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**Implementation of Professional Development Programmes For Grade R
Teachers: A case study of four primary schools in Amathole West
Education District, Eastern Cape.**

By

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**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the implementation of Professional Development Programmes for Grade R teachers in four primary schools in Amathole West Education District. The interpretive paradigm was employed in this study because it focused on the teachers' professional development and their participation in a social learning interaction as community of practice. Furthermore, a qualitative approach was used for the collection of data so as to gain in-depth information on the implementation of professional development programmes. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used as a form of collecting data. The participants were purposively selected for the sample of this study and comprised of 4 Principals, 1 Subject Advisor and 4 Teachers.

Data analysis was done in line with the research questions, aims and objectives of the study. Through the participants' answers from schools under study, a transcript was formulated, coded and categorized in view of the implementation of Professional Development Programmes for Grade R teachers. The data revealed that Grade R teachers under study were under qualified such that none of the teachers had the recommended Diploma in Grade R qualification as stated by the Department of Basic Education. It was also found that there was diversity in the teachers' qualifications, colleges and the length in training. The study also indicated that although professional development programmes were held, these were however not properly monitored. Findings also revealed that the intervention strategies through professional development programmes and the support given by the district and the schools were strategies through professional development programmes and the support given by the district and the schools were not adequate and consistent. As a result the participants encountered a number of challenges regarding the implementation of professional development programmes for Grade R teachers. Namely: (1) lack of appropriately qualified personnel to support the teachers both at school and the district (2) lack of adequate follow up support visits and feedbacks from both the school and the district (3) lack of proper management by the schools and (4) lack of collaboration

and team work in the schools. Thus, there were variances in schools under study especially with regards to late release of funding for teaching and learning materials, support offered to the principals by the Department of Education. As a result, recommendations from the study suggested that the Department of Education and the District have to come up with more strategies of continuously training the teachers and the principals and offering strong and adequate support. The study also recommended the engagement of NGOs for job embedded professional development with longer in-service training periods as compared to the short in-service professional development programs of once- off workshops. Also another suggestion that the district must monitor school based professional development programs regularly was raised in the study.

The study further recommended that the Department of Education provide personnel with special training in Grade R and early learning education to support the teachers and the principals.

DECLARATION

I, **THERESA JUMO**, Student Number **201415219** hereby declare that I am fully aware of the University of Fort Hare's policy on plagiarism and I have taken every precaution to comply with the regulations.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Jumo', written in a cursive style.

Date: 04 December 2019

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my late parents; mom Daphine Lunga and Thomas Madizvidza. My foster parents; vatete Blantina and her husband Sebastian Chirumanzu for raising me from childhood to be what I am today. God Bless you. To my family, my husband Mathew thank you for being there for me. My son Munashe my technical advisor, I am grateful son. My guardian angel, my pillar of strength Ashley, I will always be indebted to you daughter.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANA:	Annual National Assessment
Bed:	Bachelor of Education
CAPS:	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CEO:	Chief Executive Officer

CPD:	Continuous Professional Development
CREC:	Centre for Research in Early Childhood
DBE:	Department of Basic Education
DHET:	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE:	Department of Education
ECD:	Early Childhood Development
ELRL:	Education Labour Relations Council
FET:	Further Education Training
HEQF:	Higher Education Qualification Framework
HoD:	Head of Department
MoES:	Ministry of Education
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NQF:	National Qualification Framework
OECD:	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RSA:	Republic of South Africa
SACE:	South African Qualification Council
SAHRC:	South African Human Research Council
SAQA:	South African Qualification Association
SGB:	School Development Committee
SMT:	School Management Team

UK: United Kingdom

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural
Organisation

UNICEF: United Nation Children's Fund

USA: United States of America

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

According to the Department of Education (DoE), (2006), the policy for teacher education in South Africa is designed to develop a teaching profession to meet the needs of a democratic South Africa in the 21st century. In this view the policy seeks to properly equip teachers to be able to teach and understand the needs of learners and their families. This is not an exception to Grade R teachers who are expected to have an understanding of child development and early education issues through teacher education policy. The policy expects the Grade R teachers to provide rich and meaningful educational experiences for all children and families in their care. However, in spite of the policy frameworks the Grade R teachers' qualifications as well as quality have become a concern to the DoE, the stakeholders and the government at large.

Therefore, this study seeks to find out how professional teacher development for Grade R teachers is implemented to enable the teachers meet the needs of the Grade R programmes. Grade R is the final year of children's Early Childhood Development (ECD) class learning before entering formal schooling in grade 1 (Zenex foundation, 2010). Moreover, studies have shown that there is need for more qualified Grade R teachers for five to six year olds, so as to lay a firm foundation for future learning success and contribute to the bridging of the existing achievement gap Republic of South Africa RSA(2001) Department of Basic Education DBE) (2001),South African Human Research Council (SAHRC) & United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2014)). Furthermore, Grade R is the Reception Year Programme with children proceeding to Grade 1 (RSA DBE 2011, Rensburg 2015). Hence, the Education White Paper 5, of (2001) advances that, the early years are critical for the acquisition of the concepts, skills and attitudes

that lay foundation for lifelong learning. Therefore, Grade R should develop the child holistically, for instance emotionally, socially, intellectually, mentally and physically so that by the time the child enters Grade 1 the child has acquired basic skills for formal schooling United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisations (UNESCO, 2012 Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2001).

1.2 Background

The importance of reception classes is mirrored in international studies where it has been shown that schools with reception classes have children who are holistically ready for formal education (Center for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) 2013). In the same context, the CREC (2013) reports that the majority of the European countries consider high quality staff training of the reception year personnel as a critical part of early childhood education services. Therefore, it goes without mention that the use of training strategies for these staff members becomes a great stride in Grade R programmes.

In an effort to improve training in reception year, schools of education in Texas and Virginia in the United States have extended programmes which go beyond the traditional 4 years bachelor's degree to develop kindergarten teachers (Weber-Meyer, 2015). Notwithstanding, there also other pragmatic strategies where the teachers are provided with course work and clinical training prepared by their colleagues and principals at school level.

Literature also shows that kindergarten teachers in Chile are required to have minimum qualification of first stage tertiary level 5 while, the assistant teachers obtain level 3 after the completion of high school level. On the other hand, the managers and directors in reception year are expected to possess a bachelor's degree (Blyth and Meiring 2017, Darling-Hammond, Newton and Wei 2013). Therefore, in China, in- service strategies are offered in form of a two year professional development programme to improve the quality of teachers that serve

in the reception year programmes. For instance there is a programme known as, Un Buen Comienzo (UBC) (A Good Start) which provides workshops after every 12 months as coaching sessions for classroom teachers (Yoshikawa, 2015).

1.2.1 The African Context

In Sub-Saharan African countries, researchers have noted that there are also low levels of qualifications among the reception year teachers. Currently, most African countries put emphasis on training and on-going professional development programmes for the Reception Year teachers through both in-service and pre-service programmes (UNESCO, 2014). These two aspects receive more attention to ensure Grade R education system is of quality. For example Grade R centres in Uganda which are either home based or institutive has teachers that have had the basic training qualification for one year Deininger, 2003). However, Deininger,(2003) further states that for those working in institutionalised centres, are awarded with a two year Grade R teacher certificate.

The certificates awarded to the teachers enable those who wish to further their studies to the diploma level to do so. Grade R teacher training institutions in Uganda are privately owned except of Kyambogo University (UNESCO 2014) The government has little control over the training of the Grade R teachers in colleges.

This promotes semi-autonomous training institutions of colleges that have their own curriculum, employing their own assessment strategies for trainee teachers (Ejuu, 2012). The Ugandan scenario shows that entry level into different Grade R training points vary from one institution to another. Research has found out that this has led to different operational standards of the teachers in practising reception year institutions (Ejuu, 2012). This is regardless of the Ugandan policy that streamlines licence and accredits reception year training centres (OECD 2008). Another strategy is that, Kyambogo University is working in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and Sport together with the Grade R teacher training stakeholders. As a result, they have to develop a comprehensive Grade R teacher training framework to enhance quality (Ejuu, 2012, OECD, 2008). This allows all

the teachers trained through the same framework to upgrade the teachers' qualifications.

Reception year in Zimbabwe is run by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in partnership with the Ministry of Public Service Labour, Social Welfare, Health and Child Welfare which pays appropriately qualified teachers' salaries (Chinhara, 2016). Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education implements the programme for the 0-8 year olds (Dyanda, Dozva 2010). Training of Grade R teachers is done by the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Training where there are highly trained Grade R lecturers to offer the training needs of the teachers (Dyanda, Dozva 2010). This is in line with the government training needs and quality of teachers needed. Statutory Instrument 106 of 2005 clearly specifies that, all the Grade R centres should be operated by appropriately qualified teachers (Government of Zimbabwe, 200). According to the statutory Instrument 106 in Zimbabwe Grade R teacher training lasts for three years. During the 3 year training the first 2 terms are for theory and 5 terms are for teaching practice in the classes where they are under the mentorship of qualified and experienced teachers. Then, the remaining 2 terms are spent at the college for reinforcement of theory and practice (Chinhara, 2016). Meanwhile, the University of Zimbabwe, Women's university, Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), Great Zimbabwe University and Midlands State University offer Bachelor of Education and Masters Degrees specialising in reception year.

In addition to the above, quality of teacher training is enhanced through, Heads of schools, Education officers and Grade R trainers who monitor and ensure there is essential on-going professional advice and support for the teachers (Makuvaza, Gatsi, 2014). It is clear therefore, that the Reception Year personnel in Zimbabwe are being upgraded through pre-service and in-service teacher training models (Dyanda Dozva, 2010). While Uganda and Zimbabwe have different ways of training; both countries have their teachers trained in government institutions. Also, teacher training is monitored by the government.

1.2.2 The South African Context

In the South African context, Grade R is the reception year for children in preparation for formal grade one schooling (Biersteker, 2010). The focus for Grade R is to prepare 5 year old learners so that they can be ready for schooling. The Grade R class is critical because it lays the foundation for all round development of young learners which becomes a springboard for later learning success (Biersteker, 2010). Grade R teaching profession is also critical and highly demanding as it secures a positive lifelong learning of the young children. This is supported by Tsitouribou (1999) cited in Govindasamy (2010) that to secure a good future for our young children, teachers need vision, compassion and should be articulate and well-read. Govindasamy, (2010) is also of the view that untrained and unskilled Grade R staff members may contribute to children's frustration which may lead to aggression and emotional disturbances resulting in high rate of drop outs in later classes. Therefore, training of the Grade R teachers who understand the needs of the young learners is very important and desirable especially in nurturing their ability to facilitate development of the young learners.

Grade R was officially introduced in schools in 2001 through White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education (DoE, 2001). According to the policy document, the reception year programmes must be registered with provincial departments of education and accredited reception year educators must be registered with the South African Council of Educators (SACE). The policy document further states that educators without specialised qualifications should undergo appropriate in-service training programmes. Furthermore, White Paper 5 highlights that, there should be on-going development of the curriculum for the reception year and provision of more effective support to the teachers to allow them to improve their teaching practices (DoE, 2001).

Grade R teachers' training is run by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE), Non-governmental organisations (NGO) and Further Education Training (FET) colleges (Andrich, Hill & Steenkamp, 2015). Some Universities and private

colleges also offer training for Grade R teachers. These training institutions employ varied training models to offer knowledge and skills. Such models include the training model, which is done off site to deliver skills to passive teachers by experts (Stretch, 2013). In the off-site model, teacher development is done by an external expert using the lecture method, focusing mainly on imparting skills to the teachers. It is oftentimes called the cascade model of training conducted through workshops and seminars (Kennedy, 2005). Here, training of key or lead teachers from a number of schools who typically come together for varying lengths of time for a workshop facilitated by experts or district officials is carried out (Maistry, 2008; DoE, 2006; Day & Sachs, 2005).

The off-site cascade model allows lead teachers to be trained by departmental officials for periods ranging between two to three days or even up to seven days, depending on the scope to be covered. The lead teachers are, then, expected to convene training sessions for their colleagues in the schools (Ramparsad, 2001; Ono & Ferreira, 2010). The cascade model of CPTD programmes has been adopted mostly within the South African education system to facilitate teachers' development programmes.

Another model includes cluster or cross-school development work or communities of practice (DoE, 2007). In communities of practice, teachers collaborate in clusters for formal discussions or workshops facilitated by the district officials or NGO facilitators (Atmore, van Niekerk and Cooper, 2012). This cluster-school professional development support is one of the principles underlying the policy framework on continuous professional teacher development. Moreover, within this policy framework, it is clearly stipulated that teachers should be responsible and take charge of their development. As such, teachers are able to identify the areas they need to grow professionally. For instance, subject teachers may gather in one of the schools in their clusters, conduct and share experiences with their fellow

teachers. This approach is believed to develop teachers' skills and their content knowledge (Buns, 2011).

Issues of support and monitoring are also crucial in the implementation of professional development programmes. At the school level, principals and Heads of Departments (HoDs) are tasked with responsibility to supervise and support teachers with their development growth in terms of classroom observation; give feedback to the teachers; manage and support curriculum differentiation; access suitable resources; build staff capacity; and ensure improvement of developmental goals (du Plessis, Conley & du Plessis, 2007). This should be on continuous basis in terms of its applicability and effectiveness. At the district level, there is a District-Based Support Team (DBST) to coordinate and provide support to individual schools. The team support the schools by facilitating the implementation process effectively; identifying the appropriate resources; monitor and offer support required as regards curriculum and institutional development. Hence, the team creates and develop structures such as staff development teams (SDTs); and play a central coordination and monitoring role (DoE, 2007).

However despite implementation of professional development programmes, the Interim Policy for Grade R (Do E, 1996a) and White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education (Biersteker, 2010: Sherry & Draper 2013) observe that Grade R teachers struggle to have meaningful child development activities and teaching methods that support learning. This calls for the identification of on-going professional development programmes (DoE, 1996a; Department of Education, 2001).

The Norms and Standards Policy for Grade R made similar observations regarding what and how Grade R teachers should teach. There was a consensus that Grade R teachers fail to initiate the learning through play model (Heckman, 2014). According to Stretch (2013) the government made important changes and expansion of Grade R services in the Grade R preparation for formal schooling for

the five year olds. Currently, the new national Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) which was implemented in 2012 (CAPS, 2011) also focuses on teacher training through in-service for Grade R teachers having noted that they lack appropriate qualifications and skills.

Thus, the retooling of Grade R teachers lacks clear standards needed in servicing them Stretch (2013). As such questions have been raised regarding the implementation employed in developing the Grade R teachers. Existing research in South Africa points to the fact that children are not acquiring the foundational numeracy and literacy skills in primary schools especially learners enrolling for grade 1 to grade 3 (Moodley, 2014). An indication of lack of quality teaching and learning during the reception years have been noted in the above mentioned literature. Lessanyi (2006) as cited in (Ramsaroop and Gravett 2017) found out that 65% of the learners in Grade R do not meet the minimum criteria for early literacy and numeracy development as a result of poor preparation of the teachers.

Lack of formal training opportunities for the Grade R teachers is regarded as one reason Grade R teachers' lack skills. This is despite the fact that there are a host of institutions that offer training to Grade R teachers (Biersteker, Dawes, Hendricks, Tredoux, 2016). For instance, a survey done by the Early Learning Resource Unit (ELRU) in 2006 to check the Grade R teacher qualifications, reported that the majority of the teachers who received their training from the NGOs were considered unqualified according to the Department of Education (Biersteker, et al, 2016). According to that same report, out of 50 000 teachers a staggering 43 % were trained by NGOs, 23% were not trained at all; 15% were underqualified with Junior Certificate or Matriculation while, 12% were qualified but not specialised in Grade R. Furthermore, the report found that, 7% did not have any form of qualification at all (Rensburg, 2015). These statistics do not only pinpoint to the need for staff development programmes but also ensuring that Grade R teachers are not poorly prepared to teach learners.

In another survey by the DoBE in 2013, it was reported that, out of the 16 520 Grade R teachers about, 12 207 which is 78% of the Grade R teachers did not have Diploma certificates to teach at this level as recommended in the national qualification framework policy (DBE, 2015). In 2014 the DoBE carried another survey to ascertain the number of qualified teachers. The results of that survey also showed that, there were 12336 teachers who were not trained. The above statistics show that it is not clear how professional development of Grade R teachers is being implemented by Grade R training institutions because there is an indication that not only are the teachers under qualified but have not undergone some skills programmes for professional development.

According to a study by Heckman, (2014), different strategies can be promoted through various forms of professional development. For instance Grade R teachers can be developed through pre-service and in-service training in a formal system which includes coaching or mentoring. However, it is not clear which strategies are employed in implementing professional development programmes of Grade R teachers, given the outcry from stakeholders. For instance, Bernard and Braund (2016) have noted that in Eastern Cape Grade R teachers are still employing traditional teaching methods such as telling methods. Also in another study by Bernard & Braund (2016) to assess school readiness for Grade R in poor socio-economic areas of Cape Town, the results showed that most learners scored below average. Observations (in the same study) indicated that poor teaching methods and work ethics were a contributing factor to the poor performance of the learners (Bernard & Braund 2016). This clearly highlights that the teaching methods employed by Grade R training institutions might be having significant challenges because of the non-standard qualifications and low qualifications (Bernard & (Braund 2016). In addition to the above, the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) (2012) also found out that there are limited preparations of Grade R teachers, leading to half-baked learner preparation for grade one. Furthermore, concerns have been raised by other stakeholders on lack of proper professional qualification and on -going support of the Grade R teachers

(Rensburg, 2015). Also the DoBE Acting Chief Director Curriculum Implementation and Monitoring acknowledged that many Grade R teachers lack proper professional qualification (DoBE, 2013). Also *The Times* newspaper on the 4 of December 2013 quoted the Democratic Alliance (DA) education spokesperson Khume Ramulifho commenting on the 2012 poor Annual National Assessment (ANA) results, as lack of proper preparation of the early childhood teacher development. Citing the above issues, it is clear that there are a lot of question marks regarding the implementation of professional development programmes of Grade R teachers and on-going support. Thus, this study seeks to investigate the implementation of professional development programmes of Grade R teachers through pre-service and in-service programmes.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

World over the reception year is critical for preparing learners for formal schooling (CREC 2013). Grade R teachers are expected to be knowledgeable and appropriately qualified to prepare learners for formal schooling (Department of Higher Education and Training (2015). Studies claim that in South Africa children are not acquiring the foundational developmental, pre-numeracy and pre-literacy skills in the reception (Grade R) as expected because of the poor preparation of the practitioners and non-standard qualification (DBE, 2015; Moodley 2014; Rensburg, 2015). The majority of Grade R teachers do not have Diploma certificates which indicate that they qualify to teach at this level as recommended in the national qualification framework policy (DoBE, 2015; RSA, Blyth and Meiring 2017. According to statistics a total of 12336 teachers were under-qualified, yet they had not received any on the job training (in-service). The above statistics show that the training institutions are not properly equipping the practitioners to improve their competence (Moodley 2014). This has left the performance of Grade R teachers in a great need for in-service programmes (DoBE 2015). As a result, concerns have been raised by different stakeholders that Grade R teachers lack proper professional qualifications due to minimal on-going support (The Herald Live, 29 March, 2017). Another concern is that many learners in Grade R do not

meet the minimum criteria for early literacy and numeracy development and that they subsequently enter grade 1 without the skill or concept mastery as a result of lack of proper preparation. Observations have been made that there is a dearth of strategies used to implemented continuous professional development programmes that are offered to teachers (Lessanyi, 2006 cited in Ramsaroop and Gravett, 2017). From the above it is not clear how the implementation of professional development programmes for Grade R teachers are being implemented. Hence, there is a gap on monitoring and evaluation processes as well as the support mechanisms that have to be put in place to gauge achievement of the teachers professional programmes meant to improve the teacher's professional adequacy. Hence, this study sought to investigate the implementation of professional development programmes for Grade R teachers in Amathole West district.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the implementation of teacher professional development programmes for Grade R teachers in four primary schools in Amathole West Education District.

1.5 Research Questions

1.5.1 Main Research Question

How are professional development programmes for Grade R teachers implemented in four primary schools in Amathole West Education District?

1.5.2 Sub-Research Questions

a. What teacher professional development programmes are implemented to develop the Grade R teachers?

- b. What strategies are used to implement Grade R teacher professional development programmes?
- c. How is professional development programme for Grade R teachers supported and monitored by the schools and Department of Education?
- d. What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of professional development programmes for Grade R teachers?

1.6 Objectives of the Study

- a. To find out teacher professional development programmes implemented to develop the Grade R teachers.
- b. To examine the strategies which are used to implement Grade R teacher professional development programmes.
- c. To investigate how professional development programmes for Grade R teachers are supported and monitored.
- d. To find out the challenges encountered in the implementation of professional development programmes for Grade R teachers.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study may benefit the Department of Education by coming out with various programmes suitable for professional development for Grade R teachers. The policy makers may also gain insight of what is happening in the schools in terms of implementing professional development programmes for Grade R teachers. In such cases it might provide useful information when reviewing policies on teacher development. The Department of Education, school management teams (SMTs)

may benefit with the information on how to support and monitor Grade R teachers for professional growth. The study may also motivate Grade R teachers who wish to further their professional growth to do so. It will also add to the body of knowledge on how teacher professional programmes for Grade R could be implemented.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted in four primary schools in the Amathole West Education District, Eastern Cape province. The participants were four Grade R teachers and four principals from the four primary schools in the above mentioned District. It also included one official from the district who is responsible for professional development of Grade R teachers.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Grade R

Is the final year of children's early development before entering formal schooling at grade 1 Moll (2011). For this study Grade R refers to the grade before entering grade one.

Practitioner/ teacher

The guidelines for Early Childhood Development Services in South Africa (2006: p .9) described the term practitioner as a "person working in early childhood development including those qualified by their experience and involvement in the sector and providing early childhood services from home centres and schools." For this study, practitioner will be used to refer to Grade R teachers.

Early childhood

Early childhood refers to the period from birth to eight years old (Wittmer, Petersen & Puckett, 2013). The study adopts this definition.

Professional development of teachers

Professional development is meant to develop the teachers by transforming their knowledge into practice through learning. Moreover, professional development is when teachers learn how to learn and transform knowledge into practice for the benefit of their learners' growth (Avalos, 2011). For this study, professional development of teachers refers to the pre-service and in-service programmes that they engage in to improve their practice (Gomba, 2019).

Implementation

Fixen (2005) defines implementation as a specified set of activities that are designed to put into practice an activity or program of known dimension. The same view is adopted for this current study.

1.10 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1

This chapter presents the introduction of the study, the background of the study which looks at different views from the global context to African context including South Africa. The statement of the problem, the main and sub research questions give the clear concerns and help in the navigation of the research. The definition of terms is also part of the chapter.

Chapter 2

The chapter reviews relevant literature discussing the views of different authors and other researchers who have done some research on the implementation of teacher professional development programmes for Grade R teachers. The chapter also provides the theoretical framework underpinning the professional development of teachers in Grade R.

Chapter 3

The chapter covers the methodology of the study which will explain the research paradigm, research design as well as the instruments in the research used to collect data. Ethical issues are also included in the same chapter.

Chapter 4

The chapter provides a detailed presentation of data as well as thematically analysing the data collected in this study.

Chapter 5

This chapter focuses on data presentation and discussion of findings to bring out the emerging results.

Chapter 6

The chapter covers the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This is a general summary of the first chapter of the study. This chapter encompasses the introduction of the study and discusses the background of the study showing concerns by different stakeholders on the implementation of teacher professional development programmes for Grade R teachers. Furthermore, the statement of the problem, main and sub research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study, delimitation of the study and definition of key terms are included in the first chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presented literature review. The first part of this chapter discussed the theoretical framework which informed the study. The theoretical framework which guided this study is Situated Social Learning theory put forward by Lave and Wenger (1991). The second part discussed what the scholars have written about the implementation of professional development programmes for Grade R teachers. The review covered how Grade R teachers are developed. The professional development programmes in place to develop the Grade R teachers; the strategies used by various stakeholders to implement professional development of Grade R teachers; the support and monitoring mechanisms used by schools and the Department of Education to ensure implementation of professional development programmes for Grade R Teachers. Lastly the chapter discussed the challenges encountered in the implementation of professional development programmes for Grade R teachers.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

In this study the theoretical framework was adopted in assisting to understanding the theories and concepts that are related to the implementation of professional development programmes for Grade R teachers. The study is informed by the Situated Social Learning theory and its proponents are Lave and Wenger (1991). This is a constructivism theory which sees knowledge as socially acquired and constructed. Furthermore, the theory sees learning as a form of co-participation in which members of the community are not only engaged in common work but they also create knowledge and share through practice (Lave and Wenger (1991) cited in Carter and Adkins (2017)). The situated learning theory is premised on two basic principles these are: active learning which takes place as a function of the context, culture and activity in which it occurs, and social participation which is regarded

crucial element of situated learning (*cf* Wenger 1999, 2000 & 2007). Wenger (2000: 227) identifies learning as an interaction between personal experience and social competence. Wenger further identifies various ways “to take charge of learning, to direct it, to demand it or to accelerate it” which *inter alia* include continuous professional development programmes (Wenger 1999: 33).

In support of what is mentioned in this theory another social situated learning theorist Eric (1997) as cited in Kerk (1997) also maintains the notion that active participation in everyday experiences makes learning useful and meaningful to the participants. Eric (1997), further explains that in adult situated learning there is an innate human drive to learn, therefore learning must be useful, intrinsic, motivational and related to daily bases experiences. In other words the teachers will be interested to participate if the purpose and the goals of the professional development programmes implemented are clear and should articulate the expected outcomes which are intended to be achieved. In support of the same idea Guskey (2002) posits that many teachers are engaged in professional development programmes with the belief that the programmes will boost their knowledge and skills to enhance their competence so as to improve the performance of their learners. Therefore, any implemented professional development activities must motivate the teachers to participate actively.

Literature continues to reveal a number of theories that share the same ideas with Wenger on understanding the acquisition of adults’ knowledge and skills in adult situated learning. Some of the constructivist theorists of adult learning explain how adults can be assisted when they engage in professional development programmes. For instance Kegan (1994) and Knowles (1980) and their significant principles that underpin adult learning. The Andragogic theoretical model proposed by Knowles in 1980, stated that the adult learner is self-directed, is responsible for their his or her learning, wants to perform real life tasks to solve problems, and wants learning that is collaborative rather than didactic (McKeachie, 2000:58). The Andragogic model is one of the most widely used and most suitable learning and

teaching model when training adult learners (McKeachie, 2000). Knowles's (1980) model is based on six assumptions namely:

- The need to know - adults want to know why they need to learn. Facilitators must therefore clarify the importance of the training;
- The learner's self-concept – adults believe that they are responsive for their lives. They need to be treated as capable and self-directed;
- The role of learner's experiences – adults come into the learning activity with different experiences and backgrounds. There are individual differences in the background, learning style, motivation, and goals; creating a greater need for self-individualisation of learning and teaching strategies. Therefore tapping into their experiences through experiential techniques (discussions, simulation, problem-solving activities, or case study methods) is beneficial;
- Readiness to learn – adults become ready to learn in order to cope effectively with real-life situations. Adults want to learn what they can apply in the present. Training must be focused in order to relate to their situation;
- Orientation to learning - adults are life-centred (task-centred and problem-centred) in their orientation to learning. They want to learn what will help them perform tasks they confront on a daily basis; and
- Motivation – adult motivation can be blocked by training that ignores adult learning principles (McKeachie, 2000:58).

Situated learning in adult education views knowledge as socially constructed and acquired in practice by a community of learners. Thus, sharing of knowledge is done in a social context and the participants are actively engaged in group discussions and dialogues in organised community practices (Lave and Wenger

1991). Therefore knowledge acquisition in situated learning is through a process which (Lave 1997) describes as (“way in” and “practice”). Therefore with reference to this study, this theoretical framework by Lave and Wenger was the ideal theoretical framework because it highlights on the importance of the (more experienced teachers in Grade R sharing their experiences with the (less experienced or) underqualified teachers through demonstrations. While, the less experienced/ underqualified teachers acquire the knowledge by observing and then they get a chance to make attempts by imitating. In addition, the theory aligned with this study because it also assisted the researcher in selecting the participant of the study based on their experiences in teaching Grade R (more and the less knowledgeable).

Another theorist Specks (1996) also agree that participation must be structured to provide support from peers and to reduce the fear of judgement during learning.

Lave and Wenger proposes in this theory that learning is encouraged to be implemented in the suitable context with different tools to guide the participants as they interact with the surrounding environment surrounding and not to be passive recipients of the information. The same notion of the suitable context was also adopted by Barends, Zelda, & Nel, Carisma (2017). They refer context as an important workplace for learning as professionals with the view that learning is achieved through work. At the work place the teachers have the opportunity to learn through every day experiences.

This theoretical framework is relevant to this study in the sense that it clearly brings out the forms of professional development and how the Grade R teachers can be developed through the implementation of a variety of programmes to enhance their knowledge and skills and become competent to teach the Grade R learners. Moreover, this theory was adopted because it also reflects on some of the possible programmes that are suitable for the professional development programmes for adult learners (teachers) and most importantly serves as guidelines for professional development programmes. This theory was further illustrated by its

support and the importance of communities of practice such that the underqualified teachers have the opportunity to be exposed to professional development training programmes. Hence this study also sought to find out if the participants have been exposed to any professional training programmes. The study also sought to find out if this had enhanced the teachers' acquisition, construction and sharing of knowledge in a social context with peers and experts regarding teaching of Grade R learners.

2.3 Empirical Studies

Literature was reviewed using some empirical studies done by other researchers with regards to teacher professional development for Grade R teachers. This also seeks other views about the training of the teachers through pre and in-service formals. Empirical studies also helped to find more strategies used to develop the Grade R teachers.

2.3.1 Professional development programmes implemented to develop Grade R teachers

2.3.1.1 Pre-service/ Formal/ Initial training

The professional growth of the teachers is based on an on-going lifelong process; therefore professional development of teachers happens in various stages and contexts. Literature suggests that teacher professional development can occur through different ways such as university coursework, district sponsored professional development and on the job training (Hunzicker, 2012). Professional development can happen in formal or informal settings. It is believed that teacher quality and professionalism in the case of Grade R sector is considered to be a strong lever in improving education services (Heller, Dalehler, Wong, Shinohara and Mairatrix, 2012). Pre-service as a professional development programme is described by Darling-Hammond (2017) as institute based formal program or prior training done as a form of teacher preparation. Darling-Hammond further explains that pre-service is done in Universities and teachers' colleges.

International researchers reveal that Grade R teacher training and strengthening of professional development programmes is of top priority in the United States (Hyson & Whittaker 2012, Whitworth, 2014). Literature continues to reveal that Grade R research and policies are increasingly focusing on the strategies that can effectively improve teacher quality and learner outcome (Darling- Hammond & Rothman, 2015; Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012). The researchers further found that most of the common forms of Grade R professional development programmes such as one-shot workshops do not have much impact in improving the teachers' skills anymore. These scholars further contend and that it becomes even worse when they are done off-site and also not aligned to the teachers' everyday practices at work (Darling-Hammond and Rothmans 2015, Pianta 2012). As a result, new professional development strategies such as collective participation and induction have been adopted as part of state professional development system for the Grade R teachers (Douglass, Cater & Smith 2015).

In other countries such as Finland and Singapore professional development for Grade R teachers is operated at national level (Harmmermes, Ahtianinen & Sahlberg, 2017) On the other hand, Australia and Canada's professional development programmes for the Grade R/ kindergarten teachers are operated at state and provincial levels. Harmmermes et, al (2017) further explain that after an extensive pre-service preparation for the Grade R teachers, they are then provided with more support through induction and collaborative programs which includes intensive mentoring and peer interactions. Whereas, other studies have shown that Australia has put more emphasis in supporting in-services professional development programmes for Grade R teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Brown & Englehardt 2015). Finland teacher education is believed to have focused on pedagogical skills, using action research to study child development. As a result, Grade R teachers are expected to complete a master's thesis and clinical learning is done in special Teacher.

Harmmernes et, al. 2017). When the Finland approach spread, other universities in Canada and Australia also tapped on these good practices and reformed their teacher education approaches by creating a two year clinical masters of teaching degree for Grade R teachers.

In the case of South African Grade R teachers training is done in FET colleges. It is an initial preparation of teachers before entering the teaching field (Andrich, Hill & Steenkamp, 2015. In addition Barends and Nel (2017) support that during pre-service program, theory, knowledge and pedagogical thinking is taught to assist in developing teacher competences through clinical learning courses with the help of well skilled, experienced and specialised tutors (Cantalini-Williams, Cooper, Grierson, Maynes, Rich & Tessaro, 2014). However, Colmer, Waniganayake and Field (2015) are against the fact that although training in pre-service is skills based the problem is that it is, generally delivered off site with recipients passively receiving specific knowledge. In other words Colmer *et, al.* (2015) appear to be condemning the idea of not actively involving the participants in the acquisition of knowledge as recommended by most theorists and other recent studies.

In South Africa Grade R teachers undergo a pre-service training before entering the teaching field (Andrich, Hill & Steenkamp, 2015, Rensburg 2015). For instance researchers in South Africa reveal that the National Diploma course was launched in FET colleges and selected universities as ECD NQF Level 5. This was meant for teachers teaching the learners aged 4-6 years over a period of 1 year for full time then over the period of 18-24 months for distance education. The entry point for this diploma was a school leaving certificate; level 4 or a Higher Certificate in Grade R (Andrich *et. al.*, 2015; Lotz-Sisitka, 2011; Atmore, van Niekerk & Cooper, 2012). Furthermore, the DoE made the Grade R training compulsory in 2014 and offered Foundation Phase and Diploma for Grade R teaching as option for those teachers who were interested in furthering their studies. However, more research continues to show that though a majority of Grade R teachers hold a range of qualifications the problem is that, most of these qualifications are lower than a

bachelor's degree which is regarded as the minimum qualification for the teachers in South Africa (Chikoko, 2015; DoE, 2016)

The Policy Framework for universal access to Grade R, the draft policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications associated with the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) provides for qualifications in Grade R teachers (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). Due to the diverse qualification levels of the present Grade R teachers, various qualifications for Grade R practices have been well thought-out such as:-

- Higher Certificate in Grade R Practices (NQF level 5, 120 credits),
- Advanced Certificate in Grade R Practices (NQF level 6, 120 credits),
- Diploma in Grade R Practices (NQF level 6, 360 credits).

The Diploma in Grade R Practices is now the proposed initial qualification for this sector. It was also suggested by Higher Education that all new entrants to the sector without prior Grade R qualifications would need to register for this qualification (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011).

Currently, the Higher Certificate and Postgraduate Certificate are viewed as qualifications that Grade R teachers are expected to possess Department of Higher Education and Training (2011) and Department of Basic Education (DHET) (2011). This has resulted in the Department giving Grade R teachers with level 4 and 5 qualifications (on the 5-level NQF) an alternative to complete either or both of Higher Certificate in Grade R Practices (NQF level 5, 120 credits), Advanced Certificate in Grade R Practices (NQF level 6, 120 credits) before enrolling for the Diploma in Grade R Practices (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). The foregoing assertions are further cemented in the new Strategic Planning Framework in South Africa (2011-2025) gazetted by the Department of Higher Education and Training and Department of Basic Education (DHET and DoBE, 2011) as a way to support continuous professional development (Whitworth, 2014 Lotz-Sisitka, 2011). The framework involves all the teachers including the Grade R teachers.

However, Heller, Daehler, Wong, Shinohara and Miratrix (2012) are of the idea that pre-service programmes that are institute based have activities that extend to full year characterised by in-class observation, modelling and coaching. In other words it is important that the Grade R teachers who undergo pre-service training are taught theory and practice, so that they are actively engaged in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. This will give them an opportunity to interact with the other teachers who are more knowledgeable so that they observe and then apply the knowledge they have learnt through modelling and coaching.

Heller *et. al.*, (2012) further explain that effective teacher professional development must be characterised by active participation in their learning and this idea of active participation also talks to the theoretical framework stated earlier as one of the key principles for professional development. Therefore, by interacting with other teachers during training through modelling and coaching approach, the Grade R teachers will be active participants. Moreover, it is encouraged in adult situated learning to have activities which include active participation. Hence this can be achieved through classroom demonstrations as well as mentoring and coaching (Heller *et. al.*, 2012). Therefore these are all *viewed* as part of pre-service training programs. Furthermore, the extant literature continues to suggest activities that support implementation of professional development as: : observing other teachers demonstrating in a lesson, practising what they have learnt, receiving feedbacks, analysing students' work, participating and playing leading roles in discussions and applying the new knowledge to lessons (Luft and Hewson 2014, Wilson 2013, Cantalini-Williams et al 2014). Thus, the foregoing factors highlight the importance of having numerous strategies in place that may assist teachers to realise professional growth and expertise in teaching Grade R.

In addition, Martensson and Roxa, (2015) and CHE, (2015) are also of the same view that formal learning in professional development programs can take place through organised workshops by the department or school leadership, lunch hour seminars, conferences, short courses to enhance the qualifications and skills of

teachers. Literature further suggests formal professional development program activities in Grade R such as university courses, workshops, conferences, and training sessions offered during and outside school hours have been identified as being critical and yielding positive outcomes (Wei, Darling-Hammond & Adams, 2010; Darling-Hammond & Rothman, 2015; Douglass, Cater & Smith 2015).

However, Macheng (2016) argues that teachers do not enter the classrooms as finished products. In other words, teaching is a very dynamic practice such that pre-service training may not be perceived as enough to equip the teachers with all the necessary skills and knowledge they may need to be effective in their profession. Darling-Hammond (2017) supports the above idea and states that teacher learning is not complete when teachers leave pre-service preparation alone. Therefore, in the case of Grade R teachers there is need for after pre-service so that they may gain more experience in their teaching. In other words, more practice, assistance, training, and sharing with peers in informal or formal settings in-service programs is vital.

Furthermore, (Macheng 2016) observed that teachers vary in number of years of education they received, levels attained, nature and amount of training completed as well as, levels of motivation and support. In support of teachers' diversities mentioned by Macheng, the same observation was made by Orr, Westbrook, Pryor, Durrani, Sebba and Adu-Yeboah (2013). These scholars illustrated the diversities in teachers' professional development as highlighted in Table 1 below:

Table 2.1: Teacher diversity

	Educated	Less educated
Trained	1. (ET) Teachers who have at least the requisite minimum basic	2. (TL) Teachers who have a formal initial training but whose

	education and the requisite formal training or more.	general education is below current minimum requirement.
Under-trained	3. (EU) Teachers who have at least requisite minimum basic education but whose formal training has been short.	4. (LU) Teachers who do not have the requisite basic education and whose formal training has been short.
Not trained	5. (EN) Teachers who have at least the requisite minimum basic education but no formal training.	6. (LN) Teachers whose general education is below the required minimum and who have received no formal training.

Considering the diversities stated by the above researchers, the Grade R teachers in this study are found in these categories. For the sake of this study the under-trained teachers in Grade R are those who have at least the requisite minimum of basic education but with short courses of formal or pre-service training and are considered under qualified. This takes us to the point why most of the Grade R teachers are not employed by the Department but are contracted by the School Governing Boards (SGB) (Andrich, Hill, and Steenkamp 2015.) This is because of their shorter training periods as compared to their colleagues who receive lengthier periods of training to be qualified teachers. Moreover, there is a general consensus that Grade R teachers are under-qualified and that there is need for in-service

programmes to improve the quality of teaching (Hoadley, 2013; Labushagne, 2015; Andrich, Hill & Steenkamp, 2015; Brand & Nel, 2015)

2.3.1.2 In-service/ Informal Professional Development

This is when the general in-service or continuing professional development of teachers comes in to improve the quality of teachers, so that they also improve the learner outcome(Nel, 2015). There are some countries such as Netherlands, Canada United states, (US) Singapore and Australia that have established the national professional development for the Grade R teachers. For instance, on-the-job learning with colleagues as well as sustained learning from experts in content and pedagogy takes precedence (Darling –Hammond 2015; Brown & Englehardt, 2015). Researchers such as Wei, Darling-Hammond and Adams (2010) listed some examples of informal professional development activities in in-service such as teacher collaboration on instructional issues, collective research on topics of professional interest, peer observation and mentoring.

South African education also follows the global trends of change as teachers need to grow and continuously learn for effective competence. As a result the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development and the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for teacher Education and Development 2011 were gazetted. These two initiatives were put in place to fulfil the need for quality teachers through professional development (RSA 2011).

There are scores of forms of professional development programmes in South Africa. These include workshops, conferences, consultations, coaching, both peer coaching and expert coaching. Other forms of professional development programmes include courses which can either be to enhance existing professional or subject qualifications based in a Higher Education Institute to top up existing professional skills or remedial courses Andrich *et, al.* ,(2015) Steyn (2013); OECD (2012); Kruger ,(2012); Janse van Rensburg & Els (2012). The activities further consist of demonstrations and peer observation, mentoring, induction, team work, group work, clustering of schools and school visits.

Moreover, designing and executing school improvement projects, communities of practice, lesson studies, reflective supervision and technical assistance are also part of the activities used to promote teacher development (Geldenhuys & Oosthuizen 2015).

Professional development became mandatory in South Africa for all the registered teachers including the Grade R teachers (SACE, 2011). The focus was to acknowledge and encourage individuals to improve their own learning and develop themselves professionally (Steyn, 2013, RSA, 2011). Professional development was also implemented as a way of encouraging teacher participation by collectively developing themselves and improving learning within the schools. The above idea is supported by Appleby, Pilkington (2014) who see professional development as a social, discursive and reflective process that is situated around practice. In the case of Grade R teachers, professional development this is helpful in assisting teachers to review, renew and extend their knowledge and skills in within the early childhood education system. This can be realised as they work hand in hand with their peers in a social situation as recommended in the theoretical framework Wenger, (1999). The other focus was also on encouraging participation in professional programs offered by employers, unions, NGOs and other stakeholders for Grade R teachers with the NGOs Hoadley (2013) .

According to the study by Steyn (2013) teachers were mandated to accumulate 150 professional development points through three different types of activities stated by SACE (2011b). The activities were as follows:

- teacher priority - whereby the teachers choose to improve own professional practices by attending union and learning area meetings, doing research, assessing national examinations and attending workshops from own funding.

- School priority - activities are collectively undertaken as school development to improve teacher learning and these include attending staff meetings participating in fund raisings and in curriculum workshops.
- The profession priority - are those activities meant to promote professional status such as attending workshops presented by accredited bodies and enrolling for formal qualifications from higher education institutions (Geldenhuys & Oosthuizen, 2015).

In other words, the three different types of activities stated above are undoubtedly flexible and make it easy for the teachers to participate in all the implemented programmes to promote their professional development.

Although there are various general activities for professional development, early childhood in-service also has specific activities for their programs and they may be similar forms of instructions that are used in both formal pre-service and informal in-service (Pianta 2012). Such activities include workshops, conferences, in-service presentations, discussions, demonstrations and tutorials du Plessis (2007). Most in-service programs used in training the teachers by the experts tend to have shorter periods, where information tends to be generalised little follow up or feedback is made (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Pianta, 2011). Darling-Hammond (2017) In other words, this further explain that when such an approach is taken particularly during the training, there is no active participation of the teachers. Therefore, the reason being, that the flow of information is often one with little or no active participation as recommended by the theoretical framework as well as the extant literature.

Over and above both international and African researchers who have done studies on teacher development at all the levels including Grade R have asserted that effective professional development should

- Have clear and coherent design, including identifiable outcome for the teachers (Pianta, DeCoster, Cabell Burchinal, Hamre Downer & Howes, 2014);
- Be comprehensive and sustained over for a longer period and not short lived (Macheng, 2016; Steyn, 2013);
- Connect to the teachers' everyday experiences in their classrooms (Guskey, 2002; Cantalini-Williams et.al., 2014);
- Happen in a social context with learning community of peers (Brown & Engelhardt, 2015);
- Offer specific strategies with immediate applicability for the teachers (Whitworth 2014);
- Provide teachers with feedback on newly implemented practices or strategies (Pianta, Decoster, Cabell, Burchinal, Hamre, Downer & Howes 2014) and
- Offer teachers a chance to reflect and assess themselves on recent practices in their classrooms (Lauer, Christopher, Firpo-Triplett %& Buchting; 2014; Robinson, 2015)

2.3.2 Strategies used to implement Grade R teacher professional development programmes.

2.3.2.1 Collaborative Strategies

According to Grierson and Woloshyn (2013) collective participation occurs when teachers from the same school, department, subject, or grade attend professional development programmes together. Early childhood research in other countries such as United States has gradually focused on the professional development strategies that can effectively improve teacher quality and learner quality outcome through collective learning (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman 2012). Furthermore, studies have found that some of the most prevalent forms of early childhood professional development such as one-shot workshop are no longer effective in

improving teacher skills as compared to collaborative learning (Darling-Hammond & Rothman 2015, Douglass, and Cater & Smith 2015). As a result, new professional development strategies for early childhood professional development were adopted such as collective participation. According to Douglass *et.al.* 2015 collaborative participation in early childhood is when all the early childhood members are broadly engaged in professional development programmes including the administration. Thus, the inclusion of the administration and the programme directors in professional development of early childhood is essential. The belief is that, if there is collaborative learning of everyone involved in early childhood education, then, there would be no contradicting messages about what to and not to implement during the teachers' practice. Moreover, Bond and Lockee (2018) are of the view that authentic collaborative learning experiences are normally found in workplace. These researchers further suggest that, the good part of collaborative learning at the workplace is that even the underqualified Grade R teachers have a chance to collaborate with other well experienced teachers in the meetings which take place face-to face together with qualified teachers. These sentiments infer that, after the meetings the underqualified teachers have a chance to create and reflect on specific plans and feedback for their own work after participation. Moreover, when such stance is adopted, supported collaborative learning environment is not only continuously used in adult learning situations. In other words, it also assists in breaking own individualistic ideas while promoting teamwork among teachers.

In addition to the above view Steyn (2013) believes that more meaningful teacher development occurs when teachers collaborate in on-going and intensive interactions with colleagues in their workplace. Moreover, research suggests that teacher development is best when it is done through the combination of job-embedded professional development and collaborative experiences (Hunzicker 2012). Literature continues to suggest that effective job-embedded professional development and collaborative experiences should include activities that directly link learning to daily work responsibilities. Furthermore, there should be activities

that facilitate instruction that is focused on dialogue, as well as including follow-up activities such as application of acquired knowledge and skills so that there is reflection Darling –Hammond and Rothmans (2015); Steyn (2013). Hunzicker, (2012) further states that when teachers work together in job embedded and collaborative experiences; and so take time to plan and analyse the children's work together there is provision of "built-in" support.

Collaboration between the teachers in the school is very essential. There must be a collaborative participation and provision of time and space for sharing and observing within a teaching and learning environment (Jurasaitė-Harbison and Rex, 2010). Hence, collaborative participation is good for the underqualified teachers. Reason being if they are given the opportunity to mingle with qualified teachers and share this will promote their active participation as well as a feeling of ownership within the underqualified teachers. The underqualified teachers can also participate freely without fear of being judged. In this case more qualified and experts' teachers are expected to demonstrate and observe teachers in practice so as to give constructive feedback and share ideas (Koster, Bouwer, & van den Bergh, 2017). In line with the foregoing views is the extent literature which highlights that teachers can be developed through teacher networks, team work and peer coaching. This is also termed teacher co-learning as supported by the theory adopted in this study through mutual collaboration and **feedback** (McLeod, 2014; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Scholars such as (Bond and Lockee; 2014, 2018; Steyn, 2013), have demonstrated that Wenger's communities of practice can be viewed as a suitable way of describing collaborative initiatives for teachers to apply new strategies and be able to reflect upon them.

Models of collaborative learning focus on a deeper, more continually and collaborative on-the-job teacher-directed learning which is required for the underqualified teachers' effective growth (Hyson & Whittaker, 2012). Basing on the above mentioned models, collaboration is regarded as intensive interaction that engages Grade R teachers to open up and participate without fear of being judged.

Darling-Hammond and Rothman (2015) discovered the benefits of collaborative participation as follows;

- It creates time for shared dialogue and planning among the colleagues for implementing new practices;
- It encourages the directors in providing concrete and emotional support to teachers for new implementation of new practices;
- It fosters an organisational culture that is geared to changing practices in the targeted learning area; and
- It creates formal and informal opportunities for shared reflective practice and for observational modelling and learning that can reinforce new learning.

2.3.2.2 Coaching and mentoring

Schachter, Webber-Mayrer, Piaster & O'Connell (2015) state that coaching and mentoring focuses on the importance of one on one relationship usually between two teachers. Coaching is more skilled based and mentoring involves an element of counselling and professional relationship/ friend. Mentoring can be collegiate for instance peer coaching. Mentoring applies where one partner is a novice and other partner is more experienced. Some scholars such as (Hyson & Whittaker, 2012) also suggest that key notions to coaching and mentoring are that professional learning can take place within the school context and can be enhanced by sharing dialogue with other colleagues. In support of the above idea, Schachter *et. al*, (2015) is also of the view that peer coaching is a confidential process through which two colleagues work together. Reason being that during this process, both colleagues has enough time to reflect upon current practices; expand, refine, build new skills, share ideas, teach one another and conduct a research within a work place. However, recent studies are of the view that mentoring and coaching also support teachers as they try to implement new practices from professional development programmes (Whitworth & Chiu 2015, Grierson & Woloshyn 2013)

Within early childhood settings scholars such as (Hyson & Whittaker, 2012) perceives the core components of coaching as reinforcing evidence-based skills development through teaching practices. In other words Grade R teachers are expected to be actively engaged more frequently in the process of coaching and mentoring as professional learning. Moreover Pianta, (2012) agrees that the teachers could be engaged through shared observations, actions such as demonstrations as guided practice, self-reflection and feedback. In other words, the process generally frequent interactions are a recommended requirement to ensure continuous learning. Furthermore, Grierson and Woloshyn (2013) suggest that, professional development programmes should be designed in such a way that they help the teachers to implement changes in their classrooms.

Meanwhile, Deacon, (2012), believes that school based mentors are the most powerful sources of influence in teacher mentoring. Whereas Witworth & Chiu (2015) are of a different view. The foregoing scholars believe that it is the role of the district mentor or coordinator to mentor the teachers. In other words, for the sake of the Grade R underqualified teachers, the significance for having school based mentors is that they are able to make time to offer immediate practical advice to the underqualified teachers. In addition, they are in a position to have more concrete ideas on teaching and to provide constructive feedback on their frequent interactions. Moreover, Hargreaves (2012) advises that coaching and mentoring may involve all forms but the one focusing on in-class direct coaching or mentoring may be the best. In a similar fashion a study by Doan (2013) found out that it is important that the mentor/coach be physically nearby to assist early childhood teachers in daily situations such as guiding children's behaviour and how to form connections with family members as well as plan programmes that suit the children's needs and interest.

In the same line of thought, (Hargreaves, 2012), further explains in his theoretical model that Grade R teachers need support, understanding, encouragement, assurance, comfort and guidance in specific skills. In addition Grade R needs

mentors to show them how to handle insights into complex causes of behaviour, such that all of this must be provided within a teaching and learning context. Indeed general consensus by recent studies claim that on-site mentoring and coaching are the most effective approaches and should be implemented as strategy for professional development of teachers (Darling-Hammond; 2017; Pianta et, al., 2014; Steyn, 2013; Bond & Lockee, 2018; Mahimuang, 2018). Whereas, (Macbeath, 2012) is of the opinion that careful attention needs to be done on the selection of the rightful teachers as mentors. Macbeath (2012) further mentioned the desirable characteristics of teacher mentors as follows:

- Someone who is empathic and understanding;
- Someone with an interest in lifelong learning and professional development;
- Someone sophisticated, interpersonal, skilled, cultural, sensitive, understanding of the role of the mentor;
- Considerable early childhood expertise;

This infers that in those schools where all the Grade R teachers are under qualified, the chances of having quality mentoring and coaching is limited. Unfortunately this can result in expertise, skills supervision and support that is being transmitted from mentor to mentee being weak and not favouring positive professional development.

2.3.2.3 Community of practice

The concern for teachers working together in communities of learning has gained momentum, (Steyn, 2013). A convergence of literature by (Maloney & Koza, 2011, Lauer, Christopher, Firpo-Triplett & Buchting, 2014, Douglass, Cater & Smith, 2015, Wei, Darling-Hammond & Adamson 2010, Steyn 2013, Wenger, 2000) is evidence that collaboration and team work activities in communities of practice have positive outcomes for teachers' professional development. According to Wenger, (2007) communities of practice form, when people engage in a process

of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour. These views are in line with the theoretical framework adopted for this study. For instance, Lave and Wenger (1991) further defines communities of practice as a group of people who share an interest, craft, and or a passion. Wenger (1998) further states that it is not only about sharing of common interest but also the resources through the interaction of the community of practice members. Additionally, Wenger (2010) emphasises that communities of practice must consist of both participation which includes dialogues feedback reflection) and reification which includes evidence and documents. In support of Wenger's view 2010, Bond and Lockee (2014) believe that communities of practice must have interactions and reifications for it to be effective. As adult learners who teach Grade R, underqualified teachers could be empowered through collaborative inquiry and explore actionable strategies , Steyn (2013). In early childhood education teacher professional development programmes may provide an opportunity for participants to deal with real world situations (Bond & Lockee, 2018).

Scholars such as (Steyn, 2013; Bond & Lockee, 2014) believe that although individual learning is essential, at times it is an inadequate prerequisite for collaborative learning in the development of organisations. Therefore there is mutual support of each other in individual learning and organisation learning. Lauer *et, al.*, (2015) argue that individuals cannot learn in isolation since learning is in essence an activity of interdependent people. Furthermore, when teachers learn collectively especially in Grade R classes, they can tackle the external challenges collectively. Whenever there is team culture in the schools focusing on improving teaching and learning, it results in the key component of professional growth. In agreement with the preceding views are Maloney and Koza (2011) who identified five key characteristics for effective communities of practice as follows:

- **Clear vision and mission.** There is need for a clear vision and mission for the organisation so that it is explicitly stated to the members of the

organisation to help every individual to understand his/ her contribution towards the goals set for the organisation;

- **Commitment of school leadership to the learning process:** This means that school leaders are the ones to empower teachers to become involved in their own learning developing a collective learning culture in school;
- **Shared practice:** There is collective learning and the application of that learning. Teachers should continuously experiment with new methods to improve practice. However such experimentation should be acknowledged and encouraged;
- **Team work and group problems:** solving is important for individuals to assist each other in developing the necessary knowledge and skills;
- **Supportive conditions:** This is for the maintenance of communities of practice. The different models such as support the necessity for teamwork and collective learning for the sake of quality teaching and learning;

The foregoing points draw on the strands of theory utilized in this study, in particular that of communities of practice as coined by Lave and Wenger (1991) in their study of apprenticeship as learning model, and that of situated cognition. In other words communities of practice are dynamic in nature where everyone has an opportunity to learn. Therefore, it may be implied that communities of practice are groups of people, in this case Grade R teachers, who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly through implemented teacher development programmes. These views also align with what the research sought to find out, how community of practice is cultivated through the implement programmes, what strategies are used and if there is any monitoring and support mechanisms in place which allow Grade R teachers to develop their skills.

2.3.3 Support and monitoring of professional development programmes for Grade R teachers

In the face of the early childhood policy the No Child Left Behind, (UNESCO, 2014) professional development of teachers is considered critical. Hence, the support of different stakeholders in the intervention of professional development is of great importance. According to Steyn (2013) professional development programmes can generally be state run from teacher centres or colleges or can be school based. Douglass, Carter and Smith (2015) are in support of Steyn's view that state professional development systems are responsible for preparing and supporting a high quality work force. Research reveals that it is the duty of the state, provincial/district, schools and non-governmental organisations to play a significant role in supporting teacher professional development programmes (Avalos, 2011; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015; Douglass, Carter & Smith, 2015; OECD, 2008).

2.3.3.1 Support offered by the district

Research shows that it is the role of the district leadership to ensure that there is enough professional development support for the underqualified and qualified teachers in schools (Darling Hammond and Rothmans 2015). In the case of South African context, it is also within the district leadership that the role of the Grade R coordinator or subject advisor is encompassed. Robinson (2015) support the above view saying that the full participation of school districts in continuous professional development of underqualified teachers help to improve teacher performance which brings about learners higher achievement. Thus, the district coordinator or subject advisor for Grade R teachers is obliged to support the teachers in schools by holding workshops and demonstrating certain concepts which the teachers find difficult to teach. In addition, the subject advisor is expected to and then make follow up visits to ensure that the skills embedded to the teachers are being implemented appropriately. Furthermore it is encouraged that the

professional development activities be well aligned with the national state district and school policies (Whitworth and Chiu, 2015). In other words, the information shared will be the same and not contradictory. Therefore, (Whitworth and Chiu, 2015) are of the forgoing idea that the support by the district is very essential as it determines the effectiveness of the professional development programs.

In addition to the idea Pianta, Hamre, Downer, Burchinal, Williford, Locasale-Crouch, Howes, La Paro, and Scott-Little (2017) claim that the district is considered as the major provider of the teachers' professional development support. On the other hand (Darling-Hammond 2017) condemns that although the districts offer professional development support to teachers, the professional development activities are delivered in form of short in-service workshops with no follow up or support visits. Also, Whitworth and Chiu (2015) add their views to the above point that, even the one shot workshops are not even aligned to content focus and are delivered off-site with the participants passively receiving specific information. For instance in countries such as Australia, Canada and Singapore, professional development are supported by the states or provinces and districts (Hyson & Whittaker 2012).

In South Africa the Grade R teachers are well known to be underqualified to teach the Grade R children (Chikoko, 2015). Historically most of the Grade R training was done through various NGOs whereas some were not accredited to train the teachers as a result their qualifications were not recognised. In an effort to improve the skills in the Grade R sector the government instituted a social aspect. This was done through the Expanded Public Works Programmes. In addition, learner -ship was introduced to enable the underqualified teachers to gain recognised qualification in 2004 and training through FET colleges and NGOs. These are accredited by the SAQA and the Department of Higher Education and Training (Holmes et, al 2013; OECD; 2011).

2.3.3.2 Support offered by NGOs

The Salamanca Convention statement for 1994 acknowledges early learning education as it lays a foundation for future learner outcomes (OECD, 2011). The statement further encourages quality learning to start from early childhood and requires combined effort from different stakeholders to support intervention of the reception year teachers through teacher training. On the same note the Global Monitoring Report (2010) shares the same light that non-governmental NGOs also offer in-service programmes to underqualified teachers.

International NGOs such as UNICEF and Save the Children are well known organisations in Sub-Saharan African countries for delivering in-service support to underqualified teachers. For instance in Ethiopia, teacher training programmes in early childhood development are offered by UNICEF (UNICEF, 2014). Also in Zimbabwe UNICEF Zimbabwe initiated in-service programmes to Grade R “A” and Grade R “B” paraprofessional teachers (Chinhara, 2016).

In South Africa there are a variety of NGOs engaged with the Grade R sector to support the implementation of professional development programmes. According to Sherry and Draper (2013) the NGOs vary from small community-based and or faith based service providers. Some of the faith based service providers are the churches which support the children with resources needed for their development. Some are those that fund and manage the projects while, others support the channelling of funds, building capacities of teachers, management and focusing on providing crucial training for teachers with non-accredited or non-existent of previous training. The Sobambisana project is one such example, (Sherry and Draper 2013).

Besides the local NGOs in South Africa there are international NGOs such as Save the Children South Africa that also engages in professional development programmes for Grade R. this NGO also ensures that, Grade R underqualified teachers are also supported and monitored. Despite the high enrolment rate of

Grade R children in South Africa as per universal legislation requirements in schools, Save the Children found out that the level literacy and numeracy for Grade R in South Africa is very low and that there is need for improvement (Spaul 2013, SAHRC & UNICEF 2014). In their effort to make improvements Save the Children South Africa made commitments as strategic goals to support the underqualified teachers through on-going staff capacity building. Moreover, Save the Children South Africa obliged to mobilise the school communities to engage with school governance to support the principals and the teachers to improve learning through collaborative participation. The other commitment made by Save the Children South Africa was to build partnership with schools, districts and provinces to promote leadership development in schools with a view of enhancing staff learning opportunities (Sherry and Drapper, 2013; Chinhara, 2016).

2.3.3.3 Support offered by the principal

According to Heystek, (2016) principals are generally known for administrative work, management, and control of the schools. South African government adopted new changes in the new system of governance which has also seen changes in the roles of the principals from administrative work to the role of being the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the school (DoE, 1996). Heystek (2016) further explains the changes that have shifted the demands and the expectations of the principals from management and control to that of an educational leader who can cultivate professional development among the staff members. Recent studies have also identified the new roles of the principals as CEO (Mestry 2017) whereby principals are expected to balance both instructional leadership and management. Mestry, (2017) asserts that in the areas of leadership principals should be in a position to supervise the curriculum, improving the instructional programmes of the school, working with the staff to identify the vision and the mission as well as, building good relations with the community. On the other hand, management deals with maintenance of school buildings and grounds, supervising the budgets and complying with the educational policies and acts.

However, despite the evidently stated roles of the principals, still (Mestry 2017) observed that many principals are lacking basic leadership and management skills. Mestry,(2017) registered a concern that the principals lack the skills due to lack of training before and after their appointments as principals. Hence, they habitually rely on their experiences and sometimes they employ their common sense. These sentiments by Mestry (2017) infer that principals in schools might not be in a position to know how to implement professional development programmes that suit the needs of the Grade R teachers. In the same line of thought these assertions advance that principals are not in a position to identify the strategies or the support mechanisms that Grade R teachers require so as to curb challenges they face within a classroom setup. Therefore, for successful leadership in schools (Holmes, Clement and Albright 2013:50) identified six features of effective leaders;

To provide individual support to the staff;

To developing a caring and trustful culture;

To establish a participative school structure;

To develop a shared vision and related goals;

To set high-performance expectations; and

To foster an intellectually stimulating work environment for staff to provide and develop the school.

Due to lack of basic skills in many principals Mestry (2017) suggests that principals be empowered and professionally prepared for their roles through continuous professional development.

Whereas, in United Kingdom (UK) principals have started engaging in leadership professional development so that they will be able to support their staff in the school based professional development programmes (Piggot-Ivine, Howse & Richard 2013). Also in the United States of America (US) PD programmes are

usually delivered by external agencies. Moreover, the Wallace Foundation which is the national charitable trust based in New York (Wallace Foundation 2013), has also followed the same. In Singapore, successful school leaders have been attending the management and leadership in school programmes at Singapore's National Institute for education (Schleicher, 2012). Whereas Mestry, 2017; Spaul, 2013) suggest that South African schools need to tap on the best practices by also implementing continuous professional development programmes for principals. In essence, this implies that once principals are exposed to such programmes, they can be in a position to identify and customise the best implementation strategies, support and monitoring mechanism that will suit the needs of Grade R teachers through staff development programmes.

There are a number of challenges that continue to plague the implementation of professional development programmes for Grade R teachers. Poor levels of qualifications among teachers in Grade R often raise concerns about the quality of teaching and learning. This is a challenge to the teachers as they fail to implement the skills they have to teach the learners in Grade R (Ho, Lee &Teng, 2016; Chikoko, 2015). As a result there is poor performance in learner outcome due to poor skills of delivery by teachers. For instance the learner achievement in the Annual National Assessment (ANA) for 2011 report showed that the grade 3 learners achieved a pass rate of 35% in Literacy and 26% in Numeracy, while the grade 6 learners achieved 28% in Language and 30% in Numeracy (Spaull, 2013; Mestry, 2017). Basing on this evidence it means that the basic foundation for the learners which starts at Grade R level was not all that strong and this takes us back to the point of poor quality teaching and learning of the teachers. Furthermore, more factors that continue to contribute to the problem include amongst others uncertainty about transformation such as a new curriculum accompanied by inadequate training and support; technophobic; low job satisfaction and poor working conditions (DBE, 2011b). In line with the above sentiments the Herald Live report of (29 March 2017): the SADTU representative was worried about the Grade R teachers' benefits as teachers. The teachers are

lowly paid (Watson & Evans 2012) and these may lead to teachers' lack of inspiration and motivation to develop themselves professionally so as to be able to meet the global demands.

Moreover, the situation is worsened by the fact that the existing Grade R teachers are not professionally qualified. Yet many more of the Grade R teachers need to become professionally qualified in this field (DBE, 2011b). As a result, this has led to the Education Department failing to determine the Grade R salaries because of their qualifications are not recognised for salary purposes (Robinson, 2015). In addition to poor working conditions, the Guidelines for Costing Basic Minimum Package of Grade R inputs (DoE 2008) articulate that the recommended teacher ratio for Grade R is 1:30. Yet, observation have been made that in a majority of classes the teacher-learner ratio continues to be very high making it difficult for class teachers to implant what they would have been taught in some of the professional development programmes they would have attended. These views are cemented by different researchers who have agreed that most of the South African schools have over crowded Grade R classrooms resulting in heavy workloads and failure to implement changes from the professional development programmes. (Robinson, 2015; Holmes et, al., 2013; Mohangi, Krog, Stephens & Nel, 2016, Excell, 2011; Moletsane, 2012). Moreover, inappropriate teacher-learner ratio has negative effects on the children's learning activities as they are dominated by chorusing and there is no opportunity for individual responses in the classrooms. In a study by (Hoadley 2013), an observation was made that teacher assessment and feedback becomes very limited and weak in such circumstances.

Schachter, (2015) support the DoBE and states that lack of on-going support and monitoring also hinders the implementation of teacher professional development of the Grade R teachers. Steyn (2011) agrees with the above views that there is

lack of support and monitoring. Steyn,(2011) revealed in the same study that management in schools especially by principals show failure to encourage teachers to participate in professional development programmes. It was stated in the same study that principals are either not competent enough or not willing to develop the teachers. The mushrooming of private colleges and NGOs resulting in non-standard and different qualification levels of the teachers (Moodley 2014; Rensburg, 2015) has also exacerbated the situation. Historically, most of the Grade R teacher's initial training was done through the initiative of various NGOs such that it resulted in unregulated and unstandardized range of qualifications for the teachers (Cherry and Draper 2013). The training was done in form of in-service whereby the underqualified teachers followed the practices of those who were more experienced.

Furthermore, a study by Lemmer & Manyike, (2012) discovered another challenge that there was a gap between policy and implementation. For instance, the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS) for Grade R, where the focus is on play-based learning through which integration into other key areas for child development is expected to transpire. During these play-based activities incidental learning opportunities are expected to be facilitated by the teacher. Thus, incidental as well as, teacher planned and coordinated learning opportunities are expected to enhance literacy learning (DBE, 2011a). However, this appears not to be taking place in classroom setup. Thus despite attending different workshops and in-service programmes the teachers are still executing formal learning in Grade R classrooms. As a result it is a challenge to the teachers as they are failing to implement the Grade R curriculum. For a successful implementation of the curriculum the teachers need to acquire the proper skills and knowledge through professional development programmes Heystek (2016).

2.5 Summary

This chapter outlined the theoretical framework which informed the study. The chapter further reviewed other studies on teacher professional development

programmes especially for the Grade R teachers and professional development in general. The strategies, monitoring and support mechanisms which are ideal for teacher development were also reviewed. Finally, challenges encountered during the implementation of professional development programmes were discussed. The following chapter discusses the methodology adopted by the study in order to find answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter presents an overview of the research methodology and design that was used to answer the research questions. It consists of the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection instruments and their credibility and trustworthiness. The chapter also explains the methods of data analysis and ethical issues that were adhered to during the course of the study. This study looked at the implementation of professional development programmes for Grade R teachers in four primary schools in Amathole West Education District.

3.2 Research Paradigm

According to Mertens (2005), a research paradigm is “a way of looking at the world” (Mertens, 2005, p.7). The cited author further states that a research paradigm “is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action” (Mertens, 2005, p.7). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) further notes that a research paradigm includes “a basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.183). A research paradigm therefore is a way of looking at the world, which is grounded on some theoretical conventions that guide the actions and directs the thinking of the researcher in the process of the research study.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), a paradigm encompasses four terms namely: ethics (axiology), epistemology, ontology and methodology.

These four terms outline the actions of the researcher and the kind of tools the researcher employs to study reality within a situated activity or phenomenon. Ethics (axiology) relates to the moral obligations of the researcher towards the correspondents who participate in the study (Danzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.183). An epistemology looks at different forms of knowledge of a reality, and the nature of relationship that exists between the inquirer and the known (Danzin & Lincoln, 2005). Ontology looks at ways of constructing reality; that is, “how things are” and “how things really work” (Anderson, 2013, p.1). Methodology looks at the basic tools that the researcher employs to gain knowledge about the studied reality (Anderson, 2013).

A number of research paradigms are used in educational research to study situated activities or phenomena. Among these is interpretivism, positivism, post-positivism and critical theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This study was located in the interpretive paradigm. As a result, the researcher discussed the ontology and epistemology that characterise the interpretivism paradigm.

3.2.1. Interpretivism paradigm

According to Crotty (1998), the interpretivism paradigm as an outlook of explaining human, social and cultural realities traces its origins in the sociology of Weber (1930), who located “the study of society in the context of human beings acting and interacting” (Crotty, 1998, p. 68). The interpretivism paradigm asserts that meaning is subjective and that it is socially constructed. Its emphasis rests upon the insiders’ subjective experiences and seeks to understand the insiders’ perceptions and meaning about a situated activity or phenomenon (Anderson, 2013). According to Anderson (2013), its ontology is based on the world and the knowledge that is created by the social context of the insider. On the other hand, its epistemology is focused on how the researcher can best come to understand the uniqueness of each insiders’ perceptions (Anderson, 2013, p. 13).

Within the context of this study, the interpretive paradigm focused on the human action aspect of training initiatives, seeing participation as a product of interpretations, interventions and individual decisions (Rowlands, 2005). In light of the aim of the study, this paradigm assisted the researcher to examine a situated activity or phenomenon, namely, the implementation of teacher professional development programmes for the Grade R teachers in primary schools in the Amathole West Education District. Since the intention of the interpretive paradigm is to get an in depth and rich information and to understand the insiders' experiences, the researcher used the interpretive paradigm to understand the experience of teachers, principals, and district officials on how they implement teacher professional development programmes for the Grade R teachers in their schools.

3.3 Research Approach

According to Creswell (2014), there are commonly three approaches that are used in educational research and these are namely: (1) the quantitative approach, (2) the qualitative approach, and (3) mixed method approach. The above cited author states that a quantitative approach mainly provides a survey design, numeric explanation of trends, attitudes and opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, quantitative researchers put more emphasis on the measurement of quantity (Babbie & Mouton, 2005). Since this study did not intend to provide a survey design, numeric explanation of trends or attitudes and opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. This approach was not suitable for the purposes of this study, which was to examine how teacher professional development for the Grade R teachers in primary schools is implemented in the Amathole West education district.

The qualitative approach is defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). The qualitative methodology "consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). It allows the researcher to

study a situated activity or phenomenon in a subjective manner in which the world is turned into “a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self.” Within this context, “qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.3). Therefore, this makes qualitative research a suitable approach for this study, as it attempts to locate “things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Danzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3).

The focus of this study was based on the experiences and a deep understanding of what is taking place on the ground in terms of the implementation of teacher professional development programmes for the Grade R teachers in four primary schools in the Amathole West education district. As a result, the researcher found the qualitative approach suitable for this study. The qualitative approach therefore assisted the researcher in answering the questions posed by this study concerning the implementation of teacher professional development programmes for the Grade R teachers in primary schools. This research approach further assisted the researcher in gaining the necessary information for this study through the use of interviews and document analysis, which are among data collection tools of the qualitative research approach.

In the process of data collection, the qualitative approach allowed the researcher to examine implementation of teacher professional development programmes for the Grade R teachers in primary schools through a holistic inquiry within their natural setting. This was done through the use of interviews, whereby the researcher tried to make sense of and to interpret the studied phenomena in terms of the meanings and experiences that the teachers, principals and district officials shared with the researcher. The qualitative approach also enabled the researcher to use various data collection tools such as interviews document analysis in the process of collecting the data which was necessary for purposes of this study.

3.4 Research Design

A case study design was used in this study because it provides various answers to questions being researched. Babbie and Mouton (2005) states that the case study is an intensive investigation of a single unit and is a method used for learning about a complex instance taken as a whole in its context and aims to describe and explain a phenomenon. A case study is also described as an in-depth study of the phenomenon of each case in its natural context including the point of views of participants, which will come out as they share their experiences, (de Vos and Strydoms, 2011). In other words, a case study is conducted to shed light on a phenomenon, be it a process, event, person or object of interest to the researcher. A researcher may also do a case study so as to produce a detailed description of the phenomenon, to develop possible explanation to it or to evaluate the phenomenon (de Vos et. al., 2011). A case study can also be described as an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual group, institution or community. The qualitative case study is an approach used to research a phenomenon with its context or environment using different data collection sources (Evans and Lang 2006). Its advantage is that it focuses on providing detailed account of the research. Thus, this approach aligned with the study very well and gave the researcher the opportunity to get details on the implementation of teacher professional development programmes for the Grade R teachers.

The participants were actively engaged and it allowed the researcher to use flexible instruments which also allowed changes. The research design also allowed the researcher to interact with the participants by getting first-hand information through verbatim responses from the participants as well and other ways of collecting data adopted in this study such as document analysis. This was used as concrete evidence of the findings of the research. The hall mark of adopting a case study was that it allowed the researcher to choose the best suited data collection instruments to adopt. In this study, data were collected through interviews and document analysis in order to triangulate the data and findings about teacher

implementation of professional development programmes in Grade R teachers in Amathole West District.

3.5 Population and Sampling

3.5.1. Population

According to Babbie and Mouton (2005) the population of a study is that group (usually of people) about whom the researcher intends to draw conclusions from (Babbie & Mouton, 2005). Creswell (2014) further states that before the researcher can conduct a study, it is important that the researcher first identifies the people and/or the place where the population will be drawn. Secondly, the researcher needs to gain access from the relevant persons or authorities for the data collection process (Creswell, 2013). For the purpose of this study, the population consisted of Grade R teachers, principals and the district officials who were responsible for programmes in place to promote professional development of teachers in Amathole West District.

3.5.2. Sample and sampling techniques

The district Amathole West covers a big number of schools with the Grade R classes. However, the researcher sampled a population of four primary schools as case study to research the implementation of teacher professional development. Trochim (2002) defines a sample as an actual number of people whom the researcher intends to study (Trochim, 2002). Mertens (2005) further defines sampling as a procedure that the researcher uses to select a certain number of people for a study (Mertens, 2005). It requires the researchers' ability to obtain information from a small group of studied participants (Cohen, 2007).

There are two types of sampling, namely: the probability, and non-probability sampling. The researcher used purposive sampling technique, which is under the non-probability sampling. The motivation for using this technique was that it allowed the researcher to purposively choose the participants who were sufficiently informed. Therefore, the researcher purposively selected a small group of people

who were going to share their experiences and give relevant information about the implementation of teacher professional development programmes for Grade R teachers in the primary schools

in the Amathole West District Education (AWDE). The small group, which the researcher purposively selected for this study included the following: four Grade R teachers, four principals, and one district official who is responsible for the professional development of teachers in the Amathole West Education District.

3.6 Data Collection

Two data collection instruments were used in this study namely: semi structured interviews and the documents analysis. The face to face interview method was used to give the researcher a perspective of the participants' emotions, opinions, feelings and beliefs towards the subject under study. De Vos & Strydom (2011) state that all interviews are interactional events and interviewers are deeply and unavoidably implicated in creating meanings that ostensibly reside within participants. In light of this, both parties; the researcher and the participants, were actively involved during the interview process to make meaning of the subject at hand. Furthermore, interviews also helped the researcher to gain first-hand information and a deeper understanding of the narratives given by the participants within their natural settings. The perspective provided by Maree (2007) identifies an interview as a two way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, opinions and behaviour of the participants. Participants can be asked to clarify or expand on responses, making the data from an interview potentially richer and more complete. Moreover, De Vos et.al (2011) is of the content on that qualitative interviews are attempts to understand the world from the participants' point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations (de Vos, et al 2011).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2005) a qualitative interview is an interaction between an interviewer and a participant in which the interviewer has a general

plan of enquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked in particular words and in a particular order. This explains the open nature of an interview where participants are able to fully express themselves beyond the set of questions compiled by the interviewer. According to Cohen (2007), there are three types of interview, structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Qualitative studies typically employ unstructured or semi-structured interviews. Unstructured interviews are also known as in-depth interviews. Meanwhile, (De Vos and Strydom 2011) are of the notion that unstructured interviews have an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. It is focused and discursive and allows the researcher and participant to explore an issue.

Semi-structured interviews are defined as those organised around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth. De Vos & Strydom (2011) further contend that semi-structured interviewing is the most important form of interviewing in a case study research. Thus, the researcher adopted the semi-structured interviews. This involved interviewing Grade R teachers and the principals to gather information on their qualifications, where they trained and for how long. Information was sought from the District subject advisor and the principals on the expected qualifications for Grade R teachers to teach children in Grade R through the interview process as well. The researcher also gathered information on the strategies used by the district and the schools to continuously capacitate the teachers from the principals and the subject advisor. Information on how teachers were supported was sought from the teachers, principals and the subject advisors. Lastly, this process entailed gathering information on the challenges encountered during the implementation of the professional development programmes.

3.7 Document Analysis

The researcher collected data from teacher registers, memos, circulars, minutes and teachers' portfolios in the schools. This was done as part of the efforts to know

more about how teachers are professionally developed and supported. Document analysis helped the researcher to get more information about school based and other stakeholders' professional development programmes/ strategies towards the support and supervision of teachers. According to De Vos & Strydom (2011) the study of documents involves the analysis of any written material that contains information about the phenomenon being researched. In essence, this can assist in answering the questions that interviews may have missed to address. Furthermore, De Vos & Strydom (2011) note that official documents are documents that are compiled and maintained on a continuous basis by large organisations such as government institutions. Such documents are more formal and structured. They include documents such as minutes and agendas of meetings, inter-office memos, financial records, statistical reports, annual reports and process reports.

In this study data was collected using the documents and the information obtained from both the interviews and the documents was triangulated in order to get full information. The researcher studied all the official documents in order to fill in the gaps. These greatly assisted the researcher to complement the information obtained from the interviews (Martens 2005).

3.8 Data Analysis

According to Babbie (2007), data analysis refers to the assessment and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and pattern of relationships. Cohen *et al*, (2007) further notes that qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for, and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities.

Data analysis therefore involves the assessment and the interpretation of the collected data. It consists of preparing and organising the collected data for the purpose of analysis. Thereafter, the collected data is reduced to themes by making use of coding and lastly, by presenting the data in figures, tables, or discussions

(Creswell, 2013). As Babbie and Mouton (2007) already indicated, the purpose of data analysis is to discover underlying meanings and pattern of relationships.

During the process of data analysis, the researcher followed the principles discussed by Gray (2014) and Creswell (2013) which are described below:

- The researcher transcribed the data by writing the field notes in a layout that was easy to read;
- Data was organised through words, sentences and tables;
- Reading and writing summaries/memos was done in order to get a sense of the database. The researcher familiarised herself with the information without tempting to interpret;
- Data was then reduced into themes through the process of coding, it was summarised and organised based on the emerging themes, general ideas, and related features;
- Lastly, the interpretation of data was made by evolving or bringing out ideas other than the codes and themes to the bigger meaning of the data.

In the process of analysis, some comparisons were made between the individual interviews and the reviewed information from the consulted documents.

3.9 Ensuring Credibility and Trustworthiness

Rossouw (2003) asserts that credibility in qualitative research refers to the extent to which results and inference techniques are used to generate the findings that can be trusted (Rossouw, 2003). Mertens (2005, p. 358) further notes that the rationale that supports this criterion is the question: 'Is there a correlation between the way the respondents actually perceive social constructs and the way the researcher portrays their viewpoints?' Trustworthiness, on the other hand, is defined by Mertens (2005) as the dependability of the research inquiry process. The cited author (Mertens, 2005) asserts that the quality of the data collection can be determined by means of a dependability audit in which the change progress can be inspected to attest to the quality and appropriateness of the inquiry.

Mertens (2005) further highlighted the following research processes that can enhance the credibility of the results of a qualitative study:

- Prolonged and substantial engagement;
- Persistent observation;
- Peer debriefing;
- Negative case analysis;
- Progressive subjectivity;
- Member checks; and
- Triangulation.

In order to uphold the standards of credibility and trustworthiness, the researcher ensured that there is a correlation between the participants' views and the researcher's construction and representation of these views in this study. Moreover, the researcher used peer debriefing, member check and triangulation methods to increase the level of credibility. With regard to peer debriefing; peers were asked to read the findings to check if they were not biased. In terms of triangulation the study used multiple data collection instruments, that is, semi-structured interviews and document analysis to ascertain the information collected. Then the researcher used member check by ensuring that the participants confirmed whether the transcript of the data was a correct reflection of the information provided to the researcher by allowing them to have access to read the data collected or by giving the participants a report back. This means that the researcher went back to visit the participants to give a feedback.

3.10 Gaining entry

According to Mertens (2005), before a researcher can undertake a research study, s/he needs to follow all the appropriate procedures in order to gain permission from the relevant authorities. Meanwhile, Van der Burgh (1988, p. 67) is of the content on that, it is very important to get permission to the authorities because it lets people know that what the study seeks to achieve is legitimate. After the

permission has been granted, the researcher needs to consult the participants who will be involved in the process of the study (Yin, 2012). In order to abide by these requirements, the researcher approached the relevant authorities, consulted all the participants who were involved in this study, and sought permission from the Department of Education to conduct the study with the concerned schools. Furthermore, this permission was taken to the schools included in the study in order to request entry to collect the necessary data.

3.11 Ethical consideration

The consideration of ethics in this research is crucial because this study deals with people. According to De Vos *et al* (2011), ethics are a set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for and behavioural expectations of the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students. Cohen *et al* (2007), further states that the role of the researcher is to strike a balance between the demands placed on them in the pursuit of truth and their participants' right and values which may potentially be threatened by the research.

Therefore, the researcher sought to put some ethical guidelines into effect for the research processes. This study is not an exception and thus it dealt with people, who have rights and expect to be treated with respect. To adhere to required standard of good ethical conduct, the researcher considered the following ethical guidelines for this study: Informed consent, avoidance of harm, and the participants' right of privacy.

3.11.1. Informed consent

The participants were informed about the nature of the research and its possible impact in their lives so that they may reasonably expect what to encounter in the process of the research study. The participants were given the right to participate voluntarily in the study and the right to withdraw their consent from participating further at any time they wish to do so.

3.11.2. Avoidance of harm

Gray (2004) states that the central issue in data collection is to make sure that the participants are not harmed or damaged in any way by the research study undertaken (Gray, 2004). This means that the researcher should not expose the participants to harmful or dangerous research procedures. In the process of this study, the researcher did not expose the participants to harmful research procedures and avoided procedures that may cause emotional discomfort, psychological or physical harm to participants.

3.11.3. Participants' right of privacy

The researcher anticipated the possibility of harmful information being disclosed during the data collection process. Therefore, the study made sure that the participants' right of privacy were not violated. This meant that any information about the participants that was acquired during the research study was treated with care, confidentiality and was not made available to others without the consent of the participants. Furthermore, the names of the participants were not disclosed to maintain anonymity.

3.12 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, basic research paradigm and its justification, research design issues such as the research approach were examined. Furthermore, issues related to research methodologies, population and sampling, data collection tools and protocols as well as data analysis procedures were discussed. Amongst the various numerous research methodologies, the most suitable and appropriate methodology was selected. The decision to choose the methodology was influenced by the population and the sample used by the researcher. Data collection tools and methods were determined by the nature of the population used in the study.

The adopted qualitative approach enabled the researcher to collect different types of data from respondents. Data gathered through interviews and document analysis assisted the researcher to have better knowledge on the implementation of professional development programmes for the Grade R teachers. The chapter also discussed data analysis procedures and themes. Lastly, the ethical considerations adopted and adhered to by the study were highlighted and discussed at length. The next chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the presentation and analysis of the data. The purpose of the study was to investigate the implementation of professional development programmes for Grade R teachers. Therefore, during the interviews it was revealed that although the teachers were professionally developed there was no regular follow up visits from the district and the principals. The study was conducted in two rural and two urban school of Amatole West District Education (AWED) with a sample of eight participants selected from the four schools and one district subject advisor to make them nine in all. The participants were two male principals, two female principals and four female teachers. In fulfilment of ethical goals of protecting participants' identity, confidentiality and security the participants were coded and identified using codes. The following codes were used to identify the participants:

- Grade R Subject Advisor in the district office (SA),
- Teachers as (TR 1, TR 2, TR 3, TR4) and;
- Principals as (PR1, PR2, PR3, PR4).

The participants were purposively selected basing on their ability to provide relevant information as discussed in chapter three. Collection of data was done using the face to face interviews and the analysis of documents.

4.2 Profile of the Participants

This part of the chapter reveals the personal information of the participants. This part is important in the sense that it helps the researcher to examine the participants' qualifications in order to understand the implementation of professional development programmes, strategies used as well as supporting and monitoring mechanisms in their work places. It also helps to understand the challenges that the teachers face during the implementation teacher professional development programmes.

Table 4.1 Teachers personal profile

	Gender	Qualification	Experience	Age	Location of Schools
TR 1	Female	NQF Level 4	12 Years	40-49	Rural school
TR 2	Female	NQF Level 5	4 Years	40-49	Urban school
TR 3	Female	Business Studies	3 Years	30-39	Urban school
TR 4	Female	NQF Level 5	6 Years	30-39	Rural school

Table 4.2 Principals' personal profile

	Gender	Qualification	Experience	Age	Location of Schools
PR 1	Male	PTD	5 years	50-59	Rural school
PR 2	Female	B Ed	18 years	50-59	Urban school
PR 3	Female	DIP	12 years	50-59	Urban school
PR 4	Male	B Ed	10 years	50-59	Rural school

The study had nine participants who took part in the face to face interviews. From this number of participants, Table 1 shows the four selected schools and the selected Grade R teachers in the district. All the interviewed teachers were females mostly between the ages of 30-39 and 40-49. The teachers' ages demonstrated that they were mature and energetic because working with children needs people who are active. Furthermore, most of the teachers are of child bearing age,

therefore, it is clear that the teachers of this age see the children mainly through a maturational lens. Moreover, children depend on more experienced adults for their optimal growth, development and learning as supported by the theoretical framework used in this study. Of the interviewed teachers two were rural school teachers and the other two were urban school teachers. It has also been noted that of the interviewed participants most of them were females. This shows that the selected schools were populated by females. Furthermore, the fact that the selected schools were populated by females shows that Foundation Phase is generally dominated by females as compared to male teachers who become visible starting from Junior to Intermediate Phases. From the researcher's point of view it is because males are not patient with little children unlike the female teachers because it is known that females are more caring and nurturing. In addition, it is assumed that most of the female participants were mothers, therefore, they were expected to be more tolerant because Grade R children demand tolerance and patience. Without being gender biased the researcher also considered the male teachers in the study because having both male and female as participants would assist to come up with different outcomes since males and females generally participate differently. With regard to issues of gender, it may also be inferred that there are more females than males in most South African institutions.

In this study, the teachers' qualifications were also taken into consideration so as to understand the implementation of professional development programs for the Grade R teachers in comparison to the qualifications that are required by the Department. Also understanding of the teachers' professional qualifications was crucial because the researcher wanted to have clear information from the experienced and non-experienced teachers to have a better understanding of the government policies. With regards to the teachers' experiences the two urban teachers were less experienced than the two rural school teachers. This may point to the fact that the teachers may be employed under SGB or the departmental post. The teachers' experience is also critical because it is good for the less

experienced in the teaching field to attend professional development programs more often than their counterparts with more experience in teaching.

Table 4.2 shows the selected schools and the interviewed principals in the district. The principals were mostly between the ages of 50-59. Of the selected principals two were rural school principals and the other two were urban school principals. The interviewed principals were two males and two females. The four principals' had different qualifications. For instance both PR 2 and PR 4 had Bed Of importance to note was that of all the interviewed principals none of the principals had specialized in Grade R.

It was necessary to have principals with more experience in teaching and administration to give guidance to teachers. However, of the interviewed principals the male principals were less experienced than their female counterparts. However, the fact that the principals were of the ages 50-59 indicates maturity and wisdom to lead and manage the schools. Furthermore, data shows that there is gap in qualifications of both the teachers and the principals. PR1 and PR 3's qualifications indicate that the two principals did their training long back. This suggests that these principles also need to undergo professional development programmes so that they can be at par with the global trends and meet the needs of their teachers, particularly Grade R who is the focus of this study.

4.3 Professional qualifications and experience of the District subject advisor

The Grade R subject advisor was a holder of the Bachelor of Education degree specialized in Grade R. It was important to know the level of professional qualifications of the district subject advisor because these are the appropriate people to lead the implementation of professional development programmes in the district. They supervise and support the teachers in the district; hence, it is important to understand their ability to implement the professional development programmes for the Grade R teachers.

If the District Subject Advisor is professionally qualified and experienced enough, they will offer suitable guidance to teachers on how to implement professional development programmes based on their ability to understand the department policies and to develop strategies on how to implement the programs.

In addition, the experience of the District Subject Advisor was very important because their job description is to also offer professional advice to principals, teachers and to other stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that might be having special interest in the implementation of professional development programmes of the teachers. Given that, the role of the District Subject Advisor includes supervising the Grade R teachers, organizing workshops for the Grade R teachers, make follow up support visits to check if the teachers are implementing what they learnt from the workshops. It is also important to know the age of the District Subject Advisor. The reason being, the age of the subject advisor is a determining factors for maturity and energy to organize their movements such as, visiting the schools and attending workshops. Below is a table for the District Subject Advisor's profile.

Table 4.3: SA profile

	Gender	Qualification	Experience	Age
SA	Female	Bed Hons	11 years	40-49

The researcher assumed that District officials should be knowledgeable to offer the necessary guidance to school principals and Grade R teachers about the implementation processes of government educational programmes. Hence, the above table shows the profile of the Subject Advisor.

To round off, the researcher understood that knowing the profiles of personnel working in Early Childhood Education was important in that, it showed that the information the researcher was getting was coming from well-versed participants

who had proper knowledge and professional experience to work with children. The next section is looking into how teachers were trained.

4.4 Grade R teacher training.

In this study it was important to know if the participants had been trained to be Grade R teachers. The emerging results showed that some of the teachers went through formal pre-service training before they were employed as Grade R teachers in their schools. For instance TR 1, explained that;

After completing standard 10 she volunteered working at day care and became interested in teaching Grade R children. The teacher applied at one of the local colleges and she went through a one year course period. She related how she did her pre-service training to get Level 4 qualification as highlighted below

4.4.1 Pre –service training

TR 1

“My first six weeks I was in college doing theory on how children learn through writing of assignments and tutorials and the other six weeks I was sent for teaching practice at a nearby school to gain some teaching skills and I was attached to a senior teacher as my mentor who trained me on the use of different resources which children use in class to learn through playing, so I can say that I acquired both theory and practice during pre-service training”.

Speaking of the length of training both TR 1 and TR4 underwent the prescribed time of training with enough time for teaching practice before completing the course to gain their qualifications. However, the only difference was that TR4 was already teaching by the time she obtained her NQF Level 5 qualification and she did her training as part-time which took her one year six months to complete the course, as a requirement from the Department for the Grade R part-time students. Unlike TR 1 who had 6 weeks of theory in the college writing assignments and tests as well as attending lectures and tutorials so as to gain teaching knowledge. In addition, this teacher also did, other six weeks of teaching practice under the

mentorship of a qualified and well experienced Grade R teacher. The results of this study are in line with what was highlighted in the review of related literature on the importance of mentoring and coaching.

When probed TR 4 explained how she trained as Grade R teacher.

“Actually I trained on part-time bases because I was already in the teaching field despite not having a teaching qualification. I was teaching the Grade R class and I was attached to a Grade R senior teacher while studying to get a Grade R qualification on part-time bases which I completed after 1 year six months. Weekends were organized for us to attend lectures and sometimes writing examinations at a local college. This made me a better person because I am no longer the same as before training. I am now confident because I have both theory and practice”.

Thus the researcher’s finding is that although the two teachers had different years of training and different qualifications, it can be deduced from their responses that the two teachers stood a better chance to have the opportunity to observe the knowledgeable persons demonstrating good skills of teaching the 5 year olds during teaching practice. At the same time the two teachers stood a better chance to imitate their mentors by teaching under their observation and supervision as well. Therefore, it may be inferred that both teachers were exposed to participatory learning by imitating their mentors and also experienced mentorship during their time of training.

On the other hand, from the inquiries made by the researcher, it appeared that TR 3 was not a qualified teacher because she did not go for initial preparation at any college to train as a Grade R teacher. The participant acknowledged that she did the on-line course as pre-service training for two days only while she was already employed at her school. The teacher narrated her story as follows,

“Professionally I have done business studies at the university but since I am working as a Grade R teacher now I decided to get some knowledge on the learning of the Grade R children by doing some on-line short courses with the Department of Education and I was reading some on-line modules. After two days I wrote a test on-line and passed with a certificate in Grade R”.

In the same view with regards to Grade R teachers undergoing short courses TR 2 also alluded that she did the pre-service training in the same manner as TR 1 and TR 4 but for a short period of time. She did 8 weeks short course at a different private college as her pre-service training. TR 2 explained her experience, laughing she said,

“Teaching practice was only one week and the other seven weeks were for assignments, lectures and tests. To me it was some kind of a crush program because we covered the 8 modules in order to finish theory and practice within a period of 8 weeks in one of the private colleges in our area and it was quite a very painful experience. That one week of teaching practice was not enough for me to gain the teaching skills and I was still very raw in terms of skills when I completed the course”

The researcher concluded that though these short course trainings were done in different colleges with different durations by the participants, they had one factor in common, that is, producing Grade R that are half baked as end products This further implies that such teachers may not be as effective as those teachers who were exposed to period of training going through mentorship and coaching under well experienced teachers and mentors. The fact that the teachers had their training in different colleges may also result in different assessment and evaluation standards used by the colleges resulting in teachers performing at different standards when they are finally attached to schools. This may also impact negatively on the children that they are teaching because the teachers may not be confident of what they must do in classrooms. As a result, this may cause work related stress due to poor preparation from the initial training due to failure to cope

with teaching and learning in the classroom situations. Moreover, this may also result in teachers prematurely leaving the teaching profession leaving behind big gaps in grasping literacy and numeracy skills as foundation level in children who they are teaching. This is the gap which as highlighted in the background and review and related literature may take a life time for learners to recover from because Grade R is the best way to lay the foundation of children's future. Hence, training of teachers must be appropriately done to equip the teachers well. Furthermore, the responses given by the teachers indicated that most of the teachers were trained in local private colleges and not in FET colleges.

Regarding training of teachers even the principals during the interviews confirmed that when employing a Grade R teacher they consider the teachers' qualifications and experience to make sure that the school gets qualified personnel who are well trained and have the proper skills to teach the children. In the interviews some of the principals' responses were as follows,

PR 2 "A competent Grade R teacher must have been prepared to interact with the children, have the skills to teach the 5 year olds through playing, have the knowledge on developing the children cognitively and through kindergarten songs because this is what they are trained in the colleges to get a level 4 or level 5 qualification. As principals this is what we consider when employing Grade R teachers

PR1 also agreed that:

"Grade R teacher must have initial training and qualification showing the knowledge and skills on how to teach and develop the children fully."

PR 3 also agrees with others and said: *When employing a Grade R teacher one must consider the teacher's qualifications to see if the teacher has the needed skills and knowledge acquired to teach Grade R children.*

PR 4 also had the same to say: *“Grade R is specialized hence it needs a well-trained teacher with the required qualification. I am not sure of the highest level for Grade R qualification but when employing Grade R teacher the teacher must show a certificate to prove training”*

Even the subject advisor for Grade R at the district office explained that most of the teachers in the district have different levels of qualifications and that most of them have levels 4, 5 and very few with level 6 yet they were still being allowed to teach in Grade R schools in (AWDE). Regarding the same issue concerning teacher training that was exposed to Grade R as well their teacher qualifications the district subject advisor revealed that,

“Most Grade R teachers in the schools of this district were those working in the crèche after completing standard 10 and got an opportunity to be trained as levels 4 and 5. However, the government has stopped employing more Grade R teachers with levels 4, 5, 6 because the Department is encouraging the teachers to upgrade themselves to level 6 through in-service training. Otherwise, for the new Grade R qualification, there are some who have started and also those who are starting training in the universities and FET colleges they must have a Grade 10 or Grade 12 as entry point to train for a three year Diploma in Grade R”

From the foregoing narrations it can be noted in the findings of the study that there was diversity in terms of teachers' qualifications, years of training and the levels of qualifications. It was also clear from the teachers' responses, the Subject Advisor's (SA) response, and illustration given in Table 4.1 that out of all the interviewed teachers none of them possessed the recommended Diploma in Grade R qualification as suggested by the Department of Education. Furthermore, due to diverse qualifications it is clear also that the teachers' level of standards is also different. Undoubtedly, this may result in different performances and understanding in the classrooms. Hence the researcher wondered whether the teachers were receiving some intervention programmes to boost the knowledge and skills of the Grade R standards in a teaching and learning setup.

4.4.2 Intervention/ in-service programmes

The foregoing comments by the participants clearly indicate that pre-service training does not properly equip the teachers with necessary skills and knowledge to be highly efficient and effective in the classrooms. Thus, it may be assumed this is due to length of training they received. These assumptions are supported by Macheng (2016) who noted that teachers do not enter the classroom as finished products after completing pre-service training. This clearly pinpoints that teachers are in need of some interventions particularly through professional development programmes. The researcher was keen to understand what intervention was given to the teachers to improve their teaching and learning knowledge and skills in Grade R after noting the stark differences in their teachers' qualifications.

Hence, the participants were requested by the researcher to state if they attended any continuous professional development programmes after their pre-service training since they joined the teaching profession.

Still on the search for teacher training TR 3 told the researcher that she had never attended any form of professional development programme ever since she started teaching. TR3 said in her own words: *"Mm mm, I have never heard of any professional development programs."* When probed she continued to say,

"Ok! I have heard the principal talking about departmental workshops but I have never attended any of them. Instead it is the principal who attends these workshops since it is the two of us in the Grade R section. However, when she comes back from the workshop she also explains to me giving feedback of what was said in the workshop"

The other three teachers agreed that they have attended professional development programs in form of district workshops.

TR1 revealed as follows,

“Yes I have been to a workshop which was organized by the district. The other workshop was about teaching strategies that can be used in Grade R classes. The other workshop was about improvising the teaching resources and developing the Grade R themes and how to teach using such themes.”

TR 2 echoed the same and said *“professional development programs are those workshops that are organized and facilitated by the department of Education and sometimes by the district officials. During the workshop we are continuously reminded of the Grade R themes and how they are developed into lesson plans making sure that children learn through own discovery. Also how to assess the children as well as making lesson plans”*

TR 4 also agreed with her counterparts that the departmental or district workshops are the only form of professional development they get from the district. She also said the following words after being probed. *“I don’t know if there are any other forms of professional development but the most common one is the district or the department workshops, where we are constantly reminded that children learn through discovery and playing. In these workshops we are encouraged to have different classroom corners for different themes where children work and explore on their own through playing.”*

According to the findings, there is evidence of intervention programmes to promote teacher development in the classroom from the department and the district. These intervention programmes are facilitated through workshops to make sure that the teachers are at the same level and have same standards in terms of teaching and learning of the children, to bridge the gaps between teachers and the principals’ qualifications. This indicates that the departmental workshops were meant to improve the teachers’ skills and knowledge especially for the teachers whose knowledge and skills are very low due to the short courses and poor pre-service training. Therefore, the workshops were also meant to keep the teachers up to date with the changes in the Grade R Sector since education is not static and there are many changes which occur due to change of technology and curriculum. In an

effort to understand professional development Oduran cited in Macheng 2016) explained professional development as a lifelong learning career development programmes used to acquire more relevant skills and knowledge for better performance and efficiency of the children.

From the above definition the findings also indicate that, it is through an on-going process which leads to improvement work and satisfaction of the teacher. It is clear that teachers have to go through continuous experience, practice and more training so that they can be better professionals.

Though, there could be various motives by teachers for attending professional development programs, such as salary increase, reaccreditation, career mobility or gaining new skills and knowledge. In this case, the teachers and the principal's motives are to gain more skills and more knowledge on the teaching and learning of the children.

Since the researcher noted the same gaps in the principals' qualifications the researcher wanted to know if the principals were also attending professional development programmes to increase their knowledge and skills so as to assist the teachers in the teaching and learning of the Grade R learners. Their responses were as follows

PR 1

"I have never received any form of professional development concerning the teaching and learning of the Grade R. In fact I have attended principals' meetings where we are taught about the administration issues for instance managing the school and leading the teachers. Of course the invitations for the Grade R teachers' workshops are sent to the office and I only notify the teacher but I have never checked what they do at the workshops."

PR 2 shared the same sentiments, *"Yes we have the principals' meetings sometimes, but these meetings have nothing to do with Grade R in particular, the meetings are about administration and leadership. It is the Grade R teachers who*

are sometimes invited by the department or by the district for workshops and I have never been to such workshops”

PR 3 said *“I do attend the principals’ meetings where we are taught about administration but at the same time I also attend the Grade R workshops organized by the district and sometimes by the department and this is where I am gaining the knowledge and skills on how Grade R is taught and supported because i am also co-teaching with the Grade R teacher”*

PR 4 also responded as follows:

“What I know is that the Grade R teachers sometimes attend workshops because the invitations are sent to the office and I let the teacher attend. As for me I have never been to workshops that concern Grade R or any other form of professional development related to Grade R. Instead I only go for principals meetings where we deal with administration and management issues mind you it is not because that is what I want but that is the situation, most of the principals’ meetings or workshops have nothing to do with Grade R”.

The researcher found out that even though the principals were invited to some district or departmental workshops and meetings, it was clear that the meetings and the workshops had nothing to do with the development of the Grade R teachers and how to assist them in their classroom work, instead the workshops and the meetings were administration related. However PR 3 had a different response from the other principals. The principal explained that he had attended some of the workshops as he was co-teaching Grade R classes. From the above statement it may be inferred that as long as one does not teach Grade R, they are not exposed to any training programmes.

The principals were further probed because the researcher wanted to know how they supervised the teachers if they did not have some knowledge and skills about the teaching and learning of the Grade R. The researcher’s with regard to supervision of the teachers came after reading the DoB (2008) Grade R Guidelines

which stated supervision of the Grade R teachers as one of the principals' roles at school Grade R DoB (2008) Guidelines (2013). However, from the principals' responses, most principals seem to leave everything to the FP HODs and they just get reports from the HODs.

PR 1 "I do not supervise the Grade R teacher. That is done by the HOD because the HOD is the one heading the Foundation Phase and the HOD is well informed in Foundation Phase and Grade R than me".

PR4, "I just see the HODs' reports otherwise I do not supervise the Grade R teacher because the teacher is taken care of by the FP HOD after all I have very little knowledge about Grade R".

PR 2 Also said "We have distributed leadership in the school, so the HOD deals with Foundation Phase and Grade R. So I have never supervised the Grade R teacher because I trust the HOD is doing great job there because she gives me the reports of what they do because my knowledge about Grade R is very shallow compared to that of the HOD. Yes, I sometimes pass through the Grade R class as routine to check general things such as maintenance but not supervising the teacher, I leave this to the HOD".

However, PR 3 had a different way of operating things in her school. PR 3 said in her own words:

Yes, sometimes I do supervise my teacher although it is not very often but I do".

As a result knowing professional qualifications of the principals was important because it helped the researcher to understand the principals' existing skills and knowledge of the Grade R programs. Therefore, the only way for the principals to be able to supervise the teachers is to have the relevant and most appropriate qualification or being trained in intervention programmes related to Grade R. This means that school principals are expected to have specialized in Grade R. If not, then it is critical that school administrators with high and relevant professional qualifications offer and expose Grade R to appropriate services that benefit both

teachers and the children through professional development programmes. Above all, this can also assist them to be in a position to understand government policies. The responses from the principals indicated that out of four principals only one principal was supervising the teacher and the other 3 principals depended on the HODs. These comments bring us to the fact that, the absence of the principals' supervision reveals the principals' lack of knowledge or lack of interest in Grade R sector. This also indicates the importance of specialization because if the principals were specialized in Grade R they would not be facing challenges in supervising or assisting the Grade R teachers.

It is clear from the principals' responses that they lacked knowledge of Grade R during their prior training and maybe probably lacking in-service training as well. The findings for not supervising the teachers may also indicate lack of experience from the principals as well as, lack of in-service professional development to support the Grade R teachers. Hence, there may be need for a negotiation between the principals, the district or the department to find the ways to improve Grade R understanding of pre-service teachers as well as, those in-servicing teachers in school levels.

In view of the above comments from the principals, the researcher wanted to understand the district intervened to assist the principals to gain some knowledge on the teaching and learning of the Grade R. The subject advisor for Grade R indicated that the principals have their own meetings which are different from the ones they organize for the teachers as she indicated that principals are dealt with by another set of the District Support Based Team. The SA said,

"I have my superiors who are responsible for the principals' meetings and welfare, mine is to work hand in hand with the Grade R teachers".

The researcher found that the principals lacked knowledge about the teaching and learning of the Grade R sector. Judging from the principals' professional qualifications none of them had specialized in Foundation Phase or Grade R.

Therefore, it may be concluded that the principals under study were not equipped with relevant knowledge to understand the issues related to the teaching and learning of the five year olds. . The principals' responses may also indicate that they had their training long ago before the existence of Grade R. Overall, the researcher understood that generally the participants' qualifications and experiences are a dire factor in interpretative studies, as these validate the data that participants bring about, which is also a result of the knowledge of what is on the ground. Furthermore, data on documents proved that the Grade R teachers and the principals were attending workshops and principals' meetings. The teachers' registers in the offices provided the evidence of the teachers and principals clocking in and out for workshops and meetings.

The next presentation of data is of the strategies used to implement Grade R teacher professional development programmes.

4.5 Strategies that are used to implement Grade R teacher professional development programmes

The participants were asked to state how the district and the schools assisted them in their classroom work. The most common response from the teachers was that the district provides them with teaching and learning resources and workshops. When further probed on the resources those were provided by the district. It emerged that they were provided with books, educational toys and stationary. The following extracts are examples of the participant's responses

TR 1

"The district assists me by providing resources which I use to teach the learners such as books, educational toys, stationary such as crayons, play dough, paint with paint brushes used by the children in classroom. The district also assists with workshops."

TR 2

“The district assists me by providing some workshops on teaching the Grade R children. The district also provide some learning materials for the children to use in class such as play dough, crayons, colouring books, paint and paint brushes, educational toys and charts which show different themes to be done in Grade R”

TR 3 had a different answer from others as she answered that she has not been assisted by the District in the classroom work but she confirmed that she received some materials from the district and she said this in her own words:

“The only assistance I got from the District was that of resources such as books for learners the departmental books which children used in class as workbooks only and I have never been to their workshops, like I said before that the principal is the one who attended these district workshops but when she came back she then explained everything to me”

TR4 *“The district assisted me with children’s learning resources such as crayons, glue, paint painting brushes and work books and workshops.”*

Basing on the teachers’ responses, it is clear that the teachers were receiving assistance from the district through workshops and supply of resources. Three teachers confirmed attending of workshops, but one teacher was not attending the district workshops. Even though TR 3 was not receiving the district workshop at least her principal had another way of passing the information to her through cascading model. The researcher assumed that the principal used model of cascading information to the teacher who had done pre-service training on-line only. The researcher is of the view that the principal was using the correct way of teaching her because the principal gave the teacher feedback of on the job training and demonstrated what was taught at the workshop.

The researcher was also curious to know the length of the district workshops. A majority of the participants indicated that the workshops were usually one day workshops per term.

TR1 *“The workshops are just one day workshops per term depending on the agenda which I feel is not enough to acquire the provided knowledge “*

TR2

“We usually attend the district workshops for a couple of hours once per term I am not sure, but what I know is that we do not get enough time to understand the concepts taught in the workshops because the time is too short. It was going to be better if they organize more workshops per term for us”

TR4

The workshops done by the district are just one day workshops and we attend sometimes for few hours. We appreciate what the district and the department are doing for us but they must organize regular workshops and not to overcrowd us with lots of information in a short time.”

The researcher also referred to the documents to verify the length of the workshops. During document analysis, it was apparent that, the invitation circulars sent by the district to the principals' offices were not well taken care off by other schools. It may be suggested that these schools had inefficient and ineffective filing systems in place. But, the one that the researcher found indicated that although the workshops were not often, ironically the invitation circulars did not show the duration of the workshop. Meanwhile, when the Subject Advisor was asked about the duration of the workshop the response was as follows: SA

“Sometimes, this depends with the venue because if the workshop is held in one of the schools which is central and accessible to all the teachers we spend almost 5 hours but when they come to the district it is four hours. This depends on the distance the teachers travel to get to the district”.

Using the SA's response the researcher was keen to understand the venue where the workshops were done. The teacher participants' responses were as follows;

TR1

“The workshops are held at a central school accessible to all the Grade R teachers and they usually start from 12.00 hours to 16.00hours. But if we are to attend at the district we start at 11.00hours to 15.00 hours”

TR 2 also said

“The workshops are not all that long sometimes it is four hours and it depends on the agenda”

TR4 responded almost the same and said;

“The workshops are sometimes at a central school and sometimes we go to the district offices and the time we spend is around four hours”.

Considering the above responses it is clear that the district used workshops as a strategy to professionally develop the Grade R teachers. There was no other form of professional development programme mentioned by the participants for instance, seminars or conferences. However, it was found through data collection that district workshops were the only form of in-service program provided to the teachers. When asked about the other forms of professional development such as seminars and conferences, none of the teachers knew anything about them. The teachers only knew the workshops.

The above responses also indicated that there were quite limited professional development events for the Grade R teachers in the district. Therefore, the researcher found out that if the workshops were not often then the implication was that the teachers were not often kept up to date with new systems and changes in their practices. This may also indicate that the district facilitation process concerning staff development programmes was weak in terms of organizing and facilitating the programs. Moreover, these results maybe an indication that the district was also facing some challenges beyond their control such as human and financial resources to facilitate more workshops

Although the workshops for the teachers were hosted, it was learnt that, the time allocated for the workshops was too short for the teachers to understand what was being taught for them to go back to their classes and implement what they have learnt. The duration of the in-service programs is very important since time determines the teachers' understanding and participation in the workshops. It also becomes worse when the workshops are not done often.

It was also found out that the venue for the workshops were done off site where teachers had to travel. In addition, the teachers mentioned that they were not given the chance to participate but to sit and listen to the facilitators passively. This does not align well with the theoretical framework utilised in this study, neither do such teaching promote what CAPS curriculum is all about – which is learner centred teaching and learning. Factors such as off-site venues may impact negatively on the implementation of professional development because they do not indicate the reality of the context. In addition offsite venues also contribute to shorter time for the workshops as travelling time to and from the venue have to be taken into consideration.

4.5.1. Assistance by the schools to the teachers

Besides the above factors, the researcher was also interested to know if there were any other forms of assistance given to the Grade R teachers in their classrooms by their colleagues and the School Management Teams in the schools. As recommended by theorists such as Lave and Wenger (1991) in their situated learning theory that in professional development knowledge is acquired when the less experienced teachers observe the more experienced teachers performing and then make attempts to imitate. It was also noted by many theorists that in adult education the teachers are also expected to participate in their professional development. Therefore, since the district and departmental workshops were

hosted off-site, the researcher still wanted to understand whether there were other professional development programmes being held as compensation for on-site development in the schools. The responses given by the interviewed teachers and the principals were as follows;

TR 1 commended that:

“Other teachers help me by giving suggestions on teaching methods when we sometimes informally meet as staff. It is only the H.O.D who sometimes comes to my classroom for inspection. The H.O.D only checks if I’m using CAPS programs in classroom. She has never demonstrated to me how I should go about it. She only comes to observe me teaching. However, she sits with me to discuss the lesson and advise me to improve where it is necessary. Otherwise formal staff development programs are not common in my school Teachers in this school do not get together to develop each other”.

TR 2 also said:

“I sometimes gain teaching ideas in staff meetings when teachers are together..

I can say these staff meetings are just general meetings and not specifically for Grade R. It is only those who are close to me (laughing) who can assist me otherwise some of them are not even approachable for help.”

TR 3 commended:

“There is not much assistance from other teachers. I am only getting assistance from the principal who is always with me in my class giving me some guidance through demonstrations and lesson observation. Staff development programmes mmm, is not done here”

TR 4 said;

“The other teachers in my school help me if I go to them asking for ideas such as how to approach certain concepts then they just explain to me how to do it but there is not even a day when they demonstrated to me how it is done. There are not staff development programs anyways.”

From the above responses the researcher found that some of the Grade R teachers were getting assistance from their colleagues informally, which may be termed informal mentoring. However not all the teachers had a chance to observe the knowledgeable ones performing so that they can imitate from them. Also the researcher noted that staff development programmes in schools was not a common practice although the teachers were getting assistance from their close friends in informal settings. The researcher also noted from the responses that, some of the staff members were not approachable for consultation which made it difficult for some of the Grade R teachers to interact with their colleagues. Judging from such responses the researcher concluded that it could be that even the other more experienced teachers in the schools were not more knowledgeable about teaching of the Grade R children as assumed. It also could be that there was lack of interest within the staff to hold staff development programs that benefited the Grade R teachers. Thus, in such circumstances it is clear that it may be assumed that the culture of collaboration or team work in the schools was missing as well as promotion of communities of practice in these schools.

4.5.2 Culture of collaboration/teamwork

According to Chinhara (2016) collaboration implies to a dynamic relationship among people of diverse capacities and responsibilities. The researcher then asked the teachers whether there was a culture of collaboration or teamwork in the school. The responses were as follows:

TR 1 commended:

“Staff development programs are very rare here, “mmm, laughed. There is no collaboration in this school. I don’t know how to explain it, but according to the way I see it collaboration and teamwork in this school is not all that strong. The teachers here operate in different ways There is no that culture of getting together for professional development., Teachers only come together after a period of 2 months to discuss other issues, not for staff development purpose. Teachers discuss different things when they engage, especially discussing issues of discipline or sports.”

TR 2 said:

“Mmmm, (smiling), I can say collaboration/teamwork in this school is not a culture to me because I have always seen people minding their own business. Teachers only come together when there is something urgent to be discussed and usually such meetings have nothing to do with professional development or Grade R programs.”

TR3 also responded:

“You know there are a lot of politics in workplaces, the same here. There are some who like to collaborate with others and there are those few individuals who want to be just stubborn for nothing. Otherwise some teachers like to collaborate with others and the principal tries by all means to unite the staff at school because teachers prefer working alone in their corners/classrooms. Hence I cannot safely say there is a culture of collaboration and team work.”

TR 4 had the same to say,

“There is no collaboration in my school and there are no staff development programs. When teachers come together it is both because of sports or other issues different from Grade R programmes.”

It was clear that there was lack of collaboration and team work in the schools. As a result it was noted that even staff development programs were not common in

the schools. It was also noted that it was difficult for some of the Grade R teachers to consult their seniors because some of them were not approachable. Even some principals confirmed lack of collaboration and team work among the teachers. When interviewed their responses were as follows:

PR1 commended:

There are no professional development meetings held in the school. I only attended principals meetings which do not address Grade R issues but management. The issue of collaboration and teamwork is not strong in this school but I am still working on it so that teachers work together and assist each other At least the HOD is the one playing the role of a mentor because we do not have mentors to assist the teachers.”.

PR 2 also said:

“There are no staff development programs for the Grade R teacher in the school. There are no formal meetings done for the teacher. Actually there is no collaboration or team work because people are just stubborn even if you advise them to try other things. I try to encourage the teachers to have some staff development programs but not all of them attend because of lack of collaboration. The HOD for FP is the one who sometimes assist her in the classroom work since we do not have school based mentors, the one we can call mentor is the District Advisor who assists by doing workshops”.

PR 3 also said:

“The teachers sometimes meet for a staff development formally and informally. I can see that I am now relaxing. However, not all the teachers have the interest in being developed. There are some teachers who are just stubborn you know it is just school politics. However, I encourage collaboration and teamwork. I also lead by example, as i take part in workshops and school based staff development

programs making some initiatives and also mentoring my Grade R teacher, since we do not have district mentors except the district subject advisors”.

PR 4 revealed:

“I don’t know how to put it across but I have seen the teachers discussing their teaching experiences in groups of friendships. Therefore I cannot say there is a culture of collaboration and teamwork because the teachers meet sometimes.

I encouraged team work and collaboration by allowing teachers to attend different workshops. I also encourage feedback from those who would have attended the workshops to share the ideas in meetings. As for the Grade R issue, I have asked the HOD to assist because we do not have school based mentor to assist the teacher in the classroom and I am not familiar with Grade R stuff”.

It was clear from the above responses that there was lack of staff development programs in the schools maybe due to lack of interest and teamwork. The researcher even consulted the school documents such as minute books, registers and circulars but there was no evidence to show whether the schools were collaborating for Grade R professional development. It was only in school three where the researcher got hold of a minute book with recordings of the principal giving feedback to the teacher. There were minutes of the district and departmental workshops. Evidence of lesson demonstrations and observations were also noted in the same minute book. In other schools evidence of attending district workshops was only in the teachers’ register where the teachers clocked in and out for workshops. However, the three schools did not have any evidence of holding their own staff professional developments for the Grade R. The researcher concluded that out of the four schools only one school was developing its teachers internally. It was also clear that the principals were also too reluctant to encourage collaboration or teamwork in the schools. The researcher was also keen to understand whether the Grade R teachers were collaborating or networking with other Grade R teachers in surrounding schools in order to learn from each other.

However, responses indicated that all the teachers were not aware of networking with other teachers. The responses were as follows:

TR 1

“The only time we collaborate as Grade R teachers is when we are called for a workshop by the District/Department at a central venue otherwise there is nothing like visiting each other’s schools.”

TR 2 commended:

“We usually meet together as Grade R teachers when we are invited to a department/district or union (SADTU) workshops. We have never visited other schools to see how the other Grade R teachers are doing”

TR3 said:

“I have never heard of a school visit or networking, maybe the principal is the one who does school visits but I have never heard her talking about networking with other neighbouring schools.”.

TR 4 also commented that:

“The idea sounds wonderful but I have never heard of inter school visits or networking of schools.”

As indicated above by the participants, it is clear principals are not doing enough to make sure that teachers are equipped with current skills through sharing with other Grade R teachers by encouraging school trips to other schools. Hence, it is critical to note that principals should develop such strategies to make sure that teachers have relevant information on how other teachers are operating in other schools and tap on those good practices. Therefore, it is the duty of the principals to initiate and make such arrangements for the teachers to visit other schools. When the researcher noted such discrepancies, the researcher further probed if there were any other strategies used to promote teachers’ participation as part of

professional development programmes besides the workshops which were identified by the participants.

4.5.3 School based mentors

The researcher asked the participants whether there were school based mentors to assist the Grade R teachers in their classroom work as part of the strategies used to promote professional development. The following responses were given by the participants.

TR 1 said:

“There are no staff developments or regular class visits or peer reviews in my school. The senior teachers are not even willing to assist me. The H.O.D is the one who sometimes come for class visits and I have now regarded the HOD as my mentor because she supervises me and sometimes advises me.”

PR 1 also supported and said,

“There is no school based mentor. Mentors are supposed to be selected by the school but in our case we did not do any selection because we do not have any one suitable. When selecting Grade R mentor it has to be someone specialized in that area and with better experience. Hence, for now the HOD is the one playing that role of being a mentor.”

TR 2 also said:

“Class visits are not that common in this school. I’ve never been invited to class visits. If I am to talk about mentoring I can talk about the HOD because she is the only one who visits my class checking the children’s work and my files. The HOD is the one I may say is my mentor because she advises me and assist me when there is need.”

PR2 also said the same as the teacher.

“It is the HOD who works with the Grade R teacher as her mentor and I can say she is the Foundation Phase mentor. HODs are selected starting from the district office and they become mentors in the schools because of the experience and qualifications”.

TR 3 had a different story to tell and she said:

“My mentor is my principal because she is always with me. I learn a lot from her. She demonstrates and observes lessons that I teach and she gives me feedbacks although most of them are verbal feedbacks”

PR 3 agreed with the teacher and said:

“I am the one who mentors the Grade R teacher. Mentors are also selected by the schools but in our case I became automatic since I am the most senior teacher in the school with more experience in Grade R.”

TR4 also revealed that:

“The HOD is my mentor because she helps me all the time I need help. She advises me, demonstrates and supervises my lessons. She does not visit my class often, but, whenever I need assistance I feel very free to approach her.”

PR 4

“The HOD is doing a good job by helping the Grade R teacher. The HOD has a better background of Grade R and I can see by the reports she shows me.”

Besides engaging the teachers in departmental workshops, the teachers participated in in-service programmes within the school which involved their participation, as indicated by the responses given above by both the teachers and the principals. Although staff development programmes were not often in the

schools, it has also been noted that teachers participated in mentoring as part of professional development. It is clear that all the schools engaged their teachers in mentoring so that the teachers may have the chance of on-the job in-service and it happens to be one of the most important professional development programs in Grade R.

Unlike the departmental or district workshops which were off-site and the teachers were just passively receiving information. According to adult education it is important that teachers are developed through participation because it is assumed by theorists that adult learners are self-directed, goal oriented and problem centred (Knowles, 1980) as cited in Macheng,(2016). It is clear that teachers were engaged in professional development programmes in one way or another. It was also noted that most of the teachers were mentored by their HODs maybe because the schools did not have school based mentors who were appropriately qualified and specialized to mentor the Grade R teachers. The other reason maybe what has already been highlighted in the foregoing section that some of the senior teachers (more knowledgeable) were unapproachable. The other problem as revealed during the interviews as confirmed by one of the principals was that there were no school based mentors. This was an indication that there is a shortage of appropriately qualified people who are specialized in this area. As a result, the HODs end up taking the tasks.

4.5.4 District based mentors

The findings of the study revealed there was no formalised mentoring. As such the researcher sought the views of the district officials whether the district had some mentoring programmes in place. The responses below given by the teachers showed that the district officials mostly concentrated on workshops and gave little attention to follow up support visits.

TR1

“The subject advisors rarely come to our schools for follow up support visits. I do not even remember when she last visited me in the classroom.”

TR 2

“Most of the time we meet the subject advisor at the workshops and not much in our classrooms. Their visits are maybe one in a year.”

TR 4

“The SA came to my class inspecting the resources and my files to see how I am operating and as far as I remember it was long time back.”

The above responses indicated that after the district workshops there was very little follow up by the subject advisors to make sure that what they taught was being implemented. Therefore, it is clear that mentoring was not part of the subject advisor roles and responsibilities because there was already too much for her. Above all the SA told the researcher that there were no teacher mentors in the district but subject advisors. The researcher consulted the teachers' files and there was very little evidence of follow up support visits from the subject advisors. However, It is clear that some of the schools promoted the growth of the Grade R teachers by in-servicing them through mentoring. The subject advisor was also consulted to enquire about the follow up support visits and the response was as follows.

SA “ *We may not be regular on doing follow up support visits because of shortage of staff in the office but there was effort to make sure that all the schools were provided with necessary information and assistance. Also the other challenge is the delay in funding for our travelling expenses. Sometimes we get the resources later than our plans*”

It was also noted from the responses that there was a dare need have specialized people in the Grade R to cope with the demanding job of supervising and

mentoring the teachers in the schools. The responses also indicated that it is a challenge for the SA to cope with their work due to poor and late release of funds to organize workshops and transport to visit the school. Lack of qualified personal was also a contributory factor in the district office for not regularly visiting the schools. The researcher also focused on the support offered to the teachers by different stake holders and the first focus was on the support offered by the district office.

4.6 Support offered to the teachers

This section looks at the support mechanisms offered to the teachers by the district, the principals/ HODs and other stake holders.

4.6.1 Support by the District

Mavuso,(2013) cited in Chinhara(2016), states that the District Education Office as born out of the decentralization process made from the central government. Mavuso continues to say, the concept originates from the view that local education offices are best placed to play a critical role in promoting quality teaching and learning in a specific district. In other words it is the duty of the District Education Office to allocate government or national educational resources such as syllabus, circulars, government statutes and policies to schools. In the same thought District Education's facility of support is crucial for suitable implementation of educational programs such as professional development. The researcher also sought to find out the support that the district was providing the Grade R teachers during the implementation of professional development programs.

SA "As the subject advisors we make it a point that the teachers are well developed through workshops. We organize workshops for the teachers to improve their skills and knowledge on the teaching and learning of the children. We also source necessary resources for the five year olds so that they become hands on in their learning. We also supervise the teachers to see if they are implementing what they have learnt from the workshops."

These above sentiments were also supported by most of the interviewed teachers and principals. The researcher also consulted the school registers, the teachers' files and the Subject Advisors' files as part of document analysis for triangulating verbatim data given by the participants. These documents showed evidence of workshops and supervision of teachers although it was not regular but the fact that there was effort noted. TR 4 confirmed with her own words and said:

TR4 *"The Grade R Subject Advisors provide workshops and resources to us. They sometimes also supervise our teaching in the schools to make sure that we are implementing what they have taught in the previous workshops but it is not something constant"*.

PR 3 also agreed to what others were saying. *"As a principal I agree that I have also been to the workshops and there are follow up support visits by the SA although they are not regular but they do visit here and there. The SA also assesses the lesson plans and the teachers' files."*

Robinson (2015) is of the idea that the full participation of school districts officials in continuous professional development of under qualified teachers in Grade R helps to improve teacher performance which brings about learners higher achievement. Therefore, it is very important that the district be fully involved in the development of the teacher. As noted, workshops and follow up support visits ensured that teachers were equipped with skills to teaching. Though it was also evident that the district was supporting the schools basing on the responses and the reviewed documents however, the support was very limited and not all that often. Most of the cited responses may imply that the support given to teachers was not often because of limited resources or lack of enough appropriately qualified personnel. Besides getting support from outside the researcher was also interested to understand the support offered to the teachers by the principals in the school.

4.6.2 Support offered by the Principals

According to Heystek, (2016) principals are generally known for administrative work, management, and control of the schools. However, education is not static hence due to new changes in the new systems of governance; it has resulted in some changes in the roles of principals as CEOs of the schools (DoE, 1996). The changes also affected the demands and the expectations of the principals from management and control to an educational leader who can support professional development among the staff members. The researcher's motivation of wanting to understand the principals' support arose after the transformation of the education systems and to see if the changes are being implemented. The participants were asked to explain the support they get from their principals and the teachers responded as follows:

TR1 *"The principal only support me with information from the district for instance if there are workshops to be attended, funding for my workshop trips, sourcing resources for the children and distributing departmental circulars. My principal has never observed any lesson in my class. It is the HOD who has been working with me when it comes to teaching and learning of the children. The HOD is very friendly and she makes me feel confident and improved."*

PR 1 also commended and said:

"I can support the Grade R teacher with all the necessary materials she need for her children to learn. As for teaching and planning is for the HOD because the HOD is the one responsible for Foundation Phase and she understands the needs for FP better than me. That is why I leave the FP to be supported by the HOD because I also understand Intermediate Phase better than the FP HOD also. I sometimes receive the reports of what the HOD and the Grade R teacher do and I am impressed. I have never written any feedbacks but the HOD does."

TR 3 also revealed and said:

“The principal supports me most of the time. The principal supervises me and sometimes staff develops me when there is need. The principal has also been giving me feedback on what I have done in the classroom. The principal also provides workshop feedback. Most of the time the feedback is verbal and sometimes she gives me a written feedback. I enjoy the support, I feel confident and I am not the same as before”.

TR 4 commended and said:

“The support that I get from the principal is the teaching and learning material. The principal provide the district and departmental circulars that are sent through him. The principal excuses me to attend workshops, he checks my files and the children’s files but has never staff developed me or observe my lessons. The HOD is the one who observes me and supervises my lesson plans.”

It may be deduced from the responses that teachers were receiving support in other areas however, what clearly came out was that basing on the changes of the principals’ roles, it was clear that the principals were isolating their new roles to support professional development among staff members. Instead of directly interacting and supporting the Grade R teachers, the principals were getting reports from the HODs. Maybe there is lack of knowledge that makes the principals not to interact directly with the teachers. This can also be witnessed by the response given by one of the principals that FP HODs are better in Foundation phase than them. It also could be the case that the principals lack interest in learning the Grade R issues. It is also clear that the teachers were positive about the support they were getting from some of the seniors basing on the responses they were giving that they felt confident and changed. Although the support was not constant but the teachers were positive and there was a feeling of benefiting from support they were getting.

The teachers and the principals were also asked about the support given by the NGOs. Almost all the participants responded that they have never worked with the NGOs in their schools. TR 2 even said in her response,

“I have never heard of the NGOs that support Grade R teachers. Maybe it is in other schools.”

The same question was also asked to the principals and none of the principals worked with the NGOs. PR 2 said:

“I have heard other principals from other districts talking about NGO support projects but I have never worked with any since I started working in this school”.

The researcher even asked the SA in the district concerning their interaction with the NGOs. The subject advisor explained that NGOs were once there as supporting agents of the Grade R some years ago when they were not yet working in this district. The subject advisor explained in her own words and said,

“This issue of NGOs was there long back and it was a good practice because the NGOs supported the under qualified teachers in the schools but it was found out that the NGOs were not accredited and they just vanished. From that time we have never had any NGO working with the schools in this district”.

It is clear that NGOs' support was a thing of the past in the district. The responses given by the participants indicated that there were no NGOs working with schools in the district. Meanwhile, the researcher also wanted to understand how the teachers feel about the support and assistance given to them by the district/ department and also by their schools. There were mixed feelings from the teachers but most of the teachers were not satisfied with the level of support given to them. The teachers' responses were as follows:

TR 1

“Actually I am not satisfied with the way workshops are organized. I have a feeling that if we could have more time on workshops it will be easier for us to understand new concepts.”

TR 3 said;

“My principal is always updating me on anything that I need to understand. I am happy to have such a leader who is always concerned about professional development of the teachers. My principal is very initiative when it comes to developmental issues. My wish is to further my studies and have a proper Grade R qualification as well.”

TR 2

“Both the school and the district are trying and I appreciate it. We need to have more regular workshops and follow up support visits from the district. My HOD is helping me and I feel free when I am working with her. “

TR4, said:

“The department/ district workshops and follow up visits need to be regular so that we can see progress on our programs. The visits and the workshops are very rare. This does not satisfy me”.

Findings show that the teachers need more professional development support from their superiors as they responded showing dissatisfaction.

The next focus of the researcher was on challenges encountered during the implementation of professional development programmes.

4.7 Challenges encountered in the implementation of professional development programs

Several professional development programs have failed to reach their anticipated sustainability level because of numerous challenges encountered in the

implementation of the programs. The researcher requested the participants from the schools and the district to explain their challenges. The participants narrated the challenge they experienced as follows:

SA;

“The problem is lack of properly qualified people in the schools for staff development. Hence, there is no continuity even after the workshops that we provide the teachers. Even here in the district we do not have enough appropriately qualified personal to assist in workshops and follow up support visits. We are few yet there is a lot to be done. When I am talking about lack of appropriately qualified people, I am talking about people who have specialized in Grade R . Remember Grade R is a specialized area. There is also poor attendance of the workshops by the teachers. Grade R is mostly funded by Department of Education together with other different departments such that we sometimes face the problem of delay in release of the funds. As a result there is delay in the programs and planning. There is poor management in the schools such that we end up getting affected on our school visits and planning.”

It is clear that there are existing challenges affecting the implementation of professional development programmes in the district. Piñata (2011) supports the fact that the district is the major provider of professional development and that lots of funding is done to enable the professional development of the teachers. For instance, challenges on lack of properly qualified personal both in the district and in the schools emerged as contributory factors towards effective implementation of professional development programmes yet, specialization is critical. The other challenge indicated was the delay in releasing of funding resulting in delays in organizing the workshops as well as making follow up school visits on time. Poor attendance of the workshops was also noted as one of the district challenges. Poor attendance of the workshop may indicate lack of motivation on the teachers' part taking into consideration that these workshops are very short and the teachers are not given the platform to participate actively as highlighted in the preceding

responses by the teachers. Besides the challenges encountered by the district, the researcher was also interested to know the challenges encountered during the implementation of professional development programmes as experienced by the teachers and the principals. Their responses were as follows:

PR1 commented and said;

“As a school we could not properly support the teacher through staff development because there was no one with appropriate qualification and good experience in Grade R. Now we only depend on the district subject advisor to mentor the Grade R teacher. The Foundation Phase teachers and the HOD are the ones sharing the teaching skills informally since they are in the same phase. At least they have some knowledge on the teaching and learning of Grade R children. This has affected teacher collaboration of teachers”

TR 2 also commended:

“It is good that the district provides workshops for us and we really acquire more knowledge and skills to improve our performances. However, the challenge is that the workshops are not often. Above all there is very little follow up support visits from the district. Yet we believe that the district has people with the appropriate qualifications and well experienced. The teacher took a deep breath and continued;

“The schools are not supporting us enough because of lack of knowledge among the leadership and other teachers. There is lack of collaboration in the schools as a result staff development programs are rare. At the end I feel like I am not getting enough support that I deserve”. The teacher also commented on some of the challenges that they encounter apart from that of professional development. The teacher commented

“On the other hand the classes we are teaching are very big and the resources do not equate the number of learners in the classes. We end up improvising the resources using our money yet we are not well paid also.”

TR 4 also revealed more challenges and said;

“One of the challenges is poor leadership in the school. The principal has no initiative in the implementation of staff development programmes. There is also lack of consistent support from both the school and the district. There is also lack of knowledge and experience among the leadership. “

PR 3 also added to the comments and came up with different challenges saying:

“I agree that we attend principals’ meetings. On these meetings we are not getting enough knowledge on the issues of how to support the Grade R teachers. Grade R issues are not well addressed in principals’ meetings and it becomes a challenge when we want to support our teachers in the schools. The other challenge is lack of proper initial training of the Grade R teachers and such teachers need to get basic knowledge about Grade R. It becomes difficult if there are no experienced teachers in the school to assist. Such that even those one shot workshops are not even enough to equip the teachers.”

TR 1 also added to what others were saying about challenges and said;

“We have a problem of resources to use for the children to learn. Sometimes the department delays in delivery of the resources and we are obliged to improvise because there are times when the resources are needed. Moreover, the challenge is that with the little that we pay some of them needs to be purchased. Holding some of the resources the teacher explained another challenge and said; “Sometimes the resources come to school and we do not know how to use the

resources. They accumulate dust sitting in the offices because the subject advisors do not visit the schools regularly to demonstrate how these resources are used. So it becomes a challenge because we need to be developed first.”

From the above responses it is evident that there are challenges encountered in the implementation of professional development of the Grade R teachers. The participants noted lack of knowledge, lack of proper qualifications, and lack of consistent support as hurdles to effective implementation of professional development programmes. In addition factors such as poor leadership, lack of collaboration, lack of staff developments and delay in release of funding also emerged as challenges that may have negatively impacted on the professional development of the teachers.

4.8 Summary

The data presented in this chapter was generated through face to- face interviews and document analysis. They are the results on the implementation of professional development programs for the Grade R teachers in Amatole West District Education. The researcher started by presenting data on the participants' profiles and then presented data on participants' gender, professional qualifications, and work experience.

The next data presentation was on teacher training where the researcher focused on the initial training of the teachers, considering length of training, diversity in the teachers and the intervention engaged to the teachers by the schools and the district due to under qualifications and also the professional development provided because of diversity in the teachers' qualifications. In addition, the chapter also looked at the strategies used to develop the Grade R teachers. The strategies such as the district workshops, staff development programmes, school based and district based mentoring as well as follow up support visits. The last part of the chapter focused on support given to the teachers by the schools and the district as well the challenges that they have encountered in the process.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation and discussion of the of the findings as per the objectives stated. in chapter one. The chapter further provides a discussion on how the theoretical framework and review of related literature link with data analysis and presentation in the previous chapter.

5.2 Training of the Grade R teachers

5.2.1 Pre-service training of the teachers

According to Steyn and van Niekerk (2002) cited in Gomba (2019) professional development is an on-going development program that focuses on the whole range

of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to educate learners effectively. According to the theory by Lave and Wenger (1991) teachers can be developed through the implementation of a variety of programmes to enhance their knowledge and skills and become competent to teach the children. However, literature reveals that Grade R teachers in South Africa undergo a one year pre-service training in FET colleges (Andrich *et al* 2015; Ransburg, 2015) to acquire knowledge through theory and practice. However, as stated earlier in the study, (DoE, 2006) in support of the policy for teacher education in South Africa is of the view that the policy should be designed to develop a teaching profession that meets the needs of a democratic South Africa in the 21st century. As the policy seeks to properly equip the teachers, so are the Grade R teachers who are known to be responsible for children's early development before entering formal schooling. Therefore, the new policy framework was introduced to benefit even the Grade R teachers. According to the Policy Framework for universal access to Grade R, and the draft policy on Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) associated with the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF), the Diploma in Grade R was proposed as a new qualification for the Grade R teachers (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011) and the training for the Diploma in Grade R was pegged at 3 years.

In view of the stated policy, the findings of the study revealed that most of the teachers interviewed in this study do not meet the current required qualification to teach Grade R. Evidence revealed that the teachers were under qualified because the teachers' qualifications were ranging from Level 4 to Level 5. Similar studies have also noted that the Grade R teachers' qualifications are lower than those required by the Department of Education (Biesterker, Dawes, Hendricks, and Tredoux 2016). Although training was made compulsory for the Grade R teachers in 2014 by the Department of Education for the proposed Diploma in Grade R Level 6, findings show that to date most of the teachers were still holding Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications. While, the teachers' qualifications in the district were ranging from Level 4 to level 5, as highlighted in the stud. It was also found out that none

of the teachers had improved to obtain the proposed qualification of the Diploma in Grade R Level 6. Furthermore, one of the teachers did not have a teacher qualification to teach the children. The study also found that the same teacher had to gain teaching knowledge and skills through the on-line learning. Thus, it may be inferred that, the teacher's qualification is not in line with DoBE which states that, a qualified teacher is required to have knowledge and skills which they obtain through theory and practice in the colleges (DBE 2011). It is believed that teachers' own background, training and the levels of confidence and their commitment can affect their effectiveness in teaching (Fullan, 1991). Furthermore, Fullan (1991) is of the view that during training, the teachers' knowledge is acquired through theory and practice. Whereas, Lave and Wenger (1991), argues that traditional learning occurs from abstract out of context experiences such as lectures and books are not effective until the teachers are engaged in a social learning. In contrast to Lave and Wenger's idea of criticising traditional learning, on the other hand studies by Mills 2013 and O'Kelly (2016) also criticise the fact that Lave and Wenger are against acquisition of knowledge in learning through lectures. However, Mills 2013 and O'Kelly 2016 posits that learning is conflated with formal education which leads to formal certification resulting in learning being involved in both participation and acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, it is a requirement that teachers qualify when they have knowledge and skills which they obtain through theory and practice in the colleges and universities (DBE 2010). Furthermore, it is a belief that the quality of the education or training program may be a more critical factor in staff's ability to stimulate children's development and learning, Fullan 1991). In line of the same thought, there is a strong need for good initial teacher preparation; and there is also a call for greater consistency across initial professional preparation programs to enhance quality (OECD, 2012).

Besides the issue of different levels of qualifications within the teachers, it was also found that at least other three teachers in the study had under- gone through a normal pre-service training procedure in the colleges. Thus, the fact that Heystek (2016) e teachers went to different colleges with different preparations, the critical

point of view is that they were well prepared to teach Grade R. In a similar study by Chikoko (2015) and the DoE (2016) the findings also show the same findings of this current study that Grade R teachers still have a range of low qualifications.

Regarding the length of the teachers' pre-service training period in this current study, the same findings were also similar to the study of Orr, Westbrook, Pryor, Durrani, Sebba, Adu-Yeboah (2013) who noted that teachers with least requisite minimum basic education and whose training has been short were under-qualified. Furthermore, the fact that none of the teachers trained for 3 year Diploma in Grade R, makes the teachers to be classified as under qualified as stated by the above literature. According to adult situated learning by Knowles (1980) one of the assumptions in this theory confirms that there are individual differences in adult learners such as different experiences, background, learning styles and creating a greater need for self-individualization. For instance, the findings of the study illuminated that one of the teachers had 8 weeks training in the college, while, the other had 1 year training and the other had 1 year 6 weeks. The one who was not qualified had her on-line training of 2 days. Despite the introduction of the new policy and the new qualification, evidence shows that there are still more under qualified teachers in the schools who are teaching the Grade R children.

Furthermore, findings show that despite the length and difference in the teachers' qualifications the training institutions were also different. This shows that even the standards of the training institutions may not be the same in terms of the curriculum to be used by the colleges showing diversity in teachers training. In other words, this may imply that, there is no standardized curriculum set for these colleges. Moreover, according to Darling-Hammond (2017) pre-service as professional development program is described as institute based formal program or prior training done as form of teacher preparation. Darling-Hammond further states that pre-service is done in Universities, teachers' colleges. Contrary to the findings some of the teachers did their training at some of the private colleges which might have been owned by some individuals or partners and not recognized institutes

such as teachers' colleges or universities as indicated by literature in chapter two. In South Africa literature shows that pre-service training is done in the FET colleges (Andrich *et al* 2015; Ransburg; 2015). In addition, for the above reasons it also emerged that there was diversity in the teachers' training.

In the light of diversity, similar findings have revealed that there is diversity in the training of the teachers. For instance, the number of years of education received, levels attained, nature and amount of training completed (Macheng, 2016; Orr *et.al.* 2013). Similar findings have been noted in this current study that the teachers have various qualifications and different training periods as well as different training institutions. It is for the above reasons that there was need for in-service training to capacitate the teachers with more knowledge and skills so as to bridge the gap due to the exposure of different colleges as well as promoting effective and efficient teaching and learning. In support of the above, literature further supports that pre-service training may not equip teachers with enough knowledge and skills. Adult learning theory by Knowles (1980) argues that adults come into learning with different experiences; therefore tapping into their experiences through experiential techniques problem solving activities and methods is beneficial. As stated in chapter two, Darling-Hammond (2017) also supports the above idea saying that a teacher learning is not complete when teachers leave pre-service preparation only. Moreover, the current study shows that Grade R teachers in Amathole West District Education needed more practice, skills and knowledge on the teaching of the children. However, Findings have revealed that the Grade R teachers have been receiving some teacher professional development. It emerged in the study that there was intervention by the department and the district to compensate the diversities of the teachers through in-service programs.

5.2.2 Intervention/ in-service/ professional development programmes

In-service is when the general in-service or continuing professional development of teachers is implemented to improve the quality of teachers, so that they also

improve the learner outcome (Gomba 2019). In-service training that provides possibilities for Grade R specialization is considered beneficial (OECE 2012). This is because; educating young children requires specialized skills and content knowledge, including a variety of subject and development areas (OECE, 2012). Many countries such as Netherlands, Canada United States, (US) Singapore and Australia have established the national professional development for the Grade R teachers (Darling –Hammond, 2015; Brown and Englehardt, 2015). Thus, the South African education system also decided to follow the global trends of change as a way to continuously empower teachers with more skills and knowledge for effective competence (Steyk 2016). Hence, the new National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development and the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development were gazetted. These two initiatives are meant to fulfil the need for quality teachers through professional development (RSA, 2011). The findings of the current study align with the policy and show that there was intervention by the district and the department in form of workshops. It emerged that the teachers were receiving workshops done by the district subject advisors. It was also evident from the SA feedback, workshops minutes, teachers' registers and files (document analysis) that the teachers were being in-serviced although the intervention was not all that often. Thus, it may be inferred that, the department and the district were at least following the new national policy framework for teacher education and development by hosting the workshops as professional development to the Grade R teachers.

A review was conducted by the Education Labour Relations Council in an effort to provide more professional development for the Grade R teachers, (ELRC 2018). The South African government embarked on a phase-in approach to formal education starting with Grade R by improving the provision and quality of Grade R. It became a DoBE goal to universalize Grade R by the year 2019(ELRC 2019). Hence, some of the key issues discussed were such as:

1. To make a policy proposal for improving qualifications for the Grade R teachers.

2. That the DBE/ DHET are engaged to facilitate university course offerings.
3. To assist those holding Diploma in Grade R Teaching to be able to obtain the B.Ed. FP Teaching degree.
4. To provide study support programs during the reskilling process to assist teachers to successfully complete their studies.

To add to the above stated key issues by (ELRC 2019) the suggestion to make a team for Compulsory Grade R in 2019 was made. The provincial visits were done May –June 2018 to update the National data base (ELRC 2019). According to (ELRC, 2018) findings of the review by Provincial Education Department in the Eastern Cape (EC) 2017 are illustrated on table 5.1 below and are an indication that the EC province is far from improving. Therefore, the findings of the review by (ELRC, 2018) about the low number of qualified teachers in Grade R justifies the similar findings of the current study that Grade R teachers still possess poor qualifications despite the implementation of a number of policies to improve teacher quality in Grade R.

Table 5.1: E.C Grade R teacher survey.

<i>Province</i>	<i>Total No. of Teachers</i>	<i>Qualified Teachers</i>	<i>Unqualified Teachers</i>	<i>Enrolled for Bed</i>	<i>Enrolled for Diploma</i>	<i>Not enrolled</i>
EC	4558	1963	2595	46	1464	1085

(ELRC 2018, Blyth, and Meiring 2017)

Furthermore, in the process, findings have also revealed that although the workshops were hosted, they were mostly the traditional and the usual one-shot workshops. Darling –Hammond (2015), Brown and Englehardt (2015) posits that, such one-shot in-service workshops have facilitators who provide general information with very little follow up or no feedbacks. In other words the indication

is that the facilitators may not be knowledgeable to give proper information to the teachers for their benefit. The extant literature is in line with the findings of the study whereby some of the participants highlighted that, the one day workshops had very little follow up and feedback as discussed by the researchers in chapter two. These views were further cemented by little evidence of follow up and feedback in the teachers' files during the document analysis. Furthermore the researchers also found that such workshops did not promote any active participation of the teachers because the flow of information was in one direction. For example, the teachers expressed during the interviews that they were not actively engaged in the workshops instead they would just sit and take notes of what was said by the district/department SA facilitating the workshop. This is not commensurate with the situated learning theory framework as discussed in chapter two, which supports that, teacher participation is the most crucial principle in in-service programmes (Lave & Wenger 1991) for the Grade R teachers. Moreover, it also emerged that the principals were not supervising and supporting the Grade R teachers in the school. The indication was that maybe the principals were not knowledgeable about Grade R experiences neither were they well informed about Grade R curriculum.

According to a Zimbabwean study by Chinhara (2016) Principals, education officers are meant to undergo Grade R workshops to ensure essential in-service, on-going and professional development programs are offered to their Grade R teachers. Contrary, findings show that principals were invited to principals' meetings and workshops but the meetings were not addressing the Grade R issues, instead administration issues were addressed. According to recent literature (Mestry, 2017) principals are now identified as CEO. This scholar further posits that, (Mestry 2017) that principals are expected to balance both instructional leadership and management and that in the areas of leadership there is supervision of the curriculum and improving the instructional programs of the school. As such the curriculum for Grade R is not an exception. In a similar study by Mestry and Spaul (2013) it was found that many principals in South Africa are

lacking basic leadership and management skills. These researchers suggested in their article that principals must undergo specific workshops to be able to support professional development programmes in schools. Thus, it is clear that knowing the principals' qualifications was crucial in the current study because it helped the researcher to understand the principals' capabilities to work with the Grade R teachers. Furthermore, it also emerged that besides the departmental/district workshops, schools and district have strategies used to develop the Grade R teachers.

5.3 Strategies used to develop the Grade R teachers

This section seeks to demonstrate strategies used by different stakeholders such as the district, the principals and HODs to develop the Grade R teachers in the schools.

5.3.1 District strategies used to develop the teachers

In an effort to understand the district's strategies to develop the Grade R teachers, the findings were that the district subject advisors hosted workshops and that there was supply of learning materials for the learners to use in the classroom. The findings also show that the district offered workshops to the teachers although the workshops were such short in-service workshops as highlighted in the preceding paragraphs. According to Tyre, (2012) cited by Chinhara (2016), successful support and monitoring requires that the District Education Team makes frequent visits to schools to restructure the existing school practices. It was also revealed in the study that there were follow up support visits by the Subject Advisor but the visits were not often, they were very limited. Basing on the participants' responses it may be implied that not only were the workshops limited, so were other professional development programs such as conferences, in-service presentations and demonstrations. This is despite the fact that extant literature highlights that such professional development activities are perfect for the teachers because they are actively engaged in their learning unlike in the workshops where the teachers are passively receiving information. As discussed in chapter two, Robinson (2015) is of the view that the full participation of school districts in continuous professional

development of under qualified teachers help to improve teacher performance which brings about learners higher achievement. Therefore, it may be concluded that the district SA are responsible for the teachers' development and improvement through holding a variety of on-going professional development programs.

The results of the study also showed that besides the district strategies to engage the teachers in professional development, the schools had other strategies to develop their teachers at school level and these are discussed below.

5.3.2 School strategies used to develop the teachers.

The findings show that staff development programmes were not common in all the schools. Neither were the teachers frequently meeting for professional discussions and dialogues as recommended by the theoretical framework. The teachers could only meet in an informal setting. These results imply that maybe there was no one to organize the meetings as well as lack of work collaborations. It also could be that teachers were not interested to meet for professional development related to the Grade R. The findings also show that even the principals did not initiate any meeting and the assumption was that maybe they lacked knowledge and experience on how Grade R teachers were meant to be developed and mentored.

The findings of the study do not align with the theoretical framework adopted in this study that situated learning in adult education views knowledge as socially constructed and acquired in practice by a community of learners where sharing of knowledge is done in a social context and the participants are actively engaged in group discussions and dialogues in organized community practices (Lave and Wenger 1991). Therefore, it may be suggested that the schools under study lack implementation of situated learning theory it is very appropriate particularly for teacher development as it brings about participation of teachers as they get engaged in dialogues and actively participate in their own learning. Moreover, based on the adult learning theory by Knowles (1984) which talks to the situated learning theory also agrees that adults learn through everyday experience and problem solving. The assumption is that when teachers are at a suitable context

they learn through daily practices to perfect their skills and knowledge. Although the teachers were not engaged in staff development programs findings show that they were some who had the privilege to be mentored.

The findings show that the teachers were being engaged in other professional development programs in the schools. It emerged from the study that teachers were being mentored by their HODs. According to Deacon (2012) school based mentors are the most powerful sources of influence in teacher mentoring as part of professional development. The reason why the school based mentors are important is that they are able to make enough time to offer practical advice to the under qualified teachers. Moreover, they are always available to give more ideas on teaching and to provide constructive feedbacks on their frequent interactions. When there is a school based mentor in the school it works as an advantage to the novice teacher because the mentor closely works with the teacher. For instance Hargreaves (2012) asserts that mentoring may involve all forms but the one focusing on in-class direct mentoring may be the best. Reason being, it gives the mentor and the mentee more time for guidance in specific skills and knowledge. Furthermore, mentoring as part of the professional development programmes also talks to the theoretical framework utilised in this study that teachers learn through participation in a social context. This theory by Lave and Wenger also encourages that less knowledgeable teachers must work under more knowledgeable teachers through, a process which (Lave 1997) describes as (“way in” and “practice”) meaning that there should be a chance for demonstrations by the mentors then the less knowledgeable teachers practice by imitating their mentors.

Moreover, a general consensus by recent studies claim that on-site mentoring and coaching are the most effective approaches to professional development of teachers (Darling-Hammond 2017; Bond & Lockee, 2018; Mahimuang 2018). Moreover, according to Macbeath (2012) one of the qualities when selecting a teacher mentor is considerably an early childhood expert. However, in this study, it was revealed that the Grade R teachers were mentored by their HODs but not

because they were Grade R experts. The HODs became automatic mentors by virtue of being heads of the Foundation Phase since Grade R is under the Foundation Phase. Therefore, it may be advancing that there were no Grade R expertise in the schools to mentor the teachers meaning that there was shortage of appropriately qualified teachers in the schools to support the teachers.

It also emerged in the study that the Grade R teachers were not even collaborating with other Grade R teachers in other schools. It is a good idea that teachers learn from each other through inter-school visits. Above all adult situated learning theory by (Knowels 1980) and (Kegan 1984) believes that adults want to know why they need to learn. By that note it may bring confidence in teachers when they engage in dialogues with their counterparts of the same levels. Given the variation of the teachers' qualifications as one of the findings in the study, another adult learning theory expert by O'Kelly(2016) explains that, expertise can begin effective professional development if focuses on the levels of the teachers. For instance starting with the teachers who have less level. The expertise should expect the teachers to take one step at a time. Checking progress until they get to the highest level by implementing newly gained knowledge.

In other words, if the Grade R teachers are to collaborate and make inter-school visits, the collaboration will be effective because the teachers can meet and share ideas without fear of being judged. Moreover, recent research talks to the same issue of participation, hence, (Bond & Lockee 2018) are of the same view that authentic collaborative learning experiences are critical within a workplace. Findings also reveal that some of the teachers were even hesitant to consult the senior teachers in the schools because some of those senior teachers were not approachable. Furthermore, findings show that the teachers were not also engaged in peer reviewing maybe because there was no one to organize such activities. The same with inter-school visits it could not be done maybe because there was no one to organize such events. The findings show that the principals

are not doing enough to help the teachers particularly through professional development programmes in and outside their school environment.

5.4 Support offered to the Grade R teachers

This section shows how the Grade R teachers are supported in different ways by the stakeholders such as the district, principals and the HODs in the schools.

5.4.1 Support by the district

Literature reveals that it is the role of the district leadership to ensure that there is enough professional development support for the under qualified teachers in schools (Darling Hammond & Rothmans, 2015). While it is the role of the district to support the under qualified teachers, the findings show that there was support by the district in form of the workshops. Moreover, recent studies such as (Pianta, Hamre, Downer, Burchinal, Williford, Locasale-Crouch, Howes, La Paro, and Scott-Little (2017) claim that the District is considered as the major provider of the teachers' professional development support. Therefore, the district and the department are the most expected stakeholders to provide professional development to the teachers because they are the ones who are responsible for the teachers' well fare towards professional growth.

Findings of the study also revealed that although the teachers were receiving the workshops, it was evident through the participants' responses that the workshops were just one-shot workshops done off-site. The teachers revealed that they were invited to the district office for the workshops and very often the teachers would meet at a central school for the workshop. Further, it could be deduced from the results that, most of the off-site workshops restrict the participants from active participation of the workshops which is not a good idea for the Grade R under qualified teachers. A similar study also found that although the districts offer professional development support to teachers, the PD activities are delivered in form of shot in-service workshops with no follow up support visits (Darling-Hammond, 2017). The fact that the workshops were off-site indicates that the teachers were not actively engaged in their learning within their natural setting.

According to the Situated learning theory by Lave and Wenger 1991, the most important principle is active participation of the learner and they encourage that learning must be done at a suitable context with relevant learning tools. To support the idea recent researchers also agree and recommend that the context is an important workplace for learning as professionals since learning is achieved through work (Barends, Zelda, Nel, & Carisma, 2017).

Findings also show that there was very little follow up support visits by the subject advisors. According to Robinson (2015) as discussed in chapter two, the full participation of school districts in continuous professional development of under qualified teachers helps to improve teacher performance which brings about learners higher achievement. The subject advisors should continuously support the teachers so that they are always up to date with information and more knowledge.

In the event of very limited professional development programmes, the findings of the study revealed that the majority of the teachers felt that although district has been supporting them, they are not often performing the roles of policy implementation and provision of support to schools as required. It was established that the support provided by the DoE was in the form of funds, materials; workshops and training. Teachers in this study expressed concern of needing further support, such as adequate training, follow up support visits and mentoring. The findings indicate that there might be a shortage of properly qualified personal in the district to help with the programs.

According to Zhang (2006) as cited in Mohangi, Krog, Stephens and Nel (2016) support from outside agencies such as Department of Education and district education offices, District Subject Advisers (SA) have to see that Grade R standards are maintained. They are there as quality assurance officers, to provide schools with expertise and professional development programs. In many developing countries, outside agencies may also involve international development agencies such as World Vision and local or international NGOs,

which often provide teachers with materials such as teaching kits or educational toys (Mohangi *et, al*, 2016.) However, the majority of participants in the study indicated that the support from the department and the district was inadequate. Moreover, talking of the support from outside agencies such as the NGOs as stated by Zhang (2006), findings show that the district subject adviser, the principals and the teachers confirmed that they have never worked with any NGOs in the schools. For instance, one of the principals explained that NGOs used to work with the under qualified teachers in the schools by offering mentoring services and giving professional support programs long back however, it was now a thing of the past. Even the district subject advisor interviewed revealed the same that NGOs were no longer part of the stake holders who were part of helping the teachers in the schools as compared to previous years. The rest of the study implies that it may be ideal for the DoBE to outsource, seek sponsorship for some of the services such as professional development programmes for the Grade R teachers. Firstly, this may promote their career mobility, and secondly, this may lead to effective teaching and learning of Grade R learners and as a result lead to positive throughput of learner in future.

Contrary to the study by Yoshikawa (2015) in Chile workshops are provided monthly and there are also 24 biweekly in-classroom teacher support sessions to improve the Grade R teachers' skills and knowledge. Day and Sachs (2005) cited in Gomba,(2019) posits that professional development activities can also be initiated by the authorities. This trend is observed in countries such as Australia, America and Japan. Also in a study by Gomba (2019) further illustrates that, other countries, such as the Netherlands have introduced continuing professional development programmes for their teachers due to changes effected in their curriculum. Research continues to show that Netherlands have been granted increasing autonomy by the Dutch central government to reform their curriculum and teaching methods. According to Gomba, 2019 this was also experienced by educators in South Africa during transition to when outcomes based education moving from content based education with the teacher as a facilitator of National

Curriculum Statements (NCS) and (CAPS). There was a demand to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Gomba 2019). The Department of Education then realized that there is a need to develop and support teachers on a continual basis to maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge and skills and develop the personal qualities and competencies required in their classrooms (Gomba 2019). The foregoing assertions are an indication that, there is a need to tap on those pockets of good practices from other countries that have achieved positive outcomes through teacher development programmes particularly for the Grade R phase

5.4.2 Support by the principals

In a study by Qutoshi and Khaki (2014) it is advanced that on one hand the role of the principal is seen as a moral agent, in other words as a leader with high levels of commitment, patience, care and facilitative role. On the other hand as an effective manager to run the affairs of the school effectively by fulfilling expectations of the stakeholders in participatory approach. It emerged in the study that due to new changes in the new system of governance in South Africa, this has also witnessed the shift of principals' roles from administrative work to the role of being the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) of the schools (DoE 1996).

According to recent research principals as CEOs are expected to balance both instructional leadership and management (Mestry 2017). As CEOs of the schools, there has been a shift of demands such that they are now expected to nurture professional development among the staff members as one of their new roles. According to the findings most of the principals were not knowledgeable on how to assist the Grade R teachers. Moreover, the principals depended on the HODs' reports to understand what was happening in the Grade R classes. After all, as highlighted in the data presentation, most of the principals' qualifications indicated that they were not equipped with relevant knowledge to understand the issues of Grade R. Despite attending the principals' meetings and workshops, the principals appeared to lack innovative skills, interest and as a result, failed support their

teachers because of lack of knowledge specialization in Grade R matters. Furthermore, Heystek (2016) asserts that in the areas of leadership there is supervision of the curriculum, improving the instructional programs of the school, working with the staff to identify the vision and the mission of the school. Despite the changes in the principals' roles findings show that the principals were not supervising the Grade R teachers, as highlighted in the foregoing study.

Meanwhile, research shows that in other countries such as United Kingdom, United States of America and Singapore, principals have started engaging in leadership professional development so that they can be able to support their teachers in school based professional development programmes (Piggot-Ivine, Howse & Richard, 2013), for instance, the extant literature shows that, this is not only happening in international countries, it is also happening in some of our African countries. For instance a Zimbabwean study by Chinhara (2016) shows that school heads are engaged in Grade R workshops and professional development programmes as a way of preparing the principals to support their teachers in schools adequately. However, contrary to the above research a South African research by Spaul (2013) noted that South African principals were still in need of more professional development to be able to support school based professional development programmes. Also another South African by (Mestry, 2017) in support of Spaul's findings, recommended that principals be provided with more professional development programmes if they are to be able to support their teachers in schools. Furthermore the two studies uphold the current findings of the study that the principals need to be well informed about Grade R through intensive professional development programs to gain knowledge, skills and experience.

5.5 Challenges encountered in the implementation of professional development of the Grade R teachers.

Most professional development programmes have failed because of many challenges encountered during their implementation (Chinhara 2016). Findings

show that there were number of challenges that have continued to affect the success of professional development in the schools. Findings have revealed lack of appropriate qualifications for the teachers to teach Grade R children. According to the Diagnostic Review of Early Childhood Development Draft (2012) priority areas to improve Grade R education included the standardization of training qualifications of the teachers. Despite the report of the review, the major finding of the current study is the considerable variability of the teachers' lack of appropriate qualifications to date. The report further stated that Grade R teacher qualifications should be revised by August 2013 and that teacher development strategy be implemented from April 2015 (Moletsane, 2012). Though this study is a bit dated, observation through current literature show that the status quo subsists. Furthermore, even the DoBE has acknowledged that there is an absolute shortage of teachers as well as a relative shortage of teachers qualified and competent enough to teach specific subjects and in Grade R sector (DBE, 2011). The fact that the teachers have various qualifications means that the teachers trained in different institutions at different levels and different length of training period. Hence, there was need for strategies to improve the teachers' knowledge and skills to be standardized through in-service programs.

The findings of the study show that the teachers were being in-serviced through the departmental and district workshops but the challenge was that there was lack of consistence of the workshops. Moreover, according to the teachers' responses during the interviews the indication was that the programs were not constant and with no often follow up support visits. It was evident that the district attached little importance to the workshops and the follow up support visits in the schools. These findings imply that, if the support given is not consistent the teachers will end up losing the value of the support given to them resulting in a majority of teachers not being motivated to develop their careers. The teachers appreciated the effort but their concern was the rate at which the programs were being operated. The teachers were very positive about being developed as well as furthering themselves. Basing on this major finding of variability in the teachers'

qualifications, this is an indication that the district or DoBE must not dwell on the one size fits all when it comes to planning for the teachers' professional development programmes. Relating to the adult situated learning theory professional development would be effective if the district or the department would plan their programs according to the teachers' levels of education. O'Kelly 2016 support the theory and explains that professional development programmes could be designed in a way to suit the level of the teachers for instance the first design maybe designed to suit the less experienced teachers then they take the next step until they get to the highest level together through workshops or any other form of developmental programme in place.

It also emerged in the study that there was lack of staff development programmes in the schools. Such challenges indicate that maybe there is lack of interest and motivation among the teachers. It may also be that the principals were lacking the initiative skills. However, one of the principals mentioned school politics in the schools that there are some who are there just to sabotage the school administration. Another principal also mentioned the more experienced staff who are left with a few years in the service before they retire were reluctant to participate in staff development programmes because they feel they are not benefiting since they are about to retire.

During the interviews one of the teachers even mentioned that some of the senior teachers are not even approachable for consultation. Richter (2011) cited in Gomba (2019) emphasized this when they mention that teachers in their final stage of teaching tend to reduce their commitment and career ambition. They focus more on their personal goals. As a result there was lack of collaboration and teamwork in the schools. Majority of the teachers indicated that collaboration of teachers was lacking and that people minded own businesses. In essence, this is where the school principals are expected to intervene and promote mentoring in their schools. Moreover, principals play an important role in supporting professional development. Principals matter to the extent to which the schools supports,

stimulates and subsidises professional development. (Ackerman, 2006) cited in (OECD 2012). Staff quality is maintained by leadership that motivates and encourages working as a team, information sharing and professional staff development (OECD, 2008). The quality of leaders and managers of Grade R services is also strongly related to their level of education and professional development (OECD 2012)

However, informal meetings were just between friends maybe making dialogues over a cup of coffee at break times. Findings showed that there were informal meetings because of poor planning by the management in the school. Poor planning by the school management resulted in poor management as there was no systemic regular support and monitoring of the teachers. Moreover, the findings further indicated that there was no proper planning for professional development activities and programs at school level. The school management did not allocate time for these activities and the school principals as the driving forces in their schools could not see to it that teachers participate or have the ability to participate in professional development programmes. The teachers and even some of the principals confirmed during the interviews that there was no teamwork in the schools. However, on a positive note the principals promised to make some positive changes in the near future. After all Witworth & Chiu (2015) agree that school culture influences teacher retention and classroom practice.

It also emerged in the study that there was lack of appropriate support towards the principals from the department and district to be able to support the Grade R teachers in the schools. In a Zimbabwean study by Chinhara (2016) principals attend Grade R professional development programs offered by various organizations. According to Moletsane (2012) principals play an important role in achieving the key components of success. The study further states, those principals have the ability to thrive in these conditions and adapt to unique characteristics of school community. Furthermore, findings have also shown that

instead of the principals, the HODs assumed leadership roles when supervising and providing mentoring to the teachers.

It also emerged in the study that there was poor attendance at the workshops. The reasons for poor attendance could be an indication that the teachers were not interested in receiving information passively. Looking back to the Situated Learning theory, the theory encourages learning through participation and engaging in dialogues. The teachers maybe want their presence to be felt and appreciated in the workshops by contributing and participating and if they are not given the chance to do so they get bored. Teachers believe in sharing information as supported by the theoretical frame work used in this study. It could be that poor attendance was a result of boredom during these workshops and nature of delivery as well as lack of expertise by those facilitating the workshop and trainings. . Also in support to the above idea Kegan (1994) and Knowles (1984) indicate that, adults' personalities, needs and learning styles, work and life experiences influence their views on education, learning and continuing professional development. Therefore the facilitators should have a better way to motivate the teachers to attend workshops. On the other hand, for those teachers that were from rural schools, lack of attendance could be an issue of financial constraints and distance to go to the venue.

It also emerged that the venue of the PD was out of context yet according to the theoretical framework contextual activities are very crucial for a successful professional development programmes. In other words the context is not appropriate, and the time for the workshop is also short, this may lead to teachers being put off to attend.

It also emerged from the study that there is shortage of appropriately qualified personnel for instance people who are specialized in Grade R in the district office. It is not only in the district but also in the schools. The teachers were not mentored by the rightful people because of such shortages. It is important that people who work with children get a specialized qualification in Grade R as stated by the

District Subject Adviser during the interviews. Also (OECD, 2012) supports the issues on specialization saying not only the level of education but also the content of the staff's educational or training curriculum is important for the level of quality in Grade R. Specialized education is associated with better child outcomes and improved staff competences to provide suitable pedagogical learning opportunities. Furthermore (OECD, 2012) added the fact that: In-service training that provides possibilities for Grade R specialization is considered beneficial. Reason being, educating young children requires specialized skills and content knowledge, including a variety of subject and development areas.

Moreover, working conditions such as working as part time on School Governing Board (SGB) posts is also a challenge to the teachers because they do not have the assurance to stay at that school or to move to another one. Mostly, the SGB posts given to the Grade R teachers have very little salaries. At the end teachers are not motivated and they end up abandoning the teaching field looking for something better to do as a means of survival.

5.6 Summary

The chapter discussed the findings of the study. The findings show that the Grade R teachers in the four primary schools of Amatole West District Education were under qualified. The findings also show that professional development was implemented through workshops by the district and mentoring by the HODs in the schools. However, findings have also shown that staff development programs in schools were not common and that there was lack of collaboration within the teachers in the schools. Findings also show that most principals lacked the capacity to assist their teachers in the schools. The results of the study also revealed that challenges such as poor management. Lack of collocation and formalised mentoring as well as inadequate support slowed down the implementation of professional development programmes in Amatole West District Education schools.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate the implementation of teacher professional development programs for Grade R teachers in four primary schools of Amathole West District Education. Teacher professional development programs play an important role in improving academic performance of most Grade R children. Above all, professional development should be a requirement for the teachers to stay and grow in the profession. Furthermore, professional development should be tailored to suit the needs of the teachers for better quality. Therefore, this chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study that were presented, analysed and interpreted in chapter 4. In addition, the conclusions which are drawn from the findings of the study are also highlighted. The chapter also discusses the recommendations based on the implementation of professional development programs for Grade R teachers. Suggestions for further studies are also presented.

The findings of the study revealed the Grade R teacher's training and qualifications, the strategies used for promoting professional development programmes by the district and the schools to develop the teachers. In addition, the findings of the study also illuminate the support given to teachers by the school management and the district, as well as the challenges encountered during the implementation of professional development.

6. 2 Grade R teachers training.

The findings show that most of the teachers who were under study had gone through pre-service training though the type of training they went through was different. It was found that out of the four interviewed teachers, three teachers attended formal or initial pre-service in the colleges while, one teacher did her pre-

service through online training. Thus, the researcher is of the view that teachers who undergo pre-service training in the colleges acquire knowledge, theory and pedagogical thinking to develop competence through clinical learning courses during their training. Thus, the three teachers who went to the colleges were at a better position to teach effectively in Grade R, as compared to the other one who just did the on-line training and acquired only the knowledge. The implication was that there was diversity in the teachers' qualifications.

Although the results show that all teachers underwent training and possessed various qualification of importance to note was that, none of the teachers had the required qualifications as recommended by the DoBE that is, the Diploma in Grade R teaching. This implies that the teachers' qualifications were not matching the policy requirements. The district subject adviser also confirmed that most of the teachers in the schools did not have the required Diploma in Grade R teaching. Therefore teachers' poor qualifications were one of the major concerns emanating from the study.

Besides various qualifications and training, findings have also revealed that the length taken by the teachers during their training differed. The mushrooming of privately owned colleges was again revealed as a major issue in the findings of the study undertaken. As a result, this led to some of the teachers attending their training in different colleges that are not accredited and not the FET colleges sponsored nor recommended by the government. These results suggest that there was a chance that the training was different and not up to standard. Therefore there was diversity in the teachers' qualifications.

6.3 Intervention/ In-service/ professional development

The findings revealed due to the diversity of the teachers qualifications there were intervention programmes from both the district and the schools. It was also found that the district intervened by holding the workshops for the teachers to acquire more knowledge and skills as a way of bridging the gaps on the teaching and learning of the Grade R learners. However, although the workshops were done,

they were not done on regular basis. Follow up support visits were also done by the district subject advisor but, evidence from the documents showed that the visits were also not regular. As a result, the teachers were not pleased with the current intervention programme from the district. Findings also show that even though the workshops were hosted by the district, the workshops were done off-site and very short in-service workshops. Furthermore, the findings show that teachers were just acquiring knowledge with no evidence of active participation.

It was further revealed from the findings that even the principals' lacked knowledge and experience to supervise the teachers in the schools. Principals as leaders of the schools are expected to balance both instructional leadership and management including supervision of the curriculum by the principals. However, what emerged from the studies was that there were still traces of lack of good leadership and management skills in the schools. Furthermore, findings show that although there were principals' meetings and workshops, there was no appropriate intervention for the principals to be able to assist the Grade R teachers in their schools. Thus, the HODs resumed leadership roles by supervising the Grade R teachers in classrooms and also taking up the mentorship roles. Furthermore, the reason why the HODs took up mentorship roles was, as emerging from the findings that, that there was shortage of appropriately qualified teachers to mentor the teachers both in the schools and the district. Even the HODs were just helping by virtue of being leaders in the foundation phase and it may also be assumed that they also did not possess as relevant qualifications or experience to mentor Grade R teachers.

6.4 District Strategies used to develop the teachers.

It emerged in the study that the Department and the (DSBT) as assisting the schools in different ways. Findings show that the (DSBT) was holding workshops for the teachers and providing teaching and learning materials to the schools. Findings also show that although the follow up support visits were not regular at least evidence revealed that the district subject adviser was making follow ups after

the workshops. Meanwhile, the findings also revealed that the teachers were not satisfied by the assistance given by the district because the workshops were not regular, were shot in-service programs without the teachers' participation. Findings also show that principals were receiving district workshops and meetings but no Grade R issues were discussed. Despite many forms of professional development programmes mentioned in the studies, findings show that the district concentrated on the workshops only and there were no conferences or presentations that were done which were related to professional development programmes for Grade R. Finding also show that the workshops were off-site making it difficult for the teachers in the rural schools to travel due to financial constraints. Findings also revealed that there were very limited professional development programs by the district.

6.5 School Strategies used to develop the teachers

Similarly to the district, it also emerged from the schools that teachers were also exposed to professional development programmes, so that they can be more empowered to improve their competence and quality in Grade R programmes. However, the findings revealed that a major hindrance was that schools lack appropriately qualified personnel (those specialized in Grade R to support successful professional development programmes to the teachers). Furthermore, revelations were made that there was poor management in the schools as there were no time tables set for the staff development programmes. It also revealed in the study that there was lack of collaboration of teachers and indication of lack of team work as well.

Findings also revealed that due to lack of knowledge and experience the principals as CEOs of the schools, lacked supervision skills to supervise the teachers. Meanwhile, mentoring in schools emerged as part of pocket of good practices utilised as professional development programme in the schools under study. The study showed that mentoring engaged the teachers in active participation as recommended by the theoretical frame work. Also findings show that by receiving

mentoring skills from the HODs the teachers were also gaining knowledge from the more knowledgeable in a social context as recommended by the Social learning theorists.

Moreover, the teachers had a chance to participate in their own learning unlike the district workshops where they received information passively from the workshop facilitators. At schools, the teachers were able to practice what (Lave 1997) explained as "way in and practice" the under qualified teachers had a chance to observe the mentors demonstrating and took chances to imitate them. The findings of the study align with the theoretical framework adopted in this study which highlights that, on-site professional development programs are the best practices.

Although the teachers were being mentored by the HODs at schools it also emerged in the studies that there was no collaboration of the Grade R teachers from other schools. The teachers could not collaborate with other Grade R teachers from other schools for professional dialogues, to learn from each other and even tap on each other best practices. This lack of collaboration with other schools may be linked to poor management in the schools.

6.6 Support by the District

It emerged in the study that the district supported the teachers through workshops. The teachers were invited for the departmental and district workshops. It also emerged that the district subject advisor made follow up support visits some times. However, the teachers were not satisfied because in their responses from the interviews the teachers were concerned about the allocation of time given for the workshops as well as inconsistency workshops. Still on the issue of the district workshops the teachers were also concerned about lack of adequate follow up support visits from the subject advisors.

It was also found out that the district assisted the schools with the teaching and learning materials besides the workshops. The teachers indicated that the district provided the resources used in the classrooms such as educational toys, books

and stationery. Findings also show that even though the principals were invited for principals' meetings by the district and the department, the principals were not getting assistance to be able to support their teachers with classroom work. The principals indicated that the meetings and workshops were mostly about administration. Moreover, there were very limited professional development programs by the district to develop the teachers.

6.7 Support by the principals

The principals as the leaders of the schools are expected to be more knowledgeable and experienced. However, findings show that the principals lacked knowledge and experience in the learning and teaching of the Grade R. It was revealed in the study that the principals were not even engaged in the development of the teachers in the schools.

Out of four principals that participated in the study, only one principal was very supportive to the teacher. For instance, the principal went to the extent of even attending the Grade R workshops to gain more knowledge about the learning and teaching of the Grade R. On the other hand, the findings showed that the principals also lacked proper management because there were no staff development programmes, collaboration and team work in the schools. The principals were not innovative neither did they take any initiatives to implement development programmes.

6.8 Challenges encountered during the implementation of professional development programs.

6.8.1 Lack of specialized personnel

The results of the study showed that there were a number of challenges encountered in implementing professional development programmes. For instance, the challenge of lack of appropriately qualified personnel in the schools to promote professional development to the teachers was revealed in the study. The challenge of organizing regular district workshops was also cited. For

example, the District Support Team was said to be holding organizing workshops once a term and sometimes once in two terms. Some of the district support team members were qualified as FP but without a specialization in Grade R. The subject advisor explained that this was because there was a shortage because of lack of specialized staff. It was also found out that even follow up support visits to the schools was not regular because of the shortage of staff to help with the development of the teachers. The same concern was also found in the schools. The HODs as mentioned in the preceding sections, had to resume the leadership roles when supervising and mentoring the teachers not because they had Grade R qualifications but by virtue of leading the phase. One of the requirements considered for mentorship for Grade R is a qualification for Grade R.

6.8.2 Poor qualifications for the Grade R teachers

Most Grade R teachers continue to possess low qualifications. Although the new policy was implemented some of the teachers are not upgrading their qualifications. This has become a challenge to the DoE as it finds it difficult to determine the Grade R salaries because most of the qualifications held by the Grade R teachers are not recognized for salary purposes (Republic of South Africa 2011). Moreover, some of the teachers are employed under SGB posts (Excel. 2011). These views also align with the findings which revealed that some of the teachers were employed under SGB posts and were paid very low salaries because of their low and non-accredited qualifications.

6.8.3 Lack of resources

Findings revealed that resources given by the department were not enough to cater for all learners. One teacher revealed that sometimes they had to improvise especially in the rural settings. The teacher also mentioned that sometimes there were delays in the distribution of the resources such that teachers ended up improvising to make sure learning took place. Furthermore, one of the teachers also mentioned that though resources were distributed the problem was that there are no workshops or follow up visits to demonstrate to teachers on how to use

them. The teacher also mentioned that some of the resources had not been opened since their delivery because none of the teachers had been trained on how they should be used during teaching and learning.

6.8.4 Lack of proper support by school management and district

Findings show that there is lack of organized and regular monitoring of teachers' progress in the classrooms and that supervision was not common to the teachers by the management and the district. The fact that findings revealed lack of collaboration, team work and staff development programs in the schools shows that these are the areas that are being neglected by management in schools. The findings of the study further highlight that there is no proper planning for professional development activities and programmes in the schools. Thus, it could be deduced from the findings of the study that the school management does not allocate time for these activities and the school principals as the driving force in their schools do not see to it that teachers participate or have the ability to participate in professional development programmes. However, findings show that principals are not engaged in Grade R in-service programs hence their ability to manage Grade R development programs are inadequate.

6.8.5 Poor attendance of workshops by teachers.

The findings show that there is poor attendance by teachers during workshops. Lack of attendance may imply that, teachers need to be motivated in order to engage in workshops. There should be incentives for attending the workshops or some form of appreciation such as attendance certificates. Teachers also need to be engaged in their own learning and be given the opportunity to participate in workshops and not to be taken as passive participants. Poor attendance of district workshops was caused by financial problems of the teachers.

6.9 Conclusion

During the investigation of the study, implementation of professional development programs for the Grade R teachers, the major findings revealed that most teachers

are still under qualified. Despite the introduction of the new policy designed to develop a teaching profession that seeks to properly equip the teachers, the study findings show that most of the Grade R teachers do not have the Diploma in Grade R as a new requirement by the DBE and as stated in the policy. Moreover, there was so much diversity in the teachers' qualifications. The teachers' qualifications were not the same so was the length of training received as well as the colleges they attended. Findings also revealed that most of the teachers had less experience in the teaching field. The teachers' qualifications indicated that the teachers were not adequately trained to teach the Grade R learners. The findings also revealed that though most of the principals were qualified for their positions, however, they did not have any qualification or knowledge and skills as qualifications.

Furthermore, it was found out that intervention programmes in form of in-service professional development were done to curb diversity in the teachers' and principals' qualifications and the principals' lack of knowledge and skills in Grade R sector. Findings show that the district held workshops for the teachers and the principals separately. This is despite the fact that these workshops were said to be, traditional in-service workshops with very little follow up support visits and feedbacks from the district. It also emerged in the study that there was lack of appropriately qualified personnel in the district to assist with Grade R follow up support visits as other members of the district support team did not specialize in Grade R. Findings also revealed that even though the principals were invited to principals' meetings and workshops the meetings and the workshops were not addressing the Grade R issues. Hence the principals continued to lack Grade R knowledge and skills to be able to assist the teachers in the schools. Also emerging from the study was that the schools were not working in collaboration with the NGOs.

Furthermore, findings revealed that there was no adequate assistance by the schools given to teachers because of poor management. Findings revealed that

there was no collaboration of teachers in the schools for staff development and professional dialogues neither were there teamwork in the schools. For instance, some of the responses showed that, and some of the Grade R teachers were even hesitant to approach some of the senior teachers for consultations because of lack of teamwork and lack of interest in the Grade R issues. As a result principals as the head of schools appeared to have poor planning for professional development activities and ended up neglecting time for professional development activities in the schools. Findings also show that HODs resumed leadership roles when supervising the Grade R teachers by virtue of them being leaders of the foundation phase and not by qualifications. The HODs played the principals' roles because most of the principals lacked even the most basic knowledge about foundation phase. Thus, the foundation phase HODs were viewed as better equipped with Grade R teaching and learning matters although none of them had specialized in Grade R.

Furthermore, findings show that the teachers were supported by both the district and the schools. However, what came out from the findings was that, the implementation of professional development programmes in the schools was inadequate. This was even revealed by the teachers during the interview that they were not satisfied by the support they are getting from the stakeholders because they felt it was not enough. Findings also show that mushrooming of privately owned colleges had resulted in teacher diversity in terms of standards of training, period/ length of training and qualifications obtained.

6.10 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the researcher's findings and the literature which was reviewed: Therefore the study recommends that:

i: Department of Education must see to it that Grade R pre-service training is done in recognized FET colleges sponsored by the government or recognized universities with well qualified and experienced tutors so as to avoid the

mushrooming of privately owned colleges that are after money and offer no-accredited certificates.

ii: The government or the Department of Education must authorize state in-service training and continuous professional development programmes for Grade R to upgrade and bridge the Grade R qualifications in the districts. The teachers should also be rewarded for attending the in-service and professional development programs as motivation.

iii: The Department of Education must have monitoring mechanisms to see that there is continuation of professional development both in the district and the schools for the teachers and the management.

iv: The Department of Education must provide adequate and appropriately qualified personnel in the district office to make sure there are regular follow up support visits in schools to support teachers and principals.

v: The district must source for NGOs with well qualified and experienced facilitators who are willing to work with Grade R teachers in schools to provide in-class mentoring of teachers and on the job-training or in-service.

vi: The district must encourage the school management to have timetables set for staff development programmes and teacher collaboration while monitoring them.

vii: The department must also have a salary benchmark for the Grade R teachers. The department must also investigate salaries given to the Grade R teachers who are on SGB posts in the schools.

viii: The district must implement a variety of professional development programmes and not using workshops only. In addition, teachers must be given the change to attend conferences, presentations and other types of development programmes which will fully engage them. This may motivate the teachers to attend professional development programmes.

6.11 Suggestions for further studies

- Another study should be conducted using mixed methods since the current research was conducted using qualitative research method.
- The study also suggests more research should be done using more than one district in other provinces since the current study used one district in the chosen district.
- Further studies can also be conducted on implementation of professional development programmes for Grade 0 and Grade R teachers for comprehensive findings.

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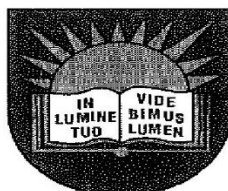
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical clearance certificate



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **REC-270710-028-RA Level 01**

Certificate Reference Number: REM031SJUM01

Project title: **Implementation of teacher professional development for ECD/Grade R teachers: A case study of four primary schools in Amathole West District.**

Nature of Project: Masters in Education

Principal Researcher: Theresa T. Jumo

Supervisor: Prof S. Rembe

Co-supervisor: N/A

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above. This certificate is valid for a year from the date of approval; thereafter, the Principal investigator/s will be expected to apply for renewal.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document;

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

Special conditions: *Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:*

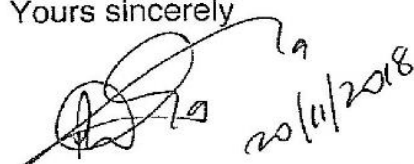
Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of Department of Health Charter of Ethics in Health Research Principles, Processes and Structures; DOH 2015, signed by the Minister of Health in March 2015. This certificate is granted in terms of the provisions of the above-mentioned document.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
 - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected;
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented;
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require;
 - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to.
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office.

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Dineo', with a date '20/11/2018' written next to it.

Professor Pumla Dineo Gqola
Dean of Research

12 November 2018

Appendix B: Letter to the District Office

Faculty of Education
School of Further and Continuing
Education

Stewart Hall, Alice

Phone: Alice: 040602412

| Email: nmayiya@ufh.ac.za |



22 August 2018

The District Manager

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to Collect Data: Mrs T. Jumo (Student Number 201415219)

This is to confirm that Mrs Jumo is pursuing MEd degree at the University of Fort Hare. Her research title is **“Implementation of teacher professional development programmes for Grade R practitioners: A case study of four primary schools in Amathole West District, Eastern Cape province”**. She is supposed to collect data from the district office and schools. Kindly grant her permission. I would also be grateful if you could kindly provide her with documents that may assist with information regarding the area of her study.

I would like to assure you that any information that will be collected will remain confidential and no name of a person will be disclosed. The student will ensure that she does not disrupt on going activities during the period she will be collecting data.

Sincerely



Prof. S. Rembe

Supervisor

Faculty of Education, Alice Campus

University of Fort Hare

Appendix C: Letter from the District Office to Schools



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

AMATHOLE WEST DISTRICT – OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

CAPE COLLEGE BUILDING * Healdtown Road * Fort Beaufort * Private Bag X2041 * FORT BEAUFORT * 5720 * REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA * Tel: +27 46 645 7802 Fax: +086 724 6373 * Websit thembela.ndzandze@gmail.com

06 SEPTEMBER 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir /Madam

This serves to inform you that the bearer of this letter **Mrs T Jumo (studend Number 201415219)** had been given permission to use the District office and four primary schools as sites to conduct her research. The title of her research is: **"Implementation of teacher professional development programmes for Grade R practitioners: A case study of four primary schools in Amathole West District, Eastern Cape province."**

It is hoped that she will favour us with her findings as soon as she had concluded her studies.

Your cooperation regarding the matter will at all times be highly appreciated.

Yours in Education

A/District Director – Amathole West District

building blocks for growth



Appendix D: Letter to the Principals

**Faculty of Education
School of Further and Continuing
Education**

Stewart Hall, Alice

Phone: Alice: 040602412
| Email: nmayiya@ufh.ac.za



22 August 2018

Principal

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to Collect Data: Mrs T. Jumo (Student Number 201415219)

This is to confirm that Mrs Jumo is pursuing MEd degree at the University of Fort Hare. Her research title is **“Implementation of teacher professional development programmes for Grade R practitioners: A case study of four primary schools in Amathole West District, Eastern Cape province”**. She is supposed to collect data from the district office and schools. Kindly grant her permission. I would also be grateful if you could kindly provide her with documents that may assist with information regarding the area of her study.

I would like to assure you that any information that will be collected will remain confidential and no name of a person will be disclosed. The student will ensure that she does not disrupt on going activities during the period she will be collecting data.

Sincerely



Prof. S. Rembe

Supervisor

Faculty of Education, Alice Campus

University of Fort Hare

Appendix E: Informed consent form

I hereby agree to participate in research regarding I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally.

I have received the telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this interview.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the questionnaire, and that my answers will remain confidential.

I understand that if at all possible, feedback will be given to my community on the results of the completed research.

.....

Signature of participant

Date:.....

I hereby agree to the tape recording of my participation in the study

.....

Signature of participant

Date:.....

Appendix F: INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guide for ECD/Grade R Teachers

My name is Theresa Jumo. I am a Masters candidate at the University of Fort Hare. I am conducting a study on the Implementation of Professional development programmes for the ECD Grade R teachers in Amathole West District as a fulfilment of the University. Your school has been incorporated in this study for the collection of information and I shall appreciate if you could dedicate some of your time with me in the participation of the interview.

I promise that any information provided by you will not be disclosed to anybody and will remain confidential. Your responses will assist in providing the information on the implementation of teacher professional development programmes for the ECD Grade R teachers, hence you are kindly requested to give honesty answers.

TOPIC: Implementation of Teacher Professional Development Programmes for ECD/Grade R teachers: A case study of four Primary schools in Amathole West District.

Section A: Personal Information

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Gender: | female | male |
| 2. Age range | 20 - 29 years | 30 – 39 years |
| | 40 – 49 years | 50 – 59 years |
| | 60+ years | |

3. Highest professional qualification:

NQF Level 4.....

Higher Certificate in Grade R NQF Level 5.....

Advanced Certificate in Grade R NQF Level 6.....

Diploma in Grade R NQF Level 6

Bachelor of Education

Any other qualification; please specify.....

4. What is your highest academic qualification?

5. Did you specialize in ECD/Grade R? Please explain.....

6. What is your teaching experience in ECD/ Grade R class?

1 -5 yrs

6 -10 yrs

11 + yrs

7. Where did you do your initial/ pre-service training?

8. How long was your initial/ pre-service training? Please explain.

9. Was it formal or informal training? Please explain.

10. Which skills and knowledge did you acquire from your initial pre-service training?

11. How were those skills and knowledge being acquired during the initial/ pre-service training? Please explain.

12. Please explain to me the activities that you were involved in during the initial/ pre-service training.

13. After joining the teaching field which forms of continuous professional development programmes have you attended?

14. Are the programmes formal or informal? Please explain.

15. Who organize the programmes and how?

16. Where do you meet for these programmes and for how long?

17. Which activities are involved during these programmes? Please explain.

18. Who participates in the activities and how?

19. After participating in these programmes do you get any feedbacks? Please explain.

Section B: Strategies which are used to implement ECD/Grade R teacher professional development programmes

1. Which strategies are used to assist the ECD/Grade R teachers in schools?
2. Do teachers in your school assist each other with classroom work? Please explain.
3. Do the ECD/Grade R teachers feel free to interact with other senior teachers for consultation? Please explain how.
4. Do you think there is a culture of collaboration and teamwork at your school? Please explain clearly.
5. How often do teachers collaborate for teacher development in your school?
6. What happens when teachers engage with each other?
7. Are the meetings formal or informal? Please explain.
8. Who organize the meetings and how long are the meetings?
9. Do you as ECD/GRADE R teachers collaborate with other Grade R teachers from other schools?
10. Do you participate in class visits and what is your feeling about them?
11. Are the senior teachers willing to assist you as mentors? Please explain.
12. What are their roles as mentors in your classroom?
13. Do you receive feedbacks of your progress? How please explain and also explain how you reflect on your practices.

Section C: Support offered to the teachers

1. . What form of support do you get from the principal at school?
2. How often do you get support from your principal?
3. Does the principal support collaboration of teachers in the school? Explain how?
4. Does the principal have time to supervise you in the classroom and how do you get the feedback?

5. Please explain how the district officials support you and how often you receive support from them.
6. Please explain your involvement with the NGOs.
7. What form of support do the NGOs offer to you?
8. How often do you interact with the NGOs and who organizes the visits?
9. Please explain your interaction with your peers at school and how they also support you in the classroom work.
10. What is your feeling about the support you are getting from all the stakeholders? Please explain
11. Do your peers assist you in classroom work willingly? Please explain.

Section D: The challenges encountered by the ECD/Grade R teachers in the implementation of professional development programmes.

1. What challenges do you encounter in the implementation of professional development programmes?

Interview Guide for the Principals

TOPIC: Implementation of Teacher Professional Development Programmes for ECD/Grade R teachers: A case study of four Primary schools in Amathole West District.

My name is Theresa Jumo. I am a Masters candidate at the University of Fort Hare. I am conducting a study on the Implementation of Professional development programmes for the ECD Grade R teachers in Amathole West District as a fulfilment of the University. Your school has been incorporated in this study for the collection of information and I shall appreciate if you could dedicate some of your time with me in the participation of the interview.

I promise that any information provided by you will not be disclosed to anybody and will remain confidential. Your responses will assist in providing the information on the implementation of teacher professional development programmes for the ECD Grade R teachers, hence you are kindly requested to give honesty answers.

Section A: Personal Information

1. Gender: female male
2. Age range 20 - 29 years 30 – 39 years
- 40 – 49 years 50 – 59 years
- 60+ years

3. Highest professional qualification:

Higher Certificate in Grade R NQF Level 5.....

Advanced Certificate in Grade R NQF Level 6.....

Diploma in Education

Bachelor of Education

B Ed Hon.....

Masters of Education.....

Any other qualification please
specify.....

4. What is your highest academic qualification?

5. Did you specialize in ECD/Grade R? Please
explain.....

6. What is your experience as a principal?

1 -5 yrs 6 -10 yrs 11 + yrs

1. What qualifications do you consider when employing ECD/Grade R teachers

2. How do you select a teacher for Grade R in your school?

3. What are your expectations on ECD/Grade R teachers?

4. What knowledge and skills have you acquired concerning the teaching and learning of Grade R children?
5. Which forms of professional development have you ever attended concerning the teaching and learning of the Grade R children?
6. Where did you attend, for how long and who organized?
7. If not how do you acquire knowledge on the learning and teaching of the Grade R children?
8. How do you describe quality performance of the children in Grade R?
9. Do you sometimes supervise the ECD/Grade R teacher in her work and how do you give her the feedback?
10. What is the attitude of your ECD/Grade R teachers towards their professional development?

Section B: Strategies which are used to implement PD for ECD/Grade R?

1. What strategies are used by the teachers in your school to assist each other?
2. Who organizes the meetings and how often do the teachers meet?
3. Please explain the activities involved in these strategies.
4. Is there a culture of team work and collaboration of teachers in your school?
5. As part of the administration are you also engaged in these strategies?
6. What is your and the teachers' participation in these strategies?
7. Does your Grade R teacher collaborates with other Grade R teachers in other schools? Please explain.
8. Do you have school based mentors and who mentors the Grade R teacher in your school?
9. Who selects the school based mentor to assist the Grade R teacher?
10. What is considered when selecting a school based mentor?

11. What is the district's contribution on mentoring the teacher in ECD/Grade R?
12. How often is the teacher mentored?
13. What is the attitude of the teacher towards the assistance given?

Section C: Support offered to teachers

1. Please explain clearly how your school supports the ECD/Grade R teachers?
2. What form of support do your ECD/Grade R teachers get from the department /district officials? Please explain.
3. What is the contribution of other interested parties such as the NGOs in supporting the ECD/Grade R teachers? Please explain.
4. Are you content with the support given to the ECD/Grade R teacher by other stakeholders? If not what is your advice?

Section D: Challenges encountered by the ECD/Grade R teachers in the implementation of PD programmes.

1. Could you state the challenges encountered by the ECD/Grade R under qualified teachers in the implementation of PD programmes.
2. What challenges do you also face in the implementation of PD in the ECD/Grade R classrooms as a principal?

Appendix G: Editors Letter of Declaration

BBC Language and Editing Services

I, **BELLITA BANDA-CHITSAMATANGA** hereby confirm that I have proof read and edited the following **MASTER OF EDUCATION** Dissertation for

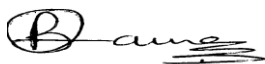
JUMO THERESA

TITLED

Implementation of Professional Development Programmes For Grade R Teachers: A case study of four primary schools in Amathole West Education District, Eastern Cape.

The Windows 'Tracking' System was used to reflect my comments and suggested corrections for the author to action.

During the process of the proof reading and editing, the following changes were recommended: to expunge repetitions, correct tenses, punctuation, grammatical and sentence construction to enhance coherence. In addition suggestions were given concerning consistency in use of abbreviation, referencing style and capitalization, use of current literature. Overall, recommendations were given by the editor for the author to effect all the suggested changes. Although greatest care was taken in the editing of this document, the final responsibility for the product rests with the author.



11/06/2019

Editor's signature

Date

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