

**AN INVESTIGATION OF READING METHODS USED BY BASIC  
EDUCATION TEACHING DIPLOMA (BETD) PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN  
THE KAVANGO EDUCATION REGION OF NAMIBIA**

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated how Basic Education Teaching Diploma (BETD) graduate teachers applied teaching methods of reading that they were taught at college in their teaching of reading in schools. Using a qualitative case study approach, a non-probability convenience sampling method was employed to select 19 teachers from 5 primary schools in Rundu Circuit, Kavango Region of Namibia. To find out how the selected teachers used the teaching methods they were taught at college. Data were collected from them through face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Results of the study revealed that the majority of the respondents did not use the methods to teaching reading that they were taught at the College. In fact about 21% of the respondents did not recall the teaching methods taught to them at college. Instead, the majority of them used methods to teaching reading that were ad hoc and unsupported by literature. In teaching reading most of the respondents faced challenges in the form of lack of resources, overcrowded classes and the interference of learning English as a subject with learning how to read and write in the mother tongue. In addition to discussing these and other results of the study it is strongly recommended that the application of appropriate methods of teaching reading in Lower Primary schools in the Kavango region in particular and in Namibia in general should be monitored and evaluated through tailor-made continuous professional development seminars and workshops.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my husband John-John Mhoney, for his moral support and love that he gave me when I was working on this thesis. And a special thanks to my son Nthando for his inspiration and unconditional love.

## **DECLARATIONS**

I, Moira Jerodine Kekhani-Mhoney, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Modern society deems the ability to read as one of the most essential skills to succeed at school and in the workplace. According to Pretorius & Machet (2004) as cited in Klapwijk (2011), all academic achievement depends to a greater degree on reading literacy.

Parris, Gambrell and Schleicher (2008, p10) argue that the ability to read is a fundamental necessity for full participation in one's society and economy. However, developing the ability to read successfully is not a simple process. Reading, like thinking, is very complex (Clay, 1991, p320). Reading is about more than the ability to recognise letters and decode words. Reading is ultimately about constructing meaning from written text (Graves, Juel & Graves, 1998; Snow, 2002a; Williams, 2008). In other words, the aim of reading is to comprehend what is being read. Reading comprehension requires the integration of meaning across words, sentences and passages (Paris & Hamilton, 2009, p40) and the simultaneous, flexible consideration of multiple elements (Cartwright, 2009, p115).

The ability to read and understand a simple text is one of the most essential skills a child can learn. Yet in many countries, learners enrolled in school for as many as six years are unable to read and understand a simple text (The

World Bank, 2008). Recent evidence indicates that learning to read both early and at a sufficient rate are essential for learning to read well (The World Bank, 2008). Acquiring literacy becomes more difficult as learners grow older. Children who do not learn to read in the first few grades are more likely to repeat and eventually drop out of school. Worldwide efforts to expand access to education may be undermined if parents, faced with difficult economic choices and the knowledge that learners are not acquiring basic reading skills, remove their children from school. In many countries it is apparent that this tendency may be already taking place. While more learners are enrolled, primary school completions have not kept pace with expanded enrolments (Cvelich & Gove, 2010). If learners have problems to achieve certain reading levels when they are learning to read, they will also be discouraged to progress in other subjects where they will be required to read.

In January 2012, Namibia piloted an Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) project. EGRA is a one-on-one oral evaluation that assesses competence in phonemic awareness, phonic decoding skills, vocabulary knowledge, reading fluency and comprehension. In Namibia, this test was conducted amongst Grades 2, 3 and 4 learners from the Oshikoto, Kavango and Hardap regions. The main findings of the EGRA pilot project indicated that several learners had problems in the areas of reading sounds, letter names, reading speed, fluency and reading comprehension. For instance, several learners displayed confusion between letter sounds and letter names, their reading speed and fluency were low and in some cases children who seemed to sound letters correctly did not necessarily have reading fluency and did not score highly in the comprehension questions.

It was noted that the reading problems manifested by learners emanated from a lack of clear methods of teaching reading, teachers' lack of knowledge of phonics, and the tendency of not teaching reading comprehension.

As the EGRA study was conducted in both English and the mother tongue, it is evident that these reading problems are wide spread in the Namibian Education System (Nghikembua, 2012).

Reading literacy has been defined as “the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual” (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture ‘MBESC’, 2004, p20). It involves the interpretation of printed words and finding meaning in them (Wario, 1989). Reading is a very important skill and it contributes to the success of a learner's school career as well as being important later in life (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998). Heckman (2002) as cited in Statkus, Rivalland & Rohl (2005) described reading as a communication skill that produces many other skills and is a key part of our capacity to increase our performance. If learners struggle to read, it will be difficult for them to cope in other subjects as learning involves the understanding of concepts, the enhancement of thinking skills and the overall academic development of the learners.

A major source of concern in Namibia is that learners have difficulty in reading and writing, and as such are often considered functionally illiterate (Mutenda, 2008). Namibian scores for literacy were poor compared to those of other African countries as indicated by results of research done by the

Namibian Institute for Educational Development (NIED) in 2000. The purpose of the study was to investigate the reading and writing practices in the Lower Primary (LP) phase. The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) 2 study that was done in 1995-2000 found that grade 6 learners were unable to read with understanding and that this led to the high failure rate at grades 10 and 12 level. This means that learners go through their lower primary, upper primary as well as junior secondary school without developing fluency in reading. This problem can be minimized if learners' reading skills are developed while they are still at lower primary level.

Reading is also a concern for the whole of Namibia. According to Maletsky (2007),

“the Directorate of National Examinations and Assessment (DNEA) announced that only 15220 (47.6%) of the 31961 pupils from 534 schools who wrote the Junior Senior Certificate Examination in 2007 managed to score the required 23 points or more and a minimum of an F grade in English to proceed to grade 11”.

In all likelihood, the main problem here was that most learners could neither read nor write with understanding. Based on the EGRA findings that were cited earlier, this problem is currently prevalent.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

A more in-depth investigation into this specific concern of reading revealed that the problem also results from teachers' inabilities to teach reading (NIED, 2006). A study carried out by the English Teacher Development Project in conjunction with the Ministry of Education on English Language Proficiency of teachers and student teachers in the year 2000 showed that “35% of Lower

Primary teachers, ... do not have the required level of proficiency in English to teach at their respective phase” (MBEC, 2000, p.58). This meant that teachers, themselves, had problems in teaching reading. Findings showed that “the training that the teachers have undergone does not have clear impact on their language and teaching skills.” (MBEC, 2000, p.60). It was further explained that the teachers’ poor reading skills affected both teaching and learning.

Another investigation into what was happening at teachers training institutions revealed that the integrated thematic approach, breakthrough method, language experience approach, phonic method, whole language method, letter land and story methods were taught when preparing teachers to teach reading in Lower Primary School (MEC, 2006, p. 8). Each of these methods, if effectively applied, would enable teachers to help learners to read fluently and comprehend what they read.

We however, have no research findings on how and the extent to which teachers applied these methods in their teaching or whether they were taught these methods in an effective manner, that they would be able to then apply them in their classrooms. To fill in this knowledge gap and based on the reading problem context that has been captured in the background provided in the preceding paragraphs, this study sought to find out reading methods that teachers employed when teaching reading.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

Specifically, the purpose of this investigation was to find out if the former BETD teachers used teaching methods they were taught in college when teaching reading in their classes.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study focused on the following questions:

- 1.4.1** To what extent did BETD teachers in the Kavango Education Region use the teaching methods they were taught at college?
- 1.4.2** How did the teachers perceive the appropriateness of these methods?
- 1.4.3** What factors, if any, hindered the effective use of these methods in the classroom?
- 1.4.4** What assistance did teachers need to use these methods appropriately in order to teach reading more effectively?

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

It was expected that the information gained from this study would stimulate teachers to use more creative and innovative ways to teaching reading in primary schools. It was also hoped that the study would encourage teachers to use known teaching methods more meaningfully and effectively. In addition, it was expected that findings of this research would benefit the children not only

in primary schools in the Kavango Education Region, but also in primary schools elsewhere in Namibia

### **1.6 Limitations of the study**

Although findings of this study may be of value to other contexts in Namibia, their generalization is constrained by the fact that a convenient sample that was not representative of all primary school teachers in the Kavango Region was used.

### **1.7 Delimitation of the study**

The research was focussed on lower primary and upper primary teachers from five selected schools in the Kavango Education region.

### **1.8 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

**The terms that follow are defined to clarify the concepts of reading and writing on which this study is focused.**

**Reading** – is the cognitive process of understanding a written linguistic message. It can also be defined as a simple, passive process that involves reading words in a linear fashion and internalising their meaning one at a time (Harris, 2000).

**Reading literacy:** Refers to understanding, using and reflecting on written texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential and to participate in society (Programme for International Student Assessment PISA , 2006).

**Cognitive skills:** These are any mental skills that are used in the process of acquiring knowledge. These skills include reasoning, perception, and intuition.

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (1998) describes the importance of cognitive skills in acquiring literacy skills as follows: "Reading and writing rely on a specific set of cognitive skills such as attention, memory, symbolic thinking, and self-regulation".

**Reading methods:** A reading method is a set of teaching and learning materials and/or activities often given a label, such as phonics method, literature based method, or language experience method. (International Reading Association, 1998)

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Collis and Hussey (2003) state that literature refers to all sources of published data and is a written summary from literature research. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) stated that literature review describes theoretical perspectives and previous research findings regarding the problem at hand. The purpose of literature review is described by Akpo (2006) as that of providing the context for the research by looking at the work of what has already been done in the subject area. In this case, literature review is a way of exploring the existing literature to ascertain what has been written and published on methods of teaching reading at primary school level. The literature review in this chapter focuses on theories of reading and learning, how children learn to read and the BETD pre-service syllabus for Primary Education.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework, according to Maxwell (2005), assists the researcher in understanding what problems have been encountered with existing research and theory, what contradictions the researcher has found in existing views, and how the study can make an original contribution to understanding.

In this study I used a theoretical framework for understanding teaching methods of reading not based purely on a theoretical point of view, but also by taking existing practice into account, or at least acknowledging the constraints

caused by the gap between theory and practice. In Namibia, teachers feel overwhelmed by policies and studies which try to bring new insights from research into classrooms. In the face of large classes and demands for assessment and other administrative chores demanded by the Ministry of Education, teachers often go into a type of survival mode where they stick to familiar practices, even when these practices do not show the required results (Klapwijk, 2011).

In investigating the possible mismatch between training in teaching methods at college and the teachers' application of the methods in the classroom, the constructivist theoretical framework was used in this study. The constructivist theory is based on the tenet that people construct their understanding of phenomena by actively interacting with other people and 'objects' in the world around them (Mertens, 2010). The view in this study was that in order for teachers to appropriately use teaching methods they were taught in college, they would need to 'appropriate' (i.e. own) the methods in a constructivist way. This is that they would not only need to understand them theoretically but also learn how to use them in practice in the classrooms. One of the main tasks of this investigation was to find out whether this took place.

Other theoretical underpinnings of this study are presented in the rest of the literature review. The point of the rest of the literature review is to clarify from literature in the field of study and from the knowledge of what the BETD graduates were exposed to, the nature and type of methods that the study focused on. Although some assessment of the efficacy of the teaching methods

is provided in some parts of the review, the main point was to describe and relate the methods to the study.

### **2.3 Defining Reading**

In order to assess the manner in which the BETD graduates applied the teaching methods of reading, we need to understand what reading is. According to Rockets (2011), reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. Reading also means making meaning from print. In addition, reading is also about decoding, comprehension, narrative, familiarity with books and other printed material and a culture of wanting to and enjoying reading (House of Commons, 2004-5). This goes hand in hand with (Derchant, 1993) who stated that reading involves the recording of the printed words in the brain by the visual and perceptual processes, converting the written symbols into language, and through cognitive and comprehension processes creating meaning by relating the symbols to the readers' prior knowledge. Moreover, Harris (2006) stated that reading could be defined as the understanding of the written text. This simply means that the end result of any act of engagement should be comprehension of a text. She emphasized four principles of effective readers. These are that:

- Effective readers do a lot of predicting.
- Effective readers use certain strategies to help them with reading difficulties and blockages. These include sounding out letters in words and breaking words into parts.
- Effective readers draw heavily on their background knowledge. This includes past experience with reading, knowledge of sounds and words, most importantly knowledge about the content being written in the text.

- Effective readers are typically confident enough to read difficult text.

Learners and teachers often have the wrong perception of what reading is and most of the time their misunderstanding is as a result of the training they have been given. Since the focus of my study was to find out what reading methods primary teachers used to teach reading, these definitions clarify what reading is and how it is important to understand all the components in order to teach reading effectively.

#### **2.4.1 Theories of reading**

The study needed to benefit from the theoretical ways in which the teaching of reading was understood. Vaezi (2006) identified three main theories of reading. These are the traditional view, the cognitive view and the metacognitive view of reading. The traditional view focuses on the printed form of a text while the cognitive view looks at the role of background knowledge in addition to what appears on the printed page and the metacognitive view is based on the control and manipulation that a reader can have on the act of comprehending a text.

According to Dole, Duffy, Roehler and Pearson (1991), in the traditional view of reading, novice readers acquire a set of hierarchically ordered sub-skills that sequentially build toward comprehension ability. Having mastered these skills, readers are viewed as experts who comprehend what they read. According to Nunan (1991), the traditional view is the 'bottom-up' (language-based process) view of reading which involves the decoding of a series of written symbols

into their aural equivalents in the quest of making sense of the text. According to Harris (2006), the bottom-up theories argue that meaning is embedded in the text and that meaning travels from the 'bottom' (the page) 'up' to the eyes. This theory defines reading as beginning from letters that form the printed words, and then form sentences, sentences form texts. The steps here explain that the combining of small parts will eventually form a whole text from which meaning will emerge.

According to this theory the reading process consists of a number of skills and that children need to be taught to be able to hear and identify sounds in words (phonemic awareness), match sounds and letters (phonics), and recognise words in isolation with automaticity (Moller, 2013).

Smith (1978) cited in Nunan (1991) stated that reading works in the reverse order from that proposed by the bottom-up theory. He believed that in order to identify words we need to comprehend meaning. I partly agree with Nunan but also feel that this theory displays that knowledge of linguistic features is also necessary for reading comprehension to take place. Nunan stated that it was time consuming to teach reading in chunks, whereas the teacher should just teach the top down theory of getting the learners to understand the content before they are taught the sounds. Learners should be able to identify sound in order to correctly understand words. It is the over dependence on this theory that might limit learning to read with understanding. If learners are taught reading focusing mostly on the bottom up theory/process they would only know how to decode letters and not understand the words that they are decoding.

The cognitive view is the 'top-down' (knowledge-based process) model which directly opposes the 'bottom-up' model. According to Goodman (1967) cited in Paran (1996) reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game, a process in which readers sample the text, make hypotheses, confirm or reject them, make new hypotheses, and so forth. The cognitive view encompasses the schema theory of reading which is used in the process of interpreting sensory data, in retrieving information from memory, in organising goals and sub-goals, in allocating resources, and in guiding the flow of the processing system. The schema is necessary to make connections before reading, while reading and after reading (Dilbeck, undated). Harris (2006) stated that the top-down theories emphasise that reading begins in the head of the reader-claiming that the reader moves from the 'top'- the brain – down to the text on the page. Readers use their prior knowledge stored in their memories to unlock the text. According to this theory, without background knowledge meaning cannot be made from the text. This theory proposes that the objective of reading is making meaning of the text by using the readers' background knowledge. Vialle (2000) cited in Harris, Turbill, Fitzsimmons, & McKenzie (2006) stated that the top-down theory adopts a constructivist stance and links reading comprehension to factors both inside and outside the reader.

The metacognitive view according to Block (1992) defines the control readers execute on their ability to understand a text. Metacognition involves thinking about what one is doing while reading (Klein, Peterson and Simington, 1991). Sloan and Whitehead (1986), Ruddell and Speaker (1985), and Rumelhart (1994) cited in Harris (2006) suggest that while reading is predominantly a meaning – making process that is embedded in the top-down view also

requires that readers focus on skills – a position more aligned to a bottom up view. This model of reading has taken a more social view of reading. Readers in this view can be taught to adjust their reading strategies in a flexible manner to choose the best strategy to meet the purpose of the current text and their purpose for reading it.

Each view of reading can help to develop the reading capacity of learners differently if approached correctly. All these theories are integrated and used in the training of teachers.

#### **2.4.2 Methods of reading**

In this section, various methods of how to teach reading are presented with the intention of showing what they are and how they relate to this study.

According to the International Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) (1999), various methods of teaching reading begin by:

- teaching learners to get meaning from whole chunks of text,
- teaching whole words and going on to larger chunks of text,
- teaching whole words and breaking them down into smaller parts,
- teaching parts of words and putting them together into whole words, or
- teaching meaning, whole words, and parts of words from the very beginning.

Common methods of teaching reading are identified by SIL International (1999) as the analytic method, the eclectic method, the global method, the phonic method, the sight word method, the syllable method and the synthetic method. These teaching methods are briefly described as follows:

#### *2.4.2.1 The Phonic method*

A phonic method of teaching reading relates letters (graphemes) to sounds (phonemes) they represent (Halvorson 1992). According to Aukerman (1984), the theory behind the phonic approach is based on two assumptions. These are:

- i. Most languages have consistent phoneme (sound) to grapheme (letter) correlation
- ii. Once learners have learned the relationships of the letters to the sounds, they can pronounce printed words by blending the sounds together (Aukerman, 1984).

An alphabetic, phonic approach to teaching reading has been used for centuries and since then it has been further developed and modified in such a way that it is used today in varying degrees in most methods of teaching reading (SIL International, 1999).

An analytic method to reading begins with words (preferably nouns that can be easily illustrated), then breaks the words into parts. “By the use of [meaningful] words the learner can better see the relationship between reading and their own language” (Gudschinsky, 1973).

#### *2.4.2.2 The Global Reading Method*

A global reading method assumes that a person learns to read best when reading begins with natural and meaningful text to listen to, look at, and memorise by sight (SIL International, 1999). In the process the teacher writes down what a learner says and then reads it back to help develop the concept of words in print. It is mostly taught through stories from the learners' personal experiences. Through discussion, the teacher can help learners organise and reflect on their experiences.

#### *2.4.2.3 Sight Word Method*

A sight word method to reading is a method that uses the word as the basic unit of language (Halvorson, 1992). New words are learned by sight (memory) as the learner sees them written and with picture cues (SIL International, 1999). Learners who know words by sight are able to read them aloud automatically. The ability to recognise a large number of words instantly and automatically enables the learners to read fluently and to focus their attention on making sense of the passage improving their comprehension and understanding.

#### *2.4.2.4 Syllable Method (combination of phonic and syllable methods)*

A syllable method to teaching reading is a method which uses syllable recognition as the primary word attack skill and is characterized by use of the syllable as the basic building block or unit for decoding words whereby learners learn syllables before reading words and text (SIL International, 1999).

#### *2.4.2.5 Eclectic Reading Method*

An eclectic reading method to reading is a combination of methods (global, analytic and synthetic) used to suit the convenience of the teacher (Halvorson 1992). When teachers use a combination of the reading methods, they provide activities from a range of language teaching methodologies. The teachers decide what methods to use depending on the aims of the lesson and the learners in the group.

#### *2.4.2.6 Synthetic Approach*

A synthetic method for teaching reading is a method that begins with the smallest segment of speech and builds, or synthesizes, the small parts into syllables and words (Halvorson, 1992). The smallest segments of speech include letters and sounds that are blended into syllables and words. The method is usually combined with other methods (SIL International, 1999).

The above methods may not be universal. However, they are guidelines that can be adapted to suite a particular situation in a local context or in a classroom situation depending on the socio-cultural background of learners. For instance, they are evident when teaching reading in the Namibia classrooms. They have been described in detail here because they partly formed the basis of this study.

### **2.4.33 Teaching methods of reading in the Namibian schools**

In this section, the teaching methods that were used in the Namibian BETD teacher preparation program are presented. These are the phonics, whole language, look and say, the language experience and the shared reading methods. These methods are covered in this section to show the types of methods that were expected to be known and used by teachers who graduated from the BETD programme.

#### *2.4.3.1 Phonics Method*

According to the phonics method, reading is a matter of learning letter-sound relationships, and reading and memorising words in isolation (Ekwall & Shanker, 1993:1,7; Clay, 1991b; Weaver, 1994, Adams, 1990). Phonics, as described by Adams (1990:50), refers to “a system of teaching reading that builds on the alphabetic principle, a system of which a central component is the teaching of correspondences between letters or groups of letters and their pronunciations”. In this method, small units like letters and short words, along with spelling and punctuation rules, are taught in isolation, devoid of meaning. Behaviourist scholars argue that when children learn to pronounce words correctly, meaning will follow automatically (Weaver, 1994). Kidd (2011) felt that the phonics approach tended to ignore the valuable information, language patterns and reading strategies children bring to the reading experience, as well as reading and writing simultaneously. When this method is used, children struggle to learn how to use their acquired knowledge when approaching texts during reading because they are forced to focus on lists of phonics, words and rules they have memorised instead of applying strategies

focused on the process behind reading. This might hamper the ability to read in some cases. Taking Kidd's view and what is taking place in schools at present where most learners cannot read, I tend to agree with her. The phonic method advocates the teaching of isolated skills such as letter names which is based on a belief that knowing all the letter names and sounds will help learners understand and read fluently but this is not really the case.

#### *2.4.3.2 Whole Language Method*

The Whole language method is a socio-psycholinguistic method (Weaver, 1994). When reading and writing within this method, learners are viewed as constructing meaning for themselves within familiar contexts in which interaction between them and other role players takes place. There is also a central focus on reading and writing for meaning. In order to determine the meanings of words, various contexts are used. For example, the grammatical context, semantic context, pragmatic context and schematic context (Weaver, 1994:17) are used to read for meaning. In this way, learners experience both reading and writing as being purposeful and valuable. It can also be called the language experience method which handles language and literacy in a holistic way and builds on what the child already knows. Carter (2000, p. 10-11) describes the method as, "based on the ideas that children's experiences can be talked about, and recorded by the teacher and form part of the reading material". Leu and Kinzer (1987, p. 74) explain that it "represents an effort to teach reading using children's language and experience as a base". This method is based on meaning. The teacher creates an opportunities for learners

to talk about something of interest and then writes the sentences produced by the learners on the chalkboard. These sentences form the reading text to be read by the learners.

This method works well with thematic teaching because learners have prolonged exposure to one theme for a week or more. Therefore, they have background knowledge about the topic and can construct their own sentences easily. This promotes learning for understanding because learners read more authentic sentences drawn from their schemata. It should be noted that learners' critical thinking skills are developed when they construct sentences from their own experiential material.

#### *2.4.3.3 The Look and Say Method*

The look-and-say method is used to teach reading. The basic feature of this method is explained by Campbell (1995, p. 161) as being based on the view that "language is indeed whole and it is best learnt as a whole with meaningful and relevant texts". This method can also be divided into two approaches; the look-and-say whole word and the look-and- say whole sentence approach.

When teaching via the look-and-say word method, a teacher introduces words with the help of pictures or real objects. The words are then presented on flash cards. In this method, as explained by Hann (1984, p. 31), "children are taught to respond to whole words rather than separate parts of words". The teacher shows a picture to the learners to identify (e.g. a chair). When they identify the picture as a chair, the teacher then flashes the word or writes it on the

chalkboard, and tells the learners that the word is pronounced, 'chair'. Learners are encouraged to say the word as a whole after the teacher. They repeat this with all the words. Once learners become confident in reading the words, the pictures are removed. The focus of this study is to find out if teachers used these effective approaches.

#### *2.4.3.5 The Shared Reading Method*

Shared reading is an interactive approach to teaching reading that bridges “reading aloud and guided reading” (Siyave, 2011). In shared reading, the teacher reads together with a group of learners. Holdaway (1979) developed this strategy and it is modelled on the way literate, middle-class parents read storybooks to their children at home (cited in Siyave, 2011). In school, a teacher reads to a group of learners rather than to a single child. According to Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982), (cited in Siyave, 2011), the shared reading model allows a group of learners to experience many of the benefits that are part of storybook reading. Smith (cited in Siyave, 2011) contends, “It is a non-threatening and enjoyable way to strengthen the language skills of struggling readers”.

Yaden (1988), (cited in Siyave, 2011) explains that during shared reading, “learners are actively involved” throughout the reading process as the teacher may pause and use scaffolding or support learners by doing the following:

- asking learners for predictions as to what will happen next,
- discussing the title and author,
- discussing the pictures as he/she is reading,
- using her finger to point to the words as he/she reads and therefore show the direction of reading,
- discussing the meaning of words, and
- drawing punctuation marks to learners' attention.

Bridge, Winograd and Haley (1983); Pikulski and Kellner (1992), (cited in Shared Reading, n.d.a), explained that through repeated reading and predicting of the text, learners become familiar with word form and learn to recognise words and phrases. These activities develop language comprehension and word recognition, which learners need to coordinate to develop as skilled readers as explained by Scarborough (2002).

We do not know whether or not all these methods above are taught to trainee teachers and if they are how teachers use them in colleges. This was the focus of this study.

## **2.5 Learning to read in the lower primary phase**

Leu and Kinzer (1987) and Wario (1989) contend that reading involves interpreting printed words and finding meaning in them. Cook-Gumperz (1988), cited in Imene & van Graan (2000, p. 3), goes further and describes literacy as a “socially constructed phenomenon, which is formed through

interactions in a variety of contexts and not the mere acquisition of decoding and encoding skills.” This means that reading is more than just sounding out and pronouncing of words, but it involves comprehension and deeper engagement with texts.

In the lower primary phase learning to read primarily takes place in the mother tongue. Webb (1993:3) argues that it is the learners’ first language that provides a rich cognitive preparation for second language learning. Webb (1993:3) further argues that the skills acquired in the first language provide for an easy transition to the second language medium. This view is supported by Cummins (2005) as cited in Mutenda (2008:13) who describes the relationship between people’s first language and second language. Mutenda (2008:13) contends that language learners have a Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) that support language learning by transferring skills from the first to the second language (Cummins, 2005). Based on these arguments, the ability to read whether in the first or second language should not be an issue because if learners are taught using the appropriate approaches for doing reading effectively it will not be a problem.

Learning to read and write is “both a psycholinguistic and a social process” (Trudell & Schroeder, 2007, p. 165). Research has shown that, the cognitive process of learning to read and write points to the competencies and complexity of the link of spoken language and written language representation (Trudell & Schroeder, 2007). From the cognitive perspective of learning to read, reading involves two important competencies, “reading comprehension (the ability to construct meaning from spoken representation of language) and

decoding (the ability to recognise written representation of words)” (Wren, 2000, p. 13). This means that reading involves mastering of these two competencies.

The principles behind reading in the lower primary phase are informed by the syllabus for primary education in Namibia, which is analysed below.

## **2.6 The BETD pre-service syllabus for Primary Education**

The basic competencies in the syllabus for lower primary education which was used to train BETD pre-service students, states that students should:

*“Be aware of different reading methods that can be used in schools to teach grade 1 learners the skill of reading including: the integrated thematic approach, breakthrough method, language experience approach, phonic method, whole language method, letter land, and story method” (MEC, 2006, p. 8).*

This applies to all the four grades of lower primary phase and upper primary phase where instruction should be in such a way that learners show understanding and derive meaning from texts. There used to be many programmes that a school or a teacher in Namibia could follow to teach reading to their learners. For instance, they could use the Namibia Early Literacy and Language Project (NELLP), Structured Instructional Materials (SIMS), Molteno breakthrough method and The Integrated Thematic Approach. There is, however no one correct or best method/approach for

teaching reading. Findings from the research done by the Australian government found that, “all pupils learn best when teachers adopt an integrated approach to learning to read that explicitly teaches phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary knowledge and comprehension” (Australia. Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), 2005, p.11). From this, it appears that the use of multiple methods to accommodate the diversity of learners in their classrooms is encouraged because “What works for one student or for one teacher may not work for another. What works at one grade level or for one type of content may not work in another situation” (Wood & Algozzine, 1994, p. 6). Having said this, my study intended to establish how teachers used different reading methods when teaching reading amongst diverse learners.

## **2.7 Classroom factors that affect effective teaching of reading**

Before looking at factors that affect effective teaching of reading let me first look at the term effective teaching. Smith (1995) cited in Gurney (2007 p. 90) defined teaching as a tool that should focus on the creation of ‘appropriately nourishing experiences so that learning comes about naturally and inevitably’. He continued by stating that schools should focus less on speaking about learning and more about learning. Most planning in teachers files will illustrate the ideal reading lesson scenarios but they do not put those theories in practice. Alton-Lee (2003) provided the following ten characteristics of quality teaching:

- A focus on student achievement in reading.
- Pedagogical practices that create caring, inclusive and cohesive reading communities.
- Effective links between schools and cultural context of the school.
- Quality teaching of reading is responsive to student learning processes.
- Learning opportunities are effective and sufficient.
- Multiple tasks and contexts support the teaching and learning of reading.
- Curriculum goals are effectively aligned.
- Pedagogy scaffolds feedback on students' reading engagement.
- Pedagogy promotes learning orientations, student self-regulation, metacognitive strategies and thoughtful student discourse in reading.
- Teachers and students engage constructively in goal-oriented assessment.

(Alton-Lee, 2003: vi-x)

These are the characteristics that an effective reading teacher should possess. Gurney (2007) compliments this list with five key factors that provide a foundation for good teaching:

- Teacher knowledge, enthusiasm and responsibility for teaching reading.
- Classroom activities that encourage a positive attitude toward learning to read.
- Assessment activities encourage learning through experience.

- Effective feedback that establishes the learning process in the classroom and encourage learners to enjoy reading.
- Effective interaction between the teacher and students, creating an environment that respects, encourages and stimulates learning through experience.

These factors are good to guide the teacher to become an effective practitioner and create an effective classroom for teaching reading.

Research to date has opted to focus on reading as a skill rather than classroom factors that affect efficient teaching in the reading classroom. Rose (2010) stated that teaching effectively is very difficult, and the best teachers take many different factors into account when teaching. She continued to list the following factors that might hinder the effective teaching of reading: knowledge of the reading methods, time, learners attitudes, class sizes, learning styles and resources. According to her teachers knowledge of the reading methods dictates the teaching style that a teacher uses in her classroom. She added that short teaching periods for reading constrained the kind of activities that teacher can use to teach reading and also increase the homework load of learners and that the constraints of time in the reading classrooms may reduce creative learning strategies during class time. In addition, Rosas and Jimenèz (2009) added that some factors that hinder effective teaching of reading are lack of resources, teachers' belief and attitudes. In their small scale study where data were collected through the use of both questionnaire and ethnographic notes they concluded that the main obstacle in effective reading classrooms is teacher attitudes like lack of

reading culture, inability to teach reading and laziness to model effective reading habits. An article by (Anonymous, 2009) stated the following factors: educational qualification of the teacher, skills and experience of the teacher, classroom environment, economic factors, and administrative policies of the school, subject matter and parental expectation. {These factors coincides with the teacher attitudes stated by Rosas and Jimenes (2009). These factors are in agreement with Rose's (2010) findings which showed, that subject matter is essential for efficient teaching.

Agabi and Odipo (1997) concurred with these finding but their paper focused more on factors affecting efficiency in teaching at schools in the third world countries. They listed the following factors: Education policies and management processes - misallocation of resources to educational levels; school based factors – teachers attitudes, time utilisation, school environment; and household based factors - poverty, socio-cultural factors, and gender issues. The above factors influence the development and availability of reading resources in African schools. It also revealed that teachers fail in their pursuit of teaching reading, because they do not get the proper support from other stakeholders.

Briefly explained below are some of the factors related to the referred studies that adversely influence the effective teaching of reading.

#### *School environment*

The first problem in the school environment is class sizes. Overcrowded classrooms constitute another factor that unfavourably affects the quality of reading instruction. London (2013) stated that while in Western schools

overcrowded classes is not an issue, many developing countries score badly on this factor. Most of the schools in South Africa have a teacher-to-learner ratio of more than 46. In Nigeria and Namibia, some schools have classrooms of 70 to 100 learners. It would be difficult to provide adequate English language teaching under these conditions because the teacher would have difficulty in ensuring that every learner got proper reading instruction. This relates to my study because the teacher to learner ratio in some classes in the Kavango region is 65 learners for one teacher. This makes it difficult for the teacher to teach reading effectively to such a large group of learners in the given time for instruction.

#### *School resources and Poverty*

The next factor that limits proper reading instruction is funding. London (2013) stated that many schools in Nigeria not only lack study materials, such as textbooks, dictionaries, workbooks and posters, but also do not have such essentials as electricity or adequate staff rooms and offices, and their buildings have leaking roofs and cracked walls. Without adequate learning infrastructure, the teaching of English in general and of reading and writing in particular can be very difficult (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu, 2006).

#### *Teachers' dispositions*

According to Phurutse (2005), it is natural that some teachers are ill-equipped to provide high-quality English teaching in reading. Furthermore, some teachers in developing countries have difficulty speaking English themselves and as a result of this, they are unable to teach others English. . In addition,

teacher absenteeism, or a habitual practice of teachers skipping work, is also an issue that would not promote the effective teaching of reading.

## **2.8 Grouping in Reading Instruction**

Selecting and introducing a text for a group of learners who share similar developmental needs at a point in time creates a context that supports learning how to read. Iaquina (2006) distinguished between two types of grouping in the reading classroom namely; traditional grouping and dynamic grouping.

According to her, the traditional grouping is a kind of grouping that is based on the ability of learners in the reading instruction classroom. The teacher using this grouping style would focus on the skills to read selections in a basal text. The traditional grouping uses static, unchanging groups. In the approach, vocabulary was pre-taught and controlled student's workbooks and worksheets exercises from the responses to reading and instruction were focused on a systematic progression of skills in the texts as measured by an end of unit test (Fountas and Pinnell; 1996; and Schulman and Payne (2000) cited in Iaquina 2006).

The second type of grouping stated in Iaquina (2006) is the dynamic grouping. This grouping style is dynamic or flexible and varied. It allows learners to support one another as readers who feel part of a community of readers. In contrast to the traditional grouping, dynamic reading groups are temporary and are expected to change regularly. Teachers should change the composition of groups to accommodate the different learning paths of readers.

According to Iaquina (2003) skilled teaching which begins with observation, is the key to successful dynamic grouping. In the grouping, teachers facilitate a self-extending system of reading in which learners engage in self – monitoring, cross – checking, self – correcting, searching, prediction, confirming, word meaning exercises, sentence structure exercises and the connection of symbols and sounds.

According to Clay 1993, cited in, even though information might be held, it is the foundation for reading texts in a smooth and fluent way. In this study, Iaquina gave a distinction between traditional and dynamic groups but her focus was not on the group sizes.

Recent evidence by Roskos and Neuman (2010) suggest that reading instruction needs to serve the whole class, small groups and students working independently. They describe each grouping to illustrate the importance of it for reading instruction. These are whole class reading which should focus on literacy activities that will benefit all students and use approximately one third of a teacher's instructional time.

Iaquina (2006) also stated that the use of independent reading groups for which teachers provide a compulsory activity for all the learners in the class, followed by a self-directed activity, helps learners to acquire reading success. This grouping will also provide order in the reading classroom.

Carrison (2010) stated that reading instruction should only be done through small group instruction. She supports this by using the following benefits of small grouping referred to as Notebook. In a similar study by Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, Moody and Schumm (2000) researchers interviewed elementary

learners to determine their perceptions of grouping formats in reading instruction. They wanted to find out how these learners would feel about small mixed ability groups. In this study, learners were found to perceive that there are benefits and drawbacks to working in small groups. The benefits mentioned in the study are as follows:

- Learners with lower abilities can learn from higher ability learners
- Because learners work cooperatively with one another to practice or reinforce skills rather than to provide focused instruction to a small number of learners their reading development would be more successful.

In their study, Elbaum et al., (2000) pointed out the drawback of small grouping in reading instruction. When these elementary learners were interviewed they did not have the same sentiments teachers had of small groups, especially of learners with mixed abilities. The questionnaire in which learners had to respond to open-ended questions to indicate their perception indicated that group work in reading promotes cooperation and enhances students reading achievement. A follow – up session with the same group brought out different concerns of small groupings. These are:

- The classroom becomes noisy and students are very disruptive when the class is arranged in small groups for reading.
- It is more difficult for the students to get help from the teacher when they are working in small groups.

- Students felt that whole-class instruction was better because the teacher does not have to go from group to group as he/she just teaches reading to the whole class.
- Students also complained about the embarrassment and ridicule of group work in reading.

Recent research has shown that there is no correct grouping format when a teacher teaches reading. Radencich and McKay (1995) cited in Elbaum et al (2000) stated that instructors may advocate flexible grouping, an approach that involves the use of a variety of grouping formats to address the diversity of students' individual needs while avoiding the rigidity of permanent grouping. In the Namibian schools teachers group learners according to the availability of space in the classroom and it hampers proper control in the reading classrooms. Flexible grouping affords teachers the opportunity to deliver intensive individualised instruction to students with special needs in a way that fits into the total organisation of instruction in the classroom (Moods, 2000).

Group work can be an effective and enjoyable part of classroom activity with benefits for learners of all levels if it is carefully prepared, planned, and monitored.

Accomplished reading ability develops gradually through engagement in meaningful learning activity in which learners receive explicit instruction, guided and independent practice, and assistance from teachers and more accomplished peer to support their transition to become independent self-regulatory readers (Pearson and Gallagher, 2010). If students do not reach a certain stage in their reading development they will need more extra support

that teachers cannot provide during class time. When teaching reading it is important to focus on the class sizes because the smaller the group the easier it become to teach reading. This study seeks to establish the situation in the sample schools and see how grouping affects the use of different reading methods. I agree with Block and Johnson (2002) who stated that there was no prescribed grouping for teaching reading because the effectiveness in the reading classroom depends solely on the teachers, but how these teachers decide which reading methods to use in the field and why they chose those methods was partly the the focus of this study.

## **2.9 Reading support services**

According to Wolfe and Nevills (2004) the estimated number of children with serious reading problems in schools in South Africa is very high. The situation is the same in Namibia as eluded in the SAQMEC 2005 report. This is an indication that children struggle when it comes to reading and schools should have measures in place to assist these struggling readers. In a study Reglin, Cameron and Losike-Sedimo (2012) determined the effectiveness of a parent support intervention to improve students' scores in reading. {During this longitudinal study (2006-2010) the learners' seventh grade reading scores at the study site on the state end of grade reading test declined from 71.1% to 28.1% which represents a decline of 43% in their performance levels in reading. Findings show that as a result of parental participation in the parent support reading (PSR) intervention the experimental group student's reading comprehension scores increase. parent were expected to assist their children with reading homework for about an hour each evening as well as volunteer to

help reading teachers in the classroom. The study above revealed that parental involvement in reading instruction will improve the learners reading skills.

It is evident from studies done in Namibia that even though researchers identified the lack of reading support in the Namibian school system (Imene & Van Graan, 2000) there are still no proper structures in place to give immediate intervention.

Klopper and Nel (2010) focused on a different intervention model to support reading development. According to their study the decrease in literacy levels in South African schools are caused by large classes, lack of teaching expertise and training and a lack of resources in many classrooms. The purpose of their study was to describe how recently developed multimedia learning and teaching support materials (MLTSM) can enhance reading skills of foundation phase learners. They also described the benefits of the digital book disc (DBD) for the South African school context and its potential for enriching and supporting reading instruction in the foundation phase. In this programme, reading support is given through active learner participation, motivation, reinforcement of positive self-assessment and immediate feedback. This is ideal for developing reading of learners but it is a very expensive intervention. Schools cannot afford books and since DBD needs computers it is unaffordable (Klopper & Nel, 2010).

Woodward and Talbert-Johnson (2009) stated that many schools provide some form of intervention for learners with reading difficulties. They came up with daily sessions in which reading specialists shared the classroom with the teacher and give attention to the “at risk” learners. They would assist during

the lesson or remove the learners from the classroom and give them individual intervention- This is a very expensive practice that would work in some set ups but definitely not in our schools where lack of resources is so evident.

In telephonic interviews with curriculum developers at Namibia Institute for Educational Development (NIED) the researcher has got the following information:

- The training or development efforts are more for the teacher to be able to identify learners at risk and give them remedial classes.
- The lower primary division has started to pilot a reading support programme in 10 schools in Namibia but she {Who} could not explain the process and its benefits for the learners.

From these interviews, it was clear that there was something in place for reading support in Namibia but there is no clarity to what the developers are doing. Whether it was taking the “at risk” learners out of the class, give afternoon classes or incorporating these interventions into daily lessons is unclear.

In relation to this study the implication of adopting these reading support methods in the Namibian school system is twofold. The first one is that it will enable the teachers to identify learners “at risk” early and give proper in class assistance and secondly it will also have a positive effect on the learners reading development.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Research design refers to the strategy used to integrate the different components of the research project in a cohesive and coherent way. Rather than a "cookbook" from which one chooses the best recipe, it is a means to structure a research project in order to address a defined set of questions (Trochim and Land, 1982). This research was a qualitative case study. It looked at a specific group of people in a specific action and in a specific natural – social setting, rather than in general. Because of its small size, this study was intended to intensively examine the specific group and their actions in teaching reading. Greetz (in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p182), asserted that “case studies strive to portray what it is like to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality”. A case study helped the researcher to probe more deeply and to intensively analyse data to have a better understanding of teachers’ perceptions on approaches to the teaching of reading. The researcher wanted to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of the research participants and also to understand the meanings they gave to their experience. According to Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) the interpretive paradigm assumes that people create and associate their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. Teachers and learners interact with one another, giving meaning

to what they do and why they do what they do. This paradigm helps the researcher to understand and interpret teachers' actions when teaching reading.

The interpretive paradigm according to Jackson (2003) cited in Mutenda (2008) involves interpreting and understanding human action. Human action must be interpreted to give it meaning. During my data collection period I interacted with the teachers through interviews and observations and during that time I was able to observe and understand some of their actions.

### **3.2 Sampling**

Convenience sampling was used as a non-probability sampling method to select schools in Rundu Educational Circuit. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009), purposeful sampling is the process of including whoever happens to be information rich and available in the sample. This is the process of selecting a sample using a technique that does not permit the researcher to specify the probability, or chance, that each member of a population has been selected for a sample (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2009). The advantages of this method are convenience, economy and the easy in obtaining a suitable sample size and the disadvantage is that the readily available participants are most likely not a random sample of the overall population (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2009). Five schools out of the thirty-six primary schools were conveniently selected in the Rundu circuit area. The choice was made because these schools provided an accurate picture of all the schools in the circuit. Ideally I needed to examine every school in the circuit but the schools I included in the sample represented typical schools with reading problems.

Criterion sampling was used to select participants for the study at each school. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) define criterion sampling as the process of selecting a sample that meet some predetermined criteria of importance. Twenty teachers were supposed to be selected from each of the five schools, with four teachers from each school. Two of these were to come from the lower primary phase because they taught reading to the learners at this phase and two English teachers from upper primary phase because they were expected to share their experiences regarding teaching reading. Working with only four teachers per school gave me an opportunity to study their practices in depth. However, only nineteen teachers were interviewed as one of them withdrew at the last minute due to personal reasons shared with the researcher at that time.

### **3.3 Research instruments**

The data were collected using face-to-face semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and focus group discussions. The interview schedule consisted of open-ended questions which according to Farrell, Bannister, Ditton and Gilchrist (1997) are qualitative and allow the exploration of many themes as respondents can talk about any issue they wish in response to the questions.

### **3.4 Data collection procedures**

Data collection was undertaken after asking permission from the principals of the schools and the teachers who were to participate in the study. Lower primary and upper primary teachers from the selected schools were interviewed individually in the afternoons during the first three weeks of the data collection process. With the permission of the participants, interviews were tape-recorded. With permission from principals and teachers, non-participant observations were carried out on the fourth week of data collection to observe how reading was taught. The last part of the data collection process was the focus group discussions in which a group of five teachers, who were interviewed individually freely discussed reading and how they taught reading.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

The tape recorded interviews were transcribed and then analysed. The transcriptions were given to the participants for verification before the analysis to validate them. Radiee (1990) as cited in Rowling (1994) recommended the return of interview transcripts to interviewees for confirmation as one technique which is aimed at protecting their interests. For reliability and validity, a pilot study was carried out with a small group of four teachers with who had characteristics similar to those in the sample. The four teachers did not form part of the sample for the main study.

The interview transcriptions and observation notes were coded and then analysed. The data were analysed using content. Mayring (2000) stated that content analysis is used to systematically summarise written, spoken or visual communication in a qualitative research.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005, p.181) stated that ethical behaviour is important in research, as in any other field of human activity. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005, p.181) further explained that principles underlying 'research ethics' are universal and concern issues such as honesty and respect for the rights of individuals. In respect of this, the researcher observed ethics throughout this research.

The autonomy of the participants and the information was respected and handled confidentially. No information collected was revealed to anybody and no names of participants were used in this research. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis. Informed consent was obtained from participants and it was explained to them that they could withdraw from the research any time they wished to. Terre Blanche & Durrheim, (1999, p. 66) explained that "consent should be voluntary and informed. This requires that participants receive a full, non-technical and clear explanation of the tasks expected of them". This was done by the researcher before every session.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS AND THEIR DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents results of the study that was conducted and their discussion. In order to maintain the focus on the original goal of the study, the results are presented in the chapter according to the research questions that were stated in chapter one. These questions were:

- To what extent did BETD teachers in the Kavango Education Region use the teaching methods they were taught in college?
- How did the teachers perceive the appropriateness of these methods?
- What factors, if any, hindered the effective use of these methods in the classroom?
- What assistance did teachers need to use these methods appropriately in order to teach reading more effectively?

The responses to these questions are presented and discussed as follows:

#### ***4.1 The teaching methods used by teacher in the Kavango Education Region***

##### ***4.1.1 Teaching methods that teachers were exposed to during teacher training.***

According to the BETD pre-service syllabus, lower primary student teachers were taught methods of teaching reading that included the integrated thematic method, breakthrough method, language experience method, phonic method, whole language method, and the letter land and story methods.

To ascertain whether teachers in the study applied these teaching methods, they were asked to recall methods they were taught at college and explain the types of methods they used to teach reading in their classrooms.

#### ***4.1.2 Teaching used by teacher to teach reading in classrooms***

According to table 4.1, 6 out of the 19 respondents recalled that they were taught in college how to use the phonics method. Three of the respondents indicated that they were taught the ‘look and say’ method. Whereas four of the respondents could not recall the teaching methods they were taught, all of the respondents provided methods of teaching reading that had little to do with what they were taught in college.

**Table4.1: Teachers' Responses on Methods Taught during Training at College**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Teacher responses on methods they were taught at college</b>
Teacher 1	alphabetical approach, phonics approach and look and say, whole words method  whole sentence approach
Teacher 2	Vocabularies
Teacher 3	skills turning, skimming and free reading
Teacher 4	learner centered approaches of teaching reading
Teacher 5	I can't really remember

Teacher 6	I can't really remember but skimming
Teacher 7	Skimming, scanning and understanding
Teacher 8	look and say and phonics
Teacher 9	pre-reading approach, phonics, I forgot the third
Teacher 10	phonic method and vocabulary
Teacher 11	Reading for pleasure, read aloud and silently
Teacher 12	look and say this method, teacher dictation and drilling method
Teacher 13	Pronounce and learner centered
Teacher 14	Phonics
Teacher 15	phonics, look and say word and look and say sentences
Teacher 16	I can't recall.
Teacher 17	Sentence approach, word approach
Teacher 18	Put a few words on a poster
Teacher 19	The picture

The English Language Education Curriculum that had been in use during the BETD era indicated that student teachers were to be taught basic reading components and strategies to teach upper primary learners reading. Teachers came up with methods that were never mentioned in any reading programme.

This is an indication that teachers develop their own methods and use a combination of these methods to teach reading. Scanning and skimming are processes or techniques of speed reading, and have some relation to reading but they are not methods to teach reading. Table 4.1 also showed that seven of the respondents could recall the methods they were taught during their studies. Common methods mentioned were 'look and say method, phonics and the use of pictures. The phonics method appeared to be common as it featured in most responses given by the teachers. It was mentioned in the following combinations:

- alphabetical method and phonics method;
- pre-reading method and phonics ;
- game method and the phonic method.

There are also clear patterns that show that teachers who teach the lower primary groups made use of the phonics and look and say methods more than the teachers who taught the upper primary groups.

In a follow-up question in which the teachers had to explain whether they use the teaching methods when teaching reading most teachers responded that they used the methods very effectively. This response contradicted the fact that most of the teachers could not even remember the methods taught to them during their studies. The responses given to the second part of the question which required participants to know whether these approaches were well explained to them during their teacher training yielded the issues that follow. It seemed that most teachers tried to convince the researcher that they used the

methods taught to them during their studies. For instance, 14 of the 19 respondents confirmed that they used methods for teaching reading that they learnt at college. From the remaining respondents, one tried to use the methods, another could only apply one method, one did not apply any method, and two could not remember the approaches and did not answer the question.

Data from the focus group interviews revealed that three of the respondents indicated that they did not make use of some reading methods when teaching reading because they perceived the processes used to teach them as time consuming. All the approaches used in Namibian schools are very time consuming and the timetable caters for only six periods of English teaching a week. This may mean that because teachers teach language in overcrowded class rooms they are unable to apply the methods they were taught at College. This may explain why they use other methods that seem to be more appropriate in overcrowded classrooms. Consistent with is the suggestion that teachers should not stick to one method; rather they should make use of methods that are applicable in their situations. This is supported by Fillipo (1999) cited in Imene and van Graan (2000) who stated that there was no single method or single combination of methods that could successfully teach all children to read. Therefore, teachers must have a strong knowledge of multiple methods for teaching reading and a strong knowledge of the children in their care so that they are able to create an appropriate balance of methods needed for the children they teach. Teachers should make use of any method as long as their learners acquire the skills needed to read.

The focus group interviews further more revealed that the most favoured alternative methods apart from prescribed methods were informally assessing the reading levels of the learners and teaching learners new words from a given texts. Other alternative methods discussed were identifying unfamiliar/difficult words from a text before asking learners to read the text or teach a reading lesson and teaching pronunciation, giving extra classes and putting learners in small groups before giving words for sentence construction. The result revealed that the most popular alternatives were those of identifying difficult/unfamiliar words from a text, teach the learners pronunciation and then reading. Dilbeck (undated) wholeheartedly agreed with Editor when he stated that the pre teaching of vocabulary before reading also helps to develop “the schema necessary to make connections before reading, while reading and after reading”

The respondents during the focus group interviews clearly indicated that they are well-informed with the needs of their learners and might feel more comfortable with addressing the needs of the learners then teaching methods that are time consuming for them.

#### ***4.2 Observation data on methods used to teach reading in the classrooms***

The researcher observed four teachers to see how they taught reading in their classes and also to see whether they taught reading as they explained in their interviews. The researcher decided to only observe four teachers from the nineteen and only at three of the five schools because she did not have time to interview more than four teachers. I present the results of the observations as follows:

### *Teacher 1*

Teacher 1 taught a lower primary class.

The researcher visited the class with an observation checklist and made some notes. The teacher started the lesson with a song which got the learners interested in the lesson from the beginning. I was only interested to find out methods the teacher would use to teach reading I studied the lesson plan I received from the teacher. It indicated that she was going to make use of the phonic method. I did not tick it on my checklist as I wanted to observe the method. The teacher then put pictures on the chalkboard and asked the learners to identify the pictures. The learners replied *mat, sat, rat, cat and bat*. She then asked the learners to come to the front and put flash cards with names of the pictures on them. The learners that she pointed out bravely came to the chalkboard and placed the flash cards on the pictures. She then asked other learners to spell out the letters. They would go: '*r-a-t = rat, m-a-t = mat*'. This activity continued until the end the lesson. All this showed that the learners could read and that the teacher was really teaching a component of the phonics reading method. The class had only a few posters on the bulletin boards and there were no pictures to be seen anywhere in the classroom. Because of this, the researcher felt that no incidental reading took place in that classroom. Notwithstanding this, the lesson was a phonics reading lesson and the teacher showed that she knew how to use the method.

### *Teacher 2*

Teacher 2 was a male teacher at the same school as Teacher One. Teacher Two had a beautiful class. I remember from the individual interviews he was

the teacher who informed me that he believed in having a learner friendly classroom. The teacher put his learners in groups. In the process he could cater for all the learners in his very big class. While he taught a small group reading, the other groups were busy with silent reading, writing and drawing.

The teacher asked the learners who he was working with to read together. This method is shared reading which Siyave (2011) stated was “a non-threatening and enjoyable way to strengthen the language skills of struggling readers”. In the task, the researcher observed that the learners were very interested in the lesson. They appeared enthusiastic and willing to participate. They were also more motivated when they were in groups than when they worked individually. Group work increased their confidence in their own ability to complete their reading tasks.

From the observation of the two lower primary lesson, the researcher learned that the teachers were really teaching reading in their classes and made use of better and more effective methods than the ones on her checklists. Teachers tended to look for the best methods to teach reading. The only problem that I observed in both lessons was that teachers did not use any measures to assess whether learning actually took place in their lesson. When asked how they knew a lesson was successful they told me that they would know this when they gave a test later in the week.

### *Teacher three*

Teacher three taught English to a grade five class. As I entered the class the teacher asked the learners to take out their text books and turn to page 91. She then told the learners to read the text (they made use of silent reading) and answer the questions that followed. This was a very disappointing lesson. When I made the appointment with the teacher I told her I would like to see how she taught reading and she told me that this was how she typically taught reading. Learners were making noise and some were not reading. The teacher took in the completed task to mark at home. This meant to me that she had not understood the teaching methods she was taught at College.

### *Teacher Four*

Teacher four was also an upper primary English teacher. She asked her learners the previous day to go and read up on a topic. The topic she taught was “*Diseases*”. As an introduction to the lesson she asked the learners to role play the parts of different diseases such as TB, Measles, Polio and HIV/AIDS. This was very interesting as she had her learners interested in the lesson immediately. She then gave them the passage to read and answer questions she provided on a poster. After the short comprehension exercise, she took in their books, told the learners to read the passage again and underline the adjectives in the first paragraph. After this a learner read the second paragraph. All learners were asked to underline superlative adjectives found in it.

This was a very interesting lesson and I realised there was a very big difference in the learning taking place in the Lower and Upper primary

classrooms and that the teacher's planning and interactions with learners during the lesson is very important.. Even though the upper primary classes that I observed were not too overcrowded learners were arranged in groups. I observed that teachers did this to encourage interaction amongst the learners but in most cases this technique did not lead to increased interaction.

When respondents were asked about whether the teaching methods they used to teach reading were effective, they gave two main responses. Firstly, they felt that the success of lessons on reading could be determined by the class size. The data revealed that most of the respondents had a problem controlling and teaching large classes. The larger the class size the more difficult it was to teach reading. In this context, the class size and not the type of teaching method influenced the effectiveness of lessons on reading. Secondly, .respondents thought that the effectiveness of the teaching methods depended on learner participation. To illustrate this, one of the respondents said: *"It is effective because most of the time when you start asking them questions they are interested and when they will read after marking I would also see that most of my learners are doing good there are only few that need more attention."*

The observations and the two interviews revealed that respondents either taught reading through newly learned methods from experience or used methods that they were taught during their training.

#### ***4.3 Data on the appropriateness of reading methods to teach reading***

The following views were expressed on the appropriateness of methods used to teach reading:

Nine of the 19 respondents who were observed confirmed that the reading methods they used were very effective. What was needed was to use them appropriately. One of the nine respondents stated that because the various methods were linked to each other teachers needed to use all of them when teaching reading.

Two of the participants felt that the methods could be appropriate if the teachers considered the levels of the learners in their teaching. For instance, if learners were already at an advanced level because they came from very good pre-primary schools they would learn how to read with ease. However, learners from poor educational backgrounds would struggle to learn how to read.

Five teachers felt that the methods they were using to teach reading were not very effective because after using them for most of the year, the majority of learners could still not read. They felt that it would be appropriate if the teachers used these methods with extra materials such as pictures and real objects. Methods alone are not enough.

One of the teachers felt that the 'look-and-say method' was the best because learners learnt best when they saw and touched things. She further stated that various methods of teaching reading would be effective if they were used in conjunction with visual aids, such as pictures, posters and flashcards.

Three of the respondents could not assess whether the methods for the teaching of reading were appropriate because they could not remember what methods to teach reading they were taught during their studies. This was consistent with what seven teachers said. They indicated that they had no idea of how appropriate the methods were because they could not remember what

those methods were. It seemed as though they were saying that they could not measure the effectiveness of none existing methods.

Most of these views are inconsistent with the responses captured in the preceding section because when asked to list the methods they were taught in college, most of the respondents did not remember most of them. They either came up with their own methods or renamed those that were taught. For instance, one respondent called the phonics method the alphabetic method.

These responses made the researcher doubt the reliability of the responses from some of the respondents. She thought that as teachers they felt they had to come up with favourable responses which would make them seem more adequate as teachers. Kidd (2011) stated that reliability is concerned with “questions of stability and consistency. There was lack of consistency in the respondents’ responses.

The ability for a teacher to be able to teach reading is such an important skill. In this study, the researcher wanted to find out how teachers used the methods they were taught to them during their training. She wished to find out if the use of the methods for teaching reading benefited learners in their classes. The results did not seem to communicate this message.

The remaining teachers had mixed opinions on the effectiveness of the approaches used. One of the respondents said that the effectiveness of the methods depended on the level of the learners. Generally, results showed that

there were doubts among some teachers on the effectiveness of the teaching of reading methods they were using.

Based on the responses from teachers, it was suggested that to improve the effectiveness of ineffective methods, teachers should use a variety of methods. This is consistent with findings from the research done by the Australian government which found that, “all learners learn best when teachers adopt an integrated approach to learning to read that explicitly teaches phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary knowledge and comprehension” (Australia. Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), 2005, p.11). A variety will help all the learners achieve their goals.

#### ***4.4 Factors affecting the effective use of teaching methods during reading instruction***

When teachers were asked about what hindered the effective use of the reading methods in their classrooms, the following factors came out: teachers’ ability levels, learners’ involvement, class size, learning environment in which reading is taught and parental involvement.

##### ***4.4.1 Teachers’ ability levels***

The data revealed that some of the reasons that teachers struggle to effectively use the methods to teach reading in their classrooms were lack of knowledge and lack of confidence to teach reading. Some of the teachers did not know the methods for teaching reading and so preferred to come up with alternative

ways to teach reading. This is how one of the respondents illustrated this view:

*‘There are a lot of things which can hinder a skill, when you come [to] a certain class you find some teachers are behind the skill of words; then others because some topics have to pull them behind, they have to go over and over again [some material] before kids adopts or understand what is going on’.*

This is supported by Klopper and Nel (2010) who have shown that learners in Southern Africa have problems in reading because of a lack of teacher expertise in teaching reading and because of inadequate training for teachers.

One of the respondents said that she felt that the reading methods (i.e. phonics, syllable and look and say methods) she was taught during her training were boring and that was the main reason she did not use them. Three of the respondents also revealed that they taught reading through the use of drills.

Whereas some of the teachers revealed that they did not know how to deal with or assist learners who struggled with reading but either merely sent them to the library or just ignored them, other teachers revealed that they struggled with classroom management. One other teacher said that she was unable to do certain activities because of limited classroom space, classroom structure and a large class size. These conditions were not conducive to the effective teaching of reading.

The data also revealed that since some teachers had difficulty teaching how to read, they just did not teach reading in their classes. They just gave their learners reading tasks to do.

Some of the respondents revealed that they themselves needed assistance in teaching reading because their lecturers just gave them assignments to do and some theory on the topic of reading. They did not however, model the actual implementation of how to teach reading during their training.

Teachers also responded that they make use of remedial classes if the approaches are ineffective. This is actually inconsistent because they are the ones with the problems, they either don't know the approaches or do not know how to teach them so why would they give remedial classes to the learners.

*“Especially in grade 5 I identify some learners how are really having problems then I do remedial classes after then when they are in small numbers I can see their problems.”* Similarly another teacher echoed that he give compensatory classes: *“There is something that we call compensatory daily, which we give them in the morning and afternoon we give them a certain text which they need to practice in a specific time it can be for one hour or 30 minutes.”* The respondents also reported they gave extra classes to assist learners who are struggling to cope with reading approaches. This again contradicts the fact that teachers previously stated they do not have time to use the approaches as it is time consuming.

This is very interesting because it indicates that upper primary teacher go to the lowest extend to help their learners become fluent readers because they feel it is the responsibility of the lower primary teachers to teach learners who

to read. *“If the method is not effective I arrange for the learners to get remedial classes only for them. I start with the lower primary level, to combine words small words like na, ba then they combine the next time it will be the phonics like the way in lower primary.”*

The last group of respondents had difficulty because learners are not able to pronounce and sound the letter correctly. One teacher reported that

*“the main problem for some learners is pronunciation you read and ask them to repeat after you, some will pretend not to follow, even if you correct them and tell them the right pronunciation they will still read it in another way”*

This coincided with the teacher that *reported that she “has a slow learner, when you sound the words he does not even know the letters, so what I do from the beginning of the year is to try and teach the letters, the vowels....”*

Some learners have difficulties to learn sound and this is the time when a teacher should employ remedial strategies for teaching reading. *“We do use drilling but to no avail we even started up a song which helps a little bit but still the ka ke ku but it is difficult.”* These response showed that there is a confusion of sounds in English and local Rukwangali language.

#### ***4.4.2 Learners’ involvement***

Respondents felt that most of their learners were shy and did not participate in the classroom. This made reading instruction more difficult for them as they needed their learners to be actively involved for their own success. Five teachers thought that learners were not actively involved because they lacked

interest in school work in general and in reading instruction in particular. According to the top-down theory, effective reading instruction starts with learners' prior knowledge. One implication of this is that learners will find it harder to learn reading if they are not actively involved in the process.

The results also revealed that learners confused letter sounds in English with letter sounds in their first languages. Since letter sounds in English did not always represent the actual letters, learners found it difficult to grasp the correspondence between letters and sounds in the language. This hindered their reading ability and their participation in reading instruction. This is not a problem in African languages used in the Kavango regions because there is a one-on-one correspondence between letters and sounds.

One of the teachers identified another problem that adversely affected learner involvement in learning how to read in English as a second language. She indicated that because of mother tongue interference, several learners had problems with pronouncing English words. This inhibited fluent reading and proper reading development. This is how the teacher illustrated the problem: *"Learners are getting confused with the sounds in English and the sounds in Rukwangali. The /c/ sound is different from the letter name."*

Some of the lower primary teachers revealed that since some of the learners had no pre-primary background, it was very difficult for them to get these learners at the same level as others and it took a lot of time to teach them basic skills like reading. Another issue that hindered learner participation was the transition from the mother tongue to English. Four of the respondents highlighted this problem. According to one of the four respondents, some of

the learners she was teaching had a mother tongue that was different from the one offered at their school. This meant that the learners had to acquire Rukwangali that is offered as a course, plus English which is a strange language to them and often times not spoken at home. As a result, these learners could not actively participate in class activities as they were unable to communicate effectively in Rukwangali and in English. Moreover, it was reported by the remaining three respondents that ill-prepared learners transferring from other schools were also unable to participate actively in reading lessons.

#### **4.4.3 Class size**

Data revealed that thirteen of the 19 respondents felt that the big class size limited effective reading instruction as it was difficult to organize big classes for reading. One of the teachers illustrated this as follows: *“And then the other thing is also overcrowd[ing]. Because you find a grade 7 class has over 50 learners. Only when they start dropping out they come at around 45. So if you find I have four classes I cannot manage even if I want to assist those slow learners you have to struggle.”* The teacher revealed that the size of the class prevented her from assisting learners at risk. This is consistent with what London (2013) stated. He indicated that in Nigeria and Namibia, some schools have classrooms consisting of 70 to 100 learners. It is obvious that it would be difficult to provide adequate English language/reading teaching under these conditions because the teacher would have difficulty in ensuring that every learner got proper reading instruction. The big class size would prevent the teacher from providing individual attention to learners who require help with

reading problems. This is supported by Blatchford, Moriarty and Martin (2003) who stated that the larger the number of children in a class, the more time teachers would spend on procedural and domestic matters such as taking the registers, lining children up and dealing with domestic duties. Because of this they would spend less time on instruction and dealing with individual children. To illustrate this one respondent stated the following:

*“Like us here we have many learners, the only approach I can use is when they are in groups then I can concentrate on the groups, when the learners are reading individually it is easier for me to identify learners who cannot pronounce/read words.*

Large class sizes deprive learners of quality one-on-one interaction with their teachers.

Teachers also revealed that large classes made teaching reading very difficult because of insufficient text books for instruction. It was found that in some cases more than six learners’ shared one textbook/ story book. This made it impossible for the teacher to give learners reading tasks that required the use of text books.

#### ***4.4.4 Resources to teach reading***

For reading instruction to be effective various resources are needed. It starts with the simplest resource which is reading materials. Most of the respondents indicated that their schools lacked these resources and the ones they had were outdated or very limited in supply. As stated by one of the respondent:

*“Our school had it in the past but not really at this point in time, for example the school had overhead projectors, but now there is no one using overhead projectors, for some people use laptops of which they also need overhead projectors it is very difficult but then the school does not have adequate resources for us to enhance the reading capabilities of our learners the reason being I do not know but we really need help from stakeholders in education.”*

Another respondent indicated that not having enough materials kept her from giving the learners at risk individual attention. She explained it in the following manner:

*“First of all is the lack of resources e.g. pictures, story books and textbooks; are not enough for every learner to have so it is difficult providing material for every child it is a challenge for me and it is also difficult to pinpoint who is having difficulty in what section and which I try to do most of the time which is not possible because of over crowdedness, I try to give them time though I cannot finish all of them, giving them individual attention is a challenge.”*

One teacher reported that even though their school had a library, learners were not allowed to take out books.

The importance of reading materials is further supported by Siyave (2011) who stated that children needed to be given books to practice reading in order to develop as readers. According to the Ministry of Education (2005), books help learners to develop language structure, syntax, and style as well as to deepen the use and understanding of punctuation and the expansion and development of vocabulary. In addition, when learners are exposed to many

texts, they develop knowledge of language structures, literacy knowledge, phonological awareness, decoding, and sight word recognition and improve their inferential skills that they need for critical reading.

The other 3 teachers stated that there were no resources at all while 1 teacher had no idea of the availability of teaching resources. The remaining 11 respondents indicated that although available to some extent, teaching resources were inadequate.

To further illustrate the importance of reading materials, one respondent said the following:

*“I need support with materials, reading books that can assist us in terms of maybe own ways how to teach at a lower level and in the languages especially English because for learners who have only a background in other indigenous languages like Rukwangali, it is difficult and takes time, so we really need books that teach us how to go about this.”*

#### **4.4.5 Parental involvement**

Respondents felt that parental involvement in reading instruction is lacking in most households. Reglin, Cameron and Losike-Sedimo (2012) demonstrated the effectiveness of parental involvement in improving students’ scores in reading. This was echoed by some of the respondents in this study who stated that parental involvement would improve the learners’ reading levels. The respondents revealed that they would really appreciate it if parents assisted in the teaching of simple reading tasks and showed interest in their children’s work.

#### ***4.5 Assistance required by teachers to successfully use various teaching methods during reading instruction***

##### ***4.5.1 Teaching and learning support***

Three of the respondents felt that teachers need more training on the teaching of reading. *“Yes the resources we have, it is just myself that need extra assistance”*. This is consistent with Imene’s and van Graan’s (2000) position. The two researchers advanced the view that knowing a variety of techniques and approaches put teachers in a more favourable position to become eclectic in their classroom practice and to provide the kind of support that individual learners might need, especially during remedial stages in the literacy encounter.

If there was a lack of understanding when methods of how to teach reading were taught at college or the methods were not taught to the teachers, in-service training or workshops would benefit them and their learners. This is how one of the teachers verbalised this view: *“I think if you are new in a subject, you just need to be trained and be told you must do this, do that then you know you are on the right track, you also need those new information maybe because even if I ask my colleagues they do not really do it, only if they have time. It is your first year teaching you need a workshop to tell you what to do and then you can.”*

The three respondents, in addition, said that they would need very interactive workshops to assist them in the teaching of reading. They indicated that they sometimes attended workshops whose content could not be applied when teaching reading. To clarify this position, one of the respondents stated:

*“There is a lot of unnecessary workshops but in service training would be beneficial because it been 3 years already since my training. It would also be good if the subject advisors can also come in and assist with strategies and methods to teach reading.”*

Another important finding was that it was sometimes not enough for teachers to have the knowledge of how to teach reading. They needed help in how to use the knowledge in practice in the classroom. This might explain why only three out of nineteen respondents affirmed that there were resources that enabled them to use each of the teaching methods of reading they were taught in college with ease.

#### ***4.5.2 What teachers do to deal with learner reading difficulties?***

Results showed the opinions of teachers on what could be done to deal with challenges of teaching reading. The most favoured strategy was that of giving extra reading materials to learners.. Other strategies included those of giving more practice and encouraging learners to read novels. Strangely, two respondents suggested punishment as a remedy. However, none of the suggested ways appeared to be addressing the challenges identified in question 4. This may suggest that teachers did not have strategies to deal with challenges they face during teaching reading.

The data also revealed that the accessibility of resources was an important determining factor. Some respondents were willing to spend their afternoons at a Teachers' Resource Centre or pay at an Internet Café to download relevant teaching aids. One respondent thought that doing this was a waste of time and money. She felt that one of the best solutions would be to do peer co-teaching; where teachers exchange topics and teach topics in which they were stronger than their colleagues. , By doing this, the learners would get the best from the experts and teachers would not disadvantage learners by not teaching what they did not understand. Other respondents agreed with this and added that peer teaching would also encourage teachers to share teaching aids, expertise and ideas. This would make their teaching easier. For instance, a teacher who is good in grammar would assist a teacher who struggles with that skill.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate how BETD trained teachers used methods of teaching reading that they were taught at college. As indicated in chapter one, the investigation was guided by the following research questions:

- To what extent did BETD teachers in the Kavango Education Region use the teaching methods of how to teach reading that they were taught at college?
- How did the teachers perceive the appropriateness of these methods?
- What factors, if any, hindered the effective use of these methods in the classroom?
- What assistance did teachers need to use these methods appropriately in order to teach reading more effectively?

This chapter presents main conclusions and recommendations of the thesis.

#### **5.2 Conclusions**

From the findings presented and discussed in Chapter 4, the BETD programme in Namibia was designed to equip teachers with methods of how to teach reading. Based on the findings reported in this thesis, it can be concluded that not all methods of how to teach reading that were covered in the BETD programme were fully utilised and applied by the majority of the

respondents in the study. This conclusion is supported by the fact that several respondents lacked knowledge of methods of teaching reading that they learnt at college.

It can also be concluded that, according to the respondents, attempts to effectively use methods of how to teach reading in primary schools were hampered by a lack of resources, large class sizes that were difficult to manage, and the confusion caused by learning how to read in Rukwangali (the mother tongue of most learners covered in the study) and learning how to read in English as a second language.

Other conclusions from the study that can be highlighted relate to teachers' ability levels, learners' involvement in their own learning of how to read, parental involvement and teaching and learning support for teachers. With regards to teachers' ability levels, it can be concluded that the application of methods of how to teach reading, according to the respondents, was partly hampered by teachers' reported lack of capacity of how to teach reading. Moreover, because the majority of lower and upper primary school learners lacked the knowledge of the English language, it was difficult for them to participate in their own learning of how to read in English.

In an attempt to handle some of the reading problems most learners faced, the majority of the teachers in the study wished parents were more involved in the learning of their own children.

To enhance their capacity, most respondents asked for hands-on and interactive teaching and learning support in the form of in-service training workshops on methods of how to teach reading. It was urged that such training be provided by advisory language teachers and by teacher education instructors who train teachers on how to teach reading at primary school level.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

1. The results of this study revealed that most teachers, even though they used methods they had developed, were not familiar with appropriate methods of how to teach reading. Because of this, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education in Namibia, through the University of Namibia, should develop and coordinate a structured system that would monitor and assess the effectiveness of how teaching methods of reading covered in training are applied in practice by teachers.
2. It is recommended that the Government of the Republic of Namibia through the Ministry of Education and its Directorates should prioritise the development of strategies for the successful implementation of monitoring and assessing the application and implementation of methods of teaching reading in primary schools in the country. This recommendation is made because reading is the most important skill for a learner to achieve academic success and because the data from the present study showed that even though teachers were taught how to teach reading at teacher education institutions they did not use the methods in their work as they did not understand the benefits of the methods.

3. It is recommended that in-service training workshops should be conducted on a continuous basis to equip teachers with more knowledge of different methods of teaching reading as well as practical demonstrations of their implementation and use in schools. This recommendation is based on the finding that even though teachers in the study knew some of the methods of how to teach reading they did not know how to teach reading.
4. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education in Namibia through Regional Education Directorates should create an enabling environment for supporting the effectiveness and successfulness of teaching reading in primary schools by availing resources for teaching reading and resources for reducing classes to manageable sizes. This recommendation is based on the finding that lack of resources and large class sizes hamper reading success amongst learners. The reducing of class sizes to manageable numbers of learners at primary school level should be prioritised because large class sizes have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the teacher in supervising and giving individual attention to learners when teaching reading.
5. It is recommended that for the results of this study to be generalized to the rest of Namibia, it should be replicated in all 14 Education Regions. To ensure the adoption and application of concepts, methodologies and approaches to teaching reading in primary schools, the studies in the regions should be conducted at circuit level.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix (i) Approval letter



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA  
KAVANGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION

Tel: 258911  
fax: 2589213

Enquiries: Fanuel Kapapero  
Email: [kapapero@iway.na](mailto:kapapero@iway.na)

7 June 2011

Ms. Moira J. Kekhani  
University of Namibia  
Rundu campus

**Re: Request to conduct research**

Your letter dated 25 May 2011 on the above matter refers.

Kindly be informed that approval has been granted for you to conduct a research at various schools in town from 15 July to 31 October 2011.

The Directorate of Education is impressed by the topic you have selected that is "investigation of reading approaches used by BETD teachers in the Kavango education region". We are convinced that the outcome of the research will not only benefit you as a person, but also the Directorate of Education in the Kavango region and the entire Ministry of Education.

We wish you well in your studies.

  
Fanuel Kapapero  
Deputy Director



## **Appendix (ii) Individual interview schedule**

### **RUNDU UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA CAMPUS**

**Department of Educational Psychology and Inclusive Education**

**Master of Education (Literacy and Learning) Programme**

**Interviewer: Ms. Moira Kekhani**

**Number of the interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of school:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Purpose of the interview:**

The purpose of this interview is to discuss with you approaches that you use to teach reading. Because your answers will be treated as confidential, I ask you to be as free as possible when you answer the questions that follow. No information that you give will be used against you as you are giving it anonymously.

#### **Questions**

1. As a 'reading' teacher, in your view, what is reading? How do you arrange your class for teaching reading?
2. Why would you consider reading mastery important for your learners?
3. Do you find it easy to teach reading?
4. Which teaching reading approaches did you learn at college? List them for me?
5. Can you apply them all when you teach reading? Were their use well explained during your training?
6. How do you use these methods?
7. How effective is each of these teaching methods in enabling your learners to learn how to read?
8. If any of the teaching methods of reading are not effective, why are they not effective? What should be done to make the methods more effective?

9. What difficulties, if any, do you experience when using each one of the methods of teaching reading? What support do you need to overcome the difficulties?
- 10.** Does your school have resources that enable you to use each of the teaching methods of reading with ease? If this is not the case, what support do you need to obtain the resources?

## **Appendix (iii) Focus group interview guide**

### **RUNDU UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA CAMPUS**

**Department of Educational Psychology and Inclusive Education**

**Master of Education (Literacy and Learning) Programme**

**Interviewer: Ms. Moira Kekhani**

**Number of the focus group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Purpose of the interview:**

The purpose of this interview is to discuss with you approaches that you use to teach reading. Because your answers will be treated as confidential, I ask you to be as free as possible when you answer the questions that follow. No information that you give will be used against you as you are giving it anonymously.

#### **Questions**

1. From the individual interviews I picked up that you do not make use of reading approaches when you teach reading. What is the reason for this?
2. If you don't make use of the prescribed approaches, how do you teach reading?
3. Where did you acquire these skills?
4. What challenges do you have when you teach reading?
5. How do you deal with these challenges?