

**THE TRANSITION OF LEARNERS FROM GRADE R TO GRADE 1 IN  
MUTSHINDUDI CIRCUIT, VHEMBE DISTRICT**

by

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## DECLARATION

I, **TSHILOLO HAZEL MAPHIRI**, hereby declare that the mini-dissertation for the Master of Education in Curriculum Studies degree hereby submitted by me, has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other institution, and that this is my own work in design and execution and that all reference materials contained therein have been duly acknowledged.

.....  
**TSHILOLO HAZEL MAPHIRI**

.....  
**DATE**

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late husband, Dzedzi Leonard, my four cute, loving daughters, Fhululedzani, Nangani, Nndinde, Lindavhuđi, my grandson Muđalukanyi Gabriel, my mother Helen and my father the late, Ađilali Sampson as well as my younger sister, Tshifhiwa.

## ABSTRACT

The transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1 in a formal school is a significant stage. The purpose of the study was to investigate the transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1 in Mutshindudi Circuit, Vhembe District. The researcher used qualitative method to conduct the study in order to get in-depth information to improve the teaching and learning of children in transition.

It was a case study of one school where three Grade R and three Grade 1 teachers were selected. Individual interview and observation schedules were used to collect information from the informants during class visits. Learners were observed during teaching and learning in the classroom to see how teachers facilitate the transition between two grades

The population of this study comprised with six teachers, three from Grade R and three from Grade 1. Purposive sampling of three Grade R and three Grade 1 teachers was based on the teachers' knowledge and experience in these Grades. The findings revealed that Grade 1 teachers expected Grade R learners to know how to read and write. Teachers had experienced transition problems as the policy stipulates that all Grade R learners should progress from Grade R to Grade 1. Teachers should be inducted on how to assist learners to transit from Grade R to Grade 1

**Key Concepts:** Bridging Period, Early Childhood Learning, Grade R and 1, Gradual Introduction, Integrated Curriculum, Transition

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1 in a formal school is a significant stage. Some of these learners may be out of their comfort zone which is Grade R, where they used to do less cognitive and demanding activities such as singing rhymes, indoor and outdoor activities with the freedom to play.

The differences in cognitive demands between Grade R and Grade 1 may cause misunderstandings between Grade R and Grade 1 teachers. The misunderstandings between these teachers may manifest themselves in different ways; for instance, the Grade R teachers raised concerns that Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners are not adequately preparing children for formal schooling.

There are 20 schools in Mutshindudi circuit which consist of Grade R classes since the introduction of Grade R classes. This evoked the researcher's interest to research about Grade R classes. The researcher wanted to observe how transition is handled and developed in schools with Grade R classes.

Preparing for formal school is marked by a transition from Grade R to formal schooling. This could be a stressful event for young children. Preparation for the change should be kept in mind by all educators of young children (Papalia, Wendkos, Punch & Oance 2006:360).

Children find themselves encountering a variety of series of pathways, transitions and border crossings during their early childhood (Woodhead, 2007:10). This necessitates closer co-operation and collaboration amongst various stakeholders, namely; teachers, parents, families to assist learners with the transition. The researcher is of

the view that lack of active involvement of these people in the learner's early life may bring about developmental and educational challenges.

The researcher is in full support of the above statement that children without supportive leadership that can lead them through their formal education, their transition cannot be a positive one. This can be stressful, thus hindering their learning in a formal setting. This transition of young learners needs qualified and dedicated educators. The researcher supports the notion that supportive educational leadership is a *sine qua non* for the smooth, less descriptive transition from Grade R to Grade 1.

According to Meier and Marais (2007:126), learners whose educators have high expectations receive more positive non-verbal communications from the teachers, for example smiles, nods and eye contact. Moreover, such learners receive more opportunities to master new and challenging learning content than learners whose teachers have low expectations.

It is therefore, essential for all teachers to have high expectations for all children. This will enable all children to achieve positive learning experience. This will equally enhance a smooth and positive transition from Grade R to Grade 1.

Worldwide, pre-primary schools' attendance has nearly tripled in the last thirty years, though enrolment varies dramatically by regions (United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2008: 2). For example, in 2004, pre-primary enrolment rates for children between 3 to 5 years old were approximately 73% in developed and transition countries such as USA (Girdwood, 2012:24).

The researcher wanted to investigate how teachers and learners managed the transition with large numbers of children and whether it was smooth or difficult.

Some countries such as England, United States of America, Australia and South Africa have tried to provide more curriculum coherence by developing an integrated curriculum for pre-primary and primary schools, and even organised programmes around the developmental cycles of the child. This approach has been adapted from the Grade R to primary schools. Transition projects which are familiar include, among

others, the transition from Grade R to primary school projects, for example, in Guyana and Sweden. These countries have developed three interlinked curricula based on common goals and values for children (Wood & Moss, 2007:49).

Marais and Meier (2010:57) opine that prior to the reception year policy in 1997 the national Department of Basic Education launched the National EC Pilot Project to address particular ECD issues and to put forward policy proposals on the creation of a public system of ECD in the reception year. Policy recommendations made included the following: the reception year should be made compulsory for admission in Grade 1; reception year classes should be based within a new public system of reception year provision. Many learners who are admitted in Grade R are not yet fully developed. It would be better if they start school in Grade 1 while they are six years of age as they would be ready to develop their full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potentials.

According to Wood and Moss (2007:46), the step by step project establishes linkages between Grade R and formal schooling. Transition is planned to enable children to stay together with their friends as they move from Grade R to Grade 1.

Grade R programmes that are both inclusive and integrated should provide opportunities to foster children's emotional, social, intellectual, physical, spiritual and moral development and use play as the primary vehicle for achieving these (Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education, 2001: 8).

Gradually, over the last few years, early admission to primary schools has become a rule rather than an expectation (Brown, 1991:2).

Hoadley (2012:1) cites that in 2011, 40% of five-year-old learners having access to Grade R have more than doubled in poorer provinces of Limpopo, Northern Cape and North West between 2002 and 2011. This is the same group which will later transit to Grade 1 in formal schools.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The Grade 1 class admit all learners who are coming from home and those who are from Grade R. The learners who are from home experience more problems of transition as they lack basic skills. There are some learners who are from Grade R who did not acquire enough knowledge for example, of sight words, knowledge of letter sounds and reading abilities. Grade 1 learners are expected to write common examination whereas some of them were not well equipped, especially those who are from home to Grade 1. These give Grade 1 teachers a problem as they expect learners to know how to read and write. Teachers expect Grade 1 learners to have skills and basic knowledge about things that they have learnt from Grade R. The researcher wanted to investigate whether the introduction of Grade R in schools has enhanced the way the transition was before in formal schools? In the light of the research and the call to improve the quality of transition from Grade R to 1, there is need to investigate transition of learners from Grade R to 1.

## **1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The main aim of the study was to investigate the transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1.

## **1.4 OBJECTIVES**

In line with the aim of the study, the following objectives guided the study:

- To establish what teachers understand about the transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1.
- To identify strategies used by teachers to manage the transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What do teachers understand about the transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1?

- How do teachers manage the transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1?

## **1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Creswell (2005:79) maintains that the researcher conducts literature review in order to show how the study adds to the existing literature. A study will not add to the existing literature if it duplicates research already available. Literature review is conducted to convince the researcher to learn how other researchers conducted their research studies, to find useful examples and models in the literature for research studies.

According to James and McMillan (2010:73), literature review establishes important links between existing knowledge and the research problem being investigated. The review provides very helpful information about methodology that can be incorporated into a new study.

Kapp (2003:197) avers that the introduction of a bridging period is recommendable in order to ease the child's transition from Grade R to school stage and decreases school readiness problems. The aim of such a bridging period is to get as many children as possible ready for school before they receive formal teaching. During the bridging period, children are given more work to do under close supervision. The bridging programme helps to smoothen the transition.

The transition to primary school is one of the greatest challenges of early childhood, handled well; it can set children into virtuous cycles of learning. A further consideration in the analysis of successful transitions is whose voices are heard. Teachers in primary school sometimes have different views regarding the same transition (Docket & Perry, 2001:14).

### **1.6.1 Children's Experiences of Transition**

Most of children in Vhembe District experienced their anxiety and apprehension about their entry into school and what the whole process meant to them (Griebel & Niesel, 2002:15; Peters, 2000:37). Children from Grade R to Grade 1 were not comfortable

in Grade 1. They felt bored because they were not given more time to play. They only played during break and they did not like it.

Docket and Perry (2002:1) aver that children's lack of continuity between Grade R and primary school makes them feel unsettled. They point out that in primary schools; there was less freedom of choice when compared to their Grade R experiences. They also felt insecure and nervous about going to school (Peters, 2000:2). There were some children who were delighted to learn new things in a new environment and saw this opportunity as a challenge rather than a threat. They viewed discontinuity as a challenge for them. Therefore, to prepare learners well for the new challenge, it is emphasized that knowing school rules would put them in a favourable position to conform to school rules and regulations.

### **1.6.2 Children's Adjustment to School**

Adjustment is the ability of learners to learn optimally in the classroom by being emotionally and socially developed to cope with classroom activities (Margetts, 2003:53). Children's adjustment to school is supported by a number of skills including social competence, problem solving, self-reliance and determination, knowing about 'not knowing' and what to do about it, behavioural control and academic competence (Fabian, 2000b; Margetts, 2002). Children's adjustment is supported when they follow directions, take responsibility for their belongings, take turns, regulate their behaviour in response to others, and respond appropriately to frustrations. Adjustment to school is influenced by the level of comfort, familiarity and predictability children experience. Children are at risk of not adjusting easily to school when there is a mismatch between the personal and cultural skills, attitudes and knowledge they bring to school, and the expectations of the school itself (Simpson & Clancy, 2001; Fabian, 2000; Margetts, 2003).



## **1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

### **1.7.1 Transition**

Transition is a change from one stage/state/place/condition to another. It is a passage from Grade R to Grade 1. Wood and Moss (2007 46) state that 'transition' describes the movement that takes place from one familiar setting (including the home) to another. It is defined as the process where policy and practice have been adapted to support children in settling in their new learning environment in preparation for future learning and development. The researcher wanted to investigate how transition could be handled when Grade R learners are to transit to Grade 1, and what could be used to evaluate them and how to prepare them for the next level.

### **1.7.2 Early Childhood Development**

Education White Paper No 5 on Early Childhood Education (ECD) (2001: 7) defines early childhood development as a comprehensive approach to policies and programme for children from birth to nine years of age with the active participation of their parents and teachers. White Paper 1 on Education and Training (1995) and Interim Policy for Early Childhood Development (1996) define early childhood development as an umbrella term that applies to the process by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially. For the purpose of this study, ECD refers to learners aged five years and six years.

### **1.7.3 Integrated Curriculum**

Drake and Burns (2004:2) define integrated curriculum as the correlation to relate materials in other subject areas. This means that integration is the unification of all subjects and experiences. For the purpose of this study, integrated curriculum refers to the teaching material of Grade R and Grade 1 that should be related to facilitate the transition of learners.

#### **1.7.4 Bridging Period**

Bridging period is a process aimed to ease the child's transition from the pre-school to the school stage, thereby decreasing school-readiness anxieties by getting as many children as possible ready for school before they receive formal teaching (Kapp, 2003:197). The aim of such bridging period is to get as many children as possible ready for school before they receive formal teaching. In the context of this study, bridging period refers to progressing from one level to the next level.

#### **1.7.5 Foundation Phase learners**

Foundation Phase learners are found in the band or level of education that comprises Grades R, 1, 2 and 3 within the Early Childhood Development (ECD) band. Learners in this phase are given more opportunities to gain first-hand experiences through active involvement. They are also given time to develop their speaking and listening skills and to become confident in their reading and writing abilities (Erradu, 2012: 12-13).

### **1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this study was to investigate the transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1 in Mutshindudi Circuit, Vhembe District of Limpopo province. This section presents the research design, research methodology, population, sampling procedures, sample and data collection procedures.

#### **1.8.1 Research Design**

Creswell (2007:462) defines a research design as a plan or structured framework of how you intend to conduct the research process in order to solve a problem. This study followed a qualitative research design.

### **1.8.2 Research Methodology**

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2007:22) research methodology is the creation and development of techniques and strategies to collect data, the development of methods to investigate and improve the psychometric properties such as reliability and validity of the data obtained by means of these techniques and the analysis of such data

Neumann (2006:196) maintains that qualitative methods advocate an approach to examining the empirical world, which requires the researcher to interpret the real world from the perspective of the subject of the investigation. Qualitative methods seek to understand phenomena in their entirety in order to develop a complete understanding of a person, programme or situation. Qualitative research also occurs in natural settings where human behaviour and events normally occur (Creswell, 2007:162). Creswell (2007:65) also holds the view that in qualitative research, the researcher tends to become involved with the phenomenon.

In this study, the researcher used qualitative method in order to facilitate interview and observation in the classroom situation. This enabled the researcher to follow-up on questions raised.

### **1.8.3 Population**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:129) define a population as a group of elements or cases, whether individuals or objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which the researcher intends to generalize the results of the research. This group is also referred to as the target population or universe. Population is a group of individuals from which a sample is drawn. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:87) defines population as a set of elements that the researcher focuses upon and from which the results obtained by testing the samples can be generalized.

#### **1.8.4 Sampling Procedures**

The researcher employed two sampling techniques namely, purposive and cluster sampling. These were convenient for the researcher because she worked with participants that were available in order to collect information from the sampled schools.

The researcher chose one school purposely which had all the elements that the researcher wanted to observe. The researcher wanted to investigate the transition of learners from Grade R and Grade 1. The selected schools had Grades R and 1 which the researcher wanted to observe. The researcher conducted classroom observations and individual interviews with Grade R and Grade 1 teachers

#### **1.8.5 Sample**

According to Behr (1983:13), the size of the sample is important and cannot be decided upon arbitrarily. A decision on the optimum size of the sample is taken with due regard to the statistics used in large groups of persons. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:163) state that the number of subjects in a study is called the sample size. The researcher determined the size of the sample that provided sufficient data to answer the research questions. The researcher wanted to investigate how the transition of learners is handled and to gain knowledge about the transition in these schools. Six teachers were selected based on their experience of teaching Grade R and Grade 1. Three teachers teaching Grade R and three teachers teaching Grade 1 were selected as research participants of the study.

#### **1.8.6 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher was granted permission to conduct the research by the Vhembe District (Department of Education) and principals of the schools. The data collection did not interrupt the classes. The researcher made appointment with the relevant teachers on the dates which were suitable for them. The researcher observed the children in Grade R and Grade 1. The teachers were interviewed and observed in their schools. The data were collected by means of interviews and observation schedules.

The interview schedule was used to probe questions and when the need arose, the researcher probed for more clarity. An interpreter was not needed as all the respondents understood English. The researcher travelled to meet the participants at their schools. The researcher kept all the written records in the record book.

Creswell (2005:10) indicates that evidence provides answers to the researcher's questions. To get this, the researcher engaged in all the steps of collecting data as well as identifying and selecting individuals for study, obtaining respondents' permission to participate in the study and gathering information by asking people specific questions or observing their behaviour. The researcher sampled one school which is found under the Mutshindudi Circuit.

## **1.9 INSTRUMENTATION**

Research instruments are tools that are used to gather data from the field. The researcher gathered relevant information for the study from subjects by means of interviews and observation schedule.

The researcher collected data by using observation and interviews data gathering methods. The researcher observed people in their teaching and learning situations. The researcher conducted pre-interviews with the Grade R and Grade 1 teachers. The researcher further observed teachers and children during teaching and learning. The researcher observed how children responded to their teachers and the teachers' attitudes towards the children.

### **1.9.1 Trustworthiness of the qualitative research**

According to Thomas (2010:318), credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability when used as trustworthiness criteria, ensures the rigour of qualitative research.

Qualitative research is worthy because it is documented while observing and at the same time interviewing the participants. The researcher used face-to-face interviews.

Using face-to-face interviews helped the researcher to read out the facial expressions of the respondents. It enabled the researchers to probe if there was an essence of doubt in the answer given by the respondents. The face-to face interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to interact with the participants. The researcher used a tape recorder to record the conversation during the interviews. The researcher transcribed the information for the purpose of making meaning. The researcher coded and developed themes based on what was coming out from the respondents.

### **1.9.2 Credibility**

Kumar (2011: 396) posits that credibility is the ability of a research instrument to provide similar results when used repeatedly under similar conditions. According to Thomas (2010: 318), credibility is involved in establishing that the results of the research are believable. It depends more on the richness of the information gathered, rather than the amount of data gathered. There are many techniques to gauge the accuracy of the findings, such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer briefing, data triangulation, triangulation through multiple analysis and member checks. In reality, it is only the credibility of the research participants that makes the reader trust the data. This gives the research trustworthiness. The researcher used adequate numbers of observations and interviews. Data were gathered from multiple sites and sources.

### **1.9.3 Dependability**

Dependability ensures that the research findings are consistent and could be repeated. This is measured by the standard at which the research is conducted, analysed and presented. Each process in the study was reported in detail to enable an external researcher to repeat the inquiry and achieve similar results. This also enabled the researcher to understand the methods and their effectiveness (Kumar 2011:396).

#### **1.9.4 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the degree at which the research can be transferred to other contexts. Transferability can apply in varying degrees to many types of research (Thomas 2010:318). The researcher notes the specific details of the research situation and methods and compares them to a similar situation that they are more familiar with. If the specifics are comparable, the original research would be deemed more credible. It is essential that the original researcher supplies a highly detailed description of his or her situation and methods.

#### **1.9.5 Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the participants and not researcher's bias, motivation or interest. Confirmability questions how the research findings are supported by the data collected. An external researcher can judge whether this is the case by studying the data collected during original inquiry. To enhance the confirmability of the initial conclusion, an audit trail can be completed throughout the study to demonstrate how each decision was made (Thomas 2010:318).

### **1.10 QUALITATIVE METHODS**

According to Castle (2012:113), qualitative data differ and can include information recorded in field notes observations, narratives, interviews, and open-ended responses.

In this study, the researcher is often described as being the research instrument because the bulk of the data collection depended on her personal involvement (interviews) and observation in the setting. Holloway (1997:45) indicates that data collection in qualitative research involves the gathering of information for a research project through a variety of data sources.

## **1.11 DATA ANALYSIS**

Creswell (1994:153) maintains that data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials that can be accumulated to increase one's own understanding. The process of data analysis is flexible, there is no right way. Several factors can guide the development of the analysis of qualitative data.

Data analysis was conducted by means of a qualitative method. Three Grade R teachers and three Grade 1 teachers were interviewed and observed while teaching their children in order to facilitate transition from Grade R to Grade 1.

## **1.12 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The research will help the following people:

This study is important to the Grade R teachers because it is envisaged to encourage them to teach basic content that will benefit their learners when they are admitted in Grade 1.

This study is important to the Grade 1 teachers because it recommends that a special curriculum be implemented in schools. This can result after the admission of Grade R learners into Grade 1.

This study is important to the policy makers because they may use the findings when developing policy about the Grade 1 learners' curriculum. They will also develop ways of smoothing the transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1.

This study will also benefit the Grade 1 teachers to know what is to be taught in Grade 1. They will get regular training and workshops through cluster meetings where they will share ideas and information about transition of learners. The researcher hopes that the research findings may motivate teachers in the correct implementation of the curriculum.



### 1.13 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The research is confined to the Vhembe District, specifically the Mutshindudi Circuit.

### 1.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethics provide the researcher and field workers with guidelines and rules of behaviour that enable them to conduct research in a morally acceptable manner. For research to be conducted at an institution such as a university or a school, approval for conducting the research should be obtained before any data is collected (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:195). The researcher got permission from the Department of Education to conduct the research in one primary school.

### 1.15 CHAPTERS OUTLINE

This research is organised as outlined below:

**Chapter One** presents the background of the study and the statement of the problem, the aim and objectives of the study, research questions, research design and methodology, data analysis, delimitation of the study, ethical considerations, significance of the study and breakdown of research chapters.

**Chapter Two** outlines the literature review and focuses on what other authors say about the topic.

**Chapter Three** deals with the research design and methodology of the study.

**Chapter Four** focuses on the presentation and interpretation of data.

**Chapter Five** presents the major findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## 1.16 CONCLUSION

This chapter present an overview of the study, findings, conclusion and lists recommendations on the basis of finding of the study and suggestions for further research. Given the qualitative nature of this study, the researcher used simple descriptions to interpret data.

The next chapter will present the review of literature.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Cleave and Brown (1991:2) indicates that gradually over the last few years, early admission has become a rule rather than an exception. Early childhood teachers have a responsibility to assess children in appropriate ways to benefit their learning and to identify possible needs for interventions. A single test or single assessment is usually not appropriate for making decisions about children's educational programmes; because young children continuously change and are influenced by the context in which assessment is done.

Some children do not seem ready to enter the primary grades after one year of formal teaching, to ensure success in later years, the transitional programme was created. Those who oppose the transitional kindergarten do not like reasons that the children are held back (Dunlop & Fabian, 2002). The researcher sees the transitional programme as a handy programme because it helps to select children who are ready to transit to the other levels, and not as a programme to hold children back. It is also a way of helping learners to ease their transition to be smooth (Kapp, 2003:197).

#### 2.2 UNDERSTANDING TRANSITION

Palaiologou (2016:133-134) defines transition as a complex concept which is not only limited to changes in physical environment and not as a moment of change, but as the experience of changing and of having the discontinuities between different contexts. The transition stage should be handled with care by professionals. This can help learners to transit well in an understandable manner. Learners feel at ease if transition is prepared and handled mostly by known professionals. Palaiologou (2016: 133) asserts that through their lives, children go through several transitions such as external

transition from home to the early years setting, from the early years setting to school, from school to child minders, or inner transitions such as their developmental growth.

## **2.3 TYPES OF TRANSITION**

There are four types of transition. Palaiologou (2016:133-134) outlines these types as indicated below:

### **2.3.1 Lateral Transitions**

These involve the moves between two activities (such as moving from early years setting to reception clans). In lateral transitions, the person is replacing one activity (the early years setting) with another activity (reception clans) and their move is involving progression.

### **2.3.2 Collateral Transition**

This occurs when an individual is involved in two or more related activities and they move simultaneously to both, for example, the move from home to early years setting where children are asked to move to different activities in the setting. This type of transition does not have the element of progression.

### **2.3.3 Encompassing Transition**

This takes place within the boundaries of an activity that is set on changing and the individual has to adjust in order to participate. In classroom activities for example, children demanding role-play decide to change the play so that individual children either have to adopt the changes or otherwise, they will not be able to participate in the new activity that has emerged.

### **2.3.4 Meditational Transition**

Meditational transition is mainly related to educational activities, for example, we create an activity where children are playing part office and exchange money when they are not old enough to have their own money. In early years setting we can see meditational transition with boys. For example, pretending they can hold guns and play war when in real life they are not allowed to have guns (especially common in Greek early years education where military service was compulsory for all young men at the age of 18) or when they pretend to wear shoes with high heels or to use make-ups (Palaiologou, 2016: 133-134).

## **2.4 TRANSITIONAL OBJECTIVES**

Wood and Moss (2007:137) describe the term 'self' to describe both the age and self as object. They describe the self in terms of 'genuine' or 'true self', and "false self". The genuine or true self is developed when children form their personalities by developing the capacity to recognize their needs and to express them. When babies grow up in an environment where their needs are not covered, they build a 'false-self' (Wood & Moss, 2007:138-139).

Wood and Moss (2007:60) recommend that to achieve successful transition for all young children, more research is needed on the organization, aims and pedagogy of both the pre-school and the early classes of primary school.

## **2.5 TRANSFORMATION**

Young children have trouble understanding transformation. Unless a child can actually see what transformation is like when an organism changes from caterpillar to butterfly, then transformation will not make sense. It is important that children have an opportunity to witness changes so that they can begin to make sense of transition themselves (Carlton, Winsler & Marths, 1999: 34).

## 2.6 SCHOOL READINESS

Children should not be pushed into kindergarten or first grade just because they have reached a certain chronological age. First, they should be assessed to determine if they have reached the prescribed intellectual and physical norms. If not, they should be held back until they are ready. Similarly, children should not be forced to read until they have reached their own internal maturational level of at least six years. Children in maturational classrooms at about the same stage of development (Suzanne, 1994:42).

Really and Hofmeyer (1983:192) indicate that school readiness has a specific meaning, i.e., it is associated with a particular society or culture and the norms and values thereof. This implies that school-readiness and the demands of the school situation work hand in hand with educational systems. The demands made on the school beginners in the South African school systems are associated with the criteria for school-readiness.

Edward (1999) is of the opinion that chronological age cannot be used as a measure for school readiness. So, for example, a five-year-old could be ready for formal education, while a seven-year old may not be school ready due to factors such as mental impairment, neurological disorder, and physical disability, emotional and environmental deprivations. Although Palaiologou, (2016:134) argues that early years education and care should prepare children to be 'ready' for school, what will be organized here is that for effective transitions, it is essential to prepare to receive children rather than to prepare children to 'fit' into the early environmental stage.

Wood and Moss (2007:14) posit that the word 'readiness' has amassed scores of different meanings, provoked legions of debates and confused parents and teachers. It appeared in print in the 1920s, with two constructs for prominence – readiness for learning and readiness for school. Advanced by developmental readiness for learning, it was regarded as the level of development in which the individual has the capacity to undertake the learning of specific material and interpreted as the age at which the average group of individuals has acquired the specific capacity.

Wood and Moss (2007:15) further indicate that readiness for school is a more finite construct embracing specific cognitive and linguistic skills (such as identifying colours, distinguishing a triangle from square) irrespective of academic domain, school readiness typically implies standards of physical, intellectual and social development sufficient to enable children to fulfil school requirements.

Children should be monitored closely when their time is ready to go from Grade R to Grade 1. Teachers from different grades should meet from time to time to discuss the children's transition, discussing their different expectations from Grade R, giving Grade 1 teachers information about what to do with the Grade R children in order to ease their transition to Grade 1. The Grade R teachers should in a while, also teach Grade 1 learners. It should be monitored to see how they are failing. Grade R and Grade 1 learners should meet at least twice per week when playing indoor or outdoor activities. This will stimulate interest from Grade R learners to go to Grade 1 classes. By so doing, Grade R learners will be adjusting well to Grade 1 classes.

In South Africa, it is legally stipulated that children may go to school when they are five but must be enrolled at the school the year when they turn seven. However, chronological age should not be used as a criterion for school readiness. In too many instances, children are admitted to school when they are, in fact, not ready. If the child has spent the pre-school phase in a rich stimulating environment, parents need to be concerned about the child being ready for school (William, 2017: 1).

### **2.6.1 Criteria for Cognitive Readiness**

- The child is able to count with a measure of insight (note, not counting from memory)? Think of situations where two or more sweets are handed out.
- Able to match one to one? (Think of situations where things are handed out).
- Can recognize and copy certain shapes?
- Beginning to understand the principle of cause and effect?
- Do simple addition and subtraction with numbers?
- Perceive certain similarities and differences?
- See certain regulations or rules?

- Have some understanding of symbols?
- Ability to estimate, plan and evaluate (Kruger, 1983, 28)

In transition, a child should be checked for normative readiness. The following should be asked:

- Does the child subject himself to authority?
- Can the child distinguish between proper or improper?
- Does he/she know and use concepts such as please, thank you and sorry?
- Does the child fit in easily with routines such as meals, use of toilet facilities and so on?
- Can the child eat on his own and without messing?
- Does the child respect the rights of others?
- Can the child obey certain simple rules and regulations?

The following should be taken into account when teachers need to understand the child's transition.

- Does the child venture into and explore the world?
- Does the child regularly ask questions?
- Does the child expect to be answered?

## **2.7 FOCUSING ON THE CHILD**

Castle (2015: 5) indicates that early childhood teaching is a special area in the field of education that is focused on the child. A whole approach to early childhood teaching facilitates children's development in all areas; physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, and aesthetic. Early childhood teachers recognise that children develop at their own pace and with their own unique developmental profile including special needs. Working with children requires comprehension and knowledge of not just academic subjects, but how to facilitate learning and development, including accommodating various learning styles and special needs.



The introduction of bridging period recommends that a bridging period be introduced in order to ensure the child's transition from Grade R to Grade 1 and by so doing, decreases school-readiness problems. The aim of such bridging period is to get as many children as possible ready for school before they receive formal teaching and learning (Kapp, 2003:197).

The pre-school stage forms the basis for all later development and becoming. Knowledge of the characteristics of children in this stage is very important. The quality of the child's development during the school years is largely determined by the quality of the relationship and communication he/she performs during pre-school years. Mulovhedzi (2008:16) indicates that communication through language is the main ability that distinguishes human from all other species on earth. A sound general knowledge of this phase will enable parents, pre-school teachers and other educators to assist pre-school learners to form positive meaningful communication during this stage.

This period of development is generally referred to as the pre-school stage. It is not simple to classify learners' development into generally acceptable periods. Mwamwenda (1995:47), Blackburn and Papalia (1992:178) describe early childhood stage as a period between the stages of zero to two years and three to six years. Vrey (1990:65) sees it as a period between two to six years.

Physical and biological growth is one of the aspects in the physical development of children including movement. The motor development of children is divided between "gross" and "fine" motor to all spatial movements used by children to manoeuvre around their environment, "fine" motor development concerns all of the smaller and more intricate movements (Palaiologou, 2012: 23).

Motor development and physical growth according to Krogh (1994:83) is as follows:

<b>Age</b>	<b>Motor Phase</b>	<b>Behaviours</b>	<b>Physical Growth</b>
Pre-natal: 6 months	Reflexive	Involuntary blink, suck, cough and yawn	Brain development, length increases 50% in first year, hands grow faster than head

Krogh (1994:83) states that the first years of a child's life are very important for brain development. A baby's brain develops at an outstanding rate in the first three years such that by the age of 3 years, a child's brain is as complex as it will ever be. The brain comprises billions of nerve cells (neurons) designed to send and retrieve information across organs and muscles.

During the first 6 years, there is a rapid development of synapses in the human brain. However, the number of new synapses decreases as children enter adolescence and then adulthood. Babies acquire more synapses than they will need. After the age of 3 years some connections are lost Krogh (1994). For example, a typical 18 years old has lost half of the synapses in the brain in early childhood, and synapses in the brain that are unused disappear. It is inevitable that individual wonders why learners could do certain things when they cannot do them when they are adults.

According to Woodhead (2007:74-75), Grade R is a position between Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes (age 0-4) and the start of formal schooling in Grade 1. Conceptually, what learning consists of in Grade R is unclear and contested. ECD is rooted in informal and structured play which focuses on the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, aesthetic and moral development of each child including gross and fine motor skills.

Early childhood teachers have a responsibility to assess children in appropriate ways to benefit their learning and to identify possible needs for interventions. A single test or single assessment is usually not appropriate for making decisions about children's educational programmes; young children continuously change and are really influenced by the context in which assessment is done. Multiple forms of assessments provide a more holistic picture of child development (Castle, 2012: 20).

## 2.8 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW METHODS WHICH WILL BE USED FOR TRANSITION FROM GRADE R TO GRADE 1

In the past decade, testing of 4 – 5 and 6 years olds had been excessive and inappropriate under a variety of different names. Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests were used to track children into ineffective programmes or to deny them school entry. Pre-reading tests held over from the 1930s have encouraged teaching of decontextualized skills (Guddemi & Case, 2004: 52). In response, fearing that “assessment” is just a euphemism for worse testing, Guddemi and Case (2004) maintain that many early childhood professionals such as teachers and facilitators asked why such tests were done at all observed that:

- No testing of young children should occur unless it can be shown to lead to beneficial results.
- Method of assessments, especially the language used, must be appropriate to development and experience of the young child.
  - Failure of assessment context form, evidence of individual and standards for interpretation must be tailored to the specific purpose of an assessment.
  - Identifying children for special education with no legitimate purpose for assessment and aptitude measurement and normative comparison.
  - For classroom, instructional purpose and purpose of public policy making the content of assessment should embody the importance of dimension of early learning and development. The tasks and children are asked to perform should reflect and model progress towards important learning goals (Guddemi & Case, 2004).

From the above point of view, teachers conduct assessment in a variety of ways including asking children to engage in peer assessment which helps teachers and the children themselves to judge the quality of children’s own work across time.

Assessment plays a number of crucial roles in relation to curriculum and learning. Firstly, school-based assessment allows teachers to measure learners’ progress and to diagnose areas of lack of progress to enable remediation and for assured teaching.

It also provides positive feedback to learners and parents about academic progress (Hoadley, 2012: 322).

Assessment in early years setting is the gathering of a range of evidences about children learning and behaviours so that judgment can be made about their progress.

This judgement can fall into two broad categories:

- Judgment about how to design and implement the next steps for further development in learning, and
- Judgment on what has been learned and achieved
  - The first category is often termed formative assessments or assessment for learning
  - The second category tends to focus on what has been attained and achieved, forms a record of a child's summative assessment (Paliaologou, 2012:101).

Summative assessment structure has been explained earlier on with statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) documents. It is assessed out of fewer than three broad strands relating to what to look out for and what can be done.

- A unique child, which supports observing and what a child is learning expressed as short statements.
- Positive relationship; which outlines what about adults could do to enhance learning.
- Enabling environmental; which outlines what adults could provide to children to enhance their experiences in an established way (Palaiologou, 2012:101-102)?

### **2.8.1 Redefining the Relationship between Earlier Childhood and Schooling**

If pre-schools and schools are to be equal partners in the future, one tradition taking over the other must be avoided. Rather, earlier childhood and primary education services must work together with parents and communities to create a new and shared

view of the child, learning and knowledge, as well as recognizing the child as a constructor of culture and knowledge.

### **2.8.2 The Role of Assessment in Early Years Foundation Stage**

Central within the EYFS are the assessment processes. Considerate emphasis is placed on the on-going assessment of children and this is viewed as an integral part of the learning and development process. Providers must ensure that practitioners are observing children and responding appropriately to help them to make progress from birth towards the early learning goals. It is expected that all adults who interact with children should contribute to that process.

The important role played by observation and assessment in the early years is improving practice correctly and monitoring children's progress cannot be underestimated.

Different assessment strategies can be used to conduct assessment including; observation-based assessment, self-assessment, peer-assessment, portfolio assessment, group assessment and test-based assessment by Grade 1 learners.

Palaiologou (2012:115) describes assessment with parents as the sharing of assessment information with parents. The information should always be shared with parents so that they understand and support the child adequately. The observation files are available to parents at all times and it is these openers that help provide continuity between home and school and enhance the partnerships. Often, parents want to help their children to reach their next stage of development, but are not sure how to, or lack the confidence to believe they are doing well in this regard.

## **2.9 CHARACTERISTICS OF OBSERVATION**

Woodhead (2007:73) indicates that Grade R is a position between Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme and the start of formal schooling in Grade 1.

ECD is rooted in informal and structured play which focuses on the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual, athletic and moral development of each child, including gross and fine motor skills.

Woodhead (2007:74) further asserts that the difference between test and an assessment is that the term test is used when referring to traditional standardized developmental and pre-academic measures and the term, assessment, refers to more developmentally appropriate procedures for observing and evaluating young children. This is a semantic trick that plays on the different connections of the two terms, technically, they mean the same thing. Tests, defined by the standard for educational and psychological testing, have always included systematic observation of behaviour, but our experience with tests is that they are more formal, one right-answer instruments used to rank and sort individuals, whereas assessment might be standardized involving paper and pencil response and so on.

The National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood specialist in State Department of Education have played important roles in informing educators about the harm of developmentally inappropriate instructional practices and the misuse of tests. In 1991, NAYEC pillared “guidelines for appropriate curriculum content and assessment in programmes serving children of ages 3 through to 8”. Although the detailed recommendations are to be repeated, a guiding principle is that assessments should bring about benefits for children or data “should not be used to recommend children stay out of a program, be retained in the grade or be assigned to a separated group based on ability or development maturity”. In other words, tests should not be used if they do not bring about benefits for the children (Paciorek & Munro, 1997:122).

It is of paramount importance for the curriculum to relate to the social community of the related child. In particular, the curriculum should be used to test the development of the child from each grade to another. Tests should serve a purpose to be used as a stick to measure the performance of the child and to help teachers to devise some means to help the child if the need arises or to empower the people.

## 2.10 MATCHING THE WHAT AND HOW OF ASSESSMENT

The intended use of an assessment will be determined by the need for normative information or other means to support the interpretation for example, the identification of children for special education has critical implications for the sector. Failure to do so could mean the denial of needed services, being identified as a need of special services may also mean removal from normal classrooms. The tests must be used to gauge the intellectual of the child. It also helps the teacher to value their work whether understood or not, to see where they need training or improvement, and to use the curriculum to update their teaching material or curriculum.

Ordinary classroom assessments may affect individual children, but the consequences of those decisions are not nearly so great. An unreliable assessment on a given day may lead a teacher to make a poor grouping or instructional decisions, but such an error can be concerning as more information becomes available about what an individual child really knows.

Group assessment refers to uses, such as programme evaluation or school accountability, in which the focus is on group performance rather than individual scores, although group assessments may need to meet very high standards for technical accuracy.

Assessing the child is therefore, needed when identifying children who have special needs and need special attention. The child needs to be assessed by professionals such as psychologists or social workers. This is determined by a need of particular child in concern. The process of assessing a child during examinations helps them to be guided through transition. The assessment would serve a good purpose to help teachers to identify the type of a child that the teachers are dealing with. When teachers give learners several tests and realise that there is no improvement, they would devise intervention strategies to enhance the transition for that particular child.

## 2.11 THE ROLE OF OBSERVATION

There are different appearances to children's assessments. No matter what approach (or mixture of approach) early years settings adopt, observations are central to all of them. There are a number of observation techniques available in early years' education and care (participation observation, normative checklist, diagrammatic, dumpling and media learning techniques that can be used to record children's learning and development (Palaiologou, 2012: 90).

Assessment is arguably, the most useful tool in organizing and planning early years practice. In early years setting, a number of different techniques of assessment and recording of children's progress are used before this information is translated into the formal statutory.

Requirements of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as the most common way of gathering information on children to assess their progress are the learning stories, pedagogical documentation and the learners' scales of involvement and well-being.

Practitioners are advised to look and note what children are doing when interacting and then analyse what they have assessed to use the findings for further planning. Once experiences and opportunities have been planned and implemented, observation is used as a basis for evaluating the activity, taking note of children's progress and considering possibilities for enrichment and extension. In order to support each "unique child", practitioners are advised to understand and observe each child's development and learning, assess progress, and plan for the next steps. Stakeholders should evaluate each assessment meant for an individual child. Formative assessment should also be evaluated in order not to be biased, but to fulfil its course. This will also help in further planning and implementation of the curriculum (Palaiologou, 2012:90).

Some countries such as England, the United States of America and Australia have tried to provide more curricular coherence by developing an integrated curriculum for pre-primary and primary schools organized around the development cycles of the child. This approach was adopted by the pre-primary to primary transition project in



Jamaica and the transition from nursing school to primary school project in Guyana. Sweden has developed three interlinked curricular based on a common goals and values for children (Wood & Moss, 2007:49).

The researcher thinks that it would be better if the policy makers develop an on-going curriculum which is interwoven from Grade R to primary schools. This might help the policy makers and curriculum developers to work hand in hand. By so doing, they would be able to implement transition in a simpler way. They would be able to observe the development of the child and be able to assess the individual child's progress.

Supporting pedagogical continuity for children as they move from one educational setting to another requires a learning environment that fosters positive teacher – child interactions. It is important for both early childhood programmes and primary schools to focus on continuity of pedagogy and content across the early childhood age from infancy to 8 years. If this continuity is to be based on a “strong and equal partnership”, indeed, many Grade R and 1 learners could benefit from learning materials commonly found in early childhood centres.

In some cases, closer linkages between early childhood programmers and schools can build on the strength of both pedagogical approaches. For example, primary schools can become more child-centred and early childhood programmers can focus more on fostering the skills children need to succeed in school (Wood & Moss, 2007:50).

## **2.12 EARLY CHILDHOOD IS A SPECIAL AND VULNERABLE AGE**

Wood and Moss (2007:58) opine that children benefit when early childhood and primary school teachers work together. When staff members communicate and collaborate well, they are more likely to develop comparable programme philosophies and broaden their understanding of children's transition from pre-school to school with teachers from their leader pre-school. Such strategies encourage connections and coherence in Guyana and East Africa.

Not only is the focus on the child in early childhood teaching, but also on the special age of the child in the early childhood programmes. Young children are the most vulnerable of all. They are most vulnerable because what happens to young children can leave long-lasting effects including detrimental ones. The younger the child, the more damaging the detrimental effects can be. For example, infants who do not relate well with a primary care-giver may have long lasting relationship difficulties throughout their personal development (Castle, 2012: 35).

Some children have certain personality traits that leave them defenceless against life's traumas. They have difficulty in dealing with tension. This is the so-called "learn at risk" because they are particularly vulnerable to the development of effective problem. Learning problem, on the other hand, often follow effective problems, because any destabilizing experience may retrain congruities (Kapp, 2003: 20-30).

In the past decade, testing of 4-, 5- and 6- year olds has been excessive and inappropriate. With this history of misuse, the burden of proof must rest with assessment advocates to demonstrate the usefulness of assessment and to ensure that abuse will not recur.

The White Paper No 5 (RSA, 2001:4) indicates that the responsibility of young children belongs to parents; their involvement as primary role-players is directly implicated. Parents who are involved in the education of their children in pre-school contribute positively on the future learning and academic success of their children. Then the support role is dual in pre-school context and in the child.

According to Education Policy of South Africa, parents' involvement in the schooling of their children is not only a "good" thing but necessary. According to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, parents must be part of the School Governing Body (SGB). Parents are therefore, according to law, active partners in their children's education during their formal school years (Marais & Meier, 2010:152).

The researcher thinks that early childhood is vulnerable and should be taken into consideration by the educational policy maker and the children's parents. The children ought to get support that can sustain them in their primary education. Parents'

involvement in their children's educational matters is of paramount importance to teachers and children. Children learn easily and faster if they get help from their parents. This makes the teacher's work easier and enables teachers to facilitate the children's work more easily. Children become more confident if they are being helped at their homes. Learners get a good chance to listen and ask questions openly without any fear of being frowned upon by other children if the parent gives himself or herself ample time to help his/her child. Parents should enjoy helping their children. It is a joyful thing to see a child having an insight of what the particular teacher or parent is teaching. It gives the parents pride when the child achieves.

When assessing children, keep the following in mind:

- Assessment methods must not disadvantage any learner, e.g. learners with sight/hearing impairment or other disability.
- The learners should know what the teacher is assessing and what criteria are being used before the assessment is out.
- Learners and parents should be informed of assessment findings so that they are able to see what has been achieved and what needs to improve. Parents' involvement is important to ensure that learners get support from home.

Interactions with other teachers can sometimes lead to ideas for teacher research studies. Professional issues with colleagues can provide different perspectives on situation. Based on what others say and do, we may find our ideas change in how we address working with young children. In addition, there are times when interacting with others may lead to collaborative teacher research. Teachers may find that they have common wondering interests, and problems that they can investigate together (Castle, 2012: 54).

Castle (2012) holds the view that it is helpful to read professional literature to reap updated and most current thinking and practices in the field. Teachers read professional literature for many reasons, but usually to find out information that can enhance what they are already doing in their teaching. Professional literature can also be a source for teacher research questions. Reading about what others have done and learned can help us form questions for own inquiry, for example, a teacher may

desire to change the way children are assessed in his/her programme. He/she may want to find out what other professionals are doing in assessment.

Research questions can also pop up in other daily experiences beyond wonderings, problem interactions with others, and reading professional literature. For example, one teacher who was also a parent of a 4-year-old noticed that during the morning, the child went more smoothly when she engaged her in choosing and laying out what to wear to school the night before. She began to think about the role of choice in learning and ways to offer choice in her third-grade classroom. Her research question was: what role does choice play in children's learning? It was narrowed by: do children write more and learn more when they get to choose the topic for journal writing compared to when I assign a topic?

The largest early childhood association, the National Association for the Educations of Young Children (NAEYC) in the United State of America, has developed guidelines for appropriate practices set forth in developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programme. These guidelines call for teaching that addresses children developmental levels, individual differences and cultural backgrounds. The major guidelines of NAEYC's appropriate practices are about:

- Creating a caring community for children;
- Teaching to enhance development and learning;
- Planning curriculum to achieve important goals;
- Assessing children's development and learning; and
- Establishing reciprocal relationship with families (Castle, 2012: 23-24).

The developmental approach emphasizes progression in learning as a result of maturation and experience rather than age alone since the movement experiences of children differ considerably from one school setting to another. Expectations for performance vary from school to school. It assists the teacher in distinguishing developmental needs of individuals rather than generating the needs of the particular group.

Follari (2007) show that the curriculum points out that goals of early education refer principally to the content (what to teach) and to the methods (how to teach) to be used to support the children's development and learning. In practice, the curriculum provides guidelines for, or stipulates functioning of early childhood education.

Krogh (1994:39) posits that observation is an important part of teaching young children. There is much to learn by watching, and the information you gain can and should be put to use when designing a curriculum or helping individual children. This is particularly true in terms of physical and motor development because infants, toddlers and young children are by nature physically oriented. The way they move and use their bodies can tell you much about their cognitive progress, their social attitudes and their emotional state, as well as their physical and motor progress.

Krogh (1994:353-357) prescribes the following guidelines for curriculum:

- The curriculum has an articulated description of theoretical base that is consistent with prevailing professional opinion and research on how children learn;
- Curriculum content is designed to achieve long-range goals for children in all domains, social, emotional, cognitive and physical and prepares children to function as fully contributing members of a democratic society;
- Curriculum addresses the development of knowledge and understanding process and skills, disposition and attitudes;
- Curriculum goals are realistic and attainable for most children in the designated age range for which they were designed.

## **2.13 CONCLUSION**

Transition plays a vital role during the development of the learners. Different types of transition showed that through activities, children show progression. The transition from Grade R to Grade 1 can be a difficult time for many young learners as they have to cope with the differences and challenges that school may pose. Ensuring that children have the smoothest transition possible is crucial and calls for teachers to work together and share information and knowledge about the children's lives.

In the next chapter, the research methodology and approach that will be used in this study are discussed.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research method of the study. Research involves the selection of the appropriate population, sampling procedure, instruments design, data collection and data analysis. The aim of this research was to study the transition between Grade R and Grade 1 children.

#### 3.2 POPULATION

Population is a group of individuals from which a sample is drawn. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:87) define population as a set of elements that researchers focus upon and to which the outcome obtained by testing the samples can be generalized. The researcher chose a group of individuals in whom she had interest. For the purpose of this study, two primary schools with the Foundation Phase in which there were Grade 1 classes were selected. Mutshindudi Circuit formed part of the population of the study. The researcher selected six teachers, three from Grade R and three from Grade 1 classes as research participants. The research participants helped the researcher with the sample information regarding the study of transition from Grade R to Grade 1.

The data were collected by means of interviews and observations. The researcher used the qualitative method in gathering her data.

##### 3.2.1 Grade R

From schools in Mutshindudi Circuit, the researcher chose school with three Grade R in order to collect data for this research. The researcher considered the following when choosing these two Grade R classes.

Grade R – A : was a grade that was specialising in children that were to proceed to Grade 1 in the following year as well as children of age four to five-year old children.

Grade R – B: was a preschool class that took care of children from the age of 3months to the age of four-year old children.

Foundation Phase A and B: Foundation Phase consists of Grade R classes and the Grade 1 classes.

In these three Grade R classes, the researcher observed the surrounding environment and their outdoor and indoor activities to observe the transition among three grades, Grade R and Grade 1.

The respondents were sampled using purposive strategy for the sake of convenience. Purposive sampling assisted the researcher because it draws only relevant respondents who have reliable information and experience of the topic under study. This helps the researcher to collect data and understand the ideas of participants chosen for the sample (Holloway, 1997:142).

Dyer (1995:89) defines a sample as a group of individuals who are selected from a large population by means of sampling procedure and who actually generate the data for research. Oppenheimer (1992:38) states that a sample is used to indicate a smaller group within a population.

The Readers Digest Association in Southern Africa Reader's Digest Word Power (2001:863) defines the term sampling procedure as a portion of a population, serving as a basis for estimates of the attributes of the whole population.

The researcher sampled one school which had three Grade R and three Grade 1. The researcher also sampled three teachers from Grade R and three teachers from Grade 1. The researcher chose this school because it has the grades which were to be observed. The teachers who taught those grades were interviewed and observed with



regard to the transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1 to enable the researcher to conduct her investigation.

### **3.2.2 Grade 1**

Grade 1 classes were also targeted because they offered opportunities where the Grade R children and the Grade 1 teachers interact in a teaching and learning situation. The researcher wanted to conduct interviews and observations at those classes where the relevant people are found. It is a stage where transition normally takes place in the early years. The researcher held the view that transition could be very negative at both sides, that is, the child and the teacher. The researcher had unsolved questions regarding transition that takes place between Grade R and Grade 1.

### **3.3 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

Sampling is defined as the strategies used to select the sample of participants chosen from the whole population to get the information about the larger group (& McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:158). This means that the researcher searched for information from, informants, groups, places or events for study. In the particular study,

The researcher sampled six teachers, three from Grade R and three from Grade 1. The researcher chose the school as it has three grades which are to be observed. Teachers were sampled due to their experience and knowledge.

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT**

Researchers are often described as being the research instrument because the bulk of their data collection depends on their personal involvement (interviews and observation) in the setting. According to Holloway (1997:45), data collection in qualitative research involves the gathering of information for a research project through a variety of data sources.

Research instruments are tools that are used for gathering data from the field. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used interviews and observations to collect data.

### 3.5 INTERVIEW

An interview schedule was used as an instrument to collect data from the respondents. An Interview consists of two people talking together about some topic which is of interest to them (Colin, 1995: 55). Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:1) maintain that this method of collecting data is called the method of authority because it regards the knowledge procedures as authorities due to their ability to transmit the truth or knowledge about what they know or have experienced in their local environment. For this study, Grade R and Grade 1 teachers were interviewed in their classrooms.

Structured interviews were developed to answer the research questions. The information gathered enabled the researcher to answer the research questions. In this kind of interview questions are not reformulated or themes identified before. Schulze and Avital (2011:61) posits that the researcher using in-depth interviewing will develop questions spontaneously in the course of the interaction with the interviewee. In this study, the researcher limited her contribution to an absolute research questions. The researcher used face-to-face interview. Using face-to-face interview helped the researcher to read out the facial expressions of the respondents, their behaviour and their characters as well as their attitudes towards their classes as they were busy teaching. It enabled the researcher to probe when necessary.

The researcher chose semi-structured interviews because of the following reasons:

- Interviews enable the researcher to ask follow-up questions for clarification purposes.
- Interviews are recorded followed by verbatim transcriptions.
- Themes are developed from coding.
- Themes are given meaning.
- Descriptive analysis is followed. In this situation the researcher narrates the story based on what is coming out.

Gay (1996:227) asserts that “the data analysis in qualitative research involves making sense out of an enormous amount of narrative data”.

Data were analysed by means of interviews (individual interview) and observations. The field data comprised transcripts taken during the interviews and observations.

In the next chapter the researcher will analyse the data gathered by means of interviews, observations and interpretation will be done, findings and recommendations will be drawn.

### **3.6 OBSERVATION**

During the observation phase, the researcher consciously and purposively observed the behaviour and environment of subjects under study. The researcher chose to be a passive participant observer but did not participate wholly in the activities. Bailey (1987:239) maintains that observation in most cases involves visual data collection, but it can also include data gathering through the other senses. This may mean that in observation, an observer watches someone else’s behaviour, judges that behaviour in some way and records this judgement. Observation is taken as the first step in any research because scientific results have their origin in observation.

A participant observer is referred to as an observer identifying herself as a researcher and participates in what she observes. In participant observation, the researcher observes actions and interaction of the subjects in their setting. It is taken for granted that understanding the inner perspective of subjects can only be obtained by participating in their world and gaining insight by means of examining the researchers’ own thoughts and feelings (Mouton & Marais in Mulovhedzi, 2008:58).

Mouton and Marais (1988: 25) continue to define participant observer as a straight forward technique where the observer immerses himself or herself in the context being studied. The researcher is presumed to gain understanding, maybe more deeply than could be obtained. Arguments in favour of this method include reliance on first-hand

information, high face validity of data, and reliance on relatively simple and inexpensive methods. (Mouton & Marais in Mulovhedzi, 2008:58).

The researcher wanted to get the opportunity of observing the transition between Grade R and Grade 1 children. The researcher had planned before-hand what was going to be observed in order to give herself direction and she also recorded systematically what she observed.

The researcher chose observation for the following reasons.

- It provided a direct observation for studying of transition between Grade R and Grade 1 children.
- It was of paramount importance when studying young children.

### **3.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

For the purpose of this study the process of data collection was divided into two major steps.

#### **Step One**

The researcher made appointments with the Grade R teachers. Interviews, through structured questions, were conducted on the agreed dates and time as well as the place.

#### **Step Two**

The researcher concluded the research by using interviews, through semi-structured questions. These were conducted on the agreed upon dates, time as well as the place.

The researcher observed the Grade R and Grade 1 teachers during teaching sessions. The researcher also conducted observation on how children behaved during the lessons, and how they responded to the questions asked by teachers. The researcher observed the teachers' behaviours when children were answering the questions and how the teacher responded to what the children were answering.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2013: 127), data analysis, especially in qualitative research, is an on-going, emerging and interactive or non-linear process.. This simply means that texts from interviews, observational notes or memos are typed and processed into- documents. Gay (1996:227) has the following to say about data analysis in qualitative research. “In a simplified explanation, qualitative analysis involves making sense out of an enormous amount of narrative data”

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

Data collected by means of observation was corroborated by the semi-structured interviews which the researcher had employed. As a result, inferences drawn from the observations and interviews formed the basis of data analysis and interpretation.

The analysis and interpretation of the collected data are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents analysis and interpretation of data. The presentation is mainly descriptive, supported by the teachers' explanations. The data were collected through in-depth individual interviews conducted with Grade R and Grade 1 teachers in order to investigate the transition of Grade R to Grade 1 learners in Mutshindudi Circuit. The researcher used similar questions for all the respondents and divided the results into two sections: Section A for Grade R teachers and section B for Grade 1 teachers. Interviews and observations were used for data collection. Three Grade R teachers and three Grade 1 teachers from the Foundation Phase schools were selected and interviewed.

In the selected Grade R and Grade 1 classes, participant observation was conducted. The aim was to observe the transition of Grade R to Grade 1 learners in the Foundation Phase. The researcher recorded the interviews.

The Grade R and 1 class were observed for duration of four days. Observations were done and recorded in both grades were the researcher spent two periods in each class. This brings to the total of four periods per day.

#### 4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected through interviews and observations were analysed, reduced and interpreted. The presentation of the analysis was according to the interview schedule format used with respondents, starting with the Grade R teachers and then followed by Grade 1 teachers. The participant observation forms were the last part of the analysis.

#### **4.2.1 Interview with Grade R and Grade 1 Teachers**

This section deals with categorising data obtained by means of interviews with Grade R and Grade 1 teachers (See Appendix A). Three Grade R teachers and three Grade 1 teachers from one school were involved in individual interviews.

#### **4.2.2 Age and Gender of the Respondents**

There were six female teachers who were selected in Grade R and Grade 1 classes. Their ages were categorised in the following class intervals:

60 – 65

50 – 59

40 – 49

30 – 39

20 - 29

The age range indicated that both young and relatively old Grade R teachers constituted the sample used.

#### **4.2.3 Age Restriction on Admitting Grade R Children**

Each Grade R has its own age restriction when admitting Grade R children. Some of the potential learners were restricted by the availability of the accommodation or infrastructure. The sampled respondents differed in this regard.

Selected schools admitted children whose ages ranged from four and a half to five years in Grade R. The participants pointed out that in Grade R, they also admitted children on condition that the children were not below the age of four years.

All the respondents agreed that they admitted children without age restriction as long as the children were not under four years of age.

#### **4.2.4 Teachers' Views about Transition between Grade R and Grade 1 Learners**

The researcher used the word respondent for selected teachers. For this study, respondents were three Grade R and three Grade 1 teachers.

Respondent A indicated that there is no significant notice of the transition. She did not see any transition except for a new child from home to Grade R whose transition was noticeable as the transition would not have been planned for.

Respondent B indicated that all children of the same age group perform almost in the same way; they transit when they are almost five, except for children with special needs. Some children have problems in adjusting from home to Grade R.

Respondent C Children almost transit according to their age development, irrespective of their individual differences.

They all agreed that there is a slight transition that they noticed in almost all the Grade R children. Only few learners have problems in adjusting to the school environment.

#### **4.2.5 Grade R teachers' Views about Children's Transition**

Respondent A: Transition is the progression of children from one grade to the other grade.

Respondent B: Transition is a passage in one's life that children pass through when growing to maturity.

Respondent C: All children transit well but only some are not yet ready for the transition. She views transition as a natural way of growth depending on an individual's development.

Respondents A, B and C:

They all agreed that there was no sign of transition because of age. Every child passed and progressed to formal school. The respondents also indicated that parents did not



seem to be bothered by their children's transitional development. According to the respondents, parents had the following in mind:

- That when a child reaches a certain age, it is automatic that he or she must progress to the next level.
- Preschool children should not be retained for another year to be fully developed for the admission in the formal school.

#### **4.2.6 What do Grade R Teachers Consider when Admitting Children?**

Respondent A: Said that she normally checked the children and asked views from parents to find out if there was something wrong about the children.

Respondent B: They asked parents to bring along the children's clinic cards. The cards helped the teacher and the principal to know about the health status of the children.

Respondent C: The teacher checked the birth date from the clinic card together with the birth certificate of the child.

All the respondents indicated that:

- Parents forged the dates because they wanted their children to be admitted earlier than their age group.
- It would be better if parents were asked to bring along the original birth certificates of the child together with the clinic cards.
- They all agreed that learners were normally admitted from preschool to Grade R when they are four and half years and above.

#### **4.2.7 Do you Think Grade R learners should be Taught by Professional Teachers only?**

Respondent A: Indicated the importance of training Grade R teachers.

Respondent B: Confirmed that children had to be taught by professional teachers even when the children were also taught at home.

Respondent C: Claimed that it was of paramount importance for the children to be taught by professionals, even when they were taught by ordinary teachers in schools.

All the respondents shared the following views:

- Children start education at home and proceed to school, where they are taught by professionals.
- Professionals know how to handle children.
- Parents want their children to be able to write their own names while in Grade R.
- Professionals know the time for children to learn and when they must rest.
- Professionals know that children have time for in-door and outdoor activities.

#### **4.2.8 Problems which Grade R Teachers Encounter when Admitting Children**

Respondent A: Parents do not tell the truth or the history of the child.

Respondent B: Some children are looked after by their “grannies” and at times the old- aged people do not have a clue about the child’s health or history to convey the message to the teachers.

Respondent C: Children are not happy to be left at school by parents or guardians. The children cry, clinging to the parents. Some of them come to a point where they try to run away from school.

All the respondents came to a conclusion that:

- Class register must be marked after each break.
- The gate must be locked.
- Some of the children do not ask for permission to go out to the toilet.
- Some will go from door to door crying looking for their siblings.

- Parents do not bring in children on time. They usually bring them when they are five or six months before their entrance to Grade R classes.
- Parents expect their children to be normally transferred from pre-school to Grade R classes.
- Parents do not inform teachers about the learning barriers of their children, e.g. hearing, sight, speech as well as those who are slow learners.

#### **4.2.9 Do you Group Children, if Yes, how? Give Reasons for your Answer**

Respondent A: Grouped children according to their ages, e.g. 4½ and 5 years.

Respondent B: Grouped children according to their understanding of the subject matter and their abilities as well as how they perform during activities. It may be during in-door or outdoor activities. She takes that into consideration.

Respondent C: She did not group the children. She just let them sit wherever they like. She claimed that grouping children made dull and children felt bad, while good ones were cherished by teachers.

#### **4.2.10 Are all the Grade R Children Active in Class? If Yes or No, Support your Answer**

Respondent A: Most children are active, only few, three or four may seem not competent or not active.

Respondent B: Methods used in class must suit their developmental age and teachers must exercise patience and show love to the children.

Respondent C: Shows that the lesson plan must be prepared in an interesting way, e.g. when teaching about wild animals, a child must be stimulated to go to the zoo or game reserve.

All the respondents agreed on the following:

- Teachers must live what they are teaching.
- Everything which is taught must be done practically.
- When teaching about wild animals or birds, the teacher must imitate every sound where possible.
- The class should resemble a play area because they learn by playing, touching, smelling and imitating.

#### **4.2.11 What do you do to Involve Grade R Children in Teaching and Learning?**

Respondent A: She indicated that she would ask children to bring along different magazines into the classroom. The children would be asked to cut different pictures using scissors and also to colour the drawing that they would be asked to draw.

Respondent B: The teacher adjusted herself with the children, in other words, she lowered her level to the children's level. This helped her to adjust her speech as well as her understanding to that of her class.

Respondent C: She said that she divided her class into different areas, e.g. fantasy area, block area, educational corner and discovery area. Every child should be involved. Every child would go to the area of his or her choice out of the child's own will.

Respondents A, B and C agreed that:

- Children who were not active in in-door activities must be involved as individuals.
- Teachers should target slow learners and learners who are not self-motivated to learn.
- Children who are either slow or not self-motivated should be taught using different methods that are likely to stimulate their interest.

#### **4.2.12 How do you Treat or Involve Children who are not Interested in Teaching Activities?**

Respondent A: She indicated that almost all children are interested in learning activities.

Respondent B: She said she would call the child to be in a certain group. She would call other children to participate in whatever activity was in progress. The teacher would slowly pull out before the child noticed that the teacher was not there.

Respondent C: The teacher would try to associate herself with the learners and encouraged them to participate. The teacher would use polite language and create an exciting atmosphere.

All the respondents concluded that:

- Children can be active while doing play role (drama).
- Children must be encouraged to play and be corrected in a loving way.
- The teacher should encourage the learners by putting a star in the child's book or on the clothes next to the child's chest.

#### **4.2.13 Are there any Grade R Learners who are Active in Outdoor Activities and not Active in In-door Activities?**

Respondent A: Most or almost all the children who were active in outdoor activities were also active in in-door activities.

Respondent B: Yes, some children are lazy to play outdoors activities by nature. Those children did not even listen to the instructions from the teachers. They just went out in order to be relieved from in-door activities.

Respondent C: Almost all Grade R children are active both in in-door and outdoor activities. They are energetic, except for those few who are lazy to write, e.g. writing the whole page as is usually done in Grade R.

Respondents A, B and C:

- They all agreed that they are there; these children seem to be active when you look at them.
- Claimed that the learners' true colours are seen when they perform outdoor activities.

#### **4.2.14 Do you Notice any Difference in Physical Development? Support your Answer**

Respondent A: At early age girls grow faster than boys.

Respondents B and C: Their responses were in the affirmative. The child cannot ride a bicycle at first, but later on, the child would master riding a bicycle. The child at first would be unable to hold a pen and then later would be able to. They are unable to do hip-hop at first, but at a later stage, they would be able to.

All respondents A, B and C:

- They all agreed that some came to school being small and eventually they become big or tall.
- Some came being shy to speak and eventually they were able to express themselves before others.
- Some of them would be engaged in a fight that needed a teacher to come in between.

#### **4.2.15 How do you Assess them when they come to Grade R?**

Respondents A and B: They indicated that they do not assess children when admitting them. They only used age as the admitting norm.

Respondent C: She indicated that children were not assessed when admitted but she felt they were supposed to be assessed first before they were admitted. This would help them to find out about the children's speech, hearing or sight. This could also help them to group children according to their abilities. Furthermore, it could help them in determining where to place them, e.g. back or in front.

Respondents A, B and C said that the children ought to be assessed in order to group them according to their abilities and the level of their development.

#### **4.2.16 Do you Support the Idea of Grade R Children to be Assessed First when you Admit them? Give Reasons for your Answer**

Respondents A and B did not support the idea of assessing children when admitting them. The advanced reason was that children were no longer retained in a class for the first time, especially in Grade R because of the automatic pass policy.

Respondent C said that she supported the idea of children to be first assessed when being admitted. She claimed that this would help the teacher to know how to handle the child as well as how to support the child.

They all agreed that it would help them to know the children's:

- Oral ability
- Personal and their social well-being
- Behaviour
- Self-esteem
- Co-operation with their peers
- Intellectual ability and
- Creativity

They all agreed that Grade R learners were supposed to be assessed but their age rendered them an automatic progression.

#### **4.2.17 What do you Understand by Grade R Transition to Grade 1 Classes?**

Respondent A: She indicated that the child should seldom be taken to school by a parent.

Respondents B and C: They both agreed that they see it as a way of children going from a low level to a higher level of education. They both agreed that there should be a link from Grade R to Grade 1 to establish association between teachers and children.

#### **4.2.18 Can you Define Negative and Positive Transitions?**

Respondent A: She pointed out that negative transition is when a child is not associated with other children whereas positive transition is when a child is able to play with other children and is be able to play and share food or toys with others.

Respondent B and C: They indicated that negative transition is when a child is progressing by virtue of their age and not their intellect whereas positive transition is when children transit by their ability and cognitive level.

Respondents A, B and C agreed that negative transition can have undesirable impact on the child's life that can be detrimental, while a positive one has a desirable impact that is influential to a child's growth. They indicated that it is advisable to be always alert in order to help a child to be surrounded by people and environment that are conducive to a positive transition to a particular child.

#### **4.2.19 How do you Prepare Children for Transition?**

Respondents A: She said that children were to be prepared by parents and their preschool teachers as well as their formal school teachers.



Respondent B: She indicated that the community should also be made aware in preparing a child for transition from home to school. This is a stage of every child living on earth.

Respondents A, B and C

- They all agreed that there were certain concepts which were to be taught at home as a preparation for a child who is ready to go to school.
- They have to teach children to count from one (1) to twenty (20).
- They should also teach them reading; it can be by reading of mere pictures.
- They should teach them how to hold a pencil, a pair of scissors as well as colouring.

#### **4.3 GRADE 1 TEACHERS' VIEWS ABOUT TRANSITION**

Respondent A: The teacher indicated that children could not cope and were not settled, particularly those who had never been in Grade R at all.

Respondents B and C:

They indicated that there were great differences between Grade R and Grade 1. Children who did not attend Grade R were the ones who were not coping in Grade 1. Teachers felt that their jobs were simplified by children who transited from Grade R to Grade 1.

##### **4.3.1 Grade 1 Teacher's Views about School Transition**

Respondent A indicated that Grade R was taken as a preparation for Grade 1. She did not view it as a formal school.

Respondents B and C said that most teachers did not view anything about school readiness. They thought that preparation for Grade 1 starts in Grade R.

Respondents A, B and C

- They all agreed that children grasped concepts in different ways.

- Other teachers thought in the same way as Grade R teachers, whereas it is a formal start for schooling.
- That the government should bring books for children to read.

#### **4.3.2 Grade 1 Teachers' Opinion about Assessing Children who are to be Admitted in Classes**

Respondent A: She said that assessing them was not necessary even though the children would not be rejected considering their age. It only helped her to know how to help the children

Respondent B: She said that assessing children from Grade R for admission to Grade 1 classes would be a waste of time as the learners were just progressing from Grade R without the basic knowledge needed in Grade 1.

Respondent C: She said that it would be better if only children from home to Grade R were the one to be assessed for admission before they are admitted in Grade R.

All respondents A, B and C thought that it was better for assessment if it is meant for its purpose because even in Grade R, assessment is done, but it does not serve any purpose because all Grade R learners are automatically progressed to Grade 1 in line with the rule stipulated by the government.

#### **4.3.3 Grade 1 Teachers' View about the Proper Admission of Grade Children into Formal School**

Respondents A and B indicated that proper admission occurred when children were admitted to Grade R when they were five (5) or six (6) years old. This, would better their performance as they would be grown and their intellectual developed.

Respondent C indicated that proper admission for children into Grade 1 would be proper if children were intellectually assessed.

Respondents A, B and C agreed that:

- It would be better if teachers were to give a special test to evaluate children to determine if they were ready for admission in Grade R classes.
- Those children who did not pass the special test should be held back in the same Grade which is Grade R in order to prepare them to cope with the tasks of that particular grade.

#### **4.3.4 Grade 1 Teachers' Views about Formal Schooling**

Respondent A: The child would be wearing uniform unlike while in preschool where they were wearing their different clothes. In the formal school, they sat around tables and on chairs while they were taught.

Respondent B: She said that children sat in groups according to their ability and performance. They no longer sat with their friends.

Respondent C: She responded that formal schooling helped teachers to see the learners' different interests, especially during different activity corners. They stimulated children's different interests.

Respondents A, B and C indicated the following:

- They both agreed that we as black teachers were failing to identify the talent that lies in our children.
- Parents fail to buy them toys to stimulate their talent.
- Parents looked for advice from other people because they failed to observe their own children.
- Teachers and parents could improve career guidance at home and proceed with it at school.

#### **4.3.5 The Impact of Assessing Children**

Respondent A: She responded that she wanted to see the improvement of the children, to identify if there were some gaps and to try to find their causes and their

remedy if possible and to help the child to be assisted by the teachers as an individual at their different pace and capabilities.

Respondents B and C pointed out that they wanted to verify the children's knowledge. Some children were cleverer than others but not in connection with the subject matter being taught. There were children who were naturally quiet but when writing or learning, they were very competent. Assessment becomes the scale or tool to measure their knowledge.

#### **4.3.6 The Effects of Assessing Children**

Respondent A: indicated that the assessment can be negative or positive, for example, if the teacher were to point at a particular child in front of the class and say the child was not coping, that might impact negatively in other children whereas it might not mean anything to other children. It could become a laughing matter to the other children. On the other hand, the child who is praised in the presence of other children develops a positive attitude. Other children who cannot cope together with others can also develop a positive attitude when the teacher is teaching them as individuals in groups. Such children may see the teacher as willing to assist them instead of thinking that they were being punished.

Respondent B: It excites children who are competent but to children who are incompetent, they show no interest at all of being assessed. They think other children are making a mockery out of them. They tend to be the laughing stock of the day. The child who is dull feels stressed or withdrawn as well as being intimidated by the teacher and also by other children.

Respondents A, B and C: They all believed that:

- Children who were capable of learning made or established friendship with teachers most of the times.
- Those who were becoming competent started to show smiles to the teacher.

- The learners who were competent liked to report others who were not competent to the teacher and liked to carry the teachers' bags.

#### **4.3.7 View of Grade 1 Teachers in Connection with the Significance of School Readiness**

Respondent A indicated that a child would be able to hold a pen, speak of other children and would be able to grasp the content matter.

Respondents B and C pointed out that school readiness has an impact because it identifies a child who is ready to progress to the next level.

What was done in Grade R was a laying of foundation for Grade 1; therefore, the foundation should be strong. This will automatically make it easier for the child to work together with teachers in the next level. This process will also inform parents if the child is progressing or not who will in turn, have a clue of their children's work at school.

Respondents A, B and C:

They see school readiness as the paramount factor for progression:

- They believe that it could be good if parents were to sign their children's work or report which may be on a quarterly or monthly basis. By so doing, parents will be in a better position to know what is happening in the class and how their children are performing.
- Exhibition also helps to assess the learners as a cluster where written books, cutting of pictures and colouring are displayed to show the work of children to parents.
- Parents are motivated to go home and assist their children with school work for they can compare their children's work with those of their peers.

#### **4.3.8 The Grade 1 Teacher's Opinion about the Difference between Chronological Age and School Readiness**

Respondent A indicated that age does not mean the child is ready for formal schooling.

The child can be of age to go to a formal school, but not ready for formal education. There is a big difference between chronological age and being ready for school.

Respondents B and C: Their responses were that there were children who are very tall whereas they are younger than their physical appearance.

- There are learners who looked younger than their ages whereas they were chronologically ready for school.
- Some children are of the same age group, but they differ in terms of their pace of development. When coming to their age, they catch up when they reach their birth date. Sometimes they will develop at the end of the year, but this depends on the child as an individual.

#### **4.3.9 Grade 1 Teachers' Opinion about how Often Assessment should be Done**

Respondent A indicated that assessment should be done more often. There are different types of assessment for example, oral and written assessment. When starting a new lesson, assessment should be done to see whether the children have understood the subject matter of the previous lesson. During the lesson, assessment should be done to see if children are grasping the matter. At the end of the lesson, it should be done to see if the children understood the whole subject matter from the start to the end of the lesson.

Respondents B and C responded that learners must be assessed often to ensure that they are always engaged in active learning. For example, the teacher may start to assess the learners in the morning while asking them about their health and other things.

Respondents A, B and C: They all agreed that:

- Children must be assessed quarterly to see their improvement and to establish if there are any setbacks to enable teachers to provide immediate remedial action.
- They wished children were supposed to be taught by the same teacher at the next levels.
- Their school system is in favour of children not progressing with their previous teacher.
- They are of the opinion that if the former teacher is incompetent, it will deprive the children's performance.
- Children will suffer the consequences of teachers who are lazy or those who are often absent from school.
- The teacher would be able to help children, particularly those who were incompetent as the teacher would be knowing them from the previous classes.

#### **4.3.10 Grade 1 Teacher's Opinion in Connection with the Role of Teachers**

Respondent A was of the opinion that the teacher is a motivator, assessor and classroom goals setter.

Respondent B indicated that a teacher is a leader who helps children to walk their journey from childhood to their formal school journey. The teacher works as a compass that directs the children's path.

Respondent C: Her opinion in regarding the role of the teacher is that a teacher is a partner in leading the learner to the learning process.

Respondents A, B and C believed that:

- A teacher should lead by example.
- A teacher should bring warmth into the class.
- Children take a teacher as a nurse and doctor since the teacher must know the children's health.
- Teachers must counsel the parents about the child's condition.
- The teacher is a parent figure.

#### **4.3.11 What is the Impact of Assessment on the Child's Level of Development?**

Respondents A, B and C said that it gives the child self-confidence because assessment:

- helps to develop the child when assessing them orally when playing with others
- helps to point out a child who is hyper active
- serves as a screening tool
- enables a teacher to see leaders when assessing them

#### **4.3.12 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Grade 1 Assessment**

Respondent A indicated that children assessment offers advantages to the teacher and children. It helps the teacher to detect if the child is improving in learning. It can be negative if it is used to identify children to be put into different groups as the last group which may be labelled negatively may be discouraged from exerting more effort in their school work, and this may have adverse effects in the learning process.

Respondents B and C indicated that the disadvantages may not apply to all children. It is not always good for children who cannot perform well and for the teachers.

All respondents A, B and C came to agree that assessment:

- is good if it is meant to help children to improve on their school work.
- helps the teacher to see where there were misunderstanding of new concepts and this may enable the teacher to come up with intervention strategies to correct that the misunderstandings.
- is advantageous to the children if they receive more attention from the teacher.
- is of more benefit to the teacher to see all the children's progress at the same level.
- can help the teacher to remain with the slow child after school if it is possible to facilitate the learning content.



#### **4.3.13 Grade 1 Teacher's View about Parents Helping in Preparing Children for Formal School**

Respondent A thinks that parents may prepare their children for formal school by taking them for registration prior to the opening of the school. They can help them by teaching them simple concepts taught at school.

Respondent B: She thought that it is difficult for parents to help their children at home. Even those who are educated do not know the syllabus. Those who are not educated find it difficult to prepare their children for formal education by teaching them basic school concepts.

Respondent C: Parents who are working or those who work away from home find it difficult to help their children with their school work.

All respondents A, B and C thought it would be better if:

- Parents who have children who are ready to go to school the following year need to get some workshops in preparation for their children for formal schooling.
- It would be better if the Grade R teachers can organise a day with the Grade 1 parents to come to primary school to be oriented.

#### **4.2.14 Grade R Teachers' Opinion about the Notion that not every Child should be in Grade 1**

Respondent A: She has an opinion that not every child should be in Grade 1 because some children are slow learners. Children awakened her interest to investigate the child's date of birth. The passiveness of the child can make the teacher think of visiting the child's home or family to find out if there is a problem that needs serious attention.

Respondent B: She does not agree that a child should be held back. A child should proceed with his/her cohort, whether the child was in Grade R or not

because a child can be admitted straight to Grade 1 without having been to Grade R.

Respondents A, B and C pointed out that there was no need for Grade R assessment, especially at the end of the year as all children would be progressed to Grade 1. There is an argument that a child may start from Grade 1 without having been to Grade R following his age cohort.

#### **4.3.15 Grade 1 Teachers' Opinion on whether a Child must have Developed Holistically for Admission**

Respondents A and B felt it would be better if the child is developed as a whole. The child should have developed intellectually with the ability to think, to perform different activities and being physically active.

Respondent C said that it is not normal for a child to develop holistically in Grade R as development is a process. Children develop differently. Some develop in the month in which they were born, that is the time when they may start to show progress in their school work. Some children can do colouring perfectly but cannot write. Some children can copy from the board but cannot read on their own. Some children would be perfect in reading but still cannot write their names.

#### **4.3.16 The Grade 1 Teachers' Opinion in what is to be Assessed**

Respondent A pointed out that the child must not only be assessed intellectually. Even though the child is weak physically, the child must be encouraged to work and do some different exercises.

Respondents B and C indicated that they assess children by putting a chart on the chalkboard. They ask the children to say something about the picture. They indicated that they:

- assess their listening skills to find out whether the child can repeat what the teacher said.
- assess if the child is able to share with others.

- assess if the child is able to play with other children
- assess if the child is able to copy what is written on the board, etc.

#### **4.3.17 The Nature of Curriculum that is Offered in Grade 1 Classes**

Respondent A indicated that there was more paper work that is more than what the children can handle at their age. The child is supposed to write more than necessary. The child has to finish the workbook, green book, mother tongue book, Maths and Life skills book for each particular term. On top of that, the child must do rhymes and be able to tell a story from a picture, by mere looking at the picture.

Respondents B and C indicated that the policy which is in place, CAPS (Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement), does not contain anything new. It takes so much time to finish the workbooks and this delay the teacher from teaching the learners. As a result, the child could not be taught other things.

#### **4.3.18 Is there any Difference between Children who Attended Grade R before Coming to Grade 1 and those who come from Home to Grade 1?**

Respondents A and B indicated that learners who did not go to Grade R were afraid of other children and teachers. They were not taught different rules concerning formal toilet routine, whereas children who attended Grade R before coming to Grade 1 were taught different rules concerning formal toilet routine. Moreover, children who attended Grade R before coming to Grade 1 can share pencils, crayons and scissors with others whereas children who come straight from home to Grade 1 find it difficult to share pencils, crayons and scissors with other children.

Respondent C indicated that children who did not go to pre-school cried when coming to formal school. They cannot tie shoelace as they were not trained to dress.

All the respondents indicated that Grade R is more important as it enhances children's adjustments to the formal learning environment. Children who did not attend Grade R could not perform well in Grade 1 because they were not properly trained on different things and skills concerning the formal learning environment, for example, socializing with others, sharing toys, food, pencils, crayons, scissors, buttoning shirts and tying shoelaces. Moreover, they lack basic formal toilet training which is an indispensable skill in any formal learning environment.

#### **4.3.19 Grade 1 Teacher's Opinion about New Assessment of Children when they are to be Admitted in Formal School**

Respondents A and B: They said that children are assessed in new methods for entering formal school in Grade R classes. Some of the children would not be able to attend formal school because some parents are poor. They cannot first take their children to pre-schools. Respondent C: Says that it is useless to find new methods when entering formal schooling if progress is automatic by their age.

Respondents A, B and C all thought it could be wise if new methods were introduced that would make the child to be retained in the same class if the child is not ready to progress to Grade 1. This will help teachers not to have a burden of children who are promoted to the next grade when they are not cognitively mature or ready to progress.

#### 4.4 FINDINGS

- The following findings were drawn from the study after data had been analysed. Findings emerged as a result of the consolidation process of teachers' interview responses as well as observations.
- One teacher perceived lateness as a problem in her class. Several children were habitually late for school each day. She perceived this as a problem because children who arrived late consistently missed morning meeting sessions. The teacher perceived this as a problem which resulted in children missing important content and activities that enriched learning in general. In addition, lateness of children had become a problem for the teacher as she may not have time to read what transpired during the morning meeting for each child who arrived late.
- The researcher found it more necessary to identify problems of each individual child in order to enable teachers to help the learners to participate in educational matters with other children.
- A child who has problems cannot participate fully in every activity. The teachers can work smoothly if they let children know beforehand the criteria of what is going to be assessed. This can be accompanied by teachers' interaction with collaboration on how learning should be improved and further research should be conducted on the educational matter. When teachers come together in the interest of children's education, education becomes a priority to both the teacher and the learner. A continuous research based in education of the child should be more emphasized. This will make teachers to upgrade themselves and upgrade the learners' education.

#### 4.5 CONCLUSION

The analysed data reveal the importance of pre-foundation phase base. The pre-foundation phase actually prepared learners, in the long run, for a swift transition from

Grade R to Grade 1. The transition was smooth because a strong foundation that came as a result of early stimulation had physically and psychologically prepared learners to cope with the curricular demands of Grade 1.

Data were collected through interview and observation as presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 also showed how the collected data were analysed and interpreted. In the next chapter, the findings will be summarised, conclusion will be drawn and recommendations made.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### OVERVIEW, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This study focused on the transition of Grade R children to Grade 1 level. This study examined the viewpoints and opinions of teachers with regards to the transition from Grade R to Grade 1 classes.

The study revealed the attitudes of the Grade R and Grade 1 teachers regarding the appropriate assessments that could be used to assess the transition between Grade R and Grade 1 children. The researcher further examined what needs to be done in Grade R and Grade 1 classes to stimulate and enhance development in Grade R and Grade 1 learners.

The researcher found it necessary to concentrate on Grade R and Grade 1 children at Mutshindudi Circuit. This was done to achieve the following objectives:

- To establish what teachers understand about the transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1.
- How do teachers manage the transition of learners from Grade R to Grade 1.

The literature review in this study shows that chronological age alone cannot be used to determine school readiness. The child can be grown age wise but yet not ready for school. A child can be young in terms of age, but ready for formal schooling.

The researcher again pointed out that most children seem to be school ready for their first year in the receptive classes.

The researcher further indicated that the indoor and outdoor activities that are done in Grade R and in Grade 1 classes expedite the children's development and help in

developing children's way of communication. The activities again develop the learners socially. The researcher also pointed out that the different corners that are found in Grade R classes play an important role in developing children physically, mentally and emotionally.

The researcher again indicated the importance of the role that parents of Grade 1 learners can play in developing their children for school readiness. Parents can help in developing their own children in this regard.

The instruments for the study were developed and administered by the researcher. These included interview schedules and observation schedules of Grade R and Grade 1 learners together with their learners. The analysis of data was qualitative in nature.

## **5.2 INFERENCES**

The following inferences were drawn from the study:

### **5.2.1 Inferences Regarding the Interviews with Grade 1 Teachers**

- The Grade 1 teachers indicated that parents should be involved in training their children's transition from home, Grade R to formal education.
- All children progress from Grade R to Grade 1, but some of them were not fully developed as they are experienced problem of mastering certain concepts.
- Teachers have challenges of children who were admitted from home to Grade 1 as they could not cope with those who first attended Grade R, especially in the first term.
- The Grade 1 teachers expecting children who attended Grade 1 to know how to write their papers.



- During term 1 Grade 1 teachers waited their time by completing Grade R curriculum.

### **5.2.2 Inferences Regarding the Interviews with the Grade R Teachers**

The Grade R teachers indicated the problems that children who were admitted to the Grade R class as an automatic admission of age 4½ old encounters.

- The Grade R teachers need children to be assessed first before they were accepted to Grade R classes.
- The Grade R teachers were of the opinion that children who did not first go to Grade R are difficult to handle especially during the first quarter.
- The Grade R teachers further indicated that children who did not go to pre-school are the ones who took time to catch up with the work even after the second quarter.
- Grade R teachers have no authority of holding back a child for a year even if that child is not yet ready for progression to Grade 1 classes because of the age cohort promotion policy.
- The teachers wanted the policy makers to come up with an instrument to assess the children when progressing from Grade R to Grade 1.
- Grade R teachers were even experiencing the same problem as Grade 1 teachers, that of automatic pass from Grade R to Grade 1. This has become a daunting problem.
- The Grade R teachers were also of the opinion that assessment performed its duty of assessing rather than a waste of time.
- The Grade R teachers want the evaluation to be done in order to assist the children. It must also be a tool to measure their ability as teachers.

- A child in Grade R who can stay at home and only attend for the last two quarters automatically progresses to the next level.
- Grade 1 teachers expressed concern on the lack of parental involvement in their children's development.

### **5.2.3 Inferences Regarding the Observation with Grade 1 Classes**

- Indoor activities help the children to stimulate their interest and at the same time they are being developed.
- Outdoors activities help them to develop physically, socially and emotionally.
- Some children who are passive participating in indoor activities are active in outdoor activities.
- Children, who at times passive in learning, do better when teachers call them to stand at the table beside teachers. They complete two tasks or more per day.
- Children develop when playing with others. They are developing their small and large muscles as well as fine and gross motor skills.
- A print-rich classroom environment supports teaching, encourages learning and development.
- The teacher's pitch of voice is a motivator. When a teacher uses a low or moderate pitch children can participate fully with interest.
- The introduction of the lesson plays an important part in the way in which children will follow the teacher's pace.
- The children are grouped according to their performance to support competition among themselves.

#### 5.2.4 Inferences Regarding Observation of Grade R Classes

- The different corners in the classrooms helped the children to develop mentally, physically and emotionally.
- The manner in which children sat on a mat while the teacher is presenting the content made children to participate fully. The teacher can spot nearly every child.
- Content is presented in a stimulating manner that arouses the children's interest to learn.
- The teacher encourages passive children and engages them in productive learning. The teacher let them be free and do as they like, a child may spot a corner of interest.
- Children learn easily by using the charts on the wall or on chalkboard. The chart has a picture and words that match the picture, for example, a picture showing a mother feeding her baby. The words will illustrate this mother feeding her baby.
- Singing rhymes before each lesson helps the children to stay awake and energetic and alert all times.
- The teacher could spot a child who is not concentrating in the lesson and the teacher will help that child. The teacher would try and persuade the child to go to another corner to try something else.
- Children take time in saying different symbols, e.g. the teacher asks children to give a symbol or a sign. The children are all encouraged to say after the teacher and as individuals.
- The classroom environment, due to space and the desk arrangement, influences teaching and learning. It enables the teacher and children freedom of movement.

- Children sit together at times so that children would teach each other within the group. Some children enjoy teaching or assisting their peers during learning, and other children learn better from their friends. This type of inclusivity would also help teachers to identify leaders in the class or within the group.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATION FOR GRADE R TEACHERS**

The following recommendations are made as a result of this research:

- Some Grade R teachers who had been teaching in Foundation Phase before the introduction of Grade R in their schools were complaining about the training they get. They said the trainings they received were not enough; at least they should get four (4) trainings per year.
- They are of the opinion that their work should be monitored from time to time. Only three (3) persons are supervising the whole Vhembe District which makes it impossible for them to monitor all the schools in Vhembe district.
- The government should deploy more supervisors to supervise the Grade R teachers as well as training them to improve their work concerning teaching and learning.
- The Grade R teachers should get children who have attended pre-school (pre-foundation phase) training. This will help to make their work easier and enjoyable.
- The admission policy should be strict in admitting children in Grade R. No child should be admitted without a birth certificate.
- Indoor and outdoor activities should be encouraged every time as they help children to develop holistically.
- There should be a screening tool for pre-school children when coming to the receptive classes, in this case, Grade R.

- There should be a mutual relationship between the parents and the Grade R teachers. This could enhance in the development of the child in formal teaching.
- Grade R and Grade 1 teachers should work hand in hand. They should have discussions in connection with the expectancy of Grade 1 teachers from Grade 1 children.
- The principals should be fully equipped with the knowledge about the work done in Grade R classes. This will enable the principals to monitor the teacher's work adequately and properly.
- The Grade R teachers should form cluster with their nearby schools to share ideas and new information and to help each other with the learning content of the children compared to the policy.
- Assessment should help to evaluate children who have not acquired the subject matter to be retained for the next year in order to be helped to develop in the subject matter. In other words, Grade R teachers are not in favour of the automatic pass as it has been imposed by the government to them. Retention or promotion of learners should be based on the learners' performance
- When most of the children were dealt with as individuals, they performed well.
- The Grade R teachers should keep a checklist or performance list. This helps the teacher to tick each child after performance. This also helps the teacher to keep the record of performance of an individual child.
- The Grade R teachers must start or keep their classes with rich-print. By doing this, they help their children to develop in reading skills.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRADE 1 TEACHERS**

- A child must proceed after mastering certain concepts e.g. vowels, phonics and be able to write his or her name.

- A teacher must know the child by his or her name as well as the family background of the child.
- In Grade 1, children should be taught by teachers who really care for children, who have children's interest at heart.
- The child should be allowed to fail once in a phase and proceed to the next class if that particular child is capable of mastering the Grade R basic concepts.
- Let there be a policy that progresses a child who is ready to progress not because of their policies that does not take the interest and the future of the child.
- Teachers must be trained to discuss issues with the child (social life)
- A child who is coming to Grade 1 should be able to read and write the basics.
- A child should not be sent home or to go home and call the parent when the teacher is not aware whether the child has parents or not.
- The teacher should be caring in such a way that she should keep a pencil for a child who cannot afford to have one due to parental problems.
- Children should be shown love and be encouraged to play and learn.
- Children should be spoken to in such a way that they feel free to tell teachers any problem.
- Teachers should check children with passion in a manner that the teacher can immediately detect problems from the children.

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

It is the researcher's wish that the findings, conclusions and recommendations made in the study will help the policy makers to revise the assessment policies on progression of learners from one grade to the next. Assessment should be of value right from the start. Both pre-school practitioners and Grade R teachers should work together to help children in transition. Parents should be encouraged to help their children at home for school development. There is need for cooperation/collaboration between pre-school practitioners/ teachers and Grade R teachers if the transition from pre-school to Grade R, from Grade R Grade 1, is to be effectively managed.

The policy makers should come up with new screening tools to determine school readiness. The mere fact that the child is 4½ years old does not satisfy the teachers.

The fact that Grade R is a formal preparatory stage is not a valid fact if there are children who can start formal schooling straight from home to Grade 1 when they are older than 4½ years or when they are above five (5) years old. When a child is truly in not ready for school, the researcher thinks that the child should be thoroughly prepared in such a way that there is no question about it. There will be few individuals who can be noticed, e.g. slow learners or those who are mentally retarded.

- A child in Grade 1 must be able to read and write vowels, alphabets and numbers.
- The Grade 1 child should be able to write a name and surname when the child sets foot in the classroom for the first time. Problems would be faced by those who start school in Grade 1, maybe due to the fact that they are above age.
- Children must know Maths, e.g. addition and subtraction. They must also know the phonics.
- Policy makers must amend admission policy to ensure that children are to start Grade 1 while they are seven years old.
- A teacher must make sure that a child in a particular grade must do the whole curriculum.
- Teachers in Grade R and Grade 1 must work as a team (teamwork).

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### GRADE R TEACHER'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What age group do you admit in your school?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. What else do you consider when admitting children?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. Do you think that Grade R education is important? Support your answer.

Yes

No

.....  
.....  
.....

4. Do you think pre-school should be taught only by professional teachers only?

Give reason to your answer.

Yes

No

.....  
.....



.....

5. What problems do you experience when admitting Grade R learners?

.....

.....

.....

6. Do you group the children? If so, how?

Yes

No

.....

.....

.....

7. Is the Grade R all active in the class?

Yes

No

8. What do you do to involve them in learning?

.....

.....

.....

9. How do you treat those who are not interested in learning activities?

.....

.....

.....

10. Are there Grade R who are active outdoors and not active in indoors activities?

Yes

No

11. What do you do to involve all Grade R learners in learning and teaching?

.....  
.....  
.....

12. Is there any difference between children who did not go to Grade R and those who went to Grade R?

Yes

No

13. Do you notice any difference in physical growth development? Support your answer.

Yes

No

.....  
.....  
.....

14. How do you assess them when they come to Grade R?

.....  
.....  
.....

15. Do you support the idea of Grade R children to be assessed first when you admit them? Give reason for your answer.

Yes

No

.....  
.....  
.....

16. What do you understand by early childhood transition in Grade R?

.....  
.....  
.....

17. Can you define negative and positive transition?

.....  
.....  
.....

18. How do you prepare children for transition?

.....  
.....  
.....

19. Is assessment important in Grade R? Substantiate your answer.

Yes

No

.....  
.....  
.....

20. How do you assess your children?

.....  
.....  
.....

21. How often is the assessment done?

.....  
.....  
.....

## APPENDIX B

### GRADE 1 TEACHER'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What do you expect from Grade 1 children when they are admitted in Grade R classrooms?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. Do you firstly evaluate or assess them? If Yes or No, support your answer.

Yes

No

.....  
.....  
.....

3. What do you understand by transitional gap?

.....  
.....  
.....

4. What do you think can minimize these transitional gaps?

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Do pre-schools have anything to do in easing the transition to Grade 1 classes?

.....  
.....  
.....

6. Do Grade 1 children behave differently when in class and outdoors?

Substantiate your answer.

Yes

No

.....  
.....  
.....

7. Do the Grade 1 learners seem to be ready for school entrance?

Yes

No

8. What do you use to assess them?

.....  
.....  
.....

9. Do you think the assessment is appropriate? Give reason for your answer.

Yes

No

.....  
.....  
.....

10. Which areas do you assess in the Grade 1 receptive class?

.....  
.....  
.....

11. Do you have a curriculum that includes the Grade 1's special needs?

Yes

No

12. What is the provision that you have for learners with special needs?

.....  
.....  
.....

13. What are you doing as a teacher to work with children that are perceived as not yet developed for formal school?

.....  
.....  
.....

14. What tools does the whole school use to assess children?

.....  
.....  
.....

15. Is there any difference between test and assessment?

Yes

No

16. What do you do as a teacher to help assess children in your class?

.....  
.....  
.....

17. What is meant by children who are not ready to enter receptive class?

.....  
.....  
.....

18. What do you understand by negative assessment?

.....  
.....  
.....

19. What do you understand by positive assessment?

.....  
.....  
.....

20. Do you have extra classes for children who did not perform to the teacher's expectations?

Yes

No

21. What do you use to progress children to the next level?

.....  
.....  
.....

22. What do you think policy makers must do to receive Grade 1 who did not first enter Grade R?

.....  
.....  
.....

23. Foundation teachers, what must they do to equip themselves for the coming children into the first receptive class?

.....  
.....  
.....

24. Is there anything that can be done to minimise the transitional gap between Grade R and Grade 1 children?

Yes

No

25. What do you understand by the word school readiness?

.....

.....

.....



## APPENDIX C

### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

1. What do you expect to see from children who are in your classroom?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. Do they behave in an accepted manner?

Yes

No

3. How do you teachers ask questions to children?

.....  
.....  
.....

4. What is your expectation of children when answering the questions?

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Do you think assessment is important for defining school readiness?

Yes

No

6. What do you understand by school readiness?

.....  
.....  
.....

7. What makes the difference between age and school readiness?

.....

.....

.....

8. Do children transit in a positive or negative way?

Yes

No

9. What is your opinion about transition?

.....

.....

.....

## APPENDIX D

### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN

1. Do children settle down in an acceptable manner?

Yes

No

2. How do the children listen to the teachers?

.....  
.....

3. How do they respond to the questions?

.....  
.....

4. Do they play together, and share their toys or food?

Yes

No

5. Do the children play with each other during break?

Yes

No

6. Do they seem to be coping with the subject content?

7. Are they ready for formal schooling?

Yes

No

8. Is their age in line with performance in class?

Yes

No

## APPENDIX E

### OBSERVATION SCHEDULE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Does print-rich classroom broaden the children's vocabulary and knowledge of the subject matter?

Yes

No

2. Does the classroom environment encourage and promote children to learn new concepts?

Yes

No

3. Does the language used to label object in the classroom promote children's transition?

Yes

No

4. Does classroom environment encourage and promote socialization among children?

Yes

No

## APPENDIX F

### REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

P.O. Box 1007  
Sibasa  
0970

19 October 2017

The District Manager  
Department of Social Development  
Private Bag X5009  
Thohoyandou  
0950

Dear Sir/Madam

### REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MUTSHINDUDI CIRCUIT AREA

The above matter has reference.

I would like to request for permission to conduct research in a sampled primary school situated at Mutshindudi Circuit area in your district, which has the Foundation Phase. The topic of my mini-dissertation is: **The Transition between Grade R and Grade 1.**

Sample will include one primary school, three teachers from Grade R and three teachers from Grade 1.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours Faithfully

Tshililo Hazel Maphiri  
Student: University of Venda

## APPENDIX G

### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: VHEMBE DISTRICT

#### APPENDIX G PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



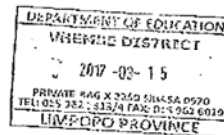
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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**  
VHEMBE DISTRICT

CONFIDENTIAL

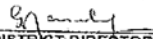
REF: 14/7/R  
ENG: MATIBE M.S  
TEL: 015 962 1029

MAPHIRI TSHILOLO HAZEL  
P.O. BOX 1007  
SIBASA  
0970



PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN VHEMBE DISTRICT: MUTSHUNDUDI CIRCUIT.

1. The above matter refers.
2. You are hereby informed that your request for permission to conduct research on "THE TRANSITION BETWEEN GRADE R AND GRADE 1 AT MUTSHUNDUDI CIRCUIT" has been granted.
3. You expected to adhere to research ethical considerations, particularly those relating to confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent of your research subjects.
4. Kindly inform circuit manager and principals of selected schools prior to commencing your data collection.
5. Wishing you the best in your study.

  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR

15/03/2017  
DATE

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN VHEMBE DISTRICT : MUTSHUNDUDI CIRCUIT.[Type text] Page 1

Thonoyandou Government Building, Old Parliament, Block D, Private Bag X2250, SIBASA, 0970

## APPENDIX H

### EDITOR'S LETTER

Office No. 06  
Department of English  
University of Venda  
P/Bag X 5050  
Thohoyandou  
0950

30 January 2018

To Whom It May Concern

This serves to confirm that I proof-read and edited the dissertation entitled "The Transition of Learners from Grade R to Grade 1 in Mutshindudi Circuit, Vhembe District" by Tshililo Hazel Maphiri, Student Number:11503489.

Regards

*V.Demana*

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