

**SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT AT SCHOOL-BASED GRADE R CLASSES OF THE
GAUTENG NORTH DISTRICT**

by

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

In the subject

CURRICULUM STUDIES

at the

University of South Africa

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(January 2017)

DECLARATION

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SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT AT SCHOOL-BASED GRADE R CLASSES OF THE GAUTENG NORTH DISTRICT.

I declare that the above dissertation/ thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

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DATE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- First of all and foremost, I would like to thank the Lord Almighty and my Creator who enabled me through all the difficulties to keep on looking unto Him for strength and courage, to keep on pressing on for the achievements of my dreams and goals.
- I wish to extend my sincere thanks to all the people who made it possible for me to complete this study.
- I owe special thanks to:
 - My supervisor Prof. E. Lenyai for her patience and support in guiding me, her constructive criticism and for making sure that I complete the thesis.
 - Dr Adeyefa and Dr Mary Clasquin for critically reading my work and for their support and encouragement.
 - The research counsel in UNISA for the support they provided by making sure that funds are available for the completion of this study.
 - The Gauteng Department of Education for granting me permission to conduct research in their schools.
 - The District Director and the School Principals of Gauteng North District for allowing me access to the schools.
 - The principals, HoDs and practitioners for participating in this study.
 - I would also like to acknowledge my extended families, colleagues and friends for their support and encouragement.
 - The UNISA library staff for their assistance with research material.
 - Dr Jacqui Baumgardt for professionally editing my thesis.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to:

My dear husband Reverend Samuel Njele Modise for the patience and support he has always shown through my studies.

My children: Moatlhodi L. H. Modise and his wife Tsholofelo Modise for their effortless assistance and support, Lethabo Modise and Molebogeng Modise for their prayers and support.

My two grandsons: Molemo L. Modise and Mogau L. Modise for allowing me to share their time with the study.

My niece: Bonang F. Sepoloane for her assistance.

My late parents Philemon Letsholo and Molly Yong Sepoloane for the foundation they have laid by sending me to school and seeing to it that I get the profession I needed.

Thank you.

SUMMARY

Empirical research has confirmed the importance of supervision and support to subordinates in improving the quality of performance. This study investigated the nature of supervision and support provided at previously marginalised school-based Grade classes of the Gauteng North District, at Gauteng Province in South Africa. To meet this objective qualitative research design was used. The subjects of the study were all purposefully selected practitioners, Head of Departments and school principals. Data was collected through observations, documents analysis and semi structured interviews (individual and focus group). The total of 33 purposefully selected participants took part in the research. Participants were selected according to the socio-economic status of their schools. It included schools from rural, semi-rural, semi urban and farm areas. To analyse the information collected, responses were grouped into categories as they appear in the practitioners' observation template and ATLAS ti. software themes for individual and focus group interviews. The findings showed that the nature of supervision and support provided in Grade classes compromised the quality of teaching. Practitioners were also very vocal about the absence of support they get with regard to classroom practices from the School Management Team (SMT). The Head of Departments also mentioned lack of knowledge of Grade R practices, work overload and limited time as challenges that inhibit them to provide the needed support. Their concerns were also confirmed by the findings of the conducted classroom observations. The mistakes and omissions made by practitioners when carrying out Grade R daily routine activities indicated a lack of proper guidance and support. It was also confirmed during practitioners' interviews that, practitioners worked on their own without any classroom support or guidance. The problems noted were exacerbated by the lack of professional qualification of practitioners. This study made recommendations and proposed a functional model of supervision and support that could address the challenges of poor supervision and support at Grade R classes.

KEY TERMS

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
- Curriculum subjects
- Environment
- Grade R
- Policies
- Practitioners
- Previously disadvantaged
- Programme
- Qualifications
- Quality teaching
- Role-players/Stakeholders
- Roles
- Supervision
- Support
- Training
- Underprivileged school

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADE	Assistant Director of Education
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AIDS	Developmentally Appropriate Practice
BHS	Bronkhorstspuit
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CSMT	Community Site Management Teams
DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DEOC	District Education Oversight Committee
DES	Directorate of Education Standards
DICECE	District Centres for Early Childhood Education
DO	District Official
DOE	Department of Education
DTST	District Teacher Support Teams
ECC	Early Childhood Curriculum
ECDE	Early Childhood Development Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ELRC	Education Labour Relation's Council
ELSEN	Education for Learners with Special Educational Needs
EWP5	Education White Paper 5
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GEQIP	General Education Quality Improvement Programme
GES	Ghana Education Service
GET	General Education and Training
GNDF/P-R	Gauteng North District Foundation Phase Reports
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Frame work
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HoD	Head of Department
HRM	Human Resource Management
IDSO	Institutional Development Support Officer
IIEP	Islamic Integrated Education Program

IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LA's	Local Authorities
LTSM	Learning and Teacher Support Material
LTSMC	Learning and Teaching Support Material Committees
MEC	Minister of Executive Council
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MGSLG	Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance
MOEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
NACECE	National Centre for Early Childhood Education
NACECE	National Centre for Early Childhood Education
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NECEP	National Early Childhood Education Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA	National Protocol for Assessment
NQF	National Qualification Frame work
PED	Provincial Education Department
PTA	Parent-Teacher Associations
SA	South Africa
SAIDE	South African Institute for Distance Education
SANTS	South African National Tutor Services
SES	Senior Education Specialist
SES	Senior Education Specialist
SGB	School Governing Body
SMC	School Management Committees
SMT	School Management Team
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISA	University of South Africa
UO	University of Oregon
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education provisioning in South Africa was intended to correct the education imbalances of the past. The intention of the Department of Education (DoE) now the Department of Basic Education (DBE) was to plan and deliver Early Childhood Development (ECD) services, in particular, Grade R programmes, in a co-ordinated manner. It was for this reason that the DBE developed an action plan to ensure the delivery of a Grade R programme and training aimed at addressing early learning problems (DoE, 2001a: 29). The realisation that children in the Foundation Phase still experienced learning challenges even after the introduction of the ECD policy document prompted the DBE to focus more on Grade R.

In 2001, after the ECD Interim Policy of 1997 was produced, the Education White Paper 5 (EWP5) was developed. It was regarded as a comprehensive approach to the introduction of the Grade R programme referred to as the Reception Year for children from birth to nine years of age. The paper provided policy guidelines on unqualified ECD practitioners, lack of operational structures, centre-based organisations, school-based Grade R classes, and the need for quality programmes among others (DoE, 2001a:7). An important component of this programme is the human capital, namely, the teaching and the management teams.

The statement outlined in the seven pillars of the EWP5 (DoE, 2001:4) registered the concern of the DBE about the prevalence of children who repeat grades, drop out of school or need remedial services since they did not have a good start and foundation in the first months and years of their lives. It then became necessary for the government to better the quality and the implementation of the ECD programmes.

High levels of increased budget allocations and political commitment were then directed to the services for South African ECD children as compared to the past regime (Biersteker, 2010:3). For this reason, the staff and the management dealing with early learning, in particular, school-based Grade R needed to be trained for positive results.

However, the contention in this study is that not enough emphasis is put on the quality of supervision and support for the Grade R practices. Some schools in Gauteng North District have registered Grade R classes that are supervised by the Foundation Phase Head of Department (HoD) under the leadership of the principal. These schools are at the centre of this study. Even though there are ECD studies that have been conducted in South Africa by Clasquin-Johnson (2011), the National Treasury of the Republic of South Africa (2008), Lenyai (2006) and the South African Institute for Distance Education (2010), there is minimal focus on the nature of supervision and support provided to practitioners for quality teaching in school-based Grade R classes.

This is the shortcoming that has prompted this study. At the same time, I wish to acknowledge the effort made by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and the University of Witwatersrand to address the issue of providing support for Grade R practitioners (GDE, 2009: 181-184).

1.2 RATIONALE OF THE PROBLEM

Absence of quality supervision and support in Grade R classes was realised in the early years of the introduction of reception year classes (now Grade R) into main stream schooling in South African schools. My job responsibility as a Senior Education Specialist (SES) is to monitor and support teachers in curricular activities in the Foundation Phase. Teachers are visited at schools by Subject Specialists, for example Grade R, Life Skills, Languages, and Mathematics SESs. After class visits have been conducted, the SESs, of which I am one, give feedback after school about the findings in the classes that were visited including Grade R to teachers, HoD and principal.

The SESs would make some recommendations as well as indicating the support provided to teachers and Grade R practitioners. As an SES in the Foundation Phase, I am also part of the Foundation Phase Team that visits the schools for monitoring and support. In the Foundation Phase Unit meetings at the District Office, SESs also give reports on their dissatisfaction about practices in Grade R classes. From the reports that were given in the meetings, the researcher noted some contextual factors being reported that could affect the delivery of quality teaching in Grade R classes negatively; factors such as those HoDs, who because of lack of understating of Grade R practices, expect Grade R practitioners to function formally like Grade 1 teachers.

This created tension between Grade R and the HoDs because the guidance HoDs gave contradicted practices in Grade R classes. Grade R practitioners need to be supervised and supported by the people who have a clear understanding of the Grade R programme. It is against this background that I became aware of the problems of supervision and support at Grade R classes and developed an interest in investigating the nature of supervision and support provided at school-based Grade R classes of the Gauteng North District.

1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Grade R practitioners in Gauteng North District often seem to be left to function alone with minimal support from the other role-players especially the HoDs. It is for such reasons that the GDE (2009: 138) raises this question: must Grade R be the odd one out, the Phase 'orphan' or, at least, an uneasy addition to Grades 1 to 3? A study conducted for GDE by the University of Witwatersrand, (GDE, 2009:153) states that, "Principals, Foundation Phase HoDs and other Foundation Phase teachers were not given any insights into what is to be done in Grade R classes".

According to Clasquin-Johnson (2011:48), ECE teachers' access to new ideas and better solutions is restricted by their professional isolation and they become incompetent. In many cases practitioners seem not to be receiving any guidance from within, and the majority of SMTs were never taken on board in equipping them with knowledge about the Grade R curriculum issues when it was implemented.

It has thus come to my realisation that practitioners largely rely on the District Officials during school visits and cluster meetings as well as training by the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) for the support. This then has tendency of compromising the quality of teaching offered in the Grade R class which is exacerbated by the fact that senior management people who are supposed to be monitoring the practices and offering supervision and support are not grounded in the ECD methodologies.

ECE teachers are said to need strong professional linkages, debrief each other on issues as they arise, share ideas, as well as take advantage of opportunities to critically reflect on the complex nature of the workplace in order to remain confident about their role in the pedagogical process. The following problems might arise if supervision and support is a problem in Grade R (Obiweluzor, Momoh & Ogbonnaya, 2013:589).

- there may be no improvement in teachers' effectiveness and maximum contribution of practitioners to the attainment of the school's goals.
- there may be no recommendations will be made for improving incompetent practitioners;
- the quality of instruction may not be enhanced and no minimum standards may be maintained and sources of the school's needs may also not be identified;
- there may be difficulties in deciding the nature and content of the Grade R curriculum and LTSM that may enhance educational growth of both HoDs and practitioners;
- both activities of staff and the newly recruited practitioners may not be supervised and supported; and
- no special qualities and abilities possessed may be discovered which may be used as a guide to staff development if there is a problem with supervision and support.

When the teaching, supervision and support practices in school-based Grade R classes are not of quality standard, it then becomes necessary to investigate what training, supervision and support was offered to role-players to help them acquire the necessary skills.

1.4 PROBLEM REVIEW

Some Grade R practitioners are employed and operate in classrooms without orientation or any formal training that might equip them with the necessary methodologies or skills required for teaching the Grade R curriculum. According to the GDE (2009: 155-167), practitioners do not possess the ability to present classroom activities in a meaningful context for the children. Children are not provided with enough access to stimulating and varied educational activities. Noble and Macfarlane (2005: 550) point out that those Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers (referred to as practitioners in this study) are sometimes unable to cope when met with real classroom truths.

According to the 2009 Delivery Agreement report (DoE, 2009:18), the greatest challenge facing Grade R classes is that, many Grade R practitioners require upgrading

of both their actual teaching skills and formal qualifications. A Witwatersrand University report (2009) conducted for the DoE revealed many under-qualified practitioners in Gauteng province have insufficient curriculum support from the School Management Teams (SMTs) (GDE, 2009:18).

Excell and Linington (2010:7) indicate that, in a number of cases, practitioners were experiencing pressure because they did not understand the way they could improve learning. The GDE (2009:18) also raised concern on the quality of Grade R teaching. Many Grade R practitioners are under-qualified and need to be supported continuously (Excell & Linington, 2010:21). The pillar of the Grade R classes is the teaching team who should take the children through the Grade R programme and prepare them for formal teaching in Grade 1.

Most of these practitioners are not professionally qualified, but possess only a Grade 12 certificate. In her study, Clasquin-Johnson (2011:4) points out that these under-qualified practitioners who also did not have enough teaching and learning support materials were obliged to implement the Grade R programme. More was expected from all the relevant Grade R role-players (stakeholders) when the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was implemented in 2012. According to the GDE (2009:175), District Officials alone are not capable of monitoring all practitioners at all schools in the district.

The SGB, whose chairperson is a parent, is saddled with the responsibilities of appointing Grade R practitioners and providing the necessary infrastructure for the school's Grade R programme. The SGB chairperson, not being an educator, would also not be able to provide support to educators of the Grade R programme. Bush and Gamage (2001: 45) suggest that governing bodies are likely to require substantial support from principals in carrying out their responsibilities. This implies that SGBs are a part of the institutional support and the principals have an influential role in guiding them regarding Grade R issues.

Rodd (2006: 45) is of the view that linking ECD practitioners with their leader (HoD) and members of their team reduces their isolation. For effective supervision to take place, practitioners need to mirror their new skills and opportunities. Although the DoE has been paying for the practitioners to receive NQF Level 4 and 5 training from Non-

Governmental Organisations (NGOs), practices in the Grade R classrooms still seem to be a challenge. This requires supervisors to play an instructional role of leadership by conducting induction workshops for the newly appointed practitioners, content training, continual supervision and support to all practitioners.

According to Biersteker (2010: 49), where HoDs and Principals are not grounded in early childhood education programmes, practitioners are under pressure to implement a formal approach to teaching. However, Van Deventer and Kruger (2008:247) assert that the requirements of the new curricula have broadened the role of all SMT members to bear the main responsibility for instructional leadership and curriculum management. The HoD's supervision, as stated by Rodd (2006:45), gives recommendations about professional development matters, positive criticism about performance, and information on training needs as well as offering staff positive feedback. Structured curriculum support ought to be provided to make certain effective teaching and learning takes place, GDE (2009:182).

GDE (2009) further argues that, the supervision and support to the Grade R classes within the institution are left to the HoDs, many of whom have not been trained, and consequently lack insight into the practices of the programme. According to the 2012 Gauteng North District's Foundation Phase (GNDF/P-R) school visits reports by Grade R Senior Education Specialists on monitoring and support of curricula activities (GNDEF/P-R, 2012:1), there seems to be no appropriate curriculum supervision and support in Grade R classes from the SMT.

The South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE, 2000: 28), mentions the fact that HoDs' and principals' poor understanding of ECD and Grade R, results in a lack of leadership in many schools around Grade R implementation. The challenge is that some of the HoDs who are immediate supervisors of the Grade R practitioners are not capacitated to provide such support. Although some received training in 2014, there still seem to be challenges with regard to putting theory into practice. The status- quo confirms the National Treasury's Report (2008:6) that states that it creates problems to add Grade R to people with no previous familiarity of Grade R, and inadequate understanding of what it entails.

Biersteker (2010:57) indicates that, there are many problems found with the overall quality of what is being presented in Grade R classes. It is required of Principals and Foundation Phase Departmental Heads to comprehend the less formal educational approach appropriate for younger children and the SGBs to manage financial arrangements. It is important that role-players in Grade R classes are knowledgeable and understand how young children learn in order for them to be in a better position to provide required supervision. Quality supervision and support to practitioners will advance the teaching and learning in Grade R classes.

Clasquin-Johnson (2011:51) states that, in order to provide on-going mentoring and coaching, principals, teachers and Grade R practitioners should be afforded the opportunity to attend training. According to Reid and Westergaard (2006:14), the purpose of supervision and support of school-based Grade R classes has been misplaced from that of enhancing professional development within the bigger picture of organisational change. The arguments above imply that the SMTs seem to have not taken the lead in improving quality teaching by providing constant internal trainings, supervision and support for Grade R classes.

1.5 TRAINING

Human Resource Management (HRM) consists of policies, practices and systems that are put in place by employers to influence employees' performance, attitudes and behaviour in providing improved customer service and higher productivity (Opperman & Meyer, 2008:3). The effectiveness of HRM depends on managing its strategic role to support the organisation by providing improvement through training and learning. Training occurs when organisations schedule efforts to facilitate education of personnel related to work expertise, knowledge and performance competencies.

Salvi (2013:1) claims that to avoid and prevent problems, training can be a pro-active way of developing work capabilities, talents and filling in performance gaps identified among members of staff. Training is important in creating solutions to problems identified and can also be applied in organisational development as part of the solution. The purpose of training in achieving organisational objectives needs employees to constantly be receiving developmental trainings to equip and advance them in the work they do. It is strategic for the SMT and practitioners to be provided with training in order

to improve their competencies in the work they do. It is important that the SMT is able to identify and realise training needs.

The practitioners' performance and confidence would be influenced through developmental training provided to provide clarifications to the malfunctions recognised when carrying out their work responsibilities. Training is therefore done with a vision to carrying out precise tasks, preparing for new responsibilities, or

achieving individuals' occupation goals (Nadler, 2013:3). It can be defined as skills development for individuals and groups. In general, training has to do with performance and knowledge of content as a means of augmenting skills growth and improving workplace behaviours (Salvi, 2013a).

Training for practitioners requires that individuals must be multi-skilled, resilient, adaptable and possess competencies that are suitable for the job (Garavan, Neeliah, Auckloo and Ragaven, 2016:211).

This claim is reinforced by Weinstein (2010:31), who maintains that personnel are supported through training to connect and work in partnership with co-workers and customers and be functional in virtual teams functioning in diverse cultural backgrounds by using new technologies.

Rothwell and Kazanas (2008:13) warn that not all performance problems require training as a solution. There are some instances, like in this study, where training cannot be regarded as the only solution to address the performance problems of practitioners and HoDs. Rothwell and Kazanas (2008:13) are of the view that there are other human performance problems that require non-instructional solutions, which include communication. I therefore maintain that communication between the HoDs and the practitioners plays a very crucial part as prospects; feedback and performance need to be communicated to them. They (practitioners) also need to be informed of developments in their work. In the next section, I therefore discuss communication theory. If people are not given any training in the job they perform who should then be blamed? Training therefore plays a very important role in preparing people for the tasks they are expected to carry out.

1.6 COMMUNICATION

Communication, according to Fielding (2004:4), is a transaction where members exchange symbols to give meaning to their conversation. From the definition, she has given, the following facts are highlighted: symbols may assume different forms, for example, meaning is created from verbal or non-verbal words; meaning should always be created; common prospects should be established and people should learn to pay attention to each other and collaborate well. The message transmitter and receiver must pay exceptional attention in order to create common ground for communication (Fielding, 2004:22).

For communication to be effective, simple language with a pre-determined purpose and a clear message should be used (Raman & Singh, 2011:19). Foltz (1986:6) further explains communication in organisation as exchanging of feelings, information and thoughts across structural lines. Communication, in this study, is regarded as interaction and collaboration between HoDs and practitioners, where HoDs communicate their expectations and provide guidance to their subordinates. To set the tone for effective communication within the organisation, I found all of the above definitions relevant due to the fact that it is regarded as an exchange process.

From the perspective of this study, there should be meaningful exchange of information between the practitioners and the role-players and between role-players themselves with the purpose of providing the necessary supervision and support in return for quality teaching in Grade R classes. In the next paragraph, I present the theory underpinning the study.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The theoretical framework of the study is based on Vygotsky's (1981) model of mediated learning since Vygotsky, is of the opinion that the differences between what the children could achieve independently and what they could achieve through collaboration with more able partner is determined by the child's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Sills, Rowse & Emerson (2016). Sills, et al., 2016:314). In context, the practitioners' level of cognitive development will regulate what they could achieve when working individually and what they could achieve when collaborating with HoDs as their supervisor. According to Sills et al. (2016:314), Piaget and Vygotsky together

give emphasis to collaboration as an instrument for intellectual development emphasising the importance of deliberations and reasoning with another individual which I believe could be achieved through communication.

Piaget (1959, 1977) suggests that central to intellectual development is imbalance; he emphasises the role of equal peer interactions while Vygotsky argues that cognitive progression is more likely when there is a difference in their levels of understanding. I would argue that even though practitioners can benefit from peer interactions, it would be more beneficial for their intellectual advancement when joining forces (collaborating) with the HoD who does more at an advanced level of understanding as argued by Vygotsky.

According to Shanahan (2016: 769), the model looks at how virtual simulation as a tool is used to support the learner (practitioner) by the HoD; what tools are being used in supporting the learner and the opportunities provided to the learner to develop skills and knowledge. She (Shanahan) defines virtual simulation as a key informative instrument, providing students with access to learning involvements that are challenging to attain by other mechanisms. Shanahan (2016) indicates that simulation is increasingly being adopted within the undergraduate health curriculum to supplement and enhance pre-clinical learning opportunities for students.

In the context of this study, HoDs may use virtual simulation to mediate the supervision and support activities to Grade R practitioners. According to Shanahan (2016:796), virtual simulation in the Vygotsky model is a tool that facilitates learning and presenting opportunities for development of both intellectual and practical skills. In context, virtual (practical) simulation could therefore be an important means for HoDs to use in

supervising and supporting activities of Grade R practitioners. Virtual simulation would also present Grade R practitioners with opportunities to learn more of the Grade R classroom practices than through other approaches which may be at an abstract level. HoDs would have to engage in practical demonstrations of presenting or managing Grade R classrooms to the practitioners who are not professionally qualified and lack Grade R methodologies.

Virtual simulation by HoD will offer practitioners opportunities to observe and practically be engaged in implementing activities of the Grade R daily programme. The

Department of Basic Education tasked the SMT especially the HoDs to supervise and support Grade R practitioners in carrying out their responsibilities. These practitioners are to ensure that the Grade R pupils go through a quality Grade R programme. However, the Grade R practitioners in the previously disadvantaged schools of South Africa are not professionally qualified and lack the necessary training and skills they may need for teaching young children and function within the school system.

This requires an experienced and well-informed Head of Department (HoD) to provide supervision and support of Grade R practices to these practitioners who still struggles with the Grade R methodologies. Vygotsky's model is relevant for the HoDs and practitioners to use. Subject, tools and object are the three central elements of the Vygotsky's model of mediated learning presented in triangular form. Figure 1.1 below presents Vygotsky's model of mediated learning.

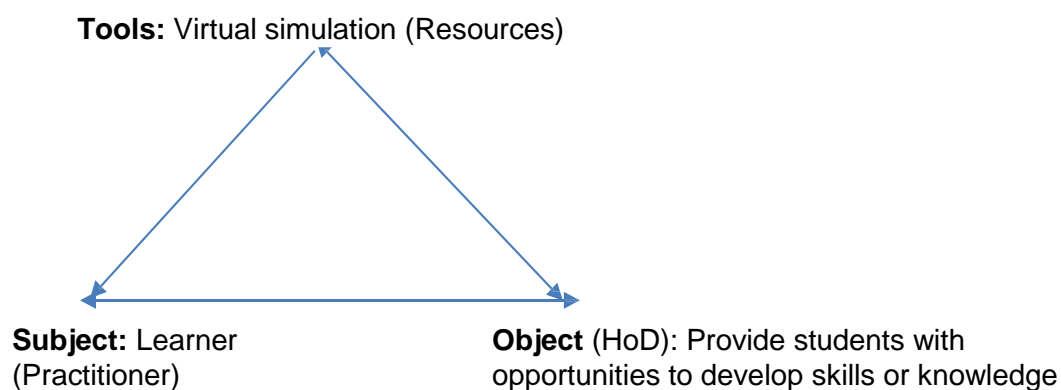


Figure 1.1: Vygotsky's model of mediated learning

Source: Shanahan (2016:769)

The bottom left corner of figure 1.1 above is labelled a subject, the top corner has been labelled a tool and the right corner labelled the object. According to Kaptelinin and Nardi (2006) and Vygotsky (1981) cited in Shanahan (2016:770), in the Vygotskian triangle, the subject is defined as the learner, who is seen as an active go-between, decisively applying mediating tools (virtual simulation) to realise their learning goals. The 'object' is said to be the final component of Vygotsky's triangle relating to the goal of learning. From the academic perspective, the goal of learning might be to offer students with chances to develop their skills and knowledge (Kaptelinin & Nardi, 2006, cited in Shanahan, 2016:770).

In the context of this study, the practitioner is viewed as a subject, who is an active representative engaged in practical simulation to accomplish the organisational (school) goals of improving the quality of teaching in Grade R classes. Tools are said to be utilised by the learner to support the learning process (Nardi, 2006). Tools in the context of this study are resources (which may include virtual simulation) used by both the HoD and practitioners to model practices in Grade R classes during supervision and support processes. HoDs may use virtual simulation to offer Grade R practitioners opportunities to be practically engaged in Grade R classroom practices, which will enable them to develop hands-on experience and intellectual skills to deliver quality teaching.

According to Shanahan (2016:770), the Vygotskian model focuses on the individual's actions. Individuals in this study may be practitioners, HoDs and other relevant stake holders. Actions of HoDs and practitioners are very important on how they do their work towards improving the quality of teaching in Grade R classes. Engeström (2001) cited in Shanahan (2016: 770) argues that, to comprehend the activities of people, you first need to understand the actions of the whole system. For the HoD to comprehend the practices in Grade R classes, he/she first has to understand the policies and procedures of running Grade R classes.

Vygotsky's model of mediated learning expands beyond the triangular representation where it also has three other components added (Shanahan, 2016: 771). These components are rules, community and division of labour. The expansion recognises that tools, subjects and objects of a system function within divisions of work, guideline procedures and cultural historic systems of community (*ibid.*)

Contextualising this in terms of the study, the rules, regulations and guidelines are equated to the policies and instructions of Grade R that the HoD in his /her supervisory and support functions should follow. Community will then be equated to a school where work is allocated according to different power positions. HoDs and practitioners therefore operate at different levels of work distribution as directed by rules and important informative planning of the school as a learning organisation.

Learning from Vygotsky's model, HoDs who are responsible for supervising and supporting Grade R practitioners could employ virtual simulation as a facilitating

resource for their supervisory and support functions in Grade R classes. Effective classroom teaching would therefore involve creation of both shared and individual knowledge of practitioners and HoDs. As the HoD conducts virtual simulation of Grade R practices to guide the Grade R practitioners, they (practitioners) will also individually take part in the virtual simulation activities in order to construct their own meaningful understanding. Learning through virtual simulation may also be a shared knowledge construction action of Grade R classroom practices.

In context, within the school (system), there are policies (rules and regulations) that direct, regulate and influence Grade R practices. Division of labour refers to the social reality of participants in the system which, in the context of this study, refers to the co-operation (collective) between HoDs and practitioners where powers and responsibilities have been divided according to hierarchies of power. Collaboration in context would refer to co-operation and synchronised activities between the HoD and the practitioners, resulting from continuous efforts of generating and sustaining the

effort of addressing the problem of supervision and support at school-based Grade R classes. Sills, et al. (2016:313) indicate that helpful collaboration with peers advances the intellectual growth of children. In this study, collaborative interaction between the HoD and the practitioners will benefit practitioners' intellectual understanding of practices in Grade R classes.

Given the importance of virtual simulation, Vygotsky's (1981) model of 'learning, mediated by tools is a theoretical framework suitable for addressing the problem of supervision and support at Grade R classes. This study is therefore grounded on the basis that supervision and support through mediated learning can improve the achievement of organisational goals. Because of the nature of this study and the role-players involved, it is significant to also discuss the systems thinking and, stakeholder's theories, training and communication which are related to the study.

1.7.1 Systems Thinking Theory

According to Rockandla (2015:4), a system consists of interrelated parts which interact to form a complete whole in order to achieve set objectives, while Checkland (2001:12) views a system as a whole consisting of different parts showing properties of a system rather than its component parts. Systems thinking, according to Ing (2013:528), are a

view of the systems as a whole, its parts and how they are related to each other. In this research, the system could be the relationship between the practitioner and the learners, between the HoD and practitioners or between the HoD and the principal.

Jackson (2006:648) views system thinking as a holistic approach to solving a problem. One can neither determine nor explain properties of a particular system by its component parts alone. Be it economic, social, biological, physical, linguistic or mental, these systems' properties cannot be determined or elaborated upon in isolation. Therefore, holism offers a way of inspecting and comprehending a system as a whole. Holism, according to Rockandla (2015:4), also assists in creating an understanding of a system as a whole in environments such as working in an organisation, group culture and team spirit.

In reality, the behaviour of the parts of a system is critically determined by the system as a whole. This explains why the contention in this study is that the quality of teaching in Grade R is converted by the interrelation and interactions between those people involved with Grade R. Systems thinking employs different tactics in solving problems after analysing problems from different perspectives with careful consideration of the context of the system. Ing (2013:528) refers to the structure, function and process as the most basic relations in systems thinking. Process is an arrangement in time, structure is an arrangement in space, function is considered as an influence of a part on the whole.

The relationship between the three is important to the systems-thinking theory. Components and their relationships define structures which in this context are synonymous with input, means and cause. In the context of this study, systems refer to the school in which the Grade R Programme is being run, with its constituent components such as the learners, human capital (Grade R practitioners and School Management Team), School Governing Body, Learning and Teaching Support Material Committees (LTSMC), ECD infrastructure, ECD Curriculum, Finance and Government input. The human capital (HoDs, principals, practitioners) and Gauteng North Department of Education Officials can be singled out and treated as stakeholders as is indicated by the stakeholder theory below:

1.7.2 Stakeholder Theory

Freeman (1984) cited in Argandona (1998:1098) defines a stakeholder in terms of the accomplishment of organisation's goals. Freeman defined stakeholders as those people who have the interest of groups at heart and are vital to the survival and success of the corporation (Argandona, 2011:1). Friedman and Miles (2006:5) state that the organisation itself should be understood as combination of stakeholders and the purpose of the organisation would be to manage their needs, viewpoints and interests.

To make certain the organisation survives, managers are to act as mediators between the stakeholders in order to maintain and protect continuing needs of every single group member. The supervisors of the organisation are responsible for stakeholder management who, for the good of interested parties, safeguard their contribution in making decisions as well as their rights (Friedman & Miles, 2006:5). In the context of this study, the firm symbolises the school in which Grade R sites operate under the supervision and support of the HoD being the manager of the Foundation Phase.

The HoD as the manager of the phase is there to supervise and support the staff (practitioners) as well as pushing the agenda or goals of the school (firm). The HoD serves as the mediator between the staff (Grade R practitioners included) in her department and the school. Quality teaching which seems not to be properly supervised and supported may be one of the school's goals that the HoD has to push. Friedman and Miles (2006:5) further states that the instrumental, normative and descriptive theories are the three approaches to stakeholder theory.

According to Freeman, Harrison and Wicks (2010:9), instrumental stakeholder theory accounts for the behaviour of supervisors towards the organisation's benefits in making the most of investor value. Instrumental stakeholder theory, according to Engel-Zandén and Sandberg (2010:10), "could be understood as research into the constructive or negative links between stakeholder management and financial performance, and into what would explain these relations".

In the case of the Grade R situation, the instrumental approach could be represented by the basis on which interaction between the HoD and the practitioners is examined for the purpose of providing supervision and support to practitioners that will improve

their quality of classroom practices. The normative aspects of stakeholder theory represent the relationship of the supervisor (HoD) with the practitioners, which should be based on the moral responsibility of all staff members in achieving the organisational (school) goals.

How the practitioners carry out their classroom practices and how the HoDs carry out their supervisory function and support to achieve the firm's (school) goals is key to the normative theory. In the context of the study, the school will establish basic principles on which to function.

Freeman, et al. (2010:9), view descriptive stakeholder theory as determining the behaviour of stakeholders; such as supervisors and their opinions about their functions and activities. The descriptive approach in this study could be represented by how the ideas and performances of SMTs and practitioners could be determined with regard to their actions and roles within the school. It is the researcher's view that the organisation will be more successful when supervisors understand the concept of stakeholders when considering other members of the firm.

Stakeholders include influential people influencing the Grade R programme in order to make certain that the programme's objectives are met. In this study, the external and internal members of the school executing the Grade R programme are stakeholders. These include Grade R practitioners, Heads of Department (HoDs), Principals, LTSM committees and Gauteng North District Officials. In the study, stakeholders will be referred to as role-players. Because of their link to and interest in Grade R, they must have the knowledge of the Grade so that they can execute their functions properly.

1.8 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the nature of supervision and support provided at school-based Grade R classes of the Gauteng North District?

1.9 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The study aims at establishing the nature of supervision and support for quality teaching provided at school-based Grade R classes of the Gauteng North District. The following secondary aims are used as a guide to allow the researcher to comprehend the aim of the study:

- Do the Grade R practitioners receive any supervision and support regarding their classroom practice from their immediate supervisors?
- How practitioners carry out daily classroom activities?
- What is the nature of interaction between practitioners, HoDs and the principal?
- What do practitioners and their supervisors consider as good support?
- What are the negative and positive experiences of Grade R, HoDs and principals with Grade R?
- What should be done differently in Grade R to improve the quality of teaching?

1.10 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To establish the kind of support provided to Grade R practitioners by the SMT (HoD and the principal).
- To evaluate the effect of HoDs' supervision and support to practitioners' classroom practices.
- To determine the measures of follow-up on the support provided by the HoDs to practitioners.

1.11 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

“To compensate for socio-economic deprivation, it is important that the quality of Grade R programme should match universal standards for Early Childhood Development” (DBE, 2011: 3) is the statement guiding the study. The statement is output number 3 of the 2009 Delivery Agreement (GDE, 2009:3) and the CAPS (2012).

Therefore, a study that focuses on the supervision and support at school-based Grade R classes, which has not yet been investigated, would be important to schools, districts and the Provincial and National Department of Education in the following ways:

- it will help SMTs, and the Gauteng North Department of Education officials to identify and address problem areas;

- its conceptual framework will help SMTs, and the Gauteng North District Department of Education officials to find solutions to the problem of supervision and support of school-based Grade R classes;
- the study will contribute knowledge in the early education field.

1.12 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Before presenting the theoretical basis of this study, it is significant that the concepts in this research being, supervision, support, collaboration, stakeholder, communication and training, be first discussed in this chapter. The six central concepts underlying the study are described in order to set the stage for the empirical investigation of providing supervision and support at school-based Grade R classes of Gauteng North District.

Ogunu (1998:128) explains supervision as the art of overseeing the activities of teachers and other educational workers in a school system to ensure conformity with commonly accepted principles and practice of teaching and the specified policies and guidelines of education authority and providing professional leadership to the to improve the conditions which affect the learning and growth of learners and teachers. Instructional headship in ECE includes providing supervision, offering opportunities for curriculum development and professional support and explicit direction (Rous, 2004: 267).

Based on what Rous says, Grade R practitioners should be offered opportunities for professional support and classroom instruction by the SMT. According to UNESCO (2007a:7), through experience it came to be known that teachers have great chances of success when they are active partners in their professional development, supervision and control. Control and supervision efforts all converge on the advancement of their classroom enactment.

According to Day (2008:252), commitment and effectiveness of the teachers in schools is positively affected by viewing the principal as the person who is strong and has a clear vision of where he wants to take the school. It is important and required of Grade R practitioners to engage in professional development by attending in-service trainings and workshops in order to keep abreast with new developments. They have to

constantly be engaged in life-long learning for their professional growth. Training is thus important for both the supervisor and supervisee.

It is important to examine the quality of the on-going professional development and support experiences available to early childhood practitioners. For supervision and support of practitioners at school to be successful, there should be collaboration and continuous communication between the supervisor and the supervisee and other relevant stakeholders. Sills, Rowse and Emerson (2016:313) define collaboration as a coordinated action resulting from a continuous effort of constructing and sustaining a joint conception of a problem. According to Raman and Singh (2011:2), communication is defined as “a practice where two or more people share verbal and non- verbal messages to express their feelings”.

It is not surprising then, that “many schools feel that the overall influence of what happens in schools to supervise and support practitioners remain pathetic” (Grauwe, 2001:16). This is also applicable to the curriculum support in the previously neglected Grade R classes in the mainstream schools.

1.13 EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Definitions of terms used in this study are as follows:

1.13.1 Supervision

According to Reid and Westergaard (2006:16), supervision means that an inexperienced person is watched over by someone who has experience in the work they do. According to Mahfooz and Hovde (2010:2), in educational policy discussions held in English, the words “supervision,” “inspection,” and “evaluation” are often used almost interchangeably.

1.13.2 Quality Supervision

Quality supervision, according to Obiweluozor, Momoh & Ogbonnaya (2013:587), is based on identifying certain areas that if well supervised, would help improve quality of primary education and be effective.

1.13.3 Support

I define support as technical assistance given to practitioners by the relevant stakeholders to make teaching and learning effective in a class. The support could be in terms of practices in the class by the HoD, colleagues, principals and the provision of required resources by the SGB with the principal's support.

1.13.4 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)

CAPS is the national curriculum policy declaration developed for each subject to be offered in South African Schools from Grade R -12.

1.13.5 Early Childhood Development (ECD)

ECD is defined as term indicating the procedures under which children from birth to 9 years grow and flourish emotionally, morally, socially, physically and spiritually (DoE, 2001a:7).

Grade R is one year of programme before start of Grade 1 which is established at both primary schools and community (Samuels, Taylor, Shepherd, van der Berg, Deliwe, & Mabogoane, 2015:1).

1.13.6 Grade R Learner

Circular 28/2005 defines a Grade R learner as a child who is four and half years old and will be turning five in the year of admission to Grade R class (DoE, 2005:3)

1.13.7 Grade R Practitioner

The person who is working in the ECD field and is interchangeably referred to as practitioner, educator or teacher (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009:1).

1.14 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is discussed under the following headings:

1.14.1 Research design

This research was undertaken under actual circumstances since it was about a current situation, which requires a practicable solution (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:79). The study lent itself to an exploratory design, requiring qualitative research techniques where data

were collected in a real-world setting to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2010:79).

1.14.2 Methodology

To achieve the stated objectives above, a qualitative approach using a case study was employed to gather data. Semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis were used to collect data from purposefully selected participants (Heads of Departments (HoDs), practitioners and school principals). The researcher's role was to act as the "human instrument" of collecting data. According to Hoepf (2007:4), the researcher must develop the approach through which data will be gathered and interpreted. The researcher prepared a research design that utilised accepted strategies for naturalistic inquiry as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) cited in Hoepf (2007: 4).

1.14.3 Sampling Procedures

The target population of the study consisted of school principals, Heads of Department (HoD), and Grade R practitioners in the selected primary schools in the three circuits at Gauteng North District.

1.14.4 Data-Collection

The research instruments for this study consists of observations, document analysis and individual and focus group interviews. Primary information from the sample of principals, HoDs and practitioners, will be/was? collected through interview guides. Focus group interviews will be/was conducted with both practitioners and HoDs and indoor and outdoor classroom observations will be/was done. Secondary data will/was also be collected by content analysis of management plans, agendas and minutes of meetings held by the HoDs.

1.14.5 Validity and Reliability of Research

According to Nieuwenhuis (2010a:80), when research addresses validity and reliability, it implies that the study is credible and trustworthy. Attention was paid to the following to increase trustworthiness (reliability) of the study as stated by Maree and van der Westhuizen (2010:38): credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. To establish the reliability of the research instruments, the researcher conducted a pilot

study, with the aim of ruling the consistency of the investigation tools, how well the items reflected the concepts being studied, yielding comparable results and assessing the suggested data analysis practices in order to uncover possible hitches (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001:35).

1.14.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

ATLAS ti. software was used to analyse recorded interviews and notes. The collected data was broken down into categories as stated by Mouton (2011:108). Content analysis was used for the analysis of secondary data.

1.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this study, access to the sample was practicable as it was anticipated that both schools and Education Head Office would grant permission. The GDE Research Request form and the University of South Africa's (UNISA) Ethical Clearance form to conduct research in institutions was completed and permission from principals was sought. The prospective respondents i.e. Principals, HoDs, and practitioners were visited by the researcher to inform them about the intended research. Special attention was paid to the following four ethical considerations as stated by Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2010:201): informed consent, right of their privacy, involvement of the researcher and protection from harm.

1.16 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This research will be conducted at schools in the Gauteng North District. It focused only on role-players involved with Grade R classes, namely Grade R practitioners and SMT members (principal and HoD). The focus of the study is to establish the nature of supervision and support provided at school-based Grade R classes.

1.17 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

A brief account of content of the chapters is provided in this Section.

- Chapter 1 introduces and orientates the reader to the study.
- Chapter 2 reviews the literature on supervision and support in Grade R.

- Chapter 3 presents a discourse on Grade R teaching and on supervision and support models.
- In Chapter 4, the research methodology and data collection procedures are discussed in detail.
- Chapter 5 presents findings obtained from fieldwork.
- Chapter 6 presents the limitations of the study, recommendations and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 orientated the reader by introducing the study and providing the conceptual and theoretical basis upon which the study is grounded. The chapter also outlined the methodology and referred to the chapters that will be completed to answer the research question and to realise and aim of study. The methods including the delimitation of the study were also presented. This chapter presents a literature review on the provision and support for quality programmes for Grade R education which is the subject of this study. The literature is intended to give a broad background to this study and also serve as a basis for arguments that will be raised later.

In order to contextualise the discussion, the next few Sections provide an overview on the provision and policy development of ECD in South Africa; Grade R policy in S.A.; Children and the Millennium Goals; the benefits of the Grade R programme; teaching and learning the Grade R curriculum; the importance of the quality of practitioners; quality teaching; the required environment in Grade R; learning in Grade R; training of practitioners; importance of professional qualification; and quality standards and indicators to measure quality standards.

An argument on teacher supervision in other countries and the benefits of teacher supervision are presented in the last section of the chapter. The next paragraph presents the discussion on the provision of ECD in South Africa.

2.2 PROVISION OF ECD IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to the 1996 Interim Policy for ECD, 7.1, the majority of South African's were never exposed to quality ECD programmes in the past (DoE, 1996:14). Williams and Samuel (2001:6) who drafted the National Audit of ECD Provisioning in South Africa report, state that children's rights were fundamental to rebuilding and development task of the country by the Government of South Africa. The right of children to education is deeply rooted in the Constitution of South Africa. This right to education, according to Churr (2012:1), is acknowledged and emphasised throughout the world.

Education and the right of children to education were prioritised as part of the country's constitution. To redress the past, the democratically-elected Government had to commit itself to making Grade R accessible to all the children of the country, irrespective of race and socio-economic status. This created a great demand for teachers to facilitate teaching in the Grade R classes that were established. The provision of Grade R classes to expose all South African learners to ECD resulted in a situation where teachers for these children were employed without ECD qualifications.

SMTs were not also trained to enable them to adequately provide supervision and support to these practitioners who are supposed to leave a lasting impact in the lives of the young children. In preparation for the ECD provision, efforts could have been put in place well in advance before implementation to simplify preparation of workers (SMTs and practitioners) that are related to work competencies, skills, understanding and behaviours through training. It plays an important role in uplifting the society, families and individuals.

Atmore (2006:245) includes the creation of stimulating environment by an adult to facilitate the development of young children and helping them to understand their surrounding world. The South African Government emphasised a family approach in the upbringing of children. To fulfil the Government's task of commitment to children, policies that were aiming at improving the circumstances under which children lived were developed (DoE, 2001:7).

2.3 ECD POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

ECD policy for the establishment of Grade R was developed in 2001 (DoE, 2001:2). Its idea was to address challenges identified with Grade R provision. One of the challenges was essential to improve the quality of the reception-year programmes. To improve and provide high quality reception-year programmes would then require the following supervision and support services (DoE, 2001:39):

- educating officials to provide efficient and consistent checking of practitioners through reflection and advice by education officials; and
- giving sufficient support to practitioners to ensure an understanding of the anticipated results or projected levels of learner achievement.

Berry, Biersteker, Dawes, Lake and Smith (2013:27) state that South African law and policy sum up a wide-ranging view of service delivery and distinguish the necessity for a multi-sectoral approach through health, education, and social protection and socio-economic growth. South African policy and law recognise the need for a multi-sectoral approach across Education, health, socio economic development. Given the current high profile debate on ECD in the South African government, South African government regards the early years of childhood development as a very crucial stage.

This stage therefore needs some quality intervention programmes for the young ones in order to develop them holistically. It is the researcher's opinion that quality intervention programmes depend on close supervision and constant support for those offering the programme.

2.4 GRADE R POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to the DBE (2011a:3), the purpose of the Grade R policy "the Universal Access to Quality Grade R" has been put in place in order to identify gaps in ECD policies and come up with suggestions. The policy was intended to provide guidelines on how universalisation of Grade R would take place. The Grade R policy therefore outlines the six pillars on which the programme to universalise Grade R is based. The six pillars stated in the policy (DBE, 2011a:4) are:

- Grade R legislation: Guidance on the implementation and making Grade R accessible to all South African Children was made available in the Education White Paper 5 on ECD, (DoE, 2001:4). Although the target for the universalisation of Grade R was moved from 2010 to 2014, it has again been extended to 2019, with the sole purpose of having all primary schools with Grade 1 classes offering Grade R in the targeted year. The drive of the policy is to incorporate Grade R into the schooling system.
- The Grade R curriculum: The curriculum in Grade R is part of the Foundation Phase curriculum outlined in the 2002 National Curriculum Statement which has been strengthened through CAPS that was implemented in the Foundation phase in 2012 (DBE, 2011a:6).

- Grade R teacher training: The DoE has considered several qualifications for Grade R practitioners. There are diverse qualification levels for practitioners in the higher education institutions. The Grade R qualifications offered for Grade R in South Africa are a Diploma in Grade R Teaching, NQF Level 6; a Higher Certificate: Early Childhood Development, NQF Level 5; or Further Education and Training Certificate: Early Childhood Development, NQF Level 4. Most of these NQF Levels qualifications are offered by private training providers.

In the context of this study, the majority of practitioners as mentioned previously, were employed without any of the NQF qualifications or the professional qualification (Diploma) in Grade R. This created problems for practitioners in carrying out routine practices in Grade R classes, who were struggling with the Grade R teaching methodologies. They also seemed to have problems with putting what they had learnt into practice. Although they were very much aware that Grade R practices are different from the rest of the Foundation Phase classes, they were still in need of constant supervision and support. This is where the problem of supervision and support originated.

HoDs were tasked with the supervision and support of the Grade R practitioners. This was problematic because HoDs were not capacitated to supervise and support practitioners in the implementation of ECD programmes. They used their knowledge of Grade 1 to 3 to supervise and support practitioners. To try to improve the situation, the Department of Education in South Africa made arrangements with some NGOs to provide NQF training to unqualified practitioners. The training offered was at NQF L4 and NQF L5. This resulted in misunderstandings between practitioners and the HoDs as the guidance they were giving contradicted the knowledge practitioners gained during their NQF training.

- Employment of Grade R teachers: There is no legislation that directs the appointment of Grade R practitioners (DoE, 2001:6). The employment of practitioners needs to take into consideration the following three main areas: teacher learner ratio, qualifications of Grade R practitioners and employment modalities.

Professional qualifications of practitioners would help them in contextualising and applying skills to make their teaching relevant and appropriate. In South Africa, practitioners do not require any ECD qualification to be employed as Grade R practitioners. They may be employed only with a Grade 12 certificate. Even when HoDs were given the responsibility of supervising and supporting the practitioners, whether they have an ECD qualification does not come into consideration. The question that arises is: how do you supervise an inexperienced practitioner while you are not skilled in and lack understanding of the supervisory work you have to carry out?

- Funding of Grade R: The funding of Grade R in schools is known as 'allocation', (norms and standards) (DoE, 2000b). The funding policy allows for three different ways of funding Grade R in public schools which are:
 - transferring all the Grade R funds into the school account by the department of education if schools have been granted section 21 company status. (It should be noted that non-profit companies were section 21 companies under the 1973 Companies Act. Not-for-profit companies now fall under section 1 of the 2008 Companies Act.)
 - purchasing of resources, the school needs for the Grade Rs if the school has not been granted section 21 status, whether a school operates as a section 21 company or not.

It is then the responsibility of an HoD to always check availability and shortages of resources in Grade R during his/her supervisory tasks done at Grade R; as a supervisor, she also needs to do a needs analysis and procure resources for the Grade R classes.

- Evaluation and monitoring of Grade R: For quality purposes policy instructs that the assessment and monitoring of Grade R classes in the Foundation Phase be part of the whole monitoring and evaluation system.

This is another area of neglect in our schools especially for Grade R which does not receive any evaluation. As the policy states, it is important that Grade R practitioners be included in the Integrated Quality Management System that takes place in schools. It

will help in quality-assuring the practitioners' work and it will encourage collaboration between staff members. Evaluation and monitoring of Grade R practitioners will assist in their reflection on the work done.

This evaluation process needs to be carried out by the people who understand the practices in Grade R classes. Currently at South African schools, SMTs are not in the position to carry out this function as they are still ill-informed about Grade R practices.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) policy perspective is important for this study which investigates how practitioners for children turning five (Grade R) are supervised and supported for quality teaching. All role-players involved in the field of Grade R need to have contextual information and an understanding of the Grade R policies and practices governing the sector.

Knowing how Grade R children grow, develop and learn will thus inform the basis for planning the children's programme, and selecting relevant teaching and learning support materials that will help fulfil their right to quality education by being exposed to variety of stimulating activities. It is then the role of the practitioners to make sure that environments conducive for these stimulating activities to take place are created. The next paragraph elaborates on the children and the millennium goals by UNESCO.

2.5 CHILDREN AND MILLENNIUM GOALS

According to Biersteker (2007:1), government, at the General Assembly held in May 2000, committed to a set of calculated actions, and specific goals for the wellbeing and the rights of young South African Children. This was accomplished through defending children against exploitation, affording them quality education, healthy lives, and protecting them against violence. Biersteker (2007:37) states that children should be registered at formal ECD centres to receive early childhood education.

Children who come from the poor family backgrounds are capable of gaining a lot from the ECE and would be at a great loss if left out (Right Beginnings, 2012/3:5). The deputy president, Motlanthe (The Presidency, 2010) emphasised how education could empower both community and the individual.

Bowman, Donovan and Burns (2000), cited in Atmore (2006:246) are of the view that the base for the growth of human capital in young children is laid by positive

experiences. Likewise, Mahalingam (2009:39) believes that the paramount human resource growth investment of a country is Early Childhood Education. It is important that young children are allowed an opportunity to engage in structured group activities at early stage even though they get most of their stimulating activities from neighbours, friends, home and friends UNICEF, (2007:37). Teachers of these young children are to provide high standard quality education.

They therefore need good supervision and support from their HoDs to guide them in creating an environment for good structured activities. Because of practitioners' lack of experience and Grade R qualification, collaboration with HoDs as supervisors plays an important role. HoDs therefore need to provide instructional supervision that will put practitioners at another level of development where they will be able and confident in providing quality teaching to these Grade R learners.

Countries have pre-primary schooling that are unique (UNICEF, 2007:38), and all of them have programmes which are very strong and share characteristics such as supporting parents as early as they give birth, nutrition and health services being integrated with educational activities and easing children's transition from home to school provision with educational experiences. With this study, the main focus is therefore supervision and support of practitioners who are to provide quality educational experiences to these young children. It is therefore important to elaborate on the benefits of such formal systems with reference to Grade R programme.

2.6 BENEFITS OF THE GRADE R PROGRAMME

Barnet, Brown and Shore (2004) cited in Tarlov and Debbink (2008:212) indicate that irrespective of socio-economic status of families, it is understood that good early care and education contribute to a decent quality of life for citizens. They showed that children who sustain higher earnings later in life were exposed to early childhood education. They then contribute in enriching their societies through high ownership of homes and payment of higher taxes. Bonga (2009:13) agrees that it is important to provide young children with early childhood education based on the relationship that exists between early years of education and the success of such children in future. The following benefits of Grade R are offered by Hyde and Kabiru (2003:7):

- It is of highest significance for expressive, knowledgeable and communal growth; interventions at this phase can have sturdy and permanent influences on their health and welfare as adults and chances foregone at this phase can hardly be made up for at later stages. HoDs are, therefore, required to make sure that practitioners provide quality teaching that will have a strong, lasting impact on the whole child through supervising and supporting practitioners' activities;
- The growing research/knowledge indicates that children who have gone through pre- primary education or had ECD interventions turn out to be successful in school and are able to socialise and do better with teachers. It is important that the supervision and support of practitioners assist practitioners in producing learners who are successful and sociable;
- Children who received ECD transit better to primary school; experience fewer possibilities of being involved in unlawful activities; have more stable families; and have better employment records. HoDs in their supervisory and support functions to practitioners should make sure that practitioners provide high quality teaching that will be assist children to transit well to primary school.

One such example of many researchers conducted on the benefits of ECD programmes is the experiment in low-income families about the provision of intensive pre-school services to their children. The research was conducted in Carolina, USA. This programme began in 1972 where the research effects (on children from infancy to five years) were that the children experienced strong gains in IQ and achievement in reading and mathematics (Masse & Barnett, 2002:157). The results indicate that children in the pre-school (Grade R) consistently performed far better than those in the control group who did not receive the services.

Similarly, Bukaliya and Mubika (2012) highlight that ECD programmes have a constructive influence or influence on the performance of pre-schoolers in their first year of formal schooling. Mustard (2010) and Shonkoff (2009) agree. Supervision and support received by teachers of these young children should consequently be of the standard to promote quality teaching and learning. Hertzman (2010:3) regards early childhood programmes as an investment in early childhood, and a powerful economic

strategy, as returns in future are greater than the original expenditure on the life of the child.

Understanding benefits of Early Childhood Education (ECE) will henceforth help role-players involved to understand the needs of young children and strive for quality provisioning of resources and teaching and learning. I am of the opinion that quality demands well-trained staff (practitioners and supervisors) to ensure that every child receives high quality teaching and that quality learning is taking place. The research done by other researchers compelled me to agree that ECE programmes of high quality have a positive impact in the lives of children. However, South Africa is still concerned about quality supervision and support given to the practitioners in the previously marginalised school-based Grade R classes and their qualifications.

The practitioners in these schools need to receive the kind of supervision and support that will equip them to be able to implement practices that are developmentally appropriate to the Grade R children. Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), according to Hertzman (2010:3), is a broad, overarching concept relating to different developmental areas for children in the age category of zero (0) to eight (8). He sees it as a teaching engagement that adapts teaching to the developmental level of children, their experiences and interest. Bredekamp and Copple (1997), cited in Grisham-Brown (2009:45), are of the belief that developmentally-appropriate curricula, should speak to all content and development areas and should bear in mind their age with consideration of their ability, linguistic and cultural differences.

It is therefore important that practitioners receive good quality supervision and support in order to make sure that activities they develop for learners are appropriate to their level of development. When practitioners are planning the lessons, they must first understand the children's context. It is my view that for practitioners to implement developmentally appropriate practices, they need clear understanding of the Grade R curriculum which needs to be facilitated by the HoD. The next paragraph presents a short description of the Grade R curriculum.

2.7 GRADE R CURRICULUM

What the Grade R children should learn has been sketched out in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). CAPS is one of the components of the National

Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R-12 (2012), the teaching and learning policy statement of South Africa (DBE, 2011b:3). “The NCS Grades R – 12 therefore communicates the skills, values and knowledge that are worth learning in South African Schools” (DBE, 2011b:40).

School-based Grade R practitioners are to follow the South African official curriculum and CAPS in defining the content and skills to be taught. It is, however, the task of an HoD as a supervisor to guide, monitor and support practitioners in the correct implementation of the Grade R curriculum which requires their full understanding and knowledge of how it should be implemented. Since the majority of practitioners in the previously marginalised schools of Gauteng Province (South Africa) are not professionally trained and lack the methodology needed to enable them to present the prescribed Grade R curriculum, this is a problem that needs to be addressed.

Grade R practitioners will; in this case, require the full supervision and support of all the relevant role-players assigned to monitor implementation of policies and support of curricular activities in Grade R classes. As a result, supervision of teaching should be of a standard that will improve the quality of teaching in Grade R classes.

The CAPS document outlines clearly what needs to be taught per term to the Grade R learner in all three subjects in the Grade overview. In Grade R, the three subjects are presented in an integrated, play-based way within the routine activities in the daily programme which is called the timetable in other Grades. Annexures 1 and 2 of this thesis present the practitioners’ daily programme. The practitioner when presenting this content is required to first go through the kinaesthetic stage where learner will experience concepts with body and senses before going to the concrete stage and paper and pencil representation (DBE, 2011b:14).

The CAPS pursues the creation of a lifetime learner who is literate, multi-skilled and confident, with the capability to contribute in society as an energetic citizen. In other words, teaching in Grade R classes needs teachers who will provide quality teaching in such classes. With the current Grade R practitioners in the previously disadvantaged schools who are not professionally qualified as required by NCS and CAPS, challenges could be encountered as they are not trained subject specialists.

These practitioners rely mostly on their immediate supervisors (HoDs) and the Senior Education Specialists (District Officials) and other relevant role-players for monitoring and support of the curricular activities in their Grade R classes. Shonkoff and Phillips (2000:384) assert that teachers need to construct environments that are nurturing, safe and thought-provoking in order for them to be able to offer children high quality experiences. The environment has to be encouraging and warm. Considering this assertion, it would also be reasonable to look at how these practitioners are supported to provide such high quality early childhood experiences in the said environment. Therefore, my contention is that the teaching in Grade R should be of high quality – in order to realise the National Curriculum Statement Grade R – 12 or CAPS vision of producing an aspired learner.

According to the South African Assessment policy document 'Programme and Promotion Requirements' (PPR), the Grade R learner must learn three subjects: Life Skills, Mathematics and Languages. (DBE, 2011a:5). These subjects are to be presented in an integrated way following the Grade R daily programme. I offer a brief discussion of each subject in the following section to elucidate how the subjects are integrated.

2.7.1 Subject Life Skills in Grade R

Life Skills, according to DoE (2011:8), implies the all-inclusive development of learners. It deals with physical and emotional growth of learners, perceptual skills, social and intellectual skills in an integrated way. It is organised into four Study Areas, i.e., Personal and Social Being, Beginning Knowledge, Physical Education and Creative Arts. Life Skills is regarded as a subject that should strengthen and support the instruction of other essential subjects like Languages (Home Language and First Additional) and Mathematics. It is central to most programmes of basic education and is essential for educating learners and communities about important aspects of life that affect us.

In the case of the Grade R learners, the teaching of Life Skills would be reinforced during indoor and outdoor teacher-guided activities. Communication during play activities is important. It is therefore important that practitioners aim at the holistic development of a Grade R child with emphasis on development of perceptual skills.

Annexure 6 of this thesis presents the perceptual skills as stated in the Life Skills policy document (DBE, 2011b:11 and 12). Practitioners are therefore expected to also focus on the development of perceptual skills by creating environments that will encourage development of these skills.

2.7.2 Home Language in Grade R

According to the DBE (2011a:10), the skills that are to be developed are combined into four competencies namely: Listening and Speaking, Phonics and reading, Handwriting and writing and thinking and reasoning.

In the Foundation Phase (Grade R – 3) the skills to be developed in the Home Language are: listening and speaking, reading and phonics, writing and handwriting and thinking and reasoning and language structure and use, which are integrated. Life Skills is incorporated into other subject areas. The Grade R practitioner must therefore have the expertise to integrate the language content into the other two subjects and choose the daily activities appropriately.

2.7.3 Mathematics in Grade R

The subject Mathematics covers the five content areas from Grade R to 3. The five content areas of the Grade R Mathematics according to CAPS are: number operations and relationships, algebra, space and shape, patterns and functions, data handling and measurement (DBE, 2011d: 6). Unlike in Grades 1 to 3, the Grade R daily programme comprises a variety of routine activities. Some activities are child-initiated while the others are guided by the teacher (DBE, 2011d: 9). To attain emergent numeracy, the use of routine activities in the daily programme should be emphasised.

Practitioners are therefore expected to present the three subjects in an integrated way through guided play activities. It is my view that, to be able to create these learning opportunities, practitioners need to have a background and full understanding of the ways of learning in Grade R classes in order for them to lay the necessary quality educational foundation.

2.8 WAYS OF LEARNING IN GRADE R

According to Alexander, Frohlich and Fusco (2014:155), play is crucial in the growth, development and health of children. Lytle (2003:245) regards play as a means of

conceptualisation, a place for each child's fantasy, where children interact with objects; acquire language and produce their own subjective understanding of the world around them.

Most of the time, young children are engaged in diverse types of play, and as such it is easy for them to comprehend their environment and come up with solutions to address their problems. As they engage in play activities their self-regulation and self-confidence are developed. Play, according to Chowdhary and Rivalland, (2012:72), offers children an opportunity to interact with other learners and get to improve their gross and fine motor skills to needed grow and learn.

The manner in which space is organised, the selection of resources or play material and the allocated time influence the manner in which children learn and play. Effective play methods are subject to how they are executed and incorporated into teaching and learning strategies by the practitioner. Supervisors of practitioners should, as a result, understand play as a means by which learning takes place in Grade R classes. They should not see play as a waste of time but rather see and understand it as a way of teaching and learning for Grade R children.

To maximise the benefits derived from play, the teacher (practitioner) is expected to create many opportunities for innovation, experimentation and investigation. Well-organised and resourced play environments are ideal places for the activities to take place. The SMT must always make it a point that the environment is secure and safe for the children to operate. Young children learn best through play and as such it is regarded as a means of teaching and learning in ECD. The practitioner may also make use of teachable moments as she observes the learners during free play in different areas to instil some values and norms.

Since Grade R learners are naturally curious, they actively engage in explorative activities to discover and ask questions to create their own meaning and ideas from what they have experienced. According to French (2007:20), play is an essential means for growth and learning in totality. Play is fundamental way of presenting young children's activities. The use of their senses offers them opportunities to form concepts and impressions during interaction with their surroundings.

I maintain that, for correctly-structured play, highly skilled, dedicated and motivated practitioners are needed, who will in turn be able to implement quality ECD programmes and create conducive environments to teaching and learning. Play therefore needs pioneering practitioners, who through the support of the SMT will create and provide supportive contexts that will expose learners to a variety of learning and developmentally appropriate activities. Such supportive contexts, according to Heidemann and Hewitt (1992) cited in Chowdhury and Rivalland (2012:115), are planned and well-resourced environments providing a variety of stimulating activities relevant for early childhood curriculum.

I also contend that it is significant for the supervisor and other role-players to understand that these supportive contexts are very important and need to be seriously considered in order to unfold the Grade R curriculum which is in play-based form. It is very significant that all role-players involved with Grade R see play as a vehicle through which the curriculum is implemented and see it as a learning process and not just as a passing of time like most teachers and adults think. I further endorse the fact that some of the play activities are teacher-directed and need the application of appropriate methodologies and provision of relevant resources, the correct management of time.

2.9 THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN GRADE R

All role-players involved with Grade R need to know that every child has potential and should therefore create environments that are conducive to both effective teaching and successful learning. According to Hertzman (2012:2), children need safe, secure and warm environments that can protect them from harm, punishment and disapproval. They need experiences that will offer those opportunities to discover their surroundings, learn how to express themselves and listen to other children as well as to socialise and play with them.

Lenyai (2006:4) argues that this knowledge will come from the individual experiences children have with their environment, direct contact with real objects and from conversations about their ideas and experiences and how they apply their logical thinking to these happenings. Lenyai (2006:3) further asserts that, the most critical years for the acquisition of learning skills are the years before formal schooling while

Shonkoff (2009:3) states that it is advantageous to provide environments that are supportive for children's development at an early stage which cost less than later in life.

It is therefore important for practitioners to create and provide an environment that learners can creatively learn from. In doing so, they will also need the backing of the other role-players like School Governing Bodies (SGB) in topping up the available resources as well as that of the SMT and the District Officials for guidance and the Teaching and Learning Support Material (LTSM) committee.

Positive outcomes outlined in the CAPS document indicate that education needs to happen within an environment that meets the standards that promote quality teaching and learning. According to UNICEF (2000:7), learning environments are made up of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements. It is important that schools have a plan in place for the creation of learning environments that will be conducive to present the curriculum effectively. The most important role of practitioners, according to the DBE (2011c:10), is to carefully guide and expose learners to suitable prospects by providing clean, safe and caring indoor and outdoor environments.

2.9.1 Grade R Indoor Learning Environment

Teaching and learning in Grade R occurs within inside and outside environments. The inside environment is referred to as Indoor Area and the outside environment is referred to as the Outdoor Area. Teachers are expected to provide a stimulating environment and they ought to be well prepared. Grade R classrooms (Indoor Area) need to be organised into different working or play areas to expose learners to a variety of activities. Proper planning is very important for successful teaching in an ECD Centre. Young children need enough well-planned space in order to learn through play.

A well-planned playroom may consist of several areas in which a variety of simultaneous activities can be presented during free play indoors, and where the child has the opportunity and freedom to make decisions (Gordon & Browne, 2004:337). According to Davin, et al. (2011:204), a Grade R classroom consists of several areas like a block area, creative art area, a writing area; a book area, a gross motor area, a manipulation area, a science area, woodworking area, fantasy play area, and water/sand area.

Space requirements for indoor and outdoor play areas per child and the teacher/learner ratio are important aspects that should seriously be considered. Each individual child should move around freely. The recommended ratio of 1:30 or maximum of 1:33 for public and community sites and 1:12 or 1:15 for farm schools should be maintained (DoE 1996:19). It is imperative that practitioners realise that when planning indoor areas, layout should not be permanently set in order to offer learners a variety of play opportunities. Areas may be changed as needed. Figure 2.1 below provides an example of a layout of a Grade R indoor space.

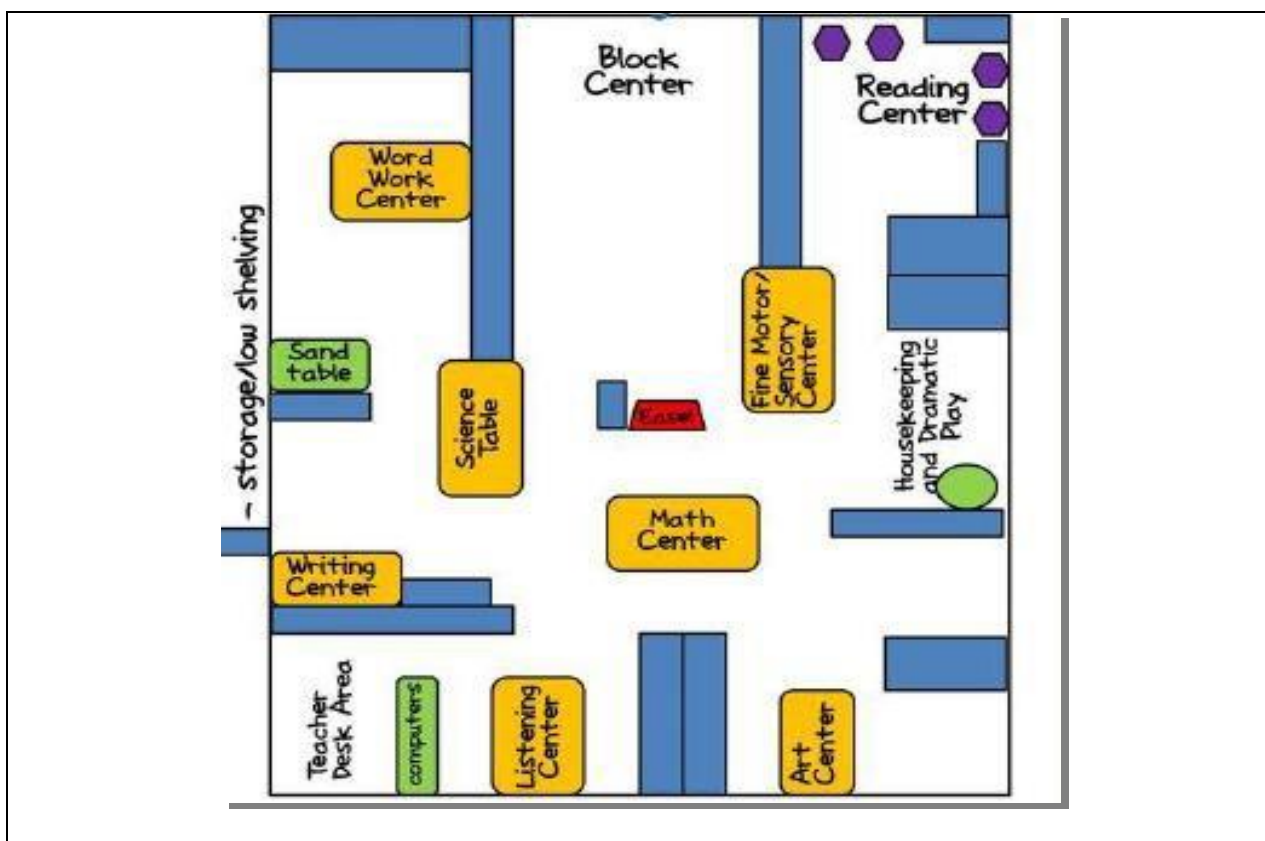


Figure 2.1: Example of an indoor layout

Source: (Pinterest, 2016)

The colour blue in the above figure shows how partition can be done to create areas in the Grade R classroom. The yellow, white and green areas specify the different working stations to be set for variety of activities.

Learners are engaged in different activities (like painting, playing with blocks, reading, and fantasy play) in their specific areas that are equipped with relevant resources. Learners work independently in small groups with the teacher keeping an eye on them and at some point. The DoE (1996:19) further recommends that, where there are more

than 30 children, an additional practitioner should be deployed in the classroom. The indoor learning environment is also extended outside where the practitioner is expected to plan thoroughly for this area.

2.9.2 Grade R Outdoor Learning Environment

The outdoor learning environment is regarded as an extension of the indoor learning area. Teaching and learning also takes place in this area and it therefore needs to be well-resourced and used to expose learners to a variety of stimulating and

developmental activities. Children's large and small muscles can be well developed when there are opportunities for children to be engaged in thought-provoking play environments. According to the DoE (2008:10), children love open spaces and should be provided with opportunities where "they can enjoy the sun, run, fresh air, and interact with nature and make a noise". The practitioner will need the support of the SMT and the SGB to provide the necessary resources like jungle gyms, slides, swings, sand pits and seeds for gardening.

Although the Department of Education is responsible for resourcing the indoor and outdoor areas, schools still have the responsibility of augmenting and providing resources that they do not have. The practitioner may advise the HoD of the needed resources who will in turn bring this to the attention of the SMT and the SGB in order to provide resources for the indoor and outdoor areas. Figure 2.2 below provides an example of outdoor equipment and its arrangement.

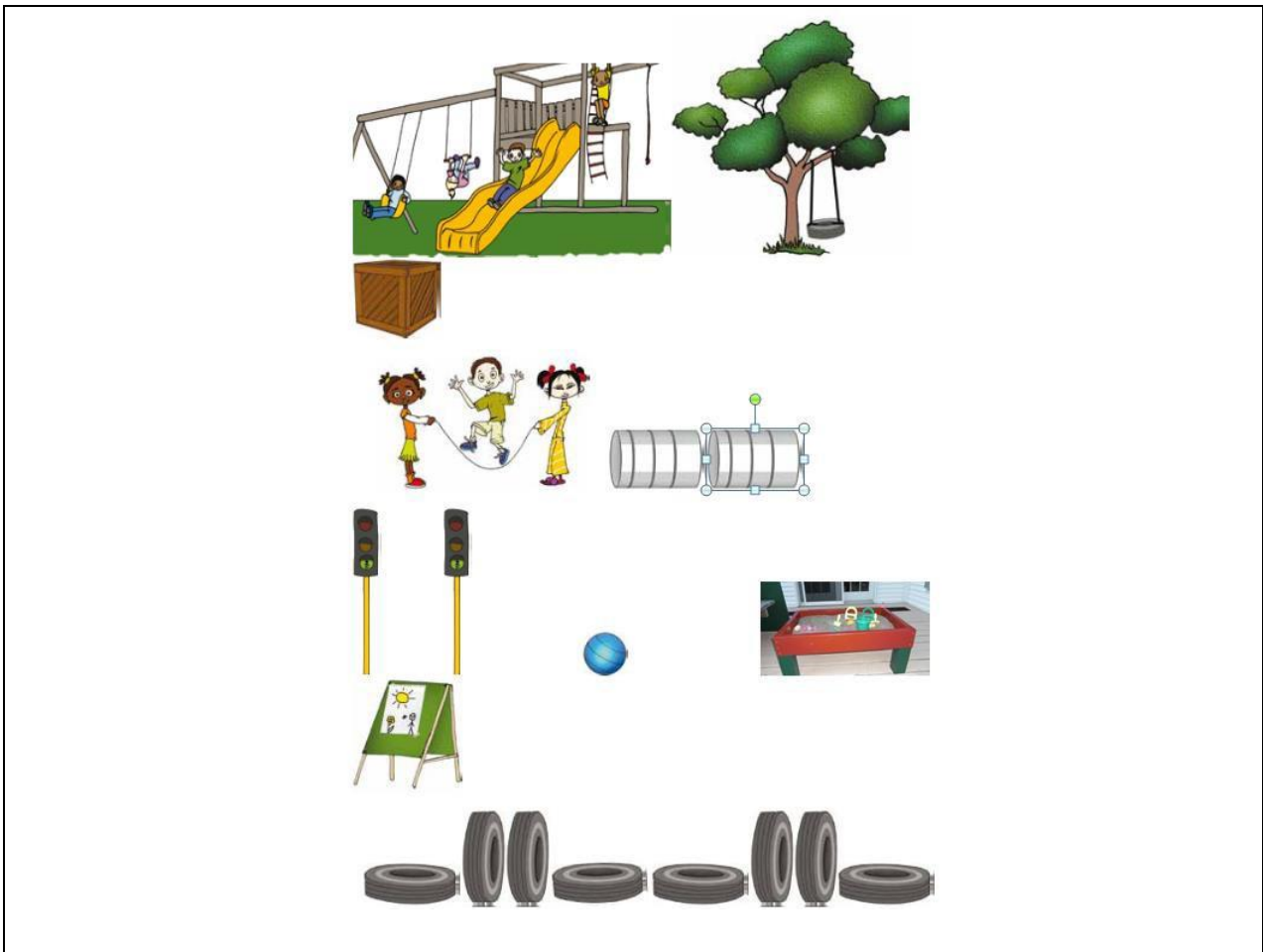


Figure 2.2: outdoor equipment and its arrangement

Source: (GDE, 2014:21)

Examples of equipment that can be provided are jungle gyms and swings where children can climb, slide and swing using the large muscles of the body to develop their gross motor skills. The drums and tires may be used for balancing and crawling through. The red table tray contains sand which is useful for exposing children to a variety of sensual experiences. Playing in sand is best also for learning, socialisation and creativity. The tray can also be used for water play. Robots are used for learning road signs. There should also be space for free play activities like playing soccer and skipping ropes or indigenous games.

The subsequent section presents the discourse on supervision. Having explained the ECD curriculum and acknowledging that the majority of practitioners in the previously marginalised schools of South Africa are not professionally trained and lack the methodology, I contend that they need full supervision and support from all the relevant role-players assigned to monitoring the implementation of policies and curricular

activities. It is important to explain how quality supervision and support can assist in the acquisition of essential skills to be able to present the prescribed Grade R curriculum. Good supervision and support in Grade R classes should be of a standard that will improve the quality of teaching in Grade R classes.

2.10 SUPERVISION

Teaching Grade R requires practitioners who can turn pedagogical and didactical theories into practice and promote successful learning. Practitioners need in-depth understanding of the theories to enable them to turn learning challenges into opportunities. Furthermore, they need training and development that will equip them to translate the philosophies into instructive and educational knowledge. Training must include lesson preparation and delivery that will suit different learning styles and children of different abilities.

Abilities and continuous observation of these learners need to be conducted by the practitioners and their level of performance should be recorded. School-based Grade R practitioners are therefore required to follow the South African official curriculum and CAPS in defining the content and skills to be taught in Grade R. It is, however, the task of an HoD as a supervisor to monitor, support and guide the practitioners in correct implementation of Grade R curriculum which requires their full understanding and knowledge of how it should be implemented and assessed.

2.11 SUPPORT

I would define support as the way staff is assisted by their supervisors or colleagues in carrying out their duties with the purpose of staff refining the quality of the work they do. The main aim of supporting staff is to assist them overcome their performance challenges and work towards achieving organisational goals.

According to Singh and Billingsley (2010:230), teachers who receive little support experience more burnout and illnesses than those who receive more support from their supervisors. There is a correlation between support and job satisfaction among teachers. Interaction amongst colleagues is a best practice that can result in educators' professional development. The main purpose of supervising and supporting activities of teachers is to improve the quality of teaching in the classrooms. The next paragraph elucidates what constitutes quality teaching in education.

2.12 THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY TEACHING IN EDUCATION

“Quality” is a conception under deliberation in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECE) among the researchers, Taguma, Litjens and Makowiecki (2012:13) because quality can best be described through value judgments, and qualifications.

2.12.1 Value judgements

Judgment of quality involves value judgements. Dahlberg & Moss (2008:29) share the same sentiment where they indicate quality is neither neutral nor self-evident, but saturated with values and assumptions. According to Taguma et al. (2012:13) the apparatus to measure quality and its meaning regulates the efficiency of the education and preparation (teaching) of teachers. The critical dependent variable to assess quality in ECE is said to be the children’s developmental outcomes.

2.12.2 Qualifications

According to Urban (2009:3), the issue of quality is a subject that exists in other countries and is found to be connected to a non-satisfactory level of staff qualifications. I regard quality teaching as the ability to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning, presentation of instructional practice through correct interpretation and presentation of curriculum content, using appropriate resources, conducting valid and reliable assessment of all the learners and providing remedial support to learners experiencing learning barriers. Quality teaching therefore requires teachers to have a deep knowledge and understanding of the central concept they are addressing with learners and to seek that depth in the work of learners (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2008:14).

However, quality in teaching may be defined based on the context of different countries. The ability to engage students in activities in the classroom, helping different groups of students to access information in a manner which facilitates learning towards achieving curriculum goals is defined by Alton-Lee (2003:144) as educational practices. The question that now arises is how the Grade R teachers are being prepared to provide quality teaching in their classes. I therefore deem it fit to discuss the training and development of practitioners in the ensuing paragraphs.

2.13 PREPARATION OF PRACTITIONERS FOR QUALITY TEACHING THROUGH TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

According to Hyde and Kabiru (2012:43), for South Africa to implement efficient ECD policy, that is operational and effective in providing education to young ECD children, it is important that all role-players in the ECD be given appropriate training. It is essential that training is offered to practitioners on a wide range of topics. According to the Department of Social Development, Grade R practitioners require ongoing training and must be prepared to expand their knowledge (UNICEF, 2006:14).

Mehrotra (2005:54) is of the view that teachers should be engaged in continuous professional development; a point which Tyagi (2010:115) suggests would be more effective, if the professional development activities were sensitive to teachers' learning needs, and if such events could be considered as school-based. Cornelissen and van den Berg (2014:239) state that an on-going professional development of in-service teachers is paramount in upgrading the quality of education. Head of Departments (HoDs) and Senior Education Specialists (SEs) must continuously contribute towards the expansion of Grade R practitioners' knowledge by conducting in-house training and workshops in relation to pedagogical practices and knowledge.

As life-long learners, practitioners should, through in-service training, be assisted to build their self-esteem, confidence and motivation. Institutions should encourage practitioners to develop themselves. This will then be in line with developmental supervision which is one of the cycles of supervision to be discussed in chapter 3. Supervision as regarded by Glickman, Gordon and Gordon- Ross (2004:208), is a development where teachers, with the assistance of their overseers, take full accountability for instructional enhancement.

Aligning myself with, Glickman et al. (2004), the purpose of HoDs providing in-service and internal workshops to practitioners would therefore be to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out job responsibilities. The DBE (2014:3) states that, practitioners are required to be trained in curriculum differentiation in order to manage diversity in the classroom and ensure that each learner reaches her/his full potential. Early childhood development is a unique and focused arena where understanding of children's development is key.

Since practitioners will be dealing with children who are vulnerable and are at a very sensitive stage, their positive attitude and specialised training is required. The training needs to be of an on-going for the expansion of practitioner's knowledge (UNICEF, 2006:14). At the same time, practitioners need to be encouraged to register with accredited private colleges and universities for further development of the needed skills and methodologies. They may also be encouraged to register with credible institutions that offer ECD qualifications.

The next section elaborates on how practitioners in other countries are prepared for quality teaching.

2.13.1 Overseas Countries

2.13.1.1 New Zealand

According to Rous (2004:20), the New Zealand Government had to re-train all teachers who had Primary School Teaching Diploma qualifications for three years in Early Childhood Education. The government (New Zealand) believes that there is correlation between quality and teacher qualifications. That is why it had to invest in the retraining of its ECD teachers. Nadler (2013:3) indicates that training serves the purpose of helping employees learn what they should for the achievement of the organisational goals. That is why the New Zealand Government believes in retraining of teachers on a periodic basis.

2.13.1.2 Turkey

In Turkey, according to Kayhan and Kiliça (2011:3751), pre-school teachers are prepared through a training period of four years at a university to obtain a diploma. Higher institutions like academies, colleges and universities offer preschool teacher training. Secondary education with university entrance examination are said to be the requirements that have to be met by prospective preschool teachers for teacher training in Turkey and EU.

2.13.1.3 Austria

In Austria, according to Kayhan and Kiliça (2011:3750), pre-school teacher training takes five years of secondary level and two years of the post-secondary level. There

are certificates and diploma programmes being offered. The majority of staff in kindergartens and crèches in Austria boast a professional qualification in diploma.

2.13.1.4 China

According to Lobman, Ryan, McLaughlin and Ackerman (s.a.:14), professional education and teacher training of pre-school teachers in China consist of two divisions. Teacher preparation is the first and is provided through the state over a period of two to four years by institutions of higher education. Professional development is the second sector, provided by various levels of education, resource and referral organisations, school districts and community colleges to teachers.

2.13.2 African Countries

2.13.2.1 Uganda

Similar to South Africa, most ECD centres in Uganda experienced shortages of professional teachers. Saturday Vision (2012: n.p), identified a breach that has been generated by the shortage of manpower by the people who left school at primary level 7 and senior level 7 (called Grades in South Africa) who for some unknown reason failed to continue with education. According to this report, kindergarten teachers in Uganda are required to attend a two-year training course after having obtained six passes at O level. This is not found to be the situation in ECD centres.

2.13.2.2 Zimbabwe

Shortly Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980, the government introduced a number of play centres, crèches and playgroups. Initially the centres were organised under the auspices of the Community Development and the Women's Affairs Ministry to provide custodial services for children (Dozva, 2009:65). At that time, day care centres' care givers, were just picked from local communities without regard for education level or professional training (Dozva & Dyanda, 2012:57). The teachers received two weeks' training for which they received certificates of attendance.

There was still a need to provide professional training for ECE teachers. The National Early Childhood Education Policy (NECEP) was established in 1990. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport was given the accountability of custodial centres. Consultations with role-players on the status of ECD were carried out where it was

found that that ECD centres were not accessible to many children and the commission recommended that measures to increase access be implemented. A policy requiring primary schools to establish ECD classes for four-year and five-year-olds was instated by the Ministry of Education.

The implications of this policy were that more personnel with requisite training were required to serve these children; hence there had been initiation of professional training for specialist ECD teachers at diploma level in 2004 which was to be taken after completing four years of secondary education (Dozva & Dyanda 2012:58). Therefore, most of the ECD centres in Zimbabwe established in primary schools are managed by graduates who have completed their Diploma Programmes, (Dozva & Dyanda, 2012:62).

2.13.2.3 Kenya

According to Mbugua (2009: 220) ECD teacher training in Kenya, is regarded as a core activity of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST). This ministry (the MOEST) is in charge of certification of pre-school teachers. Equipping of ECD practitioners with necessary attitudes, knowledge and skills to stimulate their growth is emphasised in a two-year diploma course. Thus preschool education policy in Kenya sets up a double bind of requiring well qualified teachers, (Adams and Swadener 2000:393) as compared to South Africa.

2.13.2.4 South Africa

The ECD accreditation system in South Africa is managed by the South African Qualifications Authority. This qualification Frame work aims at regulating training offered at NGOs and tertiary institutions. In the case of South Africa, there are some Grade R practitioners who went through a three-year Pre- Primary Teacher's Diploma or a Degree in Pre-Primary Education, but these teachers are mostly found in the previously-privileged schools and in the North West Province.

In contrast, the previously-marginalised schools of Gauteng North District seem to have a shortage of professionally qualified Grade R practitioners. Grade R qualifications have been outlined in the new policy draft on minimum requirements on qualifications of teachers. The following are the various Grade R qualifications considered by (DBE, 2011c:6): higher certificate in Grade R (NQF Level 5 which has 120 credits, a one-year

programme), advanced certificate in Grade R (NQF level 6, also 120 credits, a one-year programme) and diploma in Grade R practices (NQF level 6, 360 credits, a three-year programme).

According to the DBE (2011c: 6), the diploma is the proposed initial qualification for this sector. Since 2001, the majority of practitioners in the marginalised schools in Gauteng North District have not studied for the ECD Diploma. Those practitioners, who were studying with some higher institutions for a professional qualification, would leave Grade R after they obtained their qualifications. Practitioners without professional qualifications seem to be facing the challenge of quality teaching.

More importantly as mentioned in paragraph 2.2, practitioners do need supervision and support from people who also have the knowhow of practices in Grade R. Some practitioners also receive training offered by Further and Higher Education institutions like the South African National Tutor Services (SANTS), the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) and other training institutions. Unlike in New Zealand, the practitioners in South Africa have to pay for their own professional qualification (NQF6). However, after completion of the qualification, they leave teaching in Grade R for Grade 1 to 3 classes.

They do this in order for them to earn a better salary. This practice may impact negatively the teaching in Grade R classes, as immediately after the practitioner has left; the school must look for a replacement. In many cases, the school will find someone who has no professional qualification or any experience in teaching Grade R, not even training on CAPS. This situation also requires further research on how the Grade R practitioners can be retained.

Although the Grade R classes are part of the primary schooling system, there is an assumption that primary school teaching (1 to 3) is more important than teaching in Grade R. This may be because of the stipend received by the practitioners as compared to the salaries of the Foundation Phase teachers. In 2015, DoE offered practitioners bursaries to be trained on the NQF Level 6 qualification which I believe is a way of equipping and preparing them to be able to offer quality teaching in Grade R classes.

Although according to DBE (2011c:45), the minimum qualification requirement is a diploma, South Africa's requirements for the appointment of ECD teachers are still very low, basically matric or NQF4. The low qualification requirement for appointment seems to affect the quality in the sense that the practitioners will be struggling with the implementation of CAPS, the use of appropriate teaching methods and clarification of content encapsulated in each subject. It is again a challenge that the supervisors will face as they will not be able to provide the training required as they themselves are still lacking in those areas.

Problems such as lack of preparation, use of correct teaching methods, implementation of the daily programme, creation of good learning environments may be encountered because of inadequate supervision and support of practitioners. If the organisation did not train its employees for the job they have to perform, it would then be improper to blame them for poor performance. While some practitioners are still waiting to be trained, what will then happen in these classes? Who will then provide them with appropriate supervision and support to equip them with the necessary skills needed?

I am of the conviction that South Africa should stick to a professional requirement as a prerequisite for appointment of practitioners in Grade R. In as much as the requirement for appointing Grade 1 to 3 teachers is Matric plus a three-year teaching diploma, the same requirements should be applied in the appointment of Grade R practitioners. According to Taguma et al. (2012:28), education systems need to invest in teacher education that is rigorous if it expects teachers to deliver excellent results. It also includes ECEC practitioners who are expected to possess specific knowledge and skills and competences needed in their classes. I agree with the statement in paragraph 1.3.3, that development and training are essential in supporting the organisation in the effectiveness of Human Resource Management.

The CAPS document as referred to in paragraph 2.3.2, of this study, elaborates on the type of teacher and learner envisioned by the NCS. It is difficult to see how learners envisioned by NCS and CAPS will be produced if practitioners themselves are not professionally trained. It is then my opinion that people who supervise and support practitioners should also acquire ECD training. Training is essential in preparing employees for improved performance. In other words, training is the best strategy to prepare practitioners for teaching responsibility they have to carry.

Although some HoDs in the Gauteng Province received training on Grade R Management in 2014 and 2015, providing supervision and support to the Grade R practitioners still seems to be a problem. There are still some HoDs who did not receive the training. The problem of untrained practitioners and HoDs may warrant further research to establish the content of training and its impact on supporting the practitioners in schools. I therefore agree with the New Zealand view that there is a correlation between quality and teacher qualifications.

It is my concern that if our practitioners are not professionally developed, it will affect the foundational value they ought to be laying. Ultimately there will be failure in building the type of learner that the NCS and the CAPS is envisioning.

2.13.3 Other Countries: Pakistan, Nepal, Argentina

In contrast to Zimbabwe, ECD teachers in Nepal are employed with a 10th Grade qualification, and those in Pakistan have basic training of ninety (90) hours and receive a graduating certificate (Right Beginnings, 2013:38). Post-secondary studies for ECEC employment in Argentina need four years as opposed to South Africa and Pakistan (Taguma, et al., 2012:47).

The ensuing section discusses the importance of professional qualifications as one of the aspects of quality standards in the South African Education.

2.14 THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION

There is a concern worldwide about the existence of poorly-qualified practitioners in ECD centres. To improve skills and acquire traits needed for a particular job, it is important that a professional qualification is obtained. To enter a specific career or profession requires that a person should have a professional qualification for the career s/he has chosen. For example, one cannot become a lawyer without taking a Legal Practice Course. The same would apply to any other profession including teaching, especially staff in the Early Childhood Development Centres. How do they (staff in the ECD) become teachers without being professionally trained to be ECD teachers? This also can be a matter of future research.

It is my view that professional qualifications in a specific career can help one to move to higher levels of his/her career and receive recognition in the chosen field. If educators

attained better qualifications, analysts are of the view that larger, more consistent educational gains would occur (Elliot, 2006:39). Australia holds the same point of view as the New Zealand Government by believing that increasing the number of teachers who obtained university degrees would translate into ECE services that are of high quality (UNESCO, 2006:59). It is, however, prudent to note that the Australian Government as a result, has designed ECE programmes of quality through the employment of qualified teachers who hold an Early Childhood degree.

Better qualified employees with professional training are important in determining the quality of production which also applies to schools as learning organisations. According to UNESCO (2006:59), expecting services that are of excellence from professionals, special training is required. In South Africa, lack of professional qualifications of practitioners is a serious problem which has implications for the quality of educational experiences in the Grade R classes. It may also be as a result of the practitioners lacking background information on instructional practices and teaching methodology in Grade R classes. If the supervision and support received by practitioners do not meet the requirements of a Grade R programme, this will have negative impact on the quality of pedagogical experiences in Grade R classes.

The problem will then be the quality of the end product which is the children. What type of children will they be to society; will they become the type of children envisioned by NCS and CAPS? Hence the supervision and support provided should be the kind that will meet the requirements of Grade R programme. The problem here can be stated in a question form: are the role-players providing supervision and support to the Grade R practitioners well equipped to do so? This question will be answered through data collection.

I would also argue that the classroom support provided by the Senior Education Specialist (SES) responsible for Grade R might also not be as regular as expected because of the number of schools that the SES must supervise and support. Noble and Macfarlane (2005:55) are of the view that since practitioners often have problems when facing classroom realities, they would need professional support that is ongoing. Other role-players like Institutional Developmental Support Officers (IDSOs), the School Governing Bodies (SGB), parents, principals and teachers also have a role in supporting curricular activities in Grade R classes.

It is in the interest of this study to establish the nature of supervision and support provided in predominantly black, school-based Grade R classes by the SMT for quality practices. From the literature studied, there is silence on the types of activities carried out by the immediate supervisors (HoDs) of Grade R practitioners in support of practices in the classroom. I am of the view that for the effective implementation of correct practices in Grade R, practitioners need to receive intensive training. It is also important that all stakeholders involved with Grade R be trained on Grade R practices so that they are well equipped to provide relevant supervision and support to the practitioners.

I also concur with the New Zealand's view by stating key to high quality ECE are well trained professionals who are well educated. It is my opinion that, within any organisation, there are standards to attain to uphold excellence and yield measurable outputs. In the context of this study, schools as learning organisations also should have established standards that are to be met in order to yield positive or high learner achievement. If South Africa as a country is concerned with quality provisioning in Grade R classes, how then do they define and measure quality in Grade R? What

would be the indicators to measure quality in Grade R classes? Therefore, in the ensuing paragraphs, I discuss the standards to be met in order to make learning beneficial to the Grade R learner.

2.15 INDICATORS TO MEASURE QUALITY STANDARDS AND MAKE LEARNING BENEFICIAL IN GRADE R CLASSES

According to Tarlov and Debbink (2008:190), standards that are easy to comprehend, clear and instinct are able to assist and build consumer engagement. To hold practitioners accountable for achieving certain results, it is important therefore to design standards to achieve the outcomes. Standards, according to Tarlov and Debbink (2008:191), can illuminate pathways toward best practice. Indisputably, it can be said that promoting quality standards in Grade R classes, requires highly skilled and dedicated practitioners, supervisors and all other relevant stakeholders. According to DBE (2008:28), quality in the delivery of services is promoted in the South African Schools Act, no. 84 of 1996. It needs to be done by monitoring the type of services offered and providing adequate levels of funding. In South Africa, funding has been

put aside for training of NQF Levels 4 and 5 practitioners and resourcing the Grade R sites.

According to Sharma, Sen and Gulati (2008:79), quality ECE should focus on five major quality aspects: ECE curriculum, staff/teachers, teacher-learner ratio, infrastructure and supervisory mechanisms. In South Africa, the DBE (2011c:5) established standards for providing for minimum quality for Grade R classes which cover the following areas: infrastructure, water and sanitation, indoor and outdoor space environment, workspace and recreational space, curriculum, routine activities, qualifications and professional development of teachers, teacher-learner ratio, programme and staff evaluation, legislation and regulations, special needs and administration.

The physical school structures, maintenance and structures that are fit to live in are all termed infrastructure (DBE, 2015:5). The DBE (2015) indicates that the space should be measured as per the maximum prescribed teacher-learner ratio (30:1) and should take seating into account. Some of the indicators most utilised by DBE, especially for regulatory and comparability purposes, are: class size, child-teacher ratio, material availability and teacher training (UNESCO, 2004:16). UNICEF (2006: 39-40) states the following as the minimum standards for ECD:

- Equipment and the surrounding areas where children play should be kept clean.
- The space allocated for each individual child is 1,5m² for the inside per child and 2m² per each child for the area outside the classroom. The surroundings should also accommodate children with disability;
- Efficient management, procedures and administrative and systems should be in place;
- HIV and AIDS admission policies for infected children must be drafted;
- Ongoing training should be provided to all practitioners;
- Children should be exposed to appropriate developmental opportunities.

Positive outcomes outlined in the South African curriculum sought by the education system need to happen in an environment that meet the standards that promote quality teaching and learning. (Barrett, Ali, Clegg, Hinostroza, Lowe, Nickel, Novelli, Oduro,

Pilly, Tikly & Guozing, 2008:207). To improve the quality of education in Grade R classes it is important that focus is placed on improving teaching. Focus should also be paid to factors like LTSM that could help change the quality in class. It is my view that supervision and support of teachers by relevant role-players play a major role in making sure that teachers (practitioners) work towards achieving the positive outcomes outlined in the South African curriculum.

2.16 TEACHER SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT IN FIRST WORLD COUNTRIES

Five countries (England, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea) which are regarded as high performing countries in education were selected by World Bank in 2009 to compare their school supervision systems at the primary and secondary levels in these five countries. According to Mahfooz and Hovde (2010:7), this review defines supervision as overseeing of individuals periodically and used evaluation outcomes to direct and enlighten action of those overseen. It also distinguished between, inspection, supervision, evaluation, and support.

The 2009 review states that some teachers (particularly new teachers) may attend induction programmes organised by mentors or experienced teachers. Mentoring periods and induction programmes have gained recognition for being able to improve teacher retention and quality. In South Africa, the question may be: who should do the induction of the newly-appointed practitioners? Should it be their immediate supervisors (HoDs) or the SESs, and do the responsible HoDs and SESs have experience in Grade R?

A bone of contention here is whether the SMTs are experienced in Grade R practices in such a way that they can provide supervision that will impact practitioners' classroom practices. Supervisors are expected to "provide instructional leadership to practitioners based on the increased attention given to the quality of ECD programme and curriculum and instruction" (Rous, 2004:266).

2.16.1 England

In England, since 1999, according to Mahfooz and Hovde (2010:4), all newly appointed teachers get a reduced teaching load and are assigned an experienced teacher as a mentor for the first year. According to Mahfooz and Hovde (2010:4), the supervision of

the principal is done either entirely by a local school board or by a municipal authority in consultation with a school board, depending on the governance structure of the school.

2.16.2 Finland

There is no formal teacher mentoring system in Finland. The existence of programmes such as mentoring and induction varies according to the municipalities. The arrangement of induction and mentoring sessions is the responsibility of local schools, Jokinen & Välijärvi, (2006:93). There are great differences between schools, in the ways how induction is implemented. According to Jokinen & Välijärvi, (2006), the arrangements for induction are random and often 85 schools fail to provide any induction at all.

2.16.3 Netherlands

The post of a "trainee teacher", introduced in primary schools in 2000, allows teachers to work part-time, and be supervised by a qualified teacher. Since 2006, schools have increasingly been responsible for training new teachers in collaboration with universities and in accordance with specific guidelines. In the Netherlands, principals are supervised by the municipality or private governing body of the school along with a "participation council" comprised of school staff and parents, mandated by law (Mahfooz & Hovde, 2010:4).

2.16.4 New Zealand

All newly appointed teachers are expected to take part in advice and guidance induction system, which includes assignment of a teacher-tutor to new teachers. The induction system is a part of teacher registration process run through New Zealand Teachers Council; teachers cannot receive full registration status without participating in the induction programme (Mahfooz & Hovde, 2010:4).

2.16.5 Korea

In Korea, mentoring of new teachers by experienced teachers during the first year is not mandatory, but is common in private schools. Public schools do not conduct the induction and mentoring sessions but they are done only in private schools. Public schools make up over 30% of schools in the country. Principals are hired and supervised by provincial offices.

School supervision in all five countries is thus concerned with the improvement of pedagogical results for learners. Each country studied has a unique history and culture system each with some elements of accountability and support (Hovde, 2010:8). Each country understands that it is important to provide support first before insisting that people become accountable. According to Hovde (2010:9), supervision can be more effective if it is coupled with feedback and suggestions on how identified weaknesses can be addressed. He also views building dialogue and a relationship of mutual trust between the supervisor and those who are supervised as a means of reducing the stress of the supervision process and opening the way to a more mature and constructive relationship.

2.17 SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT IN THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

2.17.1 Kenya

In Kenya, supervision of teachers according to Hovde (2010:22) has been assigned to head teachers. It is important to note that through deliberate emphasis on ways of instilling excellence, teaching and learning can be improved. Teachers are guided and influenced to seek to achieve the anticipated objectives and goals. Supervisors who understand the content of their functional role as supervisors in Grade R classes and do their work well are seen to impact positively on the work done by practitioners as the supervisee.

2.17.2 Botswana

As in South Africa, Botswana recently re-organised primary schools' staffing. The idea of the School Management Team was introduced in the new arrangements. According to Pansiri (2008:472), the SMT structure comprised the heads of department, deputy principal, school head, and Grade 1 and 2 senior teachers. According to the policy, SMTs in Botswana are critical forces needing specialised skills to institute change and quality in schools. The principal's role is then to make sure that all those who are in the structure are actively involved and functional. This means that all those who are in the SMT must continuously play their supervisory roles.

Supervision will, therefore, involve cooperation and communication between the staff members and their seniors as well as the colleagues within the organisation in order to bring about desirable results. Supervision of curriculum means that supervisors

regularly monitor and support the work of practitioners through class visits and developmental workshops to address challenges noted and workshops to address policy issues. It means giving professional assistance to those teachers who require it. The concern in this study is that supervision of practitioners seems to be carried out in schools without any proper guidance or formal structures

2.17.3 Ghana

Supervisors of instruction in Ghana, according to Baffour-Awuah (2011:7), are departmental heads, grade teachers, master teachers, directors of programme, subject coaches, institutional heads and their deputies, associate and assistant superintendents. The responsibility of school supervision is given to head teachers of primary schools referred to as principals in other African countries. Inspectors at primary school level are responsible for supporting teachers and inspecting the school facilities.

Baffour-Awuah (2008) indicates that this has been supported by the Director General of Education who said that through his observation he noted that quality education is dependent on how effective supervision is. It is for such reasons that the GES encourages empowerment of PTAs and SMCs.

2.17.4 Uganda

The purpose of supervision in Uganda is continuity in development of education system and that maintenance of high standards is ensured. The Education Directorate Standards is the one that ensures there are quality education services (The Republic of Uganda, s.a.).

According to Nolan and Hoover (2008:6), teacher supervision is aimed at refining the practitioners' quality of instruction and that of learners' learning. Researchers have conceptualised effective supervision as the collection of skills and knowledge to be possessed by supervisors. Effective supervision need supervisors with good interpersonal and technical skills, who are well-trained and knowledgeable about their task, and willing to provide staff with the needed guidance and support (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2004:2).

2.18 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Literature consulted clearly presented provision of ECD, ECD Policy and Grade R policy as well as the theoretical framework grounding the study. Teaching and learning in ECD, the imagined teacher and learner, and a discussion on quality teaching and the standards for quality teaching in Grade R classes were discussed. Literature confirms that the main purpose of teacher supervision is to improve instruction and learner attainment. It is therefore vital that Heads of Department as the immediate providers of supervision and instructional leaders as well as other relevant role-players are thoroughly equipped with the methodologies and practices in Grade R classes. The next chapter (Chapter 3) presents the supervision framework, its importance, functions, cycles and models.

CHAPTER 3:

DISCOURSE ON THE GRADE R PROGRAMME AND THE SUPERVISION OF PRACTITIONERS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 presented the review of literature related to the study. It included among others discussion on Grade R Curriculum and examples of teacher supervision and support in other countries as a way of putting supervision and support in context. This chapter also focuses on discourse on the Grade R programme, and the supervision and support for Grade R practitioners. The discussion includes teacher supervision and its benefits, functions, framework, phases as well as the models of supervision.

3.2 THE SUPERVISION FRAMEWORK

Before exploring the models of supervision, it should be noted that there are frameworks that guide how supervision models are constructed. The Little Oxford Dictionary (2004:184) explains the framework as a structure supporting something or a basic plan or system. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007:3) state that a framework for supervision is responsive to the present policy context of school renewal that requires the integration of bureaucratic aspects of supervision and human resource aspects that seek to invest in teacher learning and their capacity-building strategies. Sullivan and Glanz (2013:23) see bureaucratic supervision as associated with accountability and judgement about teacher's efficiency.

Ingram (2013:8), on bureaucratic organisational structure, claims that the culture of the company focusing on standards and rules is encouraged by information flowing from top-down, where operational processes are rigidly controlled with best- methodologies, close supervision and practices. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007:3) and Sullivan and Glanz (2013:23) propose the following as the three pathways that constitute the framework for school supervision:

- **Instructional capacity:** this refers to features of schools' organisational characteristics that support teaching and learning. Instructional capacity, according to Jaquith (2012:2), is the "collection of teaching resources needed to deliver high quality training to groups of pupils or scholars in a specific context". It is my opinion

that schools, as learning organisations, ought to therefore put in place structures or features to support teaching and learning. Supportive structures and provision of relevant resources will thus have a positive effect on the academic life of the school. In the context of this study, role-players providing supervision and support should be in a position to provide effective supervision and required resources for school-based Grade R classes to improve the quality of teaching.

- **Instructional quality:** this refers to the curriculum content grounded in the academic and professional disciplines, demanding in-depth understanding of basic information and skills and complex thinking. Role-players, particularly the SMT, therefore need to have in-depth understanding of the practices they are supervising and supporting. In addition, they must have in-depth understanding of the curriculum content in Grade R classes so that they are effectively equipped to support the practitioners in the implementation.
- **Student engagement:** This refers to the students' commitment and participation in learning. In this context, practitioners are referred to as students. At the same time they must show commitment in the work they do and must always be prepared to learn new things and take feedback given by supervisors positively.

Frameworks in supervision are very important as they provide the basis for the supervision and support models within an institution. In order to assist the schools in becoming successful; the supervisors need to establish a framework under which their supervisory task is carried out.

Role-players need to therefore travel through the three pathways mentioned in paragraph 3.2, namely instructional capacity, instructional quality, and student engagement. I consequently perceive good supervision and support as providing resources, interacting with subordinates, listening to their pleas and acting appropriately, giving feedback and conducting workshops and having basic understanding of curriculum and practices in one's department. I agree with the frameworks stated, the rationale being that involvement of supervisors in the three pathways will enable them to carry out the supervisory functions expected of them. It will help them to understand their basic function that will make them successful in their supervisory and role.

I therefore consider these aspects as being good support because the practitioners will open up to their supervisor and through the establishment of mutual relationships, the relationship of trust will be created. Practitioners will be in a position to approach their supervisee with any challenge they are confronted with. Given the problems that I became aware of, the framework of supervision may be of use in solving the problem of supervision and support at school-based Grade R classes.

3.3 FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION

According to Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007:5), supervision is best understood in terms of its roles and functions. Principals, Senior Education Specialist (SES), Heads of Department (HoDs) and other formally designated officials, play a supervisory role when conducting classroom visits to monitor and support practitioners in their practices. The task carried out by being in functions such as observing teaching and providing comments, assisting teachers to reflect on their practice, and doing demonstration lessons. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007:5) further indicate that supervisory functions help schools contribute effectively to authentic and rigorous learning.

Garmston, Lipton and Kaiser (1998) cited in Minnear-Peplinski (2009:26) name the following three different functions of supervision: to improve instruction, develop educators' potential for growth and improve organisations' ability to renew and grow itself. According to Zepeda (2012:3), teachers want leaders who are persistent about their leadership, who lead with a vision, focused on learning and development. They want supervisors who are supportive of the work they do and tackle the challenges they face. The Grade R supervisors are therefore required to create conducive teaching conditions; provide effective supervision and support teachers' need; and engage in the supervisory functions as part of their daily routine.

In view of this, the current supervisory situation in school requires answers to the following questions:

- will supervision and support provided in school-based Grade R classes improve teaching?
- how is supervision and support being provided by the SMT to the Grade R practitioners to improve the quality of teaching and learning?

- is there friction and confusion between practitioners and HoDs on what is to happen in Grade R, as practices in Grade R classes are different from those in Grade 1 to 3 classes?
- do role-players involved with Grade R understand the pedagogical differences that exist between Grade R classes and other Grades?

In my opinion, providing effective supervision and support to school-based Grade R practitioners involves a cyclical process that needs to be carried out by the supervisory team for these classes. The following section explores the supervision cycle in more detail.

3.4 THE SUPERVISION CYCLE

I would define the supervision cycle as the process that the supervisors are following to give direction to subordinates on the work they do for better and improved production within an organisation. School-based Grade R supervisors should therefore follow a cyclical process in providing supervision in their learning organisations. Zepeda (2007) cited in Minnear-Peplinski (2009:7) advocates for a combination of three aspects of supervision to best achieve the goal of improving teaching, namely: instructional supervision, professional development, and evaluation. Figure 3.1 below illustrates the arrangement:

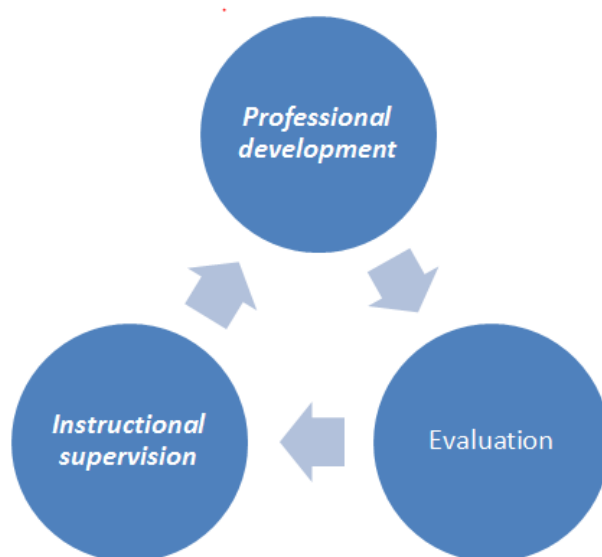


Figure 3.1: Zepeda's three aspects of supervision
Source: Minnear-Peplinski (2009:7)

Figure 3.1 above represents the three aspects of supervision. The bottom circle on the left indicate instructional supervision that must constantly be provided to subordinates. The top circle indicates that through instructional supervision subordinates will also get opportunities for professional development in the work they do. The bottom right circle indicates constant evaluation of the work done by subordinates to see if there is growth and development and to be able to provide feedback to subordinates.

3.4.1 Instructional Supervision

According to Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002:6) instructional supervision is an opportunity provided for teachers to develop their capacities towards contributing to student's academic success, while Charles, Kimutai, and Zachariah (2012:301) regard instructional supervision as aiding head teachers to improve, coordinate and maintain high standards of teaching and learning. People who take on the responsibility of supervision are, in most cases, part of the SMT within the organisation, which is tasked with the responsibility of leading and supervising subordinates in order to achieve organisational goals. Reflection in instructional supervision is vital. It involves a corresponding experience, whereby heads of schools and their teachers acknowledge and use their collective expertise to carry out self-appraisal, finding gaps in teacher competencies, knowledge and skills.

Through reflective dialogue, heads of schools and their teachers could continue thinking of that which could make their professional knowledge clear, and explore complex matters. It is the same in SA schools, where the senior management is tasked with the responsibility of leading and managing schools as organisations. In the South African context, schools are led by the SMTs as well as the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) who are responsible for governance issues. The SMTs comprise of the Principal, Deputy Principal, HoDs and Senior Teachers in some schools. The Department of Education (DoE) posits that the SMTs should be responsible instructional leaders and front runners in improving and putting school curriculum into practice (DoE, 2000a:1).

It is my opinion that, since the SMTs have been appointed by Department of Education to lead and manage the schools; they are then regarded as pedagogical leaders who are expected to lead in pursuit of the agenda of national policies and programmes.

They are also expected to pursue the Department's vision and goals. Pedagogical leadership, according to Pansiri (2008:477), indicates an approach where SMTs and teachers work together with the sole purpose of enhancing teaching and learner attainment. Rous (2004:125) believes that instructional leadership has a significant administrative function enabling the setting of standards for programming in education.

These standards consist of instructional practices essential to meeting the needs of children and curriculum and assessment (§2.9). The ability to provide instructional leadership to staff, according to Rous (2004:268), is one of the critical roles of supervisors in early childhood programmes. Where there is a formal context of teacher supervision collaborations teaching is bound to advance. Instructional supervision, therefore, according to Nolan and Hoover (2000), Zepeda (2000) and Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007), aims at fostering teacher growth and development.

The improvement of teachers' instructional approaches which, in turn, improves student academic achievement, is regarded by Wanzare and da Costa (2000:189) as the purpose of instructional supervision. All activities directed towards maintenance, enhancement and establishment of the process of teaching-learning in schools are embraced in instructional supervision. In the next paragraph the professional development of teachers which is relevant to this study since it is about teacher/practitioner development is discussed.

3.4.2 Professional Development

Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2004:370) regard professional development as the responsibility of those who supervise to improve instruction. They point out that professionals should study throughout their careers as one of their trade marks. Studying throughout one's career is called Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Teaching is seen as an essential trademark of the teaching profession (Earley & Bubb, 2004:3). McAlpine and Harris (2002:9) define professional development as "the individual's ability to conceptualise and carry out activities with further personal growth in teaching". In other words, continuing professional improvement can play a very imperative role in supporting all early childhood educators as they face their own increasing challenges.

According to Taguma et al. (2012:27), staff members who are working at the ECD are presented with opportunities to improve and advance their careers through in-service training or professional development (provided by their supervisors), “continuous education” or “professional training”. Salvi (2013b) as mentioned in paragraph 1.5.4 under training, claims that training is an effective tool to address any performance gaps and skills among staff. From the supervisor’s standpoint, “professional development emphasises providing teachers with opportunities and resources they need to reflect on their practices and share it with others” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007:216).

This also applicable to this study, where HoDs as supervisors are expected to provide practitioners with opportunities and resources they would need in their day-to-day practices in the classroom

3.4.3 Evaluation as a Measure of Accountability

According to Mazibuko (2007:84), evaluation can be seen as a way of holding schools accountable to funding agencies and taxpayers for the money they spend. Similarly, UNESCO (2007a:7) contends that, it is essential that both internal and external mechanisms of supervision form a coherent entity focussed at refining instructional practices in the classroom, and keeping the holistic perspective of supervision. When teachers are actively involved in their professional development and feel that support and control they receive are all directed towards their classroom improvement and being active partners in their professional development, such efforts have the greatest chances of success (UNESCO, 2007a:7).

In South Africa, the attempt by the government at national level to institute whole school evaluation in all provinces is commendable but the move was severely resisted by different teacher unions. The unions felt that whole school evaluation should be followed by teacher development programmes to improve instruction in schools. Another significant factor is that while following the cyclic process of supervision, it is equally important to note the different models of supervision that can be employed. There need to be models in place that supervisors within learning organisations can use to guide their supervisory function. The next paragraph presents a discourse on existing models of supervision.

3.5 MODELS OF SUPERVISION IN EDUCATION

The SMTs could choose to employ certain models of supervision in order to bring about improvement of instruction and learning in their learning organisations. The subsequent paragraphs present models of supervision which include: clinical supervision, developmental supervision, and artistic model of supervision, technical/didactic model of supervision, reflective model of supervision, peer coaching and action research.

3.5.1 Clinical Supervision

According to Mazibuko (2007:83), clinical supervision by nature intends increasing professional development and improving instruction through face-to-face contact with educators. Daresh (2007:316) states that it focuses on the improvement of teachers' instruction in the classroom which has been designed largely as a formative evaluation technique that stresses direct feedback from supervisors to teachers.

Clinical supervision according to Sergiovanni and Starratt, (2007:230) is often used when supervision is aimed at facilitating teachers understanding and improvement of their teaching, focused on teachers' issues, is direct, and run in the classroom. They regard clinical supervision together with coaching as strategies for supervision. Both strategies are able to "reach deep into academic life of the classroom" while at the same time focusing broadly on the developmental needs of teachers and those of students (learners).

Cogan (1973:9) cited in Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007:232) states two purposes of clinical supervision: firstly, to correct in-class neglect, expound and develop a system of in-class supervision powerful enough to give supervisors hope of accomplishing improvement in the teachers' classroom instruction. It is my view that the Grade R practitioners would benefit considerably from this type of strategy if their supervisors could be capacitated to carry out these responsibilities because significant improvements in the practitioner's classroom instruction would be accomplished. Interaction with the practitioners in class would make it possible for the HoD to correct the in-class areas of neglect and give support and guidance.

Clifford, Macy, Albi, Bricker and Rahn (2005:168) describe the following models that influenced early intervention programmes of clinical supervision:

- the original clinical supervision models, which the researcher has already discussed in paragraph 3.5.1;
- the developmental model;
- artistic model;
- didactic; and
- reflective model.

In the following paragraphs, a brief description of each type of model will be given. Examples of each model will also be given

3.5.1.1 The developmental model of supervision

Glickman, et al. (2001) cited in Alig-Mielcarek (2003:56) indicate that teachers in this model are in charge of their own development. The instructional supervisor is said to be responsible for creating independent and reflective teachers through non-directive supervision. A supervisor at the start of the supervisory relationship may apply high levels of support and direction. The teacher will then become a learner, with the supervisor identifying opportunities, encouraging him/her to take up many tasks as possible and to practice new skills as the central person in the classroom.

The purpose is to help learners become more independent, better decision-makers, and more effective problem solvers. The role of the supervisor here is to evaluate teacher's development, decreasing level of support over time (Clifford, et al.,

2005:169). I maintain that in striving to decrease the level of support to employees within the organisation, there should be good training in place as indicated by Masa'deh and Obeidat (2014:385) who state that training should transform peoples' existing situation by altering their attitudes, and accomplish outcomes that are intended to achieve defined goals.

Goals are the learning objectives resulting from training outlining what people will be able to do. These goals, according to Masa'deh and Obeidat (2014:385), should:

- be centered on the learner and not the trainer. The trainer should therefore not regard himself as an expert whose role is to impart knowledge to learners but has to be a guide for the learning process;
- actively engaging learners in the learning process through the use of relevant and thought-provoking activities to help with innovation of new skills, information, concepts and be able to recount what they have experienced and already know;
- train trainees in their appropriate real world. It is important that the focus of the programme should be both on theory and practice and on skills and concepts that can be used immediately by learners and
- measure the degree of the programme's success in realising the anticipated outcome.

3.5.1.2 Artistic (creative) model of supervision

The purpose of this model is to support students to recognise their abilities, strengths and refine their skills to increase efficiency. It also assists with understanding the essential feature of the situation being observed.

The supervisor's role is portrayed as understanding important aspects of the situation being observed and as that of a specialist in classroom life (Clifford, et al., 2005:168). In this model, the statement by Clifford, et al. (2005:168) regards the HoD as the expert in the classroom and can be assisted by this model in depicting her/his role as a supervisor.

The role of the HoD as a supervisor in the context of this study is to help practitioners identify their strengths and weaknesses in their day-to-day practices, assist and guide them in refining their skills for the betterment of their performance in class through interaction or collaboration with them and monitoring of their day-to-day practices.

3.5.1.3 Technical/didactic model of supervision

According to Clifford et al. (2005:169), the technical supervision strategy is the same in process as the work of the original clinical supervision models, because it follows a way of directing a planning conference, whilst it takes note of performance, and following up with a feedback conference. They further propose that a supervisor observes and

responds to what was discussed together at the planning conference. This model helps students refine teaching practices by providing behavioural feedback. The supervisor here is regarded as expert who possesses instructional knowledge. From the perspective of this study, the HoD then will have to meet with his/her subordinates where they will all be involved in the planning of what is to be observed.

After the planning, performance of practitioners will be observed by the supervisor in the areas they have agreed upon, where he/she is expected to give feedback to practitioners with regard to observed performance.

3.5.1.4 Reflective model of supervision

The purpose of this model is to help learners reflect on their practices. Supervisors assist learners to become reflective practitioners. They should involve learners in the discussions by engaging them in activities and asking those questions that will prompt them to question their practices and assumptions (Clifford et al., 2005:170). This model may be compared to peer coaching where other practitioners can assist their colleagues in reflecting on their work and give support where necessary. In my view, regular provision of feedback to the practitioners about their observed behaviours by their HoD as their supervisor will instil in practitioners a habit of reflection on their performances or practices.

Through reflective practices, practitioners will be able to reflect on their performance and come up with solutions to rectify, improve or work on their challenges. Reflection on performance will then encourage consultation with other colleagues in order to improve the weaknesses or challenges identified which will then result in peer coaching.

3.5.1.5 Peer coaching – refining classroom instruction

Coaching, according to Goldberg (2006:72), is a conversation between two people who have the same goal. Nolan and Hoover (2011:125) regard peer coaching as a way of overseeing teachers to help them in fine-tuning current skills, learning creative teaching strategies and critically applying their minds to find acceptable ways to deal with classroom-related challenges. Zepeda (2012:165) supports peer coaching as it gives opportunities to teachers to work with and learn from their peers and to get into creative discussions about teaching and learning from their own findings and that of their

students. According to Burkhauser and Melts (2009:2), peer coaching inspires investigation and shared learning as it relates to the changes observed in the teacher and how the student performs.

Teacher to teacher coaching, according to Zepeda (2012:166), can foster on-going and sustained examination of practices, with those closest to instruction, namely teachers. It is said to give ways to show teachers the methods, encouraged and motivated to pursue learning from what takes place in the classroom. As a result, overseeing does not lose the role it had from the beginning, which is to ensure that teaching and administrative areas receive the support they require (De Grauwe, 2008:4).

Grade R practitioners will meet with other teachers in the Phase for improvement of their practices and they will be receiving guidance and support from their peers which will at the same time promote the establishment of Professional Learning Communities.

Mazibuko (2007:96) is of the view that the head of the school should make sure that she/he knows and understands the role and function of each staff member at school, should from time to time check that programmes, people and processes offer the school the intended purpose. The evaluation will assist both the principal and the practitioners to determine if they are achieving the objectives of the school. It should be noted that Grade R practitioners in South Africa do not go through any evaluation like other Foundation Phase teachers. I therefore agree with Mazibuko in the sense that, as the leaders of a school, principals and HoDs need to make sure that they understand the role of each staff member and the activities they do in class to make sure teaching takes place.

It is important to review the practitioners' work constantly in order to improve practices. In South Africa, it seems that the majority of principals do not have a clue about what is happening in Grade R classes regarding curriculum. In most cases, when there is an issue related to Grade R curriculum, they would refer the matter to the HoD. As much as some of the management responsibilities are delegated to the HoD, there should be some instances where the principal is able to answer questions or deal with issues related to Grade R curriculum. In such instances, it brings forth an uncertainty as to whether the principal, as the head of the school, understands what each practitioner is

doing in the class. Mazibuko (2007:96) regards evaluation as an essential tool in accomplishing this.

However, it appears that principals will encounter some challenges in evaluating the practitioners as many principals seem to still be in the dark. If this task is to be accomplished, there is still much to be done in order to educate the SMTs within the school who are tasked with the responsibility of supervising the Grade R classes. According to the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) (2013:4), an Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is a quality delivery mechanism for teachers, created to evaluate teachers and help maintain high standards of work for individuals within a school. An IQMS is regarded as an important means of maintaining the high productivity levels in schools.

It would therefore be ideal to have a model that will guide supervisors as discussed in this paragraph. Such a model would also assist teachers to reflect on their classroom practices and plan for their future professional development.

3.5.1.6 The action research model – a reflective practice in teaching

McNiff and Whitehead (2005) cited in Zepeda (2012:247) define action research as a “common sense way of development that enables teachers to be in a position to ask relevant questions that result in their being better thinkers and educators, while Nolan and Hoover (2011:162) regard action research as a supervision activity and an excellent tool for educators to use in approaching the challenging world of teaching and learning. Glanz ((2000) cited in Nolan and Hoover (2011:162) indicates that in action research, teachers are engaged in an insightful method relating to their teaching and are assisted to look critically into factors that advance learner attainment

Citing an example regarding their own performances, practitioners will constantly reflect on their teaching practices and employ new strategies to improve the quality of their teaching. “If professional training is based on action research and results that are captured in document form relating to that research, then teachers’ voices can come out as strong, powerful and acknowledged throughout the education field” (Helterbran & Fennimore, 2004:270)

The Ethiopian government has put in place the General Education Quality Improvement Programme where school management and administration are taken as important

education quality intervention components. In South Africa, the overall school evaluation system is taken as the key quality assurance system in schools. It requires the school and external supervisors to provide an accurate picture of the current position of delivery and pinpoints the need to show how far the national goals and communities and public needs are met (DoE, 2001:3).

Whole school evaluation, according to the 2013 IQMS Draft Paper (SADTU, 2013:4), is an amalgamation of three quality management programmes that were integrated to constitute the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), signed as ELRC Collective Agreement No.8 of 2003.

As mentioned earlier, Grade R practitioners are not currently (2016) undergoing any evaluation; hence, the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is not applicable to them. Consequently, it is of importance that SMTs devise strategies that will assist them in supervising and supporting practices in Grade R classes to support practitioners in the improvement of quality of teaching in such classes.

It can, therefore, be concluded that these models are interrelated and overlap with each other, implying that it would not be possible to adopt one model and put it into practice without drawing on concepts from other models. For example, when we look at peer coaching, it links very well with the technical model which follows a process of planning a conference where planning for performance will be observed and followed up with feedback. Feedback will help practitioners perfect their teaching practices where they will be grouped according to certain attributes which promote peer coaching. Reflection will then be done through self-assessment and evaluation of members.

The evaluations will ultimately lead to teacher development because it would be pointless to do any evaluation unless it led to an improvement in results. At the same time, for evaluation to take place the supervisor need to have the necessary expertise. Before concluding this chapter, it is of importance that we discuss the quality of practitioners expected to teach the prescribed Grade R curriculum (Mathematics, Life Skills and Languages) by NCS and CAPS as stated in paragraph 2.9.

3.6 THE QUALITY OF PRACTITIONERS IN TEACHING GRADE R SUBJECTS

Hyde and Kabiru (2003:53) regard quality as the degree to which something lacks flaws, the degree to which demonstrable standards and principles achieve consistent

results satisfying to customers. For the South African government to produce the envisaged learners referred to in the CAPS, the DBE needs to train committed teachers who are enthusiastic to support the government on its undertaking. In order to ascertain the offering of quality teaching in Foundation Phase classes, teachers and practitioners would then need continuous supervision and support.

Since the quality of teaching is of concern to South African Government, the quality of teachers at Foundation Phase is key.

3.6.1 The Envisioned Teacher

The DBE has a vision of producing qualified teachers who are committed to their work, who care and have the ability to fill different roles outlined in the Norms and Standards of Educators (DoE, 2000b). The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) values teachers and regard them as mediators in the learning environment, who can interpret and design learning programmes and materials; serve as leaders, interpreters, scholars and researchers; and be lifelong learners, community members, citizens, assessors and learning specialists (DBE, 2011:9).

Teachers are therefore main contributors, in all areas, to the transformation process of the educational system in South Africa. Teachers have a key role to play in producing the learner envisioned in the curriculum. Since the CAPS require teachers who can satisfy the roles as explained in the norms and standards, supervision and support should help practitioners to meet the set criteria of the envisaged teacher. The most important role played by the teacher is to provide quality teaching that will enable them present the South African curriculum. Since the presentation of curriculum requires teachers who are qualified and competent, it is my opinion that supervision and support provided at Grade R classes should also assist in the professional development of Grade R practitioners.

Supervision and support should help the practitioner to meet the set criteria of the envisioned teacher. Similarly, the NCS and CAPS also state the type of learner being envisioned.

3.6.2 The Envisioned Learner

According to the DBE (2011b:5), the National Curriculum Statement Grades R- 12, aspires to produce learners who are critical and creative thinkers, who are able to work well within a group and, amongst other things, who are able to show an understanding of the world as related structures. They should also recognise that to be able to solve problems, you should understand that the contexts of problem solving do not exist in isolation. The values, skills and knowledge worth learning in South African Schools are expressed in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12. Curriculum as stated in DBE (2011a:4) aims at ensuring that children apply the values, knowledge and skills acquired in meaningful ways to their personal lives.

The quality of teachers (practitioners) who will be able to produce this type of learner is therefore very important. Based on the status quo where current practitioners in the previously marginalised schools often hold no professional qualifications, effective supervision and support plays a very important role in making sure that Grade R rules and policies are adhered to. The school management structures especially the SMTs are therefore expected to ensure that rules and policies are implemented.

3.7 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

The HoD as a supervisor constitutes part of the management structure within the school. Within the school management structure, there are internal and external role-players who have to support teaching and learning. Each role-player needs therefore to know and understand the supervisory and support roles s/he has to play.

Sullivan and Glanz (2005:27) states that for the purpose of improving teaching and growing learner attainment, supervision as the practice of engaging teachers in instructional discourse need to be engaged. I share the same notion that it is important that the supervisor be in constant engagement with his/her subordinates to guide, support and evaluate performance and give feedback that will yield improved results. Feedback is regarded as a component of communication which allows the person who sends the message to know how the message has been understood by the receiver.

Both the message sender and its receiver are expected to be given feedback either negative or positive. Furthermore, Rous (2004:267) states that the term supervisor is used by teachers to refer to people who are accountable for overseeing programmes

and curriculum execution. Professional supervision is a voluntary interaction between the supervisor and the supervisee with a view to assisting the latter to effectively perform his or her tasks (Calvert, 2014:146, Davys & Beddoe, 2010:4). Supervisees receive guidance and support to reflect and discuss issues they are concerned about and to address problems (Driscoll & O'Sullivan, 2007:32; Weils, 2008:21).

Tyagi (2010:113) states that supervision is a process of providing guidance and professional support to teachers. Gupta and Aggarwal (2007:65) identify two types of supervision in a school system, namely; management and instructional supervision that are school-based. According to Tyagi (2010:112), the former is related to the support and guidance teachers receive to improve the process of teaching and learning and also their specialised development. The latter refers to the management of the administrative, financial, infrastructure and school quality activities. The next sections highlight the roles and responsibilities of the management structures in Overseas and African countries.

3.7.1 Overseas Countries

According to Rigall and Sharp (2008:12), in Sweden at local level, municipalities are the ones who make decisions on how the schools are run as well as the staffing and resourcing whereas in New Zealand; an amount of control and self-government over the organisation and management of the school is the accountability of school governing boards.

Education in England is largely decentralised and the accountabilities are passed to voluntary bodies, churches, Local Authorities (LAs), head teachers and governing bodies of schools (O'Donnell, et al., 2007, cited in Rigall & Sharp, 2008:2). LAs are also said to be responsible for appointment and support of governors in relation to the structure of education. According to Rigall and Sharp (2008:3-4) what goes on within the school is the responsibility of head teachers and governors. In addition to overseeing that primary education is maintained in schools, three or four- year old children's parents are allowed to ask for the opportunity of providing their children with a temporary place in the form of pre-school. This is one of the LAs' functions.

The opportunity can be offered through private, independent, or voluntary bodies, nurseries outside the maintained sector or attached to primary schools. Rigall and

Sharp (2008:3-4) further explain that the 2006 Eurydice report indicates that provision for children aged between three to five years in England is found in classes in primary schools, voluntary and private settings and state-maintained nursery schools.

3.7.2 African Countries

Arrangements for management of ECD education in African countries vary widely. According to Mugweni and Dakwa (2013:1), most ECD centres in Zimbabwe are attached to schools run by either district or urban councils.

In Nigeria, ECD centres are found in church premises, industries, university campuses, business and organisations' premises, colleges, or residential buildings. Because of the high demand for ECD centres by parents, there has been great expansion in the establishment of such centres. ECD facilities in Nigeria are owned by private people, and seem to be not monitored which requires the Ministry of Education to implement the procedures laid down by the Federal Ministry of Education in regard to the provisions of early Childhood Education (Sooter, 2013:174 – 176).

According to UNICEF (s.a.), there are no government-run ECD centres in Zambia which means that there is no government oversight or control.

In Tanzania, a multi-stakeholder arrangement is in place, in which a UNICEF Tanzania ECD team works in partnership with the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children; the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Vocational Training and the Ministry of Education with the Tanzania Early Childhood Development Network to advocate for and provide technical support in the development of policies and plans for ECD services as well as monitoring and support (UNICEF, 2011).

In the following paragraphs, I review the roles and responsibilities of internal and external role-players of the South African school management structures which play a vital role in addressing the problems of supervision and support to Grade R practitioners.

3.7.3 The South African Situation

In South Africa, the SMT is the school management structure consisting of the principal, deputy principal and the HoD, with the School Governing Body (SGB) being responsible for governance issues in the school. External management structures are

the Circuit Managers, the SESs and the Institutional Development Support Officers (IDSOs) who play different roles in support of administrative and curricular activities to improve the quality of teaching.

According to the DBE (2006:13), the primary role of all officials in the Gauteng Department of Education is to ensure that quality educational programmes are implemented for all learners. Quality educational programmes are characterised mainly by effective teaching. For effective teaching to take place teachers need to be supervised and supported by their seniors. The next paragraphs will present the roles and responsibilities of officials (IDSO and SESs) in Gauteng Department of Education.

3.7.3.1 The roles and responsibilities of IDSO

For the purpose of this study, I discuss only those roles and responsibilities that are relevant to curriculum support according to the DoE (2006:8-28). The roles are:

- to provide schools with broad curriculum support, ensuring that the workloads of educators are allocated in line with the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 PAM Chapter A, Part 3 to 4.5;
- ensuring that educators are deployed in subjects taking into account their qualifications, experience and ability and in such a manner so as to serve the interest of the learners.

The IDSO's role is also central in maintaining high levels of school leadership and management, thus creating an enabling environment that supports collaboration in which quality educational programmes are supervised and supported. Support for teachers relates to offering them professional development activities that are school-based, which identify gaps in the teaching–learning process. This includes mentoring and counselling. Support can also take the form of providing the teachers with Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) to enhance teaching and learning activities.

It can also be in the form of infrastructure, like playground equipment and a learning environment for psychomotor development (Tyagi, 2010:114), which is very important for the Grade R teachers to be able to create a conducive and stimulating environment for the learners. The IDSO has to make ensure that practitioners are provided with the necessary LTSM to enhance their teaching.

IDSOs, on request by schools, also are to induct newly appointed SMTs into their new job functions; assume accountability for the academic performance of schools; liaise with the schools on behalf of the district / provincial office with respect to information that may be required from time to time; collect information from schools on behalf of the district/provincial office; evaluate the physical infrastructure of the Grade R learning environment; and communicate to the relevant section of the Department in terms of the needs in the Grade Rs' Sections. HoDs in their supervisory and support functions also need to make sure that practitioners create environment that are conducive for teaching and learning.

3.7.3.2 Role of senior education specialist (SES)

SESs according to the DBE (2011c:36) are to enable curriculum delivery through backing in various ways. The Grade R SES or Subject Advisor as called in other provinces is expected to specialise in their field, demonstrating both depths of content knowledge and training. The SES/Subject Advisor, according to DBE (2011:41), must:

- supervise, support and monitor Grade R curriculum execution by practitioners,
- source and provide appropriate LTSM to advance performance of practitioners and learners in the subject;
- guarantee that practitioners have all the essential curriculum and assessment documents for the subject;
- make sure that there is effective delivery of the Grade R curriculum in the classroom; by strengthening practitioners' content knowledge; and organising relevant/related co-curricular activities.

The DBE (2011c:41-44) states some of the core duties and responsibilities of the SES as:

- having understanding and in-depth familiarity of official policy/curriculum documents with respect to their subjects. If SESs process the knowledge and understand policies, they will be able to arm HoDs and practitioners with knowledge of Grade R practices during school visits;
- keeping a data base of all the practitioners in need of support;

- drawing up a supervision, support and enhancement strategy for all practitioners centred on examination of their requests;
- conducting school visits to each school at the start of the year to do needs analysis
- holding orientation meetings with appointed practitioners,
- visiting schools during third term focusing on:
 - practitioners that were not performing satisfactorily;
 - improving learning outcomes by instituting a convincing course of action;
 - collaborating with practitioners and HoDs on the academic improvement plans including plans for practitioner growth;
 - checking that practitioners have the required support material;
 - establishing depth and sequencing and pace of curriculum coverage;
 - comparing learner activities to practitioners;
 - planning and ensuring accessibility to and use of relevant assets;
 - assessing quality of classroom interaction during teaching time,
- identifying learner difficulties and the school systems to offer corrective programmes;
- conducting developmental training for practitioners; and
- supporting the establishment of clusters of schools with common challenges to encourage collaboration and sharing of best practices amongst practitioners.

3.7.3.3 Roles of SMT

Before discussing the different roles played by the individual members within the management structure, a diagram illustrating the organogram of the South African schools' management structure is presented below in figure 3.2.

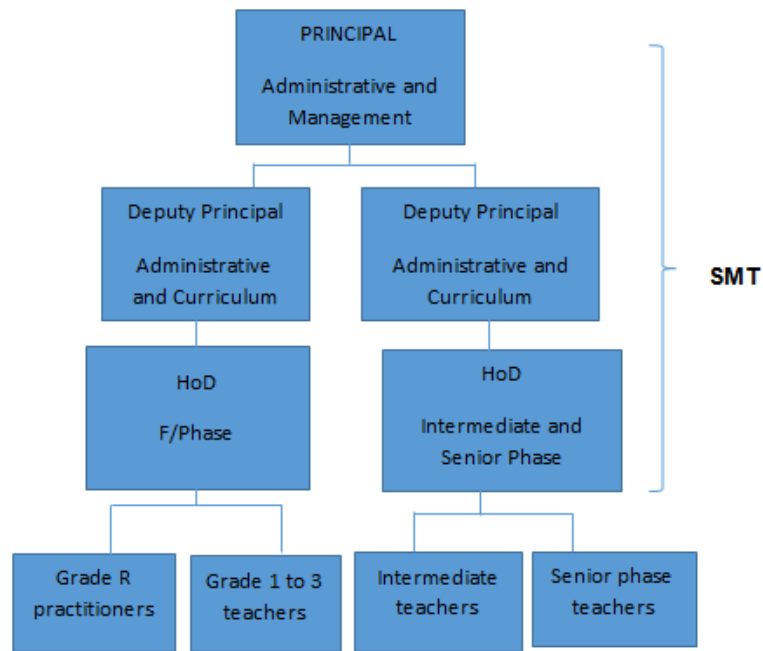


Figure 3.2: School organogram

Source: Adapted from DoE (2000a:2)

The structure above represents the management structures as exists in South African schools. The first block in the structure represents the principal who is the head of the school. He is the accounting officer responsible for the management, administrative and governance activities of the school. The second block represents the deputy principal who is the assistant to the principal. In some schools, there are two deputies whose responsibilities can either be curriculum or administrative functions depending on the needs of the school. The third row of blocks represents the Heads of departments. Schools can have more than two heads of departments based on the subjects offered at a school.

Foundation Phase also can have more than one HoD whose responsibilities are divided based on Grades. For example, one HoD can be responsible for Grade R and one and the other for Grade two and three. The last fourth row of blocks represents Grades and phases in the school. In the next paragraphs, I present the roles of each management structure in the organogram and also include the roles of SGBs to indicate the role they play in the school.

3.7.3.4 The roles of heads of department

The roles of an HoD as a supervisor, according to Marczely (2002:77), is to serve as a coach in helping teachers to set instructional objectives in keeping with the district's curriculum and establishing classroom conditions conducive to the incremental achievement of learning. After observing the teacher in practice, the supervisor should give the practitioner feedback in order to assist the teacher in determining what worked and what needs adjustment, based on what has been observed.

The general aim of the job of the HoD (DoE, 2001:6-9) is to:

- assist with administration: this requires that the HoD assists with the planning and management of resources and grades overview (what is to be taught in a grade in a particular term);
- engage in class teaching as per workload;
- give advice to the principal on work allocation to staff and be in charge of the effective running of the Department.
- ensure that the education of learners is supported by arranging extra-curricular events that are relevant.
- be in charge of the subject or phase including Grade R supervision and monitoring;
- co-ordinate assessment of all the subjects in that Department;
- provide direction on the latest approaches to the subject, methods, techniques, content to be taught and remedial work,
- exercise control in their respective departments which Makhoba (2003:93) regards as a vital task of Heads of Department because they are expected to check on the work of their subordinates,

The Department of Education expects HoDs to control practitioners and learners' work in the department; submit reports to the principal, mark schedules, tests and examinations papers and memoranda, DoE (2001:6-9). In the context of this study, Foundation Phase HoDs are expected to control the work of practitioners under their supervision. Control means they have to check the practitioners' preparations and

assist where needed, check the activities given to learners and whether learners are being assessed correctly. Meier and Marais (2007:9) regard control as all the methods applied to measure the quality of activities.

According to Meier et al. (2016), the regulatory purpose warrants that the ECD centre is on the correct track to attaining its deliberate goals. It is my opinion that control alone without corrective action will not yield fruitful results to provide support in the form of guidance to teachers and head teachers during supervision visits. This requires:

- modalities of support such as individual tutoring, demonstration lessons (simulation), in-service programmes and organisation of peer learning (peer collaboration) should also be considered;
- liaison between the authorities in the education system (UNESCO, 2007a:9);
- communication and collaboration with co-workers in order to conserve good teaching progress and standards among the learners;
- extracurricular activities to develop the Department through collaboration with educators (practitioners) of other schools and to engage in proactive leadership (Daresh, 2007:4), which means planning ahead and anticipating proper ways of behaving in advance, not simply reacting after a situation forces a response.

To sum up, the role of the Head of the Department, according to Kerry (2005:68), is a transformational one, in which they have to capture the concern and thoughts of followers. They help the followers (practitioners) to accomplish their work in the general vision or mission of the organisation. They should also motivate individuals to do better and to support the team and its goals with enthusiasm.

3.7.3.5 The principal's leadership role

In South Africa, according to the DoE (2010:178), the principal is responsible for the management, organisation, leadership and day-to-day running of a school. He/she is the accounting officer and is responsible to the school board for the control of school funds. He is also required to ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place at the school. He is expected to perform other duties as may be prescribed by the Minister or delegated to him or her by the school board.

For effective teaching and learning to occur, it needs sound leadership and management. By sound leadership and management, I mean people in the leadership who understand their role and make every effort to work towards a common organisational goal. A sound leadership and management team at the school would be expected to ensure high quality teaching and learning. The quality of education is determined, to a large extent, by the “strategies employed in curriculum supervision by school managers” (Walton, 2006:14). Mazibuko (2007:71) maintains that principals should ensure that individuals in the school understand their roles and executes them well.

Principals as accounting officers and instructional leaders play a pivotal role in supporting curricular activities within the school. They, together with the IDSO and the SGB, should have welfare of teachers, learners and the school at heart. GDE (2004:21) refers to them as instructional leaders who have to monitor progress in the implementation of educational policies by providing curriculum direction to the staff through motivating and mentoring them.

On the need for school-based instructional supervision, Tyagi (2010:113) claims that a re-evaluation of supervisory systems and procedures is necessary for them to respond to quality issues that are mounting in school education, and for the continuous professional development of teachers, with a view to improving teaching and learning. Since the school principal’s aim should be improving instruction in order to ensure better education, the learners’ progress would be the final indicator of the success of his or her work.

Manwadu (2010:2) is of the view that the principals’ task of monitoring and supervising teachers should be evaluated for its effectiveness in the classroom’s instructions and learning. Her opinion is that to address the issue of quality education, realities of curriculum supervision in the primary schools should be analysed. Teachers should be assisted by the principals to rearrange and interpret the curriculum.

Tyagi (2010:114) suggests that a head should possess technical skills and knowledge to delegate powers to his or her assistants such as departmental heads or groups of teachers. The challenge in South Africa is that the principals seem to have little or no knowledge of Grade R instructional practices. It will therefore be a challenging task for

the principals to carry out that role which calls for their transformational thinking. More is still to be done to also equip principals with the skills and knowledge of Grade R (Kobola, 2007:36). Kobola further states that, principals as instructional leaders should ensure that they give priority to teaching and learning as the central drive of the school.

Cornelissen and van den Berg (2014:239) affirm that the leadership of the school's head is reflected in his/her ability to delegate authority, consult with and recognise teachers, guide and help the teaching-learning process, mobilise resources and support the school.

3.7.3.6 Role of school governing bodies

The GDE (2005:16) states that the SGB or Community Site Management Team (CSMT) is responsible for acquisition of LTSM and the provision of a well-resourced teaching environment. The SGB/CSMT is expected to keep records, monitor and report on the provisioning and obtaining of the LTSM and its retrieval system. In other words, the SGB/CSMT, including the practitioners, is responsible for creating learning environments that are conducive for teaching and learning. HoDs, in their supervisory and support function, should communicate the Grade R needs to the principal who will, together with the SGB, make sure that the needs are addressed especially when it comes to resources and maintenance of infrastructure.

3.7.3.7 Joint responsibility

In South Africa, the principal, IDSO together with the SGB are responsible for appointments of new practitioners. The principal ensures that the school timetable is aligned to National/Provincial requirements, taking into cognisance the national curriculum requirements and the stipulated notional time. I have noted during school visit feedback meetings with colleagues, that in most cases, practitioners are not properly executing routine activities in the Daily Programme. This behaviour by practitioners seems to continue without the supervisor (HoD) correcting it because of the existence of the gap in understanding practices in Grade R.

In most cases, incorrect practices will only be rectified by SESs responsible for Grade R during school visits. The Grade R Daily Programme seems to be ignored or thought of as not important. It is very important for the SMT to familiarise itself with the Daily Programme in order to understand how the day unfolds in these classes and its relation

to routine activities and the notional time. The notional time is the time stipulated in the CAPS document indicating the hours that Grade R learners have to spend at school per week and per day. It also indicates the hours for each subject per day.

It appears that there are still some challenges in monitoring some of the responsibilities mentioned in this Section. It has been noted in a number of occasions in some schools that the issue of teacher learner ratio is not receiving the required attention. Learning environments also need some attention in some schools.

3.7.3.8 Responsibilities of practitioners

Having discussed different structures in ECD, their roles and responsibilities, it is also of significance to discuss the roles of colleagues within the school as they are also seen as the source of support to each other and promote peer assessment and learning. Teachers and practitioners within the school need to collaborate with each other in order to share and learn from one another. Sergiovanni and Starrat (2007:5) are of the opinion that if principals and other formal supervisors can fulfil their responsibilities, a culture of supervision and support that includes continuous learning can be built within a school. Within this culture, teachers and practitioners will become active members of the communities of practice.'

Communities of practice are formed when group of people (teachers) with the same interest come together in a common effort to help each other in advancing student/learner academic achievement. Coburn and Stein (2006) cited in Clasquin-Johnson (2011:49) view communities of practice as a way of teachers supporting each other, observing each other's instructions, jointly watching and analysing visual tapes of their classrooms and supporting them in developing their lesson plans.

3.8 TEACHER SUPERVISION AND ITS BENEFITS

To improve instructional practice in Grade R classrooms, it is very important to institute support at the school which will benefit teachers who are striving to improve quality instructional practices. Novices and veterans both benefit from frequent and meaningful interactions with other colleagues. These actions will establish a collaborative culture among the practitioners and their colleagues which, according to Smylie and Perry (2005) cited in Clasquin-Johnson, (2011:48), will enable them to enhance their classroom performances and expand their understanding.

Nolan and Hoover (2008:6) refer to teacher supervision as an organisational function concerned with teachers' development that leads to the enhancement of teacher performance and better student results. Effective supervision has been conceptualised by researchers as the collection of knowledge and skills that supervisors should possess. According to Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2004:2), supervision that is effective requires personnel with interpersonal and technical skills, who are ready to support and deliver the necessary guidance to the educational staff.

3.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Chapter 3 presented the discourse on frame work, functions and the cycle of supervision. Discussions on models, quality of practitioners on teaching Grade R, school management structures as well as teacher supervision and its benefits were discussed. The next chapter will present the research methods and procedures of data collection.

CHAPTER 4:

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF DATA COLLECTION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed supervision and support for Grade R practitioners in detail. The discussion included the frame work, functions, circle, benefits and models of supervision. The purpose of this chapter is to give an explanation of the research methodology and data collection processes followed when investigating the supervision and support provided at school-based Grade R classes of the Gauteng North District. The study needed to answer the following research question:

“What is the nature of supervision and support provided at school-based Grade R classes of the Gauteng North District”?

The aim of the study is to establish the nature of supervision and support provided to practitioners at school-based Grade R classes for quality teaching.

The methodology used to achieve this aim is discussed below.

4.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Cohen, et al. (2001) cited in Maree, et al. (2010:31), indicate that understanding of the research is informed by how it is viewed, what is viewed and that the research is about the world. Researchers therefore have different ways of conducting research. Their assumptions about the nature of knowledge and social world are diverse. The type of research and its design is influenced by these assumptions, which have played a critical role in influencing the researcher in conducting this study.

Johnson, et al. (2004:275) describe the plan a researcher uses to answer the research question(s) as an outline of the research design, while Kumar (2012:94) refers to it as approach or investigation used to answer research questions. According to Mouton (2011:56), the focus of the research design is on the nature of study the researcher has planned and what kind of results the researcher is aiming at. Nieuwenhuis (2010:70) also defines research design as the methods for gathering data that move from fundamental assumptions to specifying the data-gathering techniques and data

analysis to be used. He describes it as an approach that also specifies the choice of respondents.

This chapter presents the research design that was planned. In this study, the qualitative approach was adopted as indicated in the following paragraphs.

4.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Based on the definition above, I chose the qualitative research design as I intended to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in the real-world settings. The aim of qualitative research studies as maintained by Creswell (2010:56) is not to search for unexpected relationships but rather to probe for deep understanding of a phenomenon. I therefore align myself with Maree (2010:79) and Jha (2008:45) who maintain that qualitative research involves a realistic approach to its subject matter.

According to Jha (2008: 45), this means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings participants bring to them. Qualitative research, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) cited in Gephart and Robert (2004:454-455) is a “multimethod research that uses an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter”. They further indicate that qualitative research emphasises the qualities of entities, the processes and meanings that occur naturally. Qualitative research sets out to penetrate human understanding and perceptions and the construction thereof. For in- depth investigation, attention is given to a sample that is scientifically selected from the research population.

4.4 THE RESEARCH SITES

In this study, the population consisted of five schools from three circuits of Gauteng North District for which I am responsible as a Senior Education Specialist. The Gauteng Province (shown on Figure 4.1 below) has 15 District education offices. The District under study is called Gauteng North District, one of the 15 districts. Officials operate from the District Offices. Circuit A and B comprise of eight previously- disadvantaged schools each, while Circuit C consists of only four 4 schools.

The South African map is presented below to show the location of the province of research in the country.

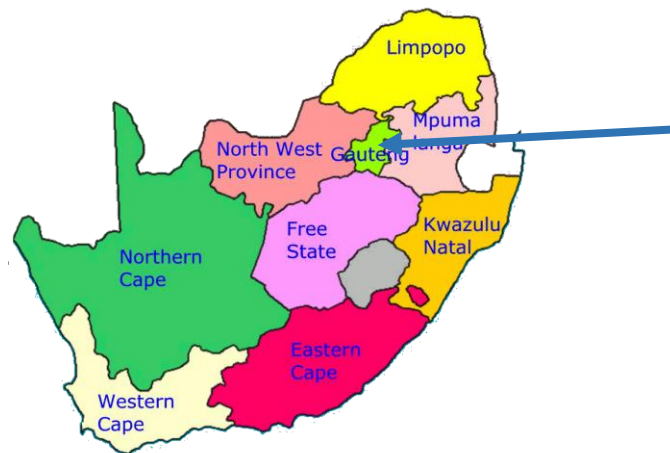


Figure 4.1: Provinces in South Africa

Source: Schamberger-Young (s.a.)

The map above reflects the nine provinces of South Africa reflected in different colours. The blue arrow points to Gauteng Province reflected in Lime green colour.

Since schools were sampled according to the size of the circuit and their socio-economic status, in Circuit A, one school from the rural and one from the semi-rural areas were sampled. In Circuit B, one school from a semi-urban area and one from a farm area were sampled. Only one school from a farm area in circuit C was sampled. All the sampled schools have Grade R sites which form the first year of the Foundation Phase at School. The sampled schools are therefore relevant as they reflect elements salient to this study. As stated by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2008:109), I also ensured that access to the sample was practicable. The five sampled schools were thus used as the sites from where the participants were purposefully selected.

4.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

“A research population is normally a large collection of persons or objects that is the main emphasis of a scientific inquiry. The research is done for the benefit of the population. However, due to the huge sizes of populations, researchers repetitively cannot investigate every individual in the population since it is too costly and timewasting” (Hassan, 2015:1).

According to Cohen, et al. (2008:100), researchers are often prevented from acquiring data from the entire population by factors such as accessibility, time and expense. According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2001:175), selective sampling is used to select from the population, specific people who are enlightened and are very clear about the topic of interest. Johnson et al. (2004:215) describe purposeful sampling as a non-random sampling procedure in which the researcher solicits individuals with specific characteristics to take part the investigation. For the current study, a purposeful sample of 33 participants was selected from the schools. Participants included five principals, five HoDs; eight practitioners, two from each of the four schools and one practitioner from one farm school which had only one class of Grade R. Of the 33 participants, 14 participated in the focus group discussions comprising seven people each.

4.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

In order for me to get information on a broad scale, focus group interviews of Grade R practitioners and HoDs were also conducted. Not only was data collected through interviews and observations, but also through document analysis. The research instruments for this study consisted of individual and group interview schedules, observations and document analysis. Individual interview schedules were used to collect primary data from the sampled practitioners, Heads of Department and Principals. When conducting individual interviews with practitioners, it was also necessary for me to know the profile of practitioners in order to establish how much support they would need to conduct quality work in their Grade R classes.

4.6.1 Pilot Study

Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001:1) use the term “pilot studies” to refer to a specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview schedule, mini versions of a full-scale study (also called 'feasibility' studies) and state that “One of the advantages of conducting a pilot study is that it might give advance warning about where research protocols may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated where the main research project could fail”.

A pilot study was conducted in the three circuits of the Gauteng North District to establish the reliability of the methods selected. One school per circuit was purposefully selected. Conducting the pilot study was to make sure the research participants would comprehend questions in the way I expected them to. According to Polit, et al. (2001:35), the pre-testing exercise of the research tool is “aimed at judging the reliability of the research tools by estimating how well the items reflect the same hypothesis, yielding similar results and assessing the proposed data analysis techniques in order to uncover potential problems”.

The purpose of the pilot was to establish whether the methodology used would yield expected results. In a broader sense, according to Kumar (2012:194), it refers to the ability of the research instrument to find out what it was designed to do.

The instrument was piloted on a group of subjects similar to my study population (Practitioners, HoDs and Principals). Ethical considerations were also observed. Sample elements involved in the pilot study were conveniently sampled. Three people from each school were involved in the pilot study i.e. the Principal, HoD, and one practitioner. The pilot study was intended to test the validity and reliability of interview questions as well as obtaining feedback about the tool from the participants. The qualitative approach was used and data collection was through interviews and focus group discussions.

4.6.2 Classroom Observation of Practitioners

Nieuwenhuis (2010:83) refers to observation as a logical process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them. He states that observation is used to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the phenomenon being studied. De Walt and De Walt (2002:92) state that the goal of participant observation is to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible. In this study, non-participant classroom observation was used.

According to Kumar (2012:140), observation can be systematically used to collect primary information. The information can be collected through watching and listening to interactions that are taking place in a particular environment. DeMunck and Sobo (1998:43) outline the advantages of observation as allowing for elaborately meticulous

description and access to the "backstage culture" of the setting in which the study is taking place. De Walt and De Walt (2002:8) add that observation improves the quality of data collection and interpretation and facilitates the development of new research questions or hypotheses.

I therefore employed observation to collect data because of the advantages mentioned above. Activities observed included routine activities, classroom arrangements and the use of relevant resources. There was no involvement in the activities of the group and I remained a passive observer watching and listening to activities and taking notes in line with what Kumar (2012:141) recommends. One class from each of the selected five schools was observed.

The purpose of the classroom observation was to note practitioners' classroom practices, especially how they carried the routine activities, and to establish if they received supervision and support from their immediate superiors namely the HoDs. Table 4:1 below presents the practitioner's observation schedule that was used.

Table 4.1: Practitioners' observation template

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT AT SCHOOL-BASED GRADE R CLASSES OF THE GAUTENG NORTH DISTRICT		
A: WHAT WAS OBSERVED	B: QUESTIONS GUIDING THE OBSERVATION	C: RATIONALE BEHIND WHAT WAS OBSERVED
1. ROUTINE ACTIVITIES IN THE DAILY PROGRAMME	Are activities in the Daily Programme supervised? Is there integration of content for the development of variety of skills?	Every routine activity in the Daily Programme is important and practitioners need to supervise and guide all the integrated activities. They also have to take note of the teachable moments that arise during free play.
2. PLANNING AND PREPARATION OF THE LESSON	Has the practitioner developed own lesson plan from the lesson plan provided by the DBE?	Although practitioners are provided with lesson plans, it is very important that they also have a separate plan in order to familiarise themselves with the content and to know which relevant resources they should prepare in advance as well as contextualising the lesson plan.
3. CLASSROOM ARRANGEMENT	Are there relevant resources displayed and used on the Theme table? Are the	It is important that relevant resources to the theme are displayed and labelled

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT AT SCHOOL-BASED GRADE R CLASSES OF THE GAUTENG NORTH DISTRICT		
A: WHAT WAS OBSERVED	B: QUESTIONS GUIDING THE OBSERVATION	C: RATIONALE BEHIND WHAT WAS OBSERVED
AND USE OF RESOURCES	resources labelled as required?	since the learners are still learning at a concrete level.
	Are the indoor and outdoor areas arranged accordingly, resourced and well maintained?	A stimulating environment will enable spontaneous and safe discovery or investigation for children since they have a natural desire to explore their world.

In Table 4.1 above, Column A specifies the areas that were observed. Three broad areas were targeted, that is: Area 1 to area number 3. In Column B, I have stated the questions guiding the observations for each area and in Column C; the rationale behind each area that was observed is stated.

4.6.3 Individual Interviews

An interview, according to Creswell (2010:87), is communication that flows from both sides where data are being collected by the interviewer through questioning the participants to learn about conduct, views, ideas, beliefs and opinions of the participants. Interviews as stated by Cohen, et al. (2008:348), enable participants, be they interviewers or interviewees, to argue their understandings of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view.

Kumar (2012:149) states that interviews give the interviewer the opportunity to explore more complex and sensitive questions, and to allow the interviewer to obtain in-depth information by probing, repeating of questions or putting them in a form that will be understood by the respondent. They were chosen with the aim of obtaining rich, descriptive data that would help me understand the participants' social reality, and construction of knowledge as claimed by Nieuwenhuis (2010:87). To get deeper understanding of the nature of supervision and support at Grade R classes, and because they would permit me to access information that would not be accessed from observation alone (Silverman, 2004:181) in-depth interviews were conducted with the practitioners, HoDs and principals. All these would reveal the extent to which SMT (HoD and principal) provide the required supervision and support to the Grade R

classes.' Proceedings of the interviews were recorded as well as non-verbal cues, because they are all of extreme importance (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:92).

Principals were interviewed in their respective offices and Heads of Department from three of the schools were met in their own offices and the remaining two were met in the staff rooms. Individual practitioners were interviewed in the HoDs' offices. The use of an interview schedule (Appendix G) enabled me to have a focused conversation with participants to gather relevant information. The purpose was to learn more about their knowledge, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours regarding supervision and support in their Grade R classes.

The instrument was semi-structured and related to supervision and support. As pointed out by Nieuwenhuis (2010:87), I had to be attentive to the answers of the participants to be able to categorise emerging lines of enquiry that were related to the phenomenon being studied.

Open-ended questions were used as suggested by Miller and Salkind (2002:45). The same questions used for individual practitioners and HoDs' interviews were also used for focus group interviews. The interviews were conducted individually as the participants had unique experiences and could have been reluctant to share these experiences if other people had been present. In using this strategy, I made sure that I guarded against the limitations the research instrument has.

4.6.4 Focus Groups

According to Speziale, Streubert and Carpenter (2003:29), and Heiskanen, Järvelä, Pulliainen and Saastamoinen (2008:153), a group interview is a practice that brings together a small group of people who belong to the same group of interest, school or work, for a discussion led by the researcher to make sure that there is adequate focus on the research question. In this study, I chose to employ focus group interviews because it is a strategy based on the assumption that "the interview will be activating forgotten details of experiences, productive in widening the range of responses, and releasing inhibitions that may otherwise dampen participants from revealing information" (Nieuwenhuis, 2010, cited in Maree, 2010:90). The individual interview schedule was used for the focus group interviews.

Separate focus groups of practitioners and HoDs were conducted under the researcher's leadership and guidance to ensure that they did not lose focus in answering the interview questions. I used focus group interviews as I wanted to gather rich, descriptive information from practitioners and HoDs. Participants agreed to focus on a topic of mutual interest stated (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003:90).

The focus group participants were the same participants that the researcher used for individual interviews. The schools from which the subjects were drawn were representative of the three circuits in the District. There were eight participants per focus group. The focus group interviews were conducted with the anticipation that participants could stimulate each other's thinking since the topic under discussion was familiar to all of them although they had their own individual attitudes, perspectives, perceptions, interests and assumptions about the topic.

The information gathered during focus group interviews would help in establishing the nature of supervision and support provided in school-based Grade R classes. Focus group members were encouraged to make comments, to offer an in-depth view and to build on each other's thoughts (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:91). The interview questions were semi-structured in nature, which Nieuwenhuis (2010:87) claims allows for inquiries, explanation inquiries, detail-oriented probes, elaboration and clarification of responses.

4.6.5 Document Analysis

According to Nieuwenhuis (2010:82), documents are all types of written communications that may shed light on the phenomenon that the researcher is investigating. Documents are referred to as secondary sources. Striepe, Clarke and O'Donoghue (2014:89) argue that document analysis provides a means of grounding the study in context. The documents that were analysed were official documents which included HoD's management plans to see the types of activities that were planned for the Grade R practitioners; agendas and minutes of the meetings to establish the nature of the discussions; and practitioners' preparation files in order to see whether practitioners were able to do their own lesson preparations to contextualise the lesson plans provided by the DBE. Appendix A is an example of the HoDs' management plan.

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.7.1 Getting Permission

According to Flick (2009:36), codes of ethics are formulated to regulate the relations of the researcher with participants. In this study, access to the sample was practicable as permission to conduct the research in the schools was obtained from schools and the Department of Education's Head Office. The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) Research Request form was requested from Head Office to seek permission to conduct research in schools. The form was completed and submitted to the DBE which granted the researcher permission (Appendix B). Letters seeking permission of the District Director and School Principals to conduct the study in their schools were also written and delivered by the researcher (Appendices D, E and F).

The University of South Africa's (UNISA) Ethical Clearance application form was also completed and submitted. Ethical Clearance certificate was issued. (Appendix C - UNISA Ethics Clearance Certificate.) Special attention was paid to the four ethical considerations as stated by Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:201).

4.7.2 Informed Consent

Flick (2009:36) states that codes of ethics require that the researcher should avoid harming the participants, that research should be based on informed consent, and should not invade their privacy or deceive them about the research aim. Participants from sampled schools (Principals, HoDs and practitioners) were telephoned and personally visited by the researcher to inform them about the intended research. The purpose of the research was explained to all participants and thereafter participants were given letters requesting their willingness to take part in the study.

My contact details, as researcher and leader of the research project were also given to each of the participants with the intention of giving them the opportunity to ask questions for clarity or to report anything they might not like about the process of the study. Principals, HoDs and practitioners of the sampled schools were served with two weeks' notice after which I visited them to conduct interviews and focus group discussions.

4.7.3 The right to anonymity and confidentiality

According to Mouton (2011:244), the principle of keeping secret the identity of individuals involved in the research is anonymity, whereas that of confidentiality refers to the safe-keeping of data collected from subjects. Participants were therefore informed and assured that their identities would remain anonymous. I further informed them that their names would not be mentioned in the study and that pseudonyms would be allocated to each participant to protect their identities and ensure confidentiality. This was done as described in the next paragraph.

Schools in the study are referred to as school A, B, C, D and E. Individual practitioners, interviewed were referred to as practitioner 1 from school A (PSA1), practitioner 1 or 2 from school B (PSB2). The same pattern was continued with the remaining schools. HoDs and principals were also referred to by their schools, for example HoD from school A would be (HoDA) and principal from school A was referred to as (PSA). The pattern was the same with HoDs and Principals from schools B, C, D and E.

With the focus groups, numbers were allocated to the practitioners; for example, practitioner 1 will be (Prct1) until practitioner 7 (Prct7). The same system was applied also to the HoDs, for example HD1 and HD7.

4.7.4 Protection from Harm

The researcher assured the respondents that they would be indemnified against any physical and emotional harm. They were also informed that there would not be any remuneration for participation. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time. According to Flick (2009:36), codes of ethics are formulated to regulate the relations of the researcher with participants.

4.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In a broader sense, according to Kumar (2012:194) reliability refers to consistency of the research findings when used repeatedly and validity refers to the ability of an instrument to demonstrate that it did what it was designed to do.

4.8.1 Validity

Johnson, et al. (2004:140) refer to validity as the actions made on the basis of test scores or accuracy of the insinuations, interpretations, while Jha (2008:101) states that validity has customarily meant an estimate of the extent to which the data measure what was intended to be measured. Jha (2008:100) contends that research outcomes are of no value if the methods from which they are derived have no legitimacy, while Cohen, et al. (2008:134) assert that if a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless. Jha (2008:100) is of the opinion that the methods must justify the people's confidence and those who read and rely on the research outcomes must be satisfied that the studies are valid and that they lead to truthful outcomes.

As a researcher, I carefully formulated my research tools to make certain the data I have collected were valid. Research instruments were piloted with some practitioners, HoDs and principals to make sure that the instruments were correct, comprehensive and ready for use. Confusing questions were modified in order to make them clear to the participants.

4.8.2 Reliability

Kumar (2012:186) refers to reliability as the ability of research instruments to produce constant measurements all the time. In cases where there was any doubt about what the questions meant during the pilot study, clarifications were made. To promote reliability an audio-recorder was used to capture the interviews while observations were jotted down in a notepad. To create understanding during the interviews, I entered into a collaborative partnership as stated by Maree et al. (2010:41), in order to collect accurate and robust data.

I was sensitive during observations and recorded participant's responses faithfully. Moving deeper into exploring the phenomena, questions were at the same time posed following ideas as stated by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:41). The reliability of the research was further promoted through triangulation as discussed below.

4.8.3 Triangulation

Campbell and Fiske (1959) cited in Cohen, et al. (2008:141), regard triangulation as a powerful way to enrich assurance in following the findings and show concomitant validity.

Triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one approach, was used to investigate the research question, (Bryman, 2003:1142). This was done to enhance confidence (sureness) in the findings as stated by Denzin (1970) cited in Bryman (2003:1142). I therefore used triangulation to support primary information collected.

4.8.4 Trustworthiness

Attention was then paid to the following measures to increase trustworthiness in the study (Kumar, 2012:184; Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2010:38).

4.8.4.1 Credibility

Stakeholder Checks: Credibility in qualitative research is synonymous with validity, whereby the researcher takes her findings to those who participated for judgement, for confirmation, validation, endorsement and resemblance. To maintain credibility, I made sure that the outcomes were plausible from the perspective of the participants. This is in agreement with what Trochim and Donnelly (2007) cited in Kumar (2012:185) say regarding credibility of qualitative study.

4.8.4.2 Dependability

To address the issue of dependability more directly, Shenton (2004:71) maintains that, a detailed report on the process of the study should be given, to enable the future researcher to gain the same results if the work has to be repeated. The degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others is referred to as conformability (Trochim, 2007:149). The researcher employed multi-method strategies, which permitted triangulation of data.

4.8.4.3 Peer-checking

Peer checking was done by engaging the services of a colleague who had understanding of qualitative research methods. It was done to confirm the categories, review all coding of data and themes that emerged.

4.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the research design, strategies used to collect data for both the pilot and main study. The processes of classroom observations, individual interviews and focus group discussion were explained. Document analysis was done as another method of data collection. The chapter also explored how the researcher observed ethical considerations. Steps were undertaken to promote validity and reliability. The next chapter deals with the presentation and interpretation of the research findings.

CHAPTER 5:

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

To realise the aim of the study, an investigation into establishing the nature of supervision and support provided at school-based Grade R classes of the Gauteng North District was conducted. Chapter 4 explained the methods of the research and the procedures that were followed when collecting data.

This chapter presents the research findings and the analysis of the collected data. The report comprises the findings from fieldwork observations, document analysis, and individual and focus groups interviews. First the researcher presents the background to the research schools in order to present an informed interpretation of the obtained results.

5.2 BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH SCHOOLS

School A is a rural farm school in the Cullinan circuit with no community around the school. Learners from the school are bused from nearby farms to the school. The teacher-learner ratio is 1:12 which is good especially for Grade R classes at farm schools.

School B is also a rural farm school in the Bronkhorstspruit circuit. Some of the learners are bused to the school. The ratio at school B is 1:35 and 1:36. These ratios are not acceptable because the maximum ratio in Grade R classes is supposed to be 1:30 (DBE, 2011c:4).

School C is in a rural community and it is the only primary school in the area. No learners are bused to this school. The ratio in both classes is 1:35. Both Grade R classes are also overcrowded and therefore the status quo is not acceptable.

School D is in a semi-urban area situated in the Ekangala circuit with the ratio of 1:32 in practitioner 1's class and 1:34 in practitioner 2's class. Both Grade R classes are also overcrowded.

The last school which is school E is in a semi-urban area in the Cullinan circuit and the ratio is 1:34 in practitioner 1's class and 1:35 in practitioner 2's class. The school has learners from both poor semi-urban and informal settlement areas and is overcrowded.

The issue of overcrowding in Grade R classes and its impact on the supervision and support of Grade R practitioners can be a subject for future research.

Given the nature of the schools referred to above and the research findings that follow, the quality of support and supervision for Grade R practitioners becomes even more significant.

5.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS

Before presenting the findings, it is appropriate for the researcher to first present the participants' qualifications in relation to Grade R. Out of the total of 16 practitioners interviewed, it was found that there were only seven practitioners with National Qualification Frame Work Level (NQFL 5), five practitioners with NQFL4, and four practitioners with NQFL1. These NQF Levels reflected the training given to practitioners in relation to Grade R practices. The levels were also considered for appointment. None of the HoDs and principals had Grade R training or a relevant qualification for Grade R. Practitioners' lack of professional ECD qualification or basic training on Grade R would have a negative impact on the quality of teaching in Grade R classes. Supervision and support of Grade R practitioners would also be negatively affected by lack of ECD training since they would not have the required knowledge for guiding practitioners. The training received by some HoDs on Grade R management should enhance the practices of practitioners through supervision and support.

Research findings are reported per category as follows:

5.3.1 Findings from Classroom Observations

The reason for observing classroom activities was explained in paragraph 4.5.1 page 106. The collected field data were transcribed, and structured into categories as reflected in the practitioners' observation template in paragraph 4.6.2. The following are the categories as they appear in table 4.1 of practitioners' observation template: Routine activities, Classroom arrangement the use of Resources and Documents Analysis.

5.3.1.1 Findings on routine activities

I observed that in school A, the practitioner failed to perform some of the routine activities properly. Routine activities include the teaching of Mathematics, Life Skills and English which are to be presented in an integrated way. (Ch. 2, §2.9; Ch.4). These routine activities should include activities initiated by children and those that have been planned and guided by the practitioner. Those that she performed, like free play, were chaotic. During the Mathematics period (referred to as 'teacher guided activity' in the Daily Programme), Mental Mathematics which should take 10 minutes of the 30- minute period was emphasised at the expense of the Mathematics Content Areas (Ch.2, §2.9.3). This was a serious mistake observed with all the practitioners in the research.

What was observed in School B was similar to School A. What was different in School C was that the practitioner taught phonics even though it was not properly taught. The other mistakes observed in school C were similar to those in schools A and B. The practitioner in school D supervised the indoor and outdoor activities properly even though she struggled with the presentation methodology. In schools A, B, C and E, refreshment time and free play outside were incorrectly managed. Ch. 2, §2.11.2 explains the importance of outdoor activities and the role of the practitioner during free play outside.

Discussion: It has emerged that all five practitioners followed the daily programme as a guide even though some routine activities were left out and those that were performed were not always properly carried out. It is my contention that the supervisory responsibilities carried out by HoDs need to support practitioners in the implementation of policy and the practitioners' day-to-day classroom practices. From my observations, other extraneous variables could include the fact that some schools are in rural areas where the practitioner does not have the benefit of collaboration since the school is the only one in the area.

Overcrowding in the classroom could limit good teaching and the practitioners may not perform some of the routine activities for lack of space and full control of the learners. A lack of interaction with HoDs that was noted could be another negative influence. Some practitioners do not have the expertise to teach Grade R and that constitutes another drawback.

The findings in School E are similar to that of A, B and C in terms of number of the learner teacher ratio, how routine activities were carried out and the fact that it is in a rural area. Observation in school D was found to be different from the rest of the schools. This could be a result of the fact that it is in a semi urban area where there is a possibility of joining forces with other practitioners in order to share good practices. However, overcrowding has the same effects as in the other schools.

5.3.1.2 Findings on classroom arrangement and use of resources

It was observed that the practitioner in school A missed out on arranging the classroom according to different areas (Ch. 2, §2.11.1). Preparations and use of relevant resources were also neglected. In contrast to school A, the classrooms in school B, C, D and E were properly arranged in different areas as required even though class B was small. There was effective use of indoor resources in both classes but learners were not exposed to outdoor activities which is intended to be an extension of the indoor classroom.

Discussion: These mistakes could have been noted by the HoDs who could have provided the needed support and guidance to correct the mistakes with the sole purpose of improving quality teaching of practitioners. The classroom errors that happened in the specified schools could be an indication that the practitioner was not properly trained, or lacked experience in teaching Grade R or did not receive good supervision or guidance from the HoD. Areas of a well-planned room and its importance are different working or play areas to expose learners to a variety of activities (Ch. 2, §2.11.1). Similarly, relevant resources are regarded as the essential tools practitioners use to reinforce quality teaching and learning.

5.3.2 Findings from Document Analysis

All practitioners except for one in school E did not adapt the lesson plans provided by the Gauteng Province and the DBE 2015 Grade R Resource pack to suit the needs of their children. The importance and advantage of lesson preparation is emphasised by Davin, et al. (2011:194) (Ch. 2, §2.8). There was, however, evidence of integration with other subjects especially with Mathematics.

The findings with regard to the agenda and minutes of previous meetings at all five schools (A, B, C, D and E) visited were comparable. It was noted from the documents

that there were no specific meetings aimed at discussing or conducting internal workshops to support practitioners on curriculum-related issues. The agenda items were found to be very general and not relevant to Grade R. This observation bears significance to the questions about the current quality (nature) of supervision and support of practitioners in school-based Grade R classes (Ch. 3, §3.3).

Discussion: I argue that a practitioner who is well-supervised and supported will see the need to adapt the curriculum to suit her learners and the classroom environment so as to promote meaningful teaching. The importance and advantage of lesson preparation has been emphasised in Ch. 2, §2.8. The realisation that the practitioners taught directly from the curriculum document provided by the DBE without additional lesson preparation is even more disturbing because it questions their efficiency and creativity and the function of the HoD whose role is to supervise and support practitioners (Ch. 2, §2.14).

It is important to have regular meetings (Ch. 3, §3.9). The absence of reference to supervisory and planning meetings in the examined minutes of meetings raises questions about the supervision and support of practitioners in the research area. It also suggests that there is poor interaction between practitioners and their supervisors.

Communication (Ch. 2, §2.2.4) plays an important role in developing good teaching skills. The fact that the examined minutes were general and were not specific to Grade R suggests that there is poor communication about Grade R issues and that the expertise of the practitioners is not what it should be.

5.3.3 Findings from Interviews with Individual Practitioners

The selected categories of participants (practitioners, HoDs and Principals) in the five schools were interviewed to increase the validity and credibility of the findings (Ch. 4 §4.8). Their responses to interview questions were clustered into themes using Atlas.ti software. In all, 16 practitioners, 12 HoDs and 5 principals were interviewed.

The table below presents the four main themes that emerged from the analysed data:

Table 5.1 Themes generated from ATLAS ti. software

ATLAS ti. software Themes	
Theme 1	Support provided
Theme 2	Interaction
Theme 3	Experience with Grade R
Theme 4	Improving the quality of teaching

5.3.3.1 Theme 1: Questions on support provided

As far as who provides support is concerned, the practitioners unanimously indicated that the HoDs and District Officials were responsible for providing support. Some said they received support from other practitioners. In describing the nature of support, they received, four of the respondents indicated their support to be minimal. Five highlighted the fact that they were not receiving support at all. From their responses, it was noted that the support they said to be receiving was in terms of the provision of resources, but not with curriculum practices. The majority of practitioners indicated that their HoDs and principals always made sure that they had resources to teach with.

The only problem noted during observations about the resources was with the appropriateness of their use. It is very important that practitioners are supervised and guided in the correct use of such resources in their day-to-day classroom practices because these resources are meant to reinforce what is being taught. Resources will help in catering for those children who are visual learners. In answer to the question on what they considered as good support, four responses highlighted getting help when experiencing classroom challenges. Two alluded to the fact that staff members need to learn about Grade R practices. Three responses indicated that collaboration amongst colleagues and respect for practitioners was good support.

Discussion: From the responses, it can be said that, practitioners' definition of good support is when they get relevant assistance and guidance on the challenges they experience in the classroom. They were also of the view that good support can only happen when there is collaboration between staff members and understanding of practices in Grade R. The implication of their answers is that there is no good support because the things they pointed out do not exist. According to the practitioners, it would then be meaningful for practitioners to be guided by their supervisors in classroom

practices and also be given assistance when they needed it and also that staff should learn to work together.

5.3.3.2 Theme 2: Question on interaction between practitioners and HoDs

This question aimed at establishing whether there was any interaction between HoDs and practitioners. From three practitioners' responses, interaction was minimal and found not to be fruitful; six practitioners indicated that it did not exist.

Discussion: The importance of interaction as pointed out in Ch. 2, §2.16 seems to be neglected. According to Rodd (2006:45) (Ch. 1, §1.13), for meaningful interaction between supervisor and supervisee to take place, they should always reflect on new possibilities by finding out what needs to be done or happen and establish the reasons why and how they can address or solve the problem. Interaction was found to be

largely missing between the practitioners and their supervisors. Annexures 9 and 10 provide examples of verbatim excerpts highlighting the absence of fruitful interaction between practitioners and HoDs.

5.3.3.3 Theme 3: Questions on practitioners' teaching experiences

A question was asked to establish how practitioners resolved the challenges they experienced as Grade R teachers. Issues raised by three of the practitioners were overcrowded classes which created situations that did not allow for practitioners' individual attention to learners and being undermined by teachers from other Grades. There was also the issue of poor understanding by other role-players of how Grade R operates that was brought to the fore by four practitioners. A concern that the Grade R outdoor areas were not regularly maintained was also raised. Two practitioners indicated that they always had to go to the HoDs and ask for their assistance when they needed help, but there was little proactive assistance provided by the HoDs.

Discussion: From the practitioners' responses, their experiences in teaching Grade R were not pleasant because overcrowded classrooms prohibited effective teaching and learning. It is impossible for practitioners to create the different learning stations (Learning Areas) required in overcrowded classrooms. Failure to create learning stations denies learners the opportunity to be exposed to a variety of stimulating environments. Practitioners alluded to the concern that teachers from other Grades (1

to 3) were looking down on them and, as a result, it impacted negatively on their self-esteem and motivation. Respect for each other within an institution improves relationships between staff members, subordinates and their supervisors.

Lack of understanding of practices in Grade R by other role-players especially the HoDs, impacted negatively on the support that could have been offered to Grade R practitioners. The implication therefore is that without understanding of Grade R practices by the HoDs, there cannot be effective supervision and support of those practices in Grade R classes.

Neglect of the Grade R outdoor area poses a very serious problem because the outdoor area is an extension of the indoor classroom. Grade R learners are supposed to be exposed to both indoor and outdoor areas to develop them holistically. Indoor and outdoor environments are quality indicators for ECD in South Africa; therefore, their optimal use is also of importance (DBE, 2015:5) (Ch. 2, § 2.15).

5.3.3.4 Theme 4: Question on quality

A question was asked to determine the quality of supervision and support Grade R practitioners considered appropriate. The responses from practitioners were very general and not specific to the classroom day-to-day practices. Their concern was to be recognised and taken seriously as teachers by the school. Nonetheless practitioners pointed out that it would be better if the Grade R had their own directorate that understands their operational functions. The following sentence presents the verbatim utterances of practitioner:

PSE1: Mm, "I would like the Grade R to have their own principal; maybe it would be better". (example of verbatim response)

Discussion: To have a section in the Foundation Phase, specifically assigned to managing and supervising Grade R, would bring improvement to the quality of teaching. The implication thereof is that people who are responsible would have acquired the necessary knowledge about Grade practices and their main focus would then be to supervise and support practices in Grade R classes.

5.3.4 Findings from Practitioners' Focus Group Interviews

The next paragraphs present the focus groups' responses to questions on supervision and support at school-based Grade classes. The same group of practitioners that was interviewed individually was brought together to be interviewed as group. The purpose was to determine if they would still be consistent with same responses they gave during individual interviews. The same ATLAS ti. software themes used for individual interviews were used here.

5.3.4.1 Theme 1: Group questions on support for practitioners

The following questions aimed at establishing the nature of support provided to practitioners by their HoDs. Five practitioners out of the seven asserted that they were not receiving any support from the HoD. Only two practitioners out of seven indicated that the HoDs in their schools do support them. (Examples of verbatim responses can be seen in Annexure 9).

Discussion: The fact that the majority of practitioners pointed out that there was minimal support or none at all, gives credence to the research question that seeks to establish the nature of supervision and support provided to Grade R practitioners at school-based Grade R classes. This supports the responses given in the individual interviews. It could be argued that there is evidence of poor supervision and support by HoDs and that it is the result of their ignorance about Grade R practices.

On the question of what they considered as good support, three practitioners emphasised that their supervisors needed to first understand the Grade R programme in order to be able to provide them with good support. Two practitioners indicated that good support is when their supervisors (HoDs) were able to help them with the development of lesson plans. The remaining two defined good support as conducting regular class visits which would create opportunities for one-on-one support to individual practitioners and creating time for Grade R meetings and internal workshops.

Discussion: The responses practitioners gave confirm the pre-requisites for good support (Ch. 3, §3.3). It also means that implementation of the points they raised would be translated into good support.

5.3.4.2 Theme 2: Group question on interaction with HoDs

A question was asked to the group to establish if there was interaction with their HoDs. Responses show that three practitioners had interactions with their HoDs. In contrast, four practitioners asserted that there was no meaningful interaction with their HoDs.

Discussion: Interaction with subordinates is essential in improving effectiveness of performance within an institution or organisation. It is through interaction that HoDs could learn more about Grade R and not regard it as similar to the formal grades in the Foundation Phase. HoDs would find it more important to respond to practitioners' concerns because they would know how these could have an adverse effect on teaching in Grade R. From the responses, the general view of the findings is therefore that effective interaction with HoDs is lacking.

5.3.4.3 Theme 3: Group question about teaching experiences

A question was asked to establish how practitioners resolved the challenges they experienced as Grade R teachers. Three practitioners indicated that the daily programme was too full and very long. They also indicated that the HoDs lacked understanding of operations in Grade R classes. Two complained about the DBE workbook activities as having too many activities which children were not able to complete. It also emerged from the remaining practitioners that the HoDs were expecting the Grade R learners to operate the way the Grade 1 learners were operating, which supports what Biersteker (2010:49), (Ch. 1, §1.3) said about pressure for formal teaching in Grade R.

Discussion: The mere fact that practitioners were complaining about the daily programme being too full and the activities in the DBE workbooks being too long is a clear indication that they need some guidance which is the role the HoDs should be playing. It also shows that the practitioners do not understand that they are the managers of their classrooms and that they can manipulate the daily programme to suit their contexts. They also need to understand that the activities in the programme may be presented in an integrated way.

The practitioners all pronounced that significant differences that exist between Grade R and the Foundation Phase classes, which created conflict between them and the HoDs' expectations about Grade R.

5.3.4.4 Theme 4: Group questions about the quality of supervision and support to practitioners

A question was asked to establish what the group would recommend to improve the quality of teaching in Grade R classes. The general feeling from all the practitioners was that HoDs need to be trained on Grade R so that they are given quality supervision and support which would improve their quality of teaching.

Discussion: When HoDs are trained in Grade R knowledge, they will then be confident in their continuous provision of professional supervision and support to these practitioners. Mehrotra (2005:54), Tyagi (2010:115) and Cornelissen and van den Berg (2014:239) (Ch. 2, §2.13) all speak to the need and importance of professional development for teachers/ practitioners.

5.3.5 Individual HoDs' Interviews

Five HoDs were interviewed to establish as whether the practitioners' findings were correct. Both individual and focus group of HoDs were interviewed. Common responses to questions were classified under the same ATLAS ti. software themes as in the practitioners' interviews.

5.3.5.1 Theme 1: Question on support to Grade R practitioners

A question was asked to the HoDs to establish if they support practitioners and in which areas they were providing the support. The responses to the questions were clustered under the following sub-themes determined through the Atlas.ti software: HoDs provide support, areas of support, resources, principal's support, follow up measures and good support. The HoDs' responses contradicted those of practitioners to some extent. Three of the respondents indicated that they provide support in both classroom practices by checking content, lesson plans and brainstorming themes or topics and in the acquisition of resources. What they did not indicate is how they do it. Ironically, when asked about their definition of good support, four of the respondents revealed their lack of understanding of what is happening in Grade R.

Discussion: HoDs as part of the SMT are regarded as the instructional leaders who have to have to be influential in the implementation and improvement of curriculum practices (DoE, 2000a:1). Based on what practitioners indicated about their supervision

and support and on their own admission about their lack of knowledge about Grade R practice, it is safe to say supervision and support for Grade R practitioners is insufficient and inappropriate. It appears that the HoDs have a challenge in providing the instructional leadership expected of them.

The implication is that it would be impossible for HoDs to define what good supervision and support is as they do not understand Grade R classroom practices. For them to be able to provide good support they need to be acquainted with Grade R practices. Annexure 11 provides a transcript of the HoDs' individual interview responses.

5.3.5.2 Theme 2: Question on interaction

This question aimed at establishing whether there was any interaction between HoDs and practitioners. Three out of the five HoDs indicated that their interaction took place during meetings where they gave feedback to practitioners from the meetings they had attended. The feedback would be about activities of the phase like assessment, language competitions and mental Maths activities which were relevant to Grade 1 to 3. The discussions were found somewhat irrelevant to Grade R. The remaining two HoDs indicated their interaction to be during class visits conducted during HoDs' break times. The reality of the matter is; no meaningful interaction took place.

The time spent would not yield fruitful results as the HoDs would be rushing to have their own break before they had to return to their classes. With interaction, there must be face-to-face communication with the practitioner which would not be possible in such a short time. The Grade R Daily programme (timetable) differs greatly with the rest of the Foundation Phase timetable. Their breaks are not at the same time as the rest of Foundation Phase (Annexures 4, 5 and 6)

Discussion: I find from the above responses that interaction between practitioners and HoDs is minimal or lacking. If it did exist, it would have been reflected in the documents that were analysed. One could have picked up, for instance, different meetings between practitioners and HoDs and the content of such meetings would reveal the nature of interaction that existed between the two. It is important to note that HoDs and practitioners form part of a system. Checkland (2001:12) and Rockandla (2015:4) (Ch. 2, §2.2.1), define a complex system as the whole of interactions amongst its parts

which are interrelated components to achieve set objectives. This is clearly not the case with the HoDs in this research.

5.3.5.3 Theme 3: Question on follow up measures

A question was asked individual HoDs to establish the measures they had in place to follow up on the support provided. The HoDs unanimously indicated that they did not do any follow ups and therefore did not have measures in place. Three alluded to the fact that sometimes it is not practical to do follow-up as they also had their own classes to take care of.

Discussion: Follow up is key to ascertaining that recommendations made to practitioners are being implemented. It is very important to supervise and provide support where needed.

5.3.5.4 Theme 4: Question on support

When asked what type of support HODs received from the principal in relation to the teaching and organisation of Grade R, three HoDs indicated that they did not receive any support from the principal while the remaining two were very positive about the support they received from their principals; for example, the buying of groceries for the children, paying for their transport for workshops and buying resources needed during graduation ceremonies. From the responses, some principals were completely unaware of what was happening in Grade R classes.

Discussion: Support of junior staff aims at helping them to improve their own work performance continuously. As the manager and an accounting officer, the principal needs to take a leadership role to supervise and support activities in the school. Manwadu (2010:2) (Ch. 3, §3.9.3) indicates that the principal's task of management and directing teachers should be determined to make it possible to assess how effective it is in the classrooms. Such support is not evident from the principals' responses.

5.3.5.5 Theme 1: Questions on HoDs' experiences in supervising and supporting Grade R.

A question was asked to establish how HoDs resolved the challenges they experienced in Grade R as supervisors. The HoDs indicated that supervising and supporting Grade

R is a challenge to them. It emerged that HoDs were finding it impossible to provide the expected support to the practitioners because they were full-time class teachers. It was noted from the responses that absence of formal writing by Grade R learners made it difficult for them to verify whether activities given to learners correlated with what appeared in the lesson plans. Two of the HoDs indicated that because of their workload, it was difficult to help the practitioners when they approached them for help.

The HoDs noted that 95% of Grade 1 learners who attended Grade R were school-ready. Their reasons were based on the fact that these learners were able to carry out instructions, they did not cry when their parents left them at school or when given some activities to do, compared with those learners who came straight from home to Grade one (1). This therefore indicated their school readiness.

The other factor that came out was that HoDs noted that practitioners worked very hard. Some HoDs felt that Grade R programme should be run separately from the Foundation Phase, and that practitioners could be excused from meetings where Grade R issues were not discussed.

Discussion: It is noted from the HoDs' responses that the issues they mentioned were contributory factors to the negative experiences they had with Grade R. Some of the negative experiences mentioned by the HoDs confirm the findings from the practitioners' interviews. The concerns and recommendations raised by HoDs confirm that they were facing challenges in supervising and supporting practitioners in school-based Grade R classes. It therefore means that the research question "what is the nature of supervision and support provided at school-based Grade R classes" has been answered. Establishing the nature of support and supervision provided to practitioners which is the aim of the study, has also been achieved.

I would therefore argue that because of the challenges the HoDs have with supervising Grade R, they are not able to perform as expected and this leaves up a huge gap that needs to be filled.

5.3.5.6 Theme 2: Question on improving the quality of teaching

A question was asked of the HoDs to establish what they would do differently to improve the quality of teaching in Grade R classes. Four of the HoDs pointed out that Grade R admission age need to be changed from 4½ to 6 years. This confirms their

lack of knowledge of Grade R practices. They were also of the opinion that formal teaching should be introduced in Grade R. This points to the fact that they are not aware of how Grade R children learn. They also pointed out that the contact time for Grade R learners should be increased; this is a clear indication that they have no idea of the allocated contact time for Grade R as it appears in the policy documents. How then will HoDs guide practitioners if they are so ignorant about what is happening in Grade R classes?

5.3.6 Findings from HoDs' focus group interview

Common responses of the group interview were categorised into ATLAS ti. software themes.

5.3.6.1 Theme 1: Group questions on supervision and support

A question was asked of the group to establish how they provide practitioners with supervision and support. The participants' responses to this question were found to be similar to those of the individual HoDs' interviews.

Discussion: The information from the HoDs with regard to supervision and support given to practitioners was conflicting. Practitioners claimed that the support was minimal or absent while the HoDs claimed that they were providing it. In my opinion, what the practitioners said is more credible because the errors they were making in the classroom are an indication that supervision and support in Grade R classes were lacking. In my opinion, sending HoDs to workshops alone is not enough. A mechanism is needed to make sure that they are also capable of doing what is expected of Grade R teachers.

In other words, principals need to have an idea of what is happening in Grade R even if it is not their direct responsibility. This will also help to reduce the workload.

It is my point of view that Deputy Principal should also be involved in Grade R issues. According to the school organogram (Figure 2.3), the HoD should report to the deputy principal who, in turn, should report to the principal: this is a point that has been ignored or neglected when it comes to Grade R. Currently the deputy principals do not feature anywhere with regard to Grade R matters.

5.3.6.2 Theme 2: Group Question on follow up measures

A question was asked the group of HoDs to establish the measures they have in place to follow up on the support provided. Five HoDs indicated that they have a monitoring tool in a form of a check list as a means to follow up on the support they provided and two indicated that they used classroom observation to follow up.

Discussion: Following-up is key in providing supportive supervision to subordinates. According to the World Health Organisation (2008), the supervisor has to plan follow-up activities, which should include acting on issues jointly agreed upon. They need to involve practitioners in the planning process, designing of tools to be used and resources. The planning should also include discussing resource acquisition, identification of career growth, and leadership opportunities, supply delivery problems.

Supervisors are also expected to establish regular communication, reviewing monthly reports and supply and delivery problems of the resources.

It is regrettable that most of the activities above were not noted in document analysis which could have been reflected either in the management plans and agendas or minutes of the meetings held. In my opinion, it is also very clear that there is no mechanism for monitoring what the HoDs are doing in relation to Grade R.

5.3.6.3 Theme 3: Group question on support

Group members were asked a question on support to establish the type of support they get from the principal. Five of the HoDs alluded to the absence of support on Grade R issues, while the other two HoDs pointed out that they did have the support although the support they referred to was found to be in the form of providing transport to attend the workshops and training.

Discussion: It is very important for principals to carry out their instructional leadership role at all times and should make sure that they support the HoDs in carrying out their responsibilities. GDE (2004:21) defines the functions of instructional head (principal) as directing, inspiring, energising, motivating and mentoring the team, and monitoring progress in the implementation of educational policies (Ch. 3, §3.8.3.2). This was found not to be the case in this research because the majority of the HoDs were very vocal about the principal not supporting them on Grade R curriculum issues. One HoD even

said “*I can even open my own Grade R class in the same school without the principal noticing*” (verbatim response) indicating that her principal was not taking his leadership role seriously.

5.3.6.4 Theme 4: Group questions on experiences in supervising and supporting Grade R.

A question was asked of the group to establish how they resolved the challenges they experienced in supervising practitioners. Two of HoDs claim to have noted great improvement in the performance of Grade 1 learners who had gone through Grade R. However, one HoD had a contrasting opinion; she pointed out that some learners in Grade 1 still had to do Grade R work before they could start with Grade 1 work. Four of the seven HoDs also raised the point that whenever practitioners went to meetings and workshops, they did not accompany them and this left them with little information regarding new developments in Grade R matters. One HoD also indicated that she had realised that some of her colleagues (Grade 1 to 3 teachers) did not regard practitioners as teachers which also confirms what the practitioners said during interviews.

Discussion: The HoDs’ responses to this question were both positive and negative. The implication of their responses is that they are also to be blamed for failing to learn more about Grade R, by not accompanying them to their departmental workshops. The issue of other teachers from other grades undermining practitioners and the stipend they receive from the Government might negatively affect the practitioners’ morale and leave them demoralised. When employees are demoralised, the quality of work they do is negatively affected. The same applies to a school situation, if the morale of the staff is very low, it will definitely compromise the quality of teaching.

5.3.6.5 Theme 4: Group question on improving the quality of teaching

A question was asked the group of HoDs to establish what they would do differently to improve the quality of teaching in Grade R classes. Two of the HoDs indicated that they need to be afforded more time to supervise the Grade R classes. The other two were of the view that the Department should do something to retain good practitioners who tended to leave Grade R for Grade 1 classes after they had obtained their professional qualifications. Three suggested that Grade R be fully infused into the mainstream

school, and that there should be formal writing lessons in Grade R classes. They unanimously agreed that more training of HoDs and principals on Grade R practices was needed.

Discussion: The implication of the responses is that some HoDs and principals do not understand practices in Grade R.

5.3.7 Findings from Principals' Interviews

Principals' responses to questions were also clustered under the main ATLAS ti, software themes as for the other interviews. The examples of the transcripts can be found in Annexure 13.

5.3.7.1 Theme 1: Question on support

Principals were individually asked a question to establish how they provided HoDs with Grade R support. All the principals indicated that their support to the HoDs was through assisting them to draw up management plans and make sure that they provided transport for practitioners to attend workshops.

Discussion: From the principals' responses, it was clearly evident that they are not directly involved with practitioners. HoDs as immediate supervisors are supposed to keep principals updated about progress and the needs in Grade R classes.

The principals were asked a second question to establish the areas in which they were providing support for the HoDs. The principals indicated that they provide support by assisting SGBs in signing practitioners' employment contracts, in helping HoDs to draw up the management plans. The principals further claimed to be supportive in the provision of LTSM.

Discussion: From the responses given, the principals' support is in the area of governance. They also claim to be providing assistance to the HoDs in their drawing up of the management plans. This contradicts what was noted during document analysis. HoDs' management plans were analysed and there were no principals' signatures and the findings revealed lack of guidance since Grade R curricular activities were not included. If the principals were truly assisting HoDs with the drafting of their management plans, the errors and omissions noted could have been addressed.

5.3.7.2 Question on follow up measures

A question was asked of the principals to establish the measures they have in place to follow up on the support provided. All five principals indicated that they had management plans as measures to follow up on the support provided to the practitioners by HoDs. They went through the management plans to find out if the HoDs had carried out all that had been planned for the Grade R. For example, the HoDs' management plans would reflect the type of activities (class visits, internal workshops) that had been planned, for the Grade R practitioners. Appendix H presents an example of an HoD's management plan collected for document analysis.

Discussion: Although the principals alluded to the fact that they had management plans as a means of following up on the HoDs, this proved not to be effective because there were omissions of Grade R curriculum activities by the HoDs in their management plans. Therefore, it can be said that minimal follow-up exists.

5.3.7.3 Theme 2: Question on experiences in supervising and supporting Grade R

The principals were asked a question to establish how they resolved the challenges they experienced in supervising practitioners. Data from in-depth interviews of principals revealed that some principals had noted great improvement in Grade 1 learners who had been through Grade R. There were also concerns by some principals about the admission age (4½) which they suggested should be changed to 6 years. Principal at school D was concerned about overcrowding in classes as the District does not allow children to be turned away due to lack of space, while the principal at school E indicated that having Grade R classes at her school had increased her responsibilities.

Discussion: Similar to what the HoDs indicated, some principals also noted the positive impact that the Grade R programme has on the learners who are in Grade 1. Issues of overcrowded classrooms and changing of admission age of Grade R learners appeared as a concern in all the interviews. In my opinion, principals have no knowledge of the practices in Grade R classes like admission age or setting up of different areas in classrooms which caters for and addresses overcrowding.

5.3.7.4 Theme 3: Question on interaction

This question aimed at establishing whether there was any interaction between principal and the HoDs. Most of the principals indicated their interaction with the HoDs to be through feedback meetings, morning briefings and monthly meetings. They did not have direct interaction with practitioners except during meetings. This is what the principal at school A said: *“But for me to be with the Grade R no, no personal interaction, I only rely on the information I get from the HoD. We also have weekly meetings”*.

5.3.7.5 Theme 4: Question on quality

The question was asked of the principals to determine what they would do to improve the quality of teaching in Grade R. This question was asked in support of the secondary aim, namely to recommend what would be done differently in Grade R (Ch. 1, §1.6). Responses: Principals stated the following as issues that need to be attended to: sufficient facilities for learners, well-trained practitioners (Ch. 2 §2.2), augmenting practitioners' salaries, providing practitioners with assistant teachers, overcrowding and inexperienced or unqualified practitioners. They also indicated the need for them to go through Grade R training.

Discussion: Principals were interviewed as individuals to complete the picture of supervision and support to practitioners although they do not have direct impact on classroom action of Grade R classes. However, they have the obligation to support HoDs to perform their roles of supervising and supporting Grade R as expected by the DoE. It is my view that as principals they also need to be schooled so that when HoDs ask something they should be able to understand because they may dismiss the request because of lack of knowledge.

The implication of their responses is that at this stage, they (principals) do not really understand practices in Grade R. Some of the practitioners and HoD responses reflected a concern about lack of HoDs' knowledge Grade R which suggests that it is not only the principals who have to go through training but all the role-players. It is also my view that the deputy principal would also have a significant role in monitoring and giving support to HoD as part of the SMT.

They also need to be part of the role-players to be taken on training of which its importance of has been explained in chapter 2 §2.2.3 and role-players will be capacitated with qualifications explained in chapter 2, §2.5. All role-players involved in the field of ECD need to have contextual information and an understanding of the Grade R policies and practices governing the sector.

5.3.8 Evaluation of Findings in relation to the Conceptual Framework

This paragraph presents the evaluation of findings in relation to the conceptual framework presented in paragraph 1.12.

- **Instructional capacity:** schools as organisations ought to have supportive structures in place and relevant resources to support teaching and learning. According to the findings, both physical and human resources available at school are not supportive of teaching and learning in Grade R classes.
- **Instructional quality:** HoDs and practitioners must have curriculum content knowledge that is grounded in the academic and professional discipline. The findings of the study revealed that the HoDs' and practitioners' knowledge is lacking in the areas of curriculum content, teaching methodologies and practices respectively.
- **Student engagement:** In the context of this study, practitioners who are referred to as students must show commitment to the work they do and should always be prepared to learn new things. The findings revealed lack of commitment and unwillingness to learn new things from the practitioners and the HoDs which was evident during classroom observation. Mistakes committed by practitioners in the classroom showed no commitment to improving.

5.3.9 Implications of the Findings for Policy Formulation and Practice regarding Supervision and Support of the Grade R classes

The implications of the findings for policy practice are that policies that guide the SMT on how to supervise and support Grade R practitioners should be put in place. The Department of Basic Education should make sure that one of the requirements of appointing an SMT should be that the SMT should have a qualification on Grade R management, especially the HoDs and the deputy principals. Their competencies in

Knowledge of Grade R and specialisation in Grade R content and practices are needed for improving the quality of teaching in Grade R classes. To improve the quality of teaching and learning in Grade R classes, only professionally qualified practitioners should be appointed. Practitioners also are expected to have professional qualifications for Grade R and CAPS training.

5.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the analysed data from documents and interviews and its interpretation. Relevant examples of verbatim responses from the participants' interviews were also reflected even though interview responses have been attached. The transcribed data were analysed using ATLAS ti. software and were categorised into four themes. The next chapter presents the limitations, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 6:

LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher presents the limitations, recommendations, contribution, summary and conclusions of this study on the supervision and support to be provided at school-based Grade R classes. Of significance, this chapter outlines a proposed programme that can address the problem of the study as a contribution. It is preceded by the presentation and analysis of research findings on which conclusions must be drawn.

6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations and shortcomings of the research were noted by the researcher even though careful planning was put into place. The main limitation of the study was the fact that it took place only in one province out of nine provinces in South Africa. The research was restricted to one (1) District Office (Gauteng North District) out of fifteen (15) Districts. The study was conducted only in the previously disadvantaged school-based Grade R classes of the selected District. It was not possible for the research to cover all the Districts and Provinces in the country because of the practicality of time and financial constraints.

Even then, it was justifiable to focus on one District as it was representative of the other Districts. It reflected all the characteristics of farm, rural and semi-urban schools. Valuable lessons were learned from practitioners' observed practices. According to Mouton (2011:148), the restrictions of the study are the indications of the results of the study that cannot be generalised. The results of the individual interviews cannot be generalised because of the small number of subjects interviewed in both individual and focus group interviews

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

This study was born from the concern that I had about the apparent insufficient supervision and support for Grade R practitioners in their daily classroom activities. The insufficiency was evidenced by the poor quality of teaching in Grade R classes that I observed in my role as Senior Education Specialist (SES) responsible for monitoring

and supporting Foundation Phase teachers on curriculum implementation. The investigation I undertook was grounded on Vygotsky's theory of mediated learning. The theory was also supported by the systems thinking, stakeholder theory, training, and communication (Ch. 2, §2.2).

The systems thinking theory emphasises the importance of the relations and functions of each member within an institution as a whole. Effective and sufficient communication will help in enabling the reception and transmission of information across the organisation. The stakeholder theory is also helpful in making role-players (SMT-Deputy and HoD) aware of their responsibilities in promoting the interest of the organisation. It is also important to realise that training within an organisation is one of the practices that is put in place to influence and improve employees' performances.

It could be noted that shortly after this study was begun, practitioners were receiving professional training (Diploma in ECD) with South African National Tutor Services through the Government's bursary scheme. Some HoDs were also trained on Grade R management for three Saturdays by MGSLG. Training in this study helped in determining the impact of the training provided on practitioners and the SMTs in teaching. To achieve good outcomes Training Needs Analysis (TNA) which requires conducting work analysis, which consists of three types of investigations, namely job analysis, task analysis and content analysis needs to be conducted.

The last applicable theory is that about communication, which describes the flow of information between role-players. Communication is of vital importance to the proposed supervision and support model. Good communication within an organisation determines growth, progress and development of individuals. It is my opinion that collaboration between role-players is very significant and no-one should work in isolation. Relevant information within the organisation should flow from both directions.

To provide depth and focus to the study, a discourse on the Grade R Programme and the supervision of practitioners (Ch. 2, §2.17 and 2.18) enabled me to identify what was successful and fruitful about supervision in first world and African countries, which models were feasible and applicable to different contexts and which approaches best produced anticipated results. Even though the examples were school-based except in

Uganda where ECD was given as an example, there are valuable lessons that can be learned and be applied to ECD centres.

In this study the combination of suitable supervision and support models (Ch. 3, § 3.5) were also studied for possible consideration in recommending an effective supervision and support model for classroom practices in Grade R

Field work was planned to achieve the research goal which was to establish the nature of supervision and support provided to Grade R practitioners. Before field work, pilot study was also undertaken to test the research instruments. The research schedules addressed a number of questions from classroom observations, documents analysis, and individual interviews for practitioners, HoDs and Principals as well as Focus group discussions. The ATLAS ti. software was used to analyse the qualitative data collected from fieldwork. The responses noted from the emerging categories derived from this instrument provided valuable information that influenced the conclusion of this study:

6.3.1 Conclusions from Observations

The conclusions that can be drawn from the routine activities' findings are that most of routine activities are not properly carried out and that proper supervision and support is lacking. Therefore, the supervision and support as well as correct implementation of routine activities need to be improved.

The fact that the observed mistakes occurred under the HoDs' leadership suggests that there could be lack of knowledge (by practitioners and HoDs) on the importance of exposing learners to stimulating indoor and outdoor environments as pointed out by Hertzman (2012:2) and Lenyai (2006:4).

The teaching and learning environment, especially with regard to lesson preparation is not properly executed. Practitioners are not competent in their knowledge about every day classroom activities. Zepeda (2012:3) (Ch. 3, §3.3) describes the type of supervisors needed in the education of young children. It can be concluded that the expertise of the practitioners in this study do not fit that description.

6.3.2 Conclusions from Individual Practitioners' Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

In both instances of practitioners and focus group interviews, it emerged that the supervision, support and interaction of practitioners with the HoDs is minimal or completely lacking and this could lead to poor quality of teaching. It is for such reasons that practitioners suggested that HoDs be trained in Grade R practices. It is important to note that even though practitioners suggested training for HoDs, the Department of Education offered a basic training to HoDs but the status quo remained the same.

6.3.3 Conclusion about Triangulation

From the observations, interviews and focus group discussions, it is clear that most of the routine activities were not properly executed, classroom arrangements and poor use of resources were not properly done and documents analysed did not reflect any developmental meetings or discussions held in relation to Grade R classroom practices.

HoDs were not providing the expected supervision and support to practitioners, and did not carry out their supervisory responsibilities as they did not understand the practices in Grade R classes even though some went through training lately.

It can therefore be concluded that there was lack of effective supervision and support of Grade R practitioners which affected the quality of teaching. The findings in this research overwhelmingly indicate that there is a functional problem with regard to the supervision and support at school-based Grade R classes. Although the existence of the management structures at schools is commendable, it has been noted that the functions of the individual School Management Team (SMT) members within the management structure do not function harmoniously and are not in support of each other. Even if the management structure exists but it does not function correctly, there will still be problems (supervision and support) at school-based Grade R classes.

It can be said that supervision and support at School-based Grade R classes is grossly insufficient, and in some instances, is completely lacking. This has been revealed by the answers that explain that HoDs do not support and guide practitioners and also that they do not seem to have a full understanding of practices in Grade R classes even

though they were trained. It is the practitioners' wish that the kind of supervision and support they receive would enable them to:

- get the assistance when they need it;
- be helped with the development of lesson plans and guidance on how to do lesson preparations;
- be assisted with the implementation of the long and packed daily programme and
- be assisted on how to deal with children who do not complete their activities of which the type of supervision they receive does not provide.

It is clear that HoDs lack the knowledge, interpersonal and technical skills of managing Grade R. With the correct training, they should have been able to advise practitioners about how to address the issue of the long and intensive daily programme and incomplete activities by learners.

Finally, it is important to note that the Department of Education conducted training for some HoDs on Managing Grade R through Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) from 2014 to early 2016. The training was intended to equip the HoDs with the knowledge of Grade R practices so that they are able to effectively supervise and support Grade R practitioners.

It can be concluded that the aim of the research, namely "to establish the nature of supervision and support provided at school-based Grade R classes of the Gauteng North District for quality teaching" has been realised. The weak link in the management structure for supervision and support has been identified to be the HoDs. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that their functional role of evaluation and support is not properly carried out.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are based on the shortcomings noted during classroom observations, document analysis and interviews. They also address the challenges reported by practitioners, HoDs and school principals. The following recommendations are therefore made based on the results of the research.

With regard to observed classroom activities, it is recommended that practitioners must be exposed to practical observation (virtual simulation) of lesson presentations in the classrooms by experienced and professionally qualified practitioners and HoDs so that they can perform routine activities correctly. There should also be an establishment of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) including the ex-model C schools. Collaboration with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) should be established where regular workshops on carrying out routine activities could be done.

Model classrooms should be set up in each circuit to guide practitioners with the correct classroom arrangement. The District Official responsible for Grade R should be responsible for managing those classrooms and practitioners should be given the opportunity to visit the sites. Awareness and discussions on the importance of exposing learners to well-set, stimulating environments should be given during practitioners' visits. Some practitioners should be appointed as Grade R leaders to collaborate with the District Official in co-ordinating the classroom visits and arrangement.

With regard to documents that did not reflect any planned curriculum activities, it is recommended that the Deputy Principal should assist and support the HoDs in drawing up the management plan for the Grade R to guide them on what activities to include and when they should be carried out by the HoD. The plan should reflect activities like induction workshops for newly appointed practitioners, specific dates for meetings and functions in the Grade R, and dates for internal workshops to address common challenges identified during class visits. Records or minutes for such activities should also be kept as evidence. Practitioners should practically be involved during workshops in the development of lesson preparations in order to contextualise the lesson plans provided by the Department of Education.

To address the problem of lack of supervision and support noted during interviews and focus group discussions, it is recommended that the Deputy Principal and the HoD undergo intensive training on Grade R management where they will also be required to complete a portfolio of evidence. The Deputy Principal will be equipped to oversee and make sure that the HoD provides evidence and accounts of the support activities provided. There should also be collaboration between the District Official responsible for Grade R, the HoD and the Deputy Principal in planning the support activities for the Grade R practitioners.

It is recommended that the Deputy Principals make sure that HoDs in their management plan clearly reflect when and how class visits will be conducted in order to promote interaction among the relevant parties. Management by walking around and face-to-face meetings with practitioners should also be considered. Face-to-face meetings are direct, run in the classroom and focus on teacher issues that help them understand and improve teaching.

A strategy on providing feedback and a follow-up tool needs to be developed and put in place to follow up on activities and the support provided. There should also be follow-up interaction meetings organised among the SMT members (HoD, Deputy Principal and Principals).

It is recommended that the current appointment requirements of practitioners be changed from Matric to a professional ECD three-year qualification. Those practitioners who are already in the schools should be encouraged to register for the ECD professional qualification. They should be provided with intensive three or four years of training. The training would equip practitioners with the appropriate teaching methodologies for Grade R classes. The SMT should on regular basis organise developmental workshops (on such matters as preparations, presentation of lessons, or support to learners experiencing learning barriers) to provide support to practitioners. There is correlation between quality and teacher qualifications (Ch. 2, §2.13.).

There should be analysis of performance (results) of learners so that problem areas of individual practitioners could be identified and addressed in the subsequent term. The following is a recommended functional model that can address the shortcomings noted in this research.

6.5 THE RECOMMENDED FUNCTIONAL MODEL OF SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

My contribution in the study is aimed at addressing the functional deficiencies noted about the activities of the HoD. From my classroom observation and the responses from all the research subjects, the HoDs included; it is evident that the problems associated with poor supervision and support at school-based Grade R classes centre around them. My proposition is informed by the responses of practitioners and HoDs to

the questions: “*what would they do differently to improve the quality of teaching in Grade R classes?*” and “*what do they regard as good supervision and support?*”

I therefore see the proposed model of supervision and support at Grade R classes as feasible because little will have to be changed in terms of the existing management structures in schools. The model is feasible because schools already have qualified deputy principals and HoDs in their management structures. They also have practitioners who have experience in teaching Grade R and some are being trained for the professional qualification. Deputy Principals and HoDs could then receive intensive training on Grade R curriculum and management. Practitioners could also be developed for managerial positions and be considered to head Grade R as they have experience in the classes. Figure 6.1 below is the proposed model of supervision and support at school-based Grade R classes.

The first block represents the Deputy Principal with the competencies needed and his/her functions in support of the HoD. In my opinion the Deputy Principal who does not feature anywhere in Grade R currently, should play an important role in the supervision and support of practitioners in Grade R classes. His/ her role should be to monitor and support the HoD by making sure that the HoD drafts and implements successfully a management plan specifically for the Grade R. The plan must reflect all HoD activities relating to their support for practitioners. It should include an induction or orientation workshop for newly-appointed practitioners and class visits to monitor and control curriculum implementation.

The Deputy Principal should also control the HoDs’ work to check how they have controlled the practitioners’ assessment of learners and reporting tools to stakeholders. The Deputy Principal will then be accountable to the principal in order to provide him or her with a report on the HoD’s activities and progress to keep him/her abreast of developments in Grade R classes. Other competencies and functions of the Deputy Principal have been spelt out in figure 6.1 below.

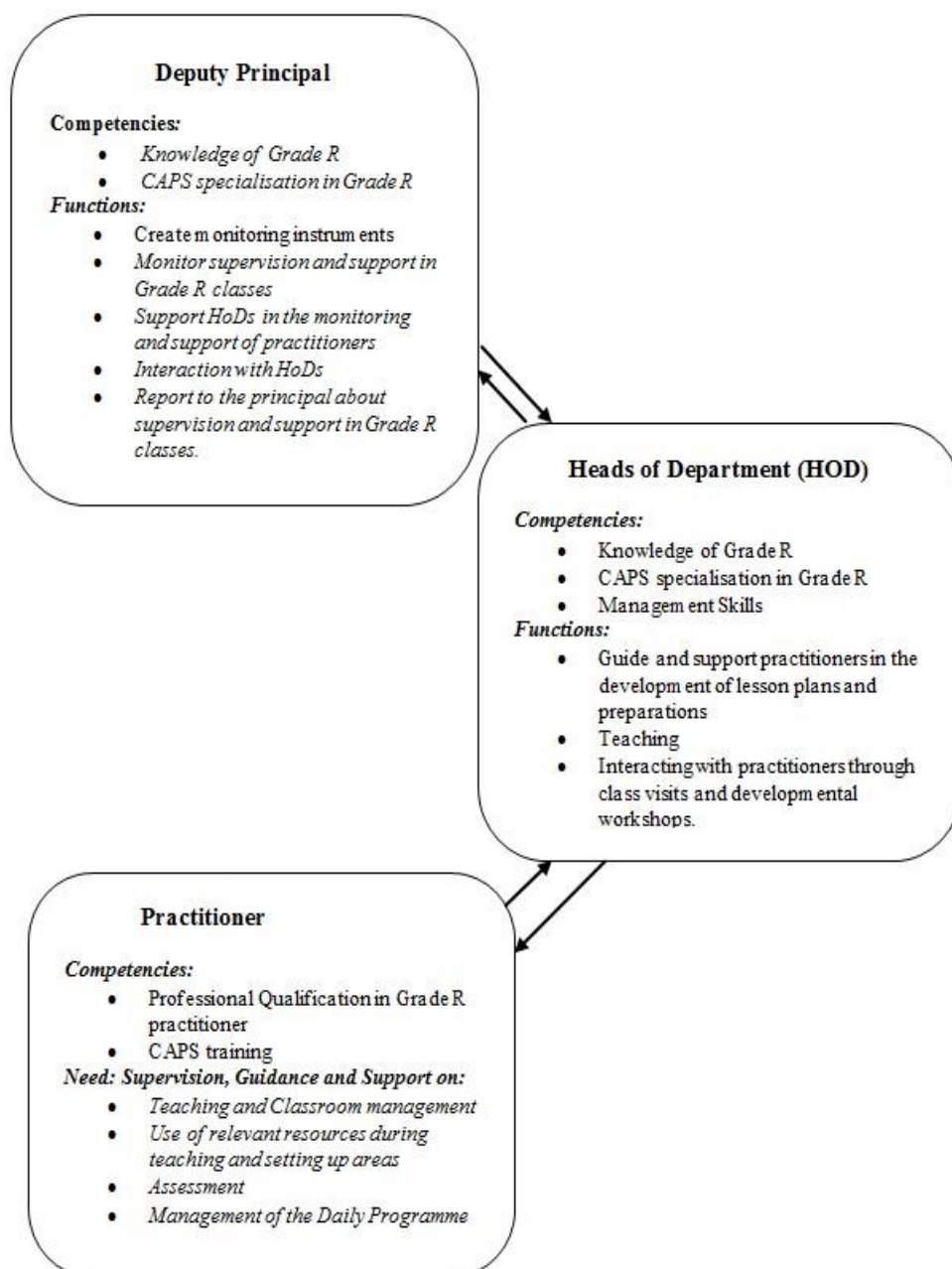


Figure 6.1: The structural representation of the recommended functional model of supervision and support

The first block in the structure, presents the competences and functions of the Deputy principal in relation to the roles he/she can play in supervising and supporting Grade R activities. The Deputy principal need to monitor and support the HoDs in monitoring and supporting activities in Grade R classes in order to improve the quality of teaching in Grade R classes.

The second block represents the competencies and the functions of the HoD for supervising and supporting of the practitioners' activities in the class rooms. Chapter

3, §3.3 also elaborates on the functions of supervision that should be carried out by the HoD as a supervisor with reference to the supervision cycle discussed in Chapter 3, §3.4. HoDs are the key people in the whole structure. Their role is to make sure that they assist and guide practitioners in the planning and presentation of lessons, monitor assessment of learners, using the correct scale, and make effective use of resources. They should also make sure that routine activities are correctly carried out by doing class visits.

The HoDs' support should improve the practitioners' performance to that of good quality. HoDs should be a functional link between the practitioners and the Deputy Principal by reporting to the Deputy Principal on their work in Grade R. To ease the HoDs' workload, practitioners could also be appointed to be HoDs for the Grade R practitioners based on the classroom experience they have. To prepare them, they could also be trained on the managerial aspect or leadership roles.

The last block represents the suggested competencies and areas of needs of the practitioners. It reflects the nature of help that must be accorded the practitioner who has to produce learners envisaged in the CAPS document. Grade R practitioners should also be the type of teachers envisaged by National curriculum (Ch. 3, §3.6.1). Arrows in the structure denote the communication flow between the individuals (Deputy Principal and HoD, HoD and the practitioner) within the structure. Chapter 3, §3.9 elaborates on the roles of management structures (HoD, Deputy Principal and Principal) in supervision as the process of engaging teachers in instructional dialogue for the purpose of improving teaching and increasing learner performance (Sullivan & Glanz, 2005:27).

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research could be conducted on

- the nature of training provided to practitioners and HoDs and its impact in the quality of teaching in Grade R classes;
- assessment in Grade R as some challenges were noted during document analysis;
- comparative practices in other provinces

- how Grade R practitioners can be retained.

6.7 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

In answering the research question “*What is the nature of supervision and support provided at school-based Grade R classes of the Gauteng North District?*” I maintain that the quality of supervision and support in the research area is poor based on the research findings.

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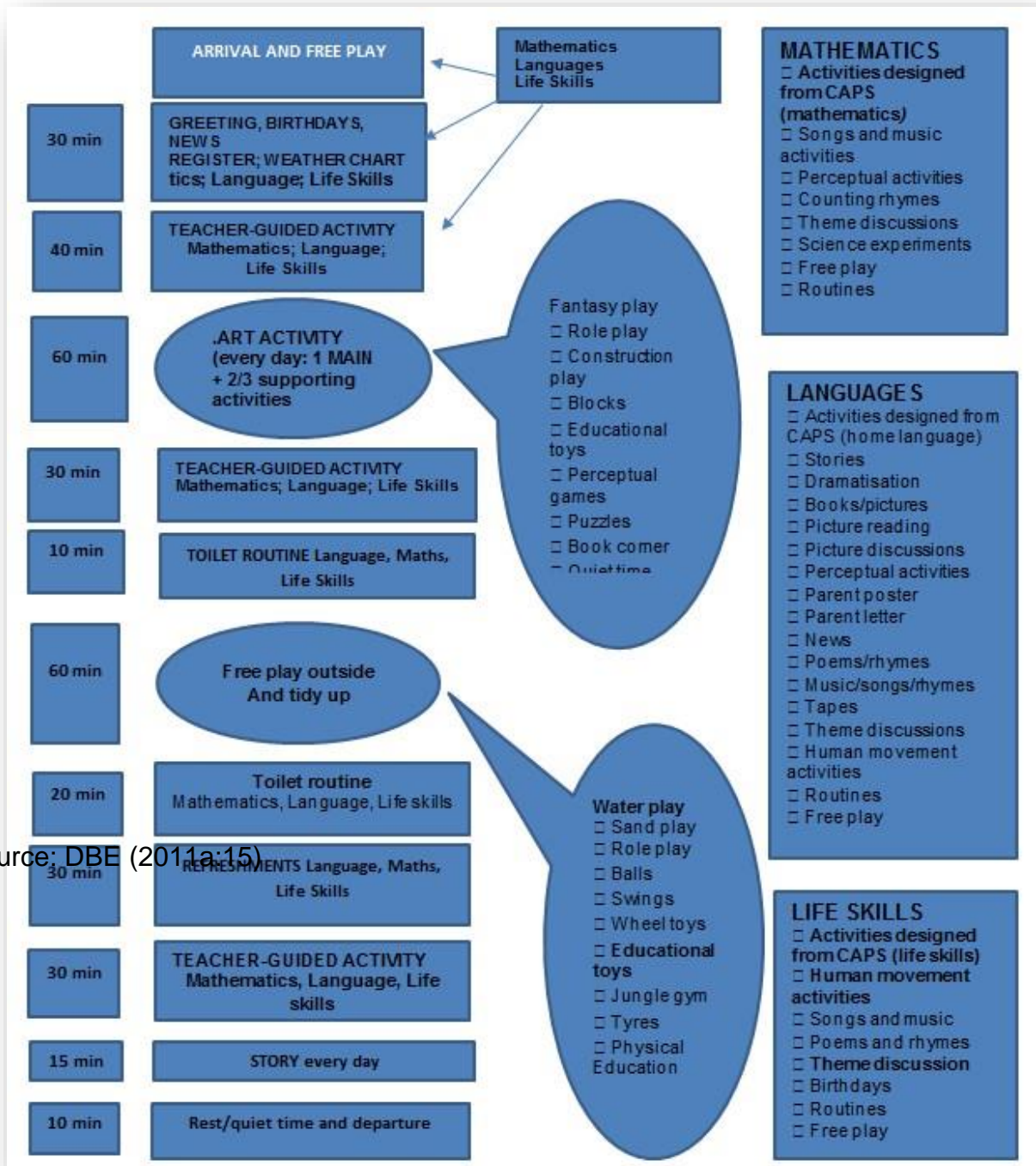
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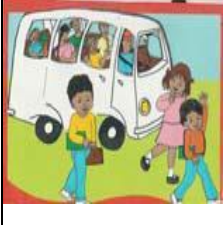












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ANNEXURE 1: GRADE R DAILY PROGRAMME (± 7:30 – 13:00 – CONTACT TIME)



Source: DBE (2011a:15)

ANNEXURE 2: GRADE R PICTORIAL DAILY PROGRAMME (FOR LEARNERS)

		
Arrival	Register, birthdays, weather and News	Activity, Visual Art and free play inside
	 	
Tidy – up	Teacher guided class activity	
		
Toilet Routine	Refreshment Time	Free play outside and Tidy – up
		
Toilet Routine	Teacher guided class activity and story	
		
Rest	Departure	

N.B. Rest for Grade R learners should be after contact time while children are waiting to be collected.

Source: DBE (2011a:60)

ANNEXURE 3: GRADE 1 TIME TABLE

Time	7H30	7H45	8H00	8H30	9H00	9H15	9H45	10H15	10H45	11H15	11H45	12H15	12H45
Day	DEVOTIONS	15min	30min	30min	SHORT BREAK	30min	30min	30min	LONG BREAK	30min	30min	30min	30min
Mon		HL	FAL	MATHS		MATHS	MATHS	L.S		L.S	HL	HL	HL
Tues		HL	HL	HL		L.S	L.S	MATHS		MATHS	L.S	L.S	FAL
Wed		HL	FAL	MATHS		MATHS	MATHS	HL		HL	HL	L.S	L.S
Thurs		HL	HL	HL		HL	MATHS	MATHS		MATHS	L.S	L.S	FAL
Fri		L.S	L.S	FAL		FAL	MATHS	MATHS		FAL	HL	HL	

ANNEXURE 4: GRADE 2 TIME TABLE

Time	7H30	7H45	8H00	8H30	9H00	9H15	9H45	10H15	10H45	11H15	11H45	12H15	12H45
Day	DEVOTIONS	15min	30min	30min	SHORT BREAK	30min	30min	30min	LONG BREAK	30min	30min	30min	30min
Mon		HL	FAL	MATHS		MATHS	MATHS	L.S		L.S	HL	HL	HL
Tues		HL	HL	HL		L.S	L.S	MATHS		MATHS	L.S	L.S	FAL
Wed		HL	FAL	MATHS		MATHS	MATHS	FAL		HL	HL	L.S	L.S
Thurs		HL	HL	HL		HL	MATHS	MATHS		MATHS	L.S	L.S	FAL
Fri		L.S	L.S	15min		15min	30min	45min		15min	30min	30min	
	L.S	L.S	HL	HL	MATHS	MATHS	FAL	HL	HL				

ANNEXURE 5: GRADE 3 TIME TABLE

Time	7H30	7H45	8H00	8H30	9H00	9H15	9H45	10H15	10H45	11H15	11H45	12H15	12H45	13H15	
Day	DEVOTIONS	15min	30min	30min	SHORT BREAK	30min	30min	30min	LONG BREAK	30min	30min	30min	30min	30min	
Mon		First Additional Language	FAL	MATHEMATICS (MATHS)		MATHS	MATHS	L.S		Life Skills (L.S)	L.S	HOME LANGUAGE (HL)	HL	HL	
Tues		L.S	L.S	MATHS		MATHS	MATHS	FAL		FAL	HL	HL	HL	HL	
Wed		FAL	FAL	MATHS		MATHS	MATHS	HL		HL	HL	L.S	L.S	FAL	
Thurs		FAL	FAL	L.S		L.S	MATHS	MATHS		MATHS	MATHS	L.S	L.S	FAL	FAL
Fri		L.S	L.S	HL		MATHS	L.S	L.S		FAL	FAL	HL	HL	HL	L.S

N.B. The time tables need to be compared to the daily programme in order to note the differences in how they have been structured.

ANNEXURE 6: PERCEPTUAL SKILLS AS IN LIFE SKILLS POLICY DOCUMENT

Source: DBE (2011:11 & 12)

Visual perception: acquiring and interpreting information through the eyes – accurate

Visual perception enables the learner to read, write and do mathematics;

Visual discrimination: the ability to see similarities, differences and detail accurately; Visual memory: the ability to remember what the eyes have seen and the sequence in

which things have been perceived;

Auditory perception: acquiring and interpreting information through the accurate auditory perception enables the learner to give meaning to what is heard;

Auditory discrimination: the ability to hear similarities and differences in sounds;

Auditory memory – the ability to remember what the ears have heard and the correct sequence in which sounds have been perceived;

Hand-eye co-ordination: the hands and eyes working together when performing a movement, e.g. throwing or catching a ball,

Body image: a complete awareness of one's own body, i.e. how it moves and how it functions;

Laterality: showing an awareness of each side of the body, e.g. which hand is waving; Dominance: preferring to use one hand or side of the body, i.e. either right or left dominant;

Crossing the mid-line: being able to work across the vertical mid-line of the body e.g. being able to draw a line from one side of the page to the other without changing the tool from one hand to the other;

Figure-ground perception: being able to focus attention on a specific object or aspect while ignoring all other stimuli, the object of the attention is therefore in the foreground of the perceptual field while all the rest is in the background e.g. being able to read one word in a sentence;

Form perception: the ability to recognise forms, shapes, symbols, letters, etc. regardless of position, size, background, e.g. can recognise a circle because of its unique shape;

Spatial orientation: the ability to understand the space around the body, or the relationship between the object and the observer, e.g. the hat is on my head.

ANNEXURE 7: INDIVIDUAL PRACTITIONERS' INTERVIEW RESPONSES

ATLAS ti. Themes	Verbatim Responses
Support Provided.	<p><u>HoD Support to practitioners</u></p> <p>P1SA: I receive support from the District Official when she visits our school.</p> <p>P1SC: Yes we sometimes get the support from the HoD.</p> <p>P2SC: Ok, when we are in need of something, we tell them, then they help us or they give us the support.</p> <p>P2SE: HoD only checks how my file has been arranged. <u>Areas of support</u></p> <p>P1SC: Our HoD at school gives us support in issues of nutrition. P2SC: They buy us grocery for the children and when we are short of stationary they do buy.</p> <p>P1SE: When we come to resources she does not want us to lack. P2SE: We do get support regarding what we need and information about the District activities.</p> <p>P1SD: She is supporting me but <i>in some areas I do not get her support.</i></p> <hr/> <p>P2SD: So far I think I am getting a support from my HoD and the officials.</p> <p><u>Partial Support</u></p> <p>P1SB: Sometimes the HoD will be with us but sometimes they do not come.</p> <p>P2SB: She is using her break time when she comes to me, she has no time to meet with me, except when we have meetings.</p> <p>P1SA: The support I receive is very minimal not as I expect it to be. <u>No Support</u></p> <p>P1SA: She is not concerned about our classes and the work we do. P1SB: No support, they always report that they have problems. P1SE: I can still say I do not get any support; we have not seen anyone of them coming to our classes offering assistance.</p> <p>P2SB: I do not have enough resources in my class, so support no. P2SE: We do not receive guidance with activities in the class.</p> <p><u>Good Support</u></p> <p>P1SE: Good support is when I have problems in my class or need assistance with something; I would be able to get help, listening to our problems and be eager to know better about the Grade R's class and work.</p> <p>P1SC: Love and respect to our colleagues.</p> <p>P2SE: Meeting with my other two colleagues for support to each other. P1SA: Providing the needed resources and assisting me with the learners who are experiencing barriers.</p>
Interaction	<p>P1SE: My HoD comes with a monitoring tool in my class.</p> <p>P2SE: Our HoD comes to us during break times to check, most of the time we discuss groceries and other issues including school fees. P1SB: We have a meeting</p>

	<p>every term, we meet with the Foundation Phase Grades 1, 2 and 3, and sometimes what they discuss is not relevant to us.</p> <p>P2SB: Last time our HoD was from the workshop, she went through what was discussed at the workshop with us.</p> <p>P1SA: HoD visits me in class.</p> <p>P1SC: Yes I do have interaction with my HoD.</p> <p>P2SC: Yes, we have interaction with our HoD when we have meetings.</p> <p>P1SD: Yes, we do. Whenever I have problems, we meet almost every time</p>
<p>Experience with Grade R</p>	<p><u>About School:</u></p> <p>P1SA: The schools have just merged and the HoD and the principal are learning together with me.</p> <p>P1SB: The Grade R is not considered as a school here, other teachers do not understand Grade R, and they want Grade R to work as other Grades.</p> <p>P1SE: There are those teachers who discriminate what we are doing in Grade R, but we do not want to let them do that because we like what we are doing.</p> <p>P1SC: We go after them to assist us where they can.</p> <p>P2SE: Sometimes learners are about 35 and 38 in a class. PSB2: I do not have variety of resources like the other two classes, in positives, we have team work.</p> <p>P1SD: Those learners come from different families, you also can enjoy looking at the child as she / he is developing.</p> <p><u>About Teaching</u></p> <p>P1SB: We have a problem, as we speak the Grade R outdoor equipment is already damaged.</p> <p>P2SE: Sometimes we had challenges of overcrowding.</p> <p>P2SB: Some colleagues do not have time for us; they seem to be too busy. Grade R kids are writing like they are in Grade 1. I did not expect them to be doing things like this.</p> <p>P1SB: We are trying to explain to them that we are not supposed to go like that.</p> <p>P1SC: they do not understand what we are doing in Grade R. <u>About learners</u></p> <p>P1SA: Learners are not the same, they come from different background and you must understand their needs.</p> <p>P1SC: Each and every day I bond with those kids, I also learn something from them.</p> <p>P2SC: I must teach the learner in totality, love them and whenever they ask questions I must listen to them and answer them.</p> <p>P2SE: I enjoy working with the young children irrespective of the small salary we are being paid,</p> <p>P2SB: It excites me to teach Grade R as I love young kids. <u>About parents</u></p> <p>P1SA: Involvement of parents, they do not want to pay.</p>

	P1SB2: Parents to be more involved in the education of their children.
Improving the Quality of teaching	<p>PSA: .If they accept us I think our teaching will excel.</p> <p>PSE1: Mm, 'I would like the Grade R to have their own principal may be it would be better').</p> <p>PSB2: I would like the Grade R to be taken seriously and teachers from other Grades to take it upon themselves to learn about Grade R, and the Grade R to have their own district or head.</p> <p>PSB1: I would like the Grade R children to be served or doing things alone.</p> <p>PSE2: They need to be ready so that they do not struggle with pencil grip.</p>

ANNEXURE 8: PRACTITIONERS' FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW RESPONSES

ATLAS ti. Themes	Verbatim Responses
Support provided.	<p>HoD Support to practitioners</p> <p>Prct1: I am getting a full support from my HoD.</p> <p>Prct2: From my Education for Learners with Special Education Needs (ELSEN) educator and HoD.</p> <p>Prct6: In our school our HoD helps us a lot.</p> <p>Prct7: My HoD helps me only when I ask for help and she would say she will phone the district.</p> <p>Prct5: I am supported by my HoD and my colleague.</p> <p>Prct2: I have somebody who was teaching Grade R she helps me together with our HoD.</p> <p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <p>Prct7: Let's say I have a problem of shortage of something in my class I go to her and ask her to help me.</p> <p>Prct5: She only comes to the class to ask for files and check on learners.</p> <p>Prct6: We sit together and discuss the lesson plan, to help us to prepare.</p> <p><u>No Support</u></p> <p>Prct2: My HoD does not support me.</p> <p>Prct3: I want to disagree, our HoDs do not support us, and the HoD only comes once per term.</p> <p>Prct4: I do not go to the HoD, she will be busy and coming once per term, that is not a support, support is daily.</p> <p>Prct5: My colleague used to teach Grade R, now she helps me a lot. Prct7: I have no support, we are working as team, (practitioners). <u>Good Support</u></p> <p>Prct1: She (HoD) must first know the Grade R programme.</p> <p>Prct 2: I expect the HoD to support me, but how will she support me if she does not understand Grade R.</p> <p>Prct3: Understanding the programme of Grade R, how Grade R is running.</p> <p>Prct5: The HoD is supposed to have that time.</p> <p>Prct 6: Help us with our lesson plans, set the class the way it is supposed to be.</p> <p>Prct7: When I don't know how to make the lesson plan correctly, she must come and help me, when I do not know how to assess the learner, she is the one who must come and show me.</p>

Interaction	<p>Prct 1: I do not have any interaction with my HoD except when she has called a phase meeting.</p> <p>Prct3: She just comes to the class and observes, and checks the learners' practicing sheets, our handwriting. Sometimes they when she guides us is not the way we do things in Grade R. and the way we do things in class.</p> <p>Prct5: My HoD has never called us to give us training or guidance on how we should function.</p> <p>Prct 6: Do not know if I can call this interaction because we usually meet casually and ask me if everything is fine.</p> <p>Prct7: She comes when there is something that is supposed to be done in class.</p>
Experience with Grade R	<p><u>Teaching:</u></p> <p>Prct1: The main problem in our teaching is the Daily Programme, it is too long, and we do not finish the programme.</p> <p>Prct2: When we treat the workbook some of them (learners) are too slow, and when we are painting some learners do not finish.</p> <p>Prct6: in fact, most of the time it becomes very difficult to be a practitioner; you cannot be good if you do not receive support. Prct7: HoDs do not understand Grade R; they used to call Grade R a crèche. Prct5: My HoD says the 'workbook' does not work, they don't understand the Grade R,</p> <p><u>School:</u></p> <p>Prct5: when learners go to Grade 1 they say this one (practitioner) doesn't teach they forget that we learn through play.</p> <p>Prct 5: We do not get recognised as practitioners.</p> <p>Prct 3: HoDs are coming to Grade R with the knowledge of Grade 1. <u>Learners:</u></p> <p>Pct2: Teaching a Grade R, you are like a nurse, a social worker a teacher, you need to help them in a special way.</p> <p>Prct 3: Some of the learners need love.</p> <p>Prct4: The children in Grade R need that motherly love.</p> <p>Prct5: Maybe the school should start to learn to appreciate what practitioners are doing.</p> <p>Prct7: I gave Grade R learners love and treat them like they are my own children.</p>

	<p>Prct 9: We need to listen to them. <u>Parents</u></p> <p>Prct 7: I think if you are a Grade R practitioner you need to work with parents more.</p>
<p>Improving the Quality of teaching</p>	<p><u>Knowledge of Grade R</u></p> <p>Prct3: The HoD needs more help they must first be trained on the programme of Grade R.</p> <p>Prct4: If I don't tell her (HoD) how I work, she would not understand.</p> <p>Prct5: The HoD did not see the right way to tell me.</p>

ANNEXURE 9: INDIVIDUAL HODS' INTERVIEW RESPONSES

ATLALAS ti. Themes	Verbatim Responses
Support provided	<p><u>HoD provide support</u></p> <p>I: I provide them with resources in case where the teacher is not doing well.</p> <p>HDE: I provide support in areas like curriculum implementation, classroom, draw a management plan, I also squeeze the dates in my plan to support them.</p> <p>HDD: We support them by controlling their lesson plans.</p> <p>HDB: If the person is lacking we communicate with the experienced practitioner to help the teacher.</p> <p><u>Areas of support</u></p> <p>HDC: By showing them how to tackle the topics, how to introduce their activities on daily basis, by buying good teaching resources. I: I also guide the practitioners on how to address challenges, check the content of the lesson and how the teacher conducts the lesson</p> <p>I: By listening to their needs and taking them to the principal.</p> <p>HDD: I always advise the practitioner to give them home works to write.</p> <p>Feedback and controlling learners work and assessment.</p> <p>HDB: I also support them by observing their teaching especially the new ones.</p> <p>HDE: I give her support on how she can teach mathematics and other subjects, I advise her to let earners write numbers from 1 to 5 in the A5 exercise books. <u>Resources:</u></p> <p>I: Where there are no relevant resources, we improvise.</p> <p>HD2: In case of their stationary when there are shortages we also improvise, by buying good teaching aids.</p> <p>HDD: helping them with acquisition of the resources they need. <u>Practitioners personal needs</u></p> <p>I: Encourage them to improve, we encourage them to register for a professional ECD qualification</p> <p>HDD: We discuss the issue of SGB increasing their salaries, encourage them to study further.</p> <p><u>Principal's support</u></p> <p>I: She helps in buying the learners food, convenes meeting with parents to discuss their children's progress.</p> <p>HDC: Whatever we want from the principal, he is able to provide us with it.</p> <p><u>Follow up measures</u></p>

	<p>HDB: I do not have any measures, even though sometimes is not practical because of time.</p> <p>HDC: Remember we also have Grade 1 to three classes. I: I do not have specific measures, I do not do follow up. <u>Good Support</u></p> <p>I: I need more information about their curriculum; I need clarity on how they assess their worksheets which of course is not simple,</p> <p>one does not understand outdoor activities and controlling learners work is a bit of a challenge.</p> <p>HDD: I am not very sure as I do not have idea of what is happening in Grade R.</p> <p>HDE: I do not have a glue of what is going on in Grade R.</p>
Interactions	<p>I: During the SMT meetings I give feedback, whatever challenge, the teachers feel that they have, I take them to the committee, and there is no time as I have my own class.</p> <p>HDB: We do that during our break times we just pass by to check if they are ok.</p> <p>HDC: We usually go to do class visit which is not that possible. HDD: When I come back from the workshops I give him feedback HDE: We interact during phase meetings, or sometimes when making rounds during our own break times.</p>
Experience with Grade R	<p><u>Teaching</u></p> <p>I: Very hard to manage- that is why we even established a committee, because I also have a fulltime class with no separate time allocated to visit the teachers.</p> <p>HDB: It's a challenge mam, Grade Rs do not have formal writing which is difficult to assess and control.</p> <p>HDC: The issue of support for me is a difficult one, we are trying but the workload is just too much.</p> <p>HDD: Learning how to develop their fine motor skills not writing as we suppose to write.</p> <p>HDE: Grade R has a lot of challenges; I sometimes do not know how to help the teacher when she approaches me.</p> <p><u>School</u></p> <p>HDD: Learners will be left alone and yet they are not included in the agenda.</p> <p><u>Learners</u></p> <p>HDC: We see the improvement from the learners in Grade 1, when they go to grade 1, 95% of them is school ready.</p> <p><u>Practitioners</u></p> <p>I: I have a challenge with them (practitioners) because it seems their reasoning capacity is not at the same level as ours.</p> <p>HDB: She is trying her level best to improve.</p> <p>HDD: Grade R classes where they will be alone, instead of Grade R attending assembly with the rest of the Phase, I have noticed that practitioners sometimes</p>

	get frustrated by this and they are not voicing it out.
Improving the quality of teaching	<p>HDC: I would wish the maintenance of broken equipment to be from the Department. The age cohort also, if it can be changed to 6 years.</p> <p>I: to get the mobile class from the closed school so that they have a proper class for Grade R.</p> <p>HDD: I am not very sure as I do not have idea of what is happening in Grade R, learners should be educated formally in their classrooms, now you wish that the age admission in Grade R could be 6 years.</p> <p>HOE: They could be going straight to class and follow their own programme instead of them attending assembly with the rest of the Phase. Maybe we should also look at increasing the hours they spent at school, and they could spend at least six hours.</p> <p>HOB: They could only be expected to attend meetings where the agenda affect them, and have more space for the Grade R classes.</p>

ANNEXURE 10: HOD'S FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW RESPONSES

ATLALAS ti. ti.TThemes	Verbatim Responses
<p>Themes:</p> <p>Support provided</p>	<p><u>HoD Support</u></p> <p>HD1: The practitioners come to me and discuss the content of the findings.</p> <p>HD3: The issue of support for me is a difficult one, like my colleagues have mentioned, we are trying but the workload is just too much. Remember we also have grade 1 classes to three. HD6: observe the lesson, I usually do it after breaks, I arrange with my colleagues....</p> <p><u>Follow up on support</u></p> <p>HD1: The use of monitoring tool, thereafter agree on a certain time that maybe after two weeks I will be coming again in your class</p> <p>HD2: we do use the monitoring tool and observation book.</p> <p>HD3: Ok the monitoring tool is divided according to the set criteria for Grade R.</p> <p>HD5: My observation book is up to date for Grade R. HD6: Yes, to sit in the class and observe the lesson. <u>Principal – support</u></p> <p>HD3: When you ask something for Grade Rs the principal respond. We have a Grade R committee which we always meet as SMT.</p> <p>HD4: She also makes sure that those who are putting these resources outside they are monitored fully.</p> <p><u>No support from principal</u></p> <p>HD1: At my school the principal does not support me at all.</p> <p>HD2: Most of the time the Grade R complain to us and we take the matter to the principal and then the principal does not attend to the issue.</p> <p>HD3: You are really lucky' with us we do not get that support. <u>Areas of support</u></p> <p>HD2: Yes, we do class visits which I can call them rounds because we do that during our break times.</p> <p>HD4: We support them by controlling their lesson plans and the acquisition of the resources they need.</p> <p>HD5: I also support them through control of their preparations and learners work, by listen to their needs and taking them to the principal. I make sure that the educators have resources as they supposed to have.</p> <p><u>Partial Support</u></p> <p>HD1: I Support them by visiting them in class and having phase meetings. Although the visit to the classes is not that thorough because there is no time.</p> <p>HD4: Maybe if I have a free period per day then I will go there. HD6: I do not usually do proper management of curriculum, I do try my best, but it's not according to the standard that I wish because of time.</p>

	<u>No Support</u>
	<p>HD2: I am not only managing Grade R, I am also doing Grade 1 to 3.</p> <p>HD3: The issue of support for me is a difficult one, remember we also have grade 1 classes to three.</p> <p>HD5: Controlling learners work and assessment is a bit of a challenge.</p> <p>HD8: - Why do they want us to have classes while we are HoDs, we have to</p>
Interaction	<p>HD2: I will be doing follow up using the observation book HD6:</p> <p>Yes, to sit in the class and observe the lesson. HD1: I Support them by visiting them in class HD2: Yes, we do class visits.</p> <p>HD6: Yes, to sit in the class and observe the lesson, I usually do it after breaks; I arrange with my colleagues that I will be working from morning until break.</p>
Experience with Grade R	<p><u>Teaching</u></p> <p>HD1: Only the practitioners understand what their learners are doing, what their learners are doing, for us is a bit of a challenge. HD2: One does not have training on Grade R issues, when Grade R practitioners go for meetings, we don't go with them, they go alone and when they come back they tell us.</p> <p><u>School</u></p> <p>HD2: you still have to start with the Grade R work that they supposed to have done in Grade R....</p> <p>HD6: In my class I have 48 learners if you share those learners amongst the other grade 3 classes, those classes will be full. So on that day I will just be running up and down, giving those learners some work to do and after that will be coming to Grade R of which it is not a proper class visit.</p> <p>HD3: We are trying but the workload is just too much.</p> <p>HD5: Even our colleagues in the main stream, they do not consider practitioners as people.</p> <p><u>Learners</u></p> <p>HD1: I have noted that when these learners come to Grade1, they come with at least a light, even though they cannot write the word properly, but they know how to write.</p> <p>HD2: When they come to Grade 1 most of the Grade R learners are ready</p> <p>HD3: But now since we have these community crèches which feed us with Grade R learners, then they become acquainted with the environment of the school,</p> <p>HD4: Learners are disciplined.</p> <p>HD5: In my school we do have the positives with what Grade Rs are doing,</p> <p><u>Practitioner</u></p> <p>HD1: I feel for the Grade R practitioners, they are working so hard, and yet</p>

	<p>they earn so little, that money that does not even have increase yearly,</p> <p>HD3: And even the government is not aware of the danger of losing good practitioners in Grade R.</p>
	<p>HD4: So where are we going to get professional practitioners for Grade Rs.</p> <p>HD5: They do complain about educators in the main stream that they are not considering them.</p> <p><u>Principal</u></p> <p>HD1: we are having a problem with the principal understanding exactly how the Grade R should function; I think they also need to be trained.</p> <p>HD4: The school fund is controlled by the SGB. Even with them</p> <p>You know Grade R is just being a crèche to them.</p> <p>HD5: most principals do not take Grade R as a serious thing.</p>
<p>Improving the Quality of teaching</p>	<p>HD1: If they could just infuse them (Grade R) in to the main stream,</p> <p>HD2: I just wish from term 4 maybe if there can be formal writing in Grade R, I support mam when she says we need training, we need intensive training with regard to grade R.</p> <p>HD3: Our Daily programmes if we can go to training like CAPS. HD4: I will require having free period every day.</p> <p>HD5: I wouldn't also not be complaining much about time because if the SMT has given us enough time to support.</p> <p>HD7: If we were given time by management to provide the full support, everything should be clear and straight forward.</p> <p>HD8: Policy (on admission) should be amended, Some they are still small they don't even concentrate, maybe five and half in Grade R then six in Grade 1.</p>

ANNEXURE 11: PRINCIPALS' INTERVIEW RESPONSES

ATLALAS ti.	Verbatim Responses
Support provided	<p>PRSA: I do give support especially if they indicated to me that they need certain help, I also support by ensuring that they attend all the workshops, we plan together (HoD), where we draw a management plan together. I also have my own form to check on the HoD. PRSE: As a principal I also make sure that I monitor the HoD if she is adhering to the plans she has drawn. In the plan it will reflect how and when she will visit the practitioners in class. Assisting the SGBs with the signing of Grade R practitioners' contracts.</p> <p>PRSA: the HoD is always put in the loop about developments that are occurring in grade R.</p> <p><u>Area of support</u></p> <p>PSA: I also support the HoD by providing for her requests in relation to Grade R. when we have our SMT meetings they give reports, if we need the SGB to intervene we also inform them,</p> <p>PSB: In the area of classroom management, in the case of monitoring the activities for languages and Mathematics.</p> <p>PSD: In the provision of LTSM, resources such as physical resources, we plan together and we assist one another.</p> <p>PSD: Sometimes we do have practitioners with matric only and we make sure that we help the practitioners.</p> <p>PSB: we help the HoD to draw up management plans which will enable the practitioners to function effectively.</p> <p><u>Support through HoD/committee</u></p> <p>PSB: I provide the support to my Grade R educator with the relevant LTSM,</p> <p>PSD: In terms of organisation we have different structures in school whereby we are always attending meetings.</p> <p><u>Partial Support</u></p> <p>PSC: I get the reports from the HoD with regard to the Grade R and I will discuss with her in trying to address the challenges. <u>No support</u></p> <p>PSC: you know in Grade R they do not do class visit, it is rare that they do class visit.</p>
Interaction	<p>PSA: But for me to be with the Grade Rs no, no personal interaction, I only rely on the information I get from the HoD. We also have weekly.</p> <p>PSC: I am there to interact with the parents to assist the Grade R educators.</p>

	<p>PSD: I hold regular meetings with the HoD to make sure that I address challenges. <u>Feedback interaction</u></p> <p>PSD: those things are discussed and then bring feedback to the practitioners.</p> <p>PSE: Our interaction is through discussions on matters related to Grade R and other Foundation Phase classes, before and during morning briefings where I give them feedback sometime.</p>
<p>Experience with Grade R</p>	<p><u>Teaching</u></p> <p>PSA: Most of the challenges are minimised. We have some challenges more especially when it comes to facilities even if we try to raise funds by asking parents to pay a certain amount it becomes difficult for them to pay.</p> <p>PSC: The age cohort is very critical; if the Grade R will be 5 turning 6 then the Grade 1 will be 6 turning 7 and the learner teacher ratio. PSD: The challenge is overcrowding.</p> <p>PSE: Having Grade R in my school has increased my responsibilities. I have also realised that the practitioners are doing a lot of work and the learners are cleverer. I always thought they only eat and sleep.</p>
<p>Improving the quality of teaching</p>	<p>PSA: We need to focus on ensuring that we have sufficient facilities.</p> <p>PSB: If practitioners can be monitored and be well trained.</p> <p>PSC: We felt as a school, that these learners need to know their names and be able to count. Too many learners in class, I have 35, 36.</p> <p>PSD: If English as first additional language can be started in Grade R. There must also be sufficient facilities.</p> <p>PSE: Qualifications, if ever they say level 5 or Diploma in Grade R in ECD that will do because we will be taking people who are experienced who will be able to deliver.</p> <p>PSE: Augmenting the Practitioners salaries. I sometimes had a look at their time table it is very packed. If I had the powers, I would suggest that they be provided with the teaching assistants. I would also take the principal and the SGB (parents) through exactly what is happening in grade R class so that we understand.</p>

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF APPROVAL- GDE RESEARCH.



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference no: D2015 / 091

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	30 May 2014
Validity of Research Approval:	30 May 2014 to 3 October 2014
Name of Researcher:	Modise M.R.
Address of Researcher:	P.O. Box 73580 Lynnwoodridge 0040
Telephone Number:	012 846 3682; 072 124 1235
Email address:	Matshediso.Modise@gauteng.gov.za
Research Topic:	The provision of supervision and support for school based Grade R classes for quality teaching at North Gauteng District
Number and type of schools:	FIVE Primary Schools
District/s/HO	Gauteng North

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

*Hidabo
2014/06/02*

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

8th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhedo@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

- letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
 3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
 4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
 5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
 6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
 7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
 8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
 9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
 10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
 11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
 12. On completion of the study the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
 13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
 14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

David Makhado

Dr David Makhado
Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 2014/06/02

APPENDIX B: UNISA ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

14 September 2016

Ref : 2014 NOVEMBER/0011900/MC
Staff : Ms MR Modise
Staff Number : 6911900

Dear Ms Modise

Decision: Ethics Approval

Researcher: Ms MR Modise
Tel: 012 846 3682
Email: modise.matshediso@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof EM Lenyai
College of Education
Department of Early Childhood Education
Tel: 012 429 4582
Email: lenyaem@unisa.ac.za

Proposal: Supervision and support at school based Grade R classes of the Gauteng North District

Qualification: D Ed in Curriculum and Instructional Studies

Thank you for the application for an extension of research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. An extension of the clearance is granted for the duration of the research.

The initial application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee on 12 November 2014 and the application for an extension on 14 September 2016.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
 - 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee.*
- An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the*



University of South Africa
Pretorius Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0001 South Africa
Telephone +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.

- 3) *The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*

Note:

*The reference number **2014 NOVEMBER/6911900/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the College of Education RERC.*

Kind regards,



Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Prof VI McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF CONSENT – GDE HEAD OFFICE

LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS OF NORTH GAUTENG DISTRICT.

P. BOX 73580

Lynnwood ridge

0042

.../...../2014

The Director – Head Office

111 Commissioner Street

Johannesburg

Sir

RE: REQUEST OF CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Matshediso Rebecca Modise, a D. ED student at the University of South Africa currently doing research on the topic: 'Supervision and Support at school-based Grade R Classes of the Gauteng North District'

Your permission is hereby requested to conduct research in five (5) Primary Schools of District North Gauteng from the principals, Head of Departments (HoD) and Grade R practitioners. The research will take in the form of classroom Observations, Individual Interviews and Focus Group interviews of HoDs and practitioners respectively.

The research will be conducted in Bronkhorstspuit, Cullinan and Nkangala circuits during the 3rd Term of the year 2014. I pledge to exercise maximum anonymity of all the participants. Participants will be urged to be open and frank to ensure that the results are not prejudiced in answering the questions.

I have confidence that this study will be of great value towards assisting in the provision of supervision and support at Grade R classes for improved quality teaching and learning.

Thanking you in anticipation. Regards

.R. Modise (Matshediso.Modise@gauteng.gov.za) (Office Tel: 012 86 3682)

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF CONSENT – GAUTENG NORTH DISTRICT

LETTER TO THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS.

P. BOX 73580

Lynnwood ridge

0042

.../...../2014

The Director - Gauteng North District

No.86 Water Meyers Street

Val - De Grace

Sir

RE: REQUEST LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Matshediso Rebecca Modise, a D. ED student at the University of South Africa currently doing research on the topic: 'Supervision and Support at school-based Grade R Classes of the Gauteng North District'

Your permission is hereby requested to conduct research in five (5) primary schools situated in Bronkhorstspuit, Cullinan and Nkangala circuits during the 3rd. Term of the year 2014. I pledge to exercise maximum anonymity of all the participants. All participants will be urged to be open and frank to ensure that the results are not prejudiced or biased in answering the questions.

I am confident that this study will be of great help towards assisting in the provision of supervision and support at Grade R classes for improved quality teaching and learning.

Thanking you in anticipation. Regards

M.R. Modise (Matshediso.Modise@gauteng.gov.za) (Office Tel: 012 86 3682)

APPENDIX E: LETTER OF CONSENT – SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL OF PRIMARY SCHOOL REQUESTING PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEACH.

P. BOX 73580

Lynnwood ridge

0042

.../...../2014

The Principal

.....

Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Matshediso Rebecca Modise, a D. ED student at the University of South Africa currently doing research on the topic: 'Supervision and Support provided at school-based Grade R Classes of the Gauteng North District'.

Your permission is hereby requested to conduct research in your school during the 3rd Term of 2014. The significance of which will be to enhance the provision of effective supervision and support to school-based Grade R practitioners in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Grade R classes. Permission to conduct research at your school has already been requested from the Head Office and the District Director.

I pledge to exercise maximum anonymity of all the participants (practitioners, HoD, principal and the SGB). They will all be urged to be open and frank to ensure the results are not prejudiced in answering the questions.

Thank you in anticipation

Regards

M.R. Modise (Matshediso.Modise@gauteng.gov.za) (Office Tel: 012 846 3682)

APPENDIX F: LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT AT SCHOOL
BASED GRADE R CLASSES OF THE GAUTENG NORTH DISTRICT.

Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____

Date...../...../2014

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of this study is to establish the nature of supervision and support provided at school-based Grade R classes of the Gauteng North District. The study will make use of classroom observations, documents analysis, individuals and focus group of both practitioners and HoDs' interviews as well as individual interviews of principals.

RESEARCH PROCESS

1. This study requires your participation as an individual or Focus group interview member to discuss the nature of supervision and support provided at school- based Grade R classes of the District.
2. The researcher will lead both the individual and Focus group interviews.
3. The interview will give you as the participant an opportunity to state your view regarding the supervision and support or provided in Grade R classes in order to improve the quality teaching and learning.
4. The focus group environment will offer a participant an opportunity to express her views on the subject of provision of supervision and support at school-based Grade R classes of the previously disadvantaged schools.
5. There will be no right or wrong answer.
6. Your participation to this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your participation.
7. The information you provided will be kept anonyms.
8. In case of the focus group, all participants will be given the opportunity to express an opinion, agree or disagree with the opinion of other group members.

NOTIFICATION THAT PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIAL, TAPE RECORDINGS, ETC WILL BE REQUIRED:

Your attention is hereby drawn to the fact that the interview will be tape recorded to ensure that valuable information collected during the interview is captured and that the context of the information can be reviewed in detail. Following both individual and focus group interview, the recorded material will be transcribed. As a participant you are allowed to peruse the transcription of the recordings of the interview in which you participated at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your anonymity as a participant in this study is ensured.

WITHDRAWAL CLAUSE

I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary until such time as I request otherwise and that I may withdraw from the interview anytime.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

In an endeavour to universalise the Grade R by the Department of Basic Education, it has become important that the quality of teaching and learning is promoted by investigating the nature of supervision and support provided to these classes' to fulfil the Department of Education's goal of providing quality teaching and learning in schools. As it has been noted that very few role-players understand the importance of Grade R and the practices in such classes, the study will be of benefit in providing guidelines and capacitating stakeholders involved by discussing the importance of supervision and support, how young children learn, practices in Grade R and the models that can be applied to manage supervision and support in the Grade R classes.

INFORMED CONSENT

I am aware that if I have any questions regarding the study, I may contact the supervisor, Prof E. Lenyai at the Department of Early Childhood Education, Mucleneuck Campus, UNISA, Tel: 012 429 4582.

I, theundersigned, (full name) have read the above information relating to the project and have also heard the verbal version, and declare that I understand it. I have been afforded the opportunity to discuss relevant aspects of the project with the project leader, and hereby declare that I agree voluntarily to participate in the project.

I indemnify the university and any employee or student of the university against any liability that I may incur during the course of the project.

I further undertake to make no claim against the university in respect of damages to my person or reputation that may be incurred as a result of the project/trial or through the fault of other participants, unless resulting from negligence on the part of the university, its employees or students.

I have received a signed copy of this consent form.

Signature of participant: Signed at

..... on **WITNESSES**

1
.....

2
.....

3
.....

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

1. FOR PRACTITIONERS Section A: Biographical Details

May you please answer the following questions?

1. Please mark with a cross the age range appropriate to you.

N.B. (HoDs and Principals leave out the age columns)

18-24		25-29		30-34		34-39		40- 49		50 plus	
-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	--------	--	---------	--

1. What is your highest Grade/Level passed?

Grade 10		Grade 12		Level 4		Level 5		Level 6	
----------	--	----------	--	---------	--	---------	--	---------	--

2. Which ECD qualification do you have?

Certificate		Diploma		Degree	
-------------	--	---------	--	--------	--

3. Which National Qualification Framework Level (NQFL) do you have ?

NQFL 1		NQFL 4		NQFL5	
--------	--	--------	--	-------	--

4. How many years of teaching experience in Grade R?

0-1yr		2yrs		3yrs		4rys		5yrs -plus	
-------	--	------	--	------	--	------	--	------------	--

Section B: Interview Questions

1. Who gives you support in your classroom practices?
2. Describe the type of support you receive.
3. Do you have any interaction with your supervisor (HoD)?
4. What do you consider as good support?
5. What are your experiences in teaching Grade R?

6. What would you like be done differently in Grade R to improve the quality of teaching?

2. FOR HODS

1. How do you provide support and supervision to the Grade R practitioners?
2. In which areas do you provide support?
3. What measures do you have to follow up on after the support you have provided?
4. What type of support do you receive from the principal in relation to the teaching and organisation of Grade R?
5. What are your experiences in supervising Grade R practitioners?
6. What would you like done differently to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Grade R?

3. FOR PRINCIPALS

1. How do you provide support to your HoD with regard to Grade R teaching and organisation?
2. In which areas do you provide support?
3. What measures do you have in place to follow up on the support you provided?
4. What have been your experiences since the inception of Grade R in your school?
5. What interactions do you have with your HoD?
6. What would you like be done differently in Grade R to improve the organisation and quality of teaching and learning?

APPENDIX H: EXAMPLE OF HOD'S MANAGEMENT PLAN

YR 2015 ①

FOUNDATION PHASE MEETING

DATE: 22-01-2015
 TIME: 7h30
 VENUE: Foundation phase office.

Main item: Report back from HOD's mtg
 * Report back.

Item	Discussion	Responsible
Assessment workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment workshop will be conducted in March, dates will be sent. - Volunteers are required from diff. schools to be trained. 	All educators
learners at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Names of learners to be forwarded. - Parents need to be contacted if the learner is not progressing well. - All educators should keep observation books (proper records should be kept) 	All educators
Spellatha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good work for the previous year has been commended. - 20-24 June - school level. - All states will be distributed to all educators. 	
learner profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learner profiles will be audited. - Submission 	All educators

02-06-2015.

(4)

TO ALL FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATORS.

All foundation-phase educators are reminded about today's meeting, scheduled as follows.

Time: 13h30

Venue: Cnr 3A class.

Agenda.

1. Report back from HODs meeting.
2. Assessment files/personal files
3. Classroom management.
4. DBE W/books.
5. Pretoria Zoo.
6. AOB.

22-09-2015

(5)

TO ALL FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATORS

You are all invited to a meeting scheduled as follows:-

DATE: 22-09-2015 (Today)

TIME: 13h30

VENUE: Cnr 3A classroom

*No Grade R issues (curriculum) to be discussed.

AGENDA

1. Report from the District officials.
2. Improvement from the monitoring process.
3. Report from National office.
4. Assessment sheets

APPENDIX I: TURNITIN RECEIPT

This is your Turnitin Digital Receipt

TR

Turnitin No Reply <noreply@turnitin.com>

Reply all |

Yesterday, 03:19 PM

Dear Matshediso Rebecca Modise,

You have successfully submitted the file "Supervision and Support at School based Grade R classes of the Gauteng North District" to the assignment "Final submission for examination" in the class "M&D Student submissions 2016" on 15-Nov-2016 03:19PM. Your submission id is 737620892. Your full digital receipt can be downloaded from the download button in your class assignment list in Turnitin or from the print/download button in the document viewer.

Thank you for using Turnitin,

The Turnitin Team

APPENDIX J: TURNITIN ORIGINALITY REPORT

- Processed on: 19-Dec-2016 11:14 SAST
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- Word Count: 43270
- Submitted: 2

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT AT SCHOOL-BASED GRADE... By Matshediso
Rebecca Modise

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Submitted to The Independent Institute of Education (IIE) on 2016-04-04

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<http://uir.unisa.ac.za>

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Clifford, Jantina R. Macy, Marisa G. Alb. "A model of clinical supervision for preservice professionals in early intervention and early childho". Topics in Early Childhood Special Educat. Fall 2005 Issue

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APPENDIX K: DECLARATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDIT



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19 December 2016

Declaration of professional edit

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT AT SCHOOL-BASED GRADE R CLASSES OF THE GAUTENG NORTH DISTRICT

by

Matshediso Rebecca Modise

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for
The degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

In the subject

CURRICULUM STUDIES

at the

University of South Africa

I declare that I have edited and proofread this thesis. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency, referencing style and formatting of headings, captions and Tables of Contents. I did no structural re-writing of the content.

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Bachelor's degree with a major in English, having taught English to matriculation, and having a Certificate in Copy Editing from the University of Cape Town. I have edited more than 100 Masters and Doctoral theses, as well as articles, books and reports.

Sincerely,

Dr Jacqueline Baumgardt
Member, Professional Editors Guild

Blue Diamonds Professional Services (Pty) Ltd (Registration Number 2014/092365/07)
Sole Director: J Baumgardt