



LEADERSHIP FOR LITERACY

CASE STUDY SCHOOL A(L): RAW CASE STUDY NOTES

NAME OF STUDY:

Leadership for literacy or officially “Succeeding Against the Odds: Understanding resilience and exceptionalism in high-functioning township and rural primary schools in South Africa”.

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A(L) CASE STUDY

12-14 June, 2017

1. SCHOOL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

A(L) Primary School is a quintile 3 school located in a relatively new and relatively poor part of Ekurhuleni. It is LOLT isiZulu, transitioning to English in grade 4, though according to reports from school leadership and from GDE district officials, the last several years has seen a large uptick in migration from neighbouring provinces and countries, resulting in a lower percentage of learners coming from isiZulu speaking homes. There was even an attempt last year to introduce Xitsonga, but many parents were not happy with the proposal, reportedly because they viewed the language to be inferior.

Initially, the school was built as a high-school, evidenced in part by its three story building. It has a large hall that is occasionally hired out to the community, a well-kept library, and a very large on-site Cellular Services tower that is the school's primary source of non-departmental revenue. The building has been very well maintained. Aside from a substantial amount of trash burning on school grounds on both the first and second day of our visit, the premises were orderly and secure.

With 873 learners and 21 teachers, its 2017 allocation from the Department was R999 372.

2. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

A(L) is the poorer performer in its pair with another Primary School, in a nearby and slightly more affluent part of Ekurhuleni.

Out of our 61 schools, it was ranked 54 by median grade 3 English ORF, 54.5 by grade 3 African language ORF, and 32 by median grade 6 literacy.

A. MATERIAL RESOURCES

MATERIAL RESOURCES

MATERIAL RESOURCES: TEXT

Are there sufficient resources, especially books, to make a programme of reading feasible? Sufficient refers to language range, graded reader range, variety.

Classroom libraries

In grade 3, there is a significant shortage of books to make a programme of reading feasible. Except for a handful of English Big Books in Teacher B's class, the only books are in isiZulu. Within the isiZulu selection of books, only the Vula Bula series of graded readers are available in Teacher A's class, and within this series, only 8 titles (a very limited number of levels of difficulty). Teacher B has a few titles from the New Heights series and the Sunshine Books series.

Table 1: Classroom readers in two Grade 3 classrooms

	Teacher A	Teacher B
Total number of readers	251	102
Total number of titles English	0	2
Total number of titles isiZulu	8	9

In the Grade 6 teachers' classes there was a stark difference in the number of books available in the classroom. In Teacher C's class there were about 210 readers for learners, both fiction and non-fiction. All of these were in English. Only readers (graded and not graded) and textbooks were observed in this classroom. In Teacher D's class, a handful of Oxford and Platinum textbooks were seen on the teacher's desk; no other books were observed in the class. In Teacher C's classroom there was a small reading with books neatly arranged on a shelf. This was not evident in Teacher D's class.

In Grade 3, the teachers would appear to rely heavily on 'Sinothile' as a text for reading, as well as textbooks and the DBE workbook. Each Grade 3 child has a copy of 'Platinum English', 'Successful English', and 'Sinothile', a compilation of short isiZulu texts. So, although the presence (and use, see below) of readers would not support a programme of reading, especially for English, use of the textbooks may compensate for the lack.

Similarly, the Grade 6 teachers in the interviews reported to rely mostly on the textbook and DBE workbook for teaching. In particular, 'isiZulu Sethu' is used for in isiZulu – which is a collection of folk studies, short stories and poems.

School library

The school library

Table 2: A(L) Library contents

Approximate number of books	3000
Approximate number of non-fiction books (including textbooks)	450
Approximate number of fiction books	750 + 1600 readers
Approximate number of isiZulu books	200

A(L) has a spacious and neat library. There are about 3000 books, almost all of which are English. Most of the books are readers and textbooks. The small number of isiZulu books are mostly old textbooks.



Are the texts utilized?

Classroom libraries

About half the texts appear to be slightly used across the two grades and classes. Many of the readers appear completely untouched, despite the overall small number. In Grade 3 the books were all piled in the top of a cupboard in the back of the room. There did not appear to be any organization or sense of planning for how the books are stored. In grade 6, though there was some haphazard organizing of books into miscellaneous piles on the shelves, many of the titles were organized and grouped within their series.

School library

Most books in the library appear unused. These are generally brand new with uncracked spines. The only books that look used, are those that appear to have been

donated. The books are not organized according to any recognizable categorizing system, but appear to be unsystematically placed on shelves. Many of the book spines face the wrong way so that the book titles cannot be seen. Some titles are grouped together.

Figure x: Unused books



Figure: Lack of systematic shelving of books



There is no dedicated librarian. There is a teacher roster on the wall however. A file on the librarian desk indicated that books were borrowed on 23 May 2017 and 5 May 2017. On the same day, 15 learners borrow and returned books. There was no other evidence of books being borrowed. Use of library books, in short, appears to be negligible.

Several teachers commented on how useful the department-run mobile library is for their students. It seems that rather than send them to the library, which seems to be completely unused despite being relatively well-stocked and well-maintained, they have their learners take books from this mobile library that visits the school each term.

Are there clear management practices in place for procurement and retrieval of texts – is it clear who is in charge of these processes?

There appears to be a very clear bureaucratic structure in place in the form of an LTSM committee and its composition. The Deputy Principal is in charge of LTSM procurement and head of this committee. There was however, a lack of clarity on the actual work of the committee and no detail on the assessment of needs and procurement based on those needs. The only methodical practice and criterion used to decide between various supplies seems to be purchasing materials based on how well the companies package them, and whether or not they can package materials shrink wrapped for individual learners. As opposed to any indication that LTSM quality features in procurement decisions, packaging featured prominently given the apparent added hassle it takes to distribute materials within grades and classes if the materials are delivered in bulk. The Deputy Principal described the process as follows:

“We do a needs analysis, and then our requirements are submitted to suppliers. Quotes are taken in, and we have an SGB meeting, and the decision is made - we choose between 3-5 service providers. We interview service providers, sit with the principal and LSTM coordinator. We tend to use the best supplier. Packaging is important – it makes for easy distribution and efficient allocation to learners. You get colour-coding by grade. Learners get up to 14 books in grade 7 (196 page); younger grades use smaller books”.

The FP HOD’s account of procurement is quite different to that of the DP, however, and the focus is on top-ups and the lack of choice they are actually given in decisions around procurement. The Department is prominent in these decisions. It would appear from the other primary school and the readers available at A(L), that certain readers (Vula Bula) are supplied from the district directly, with no input from schools.

“When there is ordering we sit as a grade and discuss which books we have to top up. If we have a shortage we top-up what we have. We receive the readers/textbooks from the department; we don’t choose. We just stick with the same books every year or what the department advises. I am more comfortable with choosing books for grade 1. But I feel like I can’t choose books that are already used in the school/grade”.

For IP the HOD’s account of procurement accords more with that of the DP: “The LTSM committee is responsible. It gives teachers the chance to ask them what they need, they do a needs assessment. The committee reconciles all the comments before going to the SMT and the SGB and orders are placed”.

Do procurement practices differ between FP and IP?
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Yes, see above. There appears to be somewhat more consultation at the IP level. At the FP level there appears more Departmental allocation of texts.

Do allocation and distribution of resources differ between HL and FAL?

Not evident from the interviews.

How are decisions made to select to select textbooks, readers and books? What criteria are used?

Reference is made to publisher expos. The DP claims that teachers know what they want but that the LTSM facilitator “directs teachers towards the right text. Makes recommendations. They give the teacher indirect prompting as to which books are best”.

A focus on “top ups” is also raised as a prominent issue when deciding on procurement.

The Department appears to be instrumental in decisions for FP.

Packaging emerges as an important criterion (see above).

Are there additional resources available from external parties?

None evident, although the mobile library appears well-utilised. The FP HOD stated: “Readers for the level of learners who are weaker need to be photocopied, because there is a shortage. Or we use the mobile library”.

A4. MATERIAL RESOURCES: TIME

Is time structured in a way that provides clear allocation for reading instruction with detailed formats for teaching reading? Additional time spent?

In Grade 3 the teachers give slightly different accounts for how they structure their reading periods. Teacher A is very clear on methodology: “I teach the class as a whole. Then I identify learners who can’t read and then I group them together to read according to their level. Reading is divided into 3 (shared reading, group guided reading, paired reading, independent reading). I try to spend equal time on these different types of reading; I do extra classes for 30-45min after school for the weaker students. I have a timetable for this, Monday to Thursday. On Friday I given them homework to read at home. They take readers home every day. Everybody has 2 – 3 readers in HL and FAL. DBE workbooks also have stories that they can read at home”. Teacher B’s account reflects more on components of teaching reading than different methodologies: “I teach phonic sounds (single sounds), basic knowledge of grade 2.

If they have mastered single sounds, we go to double sounds, then we can progress to grade 3. First thing in the morning, they must read anything they see (Drop Everything and Read). Read DBE workbooks, look at charts, read independently or in group-guided reading.”

There were slightly divergent interpretations by teachers on whether or not CAPS allocates separate time just for reading, or if reading is rather integrated into other components of the curriculum at the Grade 6 level. Teacher C states that she plans lessons for group and individual reading, but teaching reading forms part of all language lessons. She says she draws a lot on the GPLMS readers (the English readers referenced above under text). Teacher D, the Grade 6 HL teacher states that she has 12 periods for language, and usually separates two out for reading. She asks learners to read different texts, and assists when difficulties are encountered (parents are not as committed as they would want them to be – giving text to read at home can be a challenge). The texts come mainly from the compilation text (isiZulu Sethu) and she says that they sometimes read magazines (Bona). If learners are struggling, she gives different texts to them to practice at home. She also says that she helps struggling learners by staying after hours and reading further and by putting them in reading pairs since peers make them feel freer. Learners are allowed to take texts home.

Interestingly, the IP HOD2’s account of teaching reading in Grade 6 is very different, focused on comprehension (and the ATP). She states:

According to the ATP syllabus there is a part of reading and listening together. Listening has a period, and reading has a period. The learners have a reading text, DBE text or textbook text. They answer questions about the text, reading comprehension. The reader gets taken home; they read the reader at home and they have to answer questions that are marked the next day. Then do corrections”. She goes on to point out assessment requirements:

“There are supposed to be 2 tasks per term for 5 areas (listening, reading, comprehension, language structure...] – but “that’s too much work.” At the workshops teachers have said it’s too much and they said they’d reduce the number of assessments”.

Thus a very different, assessment-driven account of reading pedagogy is provided by the IP HOD2. The IPHOD1’s account is vague, based on a programme that had not yet been implemented in the school (Drop all and read): “Drop-all-and-read: we are getting learners in to the practice of reading. We give them lots of tasks. See what

they understand about what they're reading. Where necessary they help one another"

Is this time used?

It is difficult to say whether the time is used as indicated, although there are shifts in teachers' accounts when seeking the specifics of teaching Group Graded Reading, when the amount of time spent reading appears less. Different reading practices would appear to occur across classrooms at different times in the week at the Grade 3 level. There is no internal monitoring of reading. At the Grade 6 level it is difficult to tell whether time is used as indicated. Across the respondents, very different accounts of reading pedagogies emerge. The HODs' claims around what is done is very different to the teachers. There is mention of a shortage of time for reading, and across respondents' time appeared to be a limiting factor. IP HOD2, for example, justifies the inclusion of reading in language in the following way: "We are only allocated a certain number of periods per week. According to the ATP reading and listening go together. Listening gives rise to reading. And language comes from reading".

Is time allocated for reading sufficient for grade? How does it compare to curriculum expectations?

Time for reading seems to accord with curriculum expectations, especially Teacher A's account of different reading methodologies and the teaching of reading daily. Drop-all-and-read has not been implemented in the school yet, but Teacher D claims to use it daily. This is not the case for the other teachers.

Is there any monitoring of time spent on reading?

Reading instructional time is monitored only to the extent that the district curriculum coverage monitoring tool successfully captures time spent reading. At best, it traces a few practices that are related to reading, and reviews assessments that the teachers must have completed that directly have to do with reading (mostly comprehension assessments). The latter seem to be the most effective tools at monitoring time spent reading, but even those are very rough proxies.

B. HUMAN RESOURCES

B5. HUMAN RESOURCES: READING SPECIALIST

Is the management and structuring of staff in the school in any way related to the promotion of reading instruction?

The management and structuring of staff in the school is not related to the promotion of reading instruction. Despite the fact that the Deputy Principal appears to be (relatively) well-versed in reading instruction - she was selected as a facilitator for one of the main district-wide training programmes for reading instruction – she does not exercise a function of reading specialist in her current role.

The grade 6 HOD, who in theory is in charge of reading, is actually a maths specialist. He only became the HOD after the current principal who was in the position at the time was promoted, and then after the current deputy principal, who subsequently took the job, was then promoted. He became HOD of language as a result of promotion practices having nothing to do with expertise. He is called IP HOD2 here. The other IP HOD does appear to have some language expertise, but is HOD for social sciences. Termed here IP HOD2, both were interviewed. IP HOD1 in the interviews showed a very facile understanding of reading, which the deputy principal admitted outright. She claimed that he comes to her for support on reading given her expertise.

Is there a reading specialist that everyone can identify in the school or at each grade? What position does this person hold?

None of the teachers identified a reading specialist or someone with particular expertise in the area. They all emphasized that they were 'the same'. Grade 6 Teacher D made an interesting point around expertise given the teaching context: "No one stands out. Practically we try our best. "If I have 45/50 out of 60 [able to read] or so, I'm doing OK. Practically you can't reach all of them. The other 15 – that's a struggle. Truth be told, our classes are ridiculous. Her [Teacher C] class is 61, the other is 54". The IP HOD2 claims expertise on the basis of her 29 years of experience: "I, myself, teach reading very well. I know what the problem is for learners, now they're fine, I gave them alphabets." She also mentions an English teacher who she regards as good: "because she knows English the best. She was coloured by birth so she knows English better". The DP also identifies four different teachers, but the reasons given are around confidence and enthusiasm rather than specific competences.

The deputy principal claims herself to be a reading specialist. The teachers did not point to her expertise or indicate that they relied on her as a specific reading expert. No consensus emerged around a particular person or group of persons having expertise.

There had previously been a remedial education teacher who was sent by a company that sponsored the school last year (no one could remember the company name). Teachers recalled her presence and support fondly, but sadly she passed away and despite requests for the company to send additional support, it has not been forthcoming.

Are teachers / HODs identified, recruited or deployed based on specialized skills?

There is no evidence that teacher recruitment is based on expertise, but it was not discussed in depth. The principal indicates that hiring does occur in relation to subject-based needs, but this did not seem to be the case in the appointment of the current IP HOD for language. (This HOD was highly unimpressive in his interview, especially on questions related to reading instruction. Recall too that the DP indicated that she was in fact a mathematics specialist and knew nothing about reading!)

HUMAN RESOURCES

HUMAN RESOURCES: PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Do the levels of qualifications of principals and HODs suggest requisite expertise to manage reading instruction in the school? What if any is the relationship between qualification and position.

The table below shows the highest qualification across the sample:

Position	Highest qualification
Principal	Diploma
Deputy Principal	Diploma
FP HOD	Honours degree
IP HOD1	Diploma
IP HOD2	Diploma
Teacher A	Honours degree
Teacher B	Bachelors degree
Teacher C	Bachelors degree
Teacher D	Bachelors degree

Across the board, educators at the school had no shortage of qualifications. In particular, many of the respondents had further qualifications (certificates and diplomas in school management and leadership). The teachers were overall more highly qualified than those holding management positions.

Do the levels of qualifications of teachers, and the institutions at which they studied, suggest requisite expertise to teach reading?

Reported qualifications did not reveal any specific training in reading instruction.

C. SYMBOLIC RESOURCES

C7. SYMBOLIC RESOURCES: KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTION OF READING

Is there a culture of reading in the school, deriving from an importance placed on reading and on staff's own reading practices (Feb) and expertise?

There is not an obvious culture of reading in the school. It does not seem to be a focus, nor is there any semblance of urgency around reading and the lack of reading ability amongst learners.

Expertise in reading instruction, with the exception of the Deputy Principal as previously mentioned, does not appear to exist. There is a blanket following of CAPS through the ATP, which the Deputy enforces quite rigidly, and to which decisions around teaching appear to confirm. There are no special programmes focused on reading, no displays to promote reading and the library is not in use. The poor state of classroom libraries also do not represent an emphasis on developing a culture of reading at the classroom level.

Is expertise in reading available in the school reflected in understandings of structuring reading curricula and scaffolding reading instruction across grades? Refer to sequencing task. Descriptions of Group Guided Reading. Comment on results questions. Teaching reading and teaching Maths. Use tables.

Understanding of reading components and curriculum

There doesn't appear a clear or agreed upon sense of when different components of reading should be introduced to learners, nor an agreed upon idea of what reading entails. Teachers and HODs were asked when a set of key reading competencies should be introduced generated a wide range in responses.

Table x: Grade at which reading competencies should be introduced:

	Grade at which the competence should be introduced
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Teacher	Reading connected text	Identifying the main idea in the text	Making predictions about what will happen next in a text	Describing the style or structure of a text
Correct response	1	1	4	4
Teacher A	3	2	2	3
Teacher B	2	2	3	3
Teacher C	4	4	5	6
Teacher D	4	4	5	5
FP HOD	1	R	R	R
IP HOD1	4	5	6	6
IP HOD2	3	4	7	7
DP	2	3	5	7

In only one case (FP HOD, reading connected text), did a response correspond with the correct response. The wide range of responses which almost all do not correspond with a correct response is indicative of the lack of shared expertise around the teaching of reading.

Understanding of reading structuring reading instruction: the case of GGR

A broad understanding of reading can be considered in relation to questions asked about a particular reading pedagogy: GGR. In general, and in curriculum terms, the intention of GGR is that a group of 6–10 learners of similar ability read the same text under the direction of the teacher, engaging in strategies for decoding text on the one hand, and ‘text talk’ around the meaning and structure of the text on the other. The curriculum document provides detailed steps regarding how groups should be formed and how the reading should be conducted. It offers direction on ‘picture talk’, ‘whisper reading’, suggested questions for a first reading as well as instructions regarding discussion: “The discussion could also include a focus on phonics, comprehension or on an aspect of grammar. Discuss the text bearing in mind the range of questions that should be integrated into the discussion to develop comprehension” (DBE, 2011, p. 13).

The teachers all point to a motivational function of GGR. Rather than ability grouping being used to carefully target appropriate texts to learner ability, mixed ability groups are used. For Teacher A, this is so that “The other learners who can’t read, they can copy from those who can. They can want to be like so and so, and the others can help them. I warn the weaker students who lean on others that they will be asked to read”. The FP HOD says that the purpose of grouping is “To uplift their

standard of reading and to motivate them. Some learners (those you struggle) might be afraid so it gives them confidence and motivation”.

The understanding of the methodology is somewhat inconsistent across teachers. For Teacher B it consists of “3 groups of learners in rows. I arrange them by ability - “struggling”, “improving”, “best”. For the struggling group I use a grade 1 book. It’s a textbook that I have only one copy of that I borrowed from mobile library. There is a problem with photocopying, it’s not easy). Usually I write the text out on the board and they copy into their homework books to read”. Teacher A and the FP HOD’s descriptions are closer to the intention of the method. Teacher A describes her method of GGR as: “We group the learners as an educator, the educator reads to the children, then they read as a group, then you ask one learner to read (two sentences) at a time and check their understanding”. And the FP HOD as “Call one group (10 learners) to come and read for me and check their reading whilst the rest of the group continue with the activity. If there is time, each of the 10 will read one-by-one (focusing on those that struggle); if there is limited time then all 10 read together”. Although policy intends for this to be a daily practice, GGR is taught once a week by Teacher A. FP HOD is unclear how often, and Teacher B says she teaches it every day: “Every day I do group guided reading in the morning. When they enter the class, we pray, after praying we mark the register. Then I ask them to stand up and read anything they see. Take your DBE book and read a story in a page. I will first read, and then they will read after me. 3 groups of learners in rows. I arrange them by ability...”

Although all Grade 3 teachers understand the priority given to GGR as a methodology, and deploy elements of it in their classroom, there is not a routine, clear and consistent practice of GGR as a methodology across classrooms. This shared conception of practice and understanding was not found in relation to other reading methodologies.

Estimation of student reading ability

There is more of a shared conception of reading indicated in responses to a question posed to the HODs and the teachers asking them to estimate how many children in Grade 3 and Grade 6 can read fluently with understanding in their home language and in the FAL. The results are shown in the table below.

Grade 3			Grade 6		
Teacher	Home Lang	FAL	Teacher	Home Lang	FAL
Teacher A	55%	36%	Teacher C		75%
Teacher B	45%	50%	Teacher D	85%	80%

FP HOD	50%	40%	IP HOD	80%	75%
			IP HOD2	86%	60%

Although an overestimation of how many children are likely to be able to read with fluency and understanding in Grade 6 (based on this project’s testing outcomes), the responses do at least reflect some consensus between teachers and HODs. At the Grade 3 level a more realistic (although still inflated) estimation of learner ability is made across the respondents.

Respondents express a sequential approach to reading, and a number of the interviewees mention the ‘stages’ that need to be traversed in learning to read. “You have to start with a picture, then a sound, then a word, then a sentence” [Teacher B]. This is echoed by a number of teachers – the focus on a simple, procedural approach to teaching reading. Reading for pleasure and enjoyment is also highlighted in some of the interviews, but in terms of *teaching*, especially learners who have fallen behind, it is the series of *steps* that is highlighted. An additional nearly universal comment amongst staff on reading instruction is the belief that if you can read, you can teach reading effectively.

Finally, based on the February survey of educators’ own reading practices, teachers at GA(L) indicated limited personal reading practices, although more than at the other the comparator school:

Question	Response
How often do you read for enjoyment outside of work requirements? (Grade 3 Teacher)	Everyday
How often do you read for enjoyment outside of work requirements? (Grade 6 Teacher)	Most Days
Which of the following do you mostly read? (Grade 3)	Children's books, newspapers, bible/religious text, online news
Which of the following do you mostly read? (Grade 6)	Non-fiction, magazines, bible/religious texts
Approximately, how many books are there in your home? (Grade 3)	Enough to fill a shelf (11-25)
Approximately, how many books are there in your home? (Grade 6)	Enough to fill a bookcase (25-100)

Are there any incentives offered to learners to read? Competitions etc. What is the broad understanding of reading instruction in the school? How shared and coherent is this understanding? (Big section, extension). Best advice.

There is little in the way of incentives for learners to read. There only seems to be an annual Spellathon run by the department, details about which are vague.

There is no distinction made at all between reading in HL and FAL, either at FP or IP levels.

D. STRATEGIC RESOURCES

STRATEGIC RESOURCES: FINANCES

Is there any indication that budget is used strategically for reading and reading instruction?

There is no indication that budget is used strategically for reading and reading instruction. The priority for LTSM expenditure, as previously discussed, was expressly placed on packaging and ease of distribution, rather than any particular strategy or framework for reading instruction.

	Provincial stipulation	Actual allocation
Total budget allocated	R987 073	R987 073
Allocation for LTSM	R476 037	R476 037
Allocation of LTSM for textbooks	R333 226	R293 226

What takes up biggest proportion of budget expenditure?

Textbooks are allocated the largest portion of the LTSM budget R333 226 of the total school budget of R987 073. The school actually allocates R293 226 to textbooks, slightly less than the official allocation. Money is diverted from textbooks to 'Library, 'ICT materials' and 'Other materials'. It is not clear whether 'Library' means books. The IP HOD indicates that a new set of beanbags had been purchased for the library, and although unconfirmed, it is likely that the R15000 allocated in the budget was used to purchase these.

Does budget reflect a pro-active management or one that is limited to recommended departmental provisions and allocations?

The school has clearly applied for some diversion of the LTSM budget.

How much of the budget is spent on books?

It does not appear as if any money was spent on books. The focus for LTSM in the interview and represented in the budget is on textbooks and stationery.

D9. STRATEGIC RESOURCES: READING PROGRAMMES & ASSESSMENT

Are there programmes and practices in the school that are geared towards the improvement of reading instruction and outcomes?

Drop All and Read is the only programme mentioned, but it's not being implemented at the moment. It's still in a phase of being discussed at various levels in the school, getting approval from various bodies, informing teachers and asking for objections, etc. The plan is to implement it in the near future.

No other current programmes are mentioned. There are no reading-related displays in the school. One notice in the staffroom is a reminder to return books to the mobile library.

Is there reference to past programmes that currently have traction in the school?
Comment on duration etc.

Aspects of the GPLMS which was run in the school in 2014 are still used, but it is no longer a formal or systematic programme. Only one respondent (IP HOD2 mentions it). It ran from 2011-2014.

What is the nature and duration of these programmes?

Drop all and read yet to be implemented. GPLMS ran from 2011-2014.

How is reading assessed in the school?

There isn't any systematic or standardized reading assessment in the school (aside from provincial papers, which the deputy principal said are not marked reliably or accurately by the teachers). Some teachers mentioned using GPLMS rubrics in their assessments of learners.

Teachers emphasize comprehension over all other aspects of reading in discussions of their individual assessment of learners.

Are assessment results used for further interventions? Including remediation.

Teachers report having struggling learners stay after school for further support, and in exceptional cases if they're really struggling they sometimes even refer them to the district. However, it isn't clear that this is based on assessments particularly, as opposed to a general sense teachers have from class that learners cannot read.

STRATEGIC RESOURCES: COLLABORATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Have there been opportunities for professional development or collaboration amongst teachers around reading instruction?

The last training attended by Grade 3 teachers was a training commissioned by the GDE and designed by the British Council that focused on teaching English First Additional Language, which included reading instruction. Responses to the training were mixed. Some say it was hugely informative, others that they already knew everything from the training and didn't learn anything new around reading instruction. Teacher D said that the training was focused on breaking down the ATP and techniques for teaching English. She was positive about the effects on teaching reading: "It has affected my teaching – I can now take a reader and develop a lesson from the story from listening and speaking to reading and viewing to comprehension". Teacher B attributed the particular sequential understanding to this training: "I learnt that reading must start with pictures first; then simple words; then sentences; then you can give them a paragraph".

The other training received was from GPLMS, three years previously. There were mixed reactions to this. Teacher A felt that there were "Too many activities. Too many concepts. It created confusion".

How much sharing of practice is evident/reported? Do teachers watch each other teach? Are they doing the same things in classrooms across the same grade?

The FP HOD says that although she would like to, she has never watched the Grade 3 teachers teaching. This is confirmed by the Grade 3 teachers. Teacher B says: "There is a lot of work, and not enough time to observe. Yes, we like to share strategies for

teaching. But nobody came to watch me even when I first started". They have also never observed their colleagues teach.

The Grade 6 teachers have also never observed their colleagues teach. One of the Grade 6 teachers had the HOD observe her for 20 minutes at the beginning of the year: "the first term of this year she came to watch teaching (+- 20 minutes). She gave comments, told me where I need to improve for example when reading a text to learners, try to go slower because my pace might be too fast for learners). There were no other reports of observations taking place.

What support/expertise is available to teachers for teaching reading?

There is no specific support or expertise available to teachers for teaching reading.

D11. STRATEGIC RESOURCES: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Does management demonstrate strategic leadership of reading instruction in the school through their use of reading results, target setting and interventions?

Targets are generic across subjects and grade: "80% of learners must obtain a mark of 50% (level 4) or more." The deputy principal claimed this target is then modified by subject but based on follow up interviews this doesn't appear to be the case.

Is there any evidence of strategic leadership by HODs?

HODs do not appear to execute any functions relevant to subject expertise. Although they form part of the SMT, this body does not feature in discussions around results, targets or remediation, nor in relation to particular programmes in the school.

To what extent does the principal and deputy provide a 'container' for effective reading instruction?

It is not evident that there is particular focus on reading in the school, not that the principal or DP are doing anything to promote or support reading instruction. The focus in the interviews is on meeting bureaucratic curriculum demands, especially the ATP. As indicated above, reading has a diminished presence in these specifications, given that it is difficult to monitor 'coverage' of much reading methodology in these kinds of plans.

IMPLICATIONS FOR QUANT STUDY

- We should probe about knowledge of specific practices in CAPS, such as group guided reading
- We need to think of ways of getting beyond the bureaucratic structures put in place for things like LTSM procurement. Maybe instead of asking what the process is, we'd be better off somehow probing about what they view as needs, what they think makes good textbooks/good readers, etc.
- I wonder how much teachers understand what graded readers are and how they are supposed to be used. We should see if there isn't a way to ask for definitions and uses, as well as for how they are/aren't used in their classrooms
- We could work on triangulating specific practices with student survey questions – e.g. how often do they actually read
- The detailed recording of book titles and levels was very interesting. We should try to incorporate relatively straightforward/less time consuming (ideally) measures of classroom and school libraries – e.g. number of unique titles in a classroom library, whether the library is actually being used by learners