A READING BASED THEORY OF TEACHING APPROPRIATE FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor Educationis in the faculty of Education at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

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January 2008

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Summary

The print literacy competencies of many South African teachers and the learners they teach are inadequate. Evidence from local and international evaluations and research attests to this. Based on the understanding that a teacher, whose literacy level is less than adequate, is in a weak position to teach others how to read and write, the imperative to systematically address the issue of poor teacher and learner literacy levels, provided the impetus for a careful investigation of the methodology and theory of the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* pedagogy. Originally developed in Australia and applied in primary, secondary and tertiary contexts, this literacy pedagogy was described as a means of rapidly improving the literacy competence of all learners, across all subject areas.

Using an approach located within the tradition of interpretative educational theory, the meaning of the theory and practice of the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* pedagogy was explored. As a result of the enquiry undertaken, it was found that the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* approach provides a practical means of enhancing epistemological access. Access of this nature is a precondition for success of learning in schools and in tertiary education.

The LR:RL pedagogy provides a carefully structured means of holding literacy at the centre of learning. The sequence of practical steps theoretically rooted in three powerful – but usually separate realms of discourse, is a central contribution of the pedagogy to field of literacy development.

Intersecting three discrete disciplines, represented by Bernstein's model of education as pedagogic discourse, Vygotsky's model of learning as a social process and Halliday's model of language as text in social context gives rise to a unique literacy pedagogy. The theory that emerges from use, in a range of situations, over many years, and the carefully sequenced practice, together offer a sound means of addressing the challenges of literacy and learning prevalent in the South African context.

This thesis argues for a reading based theory of teaching as a means of meeting the challenges of literacy and learning head on. The capacity to learn independently from written text is critical for progress within the schooling and tertiary systems. The *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* pedagogy provides a means of realizing such a theory of teaching. Simultaneously teaching print literacy, while teaching the content of curricula, is proposed as a way of bringing about effective learning.

Within the context of teacher education, the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of many teachers is acknowledged to be inadequate. However, there is a key dimension missing for the construct of PCK to be truly useful for South African teachers. Print literacy is as an essential determinant of the knowledge of teachers. The construct of PCK can thus supplemented by foregrounding reading and writing as essential elements of this category of teacher knowledge. Thus the content of the teacher education curriculum is taught as the reading and writing competence of teachers is developed. Similarly, within the school context, the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* pedagogy can be used to teach required content and teach the requisite high level reading and writing skills needed by all learners to progress successfully through the schooling system.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the following for their contributions:

- My supervisor Wally Morrow for dedicated assistance and for continually encouraging me to think clearly and write well.

- My co-supervisor Alette Delport for her meticulous approach and warm support.

- Colleagues in the Faculty of Education for their guidance and care.

- Robbie, my husband, for his help and understanding.

- My children Jonathan and Talia for their encouragement and loving acceptance of a mom not always really present.

- Amber and Warren, fellow travelers on the doctoral path, for their interest and empathy.

- My siblings and their partners, James, Lynette, Patrick, Sandy and Francis, for their belief in me.

- Dorothy, my mom, for her prayers.

- My dad, Terence, who though no longer with us, remains an inspiration to me.

List of tables

Abbreviations

AAB	Access Assessment Battery
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
B Ed	Bachelor of Education
B Ed Hons	Bachelor of Education Honours
CAAR	Centre for Access Assessment and Research
ETDP SETA	Education Training and Development Practices Skills Education Training Authority
FET	Further Education and Training Band
FP	Foundation Phase
GET	General Education and Training Band
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IJR	Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
INSET	In-service Teacher Education
IPET	Initial Professional Education of Teachers
IP	Intermediate Phase
LO	Learning Outcome
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

Chapter 1: Introduction

Establishing the field

If we want the rhetoric of transformation and emancipation to become a reality, we have to look seriously at how reading and writing are being taught in South Africa. In order to have improved access to the modern world, student teachers (and their learners) need to be able to read and write effectively. Unfortunately the shadow of apartheid still falls over much of South Africa's education system. One of the ways that this manifests is in the relatively low levels of literacy of many teacher education students, and the poor literacy levels of many learners in the schooling system. Assignments and examination scripts provide ample evidence of students who have difficulty in reading and writing the texts associated with their programme of study. Explicit teaching of the kind of reading and writing required of students may not have been included in the curriculum and students are often expected to acquire these skills tacitly. Within the school system an emphasis on teaching content often eclipses the need to continue to teach reading and writing to all learners. The interest in improving literacy levels arises out of concern that many teachers and learners are being marginalised by current literacy and education practices.

Within teacher education programmes, in addition to limited literacy support, students might also experience problems due to the language of instruction of the programme. Although many students might be able to converse in the language of teaching and learning, they might lack the proficiency to cope with the rigours of academic study in an additional language.[1] In-service teacher education programmes attract many students who are not mother tongue speakers of English, yet teaching, learning and assessment would be

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[1] The concepts of BICS and CALP introduced by Jim Cummins (1979) refer to a distinction between basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. Many teacher education students may be able to converse quite effectively, but they might have insufficient academic language ability to cope with the language of tuition of the programme.

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predominantly via the medium of English. These students may have had a few years of mother tongue instruction and then completed the remainder of their primary and secondary schooling with English as the language of instruction. The impact of learning in an additional language can be significant. At present the majority of learners in the South African school system and many teacher education students face the challenge in learning in a language other than their mother tongue.

Umalusi, the organisation responsible for the monitoring of quality within the general and further education and training bands in South Africa, has indicated that the level of English additional language teaching in the school system needs attention. In the 2004 evaluation of the Senior Certificate examination, one of the concerns raised mentioned issues related to the English Second / Additional Language curriculum. The content of this curriculum was considered to be below the required level and the language proficiency of learners inadequate to meet the demands of a context where English is used as the language of teaching and learning. Among the recommendations of the investigation into the 2004 Senior Certificate examination was the following:

> It is imperative that the Department of Education pay special attention to the position occupied by English Second Language in the school curriculum. A national strategy is required that addresses the issues of curriculum and teacher preparation. This is one problem that will not go away with the introduction of a new curriculum. It should also be stressed that the success in teaching and learning of English as a second language in further education can only happen when supported by adequate mother tongue instruction in the early grades. Learners who are taught to use their mother tongue well do not find the switch to a second language a problem (Umalusi, 2004:9).

In a 2007 report the issue of learning English in order to learn was again addressed by Umalusi. In a firmly worded comment, difficulties related to the use of English as an additional language and medium of instruction were raised. Specific reference was made to the way in which the additional language is

taught. The report indicated that additional language methodology is based on the approach used for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL):

> The unexamined acceptance and use of the ESL approach to language teaching and learning has been greatly facilitated by the fact that the subject at school went by the same name. But the ESL approach is designed to provide rapid communicative competence in social, and primarily oral-interactive environments using processes where learners learn the language by osmosis rather than through conscious language teaching and learning. While the goal of oral communicative competence is perfectly good in and of itself, the approach seldom develops the language skills required for academic success: reading and making meaning of a large variety of texts; writing for a range of purposes, particularly of texts required in an educational setting (2007:6).

When the teaching of reading and writing required to achieve success in the school system is neglected, be it in a home language or additional language, this has consequences for the learners within that system. It also has further consequences for these learners should they wish to study at a tertiary level. There is often an expectation that students entering the tertiary sector can cope, with minimal literacy support. It may happen that little specific assistance is given to develop the reading and writing competences necessary for academic work, since the primary focus of programmes is likely to be on providing exposure to academic disciplines, rather than developing the foundational literacy skills necessary to access the disciplines. Within teacher education programmes, students are required to engage with certain academic disciplines and also acquire the skills to teach subjects related to these disciplines. This often results in a daunting curriculum, with little space made for the fostering of print literacy skills within the programme.

Turning the focus from teachers to the learners they teach, literacy levels in school classrooms are also a matter of concern. The learners in many South African classrooms exhibit inadequate levels of literacy. Typically, specific teaching of reading and writing takes place in the Foundation Phase of schooling and thereafter the emphasis shifts to the teaching of content and little explicit teaching of reading and writing occurs. Systemic evaluations of learners' literacy

competence attest to the inadequate teaching and learning of reading and writing in many school classrooms.

This study addresses the need to improve the levels of literacy in South African education. The emphasis on student teachers with inadequate literacy competence distinguishes the present study from others that take place in societies in which the basic literacy levels of all teachers can be taken for granted. As the title indicates, a reading based theory of teaching will be investigated in order to determine whether this approach would be suitable for use within the South African teacher education milieu. The study will have two foci, looking at teacher education students' own literacy competence and also looking at the competence of prospective and serving teachers to teach reading and writing successfully. The concept of "literacy" as used in this thesis includes the modalities of reading and writing. Prominence is given to the improvement of print literacy at various levels for various purposes. These purposes would include engagement with both fiction and non-fiction texts in home language and additional language contexts.

The central role of reading and writing within the schooling system and in society in general is not usually questioned. The UNESCO Literacy Initiative for Empowerment provides a broad description of literacy, particularly apt for the societal context of South Africa:

> Literacy is an indispensable means for effective social and economic participation, contributing to human development and poverty reduction. Literacy empowers and nurtures inclusive societies and contributes to the fair implementation of human rights (2006:11).

The reality of a developing nation, facing many challenges, has to be acknowledged and any theory of teaching that is proposed will have to take cognisance of this situation. Before proceeding with an outline of the research problem, certain of the advantages of literacy will be explored as a means of setting the scene.

- ***Literate Identity***

Individuals with a strong literacy ability have a particular identity. This identity is both personal and collective, constructed by the individual and being constructed by society. The literate identity provides a person with a worldview and represents a way of being in the world. This way of being in the world gives the individual a sense of self and an idea of how they are positioned in the world. Since literacy is empowering, literate individuals have influence and authority and are less likely to be oppressed than those who are illiterate.

- ***School success***

Apposite levels of literacy enable learners to function more successfully within the education system. Initially, young learners need to learn to read, later reading enables them to learn. Poor reading and writing competence tends to impact on all aspects of school work from the primary school stage into the high school and beyond.

- ***Economic value of literacy***

Conventional wisdom tells us that there is a link between being literate and being employed. In a country like South Africa with a high rate of unemployment, we may find however that reality confounds this wisdom with highly literate people, such as university graduates unable to find employment. Having mentioned this, it is still possible to claim in general terms that better literacy ability usually results in a better job. Literacy ability seems to impact on the duration of employment and the level of remuneration. Illiterate people are far less likely to be employed full-time than more literate individuals, and those who are more able readers are likely to have more financially rewarding jobs than poorer

readers. Growing reliance on technology has resulted in increasing demands for sophisticated literacy skills. Higher levels of literacy in business, industry and in everyday life have become a necessity given the realities of contemporary society. The degree of access to knowledge often determines an individual's economic, social and political power. Inadequate literacy skills may, to some extent, be both a cause and effect of poverty. By increasing literacy levels there is an opportunity to interrupt this poverty cycle and enable individuals to participate more fully in modern life.

- ***Practical value of literacy***

The reading ability needed to understand texts important for modern living, such as income tax forms, hire purchase agreements and instruction manuals is significant. While there are efforts to make these documents more accessible, inadequate reading ability can have a profound effect on a person's ability to function in society. Access to basic services such as health care and social services is also often constrained due to difficulties with reading and writing.

- ***Political value of literacy***

Literacy competence offers the opportunity for thinking critically and responding to circumstances in our communities. In order to participate fully in public life, individuals must have the skills necessary to access and act upon information. Literacy skills are a necessity for effective participation in a democracy. Poor literacy can act as a barrier to accessing rights intended for all citizens and as an obstacle to meeting the concomitant responsibilities.

- ***Intrinsic value of literacy***

In broader terms, literacy competence is a human unifier, both geographically and across time periods. By means of reading, a learner can experience things she would otherwise not be able to experience. For instance, print literacy skills make it possible for a South African learner to connect with individuals half way across the world. The same learner living in the twenty first century also has the possibility of accessing writings composed hundreds of years ago.

Literacy has an impact on many spheres of life including the social, cultural, economic and political. Women in particular suffer due to illiteracy and inadequate living conditions. Throughout the world there is evidence of the inequality and the neglect of women. Sen (1990a) indicates that globally, women have a higher mortality rate than men. However, when women receive a similar treatment to men in terms of health care, nutrition and welfare services, they have lower death rates than men (Sen, 1990a:1). In exploring this issue, Sen cites the example of Kerala, a state in the south west of India, where interestingly there is not a deficit of women, unlike the global trend. Not only do many women there have the opportunity to be employed outside the home and thus have more financial security, but there is also a surprisingly high rate of literacy in Kerala compared to the rest of India. For centuries, the development of education was emphasised by the authorities in the region and basic education continues to be a priority for contemporary leaders.

> The causal chain of Kerala's exceptional record goes back in history and includes among other things such steps as the public policy of "enlightenment" and "diffusion of education," clearly articulated by the reigning queen (Rani Gouri Parvathi Bai) of Travancore as early as 1817. The high level of education also contributed to the development and utilization of Kerala's extensive public health services, by making the population more informed, more articulate, more keen on demanding health services, and more able to make use of what is offered. Jean Drèze and I have tried to explore, in our book *Hunger and Public Action* (Oxford, 1989), the connections, which are by no means unique to Kerala, between education, public activism, and the development and use of health facilities.

Literacy and basic education have also contributed, it can be argued, to Kerala's radicalism … by making it easier to depart from the traditional mold of Indian conservative politics (Sen, 1990b).

The case of Kerala provides a hopeful picture of what can be achieved in developing countries when education and literacy development are prioritized. Mindful of the potential impact of literacy, or lack thereof, on society and individuals we now turn our attention to literacy problems in South African schooling.

Defining the research problem

The bold promise of promoting democracy by means of literacy development was made at a South African education conference in 2004 and presented in a journal article the following year. In a text entitled, *Democratising the Classroom: a literacy pedagogy for the new generation,* David Rose, an Australian academic and literacy practitioner, described a literacy pedagogy which he claimed can be used at any level of the education system and which can contribute to the development of a democratic society by contributing to overcoming social inequality. Learners typically excluded by conventional classroom practice or relegated to the periphery because their background differed from the middle class norm, would, he asserted, especially benefit from this approach to teaching.

The promise of a literacy pedagogy that could be used to assist any marginalised learners to improve literacy skills rapidly and thereby facilitate educational success, resonated well at a time, in South Africa, of growing concern about literacy development and the improvement of learning. Rose summed up his position as follows:

This paper contends that the basis of inequality in the classroom, and hence in the society, is in students' differing capacities to independently learn from reading, which is the fundamental mode of learning in secondary and tertiary education. … This problem can be overcome if we focus squarely on teaching all

learners in a class to read and write the texts expected of their level and area of study, as part of everyday teaching practice. I argue here that democratising the classroom is the primary condition for achieving the kinds of educational outcomes needed to build a democratic South Africa, and outline a literacy pedagogy that can enable us to do so (Rose 2005:131).

As a lecturer involved mainly with undergraduate teacher education students, I had become aware of the need to assist both prospective and practising teachers to develop and improve their own reading and writing skills. Many of these teacher education students experienced difficulty in reading and engaging with the texts used in their programmes and consequently in completing the writing assignments based on the texts. It seemed also that large numbers of students registered for postgraduate programmes lacked the necessary literacy competences to cope with the reading and writing tasks expected of them. The gap between the actual level of literacy ability of students and expected level appeared to widen as students attempted more advanced qualifications. The pedagogy outlined by Rose offered a possible solution to a number of problems that I was encountering in practice. Although I had tried a number of strategies to improve the levels of student reading and writing, there appeared to be limited progress, with many students still demonstrating poor reading and writing skills. I wondered if the rather haphazard approach I took was partly to blame for my lack of success, not being based on a firm conceptual understanding of what it was that I hoped to achieve.

As a literacy methodology lecturer, I was also concerned about the quality of literacy teaching taking place in many Foundation Phase classrooms. I had the opportunity to observe literacy lessons of both pre-service and in-service students in a range of contexts that included urban, peri-urban and rural settings. In general, Foundation Phase learners seemed to be reading and writing well below the expected level. Although I occasionally came across pockets of excellence, the literacy practice of many Foundation Phase teachers seemed also to be haphazard. Teachers seemed content to use certain methods without

having a clear understanding of why they were using the method or what to do if some learners were not able to read and write successfully.

After listening to the presentation of the paper by Rose, considering the purported theoretical foundations and making a study of the practical implementation of the pedagogy, I decided that perhaps the methodology could be used appropriately within my practice. Subsequent to attending a workshop providing training on the use of the approach, I made the decision to try out the pedagogy promoted by Rose.

While busy with an initial implementation of some of the strategies outlined by Rose, I realised that a disciplined investigation of the pedagogy could provide valuable insights for my work with teacher education students. I decided that a study of the pedagogy promoted by Rose could form the basis of my doctoral thesis. This enquiry sets out to explicate and investigate the literacy pedagogy entitled *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* (LR:RL). We face the spectre of increasing levels of inequality in our society. Dissatisfaction regarding the achievements of our schooling system abounds and concerns are raised that relatively few learners achieve at a level comparable with their counterparts internationally.

Rose's answer to the problem of social inequality is to look closely at the school system and what is happening in classrooms. He contends that longstanding classroom practices that empower some learners, while disempowering others, are at the crux of the problem of inequality. Thus schools, often unsuspectingly, reinforce and reproduce social inequality. The origin of the disparity of competence of learners begins with the uneven preparation for schooling, according to Rose. Some learners are well prepared while others do not have this advantage. Rose focuses specifically on an early exposure to books as a preparation for schooling:

> The most obvious and relevant difference in this respect is in the experience of parent-child reading, of which children in literate middle class families experience

an average of 1 000 hours before starting school (Bergin, 2001), whereas those from oral cultural backgrounds may experience little or none (Rose, 2005:138).

Since schooling becomes increasingly text-based from the middle primary school stage, any deficit in literacy competence will impact significantly on the success of learners. This deficit is likely to be compounded as the learner moves through secondary school and possibly into tertiary education, widening the gap between learners who were literacy empowered early on and those that were not. Literacy disadvantage starts when children do not have an early exposure to written texts and is then continued and reinforced in school. Hence the source of this disparity includes both what happens in the home and what happens in schools.

Rose presents a carefully structured programme that can be introduced at any stage from early reading to reading that takes place in tertiary education. One of the key aspects of this programme is that it emphasises learning as a social process. Frequently, learning to read and write are viewed from the perspective of individual development rather than from the perspective of learning in society. The theorists Rose draws on show the way in which learning is essentially a social process which shapes the mind. Rose indicates that the methodology that he proposes has been developed to improve reading and writing swiftly and thereby provide a means of entrance and access to learning that is denied to many learners. Rose contends that certain learners are advantaged by current literacy and classroom practices while others are disadvantaged. Typically middle class learners achieve more success within the schooling system than do working class children. Bernstein, one of the theorists Rose draws on, indicates how class differences are maintained:

> In terms of the particular problems of the relationship between class and the process of its cultural reproduction, as developed in this thesis, what has to be shown is how class regulation of the distribution of power and of principles of control generates, distributes, reproduces, and legitimates dominant and dominated principles regulating the relationships within and between social groups and so forms of consciousness (1990:13).

Rose proposes a means to unsettle the status quo between social groups to allow all learners the opportunity to achieve high levels of success. The pedagogy he promotes interrogates the practices of school classrooms, that entrench class differences, and offers the hope of success for all.

Hoadley, also working with Bernsteinian theory, investigated the impact of schooling on working class learners in South Africa. She indicates that social differences are maintained and repeated through the practices of teachers. She raises the following question:

> If we are aware that there are many teachers whose voice is inadequately specialized for the task of transmitting school knowledge, then questions are raised as to what form of teacher training we advance, and what type of curricula and textbooks we construct (2006: 32).

Considering the questions Hoadley poses, a careful study of the LR:RL pedagogy is undertaken with a view to understanding the challenges of literacy more clearly and reflecting on a means to address these challenges. The research question that will guide this enquiry is as follows:

> **Does the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* theory provide an illuminating way of thinking about and responding to the problems of literacy in South African schooling?**

The objective of the enquiry is to investigate a particular literacy methodology in order to determine whether this approach could be a suitable means of improving the literacy expertise both of teachers in South Africa and the learners they teach.

Motivation

The motivation for embarking on this study arose from a problem encountered in practice. As a member of a faculty of education, I have been aware for many years that the literacy competencies of many student teachers and practising

teachers are not adequate. Visits to school classrooms for many years and research findings such as the Systemic Evaluations of the Foundation and Intermediate Phase, have also made me aware that the literacy competencies of many learners are not adequate. The Grade Six Systemic Evaluation of 2005, conducted by the national Department of Education, provides useful insights into the educational system. Learners in this grade have passed through the Foundation Phase and are in the final stage of the Intermediate Phase. Results achieved by these learners give a valuable representation of the teaching and learning that is taking place in primary schools. A clear message emerging from the 2005 evaluation is that learners are not achieving the expected assessment standards. The national average for Language was 38%. The majority of learners (63%) were described as functioning at the "not achieved" level and only 28% of learners language competence was at or above the required level for Grade Six. Significant trends were identified when the data for the Language learning area was analysed:

> Learners whose home language was the same as the language of learning and teaching obtained significantly higher scores in all learning areas. The geographic location of the schools that learners attended also had a significant impact on learner achievement, with learners in the urban areas obtaining higher scores than learners attending schools reported to be in rural areas. In addition, learner scores were extremely low for questions that required learners to construct and provide their own responses (i.e. open-ended questions) compared to multiple choice questions (DoE, 2005:2).

The results, at a South African university, obtained by in-service B Ed students in an academic placement assessment tell a story similar to that told by the systemic evaluations. The teachers assessed, like the school learners, had inadequate literacy and numeracy competence. A sample of B Ed students (167) was assessed in the second semester of 2006 on the Reading Comprehension and Arithmetic subtests of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) Access Assessment Battery (AAB). The tests were administered and written in English, the language of learning and teaching of the B Ed Upgrading

programme.[2] The report provided by the NMMU Centre for Access Assessment and Research (CAAR) tabulated student performance as follows:

Table 1: Student performance on the AAB

	N	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Reading Comprehension	167	54.02	22	88	14.13
Arithmetic	167	46.29	13	91	16.00

(CAAR, 2007:1)

The results provided sobering evidence of the inadequate preparation of many of the teachers for the rigours of academic study. A moderately significant correlation was found between test results and academic performance of the students (CAAR, 2007). Looking specifically at literacy results, the average results of the reading comprehension test per centre demonstrate that intensive effort is required at most centres to support the academic development of teachers.

Table 2: Literacy results per NMMU Learning Centre

Learning Centre	Durban	King Williams Town	George	Graaff-Reinet	Port Elizabeth	Queenstown
Average %	60	45	48	63	60	48

(CAAR, 2007:3)

At another South African university, Bertram (2006) investigated the reading levels of teachers and found that their limited reading competences impacted significantly on their success in a formal teacher education programme. The teachers were enrolled in a Bachelor of Education Honours (B Ed Hons) programme offered in distance education mode. A total of 153 teachers participated in the study. Participants were required to read two passages included in a module of the B Ed Hons. One text was from the learning guide of a

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[2] The results of the assessment were used to inform student support and materials development activities of the B Ed Upgrading programme. This programme is offered at various learning sites to in-service teachers who have already obtained a diploma in education.

module and the other a text judged to be "typical of academic writing, but not densely theoretical academic writing" (2006:8). Teachers achieved a mean score of 62.3% on the learning guide text and 45.9% on the other text. Commenting on the results of the study, Bertram states:

> Students with weak reading competences will not succeed, despite our best efforts to write user-friendly, accessible learning texts. Or they will succeed because of their learning at tutorial sessions, and not because they have the independent reading skills to access the necessary texts … Distance education is not an unproblematic panacea for creating higher education opportunities for previously disadvantaged students. Unless institutions make real attempts to address the issue of reading competences, these students will continue to fail (2006:15).

Bertram acknowledges that it would not be a straightforward matter to address the reading competences of teachers, particularly when higher education policy assumes a situation of post-graduate students with appropriate print literacy competences.

Rose's methodology may offer a possible solution to the challenge to improve the literacy skills of teachers and the learners they teach. According to Rose, the methodology can be used at all levels of the education system, for a diverse range of students. LR:RL comprises various applications including, *Reading and writing in early years, Stories in the middle years, Factual texts, Academic Literacy* and *English as a Second Language.* These applications provide the space to promote reading and writing development at both a tertiary and school level.

Based on the understanding that a teacher whose literacy level is less than adequate, is in a weak position to teach others how to read and write, the imperative to address the issue of poor teacher and learner literacy levels systematically within a teacher education programme provides the impetus for a careful investigation of the methodology and theory of LR:RL.

The process of disciplined enquiry

The focal point of this enquiry is the research question. The research strategy employed flows from this question and the methodology accordingly adopted can be described as a conceptual enquiry. This study is placed within a particular meta-theoretical framework. Given that the purpose of this enquiry is to understand and investigate the meaning of the theory and practice of the LR:RL approach, it is possible to locate this study within the tradition of interpretative educational theory. The seminal work of Fay regarding the nature of social theory and models of social theory has long given me pause for thought. And so it was to Fay that I turned in order to conceptualise the theoretical framework for my thesis. Fay outlines the interpretative perspective as follows:

> An interpretative social science is one which attempts to uncover the sense of a given action, practice or constitutive meaning; it does this by discovering the intentions and desires of particular actors, by uncovering the sets of rules which give point to these sets of rules or practices, and by elucidating the basic conceptual scheme which orders experience in ways that the practices, actions, and experiences which the social scientist observes are made intelligible, by seeing how they fit into a whole structure which defines the nature and purpose of human life (1975:79).

The interpretative study of education attends to various contexts, including the social and political contexts of teaching and learning. When working within this paradigm it is possible to analyse the constructions of meanings through which individuals make sense of their actions and interactions. Interpretation of a range of phenomena is possible, including texts, actions and practices and this interpretation can form the basis of enquiry, as it does in this research endeavour.

In order to explain and justify the research strategy it is necessary to sketch the process followed in planning the research project. Once the research question had been formulated, the next step was to determine an appropriate way of engaging with the LR:RL methodology in order to determine whether this literacy approach could be suitable for use in a South African context. In the first chapter

analysis of a range of texts concerning the field of literacy provided a foundation for examining the LR:RL methodology closely. So as to come to a sound understanding of LR:RL, it was essential to first provide a clear description of the methodology and then to examine the espoused theory of the approach. Textual analysis of written an visual material concerning LR:RL formed the basis of the second chapter. In the third chapter a critical commentary was employed to examine the underpinning theory of LR:RL. A critical interpretation of various evaluations of literacy levels followed in the fourth chapter. To facilitate a broader perspective of current literacy practice, it was necessary to consult staff at local higher education institutions, by means of a small scale survey, and also to refer to literature concerning the topic of the enquiry. The processes of description of practice, examination of theory, surveying of practitioners and reference to other written sources resulted in a range of information concerning the enhancement of literacy competence. This information provides a rich tapestry of reading and writing practice, which can be used as a key resource when reflecting on the problems of literacy in South African schooling.

Clarification of concepts

In this study certain concepts and terminology are used in a specific way to provide clarity, or as a technique to provide particular emphasis. A brief outline of these usages is provided below.

- "Literacy" refers to print literacy, specifically reading and writing. Language is used as a general term that includes literacy. Language is understood as a system of communication, using sounds, symbols and words. This system is governed by rules that are specific to the language.
- Literacy is recognised as the practice of reading and writing that begins in early childhood and continues throughout life. The kind of literacy is determined by the context of use, the discourse, the genre and the text. When the term "academic literacy" is used, this does **not** refer to an exclusive kind of literacy belonging to, and preserved within, specific

domains of The Academy. Academic literacy involves making meaning with written language, using particular genres and texts.

- "Learner" is used as a generic term to designate one who learns, either in a school or in higher education. The term student, however, specifically designates one who studies at a higher education institution.

- "Teacher" is used as an overarching term to describe one who teaches, be it in a school or in higher education. The term lecturer specifically designates an individual who teaches in a higher education institution. In cases where the practice of a teacher is emphasised, the term "practitioner" is used.

- LR:RL is described as being a pedagogy, an approach and a method. In general, "pedagogy" is used in this thesis to emphasise both the theoretical and practical aspects of LR:RL. The terms "approach" and "methodology" are used interchangeably when no specific emphasis is intended.

Outline of the chapters

The thesis consists of six chapters organised to facilitate the development of an argument that addresses the research question. The first chapter serves as an introduction to orientate the reader to the context of the study. The second chapter describes the pedagogy of LR:RL in detail and indicates the range of applications that have been developed for specific use of LR:RL. A close look at the theoretical underpinnings of LR:RL follows in the third chapter. In the fourth and fifth chapters respectively, the context of literacy use in South African schools and higher education institutions is explored. The final chapter draws together key themes that have emerged in the thesis and shows how a reading based theory of teaching can be realised in teacher education and schooling.

Conclusion

In a society where there is not a long tradition of reading and writing amongst the majority of its citizens, notions of reading for pleasure, using meta-cognition to understand oneself as a literate being and possessing multi-literacy competence seem like a far off dream. The idea of youngsters developing alternative literacy skills necessary for the digital age is one that we cannot entertain easily, while the majority of our children have not yet achieved the necessary conventional reading and writing competence. As a first step, children should have a grip on print literacy that enables them to engage with their world effectively. This purchase on reading and writing would help learners to progress through and emerge successfully from the schooling system.

The value of strong literacy capability within a society and the considerable potential benefits that could accrue as a result of this can be illustrated by the following example. Sen (2006) discusses the case of two allegedly comparable countries and how their economies developed differently in the space of thirty years. Ghana and South Korea were described as having 'similar economies' in the 1960s (2006: 106). Harrison and Huntington quoted in Sen (2006), claim that three decades later:

> South Korea had become an industrial giant with the fourteenth largest economy in the world, multinational corporations, major exports of automobiles, electronic equipment, and other sophisticated manufactures, and per capita income approximately that of Greece. Moreover it was on its way to the consolidation of democratic institutions. No such changes had occurred in Ghana, whose per capita income was now about one-fifteenth that of South Korea's. How could this extraordinary difference be explained? (ibid).

Harrison and Huntington suggest that while many factors could account for the difference in the economies of the countries, culture would be a key factor. Sen disputes this assertion. He indicates that aside from factors such as different class structures and political conditions, with South Korea having a larger and more productive business class and a government dedicated to economic

development, literacy levels were probably the determining factor for advanced economic development. Sen outlines the situation in South Korea:

> … perhaps most important – by the 1960's South Korea had acquired a much higher literacy rate and a much more expanded school system than Ghana had. Korean progress in school education had been largely brought about in the post-Second World War period, mainly through resolute public policy, and it could not be seen as a reflection of culture (except in the general sense in which culture is seen to include everything happening in a country) (Sen, 2006: 108).

Sen goes on to mention that cultural factors can be relevant to the course of development, but they do not operate separately from social, political and economic effects (ibid). In South Korea education impacted on culture and *vice-versa.* Sen remarks that,

> It is, for example, remarkable that nearly every country in the world with a powerful presence of Buddhist tradition has tended to embrace widespread schooling and literacy with some eagerness. … The focus on enlightenment in Buddhism (the word "Buddha" itself means "enlightened") and the priority given to reading texts, rather than leaving it to the priests, can help to encourage educational expansion (2006: 109).

Prioritization of reading in both teacher education and schools could be an essential springboard for literacy and learning growth in South Africa. A number of recent initiatives have been designed to address poor literacy levels in the country. The placement of reading books in schools, in-service training of teachers in teaching reading, and projects to improve the literacy levels of teachers offer hope of a more literate South African society.

The LR:RL literacy approach was originally developed as a strategy to assist learners with low levels of literacy (Rose, Gray and Cowey, 1999). Initially devised to assist indigenous learners in Australia, LR:RL is now used in a range of school and tertiary contexts in several countries around the world (Rose 2005, Rose and Acevedo, 2006). The programme will be described in detail in the chapter that follows so that its key features can be established, and what LR:RL may have to offer for literacy development in a developing nation may be determined.

Chapter 2: Description of *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn*

Introduction

In this chapter and the next, the practice and theory of LR:RL will be discussed. Since practice informs theory and theory practice, it is not possible to neatly allocate one chapter as the 'practice' chapter and the next as the 'theory' chapter. The theory of LR:RL arises and develops from the use of the pedagogy in many contexts, as an action and reflection process. Rose describes the arguments he makes about learning to read and write as encapsulating insights from a long standing and continuing action research project with teachers and staff in higher education (2005, 2006c). This chapter of the thesis will focus on providing a description of how LR:RL is used in various contexts. The subsequent chapter serves as an elaboration, providing further explication and showing the theoretical roots that are claimed to anchor the LR:RL pedagogy. The practice and theory of LR:RL will be found in both chapters since the practice of LR:RL is constitutive of the theory and *visa versa*. In the present chapter the focus will be on a discussion of the stages of the LR:RL process, use in different situations and on highlighting general features of LR:RL theory. The following chapter will focus on investigating the theoretical underpinnings of LR:RL and how this impacts on practice.

An explication of the LR:RL methodology will be provided below, outlining the six stages in the process, namely, *Preparing before Reading*, *Detailed Reading, Preparing before Writing*, *Joint Reconstruction*, *Individual Reconstruction* and *Independent Writing.* Although the stages remain essentially the same, adaptations are evident in the different applications of LR:RL to take into account genre types and other factors. There are five applications of LR:RL, specifically, *Early Years Reading and Writing, Reading and Writing Stories, Reading and Writing Factual Texts, Academic Literacy* and *English as a Second Language* (Rose, 2005; Rose and Acevedo, 2006; Reading to Learn, 2007).

Six stages of LR:RL cycle

The LR:RL approach can be used from elementary to advanced levels of reading and writing, and across the range of disciplines. The six stage cycle (suitably adjusted for particular situations, learners and content) is deployed repeatedly on the various occasions of teaching. Rose describes LR:RL as follows:

> … a methodology for teaching reading and writing that has been developed in a long term action research project with teachers in Australia at all levels of education, from early primary through secondary to tertiary study, across curriculum areas (2005:131).

The first stage is used to prepare for reading the text by way, for example, of outlining the story or generating interest. This initial stage is referred to as *Preparing before Reading*, and it might include a contextualisation of the text (background information of historical or other context) and indication of the genre of the text (a story, a report, an academic article, and so forth), and its field and tenor.

The second stage is known as *Detailed Reading.* In this stage the teacher assists learners to read a short section of the text, by focusing on the actual wordings. The teacher guides the reading of the text so that learners are able to read correctly and with understanding.

The third stage, *Preparing before Writing,* is used to provide learners with the support they will need to write a text. The third stage is tailored to the level of study of the learners. Thus young learners may work with sentences and then move on to word study and writing of those words, while more advanced learners would first make notes based on the text and then study the spelling of key words in the text. The first three stages of LR:RL are focussed on developing reading, while the following three stages are concerned with developing writing. Learners are helped to use what they have learned from reading a text to write their own text.

Stage four is *Joint Reconstruction* of the text. The teacher guides learners to develop a new text. When story texts are used the same language patterns are used as in the original, but content is changed by substituting aspects such as characters and actions. When factual texts are used the same content is used. Notes based on the original are used as the basis for the new text, with an emphasis on producing a text in language similar to that of the learners, rather than text book language.

The fifth and sixth stages are *Individual Reconstruction* and *Independent Writing.* The former requires learners to compose their own text based on the work done in the previous stage, and the latter involves an activity where the learners work on their own to produce an original text drawing on insights gained during the preceding stages.

Elaboration of processes in each of the six stages of the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* cycle

Rose refers to the stages of LR:RL as a "curriculum cycle" (2005:147). Curriculum should be understood in this instance, as a programme of planned educational experiences that take learners from reading text to writing text. The LR:RL curriculum is cyclical in nature, with reading activities preparing for writing activities. Once the learners have moved through all six stages from *Preparing before Reading* to *Independent Writing* with a particular text, the teacher may take them through the cycle again with other texts in the same and other genres to help them become proficient and independent readers and writers.

- *Preparing before Reading*

In the first stage of the LR:RL curriculum cycle, *Preparing before Reading*, the teacher prepares the learners to understand the meaning of the text.[3] The meaning of the text includes the context (when was it composed, who composed it, for what purpose, *et cetera*), the genre (what kind of text it is), the field (what it is about) and its tenor (general style). Thus learners have to be aware of various aspects of the text including its context, genre, field and tenor in order to be able to understand it. Genres have relatively consistent patterns that readers learn to recognise and are then able to predict how the text is likely to unfold. Consequently when a reader comes across a new text she is likely to have an idea of what type of text she is reading, and some expectations about what the text should be like, based on her previous experience of other examples of this genre. For instance, the reader may find two articles related to a topic that she is researching. The one could be a newspaper article while the other an article in an academic journal. The newspaper article would have a particular form, structure and content that would be distinct from that of the academic article. Each genre has a particular purpose and typical stages.

Considering possible extremes as examples of readers interacting with particular genres, a university student would understand that an argument in an academic text could have a thesis statement, supporting arguments and a conclusion. While, even a young learner reading a story book would recognise (probably without being able to articulate this) that the story would have an orientation, a complication, a resolution and possibly a coda. Once readers have established the genre of a reading, further detail regarding the field and tenor helps them to understand the reading. The field of a text refers to what is happening and what participants are doing while the tenor indicates who is taking part and what their roles are (Martin and Rose, 2003:243).

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[3] Rose's use of 'meaning' is based on the understanding of meaning developed by Halliday. Meaning is seen as a dynamic process occurring both as a system and as text. Meaning is constantly being generated and constructed. This meaning making happens amongst people through the ages, in communities, in the individual and in text. Halliday (1994:311) encourages us to think of text "as an ongoing process of meaning". We tend to think of meaning as contained in the text – but this is an illusion of mature readers already familiar with likely context, genre, field, tenor etc. All of these contribute to the meaning. Thus the "meaning" is not all internal to the text itself – this is a key point made by Halliday.

In the *Preparing before Reading* stage of LR:RL, a summary might be made of the text. The teacher would indicate the sequence of the text's field and may refer to the functions or roles of participants or characters in the text. This is similar to the process used in parent-child reading where the parent previews the story with the child in language the child can understand. After the oral summary where the teacher helps the learners to link their prior knowledge with the context of the text, the teacher reads the text aloud. The learners are able to attend to the text as it is read aloud and weaker learners do not have to struggle to work out what is happening, nor do they have to try to decode unfamiliar words.

- ***Detailed Reading***

Following the reading of the text by teacher and learners, the teacher assists the learners to begin reading the wordings themselves. The broad understanding of the text, provided at the 'preparing to read' stage, provides a firm basis upon which *Detailed Reading* takes place. A short passage is read sentence by sentence with the teacher supplying meaning cues. The teacher prepares the learners to identify words and then affirms and elaborates. Once learners have identified a word, the teacher provides an explanation of its meaning. She may refer to learners' relevant experience or clarify concepts or technical terms. The cues the teacher provides help the learners to actively identify words from their meaning. The preparations the teacher provides are usually in the form of statements rather than questions. When questions are used, their purpose is as a prompt for the learners to identify words, rather than as a means of assessing learners' understanding. The teacher calls on different learners to respond to each preparation and the class is required to check and affirm the response. Initially the teacher takes firm control as she prepares learners to identify words, then she hands over control to learners who identify words and relate the meanings of these words to their own experience. The procedure that is followed during *Detailed Reading* ensures that all learners are able to read each word with

sound comprehension and this prepares the foundation for the third stage in the LR:RL cycle, *Preparing before Writing.*

- *Preparing before Writing*

Two different types of activity can occur in the third stage of LR:RL, either *Sentence Making* or *Note Making,* depending on the phase of education and type of text. Thus with story texts in the primary school, sentence making activities are carried out, while note making activities would be used in all phases of education when working with factual texts. When story texts are used, learners work with sentences on cardboard strips. They cut off words and rebuild the original sentences and then other sentences. The focus then shifts from words to the letter patterns in words and learners practise spelling the words. The sentence making activities reinforce what has been learnt during reading and at the same time learners are equipped to write texts. When working with factual texts, learners are guided to make notes from the text. Learners write the notes on the board referring to the words that they have highlighted during *Detailed Reading.* Learners have a good grasp of the field of the text because of the thorough preparation provided by the earlier stages of LR:RL. Teacher control of the process declines, as learners take responsibility for the note making. The notes developed by the learners form the basis of the content used in the joint rewriting of the text.

- *Joint Reconstruction*

During the fourth stage of the LR:RL cycle, the emphasis shifts from reading to writing. The teacher guides the class to create a new text. Learners take turns to write the new text on the board. When narrative texts are developed the same language patterns as the original are used. The learners brainstorm to come up with suggestions of new characters, actions and locations, thus providing original

content for their story. Learners are supported to develop a new text by basing their story on that of an experienced author. When factual texts are developed by the class the same content as the original text is used. However, the new text is written in the language learners could use when writing assignments. Learners have an understanding of the genre, field and discourse patterns of the original text and they are able to translate the sophisticated wordings into language that is closer to their own language. The teacher helps the learners to use the patterns they have identified during the reading and note making activities. The teacher continues to support the learners by elaborating on contributions. She could prompt learners to check the spelling, punctuation and grammar of the text they are developing. She could also refer to how the author constructed the field of the text originally so that learners are able to use this as a guideline when reconstructing the text.

- *Individual Reconstruction*

The rewriting of the text as a class prepares the way for learners to rewrite a text on their own. Learners again use the text patterns or notes that were used during the *Joint Reconstruction* stage. New characters, events and settings are used by the learners to write their own stories. In the case of factual texts, the learners use the content of the original text, but construct their text in their own language, while remaining faithful to the genre and field of the original.

- *Independent Writing*

The skills and understandings developed by the learners in the first five stages of the LR:RL cycle provide the support for the learners to write independently. The independent writing task can be assessed by the teacher. Careful support of learners during the preceding stages of LR:RL, enables them to write more easily

and achieve more success than if there had been minimal preparation and support prior to the writing assignment.

Further discussion

An essential element of the LR:RL approach is the idea that optimal learning takes place when tasks are completed successfully (Rose, 2007). Importantly, according to the theory of LR:RL, learners must always be appropriately prepared to perform each task, so that success is more likely to ensue. After completing the required activity effectively, learners are ready for further input from the teacher. The teacher supplies additional details in order to expand the learners' understanding of the activity that they have completed. The three-step process of groundwork, activity and explanation is referred to as a scaffolded learning cycle. Rose indicates that the 'scaffolding interaction cycle', comprises three aspects namely, prepare, task and elaborate (Rose, 2006d). Learners are prepared for a task, carry out the task and then the teacher affirms the learners and elaborates on the task. When elaborating, the teacher raises the level of work to increase all students' comprehension and competence. In the example below the teacher and learners in a Grade 10 class in KwaZulu Natal are busy with a *Prepare before Reading* activity (2006d:14). The teacher affirms the response from the learner and then elaborates by supplying additional information.

Prepare	It's a beautiful book because it's about the liberation struggle in South Africa, leading up to 1994. Can anybody tell me why 1994 is important? [student raises hand] Go on.
Select	*First election.*
Elaborate	That was the first election, the first free election, for one person one vote, so every adult in South Africa got to vote.

Prepare	Of course there were more than one side to the struggle. Who can tell me the main party that was struggling against apartheid?
Select	*ANC.*
Affirm	ANC. Is she right? [students] *Yes.*
Prepare	But there were other groups too of course. Does anybody recognize this man? What's his name?
Select	*Mangosuthu Buthelezi.*
Affirm	Buthelezi!
Prepare	And what's he the leader of?
Select	*IFP.*
Elaborate	IFP! Inkatha, that's right. And of course that's another side. And there were conflicts between ANC and Inkatha, is that right? [students] *Yes.*

During the scaffolding learning cycle, the teacher provides support to learners in the preparation and elaboration phases of the cycle. With the scaffolded help of the teacher, learners are able to achieve more than they would be able to do if they were working independently. At a first glance, the scaffolding interaction cycle may appear to be the usual question, response, feedback process used widely in all classrooms, where the teacher asks a question, learners answer and then the teacher reacts to the learner responses. However, there are three important differences between usual classroom practice and the scaffolding interaction cycle. According to Martin and Rose:

> Firstly the initial scaffolding move is not simply eliciting a response, but is carefully planned to *prepare* all learners to respond successfully; secondly the followup move is rarely simply feedback that evaluates or comments on the response, but is consistently designed to *elaborate* shared knowledge about text

features; and thirdly the feedback is always affirming, whereas student responses that are inadequately prepared in everyday classroom discourse are frequently rejected. Rejection of responses includes not only direct negation, but is more often implicit in teachers' qualified acceptance rephrasing, or ignoring. In any class, it is only a minority of students who consistently give successful responses; a fact that is often missed in analysis of class transcripts, but is the daily reality for all teachers and students … In contrast, the scaffolding interaction cycle is designed to enable all students to always respond successfully (2005:8) [emphasis in the original].

Learners are offered support by the teacher throughout the LR:RL curriculum cycle. At many points in the curriculum cycle, the teacher needs to engage with the learners to ask a question or set a task. What sets LR:RL apart from other literacy approaches (and general classroom practice), is that the learner is regularly positioned for success by the teacher. By doing the 'prepare' part of the scaffolding interaction sequence before asking a question or setting a task, the teacher enables the learners to respond appropriately. The teacher would be careful to set up situations that demonstrate what the learners do know rather than exposing what they don't know. Thus the 'prepare, task, elaborate' sequence would be used many times during the LR:RL curriculum cycle. Throughout the LR:RL curriculum process learners would get the idea that 'I can do this!', thus developing a positive identity of themselves as readers. The disparity between the stronger and weaker learners is reduced continuously during the LR:RL curriculum process. Before all tasks, the teacher prepares the learners or bases activities on their prior knowledge so that learners can be successful when completing the required activity.

In line with Vygotsky's model of social learning, tasks in the LR:RL curriculum cycle are practised first as a collective activity with the whole class or group, and then as an individual activity. The teacher guides the activity, and in doing so enables learners to work beyond their independent ability. Once all learners can carry out the activity, learners are able to work on their own with the teacher helping weaker learners when necessary. In the next round of the curriculum

cycle, the complexity of the learning task increases, and the gap between the strong and weak learners diminishes. Eventually, after working through the whole curriculum cycle, all learners have the competence to complete a challenging assessment task, with similar success (Rose, 2005).

Four further general features of the LR:RL theory are, (1) the way in which the theory explicitly links reading and writing; (2) the six stages are a sequence – their ordering (in time) is crucial to their success; (3) the way in which the cycle moves from joint and collective activities to individual activities; and (4) the shift in control of the learning process from the teacher to the learners.

The notion that reading and writing are closely linked may be acknowledged by many literacy practitioners, however their practice might fail to exploit this link. It is not unusual for reading and writing to be taught as separate entities. In the LR:RL methodology the teaching of reading precedes and forms the basis for the teaching of writing. A key aspect of the LR:RL theory is that writing is explicitly linked to reading. The child at school or student in tertiary education is taught to write stories and other texts by using the cues picked up in readings. Rose indicates that the writing tasks that follow on from detailed reading expand on the approach taken in genre based writing strategies (2005). The genre based approach has three aspects, referred to as Deconstruction, Joint Construction and Individual Construction. Martin and Rose explain:

> The Deconstruction phase foregrounds modelling, establishing one genre or another as the goal for the cycle as a whole; the Joint Construction phase involves scribing another example of the genre based on suggestions from students; and the Individual Construction stage hands over responsibility to students for writing a further text in the genre on their own (2005:1).

The focus of genre based methodology is on writing. However, according to Martin and Rose (2005), the primary function of writing is to demonstrate what has been learnt from reading. In order to support all students to read texts independently, learn from those texts and demonstrate this learning in writing, it was necessary to extend the existing genre based pedagogy. Since reading is a

complex task requiring the reader to attend to aspects related to graphology, lexicogrammar and discourse, it was necessary to simplify the reading process (Martin and Rose, 2005). The LR:RL methodology provides a means of reducing the complexity of the reading process and also a means of guiding the development of a written text.

Another important aspect of the LR:RL theory concerns the order of the stages of the pedagogy. The six stages are placed in a particular sequence. Learners are guided to move from a broader understanding of the context and nature of the text to a more detailed examination of the text itself, its sentences and words and, in more elementary situations, to the letters that make up the letter patterns and syllables of the words. In the first three stages of the LR:RL cycle, there is thus a top down movement from the whole to the parts. In the second three stages of the cycle, learners are guided to develop a new text moving from words to sentences and then to text in a bottom up sequence, using the parts to make a new whole. The ordering of the stages is of vital importance and teachers are encouraged to go through all stages with learners as each preceding stage forms the preparation for the stage that is to follow.

The LR:RL cycle moves from joint activities to individual activities. This is another significant facet of the theory. Rather than choosing sides in the teacher-centred/learner-centred debate, the LR:RL pedagogy includes both approaches. Collective activities precede and prepare for individual activities. The LR:RL pedagogy promotes the idea that all learners can simultaneously be helped to work at a high level, irrespective of their independent capability. The teacher works with the whole class first, taking them through a task. Once all learners can perform the task successfully in a group situation, learners are required to practise the task in an individual situation.

The fourth aspect of the LR:RL theory that deserves mention is shift in control of the learning process that occurs at various times in the LR:RL curriculum cycle. At times the teacher controls the learning and at other times the learners assume

responsibility. The teacher takes control at first and prepares learners for reading and writing tasks. Learners practise the tasks in a group situation before attempting the activity on their own. For instance, in the *Preparing before Writing* activities, the shift between teacher and learner control can be clearly discerned. Depending on the level of the learners and the nature of the text, either *Sentence Making* or *Note Making* will be used as an activity to prepare the learners for writing. During the *Sentence Making* activity, the learners are initially guided by the teacher to cut up sentences and rebuild them. Eventually learners work independently and make up new sentences from the words available. In *Note Making,* learners assume responsibility for writing the notes on the board. The teacher guides the learners in need. During the preceding stage, *Detailed Reading*, learners developed a sound understanding of the text and are thus able to work relatively independently of the teacher during the *Note Making* stage.

Various applications

The LR:RL methodology can be used to assist a range of learners from beginner readers to students in higher education. The basic methodology is adapted for various situations, taking into account the literacy level of the learners and the type of text that is used. Rose explains the unfolding and growth of the methodology as follows:

> As the research has expanded, involving more teachers in more educational domains, the possibilities have continued to open up. Each development has occurred through examining the nature of the learning task, using the functional language model, and devising ways to support all learners to practice each component of the task, using the social learning model (2005:160).

The adaptations to the fundamental literacy strategies of LR:RL are related to the amount of scaffolded assistance required by the learners during each of the six stages of the LR:RL curriculum cycle. The nature of the text being used and the learning context also necessitate certain changes to the basic approach. The

different applications of the LR:RL methodology are titled according to use. *Early Years Reading and Writing, Reading and Writing Stories, Reading and Writing Factual Texts, Academic Literacy* and *English as a Second Language* are the applications of LR:RL methodology that have been developed as new contexts of use have been explored (Reading to Learn, 2007: Rose, 2004). These applications will be discussed briefly below to highlight commonalities and differences that can be found in the various applications of LR:RL.

Beginning readers are helped to read and write using the strategies of *Early Years Reading and Writing.* When using LR:RL with young learners, considerable emphasis must be placed on orientating the children to the reading task. The detailed discussion the teacher has with the learners before they read a text, lays the foundation for understanding the text, reading correctly and eventually for the writing task based on the text (Rose, Gray and Cowey, 1999). The preparation before reading commences is focussed on constructing a shared framework for understanding of the text. This framework is then used as the starting point for the higher level discussion of the language features of the text. Rose, Gray and Cowey refer to the preparation before reading as 'book orientation'. They indicate that book orientation has the following advantages for learners:

> Becoming a code-breaker: Learners' enhanced ability to make sense at a high level allows more mental space to deal with decoding the letter patterns of words.
>
> Becoming a text-participant: The focus upon the staging of the text and the author's reasons for particular language choices accustoms learners to the precise levels of meaning which good writers build into their texts.
>
> Becoming a text-user: Drawing learners' attention to language choices at a detailed level shows them potential choices they themselves can employ in their own writing.
>
> Becoming a text-analyst: Engaging with a story at this level is fundamental to developing critical views about why and how authors make the choices they do in their writing (1999:43).

After the in-depth discussion of the story where learners are helped to understand the story and are encouraged to link their experiences with the topic of the story, learners are ready to move on to the reading of the story with the teacher. As with the preceding stage, a detailed process is followed with the learners, now to help them read the text. The teacher reads the text to the learners several times and when they are ready they read along with her. The focus then shifts to reading sentences correctly and being able to identify the words of the sentence. Once learners are able to read the story, or portion of a story with accuracy, they are ready to concentrate on the identification of words and then on the spelling of the words. The strategies used in helping young learners to become print literate involve a progression from reading to spelling and then finally to writing.

This same progression is employed when working with older learners and more complex stories. In order to teach the process of reading and writing of stories in the upper primary and junior secondary school, the strategies of *Reading and Writing Stories* can be used. While a similar process is followed as for *Early Years Reading and Writing,* texts now start to resemble adult fiction. The stories used with older learners have a more intricate narrative structure. Typically, the orientations of stories are longer and the complications more elaborate to allow the author to develop characters and atmosphere more fully. As with the strategy used for younger learners, it is vitally important that learners should first understand the story and then read the story fluently before moving on to focus on the spelling of the words and writing. During the *Preparing before Reading* stage learners become familiar with the sequence of meanings in the story. This understanding of the text helps them to identify the words that symbolise the relevant portions of meaning. In the discussion that takes place in the *Detailed Reading* stage, reference is continually made to the specific words of the story. Learners become skilled at finding answers to the strategically posed questions of the teacher, by referring to the text. Ultimately, this assists learners in engaging with and responding to texts effectively. Once learners are able to read the story accurately, they move on to sentence making, spelling and sentence

writing, as happens with the early years strategies. However, in *Early Years Reading and Writing* the focus is on writing sentences, while the *Reading and Writing Stories* procedure involves using entire paragraphs (Reading to Learn, n.d; Rose 2005).

In the LR:RL curriculum cycle, learners would typically move from *Detailed Reading* to *Preparing before Writing.* Thus, once learners are able to read a text with accuracy and comprehension, they would prepare to write a new text patterned on the original text. Readers may require additional support before they are ready to move on to the next stage of the LR:RL curriculum cycle (Rose 2007a). In the table to follow the positioning of the additional assistance of *sentence making, spelling* and *sentence writing* is outlined.

Table 3: Additional assistance during Detailed Reading

Standard LR:RL Curriculum Cycle	LR:RL Curriculum Cycle with Additional Support
1. Preparing Before Reading	1. Preparing Before Reading
2. Detailed Reading	2. Detailed Reading
	• sentence making
	• spelling
	• sentence writing
3. Preparing before Writing	3. Preparing before Writing
4. Joint Reconstruction	4. Joint Reconstruction
5. Individual Reconstruction	5. Individual Reconstruction
6. Independent Writing.	6. Independent Writing.

(Rose, 2005; Reading to learn, n.d.)

Inexperienced or weak readers are thus given additional assistance in order to practice specific reading and writing tasks before moving on to the stage of *Preparing before Writing.*

During the *Preparing before Writing* stage there are two possible strategies. The use of these strategies is dependent on the genre of the text. When story texts are used as in the case of *Early Years Reading and Writing* and *Reading and Writing Stories,* the class discusses new content for the story, changing details such as characters and settings, while using the same literary language patterns as in the original story. In the case of passages from text books and other non-

fiction texts, that would be used for the context of *Reading and Writing Factual Texts,* learners write up a bulleted list of notes. These notes provide the framework for joint rewriting of the text that will follow. The learners rewrite the text in language that is closer to their own. The content (field) of the text is the same as the original, while the language patterns would be less like text book language and closer to the usual language of the learners.

It might be assumed that work with factual texts would usually be used with older learners, however learners at all levels can benefit from engagement with non-fiction texts. Although young children usually first encounter story texts, they should also be given experience with other genres (Rose, 2007a). For instance, young learners might learn about the genre of procedures. Rose outlines how procedures could be used for teaching reading and writing in the early years:

> Procedures consist of a series of steps in an activity, such as a recipe for cooking, or a manual for operating technology. Written procedures tell people who can already read how to do the activity. But we can teach children to read and write a procedure by first teaching it to them orally. When they are thoroughly familiar with the words in each step of the procedure, we can teach them to read and write it, as we do for the sentences in stories (Rose, 2007a:14).

Children in the Foundation Phase can also be exposed to non-fiction books and the method of *Reading and Writing Factual Texts* can be used to help them read these texts and then write their own text based on the original. Non-fiction Big Books[4] are ideal for helping young learners to access non-fiction texts. This engagement with non-fiction material would help alleviate the tendency to copy chunks of text. Foundation Phase learners are expected to produce simple projects related to various themes in their curriculum. Lacking the necessary paraphrasing and summarising skills, young learners often resort to copying extensive sections of text without acknowledging the source of the text. This habit often continues as the children move into the Intermediate Phase.

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[4] Big Books have text and pictures large enough for the whole class to see. These texts are usually used for shared reading activities with younger learners.

Difficulties with respect to sophisticated engagement with text are evident in learners in all phases of the schooling system. Secondary and tertiary students also often do not have the competence to work with academic texts and resort to 'borrowing' from other sources, despite dire warnings about the consequences of plagiarism. Use of the procedures of *Reading and Writing Factual Texts* across learning areas in the school curriculum could give learners of all ages the skill to engage with non-fiction text appropriately. This would provide a firm foundation for those learners wishing to continue on to study at a tertiary institution.

When using the applications of *Reading and Writing Factual Texts* and *Academic Literacy,* the stage of *Preparing before Reading* is similar to that of *Early Years Reading and Writing* and *Reading and Writing Stories,* where story texts are used. However, with factual and academic texts there would usually be an extensive discussion of the field of the text (Rose, 2006a). The teacher summarises the text using language the learners can understand and key concepts are explained. During the *Detailed Reading* stage, with both factual and academic texts, technical and abstract concepts are often paraphrased, linking with the learners' prior knowledge if possible.

The procedure during the *Prepare before Writing* stage may differ for factual texts and academic texts, given differences in the genre of texts. For instance, in the case of academic texts where information from several texts may have to be used to construct a new text, a lecturer in a tertiary institution could use the following procedure to guide novice students. After making notes of the different texts using the usual procedure of the *Note Making* stage, students can be guided to construct a new text. Often the genre of the new text may differ from that of the original texts. This would necessitate the modelling of the required genre. Modelling could either take place by means of a demonstration and explanation by the lecturer or by the study of a sample text. Which ever method of modelling is used, it is crucial that the discourse patterns and other key factors of the particular genre are made explicit.

When using the application *English as a Second Language,* the demands of teaching within an additional language context can be accommodated in the LR:RL process. Typical challenges experienced by learners of English as an additional language can be addressed. Martin and Rose (2005) indicate how this could take place:

> In extension activities following Detailed Reading and Rewriting, various language features can be studied as systems abstracted from the text, such as the English tense and reference systems. Students are then far more able to understand and remember these systems, as they have already recognised and used their functions in actual meaningful texts. Importantly, the process of reading and writing are not interrupted to study language systems, rather the elaborations occur rapidly as the text unfolds (2005:16).

The various applications of LR:RL all follow the six stages of the curriculum cycle with adaptations for the particular context. By tailoring the LR:RL approach to meet the needs of learners and accommodate different genre types, spaces are opened up for an exploration of appropriate learning opportunities within the context of texts as the need arises.

General characteristics of the theory

Certain of the defining features of LR:RL theory will be explored with a view to enhancing the description of the theory. A panoramic view will be taken in order to provide a comprehensive perspective of the particular approach to literacy advocated by Rose. The nature of the theory of LR:RL and key issues highlighted in the methodology will be elucidated in this section.

- ***The theory is a hybrid theory***

The theory of LR:RL is a hybrid theory, in the sense that it integrates craft knowledge with a solid theoretical background. Like the situation where an

inexperienced worker is apprenticed to a knowledgeable master, learners are trained in the craft of reading and writing by the teacher. By using the step-by-step approach of LR:RL, the teacher provides learners with the skills necessary for the reading and writing of texts. She shows the learners how to do specific literacy tasks. At first, learners are dependent on the teacher and imitate her actions. Gradually, however, learners become more skilful and autonomous when completing the literacy tasks. Learners are eventually able to work independently of the teacher, just as the apprentice is ultimately able to work successfully without the guidance of the master. Initially, the apprentice or learners are assisted by a more knowledgeable other to perform tasks that they would not be able to perform on their own. The master or teacher demonstrates the required skills and then allows their charges to practice the skill, giving guidance where necessary. In the case of LR:RL, the craft that is passed on from teacher to learners is one that has particular theoretical roots. This is one of the most striking strengths of the LR:RL pedagogy in the context of teacher education swinging between the poles of "theory" and "practice". Bereiter (2002) calls for the creation of a hybrid culture in teacher education programmes as a solution to the theory/practice dichotomy. He describes this proposed amalgamated culture, as:

> A culture in which the student teachers actually experience themselves as part of a profession that is advancing through the continual generation of new knowledge and see a continuity between their interests as teachers and the interests of those who devote their careers to understanding learning, thinking and knowledge (2002:410).

In explaining the theoretical foundations of LR:RL, Rose indicates that the practice of LR:RL is based on the Vygotskyan model of "learning as a social process", Halliday's model of "language as text in social context" and Bernstein's model of "education as pedagogic discourse" (2005:131). LR:RL methodology is strongly criticised in various quarters. This may be due to the particular way that theory and practice are brought together and the consequent dissonance this causes in language and literacy circles. On the one hand there are those imbued

with particular theoretical outlooks (either Vygotsky, or Halliday, or Bernstein, or other theorists) who are unable to appreciate the way in which LR:RL integrates these three theoretical sources and who may be unable to understand the centrality of practice. On the other hand there are those with so-called 'craft knowledge', so convinced of their own methods that they cannot imagine that there could be better ways of doing it and do not want their settled routines disrupted. Perhaps, if teachers and teacher educators could take on board seriously the notion of a hybrid culture of education as suggested by Bereiter, and made possible by means of LR:RL, the dichotomy between theory and practice would dissolve. A consequence of this could be better learning at school and at university.

- ### *Writing is learnt via reading*

A distinctive feature of the LR:RL pedagogy is the strong assertion that writing can be learnt via reading. The debate on how best to teach literacy has long been contested. There is deliberation about whether literacy should be taught in an integrated manner linking reading, writing, listening and speaking, or whether each component of literacy should be taught discretely. Rose, following in the tradition of Halliday, emphasises the importance of meaning-making, rather than stressing form, that is, teaching reading by focusing on phonics and words (Rose 2005:145). Rose emphasises the link between reading and writing, arguing that writing is learnt via reading. The text is dealt with as a whole first, then wording and lettering are examined. With the tools gained from reading and analysing the text, the learner is supported to write a text. The support given to the learner in the writing process is a key aspect of LR:RL. There are other approaches that recognise the link between reading and writing, however the level of learner support in the writing process is often not as intensive as the scaffolded assistance provided in LR:RL.

- ***Reading and writing as the key to success in the schooling system***

Rose contends that reading is the foundation of learning in school and university. He asserts boldly that "reading is the basis of what we do as teachers and students, and that we need to be developing systematic approaches to teaching reading as a core element of our practice" (2006b:1). If we accept this, then we require a significant shift in teaching practice. In schools there is an emphasis on curriculum content, which displaces the centrality of independent reading as the basis of successful learning. Rose indicates that the consequence of foregrounding the acquisition of content at the expense of explicit teaching of reading is that learners are left to learn reading skills tacitly. As a result, a small minority of learners achieve success at school and the majority are destined for vocational and manual jobs (2006b:7). In order to shift teaching practice so that it acknowledges the centrality of reading in schooling, Rose suggests using the LR:RL top down approach. The systematic progression from higher levels of meaning to those below, provides the learners with the insight to decode the specific meanings of the text. Once learners have a sound grasp of the required reading and writing skills, they are able to work with the curriculum content more effectively.

- ***Circumvention of the 'progressive / traditional' debate***

Rose sidesteps the debate that queries what type of educational approach is most appropriate for learners of today. The progressive/traditional dispute emerges at many levels of the educational system with questions about facilitators or instructors, discovery learning or direct instruction, active learning or passive learning, and so on. Rose avoids the dichotomies, contending that the ideological conflict between the progressive and traditional educational approach is superficial. Aspects of both approaches to education can be found in LR:RL with direct teaching happening at times and facilitation happening at other times, with learners receiving direct instruction and later discovering and constructing

meaning independently. Rose puts forward an alternative approach to education. He indicates that the reason that some learners do well and others do not, is not due to an emphasis either on learner-centred or teacher-centred practice. Nor is it due to the nature of the curriculum. Rose claims that disparate levels of achievement in schools are as a result of "persistently evolved classroom practices that engage and enable learners differently" (2005:136). These are classroom practices that establish and entrench inequality between classmates. The process of initiation, response and feedback (IRF) prevalent in most classrooms contributes to the inequality between learners, according to Rose. This ubiquitous, highly ritualised practice of classroom interaction is not explicitly taught. Learners come to understand that the teacher initiates a question, the children respond and the teacher evaluates that response. Rose contends that "IRF has evolved as the invisible central motor of classroom inequality that continually but imperceptibly differentiates learners on their ability to respond, from the first years of schooling" (2005:155).

- *Reproduction of inequalities in the schooling system*

One of the major barriers to achieving equality – especially in schooling – is the widely supported conviction that there are inherent individual differences in the capacity to learn. This conviction runs very deeply in the thoughts of countless teachers at all levels of education. These differences between learners are seen as innate, with some learners presumed to have more ability than others. Much of the educational system of teaching and assessment is based on this supposition. Rose contends that it is not a case of ability or the lack of it, but rather **preparation** or the lack of it. If youngsters entering the school system have had many stories read to them, they are more prepared for reading than other children who have not been read many stories before school. Rose maintains that preschool parent-child reading is the first part of a range of reading skills that form the foundation of the school curriculum (2005:138). Children who have experienced much parent-child reading are well prepared for

the literacy practices of the first years of school. These literacy experiences prepare them for the next years in the middle primary school. At each stage of the schooling system, some learners cope well, while others get left further and further behind, and they carry those disadvantages with each step they take. In order to stop this there needs to be explicit teaching of reading, at every stage at which shortcomings emerge.

- ***Social dimensions of reading and writing***

LR:RL prioritises the social dimensions of reading and writing. Instead of viewing reading and writing development as change, first and foremost in the individual, there is a focus on learning literacy in a class or group setting initially, and then only later as an individual. Within the social exchange that takes place in the class or group setting knowledge is constructed. This knowledge provides a firm foundation for the individual reading and writing that will be required later in the LR:RL process. We have a long tradition of thinking of the mind as the characteristic of individuals. Many theories of learning presuppose learning as a strictly individual process and this has a profound effect on how the teaching of reading and writing is understood. Geertz (2000:205) reminds us: "Our minds are not in our bodies, but in the world. And as for the world, it is not in our brains, our bodies, or our minds: they are, along with gods, verbs, rocks, and politics, in it".

Conclusion

In order to determine whether LR:RL could provide an appropriate means of engaging with the literacy problems in South African schooling a detailed explication was necessary. The intention of describing the LR:RL approach was to develop an in-depth understanding of the use of this approach in various contexts. In the following chapter the focus will turn from the use of the LR:RL approach to the foundational theory of this approach to reading and writing.

Chapter 3: Critical commentary on the theoretical foundations of LR:RL

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a richer, theoretical description of the LR:RL approach. In the preceding chapter the methodology of LR:RL was explored in some depth. In this chapter Rose's use of the work of three theorists will be considered. Emphasis will be placed on the complexity of the reading and writing process due to the density of meaning and how this links to social dimensions such as structures of inequality. Aspects of LR:RL practice will be viewed in the light of the theoretical exploration of the LR:RL pedagogy in order to further understand the context of reading and writing problems encountered in South African schools.

The starting point of the critique will be the text which prompted this study, a paper presented by Rose in 2004 and published in 2005, and then moving on to another paper presented by Rose in 2006. Rose has written extensively and publications include articles in scholarly journals and chapters in books. To date, twelve co-authored and more than double that number of texts by Rose himself, provide evidence of work in the fields of teacher education, language and culture and language evolution. His work is grouped into two main areas, 'Language and Literacy Pedagogy' and 'Language and Culture' (Reading to Learn: 2007). The texts chosen for the commentary that will follow, relate closely to the focus of this thesis and the research question that guides this study. The first text, *Democratising the classroom: a literacy pedagogy for the new generation,* looks at how a particular literacy pedagogy (LR:RL) can be used as a means to provide access to learning for all South African learners and consequently to realize the educational results necessary for a democratic South Africa (Rose, 2005). The second text, *Towards a reading based theory of teaching*, provided the inspiration for the title of the thesis. This paper argues that reading forms the

basis of all teaching and learning and that the language of written texts can be learnt by the careful reading of these texts (2006b).

In order to allow for the voices of the theorists Bernstein, Vygotsky and Halliday to be heard and then also allow Rose to 'speak' in this text, frequent use will be made of direct quotations. At times these quotations may be fairly lengthy, certainly beyond what might be usually considered an acceptable length for use in an academic text. However, this is necessary to avoid the distortion that could arise when attempting to either paraphrase or summarise an author's use of another author's work. In attempting to come to a deeper understanding of what LR:RL could mean for the South African literacy context, the position I will take in this critical commentary will be that of an interpreter and careful listener.

Allowing for rather liberal use of time and space, one could imagine Basil Bernstein, Lev Vygotsky and Michael Halliday sitting around a table with David Rose discussing the meeting points of their respective work. My role would be to reflect on their conversation bearing in mind the local challenges of literacy teaching, attempting to move closer to an answer to the question,

> **Does the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* theory provide an illuminating way of thinking about the problems of literacy in South African schooling?**

Text One: *Democratising the classroom: a literacy pedagogy for the new generation*

The main purpose of this text is to describe a literacy methodology that can help students of all ages to develop and refine reading and writing skills and thereby enjoy educational access and the ensuing success (2005). Rose claims that the particular teaching activities of most classrooms enable a small minority of the class to achieve good results, while the majority of the class are disadvantaged by these teaching practices (ibid). He indicates that the LR:RL methodology was

developed in an action research project that spanned several years and included teachers from all phases of education, teaching a variety of subjects over the curriculum. The methodology has been externally evaluated and has been found to be effective across a range of contexts (Carbines, Wyatt and Robb (2005); Culican (2006); McRae, Ainsworth, Cumming, Hughes, Mackay, Price, Rowland, Warhurst, Woods and Zbar (2000). Implementation of the methodology has taken place in three continents with a variety of students from differing educational backgrounds (2005). Since Rose entitles the article *Democratising the Classroom: a literacy pedagogy for the new generation,* the key question that he seems to be addressing in the article is: 'How can the educational outcomes necessary for building a democratic South Africa be achieved?' Rose states, "I argue here that democratising the classroom is the primary condition for achieving the kinds of educational outcomes needed to build a democratic South Africa, and outline a literacy pedagogy that can enable us to do so" (2005:131). For Rose the central principle of democracy is equality. Then the argument runs that inequality is reinforced by our conventional schooling practices. Central to those practices is the issue of literacy.

Rose suggests that certain theoretical traditions have been integrated in a series of teaching strategies to make up the LR:RL pedagogy. Aspects of the theory of Bernstein, Vygotsky and Halliday form the theoretical foundation of the LR:RL. In the following section of this analysis, each of the particular theoretical stances will be examined in order to discover how specific concepts have been used within the context of Text One.

- ***Bernstein as used by Rose (2005)***

Rose makes use of the Bernsteinian concept of pedagogic discourse, referring to the two dimensions of pedagogic discourse identified by Bernstein, namely, instructional discourse and regulative discourse (2005). Rose includes a description of these discourses provided by Bernstein:

> … the discourse which creates specialised skills and their relationship to each other as *instructional discourse*, and the moral discourse which creates order, relations and identity [as] *regulative discourse* … the instructional discourse is embedded in the regulative discourse, and the regulative discourse is the dominant discourse (Bernstein, 1996:46) [emphasis in the original].

Bernstein indicates that the pedagogic discourse, comprising both the instructional and the regulative discourse, is not an independent discourse, rather, it is a "recontextualizing discourse" (1990:184):

> … as pedagogic discourse is a recontextualizing principle, which transforms the actual into the virtual or the imaginary, then any recontextualized discourse becomes a signifier for *something other than* itself. What this 'other' is, the *principles of the principles* of the recontextualizing which regulates what principle of recontextualizing is selected – or, perhaps more accurately, the principle which regulates the range of alternative principles available for selection – varies according to the dominant principles of a given society. … In this sense regulative discourse is itself the precondition for any pedagogic discourse [emphasis in the original].

Other discourses are taken, repositioned and adjusted to make up a new discourse for use in an educational context. This idea may best be explained by means of an example. The teaching of primary school mathematics is a recontextualised discourse. What is understood as mathematics has been recontextualised for a school setting. A selection is made from the discipline of mathematics and this is adapted for the teaching of mathematics in the primary school. Pedagogic discourse (teaching) has two aspects. The instructional discourse refers to the conveying of particular competences, while the regulative discourse relates to the discourse that produces order, relation, and identity. Returning to the example of mathematics teaching, the original practice (of mathematics) is removed from its own regulative discourse, and the specialized skills of mathematics are converted into the instructional/regulative discourse of primary school mathematics.

The regulative discourse is the dominant discourse. The instructional discourse is often assumed to be the primary discourse of teaching, however the less obvious regulative discourse has a profound influence on what is actually transmitted and acquired. There is a tendency to try to separate these two discourses[5], however this separation is artificial. Thus Bernstein explains that the instructional discourse is positioned within the regulative discourse and not separate from the regulative discourse:

> We have said that the pedagogic discourse is the rules for embedding an instructional discourse in a regulative discourse. Instructional discourse regulates the rules which constitute the legitimate variety, internal and relational features of specialized competences. This discourse is embedded in a regulative discourse, the rules of which regulate what counts as legitimate order between and within transmitters, acquirers, competences, and contexts. At the most abstract level it provides and legitimizes the official rules regulating order, relation, and identity. The tendency is to separate these discourses as moral and instructional discourses, or to see them as ideologically penetrated rather than to regard them as one embedded discourse producing one embedded inseparable text (1990: 188).

Rose (2005) contends that if we accept Bernstein's concept of pedagogic discourse, then we would have to accept that the primary function of teaching is to convey order, relations and identity rather than to convey knowledge and skills. He proceeds to interrogate the implications of the dominance of the regulative discourse:

> What then is the nature of this order, these relations and identities? I want to suggest that these are continually apparent to all teachers in all classrooms in every day of our practice. The dominant moral order in our classrooms is one of inequality. Teachers are confronted by this inequality from the day we first walk into a classroom, ill-prepared by our training to manage it, let alone overcome it (2005:132).

Rose goes on to indicate that all of the teachers with whom he works report that there are relatively few learners who are able to participate successfully in all

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[5] In the South African context we see the school curriculum calling for the teaching of knowledge, skills and values. The assumption seems to be that values need to be taught explicitly. However when teachers teach knowledge and skills they also convey values, often unwittingly. The covert values imparted by teachers can have a more significant effect on pupils than the overt knowledge, skills and values of the curriculum that they set out to teach.

classroom activities. Another section of the class is able to achieve average results and the remainder of the learners are often not able to achieve success (2005). Based on this, Rose claims that inequality is entrenched in classrooms. Learners develop identities of themselves as successful, average or unsuccessful and these identities are continually confirmed "by the moral order of the classroom" (ibid.).

Having highlighted the differences between learners, Rose then suggests that the inequality of learners is commonly interpreted as being based on relatively inflexible differences in ability:[6]

> The entire educational edifice of assessment, progression and specialisation is predicated on this assumption. The naturalisation of inequality as differences in 'ability' serves to internalise these identities, so that successful learners come to experience schooling as their pathway to the future, while unsuccessful learners eventually come to experience it as irrelevant, even alienating (ibid.).

Rose contends that the unequal identities of learners have far reaching effects. He suggests that the purpose of conventional pedagogic discourse is to maintain a stratified social order. The instructional discourse positioned within the regulative discourse serves to establish occupational positions as professional, vocational or manual (ibid.). One of the major barriers to achieving equality, especially in schooling, is the widely supported conviction that there are inherent individual differences in the capacity to learn. Rose does not support this belief that runs very deeply in the thoughts of countless teachers. The whole ideology of an intelligence quotient which dominated (and distorted) schooling for most of the previous century was based on the idea of "natural" inherent individual differences in capacity to learn. This ideology would seem to still have a firm hold on the thinking and practice of many within the schooling system today, given the continued broad acceptance that some learners are able while other learners are less able.

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[6] Assessing 'Intelligence Quotient' is purported to measure the individual's potential and to be able to predict future intellectual achievement. The educational system has generally accepted the notion of intelligence as a stable, single entity with its location being within the brain. There has also been general acceptance of its quantification as one number for each individual, and the use of these numbers to rank people. Teachers and others in the educational system often accept that certain learners will have more 'ability' than others based on their superior IQ score.

Rose suggests that the accepted identities of "successful, average or unsuccessful" underpin the socioeconomic reality of present day industrial societies (2005:133). He then proposes that particular educational practices within schools establish and reinforce these identities. To counter this entrenchment of inequality and bring about a more democratic society, Rose proposes that a good place to begin would be in the classroom. More specifically, intervention should focus on literacy practice within classrooms. Rose makes the case that the kind of learners that are regarded as successful by society are better prepared for schooling because of initial socialisation in the home, than their less successful counterparts. He makes a bold statement, regarding preparation for school learning:

> The most obvious and relevant difference in this respect is in the experience of parent-child reading, of which children in literate middle class families experience an average of 1000 hours before starting school (Bergin 1999), whereas those from oral cultural backgrounds may experience little or none (2005:137).

Rose then explains that reading to children is the first step in a literacy curriculum. He contends that children with a broad experience of books are able to read independently more quickly than children who have not had many stories read to them. Independent reading is seen by Rose as the cornerstone of future academic success (2005:138). It is significant that the comparative international literacy study, Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), specifically mentions the influence of home activities with regard to promoting reading literacy. In both the PIRLS studies there was a clear link between learner's reading competence and their early involvement in literacy activities:

- In PIRLS 2001 and PIRLS 2006, there was a positive relationship between student's reading achievement at the fourth grade and parents having engaged their children in early literacy activities before starting school …
- The presence of children's books in the home also continued to show a strong positive relationship with reading achievement. The average reading achievement difference between students from homes with many children's books (more than 100) and those from homes with few children's books (10 or

fewer) was very large (91 score points, almost 1 standard deviation) (IEA, 2006:5).

Where learners come from non-literate households (where very little, or perhaps no reading takes place on a regular basis – where caregivers do not read to children, and the adults around are never seen reading) they begin with a massive disadvantage. If, for whatever reason learners (even university students) missed out on this key entry point, then, surely, that is where we need to begin. Rose offers a means of giving young learners literacy experiences they missed out on as pre-schoolers and offers older school learners as well as those in higher education the opportunity to make up for poor literacy experiences during their schooling. Instead of positioning learners as more and less able, Rose offers an alternative explanation for the undeniable differences that are evident in classrooms. That explanation shows how at each stage of the process, some learners get left further and further behind, and they carry those disadvantages with each step they take. And in order to stop this, there needs to be explicit teaching of reading at any (every) stage at which shortcomings emerge. LR:RL offers a series of teaching strategies to assist learners of all ages to access texts appropriately.

- *Vygotsky as used by Rose (2005)*

Rose uses a construct conceptualised by Vygotsky to support the LR:RL methodology. He discusses how the 'zone of proximal development' can be used to promote reading ability. Rose then indicates how the teacher 'scaffolds' reading development, using a concept developed by Bruner.[7] The zone of proximal development refers to the disparity between a learner's present capacity and what the learner can do with the assistance of another. Vygotsky defines zone of proximal development as follows:

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[7] 'Scaffolding' is used as a metaphor to explain the interaction between a child and a more informed person. Bruner (1975) developed and refined the concept, initiated by Vygotsky, where assistance is provided for a child to carry out a task that they are unable to manage independently.

It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (1978:86).

In discussing the concept of the zone of proximal development, Vygotsky indicates that the actual developmental level represents abilities that are already present, while the zone of proximal development indicates abilities that are likely to develop. Vygotsky refers to the zone of proximal development as the "buds or flowers of development" as distinct from the "fruits of development" that would represent the actual competence of the learner (ibid).

Rose contends that, using a Vygotskyan perspective of learning, knowledge is acquired to the extent that learners are guided by a teacher, or as least someone with more sophisticated knowledge in the relevant practice. Rose indicates how teachers can assist learners to function at a more advanced level, in their zone of proximal development, asserting that by means of the LR:RL approach all learners are helped concurrently to work at a more advanced level:

> … the Vygotskan model suggests that a teacher can potentially support learners to operate at a high level no matter what their independent ability. The *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* pedagogy assumes this possibility, but takes it further to support all learners in a class to simultaneously operate at the same high level (2005:142).

Using the LR:RL methodology, the teacher scaffolds learning. At first learning is directed actively. Initially, the teacher provides substantial support to learners in order to help them acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. Later, as the learners develop competence, the teacher gives less assistance and the learners work more autonomously. Eventually learners are able to work independently of the teacher. Using the LR:RL approach, learners acquire competence by means of repeated work with advanced activities. Instead of building up literacy skills in an incremental manner, all learners are exposed to advanced activities. The weaker learners are expected to do the same activities as the stronger learners,

but are given more assistance. As the learners become more able, the scaffolded assistance is withdrawn. The LR:RL pedagogy thus has firm roots in the Vygotskyan concepts of the zone of proximal development and learning as a social process. Throughout the LR:RL learning cycle, the teacher first directs learning and only hands over responsibility for reading or writing tasks to learners once all the participants have achieved success. The teacher directs learning, by mediating between the learner and what needs to be learnt. Rose claims:

> In the *Reading to Learn* methodology, scaffolding supports all learners to do the same high level tasks, but provides the greatest support for the weakest learners. Rather than developing in incremental steps, learners acquire independent competence through repeated practice with high level tasks, and the scaffolding support is gradually withdrawn as learners take control. This then is the principle by which an unequal moral order can be transformed into a democratic classroom, where successful learner identities can be distributed equally to all students (ibid).

The assumption that scaffolded learning can produce an egalitarian classroom may have to be approached cautiously. Although scaffolded learning produces good results, it seems a significant leap in logic to then infer that this would help all learners to develop a common identity of that of 'successful student'. The construction of identity is a complex process affected by various factors and it is perhaps fairly glib to suggest that a literacy methodology can be the primary means of bringing this about. However, the structured teaching and learning process suggested by Rose holds considerable promise. Reading and writing are absolutely central to all the kinds of learning we try to foster in our educational institutions, in every field. And, if this is so, then all teachers at all levels of education need to focus sharply on teaching reading and writing. This is not merely the old idea of 'every teacher is a teacher of language', it is, rather the claim that in any field of secondary or tertiary education, reading and writing (in particular ways) is at the core of the business.

- ***Halliday as used by Rose (2005)***

Rose makes a link between Halliday's functional language model and the LR:RL methodology. Using the structure afforded by the theory of Halliday the LR:RL pedagogy guides the teaching of reading and writing. Rose notes:

> The goal of democratising the classroom is not a utopian dream. It is basic practice in the *Reading to Learn* programme, made possible by the contribution of Halliday's functional model of language to understanding and so explicitly teaching the tasks of reading and writing across curricula (Halliday 1975, 1978, 1993). Central to Halliday's theory is the notion of **realisation**, where meaning is realised as wording (i.e. 'expressed/symbolised/manifested), and wording is realised as sounding or lettering (2005:143) [emphasis in the original].

The practice of attending to the meaning of the text and also looking at the components of the text (letters, words, word clusters) that is evident in the LR:RL methodology, finds favour with many teachers of young children. Foundation Phase teachers who have used the LR:RL methodology prepared for beginning readers, *Early Years Reading and Writing,* often claim that they are familiar with the procedures outlined in LR:RL and some can find similarities between their practice and LR:RL. The explicit teaching of reading and writing usually does however, not continue throughout the primary school, into the high school and beyond.

In LR:RL learners are taken through the stages of *Preparing before Reading, Detailed Reading, Preparing before Writing, Joint Reconstruction, Individual Reconstruction* and *Independent writing.* Working through these stages, learners of all ages can be guided to engage with and then produce texts more effectively. In the LR:RL approach, Rose echoes the strata, or levels of language, identified by Halliday. The language model developed by Halliday offers the means to systematically teach reading and writing. This complex literacy process is deconstructed and learners are assisted to practice components of the reading and writing task. Crucial to this process is that meaning-making is stressed at all stages and learners read and write for the purpose of understanding (Rose, 2005). The components of language are identified, but instead of being taught

discretely are handled within the context of a text. Halliday (1994) identifies various strata of language:

phonology	is the level of sound (pronunciation)
orthography	is the level of writing (punctuation and spelling)
grammar ('lexicogrammar')	is the level of wording
semantics ('discourse semantics')	is the level of meaning
(1994:18)	

According to Halliday (1994), lexicogrammar is at the centre of language, encompassing both vocabulary and grammar. Lexicogrammar is in the stratum of wording in language. Wording is manifested as sound (phonology) or writing (orthography). The stratum following lexicogrammar, is referred to as discourse semantics by Halliday. Wording is realized or manifested as discourse containing meaning.

Using the structure afforded by Halliday, it is possible to side-step the contested arena of a 'best' method of teaching reading. A debate has raged in literacy circles around the question of whether 'bottom up' or 'top down' strategies are more appropriate for teaching reading. Approaches such as the *Look and Say* and the *Phonics* approach are classified as bottom up approaches. The child learns to identify words or phonics sounds and then recognises the words in sentences or the sounds in phonetically regular words. The *Whole Language Approach* is an example of a top down approach. The meaning of the story is explored first. Following this children read sentences with the teacher and then on their own. Later the sentences are broken up into words and phonics. In the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* methodology both views of reading are realized. Moving from an emphasis on discourse semantics, to lexicogrammar issues and then on to orthography and phonology, all the strata identified by Halliday are addressed.

Rose (2005:131) indicates that one of the theoretical foundations of LR:RL is the "Hallidayan model of text in social context". Referring to the ongoing debate

concerning the most appropriate reading methodology, Rose indicates that both decoding (bottom up approach) and meaning-making (top down approach) are important. However it is not sufficient to move through the various levels of language systematically. Language is produced within a particular context and the reader has to become aware of this context.

> But it is not through processing letter patterns alone that we recognise written words; while the spelling system is complex, the systems of meaning that wordings realise are immeasurably more so, and it is equally our experience of these systems that enables us to read (Rose 2005:144).

Aside from mechanically recognising words in a sentence or letters making up a word, reading also has a crucial meaning-making component. Essentially language learning is a meaning-making process. Halliday refers to this process as a sociosemiotic process. This entails a fusion of three modes of interpretation:

> …that of language in the context of the social system, that of language as an aspect of a more general semiotic, and that of the social system itself as a semiotic system … The social system, viewed in these terms, is a system of meaning relations; and these meaning relations are realised in many ways, of which one, perhaps the principal one as far as the maintenance and transmission of the system is concerned, is through their encoding in language. The meaning making potential of a language, its semantic system, is therefore seen as realizing a higher level system of relations, that of the social semiotic, in just the same way as it is itself realised in the lexicogrammatical and phonological systems (1975:60).

Language is viewed by Halliday as a social semiotic. This entails understanding language within a sociocultural context. Language, both spoken and written, is made up of interactions of meaning in a variety of interpersonal situations. Chapman succinctly sheds light on the concept of social semiotics:

> The central notion of social semiotics is that all meanings are made. They do not exist as objects or concrete facts. Rather, they are constructed through systems of signs. A sign is some physical thing that stands for, or refers to, something else ... A word, either spoken or written, is a linguistic sign. It has a physical form, either the spoken sound or the written letters, and is associated with certain mental concepts (1993:1).

No happening, action, or text, has meaning in and of itself. Thus, when reading, the meaning is neither in the text nor in the individual reader. The meaning exists in the social meaning-making practices which create semiotic associations and social actions. The reader is required to engage with the text, in a similar way to that when one person connects with another in a social encounter. Texts have no intrinsic meaning. Thus, in the *Preparing before Reading* stage of LR:RL the teacher helps the learners to understand and engage with the text. The learners relate the content of the material to their own experiences in the discussion that takes place before the *Detailed Reading* stage. Then, throughout the stages of the LR:RL, learners are assisted to continue to make meaning of the text they are using.

Aside from the insights Halliday provides regarding the importance of meaning and the structure of language, another key contribution of Halliday to the teaching of language has been his demonstration of the differences between spoken and written language. Typically, the development of oral ability is neglected in favour of an emphasis on the teaching of reading and writing. Halliday (1986) has emphasised that the spoken language is a medium for thinking, and consequently learning, just as reading and writing are. In the LR:RL approach, the modalities of listening, speaking, reading and writing are recognised and developed in a systematic manner. The learner is helped to learn about their world using a range of competencies. Employing a scaffolded process, the lexical density of text is processed so that novice readers are able to access written material that at first seems obscure and inaccessible.

Text Two: *Towards a reading based theory of teaching*

This text was delivered as a paper at a plenary session of the 33rd International Functional Linguistics Conference in 2006. The central focus of the paper is to promote the concept of reading as the foundation of teaching. In the paper a theoretical construct is presented and then a model is outlined to demonstrate

how reading could be a key aspect of all school learning. Rose indicates the focus of the text in the opening paragraph:

> The goal of this paper is an ambitious one, and perhaps presumptuous as well, as I'm going to argue that reading is the basis of what we all do as teachers and students, and that we need to be developing systematic approaches to teaching reading as a core element of our practice (2006b:1).

The focal point of the paper is on learning in school and the primary claim is that reading is the basis of this learning. However, the application of the suggested literacy methodology reaches beyond the school system into the tertiary sector. Rose indicates that the methodology presented in the paper can be applied in all learning situations from the earliest years of schooling to university education. The use of the methodology in a range of contexts has led to the refinement of the practice and the theory of the methodology. The theory upon which the methodology is based is closely linked to practice. Rose emphasises the interdependence of the theory and practice. "Development of the theory thus integrates action and reflection: observations in practice continually enrich and modify the theory, which in turn continually refines and expands the practice." (2006b:2).

The paper commences with an explication of the theoretical framework of the methodology, before moving on to indicate how the methodology is used in classrooms. Rose uses the concepts of phylogenesis, ontogenesis and logogenesis to structure his argument that reading and writing are the root of all academic practice. In his discussion of the phylogenesis of schooling, Rose draws on aspects of Bernstein's theory to highlight features of the development of schooling. The next section of the discussion centres around the ontogenesis of the individual. Reference is made to the individual's development of the capacity to read and learn from reading. The primary source used is the work of Vygotsky. The third section of the discussion concerns the logogenesis or theory of language that underpins the LR:RL methodology and the main source is an aspect of Halliday's theory.

- ***Bernstein as used by Rose (2006b)***

In the text, *Towards a reading based theory of teaching,* Rose makes extensive use of Bernstein's theory to support his argument that reading is central to the practice of teaching and learning. Rose explains that the pedagogic device (teaching) consists of three sets of rules that are to be found in all education structures. He quotes from Bernstein (1996:42)

> *Distributive rules* regulate relationships between power, social groups, forms of consciousness and practice … who may transmit what to whom and under what conditions.
>
> *Recontextualising rules* regulate formation of specific pedagogic discourse … pedagogic discourse selects and creates specialized pedagogic subjects through its contexts and contents.
>
> *Evaluative rules* constitute any pedagogic practice … the key to pedagogic practice is continuous evaluation…evaluation condenses the meaning of the whole device.

In discussing the action of the distributive rules in schooling, Rose examines the interaction between four concepts, namely 'Power', 'Social groups', 'Knowledge' and 'Consciousness'. In society today, power arises out of "the control of material economic production, and the control of production, distribution and reproduction of symbols, or symbolic control" (Rose 2006b:2). Rose again refers to Bernstein to discuss the two different sources of economic power:

> For Bernstein these contrasting economic bases characterise two fractions of the middle class, the old middle class with its base in industrial production and the new middle class with its base in symbolic control, people like ourselves. There is a continual struggle between these fractions for control of the pedagogic device (ibid).

There is considerable evidence that control of the education system is a contentious issue both globally and locally. Internationally, shifts in national education policy can be identified. Evidence of the impact of market forces on the schooling system is discernable. In South Africa, the education and training

debate exemplifies the power struggle between education and labour sectors for control over the local education system.[8]

Rose identifies three broad groupings influenced by the distributive rules. Social groups are broadly categorised into professional, vocational and occupational divisions based on the general educational qualifications needed to find employment in these areas (2006b:3). Rose explains that the distributive rules have an impact on the different types of employment in terms of the knowledge required for each level of employment:

> Aside from their incomes and the degree of autonomy in their jobs, what distinguishes these groups is the broad types of *Knowledge* that the distributive rules have afforded them: theoretical knowledge to professional qualifications, technological knowledge to vocational qualifications, but predominantly everyday forms of practical knowledge to those whose choices are limited to manual occupations or unemployment (ibid) [emphasis in the original].

Rose then makes the point that the weakest learners in the school system will depend on experience gained outside the classroom, rather than knowledge and skills gained in the classroom, to prepare them for their work in the future. The literacy methodology Rose proposes is intended to give these least successful learners more access to texts used in schooling, so that they are able to take more advantage of learning opportunities provided in the classroom, thereby having the possibility of a broader range of occupation after leaving school.

The result of the distributive rules is consciousness. This could either be a restricted or an elaborated coding orientation, or "orientation to meaning" (ibid). Restricted codes have a narrower range of options for thinking and talking about a topic, while elaborated codes provide a wide spectrum of ways to think about

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[8] Although the education and training sector is a complex one, broadly speaking, education could be described as being concerned with symbolic control, and training essentially with industrial production. In South Africa education and training were brought together in one system. As part of the restructuring of education in the post-apartheid era, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was designed to accommodate all education and training qualifications. Tension and resistance have characterised much of the essence of the NQF in South Africa, given the differing interests of discipline based and skills based learning. The review of the South African NQF, initiated in 2001 and finally published in 2007, exemplifies some of the complexities linked to the attempt to establish an integrated education and training system. (CHE: 2007).

and discuss the topic. Members of the middle class would typically use both codes. Working class individuals would usually make use of restricted codes and would use elaborated codes infrequently. Another impact of reduced use of elaborated codes for working class people, is the orientation to written text. Rose makes the point that working class and middle class people often have different engagement with written text:

> In order to read with understanding and engagement it is essential to conceptualise the book as a partner in an exchange of meaning. Without the orientation to books that middle class parents give their children, it appears to be very difficult for some children to arrive at on their own (2006b:4).

For non- or semi-literate households, the notion of a book as a 'partner in an exchange of meaning' is likely to be an extraordinarily mystifying idea. Rose contends that in middle class homes there is a high incidence of parent-child reading before the child goes to school. These shared reading opportunities prepare the children for formal reading once they enter school. Children who do not have the experience of early engagement with written texts, can be disadvantaged when they begin formal schooling. A limited conception of how texts work and little understanding of the essential meaning-making process involved in reading, puts these children at an immediate disadvantage compared to children from text-rich backgrounds.

In summary, returning to the various rules that characterise education, distributive rules shape the sequence of reading development through the years of schooling. These rules control relationships between power, social groups, knowledge and consciousness. Working class learners are sidelined in the present educational system because of the impact of the distributive rules. Recontextualising rules shape the structuring of pedagogic discourse so that it privileges orientations to reading developed in middle class families. These rules regulate formation of specific pedagogic discourse. The order and relations of the society are recontextualised in education as a regulative discourse of order, relations and identity in the classroom. Evaluative rules mould the school

curriculum and control the teaching that takes place. The importance of reading development is obscured by the focus on covering all the curriculum content. Those learners who are able to interact with written texts are rewarded while the other learners develop negative identities of themselves as readers and writers. These processes have developed gradually as the schooling system has evolved (the phylogenesis of schooling), with the result that they appear normal and inevitable. Rose maintains that if reading is placed at the centre of the curriculum and all learners are explicitly taught to read, then we may be able to provide real access to education for all.

- ***Vygotsky as used by Rose (2006b)***

Rose describes cycles within which reading development takes place. He refers to these cycles as 'scaffolding learning cycles' (2006b:8). The learning cycle described by Rose consists of three steps, prepare, task and elaborate. Rose contends that most learning tasks outside the classroom involve the three steps of the learning cycle. An adult or more competent peer models the activity, thereafter the child attempts to perform the activity. While the activity is being carried out, or after the activity, the adult or peer would usually give feedback to help improve the performance of the activity. Rose indicates that this learning cycle is an elaboration of the social learning procedure developed by Vygotsky, namely, the zone of proximal development. Rose alludes to three levels where the learning cycle can be applied to analyse the activities taking place. The first level is a general level where the objective is a completed macro task. Micro learning activities (that could contribute to the macro task) are placed at the second level. At the third level, Rose places the interactions between teachers and learners that make up the fabric of classroom discourse. Rose elaborates on the nature of the classroom interaction:

> In our exhaustive analyses of learning interactions, we have found that the task demanded by teacher questions is of two general kinds: if the class is reading a text the task is to *identify* some element of the text, whether a wording or a

graphic feature such as an illustration or chart; if the task is not to identify a text element, it is to *select* an element from students' experience, whether this is personal experience, concepts previously studied, or new elements to contribute to a text. The teacher may prepare students to give the desired response, or simply assume that they already have the resources to respond successfully. And the response may be elaborated with new understandings of the element that has been identified or selected, or the response may be simply affirmed or rejected (2006b:13) [emphasis in the original].

Rose grounds the scaffolded learning cycle in parent-child reading. Parents often intuitively prepare their children for new stories by connecting parts of the story to the child's experience, or by explaining certain aspects of the story. Before reading a story the parent might look through the book with the child. By pointing to characters, identifying key aspects of the story, or explaining unfamiliar vocabulary, and so forth the parent prepares the child for the story. The exchange below demonstrates how a young child is prepared for a shared book reading.

Table 4: Shared book reading

Mother	Look, this book is about a dog. *[The mother points to the picture on the cover.]* This dog looks just like Pippa. *[The mother refers to the family pet.]* *[The mother opens the book]*	Prepare
Child	*[The child points to a picture of a dog]* Pippa!	Identify
Mother	Yes, that dog is also a Border Collie like Pippa. The dog's name is Jonty.	Affirm and elaborate
Child	*[Nods]* Woof, woof.	Select
Mother	Yes, Jonty is barking. I think Jonty likes to bark just like Pippa. *[The mother pages through the book and refers to the pictures]*	Affirm and elaborate
Mother	Look here. Jonty is helping the boy. *[The mother points to a picture]*	Prepare
Child	Good Jonty!	Select
Mother	Yes! Very good Jonty! The story is called *Jonty to the rescue.* Would you like me to read the story?	Affirm and elaborate
Child	Mmmm	
Mother	Jonty is going to rescue someone. That means he is going to help someone. Who do you think he will help?	Prepare

| Child | The boy. | Select |
| Mother | Yes! We saw that Jonty was saving the boy. | Affirm and elaborate |

(Rose, 2005; 2006b)

The mother identifies key aspects of the story and links the story to the child's experience in order to help the child understand the story. When the child responds, the mother first affirms the response and then elaborates by giving further detail.

In a classroom situation, Rose suggests that most often learners are not prepared for tasks or questions. A small percentage of learners may be able to respond correctly and are praised for their efforts. Other learners may not be able to respond correctly. The teacher either rejects their contributions or corrects the answer supplied. Thus the identity of the strong learners is constantly affirmed while the remainder of the learners are repeatedly reminded that they are not up to standard. However, when teachers use the scaffolded learning cycle, all learners are affirmed and praised. Rose emphasises the importance of affirming learners:

> The importance of affirmation in learning cannot be emphasised too strongly. It is central to Vygotsky's theory, based on his observations of behaviour, and to current models of the neurophysiology of learning (Edelman & Tononi 2001). Our brains have evolved to remember and repeat activities that are affirmed, and avoid activities that are not. Affirmation opens up the potential for learning – rejection closes it down. The elaboration move takes advantage of this expanded learning potential to raise the level of understanding (2006b:15).

A major emphasis in the work of Vygotsky is that of learning as a social process. The teacher controls the learning, thus enabling learners to work at a level that is higher than their independent learning level. The LR:RL pedagogy "is concerned with transmitting skills that learners need to succeed in education, using a social semiotic instructional discourse, and with achieving equality in the classroom and society by redesigning the regulative discourse" (2006b:23). Instead of a regulative discourse that identifies learners as achievers or non-achievers,

learners are all assisted to work at a high level. Consequently, learners are able to develop an identity of themselves as successful learners.

- ***Halliday as used by Rose (2006b)***

A central concept in the LR:RL pedagogy is that language is made up of strata. The other key concept is that language occurs within a social milieu. Rose indicates, "The linguistic theory that informs the design of our literacy pedagogy is based on a stratified model of language as text in social context" (2006b:10). Reading and writing are immensely complex practices that require the processing of many language layers at the same time:

> Reading and writing, like speaking and listening, involve processing all these layers of structure simultaneously and automatically, including patterns within the word that we call spelling, patterns within the sentence known as grammar, and patterns within the text which I will call discourse. Beyond the text is the context that it realises, which is also stratified as contexts of situation or *register*, and of culture or *genre*. The register of a text includes the fields of experience that it construes (its 'subject matter'), its engagement of readers and appraisals of positions, enacting the tenor of the reader-writer relationship, and its position on the mode continuum between highly written and more spoken ways of meaning. Its genre specifies its social purpose and the stages it goes through, in relation to other genres in the culture. Finally, running through all these layers of language in context are the ideological messages that the text encodes. In order to recognise and negotiate these dimensions of its context, readers must be able to automatically process each layer of patterning within the text, sentence and word (ibid) [emphasis in the original].

The pedagogy advocated by Rose works through each level of language from the top down. Systematically the layers of genre, register, text, paragraph, sentence, phrase, word, syllable and letter pattern are explored. The patterns of meaning at the upper level assist the learner to understand that patterns of meaning in the layer below. When teachers are taught to implement the

pedagogy they are given training in text analysis. They are given intensive guidance in analysing patterns of discourse.

Reflecting on LR:RL practice in the light of theory

This chapter deepens our understanding of the LR:RL pedagogy – it discloses how it is rooted in theoretical frameworks which reveal the centrality of literacy to schooling. Schooling and literacy are inextricably entwined with reading and writing, and other literacy practices, enabling the accumulation, organisation, storage and retrieval of information across all grades of the curriculum. In the light of the consideration of the theoretical foundations of LR:RL, certain issues emerge that have particular importance for literacy practice in South Africa. These issues will be discussed below.

- *Equivalence of opportunity*

The idea of more and less able learners is challenged in the LR:RL pedagogy. An underpinning belief that all learners can be assisted to read and write at appropriate levels, fuels the reading and writing process advocated by Rose. Rejecting the notion that there are inherent individual differences in the capacity to learn to read and write, opens a space to think about a process whereby all learners are helped to access and produce texts at requisite levels. To counter the continual reproduction of the incidence of successful, moderately successful and unsuccessful learners, Rose suggests that the starting point should be the classroom, and more specifically the literacy practices of the classroom. By means of the explicit teaching of reading and writing, the literacy process is demystified and made accessible to learners.

Children exposed to the reading of stories in the pre-school years have a head start in fathoming the immensely complicated literacy process. Parent-child

reading is key preparation for formal literacy learning. Reading is less mysterious for children who have had experience in interacting with books than for their peers who had limited exposure to books prior to school enrolment. LR:RL provides a bridge for learners who have missed out on parent-child reading. The shared reading process found in LR:RL, is very similar to early reading that takes place in the home and provides the necessary orientation to books that helps children to conceptualise a book as a partner in an exchange of meaning. This is particularly important in a country such as South Africa with a high incidence of parental illiteracy and many learners who have limited experience of books before school.

- *Literacy as a scaffolded process*

Essentially in LR:RL, scaffolding entails the teacher preparing learners to perform a learning activity by showing them how to do so before they attempt the activity. Either during or after the activity the teacher provides elaboration or feedback. In Vygotskyan terms, this would be described as teachers supporting learners to work in their zone of proximal development. A crucial aspect of the LR:RL process is the preparation before the task, since thorough preparation enables the learners to respond successfully. Success with a learning activity encourages learners to attempt the next learning activity. In the LR:RL approach the complex reading and writing process is dealt with systematically in six stages. Learners are carefully prepared to perform successfully all the stages of the LR:RL curriculum cycle.

The role of the teacher is emphasised in LR:RL, with the teacher initially controlling the learning process and only retiring to the role of learning facilitator once the learners have been carefully guided through the reading and writing activities. This restoration of the teacher to active initiator in the learning process is of vital significance within the South African context. With the introduction of outcomes based education, teachers were required to become 'facilitators' and a

constructivist approach to learning was emphasised. The official ideology was one of learner-centredness (Chisholm, 2003). However there were problems with the resulting learning, or lack thereof, in many instances. The review of Curriculum 2005 (C2005), which took place in 2000, recommended significant changes to the initial post-apartheid curriculum. Chisholm indicates that the Ministerial Committee established to review C2005 found that curriculum implementation had been problematic due to a number of factors including "policy overload and limited transfer of learning into classrooms" (2003:3). The contexts within which the curriculum had to be implemented vary significantly and these contexts needed to be considered. Chisholm highlights the debate around the issue of learner-centredness that took place at the time of the curriculum review:

> While learner-centredness may be a necessary tool to breakdown decades of learning habits formed to create uncritical and unthinking persons, it was argued that it was undermined in large under-resourced classes with poorly qualified teachers who were unconfident of their subject knowledge. Here the emphasis needed to be not only on learner-centredness but also the introduction of new knowledge and concepts (2003:10).

Using the LR:RL approach, learners are not forced to take responsibility for learning without being prepared to do so. In a scaffolded process, the teacher assists the learners to acquire knowledge about curriculum content at the same time as they learn about the texts in which the content is embedded. Once learners have been thoroughly prepared, they use the curriculum content to construct new texts and thus ultimately work in a way that can be characterised as learning-centred rather than learner-centred. Empasis is thus placed on the prerequisite that learning should take place, rather than a superficial insistence on learner-centredness as a reaction to teacher-centred practice.

- ***Literacy as a structured process***

LR:RL pedagogy addresses each level of complexity in the reading and writing process systematically. A top down approach is followed to take learners carefully through engagement with a text and then production of a text. LR:RL offers a model of formal education that regards reading as its primary mode of learning. The process of learning to read, and thence to write are the basic goals of its pedagogic practices. The approach enables learners to develop a more thorough understanding of the various learning areas of the curriculum at the same time as they learn to read and write about them. Learners are assisted to deepen their content knowledge, since the close examination of the texts includes providing the background needed to understand the text and the concepts that it contains. The phases of meaning encountered as the text unfolds are paraphrased by the teacher. Learners are able to grasp the general meaning of the text as it is first discussed and then read aloud by the teacher.

The structured approach to reading and writing breaks down language tasks into manageable parts. Learners are taken through a systematic step-by-step process. There is an acknowledgement that a text becomes comprehensible once its topic and organisation are made explicit. Similarly, a sentence becomes meaningful once it is considered in relation to the sentences that precede and follow it, and a word becomes meaningful within the context of the sentence. Broadly speaking, when using the LR:RL approach, in reading the move is from context to text, sentence and then to word. In writing the move is from the word back up to the sentence and text. This structured approach to the teaching of reading and writing offers some solution to the challenge of improving abysmal reading and writing outcomes mentioned in the PIRLS 2006 study and other evaluations of South African learners' literacy ability.

The revision of C2005 provided a clearer guideline as to the expected competences required of learners in terms of reading and writing. In the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) teachers are provided with guidelines

regarding the expected teaching and learning of languages. The following extract from the *Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes. Languages* shows that a close link can be made between the LR:RL approach and the learning and teaching approach for languages outlined in curriculum guideline documentation:

> A *text-based approach* explores how texts work. It involves reading, viewing and analysing texts to understand how they are produced and what their effects are. And, of course, it involves writing texts for particular purposes and audiences (recounts, instructions, narratives, reports, etc.). In this approach language is always explored in texts, and texts are explored in relation to their contexts. The approach involves attention to formal aspects of language (grammar and vocabulary), but in the context of the chosen texts and not in isolation. In order to talk about texts, learners need a 'meta-language': they need to develop a vocabulary of the words necessary to describe different aspects of grammar, vocabulary, style and writing genres (DoE, 2003b:26) [emphasis in the original].

The structured approach provided by LR:RL provides support to teachers who may not have been trained in the systematic teaching of reading and writing and who may be vacillating between a range of approaches or perhaps may not be teaching reading and writing at all, assuming that it is the task of others within the schooling system.

- **A caveat to be considered**

The LR:RL approach offers a way out of the dilemma concerning the inadequate teaching of reading and writing in South African schools. In the approach, learners are assisted to become independent readers and to access the discourse of various learning areas in the curriculum. However, a caveat should be sounded at this stage, regarding the use of LR:RL in the South African context.

The realities of schooling in South Africa still reflect the effects, of the hold, apartheid policy had on society in general, and more specifically, on schooling.

The framework for teacher education and development views teachers as the key force for achieving quality education. The complexity of the teaching situation is acknowledged and the impact of apartheid is acknowledged by the Department of Education:

> Notwithstanding the improved qualification profile of the teaching force, most reports on South African education indicate that the majority of teachers have not been sufficiently equipped to meet the education needs of a growing democracy in a 21st century global environment (DoE, 2007:4).

Hoadley (2006) draws our attention to the difficulties many teachers have in conveying school knowledge and the particular impact this has on working class children. If we accept the argument that Rose makes regarding the impact of education on working class children, it would mean that poor children in South Africa could be doubly disadvantaged, firstly, because of the regulative function of education on their social group, and secondly, because the majority of their teachers would not be appropriately equipped for the teaching task. The caveat is thus that we cannot just focus on improving the literacy of learners in schools, dire as this need may be. We must also urgently look at improving the literacy of teachers and simultaneously developing their conceptual knowledge.

The notion of schools that perform so weakly that they are described not as 'dysfunctional', but as 'non-functional', may seem impossible to grasp, and yet many South African schools are described so. Hugo, Bertram, Green and Naidoo (forthcoming) used Bernstein's theory as a tool for pedagogic analysis. However they encountered problems in certain situations where very weak teaching was encountered in certain schools:

> … in some of the South African schools in our study, two main issues arose that gave our use of classification and framing analysis an uncomfortable gloss. Firstly we found consistent evidence for a complete failure in pedagogic relay and secondly, when relay did happen, the content of the message being relayed was often of an abysmal quality. The conceptual and analytical tools offered by Bernstein did not allow us to work in detail with the second of these issues – the quality of the message (forthcoming:1).

Hugo *et al* decided to use Bloom's Revised Taxonomy in order to analyse the quality of the messages being transmitted in classrooms (forthcoming:8). The difficulty encountered by Hugo and colleagues brings an essential element of LR:RL into focus. While Bernsteinian theory of classification and framing focused only on the relay itself, in LR:RL the medium and the message of pedagogic communication are emphasised (Hugo *et al*, forthcoming). Crucially, what Rose does is to take account of both the mode of transmission and what is being transmitted. And his taking account of both, is why he can make his strong claim that LR:RL is a powerful way of disrupting the conventional reproduction of inequality in schooling. Neither Vygotsky nor Halliday directly enable us to see how to overcome inequality, but they provide other elements of the story that Rose crafts in the LR:RL pedagogy.

Conclusion

Having investigated the practice and theory of LR:RL carefully, in order to understand and interpret this pedagogy with insight, the focus now moves to the realities of the South African schooling system. In the chapter that follows we will explore in some detail the context and challenges of the teaching of literacy in South African schools. This will enable us to obtain a sense of the extent of the problems associated with the teaching of reading and writing.

Chapter 4: Considering the context of literacy in South African schools

Introduction

In the thesis thus far, the inadequate literacy levels of South Africa's teachers and their learners have been noted. The benefits of achieving appropriate literacy competence were explored and a pedagogy, LR:RL, was suggested as a possible means of addressing the literacy needs of all learners from early schooling to higher education. Thereafter, the LR:RL pedagogy was examined in some detail, considering the six stages of the approach and its various applications. Defining features of the theory of the pedagogy were then elucidated and a critical commentary was provided of the use of the work of Bernstein, Vygotsky and Halliday as foundational theory for the LR:RL approach.

Having investigated the process and praxis of LR:RL, the focus now turns to the context of literacy teaching in South Africa. It is generally accepted that the primary school should teach learners to read and write independently and to start to engage with the texts of various school subjects. This literacy background is intended to prepare learners for the challenges of secondary school education and possibly tertiary education. The realities of teaching literacy in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases in South African schools will be explored by analysing the reports of large scale evaluations conducted during the period 2001 to 2004. Thereafter, key findings from these reports and other sources will be discussed.

Lessons to be learnt, findings to be followed

In order to get a sense of the current situation with regard to basic literacy development within the General Education and Training (GET) Band of South

African schools, it is important to know how learners are faring in terms of learning to read and write at the required levels. The reading and writing experiences of the primary school are intended to be the platform upon which further learning will be built. Four evaluations have been consulted in order to obtain information regarding the progress in developing literacy in primary schools in South Africa. Two of the evaluations (carried out in the Western Cape) offer a perspective on learner achievement in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases; the other two (carried out nationally) focus on the same phases of schooling, presenting a broader picture of the educational system. The *Grade 3 Learner Assessment Study* (WCDE, 2003) and the *Grade 6 Learner Assessment Study* (WCDE, 2005) were reports of investigations commissioned by the Western Cape Department of Education. The *Systemic Evaluation Foundation Phase Mainstream* (DoE, 2003) and the *Grade 6 Intermediate Phase Systemic Evaluation Report* (DoE, 2005) were analyses initiated by the national Department of Education.

The Western Cape evaluations had a specific goal. The intention of these investigations was to test the literacy and numeracy skills of Grade Three and Grade Six learners. Tenders were issued in July 2002 for the Grade Three assessments. Contract *T/WCED 61* called for the development and piloting of Grade Three literacy and numeracy tests, and contract *T/WCDE 62* for the administration of the tests in schools (WCDE, 2003:8). In January 2003, the Western Cape Department of Education requested tenders for the development and piloting of tests at Grade Six level for literacy and numeracy (*T/WCDE 104*). In August 2003, tenders were called for the implementation of province-wide testing of Grade Six learners (*T/WCDE 125*).

The national Department of Education evaluations included the assessment of learner competence in literacy/language and numeracy/mathematics, but also encompassed a wider ranging assessment of the educational system. This broadly orientated investigation was defined as follows:

> Systemic Evaluation is the assessment of the extent to which the education system achieves set social, economic and transformational goals. It does this by measuring learner performance as well as the context in which learners experience learning and teaching. The Assessment Policy requires that Systemic Evaluation be conducted in three grades of the education system, namely Grades 3, 6 and 9 (DoE, 2003:2).

The national Foundation Phase report then continued to explicate the nature of the evaluation. The objectives of the 2003 Systemic Evaluation were articulated and explained. The report aimed to:

- determine the context in which learning and teaching is taking place;
- obtain information on learner achievement;
- identify factors that affect learner achievement; and
- make conclusions about appropriate education interventions (DoE, 2003:3).

The report also clarified that the principal intention of the Systemic Evaluation of the Foundation Phase was to provide a baseline for systemic evaluation processes to be carried out in the future and to make recommendations apropos the implementation of educational policy (ibid).

The goal of the Intermediate Phase evaluation was summarised in the Grade Six report, highlighting a threefold intention:

> In particular, the Grade 6 Systemic Evaluation Study is intended to serve three purposes: first, to determine the level of achievement of learners within the system; second, to highlight specific areas/issues within the system that require further attention/investigation; and, third, to serve as a base line for comparison against future systemic evaluation studies (DoE, 2005:1).

The Foundation Phase Systemic Evaluation covered the Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills Learning Programmes (DoE, 2003:8), whereas the Intermediate Phase Systemic Evaluation included the Learning Areas of Language (Language of Learning and Teaching), Mathematics and Natural Sciences (DoE, 2005:1).

While a common aim of the Western Cape Department of Education 2003 and 2004 assessments and the National Department of Education 2003 and 2005

evaluations was to provide information on learner achievement in certain key areas, the provincial and national studies had different purposes and were thus differently orientated, providing a spectrum of information that can be used to understand literacy teaching and learning and other aspects of educational practice in primary school classrooms.

- ***The Western Cape Education Department: Grade Three Learner Assessment Study***

The *T/WCDE 61* tender called for the testing of learners in all 866 primary schools in the Western Province in classes of more than 15 learners (WCDE, 2003:8). Literacy assessments were carried out with 29,220 Grade Three learners with the tests being administered in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa (ibid). The literacy assessment was designed to evaluate Grade Three reading and was required to reflect different developmental aspects of reading. An overview of the assessment results reveals that Grade Three learners are performing well below the required level:

> On the literacy test, 35,3% of pupils in the provincial sample are reading at the grade 3 level. 11,9% are performing two grade levels below the expectations of the curriculum (grade 1), 13,9% are one grade below expectations (grade 2), and a total of 32% are within one grade of achieving the intended curriculum outcomes. 6,5% are not achieving the most elementary grade 1 outcome – reading single words – and are thus considered to be performing at more than two grade levels below the outcome expectations of the curriculum (WCDE, 2003:4).

A more detailed examination of literacy results by Education Management Development Centre (EMDC) revealed that of the seven EMDCs in the province, Metro Central had the largest proportion of learners able to read at the Grade Three level (48%), followed by Metro North (39%), Metro South (36%), South Cape/ Karoo (33%), Westcoast/Winelands (31%), Overberg (30%) and Metro East (29%) (WCDE, 2003:50 – 54). Thus, even in the best performing region, less than half the learners tested were able to read at the required level. Analysis

of the results by question indicates that learners achieved well on the task pitched at the Grade One level, resulting in a provincial mean score of over ninety percent. Results of the tasks set at levels between Grade Two and Three produced provincial mean scores of above fifty percent. However, learner achievement on the task set at Grade Three level was poor, resulting in a provincial mean score of 36.6%.

Table 5: Results of WCDE Grade Three Assessment by Education Management Development Centre

Question	Lowest mean score of an EMDC	Highest mean score of an EMDC	Provincial mean score
Question 1 Word recognition Grade 1 level	88.2%	93.4%	90.2%
Question 2 Sentence completion Grade 2 level	72.2%	83.7%	77.8%
Question 3 Cloze test Between grade 2 and 3 level	51.8%	72.0%	60.1%
Question 4 Comprehension of 'mind map' text Between grade 2 and 3 level	49.2%	65.6%	54.5%
Question 5 Comprehension of extended passage Grade 3 level	31.8%	46.9%	36.6%

(WCDE, 2003:47)

- ***The Western Cape Education Department: Grade Six Learner Assessment Study***

Literacy tests were administered to Grade Six learners in 1,079 schools, with 34,596 learners being tested. Tests were available in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa and were administered in the language of instruction of the school. The literacy test consisted of items that tested reading and writing skills, based on the National Curriculum Statement Learning Outcome 3 (Reading) and Learning Outcome 4 (Writing). Items were pitched at grade levels three to six. The Grade Three level mean score was 75.5 %, Grade Four level 61.5%, Grade Five level 67.0% and Grade Six level 36.8% (WCDE, 2004: 67). The WCDE 2004 report

notes the anomaly of the Grade Four level scores being lower than the scores for questions pitched at Grade Five level. Also, it is mentioned, that the large standard deviations between scores at each grade level signify considerable variation between learner scores (WCDE, 2004:67). The analysis of results by former department shows clearly the impact of the apartheid education system.

Table 6: Results by Former Department

Former department	Cape Education	Department of Education and Training	House of Representatives	House of Delegates
Population group served	Whites	Blacks	Coloureds	Indians
Mean score on Grade Six Assessment	77.5%	33.5%	50.7%	63.8%

(WCDE, 2004:71)

An essential feature of the WCED approach was that there was a careful analysis of results using a range of descriptors. This approach reveals realities that are concealed when global reporting of results is used. For instance, a provincial Literacy score of 53.8% is concerning, but when the results are analysed further, a difference of 36.1% is found between the lowest and highest language medium result. Particularly concerning are the results of the parallel English/Sotho, English/Tswana, Xhosa/English, Afrikaans/English/Xhosa groups which fall well below the provincial mean.[9]

Table 7: Mean Scores by Medium of Instruction

Medium of Instruction	Mean Score %
Afrikaans	51.9
English	68.9
Dual Afrikaans/English	61.0
Parallel Afrikaans/English	59.7
Parallel English/Sotho	32.8
Parallel English/Tswana	37.6

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[9] Parallel-medium instruction refers to two language streams being used in a school, while dual-medium instruction takes place when two languages are used in the same class (WCDE, 2004).

Parallel Xhosa/English	33.2
Afrikaans/English/Xhosa	35.9
Province	53.8

(WCDE, 2004:77)

Examination of literacy results by Education Management Development Centre (EMDC) revealed a similar pattern to that found in the Grade Three learner assessment. The results of learners in Metro Central were the highest, Metro North the second highest and those of the learners in Metro East the lowest for both the Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase evaluations.

Table 8: Comparison of WCDE Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase scores

Foundation Phase literacy mean score %		Intermediate Phase literacy mean score %	
Metro Central	47.5	Metro Central	46.1
Metro North	39.5	Metro North	39.3
Metro South	36.3	South Cape/ Karoo	38.5
South Cape/ Karoo	32.6	Westcoast/ Winelands	37.2
Westcoast/ Winelands	30.8	Overberg	35.3
Overberg	30.3	Metro South	33.9
Metro East	28.6	Metro East	27.3

(WCDE, 2003:49; WCDE, 2004:68)

It should be noted that factors outside the control of the Education Management Development Centres could impact on results of learners, such as urban – rural differences and levels of disadvantage (WEDC, 2004:70). A direct relationship was found between poverty index scores and learner performance. The Intermediate Phase report tabulates the pass rates by poverty index and grade percentage as below, showing significant differences between first poor and least poor results.

Table 9: Poverty Index scores

Poverty Index	Grade 3 %	Grade 4 %	Grade 5 %	Grade 6 %
1st Poor	75.8	51.2	67.9	16.8
2nd Poor	75.0	52.0	65.9	16.2
3rd Poor	81.9	65.0	77.9	24.3

4th Poor	85.8	76.9	85.0	41.1
Least Poor	97.9	97.4	98.0	82.9
Total Province	82.8	67.4	78.3	35.0

(WCDE, 2004:75)

An examination of items on the literacy test revealed that learners had particular difficulty with two items, namely Item B.2 (mean score 32.7%) and item C.2.2 (mean score 25.1%). B.2 was a comprehension test based on a two page story and C.2.2 was a report of at least ten sentences about an accident. Both of these items were pitched at the Grade Six level. In general, there was a weak performance on the Grade Six items with an overall mean result of 36.8%. Learners demonstrated an inability to cope with higher level reading and writing tasks (WCDE, 2004:94).

Table 10: Results of WCDE Grade Six evaluation by question

Question	Literacy focus	Grade Level	Mean %
A.1	Unscramble letters	3	65.5
A.2	Words from pictures	3	87.1
B.1	Comprehension – short	4	61.5
B.2	Comprehension – long	6	32.7
C.1	Interpret a weather map	5	67.0
C.2.1	Interpret an accident report	6	46.5
C.2.2	Write a 10 sentence report	6	25.1

(WCDE, 2004:88)

- ***The National Department of Education: Systemic Evaluation Foundation Phase***

The Systemic Evaluation offers a synopsis of general tendencies within the national schooling system. Rather than supplying explicit detail, the systemic evaluation report highlights general areas of concern and issues that require further exploration (DoE, 2003:11). The bulk of the report describes factors that impact on learning, or more precisely, the lack of adequate learning. Little specific information is provided regarding learner achievement in the Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills Programmes. A sample of 5% of Grade Three learners

(53,963 participants) was included in the evaluation (DoE, 2003:9). Data collection and analysis took place towards the end of 2001 and the report was finalised in 2002.

Information on learner scores indicates that learners achieved a national mean of 30% for Numeracy, and 54% for both Life Skills and Literacy (DoE, 2003:57). Within the literacy assessment, a national average of 39% was achieved for reading and writing and 68% for listening comprehension. The distribution of national Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills scores are depicted graphically (DoE, 2003:59). A graph (see below) is also used to demonstrate that learner score by province was consistent (DoE, 2003:62).
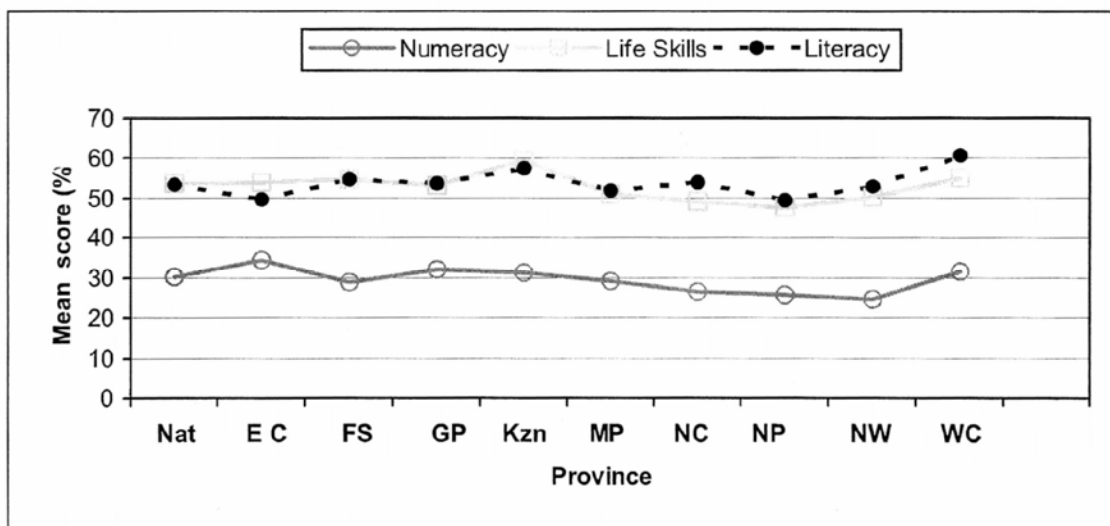

Figure 7.7   Learner Scores, by Learning Area and Province

No actual percentages are provided for the scores of each province with respect to each learning programme. Information regarding learner performance on specific evaluation items is scant, with just a brief statement alluding to performance on two broad categories of items:

> Additional analyses were conducted to compare the performance of learners on the multiple-choice questions (MCQ) and free response questions (FRQ) for Numeracy and Literacy tasks. … [S]cores obtained for the MCQ were

significantly higher than those obtained for the FRQ. This result indicates that learners performed better on tasks that required them to identify and select a correct response than on tasks that required them to produce their own response (DoE, 2003:62).

The report goes on to mention that analyses of literacy results revealed that learners achieved "significantly higher scores on the reading tasks than on the writing tasks" and that apart from KwaZulu-Natal, "the mean scores for all provinces were below 50% for the reading task and below 35% for the writing tasks" (ibid.) Some detail is provided regarding the language of the assessment. The language of learning and teaching (LOLT) of the school was used for the evaluation of learners. Although it was found that the majority of learners were able to respond to the questions in their home language, there was considerable variation among the provinces (DoE, 2003:64). The number of learners responding in an additional language was recorded as, Gauteng (64%), Mpumalanga (46%), Free State (26%), North West (22%) , KwaZulu-Natal (17%), Limpopo (17%), Eastern Cape (13%), Western Cape (10%) and Northern Cape (8%). The report concedes that "learners who took the instruments in their home language obtained significantly higher scores across all learning areas than their colleagues who has to respond to the assessment tasks in their second or third language" (ibid).

As regards the factors that influenced learner scores, the "facilities indicator" was determined to have the most significant impact on learner scores (DoE, 2003:51). Facilities included aspects such as adequate classroom space, playgrounds and sports fields, school equipment, library, staffroom, principal's office and general condition of the school (DoE, 2003:39). Other factors that influenced learner performance included:

- Level of parental education
- Availability of resources at home
- Attendance of an early childhood programme
- Use of library or resource centre
- Teacher: learner ratio
- Teaching practices

- Contact time and time on task
- Illness and absence of staff and learners
- Teacher morale (ibid.).

A particularly noteworthy influence was the lack of learner support materials. Almost 80% of respondents indicated that they had ordered learning support materials. It is not clear from the report whether the respondents, in this instance, were teachers or principals. Nonetheless, the non-delivery of materials was significant. "The figure for receiving the ordered material ranged from 5,1% in the Eastern cape to 47,1% in the Western Cape" (DoE, 2003:43). The report seems to intimate that factors beyond the control of the Department of Education are impacting considerably on learner achievement:

> It is indicated that resources at home had a significant influence on learners' scores. The Department of Education cannot be judged too harshly, since so much of achievement seems to be explained by factors in the home. The actual education of children has to be seen as part of the whole process of development and cannot be solved by the education system alone (DoE, 2003:23).

Later in the report, the influence of the home on education is again mentioned as a reason for limited access to education. However, other school related factors are also mentioned:

> Despite the many good policies of the Department of Education to promote and encourage greater access to education, many learners have been denied access to quality education as a result of their home environment which cannot provide resources such as reading materials. In addition, the lack of access to pre-schools by learners at a crucial stage of their cognitive development is a major factor affecting the performance of learners in their schooling years. The absence of resource centres in many schools also denies learners access to suitable learning opportunities (DoE, 2003:69).

The need for urgent action to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of learners is noted in the report. The recommendation is that two factors should be addressed in any improvement process. Firstly, the poor ability of learners to construct original responses should receive attention. Secondly, learners need increased opportunities to learn in their home language (DoE, 2003:66).

- ***The National Department of Education: Systemic Evaluation Intermediate Phase***

The Intermediate Phase evaluation was carried out in 2004. Like the systemic evaluation of the Foundation Phase, the Intermediate Phase evaluation provided information on the context within which learning takes place, learner achievement, and factors that impact on learner performance. The learning areas of Language, Mathematics and Natural Sciences were the focal point of the learner achievement analysis. With reference to the Language learning area, the focus was on the language of instruction. A representative sample of Grade Six learners in public schools was assessed, with 34,015 learners being assessed in total. This is equivalent to about 3% of the Grade Six learners in South Africa (DoE, 2005:25). Learners achieved a national mean score of 27% in Mathematics, 38% in Language and 41% in Natural Science (DoE, 2005:2).

The Language assessment instrument was designed to assess listening comprehension, reading and writing skills. These skills were matched to National Curriculum Statement Language outcomes (DoE, 2002) when the results were reported. The Learning Outcome (LO) for Speaking (LO2) was not used as it was not possible to assess the oral skills of learners, given the large number of children being assessed. Five of the six language learning outcomes were used, namely, Listening (LO1), Reading and Viewing (LO3), Writing (LO4), Thinking and Reasoning (LO5) and Language Structure and Use (LO6). The average scores were, Writing (31%), Thinking and Reasoning (34%), Language Structure and Use (34%), Listening (37%) and Reading and Viewing (51%) (DoE, 2005:79).

The situation of learners taking the language test in the language of teaching and learning, rather than in their home language, impacted on the overall results. This challenge of completing the assessment in an additional language rather than the home language could account to some extent for poor scores obtained by many learners. Those learners whose home language was the same as the LOLT

achieved significantly higher scores than learners whose home language differed from the language of instruction (DoE, 2005). The national average score for learners whose home language was the same as the LOLT was more than double that of those learners who did not have this advantage, that is, 69% as opposed to 32% (ibid.).

When the scores across provinces were analysed, Limpopo emerged as the province with the largest number of learners at achievement level one. These were learners who scored in the range of 1% to 39%, while the Western Cape had the fewest learners at achievement level one. The pattern of weakest and strongest results remained constant when the level four scores of provinces were compared. The Western Cape had the most learners achieving at level four, in the range of 70% – 100% and Limpopo had only 2% of learners that achieve at an outstanding level.

Table 11: Results of Intermediate Phase Systemic Evaluation by province

Provinces	Achievement level 1 Not achieved (1% - 39%)	Achievement level 2 Partly achieved (40% - 49%)	Achievement level 3 Achieved (50% - 69%)	Achievement level 4 Outstanding (70% - 100%)
Eastern Cape	76%	9%	10%	5%
Free State	66%	8%	10%	18%
Gauteng	36%	13%	23%	28%
KwaZulu-Natal	68%	7%	10%	15%
Limpopo	86%	6%	6%	2%
Mpumalanga	67%	11%	13%	9%
North West	67%	11%	14%	8%
Northern Cape	33%	11%	27%	29%
Western Cape	27%	10%	25%	38%

(DoE, 2005:78)

The 2005 systemic appraisal provides a much wider range of information on learner achievement than the 2003 report. Whereas the Foundation Phase report relied on graphs, with limited provision of numerical scores, the Intermediate Phase report provided explicit information in text and graphs. It would seem that

insights gained from working with the Foundation Phase data and report informed the design and process of the Intermediate Phase report (DoE, 2005:9).

The conditions within the education system and in broader society influence learner achievement. In the 2005 Systemic Evaluation report, the factors with strongest correlation to learner academic performance were found to be socio-economic status, information at home, learner participation and school resources (DoE, 2005:96). The following table illustrates the influence of these factors on learning.

Table 12: Impact of external factors on schooling

	Socio-economic status	Use of information at home	Learner participation	School resources
Unacceptable/ very low	24%	30%	22%	23%
Largely problematic/ poor	29&	41%	32%	28%
Problematic/ inadequate/ limited	40%	48%	39%	43%
Satisfactory	66%	57%	54%	61%
Very good/ high	80%	59%	81%	72%

(DoE, 2005:98, 101, 104, 107)

Other factors found in the 2005 evaluation to be impacting on the academic achievement of learners were indicated in the report as:

- Teaching resources available to teachers
- School safety
- Information at school
- Parental involvement/perception
- Discipline at school
- Attendance
- Entry into schools (school fees)
- Staff qualification
- Small class size
- Homework practices (DoE, 2005:96).

In summarising the findings regarding factors associated with learner achievement, the Intermediate Phase report indicates that certain of the influential factors are outside the direct influence of the Department of Education. The factors mentioned are socio-economic levels and the availability, in learners' homes, of information to support learning. Generally, learners with better socio-economic status and good access to information fared better at school (DoE, 2005:112).

The report then proceeds to consider factors over which the Department of Education has influence:

> It was found that effective participation of learners related strongly to learner achievement. Learner participation involves two critical issues: making sense of the material being taught or read, and communication between the learner and the educator. Essentially, these issues relate to the language of learning and teaching (LOLT). Learners taught through the medium of their home language out-performed learners who were taught in another language. … There was also a high correlation between school resources and learner achievement. Learners in schools with adequate resources tend to achieve much better results than learners in schools with insufficient resources (ibid).

In the concluding chapter of the systemic evaluation report, many salient recommendations are made. The report acknowledges that most of the Grade Six learners have not achieved the required level of performance. Suggestions are made regarding the improvement of academic achievement with the expectation that these will be considered by key stakeholders and adapted and implemented within the prevailing financial and situational boundaries.

Certain common elements are found in the WCDE and DoE evaluations. Socio-economic conditions were found to impact significantly on learning. Linked to this was the availability of parental support for learning and resources at home. Turning to factors within the educational system, appropriate access was a common theme. Learners need to be able to access materials. This refers to physically having the materials necessary for learning as well as having the academic skills to access texts and cope with higher level reading and writing

tasks. For many learners, an added barrier to access is the challenge to learn in a language other than the mother tongue.

Looking back on a decade of change

In a 2004 review of primary education, Chisholm looked back on a decade of educational practice. She suggests that there were few aspects of education that had not been affected by efforts since 1994 to rise above and ameliorate the legacy of apartheid (2004). Chisholm indicates that a range of projects were instituted in the first five years of a democratic South Africa in an effort to improve educational equity and excellence. In 1996, the redeployment of teachers was initiated, and a new curriculum (Curriculum 2005) was introduced a year later. During 1999, the newly appointed Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, began to focus on improved service delivery and public service accountability. In the period 2000 to 2004, the focus of improvement efforts was on HIV/Aids and the impact of the disease on teaching, School Effectiveness and Educator Professionalism, Literacy, Further and Higher Education, and Organizational Effectiveness of the Departments of Education. One of the most significant activities, according to Chisholm, during this period to impact directly on learning was the review and revision of the national curriculum, resulting in the RNCS for schools from Grades R–9 (DoE, 2002). Teachers were trained to use the RNCS in 2003 and curriculum implementation began in 2004. Chisholm alludes to the limited improvement in learner achievement in the period 1999 – 2004 and highlights key areas that require attention. Three main areas of improvement are highlighted by Chisholm, namely systemic improvements at the district level, a need to focus on the language of instruction in schools and finally the necessity of attending to teacher quality and the provision of teacher education (2004:16). Chisholm concludes her report on a more positive note indicating that one of the initiatives in the first decade of democracy that shows promise for the future is the introduction of the RNCS.

Looking forward to potential for literacy progress

The central focus of this thesis relates to the problems of literacy teaching and learning in South African schools. Having just explored many of these problems, a space is provided to consider ways of addressing these challenges. Educational change does not necessarily mean educational progress. While much change has taken place with regard to the development of educational policy in the years since democratic rule was instituted, only limited progress can be observed in learner achievement.

C2005 (implemented in 1997) was revised and the subsequent curriculum, the RNCS[10] is a prominent example of educational change **and** improvement within the South African educational sector. The revised curriculum provided a clearer description of required knowledge and skills in each grade and emphasised conceptual progression in each learning area (DoE, 2002b:12). This curriculum catered for the General Education and Training (GET) band covering Grades R to 9.

The literacy approach promoted in the RNCS avoids the long contested debates that continue to rage about the "best" way to teach reading. Teachers are encouraged to use both top down and bottom up literacy approaches to the teaching of literacy. The introduction to the Foundation Phase Languages (Home Language) document outlines the approach to early literacy:

> In this curriculum a 'balanced approach' to literacy development has been used. It is balanced because it begins with children's emergent literacy, it involves them in reading real books and writing for genuine purposes, and it gives attention to phonics. These are the things learners need to know and do in order to learn to read and write successfully (DoE, 2002a:10).

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[10] Although the GET curriculum of 2002 was termed the *Revised National Curriculum Statement,* in official documentation and workshops, to signify a revision of and connection to Curriculum 2005, it has subsequently been referred to as the "National Curriculum Statement" in Department of Education training sessions. Thus although the name of the curriculum has not been changed officially, *de facto* it is now spoken of as the "National Curriculum Statement". This adaptation of terminology provides convenient alignment between the GET curriculum and the FET curriculum, which is officially designated as the *National Curriculum Statement.*

The literacy strategy espoused employs the fundamentals of letter-sound correspondence, word study and decoding, as well as holistic experiences in reading, writing, speaking and listening to create an integrated framework that addresses various aspects of literacy.

The focus on literacy in the Intermediate Phase curriculum encourages the use of a range of content, engaging with an extensive array of issues including the needs of learners and broader social matters (DoE, 2002a:55). The language curriculum extends the work begun in the preceding phase:

> In this phase, learners consolidate and extend their literacy skills, and build their confidence and fluency in using oral language. Cross-curricular work will form an important part of learning activities (ibid).

The focus of the third phase in the GET Band, the Senior Phase, emphasises the consolidation of work from the prior phases and the preparation of learners for the Further Education and Training (FET) band. In describing the focus of language in the Senior Phase, learners are expected to be:

- able to read and write for a wide range of purposes – formal and informal, public and personal;
- keen, flexible readers who can find and evaluate information for themselves;
- active, critical listeners and confident speakers of the language, sensitive to their audience; and
- able to analyse language, understand how it works, and use it for their own purposes (DoE, 2002a:91).

The RNCS (Grades R–9) literacy plan encompasses learners' understanding, interpreting, critically analysing, reflecting upon, and enjoying written, visual, print and other texts. It includes reading and viewing a wide range of texts from various genres. There is an acknowledgement that reading involves active engagement with texts and the development of knowledge about the relationship between them and the contexts in which they are created. It also involves the development of knowledge about a range of strategies for reading.

The development of a new curriculum for the Further Education and Training (FET) band for grades 10–12 was finalised in 2003. The Languages (Home Language) document indicates that this curriculum:

> … broadens and deepens the language competencies developed in the GET band including the abstract language skills required for academic learning across the curriculum and the aesthetic appreciation and enjoyment of texts, so that the learners are able to listen, speak, read/view, and write/present with confidence. These skills and attitudes form the basis for lifelong learning (DoE, 2003a:9).

At the end of the FET band it is expected that learners would be able to demonstrate high level reading and writing competence. With regard to reading, learners are expected to have an insightful grasp of the concepts and values in texts and the ways these are expressed. Successful writing competence would entail the ability to compose complex extended texts imaginatively and critically with a high degree of proficiency. The development of the GET and FET National Curriculum Statements make provision for the eventual development of an articulate learner that has the control of language necessary to lead a fulfilled life. Continued refinement of GET and FET language policy and planning is needed to respond to the insights of teachers who are using the curriculum and those who investigate and make recommendations regarding revision. With a commitment to continued development, these curricula offer an interesting possibility for the future and great scope for literacy growth within a clearly articulated framework.

Critical commentary on the evaluations

Four comments will be made in the light of the preceding evaluations (Learner Assessment reports, the Systemic Evaluation reports and the Chisholm evaluation). Thereafter an elaboration will be provided on these comments.

1. The improvement of literacy is vital for the development of our society. The advantages of literacy are wide ranging, allowing for personal and public benefit as was shown in the first chapter of this thesis.

2. The assessment of learner performance and evaluation of the school system spell out clearly that the needs of learners are not being met, with respect to the teaching of reading and writing. Although there may have been success in other areas of schooling, achievements with regard to literacy, leave much to be desired. This has a crucial impact on efforts to transform education.

3. The evaluations revealed that there were factors both outside of the ambit of the Department of Education and within the range of influence of the department that were linked to learners not achieving the desired learning outcomes. Poverty and general socio-economic factors are suggested as factors outside the influence of the Department of Education. A prominent finding was that the kind of home background of learners impacted significantly on education.

4. Factors influencing education within the ambit of the Department of Education included the quality of learner participation, teacher education and the scope provided by a revised curriculum.

A discussion and elaboration will be provided on each comment, providing further detail of learning in South African schools. The way in which LR:RL can be used to engage with the challenges in schooling will be outlined in relation to each comment.

- ***Comment 1: Improving literacy, developing society***

In order to get a sense of where South Africa is as a society at present, we will refer to the Human Development Index (HDI). The United Nations produces an annual Human Development Report (HDR) which includes a human development index. The HDI presents a broad view of the development of a country, in contrast to the often used perspective on mean *per capita* income alone. The HDI provides information about life expectancy, education and standard of living.[11] The 2006 HDR refers to 2004. In this report, South Africa is ranked 121st out of 177 countries (UNDP, 2006). South Africa has dropped 23 places in the last ten years, with Zimbabwe also dropping 23 places and Botswana 21 places. The impact of HIV/Aids has been cited as the reason for the regional drop in ranking (UNDP, 2006:264). In terms of human development, South Africa has much work ahead. Citizens in countries with a good human development rating are expected to have a longer and healthier life, more opportunities to acquire knowledge and a better standard of living. Many citizens of South Africa cannot presently anticipate this kind of lifestyle.

The United Nations classifies countries as 'developed', 'developing' and 'underdeveloped'. South Africa is regarded as a developing country. The 2006 report ranks South Africa 53rd among 102 developing countries included in the index (UNDP, 2006a). Within the country there is a wide disparity in terms of economics. The HDR indicates that the most affluent 20% of the population have an HDI rank 101 places above the poorest 20% of the population (UNDP, 2006:270). If we are serious about developing a more equal and equitable society, we should focus on providing all South African learners with better opportunities for learning in general and acquiring literacy specifically.

Rose presents a means of literacy acquisition that confounds the usual effects of class. He proposes an approach that assists all learners to read and write at the

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[11] This index was developed by economists Amartya Sen and Mahbub ul Haq. Sen, a Nobel prize winner and philosopher, has made a ground-breaking contribution to development economics.

required level irrespective of their background or social class. Rose suggests that the inequality between learners is an effect of the sequencing and pacing rules of the curriculum:

> [T]he apparent inertia of inequality is a consequence of sequencing and pacing principles of the underlying literacy development curriculum that are deep rooted in the structure of modern educational systems, functioning to optimize the preparation of elite students for university study, while consigning others to vocational or manual occupations (2004a:92).

The gap between learners who had a good early preparation for literacy and those that did not, becomes evident in the primary school. The issue of inadequate literacy preparation is particularly problematic in South Africa, due to the incidence of illiteracy among adults and the impact of poverty on the largest proportion of society. Often the perceived gap between learners in school manifests as an apparent difference in ability between working class and middle class children. This disparity widens as learners progress through the schooling system. By the time children reach high school they are expected to be able to learn independently from texts. They need to be able to read autonomously and then provide evidence of what they have learned by completing written tasks and assessments. Many South African children will not have acquired the necessary literacy skills to cope in high school. The Systemic Evaluation of 2005 reveals that the majority of Grade Six learners were not achieving the required language learning outcomes. It is unlikely that these learners will have reached the required level necessary for Grade Eight as the first year of high school, given current literacy practice.

Rose (2004a) makes reference to the sequencing and pacing of learning as reasons for the continued inequality between learners. Considering the literacy curriculum, sequencing relates to the components of the curriculum where certain aspects of literacy are taught first and then followed by others. In other words, there is an order to the curriculum that determines when components will be taught. Pacing refers to the rate at which learners are expected to engage with the different curriculum components. Rose contends that, conventionally,

learners are expected to acquire literacy skills tacitly, with little direct teaching of reading and writing taking place after the first few years of schooling. While some learners are able to acquire the necessary reading and writing skills independently, without specific guidance from the teacher, others are not able to do so (Rose, 2004a:92). The intervention proposed by Rose is a structured approach that teaches reading and writing skills explicitly. This approach can be used for learners at any stage in the schooling system. Rose indicates:

> The *Learning to Read* project has demonstrated that all students can independently read at primary, secondary or tertiary levels within one year of regular instruction, no matter what their starting level (McRae *et al.* 2000), so there is no 'natural' reason why reading should be taught only in the junior primary (2004a:94).

Using the scaffolding interaction cycle and the understanding of patterns of meaning (as described in the second chapter of this thesis), learners are helped to engage with and produce texts independently at appropriate levels (Rose, 2004a:102). The LR:RL pedagogy offers a carefully sequenced and paced approach to the teaching of reading and writing and any level of the schooling system, including tertiary level.

The concepts of sequencing and pacing were developed by Bernstein as part of a discussion regarding social class and pedagogic practice. Bernstein's work on social impediments to learning, which reinforce class structure, provides a useful view of teaching as pedagogic practice. Bernstein explains the impact of sequencing and pacing of learning on children from different class backgrounds:

> Where the catchment area of a school draws upon a lower working-class community it is likely, as we have seen, that the school will adopt strategies, or have strategies forced upon it which will affect both the content and pacing of the transmission. The content is likely to stress operations, local skills rather than the exploration of principles and general skills, and the pacing is likely to be weakened (Domingos, 1987). In this way the consciousness is differentially and invidiously regulated according to the social class origin and the families' official pedagogic practice. In the case of a socially mixed catchment area where pupils are drawn from a variety of class backgrounds some schools, through a variety of

strategies of stratification (sometimes including repetition), will stream (or 'set) pupils according to the school's estimate of their ability, and these different streams or sets will follow curricula varying in their content and / or pacing (1990:77).

Using the approach advocated by Rose, there is an opportunity to close the gap between learners, and work towards a society where all can access the benefits of a democratic dispensation. Conventional methods of literacy pedagogy assume a particular kind of home context. However, LR:RL does not make this assumption. Use of this literacy approach provides a way to make up for a lack of preschool exposure to books. Instead of describing limited participation in reading activities before school, as being outside the ambit of the school, LR:RL addresses the issue directly. A means is provided to bridge the fissure between those who are prepared for reading in school and those who are not.

- ***Comment 2: Poor literacy hinders transformation***

Low literacy levels of teachers and learners present a considerable stumbling block on the path to a transformed South Africa. The notion of transformation encompasses the idea of significant, noticeable change, which is usually positive in nature. Within our political context, transformation has a specific meaning. In post-apartheid South Africa, transformation refers to the processes by which those deprived of certain services, privileges, protection and political voice were afforded the benefits of citizenship, previously denied them. The transition to democracy has however proved to be largely symbolic for many people. Although now having the right to vote and the protection of a progressive constitution, the promises of a 'New South Africa' have yet to be realised in the daily lives of much of the population. Less than half of the employable adults in South Africa have jobs. Statistics indicate that only 42.7% of the working-age population were employed in September 2006. This represents only a 1.3% increase on the 2005 measurement (Statistics South Africa, 2006). Between forty

and fifty percent of South Africa's population can be classified as living in poverty (Machethe, 2004).

A gauge of realised, rather than promised transformation is provided by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR). The Transformation Audit supplied by the IJR highlights continuing injustice in South African economic, educational and political systems (IJR, 2007). Van der Berg reports in the 2004 Transformation Audit that there is still a high incidence of educational inequality, deeply entrenched in the school system (2004:29). He calls for more information on the performance of schools and the education system, identifying the quality of education rather than resourcing of education as the major cause for concern (ibid).

A key variable in the quality of education is the quality of teaching. The quality of teachers is a related, but not equivalent, factor. While acknowledging the need to attend to teacher quality as indicated by Chisholm (2004:16), it is the contention in this thesis that the quality of teaching needs to be addressed urgently. The project of the improvement of teacher quality in South Africa is a long term and complicated one. However improving the quality of teaching can be addressed more immediately and more simply, by attending to the reading and writing tasks required in all subject areas. Improved competence in dealing with texts at all levels of schooling can make a significant impact on the general quality of education in South Africa and consequently the lives of its citizens. Van der Berg emphasises the key role of education in the transformation of society:

> School education is widely perceived to be the most important vehicle for transforming South Africa into a more egalitarian society. The reasons are not hard to find. Variations in educational quantity and quality account for most labour market earning differentials. School education also determines access to tertiary education, and skills and productivity in the labour market (ibid).

Van der Berg suggests that parents should be provided with appropriate information so that they are able to make informed choices about the education of their children. Information on school performance and what parents can

legitimately expect from schools would help to improve the quality of education. Communities would be able to exert pressure on schools that do not perform well, and those schools that are performing well could be commended (Van der Berg, 2004:39).

In the 2005 Transformation Audit, various contributors make an input regarding the state of education. Jansen focuses on reasons for poor performance in schools, despite better provision of resources. He identifies teachers' understanding of the subjects they teach, use of textbooks and time on task as key factors affecting schooling (2005:56). With regard to teachers' subject knowledge, Jansen notes:

> Renewal and transformation of the education system is just not possible without attending to the simple but central finding – the quality, depth and sophistication of subject-matter knowledge among South African teachers is perhaps the single most important inhibitor of change in education quality, measured in terms of student achievement (2005:74).

Taylor, contributing to the Transformation Audit of 2006, also emphasises the importance of teacher knowledge. He indicates that due to inadequate education, the knowledge base of most teachers is not firm:

> Since knowing the content of one's subject-matter is a prerequisite for teaching it, it is evident that an urgent priority must be to improve the content knowledge of these teachers. A second aspect of teacher knowledge concerns pedagogical content knowledge: this is the knowledge required to teach a subject, over and above knowing the subject's content (2006:72).

Many South African teachers lack adequate knowledge of subject content as indicated by Jansen (2005) and Taylor (2006). However, while accepting the importance of content knowledge, a warning is necessary here. Over-emphasis on content may obscure the centrality of literacy in schooling. A prerequisite for engaging effectively with the content of curricula is the competence to read and write about the subject matter. Teaching reading and writing while teaching content, as done in LR:RL, offers a solution to the problem of inadequate content knowledge of South African teachers and their learners. Print literacy skills can

be improved simultaneously with the development of content knowledge within teacher education programmes and within learning areas of the school curriculum.

Curriculum leadership is identified by Taylor as another important factor linked to the achievement of learning outcomes. He suggests that management of the curriculum in schools should include the monitoring of coverage of the curriculum, assessment and control of books and stationery (ibid). Taylor asserts that in many schools, large sections of the curriculum are not covered each year. Referring specifically to practice within schools he remarks,

> Even more disturbing is the common practice among South Africa's primary school teachers of not teaching reading. The extent of the problem is indicated in the issuing by the Department of Education in August 2006, through the national press, of an *Open letter to all primary school principals,* in which principals were exhorted to institute teaching of reading in their schools. Incredible as it may seem, teachers and principals are so confused by the ideology of competence pedagogy surrounding outcomes-based education (or OBE, embodied in Curriculum 2005 and the current National Curriculum Statements), and by the poor quality training in the new curriculum provided by provinces, that many are unaware, not only that reading is the most fundamental learning activity, but that they should be teaching it at all (ibid.).

Taylor refers to reading as being the essential activity of learning. Curriculum revision projects with their strong emphasis on competence have, according to Taylor, obscured the importance of the teaching reading and writing throughout the schooling system, resulting in learners who are unable to use print literacy adequately.

Compounding the effect on learner literacy is the particular socio-economic situation in South Africa. Taylor contends that while poorer children do not have the advantage of significant support for learning at home, middle class children do have this advantage. Middle class children also have the benefit of attending more functional schools (2006:73). A consequence of the disparate school experience, according to Taylor is that,

> … schools assist in the reproduction of the middle classes, something that occurs in every country. At the same time, schools are particularly important for the poor, because they hold the only hope for these children of developing the skills and attitudes required to escape poverty. The bad news in South Africa is that nearly 80 per cent of schools provide education of such poor quality that they constitute a very significant obstacle to social and economic development, while denying the majority of poor children full citizenship (ibid).

The urgency of addressing the problems in schools is emphasised by Taylor. He indicates that in addition to ethical and economic reasons, schooling must be improved for social reasons too. He cites the growing incidence of crime and other types of social disturbances as critical reasons why school improvement should be prioritised (ibid). In discussing the skills necessary for a modern democracy, Taylor acknowledges the emphasis that has been placed on mathematics, science and technical skills. He admits that these areas of the curriculum are vital for the development of the economy, but asserts that they are not the most important:

> Even more important is the development of general cognitive ability, which is achieved through fostering analytical language skills, such as classifying and categorising ideas, distinguishing cause from effect, and offering counter-arguments to assertions. Extensive reading and writing are the keys to nurturing these abilities, which, in turn, underlie virtually any complex task in fields as widely divergent as commerce and the creative arts, political leadership and policing, or legal judgement and the administration of a local government or the national lotto (2006:65).

From the point of view of LR:RL, Taylor's proposal regarding 'extensive reading and writing' is the appropriate kind of emphasis for the improvement of learning. Reading and writing are fundamentally comparable processes in the construction of meaning. Intensive use of these literacy skills facilitates and accelerates the process of cognitive development. The reading/writing nexus promoted in the LR:RL approach provides opportunities to exploit the interactive relationship between reading, writing and thinking.

- ***Comment 3: External factors impacting on learning***

The provincial learner evaluations and the national systemic evaluations mentioned factors external to the official ambit of the Department of Education that influenced learning. It is important to note that the evaluations allude to a range of correlations rather than causes of poor learning. Thus there is a relationship or association between poor literacy learning and factors such as home background and socioeconomic status. However poverty, for instance, does not directly cause poor reading and writing, although it may contribute to some degree.

The home background of learners is one of the most prominent external factors impacting on learning. Illiterate parents are not able to read to their children and may struggle to assist children with homework. Many poor children lack the time to engage with books, should they be available. Learners from poverty stricken homes may have to work after school to earn extra money to support the family. Furthermore, the brunt of the HIV/Aids pandemic has resulted in children being orphaned. Older children as the heads of households may have to care for younger siblings and do housework instead of homework. Since there is no guarantee that the majority of children in South Africa will have adequate literacy support at home, educators are challenged to think about how to teach literacy so that it does **not** assume a literate home in the background.

The LR:RL approach grew out of literacy initiatives in the 1980s to assist indigenous learners in Australia. These learners, like many South African learners, lacked exposure to books in the home. Originally known as the *Scaffolding Literacy Approach,* the LR:RL literacy process was developed to address the problem of low literacy levels in indigenous community schools (Rose, Gray and Cowey, 1999):

> The Scaffolding approach seeks to work with students at or close to their full potential, such as at the literacy Profile Level appropriate for their school year, by giving them adequate support to operate at this level. Scaffolding enables

learners to read and write complex texts with the support of their teachers and peers. It does so by initially supporting students to understand the roles of the language features that constitute a written text, as a means to fluently and accurately read the text without becoming overloaded. This shared understanding of the meanings in the text is then exploited as a basis for spelling and writing activities in which students gradually acquire more independent control over literate discourse (Rose, Gray and Cowey, 1999:30).

Rose, Gray and Cowey assert that the literacy approach is not difficult for teachers to understand, however they do concede that the approach requires significant effort on the part of the school staff:

> The schools that we are working with have clearly demonstrated that the scaffolding literacy approach can achieve remarkable results for indigenous students, if they are carefully and consistently applied. They are not difficult for teachers to take on, but they do require a serious commitment at the levels of classroom practice, curriculum planning and school management to be successful (Rose, Gray and Cowey, 1999:55).

Results of the evaluations of the South African schooling system discussed earlier in this chapter reveal that urgent attention needs to be paid to the teaching of literacy. The nature of this intervention would have to be methodical and thorough, given the scale of the problem of poor literacy. Success of the programme would depend to a large extent on the buy-in of school staff and Department of Education officials at all levels, and also on getting rid of the deeply embedded assumption that learners come from literate home backgrounds.

- *Comment 4: Internal factors impacting on learning*

The evaluation reports of the Department of Education and the report authored by Chisholm identified factors impacting on learning that could be addressed by the Department. These included learner participation, opportunities offered by the revised curriculum, and teacher education. The factor of teacher education will

be examined, since the issue of the competence of teachers is central to this thesis.

Teacher education has significant, direct impact on learning. Chisholm referred to the need to attend to teacher quality and teacher education. While it is acknowledged that general teacher quality is important, this thesis argues that a re-emphasis on teachers' skills as literacy (reading and writing) teachers, at all levels of the schooling system, is a key constituent of teacher quality in our socio-historical context. Improving teacher quality is a critical, long term project. A more immediate impact in classrooms could be seen if the teaching was improved by teachers attending closely to reading and writing within all subjects in the curriculum.

The current policy regulating teacher education programmes was published in 2000. This normative framework outlines what is expected of qualified teachers in South African schools. The *Norms and Standards for Educators* (DoE, 2000) stipulate the capabilities and skills expected of teachers. Competences such as those listed below can be applied to the teaching of literacy. These competences represent a selection of those that can be related to the teaching of reading and writing.[12] Teacher education providers are able to use the *Norms and Standards for Educators* as a key reference point when designing programmes. Providers have the freedom and scope to decide whether print literacy competences should be developed within discrete modules or whether these competences should be integrated within modules, or both.

In order to emphasise the scope for the development of print literacy as an integral component of teacher education programmes, germane competencies of the *Norms and Standards for Educators* have been grouped below into three sections, firstly, those related to teachers' own literacy skills, then discipline and methodology related competences.

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[12] It is important to note that the *Norms and Standards for Educators* does not prioritize the teaching of reading and writing, merely presenting a list of items as practical, foundational or reflexive competences.

<u>Personal literacy competence</u>

- Reading academic and professional texts critically
- Writing clearly and convincingly in the language of instruction
- Writing the language of learning clearly and accurately
- Reflecting on critical personal responses to literature.

<u>Discipline related competence</u>

- Understanding different explanations of how language mediates learning: the principles of language in learning; language across the curriculum; language and power; and a strong emphasis on language in multi-lingual classrooms
- Making judgements on the effect that language has on learning in various situations and how to make necessary adaptations.

<u>Pedagogic content knowledge</u>

- Understanding the learning area to be taught, including appropriate content knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, and how to integrate this knowledge with other subjects
- Understanding the pedagogic content knowledge - the concepts, methods and disciplinary rules - of the particular learning area being taught
- Selecting, sequencing and pacing content in a manner appropriate to the phase/subject/learning area; the needs of the learners and the context
- Understanding the assumptions underlying the descriptions of competence in a particular discipline/subject/learning area
- Understanding the ways of thinking and doing involved in a particular discipline/subject/learning area and how these may be taught
- Knowing and understanding the content knowledge of the discipline/subject/learning area
- Knowing of and understanding the content and skills prescribed by the national curriculum
- Understanding the difficulties and benefits of integrating this subject into a broader learning area.

Using the LR:RL approach within a teacher education programme, it is possible to integrate the competencies outlined above within modules of the programme.

In this way, literacy skills can be taught within a meaningful context, engaging with a range of genres and texts in both language/literacy and other modules. The possibility of teaching of print literacy skills within South African teacher education programmes is revealed above. However, the fact that the possibility exists, does not guarantee that reading and writing will have a key place in the preparation of teachers. Many programmes have a strong emphasis on the delivery of content knowledge which results in limited opportunity to develop literacy and other foundational skills. More will be said about this in the following chapter of the thesis.

Conclusion

Fleisch (2007) has a particular insight that is worth considering as a means of concluding this chapter, with its focus on the context of literacy in South African schools. In a book entitled *Primary Education in Crisis. Why South African School Children Underachieve in Reading and Mathematics,* Fleisch (2007) presents a stark picture of the differences in results of children enrolled at disadvantaged schools, as opposed to the results of children in more functional and affluent schools. The motivation to study learner achievement was as a result of a visit to a school in Gauteng in the mid-1990s. Fleisch explains:

> I was horrified to discover that these young children had received very little systematic instruction in reading and read and wrote very little. In the many subsequent visits to other primary schools in my district and around the country, I made it a habit to get children to read to me, confirming over and over the extent of reading failure. I found also that most senior primary schoolchildren, black and white in middle-class schools could read with varying degrees of proficiency and generally understood what they read. In sharp contrast, only a very small number of children in former homeland schools and schools that fell under the former DET were at the same level of fluency. In these schools, even children who could read too often did not comprehend the meaning of the text (2007:vi).

Many studies have alluded to the poor results achieved by South African learners in various assessments. Results from the WCDE Learner Assessment studies

and the national Systemic Evaluations of the Foundation and Intermediate Phase tell a tale of poor literacy results in South African primary schools. The PIRLS 2006 study emphasises the dismal message concerning literacy, with South Africa performing not only the worst on the African continent, but realising the weakest results of all participating educational systems (Mullins, Martin, Kennedy and Foy, 2007). Fleisch looks at the results of learner evaluations from a particular perspective and exposes a shocking picture of unequal learning. Clarifying the focus of the investigation, Fleisch comments:

> Unlike previous studies which indicate that South African learners are reading and doing mathematics well below comparable international norms and substantially below curriculum expectation, this book shows that when learners' average scores are disaggregated, the picture tells a devastating story of unequal learning (2007:2).

Fleisch reviews a number of reports of learner achievement published in the period 1998 to 2006, including both large and small scale studies. With respect to studies discussed earlier in this chapter, Fleisch concedes that the Grade Three and Six Systemic Evaluations provided significant though limited information (2007:7). The WCDE Grade Six report is viewed in more positive terms, since this report provides clear evidence of the difference in achievement between learners in advantaged and disadvantaged contexts, revealing the "huge achievement gap" between Intermediate Phase learners (2007:8). Summarising his review of learner evaluations, Fleisch indicates that a small minority of South African learners are achieving at appropriate levels, while the majority of learners do not have a basic level of competence:

> It is these South African children who struggle to read for meaning and to perform simple numerical operations – whose learning remains context-bound and non-generalisable. South Africa's primary education achievement gap, with its distinctly bimodal distribution, begins in the Foundation Phase, at the very earliest days of formal schooling, and continues unbroken to the end of primary education and beyond (2007:30).

The inequality of schooling is a theme that has emerged clearly from examining the Western Cape and National Department of Education learner evaluations.

Many factors including the impact of apartheid education and the effects of a range of socio-economic realities contribute to a particularly unequal situation in schooling in South Africa. The LR:RL literacy approach has been shown to be specifically geared to narrowing the gap between learners from different backgrounds and provides a means of engaging directly with the fracture between advantaged and disadvantaged learners in our country. In the following section of the thesis, the focus remains on literacy teaching in South Africa, as the theory and practice of literacy are investigated.

Chapter 5: Exploring the terrain of literacy theory and practice

Introduction

The field of literacy is influenced by many sources of knowledge including linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology and philosophy. This rich heritage creates a wide and sometimes conflicted space that needs careful navigation to prevent directionless wandering. Before examining the contributions of some of those involved in the teaching of literacy in higher education in South Africa, it is necessary to map out the terrain. The field of literacy will be mapped in such a way that key features are identified and main areas are outlined.

The purpose of this section of the thesis is to move closer to an answer to the question that guides this study, by considering aspects of literacy theory and practice primarily within the context of higher education. In previous chapters of the thesis, the challenge of literacy teaching was acknowledged and then a particular literacy approach was suggested as a means of engaging with this challenge. The practice and theory of the approach were investigated in a process that could be described as intra-spection (looking inside/within). After considering the South African school context as a complex site for literacy learning, the focus now turns to inter-spection (looking among/between). Literacy teaching is an extensive and multifaceted field and it is useful to locate a proposed literacy approach both inside this field and to be able to see how it fits among other literacy approaches currently being used.

In order to determine whether the LR:RL approach might be suitable for the South African literacy milieu, a number of literacy teachers working in higher education were consulted. When analysing their responses, it is prudent to remember that their practice and beliefs are influenced in different ways dependent on their location in the field of literacy.

The work of Alexander and Fox (2004) is a useful resource to draw on for mapping the extensive territory of print literacy. These authors have charted the history of literacy practice since the nineteen fifties and have come up with five phases of literacy work that could be compared to five areas, each making up a region on a map. Taking the mapping metaphor a little further, it is possible to think of exploring a broad literacy territory, guided by a particular map.[13] In this instance, the cartographers would be Alexander and Fox. Key features of the literacy terrain, mapped by the cartographers could be imagined as the mountains of behaviourism, the valleys of constructivism and the seas of socioculturalism, to name just a few.

Alexander and Fox note that in each phase of literacy, there were both internal and external conditions that framed each time period (Alexander and Fox, 2004: 33).[14] These conditions impacted on the reading practice and research of the time. The authors outline the period from 1950s to the present, citing the main literacy developments that have emerged as individuals, society and text have interacted. After outlining the five eras identified by Alexander and Fox and considering the impact the various eras may have on practice, views of those teaching in higher education will be presented. The terrain mapped out by Alexander and Fox serves to situate the responses received within the broad landscape of literacy practice and theory.

- ***The Era of Conditioned Learning (1950 – 1965)***

Alexander and Fox (2004) indicate that efforts to find a solution to the reading problems of children, resulted in researchers turning to the work of the

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[13] The categorisation of the field of literacy developed by Alexander and Fox (2004) outlines key developments with respect to reading practice and research. No claim is made that this broad categorisation includes all the important developments in literacy since the 1950s. However, the chronological view of developments in the field mirrors much local practice, providing a useful way of making sense of the varied approaches to the development of literacy evident in South Africa.

[14] It is important to note that the boundaries of the phases or eras that Alexander and Fox identify are recognized as being "permeable and overlapping" (2004:33). Also, although the authors describe the unfolding literacy eras from the perspective of the United States, these phases of literacy have been influenced by insight and practice from a range of disciplines and international authors and thus the eras identified reflect general trends in the development of literacy practice and theory.

behaviourist Skinner. Insights gained from laboratory experiments with animals were applied to the language learning of children:

> Based on this perspective, the processes and skills involved in learning to read could be clearly defined and broken down into their constituent parts. Those constituent parts could then be practiced (sic) and reinforced in a systematic and orderly fashion during classroom instruction … despite the claims of some within the reading research community that little of significance occurred in reading until the 1960s (Weaver & Kintsch, 1991), the continued influence of behaviourism on educational practice remains today (Alexander and Fox, 2004:35).

It was understood that repeated stimulus and response lead to reading. Thus repeated presentation of the symbols C-A-T resulted in the child saying 'cat' (ibid). Children were typically passive during reading lessons and an emphasis was placed on drill work.

- *The Era of Natural Learning (1966 – 1975)*

In this era, learning was viewed as a natural process. Instead of mindless drill exercises, the emphasis was on learning through meaningful use of the language (Alexander and Fox, 2004:38). The theory of psycholinguistics dominated in this period. Emphasis was placed on how meaning is developed and used in the reading process. Language was perceived to have a "natural and rule governed structure" (2004:39). The learner was viewed as an active participant in the learning process. There was an integration of the language modes, and listening, speaking, reading and writing activities were no longer seen as discrete activities.

- *The Era of Information Processing (1976 – 1985)*

During this period cognitive psychology and information-processing theory were influential (2004:41). The prior knowledge of children was emphasised:

> … the readers' knowledge base was shown to be powerful, pervasive, individualistic, and modifiable. Prior knowledge was linked to individual's perspectives on what they read or heard (2004:42).

Alexander and Fox indicate that there was a particular focus at this time on the mind of the individual. They cite two reasons for this:

> First, the computer-based guiding view that shaped this era was fundamentally a model of individual knowledge acquisition and use. There was little, if any, consideration of sociocultural or contextual influences on the processing of linguistic information. Second, the research studies generated during this period strongly supported individualistic interpretations of written text (2004:43).

In this era there was an understanding that knowledge could be refined and adapted by training and explicit instruction (ibid).

- ***The Era of Sociocultural Learning (1986 – 1995)***

Constructivist learning theory dominated during this era, rather than cognitive psychology. Other disciplines also began to make an impact on literacy practice such as social and cultural anthropology. Alexander and Fox outline developments in the era:

> The goal of learning was no longer seen as the development of an individually held body of knowledge, but rather the creation of a mutual understanding arising in the social interaction of particular individuals in a particular context at a particular time. … A common thread in these theoretical movements active during this time, such as critical theory, postmodernism, and radical constructivism, was the denial of privileged status to formal or schooled knowledge (2004:46).

The previous emphasis on individual learning was replaced with a focus on group work. Learners were seen as members of a learning community and learning was viewed as a "sociocultural collaborative activity" (2004:47).

- ***The Era of Engaged Learning (1996 – Present)***

In this period the understandings about readers and texts have shifted. The growing use of hypertext and a conception of the nonlinear character of this text is impacting on views of learning. Views on literacy have also shifted:

> … it has become increasingly more difficult to ignore that reading is a domain that relates not only to the struggling reader but also to readers of all abilities and ages. Further, reading extends beyond the initial phase of acquisition and across the lifespan as readers engage in a range of reading-related, goal directed activities. Current initiatives directed toward adolescent and adult readers are evidence of the expanded view of reading (Alexander and Fox, 2004:51).

There is an understanding that learning to read is a process that begins in early childhood and continues into adulthood. Readers have a much wider range of texts readily available and this necessitates that they become more critical and discerning when selecting material:

> Because reading is multidimensional in character, with significant relations among readers' knowledge, strategic processing, and motivation, simple models or theories based on a "learning to read" and "reading to learn" distinction[15] need to be supplanted with more complex, reciprocal models of reading development (Alexander, 2003). Specifically, investigation of the initial stages of reading acquisition should not be isolated from issues emerging when comprehension of texts becomes the focus. This requires a genuinely developmental theory of reading, spanning preliteracy reading readiness to proficient adult reading (Alexander and Fox, 2004:54).

Picking up the mapping metaphor once again, the eras identified by Alexander and Fox could represent broad territories to be visited on a literacy journey. Making an extended journey through a vast territory often has an impact on the traveller. This explorer may incorporate experiences and insights gained on the journey within her life and daily practice, cooking for instance in the tradition of an area visited, once she returns home. In the same way, experiencing different

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[15] It is important to note that the concepts of "learning to read" and "reading to learn" are broadly recognised ideas and not just acknowledged within the work of Rose and his associates. In schooling systems the first few years are often described as a period when children learn to read. Thereafter children are described as having to read to learn. Many theorists, however, prefer not to emphasise a dichotomy of "learning to read" and "reading to learn", since there is an understanding that learning to read continues throughout a person's life as a response to different contexts and circumstances.

literacy practice and gaining insight from a range of literacy theory, impacts on the understanding and actions of those teaching reading and writing.

The following sketch is provided as a brief example of how the vestiges of a long history of literacy may be seen in the practice of a teacher. The main character in this sketch is a teacher of literacy who first worked in school classrooms and then in university lecture rooms. Her reading lessons at school initially showed strong evidence of the influence of behaviourism. Learners were taught reading according to the Look and Say approach. Flash cards containing essential vocabulary were presented repeatedly to the class until the children could recognise the words easily. Learners then progressed to books, where the vocabulary just learnt featured prominently in the text. Later the teacher's literacy approach became more eclectic with aspects of psycholinguistics and social constructivism being evident, along with continued use of methodology with behaviourist foundations. Literacy lessons were predominantly based on the Whole Language Approach, but occasionally Look and Say and other methods were used. Work with learners in language classes in the upper primary school was characterised by a strong allegiance to constructivist practice. After moving into higher education, her teaching of literacy continued to be characterised by a range of influences. Her teaching of sub-skills of reading, such as skimming and scanning, and sub-skills of writing, such as composition of paragraphs and the ubiquitous five paragraph essay, showed the continuing influence of behaviourism. However, strong sociocultural elements were also discernable, with emphasis on building communities of literacy practice. Much emphasis was placed on group work, with teacher education students being expected to develop understanding through collaborative experience. As the teacher became more involved in research activities, her understanding of the theory underpinning literacy practice grew. This resulted in a more refined practice based on an epistemologically sound understanding of the teaching of literacy. Like the teacher in the sketch, the literacy practice of many teachers, be they in the primary, secondary or tertiary sector, is made up of a range of influences.

The practice of some members of the tertiary sector is explored in the section that follows.

The stated objective of this thesis is to examine the LR:RL pedagogy, in order to determine whether this approach could be a suitable means of improving the literacy expertise both of teachers in South Africa and the learners they teach. In the previous chapter the context of teaching literacy in schools was discussed, now the focus turns to consider the space where teachers are prepared to teach. Literacy teaching in higher education, particularly within the context of teacher education will be explored. The views of teacher educators will be considered and weighed up against the insights already developed in the thesis regarding the use of LR:RL and the demands of literacy teaching in a South African context. Using the work of Alexander and Fox (2004) as a map of the terrain, a literacy journey can be undertaken to pay a fleeting visit to various South African higher education institutions to obtain a glimpse of reading and writing practice at present.

A glimpse of literacy practice in Higher Education in South Africa

The higher education sector in South Africa operates at present within a state of flux. While all institutions are confronted with coping with reduced resources, the incorporation of Colleges of Education and greater demands for accountability, merging institutions are determining how to position themselves epistemically and financially and are concerned with defining their educational niche. This reality has to be considered in order to understand the boundaries within which literacy teaching occurs and within which literacy interventions would operate.

Current practice in higher education with regard to the teaching of reading and writing is varied and encompasses many different literacy approaches and combinations of approaches. Response to the needs of students, established institutional practice, discipline imperatives, theoretical bases and personal

literacy epistemology may all play a role in determining the perspective on literacy teaching at universities. The field of literacy is broad and consequently, it is not uncomplicated to provide an accurate and comprehensive picture of contemporary reading and writing practice. Therefore, a glimpse, rather than a detailed investigation of literacy practice in teacher education programmes will be provided, with the intention of stimulating reflection on how the levels of teacher literacy might be improved.

It is not the purpose of the thesis to provide an exhaustive survey of current literacy practices in higher education. The intention is to provide a brief view of the teaching of reading and writing of some practitioners working in the South African Higher Education context. These elements of practice in higher education will then be considered together with the insights about literacy that have been developed thus far in the thesis, providing a rich representation of literacy practice and potential in South Africa.

- *Procedure*

The strategy used to obtain information about literacy practice involved a survey of deans of education at public higher education institutions (or their equivalent) to identify members of staff responsible for teaching literacy to education students, or staff who teach student teachers how to teach reading and writing in school classrooms.[16] Thereafter, staff members identified by their deans were contacted by email and asked to complete a questionnaire soliciting information about the teaching of print literacy in teacher education programmes.

Of the twenty-four public higher education institutions contacted, eleven representatives responded (46%). Staff designated by deans were contacted and asked to complete a questionnaire. In addition, staff at a private higher education

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[16] A distinction was made in the questionnaire between the development of teacher education students' own reading and writing skills and their competency to teach reading and writing in schools. In this thesis, both aspects of literacy are considered important within the general context of print literacy development.

institution, working in collaboration with a public institution and staff at the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) were also approached. Ultimately, staff at thirteen institutions were asked to complete the questionnaire. Returned questionnaires were received from seven institutions.

A total of forty-seven questionnaires were sent out by email. The first emailed questionnaires were sent out on 29 May and responses were accepted until 29 June 2007. During this time fourteen questionnaires were returned (28%). A further eight responses were promised (17%), but not sent by 29 June 2007. Six individuals replied, but indicated that they were unable to complete the questionnaire due to work pressure or other commitments. No response was received from nineteen of those emailed which represents 40% of the total number requested to complete the questionnaire.[17]

- ***Discussion***

The aim of this research study is to focus on exploring the possibilities of improving the literacy competences of teachers and to consider how this might be done within the context of teacher education programmes in South Africa. To this end, university academic and support staff and an education specialist were surveyed to obtain an indication of current practice and the rationale for the particular strategies used to improve reading and writing.

The questionnaires sent to staff contained a section for contextual information and three main sections, as follows:
- o Teaching students how to develop their own reading and writing ability
- o Teaching students to teach learners reading and writing

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[17] Determining the best time to approach academic staff working in higher education institutions for assistance is not a straightforward matter. Possibly there is no 'best' time given the demands made on staff in a time of reduced resources and increased responsibilities. The examination period towards the end of the semester was chosen as a time of more flexibility for most staff. However, during this time, in addition to the usual assessment and end of semester responsibilities many of the staff requested to respond to the questionnaires were also involved in programme reviews, conducted by the Higher Education Quality Committee, either as panel members or as representatives of programmes under review. This may account in part for the 40% return rate, questionnaire fatigue and little perceived intrinsic reward may also account for the relatively poor return rate.

o   Using the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* literacy pedagogy.[18]

An addendum to the questionnaire provided information on the structure and use of LR:RL methodology, as a resource for respondents who might not be familiar with this approach to literacy teaching.

Certain contextual information gleaned from the responses to the questionnaires will be tabulated and then the responses received to the three focus areas of the questionnaire will be presented.[19] Thereafter specific issues arising from the responses will be highlighted.

Table 13: Contextual information supplied in the questionnaires

Respondent	Teaching experience		Typical level of students (10: outstanding – 1: very poor)	
	Teaching in higher education	**Teaching literacy in higher education**	**IPET[20] students**	**Other students**
A	10	10	10/4	-
B	18	12	5 (FET 4)	5
C	7	7	4	2
D	5	5	7	-
E	6	6	n/a	n/a
F	n/a	n/a	n/a	na
G	14	14	7	-
H	1.5	1.5	5	6
I	16	8	-	-
J	0.5	0.5	7	-
K	12	10	5	7
L	3	3	4	3
M	22	22	-	-
N	6	6	4	4

Responses were received mainly from lecturers. Respondent E and F were the only respondents who did not teach at a university. Respondent E mentioned having responsibility for academic support of students in a university Writing Centre. Although not directly involved in teaching literacy, Respondent F, an

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[18] A copy of the questionnaire is available in the addendum of the thesis.
[19] There were 14 responses received. The respondents are referred to by letters (A – N).
[20] Initial Professional Education of Teachers

education specialist, described engagement with literacy issues due to networking and research in the field.

Considering the information available in the table above, it would seem that the context within which teacher education takes place in South Africa is considerably varied. The range of teaching experience of respondents is significant. The most experienced respondent indicated having twenty-two years of experience in higher education, while the least experienced respondent had only six months experience. Regarding respondents' perception of the literacy level of students, a number of interesting issues arise. Respondents G, H, I and K all work at the same institution. Respondent I did not indicate the level of the students. Respondents G and J indicated the students' literacy level as seven, while Respondent H judged the literacy competence of the students to be two levels lower. Both Respondent A and M alluded to the range of levels within groups. Respondent A explained that some students had an outstanding literacy level (10), whereas the competence of others was not strong (4). Respondent M preferred not to allocate a numeric value to the literacy level of students. Instead she explained the complexities of the context as follows:

> I found that the boxes in 3 don't work for me. For IPET, the majority of the PGCE students with whom I work come from privileged or middle of the road backgrounds (literacy levels 7-9), with a minority from very disadvantaged backgrounds (the latter part of an ETDP SETA programme and with literacy levels of 3-6). In the B Ed programme students would be better located along a spectrum than in two boxes with literacy levels varying from 3 to 9. In the ACE and B Ed Hons block release programmes the majority of teachers have 'underprivileged' school backgrounds and literacy levels in a range of 3-7 but in the AELS (Applied English Language Studies) Hons and MA programmes these teachers are in the minority, with the majority from more 'privileged' backgrounds with literacy levels in a range from 7 to10 (Questionnaire Respondent M, Comments section).[21]

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[21] Education Training and Development Practices Skills Education Training Authority (ETDP SETA) students are able to complete a skills development learnership by registering for a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme.

When considering the information provided by respondents and the discussion that follows, it will be important to bear in mind the varied and often challenging environment of teacher education in South Africa.

Brief summaries will now be provided of responses relating to the three sections of the questionnaire:

- o ***Teaching students to develop their reading and writing ability[22]***

Respondent A mentioned initiating a literacy programme focussed on the improvement of the students' reading skills as a means of addressing academic literacy needs. In the future, this programme will be extended to include a component for writing support. The rationale for the approach to the teaching of academic reading and writing is based on the Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) method of literacy teaching. The respondent explained that CLE is based on a social constructivist approach to the teaching of reading[23]. The success of the initiative to improve the reading has not been assessed formally, however according to the respondent, there appears to be a general improvement in reading for pleasure.

Respondent B explained that all first-year students are required to take a semester course in academic literacy as part of their study programme. Those students who require further assistance continue to meet with language tutors for as long as they wish. The support provided by language tutors occurs both formally as part of a structured course and informally in response to student needs. In reply to the question regarding the rationale for the approach to the teaching of academic reading and writing, Respondent B indicated that academic literacy support is focussed on the development of reading skills such as comprehension, and writing skills such as the development of coherence and

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[22] See section 4.1 of the questionnaire.
[23] CLE with strong links to social constructivism, has an emphasis on scaffolding of learning. The teacher first models what learners are required to do, and then provides less guidance as learners become more able to work independently.

structure in written texts and use of correct referencing skills. The intervention is linked to the Communicative Approach[24] to language teaching with emphasis on semantic and social functions of language. In describing the success of the intervention, Respondent B stated that, "The most significant change in the students was attitudinal: increased confidence, willingness to participate in discussion, collegiality, and enjoyment".

Respondent C described the approach taken to develop academic literacy skills in terms of the activities required of students. In order to improve reading, students are tasked with finding articles dealing with particular themes. Students are expected to read the articles before the next contact session. During this session students read aloud from the articles. Some students compose questions based on the article and other students have to answer the questions. Assistance for the development of academic writing is again linked to themes. The themes used for reading activities are used for writing. Other topics of interest to the students are also used. In reply to the question related to the rationale for the approach to academic literacy, Respondent C made reference to the approach used, rather than the rationale for the approach. The respondent mentioned that the approach provides opportunities for students to read independently at home and with classmates. No mention is made of particular strategies to help students to read more effectively. The underlying understanding of literacy appears to be 'learn to read by reading'.

The questions related to academic literacy were not applicable for the context within which Respondent D works. This respondent provided detailed information regarding the methodology of teaching reading and writing in the following section of the questionnaire.

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[24] The Communicative Approach focuses on language as a medium of communication. Particular emphasis is placed on the social purpose of communication. Active learning is stressed with an emphasis on group work and pair work. The teacher's role is primarily to facilitate communication and correction of errors is not stressed. Language skills are usually integrated and an activity may involve listening, speaking, reading and writing.

While the majority of respondents were lecturers, Respondent E is employed in a writing centre. This respondent mentioned working with students from a range of disciplines and not working specifically with teacher education students. Respondent E indicated that staff employed at the Writing Laboratory of Institution 3 endeavour to develop the academic writing skills of students by working collaboratively with those students who visit the laboratory. Respondent E outlined the approach to academic literacy development:

> The main aim of our Writing Lab service is to work with students on a one-to-one basis on their writing in an informal, friendly and supportive environment. In contrast to the lecture mode of teaching where students in large classes are often passive listeners, the writing consultation affords students the opportunity to engage in "collaborative talk" about their writing with a trained peer writing consultant. Our consultants are post-graduate students who apart from being reasonably good writers, are also good communicators and listeners. Through asking questions, prompting and suggestions the consultants give writers the opportunity to talk about their assignments and develop their thoughts about the topic. The focus of our consultations is on higher order aspects such as structure, organisation and coherence. During these consultations writers are equipped with skills that they can transfer to other writing assignments.

Respondent E also mentioned that the individual consultations facilitated students' command of and active involvement in their own learning. Students are able to decide on the frequency and number of visits and there is no limit to the number of consultations available to students.

Regarding the rationale for the approach to academic literacy development, Respondent E reported that practice in the Writing Laboratory is premised on the understanding that writing is socially constructed by means of a discussion of the text produced by students. The approach to literacy knowledge and skills development at the Writing Laboratory is one of collaborative learning. When a collaborative approach is used, there is an emphasis on respect for the individual's abilities and efforts. There is a sharing of responsibility and authority and an attempt to find consensus and common understanding. Students are encouraged to talk about assignments in a language they prefer. Respondent E

explains this student support practice as follows, "Being allowed to speak in their language of preference often allows them to better explain complex ideas". Respondent E continues:

> The writing task is approached as a process that allows writers to write and rewrite, and through rewriting students also rethink and refine their ideas about the topic. What we aim for with the process approach to writing is, in the short term, better texts, and in the longer term, better writers.[25]

The scope of Respondent F's work encompasses networking and research within the field of open and distance education rather than specific involvement in the teaching of reading and reading methodologies. Consequently, Respondent F did not reply to the questions regarding the development of literacy competence (4.1 and 4.2), preferring to make a contribution to the question regarding the use of LR:RL within the context of South African education (4.3).

Respondent G indicated that students receive support in developing literacy competence directly from lecturers and via institutional support systems. Students are given support in developing academic reading and writing skills by means of one-on-one interviews, paired work with stronger students, and assistance in a Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC), according to Respondent G. Students are able to take advantage of services such as academic consultation, a writing laboratory and a language and writing advancement programme. Respondent G described the rationale for the academic literacy approach in terms of the purpose of the initiative, "To help the students to become better essay writers and to answer exam questions effectively". This respondent indicated that the success of the academic reading and writing support was dependent on students' interest in and commitment to becoming more proficient writers.

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[25] The Process Approach to writing consists of various steps including prewriting, writing, revising and evaluating. While a product orientated approach might emphasise writing activities which the teacher models and learners emulate, the process approach stresses the stages involved in creating a text. Process writing encourages learning from the refinement of drafts of written work. Literacy programmes may encourage a combination of process and product orientated elements in order to help students to progress optimally.

In responding to the question regarding the development of academic literacy, Respondent H outlined steps used to improve reading and writing skills. Reading tasks are set and discussed in class, or students are required to reflect on the reading and record this reflection in a portfolio. Respondent H did not indicate whether students are given assistance with these reading tasks, however support for writing tasks is mentioned. Assignments are discussed and students are given assistance prior to commencing the writing task. Respondent H explained, "For each academic assignment the question is unpacked, the essay scaffolded and referencing revised". In replying to the question concerning the rationale for the approach to academic literacy, Respondent H expressed a conviction that repeated practise of reading and writing would lead to improved reading and writing. Progress in reading and writing is noticeable, though Respondent H does not elaborate on the extent of this improvement.

Respondent I made reference to students being assisted both at a writing centre and by lecturers. This respondent explained, "We do have a Teaching and Learning Centre that offers help to student with their academic writing, however the continuous work is left to us". Under the auspices of the academic writing centre, students have the opportunity to develop a range of skills including reading skills and assignment writing skills.

Respondent I developed a particular intervention to assist B Ed students. This intervention provides a variety of assistance to students including information on avoiding plagiarism and using appropriate referencing techniques. In addition, students are taught reading skills such as skimming, scanning and intensive reading. Writing skills included summarising, using various techniques. Respondent I also indicated, "… the students write an academic piece which they exchange with a writing partner. This has proved to be the most rewarding exercise". In reply to the question regarding the rationale for teaching academic reading and writing, Respondent I mentioned the reason for providing assistance with academic literacy:

> Because I teach the Educational Psychology component of the B Ed and PGCE
> course I could not get past the poor structure of assignments, lack of knowledge

about referencing and the need to be aware of plagiarism, so I actually took it on as an informal course done in the "spare" Education session. This year for the first time it has been formally timetabled, but only once a week (1½ hours) for one term, which is hopelessly insufficient.

In discussing the success of efforts to improve reading and writing, Respondent I indicated that fair success was achieved with the more literate students. An analysis of a student course evaluation was supplied, providing evidence of this success. Respondent I expressed continuing challenges with regard to assisting some second language students:

Those who are weaker second language students struggle to summarise and construct a logical flow of information about a specific topic … they tend to go off at a tangent into anecdotal accounts of classroom practice seen in their ELP[26] class (once a week).

Respondent I mentioned that time constraints made it difficult to make progress with weaker students. However, insights gained from the reading of academic journals and other resources on academic literacy are providing the respondent with useful information on assisting learners to develop reading and writing proficiency.

Respondent J indicated that scaffolding, feedback and one-on-one meetings are used to develop academic reading and writing. In response to the question about the rationale for the literacy approach, Respondent J supplied a general comment about the proficiency of first language students being better, on the whole, than second language students, although there were exceptions with a small number of second language students having better proficiency than their first language counterparts. Having only been appointed at the beginning of the semester, Respondent J was unable to make a comment regarding the success of the approach used to develop reading and writing skills.

Respondent K indicated that students have to master various reading strategies by means of practice and application. No specific information is supplied as to which strategies could be used, nor is mention made of assisting students to

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[26] ELP: English Language Proficiency

acquire these strategies. With regard to the development of writing, exposure to various genres is indicated as well as practice of writing. In response to the question regarding the success of the literacy approaches mentioned, Respondent K asserts that once students are familiar with the requirements of academic writing, they become more successful.

With regard to academic literacy, Respondent L teaches a course for part-time working adults and another support course for developing academic literacy. This respondent also teaches B Ed students literacy methodology. The academic literacy courses are intended for students who will enter the business world. There is an emphasis on skills development such as note making and identification of linguistic markers that signify important content. Respondent J also mentioned that students learn other reading skills such as skimming, scanning, prediction and close reading. Students are helped to identify topic sentences and are expected to use these key sentences in their own writing. A range of material is read during the course, including newspaper articles, short texts and academic articles. Respondent I indicated, "I use L'Allier and Elish-Piper's work on reading to help work through academic articles (alpha boxes, double entry journals etc)". Work on writing skills includes help with summarising and paraphrasing. Students are also taught how to produce an argumentative essay with appropriate structure and supporting evidence. During class, short exercises requiring writing and discussion are used. Students work in pairs or small groups to explore the appropriate skills together. These short exercises are eventually developed into continuous pieces of academic writing. In response to the question regarding the rationale for the approach to reading and writing, Respondent L commented, "There is no point in expecting students to pass if they are not taught what the expectations of the university are. They need to understand academic discourse and all the hidden rules that go along with being in academia". Respondent L mentioned that the work in the course was broader ranging than the usual communication course, including the reading of dense text and essay writing rather than just teaching how to write a memo. With regard to the success of the approach, Respondent L pointed out that time constraints

were a limiting factor. However, comments from students and evidence in their written work indicated that the course was useful to students. Respondent L mentions, "They comment on being aware of planning and organisation, of reading 'smarter' and for meaning, of struggling with referencing and plagiarism to be correct because they understand why they need to do it".

Respondent M described the process followed to assist B Ed and PGCE students to develop academic reading and writing skills. B Ed students are introduced to key concepts or content during lectures. During the tutorial sessions that follow, emphasis is placed on the discussion of readings, for instance journal articles, and on the writing tasks based on the readings. Assignments are prepared during tutorials. For PGCE students the process is different. Readings are distributed in advance and then used for discussions or tasks during the seminars. B Ed and PGCE students are expected to submit a portfolio of reflections on their learning in addition to the assignments for the course. With regard to the rationale for the approach, Respondent M commented, "I aim to challenge students and to support them in meeting the challenges of reading and responding (orally and in writing) to increasingly complex texts". Regarding the success of the approach, Respondent M mentioned:

> It is generally successful for all but the weakest students whose academic literacy and general knowledge background is so limited that they require more support than my colleagues and I have time to give. What most IPET students in a B Ed programme and most ACE[27] students in an INSET[28] programme find most difficult is including content from their reading in appropriate ways (synthesizing, quoting, referencing, etc.) and expressing their personal responses clearly and coherently.

Respondent N uses an approach founded on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).[29]According to SFL theory, language can only be understood in relation to

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[27] Advanced Certificate in Education
[28] In-service Teacher Education
[29] SFL is a theory of language emphasising the idea of language function, rather than focussing on the structure of language. SFL considers social context, and investigates how language impacts on, and is limited by this context.

the context in which it is used. The rationale for the approach used by Respondent N follows that of Halliday. Halliday's work emphasises that language cannot be disassociated from meaning. Respondent N indicated that emphasis is placed on social purposes impacting on linguistic choices. A key focus is on context which consists of the relationship between the social environment within which the language occurs and the functional organisation of language. Respondent N asserted that reasonable success is achieved with this approach, with student motivation being a determining factor. Increased clarity about what is expected (in terms of genres and associated features) improves success.

Key issues emerging from responses

Respondents were asked to explain how they assisted teacher education students to develop their reading and writing ability. It would seem from the responses received in the questionnaires that academic literacy support provided to students includes a range of approaches. Revisiting the map metaphor, respondents show evidence of spending time at various sites on the literacy map, with both cognitively based skills approaches and social constructivist approaches being prominent. Certain issues have emerged from the responses and these will be discussed with reference to the preceding chapters of the thesis.

1. The nature of assistance

A range of support strategies are evident from the responses. Students are assisted to develop their literacy competence by staff in writing centres, by lecturers, in tutorials and in various peer assistance procedures. In the writing centres, students are encouraged to attend one-on-one consultations. The writing centre of Institution 3 places particular emphasis on the social construction of knowledge where students are encouraged to engage in

"collaborative talk" with tutors. In a situation of collaboration, the students' efforts are recognised by the tutor. The tutor does not act as an authority figure, but rather as a helpful peer and the students are ultimately responsible for their own learning. The tutor acts as a guide, making suggestions rather than prescriptions regarding the improvement of written work. This institutional source of support is valuable, but not sufficient if all students are to become adept readers and writers.

The nature of the assistance provided by lecturers is varied. While skills taught discretely (such as skimming, scanning and summarising) are useful, students also need to use these skills in context, while being initiated into the particular discourse of their discipline. LR:RL provides a carefully structured means of doing so. Initiation takes place through reading relevant texts and using the knowledge of these texts as a reference point in constructing new texts. The shift from emphasis on skills to a more holistic approach to literacy has resulted in a reconsideration of practice in higher education, as is exemplified in the comment of Hirst, Henderson, Allan, Bode and Kocatepe:

> Assistance for students not coping with the academic demands of their tertiary studies has traditionally been provided by study skills units, which offer generic support in a range of academic practices across disciplines. However, current recognition that literacy practices always operate in social and cultural contexts and are embedded in social goals and practices (Barton & Hamilton: Gee, 2000), give us cause to rethink how universities can best support the academic literacy needs of commencing students (2004:66).

The LR:RL approach offers a means of teaching literacy skills **and** of initiating students into participating in academic discourse. Students are helped to acquire requisite skills within a meaningful context. Literacy skills are not viewed as being discrete. Instead, students learn these skills as they engage with the texts that form part of their curriculum.

Significantly, evidence from responses suggests that there is an emphasis on helping students to write. There is less emphasis on teaching students to read, with few respondents mentioning specifically how the reading competence of

students is developed. LR:RL, on the other hand, foregrounds the importance of reading. Intensive reading practices pave the way for writing. Rose indicates,

> Techniques for scaffolding academic literacy enable students to:
> - Read academic articles with comprehension
> - Identify key information in each paragraph
> - Make notes of key information
> - Use key information to write summaries and other academic texts (2006a:3).

Reading and writing are complimentary processes, each supporting the development of the other. By devoting particular attention to reading before requiring writing, students are prepared and thus more likely to accomplish the writing task with ease.

2. Articulation of theory

An understanding of theory enables the practitioners to become aware of their tacit practice, and in turn explain this practice, furthermore, to make logical decisions based on principle rather than on the latest trend, habit or possibly even a whim. While some respondents mentioned the theoretical basis of their practice, other respondents did not provide specific information. When responding to the question regarding rationale, certain respondents clarified the theory or concepts supporting their practice, others responded by supplying a reason or justification for the approach, and still others explained their approach, rather than the rationale for the approach. Brookfield (1995) succinctly explains how theory and practice are intertwined. Rejecting the sharp divide often made between theory and practice, Brookfield indicates:

> Making this distinction is epistemologically and practically untenable. Like it or not, we are all theorists and practitioners. Our practice is theoretically informed by our implicit and informal theories about the processes and relationships of teaching. Our theories are grounded in the epistemological and practical tangles and contradictions we seek to explain and resolve (1995:1).

Theory can either be explicit or implicit. Explicit theory is usually unequivocally articulated, while implicit theory is implied rather than specifically stated. Theory

can be articulated by the practitioner, or can be tacit, being understood without being openly expressed. It is possible that although respondents were fully aware of the theoretical foundations of their practice, they chose not to supply this information on the questionnaire. It is also possible that some respondents may not have been clear about the theory linked to their practice. Should this be so, elements of their practice could be contradictory. Rose provides a sound example of the interaction of theory and practice, and the mutually beneficial relationship between the two. He defines both the practice and theory of LR:RL clearly, acknowledging that the theory that underpins the LR:RL pedagogy is an evolving theory (2007b, 2006b). Occurrences in practice enhance and result in adaptation of theory. Theory also continues to improve and augment practice (Rose, 2006b:2).

3. Tacit knowledge or explicit teaching

There is evidence in the responses to the questionnaires of a spectrum of views regarding the development of literacy in teacher education programmes. Certain respondents emphasise the importance of teaching reading and writing, while others expect students either to have developed these competences by the time they reach the university or while they are busy with tertiary studies. Whereas some respondents advocate explicit teaching of the kind of print literacy required in higher education, others do not specify whether assistance is provided to students. The comments below both acknowledge that engagement with print literacy is necessary,

Respondent H: I realise that academe is a foreign language for most people and that the more you read and write the easier it becomes.

Respondent L: There is no point in expecting students to pass if they are not taught what the expectations of the university are. They need to understand academic discourse and all the

hidden rules that go along with being in academia (Responses to 4.1 of questionnaire).

Interestingly, the comment by respondent H seems to suggest that students are able to learn to read and write by reading and writing. Conversely, Respondent L advocates a more overt approach regarding the development of print literacy. In the LR:RL approach there is recognition that both reading and writing have to be taught explicitly.

4. Unequal student achievement

In response to the question, *To what extent is your approach successful?,* Respondent I indicated, "Fairly successful with the more literate students (black and white)". It would seem from this response that students who originally were more able with respect to reading and writing, have made some progress, while weaker students have made little or no progress. Respondent M replied,"It is generally successful for all but the weakest students whose academic literacy and general knowledge background is so limited that they require more support than my colleagues and I have time to give". Again, with the weakest students, there appears to be very limited progress. These comments seem to suggest that an approach such as that of LR:RL, which is geared to bridge existing gaps in students' literacy competence **and** enable all learners to be successful, could occupy an important niche in teacher education programmes.

In the survey of HEI personnel, the teacher education student is viewed in two ways. Firstly, the student is seen as an individual in need of support in developing appropriate print literacy skills required in higher education. Secondly, the student is seen as a teacher or prospective teacher, required to teach school learners how to read and write. In the following section responses relate to the methodology of teaching literacy in schools.

o   ***Teaching students to teach learners reading and writing***[30]

The focus now shifts from the learning of literacy in higher education to a focus on teaching literacy in school classrooms. Respondents were asked to reply to two issues. Firstly, the request was to, "Give an account of the reading and writing methodology/ies that you promote for developing learner's literacy competence". Secondly, respondents were asked, "What is the rationale for your approach to the teaching of the methodology of reading and writing?" The responses received will be reported and thereafter certain matters arising from the responses will be discussed.

The first question asked which methodologies are promoted to develop learners' literacy competence. Respondent A indicated that a year course is presented to final year B Ed Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase students. In this course, students are each required to offer literacy learning support to a group of three learners. Students develop a group education plan for the learners, based on the results of a diagnostic test completed by the learners. Students are taught to teach in a social constructivist framework. In explaining the rationale for the approach to teaching literacy methodology, Respondent A mentioned that the justification for the approach was for students to learn to teach diagnostically in response to the needs of the learners in the group. Respondent A emphasised that students are exposed to the principles of social constructivism and are expected to respond to the needs of learners within this framework.

Respondent B indicated that a constructivist style of mediated learning was modelled. This was done in order to introduce students to a balanced approach to literacy teaching. Respondent B explained:

> … we try to model a constructivist style of mediation to introduce students to a balanced approach that includes behaviourist (phonics) and psycholinguistic strategies, but the preferred approach is emergent literacy.[31]

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[30] See section 4.2 of the questionnaire.

Respondent B also commented on the difficulties experienced in delivering a methodology course in a multilingual context. The course is delivered in English which results in a challenge for isiXhosa speaking students who have to adapt the phonics principles they learn in English to the context of isiXhosa. In addition, Respondent B mentioned that literature based reading instruction was advocated, however availability of resources in all languages of teaching and learning was a problem. While English materials are plentiful, this is not the case for other official languages. In response to the question regarding the rationale for the approach to literacy, Respondent B explained that the pedagogical practice of the course is based on social constructivist theory to a large extent and on behaviourist theory to a limited extent. Regarding the issue of literature based reading teaching, Respondent B supplied a succinct explanation, "The rationale for the literature based emphasis is based on humanist beliefs in the relationships between learners' agency, imagination, linguistic, aesthetic, social and moral development and reading motivation".

Respondent C explained that the approach to teaching reading and writing methodology is the same as used for teaching academic reading and writing to student teachers. However, the topics chosen would be at a level appropriate to school learners. The type of topics chosen would also be determined by the interests of learners. Respondent C indicated that the rationale for the methodology approach was the same as the rationale for teaching academic literacy.

Respondent D indicated that the reading and writing methodologies that are promoted are based on the learning outcomes and assessment standards of the National Curriculum Statement (Languages Learning Area). Students study literacy methodology in all four years of the degree programme. The outline of the literacy curriculum is supplied by Respondent D, detailing the learning

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[31] Emergent literacy refers to the development of the association of print with meaning that begins early in the child's life, taking place mainly in the period before the commencement of formal education.

outcomes and content of the curriculum. The four year literacy programme is planned as follows:

- Year 1: Introduction to OBE and NCS in the Home Language
- Year 2: Perceptual Development, Reading Readiness and Initial Reading in the Home Language
- Year 3: Reading in the Home Language
- Year 4: Reading and Writing in the Home Language

In the first year, emphasis is placed on listening, speaking and language use. Reading is dealt with in years 2, 3 and 4. In Year 2 the approach to reading emphasises reading readiness. In Year 3 there is a focus on reading methods and the use of a reading programme. In the final year a differentiated approach to reading is investigated. The writing component of the final year emphasises writing as a means of communication. No response is provided to the question regarding the rationale for the approach to the teaching of literacy.

Respondent E works in a writing centre, thus the questions regarding literacy methodology were not applicable to this respondent.

The context of Respondent F's work is that of open and distance learning. This respondent indicated that the questions regarding the methodology of reading and writing were not applicable.

Respondent G indicated that a balanced approach to literacy methodology was used. This respondent summed up the approach used to present literacy methodology as, "shared, guided and independent reading and writing very similar to Rose's article". The rationale for the approach was explained as an effort to ensure the improvement of literacy levels both provincially and nationally.

Respondent H mentioned that an integrated approach to literacy teaching is promoted. Reading and writing are seen as complementary skills with guided, shared and independent strategies used for the teaching of reading and writing.

Respondent H motivated the use of the approach to literacy teaching by asserting, "I have seen these approaches work in the classroom!".

The Language Experience Approach is used by Respondent I as a means of introducing children to reading. According to the respondent, this approach allows learners to see that "reading texts are actually the words we speak written down". This respondent acknowledges that this method is not sufficient as a means of teaching reading. A more wide ranging strategy is necessary to achieve optimal learning of reading. Respondent I explained the type of reading support needed by young readers:

> They need a multiple strategy approach to reading which includes reading for meaning, using context and syntax, using phonetic skills and Look and Say. This cannot be taught in a hit and miss fashion and some form of diagnostic record is needed (not for every child but just for struggling readers). This is done by taking a Running Record and analysing it for weak strategies and teaching these strategies specifically.

Respondent I indicates that "more able" readers in the classroom are taught higher order literacy skills including "skimming, scanning, intensive reading and summarising; accessing information through the library; how to approach a book-contents, index etc and the Barrett Taxonomy of comprehension skills." The approach to writing teaching is focussed on the process approach covering a variety of different genres.

Respondent J indicated that a process approach to the development of literacy is important. Students are taught shared reading and writing. A range of genres are dealt with so that fiction and non-fiction work is covered as well as texts related to different learning areas. Regarding the rationale for the approach to literacy, Respondent J reflected on the approach used and indicated that students are able to respond critically to how literacy is taught in the classroom. Respondent J indicated that they have the insight to consider what they experienced and observed in school classrooms and are able to adapt their literacy practice where necessary.

Respondent K refers to use of an interactive reading methodology and creative and free writing methodology. These methodologies have been selected to promote learner interaction, rather than merely focussing on the development of reading and writing skills. Use of newspapers and magazines is mentioned as a means of easing students into reading and writing expected at university level. The use of these particular approaches is motivated by a need to make reading interesting and engaging for students.

Respondent L was not able to make detailed comments citing the situation of teaching first year B Ed students, but not having any influence over what is taught in the curriculum. No response was received regarding the rationale for the approach.

Respondent M referred to the approach used with two groups of IPET students, namely the PGCE and B Ed groups at Institution 6. With the PGCE students, who are being prepared for work in high schools, the focus is on scaffolding teenagers' progress in becoming mature readers and writers. An array of genres is explored in the home language and the additional language. The focus of literacy methodology with B Ed students, working in the Intermediate and Senior Phase, is on reading and writing for a range of purposes in both the home language and the additional language. The pedagogy of multiliteracies is explored, acknowledging the increasing complexity of texts in terms of cultural and linguistic diversity.

Respondent N indicates that a genre based approach is used for the teaching of literacy methodology. Systemic Functional Linguistics provides the framework within which reading and writing are taught. The rationale for the approach is that there is systematic guidance on how to choose linguistic focus. This is important for second language learners and under-prepared teachers.

Key issues emerging from responses

In examining the responses for particularly significant themes, two kinds of issues emerge regarding the approach to literacy methodology. The first relates to a concept specific to the teaching of initial reading and writing, namely, balanced literacy. The second issue concerns inequality of literacy provision in university and school contexts. Respondents referred to unequal learning of literacy by students at university. Reference was also made to different teaching for more and less able learners in schools.

1. Balanced literacy approach

The 'Reading Wars' is a term used to refer to the debate about the most appropriate way to teach children to read and write. This debate has raged for more than two decades. The discussion has shifted over the years. Initially the argument focussed on whether the phonics approach or the whole language approach was more suitable for teaching initial reading. The debate was also characterised as 'Bottom Up' versus 'Top Down' deliberation. Phonics and word based approaches such as look and say are described as bottom up approaches because the learner begins to read by learning the phonics sounds that make up words, or high frequency words that make up sentences, and only later moves on to reading full texts. The learner progresses from learning the basic components towards reading as a whole. The top down or meaning based approach emphasises moving from reading the text to reading sentences, words and then identifying sounds. More recently the debate has progressed to acknowledge that both top down and bottom up approaches are important:

> In the 21st century, however, this debate has evolved. Instead of focussing on the "either/or" of the phonics versus whole-language approaches to reading instruction, the debate now centres on the essential components of a comprehensive reading programme (Education Week, 2007).

A 'balanced approach' is promoted where aspects of phonics, whole word and whole language methods are all used. Aspects such as letter-sound correspondence, decoding, word study and recognition are taught, in addition to holistic, meaning focussed literacy activities including listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Respondents B and G refer explicitly to the use of a balanced approach to literacy. Respondent B outlines the approach as follows, "…we try to model a constructivist style of mediation to introduce students to a balanced approach that includes behaviourist (phonics) and psycholinguistic strategies, but the preferred approach is emergent literacy". Respondent G refers to using shared, guided and independent reading and writing strategies as part of a balanced approach. The idea of a balanced approach remains nebulous, with practitioners not agreeing on exactly what it is that should be balanced. The views of Respondents B and G are supported in the literature. However, the concept of a balanced approach remains contested, with a range of interpretations evident in both practice and theory. LR:RL offers a way through the minefield of current literacy debate. Starting from a top down, meaning-based, perspective and then moving to practice specific skills associated with the bottom up approach, the learner is guided carefully through a structured programme. Balance is achieved between the emphasis on meaning and skills. In addition, balance is achieved between reading and writing, with both reading and writing being given prominence within the LR:RL methodology.

2. Different provision of literacy teaching

In the previous section where the teaching of literacy in higher education was explored, the theme of difference emerged, with reference to student success. Respondents indicated that more able students benefited most from the literacy support offered them. Now, in this section, focussed on assisting school learners to read and write, the theme of difference emerges again. In this case

differentiated teaching, rather than differentiated results, is mentioned. Respondent I makes reference to teaching more successful students higher order literacy skills. It is not clear whether other learners are never taught these skills or whether these advanced literacy skills are taught later. Rose, using the insights of Bernstein suggests a way of ameliorating the incidence and effects of difference in achievement. Rejecting the notion of more and less able learners, all members of the class are helped to achieve success, demonstrating a high level of print literacy.

Having discussed elements of the practice of teacher educators, respondents views of LR:RL will now be explored. The respondents collectively have a depth and range of experience. Their comments regarding the use of LR:RL within the multifarious teacher education situation and fraught context of South African schooling are valuable.

o *The use of 'LR:RL' in the South African context*

Respondents were asked to indicate their familiarity with and opinion of the possibility of using LR:RL within the South African context. Then respondents were asked whether they would use this approach in their practice. Again, a brief overview of responses will be provided and then a discussion will follow.

Respondent A reported that she was familiar with the LR:RL pedagogy having attended a workshop presented by Rose. At the time, Respondent A was involved in a literacy initiative with the Western Cape Department of Education. The project involved introducing Concentrated Language Encounter to three hundred schools in the Western Cape. Respondent A notes that the theory of LR:RL is quite comparable to that of CLE.[32]

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[32] The basic methodology of CLE teaching was developed during the 1970's by Brian Gray. Gray was also involved in the early stages of the development of LR:RL. See reference to Rose, Gray and Cowey (1999).

Respondent B had some knowledge of LR:RL and remarked on commonality between the LR:RL pedagogy and the practical criticism approach and also the genre approach. Respondent B considered both of these approaches as being sound means of understanding the meaning of a text. However, Respondent B considered LR:RL to be a more systematic approach to accessing the meaning of text. This respondent is of the opinion that the methodical nature of LR:RL makes this approach suitable for the South African context:

> It is more systematic than these older versions, which probably makes it more accessible to South African teachers and students who generally lack literary experience. I think our educators and learners need the scaffolding that these systems provide but I see them as part of the process of building an educator's personal repertoire of strategies and not as a universal panacea.

Respondent B indicated that LR:RL could be used as one of a range of strategies required to address the literacy needs of students.

Respondent C mentioned not being familiar with the LR:RL pedagogy. In considering the viability of LR:RL for the general South African context, this respondent pointed out that use of LR:RL in a multilingual and multicultural situations could prove to be quite challenging. Respondent C was positive about the potential use of the LR:RL approach indicating, "I have small classes and monolingual group of students, as a result it will be quite easy to use the LR:RL approach".

Respondent D was not well acquainted with the LR:RL pedagogy, but had some knowledge of this literacy approach. Consequently, this respondent was hesitant about offering an opinion of the use of LR:RL. However, Respondent D found significant correspondence between LR:RL and the Foundation Phase literacy methodology presented at the institution. Respondent D had reservations about implementing LR:RL and required additional information before making a decision.

Like Respondent D, Respondent E was not well acquainted with the LR:RL pedagogy, but had some knowledge of the approach to literacy teaching. Respondent E is employed in a writing laboratory where the primary goal is writing skills development. This respondent declared strong support for the view of writing as a means of fostering learning and thinking:

> Ideally we would like to see more writing integrated into courses/content modules. In these courses the writing is integrated/related to the course content and students have to do more writing on a regular basis and where, instead of the students writing one major assignment for the whole semester, the assignment is scaffolded and broken up into smaller manageable parts.

Respondent E indicated the possibility of using LR:RL, but did not supply specific details as to how this could be done.

Respondent F indicated not being well acquainted with LR:RL. This respondent conceded that LR:RL demonstrates a broad and balanced conception of how learners acquire literacy. Of particular interest to Respondent F were the understood parallels between mature readers and beginning readers learning to read and write. Respondent F questioned whether student teachers would be able to transfer the methodology of LR:RL to another language for use in a classroom.

Respondent G indicated being quite familiar with LR:RL pedagogy. Regarding the viability of LR:RL for the South African context, Respondent G mentioned that it would be outstanding if all teachers at all levels of schooling would acknowledge the importance of improving literacy and be prepared to do something about it. This universal buy-in of teachers would however not be without challenges, according to Respondent G:

> That would take a long time as the majority of teachers in all schools would need to be supported in developing a more progressive approach to literacy. (Retraining).
> It would also have huge financial implications as it is my understanding that there are insufficient texts of any sort in the majority of schools. (Equipping).

> Teachers and parents would need to understand the importance of learning to read and write in the mother tongue. (Language issues).

Respondent G noted similarities between the current practice of literacy methodology for IPET students at Institution 5 and the LR:RL approach. Furthermore, Respondent G expressed a willingness to include aspects of the LR:RL approach not used at present.

Respondent H indicated that she had some knowledge of LR:RL, but was not well acquainted with the pedagogy. This respondent viewed LR:RL as being particularly advantageous for the South African context, though time constraints in higher education were mentioned as a possible problem:

> I think that this approach would be most beneficial for the South African context. My only concern is the amount of time it would take at a tertiary level where contact time is limited. I would think that at a Foundation Phase level this approach would work extremely well (as long as teachers were adequately trained).

Although indicating that it would be necessary for staff to study the approach carefully first, Respondent H indicated that the LR:RL approach could be especially beneficial for the literacy methodology presented to B Ed students.

Respondent I undertook to respond at a later stage to the questions regarding the use of the LR:RL approach, but no response was forthcoming.

Respondent J reported not being well acquainted with LR:RL pedagogy. This respondent acknowledged that the approach was of value and suggested that the Department of Education could adapt the methodology of LR:RL and use this approach as a means of improving reading and writing in schools. Like Respondent H, Respondent J had reservations about the use of LR:RL within the context of teacher education, declaring, "Here at the University there's no way that we can use the program as we don't have much time".

Respondent K indicated being quite familiar with the LR:RL approach. In response to the question regarding the viability of LR:RL for the local context, this

respondent stated that teachers do not take sufficient responsibility for teaching reading and writing. Respondent K felt that it was necessary for teachers to have a sound knowledge of LR:RL and was of the opinion that limited understanding of literacy pedagogy hinders effective teaching of literacy. Respondent K asserted that it was not appropriate to use LR:RL at university level as students are expected to have advanced reading skills by the time they reach tertiary education.

Respondent L reported not being very familiar with LR:RL pedagogy. Although conceding the potential usefulness of the approach, Respondent L expressed reservations about the use of LR:RL:

> I think that these techniques are useful but can become tedious – how does one make sure that one keeps the attention of students. My bridging course is a case in point – all ESL students whose reading and writing is low in comparison to their ability to express themselves orally, but who become bored and do not see the relevance of doing 'tedious' tasks. Any form of sustained reading is a real challenge.

Respondent L mentioned the possibility of using certain of the strategies of LR:RL, but indicated that time constraints prevented fuller used of the approach.

Respondent M indicated being quite familiar with the LR:RL approach. This respondent indicated that feasibility of using LR:RL was a great concern, citing "time in the timetable, very large classes and lack of texts" as constraints. In addressing the issue of using LR:RL to teach initial literacy, Respondent M queried which language teachers should use. Regarding the use of LR:RL, Respondent M expressed reservations indicating, "I always try to scaffold learning BUT for the majority of the students with whom I work I think Rose's stages are over elaborated and could lead to boredom".

Respondent N reported being familiar with LR:RL pedagogy and expressed a positive attitude to this literacy approach. Regarding the viability of this approach, Respondent N described it as being very well suited to the South African context. The approach was described as providing, "greatest attention to linguistic

features within a purposeful and meaning-based framework". In addition, Respondent N considered the Vygotskyan learning perspective "appropriate to theory and context". In response to the question regarding use of LR:RL in practice, Respondent N reported using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) since 1989. Additionally, since 1994, SFL has been used as a framework to reconceptualise literacy work in an M Ed and B Ed programme.

Key issues emerging from responses

Respondents were firstly asked to indicate whether they were acquainted with LR:RL pedagogy. Then respondents were required to consider the feasibility of using the pedagogy within the South African context in general and within their practice specifically.

1. Familiarity with 'LR:RL'

After summarising respondents' familiarity with LR:RL, and their opinion regarding the viability and usefulness of the approach, certain observations and reservations of respondents will be discussed. Respondents were asked to indicate their familiarity with the LR:RL programme. The majority of respondents (35.7%) indicated that although they had some knowledge of the programme, they were not well acquainted with LR:RL. Three respondents mentioned that they were quite familiar with the programme (21%). The same number of respondents indicated that they were not familiar with LR:RL, choosing to make comments about the potential use of the approach instead. While two respondents (14%) stated that they were familiar with this particular literacy pedagogy. Interestingly, Respondents A and N, who were the only respondents to indicate that they were particularly familiar with LR:RL, were also the respondents who were most positive about the viability of this pedagogy for the South African context.

2. Viability of LR:RL for the South African context

A range of opinion was evident regarding the feasibility of the LR:RL pedagogy for the South African context. This opinion ran from optimistic to particularly concerned, though none of the respondents indicated that the approach was not viable within the local context. Respondents A and N pointed out the feasibility of LR:RL emphatically. Respondent A declared that this pedagogy was especially similar to the Concentrated Language Encounter literacy method and motivated for LR:RL's viability by claiming that, "Our CLE was the one literacy project introduced in the Western Cape that had the most positive improvements". Respondent N described LR:RL as a literacy approach "best suited" to the South African context.

Respondents B, E, F, H, J and K acknowledged the value of the LR:RL approach, citing factors such as a methodical approach, possibility of integration within modules and suitability for use by the Department of Education as a training programme for teachers. Respondent F mentioned:

> After an initial reading my impression is that it operates with a comprehensive and balanced understanding of how children learn to read and write. I am interested in the implicit parallels that are drawn between adults learning to read and write and children learning to read and write.

These respondents also highlight certain constraints given the challenges of the South African educational context, but were generally positive about the pedagogy.

Respondents C, G and L were also fairly positive about the feasibility of using LR:RL. These respondents nonetheless placed more emphasis on the difficulties of using LR:RL in South Africa, citing a variety of constraints including the multilingual nature of many classes, the necessity of intensive support for teachers. Respondent L was particularly concerned that students would find the approach tedious. Respondent M was also of the opinion that the approach might not be suitable and could cause the students to become bored.

3. Use of LR:RL in practice

Respondents were asked whether they would consider using LR:RL in their practice. Respondents A, C, E and N affirmed clearly that they would use the approach. Respondents B indicated that LR:RL could be used as one of the strategies to develop literacy competence. Respondents G, L and M indicated that they already used strategies contained in LR:RL in their practice. While Respondent G and L were fairly optimistic about the use of the approach as a whole, Respondent M was not, citing the "over elaborated" nature of the approach as not being relevant to the students in the programme.

Respondents J and K indicated clearly that they would not use the LR:RL approach. Respondent J cited time constraints as being a deterrent. Respondent K acknowledged the usefulness of the approach for school children, but expected university students to already have the necessary literacy competence to cope with tertiary study.

Respondents D and H were non-committal about using the LR:RL approach. They mentioned that they needed further information and would want to study the approach more closely before indicating whether they would used the approach or not. Given the nature of Respondent F's work, the question of use of LR:RL was not applicable. Respondent I did not respond to the question. Thus the majority of respondents (64.3%) indicated that they would use the approach to some extent.

4. Suggested constraints

Limitations regarding the use of LR:RL cited by respondents related to a variety of issues. The nature of classes (large, multilingual, multicultural) was mentioned by respondents C and M. Obstacles related to language needs of students and learners were also indicated by respondents. Respondent F indicated:

One question would be whether a student teacher can transfer the teaching reading skills that she or he learns in the LR:RL (at all levels) to another language once she or he is in the classroom.

Respondent G also mentioned another concern related to language, citing the challenge of convincing both teachers and parents of the significance of learning to read in the mother tongue. Respondent G also cited the challenges of retraining teachers and obtaining sufficient resources for the implementation of LR:RL. Respondent M also made reference to the obstacle of a lack of texts. Finally, Respondents H, J, L and M mentioned time constraints as being a significant challenge.

Conclusion

Particular challenges in the South African schooling system with regard to the teaching and learning of literacy were identified in the previous chapter. These challenges will be mentioned again briefly and then the discussion will move on to challenges identified within the tertiary sector.

Four key challenges emerged from the study of the schooling context. Firstly, gross inequalities in society present a serious stumbling block to learning for the majority of school children. A literacy approach, that actively focuses on closing the gap between learners, would engage directly with this critical challenge. Secondly, a related challenge facing South Africa, is that the possibility of transforming society is diminished, given the incidence of poor literacy in schools. By acknowledging the centrality of literacy in schooling, and addressing the quality of teaching of print literacy by means of a structured approach, this challenge can begin to be addressed. Thirdly, the majority of learners have backgrounds that do not prepare them for formal literacy in schooling. Many middle class children however, do have this early preparation, giving them an edge over their working class counterparts. Any serious literacy intervention would have to make specific provision for this situation. An intervention that did not presuppose a literate background would be essential. Fourthly, teaching

quality in South Africa is a key influence on literacy success in the classroom. The development of literacy would have to include more than the teaching of generic skills. Practices that integrated exposure to the discourse and genres particular to teacher education, within the course content of programmes, would better prepare teachers for the literacy challenges of school classrooms.

Specific challenges in the teacher education sector with regard to literacy were identified earlier in this chapter. Two of these articulate closely with literacy challenges evident in the schooling system. The challenge to provide appropriate assistance to teacher education students with respect to the promotion of print literacy competence is the first area of overlap. While there is evidence that the development of writing is emphasised, scant attention seems to be paid to reading. Student teachers need to be assisted to access and produce the discourse of the disciplines associated with teacher education. The second area of overlap concerns unequal student achievement. As in the school sector, there is a minority described as successful, while the remainder are viewed as being unsuccessful, due to more limited ability.

Further challenges identified in teacher education included the necessity for literacy practice to inform theory and *visa-versa*. The explicit teaching of print literacy was advocated, rather than relying on students to naturally gain these skills as they progressed through the teacher education curriculum. The necessity of providing an approach to literacy methodology that is balanced in nature was emphasised. This balance would include a both skills based approaches and approaches that emphasised meaning-making. Also the importance of teaching of both reading and writing was mentioned, rather than focussing primarily on the development of writing competence. LR:RL was suggested as a literacy approach suitable for engaging with the challenges identified in teacher education and in schools.

Insights distilled from the challenges presented above and from the exploration of the theory and praxis of LR:RL will be used in the concluding chapter of the

thesis to outline how a reading based theory of teaching might be realised. The possibility and potential of using LR:RL within the South African context will be discussed.

Chapter 6: Conceptualising a reading based theory of school teaching

Introduction

In the previous chapter the literacy practices of staff at several local institutions were discussed. Key issues raised by respondents were investigated and certain conclusions were drawn about the teaching of print literacy in teacher education programmes and in school classrooms. Although some respondents had particular reservations about using LR:RL, overall there was support for the idea of using this literacy approach in the South African context.

Study of the LR:RL pedagogy in the second chapter of the thesis revealed that this is a logically structured means of teaching literacy, with writing being learnt via reading. In the third chapter, the conceptual foundations of the pedagogy were examined and it was found that the integration of the theories of Bernstein, Vygotsky and Halliday has resulted in a distinctive approach to literacy teaching. Many theorists of reading consider only reading, and how it can be taught, disengaged from schooling. The LR:RL pedagogy, on the other hand, demonstrates how learning to read is embedded in the educational context. Theories of schooling (Bernstein's pedagogic device), theories of learning (Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and learning as a social process) and theories of language (Halliday's view of meaning rooted in social context) are three essential dimensions of the debate about teaching literacy in a schooling context. Rose has illuminated a point of intersection between three major theoretical traditions, and developed an approach which shows how those three traditions can be brought together in practice.[33] In the LR:RL pedagogy, Rose

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[33] Interestingly, Hasan (2005) also draws together aspects of the work of these theorists in *Semiotic mediation and three exotropic theories: Vygotsky, Halliday and Bernstein.* Hasan asserts that the links between the theories of Vygotsky, Halliday and Bernstein give rise to a story more substantial than any single discipline could produce (2005:155). Hasan explains the interconnection between three prominent theories: Vygotsky (consciousness), Halliday (language) and Bernstein (society). Viewed together, these three human concerns reveal a unique account of the sociogenetic development of human consciousness, distinct from, but related to, the disciplines from which it emerged (ibid.).

demonstrates how these key theoretical traditions can be integrated to yield a form of teaching that can overcome some of the persistent ways in which schooling perpetuates and reinforces social inequality. The emphasis in LR:RL on teaching reading for the purposes of teaching writing is of major significance, if we acknowledge that reading and writing are at the heart of education from primary to tertiary level. In the LR:RL literacy approach reading and writing become merged. At advanced levels they blend into a single cognitive process, which is what schooling essentially works towards. The capacity to learn from reading and to express that learning in writing is central to the purposes of schooling.

The South African literacy context – execrable and regrettable?

Although many nations may have serious literacy problems, as South Africa does, perhaps the situation of this country is unique. Apartheid, the mainstay of race relations policy in South Africa, supported by the dogma of 'separate development', distinguishes this country from others. As a legally entrenched and masterfully orchestrated course of action, the influences of Apartheid are deeply embedded in the fabric of the nation. This social policy involved political, fiscal and legal discrimination against the majority of the population. The system of Apartheid instigated in 1948, was only dismantled during the early 1990's, finally resulting in the first democratic elections in 1994. Though now protected by a constitution, often regarded as the most progressive in the world, many South Africans remain disempowered and disadvantaged. The poor education and literacy opportunities of a large proportion of society bear testimony to this.

Constrained by a situation of many inadequately trained and ineffective teachers, and a high incidence of poor teaching, improvement efforts in the schooling system are bearing insufficient fruit. A scrutiny of Learner Assessment reports and the Systemic Evaluations of 2003 and 2005 revealed that South African primary school learners are not able to read at appropriate levels. The PIRLS

2006 report confirmed the appalling situation regarding literacy competence. South Africa scored the lowest of all participating educational systems, with less than half the learners able to reach the low bench mark and only 2% reaching the advanced benchmark (Mullins *et al*, 2007). Feedback from staff of local HEIs revealed difficulties in meeting the literacy needs of students due to a range of reasons including large classes, multilingual contexts, crowded curricula and limited institutional support.

In the section that follows, three key themes that run through the thesis will be discussed. Each demonstrates that LR:RL theory (and praxis) offers a distinctive means of reflecting on and responding to the challenges of literacy teaching and learning in South Africa. The themes highlight three key areas, firstly, the need to work towards equality of learning; secondly, to ensure the centrality of literacy in schooling; and thirdly, to address the need for improvement of the quality of teaching.

Working towards equality of learning

The reality of inequality of learners and learning in South Africa is a recurring refrain and the necessity to work towards equality emerges at regular intervals throughout the thesis. The idea of equality derives from a mathematical concept of sameness. There can be equality of characteristics such as amount, value or status. Taking the concept of equality into an educational context can be tricky. There would probably be general agreement that there should be equality of access to education. However, equality of access does not guarantee equality of opportunity. And to complicate matters further, equality of opportunity does not guarantee success. Having opportunity enables one to make an attempt, but not necessarily to succeed. In order to help learners succeed it is important to provide them with the wherewithal to make the best of learning opportunities. As a first step to achieving equality of learning, it is necessary for learners to have

access to education. Access has been characterised as having two dimensions, formal and epistemological access:

> … there are two distinct kinds of access - formal and epistemological – not commonly distinguished from each other. Formal access is a matter of access to the institutions of learning, and it depends on factors such as admission rules, personal finances, and so on; epistemological access, on the other hand, is access to knowledge. While formal access is important in the light of our history of unjustifiable institutional exclusions, epistemological access is what the game is all about. One way of characterizing teaching is to say that it is the practice of enabling epistemological access (Morrow, 2007:2).

Boughey (2002, 2005, 2007) has explored the notion of epistemological access. The 2005 study investigated epistemological access with respect to language development. Using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics as a theoretical base, Boughey engaged with the difficulties of black first year students in terms of the language challenges they encountered. The investigation revealed that students were not able to deal with the reading and writing assignments appropriately and that common sense understanding predominated in their responses. Lack of access to the dominant discourse excluded the students from successful participation in their study programme. Students needed more than basic support with academic reading and writing skills. Boughey suggests the assistance that should be provided:

> At foundation level, it also implies a focus on engagement with content rather than on assumedly autonomous 'skills' and 'strategies', since it is only through such engagement that students can explore the academic constructs and thus acquire understandings of what counts as 'appropriate' in the construction of academic knowledge and academic texts. At the same time, however, it is necessary to ensure that time is available for students to truly *engage* with content. If programmes are 'content heavy' then it is likely that engagement will be superficial (2005:646) [emphasis in the original].

Poor reading and writing ability marginalises many learners. The inequality between learners grows as they proceed through the schooling system and

possibly into higher education. Inadequate print literacy skills continually hold back many learners and the deficits in their learning become compounded as they struggle to complete their education. The LR:RL approach offers a way to deal with this. All learners are taken through a six stage process where the intensive focus on reading paves the way for students to write high level text, initially assisted, and eventually independently. It is crucial that all learners are able to acquire the print literacy competence necessary for school success. Morrow offers a sombre reminder of the necessity of working towards equality of learning:

> There are many dimensions to the kinds of deprivation suffered under Apartheid, but one stands out in this context. Apartheid Education generated and perpetuated cycles of epistemological deprivation, that is, it deprived many learners in our country of a fair opportunity to gain access to the kind of knowledge that is supposed to be distributed in formal schooling (Morrow, 2007:188).

The anchor claim of this chapter is that LR:RL provides a practical recommendation for accomplishing more egalitarian epistemological access to learning. Providing enhanced epistemological access is proposed as a judicious way of responding to the problems of literacy in South African schooling. In LR:RL the teacher helps learners to access the discourse of the texts to be used. By means of the activities in the *Preparing before Reading* stage, learners are assisted to understand and access the text at hand. Links are made to the prior knowledge of learners. Then the teacher summarises the text, making the logic of the text explicit. Once this preparation is complete, the teacher reads the text aloud. This enables learners to follow, rather than struggle with the decoding of unfamiliar words. Similar focussed support is offered to the learners prior to writing. During the *Joint Reconstruction* stage learners are assisted to write a text. The teacher supports the learners to construct the text. The discourse patterns of the text and other key elements are identified. The text that was read thus provides an exemplar of the kind of text that is required when learners have to write independently.

It is important to note that LR:RL offers a distinctive means of looking at literacy improvement. It is not the same as improving the literacy skills of everyone by *x* %; where a strong learner originally with a score of 70% has a measured competence of 80% after a literacy intervention, while a weak learner originally with a score of 30% has a measured competence of 40% after the same intervention. Crucial to the process of LR:RL is that all learners are taught to work at high levels with texts. Rose asserts that the basis of inequality in schools is students' dissimilar success in learning independently from texts in the curriculum (2005:131).

The LR:RL pedagogy, with its focus on enabling access to text, provides a sound means of enhancing epistemological access. Knowing a subject, is being able to read texts in that subject with understanding, and being able to produce texts that satisfy the demands and traditions of the particular discipline. The prioritizing of print literacy as a central aspect of learning, is thus a key lever in achieving epistemological access.

The centrality of reading and writing to learning

The capacity to learn independently from written text is critical for progress within the schooling and tertiary systems. Reading and writing have been described as being at the heart of schooling, suggesting that these practices comprise the central or innermost part of what should happen in schools and other institutions of learning. Similarly, reading and writing are described as being the lifeblood of schools and the academy, implying that print literacy can be understood as a vital component, or possibly even a 'life-giving' force within the broad educational context.

Thus, a characteristic of reading and writing would be the fundamental role played in most school and university learning. Another characteristic would be that these modes of language are closely connected, since often what is read

provides the stimulus for writing and vice-versa. Writing provides a vital means of elucidating and conveying concepts that have been encountered in text, thus providing an opportunity to think and learn while producing new text. Reading and writing can be considered to be essential to each other as inter-related processes. The concept of print literacy encapsulates the idea of a way of working with text where reading and writing are inseparable, with each informing the other and both providing a means for independent learning to take place. Although essential to learning across all disciplines, print literacy is often opaque to the intended audience and requires some mediation before it can be accessed. Novice readers and writers of texts may need to be assisted to become participants in these essential learning practices.

Inexperienced readers and writers stand on the periphery of literacy practice. The guidance of an old hand can enable the novice to participate more meaningfully in literacy activities. The shift from being an outsider to a participant is the key to becoming an autonomous user of print literacy. Outsider status may be as a result of a lack of experience where, for instance, an individual would be described as still learning to read as opposed to being able to read to learn. However an individual could also be positioned as an outsider, not because of a lack of experience, but because of a dissimilar background to others in the group.

An example of how outsider status is awarded, is in the labelling of individuals to designate 'difference' of some kind. For instance, a label commonly used in higher education in South Africa is to refer to "under prepared" black students as "speakers of English as a second language" (Boughey, 2002:295). Boughey rejects the position of constructing students' problems in terms of 'language', proposing rather that an alternative understanding of the difficulties encountered by students. Boughey calls for an integrated approach to meeting the literacy needs of students. This approach would entail the collaboration of subject specialists, language specialists and academic development support staff. Boughey describes the kind of teaching activities needed as being practices,

… which would focus on understanding the difficulties students experience as being related to a lack of access to covert rules of academic discourse. Resulting approaches to teaching would then focus on making the rules and conventions of academic ways of thinking, valuing, acting, speaking, reading and writing overt to students *using the mainstream curriculum* (2002:306) [emphasis in the original].

By implication, if we accept that reading and writing are at the heart of learning in schools firstly, and later in higher education, we have to put in place assistance to help learners and students to be successful. We are obliged to provide the means for all learners to deal with texts they experience as being opaque. This assistance however, should not serve to marginalise or stigmatise learners. Rose proposes a means to provide help for all learners to work at high levels.

Instead of labelling some learners as 'weak' and providing remedial assistance for them to be able to read and write more effectively, Rose proposes that all learners should be helped to access and produce texts in a sophisticated way. Thus every learner should receive help in improving their engagement with print literacy. Rose asserts that,

> … the basis of inequality in the classroom , and hence in society, is in students' differing capacities to independently learn from reading, which is the **fundamental mode** of learning in secondary and tertiary education (2005:131) [emphasis inserted].

According to Rose, the prevailing unequal social order is reinforced in classrooms often inadvertently by teachers. Drawing on Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse, Rose contends that the dominant order, relations and identity of the ruling class is entrenched via the schooling system (2005:132). A way to disrupt this process and resist the categorisation and marginalisation of certain learners is by using the LR:RL pedagogy. Rose maintains that the explicit teaching and communication of what are usually tacit literacy practices, provides a means for all learners to engage successfully with texts and therefore learn more effectively. During the LR:RL process, the intricacy of reading and writing are lessened, since assistance is provided on two levels, that of graphology and discourse (2005:146). Learners are assisted to decode and encode texts, but this

is not an instrumental process, because there is a focus on the context of the text rather than on the skills of decoding and encoding. The teacher makes clear how the text works and models reconstructing a new text, using an understanding of the original text as departure point.

Crucially, this assistance to students is integral to the teaching of the curriculum. It is not an add-on or special programme designed to remediate problems. The solution to inadequate capacity to engage with print literacy is, in the words of Rose, to "focus squarely on teaching all learners in a class to read and write the texts expected of their level of study, as part of everyday teaching practice" (2005:131). The texts of the curriculum are used for the teaching and learning of the required reading and writing competences.

A reading based theory of teaching holds that reading and writing are at the core of school learning. All learners need to be able to read and write well in order to succeed in the schooling system. The ways learners are assisted to achieve literacy competence are important. LR:RL offers a way to work with all learners thus avoiding the stigmatisation of 'weak' learners. This literacy work happens within the ambit of the usual teaching programme, using the texts of the whole curriculum.

Improving teaching quality

Another refrain echoing regularly in the thesis, was that of teaching quality. The need to address teaching quality emerged in the investigation of literacy teaching in schooling, and again it surfaced in the exploration of literacy teaching in teacher education programmes. As a means of considering the challenge of improving teaching quality, aspects of Shulman's work will be considered. Shulman is responsible for seminal work on the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), a key concept in the preparation of teachers.

In addition to developing content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, Shulman (2004a) asserted that teachers should understand Pedagogical Content Knowledge. This new category of knowledge was defined as follows by Shulman:

> A second kind of content knowledge is pedagogical knowledge, which goes beyond knowledge of the subject matter per se to the dimension of subject matter knowledge for teaching. I still speak of content knowledge here, but of a particular form of content knowledge that embodies the aspects of content most germane to its teachablity (Shulman, 2004:203).

PCK merges subject knowledge and pedagogy. This essential category of teacher knowledge includes particular areas of study, central issues and problems in a subject area, and the various ways that these aspects of the curriculum can be conveyed to learners, taking into account "diverse interests and abilities of learners" (2004a:93).

Shulman's construct of PCK is relevant for teaching in South Africa. Taylor (2006), Jansen (2005) and Taylor and Vinjevold (1999) mention the necessity for many South African teachers to be assisted to develop appropriate PCK. Scores of teachers experienced unsatisfactory school education and inadequate professional training. This situation impacts significantly in their classrooms. Taylor (2006:72) explains, "Because of their own poor education the knowledge resources of most South African teachers are not strong". PCK is a type of practical knowledge used by teachers to guide their actions and decisions. As such, it is a vital aspect of the professional knowledge of teachers.

However, I argue that, there is a key dimension missing for the construct of PCK to be truly useful for South African teachers. Shulman identifies three categories of knowledge:

- Subject matter content knowledge,
- Pedagogical content knowledge
- Curricular knowledge (2004:201).

It is important to note that each class of knowledge is carried by reading and writing. Print literacy is an essential determinant of the knowledge of teachers. Lack of specific focus on literacy, within the understanding of the acquisition of

PCK points to a crucial gap in the account offered by Shulman. The construct of PCK can supplemented by foregrounding print literacy as an essential element of this category of teacher knowledge. PCK includes content (subject) knowledge and the knowledge of how to give learners access to that knowledge. Teachers learn how to structure and present content to learners. Essentially, this is a question of teaching the learners how to read and write in that field. The facilitation of learning within content areas requires that teachers first access and understand the subject matter. Then they need to understand how to represent the content in such a way that it is comprehensible to learners. Usually, learners are required to demonstrate their understanding of content. This often necessitates a written response. When learning is not scaffolded, by paying explicit attention to the reading and writing of subject content, a heavy burden is placed on learners. Not only do they have to cope with the intricacy of print literacy, they also have to make sense of subject content.

When working with PCK, print literacy tasks may be involved at all levels, from teacher preparation and presentation of the content to learner acquisition and assessment. Poor literacy and learning outcomes in the schooling system, may be as a result, to a large extent, of the neglect of intensive teaching of reading and writing in all subject areas. Content heavy curricula often preclude the explicit and regular teaching of print literacy, as was seen in the responses of teacher educators in the previous chapter. Predominantly, content orientated approaches to learning could disadvantage certain learners, who may struggle to access the required texts of the curriculum.

Conclusion

The LR:RL pedagogy provides a practical means of enhancing epistemological access. Access of this nature is a precondition for success in learning. The improvement of teaching quality is emphasized as an essential element in the quest to provide good schooling for all learners. A focus on pedagogical content

knowledge offers a sound means of improving teaching, but literacy needs to be prominently foregrounded in this construct of teacher professional knowledge, if it is to have the desired effect. A reading based theory of teaching is proposed for South African schools, where the centrality of literacy is recognized across the curriculum.

THE LR:RL pedagogy provides a carefully structured means of holding literacy at the centre of learning. The hard-nosed sequence of practical steps (six, significantly), theoretically rooted in three powerful – but usually separate realms of discourse, is the central contribution in our context. The intersecting of three discrete disciplines, represented by Bernstein's model of education as pedagogic discourse, Vygotsky's model of learning as a social process and Halliday's model of language as text in social context gives rise to a unique literacy pedagogy. The LR:RL theory does provide an illuminating way of thinking and responding to the problems of literacy in South African schooling. The meticulously conceptualised theory that emerges from use, in a range of situations, over many years, and the carefully sequenced practice, offer a sound means of addressing the challenges of literacy and learning prevalent in our schools. More than that, LR:RL offers hope for a nation seeking ways to achieve equality and provide a better future for all citizens.

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Addendum

Questionnaire

CONSIDERING THE LITERACY COMPETENCE OF TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Dear Colleagues

Results from Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase systemic evaluations conducted by the Department of Education (2003, 2005) indicate that most primary school learners have inadequate literacy skills. Evidence from the analysis of school leaving examinations indicates that many high school learners also experience difficulties in reading and writing at the required level. Similarly, many teacher education students lack the necessary ability to engage appropriately with the texts they encounter in their programmes. As part of a PhD study, I am surveying current literacy practice. I am not undertaking an empirical study (with all the statistical disciplines involved in such an investigation), but rather am aiming to obtain an impression of the kind of reading and writing that is taking place in teacher education programmes.

The questionnaire that follows firstly attempts to obtain a glimpse of the teaching of reading and writing that is taking place in teacher education programmes at present. Then the insights of academics are requested regarding a particular literacy approach. In the questionnaire the teaching of reading and writing has two different foci:
- Teaching students how to improve their own reading and writing
- Teaching students to teach learners reading and writing.

Kindly mark as not applicable (n/a) any sections that are not relevant to your context.

The literacy approach mentioned in the questionnaire is the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* approach. This approach was developed in Australia by practitioners and researchers concerned with the improvement of literacy competence. In 2004 David Rose presented a paper at the Kenton conference where he outlined the literacy approach. Subsequently a paper by Rose entitled *Democratising the classroom: a literacy pedagogy for the new generation* was published in the Journal of Education (2005). An outline of the approach is provided in the addendum to the questionnaire. In need, further detail concerning the approach can be obtained by accessing the paper by Rose (attached to the email) or by visiting the site www.ukzn.ac.za/joe. Your comments regarding the possible use or adaptation of this approach for the South African context would be most helpful.

I understand that you experience considerable time constraints and value your willingness to respond to the questionnaire that follows. Responses given in a participatory style would be appreciated. If possible, please email the questionnaire back to me by Wednesday 20 June 2007 using the address margie.childs@nmmu.ac.za.

Kind regards

Margie Childs

HIGHER EDUCATION LITERACY QUESTIONNAIRE

For the purposes of this study 'literacy' is understood to refer to only print literacy, which includes the accessing of text (reading) and the production of text (writing).

1. Biographic Details

> NB For administrative purposes only. The information you provide in this section will not be included in any report arising from this study, nor will it be passed to any third party.

Name	

Institution	

Telephone number: office	
Telephone number: mobile	

Email	

2. Teaching Experience

> NB The information you provide in this section will be used in the research, but it will not be connected in any way with your identity.

Number of years experience teaching in higher education	
Number of years experience teaching literacy in higher education	
Number of years experience teaching literacy other than in higher education	

3. Contextual Details

> Please mark the appropriate box.

School background

School background of IPET students[35]	Majority of students come from a privileged school background	Majority of students come from an underprivileged school background
School background of other education students[36]	Majority of students come from a privileged school background	Majority of students come from an underprivileged school background

Typical literacy level of IPET students

Outstanding (10)	(9)	(8)	(7)	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	Very poor (1)

Typical literacy level of other education students

Outstanding (10)	(9)	(8)	(7)	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	Very poor (1)

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[35] IPET = Initial professional Education of Teachers. This refers chiefly to BEd and PGCE students.
[36] 'Other education students' refers to education students in all programmes other than IPET programmes. This includes NPDE, Continuing Professional Development (such as ACE) and post-graduate degrees (such as BEdHons).

4. Questions
Please provide comments.

4.1. Teaching students how to develop their own reading and writing ability.

4.1.1. What steps do you follow in helping students to develop their academic reading and writing skills?
4.1.2. What is the rationale for your approach to the teaching of academic reading and writing?
4.1.3. To what extent is your approach successful? How do you explain this?

4.2. Teaching students to teach learners reading and writing.

4.2.1. Give an account of the reading and writing methodology/ies that you promote for developing learner's literacy competence.
4.2.2. What is the rationale for your approach to the teaching of the methodology of reading and writing?

4.3. Using the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* literacy pedagogy.[37]
Please mark the appropriate box

4.3.1. How familiar are you with *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* literacy pedagogy*?*				
Extremely (4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	Not at all (0)

4.3.2. What are your views on the viability of the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* pedagogy for the South African context? (Kindly elaborate)
4.3.3. Would you consider using this approach in your practice? (Kindly elaborate)

5. Interview
Please mark the appropriate box.

Are you prepared to be interviewed telephonically?	Yes
	No

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[37] See addendum for outline of *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* literacy pedagogy.

6. Other comments?

       Please add below any other comments you would like to make.

Kindly email your completed questionnaire to me: Margie Childs margie.childs@nmmu.ac.za .

Many thanks for helping me with my study.

ADDENDUM TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Learning to Read: Reading to Learn
(LR:RL)

Using LR:RL to improve the reading and writing competence of students in teacher education programmes

	Stage	General use of LR:RL	Detail Improving Reading and Writing of HEI students
1	Prepare before reading	• *Preparing before Reading* enables students to follow the words of a text as it is read aloud, by the lecturer first orally summarising its overall sequence of meanings, in terms all students can understand • As a result students need not struggle to work out what is going on in the text, nor to decode unfamiliar words, as they listen to the words read aloud • General understanding of the text provides a foundation for *Detailed Reading* .	• Preparation before reading begins with a discussion of the background of the text. • This is followed by a summary of the text • In this summary its phases are paraphrased in commonsense terms and its logic is made explicit.
2	Detailed reading	• *Detailed Reading* is made easy by reading a short passage sentence-by-sentence, with the support of meaning cues provided by the lecturer • These cues help students to actively identify wordings from their meanings, and so to apply what they learn to other texts • *Detailed Reading* enables all students to read the passage with full comprehension and accuracy, and provides the foundation for the third stage which entails preparing before writing	• The lecturer prepares, students identify and highlight wordings in their copies and the lecturer affirms and elaborates • In each preparation move, the lecturer first paraphrases the meaning of the sentence and then reads it aloud, then gives the position & meaning cue for each wording in turn, and asks the students to find the wording in the text • Crucially these preparations are usually given as statements; questions are not used to assess students' understanding, as in typical classroom discourse, but only as prompts to identify wordings.

3	Sentence making or note making	- After Detailed Reading of a <u>factual text</u>, students have sufficient control of its field and discourse patterns, to translate highly written wordings into patterns that they are more likely to use themselves - Sentence Making is used when working with <u>narrative texts</u>. A paragraph from the reading text is written on cardboard strips, cut up and manipulated by students in groups. Sentence Making activities can intensify reading practice, prepare for writing through manipulation of familiar wordings, and lead to spelling practice. - Note making is used when working with <u>factual texts</u>. The *Note Making* phase precedes *Joint Rewriting*. Students scribe the wordings they have marked in Detailed Reading on the board as notes - These notes provide the content for Joint Rewriting of the text using new wordings with the same genre, field and discourse patterns. - Sentence making activities prepare learners for the joint rewriting of narrative text.	- Students scribe the wordings they have identified and highlighted in the text, onto the chalkboard as notes - As the *Detailed Reading* has given the students a strong command over the field of the text, the students write the notes while the lecturer merely acts in a supportive role where necessary - The class directs the scribe in the words to write and how to spell them, affording opportunities for the whole class to actively attend to spelling patterns as their vocabulary expands.
4	Joint rewriting	- The lecturer guides the class to write a new text, with the students taking turns to scribe on the board - With <u>story texts</u>, the same literate language patterns as the original text are used, with new content – events, characters, settings, etc. This supports students to use the literary resources of the accomplished author they have learnt to read, and apply them to a new story - With <u>factual texts</u>, the same content as the original text is used, but the new text is written in wordings that are closer to what the students might use themselves in writing assignments	- The lecturer supports the class to jointly construct a new text from the notes, but before doing so, prepares them by pointing out discourse patterns and other key elements in the notes - Here the lecturer supports students to recognise patterns they have already encountered, by pointing to the notes and reiterating the *Detailed Reading* discussion - Then the lecturer may elaborate by rephrasing the selection, assisting students to check issues such as grammar, punctuation or spelling, and encouraging critical discussion of the way the original author constructed the field, and how they may reconstruct it. - Such high level critical analysis is possible because of the supported practice in deconstructing and reconstructing meanings at all levels of the text.
5	Individual rewriting	- Learners use the text patterns or notes they have practised using with the class to write a text of their own - With <u>narrative texts</u> this involves the same text patterns with new content - <u>Factual texts</u> involve the same content with new wordings.	With factual texts, students use the same notes to write a text of their own, before going on to independent writing of new factual texts.

| 6 | Independent writing | • The independent task may be in a new field, but it will be the same genre as the texts used in the preceding stages | • Skills developed through each of the supportive preceding stages finally lead to an *Independent Writing* task on which learners can be assessed
• Students select texts appropriate to the topic of the new assignment, photocopy pages, highlight and make notes on key information and then write the information in their own texts |

Learning to Read: Reading to Learn [i]
(LR:RL)

Using LR:RL to improve the reading and writing competence of learners in schools

Stage		Detail	
		General use of LR:RL	Improving Reading and Writing of school learners
1	Prepare before reading	• *Preparing before Reading* enables learners to follow the words of a text as it is read aloud, by the teacher first orally summarising its overall sequence of meanings, in terms all learners can understand • As a result learners need not struggle to work out what is going on in the text, nor to decode unfamiliar words, as they listen to the words read aloud • General understanding of the text provides a foundation for *Detailed Reading* .	• Preparation before reading begins with a discussion of the background of the text. • Learners are encouraged to discuss aspects of their prior experience that link with the text. • This is followed by a summary of the text. • In this summary its phases are paraphrased in commonsense terms and its logic is made explicit. • When working with beginning readers the LR:RL strategies make great use of the well known practice of "Shared Reading". • The teacher reads the story to learners several times until learners understand the story and can say most of the words of the story • Older learners are given the background knowledge necessary to access the text.

| 2 | Detailed reading | • *Detailed Reading* is made easy by reading a short passage sentence-by-sentence, with the support of meaning cues provided by the teacher
 • These cues help learners to actively identify wordings from their meanings, and so to apply what they learn to other texts
 • *Detailed Reading* enables all learners to read the passage with full comprehension and accuracy, and provides the foundation for the third stage which entails preparing before writing | • With inexperienced readers, the sentences of the text are written on cardboard strips. The teacher and children point at the words and say them until each child can say them.
 • In large classes a learner points at the words on the sentence strip while the other learners watch and say the words.
 • With more experienced readers, the teacher prepares, learners identify and highlight wordings in their copies and the teacher affirms and elaborates
 • In each preparation move, the teacher first paraphrases the meaning of the sentence and then reads it aloud, then gives the position & meaning cue for each wording in turn, and asks the learners to find the wording in the text
 • Crucially these preparations are usually given as statements; questions are not used to assess learners' understanding, as in typical classroom discourse, but only as prompts to identify wordings. |

| 3 | Sentence making or note making | • Sentence Making is used when working with <u>narrative texts</u>. A paragraph from the reading text is written on cardboard strips, cut up and manipulated by learners in groups. Sentence Making activities can intensify reading practice, prepare for writing through manipulation of familiar wordings, and lead to spelling practice.
• After Detailed Reading of a <u>factual text</u>, learners have sufficient control of its field and discourse patterns, to translate highly written wordings into patterns that they are more likely to use themselves. Learners are assisted to make notes based on the original text.
• The *Note Making* phase precedes *Joint Rewriting*. Learners scribe the wordings they have marked in Detailed Reading on the board as notes
• These notes provide the content for Joint Rewriting of the text using new wordings with the same genre, field and discourse patterns.
• Sentence making activities prepare learners to participate in the joint rewriting of narrative texts. | • Once the inexperienced learners can identify all words they are asked to point to certain words or groups of words and cut them off the sentence.
• The words are put back into the sentence and the sentence is reread.
• Learners rebuild the sentence after all the words are cut off.
• They use the words from several sentences to build new sentences.
• When all learners can recognise the word in and out of the sentence they are ready for spelling the words.
• The teacher shows the learners how to cut up a word into its letter patterns. Children practice writing the letter patterns.
• When learners can spell all the main words of the sentence they practice rewriting the whole sentence.
• More experienced learners write the wordings they have identified and highlighted in the text, onto the chalkboard as notes.
• As the *Detailed Reading* has given the learners a strong command over the field of the text, the learners write the notes while the teacher merely acts in a supportive role where necessary
• The class directs the scribe in the words to write and how to spell them, affording opportunities for the whole class to actively attend to spelling patterns as their vocabulary expands. |

| 4 | Joint rewriting | • The teacher guides the class to write a new text, with the learners taking turns to scribe on the board
• With <u>story texts</u>, the same literate language patterns as the original text are used, with new content – events, characters, settings, etc. This supports learners to use the literary resources of the accomplished author they have learnt to read, and apply them to a new story
• With <u>factual texts</u>, the same content as the original text is used, but the new text is written in wordings that are closer to what the learners might use themselves in writing assignments | • Inexperienced writers are guided to practice writing new stories patterned on the original story.
• The story is revised. Thereafter learners are encouraged to suggest alternative characters, events and settings for the story.
• In the joint rewriting process learners have turns to be the scribe, while the whole class thinks of what to say and how to say it, based on the original story.
• More experienced writers are supported by the teacher to construct a new text from the notes developed during the note making activities. The teacher prepares learners for the writing task by pointing out discourse patterns and other key elements in the notes
• Here the teacher supports learners to recognise patterns they have already encountered, by pointing to the notes and reiterating the *Detailed Reading* discussion
• Then the teacher may elaborate by rephrasing the selection, assisting learners to check issues such as grammar, punctuation or spelling, and encouraging critical discussion of the way the original author constructed the field, and how they may reconstruct it.
• Such high level critical analysis is possible because of the supported practice in deconstructing and reconstructing meanings at all levels of the text. |
| 5 | Individual rewriting | • Learners use the text patterns or notes they have practised using with the class to write a text of their own
• With <u>narrative texts</u> this involves the same text patterns with new content
• <u>Factual texts</u> involve the same content with new wordings. | • With story texts the learners use the same text patterns as used during the joint rewriting process.
• They are encouraged to write their own stories by expanding on ideas discussed by the class regarding various characters, events, etc.
• More able learners work on their own, while the teacher assists the weaker writers.
• With factual texts, learners use the same notes as developed during note making to write a text of their own, before going on to independent writing of new factual texts. |

| 6 | Independent writing | • The independent task may be in a new field, but it will be the same genre as the texts used in the preceding stages | • Skills developed through each of the supportive preceding stages finally lead to an *Independent Writing* task on which learners can be assessed
• With story texts learners are asked to write the same type of text as the original. At first when using LR:RL with inexperienced learners, an extract from a story could be used. Later a short story could be used. In the *Independent Writing* phase learners could write their own story based on the original.
• With factual texts learners select texts appropriate to the topic of the new assignment, photocopy pages, highlight and make notes on key information and then write the information in their own texts |

[i] Sources:

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