

**THE IMPACT OF READING DISABILITIES (DYSLEXIA) ON THE
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNER**

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation, “The impact of reading disability on the academic achievement of the primary school learner /child,” presents my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late father, Gift Shandu for his motivation, encouragement and love for education.

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SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to pursue an investigation into the impact reading disabilities have on the academic achievement of a primary school learner.

From the literature study it became evident that learners with reading problems are faced with a lot of problems in primary schools. These problems are manifest in the form of prejudice stigmatisation, humiliation and pressure as they often find the teaching and learning materials beyond their scope of comprehension.

There is a need for educator support so that they can fine-tune their instruction to suit the level of the learners with reading problems and for educators to garner the support of parents who may be uninterested about what obtains at school.

Learners with reading problems can be helped by educators whose learning activities are well planned and prepared and their presentation has to captivate the learner's attention, interest and involvement.

If learners with reading problems do not receive adequate support, they may exhibit the following:

- Behavioural problems e.g. being disobedient to the educator.
- Have a low frustration threshold.
- Develop a negative self-esteem.
- Set unrealistic goals for themselves.
- Ultimately drop out of school.
- Play truant
- Shirk their school work.
- Absent themselves from school.

Nevertheless, educators need to create a stimulating atmosphere, to exploit reinforcement strategies and set good examples, such as:

- Tangible motivators, for example, stars, edibles (nuts and fruits), cinema tickets, colouring books.

- Activity orientated motivators such as helping the educator, free play, watching television, painting or drawing.
- Social motivators, such as a smile, nod of head etc.

In conclusion a summary was presented on the findings of the literature and empirical study and recommendations are made based on the nature of assistance required by the educators in order to help the learner with reading problems. The recommendations touched on remedial approaches and teaching activities that educators need to utilize to help the reading disabled learner.

Further research should be conducted on barriers to learning that could emanate from inappropriate pedagogy, insufficient support for educators, inappropriate and unfair assessment procedures.

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booysen (1996:345) say that the impact of reading disabilities perhaps can never be fully understood by a person who can read and write. When in a foreign country, we experience frustrations because we are unable to read the language, but the situation is not comparable to being unable to read in any language.

Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booysen (1996:346) say that learners with reading problems are unable to interact with others through one of the most pervasive media, namely print. These learners are excluded from making use of some of the most important resources of information and enjoyment available. They can not make proper use of the material available in libraries for information and recreational purposes. Such learners have difficulty reading danger signs and are thus highly vulnerable. They may have a problem when trying to complete application forms for employment and thus the implication for occupational opportunities and socio-economic status are, of course, catastrophic.

An inability to read not only creates problems in school learning, but limits social maturity, social relationships and the assumption of responsibility. It leads to the dependency on other to an extent not expected of children with normal intelligence.

1.2 ANALYSIS OF A PROBLEM

Johnson and Myklebust (1967:147) ask the following questions to highlight the plight of the reading disabled on one's everyday activities and total adjustment;

- What happens when one cannot read danger signs?
- How can one use public transport if one cannot read the names of stations and trains?
- How can one look up a telephone number in case of emergency?
- What is one's feeling, when one goes to the restaurant with a friend but cannot read the name?

- How can one complete application forms for employment or forms for a driver's licence etc.

From these questions it is discernible that children with reading problems encounter a plethora of problems in their daily lives and these problems have a bearing on their self-esteem.

Ricket, List and Lerner (1983:4) maintain that the impact of reading problems upon an individual and the society can be devastating. Disabled readers in primary schools often suffer intense feelings of shame and inadequacy. Primary school learners are wont to ridicule and taunt other learners who appear to have problems in reading or those who lag behind their peers.

Inability to read is a primary cause of school failure. Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001:9) has it that about 280 000 children with learning problems drop out of school. Such failure can occur in any subject, since the ability to read is essential for all types of academic success. Thus it is of paramount importance that the primary school learner with reading problems be helped to avoid failures that lead to a negative self-concept and a negative attitude towards the school work.

Emotionally the strain of being unable to read may cause the learner to feel lost and frightened and to experience rejection and defeat. The primary school learners with reading disabilities are forced to face their inadequacies at school and are subject to degradation and grudging tolerance of others.

More often than not, learners with reading handicaps in primary school display overt disruptive behaviour or may simply give up. The poor reader finds doors for personal growth and career opportunities closed [reading being the key for acquiring and maintaining employable skills. In a technocratic society, there is always a need for retraining, much at the expense of the reading disabled. Automation has consumed the jobs for unskilled or semi-skilled workers. The employment opportunities of primary school learners with reading disabilities that drop out have diminished (Ricket, List & Lerner; 1983:4).

Wilson and Cleland (1985:2) say that many ills in our society emanate from poor reading, for example the unemployed school drop outs, the juvenile delinquent and criminals tend to have poor reading skills. The examination of problems in our schools such as truancy, late coming, absenteeism and shirking one's school work, all seem to show some association with poor reading. These are the re-actions of a troubled primary school learner who is frustrated by what he obtains within the classroom walls.

Wilson and Cleland (1985:3) argue that the reading disabled learners are not with the "in" group and are often alone at play as well as in the classroom. Rejection encourages them to seek companionship with others in the "out" group. When the learners fail they are placed one year behind their peers. Disabled learners will feel they do not belong either in the group with which they are placed or with their peers. When learners with reading problems are labeled as low achieving readers, it is difficult for them to maintain a positive self concept. Furthermore, such labels are difficult to remove.

Ricket, List and Lerner (1983:4) say that a trilogy of watchwords seem to dominate the existence of learners with severe reading problems. These learners must learn to "cope", "compensate" and "conceal" in an attempt to function as normal as possible. Coping involves dealing successfully with the situation. Compensation requires that the person "make up for" the deficiency. Concealing involves hiding the handicap which manifests itself by a primary school learner being less participative in classroom dialogue.

On the whole, primary school learners with reading problems exhibit behavioural problems, have a low frustration threshold. Since these learners are ridiculed and labeled, they develop a negative self-concept, negative self esteem and set unrealistic goals. These learners do not get adequate support from parents as well as educators.

It is incumbent on educators to encourage, praise them, be helpful, adapt work and explain. Educators need to be understanding, not show up. Educators need to know that the learner is dyslexic and treat the learner as intelligent. Lastly as an educationalist, we cannot afford to sit back and fold our arms, whilst the nation's human resources are left unexploited.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem that will be investigated in this study pertains to the effect reading disabilities have on the academic achievement of the primary school learner. The following are questions that require answers:

- How does a reading disability affect the primary school learner's academic achievement?
- How can a learner with a reading disability be assisted in order to overcome the problem?
- What is the nature of the assistance required by the educators to help learners with a reading disability?

1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.4.1 Dyslexia

Gaddes and Edgell (1994:336) define dyslexia as a disorder manifested by a difficulty to read despite conventional instruction; adequate intelligence and social cultural opportunity. It is a disorder in children who despite conventional classroom experience fail to attain the language skills of reading, writing and spelling commensurate with their intellectual abilities. They define "alexia" as the inability to read caused by lesions of the brain; word blindness and "dyslexia" as the loss of power to grasp the meaning of that which is read. Miles and Miles (1996:5) say the use of word, "dyslexia" has 3 main advantages, it classifies, it explains and it invites to action.

1.4.2 Reading

Gearheart (1981:211) says that reading is defined broadly to include word recognition, comprehension, interpretation and application of what is read. Laney and Mc Nees (1975:198) define reading as a set of independent skills and behaviours that are "learned and used separately".

1.4.3 Impact

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2004:596) the impact is the powerful effect that something has on something.

1.4.4 Academic

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2004:5) academic is connected with education, especially studying in schools and universities.

1.4.5 School

Piet and Mahlangu (1990:47) define the school as a formal institution for instruction or preparation for adult life which transport culture to the next generation. An institution like this helps to develop young adult to cultural maturity.

1.4.6. Gender

In this study reference to any gender includes references to the other gender.

1.5 THE AIM OF THIS STUDY

The aims of this study are:

To pursue the study of relevant literature in order to establish the relationship between dyslexia and academic achievement. To try to highlight the plight and frustration that learners with reading disabilities are faced with in the mainstream education. Ainscow (1999:7) calls this “mainstream dumping”, “mainstream default” or the dump and hope. In most cases it is the learner that has to adapt to the curriculum and not the other way around.

This study also hopes to make certain recommendations that may serve as guideline for educators who are faced with learners who are reading disabled and ultimately serve as a launch pad for the restoration of effective teaching and learning.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research with regard to this study will be conducted as follows:

- A comprehensive literature review of all relevant literature.
- An empirical survey comprising a structured questionnaire to be completed by primary school educators in the Ndwedwe Area under Ethekewini Region.
- A Linkert type scale self structured questionnaire with 3 response categories viz, yes, no and uncertain. The 3 response categories will ensure that all respondents will fall in one of the categories enabling the measuring of the direction and their understanding regarding the impact of reading disabilities on the academic achievement of learners which has a spill over effect on effective teaching and learning.

1.7 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

The value of this research lies in the anticipated dissemination of research findings as publications, editorials and journals. Some may be incorporated in the current syllabi, be used in seminars and workshops aimed at empowering educators and learners about reading disabilities.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Mercer (1992:431) says that reading is a major academic difficulty for learners with learning disabilities. The detrimental effect of reading disabilities has serious consequences not only for individuals who have disabilities, but also for the society in general.

Dyslexia is a learning disability in which a learner encounters extreme difficulty in learning to read. It is associated with neurological dysfunction. Two major elements of reading are word recognition and reading comprehension. Most of the aspects about the symptoms, diagnosis, teaching activities and remediation of the reading disabled will be explored in the literature review as well as the further elucidation of the concepts by informed authors.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Wallace and Kauffman (1986:207) say that learning to read is considered by many to be the most important skill taught at school. Educators regard successful reading as the most significant denominator of adequate achievement in many areas of the curriculum. They further state that 10-15% of the general school population has or experience difficulties in reading. Reading difficulties are not an isolated problem but can affect other curricular areas as well as personal, social and behavioural adjustment. The skills involved in learning to read adequately are many and varied. These skills are classified as either word recognition or comprehension skills. Word recognition skills are needed to decode printed letters and to match letters and word with sound. Comprehension skills are needed to understand the meaning of what is read. Children with learning handicaps experience difficulty with both types of skills.

According to <http://www.medscape.com> (2008/07/07) reading disability is a common problem in childhood affecting 5%-10% of children. It is even more prevalent in low socio-economic status children. As a common source of school failure it may be implicated in comorbid problems, such as ADHD, anxiety disorders, substance abuse and conduct disorders. Processing problems, particularly phonological awareness are core deficits in reading disability and often respond to specific treatment.

It is, therefore important for educators to be aware of specific reading deficits in order to plan appropriate methods and materials to alleviate the reading problem. Gearheart (1981:206) says that there is no single most effective approach for teaching reading to reading disabled learners, but educators should rather concentrate on planning a relevant and appropriate reading program for a reading disabled learner.

2.2 SYMPTOMS OF READING DISABILITY

Ngcangisa (2006:11) says that a learner with dyslexia has the following symptoms:

- Has difficulty sounding out letters.
- Reads slowly and gets confused with words.
- Can't remember what he has just read.
- Can sound out letters, but can't combine them to form a word.
- Switches letters and numbers, such as eat instead of tea, 78 instead of 87; and confuses letters such as b and d.
- Drops letters and battles with sentence structuring, punctuation, syllables and capital letters.

Kapp (2006:91) lists the symptoms of dyslexia into 3 categories namely;

1. General matters

- The child points to the word he is reading.
- He holds the book too close or too far away from his face.
- He avoids reading tasks.
- He seems very tense when he has to read.
- He fidgets a great deal.
- He closes one eye when he reads.
- He turns his head noticeably when he reads.

2. Reading aloud

- He reads slowly and word for word.
- He reads very hurriedly.
- He ignores punctuation.
- He struggles with the pronunciation of words.
- He inserts words.
- He omits words.
- Unfamiliar words are sounded out.
- He guesses at unfamiliar words.
- He reverses words.
- He reverses parts of words.

- He reads hesitantly.
- He repeats words.
- He repeats parts of sentences.

3. Reading comprehension

- The child cannot remember facts.
- He cannot draw conclusions.
- He cannot interpret metaphorical language.
- He has poor understanding of the meaning of words.
- He answers in a roundabout way without reaching the essence of the matter.

In <http://www.idanat.org> the following symptoms of reading disability are listed:

- Short memory span.
- Poor memory.
- Difficulty following direction.
- Inability to discriminate between/amongst letters, numerals or sounds.
- Poor reading/writing ability.
- Eye-hand co-ordination problems.
- Difficulties with sequencing.
- Disorganization and other sensory difficulties. (2008/05/02)

Donald (1993:180) further argues that symptoms of skills weakness and behavioural control problems may not be evident in a very young reading disabled learner. As the learner development continues in a typically uneven, frustrating, confusing and not always successful manner, the symptoms become increasingly evident. Parents begin to hope that the symptoms will be short-lived and outgrown so that their child will develop normally. Unfortunately, this does not usually happen. Instead, the symptoms become more complex and intensified, while parents' energies and hopes diminish. Daily functioning, family relationships and social interaction are all affected in various undesirable ways. Frequently, the parents discover that their methods for managing the child's behaviour and reducing failure experiences are not effective. Parents may respond to this apparent dilemma with feelings of frustration and anger or may develop feelings of guilt and depression as they search for explanations or imagine that they may have caused the problems.

Donald (1983:180) says that it is possible the reading disabled learners' symptoms. Sometimes the symptoms can be entirely eliminated if they are not too severe and appropriate kinds of learning experiences and support are provided. The learner with reading disabilities can be helped to develop skills and behaviour patterns by means of a structure, limits and consistency, prescriptive learning experiences and accepting and supportive environment, positive role models as well as co-coordinating efforts of parents and various professionals. As this goal is approached daily experiences with the child will become more enjoyable. As the child's self-image improves from increasingly successful experiences, the adult's perception of the child may also improve.

2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN WITH A READING DISABILITY

Bender (1993:1) says that learners with reading disabilities tend to have IQ's in the low to mid 90's or slightly below the average 100. This is because of language skills that are measured on most IQ tests. Learners with reading disabilities tend to have problems in memory processing which leads to difficulty in academic work. These problems are associated with strategic thinking and the ability to move awareness of a stimulus from short-term to long-term memory. Learners with a reading disability tend to have a lower self-concept than do non-learners with reading disabilities. Learners with reading disabilities tend to be more external in their locus of control and attributions than other learners. Bender (1993:2) maintains that learners with reading disabilities tend to exhibit behavioural abnormalities that frequently distinguish between learners that are reading disabled and those that are not. These behaviours include high levels of off-task behaviour in the classroom, inability to get along with peers and a high level of impulsivity. As the primary school education forms the foci for the child's anchoring ideas as well as the personality development, early intervention by educators, parents and all those who have an interest in education can never be over-emphasized.

In <http://www.idanat.org> it is stated that characteristics of reading disabilities should be evident when a learner;

- Performs differently from day to day.
- Responds inappropriately in many instances.
- Is distractible, restless and impulsive.
- Says one thing, but means another.

- Is difficult to discipline.
- Doesn't adjust well to change.
- Has difficulty listening and remembering.
- Has difficulty telling time and right from left.
- Places letters in incorrect sequence.
- Has delayed speech development and immature speech. (2008/05/02)

2.4 THE PROBLEMS THE READING DISABLED LEARNER MAY ENCOUNTER IN THE CLASSROOM

Wilson and Cleland (1985:3) state that the dyslexic learner encounters problems in one or more of the following:

2.4.1 Prejudice

Some readers encounter discrimination because of their sex. Bender (1993:1) points out that learners with reading disabilities tend to be male, and ratios of 3 to 1 or 4 to 1 [male to female] are not uncommon in some school classes. Disabled readers may encounter problems because of social status especially in rural areas where parents are wanting and cannot provide the necessary reading material to support the learner. Learners with a reading disability may be discriminated against because of appearance or some other perceived difference. When they encounter prejudice and receive discriminatory treatment the motivation by a primary school learner to make an effort to learn is dampened.

2.4.2 Instruction

Instruction is normally geared to the achieving learners and those achieving slowly and not all can be quickly left behind (Wilson & Cleland,1985:3). Catching up can be difficult even if the spirit is there. The learner gets far behind that the ability to try is gone. Ricket, List and Lerner (1983:144) say that this can be avoided by gearing reading material to learners' instructional level of reading. Wallace and McLoughlin (1999:124) maintain that instructional strategies should be designed to deliver systematic and organized intervention in the regular classroom, especially in the primary grades so as to help prevent identification of the learner as handicapped. Lerner (1993:430) emphasizes the use of whole language

instruction as the philosophy of teaching reading that emphasizes literacy, the connection between reading and writing, meaning and comprehension the use of authentic literature and the avoidance of exercises and drills such as decoding instructions.

2.4.3 Materials [reading materials]

Heimburge (2006:79) says that when materials used are too difficult, reading can be frustrating. The attitude that develops is that reading is difficult and unrewarding. Heimburge (2006:79) further argues that this problem is compounded when the primary school learner is presented with dry, uninteresting or difficult material. Many may also lose their place as their attention drifts when they are reading. Spache and Spache (1977:55) say that to grip the learners' interest and attention, reading materials should be carefully scaled according to the difficulty, presented in sequence that is consistent with available knowledge of learning and semi-controlled vocabulary. They further argue that the selection of reading experiences should include poetry, prose, and factual, fictional, informational and entertaining material. I subscribe to this view, because at primary school, the tutorial material needs to be varied and in form of fun [games and plays] as these learners have a short attention span at this level. The combination of recreational and primary school informational reading expands the learners' information base but, through balance, maintains the concept of reading for fun.

Young and Colin (1990:57) echo the same sentiments when they say one should make reading fun. The educator has to praise attention, effort and correct responses. If the child is uncertain, give the correct response before anxiety develops. A little and often is better than a lot rarely.

2.4.4 The grouping of learners

Ricket, Cadwell, Jennings and Lerner (2002:302) say that the grouping of learners that have reading difficulty can be discouraging. The learners internalize that they are slow. They further suggest that there should be small group sizes that will help facilitate one-to-one instruction. The largest number in a group is seven. The educator has to confer individually with learners.

2.4.5 Stigmatisation

Wilson and Cleland (1985:4) maintain that when a learner with reading dyslexia is stigmatized, it is difficult to maintain a positive self-concept. In the researcher's experience as an educator, learners at primary school usually ridicule a learner with problems as opposed to those in high school. The intervention by the educator in teaching the primary school learner about diversity, acceptance and tolerance can never be over emphasized. The onus rests upon the educator to instill positive values and humanness in young learners so that the young learner with reading disabilities can feel at ease to explore the world unhindered and unashamed.

Wallace and McLoughlin (1988:343) say that individualized educational programmes should be used within regular class, in which momentary learning problems are not views as failures; but as opportunities for further instruction; and in which reading disabled learners receive personalized instruction without suffering the negative side effect of labeling.

2.4.6 Humiliation

Gaddes and Edgell (1994:341) say that public displays of the reading disabled learners' progress are humiliating to the low-achieving reader. No amount of encouragement can motivate those readers who sit in the classroom and see their names on a chart that indicates that they are not doing well. As educators we have to be cautious that we do not become catalysts for the destruction of the child's self-esteem and his personality.

2.4.7 Uninterested parties

Some of the problems that the reading disabled primary school learner has originate at home. Some readers encounter problems that are not of their own making. Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booysen (1996:350) argue that as educators, we cannot afford to ignore the socio-cultural construction of all knowledge and in particular the cornucopia of informal education and incidental learning which nurtures the child's early cognitive growth. The truth is that the predictors of the child's ability to benefit from formal education, namely his levels of intellectual functioning, motivation, language development and especially knowledge of literacy are primarily dependent on the quality and quantity of information education in the

home rather than on global and intractable factors such as “cultural difference” and “socio economic status”.

2.4.8 Classroom size

Ricket, Cadwell, Jennings and Lerner (2002:302) say that to provide efficient instruction for the reading disabled learner that is in a class of more than 30 learners at one is an extremely difficult task. The educator has to make do with small size groups of not more than 7 per group to try and facilitate one-to-one instruction.

2.4.9 Pressure

Wallace and Cleland (1985:4) say that there is enormous pressure from parents, supervisors and administrators that make educators satisfy parents that all readers are reading up to the grade level. Many readers are given material that is difficult for them to comprehend. There is the problem of the absence of school based support teams in our schools. Even when they are there, they have not been capacitated to deal with the problems of the reading disabled and the Department of Education is not conspicuously supportive in this regard. There is another problem of Integrated Quality Management System, where educators are appraised and given scores that go with incentives. Educators casually try to satisfy the officials that all is well so that they can get incentives that are on offer. Wallace and Cleland (1985:4) further argue that; Educators spend more time making reports on non-teaching duties, such as ground duties, latecomers and leave registers etc. These duties often interfere with the time that is allocated for instruction.

2.4.10 Teaching material

Many educators face learners with inadequate or insufficient teaching material. Learners suffer in cases where an educator cannot improvise. Lerner (1993:418) says that to foster reading comprehension, the educator can use materials that do not have words, such as comic books without captions, silent films and books of photographs. The learner figures out the story content from pictures then they can make a transition to printed words. Once the learner understands the material words become more meaningful. The learner could even write her own dialogue.

2.4.11 Preparation

Many educators entered the teaching profession under prepared, for instance, M+3. A desire to teach well does not make up for poor teacher preparation. It is incumbent upon, educators, to make up for this short fall by being avid readers, especially in literacy that has to do with learners with learning problems. According to Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001:49) to make up for poor preparation of teachers; it is required that all curriculum development assessment and instructional development programmes make special efforts to address the learning and teaching requirements of the diverse range of learning needs as well as learning support material and equipment; and assessment methods and techniques.

2.4.12 Testing

Continuous testing, for instance, for intelligence, readiness, phonics, spelling, reading achievement often cuts into the instructional time. Ross (1976:100) asserts that testing should seek to establish how much the child knows, how he or she can learn new material, and how the varying aspects of the learning-teaching situation change the effectiveness of learning. By determining the optimal conditions for adequate learning, one obtains important clues for remedial work for which testing is merely the means. That is the proper function of assessment for it should never be the end in itself. When a child is tested, it should be for the direct benefit of the learner. All too often, testing has been used to find an excuse for “teaching failure” by seeking to discover what is “wrong” with the learner.

2.4.13 Pressure from parents

According to Heimborge (2006:76) parents become anxious when their children are not succeeding in school. They may try to solve the problem by pressurizing them to make greater efforts. These mean piling more pressure on reading disabled learners that make them reject school. Heimborge (2006:76) further describes the challenge with regard to teaching older primary school learners who are poor readers. The learners cannot read, so they do not like to read; reading is laboured and unsatisfying; so they have little reading experience, and because they have not read much, they are not familiar with the vocabulary. Over time their comprehension skills decline, because they do not read and they also become poor spellers and poor writers. What usually begins as a core phonological and word recognition deficit,

often associated with other language weakness becomes a diffuse, debilitating problem with language-spoken and written.

2.5 THE IMPACT READING DYSLEXIA HAS ON THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNER

2.5.1. The learner

Heimburge (2006:76) says that failure to read proficiently is the most common reason why students drop out, get retained, or are referred to a special school. These learners are flummoxed by what obtains in class in that they are often inattentive, playfully distractive and they bully others. They are often absent from school, play truant and show frustration by being less participative in classroom discussion to conceal their shortcomings. In rural areas most of them tend to have early marriages as the reason to drop out and in some cases they practice co-habitation. These learners breed children who will not get adequate support from the home and the vicious circle of reading disability continues. Most of them realize from an early age that they have a reading disability and have a negative self esteem and a negative attitude about the school from the word go.

According to Mc Ewan (2002:1) failure has the power and paralyses with fear, enrage with frustration; and demoralize with despair. Failure is the beginning of downward spiral- falling through the cracks. Mc Ewan (2002) further says that learners with reading problems tend to be hostile and aggressive; have low self-esteem and are at times shy because of their inability to cope with others. They tend to distance themselves from the learning situation; the teacher and their peers and often associate with a criminal culture of delinquents where they use their own distinctive language which further hampers language development.

2.5.2 Parents

Bender (1993:180) says that parents of the reading disabled learner frequently discover that their methods for managing the child's reading problem and reducing failure experiences are not effective. They soon begin to perceive the learner's reading problem as they would those of a chronic disease, as something unpleasant, which must be endured because it cannot be changed. The entire situation may seem impossible to change and equally impossible to cope

with. Parents may respond to this dilemma with feelings of guilt and anger. They may vent their anger on the reading disabled learner or at times they may have self-blame as they regard themselves as the cause of the problem. Some parents may show favouritism to children who do not have reading problems, and further frustrate the reading disabled learner. Some parents dump their children on the educators' doorstep and then hope for a miracle. They do not support the learner and some parents are reluctant to come to the school meetings. Ainscow (1997:7) calls this the dump and hope!

2.5.3 Educators

Lieberman (1982:506) states that there are educators who delve in the twilight of their cookbooks (list of activities) and workbooks and always seem to be searching for a perfect solution, whilst failing to anchor their teaching practices to certain generally accepted principles, such as, learners are more motivated when things are meaningful and that all other factors being equal, the newest (meaning newest to the child) possible method should be tried first. I subscribe to this view in that to teach a learner effectively we have to move from the known (simple) and move gradually to the unknown (complex).

Many educators are not equipped with skills to help the reading disabled learner. Their quick solution over the years had been to make the learner repeat the grade up to 6 times. The Department of Education's Annual Report (1999:52) does not want the learners to be retained in one phase for more than 4 years. Educators just move the reading handicapped learner to the next grade, without bothering to support. Another problem is caused by the redeployment policy, whereby because of an increase or decrease in enrolment educators are sent from pillar to post. The movement of educators by the PP Model (Post Provisioning Model) creates insecurity and stress on educators and they do not have the motivation to help the learner with reading problem, as educators are busy licking their own wounds. Outcomes Based Education (OBE) came with its own anxieties, as the educators have to adapt to change and teach something they themselves do not understand. OBE comes with a lot of recording (paperwork) and there is little time and energy for the educators to help the child with reading problems.

Most of the schools do not have school based support teams. In schools where they have been formed, educators do not have the skills and the resources to help the learner with reading

problems. Education White paper 6 (DoE, 2001:13) dictates the special schools are to be transformed to resource centres. The problem is that in rural schools, especially in Ndwedwe area where I work, there is not one special school. In areas where they have special schools, they are few and far in between to be able to render effective support.

2.6 CONCLUSION

It is salient from the aforesaid exposition that a lot of groundwork needs to be covered in order to accommodate the reading disabled learner in normal schooling. For the reading disabled learner to learn effectively, many authors agree that we (educators) should make reading more fun, focus on the learners' feelings and interests and involve them in games, such as letter bingo. According to Winburg and Botes (2005:98) research shows that learners' reading is complex, and if it is to be supported, it needs a multi-pronged approach. By this, they meant it is not sufficient to use supplementary reading texts at school, when these are not consistent with the practices at home. Often the educator chooses the text that they think is suitable, but several research projects have shown that the learners own reading choices, for example, magazines, comics are a powerful route to other texts. It is, therefore, counter-productive for educators to make judgments about children's leisure reading for this is an area that learners should "own" and be empowered to make their own choices and decisions. Using the school as the extension of the home is of import and using the anchoring ideas that the children have as the foci for further reading.

In the next chapter the planning of the empirical research will be explained.

CHAPTER 3

PLANNING OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapters the conceptual issues relating to the impact of reading disabilities on the academic achievement of the primary school learner were examined. The literature review revealed that much needs to be done to support learners with reading disabilities in order for them to fit into the mainstream education and to be accepted by others and to lead normal, meaningful lives. This chapter will focus on the research methodology used in the empirical investigation relating to the impact of reading disabilities on the academic achievement of a primary school learner. A self structured questionnaire was utilized as a research instrument.

3.2 PREPARATION AND DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

3.2.1 Selection of respondents

Ten (10) primary schools were selected in the Ilembe District in the Ndwedwe Circuit. For the purpose of this study three (3) educators from the ten (10) primary schools were randomly selected as the research sample. This gave the researcher a randomly selected sample of 25 educators which may be considered an adequate sample for a mini-dissertation.

3.2.2 Sampling

Random selection includes any technique that provides each population element an equal probability of being included in the sample. In this situation the lottery method with placement was employed and each individual person in the population theoretically had an equal chance to be selected for the sample (De Vos, 2000:195).

3.3 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

3.3.1 The questionnaire as a research instrument

A questionnaire is a data collection instrument containing a select group of questions chosen because of their relevance, carefully worded for clarity and carefully formatted for printed copy. A questionnaire is essential for the collection of survey data. When constructing a questionnaire, a researcher should always seek to reach two specific goals. First, the question asked should produce the data required. Second, to be reliable, the question asked must tap the same type of information in each person participating (Guy, Edgley, Arafat & Allen, 1987:229).

Gall, Borg and Gall (1996:289) define a questionnaire as a document that asks the same questions to all individuals in the sample. Babbie (1996:377) speaks of a questionnaire as a document containing questions and other type of items designed to select data appropriate to analysis. Data is any kind of information that researchers can identify and accumulate to facilitate answers to their queries.

A questionnaire is not simply thrown together. A well documented questionnaire is a culmination of a long process of planning of the research objective, formulating the problem, generating hypothesis etc (Wolhuter, Van Der Merwe, Vermeulen & Vos, 2003:14). A poorly designed questionnaire can invalidate any research results, notwithstanding the merits of the sample, the fieldworkers and statistical techniques (Huysamen, 1989:12). A well designed questionnaire can enhance the reliability and validity of the data to acceptable tolerances (Wolhuter, Van Der Merwe, Vermeulen & Vos, 2003:14).

Design of questionnaires does not take place in a vacuum. The length of individual questions, the number of response options, as well as the format and wording of questions are determined by the following (Vos, 2003:53).

- The choice of the subject to be researched.
- The aim of the research sample.
- The size of the research sample.
- The method of data collection.

- The analysis of the data.

It is discernible that the researcher has to look at principles that determine whether the questionnaire is well designed or not. It is, therefore, a requisite to draw a distinction between questionnaire content, question format, question order, type of questions, formulation of questions and validity and reliability of questions.

3.3.2 Construction of the questionnaire

To enable the researcher to explore the impact of reading disabilities on the academic achievements of a rural primary school child or learner, a questionnaire had to be developed.

Designing a questionnaire should not take place in isolation. The researcher has consulted and sought advice of specialists and colleagues during the construction and design of the questionnaire (Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg, 1990:198). In preparing questionnaires, the researcher has to be very cautious.

- To what extent might a question influence the respondent to show himself in a good light?
- To what extent might a question influence a respondent to be unduly helpful by attempting to anticipate what the researcher wants to hear or find out?
- To what extent might a question be asking for information about a respondent that he is not certain and perhaps not likely to know about himself. (Tuckman, 1972:174).

Best (1977:151) has it that careful preparation of a good questionnaire takes a great deal of time, ingenuity and hard work. Mahlangu (1987:80) maintains that the construction of a questionnaire should reflect scholarship. A poorly constructed questionnaire will hardly elicit high returns. He maintains that one has to keep the questionnaire as brief as possible so that answering it requires a minimum of the respondent's time. One has to eliminate all the unnecessary items, especially those whose answers are available from other sources. All the answers in a questionnaire should serve a research problem function, that is, they should elicit data needed to test the hypothesis or answer the questions of a research study (Ary, Jacobs & Razaviek, 1979:177).

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg, (1990:198) say that an ideal questionnaire must be clear, unambiguous and uniformly workable. Its design and content must restrict potential errors from respondents. Questions to be included in the questionnaire, were tested on people, as a question may appear correct to the researcher when written down, but can be interpreted differently when asked to another person.

Gay (1992:224) asserts that a questionnaire should be brief and attractive and easy to respond to as possible. Sloppy looking questionnaires turn people off, lengthy questionnaires turn people off as well as, questionnaires requiring lengthy responses to each question. No item should be included that does not directly relate to the objectives of the study and that structured close form items should be used if at all possible.

3.3.3 Characteristics of a good questionnaire

One can draw a parallel between characteristics of a good questionnaire as identified by (Wolhuter, Van der Merwe, Vermeulen & Vos, 2003:15; Best (1971:166) where they all maintain that:

- The topic must be significant and relevant. The respondent should recognize it as important enough to warrant a response. The significance should be clearly and carefully stated in the questionnaire and in the accompanying letter.
- It seeks only to elicit responses on the information that cannot be obtained from other sources.
- Questionnaires should be attractive in appearance, neatly arranged and clearly duplicated or printed.
- Respondents must be competent to answer and should provide reliable information.
- Questions must be brief and concise. Long and complicated items should be avoided, because they are difficult to understand and respondents may be unwilling to try and understand them.
- Directions must be salient and completed and important terms clearly defined.
- Double-barreled questions are to be avoided. Each question should be limited to a single idea or concept and should be worded as simply and as straight-forward as possible.

- Different categories should provide an opportunity for easy, accurate and unambiguous responses.
- Questions should be objectively formulated with no leading suggestions to render the desired response.
- Questions should be presented in a proper psychological order, proceeding from general to more particular and sensitive responses. An orderly grouping helps respondents to organize their own thinking so that their answers are logical and objective. It is preferable to present questions that create a favourable attitude before proceeding to those that are more intimate or delicate in nature. Annoying negative, biased and embarrassing questions should be avoided.

3.3.4 Advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire

Data can be gathered by means of a structured questionnaire in inter-alia, the following ways: a written questionnaire that is mailed, delivered, or handed out personally, personal interviews and telephone interviews. Each mode has specific advantages and disadvantages which the researcher needs to evaluate for their suitability to the research question and the specific target population being studied, as well as the related cost. The researcher used the written questionnaire as research instrument taking to consideration the following advantages and disadvantages (Wolhuter, Van der Merwe, Vermeulen & Vos, 2003:16).

3.3.4.1 Advantages of the written questionnaire

One of the advantages of using the questionnaire is that all the respondents receive the same set of questions phrased exactly the same way. The questionnaire is time saving and is conducive to reliable results Mahlangu (1987:84) and Cohen and Manion (1994:111-112) list the advantages of the written questionnaire as follows:

- Affordability is the primary advantage of written questionnaires because it is the least expensive means of data gathering.
- Written questionnaires preclude possible interview bias. The way the interviewer asks questions and even the interviews general appearance or interaction may influence a respondent's answer. Such bias can be completely eliminated with a written questionnaire.

- A questionnaire permits anonymity. If it is arranged such that responses are given anonymously, this would increase the researcher's chances of receiving responses which genuinely represent a person's beliefs, feelings, opinions or perceptions.
- They may permit a respondent sufficient time to consider answers before responding.
- Questionnaires can be given to a lot of people simultaneously.
- They provide greater uniformity across measurement situations than do interviews. Each person responds to exactly the same questions because standard instructions are given to the respondents.
- Generally the data provided by questionnaires can be more easily analysed and interpreted than the data obtained from verbal responses.
- Questionnaires can elicit information which cannot be obtained from other sources. This readers' empirical research possible in different educational disciplines.
- Data obtained from questionnaires can be compared and inferences made.
- The administering of questionnaires and coding analysis and interpretation of data can be done without any special training.
- Questionnaire design is relatively easy if the set guidelines are followed.
- Questions requiring considered answers rather than immediate answers could enable respondents to consult documents in the case of the mail questionnaire approach.
- A respondent may be willing to answer questions of a personal or embarrassing nature on a questionnaire as compared to a face-to-face situation with an interviewer who may be a complete stranger. In some cases it may happen that respondents report less than expected and make critical comments in a mail questionnaire.
- Through the use of the questionnaire approach the problems related to interviews may be avoided. Interview "errors" may seriously undermine the reliability and validity of survey results.
- Using a questionnaire solves the problem of non-contact when the respondent is not at home "when the interviewer calls". When the target population to be covered is widely and thinly spread, the mail questionnaire is the only possible method of approach.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:211) echo the very same sentiments when they say that the questionnaire provides standard questions and uniform procedures.

3.3.4.2 Disadvantages of the written questionnaire

According to McNeil (1989:47) McMillan and Schumacher (2006:211) and Vos (2003:63) the written questionnaire also has the following disadvantages

- Questionnaires do not provide the flexibility of interviews. In an interview the idea or comment can be explored. This makes it possible to gauge how people are interpreting the question. If the respondents interpret questions differently, the validity of the information is compromised.
- Written questionnaires do not allow the researcher to correct the misunderstandings or answer questions that the respondents may have. Respondents may answer questions incorrectly or not at all, due to confusion or misinterpretation.
- People are generally better able to express their views verbally than in writing.
- Researchers are unable to control the context of question answering, and specifically, the presence of other people. Respondents may ask friends or family members to examine the questionnaire or comment on their answers, causing bias if the respondents own private opinions are desired.
- Questions can be answered only when they are sufficiently easy and straight forward to be understood with the given instructions and definitions.
- In the mail questionnaire the respondent examines all the questions at the same time before answering them and the answers to the different questions can therefore not be treated as independent.
- The mail questionnaire does not make provision for obtaining the views of more than one person at a time. It requires uninfluenced views of one person only.
- Answers to mail questionnaires must be seen as final. Re-checking of responses cannot be done. There is no chance of investigating beyond the given answer for a clarification of ambiguous answers. If respondents are unwilling to answer certain questions nothing can be done to it because the mail questionnaire is essentially inflexible.

3.3.5 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

Validity and reliability are important in educational research because most of the measurements attempted in this area are obtained indirectly. Researchers can never guarantee that an educational or psychological measuring instrument measures precisely and dependably what it is intended to measure (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:198); McNeil (1989:15) and Greenfield (2002:174) speak of validity as making sure that a question measures what we say it does and of reliability as a question to which respondents give the same response on different occasions.

3.3.5.1 Validity of the questionnaire

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:237) speak of reliability as referring to the degree of consistency or accuracy of a measuring instrument and of validity as the extent to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:237) as well as Greenfield (2002:174) distinguish between three different types of validity.

- The content validity which refers to how well the test succeeds in covering its field. Decisions can be made on whether to omit or add certain items to end up with a balanced test.
- Criterion validity which is determined statistically by establishing the correlation between the subjects test result and their results in some other criterion. A distinction is made here between simultaneous validity (when the criterion is immediately available) and prediction validity (when the criterion can be applied only at a later stage). To calculate the criterion-related validity, the correlation between two sets of scores is calculated as in the case of reliability.
- Construct validity is related to the psychological qualities, features and factors determined by the test, for example intelligence, reasoning ability or attitudes.

3.3.5.2 Reliability of the questionnaire

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:194) distinguish between the following types of reliability;

- Test – retest reliability. This gives an indication of the dependability of a score on one occasion and on another occasion.
- Internal consistency reliability. This indicates how well the test items measure the same thing.
- Split –half reliability by correlating the results obtained from two halves of the same measuring instrument, the split-half reliability can be calculated.

When the questionnaire is an empirical research instrument is used, there is no specific method for example the “test – retest” method, to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Therefore, it will be difficult to establish to what extent the answers of the respondents are reliable. The researcher, however, believes that the questionnaires in this investigation were completed with the necessary honesty and sincerity required to render the maximum possible reliability. Frankness in responding to the questions was made possible by the anonymity of the questionnaire. In the coding of the questions, it was evident that questionnaires were completed with the necessary dedication.

3.4 PILOT STUDY

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:202) and Vos (2003:60) describe a pilot study as an abbreviated version of a research project in which the researcher practices or tests the procedures to be used in the subsequent full-scale project. The pilot study is a preliminary or “trial run” investigation using similar questions and similar subjects as in the final survey. According to Comrie and Peshkin (1992:30) the basic purpose of a pilot study is to give the researcher an idea of what the method will actually look like in operation and what effects [intended or not] it is likely to have. In other words by generating many of the practical problems that will ultimately arise, a pilot study enables the researcher to avert these problems by changing procedures, instructions and questions. Once the instrument was finalized, a pilot study was conducted.

The number of participants in the pilot study or group is normally smaller than the number of scheduled to take part in final survey. Participants in the pilot study and the sample for the final study must be selected from the same target group. For the purpose of this study the researcher conducted a pilot run at his school on educators.

The following are the purposes of a pilot study, Vos (2003:66):

- It provides the researcher with ideas, approaches and clues foreseen prior to the pilot study.
- It permitted a preliminary testing of the hypothesis that leads to testing more precise hypothesis in the main study.
- It permitted a thorough check of the planned statistical and analytical procedures, thus allowing an appraisal of their adequacy in treating the data.
- It greatly reduced the number of treatment errors because unforeseen problems revealed in the pilot study resulted in realigning the main study.
- It saved the researcher major expenditures of time and money on aspects of research, that would have been unnecessary.
- Feedback from other persons involved was made possible to important improvements in the main study.
- In the pilot study the researcher experimented with a number of alternative measures and selected only those that produced the best results for the final study.
- The approximate time required to complete the questionnaire was established in the pilot study.
- Questions or instructions that were misinterpreted were reformulated.

Through the use of the pilot study as “pre-test”, the researcher was satisfied that the questions asked complied adequately with the requirements of the study.

3.5 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is one of the best available instruments, if properly administered, for obtaining information from widespread sources or large groups simultaneously (Cooper, 1989:39). The researcher personally delivered questionnaires to the selected schools and collected them after completion.

3.6 DATA PROCESSING

Once the data was collected it was captured in a format which would permit analysis and interpretation. This involved the coding of 25 questionnaires completed by primary school educators. The coded data was transferred to a computer spreadsheet.

3.6.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics is concerned with the description or summarization of the data obtained for a group of individuals. Frequency tables, histograms and polygons are useful in forming impressions about the distribution of data.

According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:65-76) and McMillan and Schumacher (2006:192) frequency distributions is a method to organize data obtained from questionnaires in order to simplify statistical analysis. A frequency table provides the following information.

- It indicates how many times a particular response appears on the completed questionnaires.
- It provides percentages that reflect the number of responses to a certain question in relation to the total number of responses.

3.6.2 Application of data

The questionnaire was designed to determine the impact of reading disabilities on the academic achievements of a rural primary school child.

In order to obtain the information needed for the purpose of this study, the questionnaire was sub-divided into two parts:

- The first part required information about the support educators are getting from the district in order to cope with the reading disabled.
- The second part gathered information regarding the dilemma the reading disabled are faced with in the main stream school in rural areas.

3.7. CONCLUSION

In this chapter the planning and design of the empirical research was discussed and a comprehensive description of the questionnaire as a research instrument was grappled with.

The data obtained from the completed questionnaire will be analysed and presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter data, which was collected from the completed questionnaires will be analysed, findings will be interpreted and some comments will be offered in respect thereof. Educators completed 25 questionnaires from 5 different schools, especially those in the intermediate phase.

4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:42) the purpose of research is to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person. Descriptive statistics is one of the methods of research used to study a person or persons scientifically in the educational situation. It attempts to describe the situation as it is; thus there is no intervention on the part of the research and therefore no control. Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:355) maintain that descriptive studies do not set out with the idea of testing hypotheses about relationships, but want to find the distribution of variables. In this study nomothetic descriptive research was employed with the aim of describing the impact of reading disabilities on the academic achievements of the primary school child.

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

Table 1: Frequency distribution according to the gender of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Gender
Valid 1.00	6	24.0	24.0	24.0	Male
2.00	19	76.0	76.0	100.0	Female
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

The research shows that 24% of the respondents are males whereas 76% of respondents are females. Zaiman (1993:16-20) acknowledges that the majority of the teaching corps in South Africa comprises female educators. This may be attributed to the following:

- Female educators view teaching as an occupation that affords them time after school to attend to household chores.
- Schnetler (1993:42) believes that female educators have special qualities to care for the junior grades in primary schools.

4.2.2 The age of respondents

Table 2: Frequency distribution according to the age of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Age
Valid 1.00	1	4.0	4.0	4.0	20 – 25 Years
2.00	1	4.0	4.0	8.0	26 – 30 Years
3.00	3	12.0	12.0	20.0	31 – 35 Years
4.00	7	28.0	28.0	48.0	36 – 40 Years
5.00	11	44.0	44.0	92.0	41 – 45 Years
6.00	1	4.0	4.0	96.0	46 – 50 Years
7.00	1	4.0	4.0	100.0	51 – 55 Years
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

According to Table 2 nearly half (48%) of the respondents in the research sample are 40 years or younger which means that they have more to offer in terms of energy and productivity.

The possibility exists that younger educators may stay in the education profession for a longer period of time to gain more experience with the aim of possible promotion. Younger educators are also more eager and show more enthusiasm in the implementation of new programmes in education, such as, the implementation of inclusive education and OBE (Spady; 1994:56).

4.2.3 Academic qualifications of respondents

Table 3: Frequency distribution according to the academic qualifications of the respondents

1. Degrees	40%
2. Diplomas and / or Certificate	60%

In the research sample (40%) of the respondents possess academic and professional qualification, which are by many perceived as being better qualified for the teaching profession. However, the finding that most (60%) of the educators have diplomas and/or certificates may be because they are teaching in primary schools. The contents (curricula) of teaching diplomas and certificates are more practical than theoretical orientated and therefore more appropriate for teaching younger primary school children (Griessel, Louw & Swart, 1993:71). There may be a possibility that some of the respondents are not motivated to study further because educators are not given incentives for higher academic achievements.

4.2.4 Years in the teaching profession

Table 4: Frequency distribution according to the years of teaching experience of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Years
Valid 1.00	4	16.0	16.0	16.0	0 - 5
2.00	5	20.0	20.0	36.0	6 - 10
3.00	8	32.0	32.0	68.0	11 - 15
4.00	4	16.0	16.0	84.0	16 – 20
5.00	4	16.0	16.0	100.0	21 - 25
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

Table 4 shows that the larger percentage (32%) of the respondents that participated in the research has between 10 and 16 years teaching experience; while the same percentage (32%) has more than 15 years in the teaching profession.

Experience together with adequate training is needed for the responsibilities and the demands imposed on educators (Carl, 1995:21). NCS NET report (1997:19) says that the development of educators, service providers and other human resources is often fragmented and unsustainable. The absence of on-going in-service training of educators in particular, often leads to insecurity, uncertainty, low self-esteem and lack of innovative practices in the classroom. The disillusioned educators tend to exit the teaching profession and look for greener pastures elsewhere. With the sword of rationalization and redeployment hanging over them, most educators feel insecure about their jobs and their future in the teaching profession (Sylvester, 1992:2).

4.2.5 The post level of respondents

Table 5: Frequency distribution according to the post level of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Post Level
Valid 1.00	3	12.0	12.0	12.0	Principal
2.00	1	4.0	4.0	16.0	Deputy Prin.
3.00	5	20.0	20.0	36.0	H.O.D
4.00	16	64.0	64.0	100.0	Educator [PL1]
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

According to the findings in Table 5 most of the respondents' (64%) in the research sample are post level one and are, therefore, involved in the hands-on approach. The principals, deputy principals and heads of departments are more involved with the administrative work and consequently spend less time in the classroom. Statistics of the Department of Education indicate that generally level one educators comprise about 70 percent of the teaching personnel in a school (DoE, 2002:2).

4.2.6 The type of post

Table 6: Frequency distribution according to the type of post of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Type of Post
Valid 1.00	21	84.0	84.0	84.0	Permanent
2.00	2	8.0	8.0	92.0	Temporary
3.00	1	8.0	8.0	92.0	SGB
4.00	1	4.0	4.0	100.0	Other
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

Table 6 shows that the majority (84%) of the respondents that partook in the research are permanent educators. That the majority of the respondents are permanent augurs well for the educator and the school. Educators who are appointed on a permanent basis have the following advantages (DoE, 1999d: 2):

- They are entitled to a housing subsidy which enables them to purchase a house or flat.
- They enjoy job security.
- They are better able to provide for retirement as they are contributors to a pension fund.
- They have a medical aid benefit.

4.2.7 Area of the school

Table 7: Frequency distribution according to the area in which the school is situated

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Area
Valid 3.00	17	68.0	68.0	68.0	3 – Rural
4.00	8	32.0	32.0	100.0	4 – Deep Rural
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

Sixty eight percent (68%) of the respondents' schools are situated in rural areas whereas 32% of the respondents are found in deep rural areas. According to Magubane (1995:2) the perception exists that educators in rural areas are not as competent or qualified as their counter-parts in the cities. Research has found that 24% of the educators at rural schools do

not have qualifications while the rest were under-qualified for the posts they occupied (Jansen; 1999:8).

4.2.8 Average number of learners in class

Table 8: Frequency distribution according to the average number of learners in a class

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	No. of Learners in Class
Valid .00	1	4.0	4.2	4.2	0 > 10
1.00	2	8.0	8.3	12.5	1 > 20
2.00	3	12.0	12.5	25.0	2. Between 20-25
3.00	1	4.0	4.2	29.2	3. Between 26-30
4.00	2	8.0	8.3	37.5	4. Between 31-35
5.00	5	20.0	20.8	58.3	5. Between 36-40
6.00	3	12.0	12.5	70.8	6. Between 41-45
7.00	5	20.0	20.8	91.7	7. Between 46-50
8.00	2	8.0	8.3	100.0	8. More than 50
Total	24	96.0	100.0		
Total	25	100.0			

The two largest percentages (20.8%) of respondents in the research sample teach classes between 36 – 40 and 46 – 50 respectively. Kapp (2002:25-75) says that the educator is expected to make provision for glaring individual differences in a class, such as, in learning styles or achievements. The educator should not only be able to identify problems, but to render assistance up to a certain level. He should, therefore, be able to set individual objectives and adjust the content and the rate of progress expected and learners should receive attention on a one-to-one basis. It is evident that this cannot materialize in a large class, especially where educators do not have educator assistants. Landsberg (2005:61) says that educators need classroom assistants who can support them in teaching a diverse learner population as well as support from specialist people for advice and guidance.

4.2.9 Workshop attendance

Table 9: Frequency distribution according to the number of workshops attended

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Workshops Attended
Valid .00	18	72.0	72.0	72.0	0 – Did Not Attend
1.00	2	8.0	8.0	80.0	1 – Attended Once
2.00	3	12.0	12.0	92.0	2 – Attended Twice
3.00	1	4.0	4.0	96.0	3 – Attended Thrice
4.00	1	4.0	4.0	100.0	4 – Attended Four Times
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

Table 9 shows that the majority (72%) of the respondents have never attended a workshop on reading problems. This is contrary to the “tenets” of the inclusion philosophy which says that educators need systematic and intensive training as part of their initial training or a well planned in-service training by competent and experienced people (Putman, 1998:11). For educators to be able to implement inclusive education and to be able to address the problems of learners with barriers to learning the importance of workshops can never be over emphasized.

4.2.10 School based support team

Table 10: Frequency distribution according to the schools who have a school based support team

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	No. of Learners in Class
Valid .00	1	4.0	4.2	4.2	0 > 10
1.00	2	8.0	8.3	12.5	1 > 20
2.00	3	12.0	12.5	25.0	2. Between 20-25
3.00	1	4.0	4.2	29.2	3. Between 26-30
4.00	2	8.0	8.3	37.5	4. Between 31-35
5.00	5	20.0	20.8	58.3	5. Between 36-40
6.00	3	12.0	12.5	70.8	6. Between 41-45
7.00	5	20.0	20.8	91.7	7. Between 46-50
8.00	2	8.0	8.3	100.0	8. More than 50
Total	24	96.0	100.0		
Total	25	100.0			

The findings in Table 10 show that only 40% of the schools have a school based support team (SBST) whereas the majority (60%) of the schools does not have one. The Education White Paper 6 on special needs education states that the National Department in collaboration with the provincial departments of education, will strengthen the education support service that will have as its centre the new district based support teams whose primary function is to evaluate, and through supporting teaching, build the capacity of schools to recognize and address severe learning needs (DoE, 2001:47). The National Department has not done enough towards the realization of this dream. Further, when people speak of school based support teams, they refer to the management, which is not the case.

According to the draft guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education (DoE, 2002:44-46); the SBST should comprise the learning support educator, who is competent and innovative, the referring educator (usually the learning area or class educator), the scribe, an elected educator (e.g. a teacher of a lower grade who is good at teaching reading a learner may be experiencing. The principal is involved on a part time basis, a school assessment representative, the parent of a learner, the learner himself as well as any co-opted member from outside depending on the needs of a learner a psychologist or occupational therapist.

4.2.11 Inclusion policy

Table 11: Frequency distribution according to schools who have a policy document on inclusion.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	
Valid 1.00	9	36.0	36.0	40.0	1 – Yes
2.00	15	60.0	60.0	100.0	2 – No
3.00	1	4.0	4.0	4.0	3 – Uncertain
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

Most of the respondents (60%) in the research sample indicated that their schools do not have a policy on inclusion. What most of the schools are doing is in conflict with the South African Constitution as the Human Science Research Council (1987:112) states that the policy of inclusion has been incorporate in the S.A. Constitution, and that no aspect of the educational policy may, therefore conflict with fundamental human right. These rights are

equality of access to educational opportunities and the right to human dignity as everyone has a right to have his dignity respected and protected.

4.2.12 English reading

Table 12: Frequency distribution according to how respondents rate their English reading ability

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	
Valid 1.00	25	100.00	100.00	100.00	1 – Good
					2 – Fair
					3 – Poor

The majority (100%) of the respondents do not have a problem with reading English.

4.2.13 English writing

Table 13: Frequency distribution according to how respondents rate their English writing ability

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	
Valid 1.00	25	100.00	100.00	100.00	1 – Good
					2 – Fair
					3 – Poor

All the respondents (100%) in the research sample indicated that they rate their English writing ability as good.

4.2.14 Spoken English

Table 14: Frequency distribution according to how respondents rate their spoken English

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	
Valid 1.00	24	96.0	96.0	96.0	1 – Good
2.00	1	4.0	4.0	100.0	2 – Poor
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

The majority (96%) of the respondents in the research sample said that their spoken English is good. This finding probably means that the learners reading problems do not emanate from the educators' problem with the second language. Turkington and Harris (2003:26) say that the child with reading problems has a problem with learning words correctly remembering verbal material understanding. It goes without saying that for learners to overcome their reading problems we need competent educators who do not have a problem with the language themselves. Jacobs, Gawe and Vakalisa (2001:122) say that learners need to develop language skills and ample opportunities should be created for them to communicate orally and in writing. In particular learners should be well equipped with skills, such as writing formal letters, making speeches, doing presentations, etc.

In most rural schools and most African schools, there are no or very little resources, such as a language laboratory, which serves to improve the linguistic level of educators and learners alike. The Draft Guidelines of the Department of Education state that most rural schools are poverty stricken and therefore have poorly resourced communities which are characterized by limited educational faculties, large classrooms with high teacher: pupil ratio; inadequately trained staff and inadequate teaching material.

4.2.15 Learners experiencing reading problems display disruptive behaviour in class

Table 15: Frequency distribution according to the disruptive behaviour of learners with reading problems

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid 1.00	10	40.0	40.0	40.0	1 – Yes 2 – No 3 – Uncertain
2.00	8	32.0	32.0	72.0	
3.00	7	28.0	28.0	100.0	
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

The larger percentage (40%) of the respondents in the research sample (Table 15) said that learners with reading problems also display disruptive behaviour in class. Kapp (2002:28) says that behaviour problems are related more to school subjects and are revealed by under achievement. For a primary school child, behaviour problems are manifested as thumb sucking, excessive reticence, anxiety, enuresis or encopreses. The other school going children's problems may be manifested as disobedience, lack of interest, school phobia, day-dreaming, untidiness, truancy as well as early school leaving.

4.2.16 Assistance provided by parents

Table 16: Frequency distribution according to the assistance provided by parents of learners with reading problems

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid 1.00	8	32.0	32.0	32.0	1 – Yes 2 – Uncertain 3 – No
2.00	2	8.0	8.0	40.0	
3.00	15	60.0	60.0	100.0	
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

Table 16 shows that most of the respondents (60%) that partook in the research indicated that parents do not assist learners with reading problems. Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht (2004:175) say that any educator welcoming a learner with special needs into his classroom must regard the parent(s) of a learner as being the most important source of support and information. Due to parent's experiences with their child, they can provide useful

information concerning the child's physical and emotional well-being, as well as, his or her learning style. The educator needs to know how the learner functions both physically and emotionally in his home and family. Donald (1993:181) says if parents, educators and other specialists collaborate to provide the child with a prescriptive programme, they will be playing a vital role in eliminating or at least reducing the learners' reading problems.

4.2.17 Library visits

Table 17: Frequency table according to library visits by learners!

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid 1.00	3	12.0	12.0	12.0	1 – Yes 2 – No
2.00	22	88.0	88.0	100.0	
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

According to the frequency distribution in Table 17 the majority of respondents (88%) in the research sample said that their schools do not have a library. Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht (2004:73-74) say that the disadvantage of resources in South Africa is the expense, but it is possible to share resources with other schools or non-governmental organizations. The practical organisation of learning material is important in any classroom, but particularly so in the inclusive classroom. Learning centers may be set up in certain areas of the classroom. Some authors refer to these as work stations. The work stations need to have material and equipment which are relevant to the particular themes and general topics. The library or quiet reading corner will have individual books or magazines (Roller, 1996:107).

4.2.18 District Support Team (DST)

According to the majority of respondents (84%) there is no District Support Team (DST) at their school (cf. question 2.4). Responses to question 2.4 revealed the following:

- Only 4% learners are supported by having extra reading in groups;
- 12% of the learners receive support from their parents;
- 16% of the learners make use of additional reading material;

- 4% of the learners are involved in reading competitions; and
- Only 4% receive support from HOD's

Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001:29) states that at institutional level in general, further and higher education, we will require institutions to establish institutional level teams. The primary functions of these teams will be to put in place properly co-coordinated learner and educator support service. These services will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing the learner, educator and institutional needs. Where appropriate these teams will be strengthened by expertise from the local community, district based support teams and higher education institution. District Support Teams will provide a full range of education support services, such as professional development in curriculum and assessment, to these institutional level support teams.

The Draft Guidelines for the implementation of Inclusive Education (DoE, 2002:117-118) states that the core function of these DST would be amongst other things collectively develop strategies to address these needs and barriers to learning. This should include a major focus on educator development and parent consultation and support. Drawing in the resources needed from within and without the institution to address these challenges. Monitoring and evaluating the work of the within or "action-reflection" framework.

4.2.19 Reading level of learners

Table 18: Frequency table according to the expected reading level of learners

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	1 – Yes 2 – No 3 - Uncertain
Valid 1.00	3	12.0	12.0	16.0	
2.00	21	84.0	84.0	100.0	
3.00	1	4.0	4.0	4.0	
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

More than eighty percent (84%) of the respondents in the research sample feel that the learners in their class do not read up to the expected level (Table 18). Turkington and Harris (2003:28) say with appropriate instruction individuals with reading difficulties may largely overcome their reading problems. Individuals with a reading disability, most often benefit from a language programme that provides direct instruction in understanding the letter sound

system. They say that the earlier the instruction is given the greater the chance the person will become a fluent reader. Typically, the more senses that can be used when learning something the better the person will learn. For individuals with reading disabilities it is important to learn as much as possible by seeing, hearing, writing and speaking.

4.2.20 Learners who are unable to read

Table 19: Frequency table according to the learners who are unable to read

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	No. of Learners
Valid1.00	1	4.0	4.0	4.0	30 - 25
2.00	2	8.0	8.0	12.0	24 - 20
3.00	4	16.0	16.0	28.0	19 - 15
4.00	6	24.0	24.0	52.0	14 - 10
5.00	9	36.0	36.0	88.0	9 - 5
6.00	3	12.0	12.0	100.0	4 - 0
Total	25	100.0	100.00		

According to Table 19 the larger percentage (36%) of the respondents indicated that they are aware of between 10 – 14 learners in their class that are unable to read. In reality, in most of our classrooms, we have learners that are not able to read up to the expected level. Westwood (1987:48-49) says that the learners that are not able to read need to have appropriate material selected for them, e.g. books, programmes and apparatus. There should be a suitable selection teaching methods whilst keeping in mind the child's learning style, interests and attention span; as well as the teacher's knowledge, skills and competence to instruct pupils individually or in small groups.

4.2.21 Bridging classes for learners

Table 20: Frequency table according to educators that have bridging classes for learners with reading problems

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid 2.00	25	100.0	100.0	100.0	1 – Yes 2 - No

Table 20 shows that 100% of the respondents said that their schools do not have bridging classes. Van Wyk (1987:21-22) says that a remedial educator may be requested to render temporary aid or to give the educator the necessary guidance concerning the bridging classroom. He further says that a teacher assistance team may be requested to advise the teacher or to render additional aid to the learner and that the school principal may bring the learner to the attention of the school psychological and counseling service of the particular Department of Education for assessment (Orthopedagogical / Orthodidactical) and the planning of a strategy for rendering aid.

4.2.22 Language development stimulation

Table 21: Frequency table according to provision of stimulation for learners' language development

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid 1.00	17	68.0	68.0	68.0	1 – Yes 2 – No
2.00	8	32.0	32.0	100.0	
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

Most of the respondents (68%) in the research sample indicated that they provide stimulation for language development (Table 21). Sdorow and Rickabathgh (2002:228) maintain that educators ought to use positive reinforcement to improve their learner's classroom performance. For example, verbal praise has been used to increase participation in classroom discussions and positive reinforcement in the form of token economies has been used to promote desirable classroom behaviour. In the token economy educators use tokens to reward learners for proper conduct and academic excellence.

4.2.23 Adaptation of curriculum

Table 22: Frequency distribution according to the adaptation of the curriculum

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid 1.00	17	68.0	68.0	68.0	1 – Yes 2 – No
2.00	8	32.0	32.0	100.0	
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

Table 22 shows that sixty eight (68%) of the respondents said that they adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of learners with reading problems. Landsberg and Dednam (1999:24) say that learning support should commence on the level (grade) in which the learner is. If the learner finds it difficult to understand the content or master it, content from lower levels could be selected until the learner experiences success. The curriculum content should be contextualized for the learner to gain better understanding. For example, when explaining the concept of bigger or smaller, one cannot compare an aeroplane with a motor car if a learner from rural areas has not seen a big aeroplane on the ground. In the air the aeroplane looks smaller than the car. The same applies when using pictures of animals, such as a giraffe and a warthog if a learner in the city has not seen these rural animals.

4.2.24 Formal reading

Table 23: Frequency distribution according to the inclusion of formal reading in the teaching programme

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid 1.00	24	96.0	96.0	96.0	1 – Yes 2 – No
2.00	1	4.0	4.0	100.0	
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

More than ninety percent (94%) of the respondents said that they include formal reading in their teaching. It is the duty of educators to help children with reading problems. Richek and Lerner (2002:3-4) state that there are two basic factors that help children learn to read. They should realize that written text is related to spoken language. They should be motivated and interested in reading, and be able to identify the written symbols and associate them with the related language sound. Marioti and Homan (2001:73) say that the educator should, at the instructional level, help learners with word identification and comprehension in an attempt to determine the learners reading level.

4.2.25 Participation in classroom activities

Table 24: Frequency distribution according to the classroom participation of learners with reading problems

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid 1.00	5	20.0	20.0	100.0	1 – Yes
2.00	20	80.0	80.0	80.0	2 – No
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

Table 24 shows that the majority of respondents (80%) said that learners with reading problems do not participate in classroom discussions. Pelsner (1986:37-40) says that the learner with reading problems repeatedly experience learning failure and his learning achievements are evaluated and declared inadequate by and in the presence of other persons (friends, parents, educator). He easily assesses himself and his own abilities unrealistically. If he does not receive timeous help, disparagement of his own possibilities and abilities become more common together with sensitivity to criticism, blame and reproach. In time the child no longer believes in himself and his possibilities. The child is inclined to think all encouragement and positive remarks are untrue and false and he becomes more pre-occupied with his shortcomings.

Kapp (2002:107) says that a child with learning restraints experiences school in a negative way because he cannot satisfy the set requirements and the expectations of the school as upheld by educators. The child feels insecure, unaccepted and unworthy, he is not prepared to explore living and learning work with which the school presents him. He often displays an escapist or avoidance attitude characterized by a lack of initiative; poor co-operation, withdrawal and anxiety. He experiences the school norms as threatening and meaningless and gives rise to disobedience towards the educator, early school leaving, truancy and other serious behaviour patterns.

4.2.26 Assistance educators provide learners with reading problems

Responses to question 3.8 show that the following forms of assistance are given to learners with reading problems:

- 12% of educators use charts on the wall with different words;
- 8% gives learners reading books from previous grades;
- 12% allow learners to read their own extracts;
- 8% pairs them with good readers;
- 4% of educators do re-teaching during breaks;
- 8% of educators focus on oral work rather than formal work;
- 12% of educators use parental assistance;
- 40% of the respondents give learners additional reading work;
- 16% uses flash cards; and
- 12% give learners magazines to read.

Kapp (2002:110) says that a child should be encouraged and helped to experience success. Learners can also be asked to indicate their own progress on a chart so that their improvement is clearly visible. The learner should receive remedial help whenever he makes mistakes or uses an incorrect strategy. He should also be given adequate opportunity to practice the correct method or step until he can execute it successfully. Repetition and regular revision should be pleasing and interesting (for example using games and selected programmes).

Landsberg (2005:139) says that making use of reading games, and reading in real life situations in order to enhance the learner's interest in reading also makes them aware that reading is part of people's daily lives. Learners should always experience reading as a pleasure as this motivates them to want to read. Do not criticize every mistake, but acknowledge every attempt at improvement of a learner reading even if it is only a word or two.

Du Toit (2001:229-230) speaks of co-operative integrated reading and composition programmes, whereby the normal reading book is used and the reading groups are formed. Learners are divided into teams consisting of pairs, with each pair forming a separate reading group. Working in pairs, the teams spend most of their time on cognitive activities while the educator is busy with one of the reading groups. The team activities include reading aloud to

the team mates, making individual predictions about the outcome of the stories, making summaries, exchanging observations on and reactions to stories, decoding, practicing spelling and vocabulary etc.

4.2.27 The teaching of phonetics as part of intervention

Table 25: Frequency table according to the teaching of phonetics as part of intervention

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid .00	1	4.0	4.0	4.0	0- No Response 1 – Yes 2 – No
1.00	19	76.0	76.0	80.0	
2.00	5	20.0	20.0	100.00	
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

According to Table 25, 76% of the respondents use the teaching of phonetics as part of the intervention, whereas 20% of the respondents do not. It is imperative for every educator to teach phonetics according to Landsberg, (2005:131). He maintains that some learners have problems uttering the correct order of phonemes in words for example “precent” instead of “percent” and “kelicopter” instead of “helicopter”. They have problem with articulative (free instead of tree) and pronunciation (inportant instead of important).

4.2.28 Extrinsic motivation

Table 26: Frequency distribution according to the provision of extrinsic motivation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid .00	1	4.0	4.0	4.0	0 – No Response 1 – Yes 2 – No
1.00	23	92.0	92.0	96.0	
2.00	1	4.0	4.0	100.0	
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

The research sample shows that 92% of the respondents provide extrinsic motivation to learners (Table 26). Du Toit (2001:226) maintains that poor motivation and apathy amongst learners is perhaps one of the thorniest problems encountered by educators. Not only does poor motivation lead to poor learning results, it can disrupt discipline in class. He asserts that it is the duty of educators to create a pleasant and stimulating classroom atmosphere, to

exploit re-inforcement strategies and to set good examples so that learners can use them as role models.

Houck (1984:198) discusses three types of extrinsic motivation which are useful in motivating the younger reading disabled children:

- Tangible motivators, such as stars, edibles (candy, nuts, fruits) cinema ticket, colouring books etc.
- Activity orientated motivators such as helping the educator, free play, looking at television, painting or drawing.
- Social motivators, such as a smile, nod of head etc.

Kapp (2002:42) speaks of interests and hobbies. When a learner with reading problems is interested in rugby the educator can base his teaching of reading on this interest of the learner by letting the learner collect newspaper and magazine articles covering all aspects of rugby. This may stimulate his interest, hold his attention and at the same time improve his reading ability.

4.2.29 Positive self esteem

Table 27: Frequency table according to encouraging a positive self-esteem amongst learners

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	1 – Yes
Valid 1.00	25	100.0	100.0	100.0	2 – No

According to Table 27 all the respondents (100%) that partook in the research indicated that they encourage learners to develop a positive self esteem. Smey-Richman (1988:26) is of the opinion that a feeling of capability can be deliberately encouraged by coaching learners that they are competent to cope with the demands made on them for example;

- Setting achievable and immediate objectives. This guarantees short-term feedback and more frequent experiences of success.
- Linking effort to results, for example, I achieve success because I work hard.

- Describing competence as a skill (ask learners to think of a specific ability, for instance, being able to read fluently. No one is born with this ability, we learn it through practice.
- Praising skills: all the skills, such as, unity, neatly, reading fluently should be praised.

4.2.30 Intervention workshops

Table 28: Frequency table according to the need for workshops on intervention strategies

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid 1.00	25	100.0	100.0	100.0	1 – Yes
					2 - No

All the respondents (100%) in the research sample agreed that educators need to attend workshops on intervention strategies. Du Toit (2001:100) says that developments in the field of special needs education depend largely on how educators are trained to perform their tasks. In service training is obviously of greater importance in countries where educators do not receive good quality, basic or pre-service training, and where initial training does not include a substantial component of LSEN. However, it is not only a few educators who need such training. All educators need it, especially those in primary schools. For this reason principals should organize some form of compulsory, informal INSET. For example, one afternoon a month could be set aside to discuss various aspects of the education of LSEN and to enable educators to share their problems with one another.

4.2.31 Absenteeism

Table 29: Frequency table according to the absence of learners with reading problems

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid 1.00	8	32.0	32.0	32.0	1 – Yes
2.00	17	68.0	68.0	68.0	2 – No
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

Most of the respondents (68%) said that learners with reading problems do not absent themselves from school (Table 28). Kapp (2002:107) says that the child with a learning restraint experiences school in a negative way and this gives rise to:

- Disobedience towards the educator.
- Early school leaving.
- Truancy as well as absenteeism.

4.2.32 Repetition of grades

Table 30: Frequency table according to the repetition of grades by the learners with reading problems

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid 1.00	18	72.0	72.0	72.0	1 – Yes 2 – No
2.00	7	28.0	28.0	100.0	
Total	25	100.0	100.0		

More than seventy percent (72%) in the research sample agreed that learners with reading problems or may need to repeat a grade (Table 30). The new outcomes based education prescribes that no learner should be retained more than one year in a phase. Heimburge (2006:76) says that failure to read proficiently is the most common reason that learners drop-out, get retained or are referred to special education.

4.2.33 Respondents' comments regarding reading problems experienced by learners

The following are comments made by the respondents in the research sample regarding problems experienced by learners with a reading impairment:

- Learners do not progress to the next grade within the normal year.
- Learners with reading problems are unable to do their homework.
- There is a perception that these learners copy work from others.
- These learners depend on group work.
- Respondents feel that parents are not adequately involved.
- Educators feel that learners should be motivated through tokens.
- Educators ought to use different teaching strategies.

- Educators feel that schools should have a formal reading policy.
- Learners with reading disabilities often drop out.
- Learners with reading problems do not have confidence.
- Educators feel that there should be a curriculum that is designed to help learners with reading disabilities.

In essence the Department of Education cannot succeed all by itself. Christenson and Sheridan (2002:95) identify the building of collaborative relationships as the common denominator in all models of effective school-home partnerships and further say that effective collaboration is the cornerstone for forming partnerships with families and communities.

Adelman (2003) explains that the range of resources in a community is much greater than the service agencies of the community-based organizations that are often limited to the table. Sanders (2003:165-172) feels that there should be a partnership with big businesses as well as partnership with institutions of higher learning and that there is a need for integrated services (health, mental, health, safety) as well as organizations for people with impairments.

4.3 SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher's aim was to give some order to the range of information provided by the educators in their answers to questions in the questionnaire. Some of the data collected were demographic in nature, which enabled the researcher to construct a broad profile of the sample selected for the investigation. Data collected regarding the nature and the extent of the impact the reading disabilities have on the academic achievement was organized in frequency distribution tables to simplify statistical analysis. The responses to the questions were interpreted and the findings thereof analytically discussed.

The last chapter of this study will consist of a summary of the literature review, findings from the empirical research and certain recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter of the dissertation, a summary of the previous chapters will be given and some of the important findings from the research will be discussed. This will be followed by recommendations and a final remark.

5.2 SUMMARY

5.2.1 Statement of problem

In essence this study investigated the impact of reading disabilities on the academic achievement of the primary school learner. It is evident from the research that many problems in our society emanate from poor reading for example, the unemployed, school drop-outs, juvenile delinquents and criminals tend to have poor reading skills. Further, the prevalence of some problems in our schools, such as truancy, late coming, absenteeism and shirking one's schoolwork, all seem to show some association with poor reading. The research wanted to answer the following questions as will be discussed in the findings and recommendations.

- How does a reading disability affect the primary school learner's academic achievement?
- How can a learner with a reading disability be assisted in order to overcome the problem?
- What is the nature of assistance required by the educators in order to help the learner with reading problems?

5.2.2. Literature review on reading disability

Chapter two dealt with a literature review on the impact of reading disabilities on the academic achievements of the primary school learner. The symptoms of reading disability were identified as:

A learner who has difficulty sounding out letters, reacts slowly and gets confused with words; cannot remember what he has just read; switches letters and numbers such as “eat” instead of “tea” and “78” instead of “87” and confuses “b” and “d.”

The following are some of the problems that the learner with reading disabilities encounters at school:

- Prejudice. Learners with reading problems are often discriminated against because of the problem they have.
- Instruction. Teaching methods are geared at the “normal” learner and not the one with reading problems.
- Reading material. Material used may be too difficult for them and thus they become frustrated.
- The grouping of learners that experience reading difficulties can be discouraging.
- Stigmatization. Being stigmatized because of poor reading result in a negative self-concept and an unwillingness to explore the world.
- Humiliation. Learners feel humiliated when their progress is discussed in front of the whole class.
- Uninvolved parents. Parents do not assist with reading problems.
- Classroom size. The size of classrooms in rural schools is large so that it is not possible to provide instruction on a one to one basis.
- Pressure from the Department of Education. No learner should be retained in a phase more than once.
- Inadequate teaching material. To enable educators to help learners with reading problems.
- Preparation. Educators enter the teaching profession being poorly prepared to deal with the reading disabled learner.
- There is also pressure from parents who become anxious when their children are not succeeding in school.

5.2.3 Research design

This study utilized a survey design, quantitative methodology. The method used was a questionnaire constructed by the researcher as a data base. The questionnaire was aimed at educators in schools in the Ndwedwe district. The information sought for this investigation was not available from any other source and had to be acquired directly from the respondents. When this situation exists, the most appropriate source of data is the questionnaire as it is easily adapted to a variety of situations.

The aim of the questionnaire was to obtain information regarding the impact of a reading disability on the academic achievement of a primary school learner and was concerned by the following aspects;

- How does a reading disability affect the primary school learner's academic achievement?
- How can a learner with a reading disability be assisted to overcome the problem?
- What is the nature of assistance required by the educator to help the learners with reading disabilities?

5.2.4 Presentation and analysis of research data

The purpose of chapter 4 was to analyse and discuss the data collected from the questionnaires completed by 25 educators and to offer comments and interpretations on the findings. At the outset, an explanation and description was provided as to the methods employed in the categorization of the responses and the analysis of data. This was followed by calculating the data in percentages known as, relative frequency distribution. This was done in order to classify the presentation of data in that it indicates the proportion of the total number of cases that were observed for a particular question. The findings from the frequency distribution were commented upon.

5.2.5 Aim of the study

The researcher formulated specific aims (cf 1:5) to determine the course of this study. These aims were realized through the literature review, together with the empirical survey consisting of a structured questionnaire.

5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The most important findings from the research, as obtained from the respondents through the structured questionnaire, can be summarized as follows;

- Most classrooms are overcrowded as evident in the teacher: pupil ratio of 1:30-45 indicated by 20.8% of the respondents (cf 4:10). In a classroom with learners experiencing learning problems, this is quite a big class. A possible reason for this finding is that this study was conducted in deep rural areas, where there are not many schools.
- The research findings show that 72% of the respondents have never attended a workshop on reading disability (cf 4:11). This is contrary to the tenets of inclusive education which stipulate that the educators need systematic and intensive training as well as in-service training by competent and experienced people.
- Most of the schools (60%) in the research sample do not have a school based support team (cf 4:13). It stands to reason that most of the educators do not have know-how and structures in place that can help them when confronted by learners with reading problems.
- Learners with reading problems appeared to be less participative in the classroom as indicated by the majority (80%) of the respondents saying that learners with reading disabilities are rather passive learners. (cf 4:30)
- 40% of the respondents agreed that learners with reading disabilities tend to display disruptive behaviour in class. Behaviour problems in school most school-going children's may be manifested as, disobedience, lack of interest, school phobia, day dreaming, untidiness, truancy as well as early school learning.
- There is a dearth of reading material for learners in that 80% of the rural schools in the research sample do not have libraries. It is salient that a learner with reading disabilities is disadvantaged in an institution where reading resources are lacking.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Remedial approaches

Hooper and Umasky (2004:151) say that remedial strategies are part of intervention which they explain as a directed, purposeful process. It is the intentional application of resources with the aim of developing, improving or changing conditions within an individual environment or interaction between an individual and the environment.

<http://www.idanat.org> (2008/05/02) has it that like any learning disability, a reading disability cannot be cured or fixed; it is a life-long challenge. However, with appropriate support and intervention people with reading disabilities can achieve success in school, at work, in relationships, and in the community. Heimburge (2006:201) says that when something is a challenge or overwhelmingly difficult, a certain percentage of students will give up. In every classroom, no matter how hard the teacher tries, some students are going to be reluctant readers. These students have difficulty keeping focused for even short periods of time on the reading task at hand. They are sometimes apathetic and often disengaged during the reading period. Teachers in upper grades must search for stories and other experiences that enthrall lower-achieving students; giving them a chance to be successful by building their self-esteem without defeating their self-image and search for contemporary approaches that will hook them in reading.

5.4.2 The reading material

Wallace and Kauffman (1986:218) say that students with reading problems are often frustrated with developmental reading material, because books geared to their interest are beyond their reading ability. Therefore, books that are designed to be of high interest, yet at an easier reading level are an appealing alternative.

Richek, Cadwell, Jennings and Lerner (2002:301) maintain that in all programmes the learners read selections that they can handle successfully. Teachers move the learners to increasingly difficult selections, but only when they are able to experience success. Teacher understanding of the learner's needs and ongoing teacher support are crucial components of

this process. The majority of instructional time is devoted to support reading of interesting and motivating text.

Richek, List and Lerner (1983:23) say that the teacher must continuously adjust instruction to the learners' changing needs. This type of teaching is known as "diagnostic teaching."

5.4.3 Multi-sensory approaches

Kapp (2002:402) says that proponents of the multi-sensory approach such as Cruickshank and Gearheart (1981:107-123) believe that the total child within his specific environment should be given attention in order to counteract his problems. He further asserts that deficiencies with the child such as attention deficiency, perceptual inability, confusion of thought patterns and behavioural disturbances, should enjoy specific attention within an ordered or structured environment.

Gearheart (1981:122) says that the multi-sensory methods attempt to teach reading through kinesthetic and tactile stimulation along with the visual and auditory modalities. Two methods that emphasize a multi-sensory approach are the Fernald Method and the Gillingham-Stillman Method.

(1) The Fernald method

Lerner (1993:425) speaks of the Fernald method which simultaneously involves four sensory avenues: visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile. The Fernald method consists of 4 stages:-

- The student selects the word to be learned, and the teacher writes the word on paper with a crayon. The learner then traces the word with his finger, making contact with the paper (thus using both tactile and kinesthetic senses). As a learner traces it the teacher says the word so that the learner hears it (thus using auditory sense). This process is repeated until the learner can write the word correctly without looking at the sample. When that task is accomplished, the word is placed in the box until the student writes a story using the words. The story is then typed so that the student can read his own story.

- Pollong, Patton, Payne and Payne (1990:221) also support Lerner when she says the student in stage two is no longer required to trace each word, but learns each new word by looking at the teacher's written copy of the word saying it to himself and writing it.
- The student learns new words by looking at a printed word and repeating it internally before writing it. At this point, the student begins reading from the books.
- The student is able to recognize new words from their similarity to printed words or parts of words previously learned. Thus, the student can generalize the knowledge acquired through the reading skills.

(2) **The Gillingham-Stillman approach**

Lerner (1993:426) see that the Gillingham-Stillman approach as a highly structured approach requiring five lessons a week for a minimum of two years. The initial activities focus on learning individual letter sounds and blending. The student uses a training paper technique to learn single letters and their sound equivalents. These single sounds are later combined into larger groupings and then into short words. Simultaneous spelling tasks are also part of this method. While writing the letters, the students say both the sounds of the letters in sequence and the letter names. The method emphasizes phonics and depends on a formal sequence of learning. Independent reading is delayed until the major part of the phonics programme has been covered.

(3) **The Cloze procedure**

According to Smith (1989:233) the Cloze passage text measures how well the student is using language and comprehension strategies and can be used to place student in reading or content material. Lerner (1993:421) says that it is a useful technique for building comprehension and language skills. It is based on a Gestalt idea of closure; the impulse to complete a structure to make it a whole by supplying the missing element. The procedure involves deleting every 5th word from the reading passage (starting) with the 2nd sentence and replacing it with a blank line.

Students are then expected to read the passage and attempt to fill in the blanks with correct words for the context of the sentence.

The Cloze procedure is hailed for being easier and quicker to construct; administer; score and interpret. It is said to require less expertise and can be group administered (Wallace & Kauffman 1986:211).

(4) Reading miscue procedure

A miscue is an actual observed response in oral reading that does not match the expected outcome the emphasis is placed on the nature of the miscue rather than the number of errors. Hittleman (1978:13) says that a miscue is recorded when the student's actual response doesn't correspond to the actual passage, whereas Lerner (1993:407) analyses it as a psycholinguistic approach to assessing oral reading. Miscues are a deviation from the printed text that the students make whilst reading orally. Miscues are viewed as diagnostic opportunities because through them readers reveal their underlying language processes.

(5) The Edmark reading program

Pollong, Patton, Payne and Payne (1990:239) say that the Edmark programme was developed to teach a 150 word sight vocabulary to students with retardation. They were taught sight words through 227 lessons that are pre-reading lessons that train students on match-to-sample format. Word recognition lessons for 1 or 2 words per lesson. Lessons that teach students to follow printed directions. Lessons in matching pictures to phrases; and lessons in a storybook in which the student reads 16 lesson stories orally. There is an assumption that word analysis can be taught after a student develops a sight vocabulary.

(6) Programmed reading

These are designed to teach reading skills through a concisely organized and sequential approach. In reading, most programmed instruction takes the form of workbooks. Short learning units called "frames" require the students to be actively involved in the reading process by responding to each frame and immediately checking the correctness of the responses. Students are usually encouraged to complete the materials at their own pace (Wallace & Kauffman; 1986:221).

(7) Remedial reading drills

Lerner (1993:428) as well as Gearheart & Gearheart (1989:309) agree that the remedial reading drills were initially designed for the mentally retarded; but have been primarily used with reading disabled learners. The programme consists of lists of words emphasizing specific sounds and combination of letters the students are intended to use various lists to learn to blend various sounds. The use of drills with reading disabled helps to reinforce many sound symbol relationships.

(8) The Neurological Impress method

This method was originally developed for students with severe reading disabilities, Wallace & Kauffman (1986:222). This approach uses a system of “unison reading”, whereby a teacher and student read aloud simultaneously at a rapid rate, Lerner (1993:427). The disabled reader is placed slightly to the front of the teacher with the teacher and the student holding the book jointly. As the student and teacher read the materials in unison, the teacher’s voice is directed into the students’ ear at close range, Ekwalle and Shanker (1989:142). The student is encouraged to slide his finger along the line following words as they are spoken. One goal of this method is to cover as many pages of the reading material as possible in the allotted reading time (Pollong, Patton, Payne & Payne 1990:233).

(9) Distar reading programme

Distar is an acronym for direct instruction system for teaching arithmetic and reading. Gearheart and Gearheart (1989:312) argue that this programme was developed primarily as a compensatory effort to prepare disadvantaged black education for entrance to the traditional middle class, white oriented school programme and for slow learners.

This is a highly structured, fast paced and intensive programme of reading instruction that emphasizes decoding skills. Students are taught sequencing skills through symbol- action games. Blending exercises are designed to teach synthetic relationships of sounds and words. Students are expected to blend by say-it fast technique, whereas spelling words by sound teaches the reverse procedure. Their mastery of various skills is appraised through criterion-

referenced tests. Gunning (2006:532) says that pacing is crucial in a programme of remediation.

Pollong, Patton, Payne and Payne (1990:216) say that criterion-referenced tests measure specific mastery of individual skills. Special lessons are available for skills that have been mastered. Many educators are said to report positive results from using this programme. However, Gearheart (1981:227) criticizes it for being fast paced, for ignoring the feelings and interests of the child and that no readiness assumptions are made.

(10) Micro-computers

Wallace and Kauffman (1986:223) regard the micro-computers application for reading disabled as similar to those for non-disabled students. These applications include programmes for drill and practice of skills and presentation of information in a tutorial format. Most educationalists glorify the case of micro-computers for reading for a variety of reasons; Lerner (1993:430) maintains the following:

- It provides individual instruction; it provides none threatening feedback and corrective procedure immediately.
- It has infinite patience, providing opportunity for as much drill and repetition as the student needs and wants.
- It can provide large amounts of skill-orientated practice.
- It can be more interesting to students, particularly when the software is in a game like format.

5.5 SUPPORT FOR EDUCATORS

Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001:49) says that there is a need to develop the professional capacity of all educators in curriculum development and assessment but up to now this has been relegated to a “utopia.” The Draft Guideline for Inclusion (DoE, 2002:10) says that the District Support Team will be training, monitoring and supporting the school teams in the process of identifying barriers experienced by learners and adapting methods of assessment to address these. This has never been done up to now.

Donald (1993:182) says that educators should be supported to become aware of the child's strengths and weaknesses as well as set the stage to ensure as many successful experiences as possible through the use of structure, support and consistency. He further says that educators ought to recognize that the child's mechanisms generally reflect skill weaknesses of that educator should offer praise for appropriate behaviour and effort and not to simply rely upon discipline for inappropriate behaviour. These are powerful statements but they cannot materialize without adequate support.

It stands to reason that educators need to be equipped with skills of dealing with the reading disabled, as it requires them to dig deep into their reserves. For instance a lot of repetitions, patience, love and devotion is required of the educator. The educators need to use the criterion-referenced assessment more, rather than the norm referenced assessment. This will facilitate that the children are not rushed; but rather grapple with problematic areas at their own pace. This is in line with Outcomes-Based Education which advocates that learners should be given a chance to succeed at their own pace.

Educators need to balance the academic as well as vocational skills. They need to balance the theoretical world of the classroom and the outside world, which is the world of work.

5.5.1. The Department of Education

Wallace and McLoughlin (1998:343) say that there is a need for the Department of Education to provide curriculum-based assessment. The instructional strategies designed to deliver systematic and organized interventions in regular classrooms, especially the early grades, which would help to prevent the identification of children as handicapped. The Department should provide individualized educational programs within regular classrooms in which momentary learning problems are not viewed as failures but as opportunities for further instruction and in which special needs students receive personalized instruction without suffering the negative effect of labeling. Their peers should be educated to stop labeling and stigmatizing them and be made to appreciate diversity. It is about time itinerant educators were used by the Department of Education to capacitate primary school educators.

The department needs to develop co-operative and share training programmes. The department should come up with innovative and creative funding patterns and procedures

should be explored for the development of pre-service and in-service training to help educators cope when dealing with the learners with special needs.

Further, the DoE needs to pump in more resources into the classroom and have clear cut policies and stop chopping and changing policies for instance, the DoE came with Curriculum 2005, a few years later, Curriculum 21, now it is NCS (National Curriculum Statements). What the government is doing is like shooting wildly in the dark and they need to consistently direct the curriculum using the same vision and mission statement to avoid the slip twixt the cup and the lip. It also needs to solicit the help of Non governmental organizations if our inclusive philosophy is to take off the ground.

5.5.2. Parental involvement

Gunning (2006:533) says that parents need to know the nature of their children's difficulty. He says it is helpful if they are informed that many bright children have reading difficulties. There should be an ongoing dialogue between parents and the school to inform them of the student's progress.

Gunning further says that parents many not be equipped (especially in rural schools) to teach their children, however they can be helpful in other essential ways, such as, providing love and support and see to it that the child comes to school well rested, fed and with all the necessary requirements. They can also supply encouragement.

Parents and children may attend sessions held after school or during holidays. The parents and children may be given separate programmes or the programmes might be co-ordinated in such a way that parents spend more time working directly with their children.

On the whole the parent commonly should be employed when we use remedial strategies to help the reading disabled, so that they can assist the teachers at home and learn to handle the children's problems well.

5.5.3 Further Research

It is evident from the research sample that most of the nations physical and human resources are wasted as a lot of children with reading disabilities do not reach their full potential. Most of the learners with reading disabilities tend to drop-out of school.

In trying to address the plight of learners with reading disabilities, there is a need for further research in barriers to learning that could emanate from:

- Systemic e.g. lack of basic and appropriate learning support material, assistive devices, inadequate facilities at schools as well as overcrowded classrooms.
- Societal e.g. severe poverty, crime, drugs, late enrolment at school.
- Rooted in inappropriate pedagogy, insufficient support of educators, inappropriate aid unfair assessment procedures.

On the whole further research should focus on the provision of appropriate learning support material in order to help learners with reading disabilities.

5.6 FINAL REMARKS

It is evident from the afore-said that a lot of ground work needs to be covered in order to accommodate the reading disabled learners in normal schooling.

For the reading disabled to learn more effectively many educationalists agree that we (educators) should make reading more fun, focus on the child's feelings and interests, and involve them in games, such as, letter bingo, and start with funny stories. The importance of audio-visual aids can never be over emphasized. As Winbury and Botes (2005:98) say that research shows that children's reading is complex, and if it is to be supported, it needs a "multi-pronged" approach. By this, they meant it is not sufficient to use supplementary reading texts at school when they are not consistent with the practices at home. Often the teachers choose the text that they think is suitable, but several research projects have shown that the children's own reading choices for example, magazines or comics are a powerful route to other text.

It is counter-productive for teachers to make judgments about children's leisure reading for this is an area that children should "own" and be empowered to make their own choices and decisions. Using the school as the extension of the home is important and using the anchoring ideas that the children have as the *foci* for further reading.

Last, but not least, the DoE and the corporate world and all the other people who have a stake in the education of children should come together in support of children who are reading disabled, so that there can be equitable provision of resources as most schools are seriously lacking in resources.

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ANNEXURES

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

<http://www.schwablearning.org/> has it that there is no “miracle cure” for reading disability, even a reading programme that has the right elements requires both student and teacher to be persistent and work steadily towards reading proficiency. However, Pollong, Patton, Payne and Payne 1990:242 feel that although teaching activities aimed at intervention are exhaustive, they are representative and will stimulate additional ideas such as:

Readiness

- Display a number of buttons of different sizes (nails, blocks, pieces of the same colour) in front of the learners. Instruct her to match the buttons according to size and shape.
- Place a number of objects (cup, pencil, ruler, and eraser) in front of the child. Display a duplicate of 1 of the objects and ask the child to pick up similar object. Include 3 or 4 objects initially. As time progresses and the child improves increase the number of objects.
- Instruct the child to match the pictures of objects with the actual objects.
- Show the child a picture with a missing part direct him to draw in the part that is omitted; e.g. tree without a trunk or a face with parts missing, e.g. ears, nose, eyes etc.
- Display 3 triangles with 1 square. Ask the child to identify the shape that is unlike the others. Shapes of different colours can be used after the learner learns colour discrimination.
- Encourage the pupils to become aware of sizes and shapes. Cut out different sizes and squares, circles and triangles. Explain that the square is still a square even though it is small or longer than others. Example, find all the squares in class or magazine.
- Describe the object that is familiar to pupils, e.g. I am thinking of something that is round, bounces up and down and is needed to play certain games. Ask the child to identify that object in 1 of the 4 pictures presented to her.
- Have student's complete dot-to-dot pictures of familiar objects or animals. Gradually increase the details of the pictures and ask the students to describe them.

- Have students trace the words and letters in any of the following media, finger print, salt, sand paper, felt, instant pudding, clay or wet sand.
- Write a number of letters on the board whilst the student's eyes are closed, erase 1 letter when the student's open their eyes, and ask them to identify the missing letter.
- Encourage the students to use a toy telephone to learn the telephone numbers of their friends.

Gearheart (1981:211) mentions that children should go through a readiness period and those who are not prepared for reading after a prescribed length of time should spend more time in the readiness programme.

Visual discrimination

Bender (1992:194) says that historically a sight – word approach was used, in which student's memorized words by sight. The emphasis on this approach is on the meaning of the words and whole words may be learned before the alphabet is introduced. Shanker and Ekwall (1998:92) have the following to say about visual discrimination.

- Present rows of 4 or 5 letters cut out to students. Ask him to circle the same 2 letters in each of the row.
- Have pupils match the capital and lower case letter, e.g. Kk, Mm.
- Play letter bingo with small groups of students. Cards with different letters printed on them are passed on them. As the teacher covers these letters on his card. The first student to fill his card is a winner.
- Have students trace various letter templates and stencils.
- Let pupils use the typewriter to find specific letters. He can be instructed to find certain letters in a given amount of time.
- Present letters of varying sizes to the students, ask him to find matching letters, e.g. a large “M” can be presented with a very small “m” and along a medium size lower case “m”.
- Pictures that correspond to the shapes of individual letters can be presented with these letters as a nursery device, e.g. a wiggle snake \approx can be presented with the letters S, a telephone pole, with T or a wheel with letter “O”.

- Show the pupil the alphabet with specific letters omitted. Ask him to fill in the missing letters, e.g. a; b; _; d; _; f; g; _ it etc. Increase them as he progresses.

Landsberg (2005:140) says that playing word games with learners by using word and picture cards is very active with younger learners.

Auditory discrimination

Pollong, Patton, Payne and Payne (1990:213) speak of auditory discrimination where they say the student listens to a word pronounced by the teacher then writes the sound heard at the beginning of the word. Gearheart and Gearheart (1989:314) maintain that the educator should, amongst other things, do the following:

- Read a word, such as, fat. Ask the learner to repeat the word. Then read the list of words once have a student clap when she hears a word that rhymes with the stimulus word.
- Select 2 different noise makers, e.g. drum or bell, stand behind the pupils and ring the bell. Ask the student to point to the objects used to make the sound.
- With the aid of a tape recorder, ask the student to identify common sounds, such as, those made by an aeroplane, a car, various animals, and household appliances.
- Associate sound with a picture or a real object, e.g. picture of a cat, rooster or duck.
- Write sounds in a large piece of paper and place them on the floor. Say a word beginning and ending with a specific sound and have the student walk to the sound she has heard.
- Read a sentence with a word omitted “we play baseball with a ball and -. Instruct the pupils to change the omitted word to the one that rhymes with it. Acceptable examples include cat, fat, sat.
- Give a student 2 cards numbered 1 and 2. Instruct her to listen for a specific sound as you say a word. She would indicate whether she heard it at the beginning or at the end by using card 1 and card no. 2.
- Say a word, such as, SAB and require the pupil to provide a word that rhymes with it, but has different initial consonant.
- Ask a student to say all the words she knows that begin with a specific sound.

- Make up nonsense sentences using the same letter at the beginning of each word, e.g. “Holy Harry has hot hands.”
- Instruct learners to classify a number of pictures according to initial or final word. Approximately labeled boxes are helpful for this activity. Have student place pictures with the beginning (L) sound in one box and those beginning with (f) sound in the other.
- Give pupils the same number of oak cards each with a word written on it. Ask for all cards that begin and end with a certain sound or rhyme with a certain word. Ask questions until each student’s pile is depleted.

Sound blending

- Bond and Tinker (1987:323) maintain that to teach blend sounds, write in blanks the word that begins with the same blend as the word understanding. The branch soon – (bring fell, broke). They further say the following:
- Ask the student to blend specific sounds to a given list of phonograms of blending the (P) sound to (at, in ,it and an).
- Ask the students to blend different consonants to a specific word family. For example, they might blend initial consonants to the IN family (pin, tin, fin).
- Call out words that have the same blend in either the initial or final position. Let the student call when he hears the sound blend of search, patch, watch.
- Provide the student with a picture of an object e.g. block; below the picture appears the name of the object spelled without a particular consonant blend, such as – ock. Have the student supply the missing blend, either writing or saying it.

Reversals

Lerner (1993:429) as well as Gearheart and Gearheart (1989:316) agree that the term reversals may be used to refer to a variety of difficulties that some students experience. Reversals may occur;

- In confusion of single letters, such as b-d or m-n.
- In which words, on-no or saw-was.
- In the letter sequence, such as, ram-arm, ate-tea or girl, grill.

- In word order, such as, the girl saw the pig in place of “the pig saw the girl”.

Mercer (1992:428) speaks of inversions, such as “u” for “n” and the poor readers with this problem may even write backwards, e.g. “was” for “saw” producing “mirror writing.” Mercer (1992:429) has it that the educator should;

- Present students with a stimulus word and 4 choices from which to choose the matching word for example; pot – otp – top - tip – pot
- lap – pal – pil –lap – alp
- Have the student make an association for letters that are reversed, e.g. a student with a freckle on the left hand could remember that a d points in that direction.
- Place words that frequently are reversed on flash cards and use them for periodic drills, e.g. saw – dog – net – tar
- Place words on flash cards and present them to the student by covering up all but the first letter. Slowly uncover additional letters until the student correctly pronounces the word. This activity emphasizes left to right hand orientation.

Structural analysis

Landsberg (2005:141) says structure analysis occurs when a word is analysed in syllables, such as word roots and suffixes. Landsberg is supported by Stanovich (1984:11-18) who also asserts that by singing and clapping the sound rhythm of the words, learners become aware of the syllables in them.

Lerner (1993:398) refers to it as the recognition of words through the analysis of meaningful word units, such as, prefixes, suffixes, root words, compound words and syllables. They maintain the educator has to;

- Provide the student with a list of words and direct her to circle the not (graphemic base) in each word, e.g. singing, jumps, ended. This activity can be applied to prefixes and suffixes.
- Provide the pupils with a variety of root words and an envelope of endings that can be added to these root words. Ask them to make as many words as they can.
- Give the students a series of sentences in which certain words are missing prefixes or suffixes. Have the student complete the sentences e.g.

- * They are play ____ in the yard.
- * He did not _____connect the refrigerator.
- Under the two columns list words that can be made into compound words. Leave the third column blank so a student can supply the compound word.
- Another method is to use what Gearheart (1981:232) refers to as the “Rebus Approach”, whereby a picture stands for a word. Mercer (1992:525) also highlights that the rebus approach to readiness and beginning reading instruction involves the use of picture words rebuses rather than spelled words. A typical example would be;

COLUMN A	COLUMN B	COLUMN C
Base	Picture of a ball	_____
Picture of a cow	boy	_____

- Letters or parts of words can also be colour cued for memory. For example, in the word Raining, _____ing can be colour coded red.

SECTION ONE: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1.1.	My gender is?	
	Male	
	Female	
1.2.	My age in completed years by 2007/12/31	
	Age Group	
	20 - 25 Years	
	26 - 30 Years	
	31 - 35 Years	
	36 - 40 Years	
	41 - 45 Years	
	46 - 50 Years	
	51 - 55 Years	
	56 - 60 Years	
	61 - 65 Years	
1.3.	My academic qualification(s) e.g.[B.ed, M.ed → Professional qualifications e.g. [PTC, HDE, FDE]→	
1.4.	Total number of completed years in the teaching profession as at 2007/12/31.	
	Number of Years	
	0 - 5 years	
	6 - 10 years	
	11 -15 years	
	16 - 20 years	
	21 - 25 years	
	26 - 30 years	
	31 - 35 years	
	More than 35 years	
1.5.	My post level is	
	Principal	
	Deputy Principal	
	Head of Department	
	Educator [PL1]	
1.6.	Type of post held by me	
	Permanent	
	Temporary	
	Governing Body	

1.7. My school is situated in
 An Urban area
 A Semi-urban area
 Rural Area
 Deep Rural Area

1.8. Average number of learners in classes you teach
 Less than 20
 Between 20 - 25
 Between 26 - 30
 Between 31 - 35
 Between 36 - 40
 Between 41 - 45
 Between 46 - 50
 More than 50

1.9. Number of Workshops attended on reading disability →
 Date(s) of workshop(s) attended, e.g. [2001, 2004] →

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1.10. Does your school have a School Based Support Team?

YES NO

1.11. Does your school have a Inclusion Policy accommodating learners with Reading Problems?

YES NO

1.12. How would you rate yourself in English?
 [Good, Fair, Poor]
 Read
 Write
 Speak

SECTION TWO

A.

2.1 Learners experiencing reading problems have behavioural problems as well

YES NO UNCERTAIN

2.2 Do the parents of these learners provide assistance to ease their reading problems?

YES NO UNCERTAIN

2.3 Do learners visit libraries?

YES NO

2.4 What support did the District Support Team give to learners with reading problems?

B. THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR IN HANDLING OF LEARNERS WITH READING PROBLEMS

3.1 Are the learners of your class able to read up to the expected level or grade level?

YES NO

3.2 How many learners in your class are unable to read?

30 - 25	<input type="text"/>
24 - 20	<input type="text"/>
19 - 15	<input type="text"/>
14 - 10	<input type="text"/>
9 - 5	<input type="text"/>
4 - 0	<input type="text"/>

3.3 Does the school have bridging class for learners with reading problems?

YES NO

3.4 Is the necessary stimulation for the language development of the learners (e.g. providing tokens for reading excellence) provided?

YES NO

3.5 Do you have to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of these learners?

YES

NO

3.6 Do you include formal reading as part of your teaching programme?

YES

NO

3.7 Do learner's who are unable to read participate in classroom discussions?

YES

NO

3.8 What form of assistance do you provide to learners with reading problems?

3.9 Do you use the teaching of phonetics as part of your intervention?
[Phonetics has to do with representing vocal sounds corresponding to pronunciation]

YES

NO

3.1 Do you provide extrinsic motivation to these learners, (e.g. praise and rewards?)

YES

NO

3.11 Do you encourage learners to have a positive self-esteem?

YES

NO

3.12 Do you think that educators need workshops in intervention strategies to address the reading problems of learners?

YES

NO

3.13 Are learners with reading problems often absent from school in your school?

YES

NO

3.14 Do learners with reading problems have to repeat a grade?

YES

NO

3.15 Please feel free to make any comment regarding reading problems experienced by learners.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

