

**A professional development enquiry: teacher pedagogical content  
knowledge to support reading comprehension of non-mother-  
tongue speakers**

*by*

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*Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of*

*Doctor of Philosophy  
(Curriculum Studies)*

*in the Faculty of Education  
Stellenbosch University*

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*December 2016*

## DECLARATION

Student number: 10940243

By submitting this dissertation, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

M. Basson

December 2016



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18 August 2016

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that I assisted **Mrs MAGDALENE BASSON** with the language editing of her doctoral thesis for the Department of Curriculum Studies at the Faculty of Education, Stellenbosch University entitled: **Pedagogical support to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes**, while she was preparing the manuscript for submission. Her supervisor was Dr Michael le Cordeur.

I went through the entire draft making corrections and suggestions with respect predominantly to language usage. Given the nature of the process, I did not see the final version, but made myself available for consultation as long as was necessary. I may be contacted personally (details below) for further information or confidential confirmation of this certificate.

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To Whom It May Concern:

Hereby I, Marisa Freya Honey, declare that I am a full-time editor and translator with 16 years' experience of, among other things, editing theses, dissertations and journal articles. I also wish to state that I undertook an edit of the references for Mrs Magdalene Basson's thesis.

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The latter degree had a large bilingual (Afrikaans and English) editing component.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any queries.

Kind regards



Marisa Honey

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated and addressed the professional development needs of teachers to improve their pedagogies regarding the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans-medium classes. A professional development programme was designed and implemented based on collected data. The investigation was undertaken against the background of the poor overall achievement of pupils in the national systemic evaluations and international assessment studies, which is currently a cause of great concern. Teachers have indicated that they feel frustrated and overwhelmed, because they do not have adequate knowledge to support the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. Therefore, they have expressed the need for professional development to assist them to improve their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) in this regard.

Action research as part of a mixed method approach was the design of choice for this study. Empirical data were generated by two cycles of this action research study. In this way, research questions could be explored without the constraints of using only one research method. The main approaches to data collection were quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (questionnaires, teacher journals, observations and interviews with the participating teachers). The data collection was supported by a literature study that investigated the professional development of teachers, reading models, approaches and strategies as well as comprehension strategies with specific reference to non-mother-tongue speakers.

The study was based on the theories of constructivism and socio-constructivism as underpinning theories for the development of literacy skills. As this study included the professional development of teachers, a theoretical framework that addresses their knowledge base and the degree to which their continued professional development and growth should be supported was adopted. Teacher learning and the development of their PCK as described by Shulman were therefore included.

Study findings prior to commencement of the professional development programme indicated that the majority of the respondents had received no professional development on reading models and reading strategies, nor on comprehension strategies to enhance the reading and comprehension skills of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans-medium classes. Furthermore, 84% of the respondents indicated that they do not explicitly teach comprehension strategies.

The study found that the professional development programme may have had a positive influence on the PCK of the participating teachers regarding reading models and strategies as well as comprehension strategies. Similarly, the programme may have resulted in increased implementation of these strategies in their classes, as indicated by the 92% of participants who explicitly taught comprehension strategies after the conclusion of the professional development programme. The results show that the participants' implementation of action research may have contributed to effective application of reading and reading comprehension strategies.

The responsibility to ensure that pre- and in-service teachers receive professional development, which includes the appropriate methodologies and strategies to adequately support the literacy skills of non-mother-tongue speakers, lies with universities and the Department of Basic Education. The study, its findings and recommendations can therefore be used as a resource for the development of training programmes to improve teacher PCK regarding the enhancement of the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers.

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie ondersoek die professionele ontwikkelingsbehoefte van onderwysers met betrekking tot die bevordering van die leesbegrip van nie-moedertaalsprekers in Afrikaansmediumklasse. Gebaseer op die data wat gegenereer is, is 'n professionele ontwikkelingsprogram ontwerp en geïmplementeer. Hierdie ondersoek is onderneem teen die agtergrond van die swak prestasie van leerlinge in nasionale sistemiese toetse asook internasionale assesserings. Onderwysers het aangedui dat hulle oorweldig en gefrustreerd voel, omdat hulle nie oor die nodige kennis beskik om die nie-moedertaalsprekers in hulle klasse te ondersteun nie. Dus het hulle die behoefte uitgespreek om professionele ontwikkeling te ondergaan sodat hulle pedagoogiese inhoudskennis in die verband uitgebrei kan word.

Hierdie studie het 'n gemengde navorsingsbenadering gevolg. Empiriese data is gegenereer deur aksienavorsing wat onder andere twee siklusse behels het. Die navorsingsvrae kon dus sonder die beperkinge van slegs een navorsingsmetode verken word. Data is op die volgende wyses gegenereer: kwantitatiewe data (vraelyste) en kwalitatiewe data (vraelyste, onderwysersjoernale, klaskamerobservasies en onderhoude met onderwysers). Die literatuurstudie gee 'n oorsig van die professionele ontwikkeling van onderwysers, leesmodelle, -benaderings en -strategieë sowel as leesbegripstrategieë.

Konstruktivisme en sosio-konstruktivisme is geïdentifiseer as die teoretiese begronding vir die vestiging van geletterdheidsvaardighede. Aangesien hierdie studie die professionele ontwikkeling van onderwysers behels, is 'n teoretiese raamwerk wat hulle voortgesette professionele ontwikkeling en groei in ag neem oorweeg. Dus is onderwyserkennis asook die ontwikkeling van hulle pedagoogiese inhoudskennis soos beskryf deur Shulman as teoretiese raamwerk ingesluit.

Bevindinge voor die aanvang van die studie dui daarop dat die meerderheid van respondente geen professionele ontwikkeling ondergaan het aangaande die bevordering van lees- en leesbegripstrategieë van nie-moedertaalsprekers in hulle Afrikaansmediumklasse nie. Voorts het 84% van die respondente aangedui dat hulle nie leesbegripstrategieë eksplisiet onderrig nie.

Bevindinge van die studie dui daarop dat die professionele ontwikkelingsprogram moontlik 'n positiewe invloed op die pedagoogiese inhoudskennis van die

deelnemende onderwysers rakende leesmodelle en -strategieë sowel as leesbegripstrategieë gehad het. Eweneens kon dit gelei het tot die verhoogte implementering van leesbegripstrategieë in hulle klasse soos aangedui deur 92% van die onderwysers wat na afsluiting van die professionele ontwikkelingsprogram, leesbegripstrategieë eksplisiet onderrig. Voorts dui die resultate daarop dat aksienavorsing moontlik 'n bydrae kon lewer tot die effektiewe toepassing van lees- en leesbegripstrategieë in hulle klasse.

Die verantwoordelikheid rus op die Departement van Basiese Onderwys en universiteite om te verseker dat voor- en nagraadse onderwysers professionele ontwikkeling ontvang sodat hulle oor die nodige pedagogiese kennis en metodes beskik om effektiewe ondersteuning aan die geletterheidsvaardighede van nie-moedertaalsprekers te bied. Die studie, sy bevindinge en aanbevelings kan dus as verwysing dien wanneer professionele ontwikkeling van onderwysers beplan word. Dit geld met spesifieke verwysing na die bevordering van hulle pedagogiese inhoudskennis aangaande lees- en leesbegripstrategieë van nie-moedertaalsprekers.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with great appreciation and sincerity that I want to acknowledge the following people. Without your support this study would not have been possible:

Dr Michael Le Cordeur, my promoter, for his expert advice, guidance, patience and encouragement;

My husband, Dennis, and my children, Arno and Danelle, for their support and patience;

My mother, Rita, for her words of encouragement and support;

The teachers who sacrificed their time and participated in the professional development programme with such enthusiasm;

My colleagues and friends for their understanding and support;

The South African Academy of Science and Art for their financial assistance which made the completion of the study possible;

Prof Martin Kidd of the Centre for Statistical Consultation, for his statistical assistance and advice;

Prof Edwin Hees for editing of the thesis and particularly for the insightful comments that he has made;

Marissa Honey for editing of the bibliography.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
BICS	Basic interpersonal communication skills
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CALP	Cognitive academic language proficiency
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CCK	Common content knowledge
CPM	Comprehension process motions
CSA	Centre of Statistical Analysis
CWED	Cape Winelands Education District
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
FCL	Fostering Communities of Learners
FCTL	Fostering Communities of Teachers as Learners
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
INSET	In-service education and training
LiEP	Language-in-Education Policy
LoLT	Language of learning and teaching
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NGO	Non-government organization
NPA	National Protocol for Assessment
NPPPPR	National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements
OBE	Outcomes based education
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study



RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SBST	School Based Support Team
SCK	Specialised content knowledge
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

## CHAPTER 1

### BACKGROUND, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

#### 1.1 ORIENTATION

The Constitution of South Africa (RSA 1996) and the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) promulgated in 1998 both recognize the equal status of 11 official languages in South Africa. The aim of this policy is to ensure meaningful access to education for all learners (Scheepers 2006:2; DoE 1997:1). Parents exercise their democratic right by enrolling their children in Afrikaans- or English-medium schools, because they believe this will give them an advantage in the future: "[s]ince most black people continue to equate mother tongue-based education with the ravages of Bantu education" (Alexander 2011:10). Consequently, teachers in South Africa are challenged by the presence of diverse languages and cultures in their classes, which may be one of the reasons why educationalists agree that the South African education system is experiencing a literacy crisis (Bloch 2009:26; Jansen 2009:37, 49; Ramphela 2008:171; Moodley 2013:1).

These concerns are confirmed when the diagnostic report of the Minister of Basic Education on the Annual National Assessment (ANA)<sup>1</sup> is studied. Analysis of the learners' scripts (DoBE 2013:77) indicates the following problem areas: a lack of understanding of the events in a story; an inability to summarise a story; and an inability to analyse a text and identify the lesson in a story. Moreover, the 2014 report indicates that pupils are unable to use contextual clues to derive the meanings of words, or to use reading strategies to summarise a text (DoBE 2015:58). Schools are therefore under increased pressure from the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) as well as the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) to improve their literacy results.

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<sup>1</sup> ANA are literacy and numeracy assessments conducted annually by the Department of Basic Education in all public schools in South Africa.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The researcher, currently a learning support advisor<sup>2</sup> in the Stellenbosch region, has been interacting with teachers in Afrikaans-medium schools who express their concern about the increasing numbers of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes; these learners are consequently unable to reach their full potential because they do not possess adequate reading comprehension skills. Research studies by this researcher and others found that teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes find it difficult to adequately support these pupils (Pretorius & Klapwijk 2016:15; Basson 2013; Hoojer & Fourie 2009:141; Lemmer 1995:89). The teachers who participated in these studies felt that they have insufficient knowledge and skills to improve the literacy skills of non-mother-tongue speakers and expressed the need for professional development and programmes to assist them in this regard (O'Connor & Geiger 2009:263; Hooijer & Fourie 2009:141-146; Scheepers 2006:4; Theron & Nel 2005:236; Lessing & De Witt 1999:48; Basson 2013:91).

## 1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Epistemological issues that deal with teaching pedagogies are not emphasised sufficiently during in-service teacher training (Le Cordeur 2012a:142). The ability of teachers to develop new knowledge as well as thinking and finding new solutions has therefore been inhibited. It is important that teachers realise the implications that epistemological issues have for reading comprehension skills. This includes the education of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes. Teacher development has not included knowledge of the relationship between language and cognition, or strategies for promoting reading comprehension in a non-mother-tongue environment (Lemmer 1995:88; Theron & Nel 2005:224; Nel & Müller 2010:648).

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<sup>2</sup> Learning support advisors are specialists appointed by the department of education at district level to provide training and support to mainstream educators and learning support educators in order for them to be better able to support learners with special education needs.

According to Miyazaki (2015:2), pedagogies based on constructivism and socio-constructivism are much more complex than the direct transmission method of teaching. Moreover, their efficacy relies heavily on the knowledge and skills of the teachers involved (Barron & Darling-Hammond 2010).

This researcher had been part of a project to train in-service teachers in the Stellenbosch region in the Balanced Language Programme. During follow-up classroom visits, it was evident that these teachers have difficulty in implementing reading strategies. Therefore, unless teachers understand the pedagogy that incorporates the theories of learning that underpin their teaching practices, changes in the way they teach are likely to remain superficial. It is therefore necessary for pre- and in-service teachers to be equipped with the necessary pedagogical knowledge to address these challenges (Pretorius & Klapwijk 2016:16; Nel 2010:150; Nel & Müller 2010:648).

The researcher envisages a re-imagining of reading comprehension strategies in order to support the pedagogies of in-service teachers so that they are better able to enhance the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. This will be done by researching, analysing and refining the current reading strategies employed in Afrikaans Home Language classes. The method to facilitate this study will be action research based on a constructivist paradigm.

#### **1.4 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:74) state that the theoretical framework provides a rationale for the research questions. It can be described as the scholarly perspective within which the problem is embedded and is used to explain and interpret the results of the study.

The learning theories that underpin the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) are constructivism and socio-constructivism (WCED 2006:4; DoE 2008a). In order for teachers to understand how learning is constructed, their professional development should include teaching methods that adopt constructivist approaches. Therefore,

constructivist approaches should be demonstrated during professional development sessions by encouraging the active participation of teachers. This should take place either through discussion, problem solving, exploration of different reading strategies and their implementation (Al-Weher 2004:170). This enables teachers to construct their own knowledge, establishing them as independent learners.

The field of teacher professional development has not been clearly defined. Bell and Gilbert (1994:493) consider key features of teacher development to be the input of new theoretical ideas, trying them out, evaluating these theoretical ideas in a collaborative situation as well as engaging in critical reflection. Therefore, it is important for teacher trainers to consider a theoretical framework that involves teacher learning and the development of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (Reeves & Robinson 2014:245; de Clercq 2014:304).

The learning theories of the NCS as well as a theoretical framework for teacher knowledge will be discussed in the following section.

#### **1.4.1 Constructivism**

According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, humans try to make sense of their world by actively creating their own knowledge by interacting with objects and people. As we interact with our environment, our thinking processes change and become more complex. Teachers should therefore realise that knowledge cannot merely be transmitted by them, but rather that they should create opportunities for their pupils to engage with real problems and do their own research (Woolfolk 2010:60; Al-Weher 2004:170). This implies that teachers should have a sound command of the subjects that they teach and act as mentors to stimulate thinking in their classrooms (WCED 2006:11). In this regard, Al-Weher (2004:170) emphasised that the classroom environment should be non-threatening, allowing pupils to communicate freely. Communicating with others allows pupils to use, test and sometimes even change their cognitive processes (Woolfolk 2010:50).

### **1.4.2 Socio-constructivism**

Proponents of socio-constructivism do not regard knowledge to be an objective construct waiting to be discovered, but rather posit that knowledge is discovered by sharing experiences and linking what is new to what is known. In reading, this concept is reflected in schema-based learning development, which is critical for the development of reading comprehension (Cooper, Kiger, Robinson & Slansky 2012:67; Grabe 2010:79; Woolfolk 2010:32; Carrell & Eisterhold 1988:76). The ultimate teaching goal of literacy professionals is to guide pupils to become independent, strategic readers by using reading strategies to read with comprehension through increased semantic and syntactic knowledge (McLaughlin & Allen 2002:7; Avalos, Plasencia, Chavez & Rascon 2007:321, 324). Reading comprehension can be described as a strategic process whereby the reader makes meaningful connections between their cognitive processes, the text and their prior knowledge (Stanovich 2000:22; Grabe 2010:39; Le Cordeur 2010a:82; Cooper et al. 2012:12). Teacher development through socio-constructivism shares, identifies and solves instructional issues through ongoing expert support and assistance, as well as teachers' implementation of instructional practices in their classes (Rueda 1998 in Garcia, Pearson, Taylor, Bauer & Stahl 2011:151).

### **1.4.3 Teacher knowledge**

Shulman (1987:9) investigated the content understanding of teachers as a special kind of technical knowledge required for teaching. He suggested that "high-quality instruction requires certain typologies, namely subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and curricular knowledge" (Shulman 1986: 9). The most influential of these three typologies is PCK. PCK can be described as the subject matter required for teaching. It is the ability of teachers to interpret the subject matter, find different ways to represent it and make it accessible to pupils (Shulman 1986:9).

However, Shulman and Shulman (2004:259) concluded that teachers' teaching skills and pedagogical knowledge require a theoretical framework that addresses their knowledge as well as providing support for their continued professional development

with specific reference to PCK. They therefore analysed ways in which teachers learn individually and in communities. They named their new conceptual scheme Fostering Communities of Teachers as Learners (FCTL). This model asserts that an accomplished teacher is a member of a professional community which shares its experiences with colleagues and reflects together on teaching and learning (Shulman & Shulman 2004:259).

## **1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aims and objectives of this study are the following:

- 1.5.1 To investigate the professional development needs of teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes with regard to reading and reading comprehension strategies;
- 1.5.2 To make a contribution to the development of the PCK of teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes by designing a professional development programme so that they are better equipped to enhance the reading comprehension of these learners;
- 1.5.3 To investigate action research as a professional development model to conduct the professional development programme.

This study focuses on the Intermediate Phase, because the annual Western Cape Education Department Grade 6 literacy results indicate that only 36,8% Grade 6 pupils obtained an average of 50% (WCED 2016). Moreover, Intermediate Phase teachers are not trained to teach basic reading or struggling readers (DoE 2008b:7). Intermediate Phase pupils are exposed to new subjects that require an academic vocabulary and they have to cope with subject teaching by different teachers. Furthermore, they are expected to work more independently (Theron & Nel 2005:224).

## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.6.1 Research question**

The main research question formulated by the researcher is as follows:

How will professional development improve the PCK of in-service teachers to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes?

### **1.6.2 Sub-questions**

The central research question is sub-divided into the following sub-questions:

- 1.6.2.1 To what extent can a professional development programme contribute to the PCK of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers?
- 1.6.2.2 What reading and comprehension strategies should be included in the pedagogies of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers?
- 1.6.2.3 How can the improved PCK of Intermediate Phase teachers contribute towards the enhancement of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes?
- 1.6.2.4 What are the learning experiences of Intermediate Phase literacy teachers when they are given the opportunity to explore comprehension strategies through action research?

## **1.7 RESEARCH PROCESS**

A detailed description of the research process and methodology appears in Chapter 5.



### **1.7.1 Research paradigm**

This study is situated within a pragmatic paradigm. In essence this research paradigm is concerned with solving research problems by using common sense and practical thinking and is associated with a mixed methods approach (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:6).

### **1.7.2 Design and methodology**

The research design of this study is based on the principles of action research as part of a mixed method approach.

The nature of this study, which aims to develop the PCK of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers regarding the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers, lends itself to the inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The research questions can therefore be explored without the constraints of only one research method. By combining both data sets a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between teachers' needs and their reaction to the professional development programme can be developed. Moreover, action research has been shown to empower teachers, create lasting changes in schools, and have an impact on student learning outcomes (Burns 2010). Teachers and students gain a sense of empowerment (Kane & Chimwayange 2014) as they negotiate new roles as partners and co-researchers making sense of learning in their classrooms (Sagor 2005). An understanding of the complexities of reading comprehension processes reveals a wide range of issues common to reading classrooms that can be investigated through action research. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:444) and Bell (1993:6) describe action research as an investigation of a concrete problem in a specific situation to facilitate social change. Action researchers aim to increase public awareness about a range of issues, for example, that our Constitution allows parents to choose the language in which their children will be educated. Action researchers also assume that parents and teachers can become aware of problems and may learn how to rectify them. Therefore, action research is particularly suited to teachers, because it informs them about their practice and can lead to a greater understanding and improvement of practice (Neuman 2006:28).

In this study the action research approach entails the following steps as described below.

The first step will be to investigate the problem that leads to the poor performance of non-mother-tongue speakers in primary schools in South Africa (Howie, Van Staden, Tshele, Dowse & Zimmerman 2011; WCED 2016; DoBE 2015:8). A literature study will be conducted to research the status of literacy in South Africa, the causes of poor comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers, and the processes of reading and reading comprehension, as well as the professional development of teachers and models of professional development. A questionnaire will be developed to gather quantitative and qualitative data on the professional development needs of in-service teachers. This questionnaire will be distributed among teachers in the Cape Winelands Education District (CWED). According to Burns (2010:81), questionnaires are used when information is needed from a large group of participants when there are time constraints. In addition, they ensure anonymity of participants (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:195).

The Statistica-12 programme will be used by the Centre for Statistical Analysis (CSA) of the University of Stellenbosch to analyse the quantitative data. The qualitative data will be coded and grouped by using the research questions and questionnaire as guideline. Data gathered from the literature study as well as the questionnaires will be used to design a professional development programme to expand the existing pedagogical repertoire of in-service teachers so that they are better able to support the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Intermediate Phase Afrikaans classes.

The next step will be to address the lack PCK of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers, which means they are not in a position to enhance the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. The professional development programme will be conducted to address the identified professional development needs of the teachers. After completion of this programme, the teachers need to implement the new pedagogies in their classes. Non-mother-tongue speakers will be selected by each teacher based on their performance in Afrikaans Home Language. These pupils will be assessed prior to commencement

and after completion of the project to determine their progress in reading comprehension skills.

The participating teachers will record their experiences in journals, which may produce valuable qualitative data regarding the classroom implementation process. Furthermore, classroom observations will be conducted by the researcher to determine whether the teachers are able to implement the pedagogy acquired during the professional development sessions. Additional data will be obtained by conducting semi-structured interviews. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:205), interviews are flexible and adaptable. They allow direct interaction with participants and therefore verbal and non-verbal behaviour can be observed. In this study semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a sample of participants after conclusion of implementation period. These interviews will be recorded and transcribed, and then submitted to the participants for scrutiny (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:205). This is to ensure validity and reliability of the data. To determine whether the professional development needs of the participants were met, quantitative and qualitative data will be gathered by re-administering the same questionnaire eight months after the professional development program is completed.

The qualitative data will be coded and grouped into categories by using the research questions, questionnaire, interview schedules and observation schedules as guidelines. Data collected from these data sources will be analysed and discussed separately and then compared in what is called side-by-side comparison (Creswell 2014:222). Quantitative data of the second measurement of the questionnaire will be analysed by the CSA of the University of Stellenbosch. A McNemar Chi-square test will be conducted to test whether the proportion of yes cases changed significantly between the first and second measurement.

The quantitative and qualitative data will be used to adjust and refine the programme, concluding the second cycle of the action research process. After the data have been interpreted, tentative inferences will be made regarding the process (what the teachers are saying) as well as whether this feedback influenced the development of the programme.

Triangulation entails checking the results of each data-collection method to see if they correspond by indicating the same result (Conrad & Serlin 2011:155; McMillan & Schumacher 2010:26; Ivankova & Creswell 2009:142; Slavin 2007:133). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:26) state that triangulation ensures valid and reliable research by integrating different data-collection methods. In this study triangulation will be obtained by comparing the results of the questionnaires, teacher journals, classroom observations and interviews.

## **1.8 CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY**

The following terms are used repeatedly in this study and therefore require some explanation.

### **1.8.1 Professional development of teachers**

This study investigates the professional development of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers to develop the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers. Professional development of teachers can be described as all forms of learning that occur after their initial training (Reddy 2004:140). The emerging consensus on effective teacher learning indicates the importance of teachers learning and changing together over an extended period of time as they reflect on practice and implement new teaching strategies. Furthermore, professional development activities should include content focus, active learning, coherence and collective participation (Taylor, Pearson, Peterson & Rodrigues 2005:44; Scott, Cortina & Carlisle 2012:69). Guskey (2002:386) emphasises the importance of following up professional development sessions with classroom-based support to improve instruction and ensure sustained implementation (Scott et al. 2012:69; Guskey 2002:386).

In order to select the most appropriate model of professional development for this research, a literature study will be conducted to investigate various professional development models.

### **1.8.2 Professional development programme**

The researcher envisages developing a professional development programme according to the needs of teachers as determined by the questionnaires. The aim of this professional development programme is to improve the PCK of the participating teachers so that they are better equipped to enhance the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes.

### **1.8.3 Non-mother-tongue speakers**

For the purpose of this study non-mother-tongue speakers are pupils who speak the nine indigenous languages<sup>3</sup> in South Africa and who attend Afrikaans-medium schools. These pupils often lack the appropriate vocabulary in the language of learning and teaching to master abstract academic concepts. Therefore they struggle to express themselves and often do not participate in class discussions (Basson 2013:94; O'Connor & Geiger 2009:260).

### **1.8.4 Reading models**

According to the literature, there are three reading models: the bottom-up model, the top-down model and interactive models (Barchers 1998:16-17; Grabe & Stoller 2002:32; Parris 2005:188; Smith 1988:68; Stanovich 2000:22). The bottom-up model emphasises the learning of letters which are chunked together to form words, phrases and sentences which are practised until automaticity is attained. There is little reliance on the pupil's own background knowledge (Lagerbe & Samuels 1974:24). The top-down model assumes that pupils use their background knowledge as well as their grammatical knowledge to read and comprehend the text (Carrel 1988:101). Another prominent feature of this model is making inferences from the text by the reader (Grabe 2010:89). Lastly, interactive models combine the top-down and bottom-up models. It is therefore important that teachers assist their pupils to improve their bottom-up word recognition skills as well as their top-down interpretive skills (Swaffar 1998:125).

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<sup>3</sup> Indigenous languages in this study refer to IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, IsiNdebele, Siswati, Setswana, Sesotho, Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga in the Republic of South Africa.

### **1.8.5 Reading approaches**

Various reading approaches are associated with each reading model. Basal readers are reading books that contain texts written for a specific grade or level. This approach is linked to the top-down model (Barchers 1998:29). Language experience is linked to bottom-up model where the pupils decide what should be written down by the teacher and subsequently read by them (Barchers 1998:36). The whole-language and balanced language approaches are linked to the interactive model. Proponents of the whole-language approach believe that learning to read is a natural process, like learning how to speak. Drilling of isolated skills such as sounds and sight words are not permitted (Tierney, Readence & Dishner 1990:27). Reading and writing are given equal status by the balanced language approach. Furthermore, it acknowledges the importance of meaning-making in the process of reading and writing. In addition, the importance of the strategies and skills used by proficient readers and writers are recognised. This approach ensures that pupils read and write every day and scaffolding is used to guide and support pupils to become independent readers and writers (Botha, Hugo & Mthembu 2009:5).

### **1.8.6 Reading comprehension**

Tsai, Ernst and Talley (2010:1) state that “reading comprehension is a complex skill that involves both lower- and higher-level knowledge sources in one’s first language and second language.” According to (Grabe 2010:89), the reader plays an active and critical part in constructing meaning by bringing socio-cultural knowledge, skills and experience to the reading process, which can lead to the construction of multiple meanings as opposed to a single, author-driven meaning.

### **1.8.7 Reciprocal teaching**

Pallinscar and Brown (1986:772) documented conversations between teachers and pupils about text, which they called reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal teaching involves the teaching of four cognitive reading comprehension strategies: predicting, clarifying, summarising and questioning within the context of a reading group. These strategies are introduced to pupils by intensive teacher modelling during the pre-

reading, reading and after reading phases (Oakley 2011:281). While class discussions take place during these three phases, teachers provide enough scaffolding to ensure gradual transfer of skills to the pupils (Pressley 1998:206).

### **1.8.8 Transactional strategies instruction**

Transactional strategies are not limited to a particular instruction model, but include all models that have strategy instruction, strategy use and extensive interaction between pupils and teachers as their main objective (Block & Parris 2008:162). Teachers model a comprehension strategy by explaining their thought processes to the pupils. By thinking out loud, teachers help pupils to understand when, why and how to use a comprehension strategy. Guided comprehension is very effective to improve the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers through teacher modelling. Pupils are afforded the opportunity to work with texts at their specific level of functioning (McLaughlin & Allan 2002:3). Comprehension process motions (CPM) is another model that uses interaction between teachers and pupils to introduce comprehension strategies (Block, Parris & Whitely 2008:460). Hand placements and movements are used to visually represent abstract comprehension processes. Various comprehension strategies can be taught through the methods mentioned above (McLaughlin 2012:434-435).

### **1.8.9 Educator or teacher**

In this study the word 'teacher' has been used instead of 'educator'. Recent circulars and documents from the Education Department indicate that the word 'teacher' will be used instead of 'educator' for members of the profession who teach in schools. The word 'educator' refers to any person who is a mentor, instructor or trainer. Therefore, an educator does not merely teach but gives students moral, intellectual and social guidance. Any person can be an educator without being a qualified teacher. Teaching is a paid profession which requires specific qualifications. Teachers teach children in schools by applying a curriculum and assessments. A good teacher can also be an educator (Graduate School of Business 2016).

### **1.8.10 Pupil or learner**

The word 'pupil' refers to schoolchildren who are under the direct supervision of a teacher because they are minors. They are given lessons in every subject necessary for their development. The word 'pupil' was used in this study, because recent communications from the Education Department indicate that this will be the preferred term in future (Emelda 2016). The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum refers to schoolchildren as 'learners' (DoBE 2011). Learners and pupils gain knowledge and skills through study, instruction or experience.

## **1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The researcher adhered to the ethical guidelines set by the Department of Curriculum Studies for research students. Ethical clearance was obtained by the Ethics Committee of the Stellenbosch University to ensure that all ethical aspects were adhered to. Before inviting teachers to take part in the research, written consent for conducting research in WCED schools was obtained from the research department within the WCED. All respondents in this study were supplied with an informed consent form to sign. Furthermore, the researcher protected the identity of respondents and secured the data obtained from them. The research findings will be made available to the participants on request.

## **1.10 CHAPTER DIVISION**

The study comprises of six chapters, as outlined below.

- Chapter one: Background, problem statement and objectives of the research

This chapter introduces the research topic, provides the background to the study with the problem statement, and includes an explanation and clarification of concepts.



- Chapter two: Theoretical framework

This chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks of constructivism, socio-constructivism and teacher knowledge within which the professional development of teachers to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers is situated.

- Chapter three: Literature study: part one

The lack of reading comprehension skills of Intermediate Phase pupils and professional development of teachers are investigated and discussed. This includes the status of literacy in the Intermediate Phase and causes of poor reading comprehension of non-mother tongue speakers.

- Chapter four: Literature study: part two

In this chapter the value of mother-tongue education, reading models, approaches and strategies and comprehension strategies with specific reference to non-mother-tongue speakers are investigated and discussed.

- Chapter five: Research methodology

This chapter will discuss the research methodology. The aims and objectives of the research, the research question and action research design as part of a mixed method approach are presented. Following that discussion, the data-collection instruments and techniques implemented by the researcher, namely questionnaires, teacher journals, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, as well as the data-analysis process, will be discussed in detail.

- Chapter six: Results and analysis of the study

The data gathered through questionnaires, teacher journals, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews are presented, analysed, discussed and compared in his chapter.

- Chapter seven: Findings, recommendations and conclusions

This chapter presents the conclusion by summarising and interpreting the research results. Based on reflection of the findings, this chapter proposes recommendations relevant to the professional development of teachers. The contribution that the research can make to the knowledge foundation of the professional development of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers regarding the enhancement of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers is noted.

### **1.11 SUMMARY**

The poor literacy results of Intermediate Phase pupils in South Africa need to be improved in the light of various reports of literacy tests conducted (WCED 2016; Howie et al. 2011; DoBE 2015:8). Factors related to the poor performance of South African pupils include insufficient subject knowledge of teachers as well as inadequate communication between teachers and pupils in the language of learning and teaching (LOLT). Moreover, teachers found the change of pedagogies from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred approach challenging.

This chapter has provided the background, statement of the research problem, aims and layout of the study. In Chapter Two the researcher will discuss constructivism and social constructivism as the theoretical frameworks which underpin the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum. In addition, when planning the professional development of teachers, it is important to include a theoretical framework that addresses their knowledge base. Therefore teacher learning and the development of their PCK as described by Shulman (1986:9) will be discussed.

## CHAPTER 2

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Systemic research conducted by the National Education Department as well as the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) indicates that the literacy skills of the pupils in the Western Cape are far below what is required from them to learn effectively. The 2015 literacy results of the WCED systemic tests indicate that only 36,8% of Grade 6 pupils scored above 50% (WCED 2016). A study conducted by Le Cordeur (2012a:142) indicates that one of the reasons pupils are underperforming is related to epistemological issues, as teachers do not seem to have the conceptual tools to be able to understand the new educational pedagogy of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). In addition, knowledge of the relationship of language and cognition, or of strategies for reading comprehension in a non-mother-tongue environment, has not been included in the professional development of teachers (Lemmer 1995:88; Theron & Nel 2005:224; Nel & Müller 2010:648). Moreover, Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:7) found that current pre-service training courses do not prepare prospective teachers adequately to teach and assess reading comprehension.

The learning theories that underpin the NCS are constructivism and socio-constructivism (WCED 2006:5). The professional development of teachers should therefore include the development of their understanding of these theories and how they will affect their teaching of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. The supporters of constructivist theories believe that children construct their own knowledge from their own experiences. Teachers should therefore enable their pupils to engage with real-life problems by providing materials, situations and experiences that facilitate this process (Sutherland 1992:3; WCED 2006:11). Socio-constructivists such as Vygotsky emphasise the development of knowledge by interacting with others and the environment (Woolfolk 2010:42;

Spencer & Guillaume 2006:209). Implications of socio-constructivism for teachers are that they should not only provide an environment where pupils can discover and explore on their own, but should also consider themselves to be active participants with their pupils by learning from them, giving information, reminders and encouragement (Woolfolk 2010:50; WCED 2006:13). However, Miyazaki (2015:2) cautions that the continued dichotomising of teacher-centred and learner-centred pedagogies is not helpful to improve the quality of teaching, because teachers continue to practise both approaches. Teacher trainers should therefore keep this in mind when planning professional development activities. Furthermore, pedagogies based on constructivism or social constructivism are complicated and difficult for teachers to master; therefore they require specific skills or concrete ways of practising new approaches (Miyazaki 2015:17).

When planning the professional development of teachers, it is important to consider a theoretical framework that addresses their knowledge base and the degree to which their continued professional development and growth are being supported. This also involves teacher learning and the development of their PCK as described by Shulman (1986:9), Reeves and Robinson (2014:245) and de Clercq (2014:304). Shulman's work has important implications for the argument that teaching is professional work with its own unique knowledge base (Ball, Thames & Phelps 2008:392). The way in which he emphasised the content-intensive nature of teaching, including the ways in which content knowledge for teaching is different from disciplinary content knowledge, will be discussed in this chapter

## **2.2 CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Constructivism as a theory of learning emphasises two important dimensions: pupils actively acquire knowledge (language, cultural, wisdom, technical skills etc.) as their own systems of knowing and pupils actively construct their own ways of knowing by facing unfamiliar problems (Al-Weher 2004:170). According to Piaget, humans make sense of their world by gathering and organising information (Woolfolk 2010:31). His main question was: "How does a child make sense of the world?" He argued that learning takes place when children use their knowledge and interact with objects in the world around them (Al-Weher 2004:170; Woolfolk 2010:32; WCED 2006:9).

Through these interactions our thinking processes undergo a slow but radical change from birth to adulthood, because we constantly try to make sense of our environment by gathering and organising information into systems or categories. Piaget called these systems 'schemes', which are organised systems of thought that assist us to mentally represent the objects in our world (Cooper et al. 2012:67; Grabe 2010:79; Woolfolk 2010:32; ). The significant role that the schema theory plays in reading comprehension will be discussed in Chapter 4.

As an individual's thinking becomes more sophisticated, new schemes develop as well as the need to adapt to the environment. Piaget identified two mental processes that enable us to do this, namely assimilation and accommodation (Woolfolk 2010:33). Assimilation occurs when objects are assimilated into existing schemes by interpretation or by using existing knowledge, whereas accommodation occurs when existing schemes are changed to adapt to new situations (Sutherland 1992:25). In addition, new and more appropriate structures are developed when information cannot be made to fit existing schemes (Woolfolk 2010:33; Sutherland 1992:25). Assimilation and accommodation occur simultaneously, which Piaget termed equilibration. This act of seeking equilibrium produces learning (Woolfolk 2010:33).

### **2.2.1 The implications of constructivism for teachers**

Piaget (1954 in Woolfolk 2010:32) advocates the use of active methods in education, where pupils have to participate actively in their learning. This may take place through discussions, problem solving and exploration of knowledge (Woolfolk 2010:32; Al-Weher 2004:170). It is important for teachers to note that constructivism advocates a different way of instruction. The teacher no longer transmits information to the pupil, but should create suitable conditions for pupils to conduct their own research individually or in groups. During this process knowledge is constructed and reconstructed (Al-Weher 2004:170).

Teachers should therefore have a sound knowledge of the pedagogies related to their subject. In this study this knowledge is related to enhancing reading comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language

classes. It is therefore important for teachers to consider the prior knowledge of their pupils when planning literacy activities in order to build on it and reconstruct it. They must also correct the misconceptions and mistakes of their pupils, but in doing so avoid being domineering by talking continuously (Al-Weher 2004:171). In this sense Piaget is sometimes described as seeing teachers as facilitators of the learning process, although he himself never used this term. The environment created should be a non-threatening one in which all pupils should feel comfortable to share their ideas freely.

There is a common misunderstanding about the role of the teacher. Piaget writes:

There is the fear (and sometimes hope) that the teacher would have no role to play in these experiments and that their success would depend on leaving the students entirely free to work or play as they will. It is obvious that the teacher as organiser remains indispensable in order to create the situations and construct the initial devices which present useful problems to the child. Secondly, he is needed to provide counter-examples that compel reflection and reconsideration of over-hasty solutions. What is desired is that the teacher ceases being a lecturer, satisfied with transmitting ready-made solutions; his role should rather be that of a mentor stimulating initiative and research (Piaget 1973:15-16).

Thus teachers have a valuable role to play by observing how their pupils learn and construct meaning. This will enable them to present their pupils with appropriate materials, situations and experiences. In addition, they will be able to match their teaching methods to their pupils' knowledge and abilities (Woolfolk 2010:49). However, it is important to bear in mind that cognitive development cannot take place in a social vacuum. The importance of social interaction between pupils and teachers, and between the pupils themselves, will be discussed in the following section, with specific reference to the development of literacy.

### 2.3 SOCIO-CONSTRUCTIVISM

Social constructivists emphasise the development of knowledge through interactions with the environment and with others (Woolfolk 2010:42; Spencer & Guillaume 2006:209). With regard to literacy research, the social may include changes in the definition of literacy, the uses and function of literacy within communities as well as experiencing failure and success in learning to read (Au 1998:299). Intellect and affect from a social constructivist perspective are regarded as inseparable, therefore literacy research includes motivational as well as emotional aspects (Wertsch in Au 1998:300).

The theory of socio-cultural cognitive development postulates that cognitive development takes place through three main dimensions: culture, language and social interaction (Vygotsky 1978; Sutherland 1992:42). It is argued that pupils acquire higher levels of thinking by fostering social relationships facilitated by language (Woolfolk 2010:43; Newman, Griffin & Cole 1989:60; Amendum 2014:350; Ono & Ferreira 2010:61). Therefore, when pupils engage with an unfamiliar task for the first time, they tend to seek out those who are more able than they are. Taking part in collective activities where these tasks are mediated for them is important for constructing their own mental processes (Newman et al. 1989:60).

Each pupil has two levels of development. First, there is the actual level of development, which is indicated by tasks that the pupil can perform independently. Second, there is the potential level of development, which is realised with the help of other more capable peers or adults (WCED 2006:12; Woolfolk 2010:47). The role of the teacher is important to extend and challenge pupils in order to bridge the gap between these two levels. This can be done by creating opportunities for pupils to practise new skills by interacting with others (Sutherland 1992:43; Newman et al. 1989:15; Macdonald & Pinheiro 2012:92). Vygotsky refers to this gap as the zone of proximal development. Cognitive development can only take place when the teacher provides the pupil with a task that lies within this zone (Louis 2009:20; Woolfolk 2010:47).

The crucial role of mediation is evident in the process of the pupil reaching his or her potential level of development. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976 in Woolfolk 2010:50) called this mediation by a more knowledgeable person “scaffolding”. When they introduced this term, they were discussing ways in which teachers structure learning opportunities for their pupils. Teachers are to play a much more active role when they support pupils in those parts of the task they are unable to do on their own (Cole 2006:452). Wells (1999:328) describes the role of the teacher as follows:

Teaching certainly involves preparation, instruction and assessment; but to be truly effective it also involves the ongoing co-construction of each student’s zone of proximal development and on-the-spot judgements about how best to facilitate his or her learning in the specific activity setting in which he or she is engaged.

Language development plays an important role in cognitive development (Louis 2009:20; Sutherland 1992:46). Language also facilitates social interactions, therefore it is important that pupils are exposed to effective social interactions so that cognitive development takes place. However, pupils often do not possess the skills to foster and participate in effective social interactions that may lead to cognitive development. It is therefore important for teachers to assist pupils to develop such skills (Louis 2009:20).

### **2.3.1 The implications of socio-constructivism for teachers**

Socio-constructivists place great emphasis on the role of teachers as active participants with pupils in constructing learning and believe the relationship between instruction and internal learning to be very complex. They do not advocate formal teaching where pupils sit at their desks being prepared for examinations that have little meaning to them (Sutherland 1992:43). This approach has implications for the literacy teacher who needs to expose pupils to authentic literacy activities (Au 1998:300). Teachers should also keep in mind that according to the socio-constructivist paradigm, reading involves the pupil interacting with the text. This suggests that reading is not a mechanical process but an interpretive one, and as with all intellectual skills, internalisation takes place gradually (Sutherland 1992:47).



In order to enhance literacy skills, teachers should engage with their pupils and guide them to work in groups to think about issues and questions. It is important for them to gauge from their pupils what they need and then to provide them with the necessary information and guidance at the right time. Opportunities should be created for pupils to work with peers who are slightly better at the activity, which may benefit both as explanations and questions are exchanged (Woolfolk 2010:50). It is important to note, however, that in order for teachers to create opportunities for their pupils to learn, they have to achieve a high level of competency in their subject matter themselves (Macdonald & Pinheiro 2012:90; De Vries, Jansen & Van der Grift 2013:81). Tharp and Gallimore (1988 in Macdonald & Pinheiro 2012:90) state:

To do more than manage activities and allow students to learn on their own, teachers must command the knowledge and skills they seek to impart.

Therefore teachers should move through their own zones of proximal development by engaging with other colleagues and support staff on the most appropriate literacy strategies to use in their classrooms (Macdonald & Pinheiro 2012:92). The purpose of adopting constructivist and socio-constructivist approaches as the theoretical frameworks of this study is to make teachers aware of constructivist principles and how they influence classroom literacy practices. Furthermore, the aim is to start a debate amongst teachers on how they might change and improve their own literacy practices.

In order to facilitate improvement of teacher competence in literacy education, it is important to address their professional knowledge. This construct will be described in the following section.

## **2.4 TEACHER PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

Shulman (1986:5) stated that teachers should demonstrate their knowledge of the subject matter as a prerequisite for entering the classroom. He referred to this knowledge as pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogical reasoning and action. The following section will explore the views of Shulman and others on teacher content knowledge.

### 2.4.1 Teacher content knowledge

Shulman (1986:9) investigated teachers' understanding and transmission of content knowledge across all subjects. Typologies to characterise professional knowledge for teaching were developed by Shulman and his colleagues, namely general pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organisation that appear to transcend subject matter; knowledge of pupils and their characteristics; knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures; knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds; subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and curricular content knowledge (Shulman 1986:8). The first four typologies were not the main focus of Shulman's work, although he emphasised that they play an important role in teacher knowledge. He argues that "mere content knowledge is likely to be as useless pedagogically as content-free skill" (Shulman 1986:8). The last three typologies will be discussed below.

- *Subject matter content knowledge*

Subject matter content knowledge refers to more than knowing the facts and concepts of a subject. In addition, it includes the amount of knowledge a teacher has about a subject domain and the way in which it is organised in the brain. Teachers need to go beyond knowledge of the facts or concepts of a domain to think properly about content knowledge. To do so they must understand why something is so and how it ties in with other concepts. Moreover, they need to know why a certain topic is central to a certain subject while another is not so important (Shulman 1986:9; de Clercq 2014:304; Ball et al. 2008:391).

- *Pedagogical content knowledge*

Shulman (1986:9) stated that pedagogical content knowledge includes:

[a]n understanding of what makes learning of specific topics easy or difficult: the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those

most frequently taught topics and lessons.

Pedagogical content knowledge therefore goes beyond the knowledge of a specific subject domain. It refers to the conceptual knowledge of that specific subject, which includes ways to make the subject comprehensible to others as well as an understanding of why learning certain concepts is easy or difficult (Shulman 1986:9; Reeves & Robinson 2014:245; James, Bansilal, Webb, Goba & Khuzwayo 2015:153; Le Cordeur & Thornhill 2016:104). Pedagogical content knowledge has been described as the bridge between content knowledge and the practice of teaching (Ball et al. 2008:389).

- *Curricular knowledge*

Curricular knowledge refers to the range of subjects and topics at a given level as well as the instructional materials that are available to transfer knowledge about the specific topic. Teachers should know how to use their subject knowledge and the instructional materials in alternative ways in order to accommodate the range of pupils in their classes, who may include second-language pupils. In addition, Shulman described two other dimensions of curricular knowledge, which he named *lateral curriculum knowledge* and *vertical curriculum knowledge*. Lateral knowledge refers to knowledge of other subjects being taught in the same grade, whereas vertical knowledge relates to familiarity with the topics that have been and will be taught in the same subject in different grades (Shulman 1986:10; Ball et al. 2008:391). In their study Reeves and Robinson (2014:245) found that when teachers' subject knowledge is weak, they have difficulty implementing an approach that integrates subject knowledge with pedagogical knowledge. They warn against the tendency to emphasise pedagogical skills and methods at the expense of the development of subject knowledge.

Shulman and Shulman (2004:259) came to the conclusion that teachers' teaching skills and pedagogical knowledge require a theoretical framework that addresses their knowledge as well as support for their continued professional development with specific reference to PCK. The model of their 2007 study used Brown and Campione's (1992, 1996) Fostering a Community of Learners (FCL) model. They named their new conceptual scheme Fostering Communities of Teachers as

Learners (FCTL), where the need for a more comprehensive conception of teacher learning and development within communities and contexts is recognised (Shulman & Shulman 2004:259). They regard an accomplished teacher as being:

[a] member of a professional community who is ready, willing and able to teach and to learn from his or her teaching experiences (Shulman & Shulman 2004:259).

Shulman and Shulman (2004:259) suggest that teachers should strive to be:

- ready to promote classrooms and schools as communities of learning;
- more willing to apply effort to sustain such teaching;
- more understanding of the concepts and principles that is required for such teaching;
- more able to participate in the complex forms of pedagogical and organisational practice needed to change their attitudes and understanding so that they are able to practically implement them;
- more capable to learn from their own and others' experiences by reflecting on their actions as well as the consequences thereof;
- more able and experienced in participating as members of learning communities and/or establishing such communities where they work.

To realise the above proposals, teachers should reflect critically on their classroom practices. Therefore, metacognitive reflection should be encouraged and supported by teacher educators and trainers. Shulman and Shulman (2004:264) emphasise that the accomplished teacher should integrate vision, motivation, understanding and practice into active classroom practice in order to promote FCTL teaching. FCTL teaching is associated with action research, as action research requires teachers to collaborate and reflect with others by forming communities of practice regarding changes in classroom practice and the implications of doing so (McMillan & Shumacher 2010:445).

However, Shulman was criticised for his partiality towards abstract conceptual knowledge and for not sufficiently exploring the practical aspects of teacher

knowledge (de Clercq 2014:305). Moreover, Ball et al. (2008:389) state that the term PCK “lacked definition and empirical foundation, limiting its usefulness.” This leads to differences in the interpretation of what the term includes. In addition, few studies have tested whether there is definite content knowledge that is important for teaching. Without sufficient empirical studies, ideas that are essential for improving teaching and learning will remain limited (Ball et al. 2008:389). Moreover, the implications of PCK in the area of reading comprehension instruction remain unclear (Scott 2009:128).

#### 2.4.2 Knowledge for teaching reading comprehension

More recently Ball et al. (2008) and Scott (2009) have expanded on Shulman’s theory. Ball et al. (2008:402) introduced more detail relating to subject matter knowledge for effective teaching by establishing sub-domains and validating knowledge of those domains relating to mathematics teaching. These include common content knowledge (CCK), specialised content knowledge (SCK) and horizon knowledge. In her study Scott (2009:164) proposed a theory of knowledge for teaching reading comprehension by combining CCK, horizon knowledge and SCK to form PCK, which is her proposed model for teaching reading comprehension. See Figure 2.1.

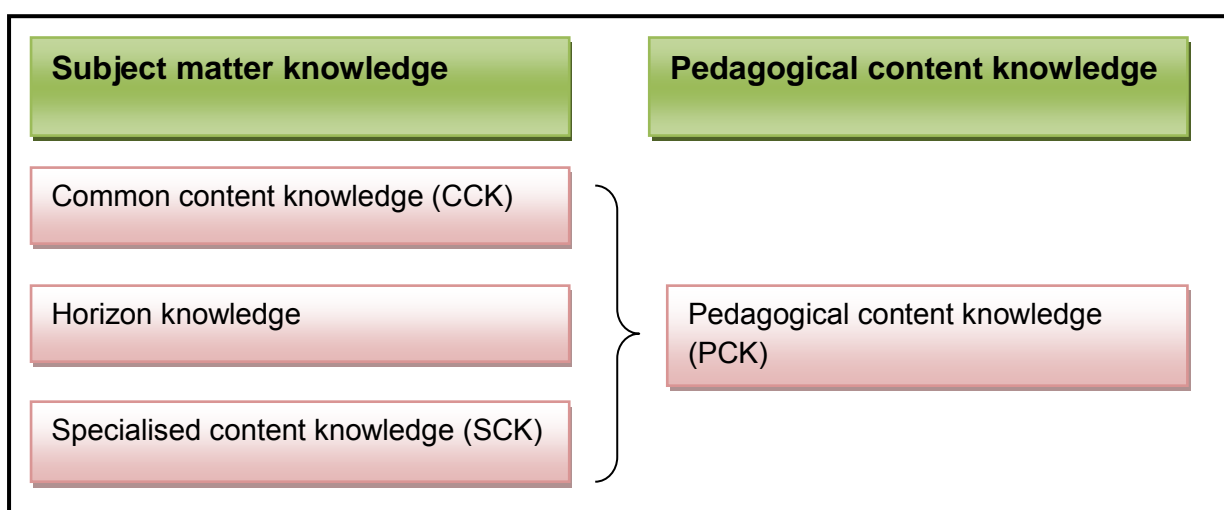


Figure 2.1: Hypothesis of domains of knowledge for teaching reading comprehension.

Next the four abovementioned dimensions of knowledge for teaching reading will be discussed in the following order: CCK, horizon knowledge and lastly SCK. After that the way in which these dimensions of knowledge form pedagogical content knowledge will be discussed.

- *Common content knowledge (CCK) and horizon knowledge*

When reading comprehension is studied, common content knowledge refers to what teachers think about and do with literacy. Scott (2009:165) argues that, in order to teach reading comprehension, teachers need to be aware of “disciplinary dispositions and text structures as well as dominant modes of argumentation in order to support text comprehension”. Similarly, teachers should have sufficient knowledge to assist pupils when they experience problems. Therefore teachers should not know only how to read, but they should also know what they are reading. Studies conducted by Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:4) and Le Cordeur (2012a) confirm the findings of Scott’s (2009) study. Moreover, Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:15) state that teachers should be skilled readers themselves and knowledgeable about reading and books in order to develop strong literacy skills and habits in their pupils.

The second dimension, horizon knowledge, refers to teachers’ knowledge about reading development in order to design appropriate activities for pupils. Teachers should therefore be aware how children’s interactions with texts and their comprehension of these texts changes over time (Scott 2009:167). This includes knowledge of child development as described by Piaget (Woolfolk 2010:33-35). This includes progression in difficulty and complexity of texts and comprehension activities as pupils move to higher grades. This allows pupils to become more skilful and strategic in comprehending what they read (Scott 2009:166).

- *Specialised content knowledge (SCK)*

The third dimension, SCK, is specialised knowledge unique to the teaching of reading comprehension. In her study Scott (2009:166) selected four categories for teaching reading comprehension by choosing the key obstacles which prevent pupils from reading with comprehension. The first obstacle refers to understanding the

process of skilled reading. Many processes work together in a coordinated manner during skilled reading, such as rapid automatic word recognition, syntactic parsing, making meaning, comprehension of texts, making inferences, critical evaluation as well as linking the reading material to prior knowledge (Grabe 2009:14; Grabe & Stoller 2002:18; Pretorius 2012:79).

The second obstacle relates to the knowledge of genre and discipline-specific features of text. Pupils need to understand the features of different types of texts and genres, for example, dialogues, diaries, narrative and expository texts. Teachers who have specialised knowledge of these different features will be more able to support pupils who have difficulty comprehending these texts (Pretorius & Klapwijk 2016:16). Understanding the linguistic demands implicit in reading comprehension is the third prerequisite for effective reading comprehension. Scott (2009:166) argues that teachers of reading comprehension should understand how texts are constructed. Each subject has its own linguistic challenges, which may interfere with reading comprehension. Teachers should be aware of these challenges and be able to facilitate meaning for their pupils.

The last obstacle to effective reading comprehension refers to lack of knowledge of words and concepts. In order for teachers to facilitate reading comprehension, they need to know a great deal about the words and topics of texts. This specialised knowledge can only be acquired by teachers who are skilled readers and who have developed a professional reading habitus (Pretorius & Klapwijk 2016:15). Moreover, teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers should be aware that new subject vocabulary should be explicitly taught to enhance understanding of the concepts being taught (Spencer & Guillaume 2006:208). Beyond the knowledge of vocabulary, teachers should possess conceptual understanding of the topic being read in order to link their pupils' prior knowledge to the information contained in the text (Scott 2009:173). Next PCK associated with the teaching of reading comprehension will be discussed.

- *Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) for teaching reading comprehension*

PCK is the category of knowledge most likely to distinguish the understanding of the content specialist from that of the pedagogue (Shulman 1987). This knowledge that

teachers have about their subject allows them to transform CCK, SCK and horizon knowledge into opportunities for their pupils to learn. Norris (1999: 47) states that successful language teachers need more than just linguistic knowledge to help pupils to achieve language outcomes. Teachers also need pedagogical knowledge to deploy that language to best effect in the classroom. This relates to their skills as teachers rather than to their language skills. Moreover, the teaching of reading requires an in-depth knowledge of text, language and the reading process itself, which includes more than just being able to decode and comprehend text successfully (Norris 1999:47). This pedagogical knowledge includes a good understanding of the general processes of teaching and learning, and knowledge of how to go about providing reading comprehension programmes for their pupils.

Scott (2009:174) suggests the knowledge base for teaching reading comprehension that teachers need to teach reading comprehension as follows:

- Set clear instructional purposes;
- Select appropriate texts;
- Activate relevant prior knowledge;
- Pose questions;
- Hear and interpret students' incomplete and emergent thinking;
- Uptake student contributions;
- Verbalising the reading process.

To effectively address the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers I have added the following aspects:

- Select culturally relevant texts;
- Develop vocabulary by using objects, pictures, semantic charts, graphic organizers and word walls.

This knowledge is not static, but continually evolves during the professional life of the teacher. Teachers should therefore continuously engage in refresher activities such as conferences, workshops and reading professional literature. Shulman (1987: 4) describes this growth as a “process of error, correction and refinement as teachers develop from novices to highly effective teachers”. Myers (1997: 4) also describes



the non-static nature of teacher knowledge as a process that includes continued personal construction of new professional knowledge, personal development of refined professional skills, and the sorting out of professional value perspectives. Teachers should thus be involved in continuous professional development in order to keep abreast of new knowledge that may become available as a result of research.

Teacher educators should also keep in mind that novice teachers need to enter the profession with an understanding of the principles and theories that underpin pedagogical practices as well as beginning to understand when and how to apply these theories in a given context (Reeves & Robinson 2014:248). Professional development for novice and experienced teachers can include in-service training provided by the employer, in this case the WCED, non-government organisations (NGOs) or universities. It is also the duty of teachers to take responsibility for their own growth and professional development through life-long learning. Jita and Mokheke (2012:9) and De Clercq and Phiri (2013:84) came to the conclusion that when teachers take responsibility for their own learning, this serves to improve their subject knowledge and PCK as well as their classroom practices.

In addition to teachers' linguistic knowledge, knowledge of language teaching and learning theories and their knowledge of language teaching methodologies or PCK (Shulman 1987; Norris 1999; Myers 1997), teachers should also have knowledge and understanding of the diverse cultural backgrounds of their pupils as well as the importance of social interactions. Moll (1990 cited in Macdonald & Pinheiro 2012:89) maintains that very few teachers seem to recognise that "cognition is embedded in the social and cultural world." Eisenclas (2009:52) emphasises that the learner is a social and cultural being who needs exposure to meaningful interactions within specific contexts so that language and context are linked. Pupils should therefore engage in authentic literacy activities within their own cultural contexts (Au 1998:300). Teachers can facilitate this process by making literacy meaningful to pupils by drawing on their pupils' interests and experiences (Au 1998:309; Ajayi 2005:188). It is therefore important that teacher educators and teacher trainers monitor teacher competencies regarding their ability to provide high-quality language and reading instruction for the diverse pupils in their classes (Howie et al. 2011:116).

This study aims to develop teacher PCK within the broader community of teachers as students where they will be assisted to create environments that support, sustain, understand and motivate all their members.

## **2.5 SUMMARY**

This chapter outlined the theoretical framework of the study with specific reference to pupil and teacher learning in a literacy classroom. Constructivism underpins the NCS (WCED 2006:5); therefore it is important that teachers understand the theories of constructivism and socio-constructivism and how they affect teaching pedagogy in second-language literacy classrooms. The continued development of teacher PCK through professional development in order for them to become more effective literacy teachers has been emphasised. Features of teacher professional development have been described by using Shulman and Shulman's (2004:259) FCTL model. This model emphasises the importance of critical reflection on teaching practices among teachers.

The following chapter will focus on the current status of literacy in Intermediate Phase in South Africa, the poor reading comprehension of Intermediate Phase pupils and professional development of teachers.

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **LITERATURE STUDY (PART I): READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS OF INTERMEDIATE PHASE PUPILS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS**

### **3.3 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is presented as phase one of cycle one of an action research approach to my study. The focus of this chapter relates to the lack of reading comprehension skills of Intermediate Phase pupils. This problem is reflected in the systemic results of Western Cape Education Department and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) tests. First the current status of literacy in the Intermediate Phase in South Africa will be investigated. This will be followed by an investigation of the variables that influence reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes. Next the study will discuss the teaching of reading according to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). When delivering the curriculum to pupils, the abilities of teachers are especially important in contributing to their pupils' learning. Therefore, this chapter will have an in-depth focus on the professional development of teachers. This is essential in order to find the most appropriate model of professional development through which the PCK of Intermediate Phase teachers participating in this study can be improved.

### **3.2 THE STATUS OF LITERACY IN THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **3.2.1 The pupils**

The education crisis in South Africa is evident when the results of the Annual National Assessment (ANA) as well as the PIRLS (2011) are studied. In addition,

the systemic results of the Western Cape Education Department indicate that 36,8% of Grade 6 learners scored above 50% in the 2015 literacy test (WCED 2016).

The 2014 results of the ANA indicate that the Grade 3 literacy average was 56% and that of Grade 6 was 63% (DoBE 2014:9). Although the ANA has reached a level of administrative stability, the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) acknowledges that it is still growing in stature as an assessment programme. Therefore the necessary statistical caution relating to inferences from the data should be exercised (DoBE 2014:8). However, when the 2014 ANA diagnostic report is studied (DoBE 2015:56), the data show the following problem areas experienced by Grades 4 to 6 pupils regarding reading:

[a] lack of understanding of the meanings of words in a context (using contextual cues); answering questions based on a text that required analysing information as well as expressing an opinion and giving a reason.

Proposed interventions suggested by the diagnostic report (DoBE 2015:66) include encouraging pupils to re-read texts and identify words they do not understand, use a dictionary, start personal dictionaries, use word attack skills to infer meanings and exposing pupils to different types of question structures. The diagnostic report on the results of the ANA however does not indicate the influence that non-mother-tongue education had on the results.

PIRLS is an international comparative study focusing on reading literacy which was initiated by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). In 2006 and 2011 South Africa along with 49 countries internationally wrote the PIRLS test in order to measure reading for literary experience, and reading to acquire and use information (Zimmerman & Smit 2014:1). The Centre for Evaluation and Assessment at the University of Pretoria conducted the testing of the Grade 4 and 5 pupils in all official languages in selected schools in South Africa. In the 2006 assessment South African pupils performed the weakest of all participating countries. South Africa participated for a second time in 2011. However, the score was still well below the international average, despite writing an

easier assessment called prePIRLS. Only 6% of Grade 4 pupils in South Africa were able to read at an advanced level. A total of 43% of Grade 5 pupils in South Africa were unable to reach the low international benchmark and only 4% could reach the high international benchmark (Howie et al. 2011:xvi). They found higher-order comprehension items particularly problematic (Howie et al. 2011:45). The key findings of these studies are confirmed by the results of the Western Cape Education Department systemic tests. See Table 3.1 below for a description of the international benchmark.

*Table 3.1: International Benchmarks of Reading Achievement*

<p><b>Advanced International benchmark</b></p> <p>When reading Literary texts, pupils can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate ideas and evidence across a text to appreciate overall themes</li> <li>• Interpret story events and character actions to provide reasons, motivations feelings and character traits with full text-based support</li> </ul> <p>When reading Information texts, pupils can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguish and interpret complex information from different parts of text and provide full text-based support</li> <li>• Integrate information across a text to provide explanations, interpret significance and sequence activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>High International benchmark</b></p> <p>When reading Literary texts, pupils can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate and distinguish significant actions and details embedded across the text</li> <li>• Make inferences to explain relationships between intentions, actions, events and feelings and give text-based support</li> <li>• Interpret and integrate story events and character actions and traits from different parts of text</li> <li>• Evaluate the significance of events and actions across the entire story</li> <li>• Recognise the use of some language features (e.g. metaphor, tone, imagery)</li> </ul> <p>When reading Information texts, pupils can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate and distinguish relevant information within a dense text or a complex table</li> <li>• Make inferences about logical connections to provide explanations and reasons</li> <li>• Integrate textual and visual information to interpret the relationship between ideas</li> <li>• Evaluate content and textual elements to make generalisations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intermediate International benchmark</b></p> <p>When reading Literary texts, pupils can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrieve and reproduce explicitly stated actions, events and feelings</li> <li>• Make straightforward inferences about the attributes, feelings and motivations of main characters</li> <li>• Interpret obvious reasons and causes and give simple explanations</li> <li>• Begin to recognise language features and style</li> </ul>

When reading Information texts, pupils can:

- Locate and reproduce two or three pieces of information from within the text
- Use subheadings, text boxes and illustrations to locate parts of the text

#### **Low International benchmark**

When reading Literary texts, pupils can:

- Locate and retrieve an explicitly stated detail

When reading Information texts, pupils can:

- Locate and reproduce two or three pieces of information from within the text
- Use subheadings, text boxes and illustrations to locate parts of the text

Source: Mullis, Martin, Foy & Drucker (2012).

### **3.2.2 The teachers**

The PIRLS report indicates that a third of Grade 4 and 5 teachers have spent less than 6 hours in-service training that dealt with reading instruction. These sessions did not distinguish teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers from mother-tongue teachers (Howie et al. 2011: xvi). Studies conducted by the other researchers came to similar conclusions. Van Staden and Bosker (2014:2) investigated factors that influence the literacy achievement of South African pupils by using evidence from prePIRLS 2011. Their analysis of the prePIRLS data indicated that factors relating to the poor performance of South African pupils included insufficient subject knowledge of teachers as well as inadequate communication between teachers and pupils in the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). In addition, they found that the change of pedagogy from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred approach was difficult for teachers to master. A study conducted by Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:16) concluded that teachers in South Africa have not been taught the relevant reading concepts and methodologies during their teacher training. Moreover, they recommend that teachers be made aware of, and given training in, frameworks that specifically target explicit comprehension instruction and modelling.

Some parents who speak one of the nine official indigenous languages prefer their children to be educated in English or Afrikaans, because they think it will give them an advantage in their studies, work and life (Hoojer & Fourie 2009:141; Kaiser, Reynecke & Uys 2010:53; Basson & Le Cordeur 2013:379). As a result, teachers have to teach pupils with diverse mother tongues in one class. They find this very

challenging, as they have little training in multilingualism and teaching of non-mother-tongue speakers. In addition, researchers found that teachers need in-service education and training (INSET) courses to increase their ability to teach in multilingual classes (Hoojer & Fourie 2009:148; Basson & Le Cordeur 2013:387). Data gathered from interviews with Intermediate Phase teachers conducted by Basson (2013:91) confirm these findings. O'Connor and Geiger (2009: 263-264) noted that teachers were frustrated because of heavy workloads associated with the extra attention non-mother-tongue speakers required. In their study O'Connor and Geiger (2009:264) found that teachers expressed the need for resources to teach non-mother-tongue speakers as well as additional training, which would include observation of practical demonstrations.

These studies indicate a need for in-service training of teachers of non-mother-tongue Intermediate Phase speakers to improve their PCK to enhance reading comprehension of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes, a point which this research will address in Chapter 4. Furthermore, the pedagogies of teaching non-mother-tongue speakers in home-language classes should be addressed during pre-service teacher education. There has not been much research conducted in South Africa on the most effective model to deliver training for teachers regarding teacher PCK in a non-mother-tongue environment.

### **3.3 CAUSES OF POOR READING COMPREHENSION OF NON-MOTHER-TONGUE SPEAKERS**

The reading levels of pupils are used by education systems worldwide to evaluate how well they are delivering on their mandate. Language policy, socioeconomic status, factors at school and self-efficacy have been identified as having an impact on the reading achievement of pupils (Pretorius & Mampuru 2007:39; Schunk 2003:162). The next section will discuss each of these in detail.

#### **3.3.1 Language-in-Education Policy**

The previous Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) was announced on 14 June 1997 by the Minister of Basic Education. The LiEP advocated additive bilingualism in all

public schools in South Africa, which was in congruence with Section 29 of the Constitution of South Africa that gives equal status to the eleven official languages. It made adequate provision for early literacy and language development in the mother tongue (Plüddemann 1999: 327; Probyn 2009:126; De Wet & Wolhuter 2009:365). Although the LiEP stipulates the curriculum requirements for languages, it does not stipulate the curriculum requirements with regard to which language or languages pupils should be exposed to during their first three years of education. This is confirmed by Burroughs (2011:8), who states that “this policy is silent” in this regard.

A recent study conducted by Taylor and Von Fintel (2016:87) concluded that the implementation of the LiEP did not take into account that the nine indigenous languages are not well developed for academic purposes, which leads to the adoption of either English or Afrikaans as language of instruction. Moreover, most schools in South Africa offer home language education up to Grade 3 and switch to English from Grade 4. According to data presented by the DoBE (2007 in Burroughs 2011:9), English became the LoLT for 79,1% of all learners in Grade 4. These data also revealed that in Grade 4 English and Afrikaans were identified as the primary languages of instruction. Burroughs (2011:9) ascribes this situation to the fact that the LiEP does not provide clear guidelines for implementation, it “merely advises and does not enforce.”

Moreover, research studies indicate that the African languages seem to have lost ground in favour of English and to a lesser extent Afrikaans, because parents still believe that these two languages will give their children an advantage in the world of commerce and industry (Manyike & Lemmer 2014:254; Kaiser et al. 2010:53; Hooijer & Fourie 2009:137; Lemmer 1995:83; De Wet & Wolhuter 2009:364). De Klerk (2002a:2) found that parents choose to enrol their children in English schools because of the absence of a good isiXhosa curriculum and well-trained isiXhosa teachers. Unfortunately parents and teachers do not realise the negative impact of non-mother-tongue education on the psychological, social and cognitive development of children as well as the impact it has on the acquisition of other languages (Scheepers 2006:6; Hooijer and Fourie 2009:138; Lemmer1995:90). These researchers noted that reading comprehension problems in the second



language can be caused by the pupils' language deficit. Systemic tests conducted by the DoBE (2015) and the WCED (2016) confirm these findings. The results of these tests indicate that indigenous home-language speakers perform significantly worse than English or Afrikaans home-language speakers. The question should be asked whether the LiEP does not contribute to the under-performance of these pupils. However, Taylor and Von Fintel (2016:88) emphasised that the LoLT is not the only contributor to the poor performance of South African pupils. Other contributing factors are: poverty, poorly functioning schools, weak instructional practices, poor accountability throughout the school system, and teachers who have inadequate subject knowledge.

Researchers such as Alexander (2011) and Le Cordeur (2012b:9) are of the opinion that current language policies continue to advantage English and Afrikaans despite the claim by the South African government that all eleven official languages enjoy equal status. Moreover, the state's lack of political will to implement a policy of multilingualism and legislation is criticised by Manyike and Lemmer (2014:254) as well as Heugh and Prinsloo (2006). Other researchers who are critical of the LiEP cite the following reasons: the effects of political compromises around mother-tongue instruction during the pre-1994 negotiations (Oosthuizen & Rossouw 2001:659) and the lack of transparency from the South African government regarding the promotion of multilingual education (Du Plessis 2006:100-102). Manyike and Lemmer (2014:256) recommend that research should inform language education programmes to develop pre- and in-service teachers professionally. The implementation of these programmes should be monitored and evaluated to determine their efficacy.

### **3.3.2 Socioeconomic status**

South Africa is a country with vast inequalities; therefore teachers should take the effects of poverty and unemployment into account when they plan literacy activities, especially for the non-mother-tongue speakers in their Intermediate Phase classes. A study conducted by Pollard-Durodola, Gonzalez, Simmons, Kwok, Taylor, Davis, Kim and Simmons (2011:162) suggests that a childhood lived in poverty may place pupils at risk of academic underachievement, which includes reading comprehension

difficulties. Many pupils in South Africa living in poverty are often not exposed to books, magazines, newspapers and television at home, which may lead to poorly developed vocabulary, verbal reasoning and mathematical skills (Moore & Hart 2007:17). Vally (2012:617) estimates that only 10-41% of parents provide materials that cognitively stimulate their children and only 11-33% of parents create cognitively stimulating activities for their children. The result is that pupils from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds often begin their school careers with backlogs which are compounded if they are not educated in their mother tongue (Woolfolk 2010:165; Pretorius & Mampuru 2007:40; Lemmer 1995:92). Researchers have found strong links between poverty and low reading achievement as a result of the lack of cognitive stimulation and emotional support at home (Bhattacharya 2010:120; Eamon 2005; Pretorius & Mampuru 2007:40; Landsberg 2010:221). Because of their own low literacy levels, parents are unable to support their children with their school work and are reluctant to attend school activities to discuss the reading problems of their children, because they feel inadequate. Therefore they tend to avoid these situations and unwittingly contribute to the cycle of illiteracy (Bhattacharya 2010:131; Landsberg 2010:222). Long hours of work, lack of finances or transport may also contribute to their lack of involvement (O'Connor & Geiger 2009:260). Some parents do show interest in their children's education by having high expectations for them, building a caring relationship with them and encouraging them to go to school (Bhattacharya 2010:121; Landsberg 2010:221).

### **3.3.3 Factors at school**

#### **3.3.3.1 Non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes**

Since 1991 state schools have received permission to desegregate and they began to accept pupils from all racial groups. The result was that increasing numbers of black pupils were enrolled in English-medium or Afrikaans-medium schools (Scheepers 2006:4; Lemmer 1995:89). Although these pupils have sufficient basic interpersonal communication skills<sup>4</sup> (BICS), they lack the cognitive academic

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<sup>4</sup>Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) refers to the basic language pupils need to communicate informally with their friends.

language proficiency<sup>5</sup> (CALP) in English or Afrikaans required for school success (O'Connor & Geiger 2009:254; Lemmer 1995:90). Cummins (in Kaiser et al. 2010:57) declares that it takes approximately two years for pupils to acquire enough BICS, but it may take up to seven years to acquire CALP. Although teachers try to support these non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes, they find teaching them a challenge (Lemmer 1995:88; Theron & Nel 2005:224).

Non-mother-tongue speakers often find themselves in total immersion in English- or Afrikaans-medium schools, where their home language has little practical application (Scheepers 2006:2). They are expected to master learning content at the same speed as first-language speakers. A study conducted by Scheepers (2006:6) indicates that many Grade 4 black South African pupils do not possess enough vocabulary to understand their textbooks. Consequently, they may experience various academic challenges, for example, repeating a year or being promoted to the next grade without adequate knowledge of the previous year's work. This may lead to psychological problems, social problems and barriers to learning which may include reading and reading comprehension problems (Hooijer & Fourie 2009:138; Lemmer 1995:90-91). Because of the lack of vocabulary in the language of learning and teaching, these pupils have difficulty in expressing themselves; therefore they do not participate in class discussions (Basson 2013:94; O'Connor & Geiger 2009:260). As a result, some teachers tend to set lower expectations for the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes which may lead to learned helplessness in these learners (Woolfolk 2010:165). Unjust social structures are created, because non-mother-tongue speakers are regarded as inferior by first-language pupils (O'Connor & Geiger 2009:260; Ajayi 2005:189-190; Au 1998:302; Lemmer 1995:90-91). Some pupils also experience social problems such as ostracism in their own neighbourhoods because they are perceived to have forsaken their culture and language. This may have psycho-social consequences such as social withdrawal as well as high anxiety levels and headaches at school (De Klerk 1995:10; De Klerk 2002a:7). It is important that the above-mentioned problems be addressed, because failure to do so may lead to pupils leaving the school system without sufficient competence in any language (De Klerk 2002b:26).

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<sup>5</sup> Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) refers to the academic language that pupils require to access the curriculum.

### 3.3.3.2 Teacher training

When South Africa became a democracy in 1994, the government accepted a multilingual language policy with eleven official languages: Afrikaans, English, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, IsiNdebele, Siswati, Setswana, Sesotho, Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. In general, the Constitution makes provision for the protection of all languages, and declares that where it is reasonably practicable, everyone has the right to receive education in the official language of their choice (Le Cordeur 2012b). With the above outline in mind, it is clear therefore why policies such as the Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE 1996), the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DoE 2006) as well as curriculum and assessment policies were accepted in order to transform teachers into highly competent professionals who are committed to their pupils and who are reflective in their practices (De Clercq & Phiri 2013:80; Moodley 2013:2).

According to a report by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (Spaull 2013:24), South African teachers lack subject knowledge, have inadequate teaching pedagogies and low productivity. This indicates that the above policies are not fulfilling their ambitious goals. It remains a particular challenge to empower teachers in the Stellenbosch region so that they may effectively support their pupils who encounter stumbling blocks in their learning. (Basson & Le Cordeur 2014:109). An outcomes-based approach (OBE) was adopted in 1994 which differed greatly from previous practice (Jansen & Taylor 2003 in Ono & Ferreira 2010:59). Provincial education departments had to disseminate the new curriculum knowledge to districts and schools. There were enormous problems with implementation because of the short time frame allowed for planning and execution of the in-service training (Taylor & Vinjevold 1999:157; Ono & Ferreira 2010:59; Esau 2013:1; De Clercq & Phiri 2013:80). Lead teachers were trained by district officials through the cascade model to reach as many teachers as possible in a short time. These district trainers were mainly of poor quality and often did not fully understand the curriculum themselves, and therefore they were unable to act as change agents in facilitating the implementation of the new curriculum. The lead teachers in turn had to impart the knowledge received in these training sessions to their colleagues, but there were frequent complaints that they did not fully grasp the complex OBE approaches (Ono

& Ferreira 2010:59; De Clercq & Phiri 2013:80). This led to the problem of dilution, which was exacerbated by the lack of support provided in schools by officials during early implementation (Day & Sachs 2004:184).

Changing policies and problematic implementation thereof require a reimagining of strategies in which new knowledge is imparted to both pre- and in-service teachers. Curriculum 2005 was reviewed in 2000, but implementation remained problematic. In 2009 the Minister of Basic Education appointed a task team to once again review the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12, which led to the conceptualising of CAPS in the Foundation Phase in 2011. The policy was formally accepted on 6 July 2012 (Esau 2013:1). De Clercq and Phiri (2013:81) argue that a thorough analysis of teacher competencies, knowledge as well as expectations and needs should be conducted in order to design interventions according to teachers' specific needs, while Darling-Hammond (2010:226) calls for ongoing, content-focused teacher development within professional learning communities rather than once-off workshops, which do not always provide solutions to the challenges that teachers face in their classrooms.

A study conducted by Theron and Nel (2005:236) found that teachers in the Intermediate Phase experience the following barriers when teaching non-mother-tongue speakers: overcrowded classes, disparity between learner and educator proficiency in the language of teaching and learning, the mother tongues of pupils and teachers differ, lack of parental support, inadequate training of teachers to support non-mother-tongue speakers therefore no set strategies are followed. Intermediate Phase teachers are feeling overwhelmed and frustrated, and frequently request support and training so that they are better able to support the literacy needs of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes (Theron & Nel 2005:224 O'Connor & Geiger 2009:263; Hooijer & Fourie 2009:141-146; Basson 2013:96). In addition, they need to develop awareness of how different environmental contexts affect their pupils. Academic under-achievement by non-mother-tongue speakers is a reality as a consequence of learners not learning in their home language. It is therefore important that teachers understand the difference between learning difficulties and language-based academic problems (O'Connor & Geiger 2009:255).

This calls for professional development best suited to address the teachers' unique needs (Moodley 2013:3).

### 3.3.3.3 Self-efficacy of pupils

The social cognitive theory emphasises, amongst other things, self-efficacy as a form of interaction between learning through observation of others (social) and cognitive factors such as beliefs, self-perceptions and environmental conditions (Bandura 1986, 1997 in Schunk 2003:160; Woolfolk 2010:349). Bandura (in Woolfolk 2010:350; Lindenbrink & Pintrich 2003:120; McTigue & Liew 2011:114) defines self-efficacy as a set of beliefs people have about their capabilities to achieve certain goals as well as their ability to maintain the effort to achieve them. This in turn governs motivation, action and cognitive processing as well as affective processes such as anxiety which may have a negative effect on performance (Liew, McTigue, Barrois & Hughes 2008:516; Fredricksson, Villalba, & Taube 2011:303). Academic self-efficacy refers to a person's subjective view of their ability to perform a specific task that influences their ability to persevere even if a task is difficult, which can lead to better engagement and participation in class activities. Better participation and engagement, in turn, can result in more learning and better achievement, which may lead to higher self-efficacy (Lindenbrink & Pintrich 2003:123; Fredricksson et al. 2011:305; Liew et al. 2008:516).

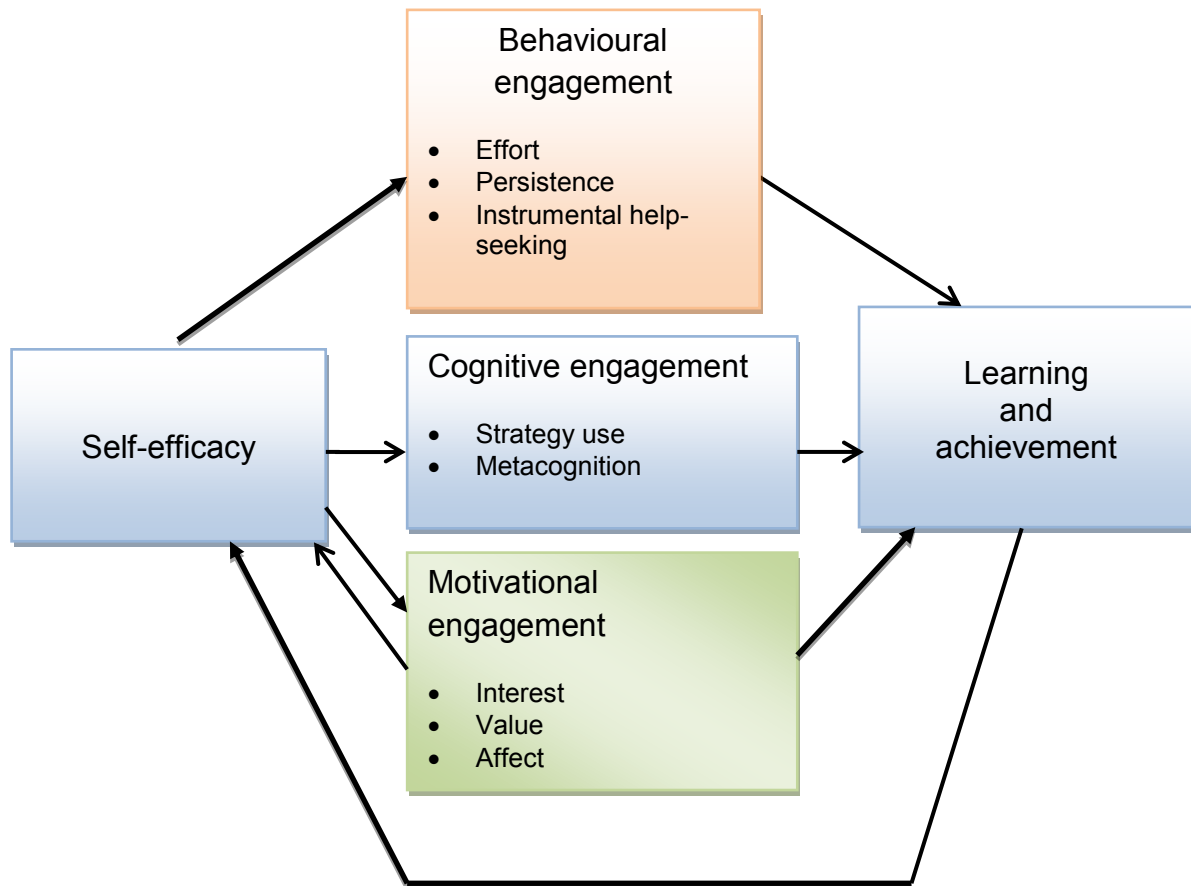


Figure 3.1: A general framework for self-efficacy, engagement and learning (Lindenbrink & Pintrich 2003:122).

Figure 3.1 illustrates the relationship between self-efficacy, learner engagement and learning. Learner engagement includes behavioural engagement, cognitive engagement and motivational engagement. Cognitive and motivational engagement is important when we try to understand the learning and achievement of pupils, whereas motivational engagement is influenced by self-efficacy and vice versa (Lindenbrink & Pintrich 2003:123; Fredricksson et al.:2011:305). Behavioural engagement involves learner behaviour that can be observed by the teacher. By creating a safe environment for pupils who are confronted with a difficult task, may lead to their seeking help from the teacher or peers just to complete the task without understanding, or they may ask for help to understand the material. The latter is an important indicator of behavioural engagement (Lindenbrink & Pintrich 2003:123; McTigue & Liew 2011:115). Cognitive engagement is more difficult for teachers to observe, but it can be done by observing and listening to learner group discussions. Pupils who are cognitively engaged will be discussing the lesson content in detail,

while those pupils who are not will be doing the task but they will be discussing irrelevant topics (Lindenbrink & Pintrich 2003:124). Another indication of cognitive engagement is pupils who are metacognitive by self-checking their work, for example, their reading comprehension. Such pupils will review parts of the text that they did not understand and re-check their answers (Lindenbrink & Pintrich 2003:125). Motivational engagement includes interest, value and affect. Pupils with high interest levels are much more motivated to complete tasks such as reading comprehension and they tend to outperform their less interested classmates (Grabe 2010:181; Lindenbrink & Pintrich 2003:126; Applegate & Applegate 2010:226; Monteiro 2013:303). Pupils are much more intrinsically motivated to persevere with a reading task when they regard it as useful or as of value to them. They read more and the greater exposure to print may lead to improved comprehension as well as growth in vocabulary (Grabe 2010:182; Applegate & Applegate 2010:226).

A study conducted by McTigue and Liew (2011:118) highlighted the following key principles that should be considered by teachers when providing literacy experiences in order to build the self-efficacy of their pupils: a safe and democratic classroom environment must be created; social and emotional learning should be integrated into literacy assignments; students' academic self-efficacy should be monitored and assessed; self-efficacy should be modelled by giving concrete explanations and demonstrations on how pupils can use a new skill; effective feedback should be given and self-evaluation and goal-setting should be facilitated. The professional development programme developed in this study envisaged empowering teachers to be able to implement pedagogies and create safe classroom environments where non-mother-tongue speakers can thrive and learn.

### **3.4 READING AND READING COMPREHENSION ACCORDING TO CAPS**

Outcomes-based Education (OBE) was introduced in 1997 to overcome the curricular divisions of the past. A review of OBE was prompted by Professor Kader Asmal in 2000 as a result of complaints about pupils' inability to read, write and count. In addition, teachers were finding it difficult to adapt to the role of facilitators of learning and group work instead of explicit teaching of content. Furthermore, teachers did not know what to teach (DoBE 2009:12). This led to the first revision of



the curriculum, namely the Revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R – 9 and the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 – 12 (2002). This curriculum was ready for implementation in 2004 (DoBE 2011:3).

Another review became essential in 2009 as a result of ongoing implementation challenges. The report of the task team for the review of implementation of the NCS (DoBE 2009:12-13) outlined the following four challenges:

- first, there was no clear implementation plan nor a clear message or national implementation plan on the benefits of the new curriculum;
- second, teachers received an official instruction that this was not a new curriculum; this led provinces, districts and other stakeholders to develop their own supporting documents for the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), which caused confusion about what constituted official policy. Furthermore, no new assessment policy was developed and teachers were told to use the assessment policy used for curriculum 2005. Subsequently, gradual changes were made which lead to widespread confusion regarding assessment practices;
- third, curriculum support documents were developed by people who were not involved in developing the RNCS. Some of these people did not understand the purpose of the review, which resulted in contradictions across the documents;
- fourth, teacher training did not emphasise that this was a new curriculum, nor did it address the urgent need for training in subject content. Lastly, the language policy specified in the Revised National Curriculum Statement was never implemented. This policy states that pupils should receive tuition in the LoLT of the school from Grade 1.

The 2009 review resulted in the combination of the RNCS Grades R – 9 and the NCS Grades 10 – 12 (2002) into a single document known as the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 from 2012. This document updates the previous curriculum and aims to clearly indicate the content of what is to be taught and learnt each term for all subjects. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 comprises the following: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements

(CAPS) for all approved subjects; National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPPR) of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12; and National Protocol for Assessment (NPA) Grades R-12 (DoBE 2011:3).

The Home Language CAPS document emphasises that language teachers should enable pupils to develop language skills required for academic learning across the curriculum (DoBE 2011:7). The ability to read with comprehension forms part of language skills. The importance of reading instruction is emphasised in the Intermediate Phase CAPS document, which prescribes that 5 hours per two-week cycle should be spent on reading instruction (DoBE 2011:13). In addition, teachers are required to implement different reading strategies such as shared reading, group guided reading, paired reading as well as independent reading. It recommends that shared reading be used at the beginning of the Intermediate Phase to guide pupils into the phase. Big books, text books and other reading books can be used for this purpose. Furthermore, it recommended that group guided reading, paired reading as well as independent reading should be used to guide pupils to be more independent readers. Teachers are also required to compile different comprehension activities to ensure that pupils understand what they read (DoBE 2011:10). However, the CAPS document lacks guidelines regarding the level of complexity relating to the different comprehension strategies across grades which may limit their effective implementation.

According to CAPS, the reading process consists of pre-reading, reading and post-reading stages. The activities recommended for the pre-reading stage are as follows: activating prior knowledge, looking at the source, author and publication date, reading the first and last paragraphs of a section as well as making predictions (DoBE 2011:10). During the reading stage teachers should guide pupils to engage in the following activities: pausing occasionally to check comprehension, comparing the content to their predictions, using the context to work out the meaning of unknown words as much as is possible, visualise what is being read, keep going even if parts that are read are not understood, rereading a section if it is not understood at all, reading confusing sections aloud, at a slower pace, or both, adding reading marks and annotating key points as well as reflecting on the text being read (DoBE 2011:11). The post-reading stage should contain the following activities:

making graphic organisers or outlines of key ideas when specific information has to be recalled, draw conclusions, writing summaries to help clarify and recall main ideas, thinking about and writing new questions on a topic, confirming understanding of the text, evaluating bias, accuracy, quality of the text and extending thinking using ideas in text (DoBE 2011:12). In addition, throughout these three stages pupils are required to apply reading strategies such as skimming and scanning (DoBE 2011:36-39). However, the volume of work in the home-language curriculum that needs to be covered may mean that there is insufficient time to implement these strategies, a concern which is also expressed by the Catholic Institute of Education (2010:10).

As learning support advisor, this researcher has been part of the CAPS training team and, although teachers are expected to implement these different strategies, they have not received sufficient training to do so. There is also a distinct lack of direction in the CAPS documents on how these different strategies “work.” This view is supported by a study conducted by Le Cordeur (2012a:142). Furthermore, CAPS training did not focus on training Intermediate Phase teachers to deal with the unique needs of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their literacy classes (Basson & Le Cordeur 2014:110). Moreover, Manyike and Lemmer (2014:256) point out that there additive bilingualism as advocated by CAPS has not been implemented in schools. Other concerns regarding CAPS are the lack of sufficient time to cover the large volume of content, which could impact on the thoroughness of teaching and learning; the home-language curriculum is very prescriptive, which limits teachers’ creativity, and which may in turn have a detrimental influence on the ability of pupils to be imaginative; and because of the absence of assessment weighting, it is difficult for teachers to know what content should be emphasised.

### **3.5 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS**

#### **3.5.1 Introduction**

Researchers in South Africa and internationally have been calling for high-quality professional development of teachers to improve education (Darling-Hammond 2010; Duncan 2010 in Amendum 2014:349; de Clercq & Phiri 2013:78). While these professional development programmes may vary in their composition and content,

they all have the same purpose. This purpose is to change the classroom practice of teachers, their attitudes and beliefs as well as the learning outcomes of pupils. However, Phelan (2009:94) states that the content of professional development programmes devotes little attention to the conversion of subject matter knowledge into pedagogical decisions. Professional development should therefore be more than just improving the profession – it has to improve pupils' learning. If professional development does not link the skills and knowledge of teachers with pupil learning, it cannot be successful (de Clercq 2014:304). In addition, teachers should be given the opportunity to determine the agenda and convey their needs regarding their professional development (Nir & Bogler 2008:379).

Views on professional development vary greatly. It can be seen as politically driven, ill-designed, brief, under-resourced and demeaning, or as essential for the improvement of quality education. The pressure of globalisation intensified the need for education systems to deliver education programmes for both students and teachers to deal with our complex and uncertain post-modern world in which knowledge, social and economic contexts are rapidly changing (Guskey & Huberman 1995:20; Day & Sachs 2004:3; De Vries et al. 2013:78). Therefore, assumptions of what teachers need most with regard to professional development have changed. There are continued debates as to whether professional development should focus on subject knowledge ('what to teach'), the practice of teaching ('how to teach') or academic knowledge about education ('the why of teaching') (de Clercq 2014:305). Shulman (1986) argues that beyond the knowledge of 'what and how to teach', teachers should focus on their ability to transfer conceptual knowledge to their pupils. This should be done by representing the new knowledge in such a way that their pupils are able to access and apply it in different contexts and settings.

In order for their countries to be more competitive in the world economic league, governments have been more actively involved in improving their schooling systems over the past 20 years. Teachers' abilities are especially important in contributing to their pupils' learning. Therefore demands on teachers are increasing (Darling-Hammond 2006:300). Governments are also keen to infuse the next generation of citizens with values that they consider to be politically appropriate, therefore

educational policies are often not determined by research but by political agendas (Taylor & Vinjevold 1999:7).

### **3.5.2 Conceptual clarification of professional development and related concepts**

According to Reddy (2002:140), professional development describes all forms of learning by teachers beyond their initial training. Professional development can potentially enrich the teaching experience of teachers by developing a fresh vision of being a teacher (Mutshekwane 2004:12). There are several definitions in the literature, some of which regard professional development in a positive light, for example:

Continuing professional development is a term used to describe all the activities in which teachers engage during the course of their career which are designed to enhance their work. Yet this simple description of a hugely complex intellectual and emotional endeavour which is at the heart of raising and maintaining standards of teaching, learning and achievement in a range of schools, each of which possess its own set of special challenges (Day & Sachs 2004:3).

Others are more cynical, such as the one from Fullan (in Day & Sachs 2004:67-68):

Professional development for teachers has a poor track record because it lacks a theoretical base and coherent focus. On the one hand, professional development is treated as a vague panacea – the teacher as continuous lifelong learner. On the other hand, professional development is defined too narrowly and becomes artificially detached from ‘real-time’ learning. It becomes a workshop, or possibly the ongoing series of professional development sessions. In either case, it fails to have a sustained cumulative impact.

Teacher development is regarded by some as synonymous with in-service education and training (INSET). However, it is more than that, as it implemented for the improvement of the school as a whole and not only for the individual professional

growth of a teacher (Bagwandeen & Louw 1993:26). The principal goal is to improve student performance through assisting teachers to develop more effective teaching strategies. Five programme elements can be included in teacher development, namely assessment of needs, long-range and strategic planning, implementation of programmes, evaluation of outcomes and participant outcomes (Mutshekwane 2004:13). The literature indicates that there is no consensus on what constitutes teacher development (Bagwandeen and Louw 1993:26). According to Bradley (in Bagwandeen and Louw 1993:27), teacher development includes increasing teacher performance, enhancing teachers' prospects for career development, enabling the teacher to help increase a deficient school's performance, and enabling the school to meet its future demands. According to Mutshekwane (2004:13), the purposes of teacher development are to increase motivation and communication, to review and improve current professional practices as well as to review career options of teachers.

The literature indicates that there are varied definitions of INSET as it is difficult to develop an all-embracing one (Reddy 2002:139; Bagwandeen and Louw 1993:17). It is necessary to clarify the concept of INSET in order to distinguish its role in teacher training. INSET has been described as all training that teachers undergo following their initial training in order to add to their professional knowledge, preparing them for new roles and positions as well as improving their professional skills (Mutshekwane 2004:14; Bagwandeen and Louw 1993:19; Mestry et al. 2009:475; Herbert & Rainsford 2014:246). Day and Sachs (2004:8) describe INSET as a "narrow" model implemented in many countries, because it is the most cost effective and efficient way of reaching large numbers of teachers to either maintain, improve or change existing practices. No matter how INSET is defined, its final goal should be to develop teachers to be effective in their posts and to enjoy job satisfaction.

### 3.5.3 Professional development of teachers

#### 3.5.3.1 The importance of developing teachers professionally

There is consensus that professional development is necessary and important for teachers, because the teacher is the most important person to influence learner performance (De Vries et al. 2013:78; Mestry, Hendricks & Bisschoff 2009:475). Whereas pre-service professional development provides the teacher with enough skills and subject knowledge to start their career, ongoing professional development transforms the novice into a professional. In today's globalised world economic, social and educational developments take place at a rapid rate; therefore it is important for teachers to continue to learn throughout their careers. The demographics of schools in South Africa have changed dramatically since 1994 as large numbers of township pupils enrol in schools in the suburbs. Consequently our teachers face enormous challenges in order to cope with the diversity of cultures and languages in their classes (Mestry et al. 2009:478). Therefore professional development has to meet the enormous challenge of developing teachers in South Africa to meet the unique needs of non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes.

According to Guskey and Huberman (1995:246) and De Vries et al. (2010:79), teachers should engage in professional development to:

- continuously develop and adapt their current skills;
- learn from experience continuously, reflect and theorise on how to address the needs of their pupils effectively;
- be a life-long learner by observing other colleagues and having discussions with them;
- continue making contributions to the professional life at school such as making policies;
- continue building capacity on how to interact with clients such as parents on behalf of the school;
- up-date subject matter knowledge and make it accessible for students;
- collect evidence of policies and practices in other schools;
- access new thinking which might lead to improving the quality of the school;

- acquire knowledge of the changing society that the school serves in order to promote good communication with pupils and using this knowledge to review curriculum priorities;
- to gather information about external policy makers and implement their decisions.

Guskey and Huberman (1995:146) state that professional development activities which are organised by the school, district or provincial education department are sometimes designed to satisfy more than one of the above-mentioned purposes. Unfortunately conflict can arise as a result of differences in approach and ideology. Therefore, it is important for those who manage the professional development of teachers to manage and resolve conflicts in order for effective professional development to take place.

### 3.5.3.2 Principles that should be taken into account when planning professional development

Various principles should be taken into account when planning professional development programmes for teachers that could lead to significant and sustained educational improvements (Guskey 2002:386). First, teacher trainers should realise that change is a gradual and difficult process for teachers. New teaching methodologies require extra energy and preparation time, which adds to the teacher's workload. They may also cause anxiety as teachers feel uncertain whether these new practices will lead to effective learning by their pupils. Therefore teachers do not easily deviate from practices they have developed and refined in their own classroom, even when presented with evidence of more effective approaches (Guskey 2002:386). Hence, teachers should be given the opportunity to reflect on their teaching, discuss their experiences and make suggestions for adaptations which can assist the process of change (Nielsen, Barry & Staab 2008:1290).

Second, teacher trainers should ensure that teachers receive regular feedback about the effectiveness of new practices on pupil learning. Teachers are more likely to



continue with new practices, even if they require extra time and effort, if these practices are perceived to be effective. Similarly, new practices will be discontinued if there is no evidence of improvements in pupil performance. To ensure the success of the professional development effort, it is essential that teachers receive regular feedback on the progress of their students (Guskey 2002:386). Class assessments and positive feedback during classroom observations by trainers can assist teachers in coming to accept that the new practices are effective, which may lead to changes in their attitudes and beliefs (Nir & Bogler 2008:378).

Lastly, continued follow-up visits and support coupled with pressure is essential for change in practices to take effect permanently. New practices need to become a natural part of teachers' repertoire and for this to occur regular follow-up visits and support are essential (Guskey 2002:386). Evans (2002:127) echoes this when she emphasises that teachers need feedback and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues in order to internalise new knowledge. This is the most neglected part of professional development (Guskey 2002:388). Furthermore, Moodley (2013:2) emphasises that trainers should consider that different types of professional support is required for different kinds of teachers. The researcher considered the above principles when the professional development sessions were planned, because research studies indicate that not all professional development programmes are successful (Kuijpers, Houtveen & Wubbels 2010:1687; Guskey 2002:382; Jita & Mokhele 2012:3).

### 3.5.3.3 Factors that may contribute to ineffective professional development

The culture of professional development in South Africa has been negatively affected by apartheid education, because principals and departmental officials were seen to be politically biased (Mestry et al. 2009:476). Other factors contributing to ineffective professional development programmes may be: too much emphasis placed on teaching quality and too little attention to conditions in schools which support teacher performance; what motivates teachers to participate in professional development; complete disregard of the expertise and concerns of teachers and expectations that teachers should implement strategies that are difficult to implement but conceptually and practically removed from realities in their classrooms (Guskey 2002:382;

Kuijpers et al. 2010:1687; Moodley 2013:3; Antoniou, Kyriakides & Creemers 2015:536). In addition, massive policy changes and curriculum reforms contributed to low teacher morale (Mestry et al. 2009:477). Once-off workshops conducted by outside experts have been particularly ineffective to bring about lasting change (Guskey 2002:282; Nir & Bogler 2008:378; Moodley 2013:3; Amendum 2014:349). These programmes can be motivational, but seldom promote deep pedagogical knowledge as well as solutions to routine problems that teachers face with individual pupils (Amendum 2014:349; Moodley 2013:3). According to Guskey (2002:282), professional development programmes that do not address the enhancement of concrete, practical ideas to improve learner performance, nor take into account the stages of teacher professional development, are unlikely to succeed.

### **3.5.4 Stages of professional development**

Professional growth can be described as a process of change in beliefs and perceptions regarding the way pupils learn. Guskey and Huberman (1995:154) observed changes in teachers' attitudes and perceptions when implementing new strategies. They developed a model that includes five stages which describe the sequence of teacher career development. These stages are as follows: survival, exploration and bridging, adaptation, conceptual change, and renewal and invention.

- *Survival*

During this stage experienced teachers are converted from being experienced to becoming novices again. They become anxious, stressed and frustrated, because they are concerned that the new strategy they have learned may not be effective (Nielsen et al. 2008:1295). Therefore, teachers are not too enthusiastic to change their traditional way of instruction. Some teachers even experience psychological problems when admitting their difficulties, which may explain why so many professional development projects do not survive the first year of implementation (Guskey & Huberman 1995:154).

- *Exploration and bridging*

Teachers who move past the first stage feel more positive about the new strategy. They start to explore how the new strategy differs from what they did before. Furthermore, they are more concerned about how they are coping rather than ascertaining how the strategy facilitates their pupils' learning. However, teachers apply the new strategy mechanically without finding ways to adapt it to the unique needs of the pupils in their classrooms. The transition from the survival to the exploration stage is critical; therefore teacher trainers should explore ways to make this transition easier. This could be done by involving teachers in making decisions about the selection of new strategies (Guskey & Huberman 1995:158; Day & Sachs 2004:11).

- *Adaptation*

Teachers apply the new knowledge by adapting it to suit the needs of their pupils, therefore adopting a more student-centred approach. They are also more confident to discuss with colleagues problems they are experiencing. Another change observed during this stage is related to teacher planning and problem solving, which addresses pupils' existing knowledge, developmental stage and motivational issues. Often planning is orientated towards long-term goals such as assessment as well as seeking alternative procedures of evaluation. By being more reflective about the new strategy and adapting it according to the needs of their pupils, teachers may experience positive changes in their pupils' performance, which in turn may lead to changes in teachers' beliefs and perceptions regarding the new strategy (Guskey & Huberman 1995:160; Nielsen et al. 2008:1298).

- *Conceptual change*

Teachers may now become ready for conceptual change. As they apply the new strategy, they realise that learning can be the result of several processes and not only the transmission of knowledge. For example, by adopting a constructivist approach to learning, opportunities for their pupils to interact with others are created (Ono & Ferreira 2010:62). According to Vygotsky, conceptual change is obtained by pupils engaging with each other in order to solve problems. This allows them to become more aware of the different ways in which the problem can be solved by

taking into consideration the different solutions each partner may offer. During this stage teachers are able to meet the diverse needs of their pupils, which could include non-mother-tongue speakers. They are also more willing to share ideas with other colleagues and trainers, as well as having the courage to ask for help when needed (Guskey & Huberman 1995:161; Nielsen et al. 2008:1298). It is therefore important that an atmosphere is created where teachers feel comfortable to ask questions and share their successes and failures (Nielsen et al. 2008:1298).

- *Renewal and invention*

During this stage the newly acquired pedagogical knowledge is used by teachers to experiment with new ways of teaching. Because this stage requires teachers to question the way they have been practising their craft, very few teachers move into this stage. Teachers who have reached this stage have greater job satisfaction and feel more positive about the potential that education has to improve the school system.

### **3.5.5 Models of professional development**

Professional development can be structured and organised in different ways and its purpose is to change or enhance teacher knowledge, skills and attitudes. However, Eraut (1994 in Kennedy 2005:236) emphasises the importance of not only considering the type of professional knowledge that is being acquired, but also the contexts within which it is acquired. These three contexts are the academic context, institutional discussion of policy and practice, and practice itself. It is therefore important to examine the models as well as the contexts through which professional knowledge is acquired as identified by Eraut (1994 in Kennedy 2005:236). The models that are discussed below will reflect these three contexts as possible vehicles through which knowledge can be acquired. The circumstances in which each model might be adopted, the knowledge that can be developed through each model as well as their ability to support transformative practice will also be examined. The models that will be discussed are: training; deficit; growth; cascade; standards-based; coaching/mentoring; community of practice; and action research models.

### 3.5.5.1 The training model

The training model of professional development has been widely used to provide teachers with the opportunity to improve or update their skills (Kennedy 2005:237). This model places the teacher in a passive role as recipient of specific knowledge and the training is generally presented by an outside expert. The content of the training is determined and controlled by the expert and is usually delivered away from the school context (Kennedy 2005:237; Moodley 2013:3). Burbank and Kauchak (2003:500) point out that one of the limitations of this model is its inability to connect with the realities that teachers experience in the classroom. Teachers therefore find it difficult to implement the ideas that are removed from their classroom contexts (Moodley 2013:3; Ono & Ferreira 2010:60).

The training model usually delivers training that is controlled centrally in order to develop specific teacher skills that are determined nationally, such as a new curriculum or reading strategies. It maintains the view of education where decisions are made to standardise education instead of guiding teachers to be proactive in identifying their own training needs. Authorities seem to believe the notion that standardisation of training will lead to improvements in teaching, learning and pupil attainment (Kennedy 2005:237). Although it has drawbacks, this model is seen as an effective way of introducing new knowledge (Kennedy 2005:238). Where this model fails, though, is that it does not significantly improve teaching as Fullan (1991:135) states:

Nothing has promised so much and has been so frustratingly wasteful as the thousands of workshops and conferences that led to no significant change in practice when teachers returned to their classrooms.

### 3.5.5.2 The deficit model

According to Bagwadeen and Louw (1993) in Reddy (2004:140) the deficit model for the professional development of teachers is characterised by the view that teachers need development, because they do not possess adequate skills to teach successfully. This model assumes that teachers are inefficient and that there is

something wrong with the way they teach that needs to be corrected (Day & Sachs 2004:171; Guskey & Huberman 1995:269). Consequently education officials, school principals and government bureaucrats decide how to promote teacher efficacy (Reddy 2004:140; Moodley 2013:3; Dadds 2007:3; Guskey & Huberman 1995:269). According to Dadds (2007:3) and Moodley (2013:3), this approach imposes a passive role on teachers, who find it difficult to implement the ideas that do not take their varying contexts and needs into account.

While the deficit model uses professional development to improve the teaching skills of teachers, Rhodes and Beneicke (2003:124) point out that organisational management and practices also contribute to poor teacher performance, and not only the teachers themselves. The deficit model does not take the above issue into consideration, as it is the collective responsibility of organisational management and teachers themselves to improve teacher competence (Kennedy 2005:239). Boreham (2004:9) argues that in the school context effective collective competence depends on school leadership which encourages the following three conditions: making collective sense of events in the workplace; developing and using a collective knowledge base; developing a sense of interdependence. This argument contradicts the deficit model, which places the blame for teacher under-performance on individuals and fails to take into account collective responsibility (Kennedy 2005:239).

### 3.5.5.3 The growth model

The main aim of the growth model is to make teachers more aware of new developments in their field and to assist them to improve their instructional skills (Reddy 2004:140; Guskey & Huberman 1995:270). It is based on the assumption that teaching is not a simple activity and that there is more to know about teaching that can ever be known by one person. Therefore the motive for teacher development should be to support teachers to seek out the expert within themselves (Jackson 1971 in Reddy 2004:140; Dadds 2007:3). This approach to the professional development of teachers offers opportunities for collaboration and participation. Teachers are regarded as true professionals whose opinions about their work are valued; consequently they are given the opportunity to be involved in

the planning and presentation of their professional development on a continuous basis (Reddy 2004:141; Moodley 2013:3).

The growth model involves a variety of professional development activities that contribute to a teacher's professional growth. These activities may include teacher study groups, evaluation of programmes by colleagues, and participation in workshops that are often presented by expert peers in a specific field (Guskey & Huberman 1995:270). These workshops are mostly based at their schools and are meant to guide teachers to produce joint knowledge by sharing experiences of classroom life, teaching styles and learning conditions in their classes.

#### 3.5.5.4 The cascade model

The cascade model is usually adopted when limited resources are available, because it can reach many participants in a short time (Kennedy 2005:240; Ono & Ferreira 2010:60; de Clercq & Phiri 2013:80). Trained master trainers train specialists at district level, who in turn have to cascade the information to teachers. These teachers are then required to pass on the knowledge to other teachers. The advantage of the cascade model is that training takes place in stages, so that it is possible to monitor progress and information can be disseminated rapidly as more and more teachers are trained (Ono & Ferreira 2010:60; Christie, Harley & Penny 2004:184).

Although the cascade model can be effective to spread the message about educational reform, as in South Africa when Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was introduced, the message does not always cascade down effectively to the teachers who have to implement the new policies. This is especially the case when the trainers are of poor quality and do not fully understand the policies or strategies that need to be implemented (Ono & Ferreira 2010:60; de Clercq & Phiri 2013:80). The result is that important information is misinterpreted or diluted (Christie et al. 2004:184). Another drawback of this model as suggested by Solomon and Tresman (1999:395) is that the knowledge cascaded down is mostly skills-focused, sometimes knowledge-focused but rarely focused on values. The cascade model also assumes

that knowledge is the important part of teacher training and does not necessarily consider the context in which it is generated or used (Kennedy 2005:240).

#### 3.5.5.5 The standards-based model

The standards-based model has little regard for teaching as a complex, context-specific and moral endeavour. It aims to create a system of teaching and teacher training that can empirically prove that there is a connection between effective teaching and pupil achievement (Beyer 2002:243). Because the standards model relies on this scientific basis, alternative forms of professional development are rarely considered. Another drawback of this model is that it draws heavily on the behaviourist perspective of learning, which focuses on rewarding teachers for certain competencies instead of encouraging teachers to work collaboratively (Kennedy 2005:241).

Critics of the standards-based model such as Smyth (1991 in Kennedy 2005:241) regard standards which are externally imposed by authorities as a lack of respect for teachers' own abilities to be reflective of their own practices. It encourages them to be reliant on training initiatives that are developed centrally and may limit their own initiative to take responsibility for their own learning. Beyer (2002:340) criticises the lack of attention that standardisation gives to issues such as the purpose of teaching, economic realities and moral directions. Instead, the focus is placed on quality assurance and accountability. He suggests that increased standardisation in the professional development of teachers is a response by nations to growing concerns about their ability to compete globally. In this context standardisation may be seen as the necessary response for improved economic status (Kennedy 2005:241). However, justification for the use of standardisation by authorities may be that it enables teachers to engage in dialogue about their practices more easily, because standardisation provides a common language for them to do so (Kirk, Beveridge & Smith 2003:221). Kennedy (2005:242) warns that standardisation has the potential to discourage teachers from considering alternative conceptions to those proposed by the standards.



### 3.5.5.6 The coaching/mentoring model

This model emphasises the importance of the one-to-one relationship between two teachers to support their professional development (Kennedy 2005:242). Both coaching and mentoring share the same objective, although coaching involves developing skills whereas mentoring implies guidance by a more experienced colleague (Rhodes & Beneicke 2003:301). This mentoring or coaching relationship can either be collegiate (for example, peer coaching) or hierarchical, as when a new teacher is guided by a more experienced senior teacher. Kennedy (2005:242) emphasises that the coaching/mentoring model is key to developing professional learning within the school context where colleagues are able to share ideas and strategies.

However, depending on the matching of teachers, this model may support either the transformative or transmission view of professional development. The transformative approach is characterised by confidentiality and a supportive approach as defined by Robins (in Rhodes & Beneicke 2003:298). The transmission approach supports initiation of a novice teacher into the profession by a more experienced colleague, but this colleague is also involved in the assessment of the novice, making it a more hierarchical relationship (Kennedy 2005:242). For this model to be successful, it is important to note that teachers need to have well-developed interpersonal communication skills in order to develop the one-to-one relationships on which this model relies (Rhodes & Beneicke 2003:298).

### 3.5.5.7 The community of practice model

Kennedy (2005:244) argues that there are similarities between the coaching/mentoring model and the communities of practice model. The difference between the two models is that the community of practice model involves more than two people. Wegener (1998:95) suggests that learning within communities of practice involves three essential processes: mutual engagement between participants; mutual understanding of their project; and developing their pedagogies, styles and discourses.

Social learning theory as developed by Bandura forms a central part of the community of practice model (Kennedy 2005:244). This theory contends that learning within a community of practice takes place as a result of the interactions of its participants. Depending on the role of each individual within the community, learning can be either an active or passive experience. Some members of the group tend to be more passive when dominant members influence the others' understanding of the group and its roles (Kennedy 2005:244). It is therefore important to note that the issue of power is essential for successful professional development within a community of practice. Wegener (1998:81) argues that members of the community of practice should have some control over the programme for professional development and, in order for it to be successful, no form of quality assurance or accountability should be attached to the process.

Kennedy (2005:245) argues that dominant discourses could be perpetuated by communities of practice in an uncritical manner, but they can also be powerful mechanisms of change. This is especially true when individual knowledge and experience are improved substantially through collective participation.

#### 3.5.5.8 The action research model

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:444) and Bell (1993:6) describe action research as an investigation of a concrete problem in a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it. Burbank and Kauchack (2003: 501) suggest that the action research model has a greater impact on practice when it is shared in communities of practice or enquiry. Participation in these communities of practice allows teachers to own the process and provides them with opportunities to choose relevant topics that are applicable to their own classrooms in order to improve their own practice (Burbank and Kauchack 2003:501; Herbert & Rainford 2014:246; Rossouw 2009:6). The action research model therefore provides teachers with the opportunity of being actively involved in their professional development rather than merely being the recipient of someone else's ideas. It allows each teacher to contribute his or her own knowledge and expertise which, combined with the trainers' knowledge and expertise of new reforms, may create a platform where expertise is shared (Kennedy 2005:246; Herbert & Rainford 2014:247).

Action research as a model has been acknowledged by researchers as being effective in allowing teachers to take ownership of their professional development and, by doing so, being able to critically question their own practices (Kennedy 2005:246; Herbert & Rainford 2014:247; Burbank and Kauchack 2003:501). However, the political determinants that guide their practice may hamper teachers and discourage them from asking questions which may challenge the new policies that need to be implemented. Nevertheless, action research may help teachers to discover alternative practices by gathering data and using this data to generate meaning which may lead to transformative practice and professional autonomy (Kennedy 2005:246).

### **3.5.6 An appropriate model for professional development**

Before teacher trainers decide which model to choose, it is important for them not to study only their structural characteristics but also the underpinning influences, expectations and possibilities. Kennedy (2005:247) suggests the following questions should be asked to analyse the different models in order to select the most suitable one for professional development: Is the principal focus on individual or collective development? To what extent is professional development used as a form of accountability? What capacity does the professional development allow for supporting professional autonomy? Is the fundamental purpose of professional development to provide a means of transmission or to facilitate transformative practice?

This last question allows the models above to be placed on a continuum along which the perceived purposes of professional development can be placed. When professional development is linked to reforms in education, it may either equip teachers with the necessary skills to implement these reforms as decided mostly by governments, or it may serve to empower teachers become contributors, shapers and critics of reforms (Kennedy 2005:248).

Professional development models that serve the function of preparing teachers to implement new reforms such as the curriculum changes in South Africa since 1994, align themselves with the training, deficit and cascade models discussed earlier

which support a transmission view of professional development. These models do not promote active collegial learning; they are characterised by little or no follow up and now pedagogies are introduced without teachers having the opportunity to observe and practise them. On the other hand, professional development models that develop teachers to become contributors to improve education policy and practice align themselves with the action research model discussed earlier which supports a transformative view of professional development (Kennedy 2005:248).

The other three models discussed earlier – the standards-based model, coaching/mentoring model and community of practice model – have the ability to support practices of either the transmission or transformative view of professional development; therefore they are considered transitional. Burbank and Kauchak (2003:501) argue that even though a professional development model may be considered transformative, the scope of the training activity is determined by an external party, usually one in a position of power. This finding implies that although the capacity for autonomy is greater in the transformative models, it is not necessarily guaranteed. Teacher trainers should therefore include teachers in their planning of professional development activities by determining their needs and including them in the planning of their professional development sessions. This is often not standard practice because of time constraints for implementation of new policies and practices, as experienced by this researcher.

After careful consideration of the above models, it was decided to use the action research model to conduct the professional development of teachers. Stoecker (in Le Cordeur 2016:170) emphasised that the ultimate goal of action research is to democratise the research process to address inequalities and to give teachers the opportunity to change or adapt old practices. This implies that teachers themselves become involved in the design and execution of research projects. The applicability of the methodology lies in its ability to analyse and explain the classroom process that unfolds during the implementation of reading comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers. By using action research this study aimed to re-imagine reading and comprehension strategies to support the PCK of teachers directed at enhancing the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans primary school classes. Action research offers opportunities for teachers

to collaborate and participate by being actively involved in the planning of their professional development (Reddy 2004:141; Moodley 2013:3). Moreover, they are able to implement the strategies gained in professional development sessions, evaluate and adapt them through action research to suit the unique needs of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. In addition, they have the opportunity to contribute this knowledge which, combined with the knowledge of this researcher, may result in the development of a professional development programme to equip teachers to better support the reading comprehension skills in Afrikaans Home Language classes. Similarly, this knowledge could be used by universities to train pre-service teachers.

### **3.6 SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the problems relating to the poor reading comprehension skills of primary school pupils in South Africa. An investigation into the current status of literacy in primary schools revealed that the literacy levels of South African Grade 4 and 5 pupils were the lowest of the 45 countries participating in the 2011 PRILS tests. Furthermore, parents who have one of our nine indigenous languages as their mother tongue prefer their children to be educated in English and to a lesser extent in Afrikaans. Consequently teachers feel frustrated and overwhelmed because they have to teach pupils with diverse languages in one class. They find this very challenging, as they have little training in multilingualism and in the teaching of non-mother-tongue speakers.

Next, the variables relating to the poor reading comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes was investigated. This included the influence of the LiEP, the socio-economic status (SES) of pupils, and factors at the school itself on the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers. Furthermore, the teaching of reading according to the CAPS was investigated with specific reference to home-language literacy.

Lastly, the pertinent professional development models for teachers were investigated to select the most appropriate model for this study. Action research was selected because it allows teachers to be actively involved in their professional development.

In addition, they were able to conduct action research in their classes while implementing the reading and reading comprehension strategies acquired in the professional development programme.

The knowledge gathered in this literature study was used to develop a questionnaire to determine the professional development needs of 81 teachers in the Cape Winelands Education District (CWED). The following chapter concerns reading models, approaches and strategies as well as reading comprehension strategies with specific reference to non-mother-tongue speakers. This concluded cycle one of the action research process of this study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **LITERATURE STUDY (Part II): MOTHER-TONGUE EDUCATION, READING MODELS, APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES AND COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO NON- MOTHER-TONGUE SPEAKERS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is presented as phase four of cycle one of an action research approach to my study. The focus of this chapter is on reading models, approaches and strategies as well as on comprehension strategies with specific reference to non-mother-tongue speakers. Attempts to improve reading and reading comprehension for non-mother-tongue speakers have produced a large amount of research during the past number of decades (Grabe 1991:375; Carrell 1989:121; Pretorius & Lephala 2011:1-24). Le Cordeur (2004:15) cites Alderson (2000:1) and points to the fact that the number of theories on reading and the ways in which reading is acquired and taught are just too many to grasp and understand: “Any review, therefore, of the nature of reading is bound to be somewhat pretentious.” Pupils who experience reading problems at school are often labelled as “struggling readers” (Le Cordeur 2010a:76). Caskey (2008:170) agrees: “they are learners who grapple unsuccessfully with written text”. Non-mother-tongue speakers across the world require the ability to read written language at a reasonable level and with good comprehension in order to succeed academically (Carrell, Devine & Eskey 1988:1).

Therefore, teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers in the Intermediate Phase should be concerned with strategies that can improve these pupils’ reading skills. Carreker, Swank, Tillman-Dowdy, Neuhaus, Monfils, Montemayor and Johnson (2005:403) found that teachers have limited knowledge of effective reading instruction strategies. In South Africa teachers experience similar challenges and have expressed the need to support the non-mother-tongue speakers in their

classes more effectively (O'Connor & Geiger 2009:263; Hooijer & Fourie 2009:141-146; Scheepers 2006:4; Theron & Nel 2005:236; DoE 2008a:8). These studies concluded that the professional development of teachers significantly increases their pupils' reading achievement.

Furthermore, researchers found that there is confusion about reading comprehension instruction, with evidence pointing to haphazard instruction (Scull 2010:89). Some research studies suggest that very little comprehension instruction takes place in classrooms, because some teachers assume that if pupils can decode, they can comprehend (Scull 2010:89; Pretorius & Currin 2010:68; Zimmerman & Smit 2014:2; Concannon-Gibney & Murphy 2010:123). It may also be because not enough focus is placed in classrooms on comprehension instruction (Pretorius 2012:80; Pretorius & Klapwijk 2016:9). A study conducted by Blair, Rupley and Nichols (2007:433) found that the quality of reading instruction that pupils receive is a major factor in their success. Furthermore, studies emphasise the importance of teacher knowledge of research about the teaching of reading and making decisions based on the findings of this research (Blair et al. 2007:433; Grabe & Stoller 2002:3). Therefore this study aims to actively involve participating teachers in this action research project.

In addition, effective and responsive teachers need to define reading, as it is important to know what reading entails and what good readers do (Barchers 1998:12; Grabe & Stoller 2002:9). It is difficult for experts to agree on a single definition, therefore several will be offered here. For example: reading is a process by which children are able to extract a sequence of cues from printed texts and relate these to one another, so that they understand the message of the text (Clay 1991:22); reading begins with the registration of the printed words in the brain through the visual and perceptual processes, with the brain converting the written symbols to language, and with cognitive and comprehension processes, adding meaning by relating the symbols to the reader's prior knowledge (Dechant 1993:69); reading is a purposeful reconstruction of an author's printed message for recreational, aesthetic or functional purposes (Duffy & Roehler 1993:36); reading is a complex, dynamic process that involves the bringing of meaning to, and getting meaning from, the printed page (Rubin 1993:5); reading is the ability to draw



meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately (Grabe & Stoller 2002:9); reading is a receptive language process; reading is a psycholinguistic process that begins with a linguistic surface presentation encoded by a writer and concludes with the construction of meaning by the reader (Goodman 1988:12).

None of these definitions fully describes the complexity of processing that takes place when we read. Neither do they explain the learning difficulties that non-mother-tongue speakers need to overcome to become efficient readers. The scope of research already conducted on reading as well the vast amount of ongoing research on reading suggests how difficult it is to define reading. According to Le Cordeur (2004:16), it is clear that reading is not a one-dimensional process; it consists of many facets.

In this chapter the value of mother-tongue education and the pedagogies of reading for non-mother-tongue speakers and the purposes of reading will be discussed. This will be followed by an account of the various models of reading as well as the instructional reading approaches linked to each model. After that, the role that the creation of mental images plays to improve memory in the form of the schema theory will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of the important role that vocabulary plays in reading comprehension, but also the role that motivation plays in the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers. Finally reciprocal teaching and comprehension strategy instruction will be discussed including the associated comprehension strategies. Some of these comprehension strategies were included in the professional development programme in which the 12 teachers participated.

## **4.2 THE VALUE OF MOTHER-TONGUE EDUCATION**

### **4.2.1 The monolingual habitus**

According to Gogolin (in Alexander 2011:1), the monolingual habitus is the generally accepted view that the use of one official language (e.g. French in France) is sufficient for the purposes of educating school children, including those who speak a

different language. Therefore, the monolingual habitus ignores the multilingual nature of the population and the languages of minority groups are marginalised. This has negative consequences for the speakers. In South Africa Gogolin's term applies to the post-apartheid dispensation in which English became hegemonic to the detriment of indigenous languages, as a result of the political class's monolingual habitus (Alexander 2011:1). Alexander argues that it is true in principle that a child can learn through the medium of any language, provided that he/she is fully proficient in the language. For most young children, the mother tongue has to fulfil this role. However, it is clear that this is not possible in the case of the indigenous language speakers in South Africa, for a number of reasons such as (i) the curriculum dictates that pupils who have an indigenous language as their mother tongue must switch to English in Grade 4; (ii) there is also a negative attitude towards mother-tongue education, which will be explained in the following section (Le Cordeur 2012b:6; Alexander 2011:1).

#### **4.2.2 The negative attitude towards indigenous languages and mother-tongue education**

Mother-tongue education remains a controversial subject in South Africa. In spite of the above-mentioned arguments in its favour, not all South Africans are convinced that mother-tongue education is best for their children. According to Gxilishe (2009:3), mother-tongue education can act as a divisive factor that may once again result in education systems aligned according to race: "There is currently a widespread mistrust of mother-tongue tuition. This view is the result of apartheid's attempt to foster and impose ethnicity as a divide and rule strategy". Kamwangamalu (2000:124) is of the view that most black people prefer to be educated in English or Afrikaans as their own languages are perceived to have little advantage in the world of commerce and industry. The stigma associated with mother-tongue education because of the legacy of apartheid makes it difficult to market indigenous languages as languages of teaching and learning (Le Cordeur 2012b:6).

Research on language-in-education over the past four decades (Alexander 2011; Heugh 2006; Le Cordeur 2012b:9) has found that all attempts to establish English or

other European languages as teaching languages for speakers of indigenous languages on the African continent have failed. The task of all educationalists should be to convince parents of the value of mother-tongue education, especially in primary schools. This will be explained further in the following section.

### **4.2.3 Motivation for using indigenous languages for basic education**

The value of mother-tongue education and the role it plays in promoting academic performance should be emphasised by educationalists. It is therefore important to discuss specific reasons that can motivate indigenous-language-speaking parents to choose mother-tongue education for their children (Le Cordeur 2012b:7). These reasons are outlined below.

First, pupils identify with their mother tongue on a cognitive level (Batibo 2011:16). As pupils are exposed to new information and concepts, they attempt to fit these into their existing conceptual and intellectual frameworks. The way in which this information is stored in memory was first explained by Piaget (1926 in Little and Box 2011:24). New information and concepts are internalised when they fit into existing frameworks. When new information is presented in an unfamiliar language, the pupil has insufficient supportive mechanisms to lead to comprehension. As a result, these pupils are unable to articulate their thoughts and they lack confidence and self-worth (Batibo 2011:17; O'Connor & Geiger 2009:260). Second, indigenous languages intensify the learners' bond with the community in which they grow up. Studies conducted by O'Connor and Geiger (2009:260), Theron and Nel (2005:223) and De Klerk (2002a:7) confirm that pupils who have given up their language and culture as a result of not being educated in their mother tongue are often ostracised in their communities. A third reason relates to current curriculum reforms in attempts to include information on indigenous cultures. This new information can be better understood if it is explained to pupils in their mother tongue (Batibo 2011:18).

As noted in paragraph 4.2.2, this is not always possible, because some parents – as in the case of this study - prefer to enrol their children in Afrikaans- or English-medium schools. Therefore it was decided to investigate the pedagogies of the teaching of reading for non-mother-tongue speakers.

### 4.3 READING PEDAGOGIES FOR NON-MOTHER-TONGUE SPEAKERS

There have been two hypotheses regarding the pedagogies of reading for non-mother-tongue speakers that have guided teachers of reading for the last forty years. The first hypothesis is that successful reading in the second language depends upon well-developed first-language ability, while the second hypothesis is that successful second-language reading ability depends upon mastery of the second language and not upon first-language reading proficiency (Perkins, Brutton & Pohlmann 1991:49). Current studies of first-language transfer conclude that first-language processes will always be present to some extent as second-language reading involves two languages (Grabe 2010:126). It is important to note, however, that to assume that transfer of first-language reading skills will take place just by reading a lot in the second language is a fallacy as non-mother-tongue speakers need explicit instruction (Grabe 2010:150).

Teachers should be aware that non-mother-tongue speakers do not possess the vocabulary, morphology, syntax and sound combinations that first-language pupils of the same age do. They need to build these resources simultaneously while developing their reading comprehension. The linguistic resources from the first language may influence second-language reading by either aiding or interfering with second-language reading comprehension (Grabe 2010:131; Perkins et al. 1991:49). Studies conducted by Pretorius and Lephala (2011:16) and Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:3) found that when pupils have not yet mastered adequate decoding skills, it is very difficult for them to read with comprehension. It is therefore important for teachers to check the ability of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes to read high-frequency words. Grabe (2010:127) noted that a certain level of proficiency in sight word recognition is necessary for fluent reading. Decoding deficiencies may have a direct influence on fluent reading and reading comprehension ability. It is, however, possible for non-mother-tongue speakers to read fluently but have inadequate reading comprehension. This may be the result of inadequate background knowledge and poor vocabulary (Guccione 2011:567). When the reader focuses more attention on unfamiliar words, less cognitive attention is paid to connecting concepts, which can in turn lead to impaired reading comprehension (Swaffar 1988:129). Therefore, teachers have to ensure that the

basic decoding skills, the vocabulary and the comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers are enhanced (Grabe 2010:127; Guccione 2011:567; Pretorius and Klapwijk 2016:3).

Studies have concluded that phonological awareness is one of the critical skills that influence reading ability for first-language pupils, but it is also regarded as essential for effective reading by non-mother-tongue speakers (Lipka & Siegel 2007:107). It is seen as an early predictor of reading development and also underlies effective word-recognition skills (Pretorius 2012:89). Non-mother-tongue speakers need explicit instruction in these skills, just like their first-language counterparts (Guccione 2011:568; Amendum 2014:353). Grabe (2010:128) notes that pupils who have an awareness of the roles of phonology, orthography and morphology in word recognition may be more effective at learning new vocabulary. In South Africa, however, the nine official black languages share few of these language structures with Afrikaans or English, which are the languages of learning and teaching in the schools that some of them attend. Dougherty Stahl (2005:186) emphasises that teachers should include oral as well as written activities to improve phonological awareness. Therefore the development of phonological awareness for non-mother-tongue speakers was included in the professional development of the participating teachers in this study.

It is important to note that non-mother-tongue speakers' reading is influenced by their social and cultural backgrounds (Grabe 2010:137; Carrell 1988:81). Early childhood exposure to books and other media enhances the development of literacy in the first language, because socio-cultural backgrounds influence expectations about reading (Lemmer 1995:93). Moore and Hart (2007:20) concluded that pupils who have not been exposed to reading as part of their early socialisation may find reading and interpreting texts difficult. This is more pronounced when they come from cultures that do not value books or when poor socio-economic circumstances prevent them from accessing books or other printed media such as magazines and newspapers (Lemmer 1995:92; Grabe 2010:138; Modiba & Steward 2013:7). Although pupils may not have been exposed to books and other printed media, they bring a rich cultural heritage to school. Le Cordeur (2004) cites Carrell (1988:2), who recognises the strong relationship between culture and text in order to understand

the meaning of the text completely. Teachers of non-mother tongue speakers should be sensitive to reading problems that may be the result of implied cultural knowledge in a text that is not correctly interpreted by the non-mother-tongue speakers (Carrell 1988:82). It is therefore important that teachers consider the cultural backgrounds of their pupils when planning literacy lessons, as the role of cultural knowledge is essential for reading comprehension (Lemmer 1995:92; Carrell 1988:82). A further consideration in the South African context is that many pupils speaking the nine official black languages learn to read in their second language, because their parents choose to enrol them in Afrikaans or English schools (Basson & Le Cordeur 2014:11; Lundgren, Scheckle and Zinn 2015:2).

Teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers should also understand the different purposes of reading in order to create a balanced literacy classroom for second-language pupils (Cooper et al. 2012:44). Hence the purposes of reading will be discussed in the following section.

#### **4.4 PURPOSES OF READING**

As mentioned in the previous section, second-language pupils often struggle to read fluently. Teachers should therefore start by exposing pupils to the different purposes of reading by reading aloud to them. Background knowledge on specific topics can be built as well as developing vocabulary. Teachers must use the opportunity to explain new vocabulary to their pupils, especially if they are non-mother-tongue speakers (Cooper et al. 2012:44; Barchers 1998:84). Having background knowledge on a specific topic helps the reader to identify the main idea and supporting ideas (Cooper et al. 2012:44; Grabe & Stoller 2002:12).

Reading aloud models fluent reading, which helps non-mother-tongue speakers to improve their own reading fluency (Cooper et al. 2012:44). It also leads to increased comprehension and development of spoken language (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola & Vaughn 2004:271). Teachers are then able to teach specific strategies<sup>6</sup> and

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<sup>6</sup> Strategies are a set of abilities which require higher-level cognitive processing which is controlled consciously by the reader, although they are sometimes used automatically by fluent readers (Grabe & Stoller 2002:15; Blair et al. 2007:434).

skills<sup>7</sup> for comprehension, which is the most basic purpose of reading (Grabe & Stoller 2002:14). Non-mother-tongue speakers often have difficulty in becoming fluent readers; therefore comprehension strategies should first be taught through listening and then through reading (Cooper et al. 2012:45; Grabe & Stoller 2002:14).

When pupils read independently, they share the above purposes for reading. In addition, they read to learn. Reading to learn is important in academic settings such as schools where pupils need to absorb information from texts. As pupils progress to higher grades, the texts they are presented with increase in complexity and length (Pretorius 2012:77). Therefore when pupils read to learn, they generally read at a slower rate, because they have to reread to remember important information (Grabe & Stoller 2002:14; Therrien, Gormley & Kubina 2006:24). This type of reading requires cognitive processes such as linking the information presented (Stoller & Grabe 2001:98). Pupils also skim<sup>8</sup> and scan<sup>9</sup> texts to find specific information or a specific word. This involves strategies such as guessing where a piece of information occurs in a text and using comprehension skills to formulate an idea when they need to absorb information from text (Grabe & Stoller 2002:14).

## **4.5 MODELS OF READING**

### **4.5.1 The bottom-up model**

The bottom-up model depicts reading as mainly a mechanical process which relies on the processing of letters and words with little interference from the reader's own background knowledge (Grabe & Stoller 2002:32; Pressley 1998:52; Le Cordeur 2004:43). This model is regarded as text driven, because the text is emphasised as the point of departure and readers are expected to read it accurately (Vogel 2006:100). Pupils start off by learning letters and their sounds (grapho-phonics), which are practised until they are able to identify them easily. Letters are then chunked together to form words, phrases and sentences which are practised until

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<sup>7</sup> Skills involve lower-level cognitive processing such as word recognition and syntactic processing are acquired gradually and eventually used relatively automatically by the reader (Grabe & Stoller 2002:15; Blair et al. 2007:434).

<sup>8</sup> Skimming refers to sampling segments of text to facilitate general understanding (Grabe & Stoller 2002:13).

<sup>9</sup> When we scan the text we search for a specific piece of information or word (Grabe & Stoller 2002:13).

automaticity is attained (Laberge & Samuels 1974:24; Barchers 1998:16). This alphabetical and phonological knowledge is used to blend sounds and ‘sound out’ new words in texts (Pretorius 2012:78). However, Smith (1986:50) argues against the use of phonics to decode words as there is no one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds. He describes reliance on phonics to read as “dysfunctional in fluent reading and interferes with learning to read” (Smith 1986:75).

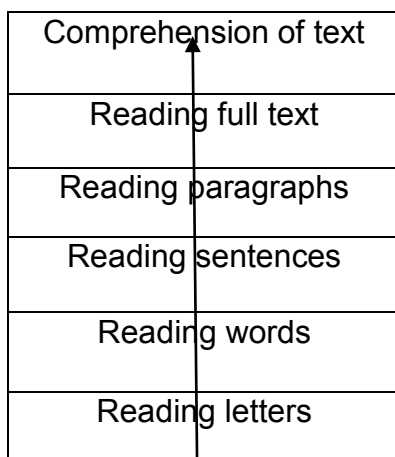


Figure 4.1: Bottom-up model of reading (Barchers 1998:15).

Parris (2005:188) distinguishes between constrained and unconstrained skills. The decoding skills mentioned above (letter-sound relationships, phonological awareness, print knowledge, word recognition and fluency) are examples of constrained skills. They are constrained because their numbers are small, their scope is limited and acquisition as well as full mastery is expected relatively quickly. Unconstrained skills refer to vocabulary and reading comprehension. These skills are open-ended, need to be taught explicitly and develop throughout life (Parris 2005:188; Fletcher, Greenwood, Grimley, Parkhill & Davis 2012:427).

The advantages of the bottom-up model are that pupils learn to master sight words automatically and that they can use their knowledge of sounds and letters to decode words (Barchers 1998:16). This model may lead to pupils reading word for word, as well as experiencing problems in understanding the deeper meaning of the text (Vogel 2006:100). Au (cited in Freppon and Dahl 1998:242) elaborated on some of the negative effects of the bottom-up model in an interview:



I find it distressing to read in the popular press that phonics instruction is supposed to lay the foundation for reading. This prevalent but misguided notion ignores research on emergent literacy that clearly demonstrates the priority of functions of literacy over forms (sounds, letters, mechanics) in young children's development. The danger, as I see it, is that an over-emphasis on word identification will result in students of diverse backgrounds being denied opportunities to acquire the full processes of reading and writing. They end up as poor readers and writers with a bunch of isolated skills, while other students become good readers and writers, able to read with appreciation and understanding.

#### **4.5.2 The top-down model**

Smith used cognitive psychology to understand the reading process. His model was called the top-down model of word perception (Stanovich 2000:5). He argues that for reading comprehension to take place, the reader or listener has to bring meaning to the text (Smith 1988:68). He emphasises the importance of surface structure and deep structure in the reading process. The surface structure in written language is the words and pictures the eyes pick up during reading, while deep structure is an alternative term for meaning (Smith 1986:69). He emphasised that meaning was not directly represented in the surface structure, but that readers must bring meaning (deep structure) to the reading process by drawing on their background knowledge about the topic (Smith 1986:75). Smith's hypothesis was that the skilled reader relies less on graphic cues and is more reliant on contextual information than the less-skilled reader (Stanovich 2000:6).

Coady (1979) adapted the top-down model of reading for second-language reading (Carrel 1988:3). This model assumes that pupils bring their own experiences and knowledge to the reading process and actively control the comprehension process (Grabe 2010:89; Carrel 1988:4). The reader is understood to have certain expectations about the text. While reading, these expectations are confirmed or rejected by sampling of relevant information (Barchers 1998:17; Grabe 2010:89). Proponents of this model accept that pupils use their background knowledge as well as their grammatical knowledge to read and comprehend the text (Vogel 2006:100; Carrel 1988:101). Another prominent feature of this model is making inferences from

the text by the reader (Grabe & Stoller 2002:32; Grabe 2010:89). Pupils are taught to use what they know to approximate the meaning of the text and, while reading, check whether this knowledge matches the text and needs to be modified, if necessary (Barchers 1998:17). It is important to note that good readers do not let their prior knowledge get out of control, so that when they retell the story it would not be recognised by someone else reading the same story (Pressley 1998:53). Eskey (1988:94) describes the top-down model as “educated guessing based on minimal visual cues.”

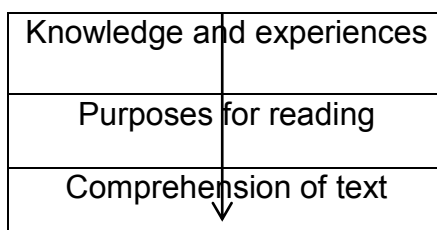


Figure 4.2: Top-down model of reading (Barchers 1998:17).

The advantage of this model is that it encourages fluent reading, which may increase the reading comprehension of some pupils (Vogel 2006:100). This holds true for the fluent reader but does not address the problems facing non-mother-tongue speakers who are not such proficient readers (Eskey 1988:93). They may experience problems with unfamiliar content and complicated language, which affects their reading comprehension. Other contributing factors may be that these pupils have not mastered adequate lower-level skills to support meaning making (Pretorius 2012:90). This model also emphasises higher-level skills such as prediction of meaning by using background knowledge or context cues at the expense of lower-level skills such as identifying sounds and words (Eskey 1988:93). Non-mother-tongue speakers require both higher-level and lower-level skills to facilitate reading comprehension (Pretorius 2012:90). The top-down model had such a major influence on the teaching of second language reading that it has been regarded as a substitute for the bottom-up model. It is important to note, however, that effective reading requires that both bottom-up and top-down strategies work interactively (Carrel 1988:4; Le Cordeur 2004:48).

The interactive model, regarded as the compromise solution, will be discussed in the following section.

### 4.5.3 Interactive models

Interactive models combine the top-down and bottom-up models, which implies that a pattern is synthesised by readers using their decoding skills and background knowledge simultaneously (Le Cordeur 2010b:118; Grabe & Stoller 2002:33; Stanovich 2000:22; Barchers 1998:18; Le Cordeur 2010b:112). These models share the same processing components. They all allow feedback between features and agree that when comprehending, the brain selects input, processes familiar letters and words automatically, recognises linguistic relationships, infers relationships and synthesises the discussion of the text with the attitudes and feelings of the reader (Swaffar 1988:125). Teachers of second language pupils should be interested in interactive models, because linguistic limitations inhibit reading. First-language researchers have found that good readers are not good just because they are better at predicting or make better use of context cues. They are able to decode letters and words rapidly, consequently they do not always have to rely on guessing strategies (Grabe 1988:60).

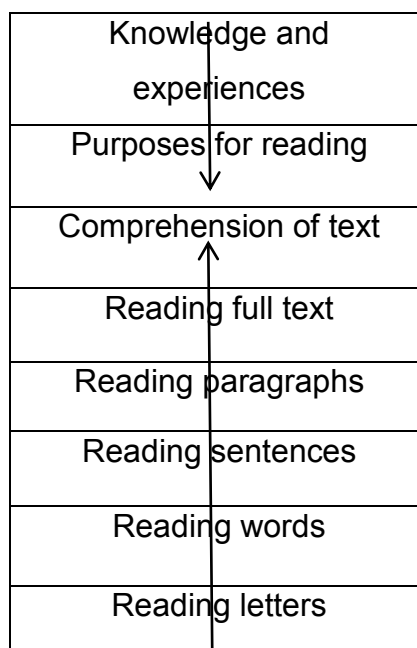


Figure 4.3: Interactive model of reading (Barchers 1998:19).

It is important to note that there is no single interactive model, thus three models will be discussed briefly to assist in understanding the reading process (Grabe 1988:60). These models are McClelland and Rumelhart's interactive-activation model, Stanovich's interactive-compensatory model and Perfetti's verbal efficiency model.

McClelland and Rumelhart's interactive-activation model is essentially based on word recognition research. This model assumes that a pattern is synthesised simultaneously from several knowledge sources (Stanovich 2000:41). It follows from the logogen model of mental activation and information retrieval, which posits that a logogen<sup>10</sup> exists for each word (Grabe 1988:61). Therefore letters, words, sentences, contexts and background knowledge activate groups of words which activate meaning and comprehension. The mind then only pays attention to the one or two words that are being read at the time. This process happens at such a rapid rate that there is no time for conscious guessing. This process allows for more attention to be focused on the comprehension process rather than on selecting and predicting of words (Grabe 1988:61; Stanovich 2000:41).

Stanovich's interactive compensatory model posits that reading involves many processes (Grabe 1988:61). This model also pays special attention to various word recognition processes. The "compensatory" dimension assumes that when readers have a weakness in a specific area, they will rely on other sources regardless of where they lie in the processing hierarchy (Stanovich 2000:41; Swaffar 1988:125; Grabe 1988:61). Therefore, a struggling reader who has poor recognition skills may, for instance, rely to a greater extent on contextual information (Le Cordeur 2010b:118). During context-free word recognition, struggling readers may have additional contextual expectancy processes to assist with word identification. Unfortunately this may lead to fewer cognitive processes being available for comprehension processes (Stanovich 2000:42). On the other hand, good readers have a larger variety of strategies to assist them. Many information-processing models share this trade-off among processes that share limited cognitive resources. According to Grabe (1988:63), this model is best suited for non-mother-tongue speakers.

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<sup>10</sup> A logogen is a response unit that is sensitive to the set of auditory, visual and semantic features that is associated with a specific word (Grabe 1988:61).

Restricted interactive models – for example, Perfetti’s verbal efficiency model – are similar to Stanovich’s interactive compensatory model (Grabe 1988:62; Grabe 2010:90). Stanovich (2000:7) reports how excited he was when he realised that Perfetti came to the same conclusion as he regarding the effects of contexts on less skilled readers. Both researchers came to the conclusion that poor readers make greater use of context than skilled readers do (Stanovich 2000:32). Perfetti also placed great emphasis on the integration of processes such as decoding skills, lexical access and converting print into language code for effective reading comprehension. These processes share a limited capacity mechanism, which means that if one process such as decoding of words requires more processing capacity, less capacity is available for higher integrated functions such as reading comprehension (Perfetti & Hogaboam 1975:461; Grabe 2010:90). According to Grabe (1988:63), Perfetti is able to explain a wide range of variations in reading ability, thus his approach may be more compatible with second-language reading.

Grabe (1988:63) describes several implications for second-language research when interactive models are accepted. First, reading is an interactive process which suggest the significant role that higher-level processes play. Second, this model suggests that many lower-level processes such as rapid word recognition are essential for effective reading. Third, there is a need for a large receptive vocabulary that can be retrieved accurately and automatically. Fourth, a range of student difficulties such as deficient schemata may cause slow text-bound reading or unnecessary guessing, while lack of low-level processing may lead to word-by-word reading or guessing too often. Fifth, the reading of non-mother-tongue speakers may be better understood by studying the five-stage theory of Chall (1983) in Grabe (1988:64). Chall proposes the following stages: pre-reading, initial reading or decoding, confirmation and fluency, reading for new information, multiple viewpoints, and construction and deconstruction. She describes various types of processing at the different stages with interactive processes starting at stage three.

Therefore it is important that teachers of struggling readers should assist pupils to improve their *bottom-up* word recognition skills as well as their *top-down* interpretive skills. The one model should not be seen as a replacement of the other. Rather, these two models complement one another. Effective reading requires that both the

*top-down* and *bottom-up* models to work in an interactive manner as stated by Carrell: “good reading – that is fluent and accurate reading – can result only from a constant interaction between these processes” (1988:95). Therefore, teachers should use a combination of the two models for teaching reading. The advantage of interactive models is that a reader can use a stronger component such as prior knowledge to compensate for a weaker component such as poor decoding skills (Swaffar 1998:125).

The following section focuses on instructional approaches linked to each of these models.

## **4.6 INSTRUCTIONAL READING APPROACHES**

Instructional approaches such as basal readers and language experience linked to the bottom-up and top-down models will be discussed briefly, as they are not currently part of the CAPS curriculum. The whole language and balanced language approaches linked to the interactive model will be discussed in greater detail. The balanced language approach will, however, receive the most attention as it forms part of the CAPS curriculum. Therefore it was included in the professional development programme of this study.

Reading researchers have been locked in a continuous debate, also called the reading wars, between proponents of the whole language approach and those who advocate the teaching of decoding skills. Good teachers have combined both approaches in their teaching strategies, but a large majority of teachers are confused by the conflicting messages that they receive from trainers and the academic literature (Hanekom 2010:6; Stanovich 2000:361).

### **4.6.1 Basal readers**

Basal readers are textbooks that contain stories, articles, essays and poetry written or chosen for a specific grade or level. This approach is mostly based on the bottom-up approach, although some basal readers may present an interactive approach. Teachers' manuals direct the way instruction has to take place in a highly

structured manner. It is teacher directed and features a systematic development of skills (Barchers 1998:29).

#### **4.6.2 Language experience programme**

The language experience programme is based on the top-down model of reading as the pupil moves from the whole story to individual words and sounds. This approach emphasises individual and whole group experiences, which implies that the group decides what should be written down. The teacher writes the words dictated by the pupils, which may be a story or poem etc. The pupils then read what has been written by the teacher (Barchers 1998:36).

#### **4.6.3 Whole language approach**

Smith and Goodman were the earliest proponents of the whole language approach, which is a philosophical approach based on psycholinguistic theory (Tierney et al. 1990:26). This approach is based on the interactive model of reading (Barchers 1998:50). Proponents of the whole language approach hold the view that learning to read is a natural process, like learning how to speak, where pupils are engaged in authentic literature (Woolfolk 2010:473; Pressley 1998:10; Stanovich 2000:400). Furthermore, Goodman and Goodman (1982 cited in Tierney et al. 1990:27) suggest that teaching literacy should be directed by knowledge of language learning, and the more removed teaching is from the natural way that students learn, the more difficult tasks are for the students. Goodman (1993 cited in Pressley 1998:16) argued:

What we have learned from the study of language development, both oral and written, is that language is easy to learn when we deal with the whole of it as we use it functionally to make sense. Little children are understanding and making themselves understood in oral language long before they fully control the sound system. That's because they learn language in the context of its use. Children learn written language in the same way.

The teaching of isolated skills such as a predetermined list of sight words or the teaching of phonics is not permitted by the whole language approach. It is seen as artificial and meaningless (Tierney et al. 1990:27). Smith (1986:50, 57) argues that teaching of phonics does not work, because letter-sound correspondences are too complex. He advocates that sounds are not needed to decode words, because words are recognised in a similar way other visual objects such as trees, cars and faces are recognised.

Altwerger, Edelsky and Flores (1987 cited in Tierney et al. 1990:27) suggest that the following theoretical premises inform the whole language approach: (a) language is used to make meaning and used for many purposes; (b) written language is language; (c) orthography, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics are always present in language at the same time; (d) language use always occurs in context; (e) contexts are essential for meaning making.

Reading researchers have struggled to arrive at a common definition for the whole language approach, because the philosophy is so broad (Pressley 1998:12). Smith (1988:301) declared that whole language is an approach that most consistently reflects the view that “meaning and natural language are the basis of literacy learning.” There is, agreement among reading experts regarding the principles that characterise whole language. The key tenets that inform whole language are summarised in Barchers (1998:50) from the works of Ken Goodman, Dorothy Watson, Brian Cambourne, Frank Smith and Constance Weaver.

- Meaning is constructed by readers using background knowledge, clues and personal purposes when reading. As they read, they predict, consider, contemplate and self-correct. Comprehension is the ultimate goal.
- Writers attempt to make their writing accessible to their readers by including enough information and detail.
- When pupils actively engage with one another, books, subject matter and the world, learning is increased.
- Learning is a social act that involves participation of a group that is committed to learning, investigation and risk taking.



- When pupil learning is self-directed and not imposed by others, learning is more effective. They are more likely to take risks, succeed and progress.
- Literacy develops from the whole to the part and from what is known to the unknown.
- There is no progression in acquiring literacy, nor a specific order in which sub skills develop. It is an individual process that can be unpredictable or even disorganised.
- Pupils are accepted unconditionally and learning is constructed on the basis of their personal experiences, cultures and backgrounds.

Pressley (1998:26) noted that there is some evidence that the whole language approach has benefits for pupils, although the evidence is not as overwhelming as proponents of whole language might have wished. Some of the findings are: involvement in literature and writing improves pupils' attitude towards reading and encourages them to participate in literacy activities; whole language allows pupils to interact with the text beyond the literal meaning, which increases comprehension and writing skills; when pupils have comprehensive exposure to stories, their knowledge of the world increases; invented spelling did not interfere with the development of conventional spelling skills. There is, however, evidence that the whole language approach impacts negatively on the reading development of pupils in low socio-economic groups (Stanovich 2000:381).

One of the most well established conclusions in reading research is that direct instruction of alphabetic coding increases reading acquisition (Stanovich 2000:399). However, proponents of the whole language approach advocate that learning to read is like learning how to speak. This idea is not accepted by responsible linguists (Pressley 1998:16; Stanovich 2000:400). Chall (1998 in Stanovich 2000:398) maintains that, although some teachers overdo the teaching of phonics, some children need explicit phonics instruction in order to learn how to read. Consequently whole language pupils rely much more on picture and semantic context cues (Pressley 1998:32). Relying heavily on semantic context cues causes pupils to read many words incorrectly, but semantic cues become important after the word is recognised (Pressley 1998:45).

#### 4.6.4 The balanced language approach

According to Au, Carroll and Scheu (1997:4), balanced literacy gives “reading and writing equal status and recognises both the cognitive and affective dimensions of literacy. It acknowledges that meaning-making is involved in the full processes of reading and writing, while recognising the importance of the strategies and skills used by proficient readers and writers.” Furthermore, balanced literacy is based on the interactive reading model and combines the strengths of whole language and skills instruction (Pressley 1998:181; Botha et al. 2009:28). This model advocates that pupils should build up their semantic-, syntactic- and grapho-phonetic knowledge in order to become fluent readers (Botha et al. 2009:28). Pupils need to be taught reading strategies to access these three areas of knowledge. These reading strategies are: using prior knowledge (semantic knowledge), reading with understanding (semantic, grapho-phonetic and syntactic knowledge), analysing words (grapho-phonetic knowledge) and reading sentences fluently (syntactic knowledge) (Cooper et al. 2012:65; Botha et al. 2009:29).

Balanced literacy combines teacher-directed instruction and pupil-centred instruction. Teacher-directed instruction includes demonstrating skills such as using think-alouds to demonstrate a strategy like making inferences, whereas pupil-centred instruction expects pupils to learn specific things from a certain task (Cooper et al. 2012:16). A variety of texts which may include big books, text books, class readers, charts, newspaper articles or library books, should be used as part of the balanced literacy approach.

However, there are a number of different interpretations of what a balanced language approach entails (Weaver 1998). On the one hand, the balanced language approach is regarded as “a structured programme for teaching, assessing, and remediating reading – an approach wherein teachers will explicitly teach phonemic awareness, phonics, and other word-attack skills”. On the other hand, the balanced approach seems to be regarded as “an eclectic approach, a little of this and a little of that, like a tossed salad, with no particular relationship among the various ingredients”. These different views may have an impact on the implementation of reading programmes as well as the development of good literacy practices (Weaver

1998: xv). Tomkins (2009:25) agrees with Weaver that different interpretations of a balanced approach to language teaching may lead to the implementation of a variety of balanced programmes in classrooms. These differences may have an impact on the implementation of reading programmes as well as the development of exemplary practice.

Balanced literacy is a curriculum framework prescribed by CAPS. Therefore it is important that follow-up CAPS teacher training includes clear guidelines as to the implementation of the balanced language approach. Other factors that may impact on the implementation of the balanced language approach in classrooms are: lack of resources, such as big books or books with appropriate texts; overcrowded classes; teachers not able to select appropriate books or their pedagogy might be based on behaviourist theory, which lacks pupil participation; lack of appropriate-level texts; large numbers of teachers who have below-average content knowledge in the subject they teach; and professional development sessions for teachers are limited to once-off sessions, which may limit effective implementation. Researchers such as Spaul (2013:53), Miyazaki (2015:2), Moodley (2013:3) and Amendum (2014:349) have come to similar conclusions.

The following content areas of the CAPS curriculum are integrated in the balanced language approach: listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing as well as language structure and use. This approach ensures that pupils read and write every day and scaffolding is used to guide and support pupils into becoming independent readers and writers (Botha et al. 2009:5).

The following reading strategies that form part of the balanced language approach will be discussed below: shared reading, guided reading, group reading, reading aloud and independent reading, including accommodation of non-mother-tongue speakers.

#### 4.6.4.1 Shared reading

Shared reading can be described as allowing teachers to “model and support the use of cues and self-monitoring reading strategies which may include the use of

pictures to help construct meaning-making predictions, rereading, segmenting and blending phonemes and finding familiar word chunks to decode words” (Short, Cane & Peeling 2000 in Fisher, Frey & Lapp 2008:548). This definition indicates that shared reading may increase the vocabulary and reading comprehension of emergent readers as well as older readers.

Holdaway initially used the term ‘shared reading’ to describe the interaction between pupils and teachers while they read (Fisher et al. 2008:548; Cumming-Potvin, Renshaw & van Kraayenoord 2003:55; Cooper et al. 2012:37). Holdaway published children’s favourite stories, rhymes and poems in big books to assist teachers to model reading skills while pupils watched and listened. Later pupils join in reading and rereading when they feel comfortable as the teacher allows them to have more and more responsibility (Cooper et al. 2012:37; Barchers 1998:88; Cumming-Potvin et al. 2003:55). An appropriate book for shared reading should have enlarged text and an interesting story which is appropriate for the age of the pupils. Illustrations should illustrate new vocabulary and assist pupils to acquire comprehension skills such as making predictions and drawing inferences (Barchers 1998:89).

A study conducted by Fisher et al. (2008:555) indicates that modelling by effective teachers during shared reading should be based on an identified purpose such as vocabulary acquisition or a comprehension strategy. They caution against focusing on one comprehension strategy at a time as many comprehension processes take place simultaneously, as indicated by Pressley (1998:55). In addition, shared reading is a useful strategy to increase non-mother-tongue speakers’ language proficiency, as it makes the written language understandable (Cooper 2012:195; Cumming-Potvin et al. 2003:54).

Other advantages of shared reading are: it engages the whole class, because all the pupils can see the text and pictures; pupils of all reading abilities can join in at their own level; it exposes pupils to text that is slightly above their reading level; and it provides an important bridge between reading aloud to pupils and independent reading by pupils (Nixon 2008a:5; Dougherty Stahl 2012:50). Teachers in the Intermediate Phase can use a wide variety of texts to engage all pupils. They may have their own copies of the text instead of the teacher using a big book (Dougherty

Stahl 2012:50). Special adaptations made for implementation of shared reading for non-mother-tongue speakers included in the professional development programme are the following: more time spent on the activation of prior knowledge; culturally relevant texts; new vocabulary should be introduced by using pictures or object and displayed on word walls; use graphic organisers and semantic charts and consolidation of new vocabulary by playing word games.

Five strategies that have been used successfully by Kessler (2010:272), Pollard-Durodola et al. (2011:164-165) and Fisher et al. (2008:551) to increase the vocabulary and comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers and which were included in the professional development of teachers, will be discussed below. These strategies are as follows: possible sentences, context clues, repeated readings, integration of narrative and expository texts, and tactile and kinaesthetic activities.

- *Possible sentences*

Blachowicz and Fisher (2010:49) state that talking, thinking and planning should be emphasised during the pre-reading phase as they increase comprehension. Moreover, they emphasise that discussing vocabulary as part of the pre-reading phase increases the prediction process.

Selected words from the text should be presented to the pupils in the same sequence they occur in the text. Pupils are then asked to generate possible sentences, which are written by the teacher on the board. Pupils are asked to predict what the text is about or to predict what they may learn. During reading a tally is put as it occurs in the text and, after reading, these words are revisited in context to determine how often they occurred in the text. Pupils are then asked to adapt their sentences or to make new sentences based on the information gained from reading the text (Kessler 2010:5). Other ways of encouraging pupils to use the new vocabulary is to snap their fingers when these words are used, or pupils can indicate by using examples when a word has been used. The teacher can then put a tally mark next to the word (Blachowicz and Fisher 2010:26).

- *Context clues*

Most pupils use context clues automatically when reading a text (Nagy, Anderson & Herman 1985:234). The use of context clues by pupils can be enhanced by teacher modelling whereby pupils' attention is focused on comparisons, contrasts, synonyms, antonyms, descriptions and definitions (Fisher et al. 2008:552). Kesler (2010:273) is of the opinion that the use of the cloze procedure can be used to practise the use of context clues. Blachowicz and Fisher (2010:37) indicate that pupils use their knowledge of context to supply suitable words to complete sentences where words were omitted in a cloze text. Cloze exercises assist pupils to connect words with their background knowledge, highlight comprehension monitoring as well as allowing pupils to participate actively in learning (Gambrell & Headley in Kessler 2010:273).

- *Repeated readings*

Shared reading can also be used to increase fluency by reading the same text more than once. Benefits of repeated readings may be quick and accurate processing of text and more meaningful phrasing (Kesler 2010:274). Cumming-Potvin et al. (2003:55) state that as reading fluency increases, less attention is required for decoding and therefore more attention is available for comprehension.

- *Integration of narrative and expository texts*

Pollard-Durodola et al. (2011:165) and Duke (2000:202) emphasise that pupils need exposure to narrative as well as expository texts during shared reading in order to mitigate the difficulties they experience in later grades with reading comprehension. Previous research conducted by this researcher confirms this (Basson 2013). Integrating narrative and expository texts in shared reading led to increased understanding of vocabulary and comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in the intervention group (Basson 2013:61). Narrative texts give pupils the opportunity to discuss characters, milieu and the main idea, while expository texts allow them to obtain more knowledge about the topic (Pollard-Durodola et al. 2011:169). In conclusion, Duke (2000:207) found that repeated exposure of pupils to expository and narrative texts help them to make connections between newly acquired vocabulary as they occur in different texts.

- *Tactile and kinaesthetic activities*

Researchers emphasise a multi-sensory approach to increase pupils' vocabulary and reading comprehension, especially non-mother-tongue speakers as this facilitates recall (Kesler 2010:275; Block et al. 2008:460). Freeman and Freeman (in Kesler 2010:275) note that backlogs in other subjects occur when teachers emphasise spoken language at the expense of reading and writing activities. Therefore it is important that pupils are encouraged to demonstrate understanding by using tactile and kinaesthetic activities. Tactile and kinaesthetic activities may include movement such as walking on footprints to demonstrate the meanings of words, catching a sponge cube with question words which have to be used to formulate questions, matching words with pictures or definitions, and role play.

#### 4.6.4.2 Guided reading

Guided reading provides reading instruction for a smaller group of pupils who read at the same level and is aimed to improve fluency and reading comprehension (Fountas & Pinnell 1996:2; Avalos et al. 2007:318; Cooper et al. 2012:33; Bauer & Arazi 2011:385). Pupils' reading ability is supported by systematically introducing them to increasingly difficult texts. In addition, it is seen as an opportunity for them to move to a higher level of comprehension under the guidance of a teacher (Fisher 2008:20).

Cooper et al. (2012: 33) describe two types of guided reading, namely observational and interactive guided reading. During observational guided reading, the teacher should be an observer and a coach. The text is short and introduces a small number of new concepts and strategies. Pupils have the opportunity to practise these concepts and strategies through teacher scaffolding (Botha 2008:8; Fountas & Pinnell 1996:2). During interactive guided reading pupils are coached through the text by the teacher. As they are reading, the teacher stops them at certain points in the text. Pupils are then encouraged to discuss the meaning-making strategies they have used and how it helped them to construct meaning (Cooper et al. 2012:34; Fisher 2008:20). In addition, Fisher (2008:20) proposes that teachers use guided reading to develop critical literacy, which means that they bring their own understanding and experiences to the text. Bauer and Arazi (2011:385) emphasise

that guided reading assists non-mother-tongue speakers to develop language and comprehension skills, but to be effective it should be practised regularly. Botha (2008:8) therefore recommends that guided reading be practised at least once a month in the Intermediate Phase.

Avalos et al. (2007:318) adapted guided reading for non-mother-tongue speakers. They called it modified guided reading. It differs from guided reading in that it includes additional language-learning opportunities such as coming to grips with morphological awareness, phonemic awareness and phonics that occur in the text. In addition, modified guided reading includes teacher readings, discussions about texts which are culturally relevant, pupils subvocalising while reading and keeping vocabulary journals related to the text (Avalos et al. 2007:320). When preparing for modified guided reading, teachers should analyse the text in order to guide pupils through possible problem areas such as new or confusing words, complex grammar or syntax, and figurative language. It is important to note that these problem areas should be taught within the context of the text either before or during shared reading. This is emphasised by Cummins (2008:71-83), who states that non-mother-tongue speakers learn more when new concepts are context embedded.

The selection of appropriate texts is very important in guided reading. Fountas and Pinnell (2012:277) describe ten characteristics of text difficulty which teachers should take into account when selecting texts. These characteristics are: genre, text structure, content, themes and ideas, language and literacy features, sentence complexity, vocabulary, words, illustrations, and book and print features. Levelled texts also give the teacher the opportunity to provide differentiated instruction to pupils while supporting them to take on more difficult texts. Therefore it is important that teachers are trained to grade texts effectively (Fountas & Pinnell 2012:269). This researcher has been part of a district in-service training initiative to develop teachers to be able to grade reading books and texts appropriately.

It is important for teachers to note that guided reading goes beyond the discussion and reading of levelled texts in a small group environment, it is about teaching the reader not the text. Fountas and Pinnell (2012:279) emphasise that professional development of teachers should include empowering teachers to observe their pupils



during the guided reading lesson and to make instructional changes accordingly. Teachers should use appropriate and precise language to guide and support their pupils to think independently and to use problem-solving strategies for themselves. According to Fountas and Pinnell (2012:282), it is fairly easy for teachers to implement the basic principles of guided reading, but high-quality professional development is needed to engender deep and lasting changes in the reading abilities of their pupils.

#### 4.6.4.3 Group reading

Group reading is designed to give pupils small group support by giving them additional practice in reading. Groups may consist of mixed-ability readers or readers of the same ability. They read the same text together silently or aloud, or alternatively they take turns to read the text (Cooper et al. 2012:33; Millward 2008:4). Research indicates that reading the text more than once improves fluency and understanding (Cumming-Potvin et al. 2003:55; Barchers 1998:228). First-language pupils have the opportunity to assist non-mother-tongue speakers to make meaning. After reading the text, the group discusses the story and completes activities to enhance their comprehension and vocabulary (Millward 2008:4).

Monteiro (2013:306) cites several studies that indicate how the social nature of group learning contributes to understanding and construction of meaning during reading. This social interaction and support by peers may contribute to reading motivation as well as develop pupils' ability to work together in a group (Monteiro 2013:306; Millward 2008:5). Non-mother-tongue speakers may feel safer to make contributions in a smaller group. In addition to improving their reading skills, pupils' listening and speaking skills are improved as their fellow group members read and discuss the text. Furthermore, good reading strategies are modelled by stronger readers, which may provide support for weaker readers (Millward 2008:5). Non-mother-tongue speakers may be given the opportunity to report back to the class, which may generate further discussions (Monteiro 2013:306).

#### 4.6.4.4 Reading aloud

Reading aloud is an important part of the balanced language approach as it promotes enjoyment of reading and contributes to vocabulary development and reading comprehension (Cooper et al. 2012:44; Beck & McKeown 2001:10; Santoro, Chard, Howard & Baker 2008:396; Barchers 1998:84). In addition, the value of reading aloud to pupils in classrooms can be measured in their increased motivation to read as well as in their improved oral language skills. This is an activity that allows for participation of the whole class, irrespective of their reading levels, and may benefit non-mother-tongue speakers (Cooper et al. 2012:44; Katz 2008:5). Furthermore, the teacher has the opportunity to model fluent reading. There are two kinds of read-alouds, namely general and instructional. General read-alouds provide enjoyment and motivation, whereas instructional read-alouds are used for the teaching of reading strategies and skills (Cooper et al. 2012:45). Teachers need to combine both kinds of read-alouds in their classes.

Barchers (1998:227) emphasises the important role that picture books play during read-alouds, even in the Intermediate Phase. Picture books can be used to involve pupils in discussions about the text, which creates opportunities for them to reflect on the storyline, which in turn aids reading comprehension (Santoro et al. 2008:397). In addition, these discussions serve to activate pupils' background knowledge. Beck and McKeown (2001:12) have observed that pupils sometimes respond to background knowledge questions in isolation, whilst ignoring information about the text. In their study they have requested teachers to rephrase their pupils' responses or to reread a specific piece in order to elicit the correct response (Beck & McKeown 2001:16). A variety of well-chosen picture books may enhance the development of different points of view as well as allow for the exploration of other cultures and concepts. In addition, picture books should be used to introduce expository texts which will enhance understanding of content areas (Barchers 1998:230). Criteria for the selection of picture books for older readers include sophisticated pictures and texts. These sophisticated texts often require repeated readings to be fully understood (Barchers 1998:228). Vocabulary necessary for non-mother-tongue speakers to understand the text should be carefully selected. In this regard, Santoro et al. (2008:402) recommend that only two to four words per text be selected to be

explicitly taught. These words should be functional and meaningful, diverse and interesting without hampering the meaning of the text and should assist pupils to understand the story.

However, Beck and McKeown (2001:11) have observed that pupils often rely too much on pictures to make deductions and predictions about the story, despite the fact that teachers follow effective read-aloud strategies such as discussing important ideas and happenings as the story progresses. This often leads to misinterpreting the story. They recommend that if teachers think that pictures will detract from the meaning of the text, these should deliberately be withheld before the text is read. In the event of non-mother-tongue speakers being unable to respond to the text, teachers should re-read the text and ask pupils to pay attention to specific words in the text (Beck & McKeown 2001:17).

Research indicates that read-alouds are effective to increase vocabulary and reading comprehension when implemented effectively (Beck & McKeown 2001:10; Santoro et al. 2008:407). Beck and McKeown (2001:19) recommend that teachers should keep the following in mind to create effective read-aloud lessons for non-mother-tongue speakers: be aware of the difference between retrieving meaning from the text and constructing meaning from the text; engage pupils by asking questions that facilitate deeper understanding of the text, which includes using their background knowledge; use pictures in such a way that they enhance meaning-making and use explicit teaching of vocabulary to improve comprehension.

#### 4.6.4.5 Independent reading

Independent reading is designed to meet the individual needs of pupils as well as allowing teachers to guide pupils to become responsible for their own reading growth (Tierney et al. 1990:439). This approach offers the least amount of support to the reader, therefore it is used when pupils have sufficient reading skills to read without the support of their teacher or peers (Cooper 2012:33). During independent reading, whole texts or sections of a text are read silently or to a partner or parent (Nixon 2008:6).

In order for effective independent reading to take place in classrooms, sufficient reading materials at different levels should be available. In addition, a variety of books on the same topic should be available to cater for different reading levels in a class. Teachers should be encouraged to build enough reading resources for their classrooms by adding to their collections each year, consulting public libraries, asking pupils to bring newspapers and magazines as well as using discarded basal readers (Tierney et al. 1990:440; Nixon 2008b:5).

The advantages of independent reading include: developing of reading skills and better language ability; it increases reading fluency and speed; it increases the pupil's knowledge of the world; and it enables teachers to cope with a variety of reading abilities in her class (Nixon 2008b:6). It is, however, essential that teachers be aware that non-mother-tongue speakers take longer to become independent readers. It is therefore important that sufficient culturally relevant books are available at their reading level. In addition, teachers should assist pupils to select appropriate books that match their level of reading.

Teachers should therefore assist pupils to select the most appropriate reading materials (Tierney et al. 1990:440). How the above reading strategies contribute towards reading comprehension will be discussed in the following section.

#### **4.7 READING COMPREHENSION FOR NON-MOTHER-TONGUE SPEAKERS**

Reading comprehension can be defined as: “[n]ot a unitary phenomenon but rather a family of skills and activities; [c]omprehension is the interpretation of the information in the text”. At the core of comprehension is our ability to mentally interconnect different events in the text and form a coherent representation of what the text is about (Grabe 2010:39). In addition, Bauer and Arazi (2011:383) describe comprehension as a complex process in which the reader uses semantic and syntactic cues as well as rapid word recognition to construct meaning. Moreover, Tsai et al. (2010:1) state that reading comprehension is a “complex skill involving the execution of various sources of knowledge including both lower-level and higher-level knowledge sources in one’s first language and second language.” It is therefore important for teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers to note that there is

no separate theory of learning for these pupils. They require the same quality of instruction as first-language pupils with a few minor instructional accommodations such as more intense development of vocabulary, activation of prior knowledge and the use of graphic organisers, semantic charts and word walls which is essential for reading comprehension (Block & Parris 2008:296; Little & Box 2011:25; Vaughn & Edmonds 2006:134; Carrel et al. 1988:81; Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill & Joshi 2007:74).

When Durkin (1979:483) conducted her ground breaking-research on reading instruction in American schools, she discovered that almost no comprehension strategies were being taught. Since then several other research studies cited in Pressley (1998:200-209) come to the same conclusion (Palinscar and Brown 1984; Scardmalia and Bereiter 1985; Oakhill and Yuill 1996; Perfetti, Marron & Foltz 1996). In South Africa research studies indicate that teachers are often not aware of comprehension frameworks and some equate teaching comprehension to asking questions based on a text (Pretorius & Klapwyjk 2016:3; Zimmerman & Smit 2014:2; Pretorius & Currin 2010:68; Le Cordeur 2011:435-461). It is therefore important for teachers to understand what is involved in comprehending in order to be able to explicitly teach comprehension strategies (Pardo 2004:272). Teachers should not only model these strategies, but combine them with direct instruction including scaffolding pupils towards constructing meaning from the text by engaging with one another (Parker & Hurry 2007:300). Finally, Block and Pressley (2007:203) suggest that comprehension strategies should be re-taught regularly integrated into one lesson so that pupils “may be shown how to view their comprehension and meta-comprehension as a unified self-controlled ability”.

According to research conducted by Alexander (2004) and Geekie (1999 in Parker and Hurry 2007:301), classroom interactions assist pupils to think independently. These processes are drawn from Vygotsky’s theory of cognitive development. The important role that teachers play in these processes will be covered in discussions later in the chapter. This study focused specifically on strategies which are involved in reading comprehension such as reciprocal teaching and transactional comprehension strategy instruction.

The following section will discuss the role that the creation of mental images plays to improve memory in the form of the schema theory.

#### **4.7.1 Schema theory**

Piaget first used the term 'schemata' in 1926, the meaning of which was expanded by Anderson in 1984 (Little & Box 2011:24). Anderson and Pearson (in McVee, Dunsmore & Gavelek 2005:537), describe the schema theory as a model that represents the way in which information is stored in the human memory. Moreover, one of the major tenets of the schema theory is that the text itself carries no meaning, but that readers construct their own meaning from the text using previously acquired knowledge (background knowledge) and higher-order cognitive structures of knowledge (schemata) (Carrell & Eisterhold 1988:76). Rumelhart and Ortony (1977 in McVee et al. 2005:536) describe schemas as "data structures for representing the generic concepts stored in memory. They exist for generalised concepts, underlying objects, situations, events, sequences of events, actions and sequences of actions." According to the schema theory, a person stores their knowledge in categories and systems in the long-term memory. This makes retrieval of information easily available for use in the short-term memory when background knowledge is needed for interpreting a text (Pardo 2004:273).

It is important to distinguish between formal schemata (background knowledge of the formal, rhetorical organisational structures of different types of text) and content schemata (background knowledge of the content area of a text) when trying to understand the role that background knowledge plays in reading comprehension. It is, however, important to note that the background knowledge that the non-mother-tongue speakers bring to the text is culture-specific (Carrell & Eisterhold 1988:81). It is therefore important for teachers to note that the inability of non-mother-tongue speakers to comprehend a text could be because the text itself is not culturally relevant. Moreover, teachers also sometimes try to cover too much material, which may prevent non-mother-tongue speakers from making connections (McVee et al. 2005:544; Carrell & Eisterhold 1988:81; Little & Box 2011:25).

The inability of the reader to activate the appropriate schema may lead to insufficient reading comprehension (Carrell & Eisterhold 1988:79; Hollenbeck & Saternus 2013:562). Teachers should therefore facilitate the planned retrieval of information from memory in order to understand the text (Little & Box 2011:25). Visual aids such as graphic organisers, semantic maps, Venn diagrams and word walls can be used to assist schema building (Little & Box 2011:25; Vaughn & Edmonds 2006:134; Carrel et al. 1988:81; Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill & Joshi 2007:74). Insights into the schema theory led to the discovery of the important role that the interaction between the reader, the text and background knowledge plays in reading comprehension and learning. This insight influenced research on reading and comprehension instruction for non-mother-tongue speakers (Nassaji 2007:80; Barrière & Duquette 2002:471; Cooper et al. 2012:67; McVee et al. 2005:537). It is therefore important for teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers to understand the schema theory in order to realise the important role it plays in reading comprehension (McVee et al. 2005:534).

#### **4.7.2 Vocabulary**

According to Van Staden and Bosker (2014:2), the poor performance of South African pupils in international comparative studies is the result of, amongst other things, poor communication between pupils and teachers in the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). Non-mother-tongue speakers are being educated in English or Afrikaans without the necessary support by teachers (Scheepers 2006:4). Parents find it difficult to support their children at home, because they do not understand or speak the LoLT of the school. Moreover, parents often do not have the financial means to invest in books, magazines and newspapers to provide additional reading material at home (O'Connor & Geiger 2009:254; Probyn 2009:127; Theron & Nel 2005:234).

Research studies indicate that vocabulary size is essential for success in reading and reading comprehension (Hickman et al. 2004:720; Spencer & Guillaume 2006:206; Kinsella 2005:2). Cummins (2008:71-83) distinguishes between two types of language proficiencies required for academic success, namely basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).

Although BICS, used in everyday conversations, is necessary for meaning-making, CALP is essential for academic success. CALP refers to the ability of a pupil to read and express abstract and complex ideas that are removed from contextual support (Modiba & Steward 2013:2). Teachers should therefore explicitly teach the vocabulary of content areas to expand pupils' academic vocabulary to enhance their understanding of the concepts being taught (Spencer & Guillaume 2006:208; McLaughlin & Allan 2002:12). This includes taking the context and cognitive level of their pupils into account when planning literacy tasks (Modiba & Steward 2013:2). In addition, teachers should create enough opportunities for pupils to engage with texts that support their vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension (Taboada & Rutherford 2011:118).

When pupils are introduced to new words, teachers tend to focus on meaning by either using an instructional content approach or a definitional approach, but seldom focus on grammatical structures (Spencer & Guillaume 2006:207). When following the instructional approach, teachers use sentences from the reading programme to introduce new vocabulary before the story is read. Pupils have to figure out the meaning of the word by using the context of the text, or they are told the meaning by the teacher. When teachers use the definitional approach, they are given a list of words and are asked to look up their definitions. Both these methods assume that pupils have enough background knowledge to understand the text (Spencer & Guillaume 2006:207). Teachers can activate background knowledge by (a) activating their pupils' prior knowledge; (b) integrating word meanings with content areas; (c) addressing basic vocabulary that is difficult to visualise; (d) encouraging discussion with pupils using scaffolding to guide them to higher-level responses with regard to vocabulary; (e) using culturally relevant texts that include life experiences of pupils; (f) actively engaging pupils in understanding words; and (g) develop vocabulary by repeated exposure to different types of texts (Hickman et al. 2004:721; McLaughlin & Allan 2002:12).

The next section will discuss the important role that motivation plays in the teaching of reading comprehension to non-mother-tongue speakers.



### 4.7.3 Motivation

The word *motivation* is derived from the Latin verb *movere*, which means “to move” (Griffiths 2008:19). Motivation can therefore be described as an internal state that moves a person to make certain choices, take action and to persist with the action (Woolfolk 2010:410; Griffiths 2008:19). Corder (in Griffiths 2008:19) states: “Let us say that, given motivation, it is inevitable that a human being will learn a second language if he is exposed to the data”. Empirical verification of this statement led to a large number of research studies by behaviourists, humanists, cognitive and socio-cognitive psychologists (Block & Parris 2008:227; Griffiths 2008:19).

In order for teachers to help non-mother-tongue speakers to persist with a challenging activity such as reading, it is necessary for them to understand the central constructs of reading motivation. The two groups of constructs refer to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as well as those dealing with preconditions of reading motivation (Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller & Wigfield 2012:429). Cognitive theorists define intrinsic motivation as the willingness of a pupil to read, because it is enjoyable, challenging and develops certain skills and knowledge (Schiefele et al. 2012:42; Taboada & Rutherford 2011:119). “Intrinsic motivation can be described as self-generated interest in an activity that brings pleasure that is inherent in the activity itself” (Block & Parris 2008:228). Research indicates that intrinsic motivation not only enhances and sustains learning, but it results in more effective learning than external forms of motivation can promote (Woolfolk 2010:379; Block & Parris 2008:228; Griffiths 2008:21). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to the reasons for reading being of an external nature. Such reasons may be to receive rewards such as tokens, praise from the teacher or parent, or to outperform and impress others (Woolfolk 2010:378; Block & Parris 2008:228; Guthrie, Wigfield, Humenick, Perencevich, Taboada & Barbosa 2006:233). Some may question the quality of interaction with the text when extrinsic motivation is the only objective. In addition, it may even undermine intrinsic motivation (Guthrie et al. 2006:233). However, some teachers and parents maintain that these extrinsic rewards are the only reason some pupils will read (Block & Parris 2008:228).

The important role that teachers play in motivating pupils to read has been the subject of numerous studies (Schiefele et al. 2012:428; Kennedy 2009-2010:2; Senn 2012:212; Linnenbrink & Pintrich (2003:125). These studies emphasise the importance of motivation in developing the reading comprehension of pupils. In addition, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000 in Guthrie et al. 2006:232) and Van Staaden and Bosker (2014:2) came to the conclusion that positive beliefs about reading enhance engagement, which may in turn result in increased comprehension. Reading comprehension requires cognitive effort and, without pupil motivation, it is unlikely to occur (Block & Parris 2008:231). Teachers play an important role in motivating pupils by creating an environment in their classrooms that encourage reading engagement (Block & Parris 2008:230). This could include creating a print-rich environment, providing interesting texts, maintaining warm relations between themselves and their pupils, allowing pupils to select their own reading materials as well as creating opportunities for social interaction and collaboration (Kennedy 2009-2010:2-3; Guthrie et al. 2006:232; Pardo 2004:274; Taboada & Rutherford 2011:118). These opportunities should be created as early as possible across the curriculum (Van Staaden & Bosker 2014:7). The affective or emotional experiences in the class determine how motivated pupils will be to engage in the learning process. Positive experiences such as happiness, success and feelings of self-worth motivate pupils. On the other hand, negative emotions such as anger, frustration and anxiety discourage pupils from engaging with tasks (Linnenbrink & Pintrich 2003:126-127; Lemmer 1995:93).

Teachers can assist in the development of pupils' self-confidence by creating opportunities for them to achieve success by demonstrating their skills effectively. Therefore over-emphasising marks, achievement and competition should be avoided (Woolfolk 2010:408; Spencer & Guillaume 2006:209; Lessing & De Witt 1999 50). Opportunities for pupils to share their reading experiences should be created, because social interactions and engagement among pupils improve cognition, intrinsic motivation and performance (Guthrie et al. 2006 in Kennedy 2009/2010:2). The importance of creating these positive experiences for non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes was emphasised in the professional development sessions.

#### 4.7.4 Reciprocal teaching

Pallinscar and Brown (1984:772) conducted a study which documented conversations between teachers and pupils about texts. They referred to these discussions as reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal teaching involves the teaching of four cognitive reading comprehension strategies, namely predicting, clarifying, summarising and questioning within the context of a reading group (Palinscar & Brown 1984:772; Pressley 1998:205; Block & Parris 2008:161; Cooper et al. 2012:148). Oczkus (2005 in Stricklin 2011:620) calls these strategies the “Fab Four”, to be discussed later in this section. Myers (2005 in Block and Parris 2008:163) conducted a similar study.

Reciprocal teaching starts with intensive teacher modelling in which the use of these four strategies is demonstrated. Each strategy is taught including the reason for their use and how pupils will go about learning them (Pallinscar & Brown 1986:773; Cooper et al. 2012:148; Pressley 1998:206). Initially teachers lead class discussions while encouraging pupils to comment on their summaries, respond to questions and add their own predictions (Pallinscar & Brown 1986:773). These discussions take place during the three phases of reading as follows: (a) pre-reading, the background knowledge of the pupils is activated and difficult words are discussed; (b) during reading, pupils are monitored and guided to use the four comprehension strategies; (c) after reading, teachers encourage pupils to share which strategy was most effective and why (Oakley 2011:281). Thinking about and discussing the use of these strategies is important to develop metacognitive thinking. This gives pupils insight into their own thought processes (Stricklin 2011:620). Good readers use metacognition to monitor their comprehension processes by asking themselves questions about the text and controlling their answers. Subsequently, they are able to discover and repair breakdown in comprehension (Pretorius & Lephala 2011:4).

Class discussions during the three phases of reading are cooperative and the teacher provides only enough scaffolding to ensure progress, gradually transferring more responsibility to the pupils until no support is needed (Pressley 1998:206). Pearson and Hoffman (2011:32-33) described this process as follows:

Teachers who teach reading in this way are using what we have come to call the gradual release of responsibility (from teacher to student) for helping readers becoming more independent and self-sufficient readers – readers who know when and whether they have understood a text, and, if they haven't, what to do to fix things.

Stricklin (2011:620) developed a method to introduce pupils to the four cognitive reading comprehension strategies included in reciprocal teaching. He stated that it is important to make the process exciting for them (Stricklin 2011:620). Costumes and props were therefore used to introduce a character to each of the four comprehension strategies (Oczkus 2005 in Stricklin 2011:620-621). Oczkus (2005), named these characters the “Fab Four.” Application of each of the four comprehension strategies is discussed below.

- *Predicting / Inferring*

Predicting is a strategy used to connect their prior knowledge with the text as well as to motivate pupils to read. While the text is previewed, pupils predict what they think will happen or what they will learn. When pupils relate their prior knowledge to the content of a text, they are able to make inferences by linking prior knowledge to information provided in the text. The character used to introduce it is Paula the Predictor (Stricklin 2011:620). While reading the text, pupils make inferences and use the inferences to make predictions about what is going to be revealed in the subsequent text. The inferring and predicting strategy occurs in a continuous cycle while pupils read, which promotes engagement, clarifies misunderstandings and assists pupils to create accurate representations of texts (Stricklin 2011:621; Cooper et al. 2012:77).

- *Clarifying*

Clarifying is necessary to draw pupils' attention to why the text is difficult to understand as well as verifying if the text is understood (Stricklin 2011:621). Moreover, pupils should be taught to become aware of when they do not understand a text. Attempts to correct comprehension failure can only be made if there is an awareness that failure has occurred. Pupils should therefore be taught to discontinue reading when something does not make sense. Only then will they be

able to make decisions about what to do about comprehension failure. The character used to introduce this strategy is Clarence the Clarifier (Stricklin 2011:621). She will demonstrate ways to seek clarification such as introducing difficult words and concepts, rereading, thinking about what is already known, looking at text aids such as illustrations, and asking for help (Cooper et al. 2012:78).

- *Questioning*

Questioning involves pupils asking questions about the text. When pupils ask themselves questions, it helps to guide their thinking about ideas in the text. This strategy promotes reading comprehension as pupils are only able to ask probing questions if they understand the text. Furthermore, it may lead to improvement in remembering the text ideas, locating information and deeper processing of text. In addition, pupils become more involved in the reading activity as they are actively participating and not only responding to questions asked by the teacher (Pallinscar & Brown 1986:772; Gregory & Cahill 2010:516). According to Stahl (2004 in Dougherty Stahl 2005:185), pupils at all ability levels profit from strategy instruction on asking questions, but more importantly, average and below-average readers benefit most. This may include non-mother-tongue speakers. Moreover, the effects of the strategy of asking questions are maintained over time and may lead to higher levels of thinking and the development of critical thinking skills. The character used to introduce questioning is Quinn the Questioner (Stricklin 2011:621).

- *Summarising / finding the main idea*

Summarising is used to integrate information about the text. However, many pupils do not know how to summarise texts but they can learn how to do so, provided they are instructed on how to do so (Brown, Day & Jones 1983). It helps pupils to find the main idea and supporting details of the text by focusing on the major content (Pallinscar & Brown 1986:772; Stricklin 2011:621). The character used to introduce this strategy is Sammy the Summariser. He will show pupils how to select key information, to ignore what is not important and to paraphrase information in the text. Using the summarise strategy involves summing up important information as you read. Pressley (2002:9) concluded that summarising as a comprehension strategy is so effective that it can be recommended to teachers without hesitation.

It is important to note, however, that teachers do not implement the “Fab Four” themselves, but teach pupils how to use them (Stricklin 2011:621). Palinscar and Brown (1986:774) found that pupils became more and more proficient at asking clarifying questions and creating summaries using main ideas of the text.

Research studies indicate that reciprocal teaching promotes reading comprehension of pupils, including non-mother-tongue speakers (García, Jensen, & Schriber 2009:12; Takala 2006; Stricklin 2011; Palinscar & Brown 1986:774). It has its shortcomings, which include too many literal questions and long pauses during lessons while the teacher waits for pupils to respond (Pressley 1998:206). Moreover, some teachers simplify the procedures to such an extent that they are no longer so effective. This is confirmed by Palinscar when she states that reciprocal teaching “has been extracted from the theoretical context in which it was originated, rendering it anaemic” (Palinscar & Schutz, 2011:88).

#### **4.7.5 Transactional strategies instruction**

Transactional strategies instruction was proposed as a model for teaching comprehension by Duffy and Roehler in 1984. It is not limited to a particular instruction model, but includes all models that have strategy instruction, strategy use and extensive interaction between pupils and teachers as their primary goal (Block & Parris 2008:162). This interaction between pupils and teachers is called modelling (Block & Parris 2008:161; Pressley 1998:207; Pressley 2006:308). Modelling can be explicit<sup>11</sup> or implicit<sup>12</sup> (Roehler & Duffy 1991 in Cooper et al. 2012:143). Teachers start the process of modelling by introducing mental imagery as a comprehension strategy by demonstrating to their pupils how mental images are constructed in the mind by thinking aloud (Pressley 1998:207). Think-aloud allows teachers to teach pupils comprehension strategies and to support struggling readers in making meaning (Migyanka, Policastro & Lui 2005:173). The purpose of using think-alouds is to teach pupils when, how and why to use comprehension strategies as well as to self-regulate their comprehension processes.

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<sup>11</sup> Implicit modelling takes place when a teacher reads aloud to pupils. Pupils are engaged in the meaning of the story and the purpose of reading is conveyed to them.

<sup>12</sup> During explicit modelling, teachers share their cognitive processes with their pupils by talking to them about what is being modelled using a think-aloud process (Cooper et al. 2012:143).

Snow (2002:32) argues that meaning does not exist in a text, but rather that it needs to be actively constructed. Therefore pupils should be taught how to employ strategies to improve comprehension. In order to assist pupils to apply comprehension strategies independently, it is necessary for teachers to guide pupils from being reliant on them to becoming independent strategic readers themselves by gradually transferring responsibility to the pupils through modelling (Harvey & Goudvis 2013:560; Pressley 1998:208). The classroom discourse consists of teachers providing support and guidance to students as they attempt to use the various comprehension strategies. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976 in Woolfolk 2010:50) called this mediation by a more knowledgeable person “scaffolding”. Pressley (2008:334) described the goal of instruction in comprehension strategies as a way “to teach students to take over their own reading and thinking.” However, it is important to note that explicit modelling of isolated strategies is not effective to improve comprehension skills, but should occur within the context of a specific text. Therefore pupils should apply these strategies in an integrated manner when reading a text (Cooper et al. 2012:144; Harvey & Goudvis 2013:560; Dowhower 1999:659). Thus pupils should be guided to realise that comprehension strategies assist with the construction of meaning rather than being rigid tasks completed at the request of the teacher (Harvey & Goudvis 2013:560).

#### 4.7.5.1 Strategies to enhance reading comprehension

The following strategies to enhance reading comprehension were included in the professional development programme. They are discussed in the following section.

- *Guided comprehension*

Guided comprehension is an effective strategy to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers through teacher modelling. It is a three-stage process which focuses on direct instruction, application and reflection. It is designed to assist teachers and pupils to think of reading as a strategy-based process (McLaughlin & Allan 2002:3). Stage one comprises of teacher-directed whole group discussion where think-aloud and read-aloud strategies are demonstrated by the teacher. Pupils practice additional sections of text with the support of the teacher,

after which they practice strategies in small groups or pairs. Lastly, pupils reflect on how these strategies can be used when they read individually.

During stage two, pupils apply comprehension strategies in teacher-guided small groups or co-operative groups facilitated by pupils. They work with different types of texts on levels which suit their reading ability. The teacher facilitates discussions with the whole group to discuss their performance, to share experiences and to set new goals (McLaughlin & Allan 2002:4; McLaughlin 2012:434). During these sessions earlier strategies are reviewed and the focus is placed on the strategy of the day. Consequently, pupils are guided to apply the strategy of the day as well as previously taught strategies while teachers scaffold when necessary. After that, pupils have the opportunity to practise the strategy individually or in pairs. Lastly, pupils reflect on and share their sense of how the strategy has helped them understand the text. In the pupil-facilitated co-operative groups pupils practise the application of the strategy for consolidation purposes. During stage three the teacher and the pupils reflect on their performance, share experiences and set new goals (McLaughlin & Allan 2002:4).

However, guided comprehension requires careful planning and classroom organisation. Moreover, teachers have not been trained on how to implement guided reading during CAPS training. It is therefore the responsibility of teacher trainers to equip teachers with the necessary skills to implement guided comprehension in their classes. Therefore, guided comprehension was included in the professional development programme of this study.

- *Comprehension process motions*

Block et al. (2008:460) developed a method to help young readers learn comprehension processes using teacher modelling. They called this method comprehension process motions (CPM). Studies indicate that additional pathways (auditory, visual and kinaesthetic) significantly increase retention of information (Block & Parris 2008: 45; Block et al. 2008:461). CPM are hand placements and movements which visually represents abstract comprehension processes such as finding main ideas, inferring, making predictions, and clarifying. Through practising CPM, pupils learn how, when and where to initiate comprehension processes.



Lessons are designed in such a way that comprehension processes are internalised through auditory, visual and kinaesthetic pathways so that pupils can develop a true metacognitive understanding of the processes that take place in their brains when making meaning. Pupils are then able to demonstrate to their teachers when they have independently transferred and used a specific comprehension strategy (Block et al. 2008:461).

Various comprehension strategies can be taught through the abovementioned methods. These include: previewing – activating background knowledge; predicting and setting a purpose for reading; self-questioning – generating questions to guide reading; making connections – relating reading to the self, text and others; visualising – creating pictures in the mind while reading; knowing how words work – understanding how words work through vocabulary development, including the use of grapho-phonetic, syntactic and semantic cuing; monitoring – checking if what is read makes sense; summarising – finding the main ideas and supporting facts and synthesising them; and evaluating – making judgements about the texts and the author (McLaughlin & Allan 2002:3-4; McLaughlin 2012:434-43). These comprehension strategies are included in guided comprehension. Additional strategies taught in CPM are: inferring – thinking about things the author has not written down, and identifying the main idea – the primary point that the author is trying to convey to the reader (Block et al. 2008:461).

Research showed that comprehension strategy instruction has a positive effect on reading comprehension (Pressley 1998:220; Block & Parris 2008:162; Klopper 2013:223). Moreover, there is great excitement in classes where it is implemented. Pupils are able to retell stories including reflections and cognitive activities that took place while reading instead of just recounting information about the text (Pressley 1998:220). Regardless of its benefits, the use of comprehension strategy instruction is not widely prevalent. Pressley (1998:220) found some of the reasons for this are: teachers do not understand comprehension as active reading; classroom interactions are more pupil-driven than teacher-driven; the time demand related to preparing teaching materials is high; and finally, constructivists make the point that comprehension strategies that are taught rather than discovered are not natural strategies. This may be confusing for teachers as constructivism is the theory that

underpins the CAPS curriculum. According to García et al. (2011:150), it can take more than a year to become a proficient teacher of reading comprehension. Professional development programmes of education districts are normally limited to one or two sessions, but there is no follow-up support. However, teachers who have the opportunity to participate in sustained professional development following a socio-constructivist perspective should be better prepared to be effective teachers of reading (García et al. 2011:151). Moreover, a study conducted by Klopper (2013:223) concluded that it is not possible for teachers to teach comprehension strategies effectively if they are not metacognitively aware of the comprehension strategies they are implementing.

Teachers of non-mother tongue speakers should keep in mind that their instructional needs differ and therefore require careful planning (Block & Parris 2008:300). The abovementioned strategies were included in the professional development programme of the teachers participating in this study. They provide a variety of choices for teachers to implement to suit the individual needs of non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes.

#### **4.8 SUMMARY**

Teaching and learning are social acts that are shared with peers and teachers; they include reading and discussion of enjoyable texts. This is consistent with a socio-constructivist perspective. Beginning readers, poor readers and non-mother-tongue speakers may require explicit teaching of comprehension strategies, which include teacher modelling through think-aloud processes. Therefore it is crucial that teachers model and facilitate think-alouds to guide pupils to think about and reflect on their reading. Teachers need to know how to select culturally appropriate texts which contain appropriate vocabulary which can be used to develop pupils' metacognitive skills, so that they are able to implement comprehension strategies (Migyanka et al. 2005:177). It is also important for teachers to note that teaching comprehension strategies is not easy and that they require careful planning. According to McLaughlin (2012:439), teachers who adapt and persevere to find the best way to teach comprehension strategies will have the rewarding experience of observing their pupils comprehending according to their potential.

The most effective way of improving teacher practice is by providing professional development that allows teachers to provide input with regard to their needs. They should not only be provided with new strategies, but also be given ample opportunities to practise these strategies, to plan their use and to discuss their implementation with their peers (García et al. 2011:154). This study aims to provide such opportunities for the teachers.

The next chapter deals with research methodology. Action research as part of a mixed method approach will be discussed.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology can be described as the procedures that will be followed for planning and executing a research study. In essence it is the plan for generating empirical evidence to answer the research questions which may lead to the most valid and reliable answers to the research questions. In addition, it determines how the data should be analysed. Researchers should keep in mind that each design has certain limitations. Therefore, the results related to each design should be interpreted with caution (Punch 2009:112; McMillan & Schumacher 2010:20).

This chapter will discuss the research methodology for this research project. The aim of the research, the research question and the scope of the research are discussed in detail. Following that, the research paradigm and research methodology, namely an action research approach, will be described. The data-collecting instruments and techniques implemented by the researcher, namely questionnaires, observations and interviews, as well as the data analysis process, will be described in detail. In conclusion, the trustworthiness of the research, with reference to triangulation, validity and reliability of action research, will be discussed.

#### 5.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of this study are the following:

- 5.2.1. To investigate the professional development needs of teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes with regard to reading and reading comprehension strategies;
- 5.2.2. To make a contribution to the development of the PCK of teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes by

designing a professional development programme so that they are better equipped to enhance the reading comprehension of these learners;

- 5.2.3. To investigate action research as a professional development model to conduct the professional development programme.

## 5.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

The main research question of this study is: *How will professional development improve the PCK of in-service teachers to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes?*

The following four subsidiary research questions serve as a guide to address the main research question:

- 5.3.1 To what extent can a professional development programme contribute to the PCK of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers?
- 5.3.2 What reading and comprehension strategies should be included in the pedagogies of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers?
- 5.3.3 How can the improved PCK of Intermediate Phase teachers contribute towards the enhancement of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes?
- 5.3.4 What are the learning experiences of Intermediate Phase literacy teachers when they have the opportunity to explore comprehension strategies through action research?

## 5.4 CHOOSING A SUITABLE APPROACH

Creswell (2014:5) states that approaches to research involve philosophical assumptions and specific research approaches. A research paradigm is the logic that links the research question to the methods of data collection in a study (McMillan & Shumacher 2010:6). The nature of the issue which is investigated

influences the choice of the approach which in turn influences the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Creswell 2014:12).

McMillan & Shumacher (2010:6) state that the pragmatic paradigm provides the theoretical base for conducting mixed method studies. Action research as part of a mixed method approach is the design of choice, because of the opportunity it afforded me to combine two mainstream methodologies – qualitative and quantitative – in my quest to answer the research questions and develop the pedagogies of primary school teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes.

#### **5.4.1 Research paradigm**

In research the assumptions of what constitute the truth and knowledge is termed a *paradigm*. The paradigm determines how we view the world around us – our thinking, beliefs and presuppositions about ourselves and others (Conrad & Serlin 2011:201). Research paradigms address three fundamental questions: What do we believe about the nature of reality? (ontology); How do we know what we know? (epistemology); What do we believe is true? (axiology). Thus the paradigm leads researchers to ask questions as to what would be the appropriate approach for a particular enquiry, which is the methodology (How should we study the world?) (Punch 2009:16).

The paradigm that underpins this study is the pragmatism, as it provides a sound theoretical approach for mixed method studies. Pragmatism is derived from the work of Peirce, James, Mead and Dewey (Creswell 2014:10). In the pragmatic paradigm it is believed that research problems can best be solved by using common sense and practical thinking by combining quantitative and qualitative methods (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:6). Addressing the research problem is emphasised rather than focusing on methodological issues and all approaches available are used to understand the problem. Researchers such as Morgan (2007) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) emphasise the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the research problem in social science research.

According to Creswell (2014:11), pragmatism allows researchers the freedom to choose the methods, techniques and procedures of research that best suit the problem they are investigating. Furthermore, pragmatists do not see the world as a unity. Hence pragmatic researchers who conduct mixed method studies also use many approaches to collect and analyse data to provide the best understanding of the research problem.

#### **5.4.2 Mixed method approach**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:11) describe mixed method research as a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to research. In addition, Tashakkori and Creswell (2007:4) define mixed method designs as “research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a programme of inquiry.” They also emphasise that mixed method research utilises quantitative and qualitative approaches where there are: two types of research questions (with qualitative and quantitative approaches); two different ways in which the research questions are developed (participatory vs. pre-planned); two types of sampling procedures (e.g. probability and purposive); two types of data collection procedures (e.g. focus groups and surveys); two types of data (e.g. numerical and textual); two types of data analysis (statistical and thematic); and/or two types of conclusions (emic and etic representations, ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’).

Schwandt (2000) pointed out that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is no longer useful, so it is no longer helpful for researchers to align themselves with one particular method. He also questioned the need for such divisions and for the opposition of qualitative and other research methods. Leech, Dellinger, Brannagan and Tanaka (2010:18) noted that this polarisation led to the perpetuation of the incompatibility thesis, which posited that qualitative and quantitative methods cannot be mixed. Similarly, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007:117) agree that the opposition between paradigms is unproductive. They suggest that a three-paradigm methodological world might be most useful as each approach has its strengths and weaknesses that can be utilised at times and

places of need. However, as mixed methods are a relatively new paradigm, it is necessary to acknowledge variations and inconsistencies within the paradigm (Denscombe 2008:272). First, researchers differ on how quantitative and qualitative elements can be used within a study. Second, the simple distinction often drawn between qualitative and quantitative methodologies does not do justice to the different epistemological and ontological assumptions that underpin the terms. Third, some researchers believe that the philosophies underpinning qualitative and quantitative methodologies are incompatible (Johnson et al. 2007:125). Furthermore, there are debates about whether mixed methods need a particular philosophical or methodological position. Fourth, no agreement has been reached about when mixing should occur in the research process. Fifth, additional research is needed to determine when it is most effective to integrate qualitative and quantitative strands of the research. Sixth, a typology of mixed method designs need to be developed that researchers can agree upon (Denscombe 2008:273; Johnson et al. 2007:125-128).

The nature of this study, which aimed to develop the PCK of teachers with respect to the development of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes, led to the inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative methods. This meant that research questions could be explored without the constraints of using only one research method. Rather, this approach allowed further understanding of the development of the pedagogies of teachers regarding the reading comprehension skills of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. Four main sources of evidence were involved in this study: questionnaires (quantitative and qualitative), teachers' journals (qualitative), observations (qualitative) and interviews (qualitative). Data obtained from these sources of evidence were analysed and discussed separately, then compared in what is called side-by-side comparison (Creswell 2014:222).

The following section will discuss action research and how it was utilised it in this study.



### 5.4.3 Action research design

#### 5.4.3.1 Introduction

It is expected of teachers to provide evidence to the DoBE of best practices, especially those whose pupils perform well in systemic tests (Le Cordeur 2016:167). In addition, the best literacy teachers have been described by Stoller and Grabe (2001:97) as being reflective practitioners. Characteristics of reflective practitioners are their ability to systematically engage in self-initiated inquiry, which is often referred to as action research (Burns 2010:2). By using insights gained from reflective classroom practices, teachers can improve their teaching pedagogies (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:444). Furthermore, it has been proven that action research empowers teachers, creating long-lasting changes in schools as well as impacting positively on learner outcomes (Stoller & Grabe 2001:97). In South Africa action researchers work in schools in disadvantaged communities, studying local conditions and spreading an awareness of learners' poor literacy levels in order to find solutions (Herbert & Rainford 2014:249; Le Cordeur 2016:171). Together they co-operate and share their knowledge, which supports research findings that action research contributes to the professional development of teachers (Stoller & Grabe 2001:107; Burns 2010:7). Given these positive results, many school principals are encouraging action research in their schools (Le Cordeur 2016:168).

#### 5.4.3.2 What is action research?

Action research is a systematic approach to help professionals change their practice (Le Cordeur 2016:168). The origins of action research can be traced back to the social experiments of Kurt Lewin in the 1940s (Punch & Oancea 2014:171; McNiff & Whitehead 2009:40). He was the first researcher to use the term 'action research'. In addition, he recognised that group discussions could be used to address specific social problems. Lewin's group discussion process included four stages: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. This group discussion process formed the basis for current models of action research (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:444). Other experts in the field are Kemmis and Elliot, who describe action research as having four phases within a cycle of research (Burns 2010:7; McNiff & Whitehead 2009:44).

Donald Schön's insights on reflective practitioners in education were also significant (Punch & Oancea 2014:171).

Le Cordeur (2016: 168) cites the following definitions which are related to Lewin's original idea of action research.

- Action research concerns a group of people who are empowered to investigate their own practices for the purpose of improving future practices (Sagor 2005:4).
- Action research is a process of systematic reflection, enquiry and action carried out by individuals about their own professional practice (Frost 2002 in Costello 2003:3).
- Action research is related to ideas of reflective practice and the teacher as researcher (Burns 2010:2).
- Any systematic enquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school councillors or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn is done by teachers for themselves (Mills 2007:5).
- Action research is a critical collaborative enquiry by reflective practitioners, who are accountable in making the results of their enquiry public, who are self-evaluative of their practice, and who are engaged in participative problem solving and continuing professional development (Zuber-Skerritt 1992:15).

Le Cordeur (2016:169) notes that South Africa is a young democracy, therefore it was bound to happen that action research acquired a political dimension where self-reflection during the research process would include a consideration of democratic principles. The central aim of the action research process of a study conducted by Robinson (1994:258) was to empower teachers through their interaction with the material development process and, through this action, improve their practice. Robinson (1994:258) notes that:

[a]ction research in South Africa can ... be argued to have an inherently political agenda, for it is motivated by a sense that teachers (and students) can assume some control of their lives and, by implication, that we are not bound to be passive recipients of a repressive education system.

#### 5.4.3.3 Action research as educational research

Research studies indicate that the participatory nature of action research allows each participant to contribute their expertise to the project (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:444; Herbert & Rainford 2014:247; Le Cordeur 2016:185; Rossouw 2009:2). Burns (2010:2) says one of the main aims of action research is to critically examine a problematic situation in educational practice in order to improve it. This requires the researcher to critically review a problem or problems relating to their own teaching contexts and practices, and then explore alternative ways in which this problem can be rectified or addressed. Furthermore, there should be a commitment to professional practice and the democratic principles that underpin it (Arhar, Holly & Kasten 2001:39). However, teachers sometimes feel uncomfortable about acknowledging that there are problems with their teaching and would therefore rather not get involved in such a project. This researcher has experienced such a response in previous projects.

During the process of conducting action research, teachers have the opportunity to collaborate and reflect with others by forming communities of practice regarding changes in classroom practice and the implications of doing so (McMillan & Shumacher 2010:445). According to Dewey (1916), these communities are formed when the development of common beliefs, aims, aspirations and knowledge are allowed. It is therefore important that conditions for individuals within the community are created that ensure their participation and development (Arhar et al. 2001:40). Benefits of action research conducted in these democratic communities are the creation of a system-wide professional problem-solving ethos within a school or community; it provides an intelligent way of making decisions, promotes reflection and self-assessment and creates a positive school climate which may impact directly on improvements in practice by empowering those who participate in the process (Glanz 2003:19).

#### 5.4.3.4 The action research process

Action research is a process whereby research principles are used systematically to identify and define a problem situated in an immediate situation to improve

educational practice (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:444). After this, action steps are developed to solve the problem, then the action steps are implemented and the outcomes evaluated (Rossouw 2009:7). An important feature of action research is that the task is not finished when the project ends. According to Bell (1993:6-7), this implies a continuous process where the participants continue to review, evaluate and improve practice. The process of conducting action research is therefore interactive, where theories of actions are examined and tested, and evaluated further until the desired outcome or goal is achieved (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:446). Lotz (1996:82) agrees, but points out that a commitment to ongoing action and reflection within a project is characteristic of action research, which is distinguished by the concept of praxis.<sup>13</sup> Because of the ongoing nature of action research, it has often been described as involving recurrent spirals of enquiry comprising three main phases as illustrated in Figure 5.1 below.

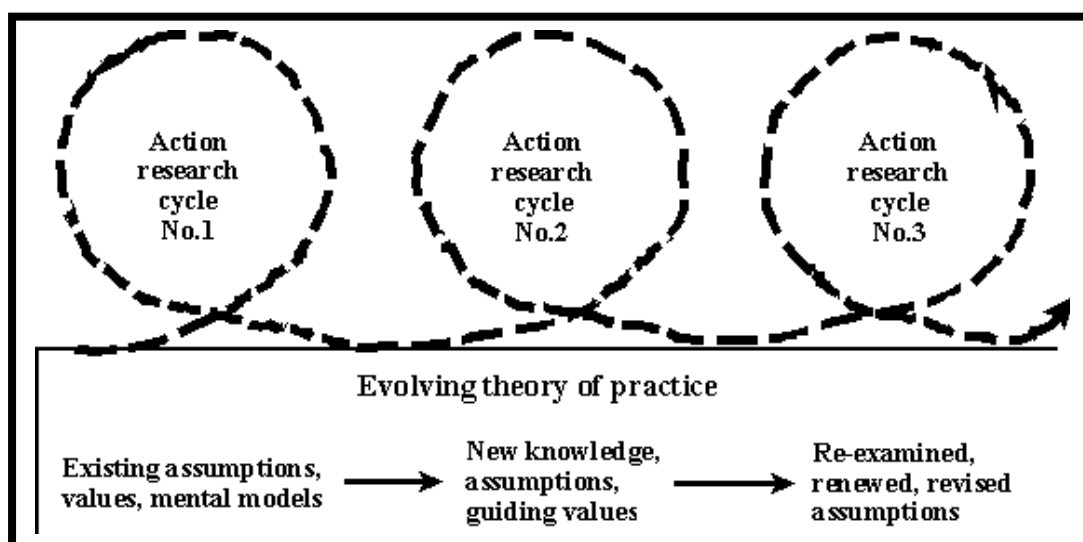


Figure 5.1: The cycles of action research (Damme 1998).

<sup>13</sup> Groundwater-Smith, Mitchell, Mockler, Ponte and Rönnerman (2013:4) draw on the wisdom of Aristotle when they summarise his definition of praxis as: “[a]ction, referring, in a general sense to all intentional activities, by which people can reach a particular goal through their own efforts. More specifically, the term refers to rational action based on a conscious choice ... and action is defined as the product of observation, desires and intellect or reason”.

#### 5.4.3.5 Action research: the choice for this study

After careful consideration of the different models of professional development, it was decided to select action research as the preferred model to assist teachers to address their need to better support reading comprehension of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans primary school classes. Burns (2010:2) argued that action research can be used by teachers to address gaps in their teaching context between what is happening and what should happen. In addition, Stoller and Grabe (2001:97) state that action research can be used to respond to the complex instructional issues that arise in reading classrooms.

Data gathered from the questionnaires completed by 62 teachers indicated a lack of pedagogical knowledge regarding the improvement of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. Areas of inquiry for this study included the following: the lack of reading comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes; primary school teachers' lack of PCK to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes; reading models, approaches and strategies as well as comprehension strategies with specific reference to non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes; and models of professional development.

This study represents two cycles in an action research approach to investigate and address the professional development needs of teachers to improve their pedagogies regarding reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes. The first cycle will be discussed in the following section.

### iii. Cycle 1

Cycle one is illustrated by Figure 5.2, which is followed by a discussion of the five phases of action research conducted in this cycle.

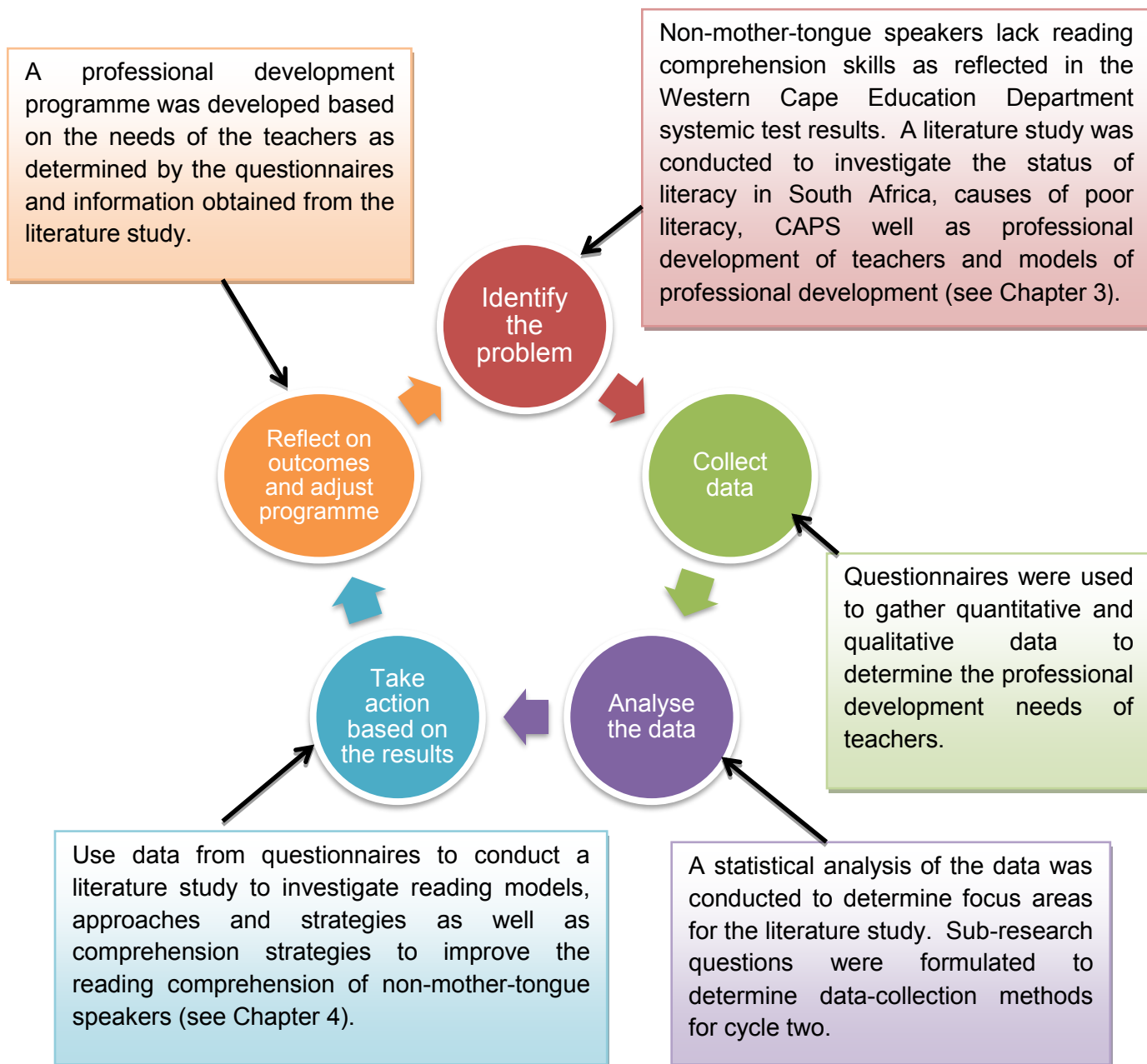


Figure 5.2: Cycle one of the action research study.

#### f) Problem identification

The first step in phase one of cycle one was to identify the problem that leads to the poor performance of non-mother-tongue speakers in primary schools in South Africa as indicated by the results of systemic tests conducted by the WCED and the PIRLS

(see 3.2.1). A literature study was conducted to investigate the status of literacy in South Africa, the causes of poor comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers and the processes of reading and reading comprehension according to CAPS, as well as the professional development of teachers and models of professional development (see Chapter 3).

The LiEP and the Constitution of South Africa give equal status to eleven official languages and make provision for parents to choose the language in which they want their children to be educated (Plüddemann 1999: 327; Probyn 2009:126; De Wet & Wolhuter 2009:365). In addition, it makes provision for early literacy and language development in the mother tongue. However, the nine indigenous languages seem to have lost their ground in favour of English and Afrikaans, as parents believe that these two languages will give their children an advantage in the world of commerce and industry (Kaiser et al. 2010:53; Hooijer & Fourie 2009:137; Lemmer 1995:83; De Wet & Wolhuter 2009:364). Studies conducted by Scheepers (2006:6), Hooijer and Fourie (2009:138) and Lemmer (1995:90) found evidence that reading comprehension problems in the second language can be caused by the learners' language deficit. Moreover, the PIRLS report states that unless children are fully functional in the language of teaching and learning, they are at considerable risk of failure or repeated failure in primary school and dropping out of school at secondary level (Howie et al. 2012:XV111). Studies conducted by De Klerk (2002b:18), O'Connor and Geiger (2009:260) and Basson (2013: 22) concluded that teachers are frustrated, because they lack the necessary knowledge and skills to teach the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes.

A questionnaire was developed to identify the needs of teachers so that they would be better equipped to support the unique needs of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. Shulman (1986:9) stated that teachers need to know more than just subject content. They also need to know what makes a subject difficult for pupils to comprehend as well as specific techniques that will make the subject comprehensible (see 2.4).

### *g) Data Collection*

- *Questionnaires*

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:195) state that questionnaires are widely used to gather data as they are relatively easy to administer, they ensure anonymity and all subjects have the same questions or statements. However, researchers should ensure that their measuring instruments are reliable and valid. Reliability and validity are two important psychometric characteristics of measuring instruments to ensure accurate data (Punch & Oancea 2014:298).

Validity has three aspects. (i) Internal validity refers to the extent to which relationships between two variables are correctly interpreted (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:105). In educational research, it is difficult to control all extraneous variables that may threaten internal validity. To limit some extraneous variables, the participating teachers attended no other professional development activities pertaining to the development of reading and reading comprehension strategies during the course of this study. (ii) Content validity addresses how well the items developed provide an adequate and representative sample of items that measure the construct of interest (Punch & Oancea 2014:298; Creswell 2014:160). Therefore, to confirm the validity of the items before administering the questionnaire, experts such as component managers and expert teachers were asked to review and reword items. In addition, the questionnaire was reviewed by an expert from the Centre for Statistical Analysis (CSA) of the University of Stellenbosch. (iii) External validity refers to the generalisability of the results and to what extent the conclusions that are made are transferable to other settings and contexts (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:105). Transferability of the conclusions of this study will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Reliability refers to the fact that if the same questionnaire was given to the same people under the same circumstances, but at a different time, the same results will be reached (Punch & Oancea 2014:297). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:205) recommend that a sample of subjects with characteristics similar to those who will form part of the study should be used to run a pilot test. This pilot group should be larger than 20 subjects. Accordingly, this researcher carried out a pilot study among



a group of 25 respondents in the Stellenbosch/Franschhoek region who matched the target population.

When a questionnaire contains Likert-type questions that form a scale, the Cronbach alpha is calculated to determine whether the scale used is reliable. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency (i.e. reliability). It measures how closely related a set of items is as a group. The alpha is expressed as a number between 0 and 1. It was not necessary to calculate the Cronbach's alpha for the pilot study as question 14 was adapted from De Vries et al. (2013:83). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:195) recommend that researchers use or adapt existing questionnaires to save time and money.

The unit of analysis entailed purposive, convenience sampling based on the researcher's knowledge of the target population. According to these techniques, a sample is selected on the basis of being "accessible or expedient" and "knowledge of a population, its elements and the purpose of the study" (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:137-138). This sample is purposive, because all the teachers in the sample teach Afrikaans Home Language; it allowed the researcher to collect data about the teachers' knowledge of reading and reading comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers and whether they teach comprehension strategies explicitly. The nature of the sample also allowed the researcher to collect data on their experience of professional development activities and their practices regarding updating skills, reflective and collaborative activities.

The sample is convenient, because a group of 81 Afrikaans Home Language teachers of the Cape Winelands Education District (CWED) of the Western Cape Province were attending a professional development session. Due to time constraints and the fact that researchers should remain in control of the data-collection procedure to ensure good-quality data, it was decided on face-to-face administration of the questionnaire (Punch & Oancea 2014:301). Prior to the administration of the test, the difference between explicitly teaching<sup>14</sup> comprehension

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<sup>14</sup> Explicitly teaching comprehension strategies were explained to the teachers as follows: This is when you model specific strategies by using think-aloud processes while allowing pupils to think about and reflect on what they have read. This includes reasons for using the different strategies.

strategies as required by question 6 and implementing<sup>15</sup> them as required by question 9 was explained to the teachers. All the respondents were fully qualified, with 46% having an additional qualification in specialised education or inclusive education. They teach in 120 schools across the district mostly in disadvantaged rural areas. As part of their job description, they are responsible for supporting non-mother-tongue speakers who are not fulfilling their full potential academically. In addition, they have to support mainstream teachers to assist non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. It is therefore very important that they gain the appropriate PCK and skills during in-service training. Of the 81 respondents, 62 completed the questionnaires. This was a response rate of 77%. Some teachers were disinclined to complete the questionnaire as they indicated that they have no non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes.

The questionnaire (see Annexure D) included four constructs to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the professional development needs of Afrikaans teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers. The first construct sought to measure the professional development needs of teachers regarding reading models and strategies. Questions 2 to 4 sought to collect qualitative data related to implementation and the professional development needs of teachers regarding reading models and strategies. The second construct sought to measure the professional development needs of teachers regarding reading comprehension strategies. This section of the questionnaire included four questions. Questions 6 and 7 sought to collect quantitative data relating to the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies and teachers' knowledge of reading comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers. Questions 8 to 12 sought to collect qualitative data related to implementation and professional development needs of teachers regarding reading comprehension strategies. To ensure that the professional development activities comply with the curriculum, the Home Language CAPS (DoBE 2011:17-18) was used to select the different reading models and strategies as well as the comprehension strategies that were included in the questionnaire. The data of the first two constructs were required to determine which reading models and strategies

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<sup>15</sup> Implementing comprehension strategies was explained as follows: This is when you include different types of comprehension questions when testing learners' comprehension abilities.

as well as reading comprehension strategies needed to be included in the professional development programme.

The third construct sought to collect quantitative data on the teachers' experience of professional development activities. This construct was included to determine how teachers experienced professional development activities in the past. The data were used when the professional development programme was developed and while these sessions were conducted with the teachers. The fourth construct was included to gain insight into professional development activities relating to updating, reflection and collaboration by teachers. For this study, reading professional literature, textbooks and educational sites on internet as well as attending courses, workshops, conferences and consultations in and outside school were considered as updating activities. In addition, reflection as part of professional activities implies a form of thinking about one's own activities when dealing with a problem to make better sense of it. Finally, two kinds of collaborative activities were included in the questionnaire, namely exchange activities (discussing teaching problems and exchanging instructional materials) and professional collaboration (joint preparation of educational materials and team teaching).

The construct relating to the professional development activities of reflection, updating and collaboration was included to connect action research as a professional development model with the development of PCK as stated in the theoretical framework of this study (see 2.4). In addition, this construct was included to gain insight into the extent to which these activities were practised by teachers. Shulman and Shulman (2004:267) concluded that learning takes place more effectively when teachers share knowledge through reflective practice and collaboration in learning communities. This section of the questionnaire consisted of the following activity items: updating (10 items), reflecting (10 items) and collaborating (14 items); they appeared as three separate sets, all measured with 5-point Likert scales (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree). To encourage respondents to represent their behaviour and beliefs accurately, the item formulations of questions 13 and 14 were in the first person. In addition, anonymity was guaranteed.

#### *h) Data Analysis*

Data analysis was both statistical and thematic. Question 1, 6, 7, 13 and 14 of the questionnaire provided quantitative data on teacher professional development needs and activities. Questions 4, 5, 11 and 12 provided qualitative data on teacher challenges and successes in the classroom when teaching reading and comprehension skills to the second-language pupils in their classes. Furthermore, qualitative data obtained from questions 2, 3, 9 and 10 provided relevant data on the implementation of reading models and strategies and comprehension strategies as well as the professional development needs of Afrikaans primary school teachers regarding reading and comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. The qualitative data were coded and grouped into four categories, namely reading strategies implemented, comprehension strategies implemented, successes and challenges.

The CSA of the University of Stellenbosch conducted the statistical analysis of the quantitative data of the questionnaires using the Statistica 12 programme to ensure reliability and validity of the results. A detailed discussion of the results appears in Chapter 6, but for the purpose of reporting on the results of cycle one, a summary of the professional development needs and experiences of teachers regarding reading and comprehension strategies is offered in Table 5.1. These needs and experiences were taken into consideration when the researcher developed the professional development programme during phase five of cycle one.

Table 5.1: Summary of quantitative data relating to the professional development needs of the teachers – measurement 1.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Number of responses indicating yes</b> (total N=62)
1. Reading models and strategies in which professional development has been received in order to develop reading skills of non-mother-tongue speakers	
Top-down model	3
Bottom-up model	3
Interactive model: Balanced language approach	6
Guided reading	9
Shared reading	8
Group reading	9
Reading aloud	9
Independent reading	7
6. Explicitly teaching comprehension strategies to non-mother-tongue speakers	10
7. Comprehension strategies in which professional development has been received in order to develop reading skills of non-mother tongue speakers	
Guided comprehension	6
Schema theory	1
Metacognitive strategies	2
Making predictions	5
Questioning	3
Drawing inferences	4
Finding main ideas	5
Drawing conclusions	4
Clarifying	2
Synthesise	3
Gradual release of responsibility	1

13.1 Positive experience of professional development with regard to reading strategies.	44
13.2 Professional development needs have been determined in the past, regarding reading strategies.	25
13.3 Professional development needs have been determined in the past regarding comprehension strategies.	21
13.4 Would like to give input regarding my professional development needs.	34
13.5 Professional development initiatives in the past with regard to reading and comprehension skills have considered the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes	10
13.6 Professional development sessions attended encouraged collaboration between colleagues teaching reading and comprehension skills to non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes.	33
13.7 Professional development sessions attended by me have encouraged teachers to become reflective practitioners.	33
14. Professional development activities relating to:	Mean score
Updating	3.24
Reflection	3.33
Collaboration	3.45

The results of the initial data-collection process as reflected in Table 5.1 were used to conduct a focused literature study to develop a plan of action which comprises phase four of cycle one. These data indicated that 78% of respondents required professional development regarding reading models and strategies and 70% of respondents required professional development regarding reading comprehension strategies to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother tongue speakers.

*i) Develop a plan of action*

After the data were analysed to determine the professional development needs of the teachers, a literature study was conducted (see Chapter 4). Reading in a second language, models, approaches and strategies of reading as well as reading

comprehension strategies with special reference to the adaptations made for non-mother-tongue speakers to enhance their reading comprehension were investigated.

The theories of constructivism and socio-constructivism, as well as the development of teacher knowledge according to Shulman, were taken into account when the professional development programme was developed. These theories postulate that teachers should be aware that knowledge should not merely be transmitted; instead opportunities should be created for pupils to develop learning experiences on their own or in groups. Moreover, teachers should consider their pupils' prior knowledge when planning literacy activities (see 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4). In addition, teacher trainers should give opportunities to teachers to work in larger or smaller groups as peer-to-peer learning enhances learning as postulated by the socio-constructivists (Woolfolk 2010:50). Furthermore, teachers should be encouraged to be part of a learning community willing to teach and learn from their experiences, as postulated by Shulman and Schulman's (2004:259) FCTL framework (see 2.4).

*j) Reflect on outcomes and adjust programme*

After the literature study was completed in phase four, a professional development programme was developed by the researcher. The unit of analysis entailed purposive, convenience sampling based on the researcher's knowledge of the target population. According to these techniques, a sample is selected "on the basis of being "accessible of expedient" and "knowledge of a population, its elements and the purpose of the study" (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:137-138). Although the questionnaire was completed by a target group of 62 teachers in the CWED, a sample of 14 Intermediate Phase teachers was selected to participate in the professional development programme. The sample was purposive, because the teachers were selected based on the researcher's knowledge of the schools and teachers in the area. In addition, the teachers in the sample indicated that they experience challenges to support the unique needs of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Home Language classes. The sample was convenient, because the teachers were selected on the basis of their geographic proximity in the Stellenbosch/Franschhoek area, where the researcher resides. This was because of a lack of funding to pay for travelling expenses of teachers as well as time constraints during afternoons when the professional development activities took

place. Two of the selected teachers decided not to participate as a result of work and family commitments.

Before implementing the programme in cycle two, the content was discussed with the 12 teachers who would be participating in the professional development activities. This was to gain their input on the content of the proposed programme as well as to determine the frequency of the professional development sessions that took place after contact hours. Regarding the content of the programme, it was decided to include the following: all the reading strategies of the balanced language approach; guided comprehension; the schema theory; metacognitive strategies; making predictions; questioning; drawing inferences; finding the main ideas; synthesising; and the gradual release of responsibility method. In addition, it was jointly decided that a minimum of eight sessions would be conducted once a week for two months. Additional sessions could be included depending on the needs of the teachers.

The professional development sessions were planned as described below:

Session one dealt with the process of conducting action research. It is important for teachers to understand action research as a tool for professional development as well as using it to teach and reflect on their own teaching practices. In addition, the reasons for selecting action research for this study, the advantages of action research and the five phases which comprise each cycle of action research were included in this session. Furthermore, the reasons for using triangulation of data in research studies were discussed with specific reference to the different data sources of this study. In conclusion, the importance of keeping a research journal was discussed and an example of one considered.

Reflective thinking is very important when action research is conducted. Teachers should therefore examine what it means when this term is used and how it can be used in the classroom (Baumfield, Hall & Wall 2008:63). This was discussed and practised in session two. In addition, definitions of reflective thinking and linking reflective thinking to the theoretical framework of constructivism were included in session two. Shulman and Shulman (2004:259) regarded reflective thinking as an



important tool to improve FCL teaching (see 2.4); hence, in order to practice reflective thinking, the teachers had to solve two problems in pairs (see Annexure J).

Shulman (1986:5) emphasised that teachers should have the necessary conceptual knowledge and demonstrate that knowledge before entering the classroom. Therefore the aim of session three was to deepen their knowledge of the process of reading by discussing the different reading models and their advantages and disadvantages. These models are the top-down model, the bottom-up model and the interactive model. Thereafter the relationship between each reading model and reading approach was explained: basal readers are linked to the top-down model, the language experience programme is linked to the bottom-up model, and the whole language approach as well as the balanced language approach is linked to the interactive model. In addition, the difference between phonological and phonemic awareness and their importance in the reading process was explained to the teachers. Sessions four and five covered the following reading strategies: shared reading, guided reading, group reading, reading aloud and independent reading (see 4.6.4.1; 4.6.4.2; 4.6.4.3; 4.6.4.4; 4.6.4.5). Each session emphasised the importance of the respective reading strategies including the methodology of each strategy, as well as the way in which they should be adapted to suit the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers. In addition, each of these sessions involved practical activities where teachers had to use either big books or smaller books to practise and demonstrate their understanding of the strategies to their peers and the researcher by mediating these texts through the gradual release of responsibility method (see 4.7.4). The importance of selecting culturally relevant reading materials was discussed, as advocated by the socio-constructivists and Shulman (see 2.3 and 2.4).

To improve the reading comprehension of non-mother tongue speakers, teachers have to have a sound knowledge of comprehension strategies. Therefore two sessions dealing with implementation of comprehension strategies were planned. Guided comprehension, which forms part of comprehension strategies instruction (see 4.7.5) was introduced in session six. Furthermore, four reading comprehension strategies were introduced which had to be implemented by using guided comprehension. These strategies are: predicting, clarifying, summarising and questioning taught within the context of a reading group. The teachers were

introduced to the four characters – the “Fab Four” according Oczkus (2005 in Stricklin 2011:620-621) – that make learning these comprehension strategies easier for non-mother-tongue speakers: these characters are Paula the Predictor, Clarence the Clarifier, Quinn the Questioner and Sammy the Summariser. The researcher showed examples of learning support materials, which were demonstrated to indicate how these materials enhance guided comprehension. Comprehension process motions (CPM) (see 4.7.5) was introduced in session seven. A practical demonstration was given of the different hand signals that accompany the following comprehension strategies: finding the main idea, deductions, predictions and clarifying. CPM uses auditory, visual and kinaesthetic pathways to internalise abstract comprehension processes.

Vocabulary development is important for the development of the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers (see 4.3 and 4.7.2). Therefore session eight included activities such as selecting the appropriate vocabulary from a text, using definitions and pictures. Venn diagrams, semantic charts, graphic organisers, cloze exercises, word walls, tactile and kinaesthetic activities to enhance vocabulary were also introduced (see 4.6.4.1 and 4.7.1).

iv. Cycle 2

Cycle 2 two is illustrated by Figure 5.3, followed by a discussion of the five phases of action research conducted in this cycle.

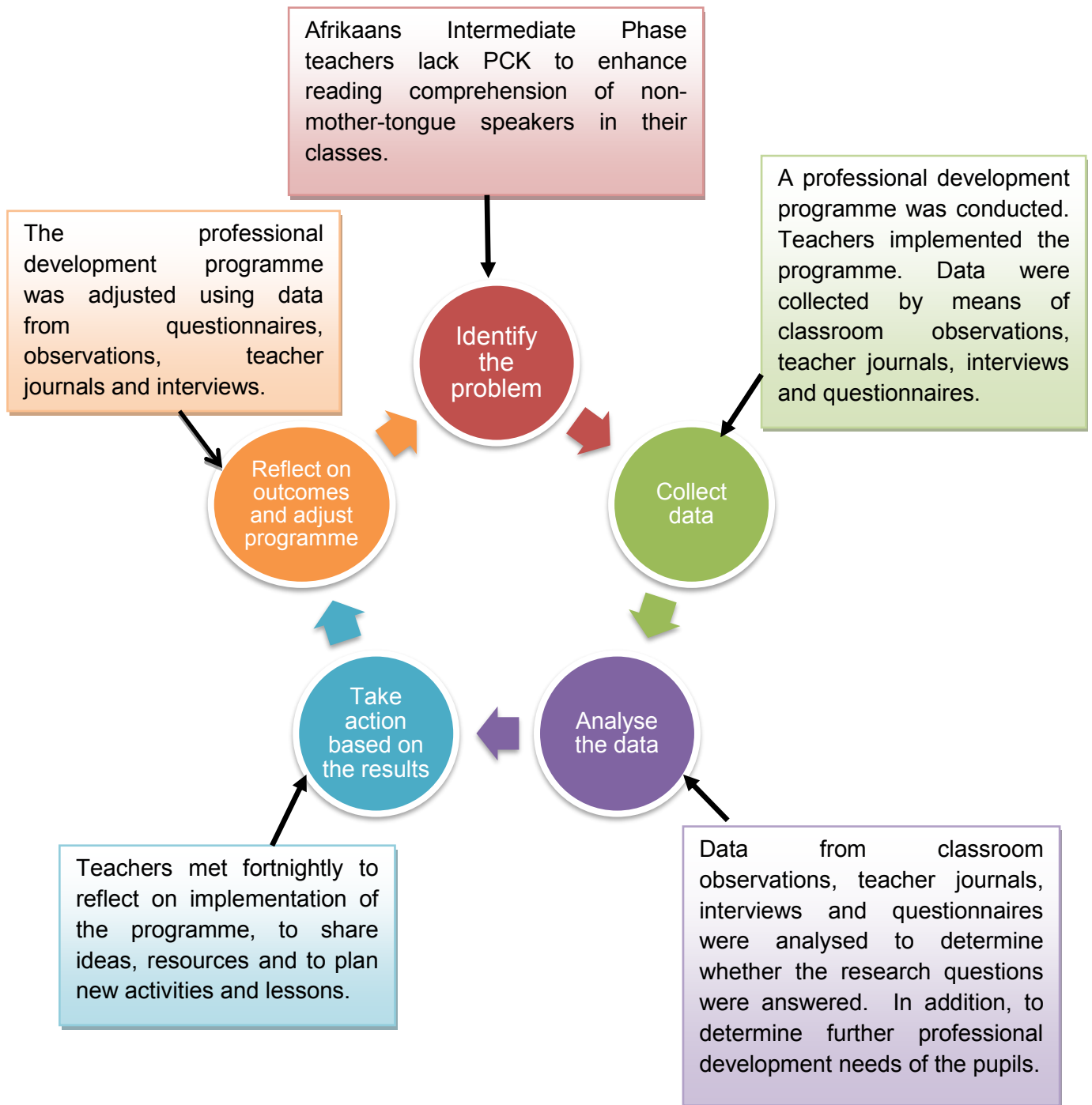


Figure 5.3: Cycle two of the action research study.

*f) Identify the problem*

The lack of PCK of Afrikaans primary school teachers to enhance the reading comprehension of non-mother tongue speakers in their classes was addressed in this phase. The literature study and data from the questionnaires indicate that this may be one of the reasons why non-mother-tongue speakers lack reading comprehension skills. Van Staden and Bosker (2014:2) found that factors relating to the poor performance of South African pupils include insufficient subject knowledge of teachers as well as inadequate communication between teachers and pupils in the LoLT. Researchers such as Basson and Le Cordeur (2014:110), O'Connor and Geiger (2009:263) and Hooijer and Fourie (2009:141-146) have found that teachers need professional development programmes to assist them in this regard. Similarly, Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:16) recommend that teachers should be trained to be aware of frameworks that specifically target explicit comprehension instruction and modelling.

The eight professional development sessions, developed during phase five of cycle one, were conducted to enhance the PCK of the 12 participating teachers (see Annexure I). These sessions covered the following topics: implementing action research in classes; practising reflective thinking; reading models and approaches; reading strategies of the balanced language approach; guided comprehension; CPM; and different strategies to enhance vocabulary of non-mother-tongue speakers. Teachers were made aware that knowledge should not merely be transmitted but opportunities should be created for pupils to develop their own learning experiences on their own or in groups. Moreover, pupils' prior knowledge should be considered when teachers plan literacy activities (see 2.2 and 2.3). During the professional development sessions, opportunities were given to the teachers to work in larger or smaller groups as peer-to-peer learning enhances learning, as postulated by the socio-constructivists (Woolfolk 2010:50). In addition the teachers were encouraged to be part of a learning community willing to teach and learn from their experiences (Shulman & Schulman 2004:259).

During and after implementation of the professional development programme, data were collected, which will be discussed in the following section.

*g) Data collection*

The weekly sessions were well attended. Six of the eight sessions had 100% attendance record. Poor health prevented one teacher from attending two of the sessions. The researcher later explained the content of these sessions to her individually. After the teachers completed the eight professional development sessions, they implemented these strategies in their classes for eight months using action research. Each teacher had to select a group of non-mother-tongue speakers from the Intermediate Phase. These pupils were identified based on their poor performance in Afrikaans by the teachers involved in the School Based Support Team<sup>16</sup> (SBST). However, two teachers included Foundation Phase pupils as there was a greater need in their schools to support these learners. A total of 12 Foundation Phase and 57 Intermediate Phase pupils were included as part of the project. Before commencement of the lessons, the teachers conducted a baseline assessment to determine the comprehension level of the pupils in their groups. This assisted them to choose the appropriate level of texts for the lessons. After that the teachers implemented the reading and reading comprehension strategies for eight months.

Qualitative data were obtained by means of journal entries of participating teachers as well as classroom observations and interviews conducted by the researcher. In addition, quantitative and qualitative data were obtained by means of questionnaires eight months after the professional development programme was completed.

- *Journals*

Burns (2010:89) states that journals can be used to record events, happenings and reflections whilst conducting action research. Sagor (2005:108) emphasises that keeping a journal may result in producing valuable information on the implementation of the action research project. However, according to Burns (2010:89) and Sagor (2005:108) it is not mandatory to use journals in action research. Journals are normally used in conjunction with other methods such as observations and interviews (Burns 2010:89). The researcher requested teachers to record their experiences by means of informal yet regular journal entries in which they

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<sup>16</sup> The School Based Support Team is a school-level support mechanism whose primary function is to put co-ordinated school, learner and teacher support in place (DoBE 2014:9).

documented (a) the reading and comprehension strategies used, (b) successes, (c) challenges, and (d) questions (see Annexure H). After the eight-month implementation period was completed, 9 of the 12 participants submitted their journals for data analysis. Unfortunately, the journals of 3 participants seemed rushed and incomplete.

- *Observations*

During implementation of the programme the researcher conducted one classroom observation per teacher to gather data on how the reading and reading comprehension strategies were being implemented. Each observation lasted one hour. Twelve sites were identified where the observations were conducted. The principal and teachers at each site were notified when the researcher would conduct the observations. Creswell (2014:191) identified four different types of observations: complete participant, where the researcher's role is concealed; observer as participant, where the role of the researcher is known; participant as observer, where the observation role is second to the role of the participant; and lastly, complete observer where the researcher observes without participating. This researcher chose the role of complete observer, as it allows for close observation and documentation of each pupil and teacher's performance.

Burns (2010:57) describes action research observation as being different from other kinds of observation because it is focused, objective, reflective, documented and evaluated. Observer bias was minimised by using an observation schedule, which structured the observation (see Annexure F). The 'Hawthorne effect' was not of major concern, because the researcher was honest and not too technical, nor overly detailed, when she explained to the participants what she would be observing (Kawulich 2005). Details such as reading and comprehension strategies, lesson structure, text used and whether classrooms were print rich were noted on the observation sheets. These aspects that were observed were addressed during the professional development sessions. Whilst conducting classroom observations, eight teachers expressed the need to meet regularly to share ideas and to develop lessons and learning support materials. They requested the researcher to contact the other four teachers in the group to determine whether they would like to meet to discuss and share ideas.

- *Interviews*

Burgess (1984:102) described interviews as a “conversation with a purpose.” There are three types of interviews: open-ended, structured and semi-structured. There are no pre-planned questions for open-ended interviews and the direction of the interview is determined by the participant. The aim is to obtain as much detailed information as possible. In contrast, structured interviews are used when the researcher wants to obtain the same information from each participant. Questions are set before-hand, therefore comparisons of responses to the same question across all interviewed participants can be made. Semi-structured interviews are also organised and structured, but they allow for more flexibility depending on how the interviewee responds. The aim of a semi-structured interview is to make some comparisons between participants, but it also allows for individual diversity and flexibility (Burns 2010:75). Semi-structured interviews may lead to richer information being elicited, therefore it was the preferred method for this study. A semi-structured interview protocol was developed to gather additional data on the implementation process. The interview protocol consisted of twelve items which were used to gather data on the effect that the professional development programme had on their beliefs, knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding professional development activities as well as teaching reading and reading comprehension to non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes (see Annexure G). The interview protocol was piloted by five participants to ensure good qualitative data. In order to obtain a homogeneous sample for this study, participants were requested to assign a number to themselves ranging from 1 to 12. Participants 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 were selected for the pilot and participants 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 were selected for the interviews.

After field testing the interview protocol, one additional question was added relating to the effect the professional development programme had on their confidence. It was not necessary to rephrase any of the other questions. Interviews were conducted with five participating teachers following the predetermined interview protocol after the eight-month implementation period was concluded.

- *Questionnaire (measurement 2)*

The original questionnaire was re-administered and completed by the 12 participants after a period of eight months transpired. The data of this measurement were compared to the first measurement to determine whether the professional development needs of the participants had been met. In addition, the questionnaire sought to determine further professional development needs regarding the teaching of reading comprehension skills to non-mother-tongue speakers. However, an additional question was added to the second questionnaire. This question sought to determine how the implementation of action research influenced the teachers' pedagogies regarding implementation of teaching reading and reading comprehension skills to non-mother-tongue speakers. The questionnaires were completed by the 12 participating teachers.

These data sources gave an insight into teachers' experience, understanding and implementation of the reading and comprehension strategies acquired during the professional development sessions.

#### *h) Data analysis*

By analysing the data obtained from the second measurement of the questionnaires, teacher journals, observations and interviews, some trends emerging across the different workshops as well as during the implementation process were identified. A comprehensive discussion of these trends appears in Chapter 6, but for the purpose of reporting results in cycle two, a summary of these trends is offered in Tables 5.2 and 5.3. This is followed with a discussion of the different statistical procedures used to calculate the results.



Table 5.2: Summary of quantitative data relating to the professional development needs of the teachers - measurement 2.

Questionnaire: quantitative data	Number of responses indicating yes (total N=12)
2. Reading models and strategies in which professional development had been received in order to develop reading skills of non-mother tongue speakers.	
Top-down model	12
Bottom-up model	12
Interactive model: Balanced language approach	12
Guided reading	11
Shared reading	12
Reading aloud	12
Group reading	12
Independent reading	12
8. Explicitly teaching comprehension strategies to non-mother tongue speakers.	11
9. Comprehension strategies in which professional development has been received in order to develop reading skills of non-mother tongue speakers	
Guided comprehension	12
Schema theory	12
Metacognitive strategies	11
Making predictions	12
Questioning	12
Drawing inferences	12
Finding main ideas	12
Drawing conclusions	12
Clarifying	12
Synthesise	12
Gradual release of responsibility	11

13.1 Positive experience of professional development with regard to reading strategies.	12
13.2 Professional development needs have been determined in the past, regarding reading strategies.	10
13.3 Professional development needs have been determined in the past, regarding comprehension strategies.	10
13.4 Would like to give in-put regarding my professional development needs.	7
13.5 Professional development initiatives in the past with regard to reading and comprehension skills have considered the needs of non-mother tongue speakers in Afrikaans medium classes	6
13.6 Professional development sessions attended encouraged collaboration between colleagues teaching reading and comprehension skills to non-mother tongue speakers in Afrikaans medium classes.	10
13.7 Professional development sessions attended by me have encouraged teachers to become reflective practitioners.	12
14. Professional development activities relating to:	Mean score
Updating	4.09
Reflection	4.23
Collaboration	4.1

*Table 5.3: Summary of qualitative data relating to the implementation of the professional development programme.*

<b>Classroom observations</b>	<b>Number of teachers: 12</b>
Using shared Reading	6
Using guided Reading	1
Using reading aloud	9
Using group reading	1
Using independent reading	2

Using guided comprehension	12
Using comprehension process motions	0
Using gradual release of responsibility	9
Teach vocabulary explicitly	11
Select appropriate texts	12
<b>Teacher journals</b>	<b>Number of teachers: 9</b>
Implementing making predictions	9
Implementing questioning	8
Implementing making inferences	7
Implementing finding main ideas	8
Implementing drawing conclusions	5
Implementing clarifying	2
Implementing synthesising	3
Integrating different comprehension strategies	5
Experienced challenges when implementing the strategies	5
Adapting the programme	2
Teach vocabulary explicitly	9
<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Number of teachers: 5</b>
Professional development sessions influenced PCK regarding reading and reading comprehension strategies for non-mother tongue speakers.	5
Professional development sessions influence collaboration with other teachers.	5
Literacy lessons influence pupils reading comprehension positively.	5
Enough opportunities were given for teachers to express their professional development needs.	5
Guided comprehension – needed further training	0
comprehension process motions - needed further training	5
Needed more time to implement different strategies	5
Professional development contributed to increased confidence in their ability as teachers of non-mother tongue speakers	5

Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analysed by the CSA of the University of Stellenbosch. Data relating to questions 1, 6, 7 and 13 were calculated by using the Chi-square statistical procedure. This procedure is a way of answering questions about the relationship based on frequency of observation in each category. In this study one independent variable (time) was divided into two categories: before commencement of the professional development programme, and eight months after it was completed. The total frequency in each category was compared to the expected frequency, which in most cases is chance (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:476). The responses of each of the 12 participants (dependent variable) were compared before and after completion of the professional development programme. The value obtained was then used with the degrees of freedom in the problem ( $df = 2-1$ ) to find the value of the chi-square to determine the relevance of the results. The result is significant when the  $p < 0.5$ .

The results of question 14 were calculated by conducting the mixed model repeated measures ANOVAs to compare mean scores before and after the professional development programme were conducted. Each of the three professional activities relating to updating, reflection and collaboration was calculated separately. ANOVA is conducted in a study where three or more sample means are compared on one independent variable (time), then to test the null hypothesis. This allowed the researcher to test the differences of each of the 12 respondents (dependent variable) relating to each statement in question 14. This comparison is called analysis of variance, because the statistical formula uses the variances of the groups and not the means to calculate a value ( $F$ -value) that reflects the degree of differences in the means. These analyses test the hypothesis that the mean scores are the same for the first and second measurement. If  $p < 0.05$  then this hypothesis will be rejected. This was to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between participants' responses prior to the implementation of the professional development programme and eight months after the programme was completed.

Furthermore, qualitative data obtained from the questionnaires were arranged into four categories by using the four questions regarding implementation of the reading and comprehension strategies (see Figure 6.1).

All interviews were recorded and transcribed, allowing for the researcher's contributions to be identified as well as allowing careful analysis of the participants' answers. This reduced the danger of data distortion due to selective memory, thereby improving the reliability of the study. Furthermore, the reports of the interviews were given to the interviewees to ascertain whether they agree with the assumptions made by the researcher (Creswell 2014:200). Questions such as: "Is this right?" and "Have I explained this accurately?" were asked. In addition, qualitative data obtained from teacher journals, observations and transcribed interviews were coded and categorised by using the research questions and interview schedule. Data collected from the above-mentioned data sources were analysed and discussed separately and then compared in what is called side-by-side comparison (Creswell 2014:222).

*i) Develop a plan of action*

True to the socio-constructivist perspective in professional development (García et al. 2011:151), the teachers arranged meetings after the eight-month implementation period to support one another in constructing their own understanding of the enhancement of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. Eight teachers indicated a needed to reflect and collaborate as a group on teaching and learning in their classrooms. In addition, they wanted to share ideas, develop lessons and learning support materials. They requested that the researcher extend an invitation to the other four teachers, who accepted the invitation. It was decided that they would bring along culturally relevant books to the first meeting, where they divided into five teams of two members each and one team of three members. Each team selected a book which they used to develop a lesson. The researcher was invited to attend and requested to contribute when necessary.

To prevent all groups using the same comprehension strategy, it was decided to divide the comprehension strategies among the groups. Each lesson contained the following: ways to activate prior knowledge, new vocabulary, including vocabulary strategies to be used, the reading strategy or strategies, the comprehension strategy and how the gradual release of responsibility method would be used. In addition, the teachers presented the lessons they had developed to each other. It was interesting

to observe the way in which they critiqued each other as well as seeking approval from me. It was inspiring to observe the development of the teachers and the way in which their confidence grew, which was also reflected in the nearly 100% attendance record. Data from the interviews revealed that these collaborative sessions contributed to the teachers' PCK (see 6.4.3.5). Research conducted by Jita and Mokheke (2012:9) and De Clercq and Phiri (2013:84) concluded that when teachers take responsibility for their own learning, this serves to improve their PCK as well as their classroom practices.

*j) Reflect on the results and adjust the programme*

A central theme of this research project was to enhance the PCK of teachers so that they are better able to support the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. In addition, they were introduced to using action research and reflective thinking in their classes. Aspects of developing these skills that need further attention that emerged from the data are: practising the comprehension strategies of finding the main idea, making predictions, inferring and clarifying through CPM; using gradual release of responsibility to develop comprehensions skills of the pupils; practising reflective thinking and adapting teaching strategies accordingly. Bataglia (1995:89) emphasises that teachers should ask questions about their teaching practice during the reflection phase, as this will assist them to remain focused. By doing so, they will constantly be thinking about or attempting to improve a certain aspect of their practice.

Positive effects that emerged from the data that should be considered in the final programme are: professional development programmes should be tailored to teachers' needs; action research made teachers aware of the importance of reflection and adapting lessons according to the needs of their pupils; collaboration between teachers through small group interaction leads to learning communities where teachers share ideas and learn from one another.

The study concluded at the end of cycle two. The professional development programme was adjusted according to further needs that emerged from the data as follows:

- Include more information regarding the different reading models to deepen the teachers' theoretical knowledge about reading instruction and the learning theories that underpin them. One session for each model;
- One session devoted to guided comprehension, including practical demonstrations by teachers;
- One session devoted to reciprocal teaching and the comprehension strategies associated with it. Special attention should be given to teacher modelling. This should include practical demonstrations by the trainer and teachers;
- One session devoted to the theoretical aspects of comprehension strategy instruction;
- Two sessions devoted to CPM and allow a third session for practical implementation;
- Emphasise the advantages of keeping a teacher journal.

## 5.5 TRIANGULATION

Using both qualitative and quantitative data-collection methods strengthened the study as it ensures that an objective approach was adopted to the data collected by applying triangulation (MacMillan & Schumacher 2010:379; Burns 2010:95; Baumfield et al. 2008:30). Burns (2010:95) states that to ensure credible results in action research, an objective approach should be adopted to the information collected. Triangulation is one way of doing so as more than one type of data are collected which can be compared and cross-checked to see whether findings through one source are corroborated by other evidence. Even though collecting more than one kind of data can seem daunting, more than one method aimed at answering research questions can reduce researcher bias and strengthen the findings of the study (Baumfield et al. 2008:30; Burns 2010:97). Furthermore, Jick (1979 in Johnson et al. 2007:115) states that triangulation has the following advantages: (a) the researcher may be more confident about the results of the study; (b) it allows for different ways of collecting data; (c) it may lead to more comprehensive data; (d) it can lead to integration of theories; and (e) it can reveal contradictions. In addition, an effective audit trail of the data may increase the credibility of the research (Costello 2003:45). In this study triangulation was applied

by using data from completed questionnaires, observation sheets, teacher journals, audio recordings of interviews and interview transcripts.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were used in this study to answer the research questions. Questionnaires and a literature study were used to answer research questions 1 and 2 (5.3.1 and 5.3.2). Question 3 and 4 (see 5.3.3 and 5.3.4) were answered by questionnaires (second measurement), observations, teacher journals and interviews.

## 5.6 VALIDITY IN ACTION RESEARCH

Burns (2010:25) states that the issue of research validity in action research raises important questions such as: *How can you ensure the methods used for collecting data are trustworthy? How can you be sure that your conclusions are based on the data you have collected?* It is therefore important that researchers become aware of their beliefs and philosophies as they form networks of assumptions underlying their practice. Consequently these become the lenses through which observations in classrooms are analysed and interpreted during the research process. By being aware of their assumptions, keeping an open mind and by acknowledging what the data are indicating, researchers increase the validity of their research (Burns 2010:26-27). Furthermore, the generalisability of results of action research studies has been criticised. The results may have high validity for the researcher, but their reliability and transferability may be questioned. This means collaboration and partnerships between teachers and researchers are important as they provide opportunities for sharing of ideas across different contexts (Baumfield et al. 2008:10).

Anderson, Herr and Nihlen (in McMillan & Schumacher 2010:451) posited that the integrity or quality of action research is based on five criteria namely: democratic validity, outcome validity, process validity, catalytic validity and dialogic validity. These five criteria as they relate to this study, will be discussed below.

Democratic validity deals with representivity of data sources as well as of the various participants in the study. In this study data sources included questionnaires,



observations, journals and interviews. Participants included 62 teachers across the CWED who completed the questionnaire and 12 participants who participated in the professional development programme. Outcome validity is related to the successful resolution of the problem that the study investigated. Interviews conducted with a representative group of participating teachers indicated that their PCK related to the teaching of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers had increased. Process validity refers to the manner in which the study was conducted. According to Mills (2007:91), process validity requires the study to be conducted in a dependable and competent manner by ensuring that data-collection methods are effective and unbiased. In this study the questionnaires were reviewed by a member of the CSA of the University of Stellenbosch, transcribed interviews were presented to participating teachers to confirm accuracy, and observation sheets were signed by the teachers. Catalytic validity addresses the extent to which the results of the study are a catalyst for action such as changing methods of instruction or modifying the curriculum. Journals of teachers as well as observations and interviews conducted by the researcher indicated that the teaching methodology of the participating teachers was adapted to better suit the unique needs of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. In addition, they indicated that they would use these strategies in future. Dialogic validity refers to the results of the action research study, for example, whether the results have been shared through conferences, discussions and being published by peer-reviewed journals (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:451).

## **5.7 EVALUATING ACTION RESEARCH**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:451), assessing the quality of an action research study is done by addressing the following questions:

- Does the research problem address the effectiveness of professional practice?
- Are the research questions stated in such a manner that they can be addressed empirically?
- Were adequate data collected?

- Could procedures regarding sampling, instrumentation or procedures prejudice the findings?
- Were there different methods of data collection and analysis?
- Were the logical actions conducted based on the findings?
- Will change in practice occur as result of the findings?
- Has the implementation of the suggested changes improved the outcomes of participants?

From the above, it is clear that evaluation relies as much on the use of results as on the technical precision of the research. In contrast, other studies rely on subject selection, instrument validity and internal validity to confirm credibility (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:452). The questions above were carefully considered when this study was planned and implemented. Furthermore, the researcher used these questions as a guideline throughout this study.

## **5.8 ADHERENCE TO ETHICAL STANDARDS**

This section briefly describes how the ethical considerations concerned were adhered to during this study. Before the data collection started, permission was obtained from the WCED (see Annexure B). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:15) point out that the rights of respondents as human beings should be respected at all times. In addition, ethical clearance was obtained (see Annexure K). The researcher adhered to the rights standards as outlined below by obtaining written consent from all participants (see Annexure C).

The teachers who participated in the research were made aware of what was required of them if they agreed to participate in this study. Each teacher was informed that the decision to take part in a survey by completing the questionnaire was their own choice, and that not participating in it would not affect their receiving support from the project. Teachers were made aware that, should they wish to withdraw from the study at any time and not provide their reasons for such withdrawal, that they would be able to do so freely, without fear of being victimised regarding their decision not to continue participating in the project. At no time did the

researcher coerce any teacher into providing information, especially information that might be perceived as sensitive or incriminating. Furthermore, teachers were given the assurance that their responses would remain anonymous, and that the information that they provided would be treated as confidential at all times.

## **5.9 SUMMARY**

This chapter focused on the research methodology of this study, detailing in particular the research design, namely action research, which included two action research cycles each consisting of five phases namely: identifying the problem, data collection, data analysis, developing a plan of action and reflecting on the results and adjusting the programme.

The importance of triangulation of data, establishing the validity of action research, evaluation of action research as well as adherence to ethical standards was discussed.

The next chapter will focus on the presentation of the research data that were collected from the questionnaire, teacher journals, observations and interviews. It covers the time span of the study from the identification of the problem in cycle one until the conclusion of the study at the end of cycle two, when the final adjustments to the professional development programme were made.

## CHAPTER 6

### RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to provide pedagogical support to teachers to enable them enhance the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes, so that the reading comprehension of these pupils can be enhanced. The previous chapter presented a detailed discussion of the research methodology and processes of data collection and analysis. A mixed methods research design featuring action research was used, which allowed the researcher to acquire and utilise quantitative and qualitative data (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:445). This method provided the researcher with a better understanding of the research problem.

During cycle one of the study the lack of reading and reading comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans medium-classes was investigated. A literature study was conducted to investigate the research problem. The data obtained from the literature study were used to develop a questionnaire (see Chapter 3). The questionnaire was completed by 62 teachers in the Cape Winelands Education District (CWED) before they commenced the programme to determine their needs with regard to improving the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. This provided the researcher with quantitative data, which were analysed by CSA of the University of Stellenbosch using the Statistica-12 programme. Furthermore, qualitative data taken from the questionnaires were arranged into four categories by using the four questions on the implementation of reading models and strategies, and of comprehension strategies. These categories were: implementation, professional development needs, challenges and successes. The researcher used these data to structure a literature review to investigate reading models, reading approaches, reading strategies comprehension strategies, professional development of teachers and models of professional development (see Chapter 4). Both the qualitative and the quantitative data were used to develop a

professional programme to suit the specific needs of the 62 participant teachers (see Annexure I).

During cycle one 14 teachers in the Stellenbosch/Franschhoek region were selected to receive professional development (see 5.4.2.5 i). Two teachers declined to participate because of their work and family commitments. Eight professional development sessions were attended by the 12 participants, after which they implemented the reading and comprehension strategies in their classes for eight months. During the implementation period qualitative data were collected by means of classroom observations, teacher journals and interviews. Eight months after the professional development was completed, the participants were asked to complete the same questionnaire to determine whether their professional development needs were met by the professional development programme. An additional question was added to determine how the implementation of action research influenced the teachers' pedagogies regarding the implementation of reading and reading comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers.

Qualitative data obtained from the second measurement of the questionnaire were arranged into four categories by using the four questions on implementation of the reading and comprehension strategies. These categories were: implementation; professional development needs; challenges and successes. In addition, qualitative data obtained from journals, observations and interviews were organised into different codes and categories with reference to the research questions, interview schedule and observation schedule. These data were grouped into the following six categories as illustrated in Figure 6.1 below.

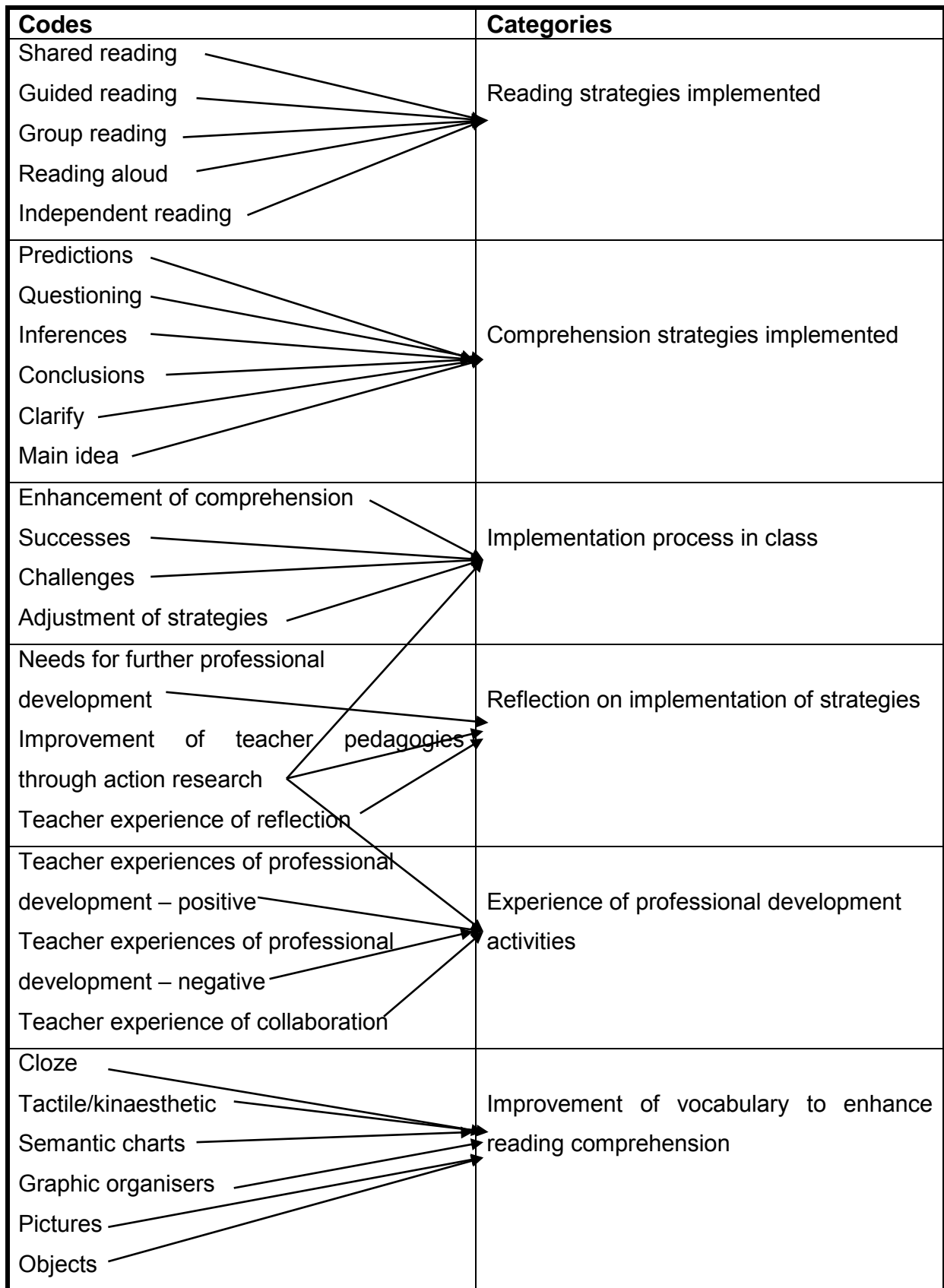


Figure 6.1: Codes and categories for analysing qualitative data.

First the qualitative and quantitative data from the questionnaires obtained before and after the professional development programme was conducted will be analysed and discussed. Next the qualitative data obtained from teacher journals, observations and interviews obtained during and after the professional development programme will be analysed and discussed. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the findings

## **6.2 DATA FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE BEFORE THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

The questionnaire included four constructs namely:

- reading models and strategies;
- reading comprehension strategies;
- experience of professional development activities;
- professional development activities related to updating, reflection and collaboration.

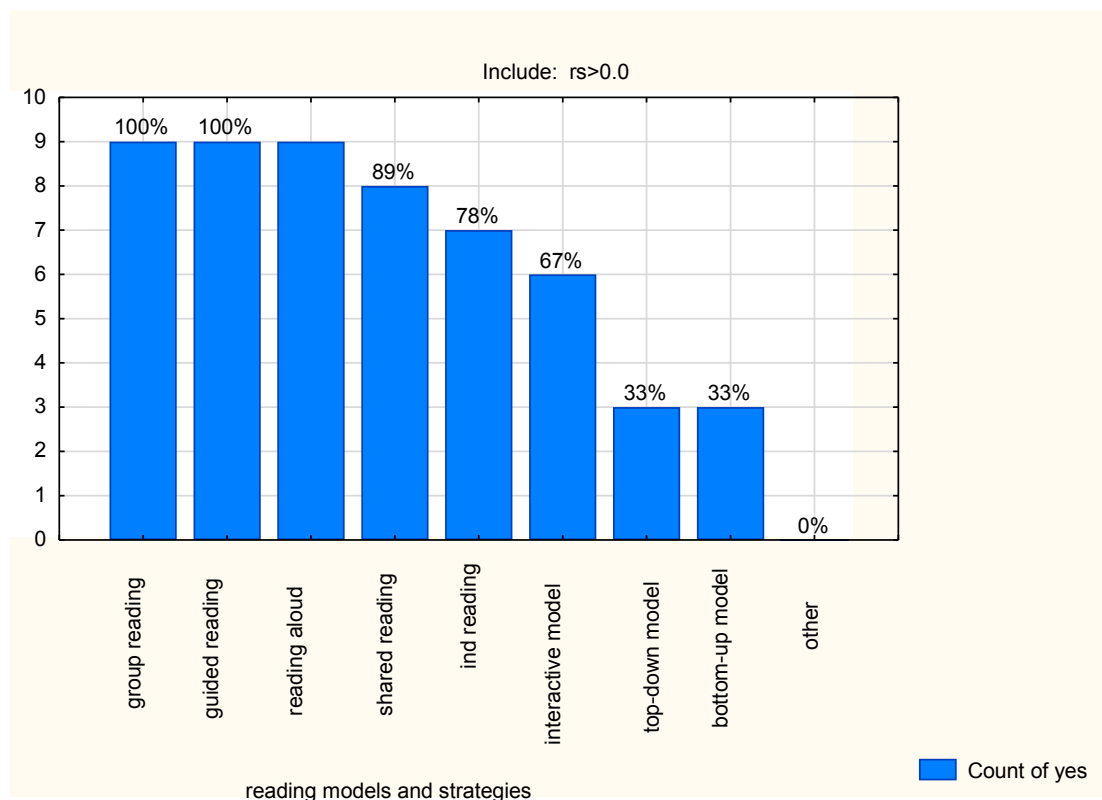
The data are presented and discussed below according to the four constructs listed above.

### **6.2.1 Reading models and strategies**

#### **6.2.1.1 Quantitative data**

This subsection of the questionnaire sought to provide information about the participants' knowledge related to reading models and strategies to enhance reading skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. This information was needed to determine which reading models and strategies should be included in the professional development programme. Reading strategies associated with the balanced language approach as prescribed by CAPS were included.

These data are presented in Figure 6.2 below.



*Figure 6.2: Respondents indicating professional development regarding reading models and strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes.*

Sixty-two (N=62) respondents completed the questionnaire to determine the needs of Afrikaans teachers regarding non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. Question 1 required respondents to mark the reading models and strategies in which they have received professional development to enhance reading skills of the non-mother-tongue speakers. A total of nine (N=9) respondents indicated some form of professional development regarding reading models and strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers.

The results are as follows: group reading, nine (N=9); guided reading, nine (N=9); reading aloud, nine (N=9); shared reading eight (N=8); independent reading, seven (N=7); the interactive model six (N=6); the top-down model, three (N=3) and the



bottom-up model, three (N=3). No respondents indicated professional development in other reading strategies.

#### 6.2.1.2 Qualitative data

The qualitative data of this section were arranged into four categories by using the four questions regarding implementation of reading models and strategies. The data are presented, mostly through tables and in the following four categories:

- i. Implementation*
- ii. Professional development needs*
- iii. Challenges*
- iv. Successes*
  
- v. Implementation*

Question 2 was included to determine which reading models and strategies marked by participants in question 1 were implemented by them. The data are presented in Table 6.1.

*Table 6.1: Reading models and strategies implemented by the participants.*

<b>Reading strategy</b>	<b>Number of participants: 62</b>
Shared reading	4
Guided reading	3
Group reading	4
Reading aloud	4
Independent reading	3
<b>Reading model</b>	<b>Number of participants: 62</b>
“Top-down”	0
“Bottom-up”	1
Interactive	1

When the data of question one are compared to those of question two, it is evident that implementation was less than 50%. Similarly, studies conducted by Klapwijk (2015:83) and Pretorius and Lephala (2011:3) found that teachers often receive professional development, but do not implement the new pedagogical knowledge or strategies in their classes. According to Ono and Ferreira (2010:60), reasons for non-implementation may be that professional development programmes are often cited by teachers as being decontextualized, fragmented and do not consider implementation in their particular contexts. These data were used when the professional development programme was planned in phase five of cycle one.

*vi. Professional development needs*

Question 3 required respondents to indicate the reading strategies in which they require professional development to deliver effective reading instruction to non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. The data are presented in Table 6.2.

*Table 6.2: Professional development needs regarding reading models and strategies.*

<b>Reading strategy</b>	<b>Number of participants: 62</b>
Shared reading	50
Guided reading	48
Group reading	48
Reading aloud	49
Independent reading	50
<b>Reading model</b>	<b>Number of participants: 62</b>
“Top-down”	52
“Bottom-up”	52
Interactive	51

Of the 62 respondents, 12 indicated that they require no professional development in the reading models and strategies as they have no non-mother-tongue speakers in their schools.

*vii. Challenges*

Question 4 required respondents to indicate challenges which they experience when implementing the reading models and strategies. One respondent indicated that group work in classes is a challenge, especially when Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers are present in the same class. Another respondent indicated a lack of training as a stumbling block. The following challenges were each identified by one respondent: serious auditory problems of learners, reading fluency, lack of confidence of non-mother-tongue speakers as well as planning of lessons and tasks for non-mother-tongue speakers (see 3.3.3.1; 3.3.3.2 and 4.3). These data are confirmed by studies conducted by O'Connor and Geiger (2009:264), Theron and Nel (2005:224) and Hooijer and Fourie (2009:141-146). The researcher attempted to address these challenges during the professional development sessions with the participants during cycle two.

*iv. Successes*

Question 5 required respondents to identify successes when reading strategies were implemented while teaching non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. Only 5 respondents indicated successes. Improvement of reading fluency was indicated by 1 respondent and 2 respondents noticed that the pupils' confidence increased. In addition, 1 respondent indicated that an American pupil learned to speak Afrikaans in eight months, while another respondent reported that the learning environment in her class improved. During the professional development sessions, participants were invited to share their successes with the group. When teachers share their experiences with colleagues it helps them to grow together as a group while reflecting on good practices together (Shulman & Shulman 2004:264) (see 2.4).

The above data indicate that, with the exception of 12 respondents, all the participants required professional development to improve their PCK regarding reading skills. Therefore the professional development programme of this study included all the reading models and strategies mentioned in the questionnaire.

## 6.2.2 Reading Comprehension Strategies

### 6.2.2.1 Quantitative data

Question 6 sought to determine whether participants explicitly teach comprehension strategies to non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. This information was needed to determine whether professional development activities in the past were transferred into classroom implementation. These data are presented in Figure 6.3 below.

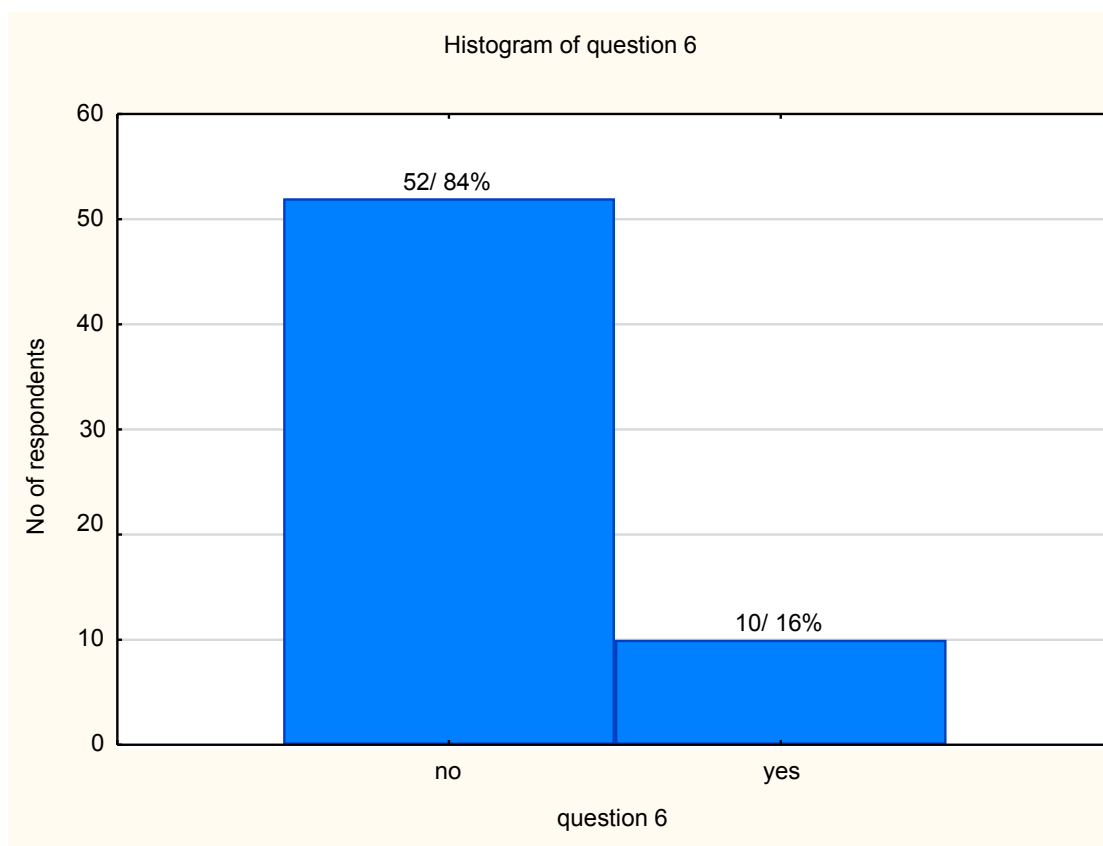


Figure 6.3: Respondents indicating explicit teaching of comprehension strategies to non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes.

Ten participants (N=10) indicated that they explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies to non-mother-tongue speakers. Similarly, the research conducted by Durkin (1978:483), Pressley (1998: 200-209), Pretorius and Klapwyjk (2016:3), Pretorius and Currin (2010:68) and Zimmerman and Smit (2014:2) found that very few comprehension strategies are being taught in schools (see 4.1). These data were verified by the data of question 7, discussed below.

Question 7 sought to provide information about the participants' knowledge related to reading comprehension strategies to enhance the reading comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. This information was needed to determine which reading comprehension strategies should be included in the professional development programme. These data are presented in Figure 6.4 below.

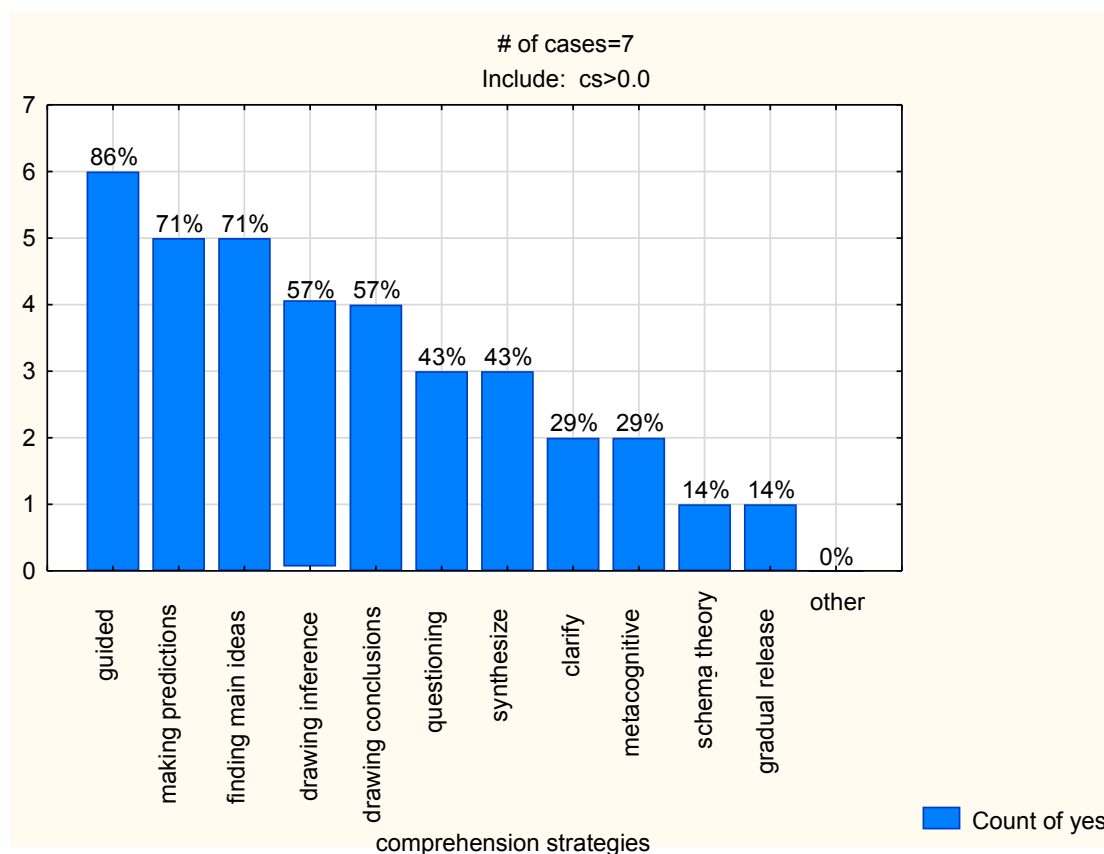


Figure 6.4: Respondents indicating professional development regarding comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes.

Of the 62 (N=62) respondents who completed the questionnaire, six (N=6) respondents indicated some form of professional development regarding the following comprehension strategies with regard to non-mother-tongue speakers: guided comprehension, six (N=6) making predictions, five (N=5); finding main ideas, five (N=5); drawing inferences, four (N=4); conclusions, four (N=4); questioning, three (N=3); synthesising information, three (N=3); metacognitive strategies, two (N=2); clarify, two (N=2); the schema theory, one (N=1) and the gradual release of

responsibility method, one (N=1). None of the respondents indicated knowledge of any other reading comprehension strategies.

Six (N=6) of the ten (N=10) respondents who indicated explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies in question 6 also indicated that they had received professional development in question 7. Furthermore, four (N=4) of the ten (N=10) respondents indicated that they received pre-service training on comprehension strategies. The difference between explicitly teaching comprehension strategies and implementing them was explained to the group prior to completing the questionnaire (see 5.4.2.5 i[b]).

#### 6.2.2.2 Qualitative data

The qualitative data of this section were arranged into four categories by using the four questions regarding implementation of reading comprehension strategies. The data are presented, mostly through tables, in the following four categories:

- i. *Implementation*
- ii. *Professional development needs*
- iii. *Challenges*
- iv. *Successes*
  
- v. *Implementation*

Question 9 required respondents to indicate which comprehension strategies they have implemented in their classes. The data are presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Comprehension strategies implemented by the participants.

<b>Reciprocal teaching</b>	<b>Number of participants: 62</b>
Guided comprehension	6
• Questioning	6
• Clarifying	6
• Predicting	7
• Summarising (main ideas)	7
Metacognitive strategies	7
<b>Transactional strategies instruction</b>	
• CPM	0
• Drawing conclusions	6
• Drawing inferences	7
• Finding main ideas	7
• Synthesising	6
Schema theory	6
Gradual release of responsibility	7

Analysis of the data indicates that with the exception of guided comprehension, more comprehension strategies were implemented than professional development was received. This may be because they explicitly teach comprehension strategies in their Afrikaans Home Language classes, but not to non-mother-tongue speakers, which is what the question enquired about. Furthermore, 4 respondents indicated that they received pre-service training on comprehension strategies.

*ii. Professional development needs*

Question 10 required respondents to indicate the comprehension strategies in which they require professional development to deliver effective reading instruction to non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. The data are presented in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Participants requiring professional development regarding comprehension strategies.

Comprehension strategy	Number of participants: 62
Guided comprehension	46
Schema theory	46
Metacognitive strategies	45
Making predictions	45
Questioning	45
Drawing inferences	45
Finding main ideas	45
Drawing conclusions	46
Clarifying	46
Synthesising	46
Gradual release of responsibility	45

Although 4 respondents had received no professional development in comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers, they indicated implementation in their classes. They indicated that instruction on comprehension was included in their pre-service education. In addition, 12 respondents required no professional development as they had no non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes.

### *iii. Challenges*

Question 11 requested respondents to indicate challenges experienced when implementing reading comprehension strategies. Only 4 respondents recorded challenges when implementing comprehension strategies. They were as follows: auditory problems of learners, 1 respondent; groups of learners on different levels in one class, 1 respondent; first-language learners and non-mother-tongue speakers in one class, because non-mother-tongue speakers need more intensive support, 1 respondent; lack of sufficient vocabulary and interpreting questions, 1 respondent; and large backlogs regarding language proficiency resulting in no communication



with the teacher, 1 respondent. These challenges were addressed during the professional development sessions.

*iv. Successes*

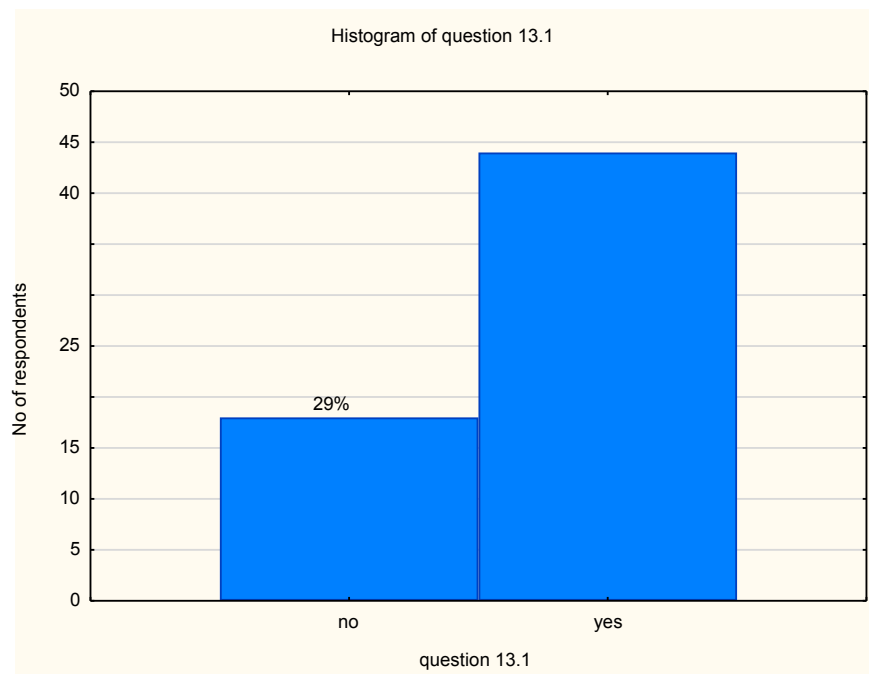
Question 12 sought to gather information on successes when implementing reading comprehension strategies. These data reflected no successes, even though respondents implemented comprehension strategies in their classes (see Table 6.3). This may indicate that participants misunderstood what comprehension instruction entails (see 4.7).

### **6.2.3 Experience of professional development activities**

Researchers such as De Clercq (2014:315) and Walton, Nel, Muller and Lebeloane (2014:321) found that teachers often have negative experiences regarding professional development activities, as they are often conducted by outside experts without prior consultation. In addition, topics are not relevant nor do they take their specific contexts into account and there is often a lack of follow-up support (Pausigere & Graven 2014:35). Moreover, Lundgren et al. (2015:1) report that when teachers are passive recipients of pre-packaged programmes, little transfer takes place to the classroom. Question 13, which consisted of seven statements, was included to determine the participants' experience of professional development sessions attended in the past. Participants had to indicate either yes or no. This information was used when the professional development activities were planned for the participants in an attempt to prevent similar mistakes occurring. The responses of the participants to each statement will be discussed and represented by histograms in the following section.

### 6.2.3.1 Quantitative data

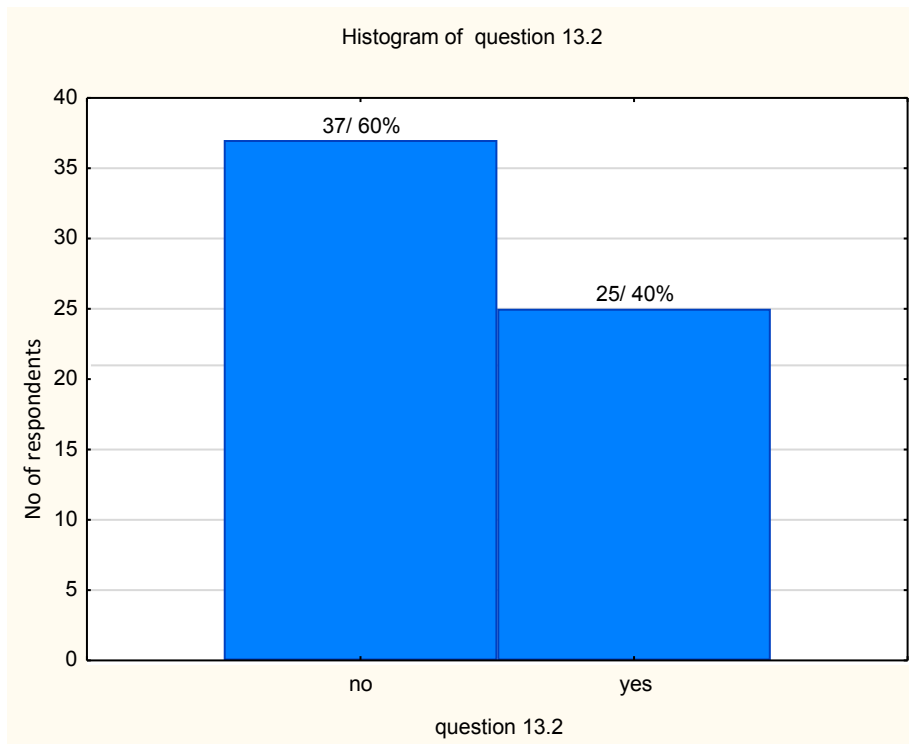
Question 13.1 investigated participants' experience of professional development activities. The data are represented in Figure 6.5 below.



*Figure 6.5: Participants indicating positive experiences of professional development.*

Forty-four (N=44) participants indicated a positive experience of professional development. This may be because this group of participants had received job-specific training in the past to equip them with special skills to deal with learners who experience barriers to learning. James et al. (2015:153-154) and Darling-Hammond (2010:226) state that professional development programmes for teachers should consider their needs, be intensive and sustained.

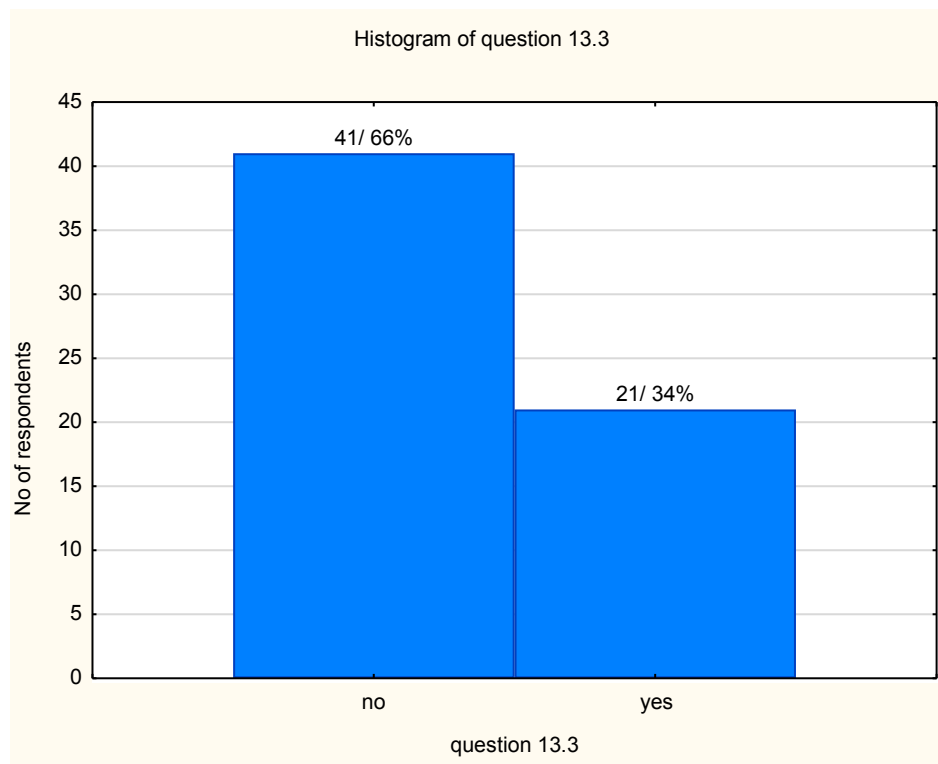
The responses to question 13.2 represent data on whether the professional development needs of participants have been met in the past regarding reading strategies. These data are represented in Figure 6.6 below.



*Figure 6.6: Participants indicating that their professional development needs regarding reading strategies have been met in the past.*

Thirty-seven (N=37) or 60% of the respondents indicated that their professional development needs have not been met in the past with regard to reading strategies. These data have been confirmed by research studies conducted by De Clercq and Phiri (2013:81), Lundgren et al. (2015:1) and Bertram (2014:94). It is therefore important to consider the diverse contexts in which teachers have to work when determining their professional development needs regarding the literacy needs of non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes (Pretorius & Curren 2010:58; Lundgren et al. 2015:1).

The responses to question 13.3 represent data whether professional development needs of participants have been met in the past regarding reading comprehension strategies. These data are represented in Figure 6.7 below.



*Figure 6.7: Participants indicating that their professional development needs regarding reading comprehension strategies have been met in the past.*

Twenty-one participants (N=21) or 34% of participants indicated that their professional development needs regarding reading comprehension strategies have been met in the past. Nel and Müller (2010:648) confirmed that strategies for reading comprehension in a non-mother-tongue environment were not included in the professional development of teachers in South Africa. It is therefore important that the professional development of teachers should emphasise that instruction on comprehension should take place for all learners, regardless of their age or development level (Zimmerman & Smit 2014:2).

The responses to question 13.4 represent data whether participants would like to give input regarding their professional development needs. These data are represented in Figure 6.8 below.

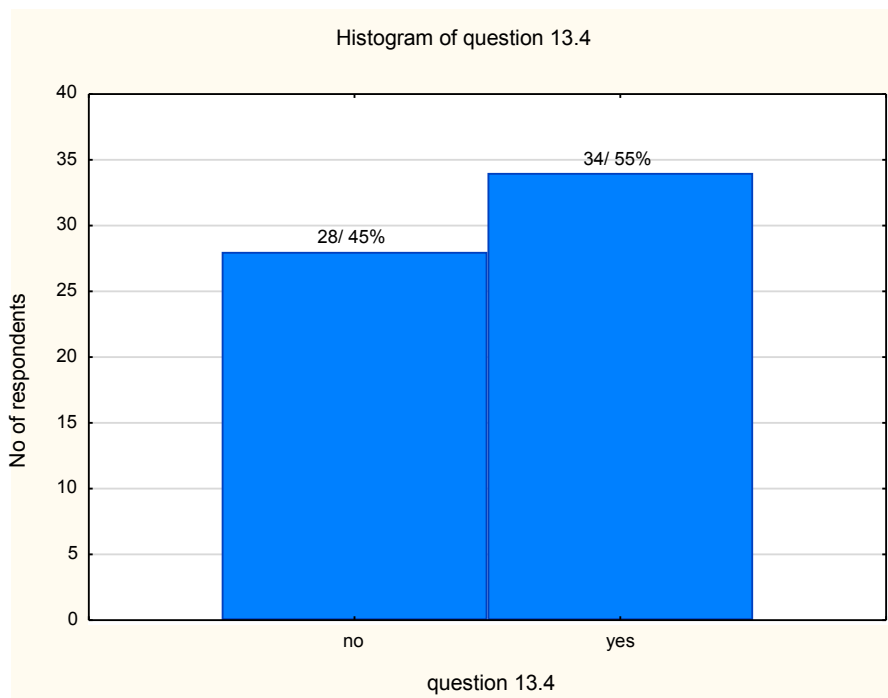
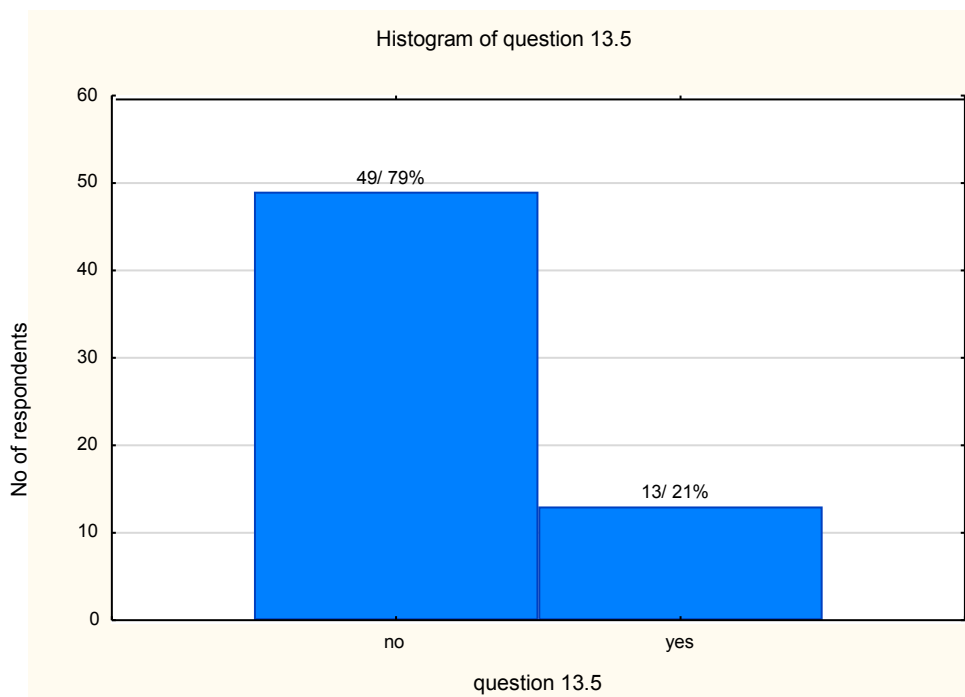


Figure 6.8: Participants indicating that they would like to give input regarding their professional development needs.

Thirty-four (N=34) or 55% of respondents indicated that they would like to communicate their needs regarding their professional development activities. Although there is not such a big difference between the yes and no answers, more participants indicated that they would like to give input regarding their professional development needs. Antoniou et al. (2015:536) found that some recent professional development initiatives completely disregarded the expertise and concerns of classroom teachers.

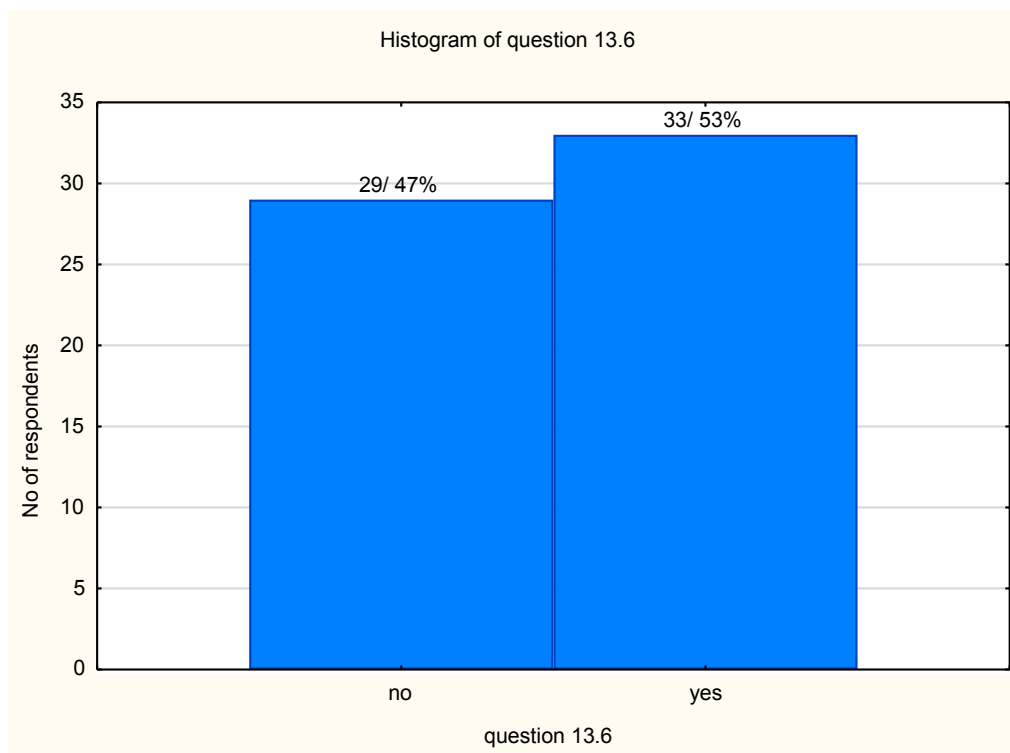
The responses to question 13.5 represent data whether professional development initiatives in the past regarding reading comprehension considered the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers. These data are represented in Figure 6.9 below.



*Figure 6.9: Participants indicating that professional development initiatives regarding reading comprehension did consider the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers.*

Thirteen (N=13) or 21% of respondents indicated that professional development initiatives in the past considered the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers regarding reading comprehension. Research studies indicate the need for professional development to support reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes (Nel & Müller 2010:648; O'Connor & Geiger 2009:263; Hooijer & Fourie 2009:141-146; Scheepers 2006:4).

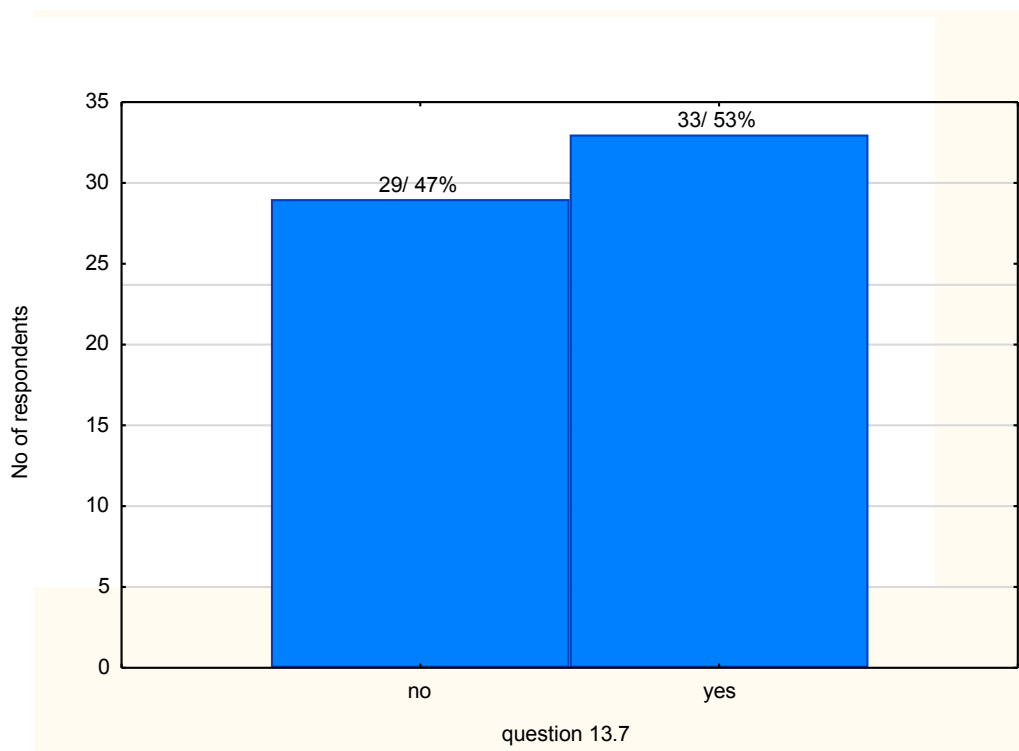
The responses to question 13.6 represent data regarding professional development activities that encouraged collaboration among participants. These data are represented in Figure 6.10 below.



*Figure 6.10: Participants indicating that professional development sessions encouraged collaboration among participants.*

Thirty-three (N=33) or 53% of participants indicated that professional development sessions did encourage collaboration among colleagues who are teaching reading and reading comprehension. Research studies confirm that teachers prefer professional development activities where collaboration is encouraged. Moreover, such collaborative activities may lead to sustained improvement in practice (Strahan, Geitner & Lodico 2010:530; Lundgrin et al. 2015:9). In addition, Shulman and Shulman (2004:267) stated: "The learning proceeds more effectively when it is accompanied by metacognitive awareness and analysis of one's own learning processes, and is supported by membership in a learning community."

The responses to question 13.7 represent data regarding professional development activities that encouraged participants to become reflective practitioners. Data are represented in Figure 6.11 below.



*Figure 6.11: Participants indicating that professional development sessions encouraged reflective thinking.*

Thirty-three (N=33) or 53% of participants indicated that professional development activities in the past encouraged them to become reflective practitioners. Shulman and Shulman (2004:264) proposed that individual teachers and groups become more accomplished through active reflection and sharing of teaching and learning experiences. Therefore reflective thinking was introduced during session 2 of the professional development programme of this study. In addition, this session encouraged the participants to reflect on their classroom experiences during and after lessons. This included sharing and reflecting together as a group during the professional development sessions as well as during phase four of cycle two.



## 6.2.4 Professional development activities related to updating, reflection and collaboration.

The subsections of the questionnaire used in this study were aimed at gathering quantitative data through the use of a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree), which sought to measure three professional development activities conducted by the participating teachers.

Tavakol and Dennick (2011:54) point out: “[I]f a test has more than one concept or construct, it may not make sense to report alpha for the test as a whole as the larger number of questions will inevitable inflate the value of alpha. In principle therefore, alpha should be calculated for each of the concepts rather than for the entire test or scale.” Hence, Cronbach’s alpha (see 5.4.2.5 i[b]) was calculated for each of the three professional development activities concerned.

### 6.2.4.1 Quantitative data

- *Subsection: Updating activities*

This subsection of the questionnaire sought to elicit information about how the participants rated themselves by responding to the ten statements related to updating activities. In this study updating activities refers to reading professional literature, textbooks and educational sites on internet as well as attending courses, workshops, conferences and consultations in and outside school. Cronbach’s alpha was calculated to determine the reliability of this set of questions in relation to a scale of measure. Histograms were then used to illustrate the data related to each statement, followed by a discussion of the results.

Table 6.5 below shows the item total statistics for ten updating activities conducted by participants.

*Table 6.5 Updating activities of participants.*

Variable			Summary scale: Mean=36.42; Std.Dv.=9.07 Cronbach alpha: 0.93		
			Mean if deleted	Standard deviation if deleted	Alpha if deleted
Updating (reversed)	activities	1	32.58	8.13	0.92
Updating (reversed)	activities	2	32.87	8.12	0.92
Updating (reversed)	activities	3	33.45	8.16	0.92
Updating (reversed)	activities	4	32.66	8.13	0.92
Updating (reversed)	activities	5	32.73	8.05	0.91
Updating (reversed)	activities	6	32.48	8.17	0.92
Updating (reversed)	activities	7	32.66	8.19	0.92
Updating (reversed)	activities	8	32.74	8.17	0.93
Updating (reversed)	activities	9	32.69	8.14	0.92
Updating (reversed)	activities	10	32.90	8.10	0.92

The above table represents data based on the responses to the question about collaborative activities in the questionnaire which consisted of ten items measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Scale measures are as follows: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree. The alpha reliability for this scale was 0.93, which indicates a high reliability coefficient (MacMillan & Schumacher 2010:182). According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011:53), the alpha provides a measure of the internal consistency of a test or scale. If items of a test are correlated to each other, the alpha is increased. Therefore an alpha of 0.93 may indicate that the items in this section of the questionnaire measured the same construct.

Statement 1 elicits data related to updating activities of participants with regard to reading of the most recent information on reading comprehension strategies. The data are represented in Figure 6.12 below.

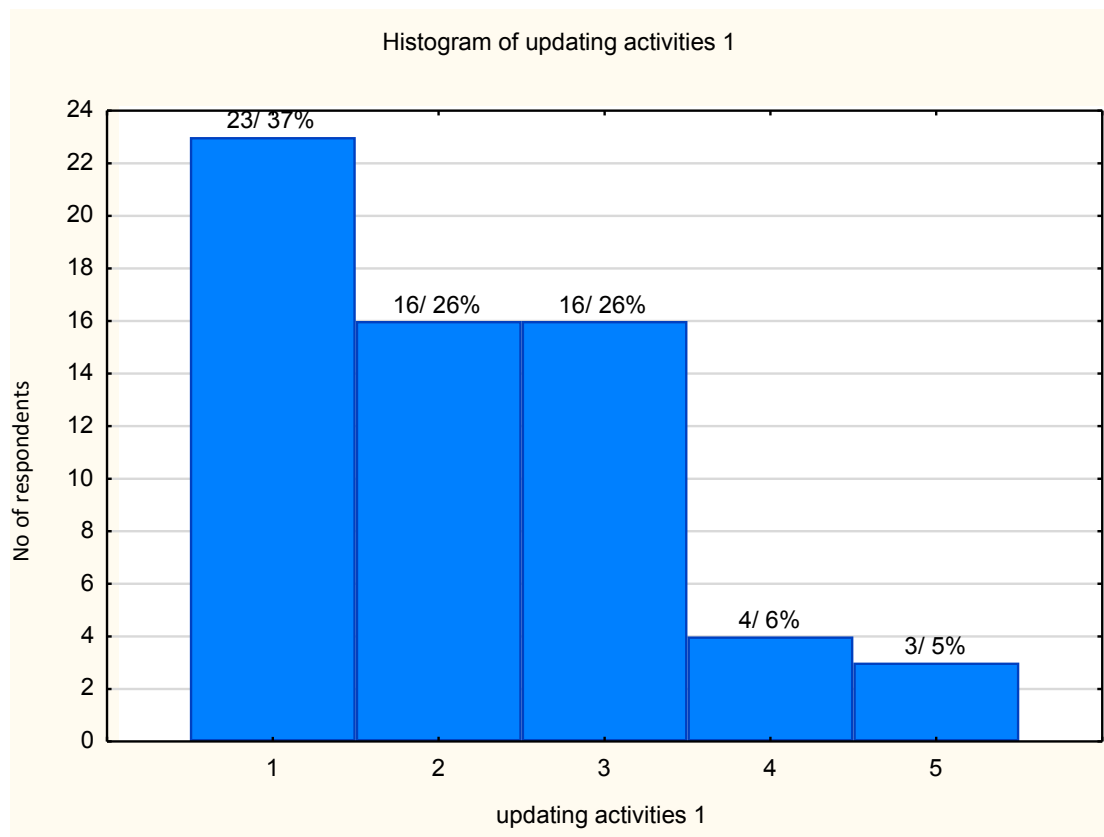


Figure 6.12: Participants read the most recent information on reading comprehension strategies.

Twenty-three (N=23) or 37% of respondents strongly agreed that they read newly available information on reading comprehension strategies. Sixteen (N=16) or 26% agreed with the statement or are neutral, followed by four (N=4) or 6% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.12 shows that most respondents strongly agreed (N=23) with the statement regarding updating activities related to reading updated material about reading comprehension strategies.

Statement 2 elicits data related to updating activities of participants with regard to reading about educational reforms and promising practices. The data are represented in Figure 6.13 below.

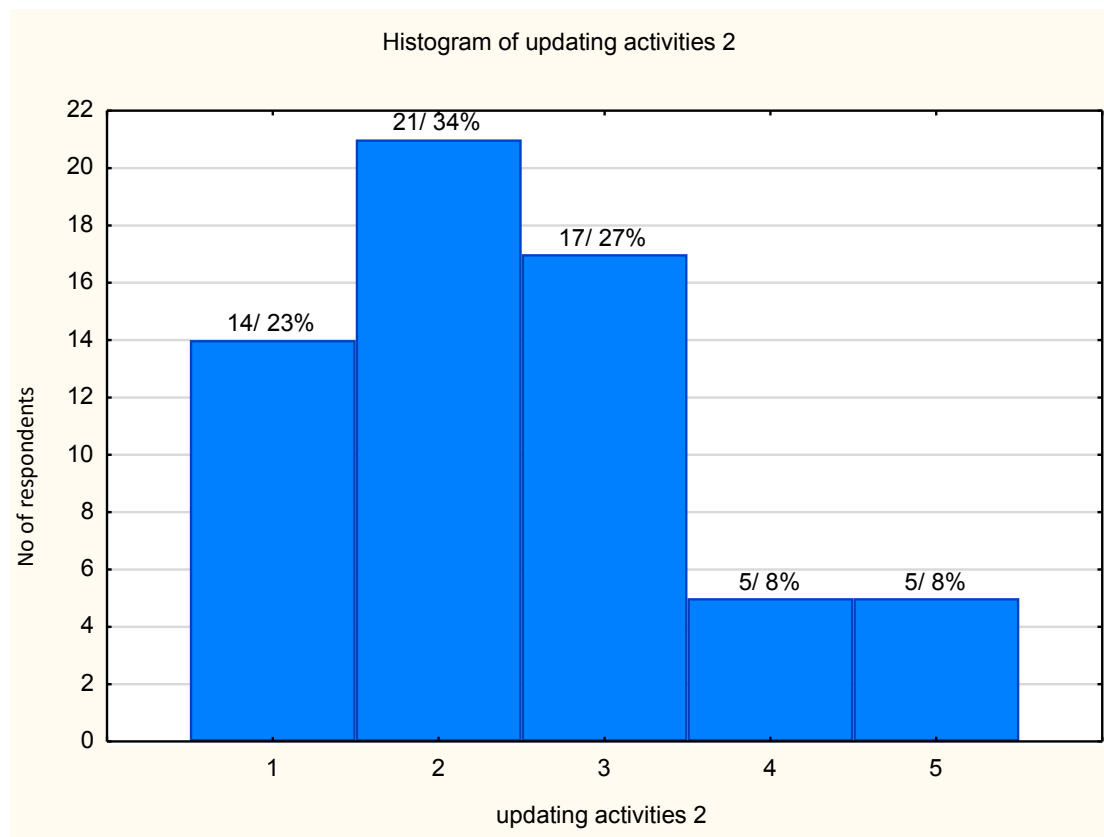


Figure 6.13: Participants read about educational reforms and promising practices.

Fourteen (N=14) or 23% of respondents strongly agreed that they read about educational reforms and promising practices. Twenty-one (N=21) or 34% agreed with the statement, seventeen (N=17) or 27% were neutral, followed by five (N=5) or 8% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.13 shows that most respondents (N=21) agreed with the statement regarding updating activities related to reading about educational reforms and promising practices.

Statement 3 elicits data related to updating activities of participants with regard to reading professional journals. The data are represented in Figure 6.14 below.

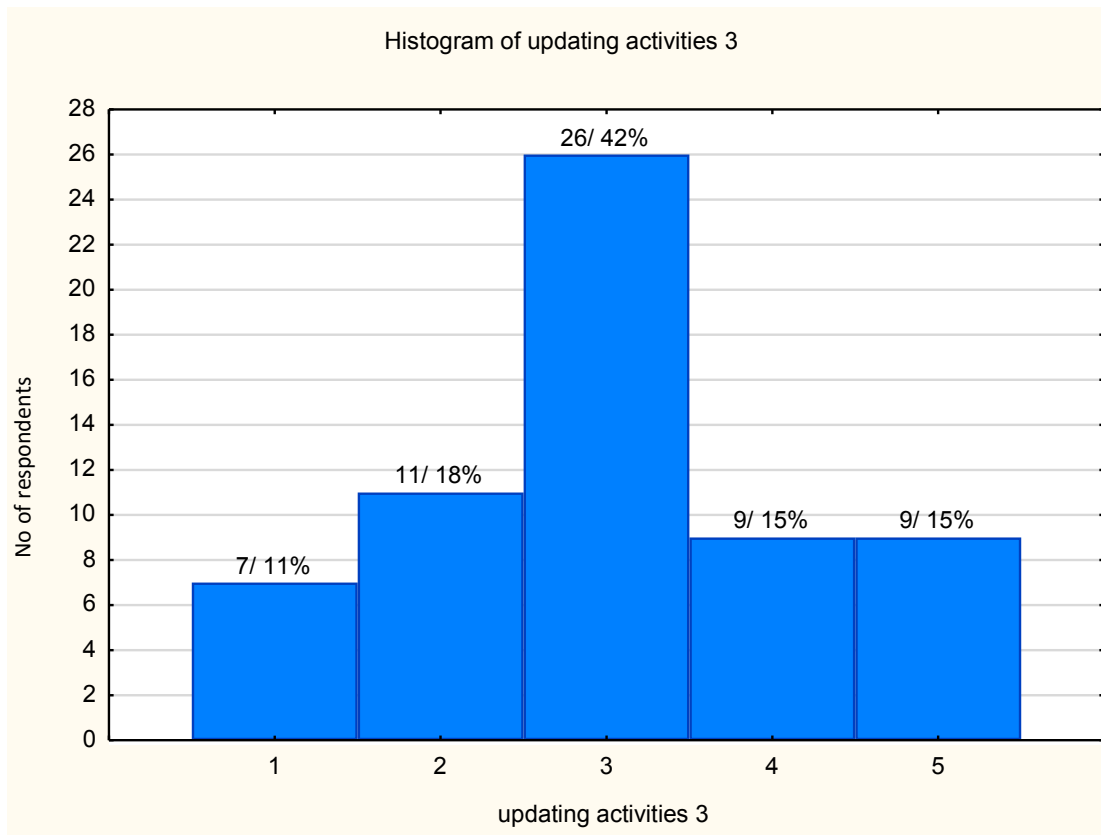


Figure 6.14: Participants read professional journals.

Seven (N=7) or 11% of respondents strongly agreed that they read professional journals. Eleven (N=11) or 18% agreed with the statement, twenty six (N=26) or 42% were neutral, followed by nine (N=9) or 15% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.14 shows that most respondents were neutral regarding updating activities related to reading professional journals.

Statement 4 elicits data related to updating activities of participants with regard to studying subject matter, exercise books and teaching materials, including manuals. The data are represented in Figure 6.15 below.

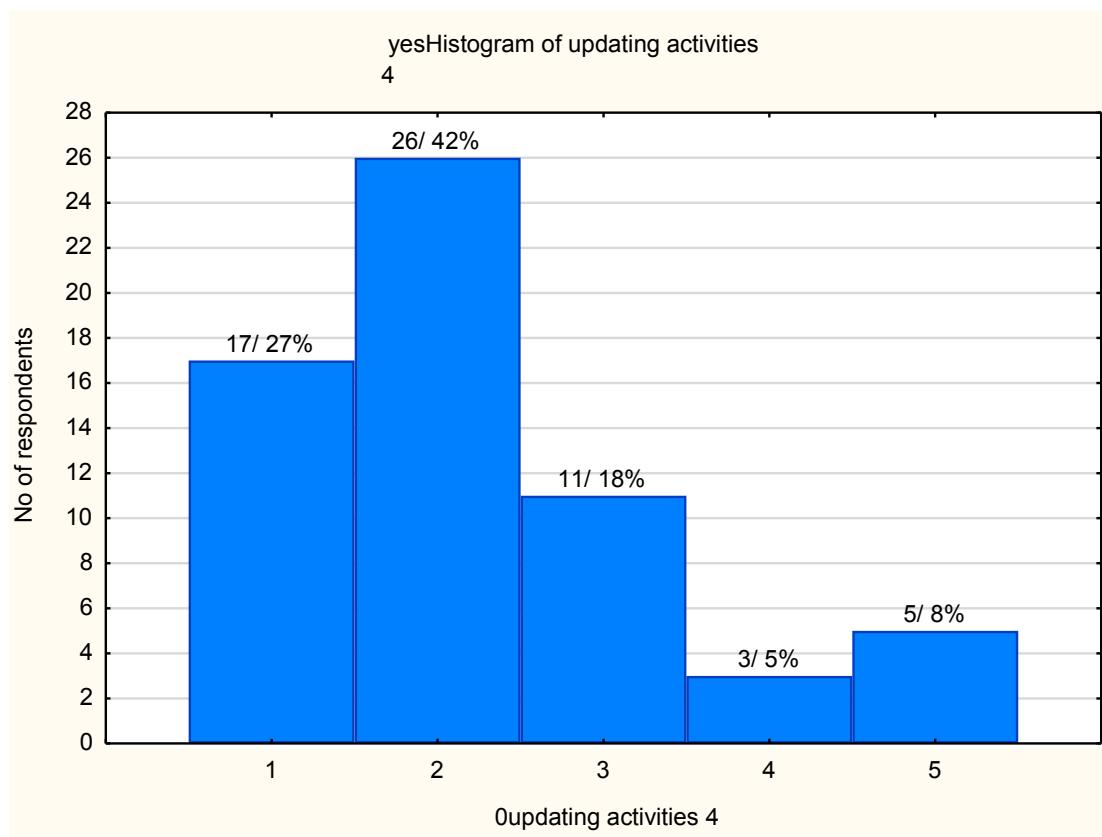


Figure 6.15: Participants study subject matter, exercise books and teaching materials, including manuals.

Seventeen (N=17) or 27% of respondents strongly agreed that they study subject matter, exercise books and teaching materials, including manuals. Twenty-six (N=26) or 42% agreed with the statement, eleven (N=11) or 18% were neutral, followed by three (N=3) or 5% who disagreed and five (N=5) or 8% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.15 shows that most respondents agreed with the statement regarding updating activities related to studying subject matter, exercise books and teaching materials, including manuals.

Statement 5 elicits data related to updating activities of participants with regard to reading about training opportunities. The data are represented in Figure 6.16 below.

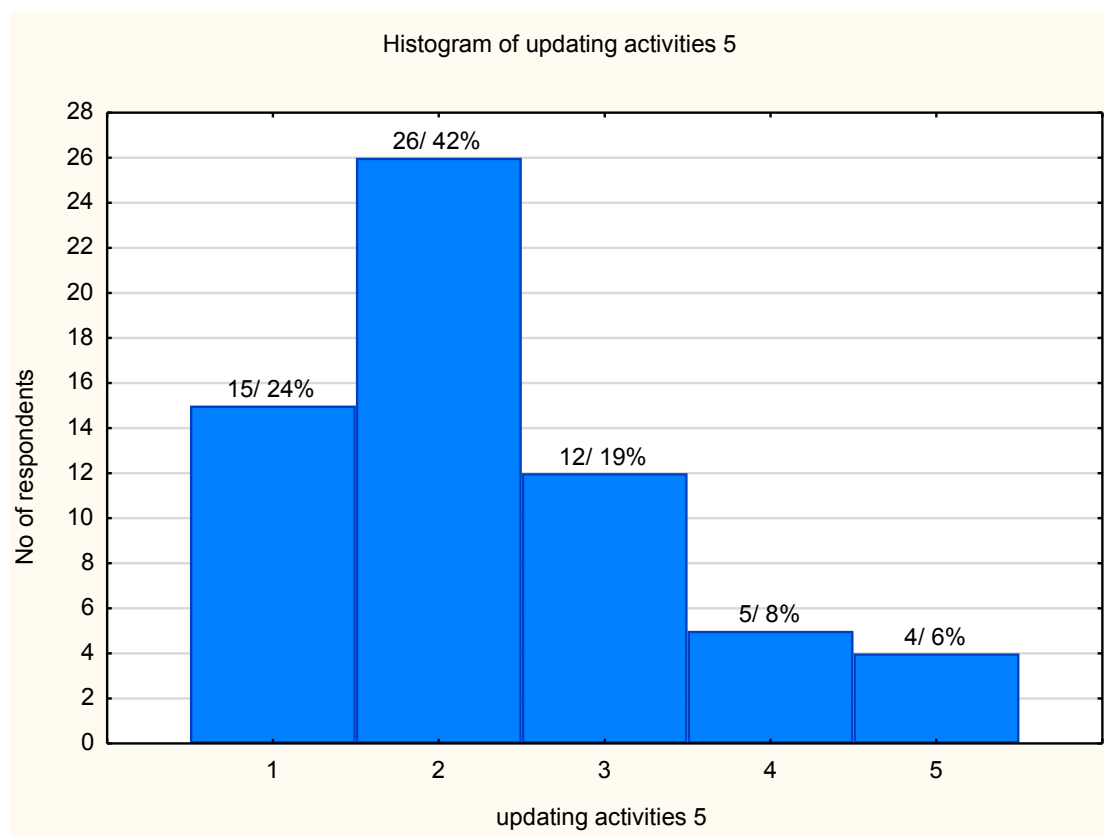


Figure 6.16: Participants read about training opportunities.

Fifteen (N=15) or 24% of respondents strongly agreed that they read about training opportunities. Twenty-six (N=26) or 42% agreed with the statement, twelve (N=12) or 19% were neutral, followed by five (N=5) or 8% who disagreed and four (N=4) or 6% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.16 shows that most respondents agreed with the statement regarding updating activities related to reading about training opportunities.

Statement 6 elicits data related to updating activities of participants with regard to participating in training sessions within the school. The data are represented in Figure 6.17 below.

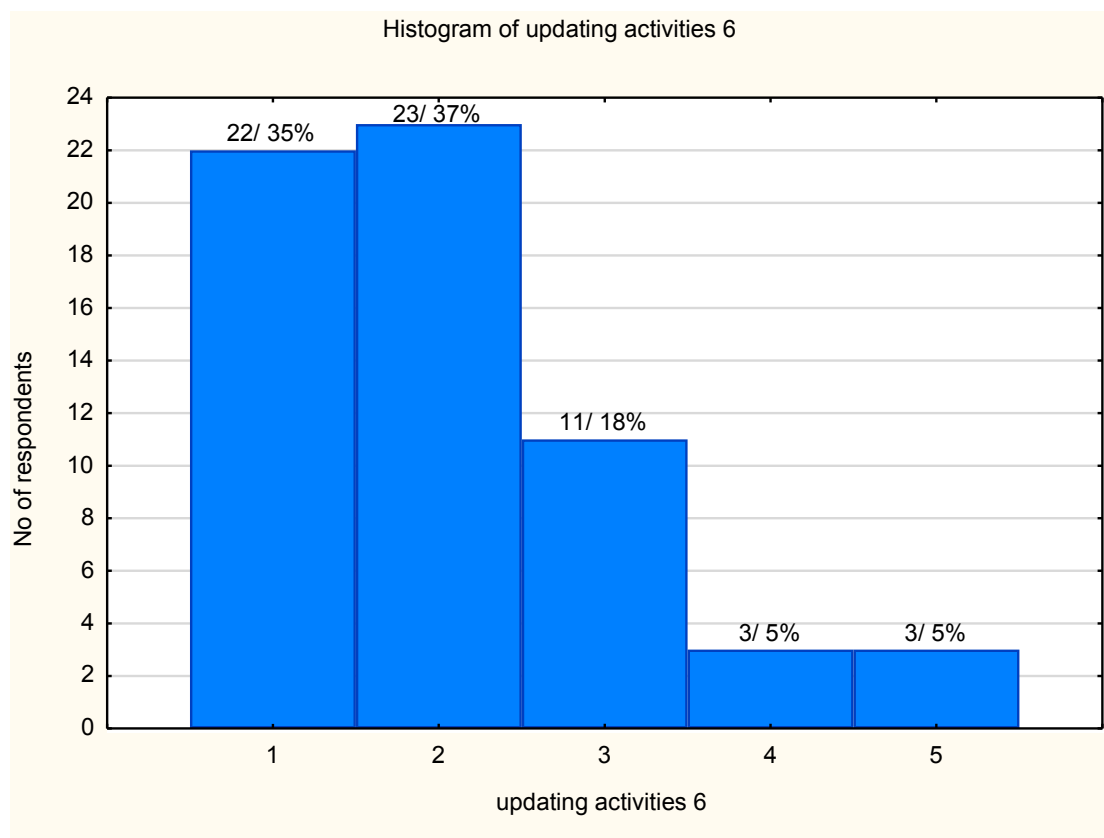


Figure 6.17: Participation in training sessions at the school.

Twenty-two (N=22) or 35% of respondents strongly agreed that they participate in training sessions at the school. Twenty-three (N=23) or 37% agreed with the statement, eleven (N=11) or 18% were neutral, followed by three (N=3) or 5% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.17 shows that most respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement regarding updating activities related to participating in training sessions within the school.



Statement 7 elicits data related to updating activities of participants with regard to participating in training sessions outside the school. The data are represented in Figure 6.18 below.

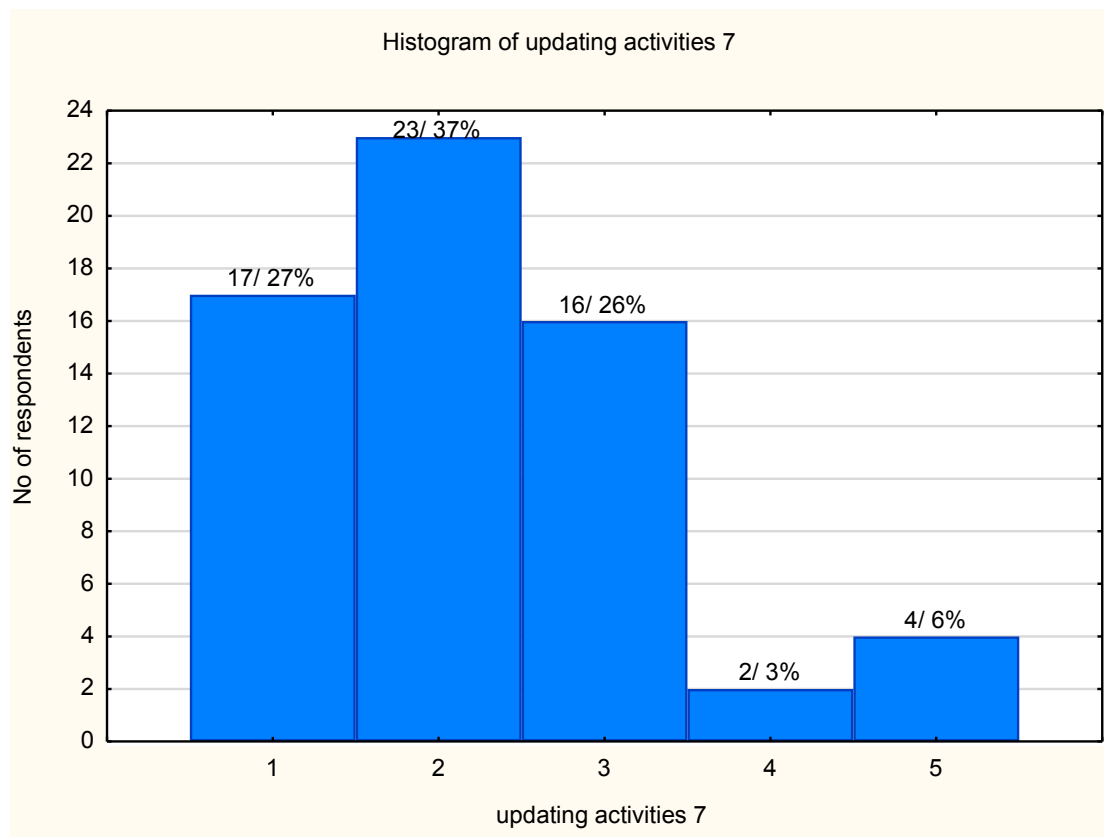


Figure 6.18: Participation in training sessions outside the school.

Seventeen (N=17) or 27% of respondents strongly agreed that they participate in training sessions outside the school. Twenty-three (N=23) or 37% agreed with the statement, sixteen (N=16) or 26% were neutral, followed by two (N=2) or 3% who disagreed and four (N=4) or 6% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.18 shows that most respondents agreed with the statement regarding updating activities related to participating in training sessions outside the school.

Statement 8 elicits data related to updating activities of participants with regard to participating in conferences and meetings regarding reading and comprehension strategies outside the school hosted by their professional bodies. The data are represented in Figure 6.19 below.

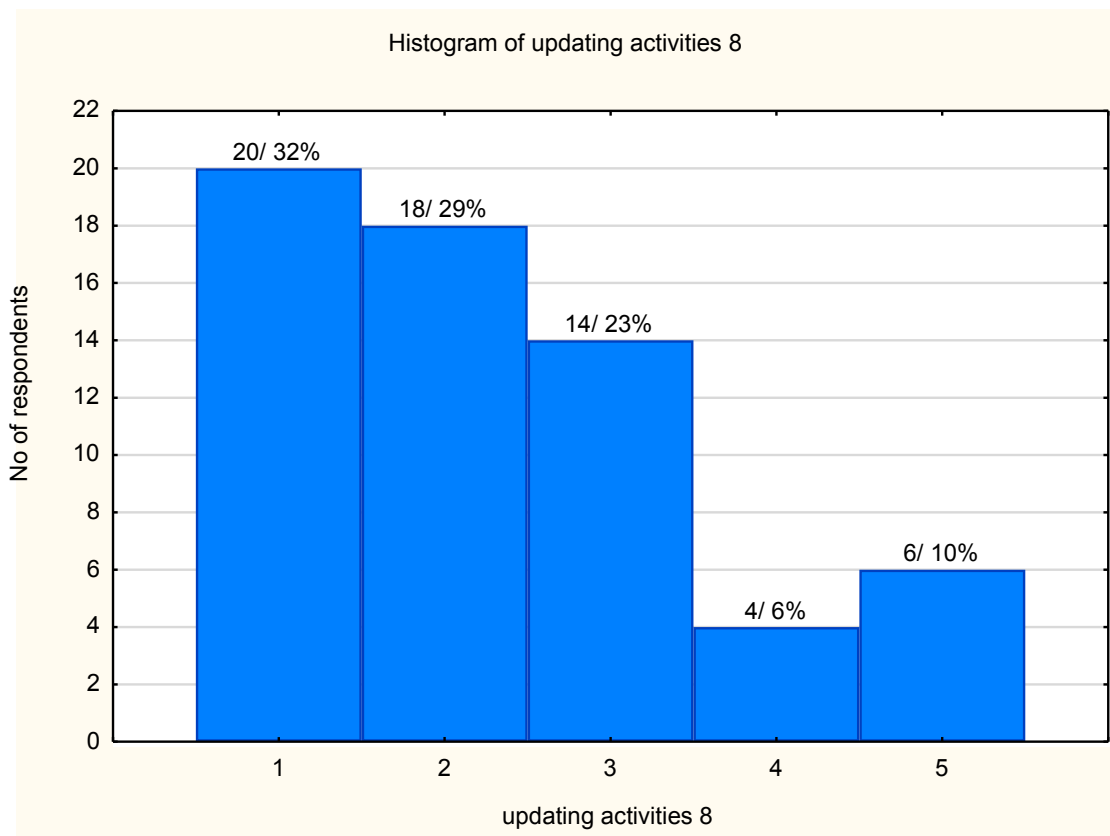


Figure 6.19: Participation in conferences and meetings regarding reading and comprehension strategies outside the school hosted by professional bodies.

Twenty (N=20) or 32% of participants strongly agreed that they participate in conferences and meetings regarding reading and comprehension strategies outside the school hosted by their professional bodies. Eighteen (N=18) or 29% agreed with the statement, fourteen (N=14) or 23% were neutral, followed by four (N=4) or 6% who disagreed and six (N=6) or 10% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.19 shows that most respondents strongly agreed with the statement regarding updating activities related to participating in conferences and meetings regarding reading and comprehension strategies outside the school hosted by their professional bodies.

Statement 9 elicits data related to updating activities of participants with regard to using the internet to obtain information related to reading and comprehension strategies. The data are represented in Figure 6.20 below.

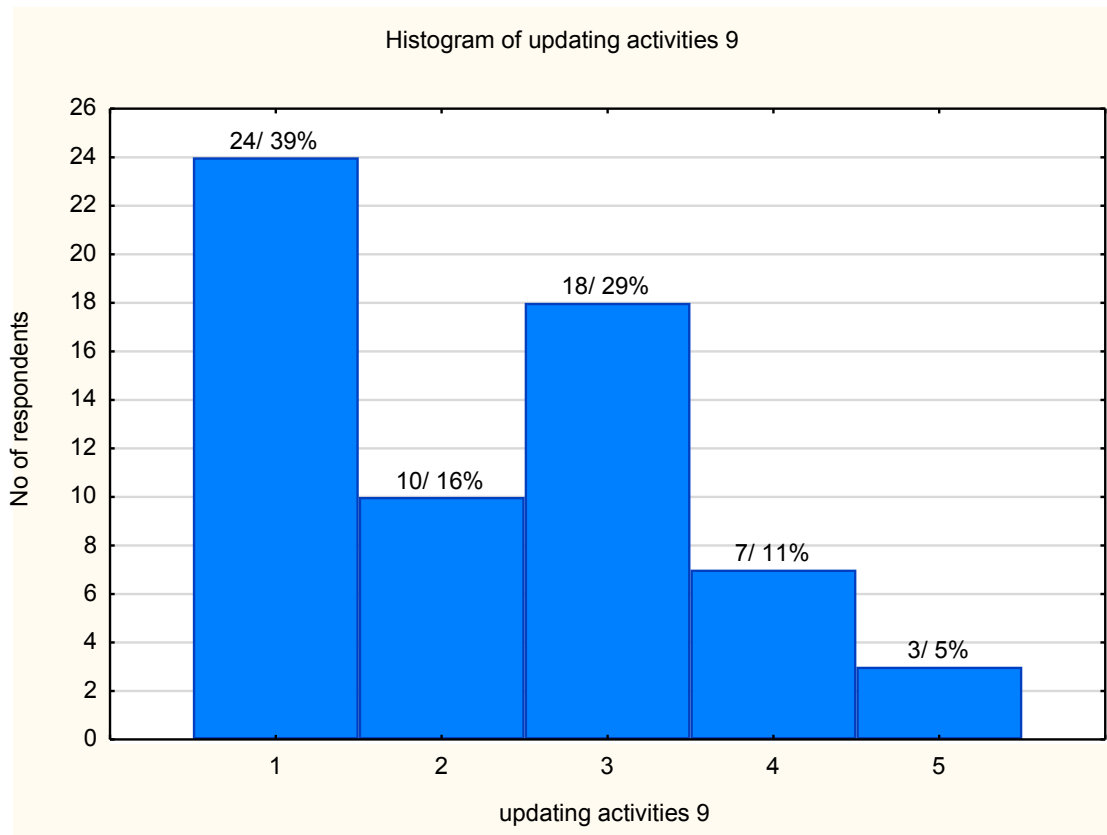


Figure 6.20: Use of the internet to obtain information related to reading and comprehension strategies.

Twenty-four (N=24) or 39% of respondents strongly agreed that they use the internet to obtain information related to reading and comprehension strategies. Ten (N=10) or 16% agreed with the statement, eighteen (N=18) or 29% were neutral, followed by seven (N=7) or 11% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.20 shows that most respondents strongly agreed with the statement regarding updating activities related to using the internet to obtain information related to reading and comprehension strategies.

Statement 10 elicits data related to updating activities of participants with regard to participating in one-on-one coaching and mentoring in the classroom. The data are represented in Figure 6.21 below.

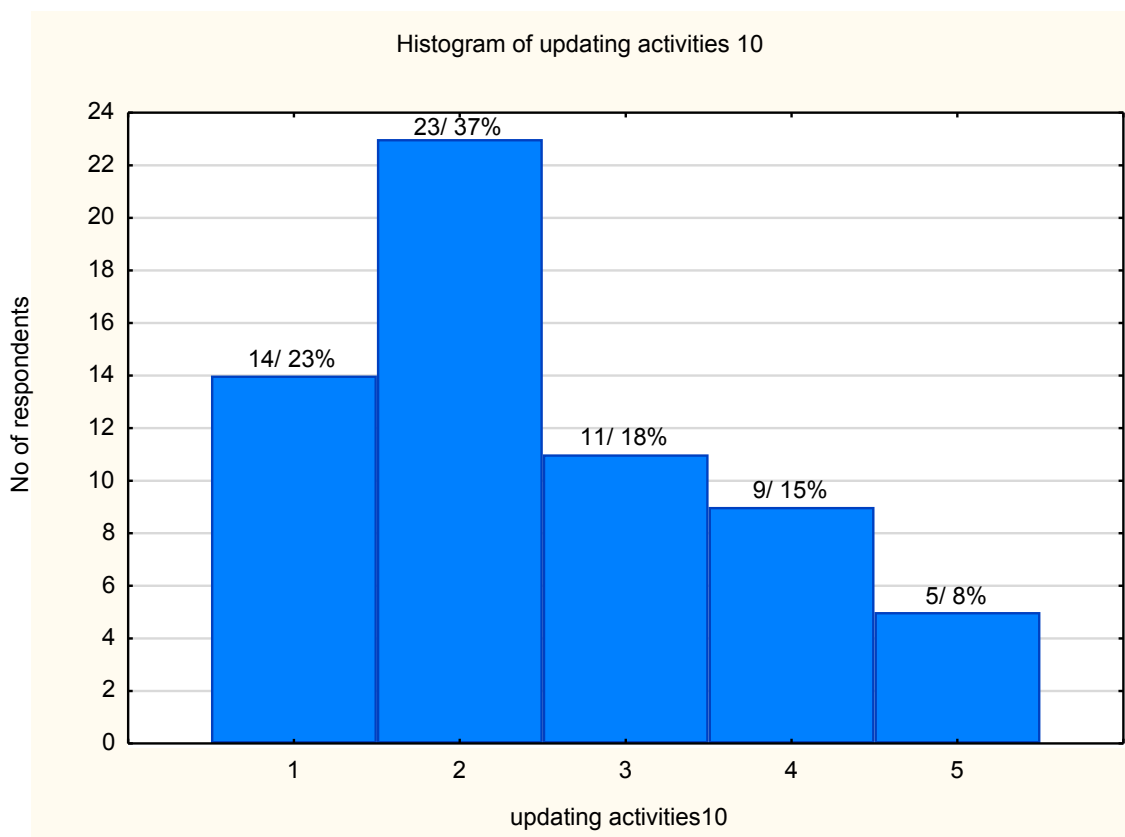


Figure 6.21: Participation in one-on-one coaching and mentoring in the classroom.

Fourteen (N=14) or 23% of respondents strongly agreed that they participate in one-on-one coaching and mentoring in the classroom. Twenty-three (N=23) or 37% agreed with the statement, eleven (N=11) or 18% were neutral, followed by nine (N=9) or 15% who disagreed and five (N=5) or 8% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.21 shows that most respondents agreed with the statement regarding participating in one-on-one coaching and mentoring in the classroom.

- *Subsection: Reflective activities*

This subsection of the questionnaire sought to provide information about how the participants rated themselves by responding to the ten statements related to reflective activities. In this study reflection as part action research implied a form of

thinking applied to deal with a problem to make better sense of it and adapt strategies. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the reliability of this set of questions in relation to a scale of measure. Histograms were then used to illustrate the data related to each statement, followed by a discussion of the results.

Table 6.6 below shows the item total statistics for ten reflective activities conducted by participants.

*Table 6.6: Reflective activities of participants.*

Variable			Summary scale: Mean=36.15; Std. Dev.=8.88 Cronbach alpha: 0.95		
			Mean if deleted	Standard deviation if deleted	Alpha if deleted
Reflective (reversed)	activities	1	32.27	8.01	0.94
Reflective (reversed)	activities	2	32.42	8.02	0.94
Reflective (reversed)	activities	3	32.84	7.99	0.95
Reflective (reversed)	activities	4	33.18	8.01	0.94
Reflective (reversed)	activities	5	32.37	8.01	0.94
Reflective (reversed)	activities	6	32.48	7.89	0.93
Reflective (reversed)	activities	7	32.18	7.88	0.94
Reflective 8(reversed)	activities		32.44	7.87	0.93
Reflective (reversed)	activities	9	32.11	7.96	0.94
Reflective (reversed)	activities	10	33.02	7.86	0.94

The above table shows updating activities of the questionnaire which consisted of ten items measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Scale measures are as follows: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree. The alpha reliability for this scale was 0.95, which indicates a high reliability coefficient (MacMillan & Schumacher 2010:182). According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011:53), the alpha provides a measure of the internal consistency of a test or scale. If items of a test are correlated to each other the alpha is increased. Therefore an alpha of

0.95 may indicate that the items in this section of the questionnaire measured the same construct.

Statement 1 elicits data related to reflective activities of participants with regard to reflecting on lessons after class. The data are represented in Figure 6.22 below.

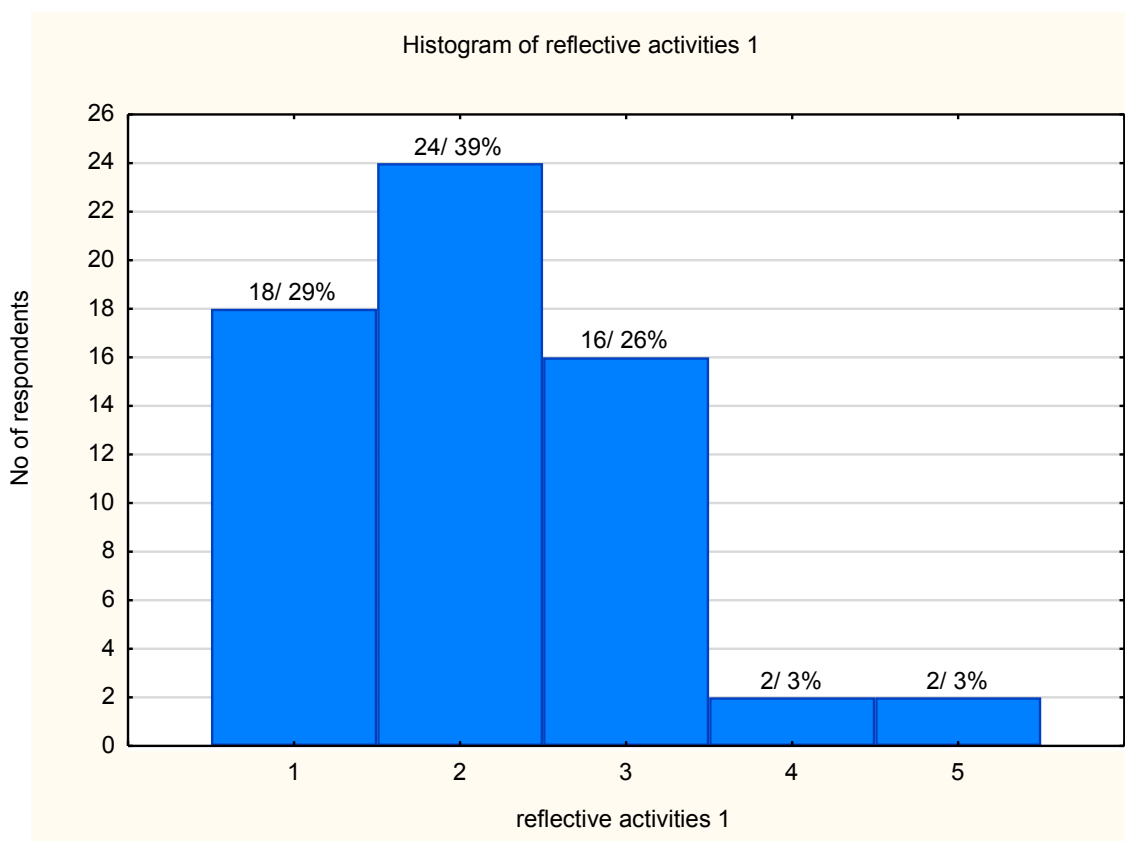


Figure 6.22: Reflect on lessons after class.

Eighteen (N=18) or 29% of respondents strongly agreed that they reflect on their lessons after class. Twenty-four (N=24) or 39% agreed with the statement, sixteen (N=16) or 26% were neutral, followed by two (N=2) or 3% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.22 shows that most respondents agreed with the statement regarding reflecting on lessons after class.

Statement 2 elicits data related to reflective activities of participants on how to improve their classroom practice by asking their pupils how they experienced the lesson. The data are represented in Figure 6.23 below.

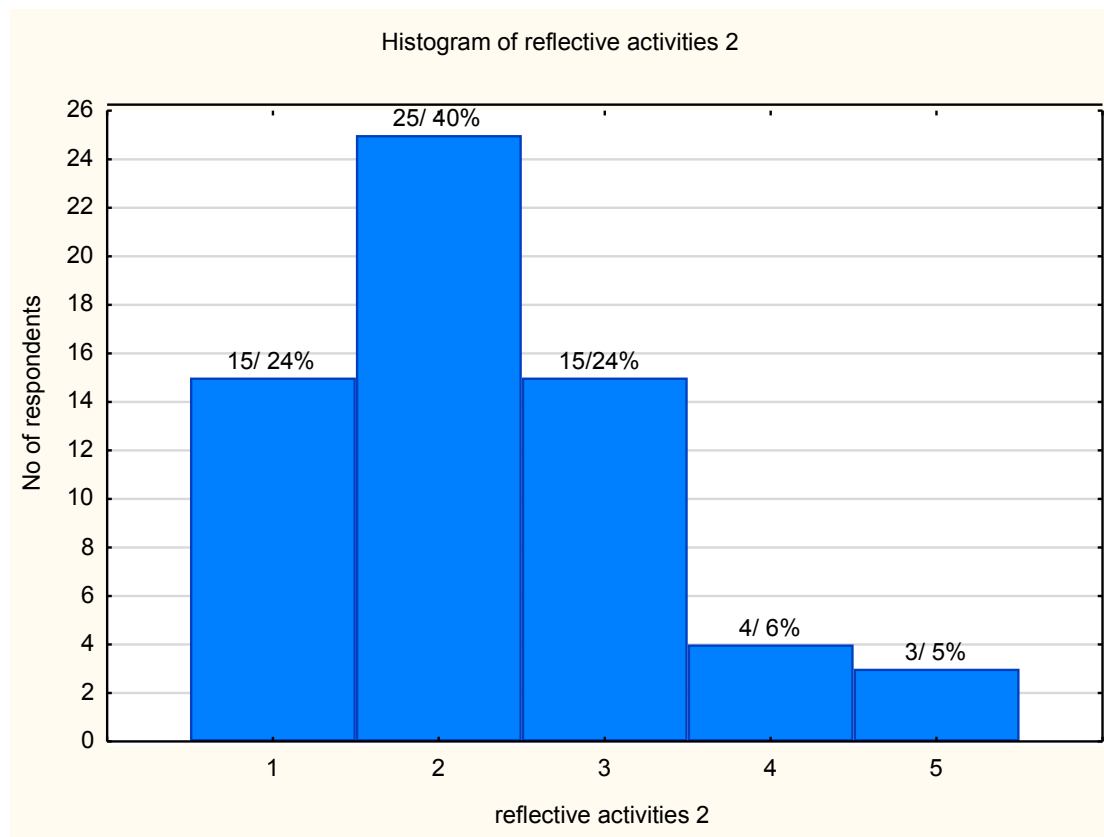


Figure 6.23: Improve practice by talking to pupils about their experiences in the classroom.

Fifteen (N=15) or 24% of respondents strongly agreed that they improve their practice by talking to their pupils about their experiences in the classroom. Twenty-five (N=25) or 40% agreed with the statement, fifteen (N=15) or 24% were neutral, followed by four (N=4) or 6% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.23 shows that most respondents agreed with the statement regarding reflective activities related to improving their practice by talking to their pupils about their experiences in the classroom.

Statement 3 elicits data related to reflective activities of participants who attend lessons of their colleagues to learn from them. The data are represented in Figure 6.24 below.

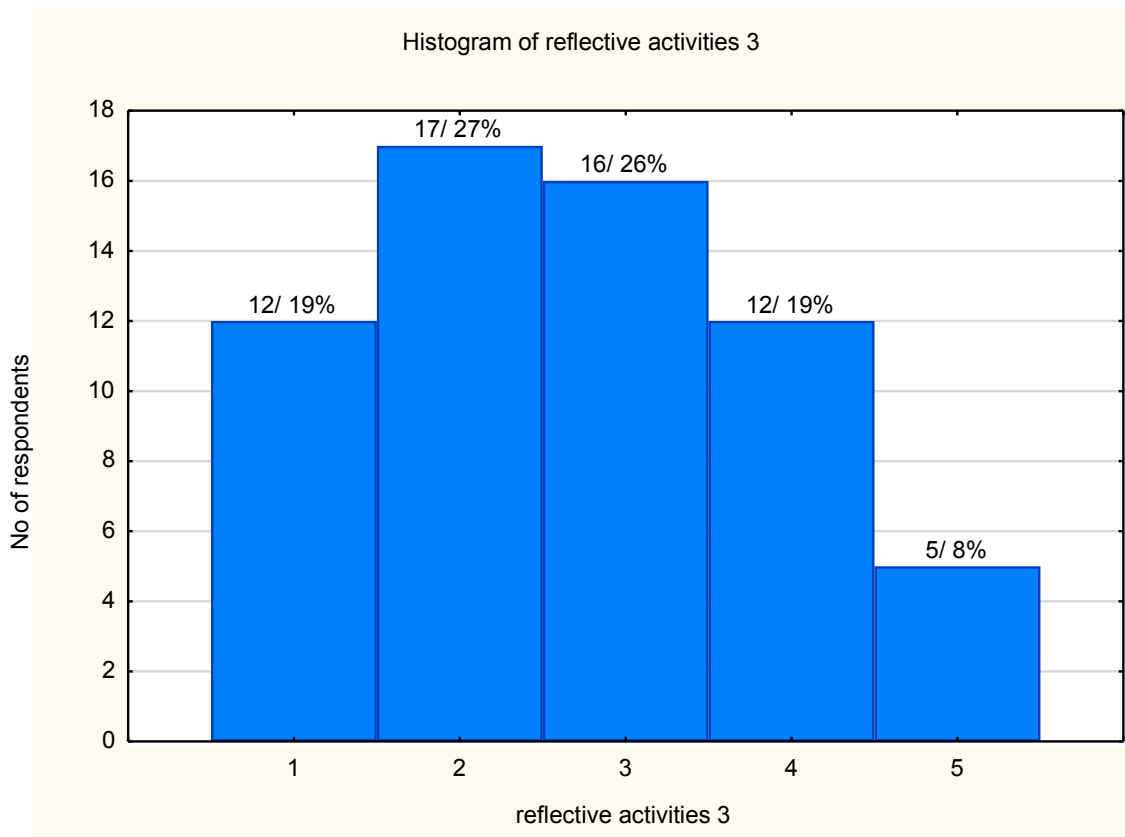


Figure 6.24: Participants who attend lessons of their colleagues to learn from them.

Twelve (N=12) or 19% of respondents strongly agreed that they improve their practice by attending lessons of their colleagues to learn from them. Seventeen (N=17) or 27% agreed with the statement, sixteen (N=16) or 26% were neutral, followed by twelve (N=12) or 19% who disagreed and five (N=5) or 8% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.24 shows that most respondents agreed with the statement regarding reflective activities related to improving their practice by attending lessons of their colleagues to learn from them.



Statement 4 elicits data related to reflective activities of participants who ask their colleagues to attend some of their lessons in order to get feedback from them. The data are represented in Figure 6.25 below.

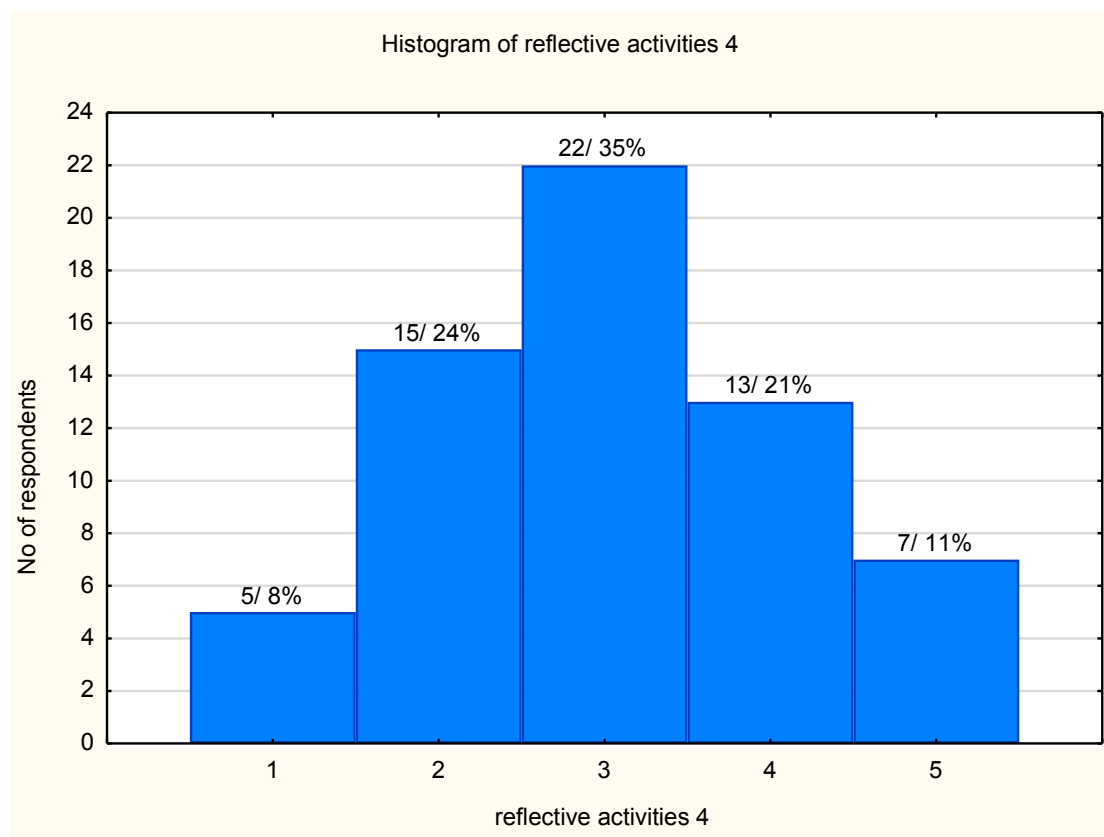


Figure 6.25: Participants who ask their colleagues to attend some of their lessons in order to get feedback from them.

Five (N=5) or 8% of respondents strongly agreed that they improve their practice by asking their colleagues to attend some of their lessons in order to get feedback from them. Fifteen (N=15) or 24% agreed with the statement, twenty two (N=22) or 35% were neutral, followed by thirteen (N=13) or 21% who disagreed and seven (N=7) or 11% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.25 shows that most respondents agreed regarding reflective activities related to improving their practice by asking their colleagues to attend some of their lessons in order to get feedback from them.

Statement 5 elicits data related to reflective activities of participants discussing events in their literacy classrooms with others in order to learn from them. The data are represented in Figure 6.26 below.

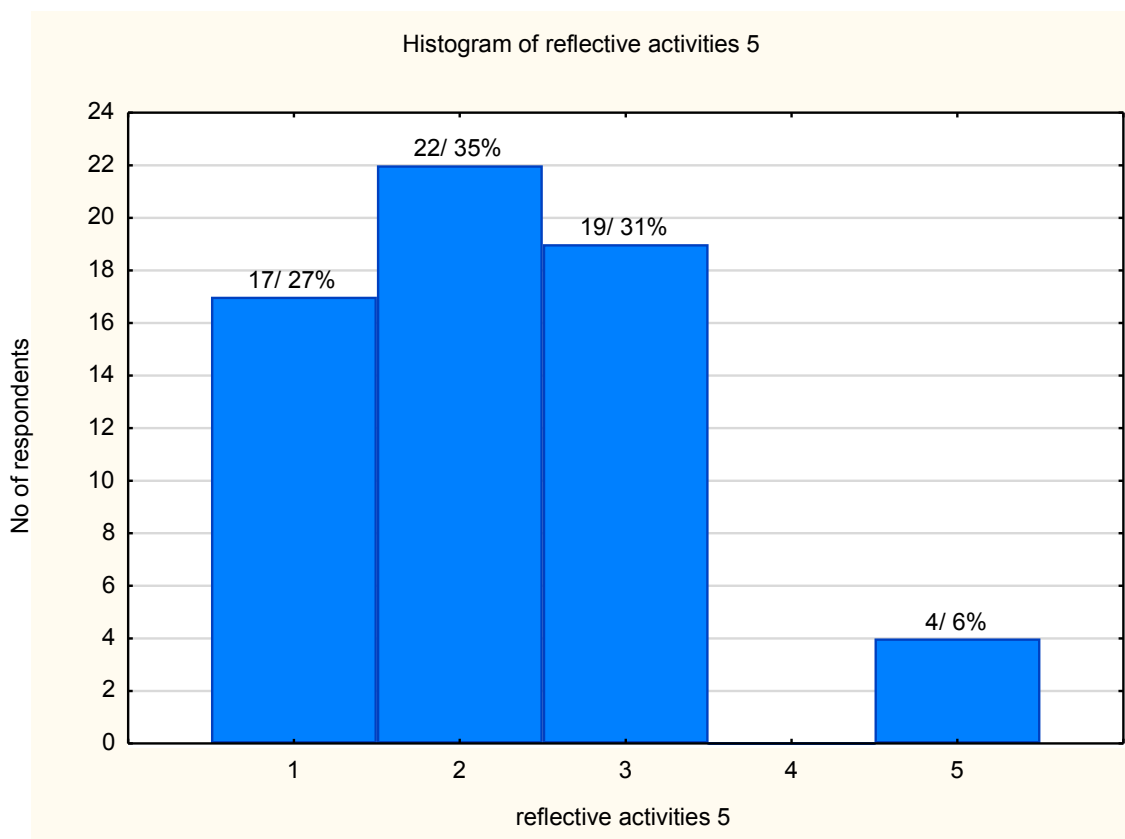


Figure 6.26: Participants discuss events in their literacy classrooms with others in order to learn from them.

Seventeen (N=17) or 27% of respondents strongly agreed that they improve their practice by discussing events in their literacy classrooms with others in order to learn from them. Twenty-two (N=22) or 35% agreed with the statement, nineteen (N=19) or 31% were neutral, followed by zero (N=0) who disagreed and four (N=4) or 6% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.26 shows that most respondents were neutral regarding reflective activities related to improving their practice by discussing events in their literacy classrooms in order to learn from them.

Statement 6 elicits data related to reflective activities of participants who analyse a problem in their practice thoroughly before choosing a solution. The data are represented in Figure 6.27 below.

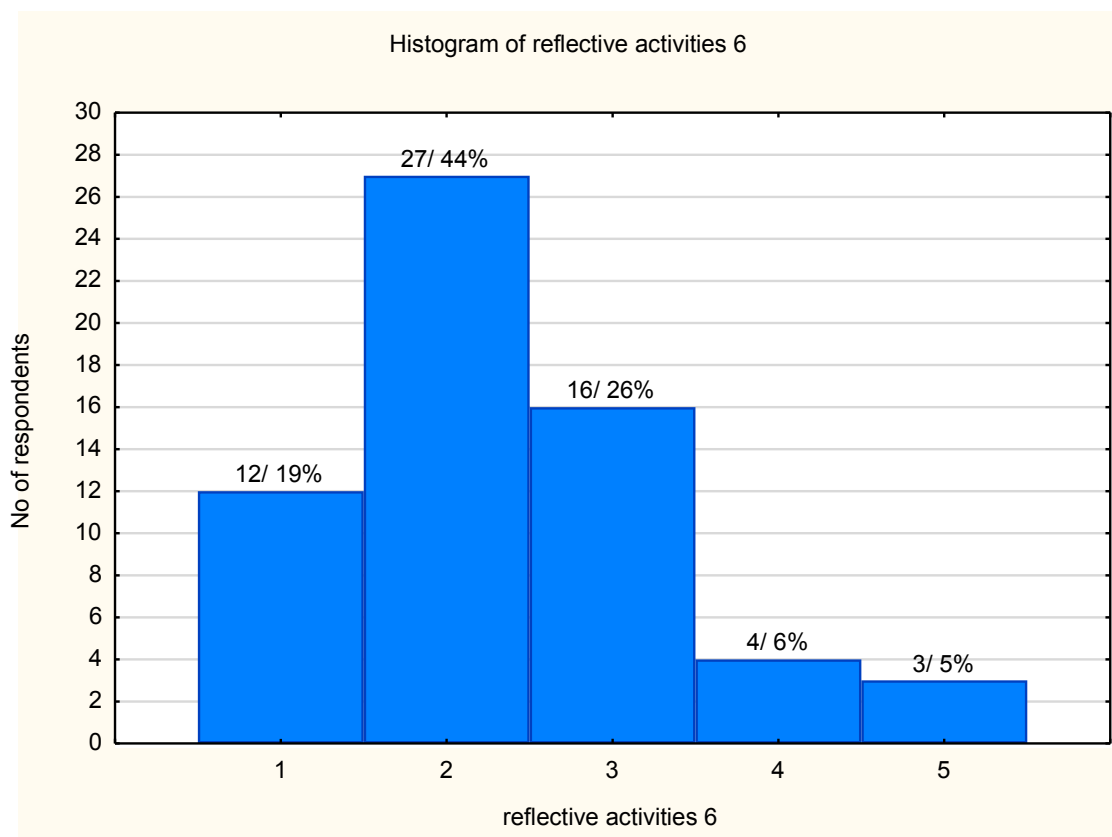


Figure 6.27: Participants who analyse a problem in their practice thoroughly before choosing a solution.

Twelve (N=12) or 19% of respondents strongly agreed that they improve their practice by analysing a problem in their practice thoroughly before choosing a solution. Twenty-seven (N=27) or 44% agreed with the statement, sixteen (N=16) or 26% were neutral, followed by four (N=4) or 6% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.27 shows that most respondents agreed regarding reflective activities related to analysing a problem in their practice thoroughly before choosing a solution.

Statement 7 elicits data related to reflective activities of participants who study their students' work to determine how their approach has worked. The data are represented in Figure 6.28 below.

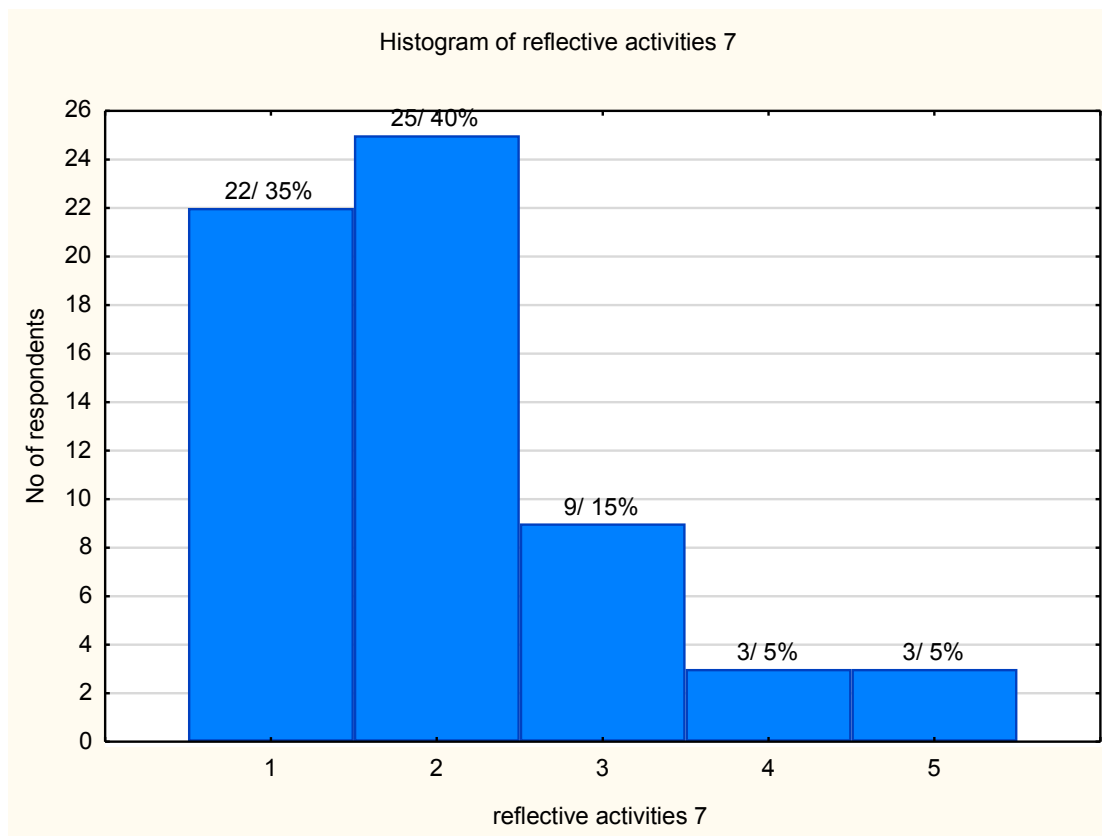


Figure 6.28: Participants who study their students' work to determine how their approach has worked.

Twenty-two (N=22) or 35% of respondents strongly agreed that they improve their practice by studying their students' work to determine how their approach has worked. Twenty-five (N=25) or 40% agreed with the statement, nine (N=9) or 15% were neutral, followed by three (N=3) or 5% who disagreed and strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.28 shows that most respondents agreed regarding reflective activities related to studying their students' work to determine how their approach has worked.

Statement 8 elicits data related to reflective activities of participants who deal with problems in their teaching by looking at what the literature says about them. The data are represented in Figure 6.29 below.

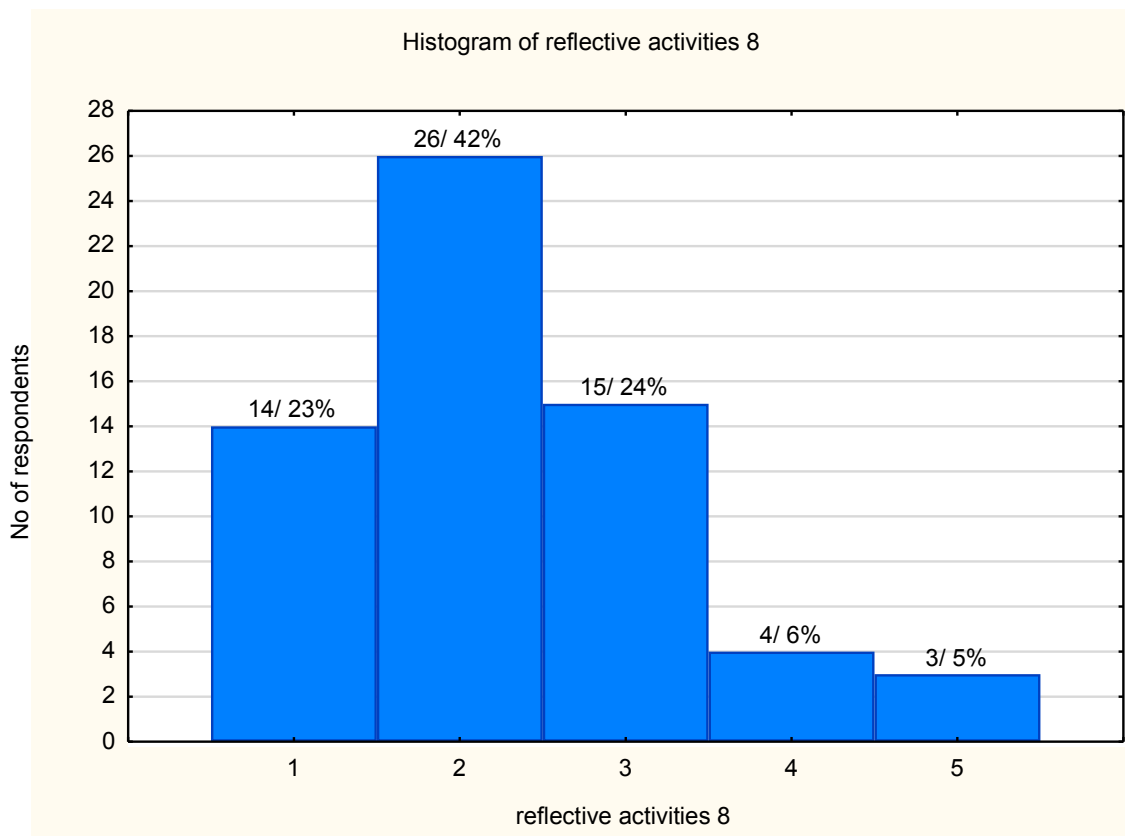


Figure 6.29: Participants who deal with problems in their teaching by looking at what the literature says about them.

Fourteen (N=14) or 23% of respondents strongly agreed that they deal with problems in their teaching by looking at what the literature says about them. Twenty-six (N=26) or 42% agreed with the statement, fifteen (N=15) or 24% were neutral, followed by four (N=4) or 6% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.29 shows that most respondents agreed regarding reflective activities related to dealing with problems in their teaching by looking at what the literature says about them.

Statement 9 elicits data related to reflective activities of participants who use student assessment results to adjust their teaching, where necessary. The data are represented in Figure 6.30 below.

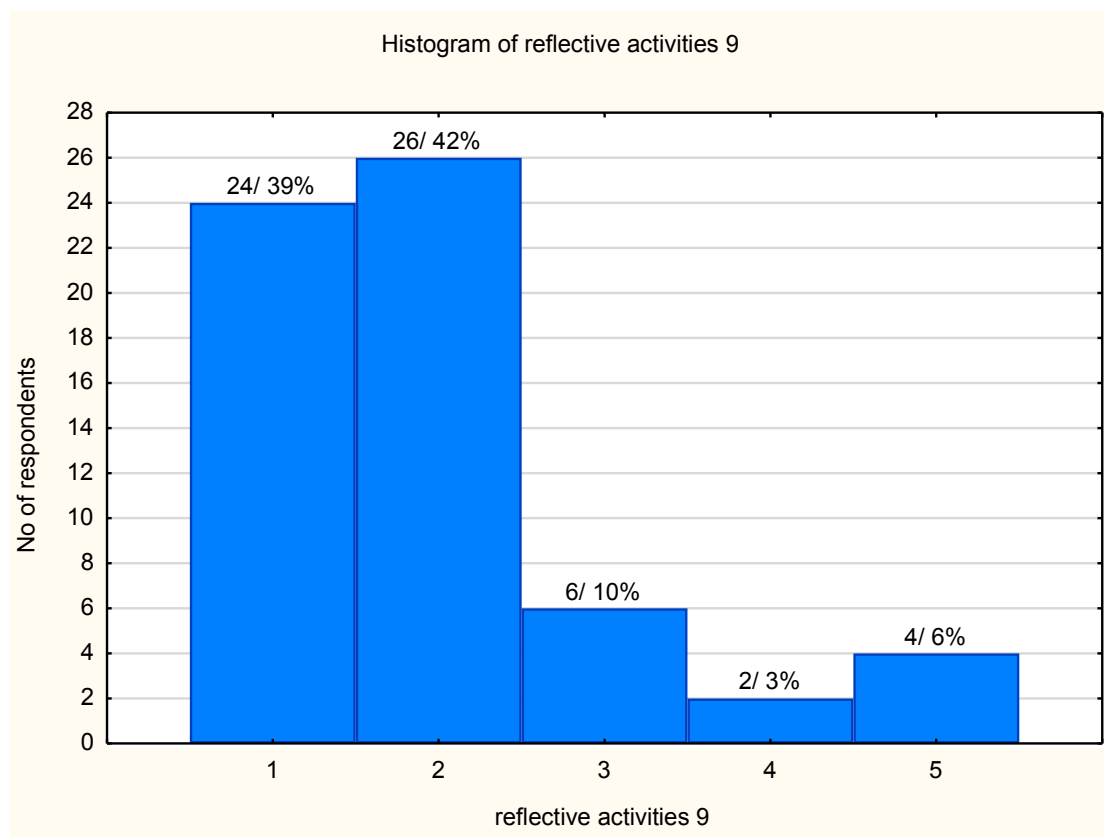


Figure 6.30: Participants who use student assessment results to adjust their teaching, where necessary.

Twenty-four (N=24) or 39% of respondents strongly agreed that they use student assessment results to adjust their teaching, where necessary. Twenty-six (N=26) or 42% agreed with the statement, six (N=6) or 10% were neutral, followed by two (N=2) or 3% who disagreed and four (N=4) or 6% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.30 shows that most respondents agreed regarding reflective activities related to using student assessment results to adjust their teaching, where necessary.

Statement 10 elicits data related to reflective activities of participants who resolved a problem or question that arose in their teaching practice by carrying out a small research project to find possible causes and solutions. The data are represented in Figure 6.31 below.

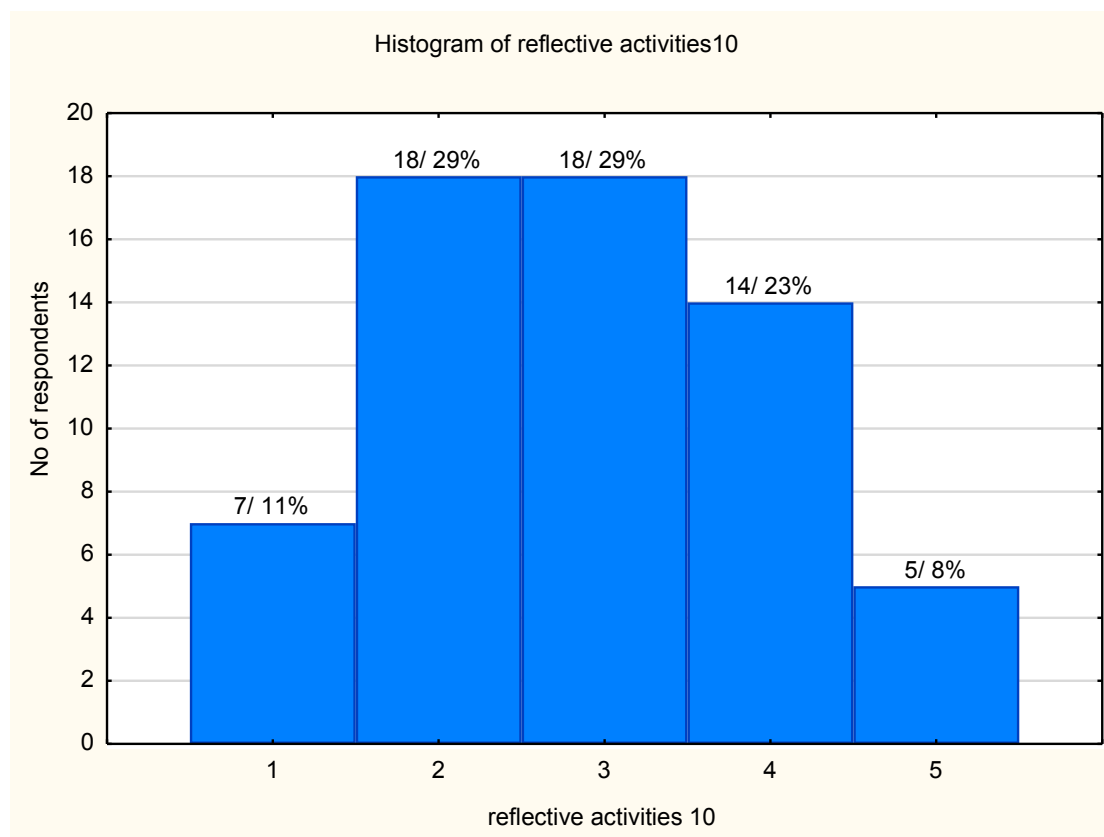


Figure 6.31: Participants who carry out a small research project once a problem or question arises in their teaching practice to find possible causes and solutions.

Seven (N=7) or 11% of respondents strongly agreed that they carry out a small research project once a problem or question arises in their teaching practice to find possible causes and solutions. Eighteen (N=18) or 29% agreed with the statement or were neutral, followed by fourteen (N=14) or 23% who disagreed and five (N=5) or 8% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.31 shows that most respondents agreed or were neutral regarding reflective activities related to resolving a problem or question that arose in their teaching practice by carrying out a small research project to find possible causes and solutions.

- *Subsection: Collaborative activities*

This subsection of the questionnaire sought to elicit information about how the participants rated themselves by responding to the fourteen statements related to collaborative activities. In this study collaboration as part of professional activities implied discussing teaching problems and exchanging instructional materials as well as joint preparation of educational materials and team teaching. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the reliability of this set of questions in relation to a scale of measure. Histograms were then used to illustrate the data related to each statement, followed by a discussion of the results.

Table 6.7 shows the item total statistics for fourteen collaborative activities conducted by participants.

*Table 6.7: Collaborative activities conducted by participants.*

Variable	Summary scale: Mean=50.31; Std.Dv.=12.11 Cronbach alpha: 0.64		
	Mean if deleted	Standard deviation if deleted	Alpha if deleted
Collaborative activities 1 (reversed)	46.23	11.16	0.95
Collaborative activities 2 (reversed)	46.23	11.13	0.95
Collaborative activities 3 (reversed)	46.21	11.11	0.95
Collaborative activities 4 (reversed)	46.21	11.11	0.95
Collaborative activities 5 (reversed)	46.37	11.09	0.95
Collaborative activities 6 (reversed)	46.50	11.11	0.95
Collaborative activities 7 (reversed)	46.87	11.21	0.95
Collaborative activities 8(reversed)	47.45	11.35	0.95
Collaborative activities 9 (reversed)	47.21	11.19	0.95
Collaborative activities 10 (reversed)	47.27	7.86	0.95
Collaborative activities 11 (reversed)	46.69	11.13	0.95
Collaborative activities 12 (reversed)	47.13	11.19	0.95
Collaborative activities 13 (reversed)	47.00	11.27	0.95
Collaborative activities 14 (reversed)	46.61	11.16	0.95

The above table represents data based on the responses to the question about collaborative activities in the questionnaire, which consisted of fourteen items



measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Scale measures are as follows: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree. The alpha reliability for this scale was 0.64, which indicates a high reliability coefficient (MacMillan & Schumacher 2010:182). According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011:53), the alpha provides a measure of the internal consistency of a test or scale. If items of a test are correlated to each other, the alpha is increased. Therefore an alpha of 0.64 may indicate that the items in this section of the questionnaire measured the same construct.

Statement 1 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who discuss teaching problems that they experience in their literacy classes with colleagues. The data are represented in Figure 6.32 below.

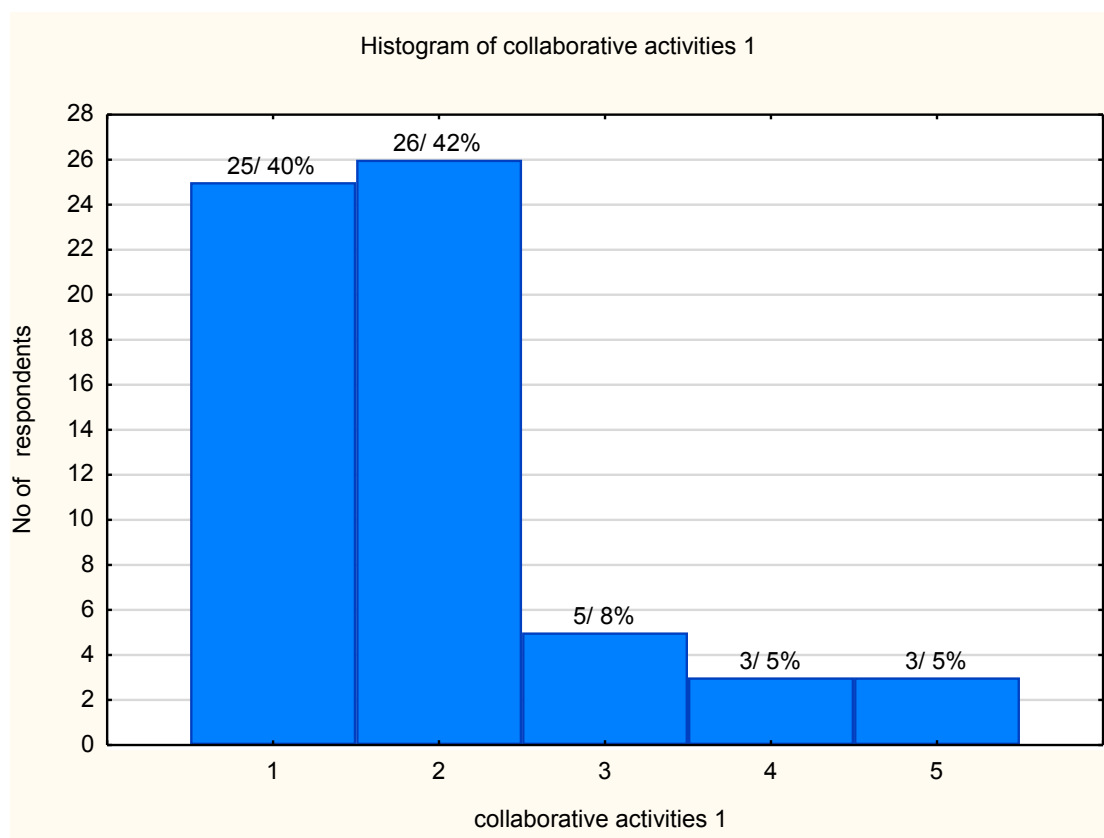


Figure 6.32: Participants who discuss teaching problems that they experience in their literacy classes with colleagues.

Twenty-five (N=25) or 40% of respondents strongly agreed that they discuss teaching problems that they experience in their literacy classes with colleagues. Twenty-six (N=26) or 42% agreed with the statement, five (N=5) or 8% were neutral,

followed by three (N=3) or 5% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.32 shows that most respondents agreed or strongly agreed regarding collaborative activities related to discussing teaching problems that they experience in their literacy classes with colleagues.

Statement 2 was intended to elicit data related to collaborative activities of participants who support colleagues who experience problems in their literacy classes. The data are represented in Figure 6.33 below.

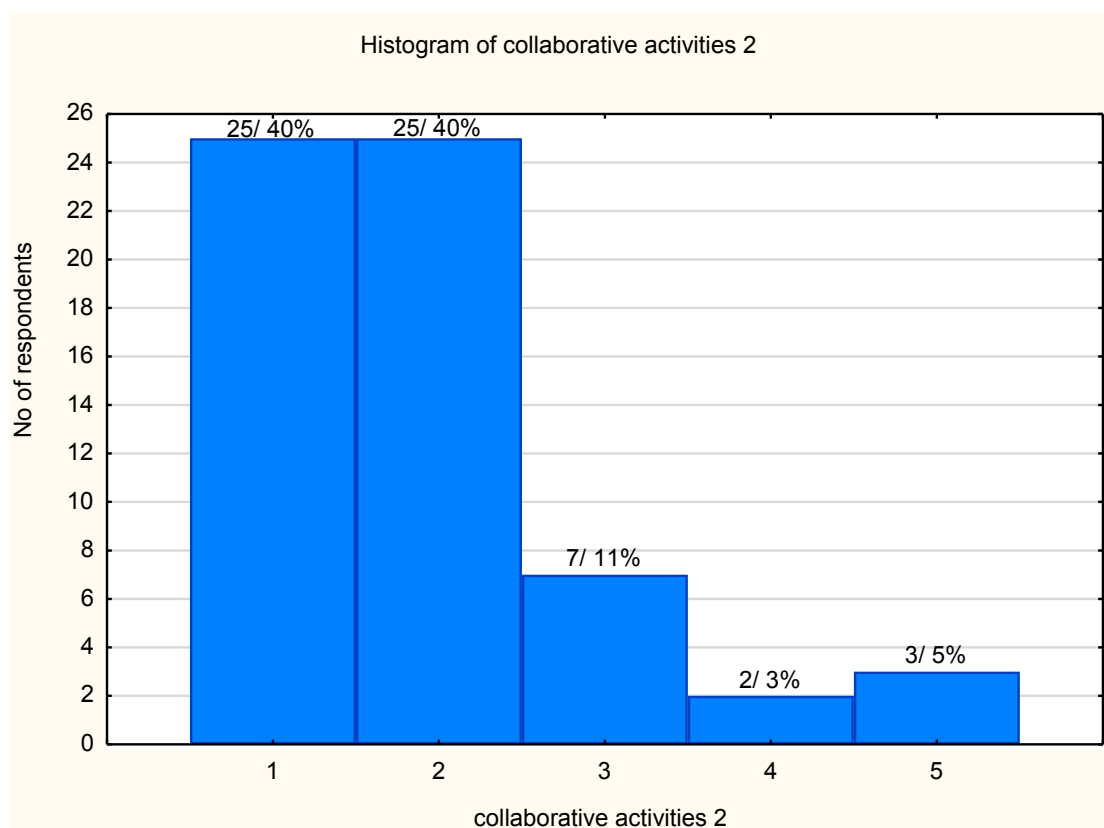


Figure 6.33: Participants who support colleagues who experience problems in their literacy classes.

Twenty-five (N=25) or 40% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they support colleagues who experience problems in their literacy classes. Seven (N=7) or 11% were neutral, two (N=2) or 3% disagreed, followed by three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.33 shows that an equal number of respondents strongly agreed or agreed regarding collaborative

activities related to supporting colleagues who experience problems in their literacy classes.

Statement 3 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who share new teaching ideas with colleagues. The data are represented in Figure 6.34 below.

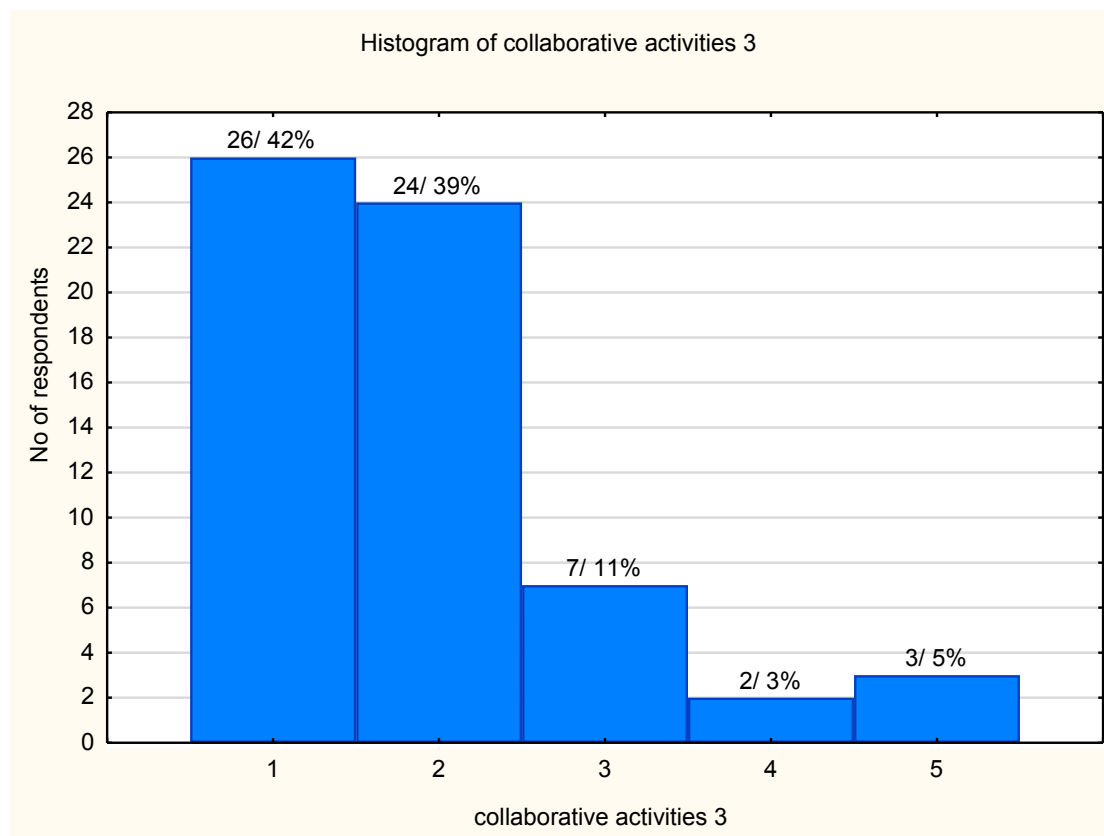


Figure 6.34: Participants who share new teaching ideas with colleagues.

Twenty-six (N=26) or 42% of respondents strongly agreed that they share new teaching ideas with colleagues. Twenty-four (N=24) or 39% agreed with the statement, seven (N=7) or 11% were neutral, followed by two (N=2) or 3% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.34 shows that most respondents strongly agreed regarding collaborative activities related to sharing new teaching ideas with colleagues.

Statement 4 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who share learning experiences with colleagues. The data are represented in Figure 6.35 below.

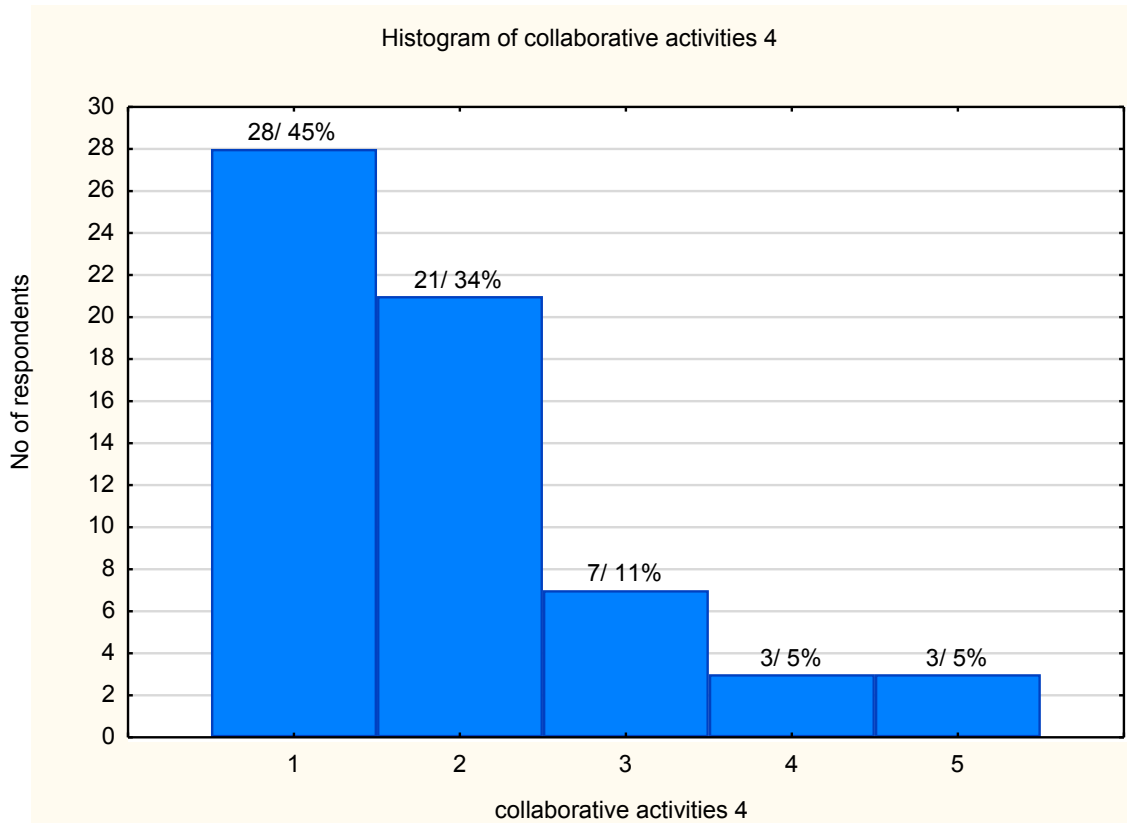


Figure 6.35: Participants who share learning experiences with colleagues.

Twenty-eight (N=28) or 45% of respondents strongly agreed that they share learning experiences with colleagues. Twenty-one (N=21) or 34% agreed with the statement, seven (N=7) or 11% were neutral, followed by three (N=3) or 5% who disagreed or strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.35 shows that most respondents strongly agreed regarding collaborative activities related to sharing learning experiences with colleagues.

Statement 5 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who discuss the manner in which they deal with events in their literacy classes with colleagues. The data are represented in Figure 6.36 below.

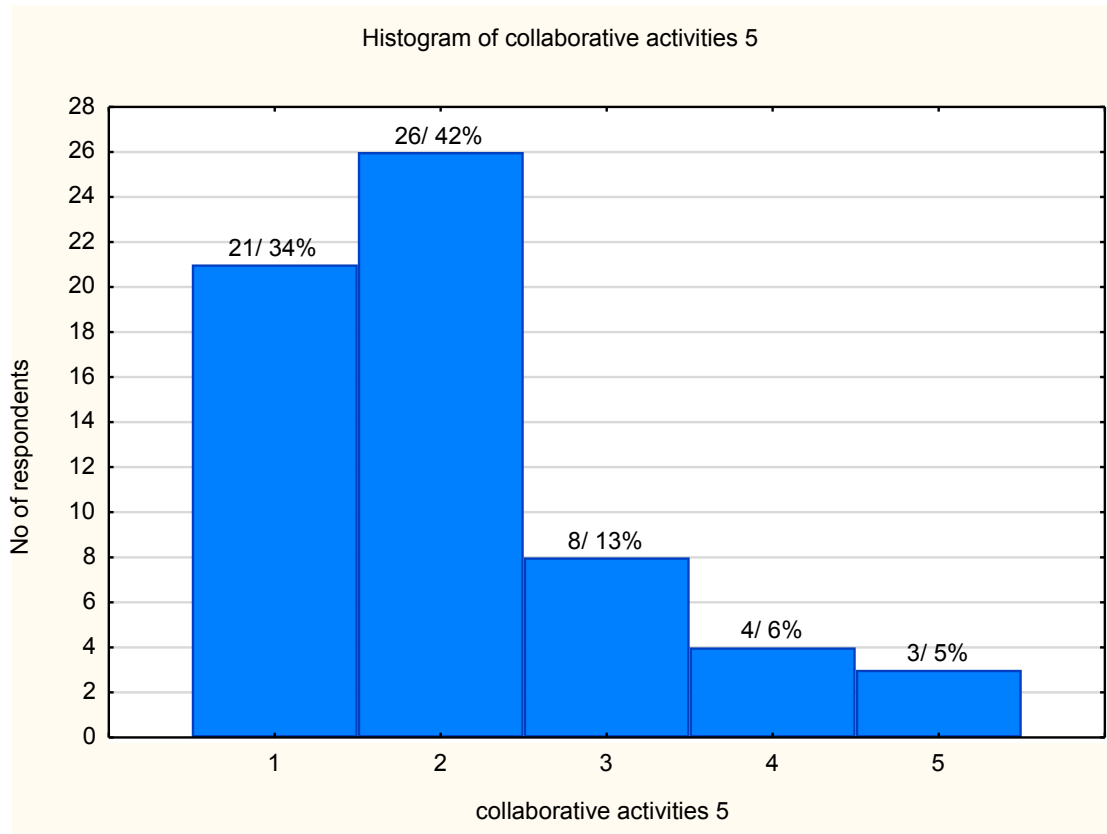
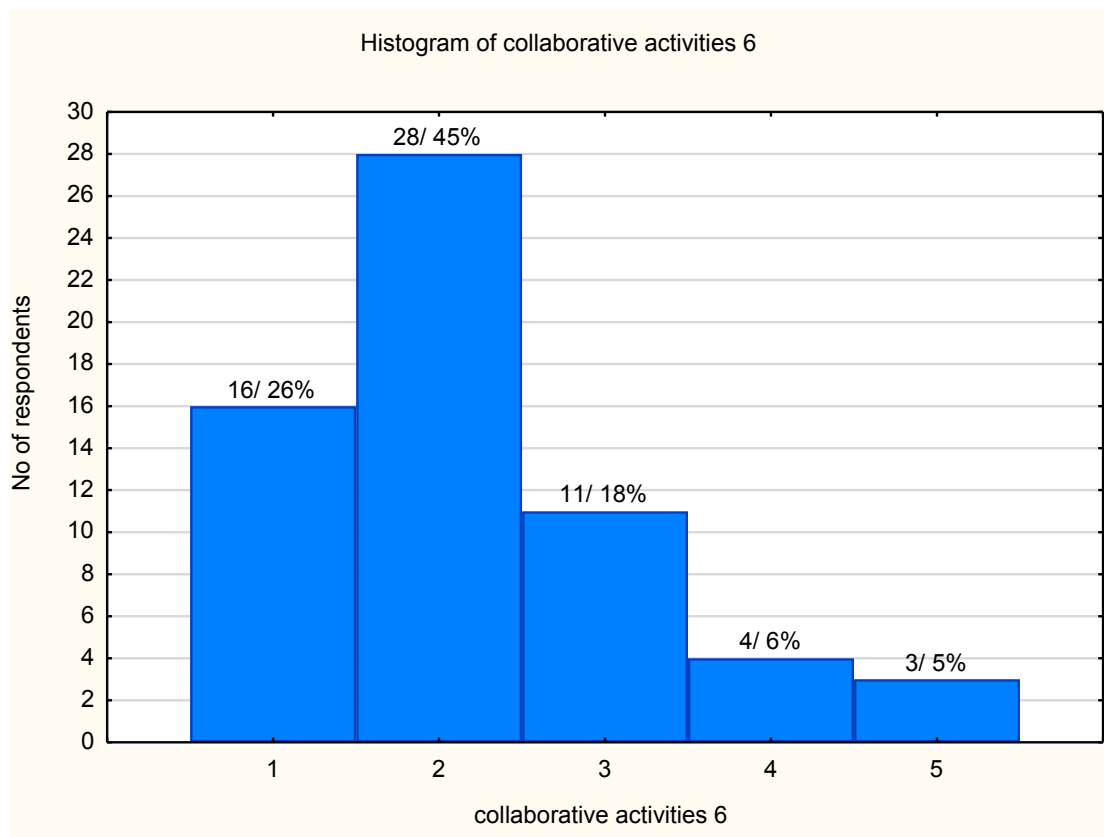


Figure 6.36: *Participants who discuss the manner in which they deal with events in their literacy classes with colleagues.*

Twenty-one (N=21) or 34% of respondents strongly agreed that they discuss the manner in which they deal with events in their literacy classes with colleagues. Twenty-six (N=26) or 42% agreed with the statement, eight (N=8) or 13% were neutral, followed by four (N=4) or 6% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.36 shows that most respondents agreed regarding collaborative activities related to discussing the manner in which they deal with events in their literacy classes with colleagues.

Statement 6 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who discuss improvements and innovations in literacy development at their school with colleagues. The data are represented in Figure 6.37 below.



*Figure 6.37: Participants discuss improvements and innovations in literacy development at their school with colleagues.*

Sixteen (N=16) or 26% of respondents strongly agreed that they discuss improvements and innovations in literacy development at their school with colleagues. Twenty-eight (N=28) or 45% agreed with the statement, eleven (N=11) or 18% were neutral, followed by four (N=4) or 6% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.37 shows that most respondents agreed regarding collaborative activities related to discussing improvements and innovations in literacy development at their school with colleagues.

Statement 7 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who use colleagues' teaching materials in their literacy lessons. The data are represented in Figure 6.38 below.

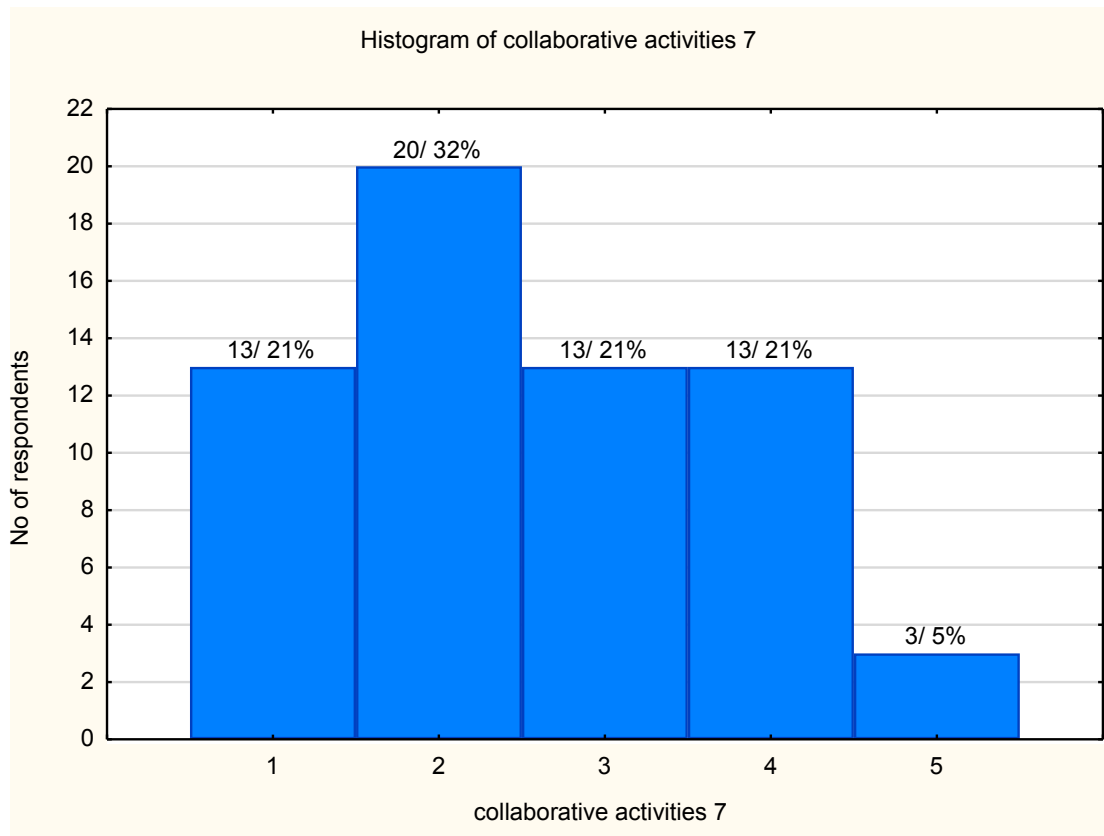


Figure 6.38: Participants who use colleagues' teaching materials in their literacy lessons.

Thirteen (N=13) or 21% of respondents strongly agreed that they use colleagues' teaching materials in their literacy lessons. Twenty (N=20) or 32% agreed with the statement, thirteen (N=13) or 21% were neutral and the same number disagreed, and three (N=3) or 5% strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.38 shows that most respondents agreed regarding collaborative activities related to using colleagues' teaching materials in their literacy lessons.

Statement 8 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who write new literacy programmes with colleagues. The data are represented in Figure 6.39 below.

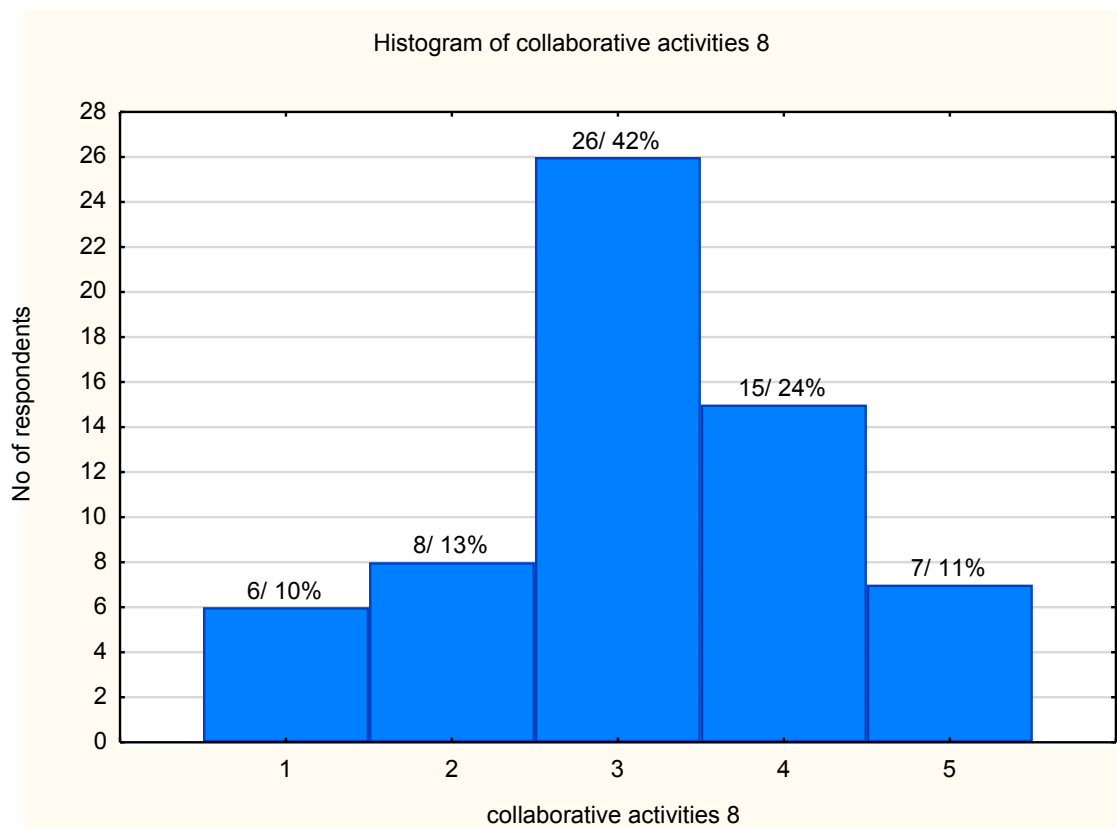


Figure 6.39: Participants who write new literacy programmes with colleagues.

Six (N=6) or 10% of respondents strongly agreed that they write new literacy programmes with colleagues. Eight (N=8) or 13% agreed with the statement, twenty-six (N=26) or 42% were neutral, followed by fifteen (N=15) or 24% who disagreed and seven (N=7) or 11% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.39 shows that most respondents were neutral regarding collaborative activities related to writing new literacy programmes with colleagues.



Statement 9 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who develop new literacy teaching materials with colleagues. The data are represented in Figure 6.40 below.

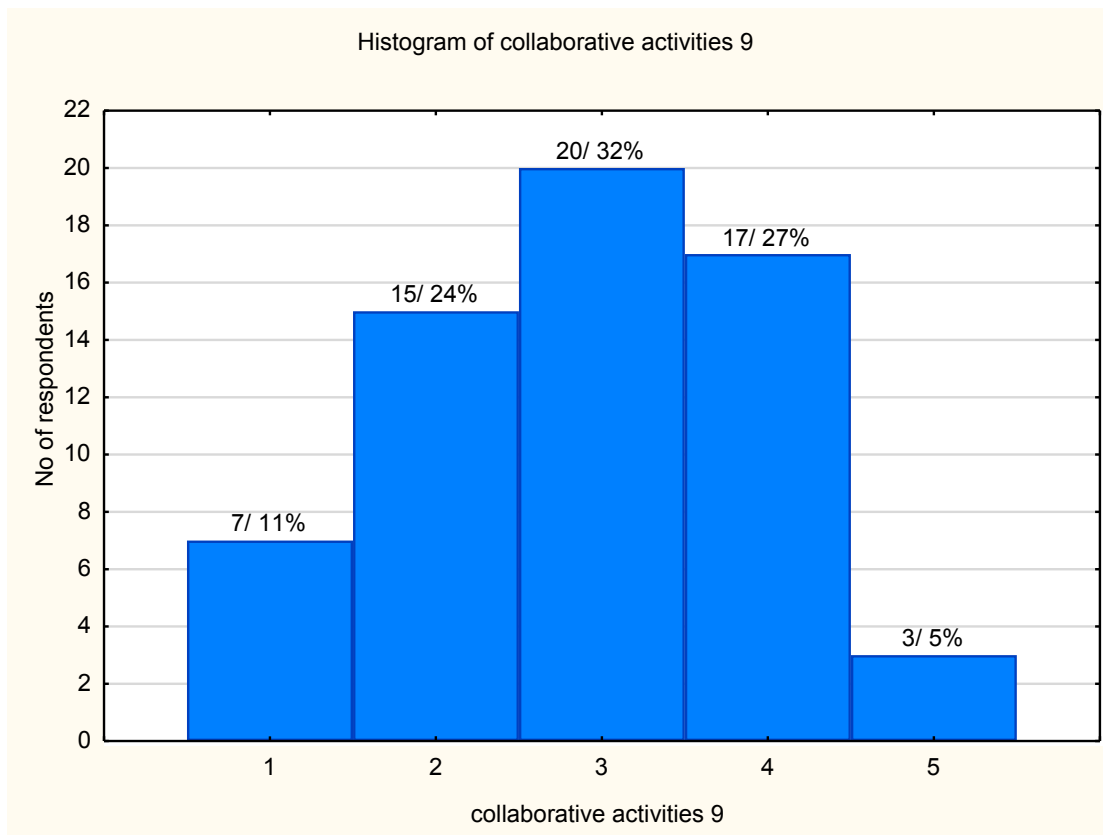


Figure 6.40: Participants who develop new literacy teaching materials with colleagues.

Seven (N=7) or 11% of respondents strongly agreed that they develop new literacy teaching materials with colleagues. Fifteen (N=15) or 24% agreed with the statement, twenty (N=20) or 32% were neutral, followed by seventeen (N=17) or 27% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.40 shows that most respondents were neutral regarding collaborative activities related to developing new literacy teaching materials with colleagues.

Statement 10 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who construct assessment materials with colleagues. The data are represented in Figure 6.41 below.

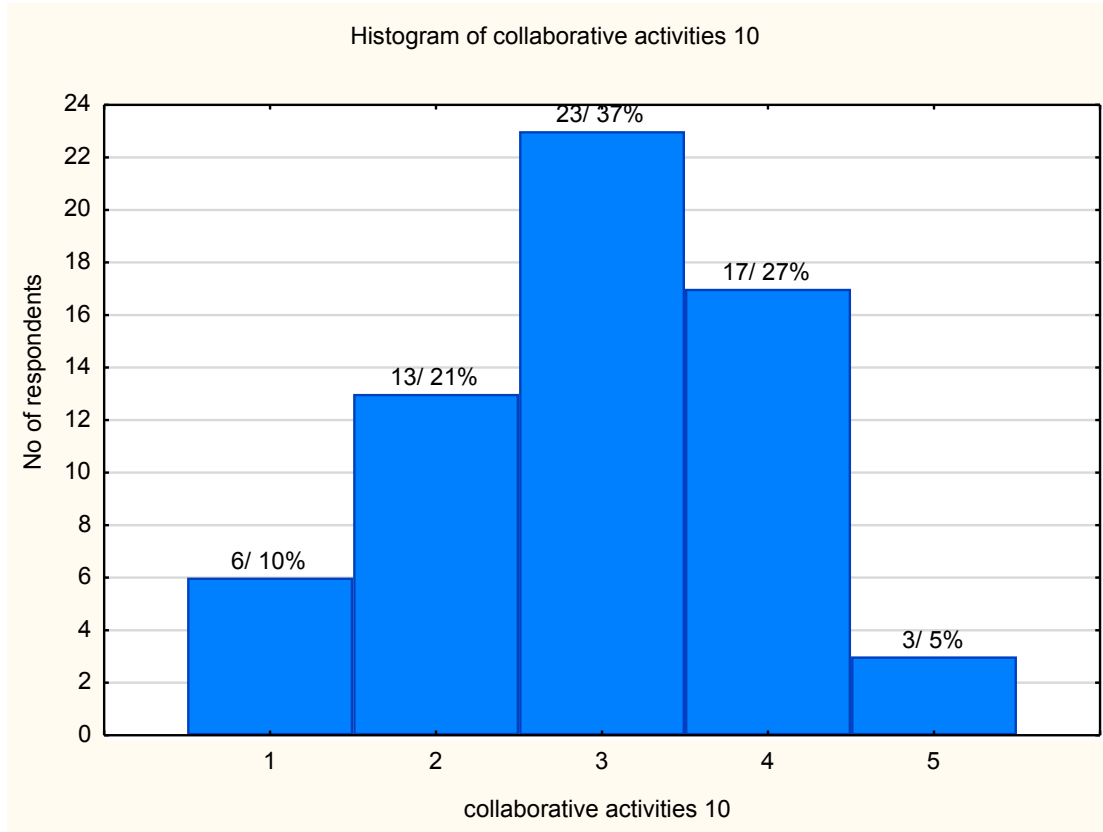


Figure 6.41: Participants who construct assessment materials with colleagues.

Six (N=6) or 10% of respondents strongly agreed that they construct assessment materials with colleagues. Thirteen (N=13) or 21% agreed with the statement, twenty-three (N=23) or 37% were neutral, followed by seventeen (N=17) or 27% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.41 shows that most respondents were neutral regarding collaborative activities related to constructing assessment materials with colleagues.

Statement 11 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who study student performance data with colleagues. The data are represented in Figure 6.42 below.

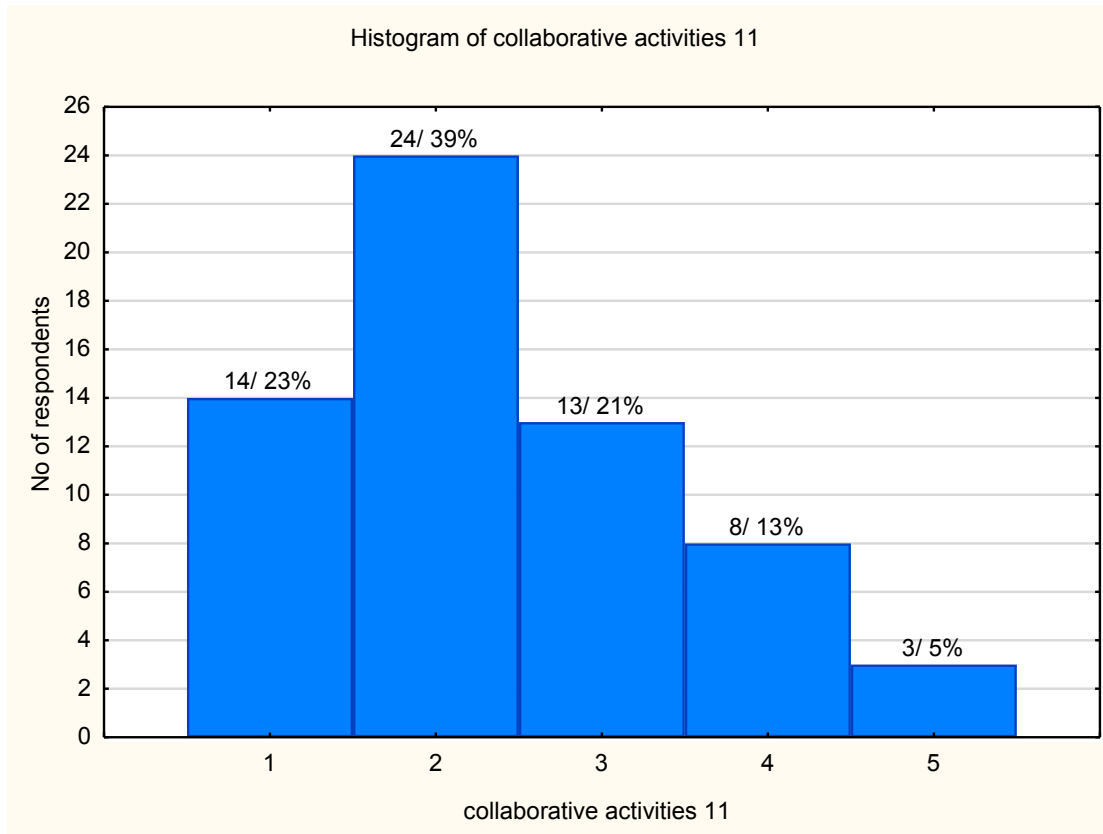


Figure 6.42: Participants who study student performance data with colleagues.

Fourteen (N=14) or 23% of respondents strongly agreed that they study student performance data with colleagues. Twenty-four (N=24) or 39% agreed with the statement, thirteen (N=13) or 21% were neutral, followed by eight (N=8) or 13% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.42 shows that most respondents agreed regarding collaborative activities related to studying student performance data with colleagues.

Statement 12 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who prepare literacy lessons with colleagues. The data are represented in Figure 6.43 below.

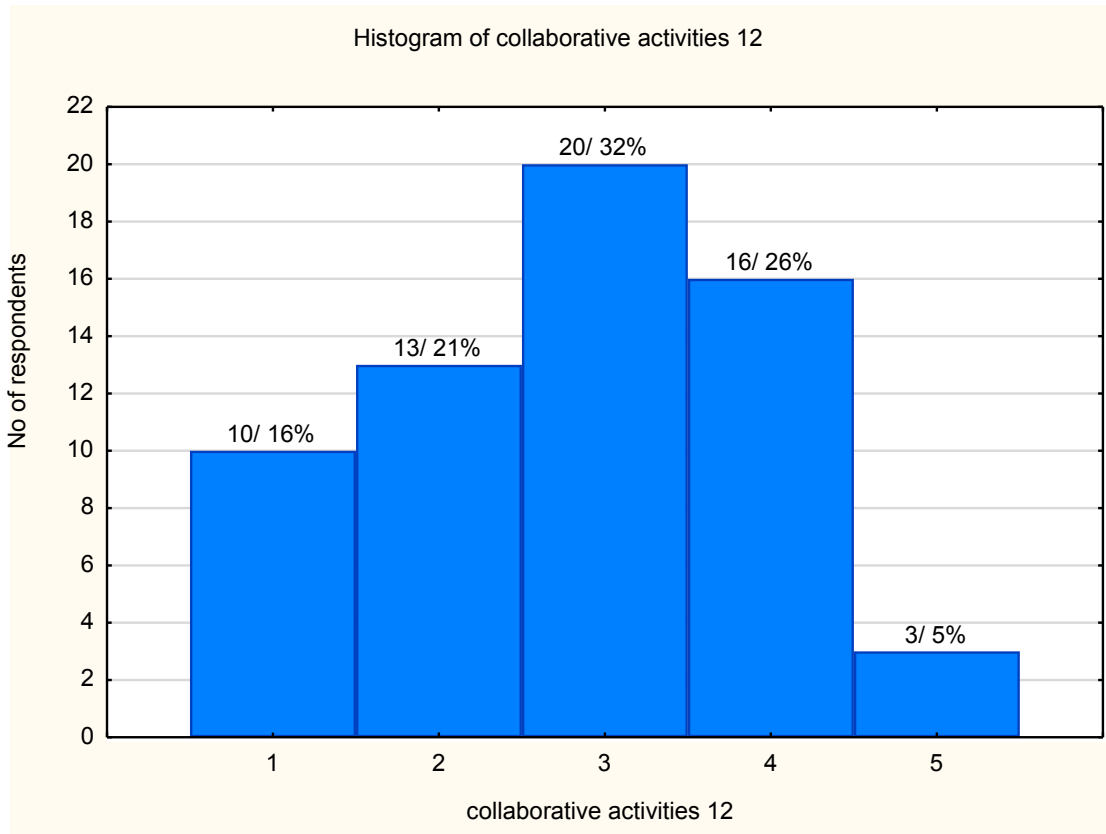


Figure 6.43: Participants who prepare literacy lessons with colleagues.

Ten (N=10) or 16% of respondents strongly agreed that they prepare literacy lessons with colleagues. Thirteen (N=13) or 21% agreed with the statement, twenty (N=20) or 32% were neutral, followed by sixteen (N=16) or 26% who disagreed and three (N=3) or 5% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.43 shows that most respondents were neutral regarding collaborative activities related to preparing literacy lessons with colleagues.

Statement 13 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who experiment with new teaching methods in their literacy classes with colleagues. The data are represented in Figure 6.44 below.

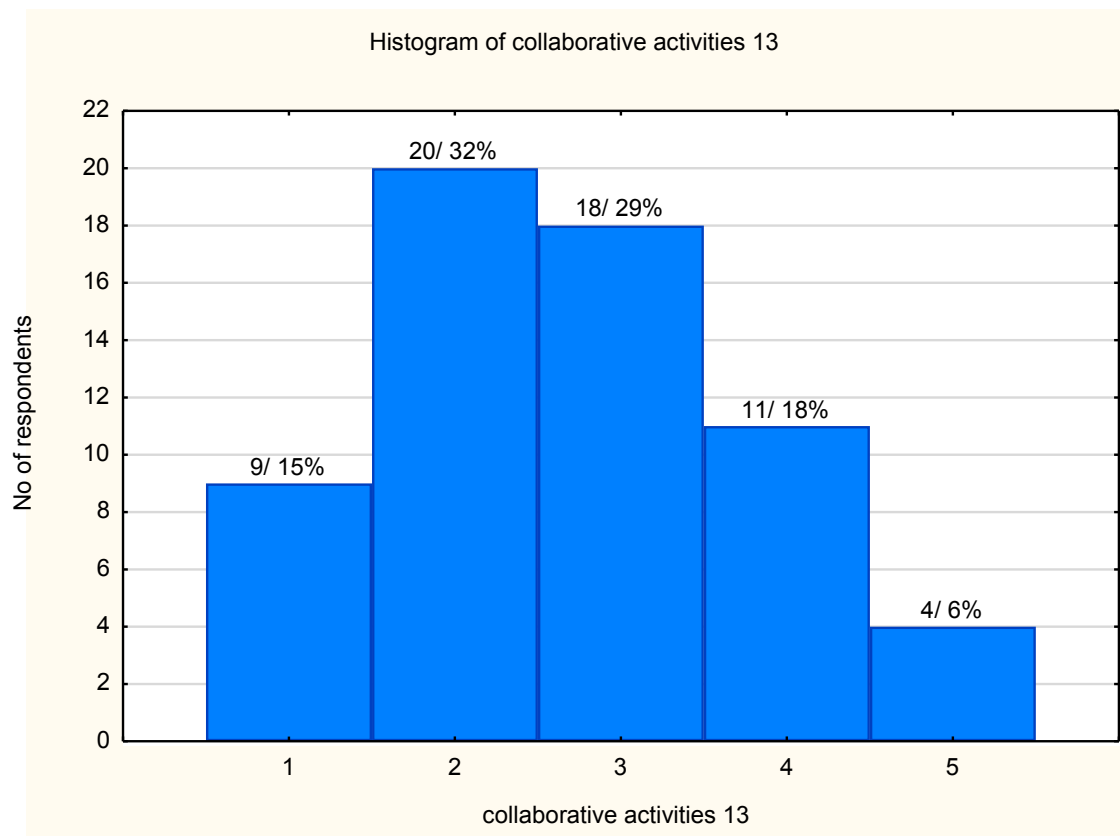


Figure 6.44: Participants who experiment with new teaching methods in their literacy classes with colleagues.

Nine (N=9) or 15% of respondents strongly agreed that they experiment with new teaching methods in their literacy classes with colleagues. Twenty (N=20) or 32% agreed with the statement, eighteen (N=18) or 29% were neutral, followed by eleven (N=11) or 18% who disagreed and four (N=4) or 6% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.44 shows that most respondents agreed regarding collaborative activities related to experimenting with new teaching methods in their literacy classes with colleagues.

Statement 14 elicits data related to collaborative activities of participants who co-teach literacy lessons with colleagues. The data are represented in Figure 6.45 below.

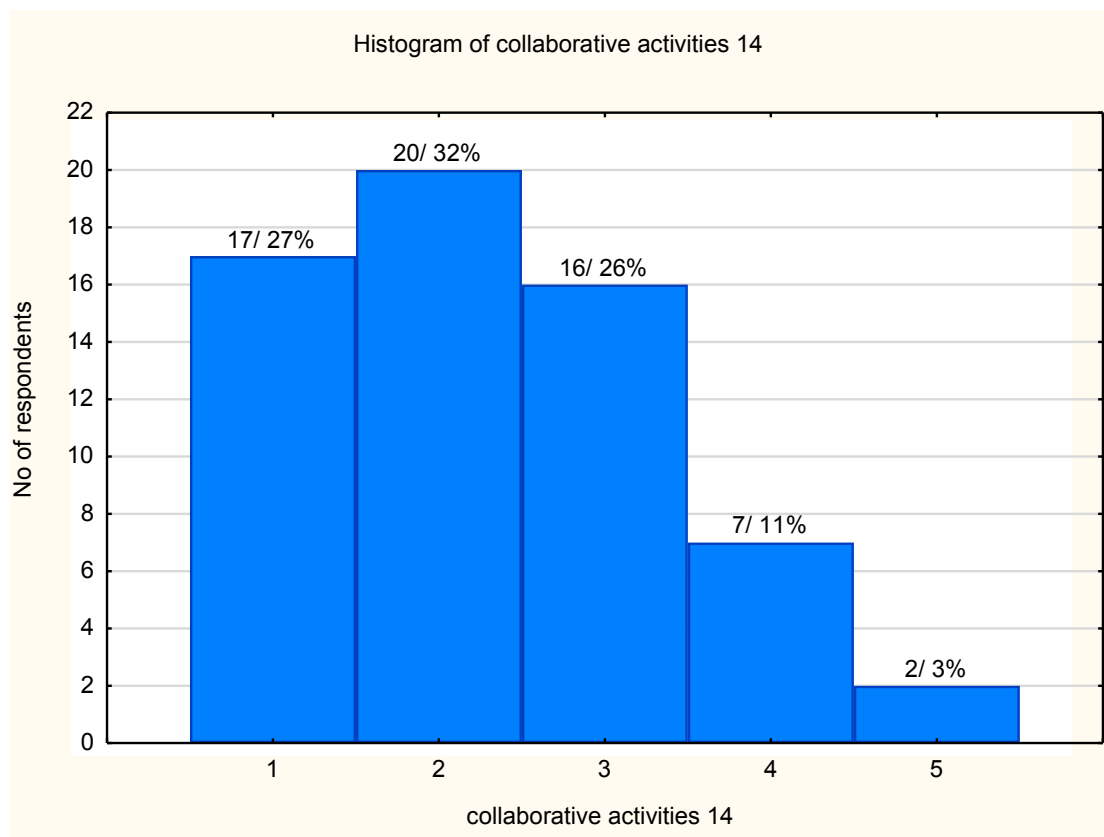


Figure 6.45: Participants who co-teach literacy lessons with colleagues.

Seventeen (N=17) or 27% of respondents strongly agreed that they co-teach literacy lessons with colleagues. Twenty (N=20) or 32% agreed with the statement, sixteen (N=16) or 26% were neutral, followed by seven (N=7) or 11% who disagreed and two (N=2) or 3% who strongly disagreed. Analysis of the data presented in Figure 6.45 shows that most respondents agreed regarding collaborative activities related to co-teaching literacy lessons with colleagues.

### 6.2.5 Summary of quantitative results

The findings of the quantitative data from the questionnaire administered to determine the professional development needs of 62 participants regarding reading and reading comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers during phase two of cycle one are outlined below.

Of the 62 respondents, 9 indicated some form of professional development regarding reading models and strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. These models and strategies were group reading, guided reading, reading aloud, shared reading, individual reading, the interactive model, the top-down model and the bottom-up model. No respondents indicated professional development in other reading models and strategies. Question 6 required respondents to indicate whether they explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies to non-mother-tongue speakers. Of the 62 respondents, 10 indicated that they implemented comprehension strategies. Of the 62 respondents, 4 indicated that they received pre-service training regarding comprehension strategies.

The data derived from the above questions indicate that very few respondents have received professional development regarding reading and comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. These data are confirmed by studies conducted by several researchers (Nel & Müller 2010:648; O'Connor & Geiger 2009:263; Hooijer & Fourie 2009:141-146; Scheepers 2006:4; Basson 2013), who found that participants have expressed their need for professional development to support the literacy needs of non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. Therefore, the above-mentioned reading models, and strategies as well as comprehension strategies were included in the professional development programme that was developed in phase five of cycle one.

The first five statements of question 13 pertained to the 62 respondents' experiences of professional development activities in the past. Regarding professional development activities attended in the past, 71% of respondents had positive experiences. Furthermore, 60% of the respondents indicated that their professional development needs regarding reading strategies were not ascertained by teacher trainers in the past. A further 66% of the respondents indicated that their professional development needs regarding comprehension strategies were not ascertained by teacher trainers in the past. In addition, 55% of the respondents indicated that they would like to give input regarding their professional development needs (see 3.5.3.2). Studies conducted by Moodly (2013:3); Ono and Ferreira (2010:60) and James et al. (2015:147) concluded that professional development

initiatives that do not consider the needs of teachers or their particular contexts, whilst placing them in a passive role, are seldom successful or sustainable.

A summary of the quantitative results of the three professional development activities relating to updating, reflection and collaboration in question 14 is provided below. For reporting purposes the 5-point Likert scale has been reversed, therefore 1=completely disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=completely agree.

Figure 6.46 represents a summary of the updating activities of the 62 respondents who completed the questionnaires.

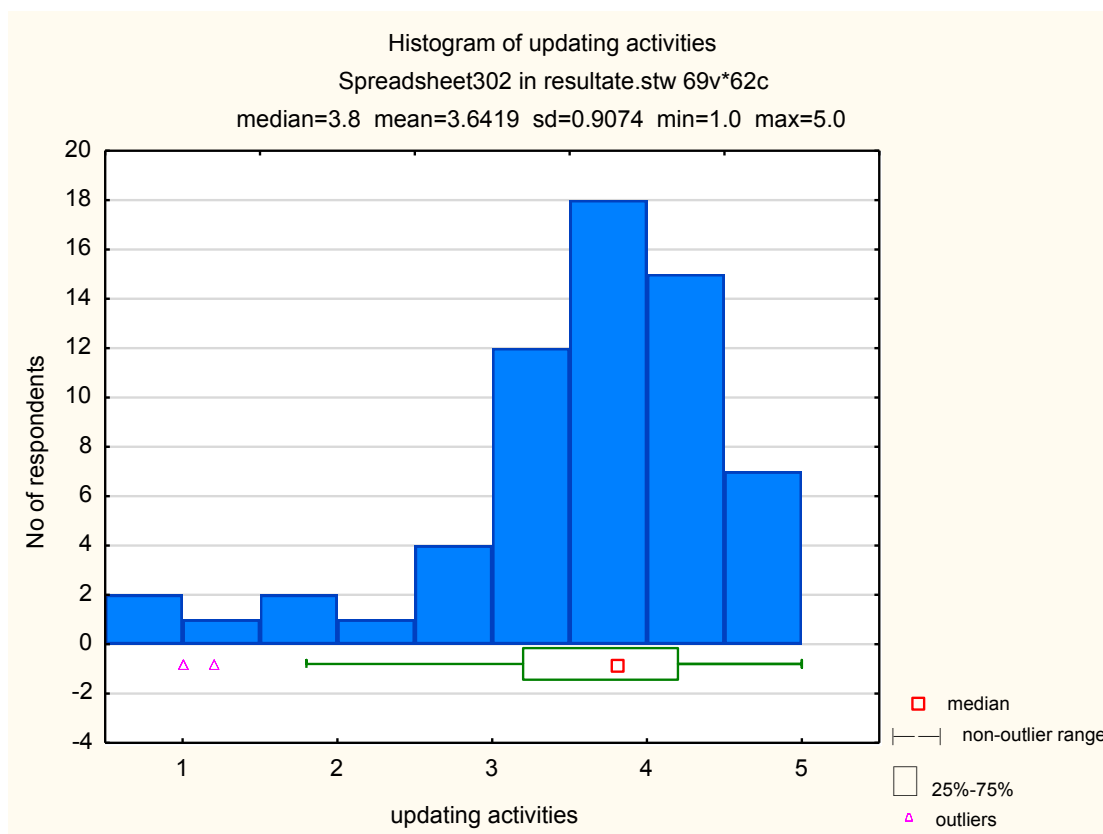


Figure 6.46: Summary of the updating activities conducted by the participants.

The median for updating activities measured 3.8, which indicates that 50% of the responses are below 3.8 and 50% above 3.8. This indicated a central tendency of eighteen (N=18) respondents being neutral to agreeing with the updating activities stated in question 14. Furthermore, twenty-two (N=22) respondents indicated scores between 4 (agree) and 5 (completely agree). In addition, seventeen (N=17)



respondents indicated scores between 2 (disagree) and 3 (neutral). Although teachers acquire their practitioner knowledge during their pre-service training, they need to continuously expand and update their skills and knowledge (see 3.5.3.1). These data indicated that although the teachers participated significantly more in updating activities, this did not necessary translate into classroom implementation (see Tables 6.1 and 6.3). In addition, they may have engaged in updating activities that did not include comprehension strategies to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers.

Figure 6.47 represents a summary of the reflective activities of the 62 respondents who completed the questionnaires.

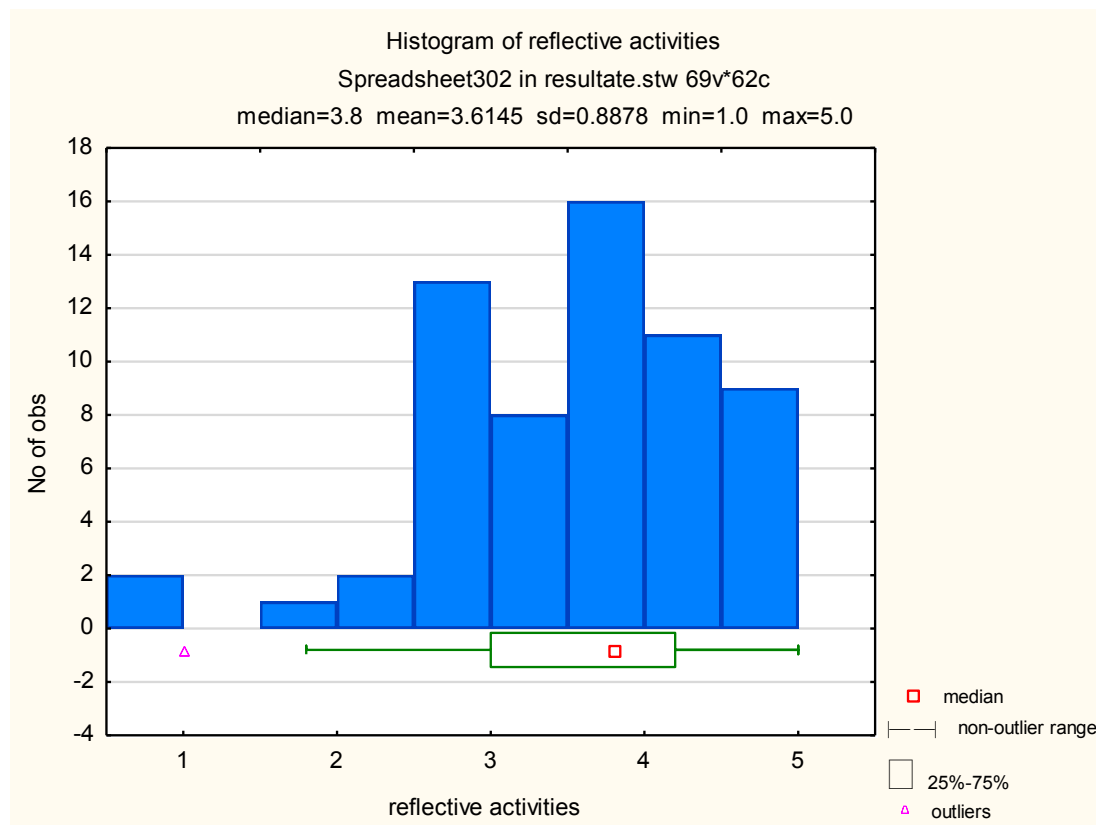


Figure 6.47: Summary of reflective activities conducted by participants.

The median for reflective activities measured 3.8, which indicated that 50% of the responses present below 3.8 and 50% above 3.8. This indicated a central tendency of sixteen (N=16) respondents being neutral to agreeing with the reflective activities stated in question 14. Furthermore, fifteen (N=15) respondents indicated scores between 2 (disagree) and 3 (neutral). In addition, twenty (N=20) respondents

indicated scores between 4 (agree) and 5 (completely agree). Analysis of the above data indicates that most participants regard reflective activities as important. The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (DoE 2006) requires teachers to become reflective practitioners (see 3.3.3.2). In addition, Burns (2010:2) describes reflective practitioners as teachers who have the ability to systematically engage in self-initiated inquiry, which is often referred to as action research (see 5.4.2.1).

Figure 6.48 represents a summary of the collaborative activities of the 62 (N=62) respondents who completed the questionnaires.

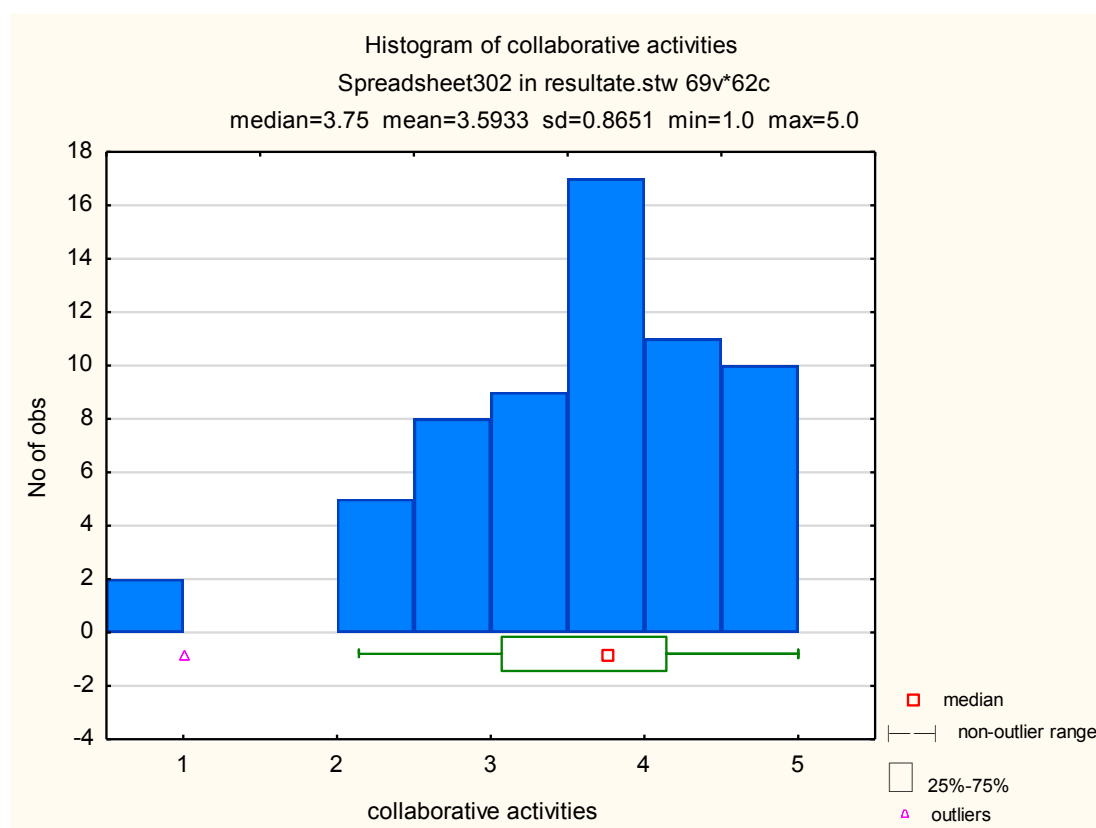


Figure 6.48: Summary of the collaborative activities conducted by participants.

The median for collaborative activities measured 3.75, which indicates that 50% of the responses are below 3.75 and 50% above 3.75. This indicates a central tendency of seventeen (N=17) respondents being neutral to agreeing with the collaborative activities stated in question 14. Furthermore, twenty-one (N=21) respondents indicated a score of 4 (agree) and 5 (completely agree). In addition, thirteen (N=13) respondents indicated a score between 2 (disagree) and 3 (neutral).

Analysis of the above data indicates that most participants regard collaborative activities as important. Similarly, Shulman and Shulman (2004:267) concluded that learning takes place more effectively when teachers share knowledge through collaboration in learning communities. Moreover, during the process of conducting action research the participants had the opportunity to collaborate and reflect with their colleagues during meetings arranged among them eight months after the implementation period.

### **6.2.6 Summary of qualitative results**

Questions 2 and 3 provided the respondents with the opportunity to indicate which reading strategies they implemented in their Afrikaans Home Language classes and where they need additional professional development. Questions 4 and 5 required them to identify challenges and successes experienced when implementing these strategies in their Afrikaans Home Language classes when teaching non-mother-tongue speakers. These data were required to accommodate the professional development needs of the teachers in the professional development programme.

Implementation of one or more of the following reading strategies were indicated by 10 respondents: shared reading, group reading, reading aloud and guided reading. Furthermore, most respondents (see Table 6.2) indicated that they require some form of professional development to increase their knowledge and skills regarding reading models and strategies to render more effective support to the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. Studies conducted by Nel and Müller (2010:648); O'Connor and Geiger (2009:263); Hooijer and Fourie (2009:141-146) and Scheepers (2006:4) corroborate these findings. A further 10 respondents indicated that they do not require professional development, because they had no non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes.

Only 6 respondents recorded challenges and 8 respondents recorded successes experienced in their classes when implementing the above-mentioned strategies. The fact that so few challenges and successes were recorded may be due to the fact that most respondents did not implement the abovementioned strategies in their classes. Moreover, they indicated that they require professional development to

increase their PCK regarding reading models and strategies to support the non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes.

Questions 9 and 10 provided the respondents with the opportunity to indicate which comprehension strategies they implemented in their Afrikaans Home Language classes and where they required additional professional development. Questions 11 and 12 required them to identify challenges and successes experienced when implementing these strategies in their Afrikaans Home Language classes when teaching non-mother-tongue speakers.

The following comprehension strategies were implemented by 14 teachers: guided comprehension, making predictions, finding main ideas, drawing inferences and conclusions and questioning. In addition, the schema theory was also applied by using graphic organisers and semantic charts. This number includes 4 respondents who implemented comprehension strategies, because it was included in their pre-service training. Furthermore, most respondents (Table 6.5) indicated that they require some form of professional development to increase their knowledge and skills regarding comprehension strategies to render more effective support to the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. Studies conducted by O'Connor and Geiger (2009:264), Nel and Müller (2010:648) and Basson (2013:91) corroborate these findings. A further 12 respondents indicated that they do not require professional development, because they have no non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. Only 4 respondents recorded challenges experienced when implementing comprehension strategies in their classes. No successes were recorded. This may be due to the fact that most respondents indicated that they do not explicitly teach comprehension strategies.

In the light of the data presented in the above section, most of the 62 respondents require professional development to improve their PCK to enhance the reading and reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes (Tables 6.3 and 6.5). It was therefore decided to include all the reading and comprehension strategies mentioned in the questionnaire in the professional development programme, which was developed in phase five of cycle one.

### **6.3 DATA FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE AFTER COMPLETION OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

The original questionnaire was re-administered and completed by the 12 teachers who participated in the professional development programme. The data of the first and second measurements were compared to determine whether their professional development needs had been met, including any further needs they might have regarding reading and comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. This information was used to adjust the programme during phase five of cycle two.

A McNemar Chi-square test was conducted to test whether the proportion of yes cases changed significantly from the first to the second measurement. Chi-square is a nonparametric statistical procedure that is used with ordinal data such as percentages. This test is a way of answering questions about relationships based on frequencies of observations in categories.

The questionnaire included four constructs namely:

- reading models and strategies;
- reading comprehension strategies;
- experience of professional development activities;
- professional development activities related to updating, reflection and collaboration.

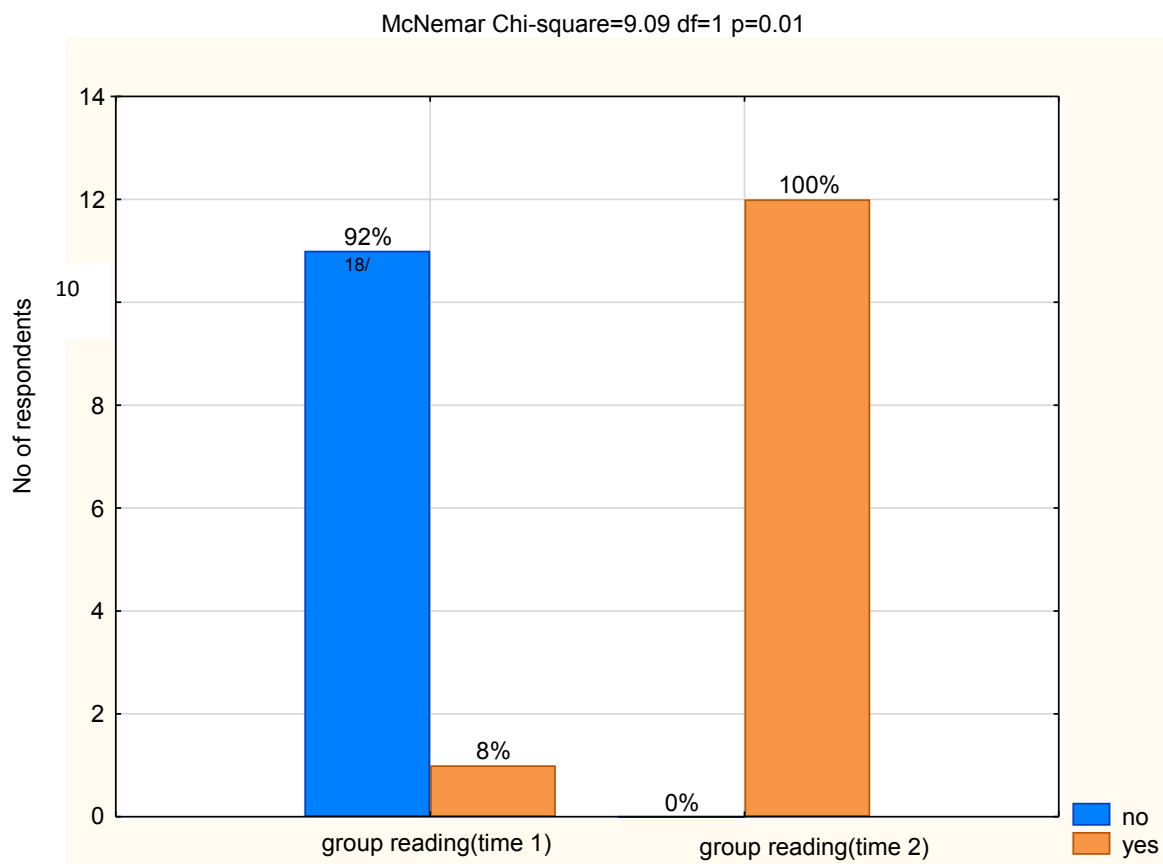
The data are presented and discussed below according to the four sections listed above. First the data regarding the reading models and strategies in the questionnaire will be discussed, followed a discussion of the data regarding the reading comprehension strategies.

### **6.3.1 Reading models and strategies**

#### **6.3.1.1 Quantitative data**

This subsection of the questionnaire elicited data regarding the 12 participating teachers' knowledge related to reading models and strategies to develop reading comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes eight months after the professional development programme was completed. These data were compared to the data obtained from the questionnaire before commencement of the professional development programme. The data were needed to determine whether the professional development programme contributed to the PCK of the participants regarding reading and reading comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers.

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding shared reading are presented in Figure 6.49 below.



*Figure 6.49: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in shared reading.*

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding shared reading for non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.49 shows that one (N=1) participant indicated professional development during the first measurement compared to twelve (N=12) participants in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding shared reading, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 9.09, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding group reading are presented in Figure 6.50 below.

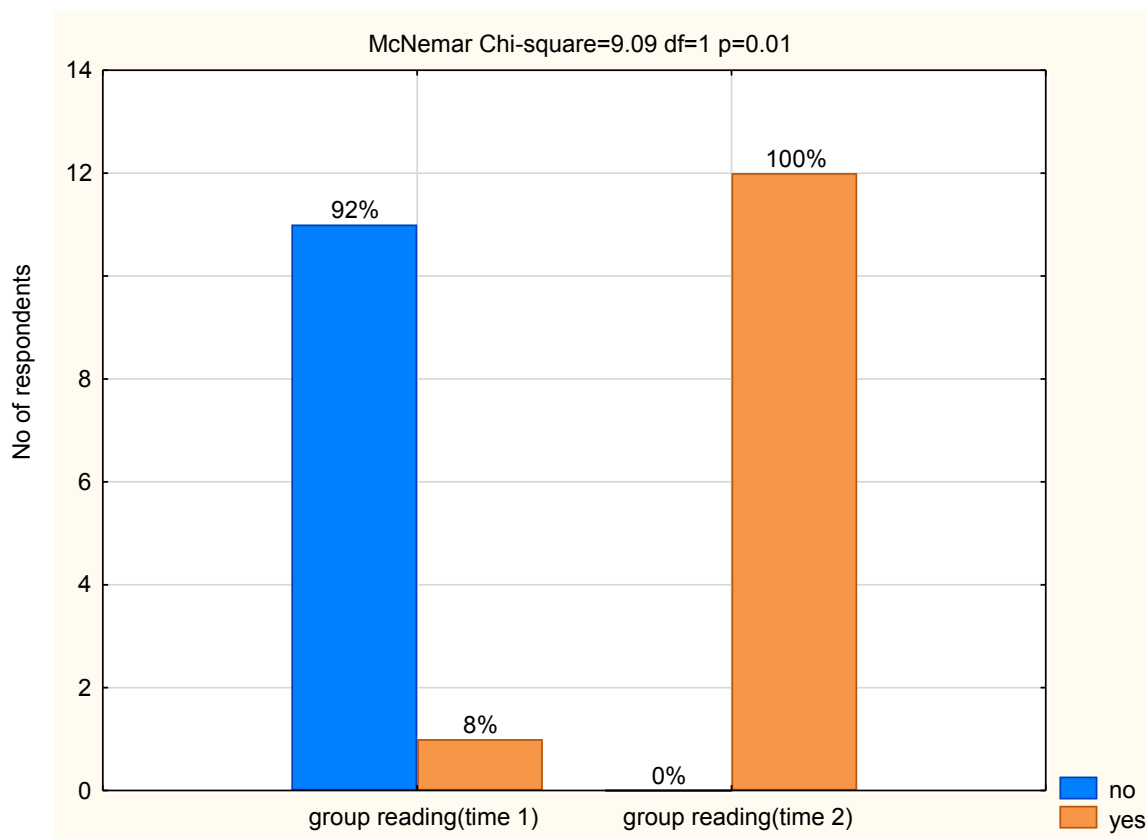


Figure 6.50: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in group reading.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding group reading for non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.50 shows that one (N=1) participant indicated professional development during the first measurement compared to twelve (N=12) participants in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding group reading, all respondents were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 9.09, p < 0.01$ .



Data comparing measurements one and two regarding guided reading are presented in Figure 6.51 below.

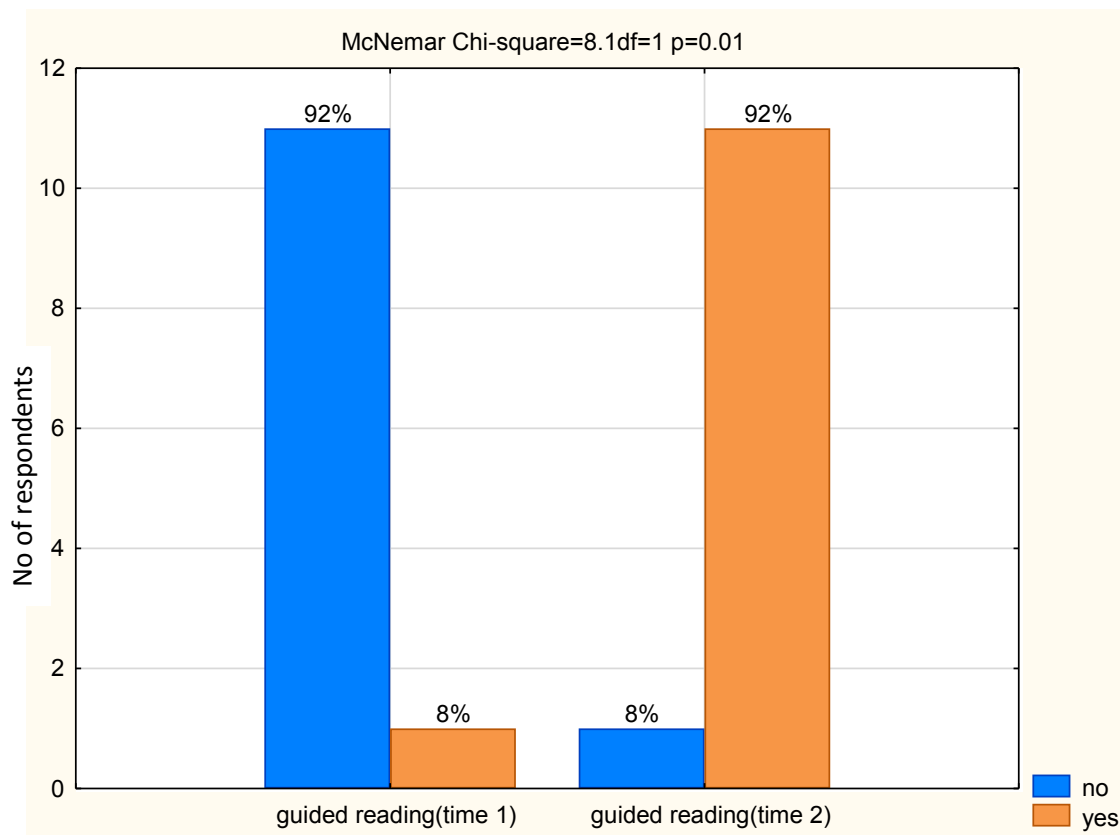


Figure 6.51: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in guided reading.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding guided reading for non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.51 shows that one (N=1) participant indicated professional development during the first measurement compared to eleven (N=11) participants in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding guided reading, all respondents were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 8.1, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding reading aloud are presented in Figure 6.52 below.

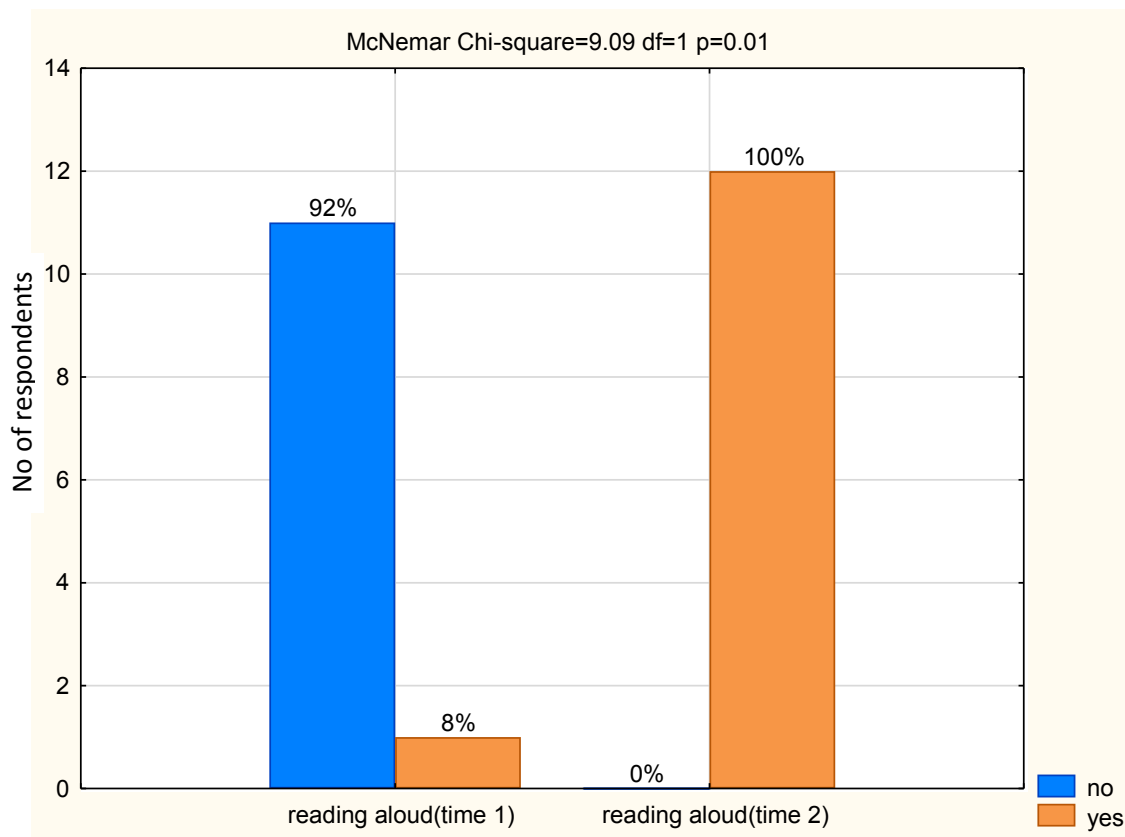


Figure 6.52: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in reading aloud.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding reading aloud for non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.52 shows that one (N=1) participant indicated professional development during the first measurement compared to twelve (N=12) participants in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding reading aloud, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 9.09, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding independent reading are presented in Figure 6.53 below.

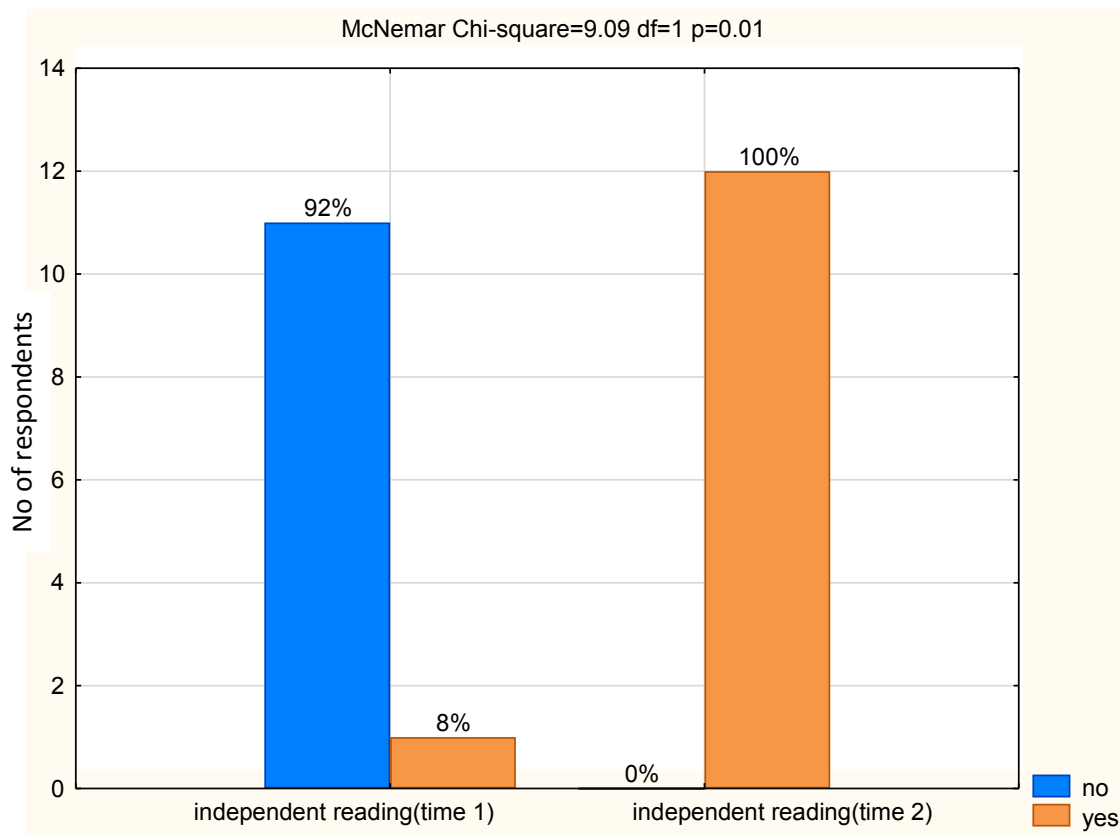


Figure 6.53: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in independent reading.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding independent reading for non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.53 shows that one (N=1) participant indicated professional development during the first measurement compared to twelve (N=12) participants in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding independent reading, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 9.09, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding the interactive model are presented in Figure 6.54 below.

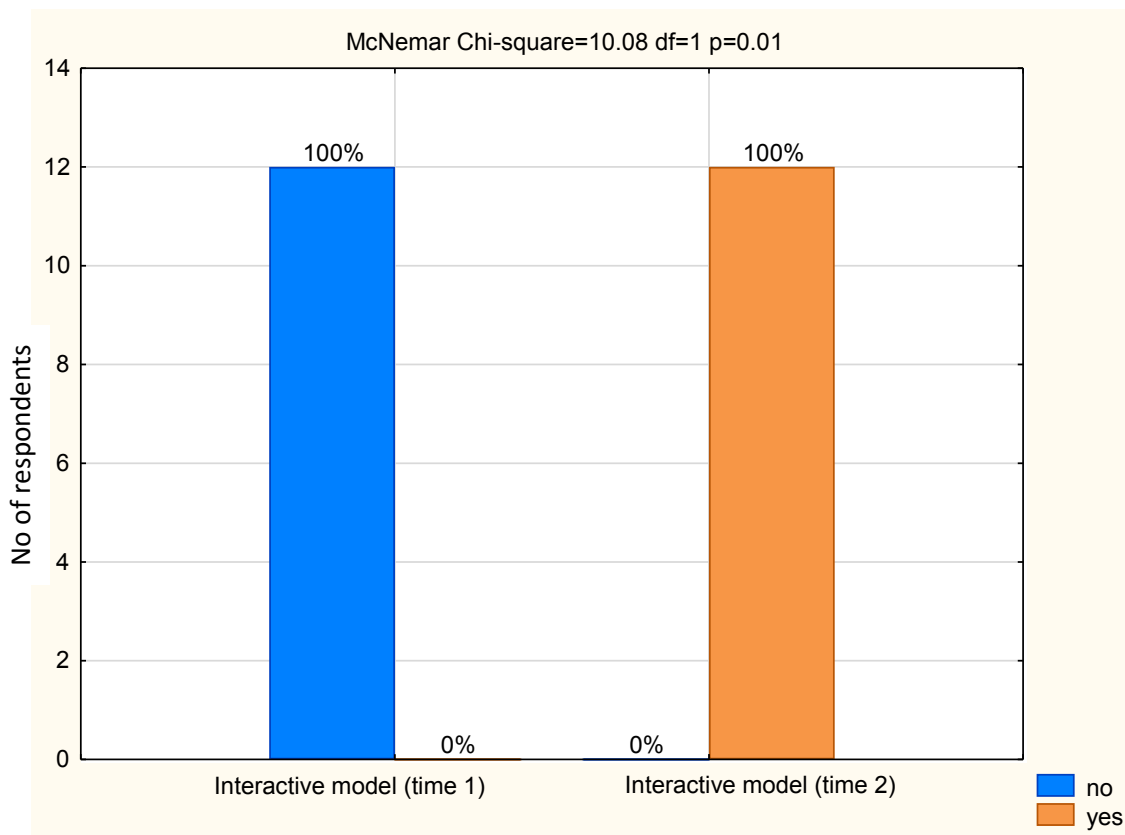
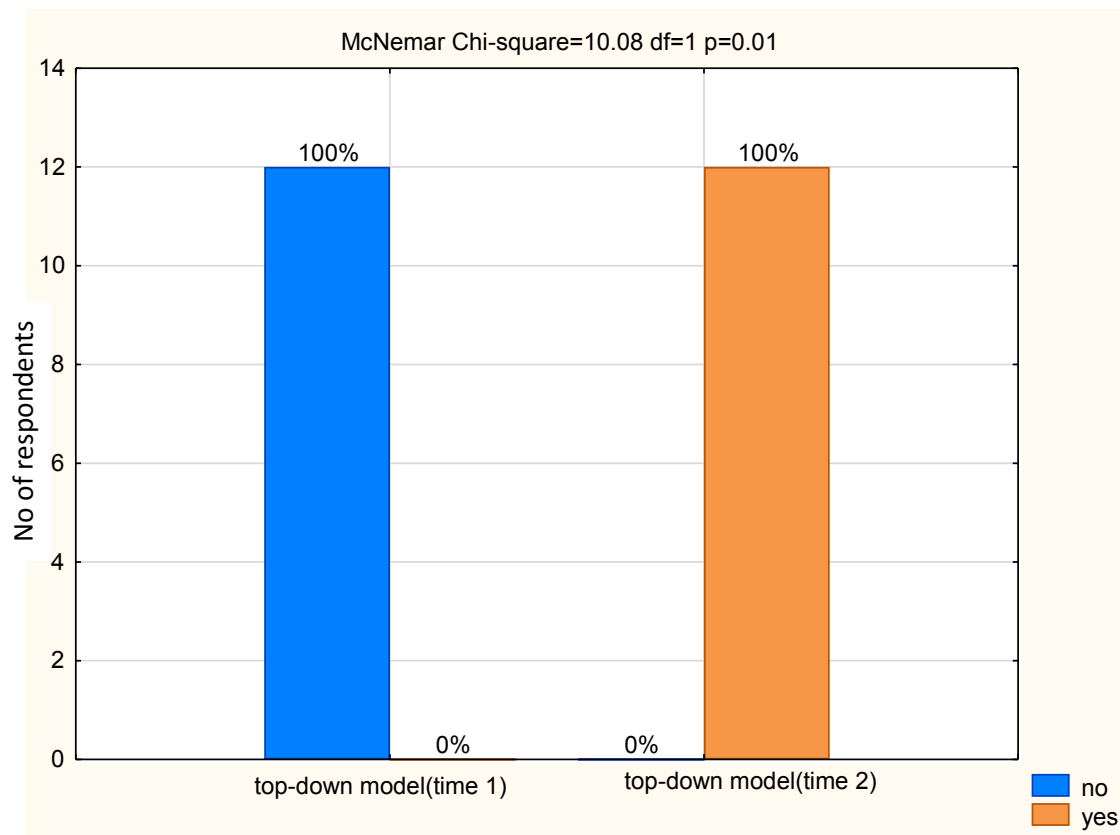


Figure 6.54: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in the interactive model.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding the interactive model, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.54 shows that no participants indicated professional development during the first measurement whereas twelve (N=12) participants were positive to the effect in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding the interactive model, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 10.08, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding the top-down model are presented in Figure 6.55 below.



6.55: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in the top-down model.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding the top-down model, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.55 shows that no participants indicated professional development during the first measurement whereas twelve (N=12) participants were positive to the effect in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding the top-down model, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 10.08, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding the bottom-up model are presented in Figure 6.56 below.

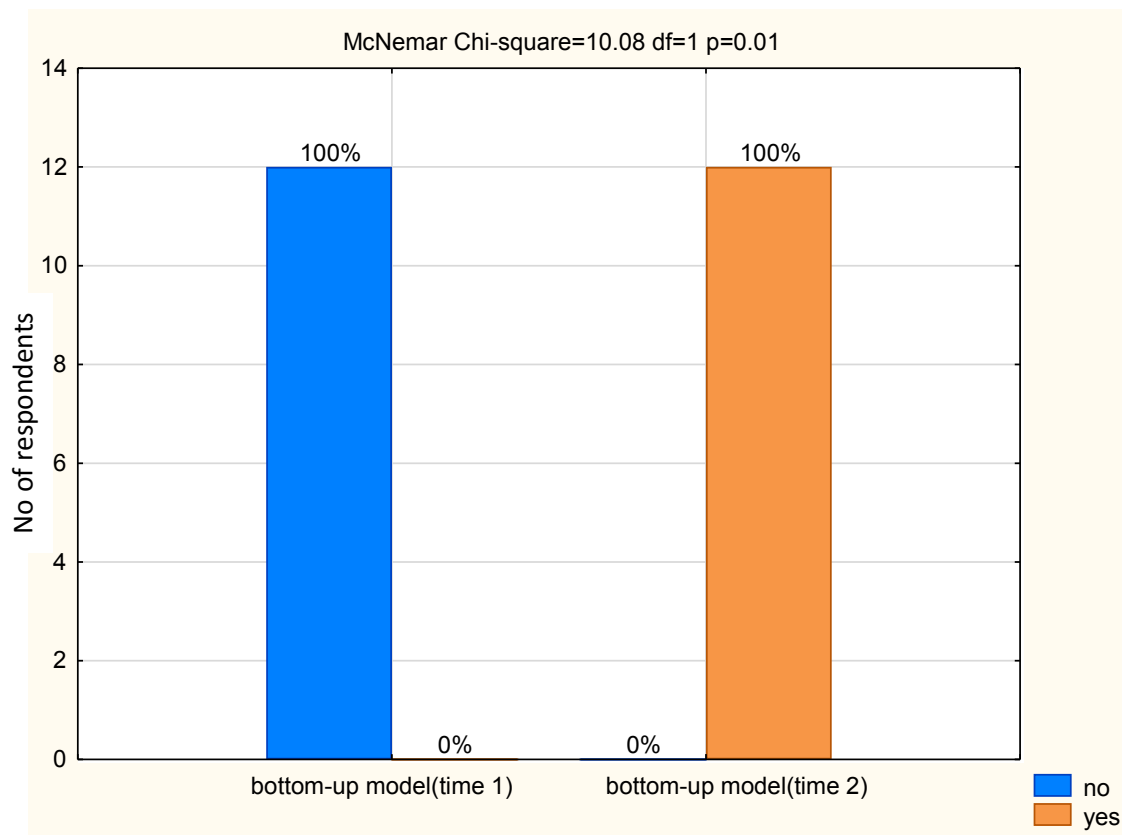


Figure 6.56: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in the bottom-up model.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding the bottom-up model, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.56 shows that no participants indicated professional development during the first measurement whereas twelve (N=12) participants were positive to the effect in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding the bottom-up model, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 10.08, p < 0.01$ .

### 6.3.1.2 Qualitative data

This section of the questionnaire required the twelve participants to indicate which reading strategies were implemented by them after the professional development programme had been completed. The data are presented mostly through tables in the following categories.

- i. Implementation*
- ii. Professional development needs*
- iii. Challenges*
- iv. Successes*

#### *i. Implementation*

Question 2 sought to compare the results between the first and second measurement regarding which reading models and strategies marked by participants in question 1 were implemented by them. The data are presented in Table 6.8.

*Table 6.8: Comparison of measurements 1 and 2 regarding reading strategies and models implemented.*

<b>Reading strategy</b>	<b>Number of participants measurement 1: 12</b>	<b>Number of participants measurement 2: 12</b>
Shared reading	1	12
Guided reading	1	10
Group reading	1	9
Reading aloud	1	10
Independent reading	1	8
<b>Reading model</b>	<b>Number of participants: 12</b>	<b>Number of participants: 12</b>
“Top-down”	0	3
“Bottom-up”	1	4
Interactive	1	8

The results indicate that all the participants implemented shared reading in their classes. According to Cooper et al. (2012:195) and Cumming-Potvin et al. (2003:54), shared reading is a useful strategy to increase non-mother-tongue speakers' language proficiency as it makes the written language understandable (see 4.6.4.1). In addition, most participants implemented guided reading, group reading, independent reading and reading aloud (see 4.6.4.2, 4.6.4.3 and 4.6.4.4). These strategies have the following advantages for non-mother-tongue speakers: guided reading assists second-language pupils to develop language and comprehension skills (Bauer & Arazi 2011:385), independent reading helps to develop reading skills and improves language ability (Nixon 2008b:6) and group reading improves pupils' listening and speaking skills (Millward 2008:5).

*vi. Professional development needs*

Question 3 sought to compare the results between the first and second measurement regarding the professional development needs of the participants. The data are presented in Table 6.9.

*Table 6.9: Comparison of measurements 1 and 2 regarding professional development needs of participants.*

<b>Reading strategy</b>	<b>Number of participants measurement 1: 12</b>	<b>Number of participants measurement 2: 12</b>
Shared reading	12	0
Guided reading	12	0
Group reading	12	0
Reading aloud	12	0
Independent reading	12	0
<b>Reading model</b>	<b>Number of participants: 12</b>	<b>Number of participants: 12</b>
"Top-down"	12	1
"Bottom-up"	12	1
Interactive	12	2



All 12 participants indicated that they required no further professional development regarding reading strategies. However, 4 participants indicated that they required additional professional development regarding reading models.

When the professional development programme was implemented, only one session dealt with the top-down, bottom-up and interactive models. The aim was to give participants theoretical knowledge regarding the different reading models and their advantages and disadvantages. Future professional development initiatives could include more than one session on reading models to give participants the opportunity to absorb the information.

#### *vii. Challenges*

Question 4 sought to compare the results between the first and second measurement regarding challenges they experienced when implementing the reading models and strategies.

Of the 12 participants, 6 indicated that independent reading was a challenge, because the pupils found pronunciation of words difficult, they lacked sufficient sight words and some confused sounds. In this regard, Nixon (2008b:5) emphasised that non-mother-tongue speakers take longer to become independent readers. Furthermore, 3 participants experienced time as a stumbling block, because it took longer to plan the lessons and pupils did not reach outcomes such as sounds and words in the time set (see 4.3 and 4.7.5). However, 3 participants indicated that they experienced no challenges.

#### *viii. Successes*

Question 5 required participants to identify successes when reading strategies were implemented while teaching non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. Of the 12 participants, 4 indicated that reading fluency of pupils improved and 7 participants noticed that the pupils' confidence increased. In addition, 4 participants indicated that the pupils enjoyed the lessons very much and started to develop a love of reading in Afrikaans. Furthermore, 2 participants observed that the pupils learned to enjoy books and stories, while 3 participants noted that the pupils' vocabulary improved. One respondent indicated that the

pupils' written work had improved, another noted that pupils grasped concepts faster, and lastly 1 respondent indicated that the pupils learned to help one another. The data indicated that all participants experienced some success while implementing the reading models and strategies.

Data comparing the first and second measurement of the 12 participating teachers regarding reading comprehension strategies will be discussed in the section below.

### **6.3.2 Reading Comprehension Strategies**

#### **6.3.2.1 Quantitative data**

This subsection of the questionnaire elicited data regarding the 12 participating teachers' knowledge related to reading comprehension strategies to develop the reading comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes eight months after the professional development programme was completed. These data were compared to the data obtained from the questionnaire before commencement of the professional development programme. These data were needed to determine whether the professional development programme contributed to the PCK of the participants regarding reading and reading comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers.

Question 6 sought to determine whether the professional development activities of this study translated into classroom implementation regarding the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies.

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding participants explicitly teaching comprehension strategies are presented in Figure 6.57 below.

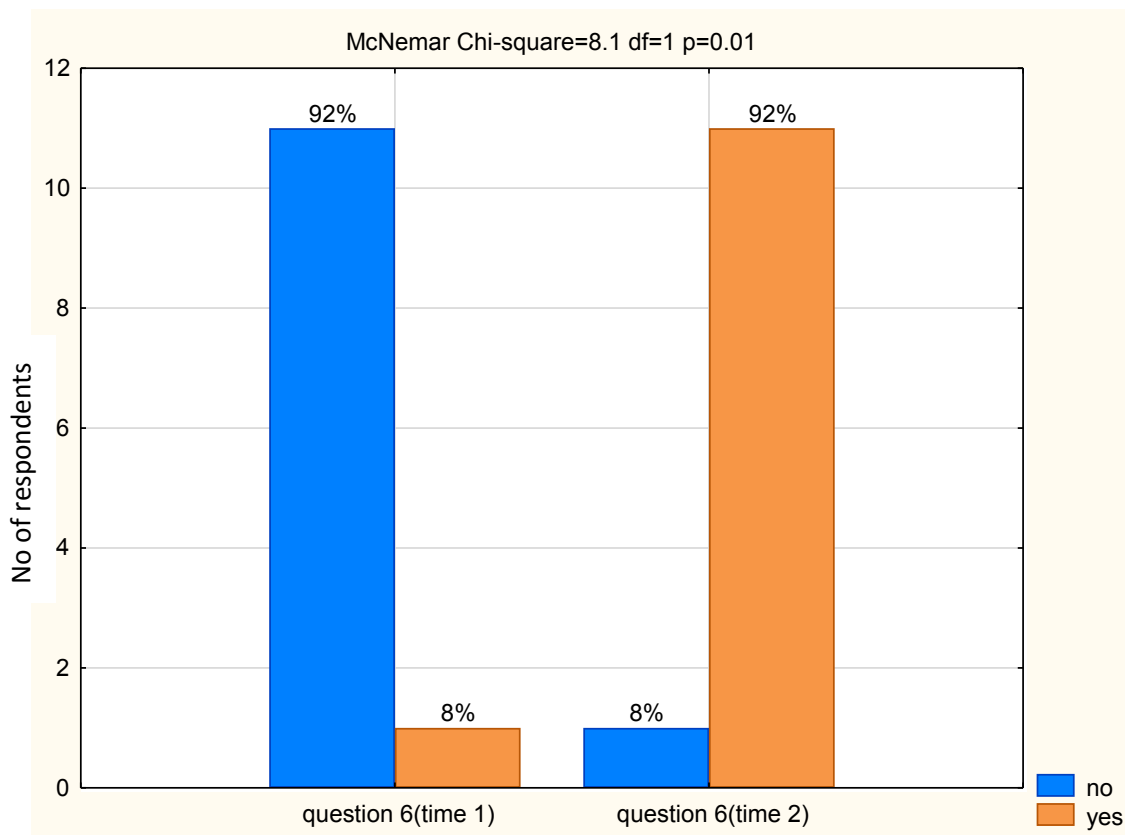


Figure 6.57: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding explicitly teaching comprehension strategies.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding explicitly teaching comprehension skills to non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.57 shows that one (N=1) participant indicated that she explicitly teaches comprehension strategies compared to (N=11) participants in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of explicitly teaching comprehension strategies, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 8.1, p < 0.01$ .

Question 7 sought to compare information about the participants' knowledge related to reading comprehension strategies to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes.

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding guided comprehension are presented in Figure 6.58.

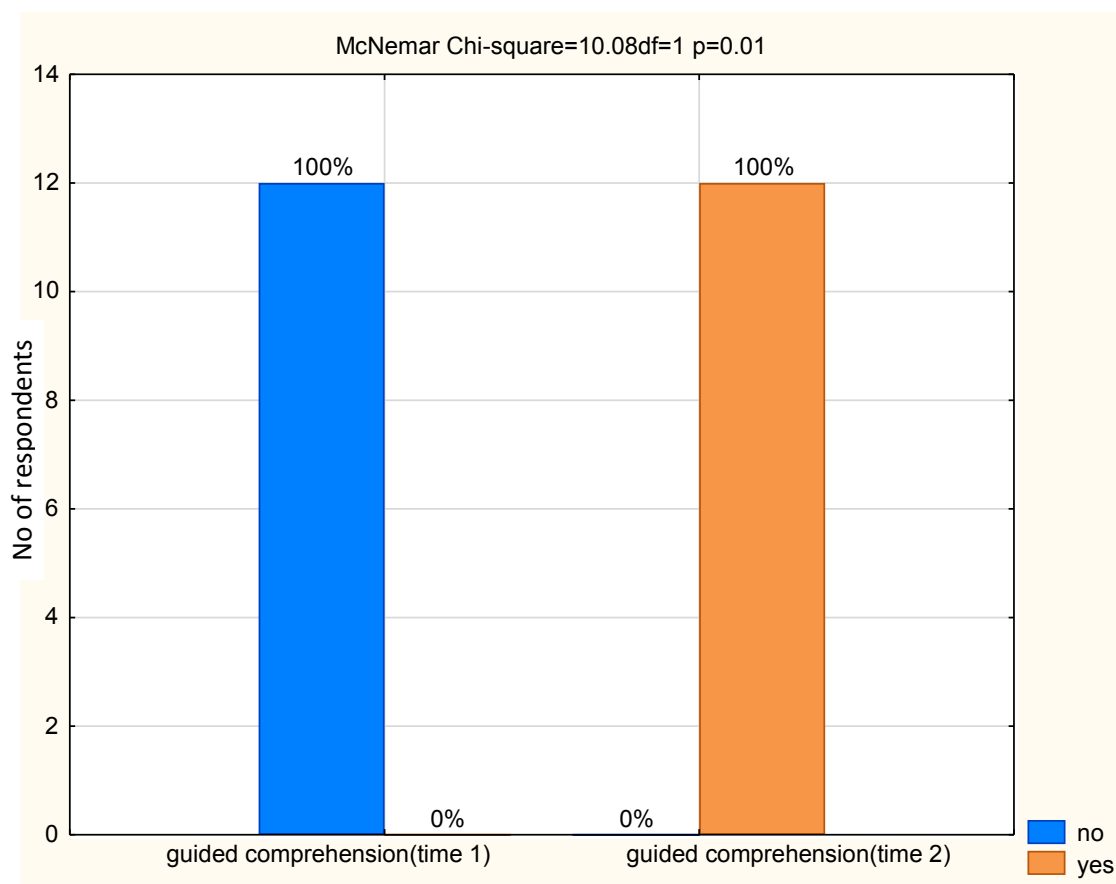


Figure 6.58: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in guided comprehension.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding guided comprehension to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.58 shows that no participants indicated professional development during the first measurement whereas twelve (N=12) participants were positive to the effect in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In

terms of knowledge gained regarding guided comprehension, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 10.08, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding the schema theory are presented in Figure 6.59.

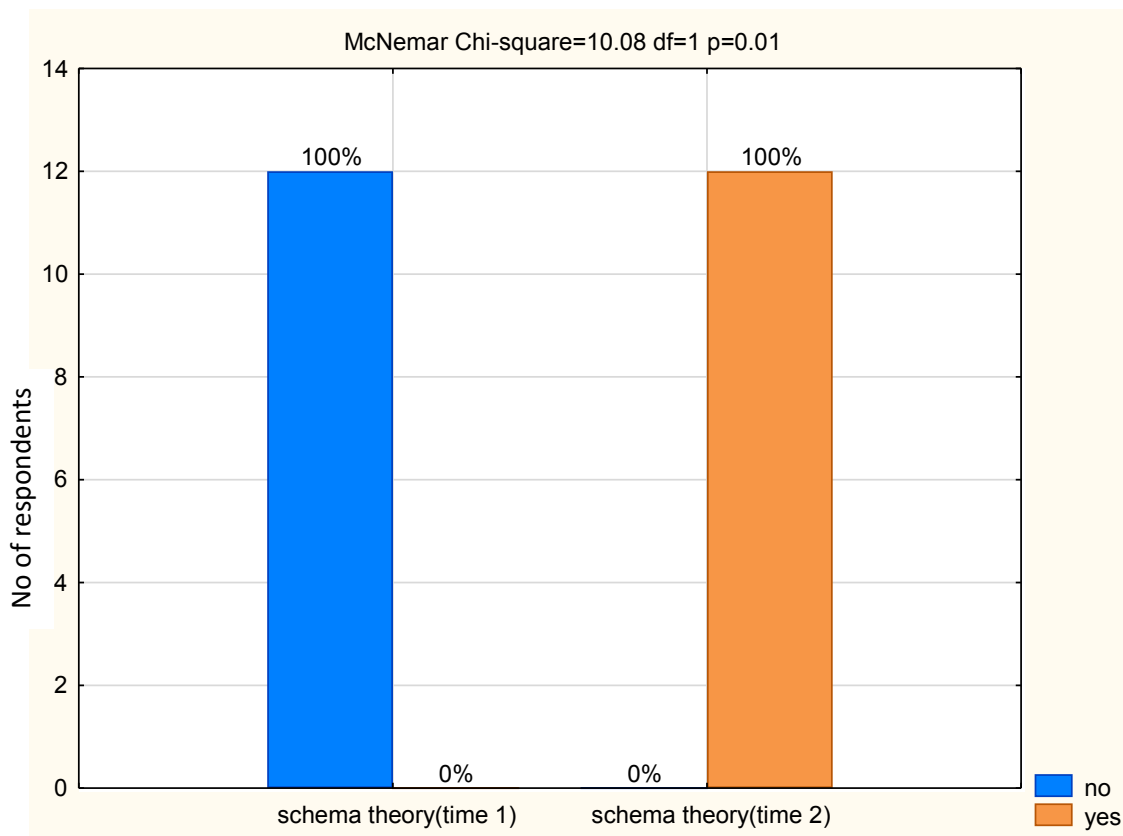


Figure 6.59: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in the schema theory.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding the schema theory to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.59 shows that no participants indicated professional development during the first measurement whereas twelve (N=12) participants were positive to the effect in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In

terms of knowledge gained regarding the schema theory, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 10.08, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding metacognitive strategies are presented in Figure 6.60.

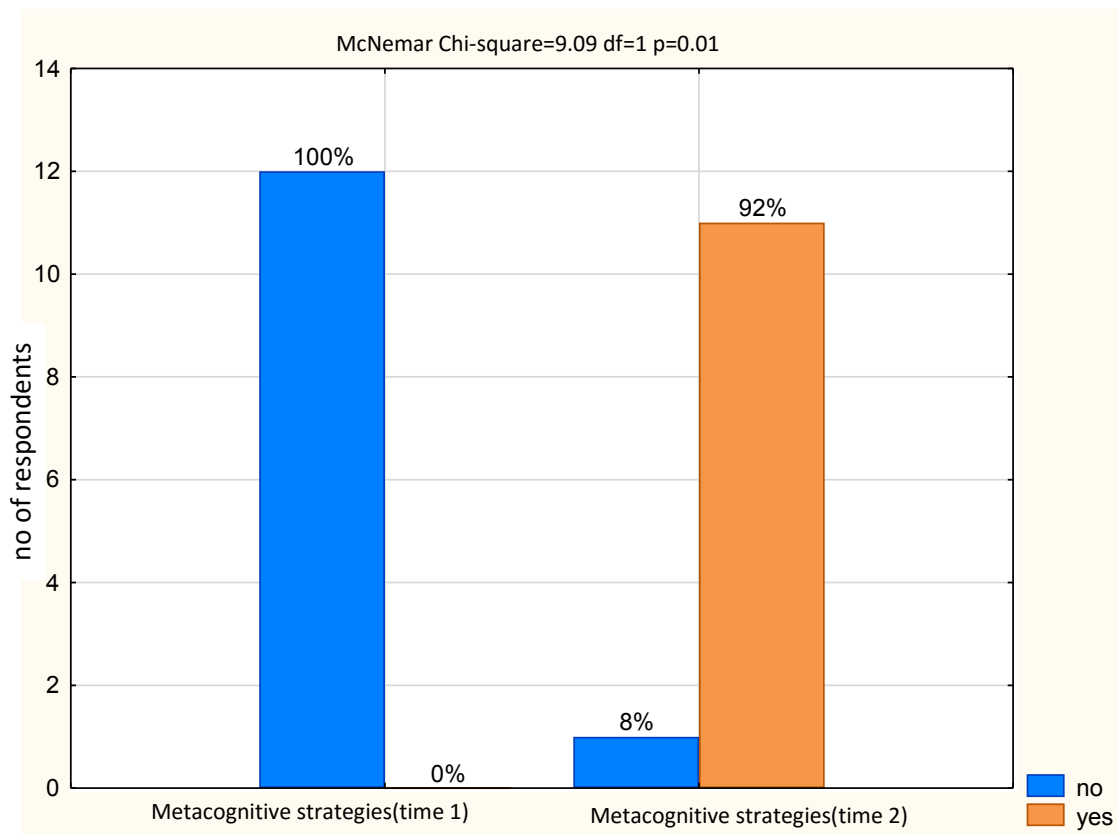


Figure 6.60: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in metacognitive strategies.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding metacognitive strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.60 shows that no participants indicated professional development during the first measurement whereas eleven (N=11) participants were positive to the effect in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding

metacognitive strategies, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 9.09, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding making predictions are presented in Figure 6.61.

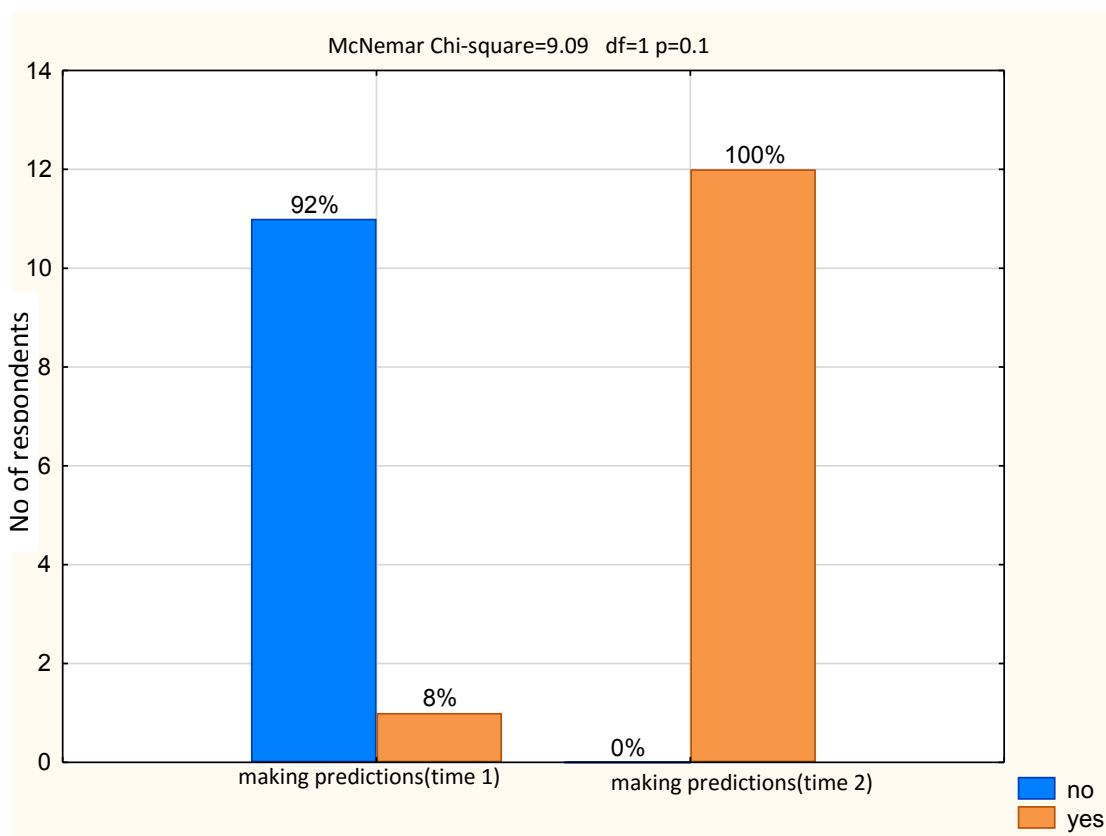


Figure 6.61: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in making predictions.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding making predictions to enhance comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.61 shows that one (N=1) participant indicated professional development during the first measurement compared to (N=12) participants in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding

making predictions, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 9.09$ ,  $p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding questioning are presented in Figure 6.62.

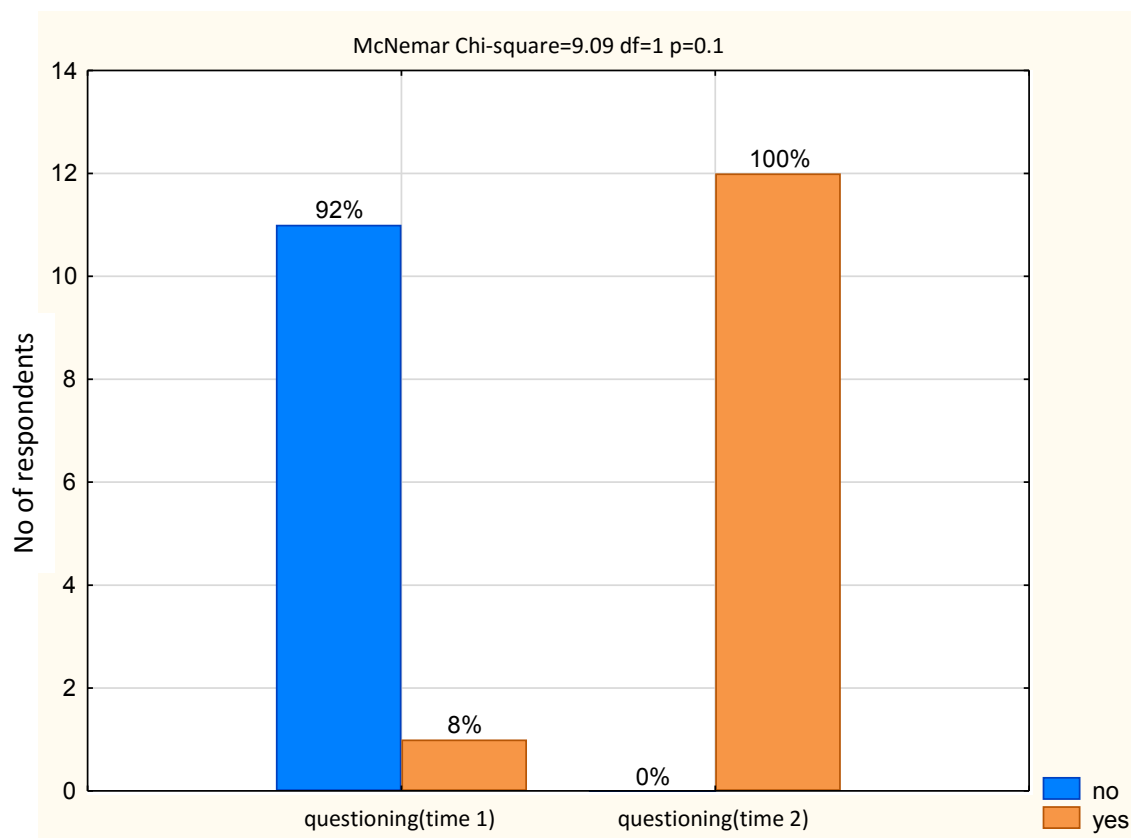


Figure 6.62: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in questioning.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve ( $N=12$ ) participants regarding questioning to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.62 shows that one ( $N=1$ ) participant indicated professional development during the first measurement compared to twelve ( $N=12$ ) participants in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding questioning, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 9.09$ ,  $p < 0.01$ .



Data comparing measurements one and two regarding drawing of inferences are presented in Figure 6.63.

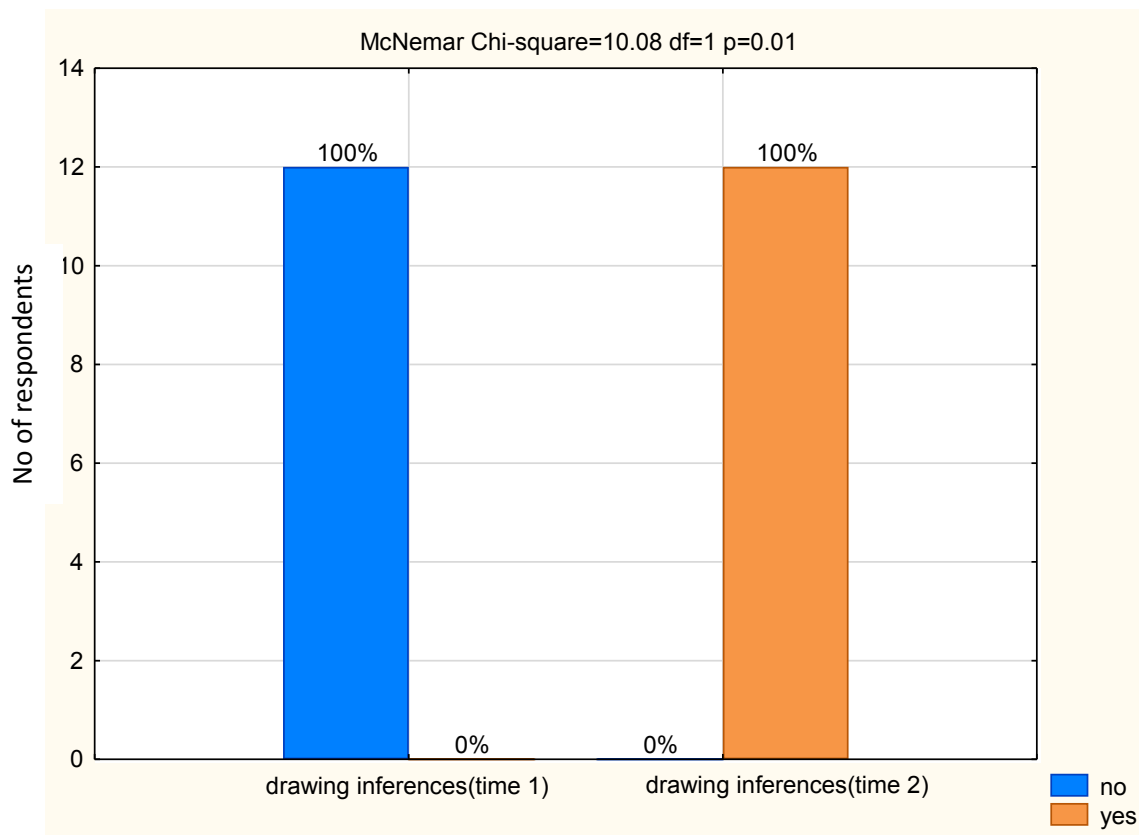


Figure 6.63: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding drawing inferences.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding drawing inferences to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.63 shows that no participants indicated professional development during the first measurement whereas twelve (N=12) participants were positive to the effect in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated a statistically significant difference between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding drawing inferences, most participants were positive this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 10.08, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding finding main ideas are presented in Figure 6.64.

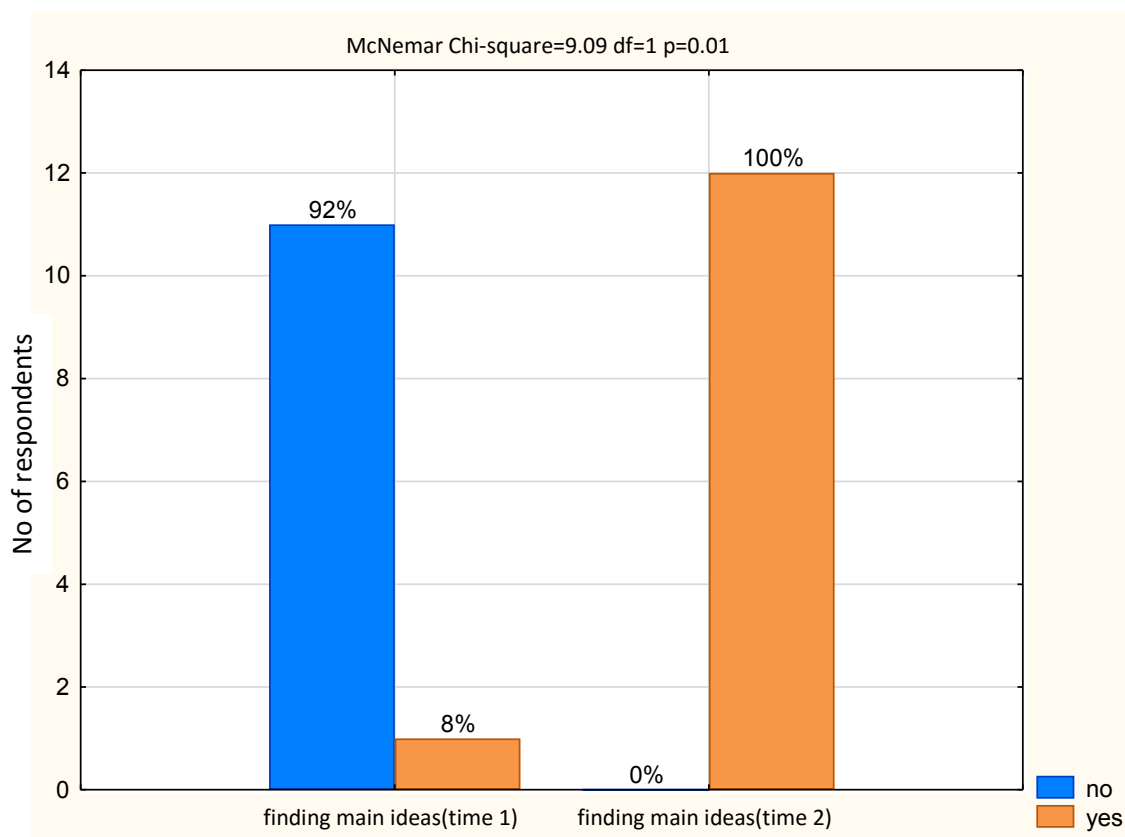


Figure 6.64: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding finding main ideas.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding finding main ideas to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.64 shows that one (N=1) participant indicated professional development during the first measurement compared to twelve (N=12) participants in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding finding main ideas, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 9.09, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding drawing conclusions are presented in Figure 6.65.

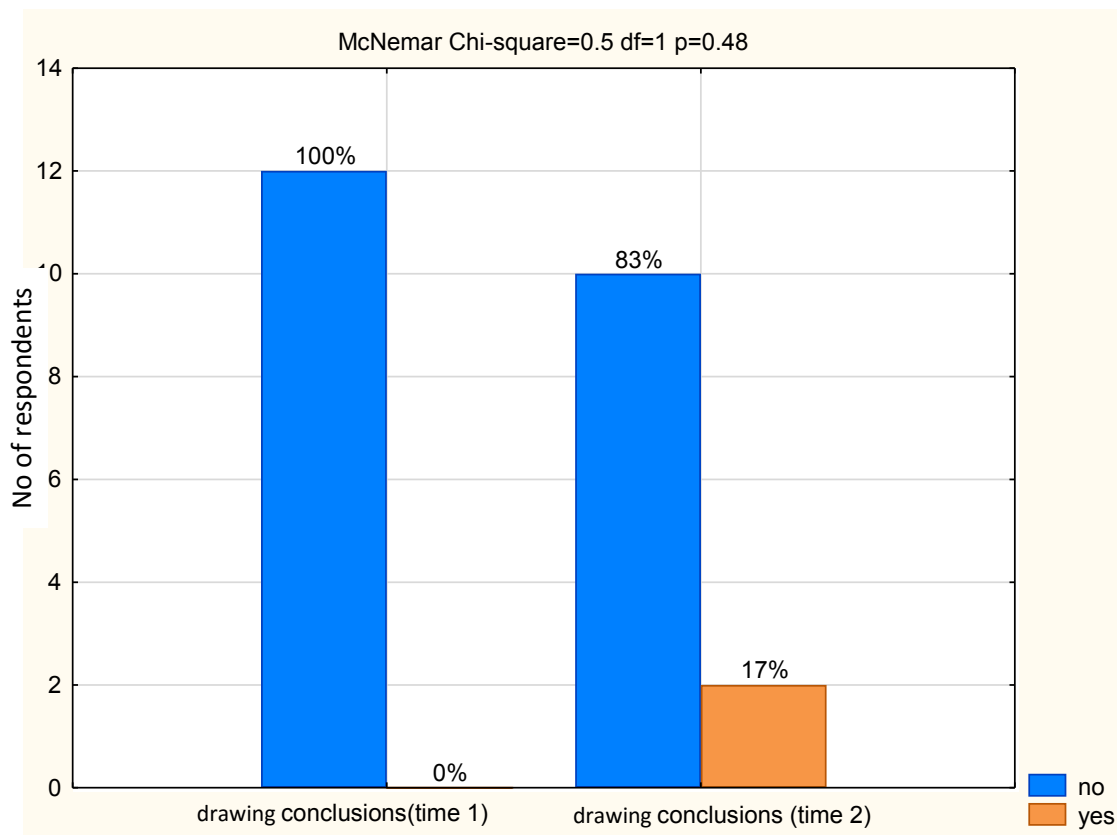
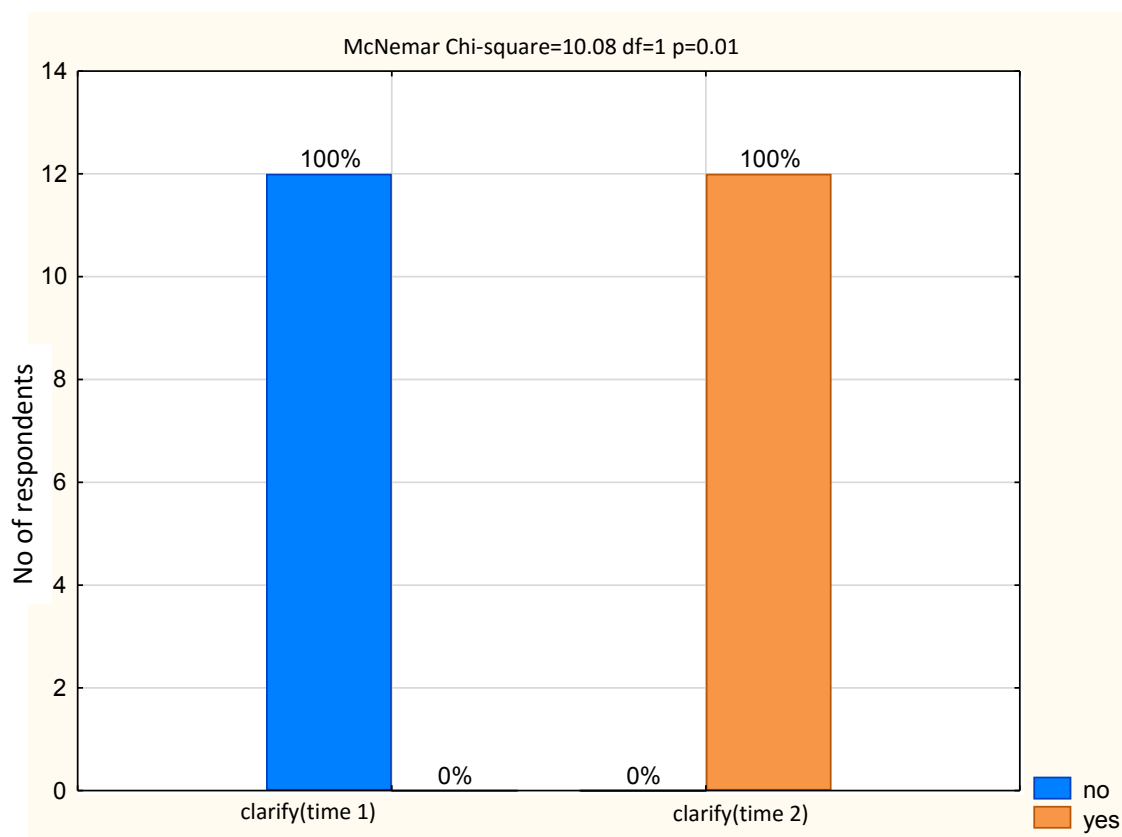


Figure 6.65: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in drawing conclusions.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding drawing conclusions to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.65 shows that no participants indicated professional development during the first measurement compared to two (N=2) in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated no statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding drawing conclusions, all participants were negative to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 0.5, p < 0.48$ . The comprehension strategy, drawing conclusions, was not formally included in the professional development programme. It was, however, discussed

during the informal fortnightly sessions during phase four of cycle two of the action research process.

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding clarifying information are presented in Figure 6.66.



*Figure 6.66: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in clarifying information.*

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding clarifying information to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.66 shows that no participants indicated professional development during the first measurement whereas twelve (N=12) participants were positive to the effect in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In

terms of knowledge gained regarding clarifying information, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 10.08, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding synthesising information are presented in Figure 6.67.

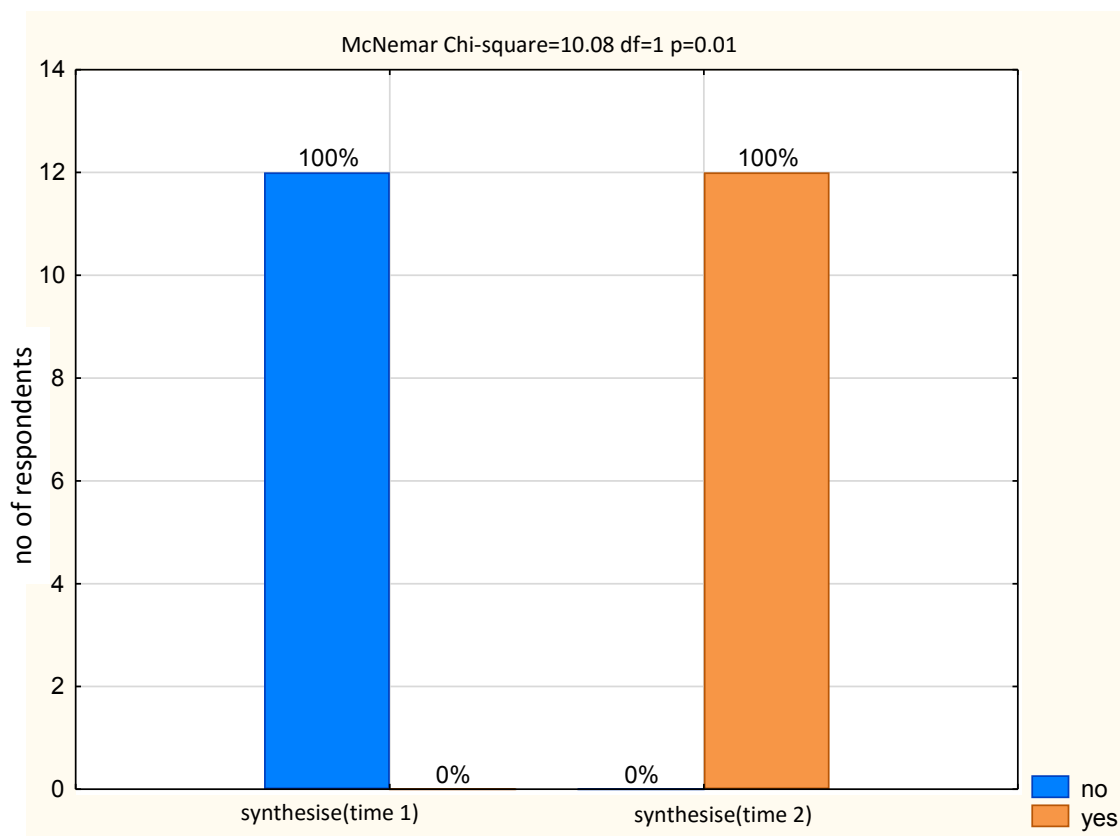


Figure 6.67: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding professional development in synthesising information.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding synthesising information to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.67 shows that no participants indicated professional development during the first measurement whereas twelve (N=12) participants were positive to the effect in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In

terms of knowledge gained regarding synthesising information, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 10.08, p < 0.01$ .

Data comparing measurements one and two regarding the gradual release of responsibility method are presented in Figure 6.68.

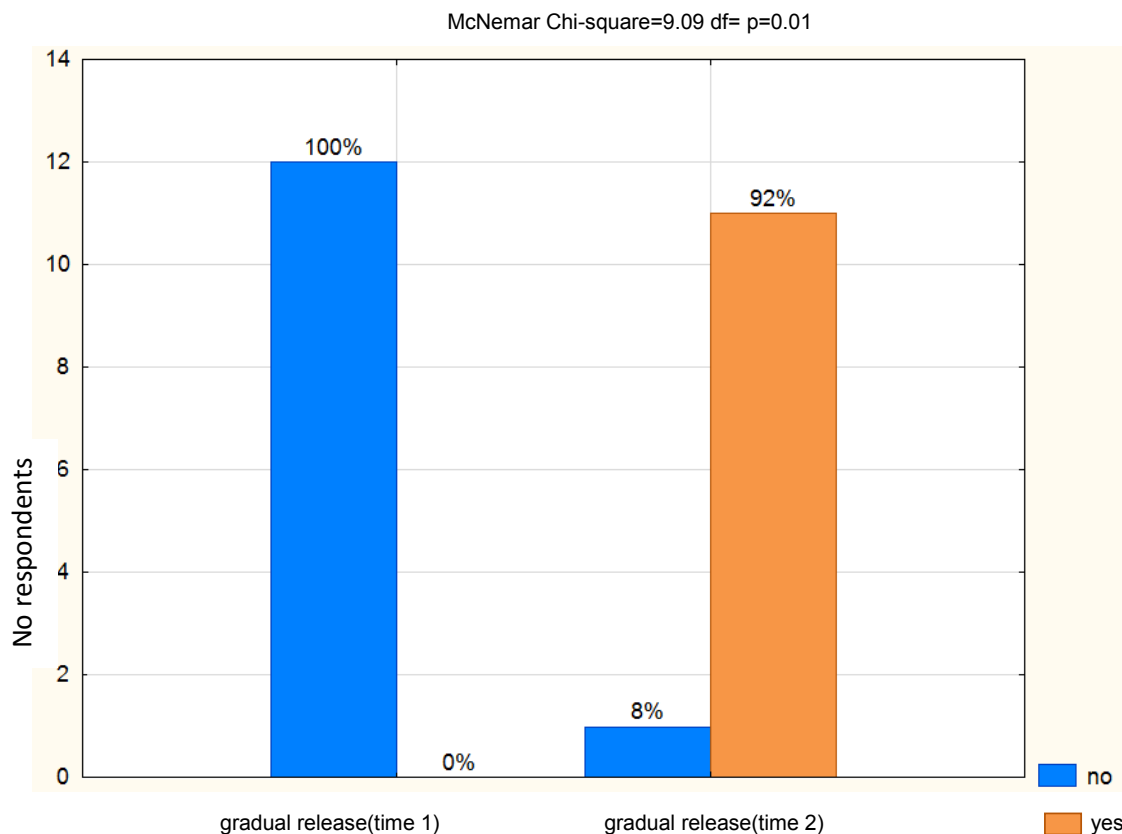


Figure 6.68: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding the gradual release of responsibility method.

To determine whether the professional development programme had a positive influence on the PCK of the twelve (N=12) participants regarding the gradual release of responsibility method to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes, the data of the first and second measurement were compared. Figure 6.68 shows that no participants indicated professional development during the first measurement whereas twelve (N=11) participants were positive to the effect in the second measurement. Chi-square analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of knowledge gained regarding the gradual release of

responsibility method, all participants were positive to this effect,  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 9.09$ ,  $p < 0.01$ .

#### 6.3.2.2 Qualitative data

The qualitative data of this section was arranged into four categories by using the four questions regarding implementation of reading comprehension strategies. The data are presented, mostly through tables, in the following four categories:

- i. Implementation*
- ii. Professional development needs*
- iii. Challenges*
- iv. Successes*
  
- v. Implementation*

Question 9 sought to compare the first and second measurement regarding the reading comprehension strategies were implemented by the participants. The data are presented in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10: Comparison of measurements 1 and 2 regarding reading comprehension strategies implemented.

Comprehension strategy	Number of participants measurement 1: 12	Number of participants measurement 2: 12
Reciprocal teaching		
Guided comprehension	1	8
• Questioning	1	10
• Clarifying	0	2
• Predicting	1	10
• Summarising (main ideas)	1	9
Metacognitive strategies	0	3
Transactional strategies instruction		
• CPM	0	0
• Drawing conclusions	1	7
• Drawing inferences	1	9
• Finding main ideas	1	9
• Synthesising	0	5
Schema theory	1	4
Gradual release of responsibility	0	11

These results indicate that most participants implemented guided comprehension, making predictions, questioning, drawing inferences, finding main ideas and drawing conclusions. These strategies are included in reciprocal teaching (see 4.7.4) and transactional strategy instruction (see 4.7.5). According to Block and Parris (2008:296), there is no separate theory for teaching non-mother-tongue speakers; they need good-quality instruction with minor adjustments such as greater emphasis on vocabulary development to facilitate comprehension. Comprehension strategies that were not implemented by many participants are: metacognitive strategies, the schema theory, clarify and synthesise information. Metacognitive strategies were included in the implementation of the comprehension strategies which form part of reciprocal teaching. However, it is evident that not all participants were certain how



they should be implemented. When the professional development programme was adapted in phase 5 of cycle two, ways of making this method easier for participants to understand were taken into account.

*vi. Professional development needs*

Question 10 sought to compare measurements one and two regarding their professional development needs relating to reading comprehension strategies. The data are presented in Table 6.11.

*Table 6.11: Comparison of measurements 1 and 2 regarding professional development needs of participants.*

<b>Comprehension strategy</b>	<b>Number of participants measurement 1: 12</b>	<b>Number of participants measurement 2: 12</b>
Reciprocal teaching	12	0
Guided comprehension	12	1
• Questioning	11	0
• Clarifying	11	2
• Predicting	11	1
• Summarise (main idea)	11	2
Metacognitive strategies	12	0
Transactional strategies instruction		
• CPM	12	11
• Drawing conclusions	11	0
• Drawing inferences	11	0
• Finding main ideas	11	2
• Synthesising	11	0
Schema theory	12	1
Gradual release of responsibility	11	2

Of the 12 participating teachers, 7 indicated that they required no further professional development regarding reading comprehension strategies.

Analysis of the above data indicated that most participants require no further professional development regarding reading comprehension strategies. The individual participants who were still uncertain of some strategies received support from their colleagues in this regard during the fortnightly sessions during phase four of cycle two. However, it is evident that CPM had not been implemented.

#### *vii. Challenges*

Question 11 required participants to identify challenges experienced when implementing comprehension strategies. The challenges were as follows: developing the pupils' reading comprehension, 3 participants; pupils formulating their own questions, 2 participants; finding main ideas, 2 participants; implementation of the gradual release of responsibility method, 1 respondent; clarifying information, 1 respondent; lack of learning support material, 1 respondent; and pupils being very shy, 1 respondent. In addition, 4 participants indicated that they experienced no challenges. Although some challenges were experienced, analysis of the data from the previous question indicated that seven participants do not require further professional development. This may be because they supported one another during collaborative sessions in phase four of cycle two.

#### *viii. Successes*

Question 12 required participants to identify successes they experienced while implementing reading comprehension strategies in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. The 12 participants noted the following improvements: reading comprehension, 3 participants; pupils supporting one another and learning from one another, 2 participants; increase of pupils' confidence, 2 participants; ability to draw inferences, 5 participants; ability to make predictions, 4 participants; drawing conclusions, 3 participants; ability to formulate questions, 2 participants; finding the main idea, 2 participants and the ability to summarise, 1 respondent. Analysis of the data indicated that each of the twelve participating teachers recorded successes experienced while implementing the reading and reading comprehension strategies. They shared these successes during phase four of cycle two.

### **6.3.3 Experience of professional development activities**

#### **6.3.3.1 Quantitative data**

Question 13, consisting of 7 statements, was included to compare the 12 participating teachers' experience of professional development sessions before and after the professional development programme was conducted. These statements asked the participants to consider professional development activities in the past. Therefore their responses may be influenced not only by the professional development activities of this study, but other professional development activities attended by them. Each statement required a yes or no response. The responses of the participants to each statement will be discussed and represented by histograms in the following section.

The responses to question 13.1 represent data regarding participants' experience of professional development activities. These data are represented by Figure 6.69 below.

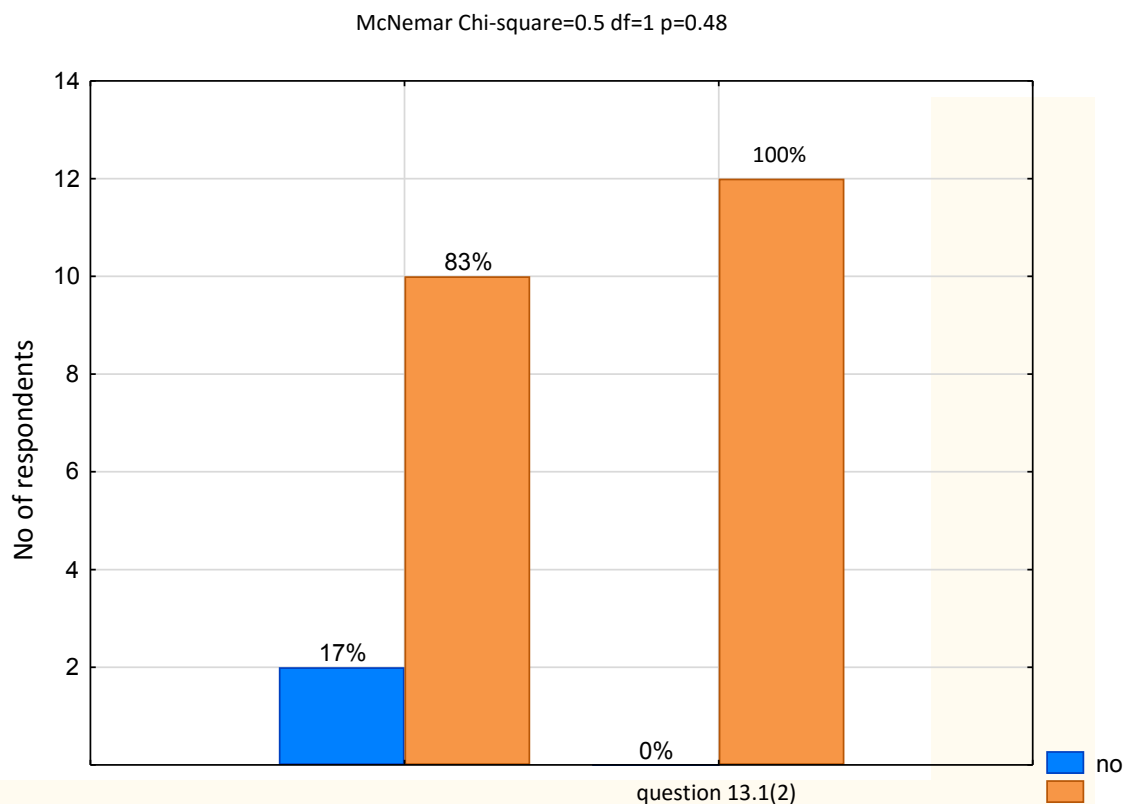


Figure 6.69: Comparison of measurements one and two regarding positive experiences of professional development by participants.

This measurement compares the results between the first and second measurement of the twelve (N=12) participants who participated in the professional development programme. During the first measurement 10 participants indicated positive experiences of professional development activities in the past. The results of the second measurement show that twelve (N=12) participants indicated that they had positive experiences regarding professional development activities. Chi-square analysis indicates no statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement. In terms of positive experiences of professional development, most participants were negative to this effect  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 0.5, p < 0.48$ . The data of the first measurement indicated that 83% of the participants had positive experiences regarding professional development activities attended in the past. These positive

experiences increased to 100% in measurement two. The first measurement may be elevated because this group had received job-specific training in the past regarding pedagogies relating to pupils who experience barriers to learning.

The responses to question 13.2 represent data on whether the professional development needs of participants have been determined in the past regarding reading strategies. These data are represented in Figure 6.70 below.

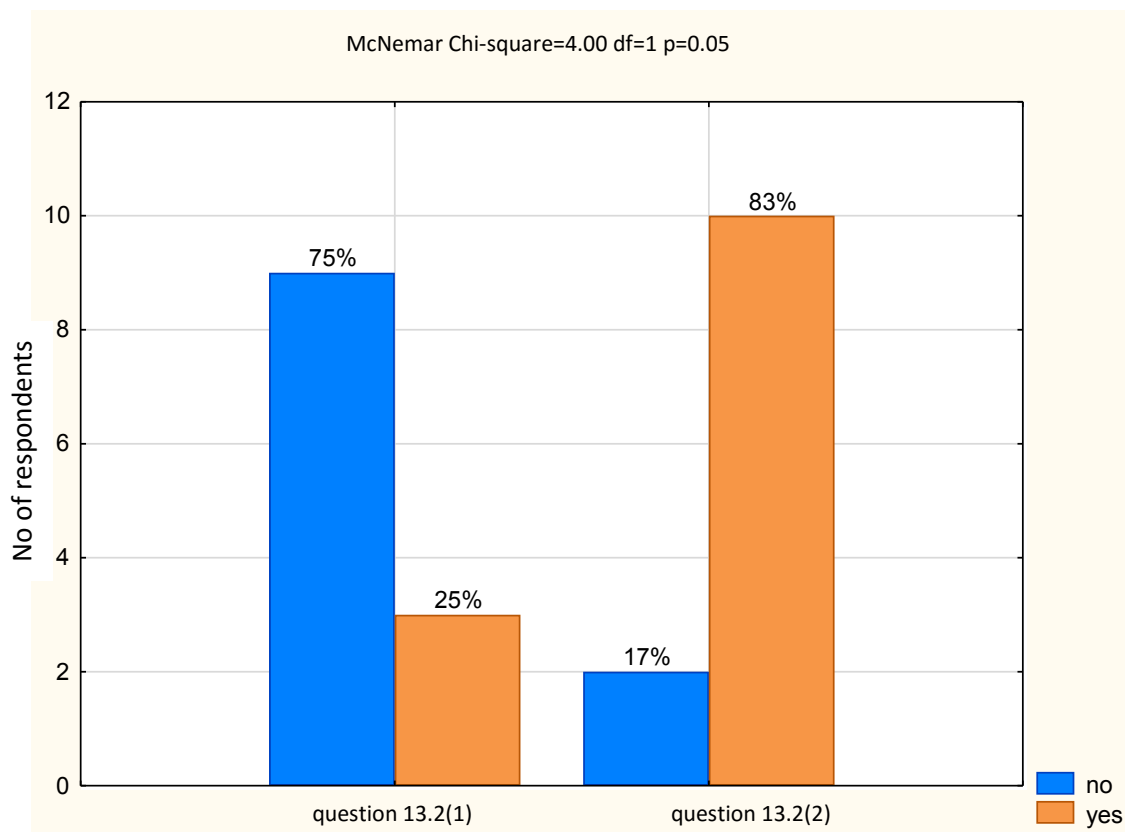


Figure 6.70: Comparison of measurements one and two whether professional development needs of participants were determined regarding reading strategies.

This measurement compares the results of the first and second measurement of the twelve (N=12) participants who participated in the professional development programme. During the first measurement three (N=3) participants indicated that their professional development needs were determined regarding reading strategies. The results of the second measurement show that ten (N=10) participants indicated that their professional development needs were determined regarding reading strategies. Chi-square analysis indicates a statistically significant difference between the first and second measurement. In terms of professional development needs

being determined regarding reading strategies, most participants were positive to this effect  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 4.00, p < 0.05$ . However, two (N=2) participants indicated that their professional development needs were not determined in the past. This was not expected as all participants completed this questionnaire to determine their professional development needs. They may, however, have been considering other professional development activities when responding to this question.

The responses to question 13.3 represent data on whether the professional development needs of participants have been determined regarding reading comprehension strategies. These data are represented in Figure 6.71 below.

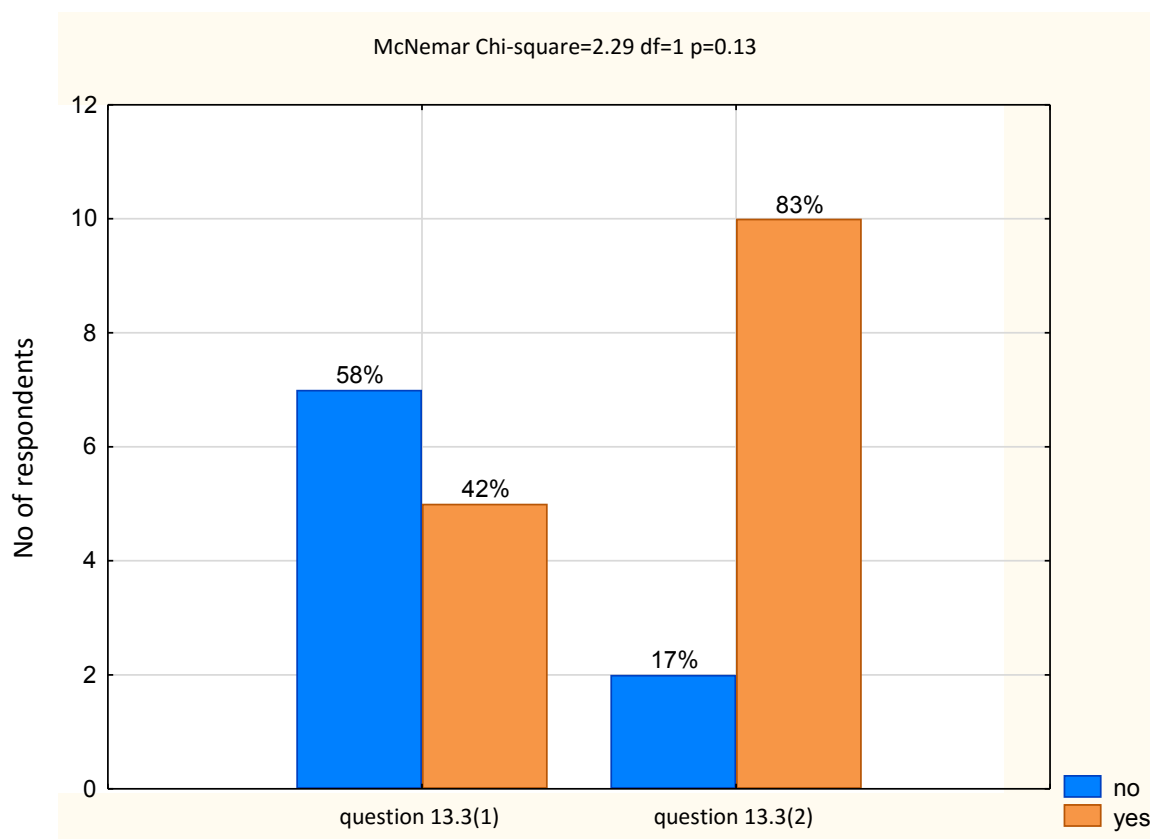


Figure 6.71: Comparison of measurements one and two whether professional development needs of participants were determined regarding reading comprehension strategies.

This measurement compares the results of the first and second measurement of the twelve (N=12) participants who participated in the professional development programme. During the first measurement five (N=5) participants indicated that their

professional development needs were determined in the past regarding reading comprehension strategies. The results of the second measurement show that ten (N=10) participants indicated that their professional development needs were determined regarding reading comprehension strategies. Chi-square analysis does not indicate a statistically significant difference between the first and second measurement. In terms of professional development needs being determined in the past regarding reading comprehension strategies, most participants were negative to this effect  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 2.29, p < 0.13$ . The data of the first measurement indicated that 42% of the participants had positive experiences regarding professional development activities attended in the past. These positive experiences increased to 83% in measurement two. However, two (N=2) participants indicated that their professional development needs were not determined in the past. This was not expected as all participants completed this questionnaire to determine their professional development needs. They may, however, have been considering other professional development activities when responding to this question.

The responses to question 13.4 represent data on whether participants would like to give input regarding their professional development needs. These data are represented in Figure 6.72 below.

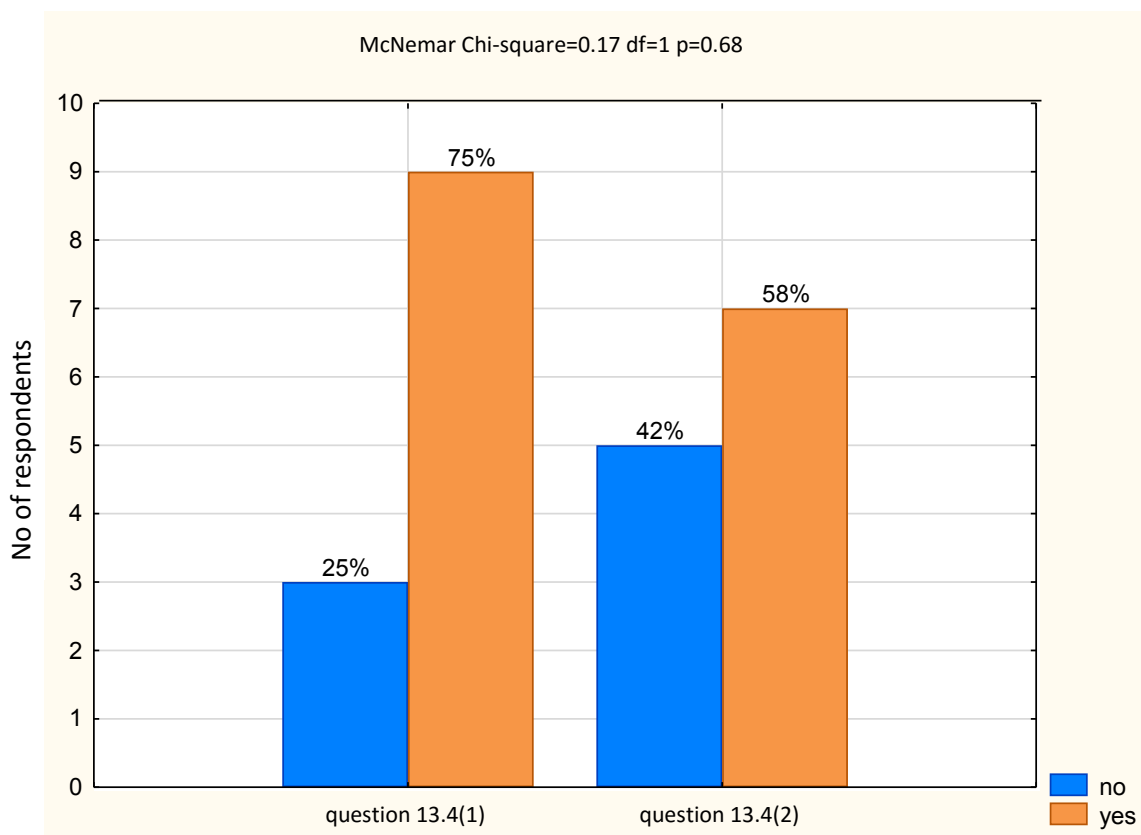


Figure 6.72: Comparison of measurements one and two whether participants would like to give input regarding their professional development needs.

This measurement compares the results of the first and second measurement of the twelve (N=12) participants who participated in the professional development programme. During the first measurement nine (N=9) participants indicated that they would like to give input regarding their professional development needs. The results of the second measurement show that seven (N=7) participants indicated that they would like to give input regarding their professional development needs. Chi-square analysis does not indicate a statistically significant difference between the first and second measurement. In terms of giving input regarding professional development needs, most participants were negative to this effect  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 0.17$   $p < 0.68$ . This may be because nine (N=9) participants indicated that they require no additional professional development regarding reading models and strategies. Furthermore,



seven (N=7) participants indicated that they require no additional professional development regarding reading comprehension strategies.

The responses to question 13.5 represent data on whether professional development initiatives in the past regarding reading comprehension had taken into account the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers. These data are represented in Figure 6.73 below.

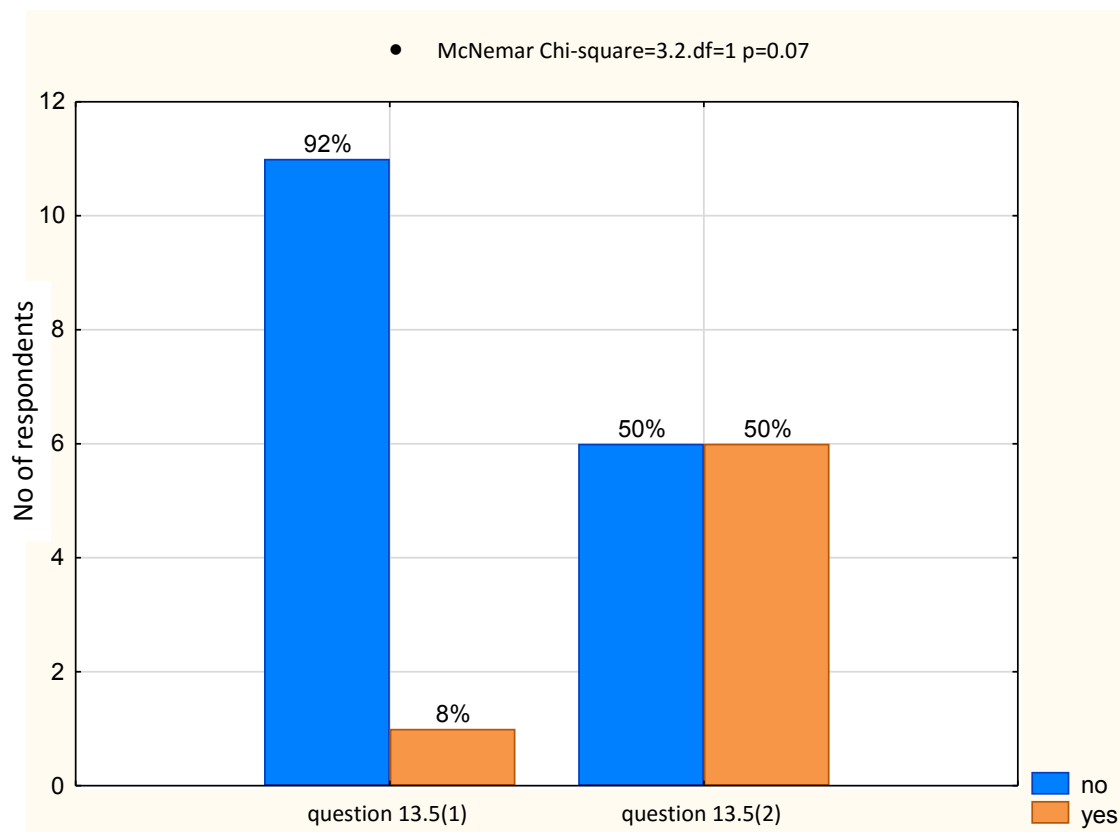


Figure 6.73: Comparison of measurements one and two whether professional development initiatives in the past regarding reading comprehension had taken into account the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers.

This measurement compares the results of the first and second measurement of the twelve (N=12) participants who participated in the professional development programme. During the first measurement one (N=1) respondent indicated that professional development initiatives in the past regarding reading comprehension had taken into account the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers. The results of the second measurement show that six (N=6) participants indicated that professional development initiatives in the past regarding reading comprehension had taken into

account the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers. Chi-square analysis does not indicate a statistically significant difference between the first and second measurement. In terms of professional development activities in the past considering the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers regarding reading comprehension, most participants were negative to this effect  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 3.2$   $p < 0.07$ , indicating the possibility that the participants may have been considering other professional development activities attended by them in the past when responding to this statement.

The responses to question 13.6 represent data regarding professional development activities that encouraged collaboration among participants. These data are represented in Figure 6.74 below.

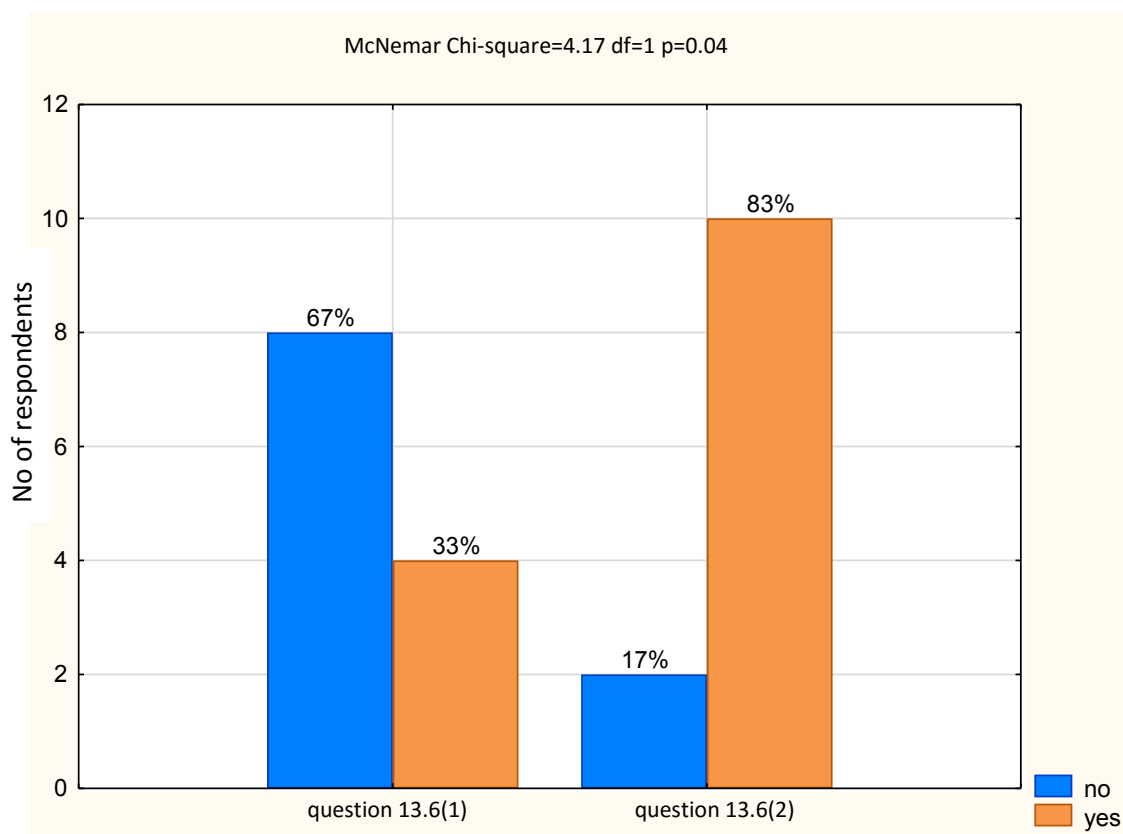


Figure 6.74: Comparison of measurements one and two whether professional development initiatives in the past had encouraged collaboration among participants.

This measurement compares the results of the first and second measurement of the twelve (N=12) participants who participated in the professional development

programme. During the first measurement four (N=4) participants indicated that professional development initiatives in the past had encouraged collaboration among participants. The results of the second measurement show that ten (N=10) participants indicated that professional development initiatives in the past encouraged collaboration among participants. Chi-square analysis indicates a statistically significant difference between the first and second measurement. In terms of professional development activities in the past encouraging collaboration between colleagues, most participants were positive to this effect  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 4.17$   $p < 0.04$ , indicating that the professional development programme may have encouraged the participants to collaborate with one another. Collaboration amongst the participants of this study was a very effective tool during phase four of cycle two of the action research process. During this phase participants shared texts and collaborated to design lessons, activities and learning support material. True to socio-constructivist principles, these meetings encouraged participants to support one another to reconstruct their previous knowledge in a different way (see 2.3.1)

The responses to question 13.7 represent data regarding professional development that encouraged participants to become reflective practitioners. These data are represented by Figure 6.75 below.

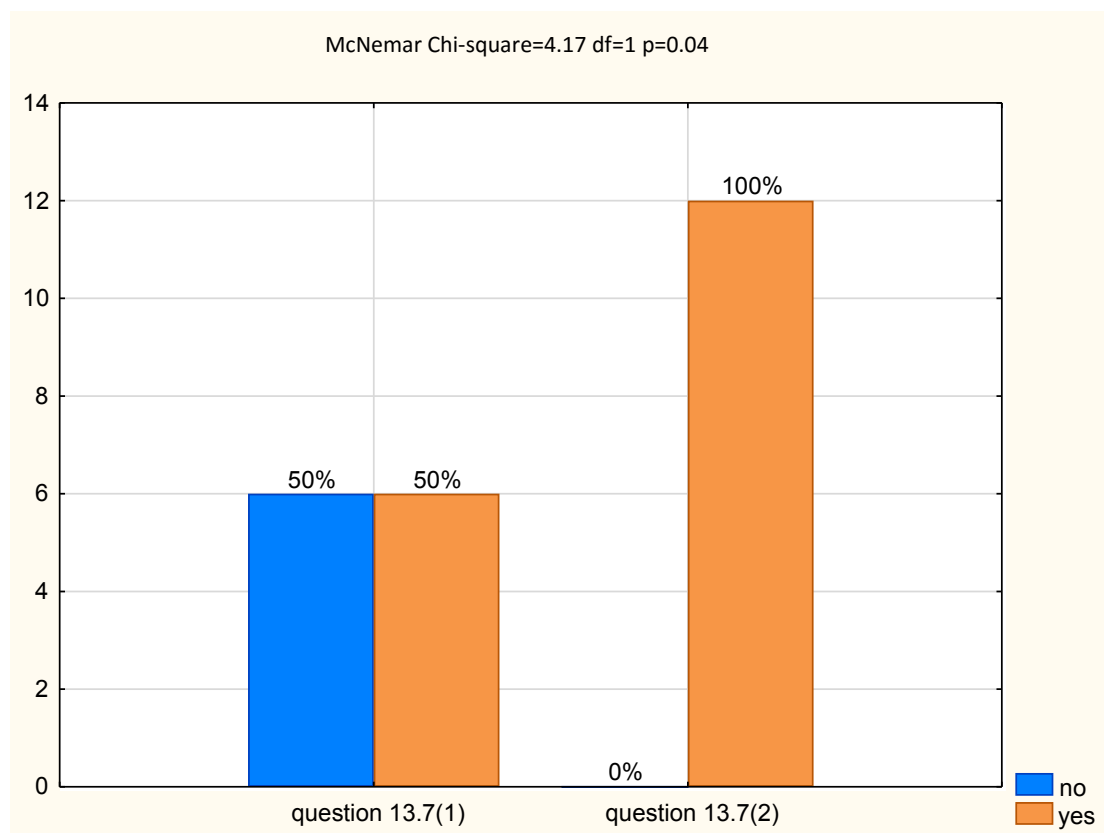


Figure 6.75: Comparison of measurements one and two whether professional development initiatives in the past had encouraged participants to become reflective practitioners.

This measurement compares the results of the first and second measurement of the twelve (N=12) participants who participated in the professional development programme. During the first measurement six (N=6) participants indicated that professional development initiatives in the past had encouraged them to become reflective practitioners. The results of the second measurement show that twelve (N=12) participants indicated that professional development initiatives in the past encouraged them to become reflective practitioners. Chi-square analysis indicates a statistically significant difference between the first and second measurement. In terms of professional development activities in the past encouraging reflective practices between colleagues, most participants were positive to this effect  $\chi^2(1, N=12) = 4.17$   $p < 0.04$ , indicating the possibility that the professional development

programme may have encouraged them to develop reflective practices. Shulman and Shulman's (2004:259) conceptual framework confirms that teachers become more capable when they learn from their own and others' experiences by reflecting on their actions as well as their consequences by participating as members of learning communities (see 2.4.1).

#### **6.3.4 Professional development activities related to updating, reflection and collaboration**

These subsections of the questionnaire were aimed at gathering quantitative data in the form of a 5-point Likert scale. To gain insights into the participants' professional development activities related to updating, reflection and collaboration, their responses were subject to a statistical analysis. Mixed model repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted to compare mean scores before and after the professional development programme was conducted. These analyses test the hypothesis that the mean scores are the same for the first and second measurement. If  $p < 0.05$  then this hypothesis will be rejected. This was to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between participants' responses prior to the implementation of the professional development programme and eight months after the programme was completed.

##### **6.3.4.1 Quantitative data**

- *Subsection: Updating activities*

This subsection of the questionnaire sought to compare the responses of the twelve (N=12) participants relating to updating activities (see 2.4 and 3.5.3.1) before and after the professional development programme was conducted. In this study updating activities refers to reading professional literature, textbooks and educational sites on the internet as well as attending courses, workshops, conferences and consultations in and outside school. A statistical analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the responses regarding updating activities of the participants before and eight months after the professional development programme was conducted.

Data comparing measurements one and two relating to updating activities are presented in Figure 6.76 and Table 6.12 below.

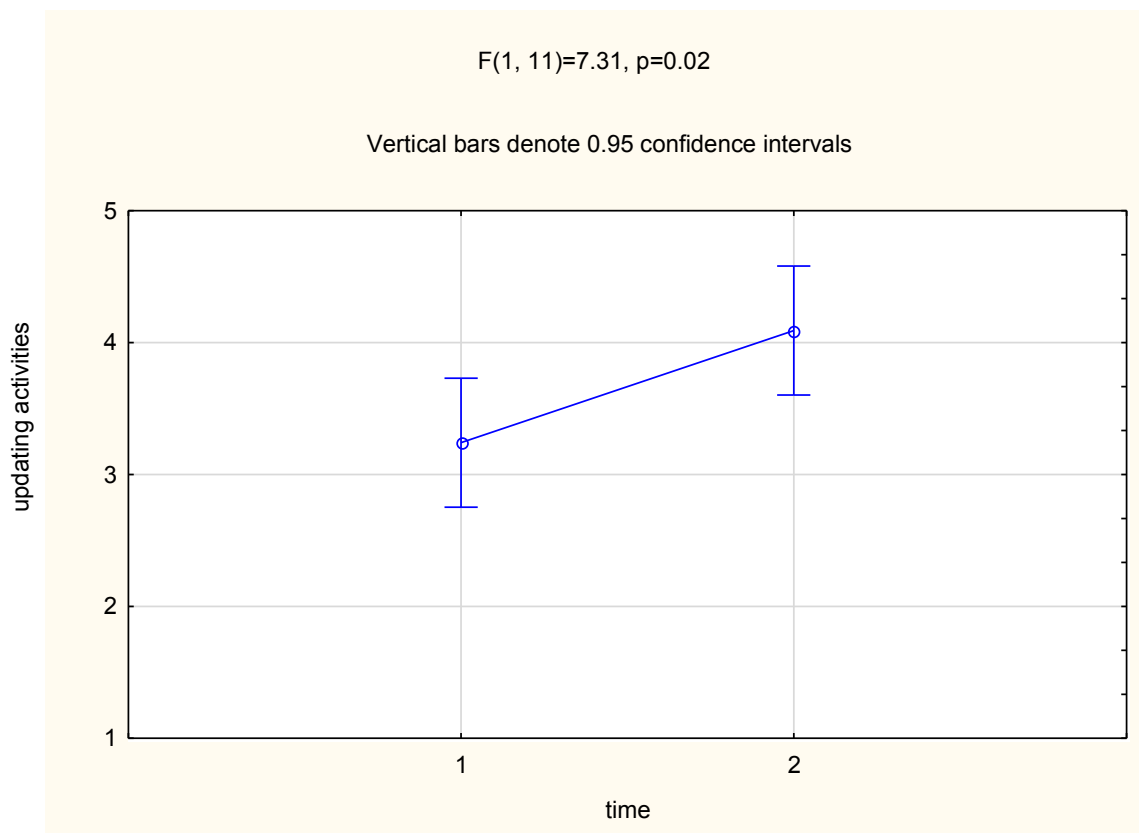


Figure 6.76: Averages of measurements one and two relating to updating activities.

Table 6.12: Averages and standard deviations of measurement one and two relating to updating activities.

Effect	Descriptive statistics			
	Level of factor	N	Updating activities: mean	Updating activities: Standard deviation
Total		24	3.67	0.87
Time	measurement 1	12	3.24	0.96
Time	measurement 2	12	4.09	0.51

According to Figure 6.76, there was a statistically significant increase between measurements one and two relating to updating activities ( $F(1,11)=7.31, p<0.02$ ), which reflects the general trend that the participants participating in the professional

development programme engaged in more updating activities eight months after the professional development programme was completed. Table 6.12 represents data relating to the mean and standard deviation between the two time points. These updating activities may have led to improved PCK of the participating teachers regarding reading and reading comprehension strategies to enhance the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. These data are confirmed by studies conducted by Jita and Mokheke (2012:9) and De Clercq and Phiri (2013:84), which concluded that when teachers take responsibility for their learning, this serves to improve their PCK as well as their classroom practices.

- *Subsection: Reflective activities*

This subsection of the questionnaire sought to compare the responses of the twelve (N=12) participants relating to reflective activities (see 2.4) before and after the professional development programme was conducted. In this study reflection as part of action research implies a form of thinking applied to deal with a problem to make better sense of it and adapt the strategy (see 5.4.2.3). A statistical analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the responses regarding reflective activities of the participants before and eight months after the professional development programme was completed.

Data comparing measurements one and two relating to reflective activities are presented in Figure 6.77 and Table 6.13 below.

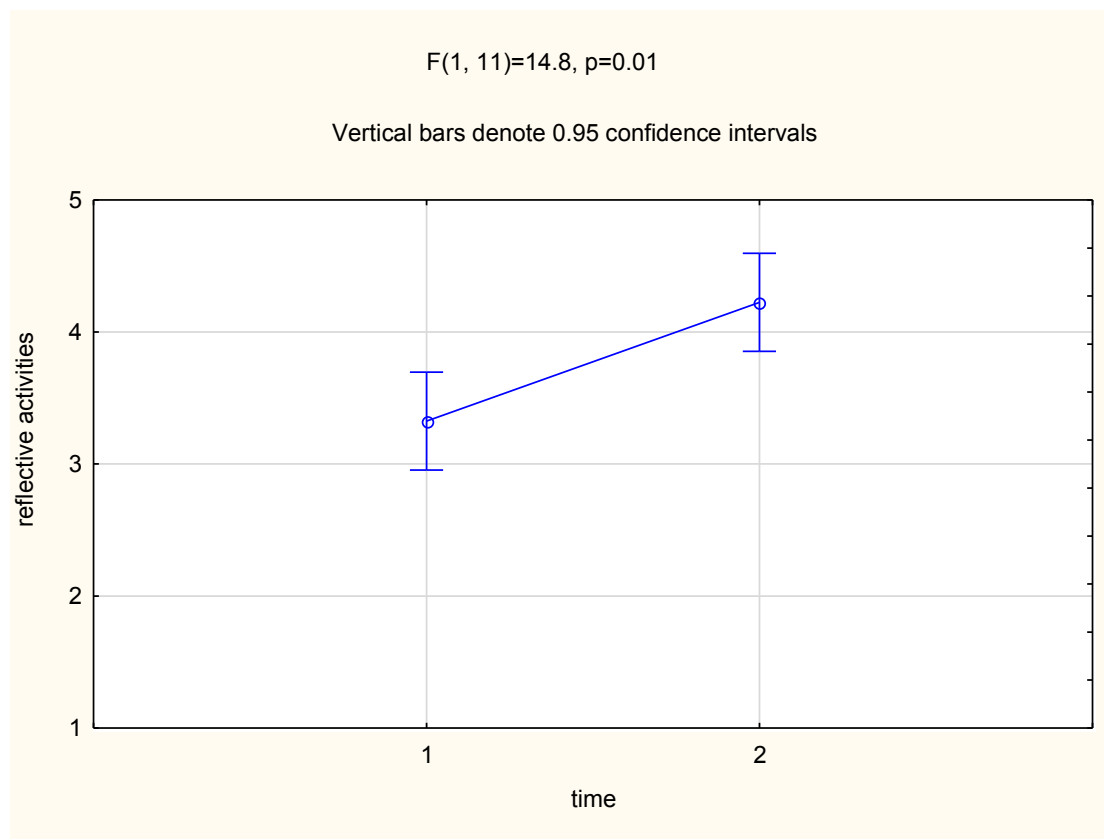


Figure 6.77: Averages of measurements one and two relating to reflective activities.

Table 6.13: Averages and standard deviations of measurements one and two relating to reflective activities.

Effect	Descriptive statistics			
	Level of factor	N	Reflective activities: mean	Reflective activities: Standard deviation
Total		24	3.76	0.73
Time	measurement 1	12	3.33	0.64
Time	measurement 2	12	4.23	0.52

According to Figure 6.77, there was a statistically significant increase between measurements one and two relating to reflective activities ( $F(1,11)=14.8, p<0.02$ ), which reflects the general trend that the teachers participating in the professional



development programme engaged in more reflective activities eight months after the professional development programme had been completed. Table 6.13 represents data relating to the mean and standard deviation between the two time points. These reflective activities may have led participants to be more reflective about their classroom practices regarding the new strategies they acquired during the eight professional development sessions. In addition, they were able to adapt these strategies according to the needs of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes (see 6.4.1 and 6.4.3). Moreover, Antoniou et al. (2015:541) recommend that teachers use reflective diaries to improve on their teaching practices.

- *Subsection: Collaborative activities*

This subsection of the questionnaire sought to compare the responses of the twelve (N=12) participants relating to collaborative activities (see 2.4) before and after the professional development programme was conducted. In this study collaboration refers to colleagues meeting on a regular basis to exchange instructional materials, develop learning support materials as well as to share problems and solutions (see 5.4.2.5:ii). A statistical analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the responses regarding collaborative activities of the participants before and eight months after the professional development programme was completed.

Data comparing measurements one and two relating to collaborative activities are presented in Figure 6.78 and Table 6.14 below.

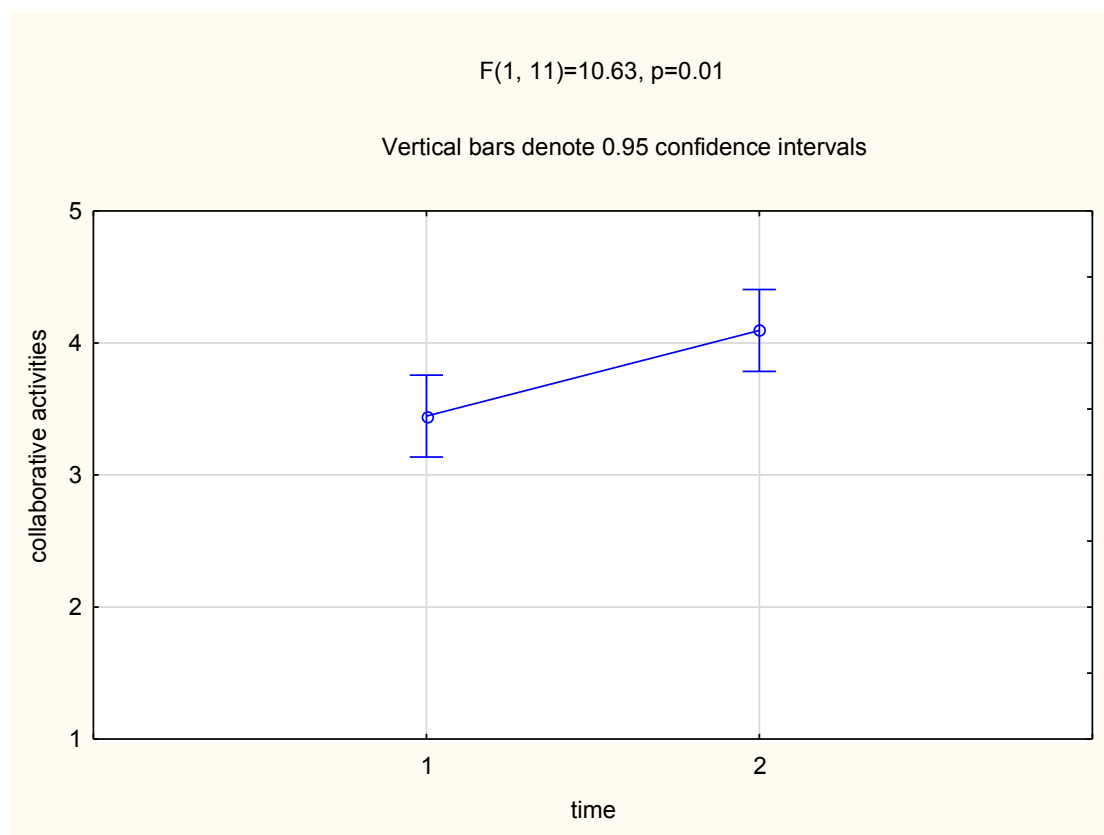


Figure 6.78: Averages of measurements one and two relating to collaborative activities.

Table 6.14: Averages and standard deviations of measurements one and two relating to collaborative activities.

Effect	Descriptive statistics			
	Level of factor	N	Collaborative activities: mean	Collaborative activities: Standard deviation
Total		24	3.77	0.58
Time	measurement 1	12	3.45	0.5
Time	measurement 2	12	4.1	0.47

According to Figure 6.78, there was a statistically significant increase between measurements one and two relating to collaborative activities

( $F(1.11)=10.63, p<0.01$ ), which reflects the general trend that the teachers participating in the professional development programme engaged in more collaborative activities eight months after the professional development programme had been completed. Table 6.14 represents data relating to the mean and standard deviation between the two time points. These collaborative activities may have led participants to learn from one another and to develop interesting and culturally appropriate learning support materials and lessons to enhance the reading comprehension of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes (see 2.4; 5.4.2.5:ii [d]).

### 6.3.5 Experience of action research as a professional development tool

#### 6.3.5.1 Qualitative data

Question 15 was added to the questionnaire of the second measurement to determine the role that action research played as a professional development tool to improve the PCK of the participating teachers. The data are discussed according to the categories as described in Figure 6.1: reflection on implementation of strategies and experience of professional development activities.

##### *iii. Reflection on implementation of strategies*

The participants indicated that action research helped them to identify and rectify problems experienced by their pupils more effectively. It also assisted them to determine which strategies worked best for each learner:

*“Deur middel van aksienavorsing was ek in staat om vas te stel van watter lees- en leesbegripvaardighede party leerders ‘n voorkeur het.”*

*“Dit het my gehelp om probleemareas in die taal te identifiseer.”*

*“My gehelp om probleemareas vinniger te identifiseer en aan te spreek.”*

In addition, reflective classroom practices as promoted by action research was highlighted by the participants as being very effective to change and adapt their strategies:

*“Ek het geleer om baie meer te reflekteer oor dit wat ek in die klas doen met leerders. Ek het geleer om die refleksies van die vorige lesse te gebruik as beginpunt vir opvolg lesse.”*

*“Die reflektiewe proses het my ook meeste van die tyd geïnspireer om nog meer kreatiewe begripsvaardighede te ondersoek en oor na te lees. Dit het my ook aangemoedig om my onderrigmetodes te evalueer en selfondersoek te doen.”*

*“Dit het my in staat gestel om gedurig krities waar te neem of die leerders die werk verstaan. Indien die leerders die werk moeilik gevind het moes ek weer ander planne maak om dit anders te doen en dan weer van voor af evalueer.”*

The participants indicated that the implementation of the different reading and comprehension strategies through action research was very successful. In addition, they observed how the confidence as well as the reading comprehension of the non-mother-tongue speakers improved:

*“Ek kon sien hoe die leerlinge se vertroue verbeter en hoe groei plaasvind.”*

*“Die leerders se leesvermoë het baie verbeter sowel as leesbegrip.”*

*iv. Experience of professional development activities*

The participants found that the collaborative activities contributed to their PCK regarding reading and reading comprehension skills:

*“My kans gegee om probleemareas met ander kundiges en kollegas te bespreek en so oplossings te vind.*

*“Ek het interessante idees gekry om lees- en leesbegripvaardighede te ontwikkel by nie-moedertaalsprekers.”*

With regard to their pedagogies, the participants indicated that they would always make use of these strategies in future, because it was to the advantage of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes:

*“Ek sal persoonlik hierdie leesbegripvaardighede vir altyd in my beplanning/lesse gebruik, want dit het baie waarde.”*

*“Hierdie manier van leesbenadering gebruik ek nou in my klas en pas die strategieë toe met my moedertaalleerders.”*

Analysis of the data indicated that action research may have contributed to a foundational shift in the instructional focus of the participating teachers. Reflective practices allowed them to focus on the needs of their pupils and to adapt their strategies accordingly. In addition, collaboration with colleagues provided a tool for the participants to share ideas, discuss problems and seek solutions. Moreover, it may have provided a catalyst for them to reflect on the impact the professional development programme had on the performance of their pupils. According to Stoller and Grabe (2001:107), action research leads to two goals that language teachers share: better teaching and better student learning.

### **6.3.6 Summary of quantitative results**

The questionnaire was administered eight months after the professional development programme was completed by the 12 participating teachers to determine whether their professional development needs have been met and to identify any further needs they may have. The findings of the quantitative data derived from the questionnaire are outlined below.

Between 98% and 100% of the participating teachers indicated that they were exposed to professional development regarding shared reading, group reading, guided reading, reading aloud, independent reading, the interactive model, the top-down model and the bottom-up model to improve the reading skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes. This indicated that the professional development needs of most of the participants regarding the

abovementioned reading strategies and models have been addressed by their participation in the professional development programme.

Regarding reading comprehension strategies, between 98% and 100% of the participants indicated that they received professional development regarding guided comprehension, the schema theory, metacognitive strategies, making predictions, questioning, drawing inferences, finding main ideas, clarifying, synthesising and gradual release of responsibility. This indicated that the professional development needs of most of the participants regarding reading comprehension strategies have been addressed by their participation in the professional development programme. However, drawing conclusions and clarifying were not included in the original eight professional development sessions as decided collectively in phase five of cycle one. This may be the reason why there was not a statistically significant difference indicating professional development regarding drawing conclusions. These two comprehension strategies were, however, discussed during the collaborative meetings which took place in phase four of cycle two. Furthermore, question 6 revealed that 98% of participants explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. This indicated that most participants taught comprehension strategies explicitly after participating in the professional development programme.

The first five statements of question 13 compared the first and second measurement of the twelve participants' experiences of professional development activities. Data from the second measurement regarding statement 13.1 show that 100% of the participants had positive experiences regarding professional development activities. This is not a statistically significant difference, because at 83%, the first measurement was already quite high. The results of statement 13.2 reflected that 83% of the participants indicated that their professional development needs had been determined regarding reading strategies. This is a statistically significant increase. Regarding professional development needs of reading comprehension being determined in the first measurement, there was not a statistically significant difference. However, at 42% the first measurement was quite high.

Responses to statement 13.3 reflected that 58% participants would like to give input regarding their professional development needs. This shows a 17% decrease when

compared to the first measurement. The reason may be that most participants indicated that they do not require further professional development regarding reading and reading comprehension strategies (see 6.3.1.2:ii and 6.3.2.2:ii). Regarding statement 13.5, 50% of the participants indicated that previously attended professional development activities did not take into account the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers. This was not expected as the professional development programme of this study explicitly focused on the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers. However, the participants may have been considering other professional activities attended in the past when responding to this statement. Statement 13.6 and 13.7 referred to collaborative and reflective activities. The data show that 83% of participants indicated that collaborative activities were encouraged in previous professional development activities. This is a statistically significant difference when compared to the first measurement. In addition, 100% of the participants indicated that reflective activities were encouraged in the past. This indicated that participation in the professional development programme encouraged the participants to engage in more reflective activities. The data from statement 13.6 and 13.7 were confirmed by data from question 14 (see 6.3.4.1). These data are summarised below.

With regard to updating, collaborative and reflective activities conducted by the 12 participants, the first measurement indicated fairly regular participation in these activities. However, data from the second measurement indicated there was increased participation in each of the three constructs when compared to the first measurement. This may be an indication that the professional development programme might have encouraged participants to participate more in these activities. These data are confirmed by a study conducted by De Vries et al. (2010:79), which found that when teachers participate in varied professional activities their own professional development is stimulated.

### **6.3.7 Summary of qualitative data**

The qualitative data of the second measurement sought to provide information regarding implementation, further professional development needs, challenges and successes experienced by the 12 participants during implementation of the professional development programme. First the data on reading models and

strategies will be summarised followed by the reading comprehension strategies. Lastly, the role that action research played as a professional development tool to improve the pedagogies of the participating teachers will be summarised.

All the participants implemented shared reading, while most participants implemented group reading, guided reading, reading aloud and independent reading. None of the participants required further professional development in reading strategies. Additional information regarding reading models was required by 3 participants. This may be because only one session was used to explain these models. In future, offering more than one session on reading models should be considered, as they represent a lot of information to absorb in one session. Challenges experienced were related to time for planning and pupils experiencing problems with independent reading. In addition, 3 participants experienced no challenges. All the participants experienced some successes when implementing these strategies in their classes. These successes are as follows: pupils' reading fluency improved, their vocabulary improved, they were more confident, and they developed a love of reading in Afrikaans.

Most participants implemented making predictions, questioning, drawing inferences, finding main ideas, guided comprehension and drawing conclusions. Furthermore, 7 participants indicated that they require no further professional development regarding reading comprehension strategies. Challenges reflected in the data (see 6.3.2.2:iii) were discussed during their collaborative sessions in phase four of cycle two. In addition, all participants recorded some successes (see 6.3.2.2:iv) which they shared with the group during the collaborative sessions. Regarding additional professional development needs, no additional needs were indicated for reading strategies. However, some participants indicated further professional development needs regarding the schema theory, making predictions, finding main ideas, clarifying, CPM and the gradual release of responsibility method (see Table 6.11).

Data analysis relating to question 15 indicated that action research may have influenced the participants to think about learning and teaching differently. Furthermore, collaborative activities provided a platform for participants to learn from one another. In this regard Macdonald and Pinheiro (2012:92) state that teachers



should move through their own zones of proximal development by engaging with other colleagues and support staff on the most appropriate literacy strategies to use in their classrooms.

In the next section, qualitative data relating to teacher journals, classroom observations and interviews will be discussed. The data were coded and organised into 6 categories as illustrated in Figure 6.1.

#### **6.4 QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED DURING AND AFTER COMPLETION OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

The following section describes qualitative data obtained from teachers' journals, classroom observations and interviews. The data were coded and categorised using the research questions and interview schedule.

Figure 6.1 represents the codes and categories which were used to analyse the data.

##### **6.4.1 Data from teachers' journals**

This section gives a brief report on data that were collected from the journals of the 12 participating teachers. The participants were requested by the researcher to record their experiences by means of informal yet regular journal entries in which they documented (a) the reading and comprehension strategies used, (b) successes, (c) challenges, and (d) questions (see Annexure H). Only 9 of the 12 participants handed in their journals and the journal entries of 3 participants seemed rushed and incomplete. However, 6 participants kept journals that revealed useful data. These data will be discussed according to the following categories as described in Figure 6.1: reading strategies implemented, reading comprehension strategies implemented, implementation processes in class and improvement of vocabulary to enhance reading comprehension.

#### 6.4.1.1 Reading strategies implemented

Shared reading and guided reading were used with great success to improve reading and comprehension skills (see 4.6.4.1 and 4.6.4.2). However, the pupils found group reading and independent reading difficult, because of their poor reading ability. Some participants paired strong readers with weaker readers successfully. They found that the weaker readers become more comfortable when reading in a smaller group (see 4.6.4.3). In addition, participants read text aloud to pupils to facilitate understanding.

One teacher noted that the pupils did not react well to texts which remind them of their poor socio-economic circumstances. They enjoyed humorous narrative texts, texts that stimulate their imagination as well as expository texts (see 4.6.4.1). In addition, reading aloud was used to promote enjoyment of reading and to enhance the pupils' vocabulary (see 4.7.2).

Analysis of the data indicated that all the reading strategies were implemented in the classes during the eight-month implementation period. However, not all the strategies were implemented by every participant. Furthermore, the participants indicated that shared reading and guided reading were used with greater success, because of the poor reading ability of the pupils.

#### 6.4.1.2 Reading comprehension strategies implemented

The participants introduced questioning by using a text that encouraged pupils to formulate their own questions. The gradual release of responsibility method was used by 11 participants to first demonstrate how questions should be formulated, then handing over the responsibility to the pupils by allowing them to finish questions and later to formulate their own questions (see 4.7.4). Two participants used a sponge cube with question words such as "*Wie?*" "*Hoekom?*" and "*Ek wonder.*" When the cube is caught, the pupils have to formulate a question with the word facing them.

Pupils also had the opportunity to work together in groups in order to support one another to formulate questions, find main ideas, summarise and clarify concepts. The participants noted that working together helped the pupils to develop more confidence in Afrikaans. Newman et al. (1989:60) stated that when pupils attempt a task for the first time, they seek out others more capable than they are. As they participate in collective activities where these tasks are mediated to them, their own mental processes are constructed. Two participants noted that the pupils enjoyed making predictions, especially when they discover that their predictions were correct.

Most participants found that the pupils formed associations with the “Fab Four” characters associated with reciprocal teaching (see 4.7.4). The associations helped them to remember the comprehension strategies of making predictions, finding main ideas, clarifying and questioning. Analysis of the data indicated that all the comprehension strategies were implemented in the classes during the eight-month implementation period. However, not all the strategies were implemented by each participant. In addition, the participants used games to consolidate and integrate the different comprehension strategies.

Other comprehension strategies that were implemented were making inferences, drawing conclusions and synthesising information. However, CPM associated with reciprocal teaching were not implemented. These data are confirmed by Pressley (1998:220), who states that implementation of transactional strategies instruction is not common.

#### 6.4.1.3 Implementation processes in class

The participants found that the use of technology such as YouTube made it easier for pupils to grasp the context of the story as well as the vocabulary in the pre-reading phase. Some participants were surprised that the pupils were able to formulate questions starting with “*Wat?*” “*Wie?*” and “*Waar?*” However, they noted that the pupils found it difficult to formulate higher-order questions. Therefore the participants had to model the formulation of higher-order questions. Pupils were also able to find the main ideas and use them to summarise a reading piece. However, the participants sometimes found that their choice of text was too difficult for the

pupils to read independently when they were expected to do so. Some participants initially selected too many new vocabulary words, but as they became more experienced this problem was rectified. In this regard, Santoro et al. (2008:402) recommend that only two to four words should be selected and explicitly taught. In addition, 2 participants noted that pupils found it difficult to describe abstract concepts such as feelings. They used actions to clarify these concepts. Furthermore, the participants noted that the pupils had difficulty in formulating and writing sentences. Therefore they mostly made use of guided writing activities. However, as the pupils became more confident, their ability to speak and write full sentences improved.

One teacher adapted the strategies of the professional development programme by using the text of a narrative story to stimulate a group of pupils to write their own story as illustrated in Figure 6.79.

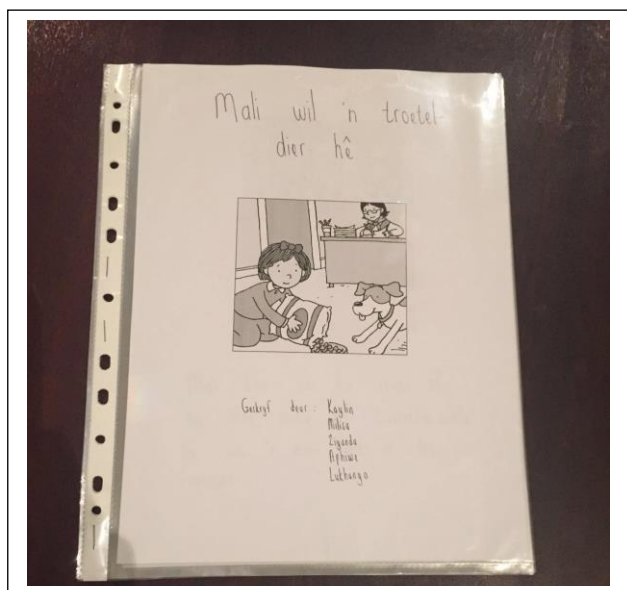


Figure 6.79: Own story written by the pupils.

The pupils were able to read this story as a group and individually. She noted that the pupils were very proud of their own story and read it with confidence. In addition, another teacher wrote a shorter version of the original text to stimulate pupils to write their own questions. She discovered that they found it easier to use a shorter text when they had to demonstrate their ability to write their own questions independently. Moreover, the same teacher discovered that role play facilitated

reading comprehension (see 4.6.4.1). These adaptations were shared with the rest of the participants during their fortnightly meetings.

Initially the participants found that some pupils had difficulty in pronouncing difficult words, which embarrassed them. This discouraged them from participating, because some of their peers laughed at them. Participants cultivated a climate of respect and acceptance among the groups by introducing group work. This gave the pupils more confidence to participate in group discussions (see 3.3.3.3).

Analysis of the data indicated that although participants experienced some challenges during the implementation process in their classroom, they discovered ways to overcome them. Some participants adapted the strategies presented in the professional development programme which helped the pupils to enjoy the text, read with confidence and write independently. Successes were shared with the rest of the participants.

#### 6.4.1.4 Improvement of vocabulary to enhance reading comprehension

All the participants made use of pictures to teach new vocabulary explicitly. They noted that colourful pictures stimulate non-mother-tongue speakers to participate in vocabulary activities. Tactile and kinaesthetic activities were used such as matching words with pictures or catching as sponge cube with words attached to it and making a sentence with the first word that the pupil reads (see 4.6.4.1). The pupils enjoyed these activities. In addition, participants brought objects such as ice and feathers to introduce the words “*ysig*” and “*donsig*.” They noted that the use of objects assisted the pupils to learn new vocabulary more effectively. Some participants put footprints of penguins on the floor for the pupils to walk on to demonstrate the word “*wagge!*.” One teacher discovered that pupils found figurative language such as “*Die ding eet ons bankrot*” difficult. However, she did not clarify how she explained this to the pupils. Cloze activities (see 4.6.4) were used by most participants to practise vocabulary and reading comprehension. At first participants had to model the cloze technique, because the pupils were unfamiliar with it. According to Gambrell and Headley (in Kessler 2010:273), cloze exercises assist pupils to connect words with their background knowledge, highlight comprehension monitoring as well as allowing

pupils to actively participate in learning. Graphic organisers (see 4.7.1) were successfully used by 5 participants to assist pupils to summarise the main ideas of a text. Most participants noted that the pupils communicated more freely and with confidence as their vocabulary increased.

Analysis of the data indicated that the participants explicitly taught vocabulary to enhance the vocabulary of their pupils. Swaffar (1988:130) and ` (2009:325) emphasise that teachers of second-language pupils should ensure that their pupils understand the important vocabulary of a particular text for comprehension to take place.

#### **6.4.2 Data from classroom observations**

This section reports on the data that were collected from observing the lessons that were conducted by the 12 participating teachers. Observations were conducted by the researcher during the implementation phase of the professional development programme.

The objectives of the observations were twofold: to determine whether knowledge gained from the eight professional development sessions was transferred into classroom practice, and to identify teachers' ability to design lessons to suit the needs of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. A lesson observation schedule was used containing the following subsections: reading and comprehension strategies, lesson structure, text used and whether classrooms were print rich (see Annexure F).

The data were discussed according to the categories as described in Figure 6.1: reading strategies implemented; reading comprehension strategies implemented; implementation processes in class; and improvement of vocabulary to enhance reading comprehension.

### 6.4.2.1 Reading strategies implemented

The researcher observed the implementation of reading strategies during classroom visits. The strategies implemented during each lesson were indicated on the lesson observation schedule. The data are presented in Table 6.15.

*Table 6.15: Reading strategies implemented during lesson observations*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Reading strategies observed during the lesson</b>
Participant 1	Shared reading Reading aloud
Participant 2	Reading aloud
Participant 3	Shared reading Reading aloud
Participant 4	Shared reading
Participant 5	No text (the teacher narrated the story)
Participant 6	Reading aloud
Participant 7	Shared reading Reading aloud
Participant 8	Reading aloud
Participant 9	Reading aloud Group reading
Participant 10	Shared reading Independent reading
Participant 11	Shared reading Reading aloud Independent reading
Participant 12	Guided reading Reading aloud

Table 6.15 represents data relating to the implementation of reading strategies during the observations. Reading aloud (see 4.6.4.4) was used by 9 participants to facilitate meaning making, because new texts were introduced during these lessons. Hickman et al. (2004:271) state that reading aloud may lead to increased

comprehension and development of spoken language. Furthermore, it models fluent reading, which helps non-mother-tongue speakers to improve their own reading fluency (Cooper et al. 2012:44). Reading aloud by the pupils according to a balanced literacy programme (see 4.6.4.4) was not introduced during the lessons as the pupils were still unfamiliar with the texts. In addition, one teacher narrated her own story and used objects instead of pictures to facilitate understanding.

Other reading strategies that were included in conjunction with reading aloud were: shared reading (see 4.6.4.1), 6 participants; guided reading (see 4.6.4.2), 1 participant; independent reading (see 4.6.4.5), 2 participants; and group reading (see 4.6.4.3), 1 participant. Participant 4 used only shared reading, because this was the second lesson where the same text was used. The aim of her lesson was to facilitate vocabulary acquisition and to use questioning as comprehension strategy. Fisher et al. (2008:555) state that shared reading should have specific purposes such as enriching vocabulary and teaching comprehension strategies.

Analysis of the data indicated that the participants used different reading strategies to facilitate vocabulary acquisition as well as reading comprehension. Next, data relating to implementation of comprehension strategies will be discussed.

#### 6.4.2.2 Implementation of comprehension strategies

The researcher observed the implementation of reading comprehension strategies during classroom visits. The strategies implemented during each lesson were indicated on the lesson observation schedule. The data are presented in Table 6.16.



Table 6.16: *Comprehension strategies implemented during lesson observations.*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Comprehension strategies observed during the lesson</b>
Participant 1	Questioning
Participant 2	Questioning
Participant 3	Questioning
Participant 4	Questioning
Participant 5	Prediction
Participant 6	Main idea
Participant 7	Prediction Clarifying
Participant 8	Questioning
Participant 9	Questioning
Participant 10	Prediction Clarifying Questioning Summarising
Participant 11	Prediction Questioning
Participant 12	Questioning Clarifying

Table 6.16 represents data relating to the implementation of comprehension strategies during the observations. With the exception of 4 participants, most participants introduced one comprehension strategy per lesson as indicated in Table 6.16. However, participants 7, 10, 11 and 12 introduced more than one comprehension strategy. Harvey and Goudvis (2013:560) and Cooper et al. (2012:144) emphasise that comprehension strategies should never be introduced in isolation but always within the context of a text. Questioning (4.7.4) was implemented by 9 participants. Intensive teacher modelling was used to introduce the comprehension strategies observed (see 4.7.4). However, participant 9 introduced questioning by means of hand signals, linking questioning to their school work and not the text they were reading. When she discovered that they were not grasping the concept, she reverted to teacher modelling. She started each of her

questions with: "*Ek wonder?*" Gradually the pupils were able to ask "*Ek wonder?*" questions.

Other comprehension strategies that were observed included the following: prediction, 4 participants; clarifying 3 participants; finding main idea and summarising, 1 participant each. Participant 10 integrated the four comprehension strategies as proposed by reciprocal teaching (see 4.7.4). She was able to do so, because she had more time to introduce the comprehension strategies, since the observation was carried out during the latter stages of the implementation period. Block and Pressley (2007:203) emphasise that different comprehension strategies should frequently be re-taught in the same lesson so that pupils have the opportunity to practise them as a unit.

Analysis of the data indicated that not all the comprehension strategies were implemented during the lesson observation period. However, data obtained from the second measurement of the questionnaire as well as the teachers' journals indicated that all the comprehension strategies were implemented during the eight-month implementation period. Next, data relating to implementation processes in the class will be discussed.

#### 6.4.2.3 Implementation processes in class

The researcher observed the lesson structure during classroom visits. The different aspects that were observed during each lesson were indicated on the lesson observation schedule. The data relating to lesson structure are presented in Table 6.17.

Table 6.17: Lesson structure observed.

Lesson structure		
	Method used	Participants
New vocabulary was explained by using	Pictures	10
	Objects	6
	Actions	0
	Other (YouTube)	4
Visual aids to consolidate vocabulary	Cloze	2
	Graphic organiser	5
	Semantic chart	0
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Prior knowledge was activated	12	0
Appropriate scaffolding was provided	11	1
Gradual release of responsibility method was used	6	6
Enough opportunities were created for pupils to respond in full sentences	10	2
Enough opportunities were given to practise comprehension strategies	10	2
Tactile and kinaesthetic activities were used	9	3
Teacher created an atmosphere that encouraged reading engagement	12	0

Table 6.17 represents data relating to the lesson structure observed during implementation of the reading and comprehension strategies. Analysis of the data indicated that the participants used pictures, objects and YouTube videos to introduce new vocabulary. Hickman et al. (2004:720), Spencer and Guillaume (2006:206) and Kinsella (2005:2) emphasise that vocabulary size is essential for success in reading and reading comprehension. A combination of pictures, objects and videos were used by 7 participants. In addition, visual aids to consolidate vocabulary were used by 7 participants. Most participants introduced new texts during the observation lesson, therefore there was no opportunity to observe how vocabulary was consolidated. However, the participants indicated in their lesson plans that vocabulary would be consolidated during future lessons using the same

text. In addition, some participants introduced new vocabulary using graphic organisers (see Figure 6.80). The cloze technique (see 4.6.4.1) was used by 2 participants, because they had already introduced the new text during previous lessons.



Figure 6.80: Example of a graphic organiser.

All the participants used pictures, objects or video clips to activate the pupils' prior knowledge or to introduce new knowledge. Appropriate scaffolding (see 2.3) was provided by 11 participants using teacher modelling (4.7.4 and 4.7.5). One teacher had difficulty in scaffolding difficult concepts. The researcher assisted her after the conclusion of the lesson. Ways of scaffolding difficult concepts were also discussed during the fortnightly sessions conducted during phase four of cycle two. Of the 12 participants observed, 10 provided enough opportunities for the pupils to respond in full sentences and to practice comprehension strategies. Parker and Hurry (2007:300) emphasised that teachers should not only model comprehension strategies, but combine them with direct instruction including scaffolding pupils towards constructing meaning from the text by engaging with one another. However, 2 participants did not provide enough of these opportunities. This was discussed with them after the conclusion of the lesson. Tactile and kinaesthetic activities were used by 9 participants (see 4.6.4.1). Finally, all the participants created an atmosphere that encouraged reading and engagement in activities. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lessons and responded with enthusiasm.

Analysis of the data indicated that the participants used appropriate methods and visual aids to facilitate reading comprehension. Difficulties experienced by some participants relating to scaffolding, practising of comprehension strategies and pupils responding in full sentences were addressed after the lessons and during the fortnightly sessions during phase four of cycle two. Next, data relating to selection of texts will be discussed.

The data relating to selection of texts are presented in Table 6.18.

*Table 6.18: Selection of texts.*

<b>Texts:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
The texts were culturally appropriate	11	1
The texts matched the level of proficiency of the learners	12	0
The text was appropriate for the comprehension strategy being taught	12	0
The text was read more than once	6	5

Table 6.18 represents data relating to the selection of appropriate texts used during implementation of the reading and comprehension strategies. Analysis of the data indicated that only 1 teacher did not select a culturally appropriate text. The selection of culturally appropriate texts was discussed after the lesson. Migyanka et al. (2005:177) stated that participants need to know how to select culturally appropriate texts which contain appropriate vocabulary so that they are able to implement comprehension strategies. Of the 12 participants, 5 did not read the text more than once, because of the length of the texts. In addition, more time was spent on introducing new vocabulary and activating prior knowledge. However, the participants did indicate in their lesson plans that texts would be read more than once in subsequent lessons. The importance of repeated readings to improve reading comprehension was confirmed by Cumming-Potvin et al. (2003:55).

Analysis of the data indicated that most participants selected appropriate texts to enhance the pupils' reading comprehension. Next, data relating to the classroom will be discussed.

Data relating to the classroom are presented in Table 6.19.

*Table 6.19: Data relating to the classroom.*

<b>The classroom</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
The classroom is print rich	11	1
Word walls containing new vocabulary	10	2

Table 6.19 represents data relating to the classroom during implementation of the reading and comprehension strategies. Analysis of the data indicated that 1 teacher had no word walls or a print-rich classroom. She presented her lesson outside, because her classroom was being painted during the observation period. The other teacher who had no word walls indicated that she was planning to put the words up. The words were displayed on her desk ready to put on the wall. Block and Parris (2008:230) emphasise that teachers should create a print-rich environment in their classrooms that encourages reading engagement.



*Figure 6.81: Example of a word wall.*

Analysis of the data indicated that most participants have classrooms that are print rich to encourage pupils to communicate and engage with texts. Next, data relating to interviews will be discussed.

### 6.4.3 Data from interviews

This section gives a brief report on the data that were collected from interviewing 5 participating teachers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted after the professional development programme was completed (see 5.4.2.5:ii [b]). During these semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked to describe the effect the professional development programme had on their beliefs, knowledge, skills and attitudes towards professional development activities as well as teaching reading and reading comprehension to non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes.

The data will be discussed according to the categories as described in Figure 6.1: reading strategies implemented; reading comprehension strategies implemented; implementation processes in class; reflection on implementation of strategies; experience of professional development activities and improvement of vocabulary to enhance reading comprehension.

#### 6.4.3.1 Reading strategies implemented

Question 2 required participants to indicate which reading strategy or strategies were most effective to develop the reading skills of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. The analysis of the participants' responses revealed that all of them regarded shared reading (see 4.6.4.1) to be an effective strategy, because all the pupils could participate at the same time, while the stronger readers helped the weaker ones. In addition, they found that shared reading improved the learners' vocabulary and reading comprehension. Furthermore, it gave the pupils confidence, thus motivating them to read more. The following responses encapsulated what the majority said:

*“Die gedeelde leesstrategie het goed gewerk.”*

*“Die woordeskatuitbreiding en die leesbegrip is ontwikkel en die leerders was gemotiveer en almal wou ‘n beurt hê.”*

*“Ja, hulle kon mekaar help en hulle kon bietjie meer selfvertroue kry om in ‘n*

*groep te lees. Die wat sterk was het gelei so dit het gehelp.”*

Of the 5 participants, 4 mentioned guided reading as an effective way to assess the learners' progress as the following comment indicated:

*“Begeleide lees ook, want bied ‘n goeie kans vir assessering....”*

Furthermore, guided reading was used to model fluent reading (see 4.6.4.2) as mentioned by another participant:

*“[d]ie onderwyser het die teks gemodelleer en die leerders aangemoedig om meer vlot te lees.”*

In addition, one teacher paired stronger and weaker readers. She noticed how they explained new vocabulary to one another as this statement indicated:

*“Ek het hulle bietjie laat sit, ‘n sterker leser saam met ‘n swakker lesertjie en dan was dit vir my opvallend hoe hulle mekaar dan reghelp met die woordeskat.”*

Group reading (see 4.6.4.3) was regarded as effective by 3 participants. They indicated that group reading increased the pupils' confidence and vocabulary as reflected by the following statements:

*“Groep lees was ook baie effektief, omdat dit selfvertroue bou by die tweedetaalleerders.”*

*“Ek het baie gebruik gemaak van groeplees. Ek het agtergekom dat dit hulle baie help, omdat hulle met sekere woordeskat nog baie sukkel dan kan hulle dit by die ander hoor.”*

This view was echoed by Monteiro (2013:306), who cited several studies that indicate how the social nature of group learning contributes to understanding and construction of meaning during reading (see 4.6.4.3).



Independent reading was mentioned as being effective to promote fluent reading by 4 participants, but only after substantial teacher modelling and practice to familiarise the pupils with the text as indicated by the following statement:

*“[e]n baie van die leerders het agterna probeer om met die nodige stembuiging en vlotheid te lees as wat jy as opvoeder vir die kind gelees het.”*

Analyses of the above data indicated that the participants regarded shared reading, guided reading and individual reading as most effective to improve the reading skills of the non-mother-tongue speakers, followed by group reading.

#### 6.4.3.2 Reading comprehension strategies implemented

Question 3 required participants to indicate which reading comprehension strategy or strategies were most effective to develop the reading comprehension skills of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. The analysis of the participants' responses revealed that all of them regarded questioning as most effective to improve the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers. Research conducted by Pallinscar and Brown (1986:772) found that this strategy promotes reading comprehension as pupils are only able to ask questions if they understand the text. In addition 4 participants regarded predictions to be an effective strategy (see 4.7.4 and 4.7.5). This was evident in the following statements:

*“Voorspelling en vraagstelling was vir my baie effektief.”*

*“Vraagstelling was vir my effektief, want alle leerders is betrokke by die lees van die boek. En dan ook voorspelling, want voorspelling ontlok die leerder se nuuskierigheid...”*

In addition, 3 participants stated that they regarded synthesising to be an effective strategy. They used synthesising in combination with either questioning and making predictions or clarifying as the following responses indicated:

*“Ek het gebruik gemaak van voorspelling, ek het vraagstelling gedoen en samevatting.”*

*“Voorspelling, vraagstelling en opklaring was effektief.”*

The comprehension strategies regarded as most effective by the participants form part of reciprocal teaching which involves the teaching of cognitive reading comprehension strategies, namely predicting, clarifying, summarising and questioning within the context of a reading group. These strategies were introduced by using the characters of the “Fab Four” introduced in reciprocal teaching (see 4.7.4).

Analysis of the above data indicated that the participants regarded questioning and making predictions as most effective, followed by clarifying and synthesising.

#### 6.4.3.3 Implementation process in class

Question 5 required the participants to indicate whether the pupils’ reading and comprehension improved or not as a result of the implementation of the professional development programme. In addition, they were required to state how this was determined.

All the participants who were interviewed indicated that the pupils’ reading and comprehension skills improved. However, 1 participant did not do an assessment before or after commencement of the programme in her class. Her statements were as follows:

*“100% verbeter. Nee, ek kon sien in die werkies wat hulle gedoen het. Ek het nie eintlik geassesser nie, net gewerk, werk, werk.”*

This was regarded as a challenge, because there was no empirical evidence other than her own observations to corroborate this statement.

The other 4 participants did however conduct some form of assessment before and after the programme was completed. The data revealed the following responses from the participants:

*“Dit het definitief verbeter. Ek het ‘n cloze oefening voor en na die tyd gedoen.”*

*“Ja, dit het beslis ‘n invloed gehad en die kinders verbeter. Dan het ek hulle vordering bepaal deur informele assesserings.”*

Question 11 required the participants to indicate whether it was necessary to adapt the strategies to suit the needs of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. Only one participant indicated that she adapted the strategies slightly by using a combination of hand signals and everyday situations as reflected by this statement:

*“Ek het lewende gebeure gevat en geassosieer met elke strategie.”*

However, the teachers’ journals indicated that some participants made adaptations to the strategies (see 6.4.1).

When asked if they implemented CPM that form part of transactional strategies instruction (see 4.7.5), the participants indicated that they did not have enough time. Moreover, data from their journals indicated that it was not implemented (see 6.4.1). Pressley (1998:20) and Block and Parris (2008:162) came to the same conclusion. They found that despite its benefits, transactional strategies instruction is not widely implemented.

Analysis of the above data reflects that the participants observed some increase in the reading and reading comprehension abilities of their pupils. One participant adapted the strategies slightly to suit the needs of her pupils. According to Guskey (2002:386) and Kriek and Grayson (2009:187), teachers are more likely to continue with new practices, even if they require extra effort, if there is evidence of improved pupil performance. Regarding transactional strategies instruction, the participants

indicated that they require additional professional development. This was arranged after completion of the study.

#### 6.4.3.4 Reflection on implementation of strategies

Question 1 required participants to indicate to what extent the professional development sessions influenced their pedagogies regarding reading and comprehension strategies regarding non-mother-tongue speakers. All the participants indicated that their knowledge regarding reading and comprehension improved. The data revealed the following responses:

*“Omdat ek nog heelwat nuut in die onderwysberoep is, het die ontwikkelingsessies my baie gehelp om my kennis uit te brei oor lees- en leesbegripstrategieë.”*

*“[e]k het baie idees en tegnieke geleer wat ek kon toepas...”*

*“[e]k het definitief beter kennis gehad om te deel met my kollegas veral in my skool waar hulle baie raad nodig gehad het met tweedetaalleerders.”*

*“Dit dit was regtig ‘n uiters leersame proses en dit was die eerste keer wat ek opleiding gekry het in lees- en leesbegripstrategieë vir tweedetaalleerders.”*

When asked in question 8 whether they required further professional development in any aspect covered in the professional development programme, 3 participants indicated that they would like to undergo further professional development in CPM. Another participant requested further professional development regarding comprehension strategies, because repetition is needed to consolidate new knowledge as reflected by this statement:

*“So mens het baie herhaling nodig. Mens moet die goed oor en oor oefen.”*

Furthermore, 1 participant indicated that she required no further professional development. In addition, 1 participant stated that action research was important to develop reflective thinking to develop pupils optimally:

*“[d]at reflektiewe denke baie belangrik is vir ‘n opvoeder sodat hy of sy uitgedaag sal word om te kyk hoe ‘n leerder optimaal kan ontwikkel.”*

The same teacher stated that all teachers should be exposed to action research:

*“Ja, dat meer onderwysers betrek moet word by aksienavorsing, omdat hulle reflektiewe denke dan sodoende kan ontwikkel.”*

Analysis of the data revealed that the participants needed continuous professional development to meet the challenges of today’s globalised world. Moreover, because the demographics of schools in South Africa have changed since 1994, teachers face enormous challenges regarding the diverse languages and cultures in their classes (Mestry et al. 2009:478). In addition, they needed to consolidate and practise these newly acquired skills. This finding is echoed by Guskey and Huberman (1995:246) and De Vries et al. (2010:79), who state that teachers should engage in professional development to continuously develop and adapt current skills.

#### 6.4.3.5 Experience of professional development activities

Question 4 required participants to indicate to what extent the professional development programme encouraged collaboration among them and their colleagues at their respective schools. All the participants indicated that these sessions encouraged them to share ideas, learn from one another and help one another. The following responses encapsulated what the majority said:

*“En ons het ‘n goeie verhouding tussen mekaar opgebou met die sessies en ons kon by mekaar leer, idees uitruil en lesse uitwerk.”*

*“[d]it het my baie bemagtig dat ek kon sien wat hulle doen in hulle klas*

*en ek kon met hulle idees agterkom wat werk en wat werk nie.”*

*“[o]ns het mekaar regtig baie gehelp. Jy vorm meer ‘n hegte band as jy mekaar help.”*

With regard to supporting other colleagues at their schools who were not part of the programme, they responded as follows:

*“By die skool het dit my baie gehelp om my mede kollegas te help veral by Skoolgebaseerde Ondersteuningspanvergaderings.”*

*“Ek het dus my kollegas aangemoedig om strategieë toe te pas in hulle eie klasse.”*

Question 6 required participants to indicate whether they had enough opportunities to contribute towards the content of the professional development programme. All the participants responded that they had enough opportunities as reflected by the following statements:

*“Ja, daar was definitief genoeg soos met ons klustersessies wat ons gehad het was daar genoeg tyd...”*

*“Ja, definitief, dit was die hele tyd van die begin af baie gemaklik en oop kommunikasie die hele tyd.”*

Question 7 required participants to state whether they had any suggestions regarding the content of the programme. No participants had suggestions regarding the content; however, the participants indicated that they would have preferred a longer period to implement the comprehension strategies as the following statements indicate:

*“[m]ens moet meer tyd toelaat, dalk oor ‘n langer tydperk die leesbegripstrategieë toepas en dan langer monitor.”*

*“Die tyd is te min, veral met die strategieë met die taktiel- en kinestetiese benadering...”*

Regarding teacher input, García et al. (2011:154) emphasised that the most effective way to improve teacher practice is by providing professional development which allows them to provide input with regard to their needs (also see 3.5.3.2).

Questions 9 and 10 required participants to state whether they would participate or not participate in a similar professional development programme in future. All the participants indicated that they would participate in a similar professional development programme in future:

*“Ek sou definitief weer deelneem, want ek glo as jy in die onderwys is, is dit ‘n ‘life-long learning process’.... [e]n soos ek nou net gesê het jy kan geweldig baie by mekaar leer en dit maak jou as opvoeder opgewonde om sukses te behaal veral met jou leerders.”*

Regarding question 10, 2 participants indicated that although they would participate in such professional development activities in future, extra administration and additional time added to their programmes were a challenge, although they enjoyed implementing the programme:

*[a]lhoewel die klasgee baie lekker was, was dit net die admin wat ‘n uitdaging vir my gewees.”*

Question 12 required the participants to indicate whether the professional development programme contributed to improved confidence or not. In this regard, all participants were positive to this effect as indicated by the following statements:

*“Dit het definitief my selfvertroue baie verbeter.”*

*“My selfvertroue het baie toegeneem.... [m]ens kan reflekteer en mens het bietjie afgedwaal om te reflekteer oor jou eie onderrig.”*

*“Aan die begin was ek baie op my senuwees gewees om met nie-moedertaalsprekers te werk. So my selfvertroue het nogals redelik gestyg na die opleidingsessies...”*

Question 13 asked participants to indicate whether they wanted to make any comments or requests. The following requests and comments were made:

*“Vir my was dit ‘n interessante proses. [j]uis omdat dit isiXhosa kinders was, want dit het my gewys hulle kan ook vorder.”*

*“[d]it was ‘n lekker proses om aan deel te neem en dit was lekker om te sien hoe die tweedetaalleerders se selfvertroue en hulle leesbegrip verbeter het en dit was vir my lekker om resultate te sien om vir my selfvertroue te gee...”*

*“Ja, ek wil graag net vra of ons nog sessies kan hê in die toekoms en weer met mekaar kan praat daaroor...”*

*“Ja, dat meer onderwysers betrek kan word by aksienavorsing, omdat hulle reflektiewe denke dan sodoende kan ontwikkel.”*

Analysis of the data above indicated that the professional development programme had promoted collaboration among the participants and colleagues at their respective schools. Shulman and Shulman (2004:259) regard accomplished teachers as being members of a professional community which is ready, willing and able to teach and to learn from their teaching experiences. Furthermore, socio-constructivists such as Vygotsky emphasise the development of knowledge by interacting with others and the environment (Woolfolk 2010:42). Participants indicated that they had enough opportunities to give input regarding the content of the professional development programme and would participate in similar programmes in future. However, they would have preferred a longer period of time to implement the strategies. In addition, 2 participants mentioned that they did experience additional administrative pressure. Furthermore, all the participants



agreed that their confidence had increased after completing the professional development programme. A summary of the qualitative results follows below.

#### **6.4.4 Summary of qualitative results**

The qualitative data of the teachers' journals, observations and interviews sought to provide information regarding reading strategies implemented, reading comprehension strategies implemented, implementation process in class, reflection on implementation of strategies and professional development activities (see Figure 6.1). First the data obtained from teachers' journals was summarised, followed by a summary of the observations and interviews.

Analysis of the data from the teachers' journals indicated that all the reading strategies were implemented in the classes during the eight-month implementation period. However, shared reading and guided reading were used with greater success, because of the poor reading ability of the pupils. Regarding reading comprehension, most participants indicated that the pupils formed associations using the "Fab Four" characters. This helped them to remember the comprehension strategies of making predictions, finding main ideas, clarifying and questioning. However, CPM associated with reciprocal teaching was not implemented by any participant. During implementation of the programme in their classrooms, some participants experienced challenges. However, they discovered ways to overcome them. Moreover, some participants adapted the comprehension strategies presented in the professional development programme, which helped the pupils to enjoy the text, read with confidence and to write independently. Successes were shared with the rest of the participants. Last, analysis of the data indicated that the participants taught vocabulary using tactile and kinaesthetic activities, pictures, cloze activities and graphic organisers. They indicated that, as the pupils' vocabulary increased, they communicated more freely and with confidence.

Analysis of the data from the classroom observations indicated that reading aloud was used by most teachers to facilitate meaning making, because new texts were introduced during observed lessons. In addition, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading and group reading were used to facilitate vocabulary acquisition

as well as reading comprehension. Regarding reading comprehension strategies, questioning was used by most participants followed by predictions, clarifying, finding main ideas and summarising. All the participants used pictures, objects or video clips to activate the pupils' prior knowledge or to introduce new knowledge, while appropriate scaffolding was provided by most participants using teacher modelling. Difficulties experienced by some participants relating to scaffolding, practising of comprehension strategies and responding in full sentences were addressed after the lessons and at the fortnightly sessions during phase four of cycle two. Participants were able to create an atmosphere that encouraged the pupils to engage in activities that allowed them to enjoy the lessons and responded with enthusiasm. Block and Parris (2008:230) emphasise that teachers play an important role in motivating pupils by creating an environment in their classrooms that encourages reading engagement. In addition, the teachers selected appropriate texts and displayed new vocabulary in their classes to enhance reading comprehension.

Analysis of the data from the interviews conducted with 5 participants revealed that shared reading, guided reading and independent reading were regarded as most effective to improve the reading skills of the non-mother-tongue speakers, followed by group reading. Furthermore, questioning and making predictions were regarded as the most effective comprehension strategies, followed by clarifying and synthesising. The participants indicated that implementation of these strategies led to improved reading and comprehension abilities of the non-mother-tongue speakers. Although their knowledge regarding reading and comprehension improved, they realised that they required further professional development to continuously develop and adapt current skills. On an interpersonal level, all the participants indicated that the professional development sessions encouraged collaboration among themselves and their colleagues at their respective schools. This resulted in increased confidence in their abilities to teach non-mother-tongue speakers. In addition, the participants indicated that enough opportunities were created to give input regarding the content of the programme and they would participate in similar programmes in future. However, additional administrative pressure could influence participation in similar programmes.

## 6.5 SUMMARY

This chapter presented, analysed and interpreted quantitative and qualitative data in a number of different ways. As mentioned in section 5.2, the aim of the study was to investigate the professional development needs of teachers and to make a contribution to the development of their pedagogies with regard to reading and reading comprehension strategies of non-mother-tongue speakers. Action research was used as a framework for teacher professional development.

Data collection started prior to commencement of the professional development programme. The first data source was a questionnaire to determine the professional development needs of 62 participants regarding the reading comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. The results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis of the questionnaire indicated that the participants required professional development in this regard (see Tables 6.2 and 6.4). In addition, the data analysis indicated that reflective and collaborative activities associated with action research were not always encouraged by previous professional development activities (see Tables 6.6 and 6.7). These results were used to conduct a literature study and develop a professional development programme for the 12 participating teachers.

A second measurement of the questionnaire was conducted eight months after conclusion of the professional development programme. Quantitative data analysis indicated a statistically significant increase in the professional development activities of the participants regarding reading and reading models and strategies as well as comprehension strategies. In addition, a statistically significant increase was indicated relating to updating, collaborative and reflective activities conducted by the participants (see Figures 6.76, 6.77 and 6.78).

Qualitative data analysis of the questionnaires, teachers' journals, observations and interviews were coded and grouped into six categories (see Table 6.1). The results indicated that no participants required further professional development regarding reading strategies. Although a few indicated that they require additional training regarding CPM associated with comprehension strategies instruction (see Table

6.11), the majority of the participants indicated that they do not require further professional development regarding most comprehension strategies. Additional professional development regarding CPM was arranged after completion of the study. Furthermore, they indicated that the professional development programme contributed to increased confidence in their abilities to meet the needs of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. Moreover, an improvement in the reading and comprehension skills of the non-mother-tongue speakers was reported. Hence, the findings of the quantitative data are in line with the qualitative data.

All the participants stated that reflection as part of action research helped them to adapt their lessons according to the needs of their pupils. Moreover, they regarded collaborative activities with colleagues as enriching and contributing to their PCK. McMillan and Shumacher (2010:445) confirm that action research creates opportunities for teachers to collaborate and reflect with others by forming communities of practice regarding changes in classroom practice.

Lastly, the participants indicated that they would continue to implement these strategies in future. This may occur, because the professional development activities conducted in this study were based on the professional development needs of the teachers and included activities that considered the particular contexts of the teachers.

The final chapter will discuss the findings, recommendations and conclusions of the study.

## CHAPTER 7

### FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 7.10 INTRODUCTION

The quantitative and qualitative data were presented, analysed and interpreted in Chapter 6. This concluding chapter will summarise the findings of this study.

The study had the following aims: to investigate the professional development needs of Intermediate Phase Afrikaans teachers regarding the enhancement of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers, to develop a professional development programme based on their needs and to investigate action research as a professional development model to implement the professional development programme. The researcher, currently a learning support advisor at the WCED, found that teachers in Afrikaans Home Language classes are concerned about the increasing numbers of non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes not reaching their full potential. These teachers have indicated that they feel frustrated and overwhelmed, because they do not have adequate knowledge to support the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes. Therefore, they have expressed the need for professional development to assist them to improve their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) in this regard.

This chapter discusses the findings measured against the research question, specific findings and conclusions. Following that, recommendations for the professional development of pre- and in-service teachers are made and the contributions of this study are discussed in detail. In conclusion, the limitations of this study are indicated and suggestions for future research will be made.

#### 7.11 FINDINGS MEASURED AGAINST THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The study focused on the following research question: *How will professional development improve the PCK of in-service teachers to enhance reading*

*comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes?*

In order to investigate the different elements of professional development of teachers, the research question was divided into four sub-questions. The evaluation of each sub-question follows below.

### **7.2.1 To what extent can a professional development programme contribute to the PCK of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers?**

Based on the research results of the first and second measurement of the questionnaire (see 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.2.4, 6.3.1, 6.3.2 and 6.3.4) it may be inferred that the professional development programme could have contributed to the PCK of the Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers participating in this study. When the data obtained from the first measurement and the second measurement of the 12 participants are compared, a statistically significant number of teachers implemented reading strategies (see 6.3.1.1) and models. Similarly, a statistically significant number of teachers implemented reading comprehension strategies (see 6.3.2.1) with the exception of drawing conclusions. This corresponds with data from the interviews (see 6.4.3.4 and 6.4.3.5), where the participants stated that they have gained new knowledge regarding non-mother-tongue speakers.

Teachers are more able to implement strategies by being actively involved in planning their professional development (see 3.5.6). Therefore the participants were consulted regarding the content of the professional development programme prior to implementation (see 5.4.2.5:i [e]). Based on the qualitative data of the questionnaire regarding implementation of reading strategies and models (see 6.3.1.2) it may be inferred that most participants implemented the reading strategies of the balanced language approach. Furthermore, most participants used the gradual release of responsibility method and guided comprehension to implement comprehension strategies (see 6.3.2.2:i). Although all the comprehension strategies were implemented, not all the strategies were implemented by every participant. These data were confirmed by data from the interviews (see 6.4.3.3 and 6.4.3.5) and

teachers' journals (see 6.4.1.2), where participants indicated that they did not have enough time to implement all the strategies. Based on the data derived from the literature study (see 4.7.5), it may be inferred that despite the benefits of transactional strategies instruction, implementation is not common. However, data from the classroom observations (see 6.3.2.2:ii and 6.4.2) reveal that most participants indicated that they require further professional development in this regard.

### **7.2.2 What reading and reading comprehension strategies should be included in the pedagogies of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers?**

Based on the research results of the literature study (see 3.4; 4.5.3 and 4.6.4) and the questionnaires (see 6.2.1.2:ii), it may be inferred that the reading strategies that form part of the balanced language approach, based on the interactive reading model, should be included in the professional development programme. However, data obtained from the literature study indicated that certain accommodations should be made for non-mother-tongue speakers (see 4.3 and 4.6.4.1; 4.6.4.2; 4.6.4.3; 4.6.4.4 and 4.6.4.5). These adaptations were included in the professional development programme.

Based on the research results of the literature study (see 3.4, 4.7.4 and 4.7.5) and the questionnaires (see 6.2.2.2:ii), it may be inferred that reading comprehension strategies included in reciprocal teaching and transactional strategies instruction should be included in the professional development programme. In addition, data obtained from the literature study (see 4.7.2), the teacher journals (see 6.4.1.3 and 6.4.1.4) and classroom observations (see 6.4.2.1 and 6.4.2.3) emphasised the important role that vocabulary acquisition plays in reading comprehension.

According to the research results from the teachers' journals (see 6.4.1.1) and interviews (see 6.4.3.1), it may be inferred that shared reading, guided reading and group reading were regarded as the most effective reading strategies to improve reading comprehension, vocabulary, fluency and confidence. Furthermore, based on data obtained from teachers' journals (see 6.4.1.2) and interviews (see 6.4.3.2), it may be inferred that the four comprehension strategies associated with reciprocal

teaching – namely, questioning, summarising, predicting and clarifying – were regarded as very effective in improving reading comprehension. However, questioning was highlighted as the most effective strategy to promote reading comprehension.

### **7.2.3 How can improved PCK of Intermediate Phase teachers contribute towards the enhancement of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes?**

Based on the research results from the teachers' journals (see 6.4.1.2 and 6.4.1.3) and classroom observations (see 6.4.2.2), it may be deduced that the teachers were able to implement the PCK gained during the professional development sessions by explicitly teaching comprehension strategies. In addition, data obtained from the classroom observations (see 6.4.2.3) indicated that the participants used a variety of methods to introduce new vocabulary to increase the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers. This corresponds with findings from the literature study (see 4.7.1 and 4.7.2) that a variety of methods should be used to introduce new vocabulary as there is a direct link between increased vocabulary and improved reading comprehension. Moreover, based on the data from the teachers' journals (see 6.4.1.3) it may be inferred that some teachers were able to adapt the strategies to suit the needs of their pupils. Similarly, data from the literature study (see 3.5.4) indicated that when teachers are able to adapt strategies to suit the needs of their pupils, they become ready for conceptual change. Furthermore, data obtained from the questionnaires (see 6.3.2.2:iv and 6.3.5.1:i) and interviews (see 6.4.3.3 and 6.4.3.5) indicated that the reading comprehension of the non-mother-tongue speakers may have improved as a result of the PCK gained by the participating teachers.

### **7.2.4 What are the learning experiences of primary school literacy teachers when they have the opportunity to explore comprehension strategies through action research?**

Based on the research results of the first measurement of the questionnaires (see 6.2.3) it may be inferred that professional development activities do not always meet



the professional development needs of teachers regarding non-mother-tongue speakers. Although the majority of the teachers indicated that they had positive experiences regarding professional development in the past, few respondents received professional development regarding reading and reading comprehension for non-mother-tongue speakers (6.2.1.1, 6.2.1.2, 6.2.2.1 and 6.2.2.2). Most respondents indicated that they require professional development regarding reading and reading comprehension for non-mother-tongue speakers (see 6.2.1.2:ii and 6.2.2.2:ii). However, analysis of the data from the literature study (see 3.5.1 and 4.8) and the questionnaire (6.2.3) indicated that teachers prefer to give input regarding their professional development needs. Data obtained from the interviews indicated that the teachers had enough opportunities to contribute towards the content of the professional development programme (see 6.4.3.5).

Data obtained from the questionnaires and literature study relating to experiences of action research as a professional development model revealed the following: it gives teachers the opportunity to implement the strategies gained in professional development sessions, and to evaluate and adapt them to suit the unique needs of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes (see 3.5.6). These data are confirmed by analysis of data from the teachers' journals (see 6.4.1.3). Furthermore, the data revealed that action research assisted the teachers to identify and rectify problems experienced by pupils more effectively (see 6.3.5.1).

Data from the literature study, questionnaires and interviews regarding professional development activities related to updating, reflective and collaborative activities the data revealed the following: the professional development programme may have encouraged the participants to engage in updating activities such as reading professional literature, attending courses and workshops (see 6.3.4.1). These data are confirmed by data from the literature study (see 3.5.3.1) and the theoretical framework (see 2.4), which indicated that professional development activities should lead to updating of skills of teachers to enable them to adapt to the rapidly changing globalised world. In addition, the participants emphasised that reflective activities as promoted by action research was a very effective tool to change and adapt their strategies (see 2.4, 3.5.3.1, 6.3.3.1, 6.3.5.1 and 6.4.3.5). Opportunities for teachers to engage in collaborative activities (see 6.3.3.1, 6.3.4.1, 6.4.3.5 and 2.4) may have

led to an increase in their PCK as they discussed problem areas with fellow colleagues to find mutually beneficial solutions. Similarly, engagement with colleagues allowed teachers to move through their own zones of proximal development while discussing the most appropriate literacy activities to follow in their classes (see 2.3.1). Furthermore, data revealed that collaborative activities encouraged the teachers to share ideas, learn from one another and help one another (see 6.4.3.5).

Based on research results of the interviews it may be inferred that the participants would participate in similar professional development programmes in future, because they gained knowledge which gave them confidence to teach non-mother-tongue speakers (see 6.4.3.4 and 6.4.3.5). Regarding action research, they suggested that it should be implemented by all teachers in their classes to develop reflective practices (see 6.4.3.4 and 6.4.3.5). However, two teachers indicated that they experienced an additional administrative burden by keeping a teacher's journal (see 6.4.3.5).

## **7.12 SPECIFIC FINDINGS**

The following section presents the more specific findings of this action research study. During the first cycle the lack of reading and reading comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes was investigated. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected by means of questionnaires. A literature study was conducted to investigate this problem and to develop a professional development programme. During cycle two the lack of PCK of Afrikaans primary school teachers was addressed by means of the professional development programme. Twelve participating teachers attended eight professional development sessions. Qualitative data were collected by means of classroom observations, teachers' journals and interviews. A second measurement of the original questionnaire was conducted eight months after conclusion of the professional development programme. This was to determine whether the professional development programme influenced their pedagogies. However, one additional question was added related to the teachers' experience of action research as a professional development model.

First, the findings of the first and second measurement of the questionnaires (quantitative and qualitative data) will be discussed, followed by a discussion of the classroom observations, teachers' journals and semi-structured interviews (qualitative data). Finally, the quantitative and qualitative findings will be compared.

### **7.3.1 Findings from the questionnaires**

#### **7.3.1.1 Quantitative data of the first measurement**

The majority of the respondents indicated that they had not received professional development regarding reading models and reading strategies as well as comprehension strategies to enhance the reading and comprehension skills of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes (see 6.2.1.1 and 6.2.2.1). In addition, 79% of the respondents indicated that professional development activities in the past regarding reading comprehension did not address the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers (see 6.2.3.1). Furthermore, 84% of the respondents indicated that they do not explicitly teach comprehension strategies (see 6.2.2.1).

Although the results show that the majority of the respondents engaged in updating activities (see Figure 6.46), these may not necessarily have included reading and comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers as most requested professional development in this regard (see Table 6.2 and 6.4). Similarly, the results show that the majority of the respondents participated in reflective and collaborative activities (see Figure 6.47 and 6.48). These activities may not necessarily have included solutions regarding pedagogies to accommodate non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes.

#### **7.3.1.2 Qualitative data of the first measurement**

The majority of the participants indicated that they required professional development regarding reading models and reading strategies as well as comprehension strategies to enhance the reading and comprehension skills of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes (see Tables

6.2 and 6.4). The results show that the participants who had implemented reading and comprehension strategies experienced the following challenges: group work in classes where Afrikaans mother-tongue pupils were present; planning of lessons and tasks; pupils with serious auditory problems; lack of reading fluency and confidence of non-mother-tongue speakers; poor language ability resulting in insufficient vocabulary to understand texts and interpret questions. The lack of training to address these challenges was identified as a stumbling block (see 6.2.1.2:iii and 6.2.2.2:iii). Few successes were identified as the majority of the participants had not implemented reading or comprehension strategies and had indicated that they require professional development in this regard (see 6.2.6).

### 7.3.1.3 Quantitative data from the second measurement

The results of the second measurement indicated that between 98% and 100% of the participants had received professional development regarding reading models and strategies and comprehension strategies. With the exception of clarifying and drawing conclusions, a statistically significant number of teachers implemented reading models and strategies and comprehension strategies. According to these results, the professional development programme may have had a positive influence on the PCK of the participating teachers regarding reading models and strategies and comprehension strategies. Similarly, it may have resulted in increased implementation in their classes as indicated by the 92% of participants who explicitly taught comprehension strategies after the conclusion of the professional development programme (see 6.3.2.1). In addition, 50% of respondents indicated that professional development activities in the past did not take into account the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers, which was an increase of 42%. (see Figure 6.73).

This result was not expected, as the twelve teachers who completed this questionnaire had attended this professional development programme which specifically focused on the needs of non-mother-tongue speakers. Therefore a 100% response rate was expected. However, participants may have been considering other professional development activities attended in the past when responding to this question.

With regard to their participation in the professional development activities relating to updating, reflection and collaboration, the participants in this study showed significantly more participation in these activities after the conclusion of this study (see 6.3.4.1). Finding resource materials for lessons, keeping reflective journals and engaging in the fortnightly collaborative activities may have contributed to the increased participation in these activities.

#### 7.3.1.4 Qualitative data from the second measurement

The majority of the participants indicated that they implemented most reading strategies (see 6.3.1.2:i). Shared reading was implemented by all the participants followed by guided reading, group reading, independent reading and reading aloud. The majority of participants indicated that they require no further professional development regarding reading strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers (see 6.3.1.2:ii). This could be a consequence of the content covered in the professional development programme of this particular study. The significant increase in implementation may have occurred as a result of the professional development programme. Regarding reading comprehension strategies, the majority of the participants implemented the strategies which form part of reciprocal teaching (see 6.3.2.2:ii). However, CPM associated with transactional strategies instruction was not implemented. This is in line with previous research, which found that despite its advantages, implementation of comprehension strategies instruction is not common.

In contrast to the first measurement, the majority of the participants recorded greater successes during the second measurement (see 6.3.2.2:iv). These were as follows: pupils were able to apply drawing inferences, drawing conclusions, formulate questions, find the main idea and summarise. Furthermore, respondents indicated that the pupils' comprehension improved, their confidence increased to such an extent that they were able to help and support one another. Although the majority of the teachers recorded no challenges in the second measurement, the following challenges were noted: some participants had problems implementing the gradual release of responsibility method and developing the pupils' reading comprehension with regard to formulating questions, clarifying and finding main ideas. Furthermore,

lack of learning support material and shy pupils were recorded as challenges (see 6.3.2.2:iii).

The results show that the participants' implementation of action research may have contributed to effective application of reading and reading comprehension strategies. This included their ability to identify problems experienced by their pupils through reflective classroom practices. Moreover, the results indicated that they were able to adapt their teaching methods accordingly. According to the results, collaborative activities may have contributed to their PCK as these discussions provided opportunities to gain knowledge and ideas from colleagues (see 6.3.5.1).

### **7.3.2 Teachers' journals**

The majority of the teachers implemented all the reading and comprehension strategies that were included in the professional development programme (see 6.4.1.1 and 6.4.2.2). However, not all strategies were implemented by every teacher. The results indicated that the pupils formed associations with the "Fab Four" characters associated with reciprocal teaching, which helped them to remember the comprehension strategies of making predictions, finding main ideas, clarifying and questioning (see 6.4.1.2). In addition, games were used to integrate and consolidate the different comprehension strategies. However, the results show that CPM have not been implemented, which is corroborated by the results of the questionnaires.

The results show that the participants used teacher modelling which assisted pupils to implement new comprehension strategies. In addition, group work was used as a mechanism to cultivate a climate of respect and acceptance amongst the pupils. Although challenges were experienced, the participants used a variety of techniques to facilitate meaning making such as YouTube clips, actions, guided writing and role play. The results indicated that these techniques assisted the pupils to speak, read and write with more confidence (see 6.4.1.3).

The lack of sufficient vocabulary impacts negatively on reading comprehension. Therefore the participants used pictures, tactile and kinaesthetic activities, cloze

activities and graphic organisers to teach new vocabulary explicitly. According to the results, the majority of the participants noted that the pupils communicated more freely and with confidence as their vocabulary increased (see 6.4.1.4).

### **7.3.3 Classroom observations**

The results of the classroom observations indicated that the majority of the participants implemented the reading and comprehension strategies gained during the professional development sessions. During observations, reading aloud by the teachers was most prevalent as new texts were introduced to the pupils. Reading aloud by teachers models fluent reading to non-mother-tongue speakers, who often struggle with reading fluency. Furthermore, it may facilitate reading comprehension and spoken language (see 6.4.2.1). The results showed that most participants used shared reading in conjunction with reading aloud to facilitate vocabulary acquisition to enhance reading comprehension. Regarding comprehension strategies, questioning was introduced by the majority of the participants using intensive teacher modelling as well as direct instruction and scaffolding. The results show that two participants found this challenging. They received assistance from the researcher and other participants during collaborative sessions.

According to the results, all the participants used either pictures, objects, graphic organisers or YouTube clips to activate prior knowledge and to introduce new vocabulary. Classrooms were print rich and new vocabulary was displayed on word walls. The results reveal that the majority of the participants selected culturally appropriate texts and vocabulary to enhance the pupils' reading comprehension. Enough opportunities were created for the pupils to answer in full sentences. However, some participants did not have the opportunity to read the text more than once during the observed lesson as a new text was introduced and more time was spent on activating prior knowledge and introducing new vocabulary. Their lesson plans indicated that the texts would be read more than once in subsequent lessons (see 6.4.2.3).

### 7.3.4 Semi-structured interviews

Participants regarded shared reading to be an effective reading strategy to improve reading skills as well as comprehension skills. According to the results, shared reading provided all pupils with the opportunity to participate at the same time, while the stronger readers helped the weaker ones. As their reading improved, their confidence increased, which gave them encouragement to participate in more reading activities. In addition, the majority of the participants used guided reading to model fluent reading. The social nature of group reading may have assisted vocabulary acquisition and reading confidence. After substantial teacher modelling and practice, independent reading was found to promote fluent reading (see 6.4.3.1).

Questioning promotes reading comprehension, as pupils are only able to formulate questions once they understand the text (see 6.4.3.2). According to the results, the majority of the participants regarded questioning and predictions to be effective strategies to promote reading comprehension. They indicated that these strategies actively involved the pupils in the reading process. Predictions were regarded as particularly effective to stimulate the pupils' curiosity. Other comprehension strategies that were found to be effective were clarifying and synthesising. These four comprehension strategies were introduced by the majority of the participants by using the characters of the "Fab Four." It was interesting to note that one participant adapted the strategies slightly by using a combination of hand signals and everyday situations.

According to the results (see 6.4.3.3), all the participants who were interviewed indicated that their pupils' reading and comprehension skills had improved. With the exception of one participant, this improvement was determined by means of an assessment of reading and comprehension skills before and after the conclusion of the programme. The participants did not implement CPM, which forms part of transactional strategies instruction. The results revealed that they did not have enough time and that they require further professional development in this regard. Moreover, it was emphasised that repetition is needed to make them fully understand new pedagogical knowledge.



Regarding the effect the professional development programme had on their pedagogies to enhance the reading and comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers, all participants were positive to this effect. In addition, they indicated that they would use this knowledge to empower fellow colleagues at their respective schools who were not part of this research study. The results show that action research and reflective thinking were regarded as very effective mechanisms to evaluate their teaching practices and adapt their teaching strategies accordingly (see 6.4.3.3 and 6.4.3.4). Moreover, the collaborative nature of action research may have encouraged the participants to share ideas and learn from one another, including colleagues at their respective schools. According to the results, their confidence increased as a result of the professional development programme, particularly regarding teaching of non-mother-tongue speakers. The teachers indicated that the improvement of their pupils' reading and comprehension skills served as encouragement to teach non-mother-tongue speakers and to participate in further professional development sessions in this regard.

When planning professional development activities, teacher trainers should involve participants in the planning process. Therefore the teachers in this study were asked to provide input regarding the content and duration of the professional development programme prior to commencement of the study as well as during the professional development sessions. The results revealed that the participants had enough opportunities to contribute towards the content of the programme (see 6.4.3.5). They indicated that they would participate in similar programmes in future. These data confirm previous research which found that sustained professional development activities that focus on academic subject matter give teachers opportunities for hands-on learning (see 3.3.3.2). However, some respondents felt the administrative load, especially regarding keeping a teacher's journal, was a challenge (see 6.4.3.5).

### **7.13 CONCLUSIONS**

The main focus of the study was to investigate and address the professional development needs of teachers to improve their PCK regarding reading and reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes. The questionnaire was used for the collection of quantitative and qualitative

data prior to commencement of the professional development programme, as well as eight months after the conclusion of the programme. Teachers' journals, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews were used for the collection of qualitative data. All the data-collection instruments focused on the same themes to allow the researcher to compare them.

The quantitative data analysis of the first measurement of the questionnaires revealed that the majority of the teachers had undergone no professional development regarding the enhancement of reading comprehension of the non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes (see 6.2.1.1 and 6.2.2.1). Some teachers attempted to improve the reading comprehension in the non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes, but experienced some challenges related to implementation, including not teaching comprehension strategies explicitly (see 6.2.2.1). It was clear from the data that the teachers requested professional development to improve their pedagogies relating to the enhancement of comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes (see 6.2.1.2:ii and 6.2.2.2:ii). Prior to commencement of the study, the teachers were afforded the opportunity to contribute towards the content of the proposed professional development programme. It is clear from the data of the literature study that teachers respond more positively to professional development programmes when they are able to provide input regarding their needs (see 4.8).

When the quantitative data of the first and second measurement are compared, it is evident that the professional development needs of the majority of the participants relating to the enhancement of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers were met by the professional development programme (see 6.3.6). Data from the questionnaires and interviews revealed that most participants require further professional development in CPM (see 6.3.2.2:ii). The data sets from the teachers' journals, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews confirm the data from the questionnaires regarding the professional development needs of the participants (see 6.4.1.2, 6.4.2.2 and 6.4.3.4).

Action research as a model of professional development may be an effective tool to increase the PCK of teachers. When professional development activities relating to updating, reflection and collaboration, as well as the quantitative data of the first and second measurement of the questionnaire, were compared, the results show that participation in an action research project may have influenced the teachers to participate more in these activities (see 6.3.4.1 and 6.3.5.1:ii). These data was confirmed by qualitative data from the interviews (see 6.4.3.5). When teachers conduct action research, opportunities are created for them to collaborate and reflect with others by forming communities of practice (see 5.4.2.3). As attested by the data from the second measurement of the questionnaire and the interviews, the teachers found these communities of practice particularly useful to reflect on implementation of the reading and comprehension strategies in their classes (see 6.3.5.1:i and 6.4.3.5). Collaborative sessions created opportunities for teachers to share ideas and to support one another. Furthermore, according to data from the teacher journals and interviews, it was evident that reflection phases in action research cycles afforded teachers the opportunity to adapt strategies to suit the unique needs of their pupils (see 6.4.1.3).

As evidenced by the data from the questionnaire, the teachers indicated that in the future they would use the PCK gained in the professional development sessions. They revealed that mother-tongue speakers would be included when implementing the reading and comprehension strategies. This was due to the fact that their pupils' confidence and reading ability and reading comprehension increased (see 6.3.5.1:ii). The literature shows that new practices are more likely to be implemented if teachers perceive them to be effective (see 3.5.3.2).

The data from the second measurement of the questionnaires and interviews showed that the reading comprehension of the pupils may have improved as a result of the reading and comprehension strategies implemented by the teachers (see 6.3.5.1:i and 6.4.3.3). In this regard, improved vocabulary may have contributed to the improvement as there is a causal relationship between good vocabulary and reading comprehension (see 4.7.2). Therefore, the various methods used to introduce new vocabulary as observed during classroom observations may have played an additional role to improve the pupils' reading comprehension (see 6.4.2.3).

Moreover, tactile and kinaesthetic activities, objects, cloze exercises and graphic organisers may have contributed to increased vocabulary as indicated in the teachers' journals (see 6.4.1.4).

Reciprocal teaching, which involves the use of cognitive reading comprehension strategies – namely predicting, clarifying, summarising – was regarded as particularly effective to improve reading comprehension. Associations formed with the characters of the “Fab Four” assisted the pupils to remember the above-mentioned four comprehension strategies. However, questioning was regarded as the most effective of these four comprehension strategies, followed by predictions (see 6.4.1.2 and 6.4.3.2).

This study therefore concludes that the participants had changed their practices in terms of teaching methods used in the classroom, because they understood the underlying premise of the new pedagogy.

## **7.14 RECOMMENDATIONS**

By means of this study the researcher sought to contribute to the improvement of the pedagogies of teachers regarding the enhancement of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in their Afrikaans Home Language classes. As South African Intermediate Phase teachers continue to struggle to raise the literacy levels of their pupils, it is envisaged that this study may make a modest contribution in this regard. Based on the findings of the study (see 6.5 and 7.2), a number of recommendations are made below.

### **7.5.1 Pre-service training of Intermediate Phase teachers**

Pre-service training of Intermediate Phase teachers should be adapted to keep up with the changing demographics in South African schools especially relating to the increasing number of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans-medium and English-medium classes. Teacher educators should therefore keep in mind that their students need to enter the profession with an understanding of the principles and theories that underpin pedagogical practices as well as beginning to understand

when and how to apply these theories in a given context (see 2.4). Their training programmes should include adaptations made to the balanced language approach to accommodate non-mother-tongue speakers. The pedagogies relating to the explicit teaching of comprehension skills to non-mother-tongue speakers should be included in such training.

### **7.5.2 Training of in-service teachers**

Systemic research indicates that the literacy levels of Intermediate Phase pupils in the Western Cape are far below the levels required for effective learning. One of the reasons for this under-performance may be related to the fact that professional development activities in the past have not addressed the unique needs of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes (see 6.3.6). Training of in-service teachers should therefore include linguistic knowledge, knowledge of language teaching and learning theories as well as knowledge of language teaching methodologies and PCK (see 2.4). Pedagogies relating to the enhancement of reading and comprehension skills of the increasing numbers of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language -medium classes should be part of such training programmes. Teachers' input regarding their particular needs should be allowed during the planning and implementation phases (see 3.5.3.2). Once-off professional development sessions should be replaced with sustained and continuous follow-up sessions and in-class monitoring and support by support staff of the WCED.

### **7.5.3 Action research as professional development model**

Action research as a model has been described by researchers as being effective to improve teacher practice (see 3.5.5.8). It provides teachers with the opportunity to be actively involved in their professional development and contribute their own expertise (5.4.2.2). By combining their expertise with the trainers' knowledge and expertise of new reforms, a platform may be created where expertise is shared. When teachers are allowed to take ownership of their own professional development they start to reflect critically on their own classroom practices (see 5.4.2.3). Moreover, reflective classroom practices were highlighted by the teachers as being very effective to change and adapt their classroom practices (see 6.3.5.1 i). The

above-mentioned advantages of action research should encourage teacher trainers and subject advisors to consider using the action research model to conduct the professional development of teachers.

#### **7.5.4 Reading strategies to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers**

The teachers participating in this project regarded shared reading to be an effective strategy to improve their pupils' reading ability, because all pupils could participate at the same time while the stronger readers helped the weaker ones. This gave them confidence, motivating them to read more. In addition, it was found that shared reading improved the pupils' vocabulary and reading comprehension. Guided reading was also regarded as effective, as it provided pupils with additional language learning opportunities such as morphological awareness, phonemic awareness and phonics that occur in the text. Moreover, guided reading provides opportunities for teachers to assess their pupils and make instructional changes accordingly (see 6.4.3.1). All teachers should therefore be made aware of the advantages of shared reading and guided reading regarding the improvement of reading and reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers.

#### **7.5.5 Comprehension strategies to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers**

After participating in the professional development programme, all the teachers indicated that they explicitly teach comprehension strategies. They found that teacher modelling using the "Fab Four" characters associated with reciprocal teaching was an effective strategy to enhance the reading comprehension of their pupils. The associations formed with these "Fab Four" characters helped the pupils to remember the comprehension strategies of making predictions, finding the main ideas, clarifying and questioning (see 6.4.4). Questioning and making predictions were regarded as most effective to enhance the pupils' reading comprehension (see 6.4.3.2). Teacher trainers should include pedagogies regarding the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers in their professional development programmes.

### **7.5.6 Fostering communities of teachers as learners**

Participants in this study indicated that they found the collaborative sessions with their colleagues very informative. These sessions assisted them to support one another in constructing their own understanding of comprehension strategies to enhance the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers. The opportunity to collaborate was used to discuss problem areas, share ideas, and develop lessons and learning support materials (see 6.3.5.1 and 6.4.3.5). It is therefore important for teachers to move through their own zones of proximal development by engaging with other colleagues and support staff on the most appropriate literacy strategies to use in their classrooms (see 2.3.1). Teachers should be encouraged by principals and curriculum advisors to reflect and collaborate with others by forming learning communities regarding changes in classroom practice and the implications of such changes (see 6.3.5.1:i and 6.4.3.5).

### **7.5.8 Adjusting the professional development programme**

According to the data, the professional development programme was adjusted in a number of ways (see 5.4.2.5:ii [e]). More information should be included regarding the different reading models to deepen the teachers' theoretical knowledge about reading instruction. One session should be devoted to each model; guided comprehension should be dealt with in one session, including practical demonstrations by the trainer and teachers; there should be one session for reciprocal teaching and the comprehension strategies associated with it. Special attention should be given to teacher modelling. This should include practical demonstrations by teachers; one session should be devoted to the theoretical aspects of comprehension strategy instruction; two sessions should be devoted to CPM and a third session for practical implementation; the advantages of keeping a teacher's journal should be emphasised.

## **7.15 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY**

Research at this level aims to make an explicit contribution towards addressing a gap in knowledge about a topic. In the field of education such a knowledge gap can

take the form of a need to identify an area of weakness and the extent to which these weaknesses affect education systems. The knowledge gap concerned can also relate to the need to explore possible solutions that are aimed at improving instruction.

This study has made a contribution to supplementing the current knowledge regarding reading comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes. The discussion on the contribution of this study will focus on the development of PCK of Afrikaans teachers, training of pre-service teachers, lack of explicit teaching of comprehension strategies, and action research as a professional development model.

The low literacy levels of South African Intermediate Phase pupils as reflected by the 2011 PIRLS results and the literacy results of WCED 2015 systemic tests (see 3.2.1) highlight the need for the PCK of teachers to be developed. Although research studies indicate that teachers are frustrated and overwhelmed, because they do not know how to meet the unique needs of the increasing numbers of non-mother-tongue speakers, very little has been done by the Department of Basic Education to develop teachers professionally in this regard (see 3.3.3.2, 6.2.1.2:ii and 6.2.2.2:ii). Therefore, the professional development programme that was developed by this researcher based on the needs of 62 respondents in the CWED can be used by the WCED to develop the PCK of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers in the Western Cape. In this case the professional development needs of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers were investigated and the findings of this study highlight the challenges these teachers face on a daily basis (see 6.2).

Universities responsible for the training of pre-service teachers will be able to use the information gathered in this study to re-design or adapt their modules on Afrikaans teaching pedagogies. This will enable their students to be better prepared for the challenges that face them in the classroom regarding reading and comprehension needs of non-mother-tongue speakers.

This study highlighted the fact that very little explicit teaching of comprehension strategies takes place in Afrikaans Home Language classes (see 6.2.2.1). A copy of



this study will be made available to the WCED, which may result in the provision of additional professional development opportunities for teachers to develop their PCK regarding comprehension strategies for non-mother-tongue speakers.

This study can be used as an example of how action research can be a professional development model as teachers are encouraged to become reflective practitioners. The data obtained reveal that when teachers conduct action research in their classes, they become more aware of their instructional practices and are able to adapt them according to the needs of their pupils (see 6.3.4.1, 6.3.5.1:i and 6.4.1.3). Moreover, the collaborative nature of action research may lead to the establishment of communities of practice by the teachers themselves, which will assist them to help and support one another (see 5.4.2.5 ii[d] and 6.4.3.5). It also affords the teachers an opportunity to give input regarding their professional needs.

## **7.16 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

During this study, the researcher experienced the a number of limitations, outlined below.

7.7.1 The fact that only twelve Intermediate Phase teachers participated in the professional development programme weighs heavily on the generalisability of the findings of this research to schools outside the geographical area of the research (see 5.4.2.5:i). These teachers received professional development for eight weeks, after which they implemented a professional development programme for eight months. A total of 69 non-mother-tongue speakers received interventions to enhance their reading comprehension skills. As the study was set in the context of the teachers participating in the professional development programme, they cannot be regarded as being representative of other teachers outside this study. However, the sample used was made up of Intermediate Phase teachers from twelve poorly performing schools in the Stellenbosch/Franschhoek region, hence schools with a similar performance background might find the study findings informative.

- 7.7.2 A large amount of research on the teaching of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in English-medium classes is available both locally and internationally. However, a limited amount of research is available on the enhancement of reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes that the researcher could draw on.
- 7.7.3 Not all participants kept comprehensive teacher's journals of their observations and reflections while implementing the reading and comprehension strategies in their classes. Of the 12 participants, 9 handed in their journals and the journal entries of 3 participants seemed rushed and incomplete. However, 6 participants kept journals that revealed useful data (see 6.4.1).
- 7.7.4 For sustained change in teacher practice to take place, continued follow-up support coupled with pressure is required (see 3.5.3.2). In research projects of this nature, the researcher is not always available to ensure continued support. Therefore, researchers may have to liaise with officials of educational departments to ensure sustained changes in the pedagogies of teachers.
- 7.7.5 The results of action research studies are not meant to be applied to a specific context or problem outside the scope of the study (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:445).

## **7.17 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The need for further research into the professional development of teachers regarding reading comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers is ongoing. Furthermore, action research as a model of teacher professional development should be investigated further. Research could include the following topics:

- 7.8.1 Repeating this study in Afrikaans Foundation Phase classes;
- 7.8.2 The establishment of learning communities by teachers to develop their PCK regarding comprehension strategies to enhance comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers through collaboration;

- 7.8.3 The professional development of English teachers to develop their PCK regarding comprehension strategies to enhance comprehension skills of non-mother-tongue speakers;
- 7.8.4 Investigating action research as a professional development model to develop teacher PCK in other subject areas;
- 7.8.5 The development of supplementary learning support materials for implementing reading and comprehension strategies in Intermediate Phase classes;
- 7.8.6 Research on training programmes for pre-service teachers to prepare them to teach non-mother-tongue speakers.

## **7.18 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

As a learning support advisor, this researcher became aware of the challenges that Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers face regarding the increasing numbers of non-mother-tongue speakers in their classes as a result of the partial implementation of the LiEP. Therefore this action research study focused on the professional development needs of Afrikaans Intermediate Phase teachers' to improve their PCK to be better able to support these learners.

The relevance of this study lies in the strategy of the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) as well as the WCED to improve the literacy results of pupils in South Africa. This researcher followed a mixed methods approach within an action research design. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered by means of questionnaires, teacher journals, classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. This was supported by a literature study that investigated the professional development of teachers, reading models, approaches and strategies, and comprehension strategies with specific reference to non-mother-tongue speakers. Constructivism and socio-constructivism are the learning theories that were identified as underpinning theories for the development of comprehension skills. As this study included the professional development of teachers, a theoretical framework that addresses their knowledge base and the degree to which their continued professional development and growth should be supported was considered. Teacher learning and the development of their PCK as described by Shulman were therefore included. However, Shulman and his

colleagues did not seek to list what teachers need to know in each subject area, but instead they provided a conceptual framework which was often criticised for not sufficiently exploring the practical aspects of teacher knowledge (de Clercq 2014:305).

Research studies by this researcher and others found that teachers of non-mother-tongue speakers in Afrikaans Home Language classes find it challenging to adequately support these learners, because they have insufficient pedagogies regarding the teaching of reading and comprehension strategies. Teachers therefore express the need for professional development programmes to assist them in this regard. According to the CAPS curriculum, teachers are expected to implement the balanced language approach, which focuses on the teaching of reading and reading comprehension, while integrating other communicative skills using scaffolding.

This study came to the conclusion that very little comprehension instruction takes place in classes especially relating to the specific needs of non-mother-tongue speakers. It is therefore the responsibility of universities and the Department of Basic Education to ensure that pre- and in-service teachers undergo professional development which includes addressing the appropriate methodologies and strategies to adequately support the literacy skills non-mother-tongue speakers.

A professional development programme was designed based on the needs of 68 respondents in the CWED. After that it was implemented to develop the PCK of 12 participating teachers in the Stellenbosch/Franschhoek region. Subsequently, these teachers had an opportunity to implement this programme using action research in their respective classes. It was evident from the results of the various data-collection instruments that professional development which takes into account teachers' needs and provides for teacher input can lead to improved performance of pupils.

Finally, this study does not offer a solution to all the problems facing Afrikaans-medium multilingual classes, but the researcher believes teacher trainers at universities and education departments can use it as a guideline to develop their own professional development programmes to improve the PCK of pre- and in-

service teachers to enhance the reading comprehension of non-mother-tongue speakers in South African schools.

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## **Annexure A: Copy of application to conduct research in public schools within the Western Cape**

### **AANSOEK OM NAVORSING IN 'N WKOD-SKOOL TE DOEN**

2014.08.28

Die Hoof: Onderwys

WES-KAAP ONDERWYS DEPARTEMENT

Privaatsak X9114

KAAPSTAD 8000

VIR AANDAG:

Dr Wyngaard, Afdeling Navorsing

### **TOESTEMMING OM NAVORSING IN SKOLE TE DOEN**

Ek is sedert 2014 'n ingeskrewe student aan die Universteit Stellenbosch waar ek navorsing doen vir die graad PhD in die Opvoedkunde. Die titel van my tesis is:

*Pedagogical support to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother tongue speakers in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes. - Studieleier: dr MLA le Cordeur.*

My navorsing behels studie van lees- en begripsstrategieë ter bevordering van leesbegrip van tweedetaalleerders in Intermediêre Fase klasse. Nadat die mees geskikte strategieë nagevors is, beoog ek diensdoenende onderwysers op te lei om hulle beter toe te rus sodat hulle meer effektiewe ondersteuning kan bied aan die tweedetaalleerders in hulle Afrikaansmediumklasse. Die diensdoenende onderwysers wat aan die studie gaan deelneem is 15 leerondersteuningsopvoeders in die Stellenbosch-omgewing. Hulle professionele ontwikkeling is deel van my werksomskrywing as leerondersteuningsadviseur van die Wes Kaap Onderwysdepartement. Die studie sal dus nie die normale werksaamhede van die onderwysers benadeel nie. Hulle het ook reeds die behoefte aan my uitgespreek vir indiensopleiding om meer effektiewe ondersteuning aan tweedetaalleerders wat leerstoornisse ervaar te bied, derhalwe doen ek aansoek om die pedagogiek van die leerondersteuningsopvoeders te ontwikkel om sodoende 'n bydrae te lewer tot die ontwikkeling van hulle professionele groei. Die professionele ontwikkelingsessies sal tweeweeklik geskied vanaf Februarie 2014 tot Augustus 2014 en aangebied word deur die navorser self.

Ek het reeds gesprekke met die leerondersteuningsonderwysers asook skoolhoofde gevoer, wat laat blyk het, dat hulle die projek sal ondersteun aangesien dit positiewe gevolge vir hulle professionele groei sal inhou asook om hulle instaat te stel om meer effektiewe ondersteuning te lewer aan die groeiende getal tweedetaalleerders wat ondersteuning verlang.

Ek verneem graag van u in hierdie verband.

Die uwe

Mev. M Basson

## Annexure B: Copy of document from the WCED granting permission to undertake the study



Directorate: Research  
[Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za)  
 tel: +27 021 467 9272  
 Fax: 0865902282  
 Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000  
[wced.wcape.gov.za](http://wced.wcape.gov.za)

**REFERENCE:** 20140911-36319  
**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Maylene Basson  
 PO Box 695  
 Stellenbosch  
 7599

Dear Mrs Maylene Basson

### **RESEARCH PROPOSAL: PEDAGOGICAL SUPPORT TO ENHANCE READING COMPREHENSION OF NON-MOTHER TONGUE SPEAKERS IN AFRIKAANS INTERMEDIATE PHASE CLASSES**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **02 February 2015 till 30 September 2015**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services  
 Western Cape Education Department  
 Private Bag X9114  
 CAPE TOWN  
 8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

**Directorate: Research**

**DATE: 11 September 2014**

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Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001  
 tel: +27 21 467 9272 fax: 0865902282  
 Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

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Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000  
 Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22  
[www.westerncape.gov.za](http://www.westerncape.gov.za)

## Annexure C: Copy of informed consent form presented to participants in the research project



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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## Pedagogical support to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother tongue speakers in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by *Maylene Basson, PhD Curriculum Studies*, from the *Department of Curriculum Studies*, at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will contribute to the completion of a PhD Thesis in the department above. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because the researcher would like to contribute to research to improve teacher pedagogies regarding comprehension skills of second language learners in Afrikaans medium classes by using action research. The target group is Intermediate Phase Afrikaans teachers, and you happen to be part of this group.

The purpose of this study is to re-imagine reading strategies in order to support the pedagogics of teachers so that they are better able to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother tongue speakers in their Afrikaans medium classes.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in the following:

1. attending professional development sessions where pedagogies regarding reading and comprehension strategies will be discussed;
2. implementing these strategies in your classes
3. keeping a journal about your experience about the training and implementation of these strategies.
4. Observations by the researcher will be conducted in your classes.
5. completing a questionnaire before the research project starts
6. a sample of the group will be selected to partake in an interview.

This interview is intended to last for a maximum of one hour. The preferred venue would be any convenient room at your school.

Your participation would be beneficial to you, because you may acquire additional skills on how to support the unique needs of second language learners in your Afrikaans medium classes. By being part of an action research study may help you to evaluate your own practices.

Your experiences of and views about how and what you have learned while participating in this action research study can be used to inform teacher trainers about measures they have to take to improve the preparation of expert teachers.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Confidentiality will be maintained by means of anonymous identities in any form of reference made to your information, and the actual records will be accessible only to the researcher or his promoter. All the information on audio-tape (s) and transcripts will be destroyed after the final analysis of data has been made. You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me on 082 82100 91 or my supervisor dr MLA le Cordeur on 021 808 2265.

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Alison Mlitwa [amlitwa@sun.ac.za; 021 808 9031] at the Division for Research Development.

<b>SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE</b>
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The information above was described to [me/the subject/the participant] by [name of relevant person] in [Afrikaans/English/Xhosa/other] and [I am/the subject is/the participant is] in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to [me/him/her]. [I/the participant/the subject] was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to [my/his/her] satisfaction.

[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study. ] I have been given a copy of this form.

---

**1 Name of Subject/Participant**

---

**2 Signature of Subject/Participant**

**Date**

<b>SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR</b>
----------------------------------

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_

[He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [Afrikaans/\*English/\*Xhosa/\*Other].

---

**2.1 Signature of Investigator**

**Date**

## Annexure D: Questionnaire

### Questionnaire

1. Mark the reading models and strategies in which you have received professional development in order to develop reading skills of NON-MOTHER TONGUE speakers in your Afrikaans medium classes:

- Shared reading \_\_\_\_\_
- Group reading \_\_\_\_\_
- Guided reading \_\_\_\_\_
- Reading aloud \_\_\_\_\_
- Independent reading \_\_\_\_\_
- Top-down model \_\_\_\_\_
- Bottom-up model \_\_\_\_\_
- Interactive model \_\_\_\_\_
- Any other reading strategies not mentioned above:

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2. Which of these above models and strategies have you implemented in your Afrikaans medium class to develop the reading skills of NON-MOTHER TONGUE speakers? Why did you implement them?

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3. Name any of the above-mentioned models and strategies that you require additional professional development in order to deliver effective reading instruction to the NON-MOTHER TONGUE speakers in your classroom.

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4. Name stumbling blocks (if any) that you have experienced when implementing the above-mentioned strategies in your Afrikaans medium class.

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5. Name successes (if any) that you have experienced when implementing the above-mentioned strategies in your Afrikaans medium class.

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6. Do you explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies to NON-MOTHER TONGUE speakers in you Afrikaans medium class?

Yes / No

7. Mark the comprehension strategies in which you have received professional development in order to develop reading comprehension skills of NON-MOTHER TONGUE speakers in your Afrikaans medium classes:

- Guided comprehension \_\_\_\_\_
- Schema theory \_\_\_\_\_
- Metacognitive strategies \_\_\_\_\_
- Making predictions \_\_\_\_\_
- Questioning \_\_\_\_\_
- Drawing inferences \_\_\_\_\_
- Finding main ideas \_\_\_\_\_
- Drawing conclusions \_\_\_\_\_
- Evaluate \_\_\_\_\_
- Synthesize \_\_\_\_\_
- Gradual release of responsibility \_\_\_\_\_

8. Any other comprehension strategies not mentioned above:

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9. Which of these above strategies have you implemented in your Afrikaans medium class to develop the comprehension skills of NON-MOTHER TONGUE speakers? Why did you implement them?

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10. Name any of the above-mentioned strategies that you require additional professional development in order to deliver effective comprehension instruction to the NON-MOTHER TONGUE speakers in your classroom.

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11. Name stumbling blocks (if any) that you have experienced when implementing the above-mentioned strategies in your Afrikaans medium class.

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12. Name successes (if any) that you have experienced when implementing the above-mentioned strategies in your Afrikaans medium class.

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13. Complete the following section on professional development by circling either yes or no.

- My experience of professional development with regard to reading strategies, have been positive. Yes / No
- My professional development needs have been determined in the past, regarding reading strategies. Yes / No
- My professional development needs have been determined in the past, regarding comprehension strategies. Yes / No

- I would like to give in-put regarding my professional development needs. Yes/ No
- Professional development initiatives in the past with regard to reading and comprehension skills have considered the needs of non-mother tongue speakers in Afrikaans medium classes. Yes / No
- Professional development sessions attended by me have encouraged collaboration between colleagues teaching reading and comprehension skills to NON-MOTHER TONGUE speakers in Afrikaans medium classes Yes / No
- Professional development sessions attended by me have encouraged us as teachers to become reflective practitioners. Yes / No

14. The following statements concern three professional development activities.

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement by circling the appropriate number. 1 indicates strong agreement, 5 indicates strong disagreement.

<b>Updating activities</b>		<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>NEUTRAL</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
		1	2	3	4	5
i.	I read newly available information on reading and reading comprehension strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
ii.	I read about educational reforms and promising practices.	1	2	3	4	5
iii.	I read professional journals	1	2	3	4	5
iv.	I study subject matter, exercise books and teaching materials, including manuals.	1	2	3	4	5
v.	I read about training opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
vi.	I participate in training sessions within the school.	1	2	3	4	5
vii.	I participate In professional development activities outside the school.	1	2	3	4	5

viii.	I attend conferences and meetings regarding reading and comprehension strategies outside the school hosted by my professional association.	1	2	3	4	5
ix.	I visit the internet to obtain information related to reading and comprehension strategies.	1	2	3	4	5
x.	I participate in one-on-one coaching and mentoring in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Reflective activities</b>						
i.	After class I reflect on my lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
ii.	I discuss with my students what they experience in my lessons to improve my teaching practice.	1	2	3	4	5
iii.	I attend lessons of my colleagues to learn from them.	1	2	3	4	5
iv.	I ask colleagues to attend some of my lessons in order to get feedback from them.	1	2	3	4	5
v.	I discuss events in my literacy classroom with others in order to learn from them.	1	2	3	4	5
vi.	I analyse a problem in my practice thoroughly before choosing a solution.	1	2	3	4	5
vii.	I study my students' work to determine how my approach has worked.	1	2	3	4	5
viii.	I deal with problems in my teaching by looking at what the literature say about them.	1	2	3	4	5
ix.	I use student assessment results to, where needed, adjust my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
x.	Once a problem or question arises in my teaching practice, I carry	1	2	3	4	5

	out a small research project into possible causes and solutions.					
<b>Collaborative activities</b>						
i.	I talk about teaching problems that I experience in my literacy classes with colleagues.	1	2	3		
ii.	I support colleagues who experience problems in their literacy classes.	1	2	3	4	5
iii.	I share new teaching ideas with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
iv.	I share learning experiences with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
v.	I talk about the way I deal with events in my literacy classes with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
vi.	I discuss improvements and innovations in literacy development at my school with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
vii.	I use colleagues' teaching materials in my literacy lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
viii.	I write new literacy programmes with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
ix.	I develop new literacy teaching materials with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
x.	I construct assessment materials with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
xi.	I study student performance data with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
xii.	I prepare literacy lessons with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
xiii.	I experiment with new teaching methods in my literacy classes with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
xiv.	I co-teach literacy lessons with colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5

Adapted from de Vries, Jansen & van de Grift (2013:83).

15. To what extent did the implementation of action research in your class contribute to the improvement of your pedagogies regarding reading and reading comprehension skills of non-mother tongue speakers?

15. Tot watter mate het die toepassing van aksienavorsing in jou klas bygedra tot die verbetering van jou pedagogiek rakende die lees- en leesbegripvaardighede van nie-moedertaalsprekers?

- My gehelp om probleemareas vinniger te identifiseer & aan te spreek.
- My kans gegee om probleemareas met ander kundiges & kollegas te bespreek & so oplossings te vind.
- Ek het baie interessante idees gekry om lees- en leesbegripvaardighede te ontwikkel by nie-moedertaalsprekers.
- Ek het geleer om baie meer te reflekteer oor dit wat ek in die klas doen met leerders.
- Ek het geleer om my refleksies van vorige lesse te gebruik as beginpunt vir opvolg lesse.
- Ek besef dat aksienavorsing 'n proses is wat nooit ophou nie.
- Ek besef aksienavorsing is noodsaaklik om 'n suksesvolle onderwyser te wees.

## Annexure F: Observation schedule

<b>LESSON OBSERVATION SHEET</b>	
Teacher: _____ School: _____ Date: _____	
<b>Reading strategy:</b>	
Shared Reading	
Guided Reading	
Reading aloud	
Group reading	
Independent reading	
<b>Comprehension strategy: Guided Comprehension using the "Fab four"</b>	
Prediction	
Clarifying	
Questioning	
Summarising (main idea)	
<b>Comprehension strategy: comprehension process motions</b>	
Main idea	
Inferring	
Prediction	
Clarifying	
<b>Lesson structure</b>	
Prior knowledge was activated	Yes/No
New vocabulary was explained by using	Pictures Objects Actions Other
Vocabulary strategies used	Cloze Graphic organiser Semantic chart
Appropriate scaffolding was provided	Yes/No
Gradual release of responsibility method was used	Yes/No
Teacher created enough opportunities for pupils to respond in full sentences	Yes/No
Enough opportunities were given to practice comprehension skills	Yes/No
Tactile and kinaesthetic activities were used	Yes/No
The teacher created an atmosphere that encouraged reading engagement	
<b>The text</b>	
The text was culturally appropriate	Yes/No
The text matched the level of proficiency of the learners	Yes/No
The text was appropriate for the comprehension strategy being taught	Yes/No
The text was read more than once	Yes/No
<b>The classroom</b>	
The classroom is print rich	Yes/No
Word walls containing new vocabulary	Yes/No
<b>Reflection educator:</b>	<b>Reflection researcher:</b>
Signature: _____	Signature: _____

## Annexure G: Interview protocol

## **Interview schedule**

1. How did these professional development sessions influence your professional knowledge regarding reading and reading comprehension strategies for non-mother tongue speakers?
2. What reading strategies did you find to be most effective to develop reading skills of the non-mother tongue speakers in your intervention group?
3. What comprehension strategies did you find to be most effective to develop reading comprehension skills of the non-mother tongue speakers in your intervention group?
4. To what extent did the professional development sessions influence collaboration with you fellow colleagues?
5. Did the implementation of reading and comprehension strategies in your class improve the reading comprehension of the non-mother tongue speakers? How was this determined?
6. Did you have enough opportunities to contribute to the content of the professional development programme?
7. Do you have any other recommendations regarding the content of the professional development programme?
8. Do you require additional professional development in any aspects covered in the programme?
9. Why would you participate in a similar programme in future?
10. Why would you not participate in a similar programme in future?
11. Did you need to adapt the reading comprehension strategies to accommodate the specific needs of the non-mother tongue speakers in your intervention group? If you did, what adaptations did you make?
12. To what extent did your confidence improve or not improve regarding the education of non-mother tongue speakers?
13. Would you like to make any further comments or requests?

## **Annexure H: Part of a journal of one participant**



<b>Joernaal van:</b> .....	<b>Datum:</b> 16, 23, 25 September
<b>Strategie/ë wat toegepas is:</b> <u>Hoofgedagte /Samevatting</u> (Sokkies die Samevatter) Eenmaal lank gelede- deur Nick Daly	
<p><b>Wat het gewerk?</b></p> <p>Baie tyd om die woordeskat te ontwikkel het gewerk. Hier het ek weer visueel prente by woorde gepas en taktiel 'n kruiebossie saam gebring om aan te voel en te ruik. Dit het hulle gehelp om die Karoo te verbeeld. Weereens kon ek dit op die kaart vir hulle wys en ook vertel van die dorpie en afstand vanaf Franschoek. Die vrae om die hoofgedagte te vind het goed gewerk. Leerders se aandag is toe deurentyd behou. Leerders kon woordeskat in mooi sinne gebruik en dit het gewerk dat hulle 'n deel van die boek in groepe kon rolspel. Dit was baie pret en het ook die leesbegrip beter vasgelê. Die storie en les van die boek het hulle laat vereenswellig met tye wat hulle ook in die klas gesukkel het om in Afrikaans hardop te lees. Die taalstrukture aktiwiteit van intensiewe vorme het leerders se taalkennis baie verbreed, want hulle het dit nog min gehoor in hulle lewens.</p>	
<p><b>Wat het nie gewerk nie?</b></p> <p>Alhoewel die konteks goed vasgelê was, het leerders dit nog steeds moeilik gevind om die Karoo te verstaan. Hierdie boek het nie soveel soos die ander boeke hulle visueel gestimuleer nie. Deels daarvan kan dalk wees dat die kleure in die boek meer vaal soos die Karoo is. Die boek was ook bietjie langer en met minder humor. Ons moes oor twee lesse die boek lees en ek moes weer hoofgedagte moddelleer. Alhoewel ek die woordeskat verminder het, was hierdie boek se woordeskat dalk bietjie moeilik vir hulle.</p>	
<p><b>Wat het my verras?</b></p> <p>Die leerders kon van die nuwe woordeskat mooi in sinne gebruik het. Ek het getwyfel of hulle dit in die regte konteks sou gebruik, maar hulle het my verras. Ek het hulle aangemoedig om die nuwe woordeskat in sinne in die hoofstroomklas ook te gebruik en van hulle het. Hulle het selfs na die les vir hulle klasopvoeder gesê sy lyk "fraai". Wat my ook verras het was die feit dat ek gedink het dat die leerders meer simpatie met die karakter sou hê, maar dit was asof hulle eerder wou weg beweeg van hartseer konteks (en in hulle geval baie realistiese omstandighede by hulle huise). Dit het my laat besef dat hierdie groep leerders meer belangstel in boeke met humor of feite. Definitief boeke wat hulle</p>	

verbeelding meer simuleer.

**Met watter vrae het die week geëindig?**

Watter boek sal geskik wees om my volgende strategie te onderrig?  
Nou dat ek weet waarvan leerders hou (humor, diere, feite) moet ek miskien 'n  
boek kies in die reeks van Aleksis Bitskoff en Camilla de La Bedoye.  
Hoe kan ek in die toekoms leesbegrip en taalstrukture saam onderrig?

## Annexure I: Professional development programme

  
 UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH  
 UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

**Inleiding tot die navorsingsprojek  
 en  
 Aksienavorsing**

Februarie 2015  
 Maylene Basson  
[Maylene.Basson@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Maylene.Basson@westerncape.gov.za)  
 University of Stellenbosch

**S** Die vyf fases van aksienavorsing

1. Die onderwyser identifiseer 'n probleem in sy of haar klas.

In die geval van hierdie studie is dit nie-moedertaalsprekers in Afrikaans-medium klasse wat probleme ervaar met leesbegrip en onderwysers wat onbevoeg voel om hulle te help

Die navorsingsvraag word dan bepaal.

4

**S** Inleiding

- Aksienavorsing
- Aksienavorsing en joernaalinskrywings
- Leesmodelle
- Gebalanseerde leesbenadering
  - ✧ Gedeelde lees
  - ✧ Begeleide lees
  - ✧ Groepbegeleide lees
  - ✧ Luidlees
- Leesbegripstrategieë

2

**S** Die vyf fases van aksienavorsing

Navorsingsvraag

How will a scientifically researched method of professional development of pre- and in-service teachers lead to improved pedagogics to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother tongue learners in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes?

Hipotese

Professional development of pre- and in-service teachers lead/did not lead to improved pedagogics to enhance reading comprehension of non-mother tongue learners in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes.

5

**S** Agtergrond

Aksienavorsing is 'n sistematiese proses wat professionele persone help om hulle praktyke te verander. Dit is gewoonlik 'n kolaboratiewe proses wat verskeie individue behels.

Die voordeel van aksienavorsing is dat dit onderwysers in staat stel om alternatiewe strategieë te ondersoek wat pas by hulle leerders.

Aksienavorsing wat leesbegrip beklemtoon, kan 'n belangrike rol speel om die onderwyser se begrip van effektiewe leesonderrig te verbeter.

3

**S** Die vyf fases van aksienavorsing

2. Ontwikkel 'n plan van aksie

Tydens die fase word praktiese uitvoering gegee aan die studie.

In die geval van hierdie studie, is dit die opleiding wat julle nou ondergaan.

Maar dit behels ook die uitvoering van die opleiding tydens julle onderrigpraktyk.

6

**S** Die vyf fases van aksienavorsing

3. Versamel data oor die probleem

Data insameling	
kwalitatief	kwalitatief
vraelys	vraelys
	onderhoude
	joernaalinskrywings
	observasies

7

**S** Generiese vrae

- Wat het ek gedoen? (fokus op die aksie)

Onderwyser's opgelei in lees- en leesbegripstrategieë.  
Strategieë word toegepas in klasse.

Verwys terug na die navorsingsvraag -daar word verwag dat wanneer die data geanaliseer is, die navorsingsvraag beantwoord sal word.

m.a.w.

10

**S** Die vyf fases van aksienavorsing

4. Analisering van die data

Data wat tydens die beplanningsfase en aksiefase ingesamel is, word ondersoek en analiseer.

Data moet goed georganiseer wees.

Kwalitatiewe data is beskrywend van aard en word gewoonlik in kategorieë georganiseer.

8

**S**

Die professionele ontwikkeling van onderwyser's het gelei tot verbeterde pedagogiek ter bevordering van leesbegrip van nie-moedertaalsprekers in Afrikaans-mediumklasse.

of

Die professionele ontwikkeling van onderwyser's het nie gelei tot verbeterde pedagogiek ter bevordering van leesbegrip van nie-moedertaalsprekers in Afrikaans-mediumklasse nie.

11

**S** Die vyf fases van aksienavorsing

Kwantitatiewe data word opgeteken deur beskrywende statistiek soos bv grafieke te gebruik.

Wanneer data geanaliseer word, is dit nuttig om die volgende generiese vrae te gebruik en hulle toe te pas op die probleem wat ondersoek word.

In die geval van hierdie studie is dit nie-moedertaalsprekers in Afrikaans-medium klasse wat probleme ervaar met leesbegrip.

9

**S**

- Watter veranderinge het plaasgevind? (fokus op verandering)

Dit is belangrik om data van meer as een bron te versamel om 'n antwoord op hierdie vraag te verkry.

In hierdie studie word daar gebruik gemaak van:

- ❖ Joernaalinskrywings
- ❖ Onderhoude
- ❖ Observasies
- ❖ Vraelyste

12

### S Triangulasie

Dit is belangrik dat die data verkry van hierdie bronne mekaar versterk om geldige en betroubare gevolgtrekkings te maak.

M.a.w.

die data wat ingesamel is met die vraelyste word bevestig deur data wat ingesamel is tydens onderhoude, observasies en joernaalinskrywings.

Die proses waar verskillende data insamelmodes geïntegreer word om inligting oor die probleem te bevestig of te weerlê, word triangulasie genoem.

13

### S Siklusse van aksienavorsing

- Siklus 1

Inligting ingewin van literatuurstudie en vraelyste.

- Siklus 2

Implementering van professionele ontwikkeling.

Data ingewin van joernaalinskrywings, onderhoude en observasies.

- Siklus 3

Gebruik die data om program te verander en te verfyn

16

### S

- Wat is die verbande (*indien enige*) tussen die aksies wat geneem is en die verandering in prestasie? (fokus op verbande)

Afhanklike veranderlike: Vemoë van onderwysers om nie-moedertaalsprekers in hulle Afrikaansmedium-klasse te onderrig ter bevordering van hulle leesbegrip.

Onafhanklike veranderlike: Strategieë wat onderwyserse toepas om om nie-moedertaalsprekers in hulle Afrikaansmedium-klasse te onderrig om hulle leesbegrip te bevorder.

14

### S Navorsersjoernaal

Dit is belangrik dat navorsers 'n navorsingsjoernaal hou tydens implementering van die aksienavorsingsprojek.

Hoe meer observasies jou joernaal bevat, hoe meer inligting sal jy hê tydens die finale siklus van die projek.

Dit is veral belangrik vir navorsers om aan te teken wanneer afgewyk word van die oorspronklike plan en hoekom daar afgewyk is.

17

### S

5. Pas die teorie aan en begin weer.

Metodes waarop professionele ontwikkeling plaasgevind het word aangepas en die proses begin weer van voor af.

15

### S Aksienavorsingjoernaal

Hierdie joernaal word voltooi elke keer nadat jy met die groep leerders gewerk het.

Dit is belangrik om die datum aan te dui.

Die volgende vrae word beantwoord:

- Wat het goed gegaan?
- Waarop kan ek verbeter?
- Wat het my verbaas?
- Vrae of onsekerhede?

18

  
 UNIVERSITEIT-STELENBOSCHUNIVERSITY  
 THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

## Reflektiewe denke

Maylene Basson  
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 Stellenbosch Universiteit

Maart 2014

**S** Tegnieke wat leer en reflektiewe denke bevorder

- Dink hardop: Leerders leer reflektiewe denke deur na hulle onderwysers se denkwyses te luister.
- Besprekings: Klasbesprekings is 'n basiese strategie om kreatiewe denke te fasiliteer.
- Groepe: Leerders kan in groter of kleiner groepe verdeel word. Die aktiwiteit en klasgrootte sal bepaal hoe groot die groepe is.
- "Brainstorming": Alle idees oor 'n onderwerp word binne 'n beperkte tyd weergegee.

4

**S** Definisies van reflektiewe denke

- Reflektiewe denke verwys na die vermoë van die onderwyser om kreatief te dink en soms selfkrities te wees t.o.v. klaskamerpraktyke.
- Reflektiewe denke is 'n gedissiplineerde bevraagtekening van die motiewe, hulpmiddels en uitkomst van opvoedkundige praktyke. Dit help onderwysers om omstandighede sowel as houdings te ondersoek wat leerders se prestasies beïnvloed.

2

**S** Tegnieke (vervolg)

- Verkry konsensus: Opvolg aktiwiteit na "brainstorming". Alle idees word oorweeg en die mees gepaste idees word gekies. Almal moet saamstem.
- Rol-spel: Dit gee die onderwyser geleentheid om insig te verkry t.o.v. leerders se gevoelens oor 'n onderwerp, hoe hulle probleme oplos en wat vir hulle belangrik is.
- Vra vrae: Deur vrae te vra mag die onderwyser die volgende bereik:

5

**S** Konstruktivisme en kreatiewe denke

Die volgende leerervarings is geskik vir 'n program wat konstruktivisme navolg:

- Leer en reflektiewe denke word beklemtoon. Relevante take moet dus op 'n verskeidenheid wyses aangepak word.
- Leer moet plaasvind d.m.v. aktiwiteite wat deel maak van die leerder se ervaringswêreld en wat leerders geleentheid gee om saam oplossings te vind vir probleme. Hierdie aktiwiteite moet kommunikasie en spanwerk versterk.

3

**S** Vrae

- ❖ maak die aktiwiteit meer gefokus
- ❖ help groeplede om alternatiewe wat nie bespreek is nie te oorweeg
- ❖ beheer die bespreking sowel as die stemming van die groep
- ❖ help groeplede om dieper insig in die probleem of oplossings te verkry

*Aktiwiteit om reflektiewe denke te bevorder*

6

## Gedeelde- en begeleide lees

Deur Maylene Basson

## Hoe werk gedeelde lees?

- Stap 1: Stel die teks bekend
- Stap 2: Lees die teks
- Stap 3: Bespreking
- Stap 4: Lees weer
- Stap 5: Leerders werk onafhanklik

## Die gebalanseerde geletterdheidsprogram

Die verskillende pedagogiese benaderings is almal teksgebaseerd en behels die volgende:

- \*Gedeelde lees
- \*Gedeelde skryf
- \*Woorde en sinne skryf
- \*Groep lees
- \*Begeleide lees
- \*Onafhanklike lees
- \*Onafhanklike skryf
- \*Luidlees

## Hoe word gedeelde lees aangpas vir L2 leerders

- \*Baie meer tyd word aan die voorleesfase spandeer sodat die nodige agtergrondkennis geaktiveer kan word.
- \*Die teks moet kultuurrelevant wees.
- \*Nuwe woordeskat moet d.m.v. prente en konkrete voorwerpe voorgestel word en teen die klaskamer mure vertoon word.
- \*Maak ook gebruik van semantiese kaarte en woordmure.
- \*Baie vaslegging van nuwe woordeskat d.m.v. speletjies.

## Wat is gedeelde lees?

- \*Dit is 'n aktiwiteit waaraan die hele klas meedoen.
- \*Leesvaardighede word gemoduleer en onderrig.
- \*Die klem word spesifiek geplaas op woordeskat uitbreiding en leesbegrip.
- \*Daar word van vergrootte tekste gebruik sodat alle leerders saam kan lees.
- \*Ouer leerders kan elk van hul eie teks voorsien word wat almal saam met die opvoeder lees.

## Wat is begeleide lees?

- \*Tydens begeleide lees werk die opvoeder met 'n kleiner groep leerders wat almal op dieselfde vlak lees.
- \*Die opvoeder help die leerders om die teks te lees en te begryp deur die vaardighede wat hulle reeds geleer het te gebruik.
- \*Die res van die klas is met ander geletterdheidsaktiwiteite besig.
- \*In die Intermediêre Fase behoort die opvoeder met 'n verskillende groep leerders twee tot die keer per week te lees.

2016/07/15

### Hoekom is begeleide lees belangrik?

- \*Opvoeder kry die geleentheid om te luister hoe elke leerder lees.
- \*Dit help leerders om met groter vlotheid te lees.
- \*Dit help leerders om met beter begrip te lees.
- \*Dit help leerders om onafhanklik te lees.
- \*Dit help leerders om die strategieë en vaardighede wat hulle tydens gedeelde lees toe te pas.
- \*Opvoeders kan leerders se vordering meet.
- \*Opvoeders kan leerders aanmoedig en prys.

### Hoe werk begeleide lees?

1. Stel die teks bekend.
2. Fasiliteer die lees van die teks
3. Leerders lees die teks
4. Opvoeder luister na individuele lees
5. Na lees: bespreek die teks en lê vaardighede vas deur die teks te gebruik.

### Vergelyk begeleide lees en aangepaste begeleide lees

Begeleide lees	Aangepaste begeleide lees
Lesse: 1-2 dae per week (20min)	Lesse: 3+ dae per week (20-30min)
Opvoeder stel teks bekend - bespreek en verbind inhoud met leerders se voorkennis. Gebruik prente en voorwerpe.	Opvoeder stel kultuur relevante teks bekend - bespreek en verbind inhoud met leerders se voorkennis. Gebruik prente en voorwerpe.
Leerders wat nie vlot lees nie subvokaliseer terwyl hulle die teks lees.	Opvoeder lees die teks en modelleer vlotheid en lei besprekings om woordeskat en leesbegrip te fasiliteer.
Opvoeder help leerders om gepaste strategieë te oefen.	Leerders wat beter taalvaardighede het kan subvokaliseer terwyl hulle lees

**DANKIE !**

Woord oefeninge fokus op fonologiese bewustheid en spelreëls	Opvoeder neem leerders waar en help hulle om korrekte strategieë vas te lê owl as om prente en voorwerpe te gebruik om woordeskat vas te lê.
	Woord oefeninge fokus op morfologie, fonologiese bewustheid en spelreëls sowel as die klanke wat in die teks voorkom.
	Woordeskatjoernale asook skryftake word verbind met die teks.



7/15/2016

## LEESMODELLE

MAYLENE HANSON (LEERONDERSTEUNINGSADVISEUR)  
WKOD KRING 1

## “Top-down” model

Knowledge and experiences
Phonological coding
Comprehension of text

## “Bottom-up” model

Comprehension of text
Reading fluently
Reading paragraphs
Reading sentences
Reading words
Phonological coding

Voordeel van hierdie model is:

- Fasiliteer vlotter wat leesbegrip by sommige leersders bevorder.

Nadele van hierdie metode is:

- Tweedetaalleersders ervaar probleme met vreemde inhoud en komplekse taal wat hulle leesbegrip negatief beïnvloed
- Sommige leersders mag nie genoegsame letter-, klank- en woordherkenningsvaardighede om leesbegrip te ondersteun nie

Die voordele van hierdie model is:

- leersders bemeester sigwoorde outomaties
- hulle gebruik hulle kennis van klanke en letters om woorde te dekodeer.

Nadele van hierdie model is:

- sommige leersders leers woord- vir-woord
- hulle ervaar probleme om die dieper betekenis van die teks te begryp – veral tweedetaalleersders.

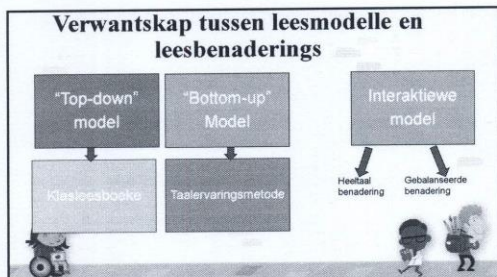
## Interaktiewe model

Knowledge and experiences
Phonological coding
Comprehension of text
Reading fluently
Reading paragraphs
Reading sentences
Reading words
Phonological coding

Voordeel van hierdie metode is:

- leersders kan sterkpunte gebruik om vir swakpunte te kompenseer by goeie agtergrondkennis kan kompenseer vir swakwoordherkenningsvaardighede

7/15/2016



**Fonologiese bewustheid vs fonemiese bewustheid**

- Fonologiese bewustheid  
Dit is die bewustheid dat woorde opgebou word uit verskeie klanke.  
Dit vorm die basis van klankleer. Klankleer is die verbinde tussen klanke en letters. Leerders wat nie hierdie verbinde maak nie sukkel om te lees.
- Fonemiese bewustheid  
'n Foneem is die kleinste eenheid van taal wat betekenis dra bv. bal bestaan uit drie foneeme: b-a-l.  
'n Leerder het fonemiese bewustheid wanneer in staat is om die b in bal te vervang met w = wal; rym te herken; woorde in lettergrepe te verdeel; kleiner woorde in langer woorde te identifiseer bv. lang in verlanje.



2016/07/15

## Begeleide leesbegrip


deur Maylene Basson



### Hoe werk begeleide leesbegrip?


Fase 1:

- Onderwyser onderrig die hele klasgroep – 'n leesbegripstrategie.
  - Verduidelik die strategie
  - Demonstree die strategie (hardop lees en dink)
  - Begelei die leerders deur die teks te lees en hulle te help om die strategie toe te pas.
  - Oefen: leerders oefen die strategie op 'n ander gedeelte van die teks – minimale ondersteuning.



### Wat is begeleide leesbegrip?

- Leerders kry die geleentheid om leesbegripstrategie te leer in verskeie situasies deur gebruik te maak van verskillende soorte teks op hulle vaardigheidsvlakke.
- Dit bestaan uit 3 fases, naamlik:
  - opvoeder gerigte instruksie
  - leerders pas strategie toe
  - opvoeders en leerders reflekteer en stel doelwitte.



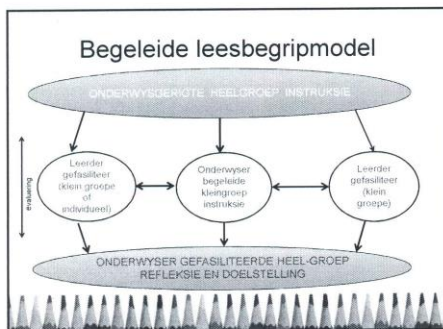
- Refleksie help leerders om te dink hoe hulle die strategie op hulle eie gaan toepas.

Fase 2:


- Leerders pas leesbegripstrategie toe in kleiner groepe (onderwyser of leerder gefasiliteer).

Kleingroep onderrig deur onderwyser

- Hersien leesbegripstrategie asook strategie van die dag.

- Ondersteun leerders om die strategie van die dag toe te pas sowel as vorige strategie soos die teks gelees word. Aanvanklik word leerders aangemoedig om die strategie toe te pas en geleidelik word ondersteuning verminder.
- Oefen die strategie.
- Reflekteer deur leerders aan te moedig om met ander te deel hoe die strategie gehelp het om begrip van die teks te fasiliteer.



2016/07/15

## Begeleide leesbegrip


deur Maylene Basson



### Hoe werk begeleide leesbegrip?

Fase 1:

- Onderwyser onderrig die hele klasgroep – 'n leesbegripstrategie.
  - Verduidelik die strategie
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- Dit bestaan uit 3 fases, naamlik:
  - opvoeder gerigte instruksie
  - leerders pas strategie toe
  - opvoeders en leerders reflekteer en stel doelwitte.



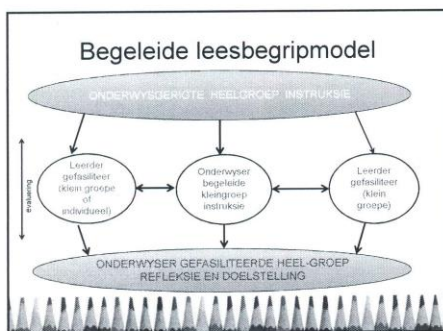
- Refleksie help leerders om te dink hoe hulle die strategie op hulle eie gaan toepas.

Fase 2:


- Leerders pas leesbegripstrategie toe in kleiner groepe (onderwyser of leerder gefasiliteer).

Kleingroep onderrig deur onderwyser

- Hersien leesbegripstrategie asook strategie van die dag.


- Ondersteun leerders om die strategie van die dag toe te pas sowel as vorige strategie soos die teks gelees word. Aanvanklik word leerders aangemoedig om die strategie toe te pas en geleidelik word ondersteuning verminder.
- Oefen die strategie.
- Reflekteer deur leerders aan te moedig om met ander te deel hoe die strategie gehelp het om begrip van die teks te fasiliteer.



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Fase 3:



- Onderwyser gefasiliteerde heelgroep bespreking en die stel van nuwe doelwitte.



Ek sien die woord ..... Ek wonder wat dit beteken? Ek verstaan nie ..... Dit maak my deurmekaar.....

- Vraagstelling: Stel die karakter bekend wat gaan help: *Frik Vraagsteller*. Vraagstelling bevorder leesbegrip aangesien leerders die teks moet verstaan om sinvolle vrae te vra.

Gaan soos volg te werk:  
Welkom by die leesspeletjie *Lees is pret!*  
Jy kry die kans om vrae te stel en te beantwoord en 'n prys te wen!!

### Leesbegripstrategieë

- Voorspelling: Stel die karakter bekend wat gaan help. *Fietjie die voorspeller*.
- Dit motiveer leerders om te lees en verskaf 'n doel om te lees.

Gaan soos volg te werk:  
Haai ek is Fietjie die Voorspeller, ek hou daarvan om die toekoms te voorspel. Ek sien .....  
Wat dink julle gaan ons in die boek lees?




Wie kan die vraag beantwoord wat met *Wat* begin? Vra vrae wat begin met: Waar? Hoekom? Wanneer?

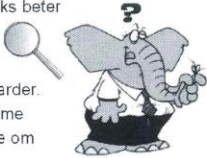
- Samevatting: Stel die karakter bekend wat gaan help: *Sokkies die Samevatter*. Samevatting help leerders om die hoofgedagte te vind sowel as die feite wat dit ondersteun.




Maak stellings soos: Ek wonder..... Ek dink.....


- Oplaring: Stel die karakter bekend wat gaan help: *Ollie die Opklaarder*. Die oplaring van woorde wat leerders nie verstaan nie help hulle om die teks beter te begryp.

Gaan soos volg te werk:  
Haai ek is Ollie die Opklaarder. Ek hou daarvan om geheime op te los. Ek soek leidrade om my te help.




Gaan soos volg te werk:  
My naam is Sokkies en ek hou daarvan om alles bymekaar te hou. Ek hou ook daarvan om inligting bymekaar te maak wat kort en samevattend is.

Die skrywer wil die volgende oordra.....  
Die hoofgedagte is.....



### Hulpmiddels

- Boekmerke: Leerders kan hulle eie boekmerke maak om hulle te herhinder aan die vier karakters.
- Verdeel 'n papierbord in vier dele met 'n wyser wat kan beweeg. Dit is 'n visuele en taktiele hulpmiddel.



Dankie!

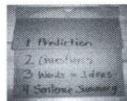
- Maak 'n plakaat met 4 deure soos die voorbeeld. Leerders kan hulle voorspellings, opsommings ens. aan die binnekant skryf.



- Sekwensie sinne: Leerders kry die geleentheid om bladsye op te som (of die opvoeder kan help. Hulle moet dit dan in die korrekte volgorde pak.

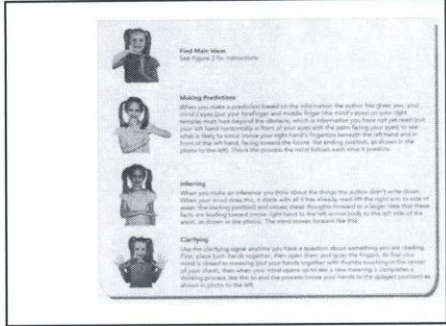
- Maak klein boekies waarin 'n vraag vir elke bladsy wat gelees is opgestel is. Vrae kan dan tussen maats uitgeruil word.

- Maak plakate soos die voorbeeld. Selfde as 4 deur plakaat.



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### Kinestetiese leesbegripstrategie



- ### Bewegings vir leesbegrip
- Die Engelse term is *Comprehension Process Motions. (CPM)*
  - Hierdie strategie word gebruik om jong lesers se leesbegrip te bevorder deur 'n addisionele invoersistiem te gebruik.
    - Elke beweging stel 'n unieke breinproses voor wat gebruik word om die teks te begryp.
    - Die is 'n alternatief tot tradisionele leesbegripstrategieë.


- ### Voorbeeld van 'n bewegings vir leesbegrip les
- 'n Prent van die leesbegripstrategie moet beskikbaar wees.
- Prosedure:
- Vandag gaan ons 'n leesbegripstrategie behandel wat ons gaan help om die hoofgedagte te vind.

- Bewegings vir leesbegrip is kinestetiese handgebare wat gebruik word om abstrakte leesbegripsprosesse soos:
  - \*hoofgedagtes
  - \*afleidings
  - \*voorspellings
  - \*opheldering voor te stel.

**Hoofgedagte**

Ek gaan my hande beweeg om te wys wat in my brein gebeur terwyl ek die hoofgedagte vind. Doen as volg:

*Hou jou regterhand vertikaal aan die regterkant van jou liggaam in lyn met jou bors.*



*Beweeg dit stadig van links na regs soos die paragraaf gelees word.*

*Gebruik vergrootte teks.*

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*Maak 'n regmerk aan die einde van elke sin wat details bevat.*

*Vertel vir leerders dat jou brein vorentoe beweeg sodra jy 'n sin wat detail bevat, lees. Al die feite word dan saamgevoeg.*

*Gaan so voort tot alle sinne wat feite en details bevat klaar gelees is.*

*Hou dan regterhand weer langs die liggaam en verduidelik die volgende:*

*Nou kry leerders die kans om te lees en die hoofgedagte te vind.*

*Verduidelik: "..... is die hoofgedagte omdat .....". Verduidelik hoe watter feit die blad van die tafel is en watter ondersteunende feite die pote van die tafel is.*

*Herhaal die proses 5 X met die daaropvolgende paragrawe. leerders demonstreer die bewegings totdat hulle dit foutloos kan doen.*

*"Soos ons brein die sinne lees wat details bevat, soek ons ook vir die hoofgedagte wat al die details kan saamvat."*

*Demonstreer weer die handbewegings wat gemaak word aan die einde van sinne wat details bevat.*

*Wanneer jy "hoofgedagte" sê, beweeg jou linkerhand voor jou liggaam, horisontaal tot by jou ken.*

*Gaan voort met die luidlees proses en sodra die hoofgedagte gelees word, verduidelik hoe jou brein gewerk het "think-aloud".*

*Verduidelik hoekom jy geweet het dat dit die hoofgedagte is.*

*Deur die loop van die les, demonstreer jy of die leerders die denkproses en die handgebare wat daarmee gepaard gaan.*

*Lees weer die paragraaf en verduidelik dat jy gaan demonstreer hoe jou brein werk.*

*Herlees die paragraaf en doen die handbewegings soos jy reeds gedemonstreer het. (hoofgedagte is die blad van die tafel en feite is die pote)*

*Leerders moet aandui of dit 'n 'n feit of hoofgedagte is.*

**Dankie!!**



7/15/2016

### WOORDESKAT AKTIWITEITE

MAYLENE BASSON

**Die Naaldekoker**  
deurskynende vierke; lyf, voelers;  
oë; pote; kop; eet insekte

**Die Skoenlapper**  
kleurvole vierke; lyf, voelers, oë;  
pote; kop, sug nektar, skubbe

#### Woordeskat uit die leesstuk: Die Naaldekoker

Woord	Definisie
Famploem	Om iets beter te doen as enige ander persoon of dier.
Geloue	Wanneer 'n mens of dier begin lewe.
Metamorfose	'n Liggaamsverandering
Deurskynende	Da soos lig deur; maar nie soveel dat jy duidelik daardeur kan sien soos glas nie.
Uitwaas	Groot; uitgroei; of volgroeid
Helderkleurige	Kleurig met duidelik en suiwer is.
Voorkyn	Jy kan dit sien.

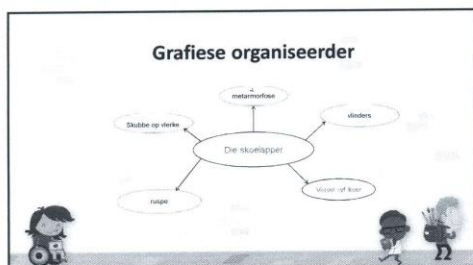
#### Venn diagram

#### Woordeskat uit die leesstuk: Die Skoenlapper

Woord	Definisie
riepie	Dit is 'n worm.
nektar	Die soet sap in blomme.
metamorfose	Verandering van die liggaam.
papie	Wanneer die skoenlapper rus en nie eet nie.
vervel	Die vel kom van die liggaam af.
skubbe	'lein stukke wat uit die vierke van skoenlappers breek.
opgetrommel	Dit is getrommel.

#### Semantiese kaart

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### Eksplisiete onderrig van woordeskat met prente

### Cloze oefening

Die wylie skoelapper lê \_\_\_\_\_ onder plante se blare.  
 Die baba skoelapper word 'n \_\_\_\_\_ genoem.  
 Die ruspe \_\_\_\_\_ vyf keer voordat hulle die papie-stadium bereik.  
 'n Volwasse \_\_\_\_\_ verskyn na vier weke.  
 Die verandering van 'n skoelapper se liggaam word 'n \_\_\_\_\_ genoem.

### Taktiele en kinestetiese aktiwiteite

- Pas woorde en prente bymekaar
- Loop op voetspore waarop woorde geskryf is
- Sponskubus met woorde
- Pas prente en sinne bymekaar
- Knip en plak prente in die korrekte volgorde
- Verbind woorde met hulle definisies

### Woordmure

Verskaf woordeskat en taalstrukture wat 2e taal leersers benodig om aan leeraktiwiteite deel te neem.

Wat gebeur wanneer?  
 Wat veroorsaak?  
 Waarmee is \_\_\_\_\_ bedek?  
 Hoekom het \_\_\_\_\_ helder kleure?

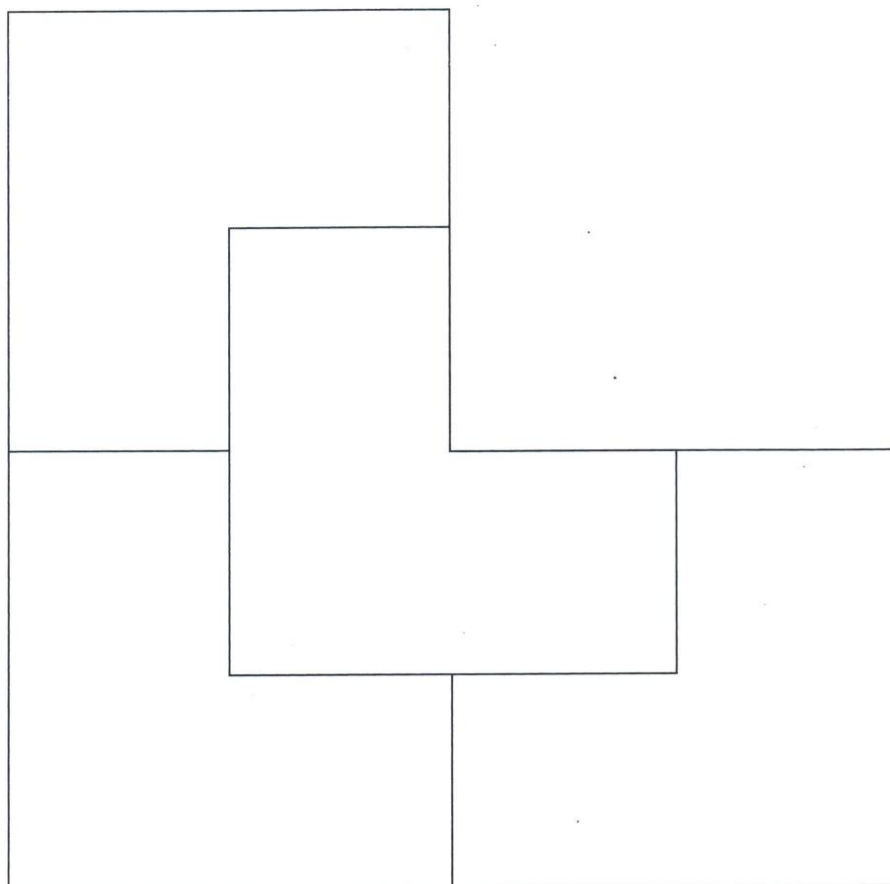
### DANKIE!

## Anexure J: Examples of activities to develop critical thinking

Taggart and Wilson. (2005:22 and 29)

### 22 PROMOTING REFLECTIVE THINKING IN TEACHERS

**Figure 1.4** Garden Plot Solution

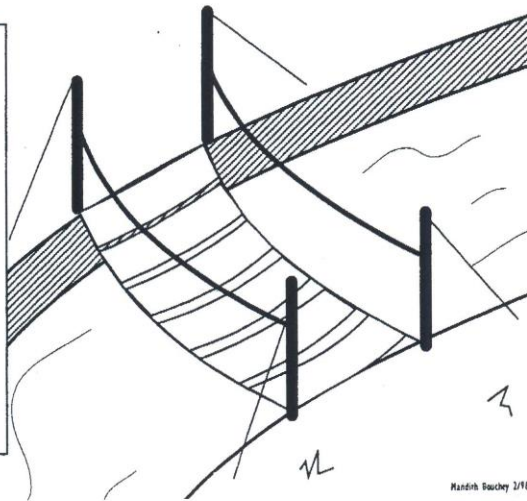


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Figure 1.7 Logic Lure (Scene)



**Dog, Rabbit, and a Bag of Vegetables**  
 A boy owned a dog, a rabbit and a bag of vegetables. One day he was on the edge of a gorge, where there was a shaky old swinging bridge that was only strong and wide enough to hold him and one of his possessions. If he left the dog and rabbit alone, the dog would eat the rabbit. If he left the rabbit and the vegetables alone, the rabbit would eat the vegetables. How did he get safely across the gorge with all three of his possessions.



Maridith Bouchey 2/18

SOURCE: Maridith Bouchey. Used with permission.

## Annexure K: Ethical clearance



UNIVERSITEIT-STELLENBOSCH-UNIVERSITY  
JOB KENNISVERHOËT • YOUR KNOWLEDGE PARTNER

### Approved with Stipulations New Application

20-Nov-2014  
BAZZON, Magdalene

Proposal #: DEBC/Bazzon/Nov2014/18

Title: Pedagogical support to enhance reading of non-mother tongue speakers in Afrikaans Intermediate Phase classes.

Dear Mrs Magdalene BAZZON,

Your New Application received on 06-Nov-2014, was reviewed  
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: 11-Nov-2014 -10-Nov-2015

The following stipulations are relevant to the approval of your project and must be adhered to:

The researcher must submit proof of permission from the WCED as soon as it has been obtained. A copy of the permission letter should be sent to the DEBC and REC for record-keeping.

Please provide a letter of response to all the points raised IN ADDITION to HIGHLIGHTING or using the TRACK CHANGES function to indicate ALL the corrections/amendments of ALL DOCUMENTS clearly in order to allow rapid scrutiny and appraisal.

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your proposal number (DEBC/Bazzon/Nov2014/18) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

**Included Documents:**

Supervisor request for permission\_ WCED  
Request for WCED permission  
Research proposal  
DEBC signatures