, it is in the principal's office. It has to be put in the staff room if we want to watch a programme like educational programmes. The programmes are good but it takes too much time to move the TV.
There is a problem with support materials that are right for this OBE. We don't have the right things such as OBE books and worksheets.

Responses to the following question are recorded in Table 6.2:

What, in your opinion, are the main reasons for the problems regarding learning support materials in the Foundation Phase?

TABLE 6.2   POSSIBLE REASONS FOR PROBLEMS CONCERNING LTSMs

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
There is not enough money to buy a lot of support materials – the money has to be used for lots of other things. You know, this OBE needs lots of different things.
We order books and other things from a catalogue. Sometimes we are lucky but sometimes the reading books are not right for us in the Foundation Phase so then the Intermediate Phase teachers will use them.
We had computers but these were stolen. We had three burglaries this year – THREE!
We Foundation Phase teachers had fund-raising but that principal of ours, he went and took the money and never gave it to us to buy teaching and learning aids. So we will never do fund-raising again!!
Sometimes we order books but when they deliver the books, only sixty or so are delivered but the invoice says a hundred books. So the books that come are not enough.

Table 6.3 shows some of the most eminent responses to the next key question:

How do you think the problem regarding learning support materials in the Foundation Phase could be solved?

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TABLE 6.3   *POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR LSM DILEMMA*

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
More money to be made available by DoE and the School Governing Body (SGB)
Training on selection of books and optimal use of available LSM, e.g. by district officials
Fewer learners per class
Storage facilities in classrooms, for example, cupboards with locks

6.6.5   DATA ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW ONE AND TWO

The data analysis approach of Kvale and that of Huberman and Miles (see 6.5.7) were combined. An example of **meaning condensation** is the following:

PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE (NATURAL UNIT)	*MEANING CONDENSATION (CENTRAL THEME)*
You know, sometimes we order things from the catalogue but when we get the things, we teachers are not sure how to use them. Like last year, we ordered spray cards for Numeracy but even now, I don't know what is the right way to use them. My HOD also – she does not know. So now I just leave them.	Unsure how to optimally use new types of LSM such as spray cards. LSM often bought on face value.

With regard to **meaning categorisation**, the central themes that emerged from the questions were grouped. For example, in answer to the question regarding the causes of the problems related to LTSMs, many participants referred to insufficient funds with which to purchase the materials they needed. All related responses were grouped under the category **FINANCIAL RESTRAINTS.** These categories will be discussed in Step 7: Reporting on the first and second focus group interviews (see 6.6.7).

6.6.6   DATA VERIFICATION OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW ONE AND TWO

♦ **Truth value** could be claimed after considering the credibility of the information received through experiences shared by participants. After checking the results critically, the face validity seemed to be high due to the credibility of the participants' responses. (Some of these have been included. See 6.6.4.)

♦ **Applicability** could be assumed although only fourteen participants were interviewed. As the findings of the Review Committee on C2005 found that many

schools had problems with support materials, it can, therefore, be assumed that the information obtained would also apply if other Foundation Phase teachers from previously disadvantaged schools were interviewed.

♦ **Consistency** could be claimed because participants from both focus group interviews identified similar problems regarding support materials, solutions to the problem and the types of support materials needed most urgently.

♦ **Neutrality** could be claimed because other perspectives, motivations and other biases did not influence the data analysis. In the researcher's opinion, the data was analysed in an objective way.

6.6.7 REPORT ON FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW ONE AND TWO

After analysing the data received during the two focus group interviews, the following key issues were identified:

6.6.7.1 Availability of LTSMs

The majority of participants had a limited supply and variety of LTSMs. These included the mere basic forms of LTSMs such as exercise books, chalk, a chalkboard, counters, newspapers and pictures. In most cases, the participants said that they had reading material in their mother tongue albeit that there were not always sufficient books for each learner. There appears to be a more serious shortage of reading material in English for the Foundation Phase except in cases where participants were included in the READ project. Three participants said that they have computers and computer programmes but did not make use of these. Two participants said that there was a television in the school but that they hardly ever watched the SABC's educational programmes. However, due to incidents of theft, two schools were now without this valuable resource. Instead of purchasing more of these sophisticated forms of LTSMs, money had to be spent on additional security.

6.6.7.2 Possible reasons for the dilemma regarding LTSMs

One of the most outstanding factors contributing to problems regarding LTSMs are financial restraints, as ten out of fourteen teachers agreed that there is not sufficient

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money to buy what is needed most. Other factors that were identified include teachers not knowing about the variety of LTSMs and how to use the available LTSMs (seen in catalogues, displays at conferences and workshops, etc.). The wrong selection of books and storage problems also posed a problem. In many cases teachers ordered books, such as readers, at face value and admitted that they need guidance on the correct selection of books. As many classes are overcrowded, little or no space is left to house LTSMs. In some cases, the LTSMs were not easily accessible as these had to be housed elsewhere, for example, in a storeroom or the head of department's classroom.

Another significant point that came to light was that some teachers believe that there are 'OBE-specific' types of LTSMs. Further probing revealed that some teachers were under the false impression that older or existing forms of LTSMs could not be used successfully within an OBE context. These teachers were thus not sufficiently empowered to adapt exiting resources or LTSMs so that these could be used to achieve the outcomes for the various learning programmes.

Theft was yet another problem identified, as many schools fell prey to burglars and valuable equipment such as computers were stolen. In addition, LTSMs such as books often 'disappeared in transit', which leads one to assume that some of the stock ordered was stolen before reaching the school. Apart from theft, learners often damaged or lost reading books and in some cases, the dilemma regarding LTSMs was brought about by vandalism. A rather disturbing fact came to light, namely the mismanagement of funds by a principal who refused to make the money available that was specifically raised to purchase LTSMs for the Foundation Phase.

6.6.7.3 Possible solutions to overcome problems

The solutions offered mainly involved additional financial support from external sources such as the DoE and the SGB. Other solutions included a request that more support should be given by publishers and the district office with regard to the selection of appropriate LTSMs and the correct use thereof. However, none of the participants suggested taking ownership of the problems, for example, learning how to adapt existing LTSMs so that these could be used in the various learning programmes.

6.6.7.4   LTSMs most urgently needed

The types of LTSMs that participants said they needed, included wall charts related to programme organisers (themes), computers, overhead projectors, art material, more LTSMs for Numeracy as well as more readers in mother tongue and English. The assumption can be made that many other teachers in previously disadvantaged schools have the same need.

6.6.8   THE WAY FORWARD AFTER FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW ONE AND TWO

A shortage of reading material in the Foundation Phase was one of the main problems identified in these two focus group interviews. This problem has serious consequences for the successful implementation of the Literacy Programme. Without sufficient and appropriate reading material, Foundation Phase learners would not be able to develop reading skills and extended opportunities for reading could not be created. This unfavourable situation would, in turn, have a serious effect on their progress in other learning programmes in the Foundation Phase as well as the learning programmes and learning areas in the ensuing phases. Moreover, the ideal of the DoE, namely to break the back of illiteracy in South Africa (see 1.4), is directly linked to this problem. Therefore, the researcher decided to gain more specific information regarding the nature of the problems regarding reading material in the Foundation Phase. This led to the planning of the third focus group interview.

6.7   FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW THREE

Approximately two months after the completion of the first two focus group interviews, the next focus group interview was held. The seven steps suggested by Kvale (1996:88) were used again to structure the third focus group interview.

6.7.1   PURPOSE OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW THREE

After analysing the data received in the first two focus group interviews, the researcher became aware that some teachers experienced serious problems with reading material in the Foundation Phase. Therefore, the purpose of the third focus group interview was

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to gain more information regarding the nature of the problems regarding reading material in the Foundation Phase.

6.7.2   DESIGN OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW THREE

The same aspects that were addressed when designing the first two focus group interviews were addressed in the design of the third focus group interview.

6.7.2.1   Selection of participants

During a three-day contact session held by the researcher on Special Needs Education, the Foundation Phase teachers in the group were invited to participate in the focus group interview. On-site recruitment, as suggested by Krueger (1994:81), was thus done to identify participants who could supply information-rich data for the third focus group interview. As this interview was linked to another event (as was the case with the first two interviews), it can also be regarded as a 'piggyback' focus group interview.

The following biographical information pertains to the participants of the third focus group interview: All the participants were black Foundation Phase teachers and hailed from Mpumalanga, the Northern Province (Limpopo), the North-West Province, the Free State and Northern Cape. All the participants were experienced Foundation Phase teachers who had been teaching for a period of five years or longer. This selection ensured sufficient diversity among participants to allow for a variety of opinions.

6.7.2.2   Size of the group

Twelve teachers in the group attending the contact session were Foundation Phase teachers. All of them were invited to participate in the focus group interview. Initially, two separate focus group interviews were planned (as was the case with the first two). However, four teachers had other commitments during the time that was scheduled for the interview. As eight teachers would be participating in the focus group interview, only one session was held.

6.7.2.3   Questions to be asked

The following questions suggested by Krueger (1994:54-55) were planned, each serving their own unique purpose:

♦ Opening questions: These would require participants to introduce themselves and say from where they are, the name of their school, the grade they teach, how long they have been teaching and why they enjoy teaching learners in the Foundation Phase.

♦ Introductory questions: The aim of these were to introduce the general topic of discussion, namely the nature of problems regarding reading material in their phase. Two of the questions planned were:

> *What do you understand under the term 'reading material'?*
> *What are your views regarding reading material for Foundation Phase learners?*

♦ Transition questions: Participants would be asked to describe the various types of reading material that is available in their classroom and whether they regarded it to be sufficient. Examples of questions are:

> *Could you describe the reading material that you have available in your class?*
> *Do you think that the reading material you have is sufficient?*
> *How would you describe the general reading abilities of your learners?*

♦ Key questions: The function of these questions was to drive the discussion. The responses to these questions would eventually require the most attention in the subsequent data analysis (Krueger 1994:55). Examples of these questions are the following:

What, in your opinion, are the main reasons for the shortage of reading material in your classes?

Do you only have a shortage of reading material for learners who experience reading difficulties?

How do you think the problems can be solved?

♦ Concluding questions: These would be asked to bring closure to the discussion and to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on what was said, for example:

What types of reading material would you like to have if I gave you a 'wish-list'? (All-things-considered question)

Do you all agree that the most important points that came out in this discussion were the following? (Summary question)

Is there anything else that we have forgotten to mention regarding this topic? (Final question)

6.7.3 REALISATION OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW THREE

Arrangements were made to hold the interview after the tutoring session for the day had been completed so as not to interrupt the primary purpose of the gathering.

The third focus group interview was conducted in a similar way to the initial two and upholding the principle of specification (see 6.5.5). The interview was steered by means of posing the planned questions (see 6.7.2.3), thereby upholding the principle of division (see 6.5.5). The principle of tacit assumption was applied (see 6.5.5) as the researcher was critical and did not take everything that was said at face value, For example, one participant said that she had 'nothing for her learners to read'. After probing, the researcher discovered that this participant did, in fact, only have a few readers (mother tongue) and some magazines in her class.

6.7.4 TRANSCRIPTION OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW THREE

As was the case with the previous two interviews, the information obtained during the focus group interview was recorded to allow the researcher to concentrate on the topic and the dynamics of the interview. A colleague, acting as a moderator, was asked to attend the discussion and to note her observations.

After the completion of the third focus group interview, transcription was done where the oral text (the researcher's questions and the participants' responses) was converted to written text. Due to the length of the transcriptions, only examples of responses (unedited) have been included. The purpose thereof is not only to enrich the study but also to add to the reliability and validity of the study.

The following are examples of responses that were obtained in answer to the following question, namely:

Could you describe the reading material that you have available in your class?

TABLE 6.4   *READING MATERIAL AVAILABLE IN FOUNDATION PHASE CLASSROOMS*

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
I have some reading books in Southern Sotho because we still do mother tongue in Grade 2. The books are not really enough because I have sixty learners in the class. I need a lot more.
In my class there are some readers, newspapers and also some magazines but nothing else that is nice like library books or like the books in the white schools.
I have readers for my learners but a lot of the books - they are very much difficult because those ones that are weak in reading can't manage to read the books.

The next question was related to learners' reading abilities as the researcher wanted to determine whether there is a link between the availability of reading material and learners' reading abilities.

Table 6.5 reflects examples of teachers' responses the following question:

How would you describe the general reading abilities of your learners?

TABLE 6.5   LEARNERS' GENERAL READING ABILITIES

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
Some learners are OK but there are a lot who can't read yet. (Grade 2 learners – mother tongue)
I have those learners who can read nicely but there are those poor learners, they struggle a lot with everything – vernacular and English. (Grade 3)
Let me honest. I teach Grade 3 and have a big group who have lots of problems with English reading.

Examples of teachers' responses to the following key question are recorded in Table 6.6:

What, in your opinion, are the main reasons for the shortage of reading material in your classrooms?

TABLE 6.6   POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THE SHORTAGE OF READING MATERIAL

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
This OBE needs lots of teaching aids so there is not enough money to buy more reading books.
We order reading books but they are not always right for our learners. They are very much difficult.
Some learners – they are very, very careless. They take the reading books home but they lose them or throw them away. Some books are very much damaged like the pages that are teared.
Our classes are very big, like I have forty nine Grade 2's. So what we have, is not always enough for every learner. To give you an example: There are not enough books to take home to do reading homework.

The responses to the question that follows are recorded in Table 6.7.

What can be done to overcome the problems you are experiencing with regard to reading material for your learners?

TABLE 6.7 *POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME PROBLEMS WITH READING MATERIAL*

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
It is the Department's responsibility to give us more money for books.
The district people or somebody else can help us select the right books. Also this person must tell us what books are good for those poor learners who can't read.
Pick and Pay or Checkers or places like that, they can maybe donate money or books. Perhaps they can even help us start a small library.
We tried raising funds by holding a cake and sweets sale but I will be honest – we didn't make much money. The learners in our community come from very poor homes so they don't have money to buy things. The parents also complain and become negative if we ask for extra money.

6.7.5   DATA ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP THREE

The approaches proposed by Kvale as well as Huberman and Miles (see 6.5.7) were combined. An example of meaning condensation for the third focus group interview follows.

PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE (NATURAL UNIT)	MEANING CONDENSATION (CENTRAL THEME)
I will be honest – many of the English reading books we have are very difficult even for the good readers. The Sepedi readers are sometimes also too difficult for learners who have reading problems. It makes learners not like to read. We also don't have a lot of easier books for children to read, so they are always disadvantaged.	Reading material in home languages and English often not developmentally appropriate.

With regard to **meaning categorisation**, the central themes that emerged from the questions posed were grouped. For example, many teachers' responses were related to insufficient books for all their learners. All these were grouped under the category: **INSUFFICIENT BOOKS (HOME LANGUAGE / ENGLISH)**. These categories will be discussed in the report (see 6.7.7).

6.7.6   DATA VERIFICATION OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW THREE

♦ **Truth value** could be assumed after considering the credibility of the information received through experiences shared by participants. After checking the results

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critically, the face validity seemed to be high due to the credibility of the participants' responses. (Some of these have been included. See 6.7.4.)

♦ **Applicability** could be assumed although only eight participants were interviewed. Six participants said that they did not have sufficient or developmentally appropriate reading material. It is possible that many other Foundation Phase teachers were confronted with similar problems. (Their comments are in line with what the researcher experienced in her time as a lecturer at a college for distance education where the reading material submitted for practical assignments was usually not developmentally appropriate.)

♦ **Consistency** could be claimed as participants experienced the same problems and generally agreed with one another regarding solutions to the problems.

♦ **Neutrality** could be claimed, as other perspectives, motivations and biases did not influence the data analysis. In the researcher's opinion, the data analysis was done objectively.

6.7.7 REPORT ON FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW THREE

Based on the central themes and subsequent categories that were identified in the data analysis (see 6.7.5), the following issues are considered to be of value to the study:

6.7.7.1 Insufficient readers / financial restraints

Most of the participants said that they did not have sufficient readers in leaners' home language. Two Grade 3 teachers in the group added that they also did not have sufficient English readers for all their learners. In fact, one Grade 3 teacher said that learners had to share readers (home language and English) with the result that they did not read every day. In fact, it often happened that her learners only read twice a week. The consequence of this situation is a lack of reading opportunities, which in turn, could cause learners to experience reading difficulties. The phenomenon (insufficient books) could be positively related to financial restraints, as the school budget often did not allow for additional books to be purchased due to the need to purchase other forms of LTSMs as well.

6.7.7.2 Developmentally inappropriate readers

Four of the teachers felt that the readers they had in learners' home language were too difficult for the majority of their learners, particularly for those who experienced reading difficulties. Teachers responsible for Grade 3 said that the English readers in use were mostly too difficult for many learners. One teacher added that she had an over-aged Grade 3 learner who experienced reading difficulties but that he was embarrassed when given Grade 1 or 2 readers. Another participant admitted that she did not like the stories in the readers because these were not appropriate for her learners in a rural school. After probing, it became apparent that the characters and setting were not within the life-world of the learners. (The series was identified but due to ethical reasons, the name thereof cannot be published in this study.)

6.7.7.3 Inappropriate selection of books

In the first two focus group interviews, it became evident that teachers often selected inappropriate LTSMs (see 6.6.7.2). Similarly, many teachers seem to have difficulty with the selection of appropriate readers and often order books randomly. Only afterwards do they discover that some of the books are unsuitable. This finding also correlates with the previous finding that the selected readers are often developmentally inappropriate (see 6.7.7.2).

6.7.7.4 Loss of books and damage to books

Reading books often got lost or were damaged when learners took them home. One participant said that she did not send readers home any longer to prevent losses and damage to books. Although one can understand her reasoning, it has negative consequences because learners are deprived of reading opportunities. Restricted reading opportunities could result in reading difficulties or in learners not fulfilling their potential.

6.7.7.5 Inadequate knowledge regarding the different types of reading material

It became evident that the participants were not fully aware of the different types of reading material that are suitable for Foundation Phase learners. The introductory question that was posed (see 6.7.2.3) required them to respond to the question

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concerning what they understood under 'reading material'. They regarded 'reading books' as the main form of reading material. Other forms of reading material that were mentioned included magazines and newspapers, the Bible, books about animals and story books. Their responses made it clear that many of them had inadequate knowledge regarding other suitable types of reading material for Foundation Phase learners as described in Chapter 4.

The participants offered restricted responses to the concluding question (see 6.7.2.3). The types of reading material that the participants said that they would like to have include more reading books in learners' home language and English as well as 'library books' and 'books with lots of pictures'. One participant said she would like a children's Bible or a suitable dictionary for Foundation Phase learners. No reference was made to other types of reading material such as big books, cartoon-style books, children's poetry, jokes and riddles or folk tales.

6.7.7.6 Possible solutions to overcome the problems

The following are some of the solutions to the shortage of reading material offered by the participants in the third focus group interview:

♦ The DoE and SGB should make more money available to buy books.

♦ The private sector should donate money for books and the establishment of school libraries.

♦ District officials and publishers should provide more support with the correct selection of books.

♦ Publishers should arrange book displays at a central point such as the tutoring session they were attending.

♦ Travelling libraries should be mobilised.

♦ Discussions with parents should be arranged to educate them on the value of books. They should also be requested to ensure that all books that were brought home were returned to school without being damaged.

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6.7.8 THE WAY FORWARD AFTER FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW THREE

The participants, who came from different provinces, clearly indicated that there were problems with regard to reading material in many Foundation Phase classrooms in previously disadvantaged schools. As the researcher is a district official involved with the support of Foundation Phase teachers and learners in Soshanguve schools, the following question came to mind:

> *Does the same situation prevail in Foundation Phase classrooms in Soshanguve?*

To find answers to this question, two more focus group interviews were planned.

6.8   FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOUR AND FIVE

Approximately three months after the third focus group interview had been completed, the fourth and fifth focus group interviews took place. As the focus of the study directly involves Soshanguve teachers, the researcher thought it wise to conduct **two** focus group interviews to obtain more authentic information.

As was the case with the three preceding focus group interviews, focus group interview four and five also progressed through the seven steps suggested by Kvale (1996:88), namely thematising (determining the purpose of the focus group interview), designing, interviewing, transcribing, data analysis, verification of results and reporting.

6.8.1   PURPOSE OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOUR AND FIVE

The purpose of these focus group interviews was to determine whether Foundation Phase teachers in Soshanguve

♦ experienced similar problems regarding reading material as their colleagues interviewed in the previous focus group interview (see 6.7);

♦ had reading material (particularly in English) that could be integrated into a programme organiser or theme in order to apply the whole language approach in full;

♦ used a variety of genres in the Literacy Programmes as required by Foundation Phase policy documents (GDE 1998:64; DoE 2002a:19; DoE 2002d:33);

♦ were able to supply learners with reading material in accordance with the theory of multiple intelligence (see 3.7) and

♦ had suitable reading material for learners who experienced reading difficulties.

6.8.2   DESIGN OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOUR AND FIVE

As was the case with the previous focus group interviews, the selection of participants, size of the group and questions to be asked were planned in this step.

6.8.2.1   Selection of participants

The researcher did on-site recruitment, as suggested by Krueger (1994:81), during school visits to identify participants for these two focus group interviews. The participants were all Foundation Phase teachers from Soshanguve (see 1.2.11).

6.8.2.2   Size of the group

Originally, the researcher planned to hold two separate focus group interviews with the view to gain as much information as possible. Fourteen Foundation Phase teachers were invited to participate in two focus group interviews, each consisting of seven members. However, only five teachers arrived on the date scheduled for the first interview. The same situation presented itself on the day that the second interview was scheduled. (It can be assumed that the participants from the first three focus groups found it easier to attend as they were already on the site where the interviews were to be held. In contrast, the participants in Soshanguve had to travel to a central point although the venue was, in the researcher's opinion, within easy reach for all. Moreover, the participants were told that they would be reimbursed for travelling costs.)

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As many workshops were planned for Foundation Phase teachers at that time and due to their workload, the researcher felt that the information gained would suffice. Further information would be gained by holding face-to-face interviews with district officials. In addition, the researcher had access to Foundation Phase classrooms and schools and could make her own observations (see 6.10).

6.8.2.3 Questions to be asked

The same type of questions, as suggested by Krueger (1994:54-55), was asked, each serving their own unique purpose. The following questions were planned:

♦ Opening questions: The participants would be asked to introduce themselves and say from where they are, the name of their school and the grade they teach, how long they have been teaching and why they enjoy teaching learners in the Foundation Phase.

♦ Introductory questions: The questions set in this stage would be aimed at introducing the general topic of discussion, namely the situation regarding reading material in their phase. The following questions were planned:

What do you understand under the term 'reading material'?
What are your views regarding reading material for Foundation Phase learners?

♦ Transition questions: Questions such as the following were prepared to determine the situation regarding reading material in their classes:

Would you explain the situation regarding reading material in your class?
Are there any problems regarding reading material that you would like to share with the group?

♦ Key questions: These questions would actually drive the discussion and the responses to these questions would eventually require the most attention in the subsequent analysis (Krueger 1994:55). Some of the questions that were planned include the following:

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What types of reading material do you have in your class and how do you use these in the Literacy Programme?

How do you link your reading material to your programme organiser?

NOTE. At the time of conducting the interviews, the RNCS was not yet being implemented, hence the referral to 'programme organiser' and not 'themes' during these interviews.

Are you familiar with the whole language approach and if so, could you explain it to the group?

In what way do you address the needs of learners who have different reading abilities and interests?

What solutions can you offer to address the problems that have been identified?

♦ Concluding questions: These questions would be posed to bring closure to the discussion and to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on what was said, for example:

The Foundation Phase policy documents refer to different types of reading material. What types of reading material would you like to have if I gave you a 'wish-list'? (All-things-considered question)

Do you all agree that the most important points that came out of this discussion were the following? (Summary question)

Is there anything else that we have forgotten to mention regarding this topic? (Final question)

6.8.3   REALISATION OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOUR AND FIVE

Arrangements were made to hold the focus group interviews after school. The fourth one was held at the Teachers' Centre in Soshanguve and two days later, the fifth one was held at one of the schools. Both focus group interviews were conducted in a similar way to the previous ones.

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The researcher steered the discussion by means of posing the planned questions (see 6.8.2.3), being critical and not taking everything that was said at face value. For example, when one participant said that she has 'lots of different types of reading material', the researcher probed and discovered that she only had basal readers and books received from the READ project.

6.8.4   TRANSCRIPTION OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOUR AND FIVE

Table 6.8 reflects examples of the responses given in answer to the key questions that follow.

What types of reading material do you have in your class and how do you use them in your Literacy Programme?

TABLE 6.8   *TYPES OF READING MATERIAL USED IN THE LITERACY PROGRAMME*

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
I have ordinary English and mother tongue readers. I also have the books we got from OLSET.
I use the big books and the small books we got from READ. I also have readers that the school ordered. Our school also got books that were donated from somewhere.
The books I use are just reading books from the school and the MOLTENO people – nothing else.

Table 6.9 contains examples of teachers' responses to the following question:

How do you link your reading material to your programme organiser?

TABLE 6.9   *APPLICATION OF THE WHOLE LANGUAGE APPROACH*

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
Eish! Now I am not sure. I don't understand what you mean with that question.
If I do the programme organiser, maybe like MY FAMILY, I will look for a story about the family and read it to the learners. Then the learners can read it also.
Let me be honest – I don't do things like that. The learners – they just read the next pages in the reading book.

Examples of responses elicited from the following key question are tabulated in Table 6.10:

In what way do you create extended reading opportunities for your learners?

TABLE 6.10   *WAYS IN WHICH EXTENDED READING OPPORTUNITIES ARE CREATED*

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
I made a little reading corner so that the learners can read the books we got from READ.
It is difficult for me because the books are not enough for all the learners to read every day.
Sometimes I send books home for learners to read or I tell them to read newspapers at home.

Responses to the following question are found in Table 6.11:

In what way does your reading material meet the needs of learners who have different abilities and interests?

TABLE 6.11   *READING MATERIAL FOR DIFFERENT ABILITIES AND INTERESTS*

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
If I see that learners can't read the book, I find a book that is a bit easier. We have books in English that are not so very difficult and some that are very much difficult for Grade 3.
Maybe I let those that struggle a lot only read words on flash cards.
If I see learners like soccer, then I bring the newspaper so they can read about a game.
That is a problem. Maybe a clever learner wants to know more about something, let's say, nature, then I can't give him the right books to read. Also, our school, it doesn't have a library and where we stay, there is no library. So this poor learner is disadvantaged.
Our school bought remedial reading books so I use these and the ordinary readers. It just depends on how good or bad the learner is in reading. There are also books from READ that we can use.

The final key question that was asked follows with examples of the responses recorded in Table 6.12.

What solutions can you offer for the problems that were identified?

TABLE 6.12   *SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED REGARDING READING MATERIAL*

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
Perhaps the district office can help can maybe help us to pick the right books. Maybe they can also help us to start a school library.
Maybe one can ask people like BMW to donate money for books. I think the Department maybe also needs to make a bigger budget for books for our black schools.
Just now it was for the first time I see that the Teachers' Centre has a library. Maybe we can borrow some books from them but now our school is far. It won't be very easy to get the books.

6.8.5   DATA ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOUR AND FIVE

As was the case with the preceding focus group interviews, Huberman and Miles's approach was used together with that of Kvale (see 6.5.7). An example of meaning condensation for focus group interview five follows.

PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE (NATURAL UNIT)	MEANING CONDENSATION (CENTRAL THEME)
My class has lots of books because we are lucky to be part of the READ project. But my class – I have many learners – 52 learners. I would like even more books – many more books so my learners can read a lot. Perhaps I can say that the Northern Sotho books are not many for Grade 3.	Reading material provided by READ but still insufficient. Shortage of Northern Sotho books for Grade 3.

With regard to **meaning categorisation**, the central themes that emerged from the question posed were grouped. For example, responses to the question concerning types of reading material were grouped under the category: **TYPES OF READING MATERIAL USED**. These categories will be discussed in Step 7: Report on focus group four and five (see 6.8.7).

6.8.6   DATA VERIFICATION OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOUR AND FIVE

♦ **Truth value** was ensured by considering the credibility of the information received through experiences shared by participants. After checking the results critically, the

face validity seemed to be high due to the credibility of the participants' responses. (Some of these have been included. See 6.8.4.)

♦ **Applicability** can be assumed although only ten participants were interviewed. For example, six participants said that they did not have a school library. It is possible that many other Foundation Phase teachers in Soshanguve find themselves in the same predicament.

♦ **Consistency** can be claimed as the responses from the fourth focus group interview corresponded to a great extent with those in the fifth one. The solutions to the problems also did not differ much.

♦ **Neutrality** can be claimed because other perspectives, motivations and other biases did not influence the data analysis. In the researcher's opinion, the data analysis was done in an objective way.

6.8.7   REPORT ON FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOUR AND FIVE

Based on the central themes and subsequent categories that were identified in the data analysis (see 6.8.5), the following issues are considered to be of value to the study:

6.8.7.1   Availability of reading material

Participants generally agreed that they had a substantial amount of reading material as they were all involved in reading projects such as READ, MOLTENO and OLSET. Six participants felt that even with the support of the reading projects at their schools, they did not have sufficient reading material as they had many learners in their classes. Even though there were not sufficient English books in many classes, the main shortages seem to be with regard to the number of books available in learners' home language such as Northern Sotho.

Furthermore, it was discovered that the majority of schools used a specific reading series (the name of which will not be disclosed for ethical reasons). In some cases, teachers supplemented their reading material by making use of book donations.

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6.8.7.2 Exposure to different types of reading material

Teachers generally had a fair understanding of what is understood by the term *reading material*. In answer to the relevant question, they identified 'readers' (basal readers), 'library books', fairy tales, big books, newspapers, magazines, the Bible and prayers as types of reading material. A few of them were able to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction material but were not completely *au fait* with other genres such as picture story books, novelty books, myths and legends, cartoon-style books and multilingual books. (Except for children's sections in some newspapers and magazines, this type of reading material is too difficult for Grade 3 learners who are only starting to read in an additional language.)

From the information gained, it seemed that teachers did not have adequate knowledge of the various types of reading material that are suitable for Foundation Phase learners. Consequently, their learners were not exposed to the various types of reading material referred to in the policy documents referred to under 6.8.1.

6.8.7.3 Integration of reading material with the programme organiser / theme

Only one participant indicated that she tried in some way to find reading material that is directly linked with the programme organiser/theme. This leads one to assume that many Foundation Phase teachers in Soshanguve were not fully implementing the whole language approach (see 4.2).

Note: The researcher does not hold the view that the available readers or other forms of reading material must **only** be read when the theme of the book corresponds with a specific programme organiser or theme in use. However, the researcher is of the opinion that at least one reading passage, linked to the programme organiser or theme in use, should be prepared for reading instruction or other literacy activities. The researcher's view is in line with that of Goodman (in Engelbrecht *et al.* 1999:82), a proponent of the whole language approach, who emphatically states that the whole language approach is not a methodology but a philosophy of curriculum, of learning, of teaching and of language. The whole language approach is also implied in the RNCS (DoE 2002a:7) where reference is made to the integration of outcomes.

6.8.7.4 Reading material and learners' abilities and interests

Teachers generally have difficulty finding reading material that is suitable for learners who experience reading difficulties. Only the teacher who had completed a course in Special Needs Education indicated that she knew how to prepare reading material for such learners. One teacher said that she gave these learners 'easier' books to read while the rest said that they were not really sure what type of reading material would meet the needs of learners who experience reading difficulties.

From the information gained, it became clear that the participants were not familiar with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (see 3.7). Consequently, they did not realise that certain types of reading material could enhance the various intelligences and that reading material could be provided that would accommodate learners' specific interests.

6.8.7.5 Lack of functional school libraries

Many schools in Soshanguve do not have school libraries with obvious negative effects. Three participants said that their school had a library but that the books for Foundation Phase learners were insufficient. One participant indicated that the school had some library books but these were locked away in a storeroom and were not easily accessible for learners. If more schools had well-functioning school libraries where a variety of books could be housed, it would be easier to enhance learners' different intelligences as proposed by Gardner (see 3.7) and to provide books that are in line with their interests. Moreover, a well-equipped school library would make it possible for learners to read many different types of reading material.

6.8.7.6 Possible solutions to overcome the problems

Participants relied heavily on external sources for support such as more money to be provided by the GDE and donations from the private sector. Other solutions that were offered include closer collaboration with the Soshanguve Teachers' Centre Library as well as a mobile library that could visit each school on a regular basis. Support from district officials regarding issues such as book selection was another solution offered to overcome the problem of ordering books randomly. A solution that was not considered was to write their own reading material, thereby taking ownership of the problem and

fulfilling their role as developers of LTSMs as stated in the Norms and Standards for Teachers (see 1.4).

6.8.7.7   Reading material needed

In their 'wish list', all the participants agreed that they would like more readers for learners who experienced reading difficulties. One participant said that she would like more big books like the ones she had received from the SABC and READ. Several participants said that they would like to have more basal readers and library books while two said that any type of reading material was welcome. Specific types of reading material such as children's poetry, cartoon-style books, novelty books and multilingual books were not mentioned, possibly because many of them were not *au fait* with these.

6.8.8   CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE FIVE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Based on the information gained from the focus group interviews, it seems that the situation regarding reading material for Foundation Phase learners varies. Whereas the participants in the third focus group indicated their need for reading material in general, those in the last two interviews indicated that they had a reasonable supply of reading material albeit that it was mostly basal readers. It can be assumed that Foundation Phase classrooms in Soshanguve had a fair amount of reading material. However, there are not always sufficient basal readers for all learners. Most teachers do not have reading material that links with the programme organiser/theme in use. In addition, they lack reading material that caters for the different abilities and intelligences of learners. There is also little variety in the different types of reading material that learners are given to read.

6.8.9   THE WAY FORWARD AFTER FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOUR AND FIVE

Many themes came to light during the fourth and fifth focus group interviews. To substantiate and compare the information gained from the focus group interviews, the researcher arranged a face-to-face interview with three colleagues at the district office to enhance the validity and reliability of the information gained in focus group interview four and five.

6.9   FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

Whereas focus group interviews involve a group discussion, face-to-face interviews involve an **individual** discussion with one person at a time.

Face-to-face interviews can be carried out in a variety of situations and can be used to question members of the public, leaders, specific members of society such as the disabled or experts in the field (Walliman 2001:238). Questions are conducted on an individual basis and are basically unstructured when used within the qualitative approach (Schurink 1998b:299).

Moreover, face-to-face interview help the researcher to

> understand the closed worlds of individuals, institutions, communities, etc. Learning about these closed worlds depends on the interviewer's ability to maximise the flow of valid, reliable information while minimising distortions in the participant's recollection of events (Schurink 1998b:297-298).

There are three types of face-to-face interviews, namely open-ended interviews, unstructured interviews with a schedule and in-depth interviews (Walliman 2001:239). Only unstructured interviews with a schedule (pre-formulated questions that are of importance to the study) were used. Such interviews involve social interaction among equals to obtain information that could be relevant to the research (Schurink 1998b:298).

Face-to-face interviews were held with four colleagues in the district office. Three are First Education Specialists working as facilitators in the Foundation Phase while the fourth is responsible for school libraries. As the researcher is also a First Education Specialist, working in the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phase, the participants were regarded as equals (Schurink 1998b:298) and experts in the field (Walliman 2001:238).

The four colleagues were chosen for the interviews as they could provide authentic information regarding the situation in Foundation Phase classrooms and school libraries in Soshanguve. Some of the responses of the three Foundation Phase facilitators could be compared with each other, which in turn, could be compared with

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the responses of those teachers who participated in the fourth and fifth focus group interviews.

All the face-to-face interviews progressed through the steps for focus group interviews suggested by Kvale (1996:88), namely thematising (determining the purpose of the interview), designing, interviewing, transcribing, data analysis, verification of results and reporting.

6.9.1   PURPOSE OF THE FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

At the start of each interview, the purpose thereof was explained to the person concerned, namely to contribute towards a more systematic accumulation of knowledge about reading material in Foundation Phase classrooms in Soshanguve. Without this knowledge, adequate support could not be given to Foundation Phase teachers with regard to the provision of adequate and developmentally appropriate reading material. Ultimately, this would impact on the successful implementation of the Literacy Programme. Particular emphasis was to be placed on the situation regarding English reading material in Grade 3, which is the end of the first phase of the GETC band.

6.9.2   FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS WITH FOUNDATION PHASE FACILITATORS

6.9.2.1   Design of the face-to-face interviews

The following questions were prepared for all three interviews with the Foundation Phase facilitators:

♦ Introductory questions: These would introduce the general topic of discussion, namely her views regarding reading material in Foundation Phase classrooms in Soshanguve. For example:

> *What are your views regarding reading material for Foundation Phase learners in Soshanguve schools?*

♦ Transition questions: Participants would be asked to describe the various types of reading material that are available in Foundation Phase classrooms in

Soshanguve. They would also be asked to describe the general level of reading competence of learners, for example:

What type of reading material do Foundation Phase teachers provide their learners with?
How would you describe the general reading ability of Grade 3 learners in Soshanguve schools?

♦ Key questions: The aim of these questions is to drive the discussion. The responses to these questions eventually require the most attention in the subsequent analysis (Krueger 1994:55). Some of the questions planned were the following:

What problems do teachers generally experience with regard to reading material?
Would you say that teachers are able to fully apply the whole language approach?
In what way do teachers accommodate learners with reading difficulties?
In what way do they accommodate learners' interests and strengths with regard to reading material?
What is the position of school libraries at present?

♦ Concluding questions: The aim of these questions would be to bring closure to the discussion and to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on what was said, for example:

Are you generally satisfied with the availability of reading material in Foundation Phase classrooms in Soshanguve? (All-things-considered question)
Do you agree that the most important points that came out in this discussion were the following? (Summary question)
What are your views on this research project? (Final question)

6.9.2.2 Realisation of the face-to-face interviews

The first two interviews were held during the course of the day while the third one took place before work one morning. The three participants were thanked for their willingness to provide information that would be of value to this study. They were also assured that their names and the names of schools would not be disclosed in the study. Respect was shown by not interrupting them, accepting their points of view and acknowledging their expertise. However, the researcher remained critical by not accepting all statements at face value.

6.9.2.3 Transcription of the face-to-face interviews

The next step involved converting oral responses into written text. The following are some of the questions asked as well as examples of responses by the participants:

Could you describe the reading material used in most Foundation Phase classrooms?

TABLE 6.13   *TYPES OF READING MATERIAL USED IN FOUNDATION PHASE CLASSROOMS*

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
Participant 1: Teachers mainly use basal readers for reading instruction. A few teachers, and I really mean just a few, use library books as well. They also have the books provided by reading projects such as READ.
Participant 2: Teachers rely mostly on reading books in a reading series. Those involved with reading projects such as READ also use the books provided. A few teachers use library books as well

Table 6.14 contains responses to the next question, namely:

What is the position regarding English reading material in Grade 3?

TABLE 6.14 ENGLISH READING MATERIAL IN GRADE 3

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
Participant 1: The reading projects have provided a lot of reading material and schools have also bought many readers. However, some classes house more than forty learners and the books they have are not enough for all of them, especially if they want to take books home to read.
Participant 3: All schools are part of literacy projects where no budget constraints have impact on the availability of reading material as they get these free of charge. Schools have also purchased a lot of readers in English but I don't think a teacher will ever have enough readers for all her learners.

Responses to the next question are recorded in Table 6.15.

What other problems do teachers generally experience with regard to reading material?

TABLE 6.15 OTHER PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED REGARDING READING MATERIAL

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
Participant 2: I think they do not always have criteria with which to evaluate books. Consequently they often order books at face value. Another serious problem is that many of them do not have suitable reading material for learners who have reading problems.
Participant 3: Some HOD's are not involved in the budget with the result that they do not have insight into the books that are ordered. So when the books arrive, they find that the books are not what they wanted.

The next question concerned school libraries and the availability of reading material for Foundation Phase learners in particular:

What is the position regarding libraries at schools? Do they stock sufficient reading material for Foundation Phase learners?

TABLE 6.16 AVAILABILITY OF READING MATERIAL FOR FOUNDATION PHASE LEARNERS IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
Participant 1: We don't visit the libraries in the schools but I know that not all schools have a library.
Participant 2: Only some schools have a library. Except for a few teachers, there is very little evidence that library books are being used as they should.

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6.9.2.4   Data analysis for the face-to-face interviews

The system of meaning condensation and meaning categorisation was applied in the same way as for all focus group interviews. (See 6.6.5, 6.7.5 & 6.8.5.) An example of meaning condensation for one of the face-to-face interviews follows:

PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE (NATURAL UNIT)	MEANING CONDENSATION (CENTRAL THEME)
This aspect is really a need for our educators as most of them are not informed about choosing the right reading material especially for those learners experiencing lots of difficulties in reading. In most schools provision is not made for learners who are experiencing this difficulty.	Difficulty with correct book selection particularly for learners experiencing reading difficulties.

With regard to **meaning categorisation**, the central themes that emerged from the questions posed were grouped. For example, information related to the reading projects was categorised under **READING PROJECTS**. These categories will be discussed under the heading: Report on face-to-face interviews (see 6.9.7).

6.9.2.5   Verification of data for face-to-face interviews

Guba's model to ensure validity and reliability (Schurink *et al.* 1998:331) was also used to verify data in the face-to-face interviews.

♦ **Truth value** was accepted. After checking the results critically, the face validity seemed to be high due to the credibility of the participants' responses, some of which have been included (see 6.9.4).

♦ **Consistency** could be claimed as many of the responses from the three participants corresponded with each other and often with those of the participants in focus group interview four and five.

♦ **Neutrality** could be claimed, as the data analysis was free of perspectives, motivations and other biases. In the researcher's opinion, the data was analysed in an objective way.

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6.9.2.6 Report on the face-to-face interviews

The central themes and subsequent categories that were identified follow.

♦ Teachers used mainly basal readers together with books supplied by reading projects. Other genres such as non-fiction books, picture story books, cartoon-styled books and children's poetry were not readily available in all classes.

♦ A large number of learners were experiencing reading difficulties, especially in English.

♦ The available reading material does not always match the interest and level of competence of over-aged learners.

♦ Teachers are not able to provide reading material that cater for learners' interests and strengths to support Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence (see 3.7).

♦ Hardly any teachers were known to plan simple group activities by making use of reading material that corresponds with the programme organiser/theme in use as they do not fully understand and apply the whole language approach (see 4.2).

♦ While only a few schools have a functional library, the majority of schools either did not have a library or had a library that was not functioning in an optimal way. This situation puts learners at a disadvantage as different types of reading material are not accessible and extended reading opportunities cannot be provided.

♦ Teachers need support in selecting appropriate reading material as they often select books at face value.

♦ There is a need for more developmentally appropriate reading material in home languages and English.

♦ All three participants agreed on the value of empowering teachers to write their own reading material. This skill would allow teachers to develop reading material according to the different levels of performance of all their learners. It would also empower them to think creatively and stimulate their problem-solving skills.

6.9.2.7   Concluding remarks

The three participants generally agreed on key issues such as the discernable number of learners who experience reading difficulties, particularly in English. They also agreed on teachers' inability to implement the whole language approach to its full, especially their inability to provide reading material that is integrated with their programme organiser/themes. Other areas of agreement included many teachers' inability to select suitable reading material and the provision of reading material to develop learners' different intelligences. Another point of agreement included the situation regarding the functioning of school libraries.

Although all three participants agreed on the value of empowering Grade 3 teachers to write their own reading material in English, they felt that the skills should also be used to develop more reading material in learners' home language.

6.9.3   FACE-TO-FACE   INTERVIEW   WITH   DISTRICT   OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES

6.9.3.1   Design of the face-to-face interview

The following questions were prepared for this interview:

♦ Introductory questions: These would introduce the general topic of discussion, namely his views regarding school libraries in Soshanguve, for example:

   What are your thoughts regarding school libraries in Soshanguve at present?

♦ Transition questions: These questions would be aimed at establishing the current position regarding school libraries in Soshanguve primary schools, for example:

   Is it true that very few primary schools in Soshanguve have libraries?

♦ Key questions: The aim of these questions is to drive the discussion and require the most attention in the subsequent data analysis. The following are examples of these questions:

Who supplies the books for these libraries?

Why do so many schools lack a library?

Are there sufficient books for Foundation Phase learners in these libraries?

Is it not possible for the mobile library to service Soshanguve primary schools?

♦ Concluding questions: These questions aim to bring closure to the discussion and to provide the interviewee with an opportunity to reflect on what was said, for example:

Are you generally satisfied with teachers' utilisation of their libraries? **(All-things-considered question)**

Do you agree that the most important points that came out of this discussion are the following? **(Summary question)**

6.9.3.2 Realisation of the face-to-face interview

The interview was held during the course of the day and lasted approximately thirty minutes. The interviewee was thanked for his willingness to supply the information needed for this study and was assured that no names of schools would be disclosed in the study. Respect was shown by not interrupting him, accepting his points of view and recognising him as the authority and most knowledgeable person with regard to the status of school libraries in Soshanguve.

6.9.3.3 Transcription of face-to-face interview

This step involved the conversion of oral responses into written text. The following are examples of questions asked and the responses that followed:

TABLE 6.17   RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS REGARDING SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Question: *Is it true that very few primary schools in Soshanguve have libraries?*
Response: *Not quite. Most primary schools have some books but they don't have space that can be used as a library. The books are often kept in someone's classroom or in a storeroom. Teachers and learners cannot access the books very easily in such cases.*
Question: *Who supplies the books for these libraries?*
Response: *Some schools buy books for the library. Many schools use books that are donated for their libraries. The Library and Information Services often make such books available. City schools and the private sector also donate books to schools in Soshanguve.*
Question: *Are there sufficient books for Foundation Phase learners in these libraries?*
Response: *I don't think so. I don't think there will ever be enough books for any group of learners in a library.*
Question: *Is it not possible for the mobile library to service Soshanguve primary schools?*
Response: *Not at this stage. But there is a courier service between the Teachers' Centre in Soshanguve and the Library and Information Services in Skinner Street. Teachers can ask for any books or books on a certain topic. These will be sent to the Teachers Centre. All that teachers have to do is to ask for the books, fetch them at the Teachers' Centre and to return them when they have finished using them.*
Question: *Do teachers make optimal use of this service?*
Response: *No, definitely not. It is a pity because there are lots of wonderful books that they could borrow.*

6.9.3.4 Data analysis for the face-to-face interview

The system of meaning condensation and meaning categorisation was applied in the same way as for all focus group interviews. (See 6.6.5, 6.7.5 & 6.8.5.)

An example of meaning condensation follows:

PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE (NATURAL UNIT)	*MEANING CONDENSATION (CENTRAL THEME)*
When primary schools were built in Soshanguve, people did not think of adding a room that could serve as a library. Most of the space was used for building classrooms. That is why schools don't have what we could call a proper library. The books that the schools have, even though some schools have very few, have to be kept in any available space, which is usually a storeroom or a classroom.	Lack of space in primary schools to house a library. Books housed in storerooms or classrooms.

6.9.3.5 Verification of data for the face-to-face interview

Guba's model to ensure validity and reliability (Schurink *et al.* 1998:331) was also used to verify data in this face-to-face interview.

♦ **Truth value** was accepted. After checking the results critically, the face validity seemed to be high due to the credibility of the interviewee's responses, some of which have been included (see 6.9.3.4). Similar observations were made the Foundation Phase facilitators (see 6.9.2.) and the researcher (see 6.10).

♦ **Neutrality** could be claimed, as the data analysis was free of perspectives, motivations and other biases. In the researcher's opinion, the data was analysed in an objective way.

6.9.3.6 Report on the face-to-face interview

During this interview, it became clear that most primary schools in Soshanguve lacked space and could not establish a well-functioning library. However, there are some schools that have well-functioning libraries. In fact, one specific school had an outstanding library and the district hoped to develop it into a model library. It was also discovered that the number of library books in the schools was not sufficient, despite that fact that many books were donated to schools. What is more, many of these books are outdated. This implies that there are not sufficient books for Foundation Phase learners.

A disturbing fact that came to light was that many teachers did not make optimal use of the courier service that is available. (A librarian at the Education Library confirmed this fact after the interview when the researcher went to borrow books that would be needed for the action research that was to be undertaken. See 6.13.) Moreover, it was determined that the school usually covers any travelling costs involved when fetching and returning books. This implies that many teachers were depriving their learners of reading opportunities.

6.9.3.7 Concluding remarks

Although many primary schools in Soshanguve do not have a well-functioning library, there are other possibilities for teachers to obtain suitable books. For instance, they could borrow books from the Education Library. These books could be read for enjoyment or used to enhance the theme with which they are busy. In addition, books could be borrowed to meet learners' specific needs, interests and abilities. Obtaining relevant books to a theme would also allow teachers to implement the whole language approach more effectively. This service, however, was not used optimally.

6.10   OBSERVATIONS MADE BY THE RESEARCHER

Participant observation is a recognised data collection method in qualitative research (De Vos 1998a:48). During school visits to primary schools in Soshanguve, the researcher made several personal observations with regard to reading material used in the Foundation Phase, particularly in Grade 3. A brief discussion of these observations follows.

6.10.1   Difficulties with book selection

Teachers generally experienced difficulty with the correct selection of books. Books were often ordered without sufficient knowledge on how to attempt this task. Books were often ordered at face value with the result that many books are not well-suited for the target group of learners. Moreover, teachers were not adequately empowered to select developmentally appropriate reading material for learners who experience reading difficulties.

The dialogue that follows serves as an example of a situation where a Grade 3 teacher had difficulty with book selection. She was asked to show the English readers that she was using for formal reading instruction.

Researcher:	*Ma'm, how many learners are in your class?*
Teacher:	*Thirty one.*
Researcher:	*How many learners are able to read this book?*
Teacher:	*Only three.*
Researcher:	*Don't you have Grade 2 or Grade 1 books of this series for the other twenty eight learners?*
Teacher:	*No, we only bought these Grade 3 books.*
Researcher:	*Do you have any other Grade 1 and 2 English readers?*
Teacher:	*No, in Grade 1 and 2 the learners read in their mother tongue*

The preceding dialogue clearly shows that this Foundation Phase teacher had serious problems with the selection of developmentally appropriate reading material. The background to this conversation should be noted as well. Before the conversation with the teacher, the principal was asked to identify the most urgent problems related to curriculum matters in his school. His response was the following:

> *I will say that it is that our learners in the higher grades can't read and write. It is our biggest problem and is giving us a lot of worries.*

The problem identified by the principal was clearly related to the Grade 3 teacher's difficulty with the selection of appropriate reading material, which in turn, affects the development of reading skills. A 'ripple effect' develops. If learners are not provided with suitable reading material, they are not able to develop the basic reading skills, which affect performance in other learning programmes in the Intermediate Phase and learning areas in the Senior Phase.

6.10.2 Limited variety of genres

Policy documents such as DoE (2002a:10, 19, 35), DoE (2002d:33) and GDE (1998:64, 93), state that Foundation Phase learners must be exposed to fiction and non-fiction reading material, which implies that learners must read different types of reading material. During school visits it became clear that most teachers did not a have a great variety of reading material available in their classrooms. The majority had basal readers and big books. Where there was a school library, a greater variety of books such as poetry books, picture story books and non-fiction books were available for learners to read. In cases where school libraries were non-existent, the variety of reading material was extremely limited.

6.10.3   Inadequate number of multilingual and multicultural books

A deliberate effort was made to determine whether Foundation Phase teachers had any multilingual and/or multicultural books in their classrooms. There were a substantial number of authentic multicultural books available but many more are needed to promote social change in South Africa. Despite the requirement by the language policy in education (DoE 1997d:1) that multilingualism had to be promoted, hardly any multilingual books were available in Foundation Phase classrooms in Soshanguve.

6.10.4   School libraries

As the situation surrounding school libraries varies, primary schools in Soshanguve can be classified into the following three broad groups:

♦ Group 1: Schools that have a well-functioning library. Only a small group of schools fall in this category.

♦ Group 2: Schools that do not a have library. The majority of schools fall in this category.

♦ Group 3: Schools that have a 'non-functional' library. For instance, due to a lack of storage space, the library books are housed in a storeroom, which makes the books less accessible for learners. Schools that fall into this category usually have a limited number of books.

A particular incident illustrates the inaccessibility of library books in a particular school. The principal asked the facilitator for Language, Literacy and Communication at the district office for books, as he wanted to establish a school library. Shortly afterwards, a donation of books was made available to schools. The researcher also works closely with this language facilitator and it was decided to select approximately eighty of the donated books for this particular school with the view of starting an extended reading project and then reporting on the progress thereof. During the time when records of the books were being drawn up, the district office arranged a workshop for teachers on the effective management of a school library. The researcher and her colleague made sure

that a few of the teachers from this particular school attended the workshop in preparation for the books that they were about to receive.

The researcher and her colleague personally delivered the books to the school in April 2003. On arrival, it was discovered that there was already a handsome number of quality books in the room that was to serve as a library. These books were received early in 2002 but no attempt had been made to catalogue the books for use by teachers and learners.

The following is an extract from the dialogue that took place:

> *Facilitator:*   *How long will it take before you will be utilising your library?*
> *Teacher:*   *I'm not sure. Perhaps only next year.*
> *Facilitator:*   *Do you mean the books will only be available for learners and teachers in 2004?*
> *Teacher:*   *I think so.*
> *Facilitator:*   *Is it not possible for every teacher to catalogue a few books every week so that this process can be speeded up?*
> *Teacher:*   *Maybe we can do that but we will have to talk about it first because we have lots of work.*

There was no sense of urgency in making the books available to learners and teachers as many books were already received early in 2002 but were not yet accessible to learners and teachers by April 2003 (nearly one year later). Unless pressure was placed on the school, these books would only be available in 2004.

6.10.5   Book donations

In 2003, book donations to schools were once again made available. The researcher and the facilitator referred to earlier on (see 6.10.4) went to collect some books with the aim of supporting a few deserving schools in a venture to undertake additional extended reading projects. The venue from where the books were distributed housed a vast number of books in an excellent condition. Although there were many books in African languages and Afrikaans, the majority were written in English. The researcher opted to select English books for Foundation Phase learners while her colleague agreed to select suitable English books for the Intermediate and Senior Phase.

A tedious task followed as more than a hundred English books were browsed through to ensure that the best were selected for the Foundation Phase. However, the

researcher only found **two** English books that contained African characters. Many of the books were donated by schools from the United Kingdom and were clearly written for learners from that country. In addition, most of the characters were predominantly white and many of the settings would be unfamiliar to Foundation Phase learners in Soshanguve. Other shortcomings were noted, for example, **none** of the books that were browsed through portrayed a disabled character while many books contained stereotypes. (Despite their shortcomings, a handsome number of books were eventually selected, as they could be used for various activities in the Foundation Phase classroom. In the light of the shortage of books in many schools, they could not be rejected just because they do not meet all the criteria identified in Chapter 5. A question mark could, however, be put on their **true** suitability for Foundation Phase learners in previously disadvantaged schools such as those in Soshanguve.)

6.11   A COMPARISON OF FINDINGS

Many problems related to reading material in Foundation Phase classrooms in Soshanguve were identified through holding the fourth and fifth focus group interview and the three face-to-face interviews. This information was supplemented by observations made by the researcher during school visits.

Table 6.18 shows a comparison between the problems identified by district officials, the teachers interviewed in the fourth and fifth focus group interviews and observations made by the researcher.

TABLE 6.18 **READING MATERIAL IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE: A COMPARISON OF FINDINGS**

PROBLEMS	TEACHERS	DISTRICT OFFICIALS	RESEAR-CHER
Insufficient reading material (English/ vernacular)	√	√	
Inadequate material for learners with special needs	√	√	√
Budget restraints	√	√	
Difficulties with the selection of readers	√	√	√
Irrelevant books			√
Books damaged or lost by learners	√		
Lack of multicultural/multilingual reading material			√
Insufficient functional school libraries	√	√	√

Table 6.18 shows a positive correlation between many of the problems identified by the participants who were interviewed and the observations made by the researcher. These include insufficient reading material in English and primary language, inadequate reading material for learners with special educational needs and insufficient functional school libraries.

Table 6.19 portrays the possible solutions that were considered by the participants in the face-to-face and the fourth and fifth focus group interviews.

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TABLE 6.19   POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS OFFERED

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	TEACHERS	DISTRICT OFFICE
More funds to be made available by DoE/SGB	√	
Requests for book donations	√	√
Support by district officials on book selection	√	√
Training parents regarding care of books	√	
Collaboration with Teachers' Centre Library	√	√

The solutions offered by participants in the fourth and fifth focus group interviews and the face-to-face interviews correlate with regard to requests for book donations, support with the selection of books and collaboration with the library at the Teachers' Centre in Soshanguve.

6.12   THE WAY FORWARD AFTER DATA COLLECTION

Based on the findings from the fourth and fifth focus group interviews, the face-to-face interviews and her observations, the researcher identified one of the common problems and considered a possible solution.

The problem

Inadequate reading material in many Foundation Phase classrooms in Soshanguve with which to

- ◆ provide a structured reading support programme for learners with special needs;
- ◆ provide sufficient reading material to create a print-rich environment;
- ◆ provide exposure to a variety of different types of reading material;
- ◆ apply the whole language approach;
- ◆ develop learners' multiple intelligences and
- ◆ promote multiculturalism and multilingualism.

A possible solution: Teacher-authored reading material

The empowerment of Grade 3 teachers in Soshanguve to write their own developmentally appropriate reading material in English could be a feasible solution. (It became clear that there is a need for reading material in learners' home language as well but the researcher would not be able to evaluate work done in an African language. Therefore, the decision was made to focus on Grade 3 because in most cases, learners start reading English as their first additional language in this grade.)

Motivation for the selection of this solution

The following factors underpin the proposed solution:

If school budgets are exhausted, then it could take some time before more books could be ordered or purchased from publishers. The development of teacher-authored reading material could provide learners with supplementary reading material within a reasonably short period of time.

It could also take a long time if teachers relied solely on financial donations from the private sector. The possibility also exists that no such donations will be made. Teacher-authored reading material could help to fill the void.

Support from the facilitators for Inclusion and the Literacy Learning Programme in the Foundation Phase at the district office with regard to the selection of books is a feasible solution. However, if schools do not have sufficient funds, then these books cannot be purchased anyway.

Liaison with the library at the Teachers' Centre in Soshanguve is also a practical solution. Teachers can request books from the Education Library and these will be delivered to the Teachers' Centre and collected there again. Many teachers may experience difficulty collecting and returning these books because their schools are not situated in close proximity to the Teachers' Centre.

Teacher-authored reading material is a cost-effective way to provide reading opportunities for learners, albeit that the material could probably not be equated with

books that are purchased from publishers. On the other hand, teachers could develop reading material that meets the **specific** needs of learners in a class. For example, if there is a learner with a poor self-image, the teacher could write a book emphasising the learner's strengths. Alternatively, an existing story could be transposed and the learner's name could be substituted with that of the main character. Similarly, a specific book could be written about a certain television character or programme to motivate a reluctant reader who has a special interest in this character or programme. The advantage of teacher-authored reading material is that it can be made available within a short period of time as books needed for a specific purpose might not be readily available even if there are sufficient books in class or the school library.

Mobilisation of the process

To mobilise this process, it would firstly be necessary to consult the literature to determine what types of reading material are recommended for Foundation Phase learners and then to determine realistic criteria that could help novice teachers to embark on this journey. The literature review undertaken in Chapter 4 and 5 served this purpose. Thereafter, action research would be undertaken as explained in the next section.

6.13 ACTION RESEARCH: A THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Although it is a relatively new research design, action research in education has a history of more than fifty years (http://info.csd.org/WWW/resources/ arc/essay1.html#overview). Action research can be traced back to the early work of John Dewey in the 1920's and that of the social psychologist, Kurt Lewin, in the 1940's. However, Stephen Corey and his colleagues at the Teachers' College of the University of Columbia first introduced this research design to the educational community in 1949 (http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed355205.html).

6.13.1 A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE CONCEPT *ACTION RESEARCH*

The literature review revealed that there is no universally accepted definition of action research as it can be interpreted in many different ways. Action research is undertaken on a small scale and deals with real-world situations. It depends mainly on observation and behavioural data. For this reason, it is pragmatic and not divorced from the context

within which it is undertaken. Teachers participating in action research usually work collaboratively but could also work individually. During the research project, teachers are required to be self-critical, to constantly monitor what was done and to evaluate their actions, which are relatively flexible. The purpose of action research in education is to empower teachers to reflect on their teaching practice, to identify difficulties experienced by learners and to reflect on curriculum matters. At the same time, teachers' knowledge is extended, curriculum delivery is improved and professional empowerment is achieved (Cohen & Manion 1996:186; Kemmis & McTaggart 1988:10; Walliman 2001:96; Zuber-Skerritt 1992:1-2).

6.13.2   CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTION RESEARCH

The following characteristics of action research motivated the selection thereof for this study:

♦ Action research is **pragmatic** as its chief identifying characteristic is the recognition of the practical requirements of educational practitioners for organised, reflective inquiry into classroom instruction (http://www.phy.nau.edu/~danmac/actionrsch. html). Action research also involves both **practical and theoretical** issues as increased knowledge helps to improve practice (Winter in Hodgkinson & Maree 1998:53). As the purpose of this particular study is to provide information and skills that are practical and will help to meet some of the needs of Foundation Phase learners and teachers in Soshanguve, action research was selected as part of the research design.

♦ Action research is **situational** (Hodgkinson & Maree 1998:53) as a problem within a specific context is identified and an attempt is made to find a solution within that context (Cohen & Manion 1996:186; Tomlinson in Kamper *et al.* 1999:286). Action research is also most appropriate for teachers who recognise shortcomings in their teaching practice, apply some form of intervention and thereafter, evaluate the success thereof (http://www.phy.nau.edu/~danmac/actionrsch.html). Through focus group interviews it has become evident that several Foundation Phase teachers experience problems with regard to reading material. The development of teacher-authored reading material is a possible solution for this problem as the material could be written to meet the specific needs of learners within a specific situation.

♦ Action research is mostly **collaborative** and **participatory** because it usually involves a team of practitioners (Cohen & Manion 1996:186; Hodgkinson & Maree 1998:53). The researcher is a co-worker doing research with the participants with the aim of solving the problem related to reading material (Zuber-Skerritt 1992:12-13). As the researcher has identified certain criteria that could be used to empower Foundation Phase teachers to write their own reading material, it can be regarded as a collaborative and participatory effort. If teachers work together on this project, they could evaluate each other's attempts and work in the true spirit of OBE where collaboration is encouraged. For example, teachers can work in pairs and develop a picture story book. The teacher with verbal-linguistic strengths could write the text and her colleague, who has visual-spatial strengths, could illustrate it. Thereafter the book could be used on a rotational basis.

♦ Action research is **self-evaluative (self-critical)** and **continuous** (Hodgkinson & Maree 1998:53) as it requires participants to continuously evaluate the action taken to ensure that the practice shows improvement or that the problem is solved (Cohen & Manion 1996:186; http://www.phy.nau.edu/~danmac/actionrsch.html; Zuber-Skerritt 1992:14). Self and peer assessment were done in Cycle 1 and 2 as the idea is that after the third cycle, teachers will continue to write their own reading material and be self-critical.

6.13.3   MODELS OF ACTION RESEARCH

Several models of action research are found in the literature. Although all the models basically follow the same steps, two models will be combined in this study, namely those of **Zuber-Skerritt** and **Kemmis and McTaggart**. The reason for this decision is that the two models are both spirals and are very similar. Hodgkinson and Maree (1998:54-56) have adapted the steps proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart as can be seen from the following table:

TABLE 6.20   **A COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO MODELS OF ACTION RESEARCH**

ZUBER-SKERRITT'S MODEL	KEMMIS AND McTAGGART'S MODEL (adapted by Hodgkinson and Maree)
Plan	General plan
Act	First action step
Observe	Monitor
Reflect	Evaluate

Graphically, the procedures can be presented as follows:

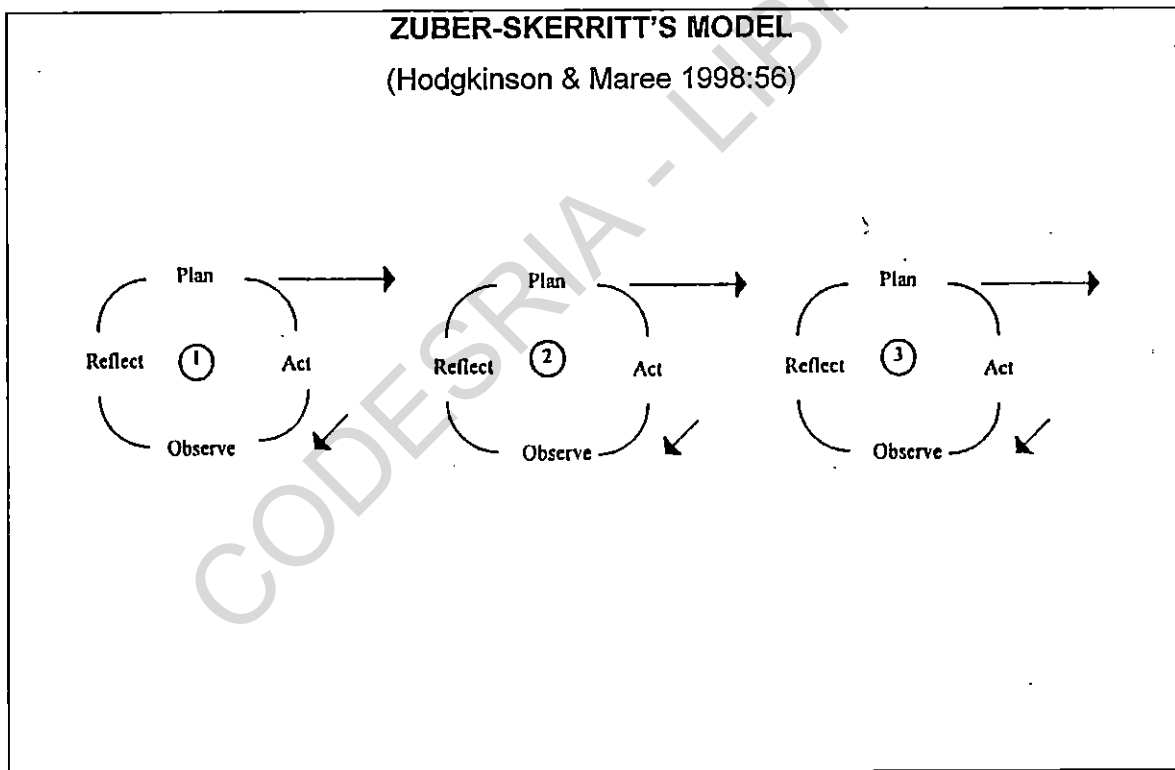**FIGURE 6.3**   **ZUBER-SKERRITT'S MODEL OF ACTION RESEARCH**

ZUBER-SKERRITT'S MODEL
(Hodgkinson & Maree 1998:56)

FIGURE 6.4 ***KEMMIS AND McTAGGART'S MODEL OF ACTION RESEARCH***

KEMMIS AND McTAGGART'S MODEL

(adapted from Hodgkinson & Maree 1998:57 by CJS van Staden)

Plan

1) Act
2) Observe
3) Reflect

Revised Plan

1) Act
2) Observe
3) Reflect
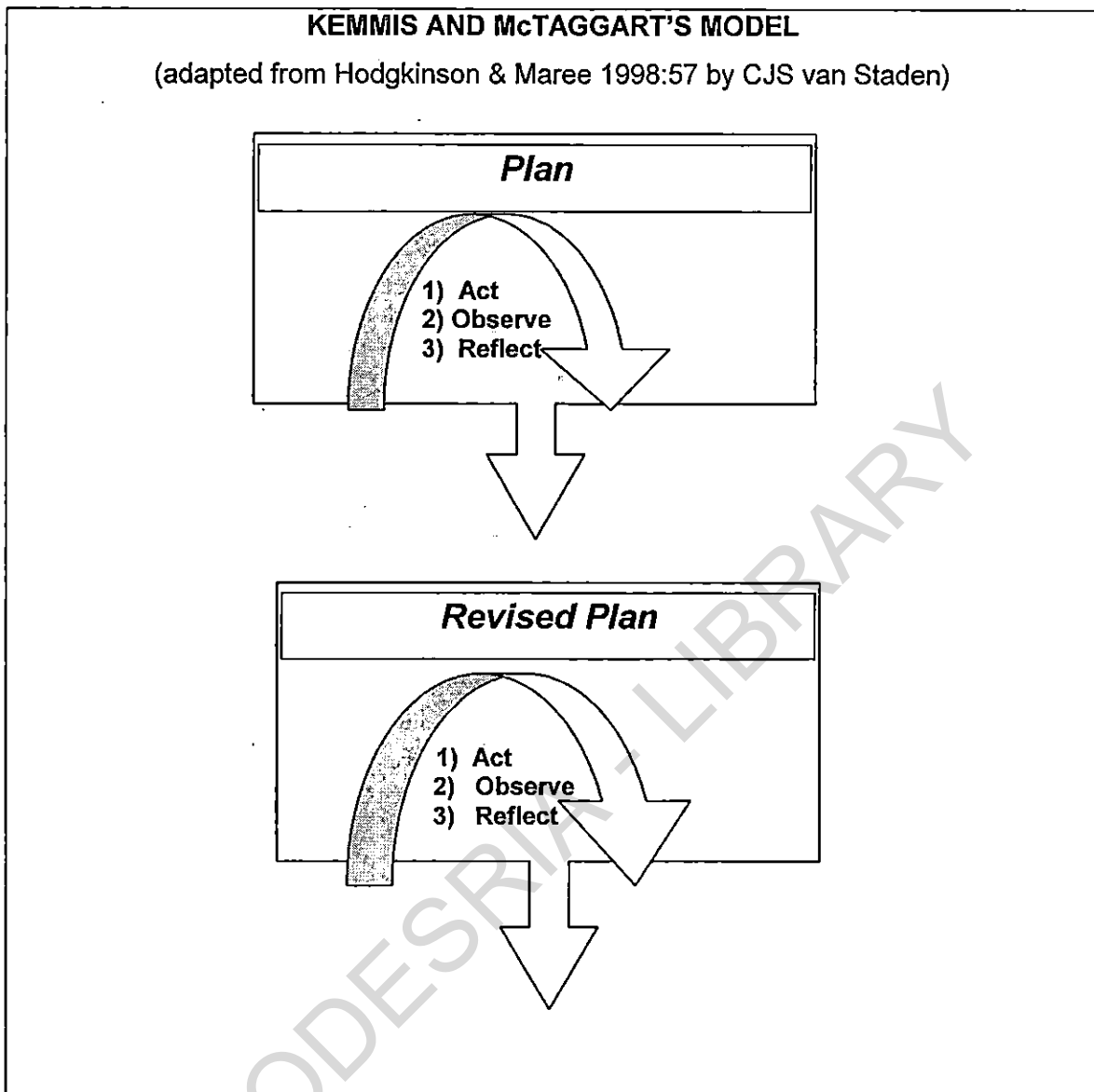
6.14   ACTION RESEARCH: PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The results from the interviews showed that schools vary in their need for reading material. Whereas some Foundation Phase teachers maintain that they have adequate reading material, there are those who are in dire need thereof. The need for reading material in many Foundation Phase classrooms is the driving force behind the action research that was undertaken.

The purpose of this action research was to empower Grade 3 teachers to write their own reading material in English. The main reasons for this decision were discussed earlier on (see 6.12). The eventual results would indicate whether the criteria provided could be of value to other Grade 3 teachers who are in need of reading material.

What follows is an explanation of how the action research was planned and how each cycle developed. The first step was to select teachers for the action research. Thereafter, the first meeting took place and the subsequent cycles were put into motion.

6.14.1   SELECTION OF PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

Nearly all primary schools in Soshanguve are involved in the READ, OLSTED and/or MOLTENO reading project, which placed them more or less on level ground and another selection criterion had to be used. The criterion then decided upon was to involve Grade 3 teachers from schools that either had no school library or a non-functional library. (In the researcher's opinion, teachers from schools that did have a well-functioning library would not be sufficiently motivated to participate in the project.)

Action research requires collaboration, a critical mind and continuation (see 6.13.2). For this reason, two teachers per school were selected to make collaboration possible and to enable them to critique each other's work. Initially, sixteen teachers took part in the action research. (Six teachers withdrew before completing the first cycle and the researcher was forced to recruit six other teachers. Two of the newly-recruited teachers were from schools involved in the READ project. However, they heard about the project and expressed their desire to be part thereof to enhance their personal development.)

6.14.2   BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

The following biographical information has been included to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the work done by the teachers who volunteered to participate in the action research:

TABLE 6.21 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

TEACHER	EXPERIENCE: FOUNDATION PHASE	HIGHEST QUALIFICATIONS AND CURRENT STUDIES
A	20 years (Grade 3: 10 years)	Primary Diploma in Education
B	26 years (Grade 3: 8 years)	Primary Diploma in Education
C	16 years (Grade 3: 4 years)	Higher Diploma in Education. Current studies: BA
D	13 years (Grade 3: 2 years)	Senior Primary Teaching Diploma
E	14 years (Grade 3: 5 years)	Senior Primary Teaching Diploma
F	33 years (Grade 3: 7 years)	Diploma in Education
G	25 years (Grade 3: 12 years)	Primary Teaching Certificate
H	5 years (Grade 3: 3 years)	BPrim Ed
I	4 years: (Grade 3: 2 years)	BPrim Ed
J	19 years (Grade 3: 10 years)	Diploma in Education
K	13 years (Grade 3: 8 years)	Senior Primary Teaching Diploma
L	6 years (Grade 3: 6 years)	BEd
M	15 years (Grade 3: 12 years)	Further Diploma in Education
N	18 years (Grade 3: 12 years)	BA. Current studies: BEd
O	11 years (Grade 3: 4 years)	Diploma in Education
P	3 years (Grade 3: 1 year)	BPrim Ed; Current studies: BEd (Hons)

(Written evidence of qualifications was not controlled.)

6.14.3 THE FIRST CYCLE

The four steps proposed by Zuber-Skerritt as well as Kemmis and McTaggart (see 6.13.3) were followed, namely general planning, action step, observation and monitoring, reflection and evaluation.

6.14.3.1 General planning

The first step in both models involves planning of some sort. This includes formulating the problem, defining strategies such as the allocation of tasks (Cohen & Manion 1996:198-199) and prioritising activities (Hodgkinson & Maree 1998:59).

First of all, the researcher had to clearly define the purpose of the action research by formulating the problem: How can Grade 3 teachers in Soshanguve be empowered to develop their own reading material?

Thereafter, the first meeting had to be planned. Aspects that had to be addressed included placing the problem in context, clarifying the vision and purpose of the project as well as preparing for anticipated questions and answers. One such question could be: *How long will this process last?* In addition, the process (the three cycles) had to be explained. In the first cycle, teachers would be asked to write their own reading material. Peer and self-assessment would be done. Based on the input received together with limited input from the researcher, they would continue with their second attempt. In the second cycle, self and peer assessment would be done again. Thereafter, the researcher would provide them with examples of different types of reading material that is suitable for Foundation Phase learners together with a set of criteria that they should use in their third attempt. The researcher would assess their third attempts and return these at a later stage together with a written report on their progress.

6.14.3.2 First action step

The first action step or main activity involved the actual implementation of the strategic plan. Firstly, the date for the initial meeting as well as the time and venue had to be confirmed. Once care was taken of these aspects, the participants were telephonically contacted to inform them of the meeting.

During the first meeting, the aspects listed under general planning were addressed (see 6.14.3.1). At the same time, an attempt was made to build a relationship of trust and co-operation with the participants. For instance, they were assured that they would remain anonymous in the study. Thereafter, the outcome of the first cycle was explained to them, namely that they should write their own story in English for their Grade 3 learners. It was explained that the criteria developed by the researcher would be given in Cycle 3 because evidence was needed to show whether or not these criteria helped them to improve their initial attempts. (A comparison between their three attempts would provide this evidence.)

Two conditions were clearly emphasised. Firstly, the reading material had to be

suitable for their learners (Grade 3) and be linked to a programme organiser or theme. Secondly, the story had to be **original** or had to be their own version of an existing story. This meant that they were not allowed to copy a story from a book. If, however, they read a book and wished to rewrite the story in their own words, they should indicate that they had used an existing book for this purpose. Finally, the teachers agreed that their first attempt would be ready within three weeks.

During the meeting, the teachers were asked to express their feelings about the project. It became clear that their feelings varied between insecurity and willingness to accept the challenge as can be seen in Table 6.22.

TABLE 6.22   *PARTICIPANTS' FEELINGS REGARDING THE ACTION*
                RESEARCH

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
Write my own stories? Eish! I never thought of that but perhaps I can try.
English is not my mother tongue. Perhaps I will make a lot of mistakes.
This sounds quite exciting – I'd like to give it a try. I'm sure I can learn a lot and I think I need this skill.
M'am, if you show us how, then I'm sure we can do it.
I think I will make a lot of mistakes but I can learn. Just like with this OBE – we all struggled but now we are much better.
I think it will be difficult to find time to do this. You must please give us a long time to finish it.

6.14.3.3 Observation and monitoring

According to Cohen and Manion (1996:192, 199), the activities that need to be monitored during this stage include gathering of information or evidence, classifying and analysing the data, monitoring the task by providing feedback and noting problems and mistakes.

The session that was held at the Teachers' Centre in Soshanguve lasted approximately two hours. During this session, peer and self-assessment were done. The researcher gave limited input and answered questions that were directly asked. At first, teachers were hesitant to express their opinions regarding their own work and that of their peers but gradually, with limited input by the researcher, they started to identify aspects that were positive as well as aspects that called for attention.

Table 6.23 shows examples of the input given during this session.

TABLE 6.23   EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES: CYCLE 1

PARTICIPANT	PEER ASSESSMENT (unedited)	SELF ASSESSMENT (unedited)
TEACHER A	She must try by all means to write more neatly. And even bigger. It is hard to see all the letters.	Yes, I see the writing is not clear for Grade 3 to read.
TEACHER B	The words, they are a bit too difficult. Look at this word **butchery** for a good example. She must say what happened to the robber at the end.	My story – I think it is not so bad but it was very much difficult to write some-thing for Grade 3 learners to read. I never knew it would be a problem to write for Grade 3!
TEACHER D	I like the idea of making a book. Next time I will do that as well.	My pictures – they are not good but I can try again to improve.

6.14.3.4 Evaluation

This step requires reflection, thinking, interpretation, explaining and evaluating the outcomes of the action plan (Cohen & Manion 1996:199; Hodgkinson & Maree 1998:60).

The following aspects that emerged from the first cycle were discussed with the view that they would help teachers to improve their second attempt:

♦ The reading material should be neatly presented, for example in the form of a book and not written on a piece of paper.

♦ The teacher's handwriting should be legible and not be too small. The size of letters should not be smaller than that found in a printed reader for Foundation Phase learners. In fact, the size of the letters should not be smaller than a font size of 14 on a computer.

♦ The choice of vocabulary had to be reconsidered as many of the words such as butchery, ambulance and sufficient are too difficult for the average Grade 3 learner reading English as his or her first additional language.

- The length of the text should not be too long and the theme should match the developmental level of Grade 3 learners.

- Pictures are very important in reading material for Foundation Phase learners as it helps them to understand the story. However, it is important to ensure that the pictures tell the same story as the text.

6.14.3.5 Formal evaluation of work produced in Cycle 1

The researcher collected the work done in the first cycle with the aim of evaluating it against the criteria developed in Chapter 5. The following observations were made:

(a) Types of reading material selected

All the work produced was teacher-authored. Twelve teachers produced material that could fall into the realistic fiction category. However, only two were presented in book-form but could not be regarded as picture story books because they did not contain any pictures. Two teachers wrote poems, another wrote an animal tale while the last one wrote a prayer.

(b) Assessment criteria

Each teacher's work was evaluated against the criteria researched in Chapter 5. The purpose of this activity at this early stage was to monitor each teacher's progress over the three cycles.

(i) Literary elements

- Characterisation: The teachers succeeded in describing the characters' behaviour although only one teacher made use of a dialogue to reflect the character's feelings. In general, the characters were credible and community-orientated.

- Plot: All the teachers found it difficult to develop the plot and clearly portray some form of conflict. Only three stories had a fairly satisfactory ending while many other aspects, such as the creation of excitement and the inclusion of the element of surprise, were not considered.

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♦ Setting: This aspect was not aptly described at the start of any of the stories.

♦ Theme: The theme of the stories and one of the poems was suitable. Examples of themes that were selected are a robbery, the school and pets. One of the poems was, however, totally unsuitable for Grade 3 learners. A line from *Freedom Child* reads as follows: *No man conceived unawares, no pregnancy can be hidden, so was the great man's pregnancy* (referring to Nelson Mandela).

♦ Style: The majority of participants used vocabulary that was, in the researcher's opinion, far too difficult for Grade 3 learners in schools where the language of learning and instruction is not their mother tongue. In addition, the sentences were very long as was the length of the text. There was no evidence of figurative language or humour in the material produced.

♦ Narration and dialogue: Only three stories consisted of a combination of both dialogue and narrative. The rest consisted of narrative only.

(ii)   Children's interests

Most of the themes fell within the interest and experience of Grade 3 learners. These included stories about children in the community, pets, relatives and a robbery in a shop.

(iii)   Fantasy and realism

The stories mainly fell within the category of realism. It was noted that none of the teachers attempted to write a fantasy story.

(iv)   Fear and violence

Fear was included in only one story, namely the one about the robber shooting at people in a shop. The picture that was drawn did not explicitly portray any violence.

(v)   *Moral issues*

Two stories clearly involved moral issues. The good deed was rewarded in the story about Ben's ball but the bad deed was not punished in the story about the robbery in the shop.

(vi)   *Anti-bias*

The reading material often portrayed evidence of gender stereotypes, for example, both the shopkeeper and the robber were men. It was noted that no disabled persons were included in any of the reading material produced.

(vii)   *Multiculturalism*

All the characters were from the same cultural group. Consequently no multicultural or multilingual texts were prepared.

(viii)   *Developmental appropriateness of reading material*

Most of the reading material was generally developmentally inappropriate. Not only was the text too long but also many multisyllable words such as *recipe, sufficient* and *precious* were used. These words are difficult to read and are not understood or used by the average Grade 3 learner who only started reading English in this grade.

(ix)   *Pictures*

♦ Only three teachers included pictures in their reading material. Based on the comments made during self-assessment, they found this aspect rather difficult. In one case, a picture was traced from a colouring-in book while another teacher cut a picture from a magazine. The third teacher drew her own pictures. The harmonisation of pictures and text was inadequate in all three cases.

♦ Number of pictures: In two cases, only one picture was included in the entire work while the third teacher drew a few pictures at random.

♦ Use of colour: The pictures were shaded very lightly with the result that it was difficult to see details. The pictures would also make little impact on the reader.

♦ Technique, media and texture: Coloured pencils were used in the hand-drawn pictures. No other medium was used.

♦ Complexity of pictures: Pictures were generally easy to interpret.

♦ Perspective: The picture traced from a colouring book and the pictures drawn by hand were represented from a child's perspective. The picture from the magazine did not meet this criterion. The relationship between objects and people in the pictures was generally correct.

♦ Composition and design: Difficulties were experienced with this aspect as pictures were placed randomly without forming a unified whole.

♦ Portrayal of stereotypes: No clear stereotypes were observed in the pictures.

(x)   Format of the reading material

♦ Cover: Only three teachers provided the book with a cover. In one case, the author and the title were provided while two books had a blank cover.

♦ Binding: The pages of two books were neatly stapled together. Several teachers wrote their stories or poems on a loose page or in an exercise book.

♦ Size of the book: The reading material presented in book-form were all of an acceptable size.

♦ Print and typeface: All the material was hand-written. One teacher wrote the whole story in capital letters. In general, teachers' handwriting was too small, untidy and often difficult to read. In most of the work, insufficient space was left between letters, words and paragraphs.

6.14.3.6 Conclusions regarding Cycle 1

Teachers had to embark on this journey with very little experience. As can be seen from the formal evaluation, very few of the many types of reading material that is suitable for Foundation Phase learners were considered. It can be concluded that most teachers are not fully aware of the variety of reading material that could be used in the Foundation Phase. An outstanding feature of the work produced in the first cycle is that very few of the criteria identified in Chapter 5 were met.

It was concluded that these teachers were not adequately empowered to write their own reading material. They were clearly in need of further support to develop this skill. Therefore, the second cycle was mobilised.

6.14.4 THE SECOND CYCLE

The same steps used in the first cycle were followed, namely general planning, action step, observation and monitoring, reflection and evaluation.

6.14.4.1 General planning

At the end of the first cycle, the teachers agreed to submit their second attempts within three weeks. A date was scheduled as well as the venue and time. During this period, the researcher had to ensure that the participating teachers stayed committed to the project. Telephonic calls were made to support them with the task at hand and to encourage them to persevere.

6.14.4.2 Second action step

The second action step or main activity involved teachers preparing their second attempts. They could either prepare a new reading passage or improve their original reading material by making use of the input given during the assessment stage in Cycle 1. Only one teacher decided to improve her first attempt while the rest decided to write something new.

6.14.4.3 Observation and monitoring

Activities that needed to be monitored during this stage included gathering of evidence, classifying and analysing the data, monitoring the task by providing feedback and noting problems and mistakes.

One teacher indicated that she could no longer continue with the project due to work pressure and personal problems. The group now consisted of **fifteen** teachers. Only eight of the teachers were ready to submit their work after three weeks. Eventually it took six weeks for all the teachers to complete their second attempts.

During the meeting, teachers were asked to verbalise the problems they experienced while they were in the process of writing their reading material in the second round. The main problems that were mentioned were writing on a Grade 3 level, illustrating the story and improving their handwriting.

The table that follows shows examples of the input given during the second cycle.

TABLE 6.24   *EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES: CYCLE 2*

PARTICIPANT	PEER ASSESSMENT (unedited)	SELF ASSESSMENT (unedited)
TEACHER H	*The title of her story is good. It just says: THE NEW BOY. It will make the learners wonder about the new boy: Is it a new baby boy in the family or is it a new boy at school? The learners will want to read it to find out.* *She must add pictures to her story.*	*I took a long time to think out this story. I think my learners will also like it but I must remember to put in pictures. I see there is some space so I will do it when I get the book back.*
TEACHER K	*She is a very good writer of poems. The writing is not so clear. She must try to write like a Foundation Phase teacher must write on the chalk-board.*	*I made too much mistakes, I think. The others, they must tell me what to do next time.*
TEACHER M	*The title of the book is NAUGHTY DAVID but the cover has flowers on it. I think she should draw a picture of David on the cover.* *She writes neatly but she must not scratch out words that are wrong.*	*I will be honest – I can't draw so I just asked by friend to draw on the cover for me!*
TEACHER N and O (worked together)	*They were clever to work together. I like the idea of using a Bible story.* *They must watch the handwriting because it is a bit small.*	*It is quite good but perhaps it is a bit too long. We had lots of problems with the pictures because we are not very good at drawing. So we made a plan and that was to trace them from another book.*

6.14.4.4 Evaluation

The following aspects were discussed:

♦ Some of the reading material still contained words that are too difficult for Grade 3. Examples of these words include *adventurous, provisions* and *announced.*

♦ The pictures on the covers of two books were not directly related to the story. For example, in the story, *Naughty David,* flowers were drawn on the front cover instead of the main character.

♦ There was a marked improvement in the general presentation of the reading material as most of the work was presented in book-form.

♦ A marked improvement was also noted in the handwriting of most teachers, which made the text far more legible. One teacher wrote with a yellow 'koki' pen on white paper, making the text difficult to read. Teachers were made aware of the effect thereof and were advised to use contrasting colours such as writing with a black or dark blue pen on white or pale yellow paper. In one book, spelling mistakes were scratched out, which made work look unprofessional. Corrective fluid could have been used or alternatively, the text should be drafted first before writing the final copy.

♦ Although one or more pictures were included in each teacher's reading material, it was clear that they all experienced difficulties with the illustrations. Consequently, very few of the criteria pertaining to pictures were met, for example, the effect of colour was not always considered.

♦ Two teachers produced combined efforts with one writing the story and the other illustrating it. One teacher asked someone not participating in the action research to draw the pictures for her story.

6.14.4.5 Formal evaluation of work produced in Cycle 2

The reading material that was written in the second cycle was collected and evaluated against the criteria that were identified in Chapter 5. The following observations were made:

(a) Types of reading material selected

Most teachers still preferred realistic fiction as eleven attempts fell in this category. Furthermore, one fantasy story, two poems, a booklet containing rhymes and a booklet containing short prayers were produced.

(b) Assessment criteria

The same assessment criteria used in the first cycle (see 6.14.3.5) were used for this cycle, namely:

(i)   *Literary elements*

Problems were experienced with most literary elements as can be seen from the following:

♦ Characterisation: Generally, the characters were reasonably credible, predictable and community-orientated. Although the behaviour of the characters were described, only one story included a dialogue that reflected the character's feelings.

♦ Plot: Teachers generally experienced difficulty with the story line. Only two stories portrayed some form of conflict. The stories generally had a fairly satisfactory ending but many other aspects such as the creation of excitement or suspense and the element of surprise were not included.

♦ Setting: Although the settings in the realistic fiction stories were all familiar, for example the school and the home, these were not aptly described at the start of the story.

♦ Style: With regard to language and vocabulary, there was some improvement in the level of difficulty of the text. Many teachers still used vocabulary that was, in the researcher's opinion, far too difficult for Grade 3 learners in schools where the language of learning and instruction is not their home language. Some sentences were still too long but the length of the text was more suitable. There was no evidence of figurative language or humour in the material produced.

♦ Theme: Generally, teachers selected suitable themes for their stories and poems, for example, *The new boy, Shoes* and *Naughty David.*

♦ Narration and dialogue: This aspect varied. In the stories produced, some participants only used the narrative form while others used a combination of both.

(ii)   *Children's interests*

Teachers managed to write reading material that would capture the interest of their learners. The following are some of the titles of these stories: *The new boy, Naughty*

David, Three little cats, What I want to be and *An adventurous day at the zoo*. These stories link with Grade 3 learners' interests and experience.

(iii)   Fantasy and realism

Only one participant wrote a fantasy story while the majority resorted to realistic fiction.

(iv)   Fear and violence

No stories containing fear or violence were produced in this cycle.

(v)   Moral issues

Three stories involved moral issues. In all three, the bad deeds were punished and the good deeds rewarded. For example, in the story, *Sipho tells a lie,* his father punishes him by making him stay at home while his brother and sister visit their grandparents for the weekend.

(vi)   Anti-bias

In most stories, boys or men were the main characters that portrayed their traditional roles such as that of a doctor, a naughty boy and the father punishing the disobedient child. An outstanding feature of the material presented was that none of the characters were disabled or had any other special educational needs.

(vii)   Multiculturalism

No improvement was noted in this area as all the characters belonged to the same cultural group. There was also no evidence in support of multilingualism.

(viii)   Developmental appropriateness of reading material

Although there was a slight improvement in this aspect, many teachers still produced material that was too difficult for Grade 3 learners who are learning in an additional language. For example, multisyllable words such as *adventurous, provisions* and

vicinity (which do not fall within the general vocabulary of the majority of these learners) were used. However, in most cases, the length of the text was more suitable.

(ix)   Pictures

♦ Number of pictures: More pictures were included than before. In some cases, pictures were included on every page but most of the pictures did not complement the text.

♦ Use of colour: Pictures related to the story as well as pictures on the front cover were generally shaded very lightly and lacked bright, appealing colours. These pictures would not readily draw the attention of young learners. Moreover, faintly-coloured pictures made it difficult to see detail. Teachers also did not succeed in using colour to create specific effects.

♦ Technique, media and texture: Except for the pictures that were cut from magazines, the majority of teachers used coloured pencils and 'koki' pens for their illustrations. In one case, the picture that was included did not complement the text as it was drawn from the computer.

♦ Complexity of pictures: Except for the computer-generated picture that was too abstract, the others were generally simply drawn and relatively easy to interpret.

♦ Perspective: In most cases, the relationship between objects and people in the pictures was correct.

♦ Composition and design: In many cases, pictures were randomly placed with the result that the text and the pictures did not form a unified whole.

(x)   Format of the reading material

♦ Cover: Although the books were all provided with a cover, these were not always attractive an/or relevant. For example, the book, *Naughty David* had a colourful cover but the picture (flowers) was irrelevant. One book was presented in the shape of a duck and contained many words with the *-u-* sound, which made it attractive for the target group of learners.

- The title of the book and the name of the author appeared on nearly all the covers.

- Binding: Books were generally neatly bound or written in an exercise book with a fairly durable cover. In two cases, the books were covered with gift paper.

- Size of the book: Reading material that was presented in book-form were all of an acceptable size. However, no big books were produced.

- Print and typeface: Except for one book that was printed on a computer, all the material was handwritten. The spacing between letters, words and paragraphs was slightly better than before.

- Choice of paper: Four teachers wrote in exercise books containing ruled lines. One teacher wrote with a 'koki' pen on paper that did not have a high density. Consequently, the writing shone through on the following page.

6.14.4.6 Conclusions regarding Cycle 2

From the onset, it must be kept in mind that many of the criteria were not explicitly addressed in the previous cycle and that the researcher only gave minimum input and expanded on what crystallised from the peer and self-assessment that was done.

With regard to the types of reading material selected, the majority of teachers still preferred to write realistic fiction. Looking at the evaluation criteria used by the researcher for formal evaluation, the reading material produced in the second cycle showed a marked improvement in **certain** areas. The slight improvement that was noted with regard to style helped to make the text more developmentally appropriate. The two areas that showed the most significant improvement are the format of the reading material (particularly the legibility of teachers' handwriting and the cover of the books) and the quality of the pictures included. Outstanding phenomena of this cycle were that no multicultural or multilingual reading material was produced and that no disabled characters or any other characters with special educational needs were included.

Although there was a marked improvement in the reading material produced, many of the criteria identified in Chapter 5 were not met. It was clear that teachers were still in need of specific criteria to enable them to write suitable reading material for Grade 3 learners. For this reason, Cycle 3 was mobilised.

6.14.5 THE THIRD CYCLE

The same procedures were followed as in the previous two cycles, namely general planning, the third action step, observation and monitoring and lastly, reflection and evaluation.

6.14.5.1 General planning

Examples of the various types of reading material that are regarded as suitable for Grade 3 learners (see Chapter 4) were collected from the researcher's personal collection as well as from the Education Library. Handouts containing notes on the different types of reading material as well as a simplified version of the criteria researched in Chapter 5 were prepared for each teacher.

Three afternoons were used to discuss the different types of reading material that are suitable for Foundation Phase learners and the criteria identified in Chapter 5. On the first afternoon, the types of reading material were discussed with the aid of the practical examples and the hand-out. They were also given an opportunity to transpose an existing text. On the second and third afternoon, the criteria were discussed. Where possible, the books used for explaining the different types of reading material were used to highlight certain criteria such as the use of appropriate vocabulary, the effect of repetitive phrases/sentences, gender stereotypes, the use of colour, harmonisation of picture and text, different techniques and media that could be used, et cetera.

6.14.5.2 Third action step

Teachers were now ready for their third attempt using the skills and experience gained thus far together with the handout that they received. Due to the many workshops having been arranged for Foundation Phase teachers in preparation for the implementation of the RNCS in 2004, it was agreed that they would be given a period of two months to complete their third attempt. However, only six teachers managed to

submit their work on time and an extension of time was needed. Eventually it took approximately three months to complete the third cycle. Two teachers withdrew from the project before having completed their third cycle with the result that only thirteen teachers completed all three cycles of the action research.

6.14.5.3 Observation and monitoring

The researcher evaluated each teacher's reading material against the criteria identified in Chapter 5 once more. Therefore, no peer or self-assessment was done in this cycle. Teachers were, however, asked how they felt about their third attempts and the following are examples of their responses:

TABLE 6.25   *PARTICIPANTS' FEELINGS REGARDING THEIR THIRD ATTEMPT*

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES (unedited)
I will be honest – I am very proud. I didn't think I would get this far.
I really learnt a lot and I am happy I joined the project. In the very beginning, I did not think I can write my own books.
I went to show my colleagues and my principal and they clapped hands to congratulate me.
Maybe you must throw away my first one – it was not very good.

6.14.5.4 Evaluation

As teachers only submitted their work for evaluation by the researcher, this step was not carried out as before. However, after evaluation by the researcher, each attempt will be returned to the teacher-author together with a written commentary. Each teacher who submitted their third attempt was given a small gift in appreciation of their hard work, perseverance and contribution to this study.

6.14.5.5 Formal evaluation of work produced in Cycle 3

The following observations were made:

(a) Types of reading material selected

In this cycle, more types of reading material were selected than before. These included a non-fiction book about Ndebele art and a book titled *Things I like to look at.* In the fiction category, picture story books featured very strongly. One such book is titled *The little yellow chicken,* which is a story that the author recalls her mother telling her as a child. Two lift-the-flap books were submitted as well as a commendable book containing several poems. Three teachers submitted two books each in this round, two of which were transposed stories.

(b) Assessment criteria

The same assessment criteria used in the first two cycles (see 6.14.3.5 & 6.14.4.5) were used for this cycle, namely:

(i) Literary elements

♦ Characterisation: This aspect showed some improvement. The majority of teachers managed to develop more credible and predictable characters by using the first person narrator and by revealing his or her thoughts and feelings (see 5.2.1.1).

♦ Plot: Teachers still found it difficult to develop a clear story line while some stories lacked a satisfactory ending. Other aspects that still were not given sufficient attention include the creation of excitement, suspense and the element of surprise (see 5.2.1.2).

♦ Setting: Although the settings in most of the realistic fiction stories were still not adequately described in the beginning of the story, some improvement was noted when compared to teachers' previous attempts. However, teachers managed to select suitable settings for the target group, for example, the school, village, home and veld (see 5.2.1.3).

♦ Style: In the first two cycles, the level of difficulty of vocabulary was a serious concern. A marked improvement was noted as far more appropriate vocabulary was used in this cycle. Grammatical errors occurred in some books, for example, *Mrs Maloka write them on the board.* More frequent use was made of rhyme and

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repetition, for example, *Food for me, food for my wife, food for my children* (which appeared four times in the story). Except for the transposed story *Hiccups for Hippo*, no other evidence of figurative language or humour was found in any of the reading material (see 5.2.1.4).

♦ Theme: Most of the themes that were selected were appropriate, for example, *Ndebele art* and *Wabu and the magic pot* (see 5.2.1.5).

♦ Narration and dialogue: In most stories, both narrative and dialogue were used to create effect and develop characters (see 5.2.1.6).

(ii)   *Children's interests*

Teachers managed to write reading material that would capture the interest of their learners (see 5.2.2). This is reflected in the titles of stories such as *Hiccups for Hippo, Granny comes to visit* and *Animals,* all of which are linked to Grade 3 learners' interest and experience. The book of rhymes is also commendable as it contains finger plays that would strongly appeal to these learners.

(iii)   *Fantasy and realism*

In this cycle, two fantasy stories were written (see 5.2.3). The titles of these books are *The giant and the boy* and *The magic bird.* Teachers clearly still felt more comfortable writing realistic fiction (see 5.2.4). Examples of realistic fiction books that were written are *The story of Vuyo, Bova and Sipho* and *Ben and the big black dog* (transposed).

(iv)   *Fear and violence*

Only one story contained some fear, namely the transposed story titled *The big black dog*. A possible assumption could be that teachers deliberately avoided this aspect due to the high rate of fear and violence to which many children are exposed to in their daily lives (see 5.2.5).

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(v)   Moral issues

Two stories clearly addressed moral issues (see 5.2.6). One such story is the transposed story: *The magic cooking pot* where good deeds are rewarded and bad deeds are punished.

(vi)   Anti-bias

In the story, *The magic porridge pot,* a girl was portrayed as being tasked to cook porridge. This **could** be seen as gender stereotyping (see 5.2.7) where women are generally portrayed as being responsible for preparing food. In this cycle, the work showed a reasonable balance between male and female characters.

A rather disappointing fact was noted: During the information-sharing sessions, it was strongly emphasised that disabled persons should often be portrayed as a main character or in a supporting role as they are also worthy members of the community. Yet not one disabled person was included in the work produced in this cycle.

(vii)   Multiculturalism

Despite the fact that multiculturalism (see 5.2.8) was strongly emphasised during the information-sharing sessions, the characters in the reading material produced in this cycle still belonged to the same cultural group. Consequently, no true multicultural literature was produced. However, some evidence of multiculturalism was found in the names of characters such as *The sparrow and Umakoti* as well as *Wabu and the magic pot.* One excellent sentence in the book titled *Animals* reads as follows: *He knocked on the door. Rat-a-tat-tat! Koko! Koko! Nqo! Nqo! Come in! called Lion.*

Four multilingual books were written. One such book is titled *The story of Vuyo.* However, in all three books, the two languages were not clearly separated, which could cause confusion.

(viii)   Developmental appropriateness of reading material

It was encouraging to note the progress that was made with regard to producing developmentally appropriate material. The text generally contained far more

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appropriate words than before and the length of the sentences as well as the overall length of the story was reduced. It can be said that, in general, the reading material produced in the third cycle would fall within the ZPD of most Grade 3 learners, particularly those whose primary language is not English.

(ix)   Pictures

The general quality of pictures showed a marked improvement. The following improvements were noted:

♦ All the reading material contained pictures and improvement was noted in the harmonisation of pictures and text (see 5.12 10.1).

♦ Only a few teachers produced reading material that contained sufficient pictures to complement the text. This phenomenon could possibly be ascribed to the fact that most teachers found it difficult to illustrate their reading material.

♦ Generally, colour was used more effectively (see 5.2.10.3) although the use of colour to create special effects was lacking in most of the work. Most pictures were still coloured in too faintly and lacked appeal. However, the front cover of two books, namely *Ndebele art* and *Animals* deserve special reference, as they are rich in colour and draw immediate attention.

♦ Pencil crayons remained the more favoured media. In a few cases, pencil crayons were used in combination with 'koki'-pens. No evidence was found of different techniques being used or the inclusion of texture to enhance the text (see 5.2.10.4).

♦ Pictures were simply drawn and easy to interpret (see 5.2.10.5), as they were drawn from a child's perspective.

♦ Composition and design improved (see 5.2.10.7), as pictures were more correctly placed than before to form a meaningful whole. A good example was found in the book titled *The story of Vuyo.*

(x)   Format of the reading material

One of the greatest improvements was noted in the format of the reading material (see 5.2.11). The covers were far more attractive than before. A marked improvement was also noted in the legibility of most teachers' handwriting. In two cases, the text was printed on a computer and pasted next to hand-drawn pictures. However, the spacing between letters, words, sentences and paragraphs in many books still call for attention.

6.14.5.6 Conclusions regarding Cycle 3

The majority of teachers still preferred to write realistic fiction although more different types of reading material were considered than before. The assessment criteria used by the researcher for formal assessment in the third cycle showed a marked improvement in many areas such as style, format, the quality of pictures and the inclusion of multicultural aspects. In general it can be said that most of the reading material was developmentally appropriate.

Outstanding phenomena of this cycle were that more attention was paid to some multicultural aspects (although not in such a way that it would promote social change). It was also noted that teachers apparently found it reasonably easy to write multilingual texts and to transpose an existing text. Teachers also managed to maintain a better balance between the number of male and female characters although examples of gender stereotypes were noted. However, they still did not include any disabled characters in their reading material.

It can be concluded that without the criteria identified in Chapter 5, the teachers who participated in the action research would not have been able to drastically improve the quality of their reading material. This statement is based on the fact that there was only a slight improvement in their work after peer and self-assessment were done and the researcher restricted her input. It can, therefore, be said that these criteria are of value for the development of teacher-authored reading material in the Foundation Phase, particularly reading material required for Grade 3 learners.

Examples of how the work of two teachers improved over the three cycles are illustrated in Addendum S and T.

Although there was a marked improvement in the reading material produced over the three cycles, it became clear that many of the criteria were still not met. Teachers were clearly in need of further support and much more time to apply all the assessment criteria in their work. Admittedly, the time spent on discussing the different types of reading material and the criteria was far too little. The participating teachers need practice in developing each criterion identified in Chapter 5 separately before integrating all their skills in written form. However, time constraints and work pressure prevented the teachers from completing further cycles of action research. Every effort will be made to encourage these teachers to continue with the project.

6.15   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The penultimate chapter of this study puts the focus on how the research was designed. Firstly, the motivation for approaching this study from a qualitative paradigm was given. Thereafter, a brief account was given of the literature review undertaken followed by a discussion on focus group interviews and the motivation for this particular data collection method. Related theoretical aspects that were discussed include the number of focus group interviews held, the role of the researcher during these interviews, the principles for setting questions as well as the validity and reliability of focus group interviews.

These theoretical issues were followed by a detailed explanation on how each of the five focus group interviews progressed through the seven steps suggested by Kvale (1996:88), namely thematising (determining the purpose of the interview), designing, interviewing, transcribing, data analysis, verification of results and reporting.

After the focus group interviews were completed, face-to-face interviews were held with three district officials from the Foundation Phase to obtain more information on the situation regarding reading material in Foundation Phase classrooms in Soshanguve. The information received from the fourth and fifth focus group interviews and the face-to-face interviews with Foundation Phase facilitators was complemented by a face-to-face interview with the district official responsible for school libraries as well as the researcher's personal observations made during school visits.

As the issue of inadequate English reading material in Grade 3 has a significant impact on the implementation of the Literacy Programme, a possible solution for the problem

had to be found. For this reason, action research was undertaken. Initially, sixteen Grade 3 teachers were involved in the project with the aim of empowering them to write their own reading material. Their progress was monitored throughout the three cycles. A marked and commendable improvement in each participant's work was noted on completion of the third cycle.

Although it cannot be claimed that these teachers have met all the criteria for producing developmentally appropriate reading material for Grade 3, it must be kept in mind that they only underwent **one cycle** in which the types of reading material were shown and the relevant criteria discussed. Their progress only indicates that the criteria are of value but that an extended period of time is needed for them to master the skill of producing developmentally appropriate reading material of even a higher standard for Grade 3 learners. The development of this skill should also be done under the guidance of a mentor or other knowledgeable persons. The potential of all the teachers that participated should, therefore, be further developed after the completion of this study.

6.16   CHAPTER PREVIEW

The final chapter gives a brief summary of the study. The main findings are presented and recommendations for the improvement of practice are made. Finally, the limitations of the study are identified followed by areas for future research and relevant recommendations.

CHAPTER 7

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study as a whole in the light of the research problem, including the main findings, recommendations for the improvement of practice and areas for future research. The investigation was prompted by the Report of the Review Committee on C2005 that found OBE was not being successfully implemented in many schools because of the lack of sufficient or appropriate LTSMs (see 1.1). Thus, the main aim of the investigation was to provide a critical overview of the nature of the problems experienced by many Foundation Phase teachers from previously disadvantaged schools. The problem was investigated by means of an extensive literature review and an empirical investigation, using a qualitative approach and action research. The literature review is reported in Chapters two to six. Chapter two gave an overview of the role and historical development of LTSMs in key developmental areas. Chapter three discussed the use of LTSMs in the light of the theories of four selected learning theorists while Chapter four investigated the different types of reading material most suitable for Foundation Phase learners.

In the light of the foregoing chapters, relevant criteria for the evaluation of reading material for Foundation Phase learners were identified in Chapter 5. These criteria form the basis for teacher-authored reading material. Thereafter, Chapter six provided the research design. It presented the main findings of the qualitative research, which used focus group and individual (face-to-face) interviews and the researcher's personal observations as data collection methods. The chapter concluded by reporting on the process and outcomes of the three cycles comprising the action research component.

In the ensuing sections of this final chapter, the main findings are expounded in greater detail according to the chapter division. Each section includes recommendations for educational provision, which would support and enhance the provision of appropriate LTSMs for learners in the Foundation Phase. The chapter concludes with

recommendations for future research and a brief discussion of the limitations of the study.

7.2   ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

In the first chapter, an exposition of important concepts such as OBE, critical and developmental outcomes, the Foundation Phase, literacy, resources and LTSMs was given (see 1.2). This was followed by an explanation of how the researcher became aware of the problem and what motivated this study. (See 1.3 & 1.4 respectively.) Thereafter, an introductory orientation to the main problem was provided, namely to give a critical overview of the nature of the problems regarding LTSMs identified by Foundation Phase teachers from previously disadvantaged schools as well as the relevant subproblems. (See 1.6 & 1.6.1 respectively.) The discussion on the goal and objectives (see 1.7) was followed by an exposition of the meta-assumptions of the study that stem from an antipositivistic, phenomenological, outcomes-based and a pragmatic approach. (See 1.8.1, 1.8.2, 1.8.3 & 1.8.4 respectively.) The chapter concluded with a brief overview of the research design envisaged (see 1.9).

7.3   LEARNING AND TEACHING SUPPORT MATERIALS

The following is a brief overview of the second chapter, its findings and recommendations:

7.3.1   OVERVIEW AND FINDINGS

In the literature consulted, many different terms are used to refer to what is currently known as LTSMs. These terms include medium and media instructional materials, educational media as well as teaching and learning aids. (See 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 & 2.2.4 respectively.) The term *LTSMs* (see 2.2.5) is an all-inclusive term that captures the various terms referred to and is used in most documents issued by the DoE and GDE, for example, GDE (1999c:23) and DoE (1997e:25). It was concluded that the term *LTSMs* is currently most relevant.

With regard to the historical overview of the role and development of LTSMs, it became clear that, what is known as LTSMs today, have played a key role ever since the first developmental era as teachers realised the importance of sensory perception in the

learning process (see 2.3). The development of reading skills was already a priority in the first developmental era. Books for children were virtually non-existent as the text was initially written on papyrus rolls and parchment (see 2.3.1.6).

In the second developmental era, sensory perception and direct experience continued to play a key role in the teaching and learning process. Books became more readily available and the value of illustrated books was acknowledged as pictures enhanced sensory input (see 2.3.2.9).

Despite the introduction of more sophisticated forms of LTSMs, such as tape-recorders, typewriters and overhead projectors in the third developmental era, these were not readily available for use in the classroom. It was found that during this era, much emphasis was still placed on enhancing sensory experience through direct experience. With regard to reading material, it was found that significant progress was made in the availability of children's literature during the 19th century (see 2.3.3.4).

The fourth and current developmental era is characterised by a quantum leap in the availability of audio-visual as well as mechanical-electronic forms of LTSMs such as video cameras, television and computers. The purpose of using all these forms of LTSMs remains basically the same, namely to enhance sensory perception, which in turn, enhances teaching and learning. The availability of reading material increased significantly during this era as can be seen in the establishment of libraries, the many catalogues made available to schools from which to order books, children's magazines and other forms of reading material.

Despite the variety of LTSMs that are currently available, many schools, especially those in previously disadvantaged areas, remain under-resourced. Research has shown that effective teaching and learning cannot take place without LTSMs (see 2.4). In addition, the Report of the Review Committee on C2005 has specifically indicated that the implementation of OBE has been hampered by a lack of sufficient and effective LTSMs (see 1.1).

Based on the preceding information, the following recommendations are made for the improvement of practice in the ensuing sections.

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7.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

A concerted effort should be made to expose teachers in training as well as practising teachers to the various types of resources that could be used to develop LTSMs. This could stimulate the creativity of teachers so that they are better able to adapt existing LTSMs and to develop innovative LTSMs that meet the required criteria referred to earlier on (see 2.6.1).

It is also imperative that teachers should be fully conversant with the criteria for selecting, designing and evaluating LTSMs, particularly with regard to reading material. These criteria should not only be conveyed to teachers in written form. Opportunities should be created where teachers can gain practical experience to develop this skill. Thereafter, teachers need to demonstrate their ability to apply this skill.

7.4 LEARNING THEORIES

What follows, is a brief overview of Chapter 3, its findings and recommendations.

7.4.1 OVERVIEW AND FINDINGS

An effective teaching practice is strongly influenced by learning theories. As the selection and use of LTSMs form an integral part of the teaching and learning process, the theories of four prominent learning theorists, namely Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky and Gardner were discussed with particular emphasis on their views on LTSMs and reading material.

The learning theory of Piaget was the first to be discussed (see 3.4). Despite criticism of his theory, it proved to be of particular relevance as it is OBE-compliant. Although he did not address reading *per se*, his theory on cognitive development is thought to be related to children's social, emotional and moral development. Hence his theory has particular implications for the study with regard to the selection of reading material as well as the criteria that apply to the development of reading material for learners in the Foundation Phase. (See 3.4.2.1 & 3.4.2.2 respectively.)

The second learning theory that was discussed is that of Bruner (see 3.5). Like Piaget, Bruner did not address reading *per se* but his views on cognitive development have direct implications for this study. His views on patterns of growth, representations of the world and transferability as learning are of importance for the selection of suitable types of reading material for Foundation Phase learners. (See 3.5.2.3-3.5.2.8.) The role of motivation, structure and reinforcement in instruction are of importance in that they underline the importance of developing reading material where the existing material is developmentally inappropriate or fails to stimulate curiosity and the desire to read. (See 3.5.2.9 & 3.5.2.10 respectively.) Bruner's view on folk psychology also has implications for the development of reading material as it addresses teachers' attitudes toward overcoming their problems regarding LTSMs and reading material in particular. (See 3.5.2.11 & 3.5.2.12 respectively.) His views on narratives are of particular importance for the development of reading material (see 3.5.2.13) as he emphasised that they provide an excellent source for the development of reading material. The role of poverty and its impact on learning are of particular relevance to this study as many participants in this study teach in schools in poverty-stricken areas. This factor jeopardises learners' potential and prevents them from developing their full potential unless teachers are empowered and willing to create an environment of learning opportunities such as creating a literature-rich environment. To accomplish this ideal, teachers should be able to write their own reading material where there is a void.

The next theory that was discussed is that of Vygotsky who emphasises the relationship between culture, society and language. In his view, cognitive development initially occurs on a social level with the aid of a more competent person through a process known as scaffolding. Thereafter, internalisation takes place when cognitive development proceeds to an individual level and learners perform a task independently. Vygotsky distinguishes between learning and development saying that they do not occur simultaneously but that the developmental process lags behind the learning process. The 'gap' between learners' actual development as determined by independent problem-solving, and the level of potential development, as determined under a more capable person, is referred to as the ZPD (see 3.6.2.1).

The importance of culture, society and language has direct implications for the selection of suitable types of reading material for Foundation Phase learners. As culture can be contained in written form, folk tales, myths and fables could serve this purpose (see 4.6.1.4). With regard to the criteria for developing teacher-authored

reading material, the writer should take into account the culture and moral values upheld by the society to which the target group of learners belongs. The production of multicultural and multilingual reading material is essential to provide opportunities for learners to be exposed to different cultures. (See 5.2.7 & 5.2.8 respectively.)

Furthermore, Vygotsky is of the opinion that other factors, such as attention and memory, emotions, exercise and fatigue, have an impact on the development of reading material for Foundation Phase learners. (See 3.6.2.3-3.6.2.8.) For example, realistic fiction and books written for bibliotherapy make a strong appeal to emotions and should be made available to learners.

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences was the last of the four learning theories to be discussed. His theory stands in sharp contrast to the traditional theories of intelligence as he believes that individuals have more than one intelligence, namely verbal-linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, visual-spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, musical-rhythmic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and naturalistic intelligence (see 3.7.3.1). Each of the eight intelligences influences the selection of reading material for Foundation Phase learners as well as the criteria for teacher-authored reading material. For example, non-fiction books about sport or dance (presented as a picture story book) could enhance learners' bodily-kinesthetic intelligence and may appeal to those learners whose strength lies in these particular areas.

A comparison of the four learning theories revealed both similarities and differences. Despite the differences, all four learning theories have proven to be of value for this study. Not only are the theories of value because they have addressed issues related to LTSMs but also because they have laid the foundation for the selection of suitable types of reading material and the criteria needed in the development of teacher-authored reading material for the Foundation Phase.

7.4.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

Gardner developed his theory of multiple intelligences in recent years. Consequently, his theory is included in many current teacher-training programmes. Practising teachers may not be as familiar with this theory as they are with the theories of Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky. Strategies should be put in place to help teachers fully

understand Gardner's theory and how these intelligences link with the philosophy of OBE. They should also understand the impact of his theory on the teaching and learning process, for instance, how particular LTSMs could be used to develop the eight intelligences. Not only should teachers be empowered to develop the eight intelligences in learners but also to capitalise on learners' strengths to promote effective learning. In addition, teachers need to identify their own strengths and develop their own intelligences as this could have positive results for their teaching practice.

However, Piaget's theory should not be omitted from teacher training programmes as it complies with OBE. Moreover, Mwamwenda (1996:107-135) has found that Piaget's theory of cognitive development is still relevant within the South African context (see 3.4.1). Similarly, the learning theories of Bruner and Vygotsky should not be excluded from teacher training programmes as they provide relevant information within the South African didactical situation. To illustrate: Bruner's views on poverty, learning and development together with his statement that effective learning requires an environment of opportunities, apply to many South African classrooms, especially in previously disadvantaged areas.

7.5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING MATERIAL FOR FOUNDATION PHASE LEARNERS

The following is a brief overview of the fourth chapter, its findings and recommendations.

7.5.1 OVERVIEW AND FINDINGS

All learners, also those in the Foundation Phase, deserve to be exposed to many rich and vicarious experiences. One way of achieving this ideal is to submerge them in a literature-rich environment consisting of a variety of developmentally appropriate reading material. Moreover, the implementation of the whole language approach (see 4.2) requires reading material that links with the theme or programme organiser. Where there is a lack of such reading material, Foundation Phase teachers should be able to compensate by writing their own reading material to fill this void.

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In order to prepare teacher-authored reading material, it was necessary to understand the developmental stages of reading and what is meant by a literature-based curriculum. (See 4.5 & 4.3 respectively.) Furthermore, knowledge was needed regarding the various types of reading material that are suitable for Foundation Phase learners and that are in line with the different texts referred to in the RNCS (DoE 2002a:10, 19, 35; DoE 2002d:33). The literature review in Chapter 4 provided extensive information on these issues.

In the fiction category (see 4.6.1), the following genres were found to be suitable for Foundation Phase learners: wordless picture story books, picture story books, big books, folk literature (nursery and childhood rhymes, animal tales, folk and fairy tales, fables, myths and legends), realistic fiction, books written for bibliotherapy, cartoon-style books, children's poetry, basal readers as well as riddles and jokes. In the non-fiction category (see 4.6.2), non-narrative texts such as dictionaries and narrative texts such as Bible stories were identified as being suitable for Foundation Phase learners.

The assumption was made that the learning theories of Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky and Gardner would support teacher-authored reading material. Most of the types of reading material referred to in the previous paragraph could be used to generate teacher-authored reading material (see 4.7). Teachers could, for example, write their own (original) non-fiction books, poems, realistic fiction or cartoon-style stories. In addition, they could transpose or translate an existing story. (See 4.7.2.2 & 4.7.2.3 respectively.) The completed reading material could then be converted into multilingual text to comply with the demands stipulated in the language in education policy (DoE 1997d:1).

OBE supports learner-involvement in the learning process. One way of doing this is by making learners co-creators of the curriculum. Teacher-learner-authored reading material is an ideal opportunity to achieve this goal (see 4.8.2). For instance, learners could keep diaries or use the LEA. The LEA, in turn, is linked to the whole language approach (see 4.2).

Against the background of the various types of reading material that is suitable for Foundation Phase learners, the following recommendations can be made:

7.5.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

The RNCS (DOE 2002a:10, 19, 35; DOE 2002d:33) specifically refer to various types of reading material to which Foundation Phase learners should be exposed. Yet, the data obtained from the fourth and fifth focus group interviews (see 6.8.3) revealed that the participants did not have an adequate knowledge of the variety of texts that are suitable for their learners. During school visits, the researcher noted that there was a limited variety of reading material for learners to read. Moreover, during the third cycle of the action research (see 6.14.5), the participating teachers were exposed to many examples of the various types of reading material. It became clear that many of them were not acquainted with the rich variety of texts that could be used in the Literacy Programme.

It is strongly recommended that knowledge of the various types of reading material that are suitable for Foundation Phase learners is included in the curriculum for teachers in training. They should also acquire the skills of developing teacher-authored reading material. More emphasis should be placed on the implementation of a literature-based curriculum and the integration thereof with the whole language approach. Workshops or information-sharing sessions should be planned, for example, by Foundation Phase facilitators from district offices, for practising Foundation Phase teachers with the same outcomes in mind.

7.6   CRITERIA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING MATERIAL

What follows is a brief overview of Chapter five together with its findings and recommendations.

7.6.1   OVERVIEW AND FINDINGS

Having done research on the various types of reading material that are suitable for Foundation Phase learners, it was necessary to determine criteria that would apply when teachers write their own reading material. Firstly, criteria that are related to literary elements were discussed, namely characterisation, plot, setting, style (which includes language, vocabulary, figurative language and humour), theme as well as dialogue and narrative (see 5.2.1).

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Several other criteria were identified and discussed, namely that the reading material should link with the learners' interests (see 5.2.2). Foundation Phase learners are intrigued by fantasy stories as well as realistic stories. For this reason, criteria related to fantasy and realism criteria were provided. (See 5.2.3 & 5.2.4 respectively.) As many stories include fear and violence, it was necessary to identify criteria that are related to these aspects (see 5.2.5). Another important criterion that had to be addressed was related to morals as these are frequently transferred through literature (see 5.2.6).

Currently in South Africa, much emphasis is being placed on human rights and the elimination of discriminatory practices. Consequently, these issues should also be addressed in children's literature. Therefore, criteria related to anti-bias were provided with the aim of preventing sexism, racism, gender stereotyping as well as discrimination against persons with disabilities (see 5.2.7). Another aspect that is receiving much attention in South Africa today is the acknowledgement of diversity. One way of addressing diversity is through the written text. Criteria for writing multicultural literature were, therefore, provided (see 5.2.8). Developmentally appropriate reading material cannot be written without ensuring that the text falls within learners' ZPD. For this reason, relevant criteria were noted (see 5.2.9).

Comenius already acknowledged the importance of pictures in reading material for Foundation Phase learners in the second developmental era (see 2.3.2.3). Thereafter, Piaget and Bruner as well as more contemporary writers, for example, Machado and Labuschagne, emphasised the importance of including pictures in reading material for young readers. For this reason, criteria related to pictures were researched. Aspects such as the harmonisation of picture and text, the number of pictures, the use of colour, technique, media and texture, the complexity of pictures, perspective, composition and design, the avoidance of stereotypes as well as realistic and abstract representation of pictures were included. It was also necessary to focus on criteria related to the educational value of pictures, humour in pictures and the portrayal of violence in pictures. Lastly, general criteria pertaining to pictures were provided (see 5.2.10).

The criteria for teacher-authored reading material would not be complete without including criteria related the format of the material. For this reason, criteria related to the cover of the book, binding, size, print and typeface were included (see 5.2.11).

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As the literature provided criteria for the development of specific types of reading material, namely picture story books, non-fiction reading material, reading material for bibliotherapy and children's poetry, these were added (see 5.3). Lastly, criteria were provided for the transposition and translation of an existing text. (See 5.3.4 & 5.3.5 respectively.)

The research undertaken in this chapter led to the following recommendations.

7.6.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers and other stakeholders should be made aware of the criteria that were identified for the writing of teacher-authored reading material with the view of applying them in the evaluation and selection of commercially available reading material. For example, these criteria could be of value when teachers evaluate and select basal readers for reading instruction as well as books for the school library. These criteria should, therefore, be made available to schools and other stakeholders.

Higher education institutions responsible for teacher training should empower teachers in training to generate teacher-authored reading material using these criteria. If similar criteria are already included in the curriculum, the various sets should be reviewed. Criteria that have been overlooked should be complemented with those identified in this study. Furthermore, opportunities should be created for teachers in training to apply their knowledge by performing practical activities to demonstrate their ability to develop teacher-authored reading material according to the given criteria.

7.7   RESEARCH PROCEDURES

What follows, is a brief overview of the research design planned for this study.

7.7.1   OVERVIEW AND FINDINGS

In Chapter six, the research design that is compatible with qualitative research was discussed (see 6.3). After the literature review was explained, theoretical issues related to focus group interviews as a data collection method were provided (see 6.5). Aspects such as conceptualisation, motivation for the selection of this data collection method and the number of focus group interviews were addressed. Theoretical issues such as

the role of the researcher in focus group interviews as well as the types of questions to be asked were discussed. Before commencing with the practical application of the focus group interviews, it was explained that Guba's model would be used to monitor the reliability and validity of data.

Each of the focus group interviews was planned according to the seven steps suggested by Kvale (1996:88), namely thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, data analysis, verification of results and reporting. (See 6.6, 6.7 & 6.8 respectively.)

The procedures used in two other data collection methods, namely face-to-face interviews and personal observations made by the researcher were described. (See 6.9 & 6.10 respectively.) The data obtained led to action research (see 6.12) to address one of the most succinct problems, namely a shortage of suitable English reading material with which to drive the Literacy Programme in Grade 3 in an effective way.

The findings of each of the focus group interviews follow.

The purpose of the first and second focus group interviews was to identify the nature of the problems Foundation Phase teachers experience with regard to LTSMs. These problems include a shortage of LTSMs such as Numeracy kits, reading material, television sets and computers. The reasons for the problems could be ascribed to factors such as financial restraints, inadequate management of funds, theft and the wrong selection of books. The solutions offered mainly involved support from external sources such as the DoE, the SGB and the district office.

Having discovered that reading material was one of the main problems experienced by Foundation Phase teachers from previously disadvantaged schools, the third focus group interview was planned with the view to identify problems pertaining to reading material *per se*. It was found that insufficient funds were often the reason for the shortage of reading material while many English readers were developmentally inappropriate. Other problems included the inappropriate selection of books, loss and damage to books (see 6.7.7.4) and inadequate knowledge regarding the different types of reading material (see 6.7.7.5). Possible solutions included more money being made available by the DoE and SGB, donations by the private sector for books and the establishment of school libraries, support by authorities with the selection of

developmentally appropriate reading material, book displays by publishers, travelling libraries that visit schools and discussions with parents to ensure that books taken home are not lost or damaged.

The fourth and fifth focus group interviews followed as the researcher wished to determine whether Foundation Phase teachers in Soshanguve experienced similar problems with reading material. It was found that most schools are involved in reading projects such as READ, MOLTENO and OLSET. Yet, in some classrooms there is still insufficient reading material for all learners. Very few teachers exposed learners to different types of reading material as stated in the policy documents referred to under 6.8.1. In addition, the reading material did not always link with the programme organiser / theme which implies that the whole language approach was not being fully implemented (see 4.2). A serious concern was that teachers generally had difficulties finding reading material that is suitable for learners who experience reading difficulties. This situation was compounded by the non-existence of a school library or a non-functional school library (see 6.8.7.5). Lastly, it was found that teachers were not familiar with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (see 3.7).

The solutions offered to address the problems included donations from the private sector, more support from the district office regarding book selection and close collaboration with the Soshanguve Teachers' Centre library (see 6.8.7.6).

The face-to-face interviews with Foundation Phase facilitators revealed that most Foundation Phase teachers in Soshanguve use basal readers and books supplied by reading projects. To their knowledge, other types of reading material were not readily available in all classes. Very few teachers use reading material that corresponds with their programme organiser / theme, which implies that the whole language approach is not being correctly applied. In addition, hardly any teachers were able to provide reading material to develop the various intelligences as proposed by Gardner (see 3.7). The participants agreed that the available readers are often inappropriate for learners who experience reading difficulties in English and do not adequately address the interests of over-age learners. In their opinion, teachers need support with book selection. They also found that only a few schools have libraries that are functioning optimally; many schools either do not have a library or have a library that does not function in an optimal way. This puts learners at a disadvantage as a variety of reading material is not accessible and extended reading opportunities cannot be created.

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The views of the Foundation Phase facilitators regarding school libraries correspond with that of the district official responsible for school libraries. In a face-to-face interview with this official, it was revealed that very few primary schools in Soshanguve have well-functioning libraries, mainly due to a lack of storage space and the number of outdated books. The Education Library have tried to address this void by making a courier service available to the Teachers' Centre in Soshanguve. However, teachers do not make optimal use of this service.

During school visits in Soshanguve, the researcher made several observations with regard to reading material used in Foundation Phase classrooms. Many teachers were in need of support with the selection of books as these were often not developmentally appropriate. There was also not a wide range of reading material available, as it appeared that most teachers used basal readers and books supplied by reading projects. The researcher also found that only a few schools had well-functioning libraries while other school libraries were either not functioning optimally or were non-existent.

In a comparison between the data gathered during the fourth and fifth focus group interviews, the face-to-face interviews and observations made by the researcher, many common problems were identified. These include inadequate reading material for learners who experience reading difficulties, a limited variety of reading material, incorrect book selection and a large number of schools without well-functioning libraries.

The common solutions offered by the participants in the focus group and face-to-face interviews include requests to the SGB and/or DoE for an increase in financial support as well as more support from the district office with regard to book selection.

A recurring problem that was identified during the focus groups interviews, the three face-to-face interviews as well as the researcher's observations was that many Foundation Phase teachers in Soshanguve did not have adequate reading material with which to drive the Literacy Programme in an optimal way. Although most schools were involved in reading projects, they did not have a variety of genres, multilingual books or reading material that linked with the programme organiser/theme. In addition, they lacked reading material that could develop learners' intelligences, as proposed by

Gardner (see 3.7). In fact, very few classrooms could be described as a print-rich environment.

A possible solution to this problem was to empower Foundation Phase teachers to develop their own reading material. For this reason, action research was undertaken with sixteen Grade 3 teachers from Soshanguve with the aim of supporting them to develop teacher-authored reading material in English (see 6.13.). The combined models of Zuber-Skerritt and Kemmis and McTaggart (see 6.13.3) were used. The combined model involved general planning, action steps, observation, reflection and evaluation.

In the first cycle, the participants were asked to write their reading material for Grade 3 learners. Very little input was given by the researcher so that each teacher's abilities could be determined. Moreover, the researcher needed evidence to determine the effectiveness of the criteria identified in the study. In the second cycle, peer and self-assessment were done, again with little input from the researcher. In the third cycle, the participants were shown examples of the various types of reading material described in Chapter four. In addition, they were provided with a condensed set of the criteria that was researched in Chapter five for the development of reading material.

The results of the first cycle (see 6.14.3.5) revealed that these teachers were not adequately empowered to write their own reading material. The types of reading material selected were limited and teachers showed a clear preference for realistic fiction, which led to the assumption that teachers' knowledge of the various types of reading material was restricted. Very few of the assessment criteria described in Chapter five were met.

In the second cycle (see 6.14.4), it was found that teachers still preferred realistic fiction. A marked improvement was noted in the work produced in the second cycle as more of the assessment criteria were met, particularly with regard to the format of the material and the quality of pictures (see 6.14.4.5). As was the case in the previous cycle, the reading material was generally not developmentally appropriate. It was also noted that no multicultural or multilingual reading material was produced and that no disabled characters were included.

The third cycle (see 6.14.5) was marked by a significant improvement in the teachers' reading material compared to their first and second attempts. This improvement was mainly brought about by the input in the third cycle, namely exposing the participants to different types of reading material and discussing the various criteria with them. The end products consisted out of a greater variety of reading material, for example, a non-fiction a book about Ndebele art was produced while picture story books featured very strongly in the fiction category. For the first time in the three cycles, multilingual books were produced.

Although there was a general improvement in the aspects related to the assessment criteria provided in Chapter five, the participants experienced difficulty with two literary elements in particular, namely the plot and setting. They did, however, manage to develop more credible characters. A marked improvement was noted in the style, although some texts were, in the researcher's opinion, still too difficult for Grade 3 learners. However, progress was made with regard to producing developmentally appropriate reading material.

Although there was a slight increase in the number of fantasy stories written (see 5.2.3), teachers clearly still felt more comfortable writing realistic fiction (see 5.2.4). Fear and violence only featured once and moral issues were addressed in two stories. An aspect of concern was that teachers did not include a disabled character in any of their reading material, despite the emphasis that was laid on this aspect during the information-sharing sessions. Although many improvements were noted with regard to pictures, for example, the use of colour, teachers generally found this aspect rather difficult. One of the greatest improvements was found in the format of the reading material (see 5.2.11).

In conclusion, it can be said that there was a marked improvement in the reading material produced over the three cycles. An important point that must be kept in mind is that the participating teachers were only exposed to the various types of material and the criteria in **one** cycle. Admittedly, they are in need of much more exposure to the various types of reading material and need more support with regard to the practical implementation of the given criteria. However, this would not be possible within the scope of this study.

7.7.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the preceding information, the following recommendations can be made.

The interviews and the researcher's observations revealed that many teachers have difficulty with the selection of developmentally appropriate English readers for Foundation Phase learners. This skill should be developed during initial teacher training by making use of the information regarding the types of reading material together with the criteria identified in this study. Knowledgeable persons should train practising teachers to develop this skill, for example, by conducting practical workshops. At the same time, teachers should be trained to use the reading material that has been developed in an optimal way, for example, by integrating the material with the whole language approach or to use the material to develop learners' multiple intelligences. Furthermore, the reading material could be used to promote multiculturalism and multilingualism and also to create a more literate environment in the class.

A few teachers who participated in the action research wrote material of a high standard. They should be encouraged to develop their potential by following formal courses. Alternatively, they should be introduced to publishers who could maximise their potential through training sessions.

Concerted efforts should be made to establish libraries in all Soshanguve schools and to support those schools whose libraries are not functioning in an optimal way. Once this has been done, teachers need to be trained how to use the reading material in the library to drive the Literacy Programme. Furthermore, strategies should be put in place to increase the number of books in the library at the Soshanguve Teachers' Centre and to promote the use of this service in schools.

7.8   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

All research carried out has strengths and limitations. The recommendations offered can be regarded as the strengths of the study. The limitations of this study are the following:

Firstly, only a limited number of Foundation Phase teachers from previously disadvantaged schools were involved in the focus group interviews. Moreover, the teachers were not representative of all eleven provinces in South Africa. Therefore, the information obtained from the participants regarding LTSMs and reading material cannot be used to generalise to the larger population of Foundation Phase teachers in previously disadvantaged schools.

Secondly, due to teachers' workload and compulsory workshops planned in preparation for the implementation of the RNCS in 2004, it was necessary to limit the number of information sharing sessions where examples of the various types of reading material were shown and the criteria discussed. The same constraining factors allowed them only one opportunity to implement the criteria given. Therefore, the assessment criteria could not be applied too stringently as they needed expanded opportunities to develop this skill.

7.9   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

During the period of time spent on this study, several topics were identified that could warrant further research. The most relevant are the following:

♦ In this study, a critical overview was given of the problems experienced with LTSMs in the Foundation Phase of previously disadvantaged schools. It would be worthwhile to undertake a similar study in the Intermediate and Senior Phase of schools.

♦ The empirical research only involved schools in previously disadvantaged schools. A similar study could be done with the focus on ex-Model C schools or schools for learners with special education needs.

♦ The language in education policy requires the development of multilingualism. Guidelines for teachers on the promotion of multilingualism in the Foundation Phase warrants further research.

♦ McDonald (1989:6) says that for young black South Africans, easy access to children's literature in African languages (either the original or a translated version) is an incentive to read. It is through the dedication and future vision of educationists, librarians, authors, illustrators, publishers and booksellers who have the best interests of young children at heart that an enduring love of reading can be enhanced. The criteria identified in this study were only applied to the development of reading material in English. The question that comes to mind is whether these criteria could apply to the development of reading material in other languages. Further research could be undertaken to answer this question.

♦ The participants in the action research in this study showed a clear preference for realistic fiction. Only a small percentage of teachers wrote fantasy stories. Research could provide an explanation for this phenomenon.

♦ A study to determine the relationship between the English reading competence of Grade 3 learners and the availability of developmentally appropriate reading material could provide important information.

7.10 CONCLUSION

This study was an endeavour to investigate the nature of the problem related to LTSMs in Foundation Phase classrooms in previously disadvantaged schools. One of the most succinct problems that came to light was that many of these teachers lacked reading material with which to drive the Literacy Programme. The reading material in many of these classrooms was not developmentally appropriate and did not link with the programme organiser/theme in use. Consequently, the whole language approach could not be implemented to the full. In addition, many classrooms did not have reading material to develop learners' multiple intelligences or to promote multilingualism. The problem regarding a limited variety of reading material was expounded by the fact that many primary schools did not have a library.

These problems called for a viable solution. In this study, several criteria were identified that proved to be of value in the empowerment of teachers to develop their own reading material. The development of suitable reading material could, therefore, help to fill the void regarding reading material and is a possible solution for the problems that many teachers experience with regard to LTSMs for Literacy. Action research, in conjunction with a sample of teachers in Soshanguve, with regard to developing suitable reading material was undertaken as a pilot project to solve the problem.

The empowerment of teachers to develop their own reading material is a step forward in adhering to the suggestions of the Review Committee or C2005. Furthermore, Mr Ignatius Jacobs, Gauteng Member of the Executive Council for Education, addressed teachers and principals at Itumeleng Madiba School (Soshanguve) on 27 August 2003. The purpose of his visit to this school was to offer teachers and principals an opportunity to raise issues that affect teaching in their schools. During this meeting, Mr Jacobs encouraged teachers to write their own reading material. At the launch of the RNCS on 15 November 2003 at Sunnyridge Primary School, he once again encouraged Foundation Phase teachers to embark on this journey.

This study is, therefore, of relevance and one way in which the ideal for *Tirisano* can be fulfilled.

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ADDENDUM A

Wordless picture story book

En toe het daar iets met Klein-Tom gebeur: Hy het begin groei!
Eers net 'n klein bietjie. Toe 'n bietjie meer. Tot hy hom
glad nie meer aan sy grootte gesteur het nie – en almal hom
Tom begin noem het.

ADDENDUM C

Novelty book

Ben Plants a Butterfly Garden

A lift-the-flap nature book with real seeds

Kate Petty ❀ Axel Scheffler

"Look under this nettle leaf," said Ladybird.
Ben looked and saw some tiny, tiny eggs there.
"These don't look like butterflies to me!" he said.

The eggs are butterfly eggs.

Lift the flap

"Don't worry," said Ladybird. "They will turn into
beautiful butterflies."
"Now you must plant some flowers that the butterflies
will like," said Worm.

ADDENDUM D

Big book
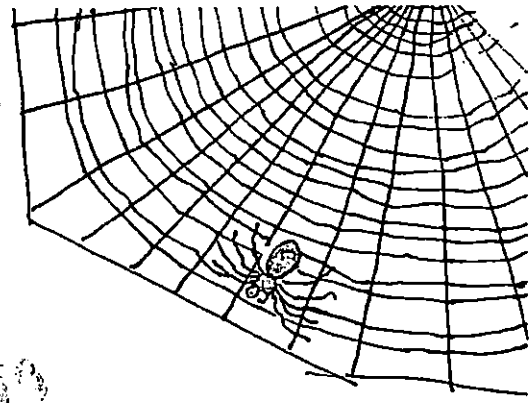
Incy Wincy Spider

Incy Wincy spider
    climbed up the water spout,

*Touch index fingers and thumbs
in turn by twisting wrists*

Down came the raindrops
    and washed poor Incy out.

*Raise hands and wiggle fingers
as you lower*

Out came the sunshine
    and dried up all the rain,

*Raise hands and make a wide
circle with arms*

Incy Wincy spider
    climbed up the spout again.

Repeat first action

THE ELEPHANT'S CHILD

In the High and Far-Off Times the Elephant, O Best
Beloved, had no trunk. He had only a blackish, bulgy
nose, as big as a boot, that he could wriggle about from
side to side, but he couldn't pick up things with it. Now
there was one Elephant, a new Elephant, an Elephant's
Child, who was full of 'satiable curiosity — and that means
he asked ever so many questions. *And* he lived in Africa
and he filled all Africa with his 'satiable curtiosities.

He asked his tall aunt, the Ostrich, why her tail-feathers
grew just so. He asked his tall uncle, the Giraffe, what made
his skin spotty. He asked his broad aunt, the Hippopotamus,
why her eyes were red and he asked his hairy uncle, the
Baboon, why melons tasted just so. He asked questions
about everything that he saw, or heard, or felt, or smelt, or
touched, and his aunts and his uncles spanked and spanked
him but *still* he was full of 'satiable curiosity!

One fine morning the Elephant's Child asked a new fine
question that he had never asked before.

"What does the Crocodile have for dinner?" he said. Then
everybody said "Hush!" and spanked him well.

ADDENDUM G

Fairy tale

At last the egg hatches. The baby that steps out does not look like his brothers and sisters. But he goes straight to the pond for a swim. "You are not a turkey!" says mother duck. But the chickens and geese laugh and say, "What an ugly duckling!"

ADDENDUM H

Fable

he Tortoise and the Hare

One day a silly hare was talking to his friends. He was boasting as usual.

"I can run faster than any of you," he said. "No one can possibly beat me in a race."

He turned to the old tortoise. "You walk so slowly, I don't know why you bother at all."

"I may be slow," said the tortoise, "but I bet I can get to the end of this field before you."

"The tortoise wants a race!" laughed the hare. His friends gathered round to watch.

"I'll win easily," giggled the hare as he and the tortoise lined up ready to start.

"Ready, steady go!" shouted the badger. Everyone cheered as the hare raced away.

The tortoise moved off slowly. She plodded quietly along towards the end of the field.

The hare stopped halfway. "That old tortoise will take all day," he thought. "I'll have a little rest."

Soon he fell fast asleep and he did not wake up for hours.

He spotted the tortoise near the finish and ran as fast as he could. But it was too late. "I told you I'd get there before you," said the tortoise.

Those who are slow and sure often win in the end.

3

ADDENDUM I
Myth
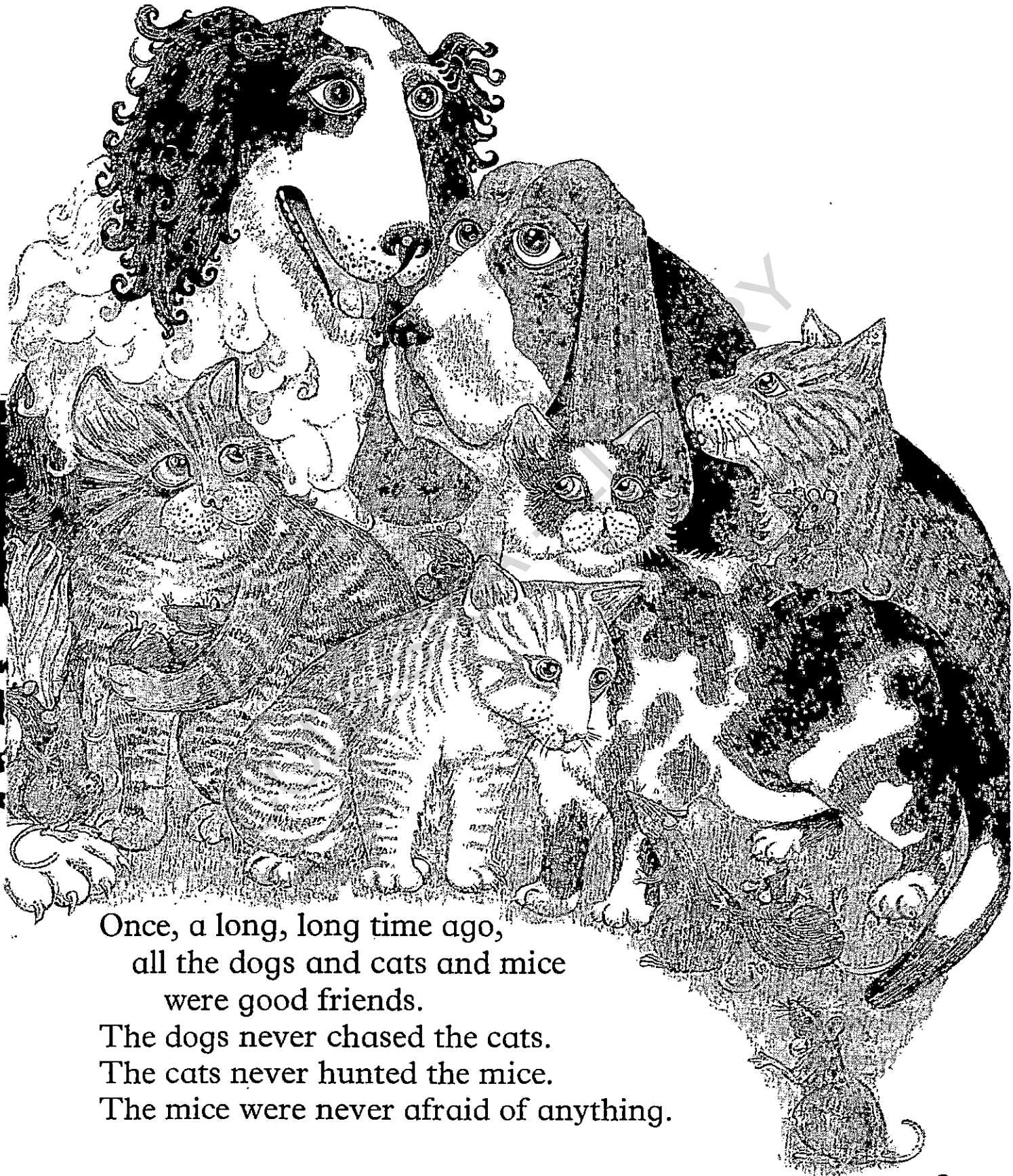
Dogs, cats and mice

Once, a long, long time ago,
   all the dogs and cats and mice
      were good friends.
The dogs never chased the cats.
The cats never hunted the mice.
The mice were never afraid of anything.

ADDENDUM J

Legend

Tired and unhappy, they moved away from the once lovely place which had been their home. The Bullfrogs croaked louder, this time in triumph, for now they had the waterhole all to themselves.

Euroka the Sun was looking down one day, feeling very sorry for the creatures who had been forced to give up their home. As she watched, she saw something which made her very angry indeed.
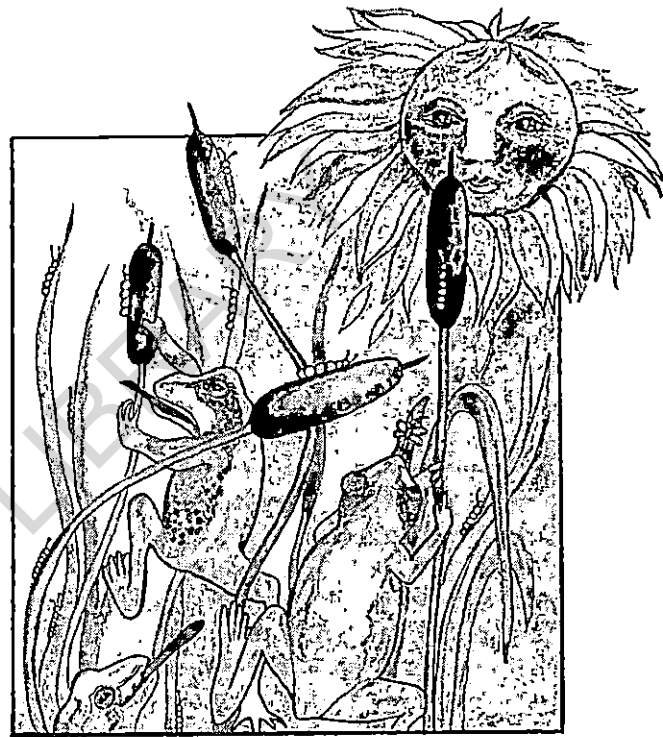
The Bullfrogs were croaking and gloating with glee. They were killing a tribe of Water-grubs who lived in the bulrushes at the edge of the pool. Euroka the Sun was furious.

'I will help you, Water-grubs,' she said, shining fiercely on the bulrushes. This gave the Grubs enough strength to climb up the stems and into the air.

ADDENDUM K

Book written for bibliotherapy

If someone tries to force you, don't be frightened to say 'No'.
Always tell your parents where you intend to go.

ADDENDUM L

Cartoon-style book

Along the road to town Sandrino met a poor old woman.

Could you give me something to eat, young man? I am very hungry!

Sure. Take this.

And kind-hearted Sandrino gave her all three of his loaves.

Thank you, Thank you.

Don't mention it!

On and on he went until he met another poor old woman.

Could you give me some money to buy a dress, young man? I'm very cold.

CHATTER

CHATTER

6

Sure. Take this.

And kind-hearted Sandrino gave her all three of his gold coins.

Thank you, Thank you.

Don't mention it!

Water

Water has no taste at all,
  Water has no smell;
Water's in the waterfall,
  In pump, and tap, and well.

  Water's everywhere about;
    Water's in the rain,
In the bath, the pond, and out
  At sea it's there again.

  Water comes into my eyes
    And down my cheeks in tears,
When Mother cries, 'Go back and try
  To wash behind those ears.'

by John R. Crossland

8
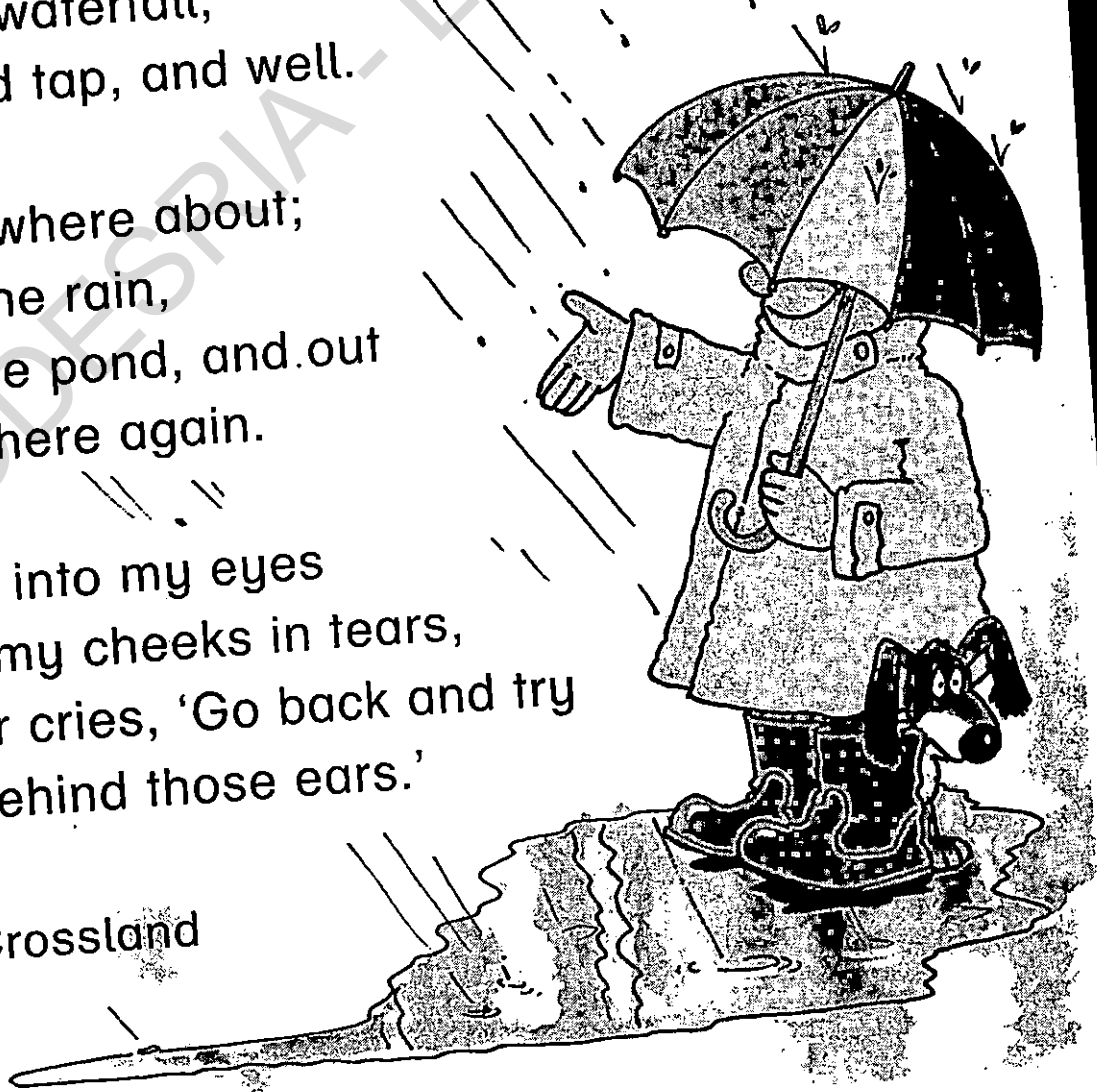
Sindi looks at the yellow socks.
The shopkeeper knows she wants them.

He gives the socks to Sindi.

ADDENDUM O

Riddles and jokes
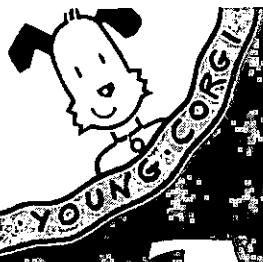
Scoular Anderson

My First Joke Book

What do
sea-monsters eat?
Fish and ships!!!

They called to the blind man
and said to him,
"Get up,
Jesus is calling you."

Here are my legs.

I can walk, trot
or gallop along.
If I am angry, watch
out! I kick hard
with my back legs.

I have four hard
hoofs. Each hoof
has a metal shoe
fitted underneath
to protect it.
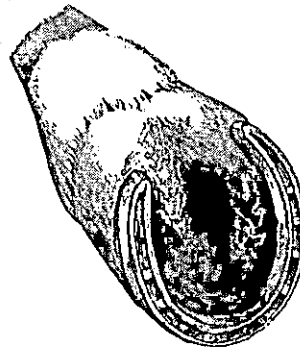
ADDENDUM Q

Non-narrative text:
Picture dictionary

b B

baby

A **baby** is a very young child.

bake
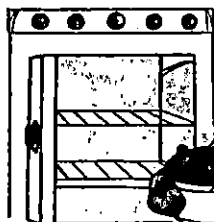
To **bake** is to cook in the oven.
Mum has **baked** a cake.

bank
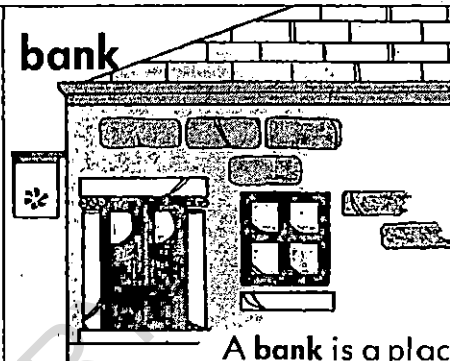
A **bank** is a place to keep money in.

back

The children are standing **back** to **back**.

Susan takes her book **back** to the library.

ball

We play games with round **balls**.
The boy throws the **ball**.

bat

We play games with **balls**

The boy will hit the ball with his **bat**.
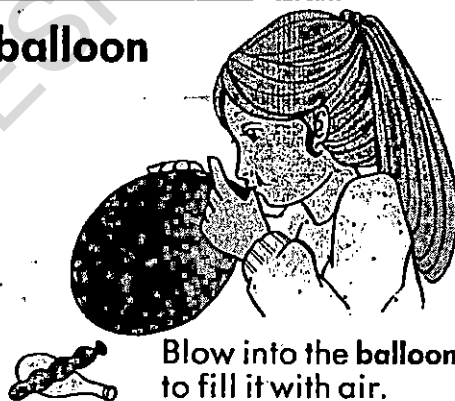
balloon

Blow into the **balloon** to fill it with air.

beach
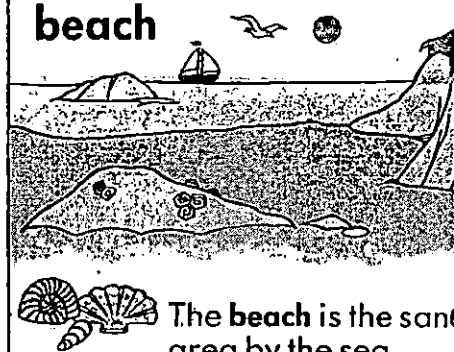
The **beach** is the sand area by the sea.

bad

Sam is a **bad** dog.

Anything not good is **bad**.
The apple is **bad**.

band
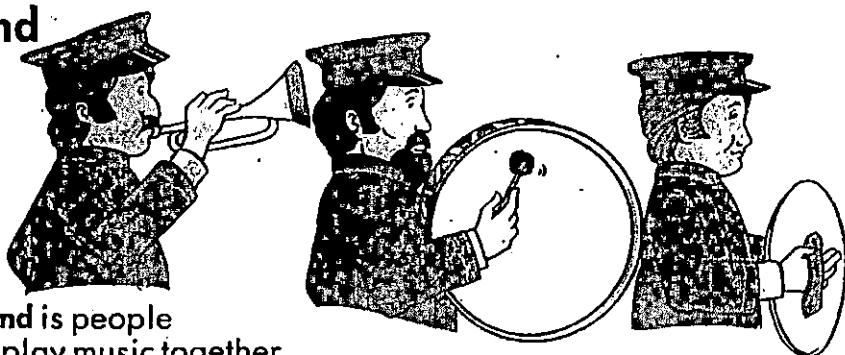
A **band** is people who play music together.

ADDENDUM R

Multilingual text

iingwenya ezintathu

izingwenya ezintathu

drie krokodille

three crocodiles

3

How many crocodiles?

Hoeveel krokodille?

Izingwenya ezingaki?

Iingwenya ezingaphi?

ADDENDUM S

Teacher 1's work

CYCLE 1

Safety
Grade 3

Title = Oh! we were nearly dead.

"Don't open the door to strangers, I am going out to look for food!" Said mother Hare.

Out went the mother to look for food. The children close the door as their mother instructed them. The children start playing hide and seek in the house. Not long there was a knock on the door. The children become frightened.

The Hyena was hiding behind the bushes, saw mother living, he become excited and say to himself that he is going to catch the children as he was hungry and have nothing to eat.

"Open the door for me beautiful kids I've brought sweets and cakes for you I am your friend. Who are you? we don't know you go away. Please! Please I am your friend open the door! The younger child say they must open the door because the stranger is going to give them sweets I like sweets I want them lets open

The children opened the door, the Hyena comes in Oh! you are so many! He said to

CYCLE 2

Safety

The mother hare went out to
look for food. The children closed
the door behind her. They start
playing in the house. The younger
child cried until she felt asleep.

Oh! we were nearly dead!

Dont open the door to any Stranger,

I am going to look for food.
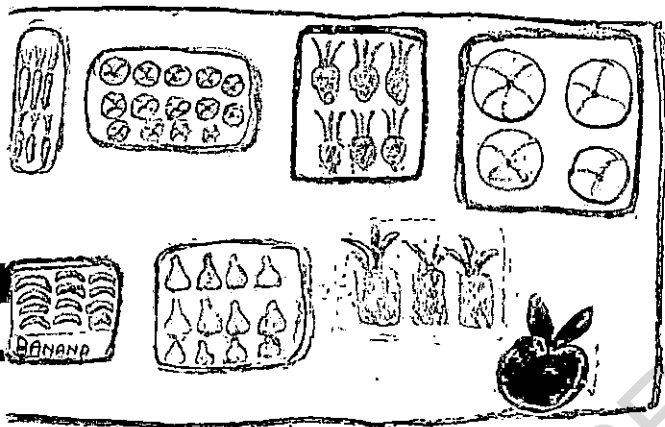
CYCLE 3

Market

eading book. On his
ay he stopped at the
market, to buy an
apple.

2

Mr Smith's Book Shop.

He went on and
arrived at the shop.
"Good morning my
customer" said Mr Smith
"Good Morning Mr Smith"
said Benny.

3

ADDENDUM T

Teacher 2's work

CYCLE 1

Kitchen Prayer

Give us this day, Lord
Our daily Food
Food upon food.
Recipe upon recipe.
From sunrise till sun set.
Then it's sufficient for us.

Give us this day, Lord
Your precious face
Your face, dear Lord
Only for today
Then it's sufficient for us

Give us this day, Lord
Your good-Love.
As precious as gold
As good as good
Then it's good for us.
Amen! Amen!! Amen!!!

CYCLE 2

Kitchen prayer

Give us this day, Lord
Our daily food
Food upon food
Recipe upon recipe
From sunrise till sun-set
Then it's sufficient for us
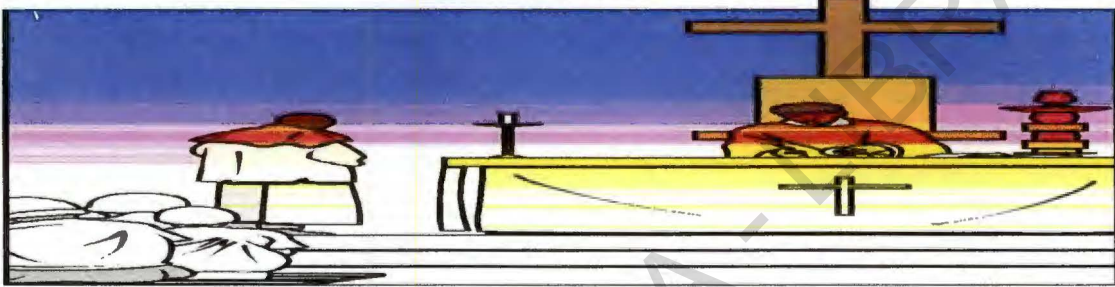
Give us this day, Lord
Your precious face
Your face, dear Lord
Only for today
Then it's sufficient for us.
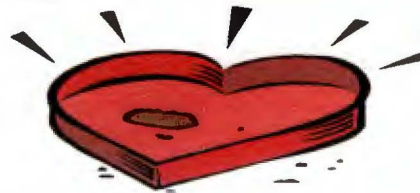
Give us this day, Lord
Your good – love
As good as good
Then it's good for us.
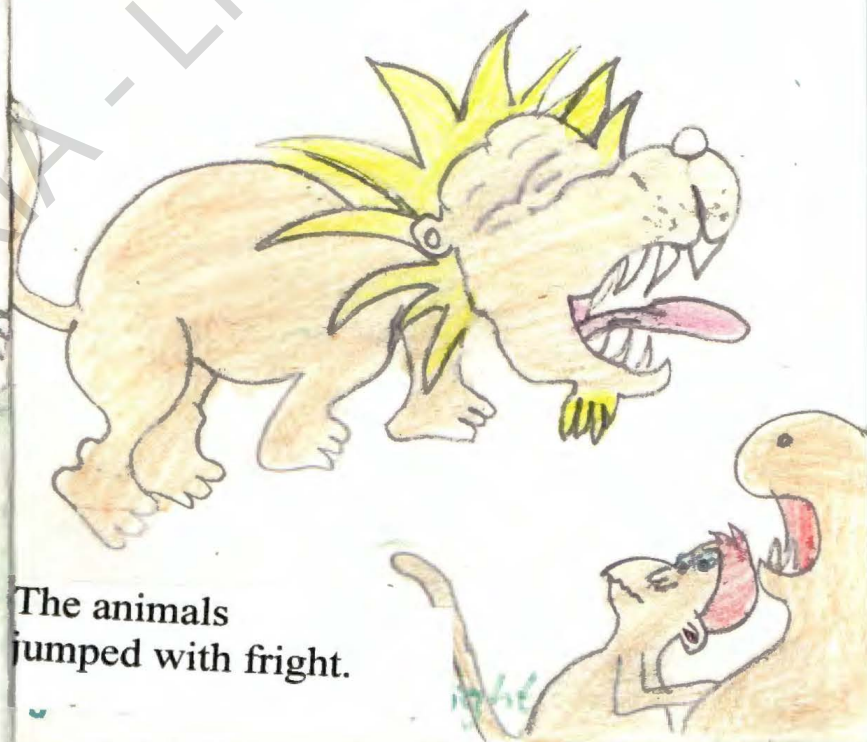
Amen !! Amen !!! Amen !!!! Amen !!!!!

CYCLE 3

Hippo tried standing
on his head. But that didn't work.

Hippo waited for the
Hiccup.
"Be quiet" roared the lion. I can't sleep.

The animals
jumped with fright.

ADDENDUM U
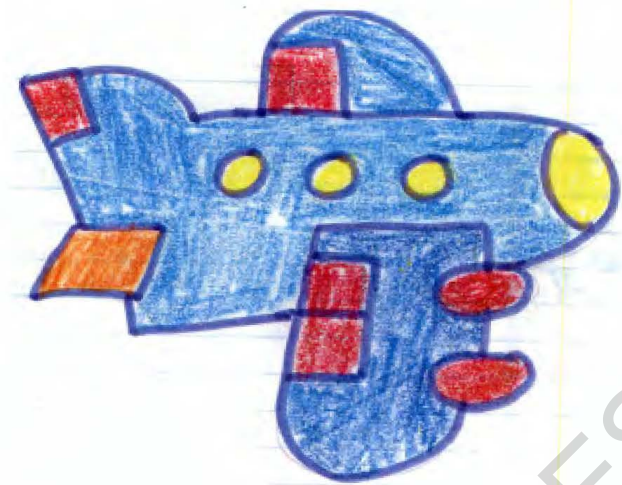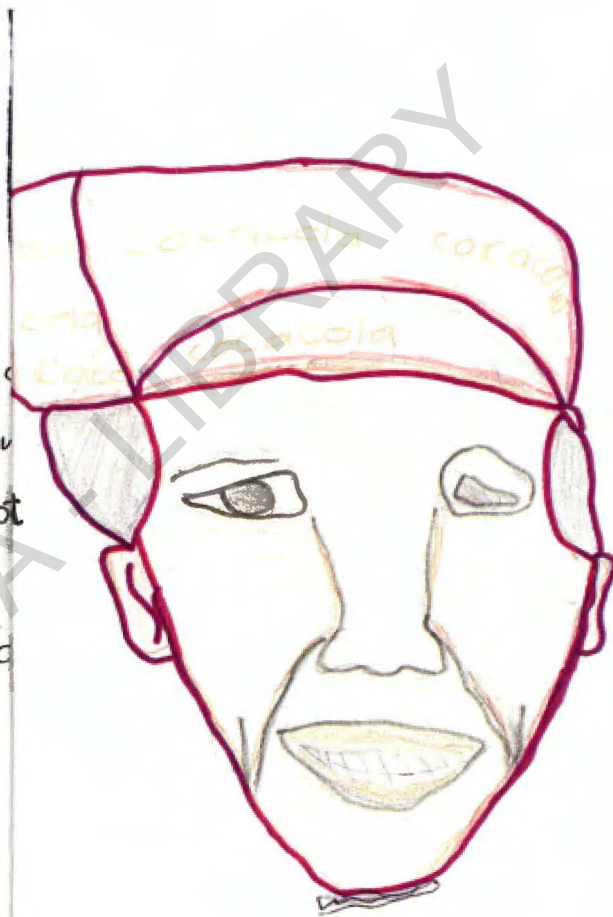
Further examples of teachers' work (cycle 3)

I like to look at the airplane.

e story of Vuyo

! I'm Vuyo.

obela! ke nna Vuyo.

m proud to be a South Afric

e ikgantšha go ba MoAfrika Boru

am an artist but I could not

nd a job.

e motaki fela ga ke a kgona

hwetša mošomo.

They apologise for their deeds

I'm starving said the bee –

I am hungry said the frog -

ina-ke (what about me) said the beetle.

I asked my classteacher to give me some advice about teaching. Then I got a group of Children from grade O to grade 3 to join me. I asked my father IF I could use his study for teaching. He Said it was alright.

I told the children that I wanted to see their parents. They came to See me. I told them that their Children wanted knowledge from me and that I wanted R1.50 everymonth. They agreed and I told them what I was going to do with the money.