

# *Classroom Observation Study*

## **THE EARLY GRADE READING STUDY (EGRS)**

August 2017



**basic education**  
Department:  
Basic Education  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**unicef**   
unite for children



## Acknowledgments

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The **DBE** would like to acknowledge the exceptional work of Dr Cheryl Reeves in the design of the instruments that were used in the data collection for this report, as well as her insightful comments on this report. For invaluable comments and editorial contributions to this report, the **DBE** is grateful to Professor Brahm Fleisch, Associate Professor Ursula Hoadley and Dr Stephen Taylor. Gratitude is also extended to **UNICEF** for funding this study, as well as to Nompumelelo Mohohlwane and the colleagues in the Research, Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate in the **Department of Basic Education** for their assistance in the realisation of this report. The report has been compiled by Dr Janeli Kotzé, contracted to oversee the classroom observation study.



# CONTENTS

List of Figures:_____	1
List of Tables:_____	1
1.Introduction_____	2
2.Background_____	3
3.Study Design_____	5
3.1.Sample_____	6
3.2.Fieldworker Recruitment_____	8
3.3.Fieldworker Training_____	8
3.4.School Visits_____	9
3.5.Data Collection Quality Assurance_____	9
3.6.Data Capture_____	10
4.Results of the Lesson Observations_____	10
4.1.Profile of Teachers in Classroom Observation Study_____	10
4.2.The Teaching and Learning Environment_____	11
4.2.1.The Physical Conditions in the Classrooms_____	11
4.2.2.The Print Richness of the Classrooms_____	12
4.3.Classroom Management_____	14
4.4.Planning and Curriculum Coverage_____	17
4.5.Instructional Practices_____	21
4.5.1.Listening and Speaking_____	22
4.5.2.Use of Learning and Teaching Support Material_____	22
4.5.3.Literacy and Language Development_____	24
4.5.4.Opportunities to Write_____	25
4.5.5.Opportunities to Read_____	24
4.5.6.Cognitive Demand and Homework_____	30
4.5.7.Assessment_____	31
4.5.8.Teachers' Approach to Literacy Teaching_____	32
4.6.Support Received_____	32
5.Theme Differences_____	34
6.Conclusion_____	35
Bibliography_____	37
Appendix:_____	39

# LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: Teacher Age Profile
- Figure 2: Main Differences with regards to the Teaching and Learning Environment
- Figure 3: Print-Richness of the Teaching and Learning Environment
- Figure 4: Gender Differences in Learner Concentration and Discipline
- Figure 5: Factors that Slow Down Teaching to Some or a Large Extent
- Figure 6: Documents Used to Compile Daily Lesson Plans
- Figure 7: Curriculum Coverage in Workbooks versus Teachers' Expected Coverage
- Figure 8: Opportunities to Handle Storybooks or Graded Readers
- Figure 9: Instructional Practices Relating to the Teaching of Writing
- Figure 10: Average Number of Pages of Written Work in DBE Workbooks and in Exercise Books
- Figure 11: Average Number of Writing Exercises per Writing Activity
- Figure 12: Cognitive Demand of Activities
- Figure 13: Theme and sub-Theme Index Differences

# LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1: Sample Characteristics
- Table 2: Days of the Week during which Lessons were Observed
- Table 3: Materials Displayed on the Classroom Walls
- Table 4: Lesson Plan Contents and Use
- Table 5: Instructional Practices that Relates to the Teaching of Reading
- Table 6: Learning and Teaching Environment
- Table 7: Classroom Management
- Table 8: Planning and Curriculum Coverage
- Table 9: Teachers' Instructional Practices-Listening and Speaking
- Table 10: Teachers' Instructional Practices-Use of Learning and Teaching Support Material
- Table 11: Teachers' Instructional Practices-Literacy and Language Development
- Table 12: Teachers' Instructional Practices- Opportunities to Write
- Table 13: Average Number of Written Exercises in the DBE Workbooks and Exercise Books
- Table 14: Teachers' Instructional Practices- Opportunities to Read
- Table 15: Teachers' Instructional Practices- Cognitive Demand and Homework
- Table 16: Teachers' Instructional Practices- Assessment
- Table 17: Approches to Literacy and Teaching
- Table 18: Teaching Support Received for Setswana Home Language as Reported by Teachers
- Table 19: Theme and Sub-Theme Indices

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading for meaning is a foundational skill that is critical in establishing an individual's life-long learning trajectory. The South African curriculum recognises the importance of early grade reading, and places a strong focus on establishing a firm foundation of basic reading in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1 – 3). This is particularly important since the curriculum assumes that learners have learnt how to read by Grade 4 and all future learning is dependent on the mastery of this skill during the Foundation Phase. To add to the complexity, learners are taught in their home language during the Foundation Phase, but are required to further their schooling in either English or Afrikaans from Grade 4. In practice, most South African learners attend schools in which English is the language of learning and teaching from Grade 4 onwards. The South African curriculum is currently based on the principle that the acquisition of a second language is correlated to the proficiency of a learner in his or her home language. For this reason, it is necessary to investigate new ways to strengthen reading and literacy in the Foundation Phase in learners' home language.

It is, however, no secret that South African learners are performing disappointingly low on international assessments of language and literacy. The prePIRLS assessment of 2011 assessed reading literacy of Grade 4 learners in the language their school use as the language of learning and teaching in Grades 1 – 3. From this assessment it emerged that 58% of the Grade 4 learners assessed could not read for meaning in any language and that 29% of the Grade 4 learners were completely illiterate (Spaull, 2016). These proportions differ dramatically among provinces, with only 11% of learners in the Western Cape being deemed as illiterate, but 50% in Limpopo. In the North West province, 29% of learners were illiterate and 66% of learners performed at a level which indicated that they could not read for meaning (Spaull, 2016).

Education reform research has mostly focussed on the redistribution of resources and curriculum reform in the pursuit to improving the state of education in South Africa. Although necessary, these policies have not had a commensurate impact on learner outcomes. In the past few years there has been a shift in the national research paradigm, with researchers and policy makers being increasingly concerned with identifying interventions that has proven effects, based on convincing evidence. More specifically, recognising the critical role that teachers play in realising learner outcomes, research has become more focussed on finding reliable evidence about instructional interventions that affect teaching, and subsequently learning (Fleisch & Schoer, 2014; Taylor & Watson, 2015; Fleisch, et al., 2017).

The Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS) was designed to fill the research gap on the impact of interventions on the instructional practices of early grade teachers. The study took the form of a Randomised Control Trial (RCT) that evaluates the impact of three different interventions in the North West Province. RCT's are widely accepted as the 'gold standard' of evaluating the impact of interventions on learner outcomes. Although effective in determining whether interventions are affecting learner performance, RCT's do not have the ability to provide insights into the specific mechanisms through which the interventions work as they often measure programmes which consists of various different components. It is therefore necessary to supplement RCT results with mixed-methods research to get a more comprehensive understanding of the specific instructional practices that have changed, as well as to determine the strengths and weakness of the interventions

## Background

that were implemented. A classroom observation study was therefore designed with the purpose of providing a more in-depth understanding of the different mechanisms at work in schools in the various intervention groups.

This report is based on the results of a classroom observation study that was conducted in 60 of the schools that participated in the study and comprise of schools from the two interventions that aimed to change instructional practices among teachers, and the control schools. The study sets out to answer three research questions specifically:

- A) Which differences were observed in the instructional practices of teachers among the three groups of schools?**
- B) Were there any differences in the curriculum coverage among the three different groups of schools?**
- C) Which aspects of the two interventions seem to have been successful and which aspects will need to be changed in future iterations of the programme?**

## 2. BACKGROUND

Policy-makers, donors and applied educational researchers have been focussing on three major policy initiatives to improving teaching and learning: **(1)** increasing resources; **(2)** increasing accountability or; **(3)** reforming school governance. However, the assumption underlying each of these policy initiatives is that teachers will be able to improve their instructional practice if supplied with sufficient resources and incentives (Raudenbush, 2005). However, this assumption does not necessarily hold in all contexts and it is increasingly recognised that the causal agent to changing learner performance is essentially change in teacher instructional practice. Structured pedagogy programmes have therefore become popular in recent years as they seek to address several barriers that schools and teachers face in their efforts to improve learning outcomes. These barriers often include inadequately trained teachers, lack of appropriate learning and teaching materials, curricula that are not aligned to the ability of the teachers or the learners, and ineffective instructional practices (Snilstveit, et al., 2016). Often the focus of intervention programmes has been to address barriers regarding physical resources, but it is now recognised that merely providing teachers with resources, without training and supporting them on how best to organise instruction, will have minimal impact on learner outcomes.

The education system in South Africa is a prime example of this phenomenon, where a strong focus on the redistribution of physical and financial resources has not had a commensurate impact on learner performance (Van der Berg, 2009; Taylor, 2011). The vast array of rich qualitative research done on classroom observation case studies reveals that, despite the substantial resource transfers, instructional practices in poor rural schools are characterised by a narrow set of pedagogical techniques. Early-grade teachers in poorer schools are often observed using instructional practices such as choral recitation, copying from the board and rote-learning, all techniques that have been found to be highly ineffective in teaching (Macdonald, 2002; Macdonald, 2006; Pretorius & Mokhwesana, 2009; Pretorius & Currin, 2010; Reeves, et al., 2008).

There is growing evidence in South Africa that ascribes school underperformance to unstructured teaching practices, in particular in terms of lesson planning, pedagogy and inadequate curriculum coverage (Taylor, 2013; Hoadley, 2012; Fleisch & Christie, 2004). More recently the CAPS Implementation Evaluation also found that the implementation of the current curriculum is grossly inefficient in the majority of the schools that were observed as part of the evaluation. The report furthermore found that the progress in schools were generally slowed down due to time wasted on non-timetable activities, by the 'pedestrian pace' of the lessons and the low cognitive demand of the activities that learners were engaged in (DPME, forthcoming).

Given this context, increasing resources, increasing accountability or reforming school governance will not lead to the desired learning outcomes. Structured pedagogy programmes in other developing countries have been found to result in relatively large improvements in test scores for both language and mathematics (Piper, et al., 2014; Nonoyama-Tarumi & Bredenberg, 2009). Based on this, the Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS) took the approach of a structured pedagogy programme by providing teachers with (1) scripted lesson plans; (2) teacher capacity building; and (3) learning and teaching support materials (LTSM). The study then investigated the influence of three different targeted interventions on the reading and literacy outcomes of learners in Grades 1 and 2. The study has been designed as a Randomised Control Trial which evaluates the impact of three different interventions on learner Home Language proficiency in the early grades. Two of the interventions focused on changing teacher instructional practice, whereas the third intervention targeted parenting practices. To evaluate the impact and efficiency of the interventions, learners were tested at the start of Grade 1 (baseline), at the end of the first year (midline) and finally at the end of Grade 2 (endline).

The interventions that were targeted at changing teacher instructional practice entailed teachers receiving scripted lesson plans, graded readers, posters, flash cards and other learning and teaching support material. The teachers in both intervention 1 and intervention 2 received two days of training at the start of each semester each year. The training focussed specifically on methodologies to teaching early grade literacy and the structure of the lesson plans provided to teachers. The teachers in intervention 2 also received additional training through a reading coach who visited them on a monthly basis. The reading coaches supported teachers by observing their lessons and providing constructive feedback, modelling various methodologies if the teacher needed additional help, encouraging teachers and monitoring whether teachers were keeping up with the curriculum. The third intervention focused on parental involvement by conducting weekly training sessions with parents focussing on strengthening parents' awareness of practices that would encourage the development of their children's' literacy and language development at home.

From the quantitative impact evaluation, the results after two years of implementation revealed that both interventions 1 and 2 were having a significant impact on learning gains, whereas no significant impact was observed on intervention 3. These results warranted further investigation into the mechanisms which are effecting the change that was observed in learner outcomes in interventions 1 and 2. The results also showed that much more planning and formative research will need to be conducted before designing another parental involvement intervention.



## 3. STUDY DESIGN

Interventions 1 and 2 have been designed on the premise that an intervention targeted at changing teachers' instructional practices will lead to improvements in learner achievement. The quantitative evaluation has focussed specifically on assessing the improvements in learner achievement, but was unable to collect comprehensive data to assess the change in teacher instructional practice. The purpose of the Classroom Observation Study was to collect systematic and robust evidence on the changes in teachers' practice to determine which practises have changed. Furthermore, it is also important to determine which factors of the programme were successful in changing instructional practice, and which elements were less successful in encouraging change in teacher behaviour. The classroom observation study was therefore conducted to establish the extent to which instructional practice has shifted under the impact of the interventions and to suggest ways in which to strengthen training and administrative support going forward with the early grade learning research programme.

Interest in classroom observations have grown in recent years as it became a popular means to measure teacher development, teacher evaluation and changed teacher behaviour as a result of classroom-based interventions (Hill, et al., 2012). These studies have contributed many important insights into the common factors and differences between effective and ineffective classrooms and teaching practices, by capturing and comparing the activities within a classroom that relate to student learning (Reeves, et al., 2008; Taylor, et al., 2013; Hoadley & Galant, 2016; McDonald, et al., 2009; Macdonald, 2006; Aploon-Zokufa, 2013).

In conducting classroom observation studies, researchers are faced with a trade-off: the richness and comprehensiveness of the data versus the number of classrooms observed. Increasing the number of classrooms allows researchers to investigate trends within a cluster of classrooms. This, however, comes at the cost of the richness of the data due to the importance of the comparability between the different observations. This risk of losing comparability increases as the number of observations increase given the various sources of variance that can enter in classroom observational data through mechanisms such as the sampling of lessons, differences among fieldworkers and the subjective nature of the instrument used (Hill, et al., 2012). Heeding the recommendations made by Hill, et al. (2012), the EGRS classroom observation study was created using an 'observational system' comprising of quality observational instruments, high-quality, well-trained fieldworkers and robust scoring designs in order to minimise the risk of unreliable (and therefore incomparable) classroom observations.

The Classroom Observation Study was conducted from the 10th to the 28th of October 2016 in 60 of the schools that participated in the Early Grade Reading Study. A random sample of 20 schools from each of the control, intervention 1 and intervention 2 groups were chosen to form part of the study. 60 schools were considered as the optimal number of schools in which to conduct the Classroom Observation Study as this would allow for enough schools in each of the intervention groups to identify various trends.

In each of the schools, three different types of evidence were collected: (1) the lessons observed; (2) the evidence of work done in learners' work or exercise books, as well as the review of various teaching documents and; (3) the information from the teacher based on an interview. Fieldworkers were instructed to randomly select one of the Grade 2 classes and request to visit that classroom specifically. Fieldworkers were requested to observe a Setswana Home Language lesson of at least one hour, conduct an interview with the Grade 2 teacher and to randomly select the exercise and workbooks of two learners in the classroom. Structure and routine forms the basis of the scripted lesson plans that were provided to teachers in the intervention 1 and 2 schools. The lesson plans were therefore designed with specific activities always taking place on the same day of the week. Teachers were trained and coached to understand this routine with the idea that it would become second nature to both them and their learners, thereby improving time on task. This routine, however, means that there would be certain days in which certain activities would inevitably not be observed during a lesson observation (for example the extended writing activities only took place on Fridays). Furthermore, the same structure and routines will likely not be observed in the control schools. The lesson observation instrument was designed, bearing in mind these complexities.

### 3.1. Sample

The Classroom Observation Study sampling strategy was influenced by the research questions which aim to specifically identify which aspects of the programme were effective in changing teaching practices. It was therefore necessary to observe teachers and classrooms where the programme was implemented with a higher degree of fidelity.<sup>2</sup> A specific sampling strategy was therefore followed to bias the probability of including schools that showed higher learning gains between the baseline and midline assessments. Schools from four different categories were selected from each intervention group using the following criteria:

1. **6 Urban Schools**
2. **5 high-performing schools**
3. **5 low-performing schools**
4. **4 schools with high learning gains between the baseline and midline assessments.**<sup>3</sup>

Table 1 below shows the characteristics of the sample that was subsequently chosen, relative to the larger study sample. Of the 60 schools that were randomly selected, 19 of the schools (32%) were from the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district, whereas 41 schools (68%) were from the Ngaka Modiri Molema district. These proportions are in line with the proportions of schools in the full sample, with 23% of schools in the full sample being in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district and 73% from the Ngaka Modiri Molema district. 38 of the schools in the Classroom Observation Study are situated in a rural area, whereas 22 of the schools are situated in an urban setting. This distribution of schools is once again in line with the full sample of 230 schools participating in the EGRS study. Table 1 shows that the sample is also well representative of the full sample with regards to teacher characteristics.

<sup>1</sup> Three different instruments were employed to collect the information:

(1) a lesson observation instrument;  
 (2) a document review instrument and;  
 (3) a teacher interview instrument.

<sup>2</sup> Given the sample size of 20 schools in each intervention arm (60 schools in total), a decision was taken to not specifically focus on statistically significant differences among the two intervention groups and the control group. However, to ensure consistency in the reporting of differences, the author decided that notable differences among the two intervention groups and the control group will only be stated if the difference exceeds five schools.

<sup>3</sup> The baseline assessments were conducted at the start of Grade 1, whereas the midline assessments were conducted at the end of Grade 1, after a year of intervention implementation.

*Study Design cont...***Table 1: Sample Characteristics**

		% In Full Study	% In CO Study
<b>School Characteristics</b>	Urban	30.9%	36.7%
	Quintile 1	48.7%	41.7%
	Quintile 2	28.3%	25.0%
	Quintile 3	23.0%	33.3%
	Mean Baseline Score	-0.003	-0.020
	Mean Midline Score	-0.003	0.029
	Mean Endline Score	-0.015	0.008
<b>Teacher Characteristics</b>	Average teacher age	48.320	46.519
	Average teacher experience	17.086	16.880
	Average teacher FP experience	14.446	14.137

Given the structure and routines in the scripted lesson plans, it is useful to know the distribution of fieldwork over the days of the week. Table 2 below shows that the overall spread across the days of the week was relatively even, but that the distribution among the intervention groups were less even. Anecdotal evidence suggest that learners and teachers are more likely to be absent on Mondays and Fridays, and it is therefore good to note that there are no large differences between the lesson observations on these days specifically. The largest differences in the days on which lessons were observed were among Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, but this difference is not considered a risk in biasing the results since the routine in the lesson plans on these days cover the same skills and activities.

**Table 2: Days of the Week during which Lessons were Observed**

	Number	Percentage	C	T1	T2
Monday	12	20%	5	4	3
Tuesday	11	18%	2	4	5
Wednesday	11	18%	6	1	4
Thursday	13	22%	3	7	3
Friday	13	22%	4	4	5

## 3.2. Fieldworker Recruitment

During the inception meeting with the instrument developer, Dr Cheryl Reeves, a concern was raised that the fieldworkers needed to have an in-depth understanding of Setswana and the teaching of home language in the Foundation Phase to be able to collect qualitative lesson observation data. The depth and complexity of the instruments that were used in the Classroom Observation Study was dependent on having fieldworkers who are both proficient in Setswana and have a specialised understanding of teaching Home Language in the Foundation Phase.

Given these requirements fieldworkers were recruited using the following minimum criteria:

- 1) At least a Bachelor's degree in Foundation Phase teaching
- 2) Fluency in reading and writing in English
- 3) Valid driver's license and regular driving experience

Preference was given to individuals who:

- 1) Have completed or are busy completing their post-graduate studies in Foundation Phase teaching
- 2) Have previous research experience particularly in academic disciplines such as linguistics or foundation phase teaching
- 3) Are proficient in Setswana

Based on these criteria, six fieldworkers were recruited to collect data for the Classroom Observation Study. One of the fieldworkers was not proficient in Setswana, but was highly skilled with regards to the teaching of Home Language in the foundation phase. She was therefore considered to be suitable as long as she was accompanied by a Setswana speaking translator. A Setswana speaking intern from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) accompanied her to assist with the translation. Overall the fieldworkers who were contracted for the study were highly capable researchers who came with a great deal of experience.

## 3.3. Fieldworker Training

The fieldworker training was conducted for three days from the 10th to the 12th of October 2016 at the Department of Basic Education. The training workshop was led by Dr Cheryl Reeves and specifically focussed on training fieldworkers in administering the instruments with the purpose of standardising data collection among the different fieldworkers. A more detailed description of the fieldworker training is available in the Draft Report on the Instrument Development by Dr Cheryl Reeves.

### 3.4. School Visits

In preparation for the school visits, schools were phoned and emailed a week in advance by the DBE to alert them to the data collection. Fieldworkers were also provided with an official letter addressed to principals, which was signed by the Director of Research Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation at the DBE, as proof that this is a study which was endorsed by the DBE.

Each fieldworker was expected to visit ten schools allocated to her. The first day of fieldwork was scheduled to commence on the 13th of October 2016 and the last day as the 26th of October 2016. Two of the fieldworkers had prior commitments during on selected day during this period. It was arranged for them to finish their fieldwork on the 28th of October 2016.

During the data collection period there were two separate municipal service delivery strikes, one in Zeerust and the other in Mahikeng. These strikes meant that either roads were closed and therefore prevented people from reaching the school, or the violent nature of the strike had forced schools to close for the day. Given these protests, the original school visit schedule was adapted to ensure that all the schools were visited during the study period.

The Classroom Observation Study was conducted just before the start of the end line quantitative data collection. Although best efforts were made by the DBE to clearly communicate to schools that they will be visited twice by data collectors during the fourth term, some schools were still confused as to when they should have been visited. This, however, is probably to the advantage of the Classroom Observation Study, as teachers were not always prepared to provide a 'model' Home Language lesson for the observation.

No issues were experienced in gaining access to schools, with most schools being receptive to the fieldworkers. In one school the fieldworkers were asked to wait in the staff room for roughly an hour. Later during the interview it emerged that the Grade 2 teachers prepared a last minute lesson together during that waiting period. In 93% of the classes observed, the usual Grade 2 teacher was observed teaching the lesson. In three of the schools visited this was not the case with the usual teacher being absent.

### 3.5. Data Collection Quality Assurance

Although specific Interrater Reliability tests were not conducted from the onset, certain processes were followed to ensure a high level of reliability between fieldworkers. One such process was the collection and evaluation of the filled out instruments after the first two days of data collection, and analysing the quality of the data, as well as identifying any potential problems in the fieldworkers' interpretation of the questions. Some issues were identified specifically relating to the internal consistency between certain questions. It was evident that some of the responses to follow-up questions were not consistent with the responses that were provided in the base question. In the document review instrument specifically, fieldworkers were found to misinterpret the question on counting the number of pages of exercises completed by learners in their exercise books and in their DBE workbooks. These questions were followed up with a question requesting the fieldworker to count the number of pages completed of which the majority of the written work comprised of one of

seven activities respectively (for instance the number of pages of writing dedicated to the writing of whole words). After this initial analysis, fieldworkers were contacted to be made aware of these issues and were asked to be specifically cognisant of these issues in their other visits. Fieldworkers were further requested to be more diligent in ensuring that there was consistency between the responses in the instruments. Finally, the questions relating to the number of completed pages of written work were once again explained to clarify any misunderstanding.

The project manager visited at least one school with each of the fieldworkers to ensure that there was some standardisation among the fieldworkers.

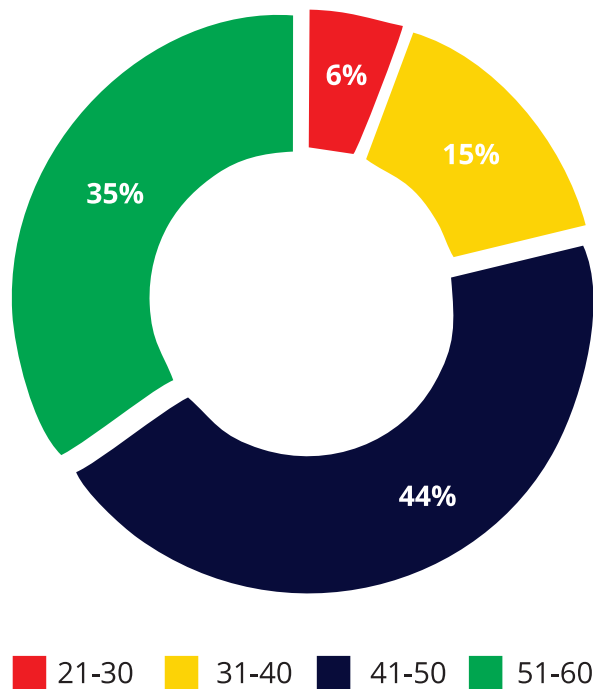
### **3.6. Data Capture**

The data was captured by the Research Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate in the Department of Basic Education. Three interns assisted in capturing the three different instruments on a data capturing template in Excel. The project manager quality assured 10% of the captured sample to ensure that the quality of the data captured is of an acceptable standard.

## **4. RESULTS OF THE LESSON OBSERVATIONS**

### **4.1. Profile of Teachers in Classroom Observation Study**

The Grade 2 teachers who participated in the Classroom Observation Study largely mirror the Grade 2 teachers who have been participating in the larger EGRS study. The average age of the teachers in the Classroom Observation Study was 65.2 years, whereas that average age of teachers in the full EGRS Study was 48.32 years. With the average age of the Grade 2 teachers being so high, it is not surprising that 68% of the teachers in the sample were above the age of 40 years old, and 30% were above the age of 50 (figure 1). The implication of the higher average age is therefore that a third of the Grade 2 teachers will be retiring over the next ten years. However, only one teacher indicated that she would be retiring in 2017 and will therefore not carry on teaching Grade 2 in the following year. With regards to the continuity of the Grade 2 teachers in the Grade 2 classrooms the following year, two thirds of the teachers, said with certainty that they will be teaching Grade 2 in 2017. Through the EGRS study, teachers receive training only for a year, but it is expected that the resultant changed teaching practices would continue to benefit learners in future years. It is therefore encouraging in terms of the sustainability of the study that two-thirds of teachers would be teaching the same in the grade in 2018. Finally, 73% of the teachers in the Classroom Observation Study stated that they were specialised in the Foundation Phase. This response is consistent across the two intervention groups and the control group that were sampled.

**Results of Lesson Observations cont...****Figure 1: Teacher Age Profile**

## 4.2. The Teaching and Learning Environment

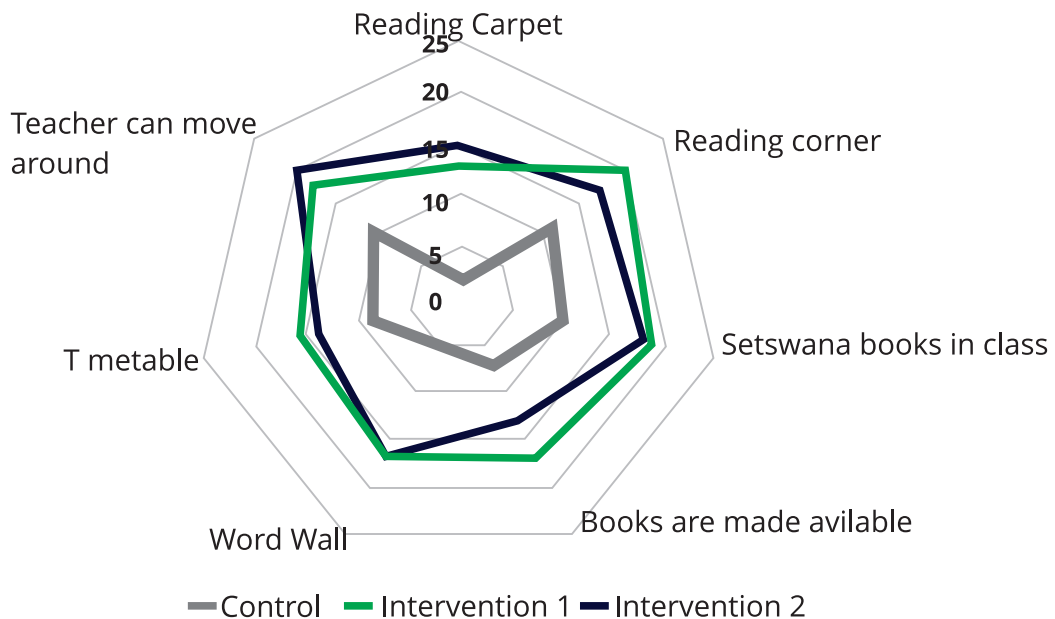
The lesson observation instrument was designed to collect data on various aspects of the teaching and learning environment, including the print richness of the classroom, the class size, the availability of reading material, as well as the overall physical appearance of the classroom.<sup>4</sup> Fieldworkers were instructed to fill out the questions relating to these topics specifically either before the start of the Setswana Home Language Lesson or after the lesson, since these questions are not dependent on observing the teacher's teaching.

### 4.2.1 The Physical Conditions in the Classroom

Overall the physical appearance of the classrooms did not vary notably between the intervention and control groups. It is encouraging to recognise that the largest majority of classrooms contained the basic infrastructure necessary for teaching, including a chalkboard, adequate seating and sufficient desk space. The classrooms were mostly arranged in a manner which allowed all learners to see the teacher and in general the classrooms were considered to be clean.

The main difference between the intervention and control classrooms, however, was the availability of a reading carpet or a space which all learners were familiar with as a dedicated shared reading space. Figure 2 shows a spider diagram of the prevalence of certain components which constitute a conducive teaching and learning environment in the Foundation Phase. From this figure it is clear that a shared reading space (reading carpet) was only observed in two of the control classrooms, whereas such a space was much more prevalent in the intervention schools. The largest majority of classrooms in the intervention schools were also arranged in such a manner that the teacher could move around the classroom with ease, whereas this was the case in only half of the control schools.

<sup>4</sup>Refer to Table 6 in the Appendix for response frequencies related to the teaching and learning environment.

**Figure 2 : Main Differences with regards to the Teaching and Learning Environment**

#### 4.2.2. The Print Richness of the Classrooms

There is general consensus in the field of literacy and language development that the amount of exposure to print will have an important impact on a learners' literacy and language development. However, both internationally and locally it has been found that the print-richness of classrooms vary significantly between low and high socio-economic settings (Duke, 2000; Pretorius & Lephala, 2011). Learners in low socio-economic settings mostly come from print-poor homes where they are not often exposed to reading and therefore not inculcated into the habit of reading (Boakye, 2012). It is therefore important for schools to be environments where learners are exposed to print-material so as to engage them in reading that is pleasurable.

Using the classroom observation instrument, the print richness of the sampled classrooms was captured by noting the presence of commercial posters, flashcards, the Grade 2 timetable, learners' work on the classroom walls and the availability of books in the classroom. Fieldworkers were requested to take note of these elements either before the start of the lesson or after the lesson had taken place, as the capturing of this information is not dependent on the teaching of the Home Language lesson.

Figure 3 shows the large differences between the intervention and control groups with regards to the print-richness of the classrooms. All of the intervention 2 classrooms and most of the intervention 1 classrooms had a dedicated reading corner whereas in the control classrooms this was observed less often. In addition, the largest majority of intervention schools had books available in Setswana for learners to read, and it seemed as if the books were regularly made available to learners in the class. Finally, the intervention schools were more likely than the control schools to have the high frequency words systematically organised on a word wall, as well as have the Grade 2 time table on display.



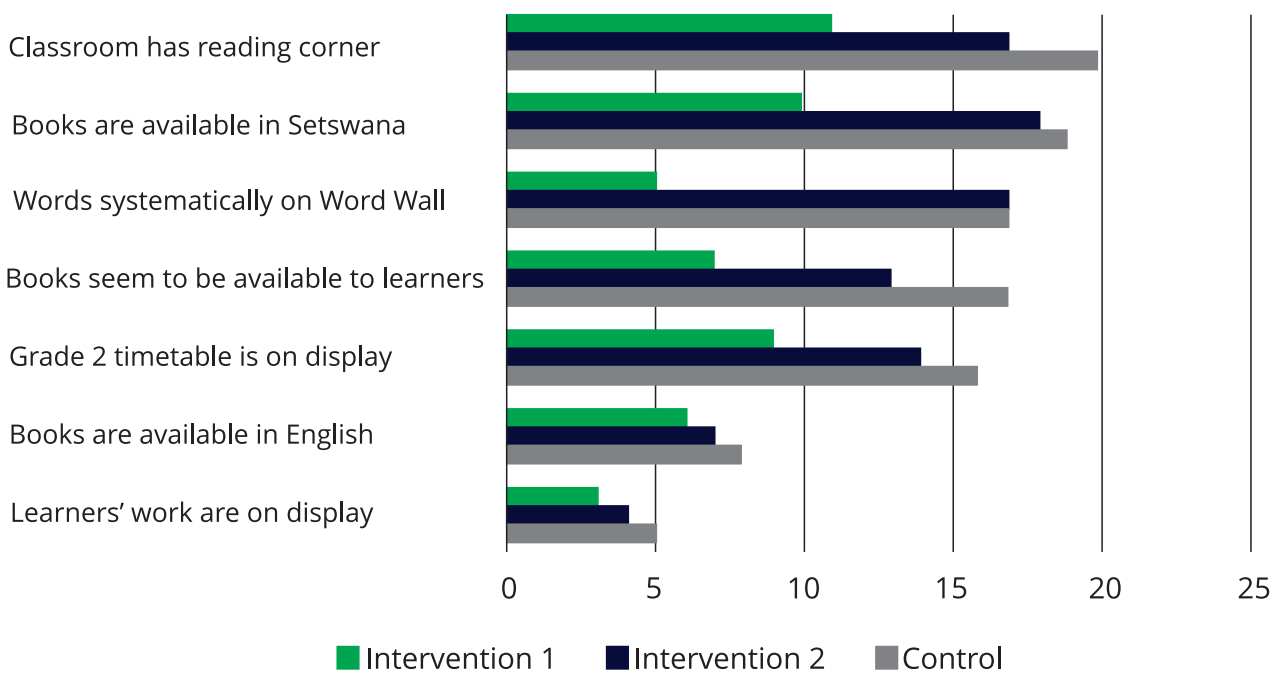
**Results of Lesson Observations cont...****Figure 3 : Print-Richness of the Teaching and Learning Environment**

Table 3 shows the prevalence of various types of display material on the classroom walls. Overall it was evident that display materials such as signs, a news board, the learners' names, a number work chart and a weather chart were not widely available in the Grade 2 classrooms observed. The materials which were generally more prevalent in the two intervention classrooms were the days of the week, the months of the year, flashcards, words matched to pictures, phonics charts, an alphabet frieze, a birthday chart and patterns for cursive writing.

Most of these materials were distributed to teachers through the interventions and it was therefore expected that there would be a higher prevalence of them in the intervention classrooms. Given that the materials were distributed to teachers, it was rather surprising that only three quarters of the intervention classrooms had these materials displayed. It is also interesting to note that very few of these resources (specifically the resources containing words, such as days of the week, words matched to pictures, months of the year etc.) were generally available in the home language spoken in the classrooms (i.e. Setswana). Flashcards seemed to be the resource most widely available in Setswana.

A further question that relates to the print richness of the classrooms was whether teachers were of the opinion that they had enough (i) Workbooks; (ii) Readers and (iii) Textbooks for their needs. Teacher responses attested to the success of the DBE Workbook programme with 92% of teachers stating that they have enough workbooks. With regards to the availability of graded readers, a clear difference emerged between the responses of the teacher in the control group and the teachers in the intervention groups. Five control group teachers stated that they had enough graded readers in the classroom, whereas twelve intervention 1 and eleven intervention 2 teachers responded that they had enough readers.

It is interesting to note, however, that only about half of the teachers in the intervention groups considered their classrooms to have enough readers, although all the teachers have been provided with six sets of Vula-Bula readers, each set consisting of eight different stories. It is evident, however, that there was an expectation among the intervention school teachers that each child in the class should have their own set of graded readers. Finally, there was a clear difference between the control and intervention groups in the number of teachers who were of the opinion that there were not enough textbooks in their classrooms. None of the teachers in the intervention 2 classrooms were of the opinion that they needed textbooks, whereas eight of the teachers in the control group were of the opinion that they required textbooks. Given that textbooks are not a resource that is necessary recommended for use in the Foundation Phase the trend in these responses seem to indicate that the activities provided in the lesson plans might in a sense act as substitutes for textbooks.

**Table 3 : Materials Displayed on the Classroom Walls**

	THAT HAVE ON DISPLAY			AVAILABLE IN SETSWANA		
	C	T1	T2	C	T1	T2
Days of the week	9	17	13	8	12	9
Words matched to pictures	9	14	15	6	10	13
High frequency words	5	16	16	5	15	13
Patterns for cursive writing	4	16	16	3	6	6
Months of the year	8	14	13	7	13	10
Phonics charts	9	13	13	9	11	12
Alphabet frieze	9	9	14	5	2	8
Number word chart	9	12	9	6	7	6
Birthday chart	6	11	11	4	7	5
Weather chart	3	8	7	2	5	5
Learners' names	3	6	5	2	5	5
News board	3	2	5	2	2	4
Signs	1	3	3	1	3	3

The table has been conditionally formatted so that the cells that contain the highest values are shaded darker.

## 4.3. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

An essential element of effective teaching is good classroom management as less time is lost to non-teaching activities in a well-managed classroom. Anecdotal evidence from the implementation service providers suggested that the reading coaches were often required to support teachers in this aspect of teaching, as they realised that teachers were losing a lot of teaching time because of weak classroom management. The classroom observation instrument considered a few aspects that relate to classroom management such as factors that slow down teaching, the management of independent learner work time, time lost in the classroom and overall learner discipline.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Refer to Table 7 in the Appendix for response frequencies relating to Classroom Management.

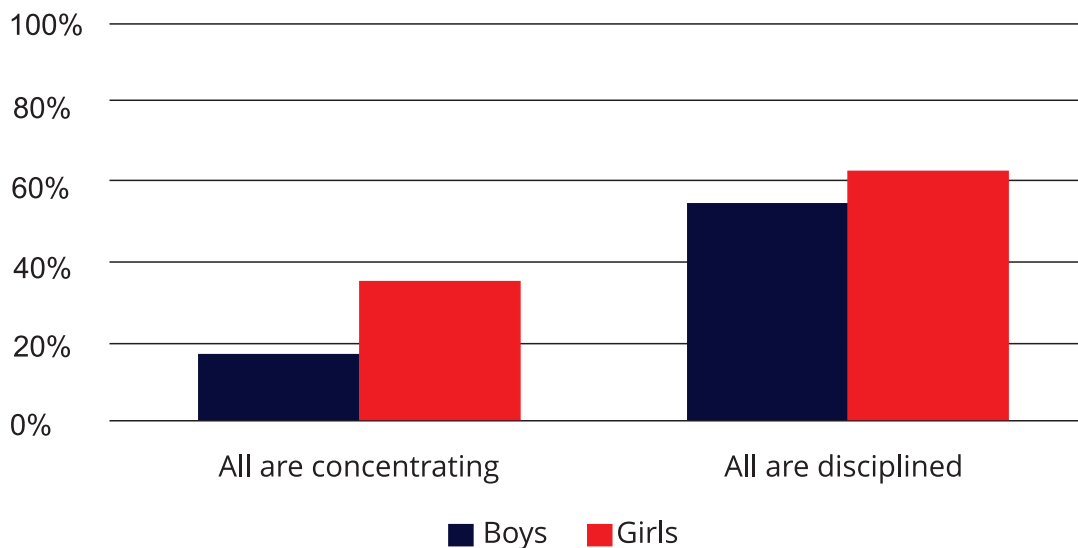
**Classroom Management cont...**

Overall almost half of the lessons observed were not interrupted by outside disturbances and the intervention schools seem to have had fewer outside disturbances than the control schools. Across the intervention and control schools, discipline also seemed to have been generally good with 82% of the teachers observed managing to mostly or always get all their learners to pay attention. In two-thirds of all the classrooms observed the fieldworkers were also of the opinion that the overall discipline was good or very good. Teachers in intervention 1 schools were most likely to mostly or always refer to their individual learners by name.

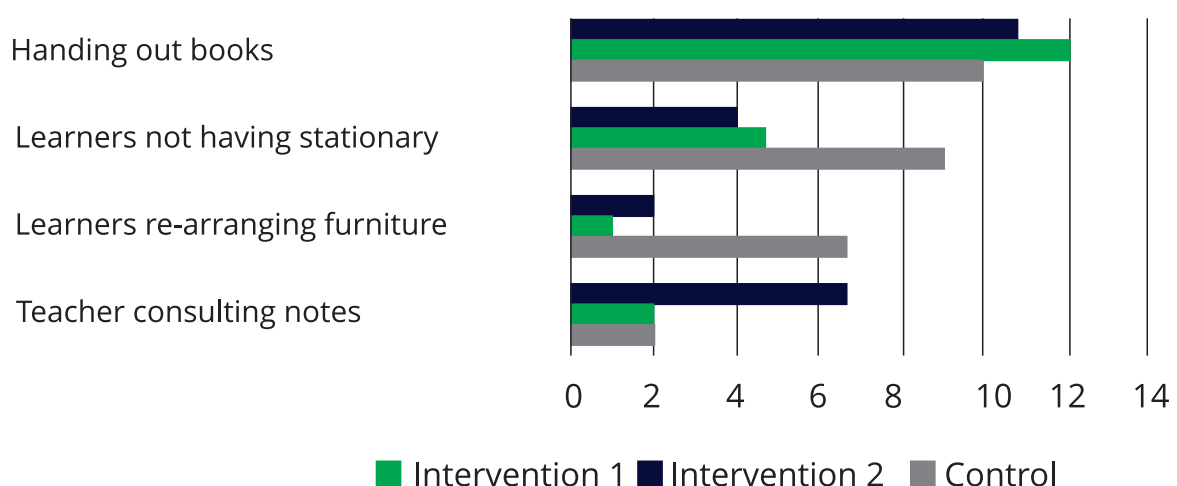
In two-thirds of all the classrooms observed, the learners were considered to be mostly or always on task when they were required to do independent work. About half of all the teachers that was observed, monitored the learners as they did their independent work, but there was no clear difference among the two intervention and control classrooms in either of these practices. Across the three sample groups, there was also little evidence of teachers providing differentiated attention or support to learners of varying levels of capability with regards to the independent work required of the learners. Teachers in all three sample groups were rarely observed supervising less capable learners or giving more capable learners additional tasks. Both of these practices were more likely to be observed in the intervention 2 classrooms, although the difference in occurrence is not very large. Information was collected on the amount of time that was lost either due to non-teaching activities taking place or to learners being uninvolved during the Home Language lesson. The information on time lost to non-teaching activities suffered from quite a high frequency of missing values specifically among the control classroom and was therefore not useful for consideration. The data collection on the question about teaching time lost due to learners being uninvolved was more thoroughly completed by fieldworkers and therefore provided more credible insights. In 90% of the intervention 2 classroom no time was lost due to learners not being involved, whereas this was the case in 75% of the intervention 1 classrooms. Often teachers struggle with keeping learners busy while they conduct the group-guided reading sessions. The scripted lesson plans, however, prescribes activities for learners to do while teachers are busy with the group-guided reading session and during the teacher training the reading coaches focussed on training teachers on keeping the rest of the class involved while conducting the group-guided reading. Evidence of increased number of writing exercised in the learners' workbooks in the intervention 1 and 2 schools further supports this finding. In only 55% of the control classrooms was no time lost due to learners not being involved.

***In 90% of the intervention 2 classroom no time was lost due to learners not being involved, whereas this was the case in only 75% of the intervention 1 classrooms and 55% of the control classrooms.***

Quite clear gender differences were observed in the general concentration and discipline of learners. All the boys were deemed to be concentrating in only ten of the 60 classrooms observed, whereas all girls appeared to have been concentrating in 21 of the 60 classrooms. Similarly with regard to discipline all boys seemed to have been well-behaved in 33 classrooms whilst all girls appeared to have been well-behaved in 38 of the 60 classrooms observed. No differences were observed among the three sampled groups with regards to these gender differences.

**Figure 4: Gender Difference in Learner Concentration and Discipline**

Finally the fieldworkers captured information on the extent to which various aspects slowed down teaching. In half of the classrooms observed the handing out of books was considered to be a factor that slowed down teaching. This was the case regardless of a classrooms' intervention status. The problems of learners not having the necessary stationary and of learners re-arranging the furniture for activities were much more likely to slow down teaching in the control classrooms than in the intervention classrooms. Finally, it is interesting to note that the teacher consulting her lesson notes during the lesson was considered a factor that slowed down teaching to some or to a large extent in seven of the intervention 2 classrooms. When completing the document review questionnaire one fieldworker suggested that perhaps teachers were consulting their notes regularly during class because they had not prepared beforehand. On the other hand, this finding could indicate that teachers are anxious about complying with the plans when they are being observed. Whilst the fact that teachers are consulting their notes shows that the teachers are actually using their lesson plans, this problem is worth addressing in future training or coaching sessions as the constant consultation of notes potentially disrupts the 'flow' of lessons and could distract learners resulting in the them loosing concentration.

**Figure 5 : Factors that Slow Down Teaching to Some or a Large Extent**

*“ During my observation the teacher was time and again referring to the lesson plan during teaching, however, she should have looked at the plan a day before the actual teaching in preparation”*

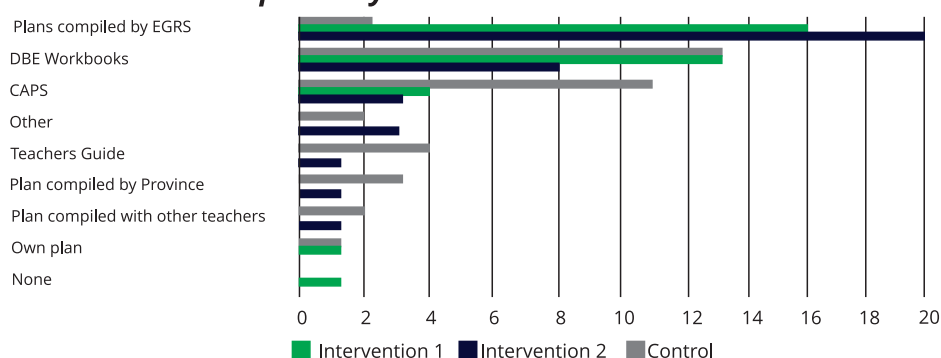
*- Fieldworker*

## 4.4. PLANNING AND CURRICULUM COVERAGE

The scripted lesson plans that were provided as part of the EGRS study translate the weekly content and skills in the CAPS curriculum into daily lessons. The main reason for this level of specificity is to improve the pacing of the learning activities and teachers' time on task. The intervention 2 schools also received instructional coaching on a monthly basis, during which the coaches encouraged the teachers to keep up the pace and monitored teachers' curriculum coverage. Both the document review and teacher interview instruments included questions to establish whether the scripted lesson plans, as well as the coaching in the intervention 2 schools, were effective in improving the pace of teaching and curriculum coverage.<sup>6</sup>

The teacher interview focused on the teacher's planning practices and perception of curriculum coverage, whereas the document review focussed on the details of the plans and evidence relating to pacing and coverage. In the interviews teachers were asked which two documents they mainly used to assist with their planning of the daily lessons and their planning for the term. The responses for both questions were very similar; it is clear that across the three sampled groups teachers used the same method for planning a term as they did for planning their daily lessons. Figure 6 shows the difference between the intervention and control schools regarding the use of the plans compiled by EGRS. As expected, the largest majority of the intervention 2 and intervention 1 teachers reported that they use the EGRS lesson plans, mostly in combination with the DBE Workbooks or the CAPS curriculum, when planning their lesson. Some teachers in the two intervention schools also mentioned that they make use of other resources, but when asked which resources they used it seems that all these resources related to the EGRS programme (eg. Vula-Bula books or the workshop booklet). Surprisingly, two teachers in control schools also reported that they use the EGRS lesson plans when planning, however evidence of the use of EGRS lesson plans is not reflected elsewhere in the data collected on these classes. Apart from these two schools, teachers in the control schools reported that they mostly made use of the DBE Workbooks or the CAPS Curriculum when planning, and some teachers stated that they made use of a teacher's guide or a plan compiled by the province.

**Figure 6 : Documents Used to Compile Daily Lesson Plans**



<sup>6</sup>Refer to Table 8 in the Appendix for response frequencies relating to planning and curriculum coverage.

The method for distributing the lesson plans was different for the two interventions. The distribution of the lesson plans for the intervention 1 teachers depended on the district offices, whereas the distribution of the lesson plans for intervention 2 depended on the reading coaches. However, during the data collection of the Classroom Observation study it emerged that not all of the intervention 1 teachers had received their lesson plans in time. This was particularly the case during the first week of data collection and explains the high number of intervention 1 teachers who could produce their work plans for term 3, but not for term 4. The ineffective distribution of the intervention 1 lesson plans is a matter of concern and should be changed or amended in future iterations of this intervention. Five teachers in the control schools could not produce any work plans, and from the reasons stated it does not seem that these teachers had produced any work plans. One intervention 2 teacher could not produce either her terms 3 or term 4 work plans providing a rather arbitrary excuse of only having had received them the previous day.

***In the control schools, only about half of the work plans observed included specific lesson plans. Interestingly, however, only 65% of the work plans observed in the intervention 1 schools showed specific lesson plans, whereas 90% of the lesson plans observed in the intervention 2 schools contained specific lesson plans.***

In the control schools, only about half of the work plans observed included specific lesson plans. Interestingly, however, only 65% of the work plans observed in the intervention 1 schools showed specific lesson plans, whereas 90% of the lesson plans observed in the intervention 2 schools contained specific lesson plans. This low specificity in the lesson plans of the intervention 1 teachers can largely be ascribed to the teachers not having received their term 4 EGRS lesson plans yet, thus they did not have any plans to show fieldworkers. The fieldworkers' impressions of lesson plans in the control classrooms overall was that they were mostly very vague and did not provide sufficient detail.

There is also a clear difference in the specificity of the lesson plans between the intervention and control groups. The EGRS lesson plans that were distributed to teachers specifically set out different tasks that focus on Phonics, Reading, Writing, and Listening and Speaking. The lesson plans also ensured that the teacher's assessment plan was integrated with the work plan. Given that these details are expected in work plans in the intervention schools, it is worth noting that about half of the lesson plans used by teachers in the control schools included a similar level of detail. Details of the activities to be used to teach these skills, however, were not generally included in the lesson plans used in the control schools. One major aspect that was lacking in most of the lesson plans in the control schools was vocabulary development. This is a particularly important aspect in the Foundation Phase, specifically in low socio-economic settings, as learners from these settings often enter school with a vocabulary which is not sufficient to support their learning.

Overall the majority of lessons observed in all the classrooms corresponded with the week and day planned for the specific lesson. In those control classrooms where the teacher did make use of lesson plans, compliance to the plans was high, with the teachers mostly teaching the lesson that was planned for that specific week and day. However, this compliance was less likely to be the case in the intervention 1 classrooms, probably due to the late delivery of the EGRS lesson plans.

## Planning & Curriculum Coverage cont...

**Clear differences were observed among the intervention groups with regards to teachers tracking the implementation of the lesson plans. This practice was rarely observed in the control schools and also not often in the intervention 1 schools, but was observed in three quarters of the intervention 2 schools.**

However, clear differences were observed among the intervention groups with regards to teachers tracking the implementation of the lesson plans. This practice was rarely observed in the control schools and also not often in the intervention 1 schools, but was observed in three quarters of the intervention 2 schools.

**Table 4: Lesson Plan Contents and Use**

	Number	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
Can produce plan for Term 3 and 4	41	68%	14	11	16
Can produce plan for Term 3	10	17%	1	9	0
Can produce plan for Term 4	3	5%	0	0	3
No plan available	6	10%	5	0	1
Plan include lesson plans	42	70%	11	13	18
Specify Phonics	48	80%	11	19	18
Specify Reading	50	83%	12	19	19
Specify Writing	47	78%	11	18	18
Specify Listening & Speaking	48	80%	12	18	18
Make reference to vocabulary development	38	63%	5	17	16
Does the teacher track implementation of plan	27	45%	3	9	15
Assessment plan integrated with work plan	43	72%	11	15	17
Content of lesson in line with work plan for the week	39	65%	12	9	18
Content of lesson in line with work plan for the day	34	57%	11	6	17
Covers details of content extensively	35	58%	5	13	17

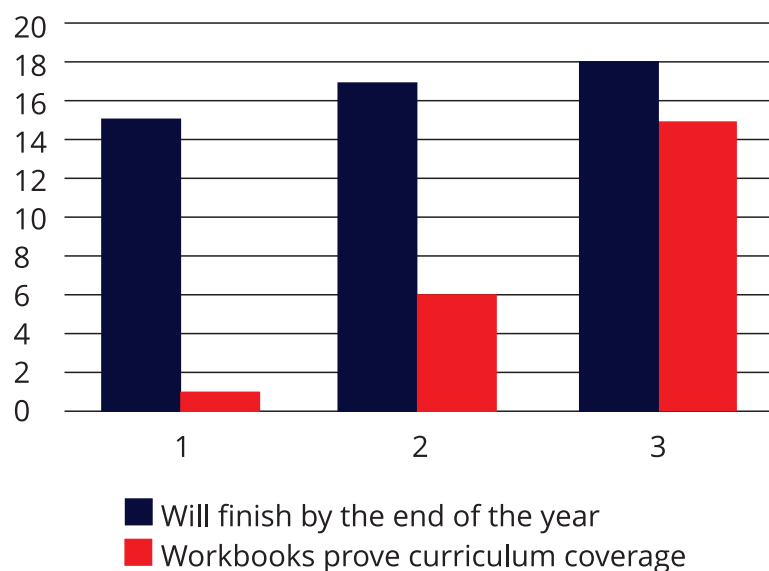
*“ Plan is very general, seems to be done daily only. Plan dates are not in line with when term 3 should begin or end”*

*“ Plans are generic documents without further details, hence one is unable to follow lessons planned for the day except to rely on the time table”*

*- Fieldworker in a Control School*

Teachers in intervention 2 schools are notably more satisfied with the progress that they have made with regards to the Grade 2 Home Language curriculum than the teachers in the other two sampled groups. Most of the teachers, however, were confident in their ability to cover the curriculum by the end of the year, regardless of the intervention that was (or was not) received. When validating their responses with the work reflected in the learners' workbooks or exercise books, however, figure 7 provides a different perspective. In only one control school and six intervention 1 schools did the learners' workbook show that the teacher was managing to cover the curriculum fully, or to some extent. In contrast, evidence was found that the teachers were managing to cover the curriculum in fifteen of the intervention 2 schools. Evidently, teachers in the control and intervention 1 schools were much more confident in their ability to cover the curriculum than the evidence in their learners' workbooks attests. By comparison, the teachers in intervention 2 schools were more likely to be optimistic about their ability to cover the curriculum, but their optimism was justified given the evidence of extensive curriculum coverage in their learners' workbooks.

**Figure 7: Curriculum Coverage in Workbooks versus Teachers' Expected Coverage**



### **Textbook 1:**

Fieldworkers were asked to give reasons for their assessment of curriculum coverage. The reasons fieldworkers provided for their assessment of curriculum coverage in the intervention schools varied significantly. In some classes the fieldworkers noted that the writing of longer sentences and extended texts were neglected, whereas in other classes teachers were commended for their coverage. The reasons provided for the higher ratings, specifically among the intervention 2 schools included:

- "The assessment is normally done and completed guided by the daily activities in the lesson plan"
- There is extensive writing seen in both the workbook and exercise books of learners. Learners are in the 3rd class exercise book. Almost all aspects of the curriculum is evident in the three books and the workbook"
- " Most of the curriculum already covered. Learners very fluent and they are also very good with spelling"



## ***Planning & Curriculum Coverage cont...***

Fieldworkers' low assessment of curriculum coverage in the control school were mostly attributed to the little writing learners had actually completed. Reasons provided by fieldworkers for the control schools include:

- "Written work is too minimal. Only one exercise book is used but the learners are still using the first book they started on since the beginning of the year. No evidence of patters in preparation for cursive work. No evidence of the letter, syllables, vowels, phonemes in books. No word wall or phonics visible."
- "There is very minimal writing, and most writing is only words. There is no evidence that phonics is being covered in any systematic way"
- Writing and creative writing is not done according to the work schedule as the teacher is doing more of the administrative work than normal teaching."
- "Short sentences and extended paragraphs seems to be neglected. There is also minimal coverage in some aspects of the curriculum."

An interesting pattern also emerged from the question asking teacher which individuals had checked their curriculum coverage. Only 22% of teachers responded that a Departmental official had checked whether they were managing to cover the curriculum. The largest majority of these teachers were in the control schools. Teachers' curriculum coverage in the control and intervention 1 schools was more likely to have been checked by an SMT member, than in the intervention 2 schools. Obviously, teachers in intervention 2 schools would have been observed by an EGRS reading coach, and the evidence suggests that the presence of a reading coach might make SMT members less likely to check the curriculum coverage of teachers. This trend cannot be confirmed using the information collected through the Classroom Observation Study, but it is something to consider in future studies.

Teachers noted that when monitoring was conducted by Departmental officials, officials mostly checked learners' workbooks, assessment records and work schedules. Only three teachers reported that someone from the department had observed their lessons. Similarly, teachers reported that they were very rarely observed teaching a lesson by SMT members, the HOD or the principal. Interestingly, seven teachers from control schools responded that an SMT member had observed them teaching a lesson in the past two years. The support provided by the EGRS coaches in intervention 2 has a strong focus on observing home language lessons, as well as demonstrating model lessons where necessary. Thus the expectation was that all the teachers in intervention 2 schools would report that their reading coaches had been observing them teaching. However, only thirteen teachers in the intervention 2 schools reported that a reading coach had observed them teaching a lesson. Given the mandate of the reading coaches this low response is of concern.

## ***4.5. INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES***

Part of the theory of change in the EGRS study is that the improvement of learner performance is dependent on the improvement of teaching effectiveness. The EGRS lesson plans and the core methodologies are therefore particularly aimed at changing various instructional practices amongst teachers so as to improve the effectiveness of their teaching. Teaching practices that are targeted through the interventions are the same teaching practices that teachers should have been taught in their initial teacher training. They are also the teaching practices that are encapsulated in the CAPS documentation.

These practices should therefore be evident in all Foundation Phase classrooms, regardless of the sample group of which the schools forms part. The instructional practices covered in the data collection instruments included (1) listening and speaking; (2) the use of LTSM; (3) language development; (4) opportunities to write; (5) opportunities to read; and assessment practices.

### 4.5.1. Listening and Speaking

The CAPS curriculum states that the skills of listening and speaking are not only important in each of the components of Home Language, but also in all other subjects, since these skills are crucial for all learning. The curriculum specifies two different activities through which these skills should be taught: (1) a brief whole class activity each morning and (2) focussed activities during the Home Language lesson where specific attention is given to the activities that promote these skills. Fieldworkers generally requested teachers to shift the Home Language lesson to the start of the day, if this was not already the case, so as to allow them to observe both activities during the lesson observation.

In over half of all the lessons observed learners mostly, or always, responded to the teacher's question either in unison, or by repeating an answer.<sup>7</sup> It was very rarely observed that a learner actually provided his or her own response individually (this occurred in only eight of the 60 lessons observed). It was also rare for a learner to ask the teacher a question (this occurred in only eleven of the 60 classrooms). However, in the majority of intervention classrooms it seems that teachers did make an effort to ensure that a wide variety of learners were given opportunities to answer questions by actively trying to involve those learners who did not voluntarily participate in teacher-learner interactions.

No clear trends were observed among all three groups of schools with regards to teacher questioning and feedback. In general, around half of the teachers were observed clearly stating whether or not a learner's answers, explanations and predictions were correct or incorrect. Very few teachers questioned learners if they gave an incorrect response so as to determine and identify the learners' misconceptions, mistakes, or thinking patterns. Code switching was not observed often, but this is to be expected in Home Language lessons in schools where the majority of learners speak the same home language.

### 4.5.2. Use of Learning and Teaching Support Material

The use of books and graded readers is critical for teaching learners how to read. The CAPS curriculum specifically allocates time every day for focussed activities that covers reading. The curriculum specifies four activities that the teachers should use in the teaching of reading: (1) Shared Reading; (2) Group Guided Reading; (3) Paired/ Independent Reading; and (4) Phonics. Graded readers and storybooks are essential resources in implementing these activities in a classroom, specifically for group guided reading, and paired reading activities. Indeed a lack of these resources means that these activities cannot take place. The use and handling of reading books or grader readers by learners during Home Language lessons should therefore be a common practice in classrooms where the CAPS curriculum is being implemented.

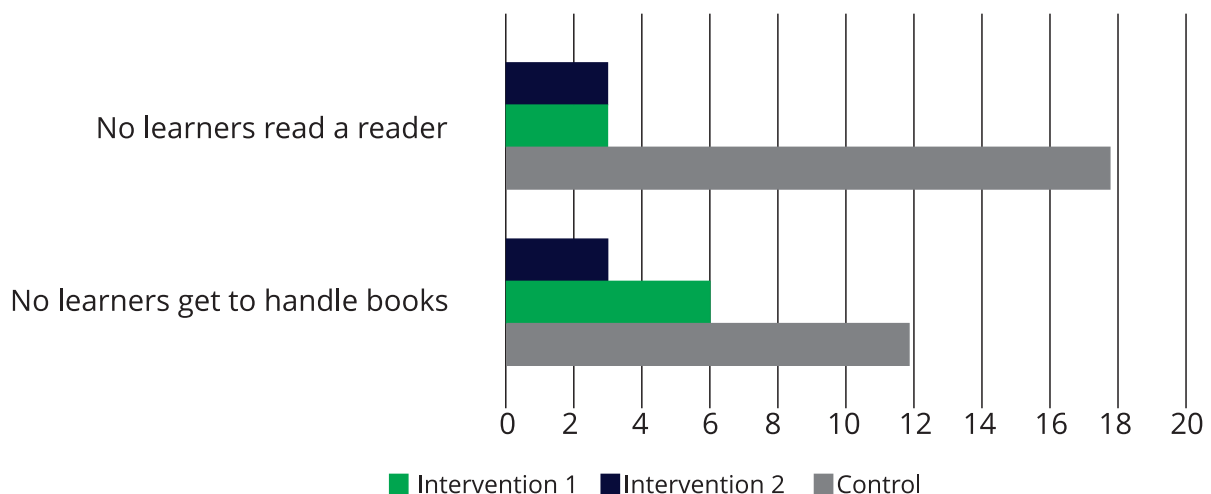
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<sup>7</sup>Refer to Table 9 in the Appendix for response frequencies relating to Listening and Speaking.

## Planning & Curriculum Coverage cont...

However, figure 8 below, indicates that not a single learner read a graded reader in 90% of the control classrooms.<sup>8</sup> This was the case, despite the fact that the CAPS curriculum specifies that Group Guided Reading should be a daily activity. Indeed in 60% of the control schools not a single learner got to handle (open and use) any readers, picture books or storybooks at all during their Home Language lesson. It is possible that these schools may not have had access to graded readers, but from information provided in section 5.2.2. it is evident that in at least half of the control school classrooms there books were available in Setswana. These findings suggest that the EGRS interventions have been successful not only in providing classrooms with the necessary readers, but specifically in teaching and motivating teachers to make use of these resources to promote reading among their learners. Nevertheless, there were a few lesson observations at intervention schools where learners did not get to handle books or readers, but half of these lessons were observed on a Friday and the EGRS lesson plans specify that Fridays are to be spent doing creative writing rather than reading activities.

**Figure 8 : Opportunities to Handle Storybooks or Graded Readers**



Very few print materials were used during the lesson observations other than the DBE workbooks and, the graded readers (used only in the intervention schools). Flash cards of high frequency words were regularly used in the intervention 2 lessons observed. They were used during sixteen of the 20 intervention 2 school lessons that were observed, as opposed to six of the control school lessons and seven of the intervention 1 school lessons. The use of charts were also observed in some of the intervention 2 school lessons (seven schools). Nevertheless, the use of charts, posters, and pictures was overall very low.

One of the most important and influential interventions by the Department of Basic Education has been the universal provision of DBE workbooks. The workbooks provide learners with the opportunity to practise their language skills in class by writing directly in these books. The workbooks are widely deemed to be a very useful resource that has 'huge potential to improve teaching and learning in South Africa' (Hoadley & Galant, 2016: 4). Although the workbook have provided learners with a wide range of writing formats, they do not necessarily provide enough opportunities for learners to practice extended handwriting

<sup>8</sup>Refer to Table 10 in the Appendix for response frequencies relating to the use of learning and teaching support material during Home Language lessons.

Teachers are therefore encouraged to make use of additional writing books to provide learners with further opportunities to write. In about half of all the classes observed learners were using the DBE workbooks and other exercise books equally often for their writing exercises. However, in eight of the control schools and six of the intervention 1 and intervention 2 schools it was found that the learners mainly only wrote in their DBE workbooks. If other books beside the DBE workbooks were used for written work, it seems that half of the teachers used a single exercise book or file for all or most of the learners' written work. If however, more than one book or file was used for written work, learners in control schools generally seemed to have a book or file for exercises, whereas learners in the intervention 2 schools were much more likely to have a separate book each for handwriting, story writing, phonics and spelling. Learners in the intervention schools were also more likely to keep personal dictionaries or word banks.

### 4.5.3.Literacy and Language Development

Literacy and language development is at the heart of the Home Language curriculum. One instructional practice that specifically promotes the development of literacy and language skills is the activity of shared reading where the teacher reads the learners a story. Shared reading provides teachers with opportunities to model and teach various skills and concepts, such as concepts of print, text features, phonics, language patterns, word identification strategies and comprehension.<sup>9</sup> Various teaching practices in this regard were observed across all the schools visited, with more than 60% of teachers overall demonstrating how to care for books, read with intonation and encouraging learners to read to some or a large extent. Teachers were also generally observed developing phonological awareness to some or a large extent and promoting word recognition skills some or most of the time. They were observed explicitly teaching grammar or teaching learners how to interpret and read illustrations to a much lesser extent. Despite various literacy teaching practices observed, teachers in both the intervention 1 and intervention 2 schools were more likely to encourage their learners to read, than in the control schools and intervention 2 teachers were also more likely to demonstrate how to care for books and to promote word recognition.

Teachers in intervention 2 schools were also much more likely to use LTSM to develop concepts about print during their Home Language lessons. Nevertheless more than half of teachers in control and intervention 1 teachers were observed using LTSM to develop some concepts about print. Although teachers in control schools were observed using LTSM, they were very rarely observed engaging in activities such as correctly identifying the front cover, the spine of a book, the headings, the beginning and end of sentences, demonstrating that print moves from left to right, pointing out punctuation, capital letters and other specifics about page layout. Teachers in the two intervention schools were more likely to explicitly teach print concepts such as identifying the front cover of a book and the title or author of a book. Nevertheless teaching practices relating to the development of concepts about print were observed less often during the Home Language lessons than what they should have been.

<sup>9</sup>Refer to Table 11 in the Appendix for response frequencies relating to literacy and language development.

## Planning & Curriculum Coverage cont...

Overall teaching practices around reading of extended texts was weak. There was no difference among the three sample groups in this regard. Teachers were very rarely observed assisting learners to correct themselves by making use of the strategy of guessing a word, or the strategy of skipping a word, reading to the end of the sentence and then going back. The strategy most commonly taught was that of sounding out a word. Around a third of teachers were observed encouraging learners to discuss or respond to pictures, or to identify the main theme in a story. Around half of teachers were observed teaching learners retelling and summarizing techniques by encouraging them to identify the main themes of stories or asking them to answer open-ended questions.

Teachers in intervention 2 schools were more likely than teachers in the control group to encourage learners to answer open ended questions, with this practice having been observed in 70% of intervention 2 lessons. This could likely be ascribed to the discussion questions that were provided in the scripted lesson plans for both the poster discussion activities and the share reading activities. A small but significant portion (about a fifth) of teachers in intervention 1 and 2 schools were observed encouraging learners to answer predictive questions. Although the practice of asking learners predictive questions were observed more often in the intervention schools, the low prevalence of this activity is concerning as this activity was explicitly included in the shared reading activities of the scripted lesson plans, and teacher were trained on asking predictive questions before reading the story. However, even more concerning is that this practice was never observed in control schools. Given that answering predictive questions is the beginning of the development of text comprehension, it is concerning that this skill was not being developed in the control schools at all.

Finally, vocabulary development was observed in four of the control classrooms, whereas vocabulary development was observed in twelve of the intervention 2 classrooms. Spelling development was observed in 43% of the lessons observed but was most likely to take place in the intervention 1 lessons. The increased prevalence of vocabulary and spelling development can directly be related to the scripted lesson plans and they have specific activities built around flashcards that target vocabulary and spelling development.

### 4.5.4. Opportunities to Write

The CAPS curriculum requires that a quarter of the time in Home Language lesson is used for be dedicated to writing and handwriting activities. Thus the expectation was that that various writing activities, such as shared writing, group writing, individual writing, spelling and grammar would be observed during Home Language lessons and in learners' DBE workbooks and exercise books.<sup>10</sup>

In the control schools, only eight teachers required learners to engage in doing two or more different written tasks during the lessons observed. Learners managed to complete their written tasks in only six classrooms at control schools. In contrast, learners were required to do two or more written tasks in eleven of the lessons in the intervention 1 schools and seventeen of the lessons in the intervention 2 schools, and learners managed to complete their written tasks in the lessons at thirteen of the intervention 1 schools and in twelve of the lessons at the intervention 2 schools. These findings suggest that the EGRS reading coaches were managing to encourage teachers to have higher expectations of learners by motivating them to provide learners with more written tasks. The fact that learners were not all necessarily completing their written tasks is not too concerning as this could indicate that the tasks given were not too easy for the learners.

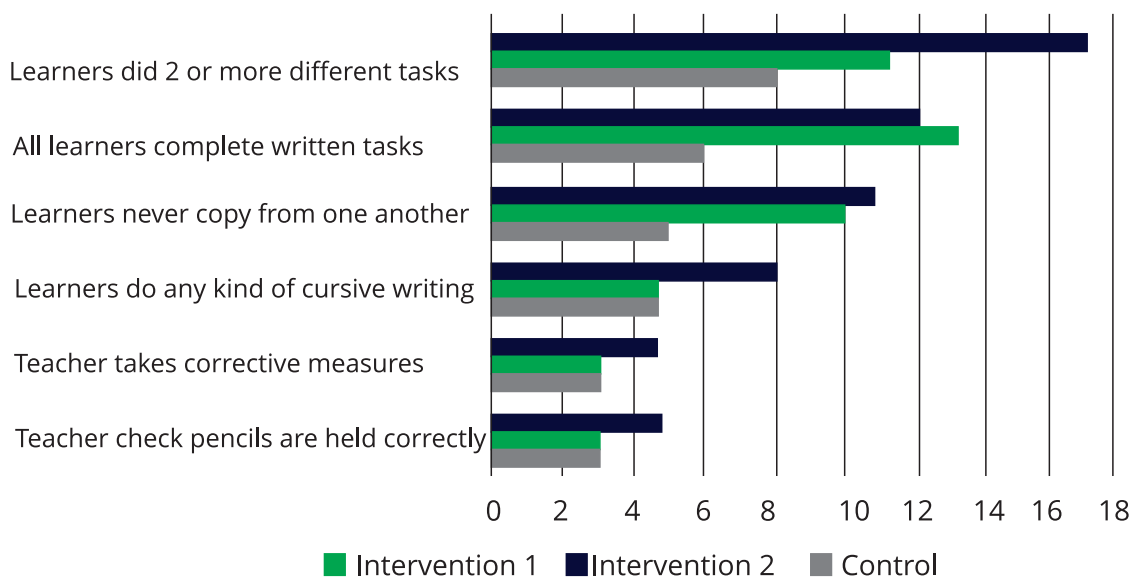
<sup>10</sup>Refer to Tables 12 and 13 in the Appendix for response frequencies relating to opportunities to write.

**During the Home Language lessons observed in the control schools, only eight teachers required the learners to engage in two or more different tasks and in only six classrooms did the learners manage to complete their written tasks. In contrast, in around eleven of the intervention 1 schools and seventeen of the intervention 2 schools where learners requested to do two or more written tasks. In thirteen of the intervention 1 schools and twelve of the intervention 2 schools did all the learners manage to complete their written tasks.**

The problem of learners copying each other's work was not very prevalent in schools, and in half of the intervention schools this problem was not at all evident, whereas this was the case in only a quarter of the control schools. Overall, fieldworkers seldom observed teachers teaching cursive writing and correcting learners' pencil grip.

With regards to the specific writing demands that were made on learners during the Home Language lessons observed, it seems that the tasks that teachers most often gave learners involved writing short sentences (of three words or less) and copying sentences (as opposed to generating their own sentences). In the control schools, teachers almost never required learners to copy whole paragraphs from the board or a book, or to create their own paragraphs. In the control schools teachers were most often observed requiring the learners to write more than three words, copying a sentence and writing their own sentence. Learners in the intervention 1 schools were just as likely than their peers in the control schools to have been observed engaged in these activities, but learners in intervention 2 schools were more frequently observed engaged in these particular activities than learners in the control and intervention 1 schools. Learners in intervention 2 schools were also more likely to have been observed to be drawing patterns, copying letters, copying three or more words from the board or a book, and writing their own paragraphs.<sup>11</sup> Overall, learners in the control schools were only observed to be engaged in a narrow range of activities, whereas the learners in the intervention 2 schools were more frequently observed to be engaged in writing activities and were observed to be engaged in a wider range of activities.

**Figure 9 : Instructional Practices Relating to the Teaching of Writing**



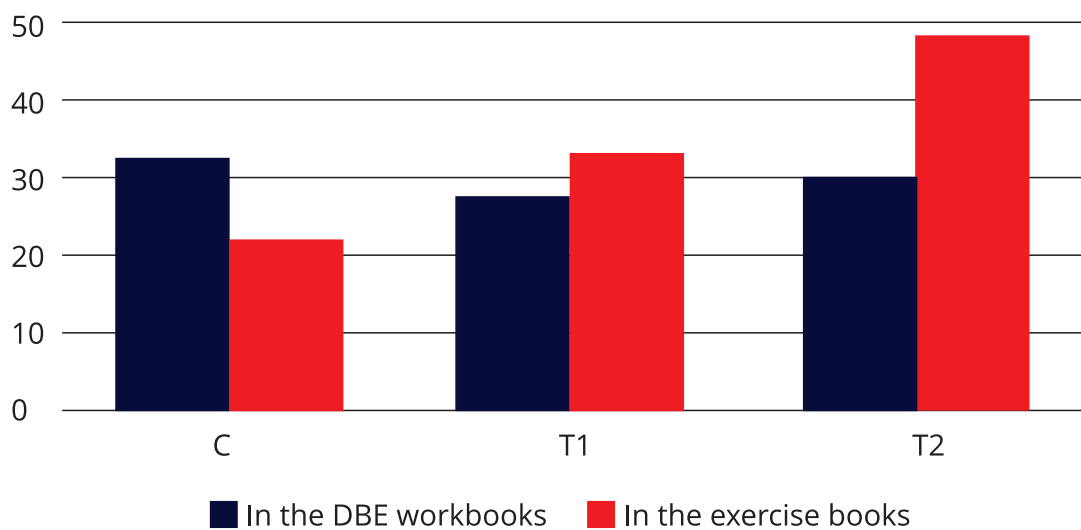
<sup>11</sup>It needs to be noted that the EGRS scripted lesson plans dedicate Friday Home Language lessons to creative writing. By implication writing extended texts would not necessarily be evident in every lesson.

## Planning & Curriculum Coverage cont...

Learners in intervention 2 schools were the most likely to be taught how to write in cursive. The extensive evidence of the use of personal dictionaries in both sets of intervention schools provided further indication of the use of a variety of writing activities in these classrooms.

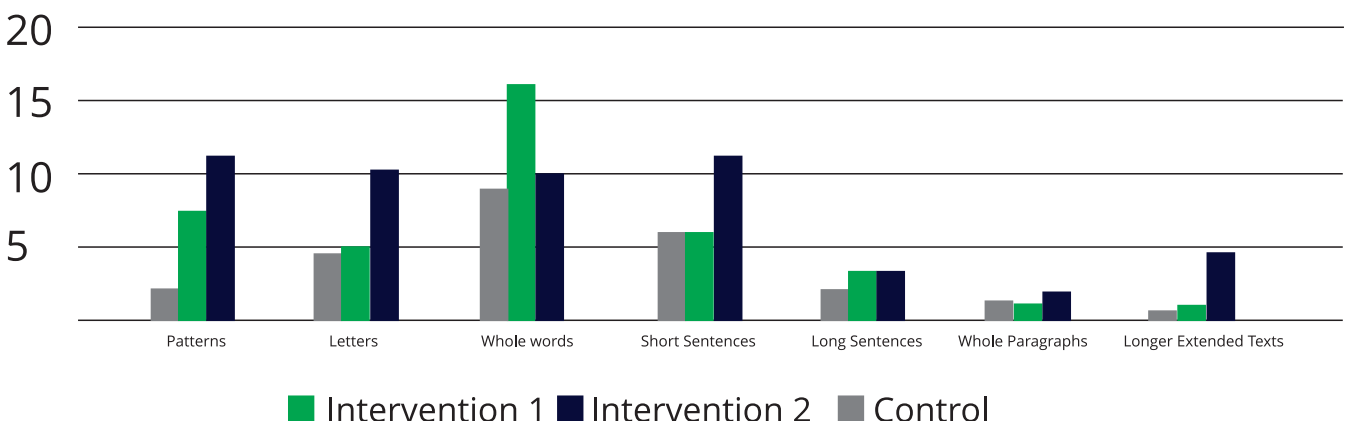
In around half of all of the lessons observed, teachers mostly or always planned activities that required learners to use their workbooks. In approximately three-quarters of the lessons there was evidence in learners' exercise books of teachers marking learners' exercises mostly or always. However, in about two-thirds of the lessons, there was no evidence of learners doing corrections in their workbooks.

**Figure 10 : Average Number of Pages of Written Work in DBE Workbooks and in Exercise Books**



Counting the number of written tasks completed in learners' DBE workbooks and exercise book revealed that learners in control schools on average covered significantly more written activities in their DBE workbooks than in their exercise books. In the intervention schools the trend was different. Learners completed a higher number of written tasks in their exercise books than in their DBE workbooks. Interesting to note is that learners in intervention 1 and intervention 2 schools on average completed a similar amount of written tasks in the DBE workbooks, but that learners in the intervention 2 schools completed a significantly higher number of written exercises in their exercise books.

**Figure 11 : Average Number of Writing Exercises per Writing Activity**



To gain a clearer sense of the types of written exercises done more often in the intervention 2 classrooms, the average number of pieces of written work has been aggregated by the type of activity. From figure 11 it is clear that the learners in both intervention 1 and intervention 2 schools completed on average more exercises involving writing whole words than the control classes. Learners in intervention 2 schools, however, more often engaged in written exercises focussed on writing letters, short sentences and longer extended texts. This evidence corroborates anecdotal evidence from teachers that EGRS lesson plans demand much more writing from learners than what they are accustomed to. The trends observed suggests that the increased number of writing seems to be the case particularly in intervention 2 schools.

***The evidence shows that the EGRS lesson plans demands much more writing from the learners than what the teachers have been used to. The trends observed suggests that this seems to be the case particularly in intervention 2 schools.***

### 4.5.5. Opportunities to Read

The three types of Reading (i.e. shared reading, group guided reading and paired reading see section 4.5.2) and Phonics forms the largest part of the CAPS curriculum, with almost four hours a week dedicated to these activities. Given the prominence given to reading in the CAPS curriculum, the expectation is that at least one, but ideally two, of these activities would be observed taking place on a daily basis. It is encouraging to note that in a fifth of the lessons observed learners mostly or always read aloud without the teacher and that in about 40% of the classes the whole class read aloud with the teacher.<sup>12</sup> In another third of classrooms it seemed as if the teacher mostly or always led the reading, but in 17% of the classrooms it was evident that the teacher mostly or always read aloud without the learners following. The shared reading activity as specified in the lesson plans consists of various sub-activities such as introducing the story, browsing through the pictures, a first reading, a second reading followed by a discussion about what has been read. Dependent on the sub-activity of the lesson plan for the day, learners should be observed being engaged in different ways of reading.

Overall the prevalence of individual guided reading, where each learner gets a turn to read aloud so that the teacher can monitor his/her reading, make comments and corrections and ask questions, was very low across all three groups of schools. The CAPS curriculum (and therefore also the EGRS lesson plans) specifies that group guided reading should take place four days a week. With this as a rough guide, it was expected that this activity would be observed in at least 80% of the Home Language lessons. However, group guided reading, was only observed in one control school classroom. Notably, although group guided reading was observed more often in intervention classrooms, the prevalence of this activity in these classroom was also still lower than expected.

Across all classrooms, learners were seldom given opportunities to read individually even to the extent that they were seldom engaged in reading instructions for tasks independently. It seems that the main reading activity in classrooms, regardless of the sampled group, was that of learners reading aloud together. By implication there were very few opportunities for teachers to gauge learners' individual reading ability.

<sup>12</sup>See Table 14 in the Appendix for response frequencies relating to Opportunities for Reading in the Home Language lesson.



**Planning & Curriculum Coverage cont...****Table : Instructional Practices that Relates to the Teaching of Reading**

	Number	Percentage	C	T1	T2
Whole class mostly/ always reading aloud with teacher	23	38%	7	8	8
Learners mostly/ always reading aloud together	21	35%	4	9	8
Teacher mostly/ always leading reading	18	30%	7	4	7
Mostly/ always group guided reading	15	25%	1	6	8
Whole class mostly/ always reading aloud without teacher	13	22%	4	4	5
Teacher mostly/ always reading aloud without learners following	10	17%	3	2	5
Learners mostly/ always reading individually aloud	8	13%	2	2	4
Learners have to read instructions of tasks themselves	5	8%	0	2	3
Learners mostly/ always reading individually silently	2	3%	2	0	0

Disaggregating the specific reading activities that learners were engaged in, it appears that whole class reading mainly consisted of learners reading letters or a very small number of words. When learners did read extended texts (three or more sentences), it was overwhelmingly in intervention 1 classrooms in small groups. The reading of extended texts was observed in eight intervention 2 classrooms, and only three of the control classrooms. As it is likely that the reading of sentences mostly happens in a group-guided setting, it is to be expected that not all learners will be observed engaged in this activity during Home Language lessons, since only one or two of the ability groups will probably get a chance to participate in the group-guided reading activity on the day observed..

In the classrooms where group-guided reading was observed, (one control school, twelve intervention 1 schools and eight intervention 2 schools), teachers were mostly observed providing readers of different ability levels to different groups. Although group-guided reading was more commonly observed in lessons at intervention 2 schools, only six of the teachers in the intervention 2 schools provided different groups with readers of different levels of difficulty. It is interesting to note that the intervention schools were more likely to have been observed to conduct group-guided reading activities, but that they are still struggling with the implementation of the activity. Teachers are particularly struggling with differentiating between different ability groups, which might suggest that teachers either lack assessment opportunities to gauge where learners' reading abilities are, or that teachers are struggling with the concept of differentiation itself.

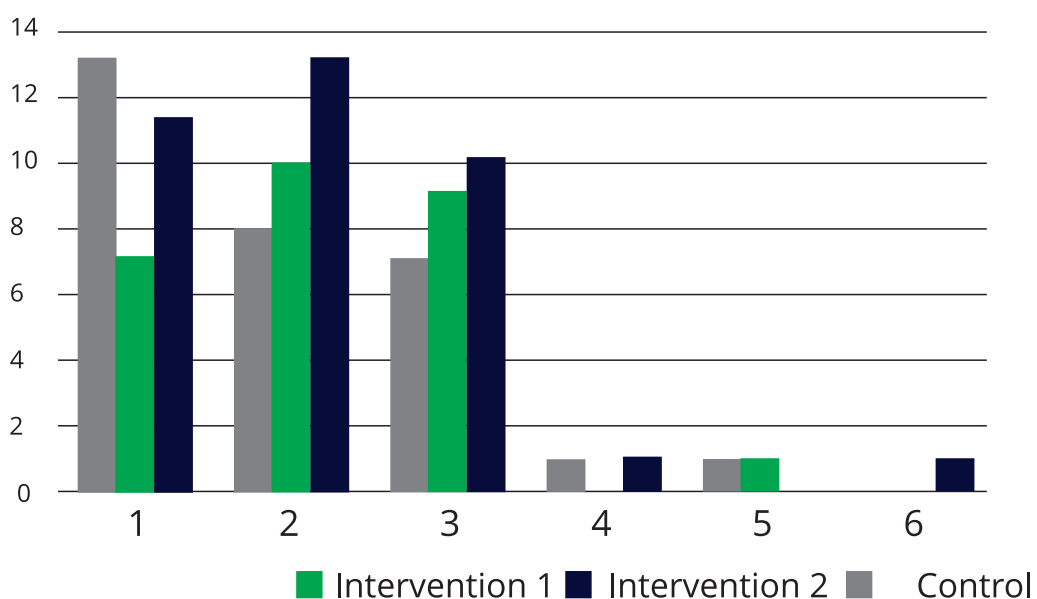
***Intervention schools were more likely to have been observed to conduct group-guided reading activities, but teachers are still struggling differentiating between different learner ability.***

### 4.5.6. Cognitive Demand and Homework

The cognitive demand of the activities that teachers give their learners to do provides an indication firstly of, the expectations that a teacher has of her learners and secondly, of the awareness that a teacher has of the ability of her learners. Activities which are too easy for learners, or activities which are too familiar to learners indicate that the teacher is not basing her expectations on the actual level of ability of her learners. Fieldworkers were therefore requested to gauge the level of difficulty of the activities that learners engaged in during Home Language lessons, based on their perception of how well learners coped with the tasks .<sup>13</sup>

Overall, in about half of all the lessons observed, fieldworkers judged that the writing and reading activities and the questions asked were too easy for or too familiar to the learners. Reading activities or questions asked were deemed too difficult in very few of the lessons, and writing activities never appeared too difficult learners. The reading activities in the intervention 2 schools were more likely to be considered too easy, or familiar to the learners, than in the control schools. This could be because learners in these classrooms were given more opportunities to read overall, and therefore seemed to be familiar with the tasks.

**Figure 12: Cognitive Demand of Activities**



Overall homework was not a very prominent feature in in the Home Language lessons observed. In the interviews about a quarter of teachers reported that they gave learners reading homework on more than three days a week. However, in the lesson observations very few teachers were actually observed giving any form of Home Language homework to learners. Teachers In six of the intervention 1 classrooms gave learners reading homework, whereas only one intervention 2 teacher and no control teachers were observed giving homework .

<sup>13</sup>Refer to Table 15 in the appendix for the response frequencies related to cognitive demand and homework.

## Planning & Curriculum Coverage cont...

Most of the most common reason given for not giving learners homework was either that their home environment was not supportive of them doing homework, or that learners tended to lose their books. In one rural school a teacher gave a very sober perspective of how un conducive the home environment could be by stating that “They [learners] do not take books home because they will lose the books. Also, parents use books as a dustpan or learners use the books for toilet paper”.

The teacher checked whether learners completed previous homework in only four of the classrooms observed (three control and one intervention 1 classroom), and no teacher was seen collecting homework to mark later.

### 4.5.7. Assessment

Assessment is a core component of teaching as it allows teachers to engage individually with learners so as to determine whether they have mastered the required skills. It provides teachers with the required information to know which learners need additional or more targeted support, and to know whether their class is progressing through the curriculum as expected. The CAPS curriculum provides various examples of formal and informal assessment activities which the teacher can use to assist her in assessing her learners’ Home Language reading, writing, and listening and speaking skills. A normal Home Language lesson should provide a teacher with various opportunities for informally assessing her learners so as to gauge their individual progress. To create opportunities for informal assessment a teacher may walk around her classroom while the class is engaged in an activity and check the written work of some learners. This allows her to provide specific individualised feedback to learners as well as to get a sense of the level of performance of individual learners as well of the progress of the whole class. Another opportunity for informal assessment is through group guided reading, where teachers listen to an individual learner reading. It is therefore expected that informal assessment practices such as these will be observed during any Home Language lesson, regardless of the time of the year.<sup>14</sup>

From evidence in the lesson observations it appears that in the majority of control classrooms the teachers’ in-class reading and phonics assessment was based on the class as a whole, rather than on individual ability. However, when teachers were asked during the interview how they informally assessed the reading ability of individual learners in their class, the majority stated that they asked learners to read individually either to the rest of the class or in smaller groups. Some teachers also mentioned that they make use of a rubric to assess their learners’ reading fluency. Less effective methods of assessing individuals were also mentioned during interviews, for instance a fieldworker reported that one teacher mentioned that “During reading she starts with the learners who can read well and faster, then call any learner at random to encourage them to pay attention”.

Teachers were also very rarely observed walking around the classrooms marking any of the written tasks or exercises that learners were given during their Home Language lessons. Neither were these exercises marked by the learners themselves, nor by their peers, suggesting that learners’ written exercises are seldom marked in class.

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<sup>14</sup>Refer to table 16 in the Appendix for the response frequencies relating to teachers’ assessment practices.

Teachers' records with regards to formal assessment practices tells a different story about the formal assessments over the third term. The majority of teachers (87%) were able to provide fieldworkers with their records of formal assessment. On average teachers had captured three phonics marks, four reading marks, three writing marks and two listening and speaking marks for each learner. However, evidence of teachers keeping running notes of each learner's level of development, ability and progress was found in only 21 of the 60 classrooms. Overall, there was no evidence of differences between the three groups of schools with regards to teachers' assessment practices.

***In the largest majority of control classrooms, the teachers' in-class reading and phonics assessment was based on the class as a whole, rather than on individual ability.***

### 4.5.8. Teachers' Approach to Literacy Teaching

When teachers were asked in the interviews whether their instructional practices had changed over the last year, three quarters of the teachers responded positively. Clearly this response is a socially desirable response, thus this question was followed up by a question about the specific practices that teachers thought had changed. The two sets of intervention teachers most often claimed that their learners were doing more reading and writing in the classroom. Teachers in the intervention 2 group more often responded that what had changed was that they were now using graded readers and they were doing the group-guided reading differently. However, no large or notable differences were evident between the responses of teachers in the three different groups.

Teachers were asked what they do about learners' different levels of reading ability.<sup>15</sup> Three quarters of the teachers responded that they gave extra lessons to learners who were struggling. About a quarter to a third of the teachers either said that they gave additional reading to learners who are coping well, or spent more time in class helping those learners who were struggling. Seventeen teachers (about 28%) said that they gave different levels of readers to the different groups of learners, but this practice was only observed in twelve of the 60 lessons observed. This response was more prevalent amongst the intervention 2 teachers, than among the other two groups of teachers.

## 4.6. SUPPORT RECEIVED

Most of the teachers (55 out of the 60 teachers) reported that they had received support or training for teaching Foundation Phase Home Language Setswana during 2016. Teachers were asked which three forms of support, guidance or training had helped them the most to improve their learners' reading and writing skills in 2016. The intervention 1 and control teachers deemed the workshops that they had attended about classroom management, teaching practices, group-guided reading and shared reading to be the most useful. The control group teachers reported that the workshops that they had attended were mostly presented by Departmental Officials, or by the principal or HOD in their school. The intervention 1 teachers said that the workshops they have attended in 2016 were mostly EGRS workshops. Half of intervention 2 teachers said that the workshops were particularly useful, but the other half of the intervention 2 teachers pointed to a variety of other forms of support as being particularly useful such as the scripted lesson plans, the provision of graded readers and the provision of on-site coaches.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Refer to Table 17 in the Appendix for response frequencies that relate to teachers' approaches to literacy and language teaching.

<sup>16</sup>Refer to Table 18 in the Appendix for the response frequencies that relate to the support that teachers said they had received.

**Planning & Curriculum Coverage cont...**

When teachers were asked why or how well the support received had worked, a couple of the EGRS intervention teachers said that the resources they had been given, the skills they were taught about teaching phonemes and phonics, and the method provided for tracking their progress in implementing the curriculum were particularly helpful. One teacher summarised the benefits of the resources saying that “EGRS has given me books which I refer to when I am teaching”. Another teacher mentioned benefits to her literacy teaching saying: “Being able to teach phonemes effectively helps learners to cope with reading better”.

Two-thirds of all teachers interviewed said that they had experienced improvements in the type or level of support or guidance that they had received from within their school with regards to teaching Setswana Home Language. This support had been received either from the school principal, the HOD or another member of the School Management Team. Teachers in some of the intervention 2 schools (eight of the 20 schools) thought that there had been a slight increase in the frequency in which SMT members monitored their curriculum coverage.

Around half of the control teachers and half of the intervention 1 teachers reported that someone had observed them teaching a Grade 2 Setswana Home Language lesson in 2016, whereas 90% of the intervention 2 teachers reported that someone had observed their lessons. Teachers in intervention 1 and control schools who stated that their lessons had been observed, most commonly reported that it was an SMT member, or another senior teacher who had observed their lessons. As expected, intervention 2 teachers mostly reported that they had been observed by an EGRS coach and were almost twice as likely as their peers in the control or intervention 1 schools to have had someone observe their Home Language lessons. Moreover, less than half of the control and intervention 1 teachers found the feedback that they received after having been observed useful, whereas seventeen out of the 20 intervention 2 teachers in the sample found the feedback they had received to be very useful.

***Less than half of the control and intervention 1 teachers found the feedback that they received after having been observed useful, whereas seventeen out of the 20 intervention 2 teachers in the sample found the feedback received to be very useful.***

Finally, intervention 1 and intervention 2 teachers were asked which two forms of the support or training had not worked very well in their opinion, and why they thought they had not helped. Response rates to these questions were very low, nevertheless, some teachers expressed the view that the pace was sometimes too fast. Others added that the training sessions were too short and that they did not have enough time to understand more difficult concepts such as group-guided reading. For example, one teacher said: “It was the first training and I did not understand immediately. From the second training all went well”.

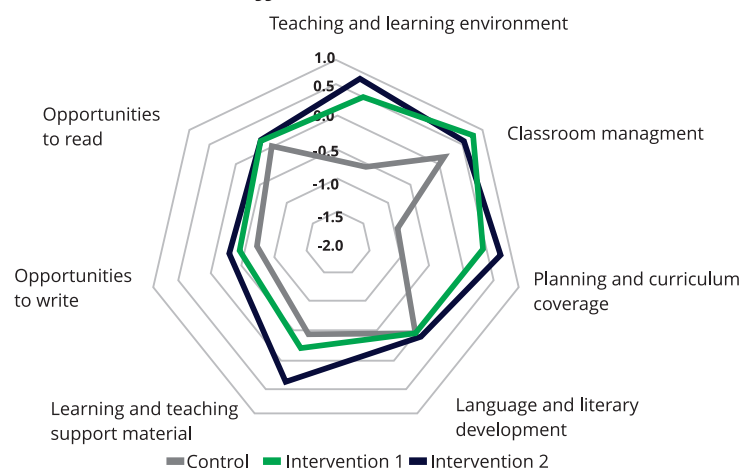
## 5. THEME DIFFERENCES

Indices were created for each of the different themes and sub-themes explored in section 5 above. These indices were constructed by applying multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) to the sub-items under each of the themes. However, given the small number of items under the sub-themes Listening & Speaking, Cognitive Demand, Assessment and Support Received, indices were not constructed for them. The purpose of constructing these indices is to provide a unidimensional measure of each of the themes, based on the underlying variables included. The indices have been constructed to be standardised around a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one, thereby providing a relative measure of how well schools performed in each sub-theme.

Figure 13 below provides a comparative sense of the areas where the largest differences were observed between the three different groups. From this graph it is clear that the control schools were performing notably worse than the intervention schools in the sub-themes: Teaching and Learning Environment; and Planning and Curriculum Coverage. From the information provided in section 4.2, it is clear that the main drivers of the differences in the Teaching and Learning Environment Index are the increased availability of display material, a classroom arrangement that is more conducive to reading, as well as increased availability of reading books in the intervention classrooms. With regards to Planning and Curriculum Coverage, information in section 4.4 shows that the content and specificity of the EGRS lesson plans differed significantly from the lesson plans used by the control groups. More importantly, however, was the evidence of greater curriculum coverage in the intervention schools, particularly in the intervention 2 schools.

In relation to the sub-themes Opportunities to Write and the Use of Learning and Teaching Material there are notable differences in the index scores between the intervention 1 and intervention 2 schools. Differences in the Use of Learning and Teaching Material can be attributed largely to the prevalence of learners using storybooks and readers in class, as well as to the use of resources such as flashcards and charts by teachers during lesson observations in the intervention 2 schools. With regards to the opportunities to Write, learners in intervention 2 schools completed more writing exercises on average, specifically more exercises pertaining to writing letters, short sentences and extended texts. Learners in intervention 2 classrooms were also engaged in a wider variety of writing exercises overall and were more likely to have their personally created dictionaries and to do more cursive writing exercises than learners in intervention 1 classrooms.

**Figure 13: Theme and Sub-Theme Index Differences**



## 6. CONCLUSION

The Early Grade Reading Study aims to change the instructional practices of teachers through the implementation of a structured pedagogy programme. Through this programme teachers were provided with scripted lesson plans and additional Learning and Teaching Support Material which were designed to enable the enactment of the current CAPS curriculum. The difference between the two interventions that were implemented was the mode through which the teacher training was delivered, i.e. the model usually used for training by the Department versus the reading coaching model.

The purpose of this classroom observation study was to provide richer and more comprehensive insights of the mechanisms through which the interventions have affected changes in teachers' instructional practises. The classroom observation study therefore employed a mixed methods approach which included a Home Language lesson observation, a teacher interview and a document review, all designed to gather information on changed practices and changed perceptions.

Section 5 provided a summary overview of the themes and sub-themes where the largest differences between the intervention groups were evident. With a focus on broader themes, the main differences between the intervention and control schools related to the Teaching and Learning Environment, as well as to Planning and Curriculum Coverage. The main differences between the intervention 1 and intervention 2 schools relate to the Use of Learning and Teaching Support Material.

Interrogating these trends further, it is evident that each component of the interventions are critically important in affecting change. The provision of LTSM through the programme seems to have been successful in both intervention groups, with all of the resources still available and visible in classrooms at the end of the school year. The display materials that were provided through the EGRS programme have served to significantly increase the print-richness of classrooms in both the intervention groups, and the graded readers have provided learners with increased opportunities to handle and read books.

The scripted lesson plans provided through the programme were hugely beneficial in translating the CAPS curriculum into daily lessons with detailed activities. The specificity of the EGRS lesson plans was notably different from the lesson plans used by the control group's teachers and included important aspects such as vocabulary development. The benefits of the level of specificity is especially clear with regards to vocabulary development, where teachers in the intervention 1 and 2 schools were much more likely to have been observed to engage the learners in vocabulary development. More importantly, the EGRS lesson plans provided teachers with a more accurate understanding of the size and scope of the curriculum that needs to be covered across the year, and also provided them with a mechanism for tracking their own progress. The teachers in intervention 2, however, were much more likely to actually track their own progress and to be up to date in covering the curriculum. Evidence of increased curriculum coverage in the intervention 2 schools was found in the lessons observed, as well as in the learners' workbooks. The increased curriculum coverage meant that learners were more often engaged in writing activities and therefore learners in the intervention schools were less often observed being uninvolved in class.

Although teachers in the intervention schools were observed to have a more realistic understanding of the curriculum scope, they still did not necessarily have a better understanding of the cognitive demand required by the curriculum.

The final aspect of the triple cocktail was the training provided to teachers, with intervention 1 teachers receiving block training twice a year and intervention 2 teachers receiving block training as well as on-going support through a reading coach. The evidence suggests that the reading coaches played a critical role with regard to two aspects, specifically: (1) in providing teachers with a more in-depth understanding of the enactment of the methodologies they were taught during the training; and perhaps more importantly, (2) in supporting and motivating teachers in persisting with the implementation of the programme. As mentioned above, there is significant evidence that suggests that intervention 2 teachers were implementing the scripted lesson plans as intended. Intervention 2 teachers were also more frequently seen providing different levels of readers to different ability groups in the lessons observed; doing a wider variety of writing activities during the Home Language lessons; covering the required pages in the DBE workbooks and covering more challenging aspects of the Grade 2 writing curriculum, specifically writing short sentences and extended texts.

This classroom observation study has provided in-depth insights into the changed practices brought about through the two different interventions. Both interventions provided teachers with scripted lesson plans, LTSM and training, however, intervention 2 also provided teachers with a reading coach that visited teachers on a regular basis. Although intervention 1 brought about significant changes in teachers' instructional practices, it seems that the reading coach component of intervention 2 was critically important in ensuring persistence in the implementation of the programme and the curriculum. Available evidence therefore suggests that the triple cocktail in its entirety is necessary to affect real change in teachers' instructional practices.



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## APPENDIX:

Table 6: Learning and Teaching Environment

		Number	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
<b>Classroom Environment</b>	<i>Clean Classroom</i>	50	83%	14	17	19
	<i>Sufficient desk space</i>	55	92%	16	19	20
	<i>Adequate seating</i>	56	93%	17	19	20
<b>Print Richness of Classroom</b>	<i>Can teacher move around</i>	49	82%	11	18	20
	<i>Reading carpet</i>	30	50%	2	13	15
	<i>Chalkboard</i>	59	98%	20	20	19
	<i>Can learners see teacher</i>	56	93%	17	19	20
	<i>Commercial Posters: None</i>	8	13%	6	0	2
	<i>Commercial Posters: 1-5</i>	23	38%	7	10	6
	<i>Commercial Posters: 6-10</i>	14	23%	3	6	5
	<i>Commercial Posters: &gt; 10</i>	12	20%	3	3	6
	<i>Words are systematically organised on Word Wall</i>	39	65%	5	17	17
	<i>Grade 2 timetable is on display</i>	39	65%	9	16	14
	<i>Learners' work is on display</i>	12	20%	3	5	4
	<i>Classroom has a reading corner</i>	48	80%	11	20	17
	<i>Books are available in Setswana</i>	47	78%	10	19	18
	<i>Books are available in English</i>	21	35%	6	8	7
	<i>Books seem to be made available to learners</i>	37	62%	7	17	13
	<i>Classroom reading rich: Not at all</i>	10	17%	7	2	1
	<i>Classroom reading rich: Hardly</i>	13	22%	6	3	4
	<i>Classroom reading rich: Fairly</i>	21	35%	7	5	9
	<i>Classroom reading rich: Very</i>	16	27%	0	10	6
<b>There are enough:</b>	<i>Workbooks</i>	55	92%	17	19	19
	<i>Readers</i>	28	47%	5	12	11
<b>Time Tables</b>	<i>Textbooks</i>	12	20%	8	4	0

**Table 7 : Classroom Management**

		Number	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
	<i>No outside interruptions</i>	27	45%	6	10	11
<b>Factors that slows down teaching to some/ a large extent</b>	<i>Handing out books</i>	33	55%	10	12	11
	<i>Teacher consulting notes</i>	11	18%	2	2	7
	<i>Learners re-arranging the furniture</i>	10	17%	7	1	2
	<i>Learners do not have the necessary stationery</i>	18	30%	9	5	4
<b>Independent learner work time</b>	<i>Learners are mostly/ always on task</i>	41	68%	12	13	16
	<i>The teacher monitors all learners</i>	32	53%	10	9	13
	<i>The teacher supervises less capable learners</i>	11	18%	3	1	7
	<i>The teacher gives additional tasks to learners</i>	5	8%	0	1	4
<b>No time lost in class</b>	<i>Non-teaching activities</i>	43	72%	11	15	17
	<i>Learners being uninvolved</i>	44	73%	11	15	18
<b>Discipline</b>	<i>Teacher mostly/ always get learners to pay attention</i>	49	82%	16	18	15
	<i>Teacher mostly/ always refer to individual learners by their names</i>	39	65%	10	16	13
	<i>Overall discipline is good/ very good</i>	41	68%	12	16	13

**Table 8: Planning and Curriculum Coverage**

		Number	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
<b>Curriculum coverage</b>	<i>Are satisfied with progress</i>	46	77%	13	14	19
	<i>Will finish by the end of the year</i>	50	83%	15	17	18
	<i>Workbooks prove curriculum coverage</i>	22	37%	1	6	15
<b>Curriculum coverage monitoring</b>	<i>No one</i>	0	0%	0	0	0
	<i>DBE Officials</i>	13	22%	9	2	2
	<i>SMT</i>	49	82%	18	17	14
	<i>EGRS</i>	20	33%	0	5	15
	<i>NGO</i>	0	0%	0	0	0
<b>Work plans</b>	<i>Can produce plan for Term 3 and 4</i>	41	68%	14	11	16
	<i>Can produce plan for Term 3</i>	10	17%	1	9	0
	<i>Can produce plan for Term 4</i>	3	5%	0	0	3
	<i>No plan available</i>	6	10%	5	0	1
	<i>Plan includes lesson plans</i>	42	70%	11	13	18
	<i>Specifies Phonics</i>	48	80%	11	19	18
	<i>Specifies Reading</i>	50	83%	12	19	19
	<i>Specifies Writing</i>	47	78%	11	18	18
	<i>Specifies Listening &amp; Speaking</i>	48	80%	12	18	18
	<i>Covers details of content extensively</i>	35	58%	5	13	17
	<i>Makes reference to vocabulary development</i>	38	63%	5	17	16
	<i>Teacher track implementation of plan</i>	27	45%	3	9	15
	<i>Assessment plan integrated with work plan</i>	43	72%	11	15	17
	<i>Content of lesson in line with work planned for week</i>	39	65%	12	9	18
	<i>Content of lesson in line with work planned for day</i>	34	57%	11	6	17
	<i>Timetable operates on five day cycle</i>	57	95%	20	18	19
	<i>Duration of the lesson observed matched timetable</i>	23	38%	6	10	7

**Table 9: Teachers' Instructional Practices - Listening and Speaking**

		Number	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
Learner interaction	Learners mostly/ always respond in unison	33	55%	13	9	11
	Teacher mostly/always gives a wide variety of learners opportunities to answer	39	65%	9	15	15
	At least 1 learner asked a question in the class	11	18%	3	3	5
Feedback and questioning	Teacher mostly/ always makes clear whether answers are right/wrong	32	53%	10	13	9
	Teacher mostly/ always question learners who gave incorrect responses	14	23%	2	8	4
Code Switching	Teacher code switches minimally/moderately	10	17%	5	1	4

**Table 10: Teachers' Instructional Practices - Use of Learning and Teaching Support Material**

		Number	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
<b>Use of Readers</b>	No learners get to handle books	21	35%	12	6	3
	No learners read a reader	24	40%	18	3	3
<b>Use of other LTSM</b>	Loose worksheets	4	7%	0	4	0
	Loose teacher-made sheets	4	7%	0	1	3
	Flash cards	29	48%	6	7	16
	Posters	10	17%	1	4	5
	Pictures	8	13%	1	3	4
	Charts	11	18%	1	3	7
	Enlarged texts	1	2%	0	1	0
	Name cards	1	2%	0	1	0
<b>Learners mainly write in:</b>	DBE Workbooks	14	23%	8	3	3
	Exercise books	14	23%	2	6	6
	Use both equally	32	53%	10	11	11
	Learners have loose sheets on which they write	8	13%	3	2	3
	Learners write work in exercise books	41	68%	7	15	19
	Learners write in workbooks	33	55%	11	9	13
<b>Other books learners write in:</b>	One exercise book for most HL work	29	48%	12	7	10
	Have a book/file for exercises	31	52%	14	8	9
	Separate homework book	17	28%	5	6	6
	Separate handwriting book	28	47%	8	7	13
	Separate phonics book	26	43%	3	10	13
	Separate spelling book	28	47%	8	8	12
	Separate language writing book	12	20%	3	5	4
	Separate story writing book	22	37%	2	8	12
	Separate assessment book	27	45%	9	10	8
	Personal dictionaries kept	21	35%	1	8	12

Table 11: Teachers' Instructional Practices - Literacy and Language Development

		Numb	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
<b>Teacher practices (Reading)</b>	<i>Teacher demonstrates how to care for books</i>	44	73%	11	13	20
	<i>Teacher reads with intonation</i>	41	68%	12	15	14
	<i>Teacher explicitly teach grammar</i>	21	35%	9	3	9
	<i>Teacher encourages learners to read to some/a large extent</i>	48	80%	12	17	19
	<i>Teacher teaches individual letter sounds some/most of the time</i>	36	60%	14	16	16
	<i>Teacher teaches phoneme awareness some/most of the time</i>	35	58%	13	16	16
	<i>Teacher promotes word recognition some/most of the time</i>	30	50%	8	9	13
	<i>Teacher explicitly teaches learners to interpret and read illustrations</i>	11	18%	3	4	4
<b>Using LTSM to develop concepts about print</b>	<i>Teacher uses LTSM to develop concepts about print</i>	42	70%	13	11	18
	<i>Identifies: front/cover of a book</i>	20	33%	1	12	8
	<i>Identifies: the spine of a book</i>	1	2%	0	1	0
	<i>Identifies: the title / author / illustrator</i>	20	33%	1	12	7
	<i>Identifies: headings/sub-headings</i>	18	30%	5	6	7
	<i>Identifies: the beginning/end of sentences</i>	17	28%	5	4	8
	<i>Shows: that print moves from right to left</i>	17	28%	5	5	7
	<i>Identifies: full stops/other punctuation</i>	27	45%	6	11	10
	<i>Identifies: capitals</i>	14	23%	3	6	5
	<i>Identifies: bottom/top of page or picture</i>	10	17%	4	3	3
	<i>Identifies: page numbers</i>	36	60%	12	10	14
	<i>Shows: that pages turn from right to left</i>	19	32%	9	4	6
<b>Reading and comprehension of extended texts</b>	<i>Teacher mostly corrects learners if they get stuck</i>	20	33%	6	5	9
	<i>Teacher provides strategies for self-correcting: Sound out</i>	36	60%	10	12	14
	<i>Teacher provides strategies for self-correcting: Guessing</i>	7	12%	2	3	2
	<i>Teacher provides strategies for self-correcting: Similarity</i>	18	30%	7	3	8
	<i>Teacher provides strategies for self-correcting: Skip and go back</i>	5	8%	1	2	2
	<i>Learners are encouraged: To retell/ act out/ summarise</i>	29	48%	9	9	11
	<i>Learners are encouraged: To discuss or respond to pictures</i>	20	33%	8	5	7
	<i>Learners are encouraged: To use pictures as clues to aid</i>	20	33%	7	6	7
	<i>Learners are encouraged: To re-state the main theme</i>	27	45%	9	8	10
	<i>Learners are encouraged: To answer open-ended questions</i>	35	58%	9	12	14
	<i>Learners are encouraged: To answer predictive questions</i>	12	20%	0	5	7
<b>Vocabulary Development</b>	<i>Vocabulary development happened</i>	24	40%	4	8	12
	<i>Spelling development happened</i>	26	43%	7	12	7

## Appendix cont...

Table 12: Teachers' Instructional Practices - Opportunities to Write

		Number	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
<b>Teaching Practices (Writing)</b>	<i>All learners complete written tasks</i>	39	65%	6	13	12
	<i>Did 2 or more different tasks during HL Lesson</i>	36	60%	8	11	17
	<i>Learners never copy from one another</i>	26	43%	5	10	11
	<i>Learners involved in any kind of cursive writing</i>	18	30%	5	5	8
	<i>Teacher checked that all learners were holding pencils correctly</i>	11	18%	3	3	5
	<i>Teacher takes corrective measures</i>	11	18%	3	3	5
<b>Forms of Writing</b>	<i>Colouring in</i>	3	5%	0	2	1
	<i>Drawing</i>	7	12%	3	2	2
	<i>Copying a drawing</i>	9	15%	3	2	4
	<i>Drawing patterns</i>	13	22%	3	3	7
	<i>Copying letters</i>	21	35%	3	7	11
	<i>Writing letters</i>	16	27%	4	5	7
	<i>Copying more than three words:</i>	24	40%	3	9	12
	<i>Writing more than three words:</i>	40	67%	13	11	16
	<i>Copying any sentences:</i>	24	40%	8	6	10
	<i>Writing any sentences</i>	34	57%	10	10	14
	<i>Copying any paragraphs</i>	1	2%	0	1	0
	<i>Writing any paragraphs</i>	3	5%	0	1	2
	<i>Writing own paragraphs</i>	11	18%	3	3	5
<b>Evidence of writing activities and assessment of activities in class</b>	<i>Extensive evidence of cursive writing</i>	16	27%	2	4	10
	<i>Evidence of personal dictionaries</i>	21	35%	1	8	12
	<i>Evidence of teacher mostly/ always marking workbooks</i>	32	53%	8	12	12
	<i>Evidence of teacher mostly/ always marking exercise books</i>	44	73%	14	18	12
	<i>No evidence of learners making any corrections in workbooks</i>	38	63%	14	14	10
	<i>No evidence of learners making any corrections in exercise books</i>	17	28%	8	5	4

Table 13: Average Number of Written Exercises in DBE Workbooks and Exercise Books

		Control		Intervention 1		Intervention 2	
<b>Average number of work book pages dedicated to:</b>	<i>Written work completed in the DBE</i>	33	(3.219)	27	(4.102)	29	(3.630)
	<i>Patterns</i>	4	(0.929)	4	(1.182)	8	(1.409)
	<i>Letters</i>	5	(0.816)	4	(0.962)	8	(4.750)
	<i>Whole words</i>	12	(1.122)	11	(1.891)	13	(2.471)
	<i>Short Sentences</i>	7	(0.776)	6	(0.829)	9	(1.568)
	<i>Long Sentences</i>	4	(0.828)	4	(0.876)	4	(0.638)
	<i>Whole Paragraphs</i>	2	(0.641)	2	(0.638)	2	(0.000)
	<i>Longer extended texts</i>	1	(0.411)	1	(0.492)	0	(0.000)
<b>Average number of exercise book pages dedicated to:</b>	<i>Written work completed in Exercise books</i>	24	(3.278)	34	(4.067)	49	(4.178)
	<i>Patterns</i>	2	(0.618)	7	(1.576)	11	(1.512)
	<i>Letters</i>	4	(0.762)	5	(1.431)	10	(1.828)
	<i>Whole words</i>	9	(1.425)	16	(2.072)	15	(1.891)
	<i>Short Sentences</i>	6	(0.909)	6	(1.048)	11	(1.410)
	<i>Long Sentences</i>	2	(0.723)	4	(1.008)	4	(0.663)
	<i>Whole Paragraphs</i>	1	(0.309)	1	(0.373)	2	(0.438)
	<i>Longer extended texts</i>	1	(0.444)	1	(0.332)	5	(3.708)



## Appendix cont...

Table 14: Teachers' Instructional Practices - Opportunities to Read

		Number	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
<b>Reading Activities Observed</b>	Teacher mostly/ always reading aloud without learners following	10	17%	3	2	5
	Teacher mostly/ always leading reading	18	30%	7	4	7
	Whole class mostly/ always reading aloud with teacher	23	38%	7	8	8
	Whole class mostly/ always reading aloud without teacher	13	22%	4	4	5
	Learners mostly/ always reading aloud together	21	35%	4	9	8
	Learners mostly/ always reading individually aloud	8	13%	2	2	4
	Learners mostly/ always reading individually silently	2	3%	2	0	0
	Mostly/ always individual guided reading	15	25%	1	6	8
Learners have to read instructions for tasks themselves	5	8%	0	2	3	
<b>Reading Demand</b>	All learners were expected to: read letters	29	48%	9	7	13
	All learners were expected to: read 1/2 words	18	30%	6	4	8
	All learners were expected to: read 3-10 words	31	52%	9	10	12
	All learners were expected to: read > 10 words	4	7%	1	2	1
	All learners were expected to: read 1/2 sentences	11	18%	4	3	4
	All learners were expected to: read 3-5 sentences	9	15%	2	5	2
	All learners were expected to: read > 5 sentences	6	10%	1	3	2
	All learners were expected to: read extended texts	18	30%	6	4	8
<b>Shared Reading</b>	Less than a quarter of the class are merely repeating the text off by heart	44	73%	14	15	15
	Less than a quarter of the class are simply repeating what is read by the teacher	36	60%	11	13	12
<b>Group Guided Reading</b>	Different groups are given readers of different difficulty levels	12	20%	2	4	6
	Roughly the same number of learners are in each group	25	42%	2	10	13
	Learners are sometimes/often required to interpret illustrations	26	43%	10	8	8
	Learners are sometimes/often required to refer to text for answers	30	50%	8	9	13

Table 15: Teachers' Instructional Practices - Cognitive Demand and Homework

		Number	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
<b>Cognitive demand</b>	Questions asked too difficult	2	3%	1	0	1
	Questions asked too easy/ familiar	31	52%	13	7	11
	Reading activities too difficult	2	3%	1	1	0
	Reading activities too easy/ familiar	31	52%	8	10	13
	Writing activities too difficult	1	2%	0	0	1
	Writing activities too easy	26	43%	7	9	10
<b>Homework</b>	Giving HL reading Homework	7	12%	0	6	1
	Giving HL writing Homework	6	10%	2	3	1
	Giving HL spelling Homework	3	5%	1	1	1
	Checking whether homework was completed	4	7%	3	1	0
	Collecting homework to mark later	0	0%	0	0	0
	Teacher gives reading homework >3 days a week	16	27%	3	7	6
	Teacher gives writing homework >3 days a week	15	25%	3	6	6
	Teacher gives spelling homework >3 days a week	12	20%	2	4	6

Table 16: Teachers' Instructional Practices - Assessment

		Number	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
<b>Written Tasks given during the lesson is:</b>	<i>Mostly/ always marked by teacher</i>	16	27%	6	6	4
	<i>Mostly/ always marked by learners themselves</i>	2	3%	0	1	1
	<i>Mostly/ always marked by each other</i>	0	0%	0	0	0
<b>Reading Assessments</b>	<i>Class based reading assessment</i>	28	47%	13	6	9
	<i>Class based phonics assessment</i>	37	62%	15	9	13
<b>Assessment Records</b>	<i>Teacher can show records of assessment</i>	52	87%	17	18	17
	<i>Teacher tracks individual learner progress</i>	21	35%	6	7	8
<b>Average number of Assessments</b>	<i>Average number of marks recorded overall</i>	19.17		15.76	19.29	22.11
	<i>For Phonics</i>	2.69		2.11	2.41	3.47
	<i>For Reading</i>	3.87		3.61	4.18	3.83
	<i>For Writing</i>	2.77		3.61	3.75	3.94
	<i>For Listening and Speaking</i>	2.45		1.94	2.35	3

Table 17: Approaches to Literacy and Teaching

		Number	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
	<i>Teaching of reading and writing changed in 2016</i>	47	78%	13	17	17
<b>What Teachers say has changed:</b>	<i>Doing more reading in class</i>	22	37%	5	8	9
	<i>Learners doing more writing in class</i>	16	27%	3	6	7
	<i>Doing group-guided reading</i>	12	20%	4	2	6
	<i>Using graded readers</i>	11	18%	2	3	6
	<i>Doing share reading</i>	11	18%	4	2	5
	<i>Lesson planning has improved</i>	8	13%	3	2	3
	<i>Covering more of the curriculum</i>	7	12%	1	4	2
	<i>More regular assessment</i>	7	12%	2	1	4
	<i>Better assessment tasks</i>	2	3%	1	0	1
	<i>Other</i>	25	42%	9	9	7
	<i>Missing</i>	12	20%	7	2	3
<b>How Teachers say they cope with different levels of reading ability</b>	<i>Do nothing</i>	1	2%	1	0	0
	<i>Teacher claims that all learners in the class are at the same level</i>	0	0%	0	0	0
	<i>Different levels of reading are distributed to different groups of learners</i>	17	28%	3	4	10
	<i>Give extra lessons to learners who are struggling</i>	43	72%	14	14	15
	<i>Spend more time in class helping learners who are struggling</i>	16	27%	5	6	5
	<i>Give additional reading to learners who are coping well</i>	18	30%	7	7	4

## Appendix cont...

Table 18: Teaching Support Received for Setswana Home Language as Reported by Teachers

		Number	Percentage	C	T 1	T 2
<b>Teachers Reports on Support Received</b>	Received training and support in 2016	55	92%	17	19	19
	Observed teaching Setswana in 2016	41	68%	12	11	18
	Changes in 2015/16 in the level of support from SMT	41	68%	12	13	16
	Observed by: DBE	5	8%	2	1	2
	Observed by: SMT	25	42%	7	11	7
	Observed by: EGRS coach	17	28%	1	1	15
	Observed by: NGO	3	5%	0	0	3
	Observed by: Other	4	7%	2	1	1
	Received very useful feedback	35	58%	9	9	17
<b>Teachers Reports on type of Support Received</b>	Workshop/ Training sessions	52	87%	21	19	12
	Scripted Lesson Plans	9	15%	2	5	2
	Support for pacing	12	20%	3	4	5
	Graded readers	2	3%	0	0	2
	Teaching material	6	10%	0	2	4
	On-site coaches	10	17%	1	0	9
	Assessment tasks	4	7%	0	3	1
	Pre-printed workbooks	2	3%	0	0	2
	Informal discussions	11	18%	3	3	5
	Other	12	20%	1	6	5
	Missing	57	95%	27	18	12

Table : Theme and Sub-Theme Indices

	Teaching and Learning Environment	Classroom Management	Planning and Curriculum Coverage	Language and Literacy Development	Learning and Teaching Support Material	Opportunities to write	Opportunities to read
Control	-1.108	-0.297	-1.424	-0.049	-0.041	-0.269	-0.085
Intervention 1	-0.012	0.232	-0.029	-0.017	0.268	0.022	0.053
Intervention 2	0.255	0.072	0.262	0.068	0.841	0.191	0.105





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