

**IMPLICATIONS OF INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS ON READING SKILLS
TO LEARNERS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES IN SELECTED SCHOOLS
IN KABWE DISTRICT, ZAMBIA**

BY

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**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of master of education in special
education.**

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LUSAKA

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DECLARATION

I, **Semidah Ndila**, do hereby declare that this piece of work entitled ‘Implications of instructional methods on reading skills in learners with reading difficulties in selected primary special schools in Kabwe District’ is my own, and that all the works of other persons have been duly acknowledged, and that this work has not been previously presented at the University of Zambia and indeed at any other university for similar purposes.

Signature:

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of **Semidah Ndila** has been approved as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Special Education of the University of Zambia.

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Date

DEDICATION

I am indebted to my wonderful family for the moral and financial support they have rendered to me, not only through the completion of this dissertation but throughout my life. Therefore, I dedicate this dissertation to my loving, patient and understanding husband, Mr Evaristo Kalonga, who accommodated the pressure for all the years of my study. I must also thank my loving children, Clare, Misheck, Mazuba, Nchimunya, Ndila and Kamunika who gave me their fullest understanding by foregoing the attention and support they needed most from me and believed in diligence and pursuit of academic excellence.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the implications of instructional methods on reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected schools in Kabwe District, Zambia. The objectives of the study were to: establish types of instructional methods used to teach reading skills to learners with reading difficulties; determine the implications of using instructional methods in teaching learners with reading difficulties reading skills and ascertain challenges faced by teachers involved in teaching reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in primary school in Kabwe District. The study employed the qualitative approach using a descriptive research design. It had a total sample of 30 participants consisting of 15 learners and 15 teachers who were purposefully and conveniently drawn from three selected special education units in Kabwe District. Data was collected through interview, observation and focus group discussion guides. Analysis of data was done thematically where merging themes were presented in a descriptive form. The study revealed phonetics, linguistic, comprehension, multisensory, whole word method, look and say and basal reading approaches were the mostly used instructional methods in teaching learners with reading difficulties. In terms of implications, these instructional methods encouraged teaching reading in groups rather than concentrating on the individual differences and needs. In addition, learners had some difficulties in phonics, failed to spell some word sounds such as phone, sugar and ball. Furthermore, teachers had challenges in teaching learners with reading difficulties such as over-enrolment, lack of learning and teaching resources, mixed disabilities, shortage of infrastructures, inconsistency on education policy regarding learners with reading difficulties, and the learning was more examination oriented than practical. Based on the findings of the study, schools must have adequate educational materials on instructional methods for learners with reading difficulties. They must promote peer teaching in instructional methods for such learners through continuous professional development (CPD).

Key word: *implications, instructional methods, reading difficulties, learners, teachers and Zambia.*

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DEBS	District Board Secretary
LEA	Language Experience Approach
MOE	Ministry of Education
NBTL	New Break Through To Literacy
ROC	Read On Course
RPR	Primary Reading Programme
RR	Reported Reading
SITE	Step In To English
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Dyslexia	This is a disorder that involves difficulty in learning to read.
Implications	This means consequences of an action
Instructional methods	Teaching strategies used to improve either reading or writing skills in learners.
Literacy	The ability to read and write
Reading Difficulty	This is a situation in which there are some whose achievement levels are lower than those of the rest of the people in the distribution.
Reading disability	This includes problems in reading habits, word recognition, comprehension, word grouping and punctuations.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This research investigated the implications of instructional methods on reading skills in learners with reading difficulties in three selected schools in Kabwe District of Central Province in Zambia. It covered the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose, objectives as well as the research questions, significance of the study, study sites, theoretical framework, and the operational definitions of key terms and summary of the chapter.

1.2 Background to the study

World over, the ability to read is important if one is to succeed in school. This is due to the fact that the comprehension of everything that is learnt in school depends on a learner's good reading skills. Further, Ball (2010) contended that if children do not learn to read, understand, write and use language to communicate their ideas and perspectives, their favourable conditions for a fulfilling and rewarding life are seriously compromised.

From the global perspective, reading difficulties have been estimated to be at two to five percent among school-going children. Findings from a study that was carried out in the United Kingdom among English-speaking children revealed that, of the grade two and three children whose reading was assessed, approximately a quarter were functioning at a fairly low level for their grade and approximately one in twenty was hardly able to read at all (Griffin and Appel, 2009). Instructional methods and their implications on reading in learners with reading difficulties have motivated this study. While there are several instructional methods, it was not known what implications these methods have on reading, especially in learners with reading difficulties in Kabwe District.

Reading is one of the basic skills that children should master during their first school years if they are to be able to assimilate new knowledge and skills in future. However, this has not been the case here in Zambia. Most learners have reading difficulties,

resulting in questioning the instructional methods used and their effects on children ability to read (Matafwali, 2010).

Reading difficulty is an unexpected failure in learning to read, write or spell in spite of normal senses, normal intelligence and adequate opportunity and motivation (Paris, 2005). For purposes of this study, reading difficulty is the unexpected failure to read fluently and characterised by mispronouncing, omitting, substituting, as well as adding words. It is not easy to figure out the causes of reading difficulties. Maruyama (2007) cited some considerations which support the view that reading difficulty is caused by neurological factors, namely disorientation and disorganization in the recognition of visual patterns due to brain damages, hereditary relationship of reading disability and interrelationship between visual, auditory and kinaesthetic disorientation and disorganization.

Mahlburgand Lynchburg (2013) revealed that deficiencies in reading abilities have become a common phenomenon in our communities and schools and have become a national concern. A person with reading difficulties mixes up letters or word sequences and has therefore interference in his or her learning as the brain has problems processing the language. Generally it is believed that reading difficulties are created and not inherited and are mostly the result of unrecognized, predisposing conditions within a child, but for most part they are caused by the environment at home, at play and at school. Reading is the key to learning the content of the school curriculum. Failure to access the curriculum through reading disadvantages a child.

Matafwali (2005) states that language is the foundation for reading as such attention needs to be paid to the elements of the language cueing systems and the critical role they play in reading. The cueing systems are the elements of oral and written language, including: sounds; the collection of words; word order patterns; and the larger units and patterns that form text. These systems communicate and cue intended meaning. The conventions are the expected form or manner that these cues should take, including: spellings of words; punctuation of sentences; and format of text such as paragraphs. All these can only be achieved when a teacher uses effective instructional methods.

Therefore, the implications of the instructional methods that teachers use in teaching reading skills to learners with reading difficulties was of major concern and remained unknown.

Developing reading skills early on in pupils is not only for passing school subjects but also a means of preparing them for the 'real world'. If pupils are able to read well, they will not have problems understanding manuals, guides or contracts, vital documents and papers they will encounter when they join the world of work. In terms of mastering the spellings of various types of vocabulary, especially during the formative years such as grades one to four, it requires regular reading of different materials containing new words. This means therefore that learners' ability to improve their spelling skills and the ability to read them correctly depends partly on how often they see the same words in print (Hlaithwa, 2013). Teachers' use of appropriate instructional strategies is known to have been influenced by a number of factors such as teacher training, academic qualification and experience. Research has shown that children's success in reading depends more on the teachers' commitment to the curriculum than on the type of program used. Therefore teachers choose the type of method or approach they believe works best for them despite not being sure if the same method can work learners with reading difficulties when teaching reading.

In the recent past, there has been emphasis on 'breaking through to literacy' in the first and second grade in the mother tongue or familiar language and English respectively. This began with the introduction of the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) whose main component is the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL), Step into English (SITE) and Read on course (ROC). The purpose of these programmes was to teach. Zambian children who enter grade one to grade seven reading skills by using a local or mother tongue as a medium of instruction in lower grades in schools (Chuunga, 2013).

The program of teaching reading is centred on the phonics approach. The approach teaches word recognition through learning grapheme-phoneme (letter-sound) associations. The students were able to learn vowels, consonants, and blends, and learnt to sound out words by combining sounds and blending them into words. By associating

speech sounds with letters, students learn to recognize new and unfamiliar words. Native reading, for example, uses both phonics and whole word techniques. The New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL), Step into English (SITE) and Read on course (ROC) are focused at the word level by teaching the connections between letters and sounds (Mwanamukubi, 2007). Despite these progressive reading programmes Zambia has been concerned about the unsatisfactory level of reading abilities among school children. Research has also shown that most pupils reach as far as grade six without the ability to read (Kelly, 1999).

In the world of literacy education, there is a deep-rooted debate over what classroom instructional method produces efficient readers. The strategies and techniques may sometimes be effective or ineffective depending on how they are used or even their type. Finding more effective instructional teaching methods for learners with difficulties presents a daunting task to most of the teachers. The research by Matafwali (2010) found that among other teaching methods used is the phonics approach, which teaches word recognition through learning grapheme-phoneme (letter-sound) associations. A student learns vowels, consonants, and blends, and learns to sound out words by combining sounds and blending them into words. By associating speech sounds with letters the student learns to recognize new and unfamiliar.

Another method is the multisensory approach, which employs tracing, hearing, writing, and seeing, often referred to as VAKT (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile) method. A multisensory technique is used with both phonics and linguistic approaches. Also, the language experience approach uses children's spoken language to develop material for reading. This approach utilizes each student's oral language level and personal experiences. Material is written by the child and his or her teacher for reading using that child's experience. This can be done in small groups and individually. Familiarity with the content and the vocabulary facilitates reading different stories. Each child can develop a book to be read and re-read. This approach helps children know what reading is and that ideas and experiences can be conveyed in print (Flores and Ganz, (2009).

Also, a study by Phajane (2014) found that phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are most effective for teaching reading to children. The research shows that not only do phonics and phonemic awareness need to be taught using a bottom-up approach, but it also needs to be explicit, systematic, and sequential. The emphasis is on how we teach, not what we teach. When a foundation of phonics and phonemic awareness is set using these methods, teachers can more effectively balance the learning with whole language reading strategies. Without systematic, explicit, and sequential phonics, students will never learn to decode effectively and will rely on guessing unknown words, which is not a reading strategy but a survival skill. In his study he said there are two polarized approaches to the teaching of reading: the look-and-say method, which uses a whole-word approach to recognize and remember words when encountered in a text, and the phonics approach, whereby children are taught to sound out and blend specific phonemes. Despite the appropriateness of this instructional method in teaching reading to learners without reading difficulties, it has not been verified on learners with reading difficulties, hence the study (Phajane, 2014).

Another instructional strategy is reading comprehension support. Persons with reading disabilities who need work on reading comprehension often respond to explicitly taught strategies which aid comprehension such as skimming, scanning and studying techniques. These techniques aid in acquiring the gist, and then focus is turned to the details of the text through use of the cloze procedure. Persons with reading disabilities typically require a variety of instructional approaches in order to make their educational experiences more productive. There is no one best approach to teach reading to students with reading disabilities. It is critical that teachers understand both the student and the various reading methods available if the student is to have the best possible learning experience. Despite teachers using these teaching methods, literacy levels among school-going children are still low, hence the need to ascertain the implications of instructional methods used by teachers in teaching reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in primary schools (Runo, 2010).

Therefore, gone are the days when reading skills were a luxury. They are now a necessity for education development due to high demand for basic literacy knowledge

and skills in most careers and in order for one to be competitively functional in the Zambian society today (UNESCO, 2004).The debate is no longer whether to use instructional methods in teaching learners with reading difficulties reading skills, especially the special units in the education system in Zambia, but how to do so and ensure equitable access for pupils, whether in urban or rural settings, because instructional strategies were implemented amidst numerous challenges (MoESVTEE, 2013). Therefore, it was imperative to conduct this study which investigated the implications of instructional methods in teaching reading to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The importance of reading has been recognised and it has prompted many studies to be conducted on reading skills world over to come up with workable measures to prevent reading decay among pupils in schools (Matafwali, 2005; Kalindi, 2005). Despite these concerted efforts in promoting the usage of instructional methods with a view to improving reading skills among learners with reading difficulties in primary schools, and despite having special units, the levels of reading are still low. However, with regard to the implications of instructional methods on reading among pupils with reading difficulties, little is known. It was imperative, therefore, to investigate the implications of instructional methods used in the teaching of reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools with special units in Kabwe District.

1.4 Purpose of study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the implications of the instructional methods used by teachers as they impart reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools with special units in Kabwe District.

1.5 Research objectives

The objectives of the study were:

- i. To establish types of instructional methods used to teach reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District
- ii. To determine the implications of using instructional methods in teaching learners with reading difficulties reading skills in selected primary schools in Kabwe District.
- iii. To ascertain challenges faced by teachers involved in teaching reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in primary school in Kabwe District.

1.6 Research questions

- i. What are the types of instructional methods used by teachers in the teaching of reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District?
- ii. What are implications of using the instructional methods in teaching learners with reading difficulties reading skills in selected primary schools in Kabwe District?
- iii. What are the challenges faced by teachers involved in the teaching of reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District?

1.7 Significance of the study

It is anticipated that the findings of this study may bring to light the realities on the types of instructional methods in the schools where the study was done through dissemination of the findings to the general public. It is also hoped that the results of this study may shed light on the implications of instructional methods on reading among learners with reading difficulties. Further, the findings of the study may be used as a reference point for policy makers in making informed decisions. The findings will also add value to the body of knowledge and provide a platform through which further research may be anchored.

1.8 Delimitation

The study was confined to three selected primary schools. The institutions were chosen by virtue of them being the only ones having special units for learner with learning disability with those with reading difficulties in Kabwe district of Central Province.

1.9 Theoretical framework

This study was guided by Chall's stages of reading development theory which underpin teachers' practices in teaching reading skills. Chall's Model of Reading Development grew out of her research on the effectiveness of different beginning reading approaches (Chall, 1967). In her later book *Stages of Reading Development* (1983), Chall described six stages of development. The theoretical framework for this study was also based on the stages of reading development given by Chall (1983). These stages begin with pre-reading stage (stage 0), birth to 6 years, where the learner grows and can control language both in semantics and syntax. The learner relies on non-visual information and contextual knowledge to begin reading, and starts developing insights into the nature of words. One also begins to realize that words are made up of sounds.

This stage is followed by stage 1, which is the initial reading or decoding stage (6 to 7 years). During this stage, the reader relies heavily on the text and focuses attention on visual information. The child begins to decode and sound words. The other two stages include stage 2 and stage 3. Stage 2 is known as confirmation of fluency and is mainly for grade twos and threes at age 7 and 8 respectively when the learner is able to recognize words and reaches the level of automaticity in word recognition and gains control of reading. Stage 3, which class 4 to 8, is the stage when the child reads for learning and uses reading as a tool to learn new information, ideas, attitudes and values while the other stages are for higher level semantics and syntax. By the end of stage 3, children begin to analyze and criticize what they read. In stage 4, high school students must deal with more than one point of view. Topics in textbooks are treated in greater depth by dealing with more than one set of facts, competing theories and multiple interpretations. In stage 5, post-secondary readers select materials to serve their purposes. They analyze, synthesize and make judgments about what they read. They

balance their own comprehension of the words with their analysis of the content and their own ideas about the topic. At this stage, the reader constructs knowledge and understanding from the reading materials of others.

Chall's theory on stages of reading development in early learning guides the study in stages 1 to 2 when the learner is able to control language, both in semantics and syntax, and relies on non-visual and contextual knowledge to begin reading. It is during this stage that the child begins to develop insights into the nature of words and realizes that words are made of sounds, which are followed by the decoding stage when the child begins to decode and sound words. The focus for this study was this stage when the child learns to read.

The rationale for selecting this theory is that they provide insight on the role of teachers in children's learning to read effectively. Applying this theory in the field of reading would enable teachers to understand that it is very important to use methods that are interactive in nature so as to advance collaborative social interaction within learners, especially in the struggle to improve and develop reading skills. The theories further bring in the focus of schools to teach activities that are more focused to problem-solving skills to enable advancement or developing reading skills, which is key to success in all educational areas. This theory was the most valuable for conceptualizing the optimal teaching of reading in learners with reading difficulties in a more persuasive manner, given the purpose of the study at hand.

1.10. Summary

This chapter gave the background to the study on the implications of instructional methods used to teach reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in schools. The chapter has also presented the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objective and questions, significance of the study, theoretical framework, delimitation of the study, limitations and operational definition of terms used in this study. The next chapter endeavours to review various literatures deemed relevant to this study based on the global, African and Zambian context.

1.11 Organisation of the Dissertation

This dissertation comprised of six chapters. Chapter one presented the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, study objectives and research questions. The chapter also presents the significance of the study and delimitations of the study, theoretical framework. Lastly, the summary of the chapter is given.

Chapter two reviewed literature related to the topic under study. As such, literature review helps the researcher to develop a significant problem which will provide further knowledge in the field of study.

Chapter three presented the methodology used in the study which includes the philosophical paradigm, research design, population, sample size and sampling techniques. The chapter further explains the research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis. This chapter ends with ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Chapter four presented the findings of the study as was provided by the participants. The findings were presented according to the study questions. Chapter five discussed the findings of the study using emerging themes from each objective. Lastly but not the least, chapter six presented the conclusion and recommendations of the study based on the findings.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

The previous chapter highlighted the introduction to the study which gave its background, problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions, significance theoretical framework, delimitation, limitation and operational definition of terms. This chapter reviews various works of literature on the implications of instructional methods used by teachers to teach learners with reading difficulties in the education system. The literature is based on studies done on reading world over in Africa and in the Zambian context.

2.2 Studies done on reading based on global context

Mokhtari, Porter and Edwards (2010) contend that learning to read is one of the most important skills learned during the elementary school years. Reading represents the major foundational skill for school-based learning, and reading ability is strongly related to opportunities for academic and vocational success. A critical transition takes place during elementary school from learning to read up to third grade to reading to learn in the fourth grade. Pupils who are not reading at grade level in third grade begin having difficulty comprehending the written material, which is a central part of the educational process in the grades that follow. This prompted the need to undertake the current study to assess the instructional methods used to teach reading skills in learners with reading difficulties among special units in Kabwe district in Central Province, Zambia.

Learning to read is a necessity in these increasingly literate societies. For children, it is also a critical skill for success in school. UNESCO (2004) emphasizes the importance of early reading ability for future educational success in which third-grade reading level was shown to be a significant predictor of eighth-grade reading level and ninth-grade course performance even after accounting for demographic characteristics and how a child's school influences their individual performance. Third-grade reading level was also shown to be a predictor of graduation and college attendance, even when

demographic characteristics were included as controls. In view of the above information with regard to third grade, reading level was shown to be significant predictor of eighth-grade reading level and ninth-grade course performance even after accounting for demographic characteristics and how a child's school influences their individual performance. In the current study it was not known whether reading skills among learners' reading difficulties would indicate significance with school performance, and if so, with what instructional methods to be used teach reading skills among them.

There are several early warning signs a teacher may notice with students who may be at risk for reading failure. These are: delayed receptive and expressive language skills; poor phonological skills; difficulty learning phonics; and not remembering basic rote information (Hudson, 2007). However, it is important to keep in mind that early warning signs do not necessarily mean that the student has a reading disability. They are characteristics that suggest further investigation and the need for early intervention. These elements are not taught in isolation. Learning English language arts curricula focus on teaching students through an integrated process to help them understand the relationship among the elements and how they relate to the ultimate goal of reading. Expressive and receptive oral language provides the foundation for these elements. These critical elements must be explicitly and intensively taught if students are to become proficient readers and writers (Kirk, 2006). Students who are at risk for reading failure require direct teaching through a systematic format. Many approaches and materials have been developed to teach reading. Methods of beginning reading instruction may be divided into two major approaches: the code-emphasis approach and the meaning emphasis approach. The primary difference in the two approaches is the way decoding is taught.

Here the teacher casts himself/ herself in the role of being a master and of the subject; the teacher is looked upon by the learners as an expert or an authority. According to Sangeeta (2011), when education is teacher-centred, the classroom remains orderly. Students are quiet, and you retain full control of the classroom and its activities. Because students learn on their own, they learn independence and make their own decisions. In this category of methods, both the teacher and the learners have to fit into

the content that is taught. Generally, this means the information and skills to be taught are regarded as sacrosanct or very important. A lot of emphasis is laid on the clarity and careful analyses of content. Both the teacher and the learners cannot alter or become critical of anything to do with the content. An example of a method which subordinates the interests of the teacher and learners to the content is the programmed learning approach

According to Kail (2007), it has been shown to have a positive effect on student learning when compared to individual or competitive conditions. It has the potential to produce a level of engagement that other forms of learning cannot. Students may explain things better to their peers than a teacher to a class. Students learn how to teach one another and explain material in their own words. Questions are more likely to be asked and answered in a group setting. Positive interdependency is achieved as individuals feel that they cannot succeed unless everyone in their group succeeds. Interpersonal and collaboration skills can be learned in a cooperative learning activity. It promotes cooperative learning has the potential to meet more learning style needs more of the time than individualized direct instruction and sends the symbolic message that the class is egalitarian and classless. Higher ability students are in a position to be experts, leaders, models and teachers; lower ability students get the benefits of having higher ability students in their group. A burden is making the students responsible for each other's learning apart from themselves.

One study showed that in groups of mixed ability, low-achieving students become passive and do not focus on the task. Depending on an individual's motivation and interest on a particular subject, that will determine how well they would learn .The goal of scaffolding is for students to become independent and be able to think by themselves, without the help of others. High stakes create increased chances for conflict and, therefore, need for conflict resolution skills. It is difficult for the teacher to be sure that the groups are discussing the academic content rather than something else. Higher ability students may not experience the stimulation or challenge that they would with other higher ability students. Lower ability students may feel perpetually in need of help rather than experiencing the role of leader or expert relative to the others in their group

(Mubanga, 2010). While the aforementioned study brought about pertinent information such as higher ability students not experiencing the stimulation or challenge that they would with other higher ability students, lower ability students may feel perpetually in need of help rather than experiencing the role of leader or expert relative to the others in their group. In the current study it was not clear whether the same challenges would be evident.

Developmental reading approaches emphasize sequential instruction on a daily basis. Most are programmed according to a normative pattern of reading growth. The basic material for instruction is usually a series of books such as readers that directs what will be taught and when. A well-developed programme provides supplementary materials such as workbooks, skills packs, wall charts, related activities, learning games, and filmstrips. To teach students with reading programme, it is often necessary to adapt developmental programs to meet their needs - changing the sequence, providing additional practice, activities, and modifying the input-output arrangements of selected tasks. Some of the developmental approaches are basal, phonic, and linguistic and language experience, Neurological Impress Method, Multisensory Reading Method, and Individualized reading approach (Ahmad and Awang, 2016).

According to MOE (1996), students develop learning and other skills and gain meaningful knowledge that will help them throughout life. It can help to build social skills and self-esteem. Also students gain more emotional and cognitive support from their peers. The relationship between rights and responsibilities is learned. Students discover that learning is interesting and fun. Teachers have less traditional work to do. Students are more attentive and willing to participate in class. Complaints about irrelevance and unfairness decrease. Reports and papers generated by students increase a teacher's collection of useful information. The pupil has more of an active role to play in their learning. Students can adapt the way they learn to make their studies more effective. It requires a longer time for students, so it is difficult to achieve curriculum targets. So teachers, in general, do not want to use cooperative learning. It requires special skills among teachers so that not all of them can do or use cooperative learning.

It requires specific qualities and characteristics among students, such as to work as a team (MOE, 1996).

2.2.1 Basal Reader Approach or Whole Language Approach

This is the most widely used approach, with estimates indicating that 75% to 85% of elementary classrooms use it daily. Also known as the skills-based or learner centred approach, the basal reader approach tends to help students move from the part to the whole by prescribing the acquisition of competencies in a systematic order. As a method, the whole language approach as an approach to first language reading and instruction that has its roots in the elementary school level and refers to the teaching of English as a second language (ESL). This approach sees language as a whole entity. The whole language stresses learning to read and write naturally, focusing on real communication, and not to follow a piecemeal approach where grammar, vocabularies and word recognition are separated. Furthermore, they also mentioned that in this approach the language is taught in a holistic manner rather than in an atomistic way (Ahmad and Awang, 2016).

Esther, Rachael and Mary (2016) stated that whole language approach holds the view, because of his beliefs that an emerging reader needs little direct instruction to decode the letters, creating sentences representing pictures and sounds of language. This is also confirmed by Paris (2005). Paris and associates further believe that learners have the ability to decode the letters, syllables, words and phrases when they read meaningful texts, therefore making inferences about the linguistic data. This method focuses on meaning, not on sound symbols correspondence, so that children can start reading short stories immediately without resorting to phonics. Paris (2005) points out that this approach to reading is a combination of the elements that are involved in the whole language and phonics approach.

In this vein, many teachers use a reading series as the core of their reading programme. Most series include a sequential set of reading texts and supplementary materials such as workbooks, flash cards, placement and achievement tests, and film strips (Runo, 2010). In addition, a comprehensive teacher manual explains the purpose of the

programme and provides precise instructional plans and suggestions for skill activities. The teacher's manual is usually high-structured and completely outlines each lesson. For example, in addition to lesson activities, the manual may include skill objectives, new vocabulary, motivational activities, and question for checking comprehension on each page of the text.

The readers in the basal series usually begin with pre-primary and gradually increase in difficulty, continuing through the eighth grade. Some basal series are changing their progression from levels of readers corresponding to stages in development (McIntyre, Hulan and Layne, 2011). The content is based upon common child experiences and well-known interests of children. Materials are designed by multiracial and disadvantaged groups. Basal approaches may stress either a meaning-emphasis or a code-emphasis approach. A basal series systematically presents reading skills in word recognition, comprehension and word attack, and it controls the vocabulary from level to level.

The reader accompanying a teacher manual and the students' exercise books provides various activities that aid in: learning word attack skills, developing comprehension and increasing reading rate steadily. The basal approach has the following advantages: the readers are comprehension-oriented and are sequential in content from early readiness to advanced reading levels; the teachers manual provides suggestions, activities, and detailed outline for teaching; reading skills are developed in a systematic, sequential manner; basic vocabulary is established and repeated throughout the sequence to provide reinforcement; and, lastly, assessment, evaluation, and diagnostic materials are usually provided.

The basal approach encourages teaching reading in groups rather than concentrating on individual differences and needs (Kruidenier, MacArthur and Wrigley, 2010). But it did not provide an adequate foundation for reading tasks of content fields, for example, reading maps, charts, and arithmetic problems using library skills and organizational skills. While the aforementioned information has provided insights on the basal approach in helping learners in reading skills in which both the strengths and

weaknesses have been highlighted and what remained unknown was whether or not advantages outweighed disadvantages with regard to the basal approach as an instructional method among learners with reading difficulties in Kabwe District.

2.2.2 Phonics or Bottom up Approach

Paris (2005) states that teaching learners how to read based on the bottom-up approach is just as it sounds. Children begin to read at what seems like the bottom of a complex hierarchy of skills, by recognizing the letters of alphabets, learning the letter names and then understanding their corresponding sounds. In this model, learning is regarded as a one-way process, from the text to the reader, and progress is made one skill at a time. He further found out that the children who do not understand the letter-sounds relationships have a problem with reading in the way phonics are taught. Explaining the ideas of the bottom-up approach or phonics is founded on behaviourist belief that learning is a kind of habit formation brought about by repetitive association with stimulus response action and so language learning is a response acquired by automatic conditioning processes. This instructional method is for teaching reading and writing in English language by developing learners' phonemic awareness-ability to hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes-in order to teach the correspondence between these sounds and the spelling patterns that represent them.

The phonic approach teaches word recognition through learning grapheme-phoneme association. After learning the sounds of vowels, consonants and blends, child learns to sound out words by combining sounds and blending them into words. Thus, the child learns to recognise unfamiliar word by associating speech sounds with letters or groups of letters. Teachers may use either the synthetic method or the analytic method to teach phonics. In synthetic, the child learns that letter represent certain sounds (for example, /b-buh/) and finds out how to blend, or synthesize, the sound to form words. This method emphasizes isolated letter sounds before the child progresses to words. The analytic method teaches letter sounds as an integral part of the words (for example, b as in baby). The child must learn new words on the basis of phonic elements of similar or

familiar or sight words. Phonic methods and materials differ on details, but the main objective is to teach children to ‘attack’ new words independently (Alnahdi, 2015).

The main advantage of phonic approach is that by emphasising word recognition, phonics help children to associate sounds with printed letter and lead to independence in unlocking new words. In phonics instruction, children study the shapes and sounds of alphabet letters so they can identify them on the page when reading. This skill helps children decode or break down new words into shorter sounds, which can be blended together to form words. The phonetic strategy gives beginning readers a tool to use when facing difficult and unfamiliar words, therefore building their confidence. Before they learn to recognize words instantaneously, they can use this approach to slowly sound out words. The phonetic approach is especially helpful when a child faces a text that is slightly more advanced than one’s actual reading level. Longer and more complicated words do not seem as scary when they can be methodically separated into individual letters or letter clusters (Alnahdi, 2015).

Mahlburg and Lynchburg (2013) point out that phonics instruction can help children spell new words when writing. It is the same way they would use the phonetic approach to break down a word in their minds as they prepare to write it. They can say the word aloud or silently, break it into smaller parts, listen for the sound and then visualize the associated letters. This method is often referred to as “invented spelling”. While it may not lead children to a correct spelling of a word, it provides a starting point. Students have a strong chance of spelling the word accurately or at least close enough that a teacher could understand the intended word. The phonetic approach to spelling helps children perform writing tasks that may otherwise feel too challenging.

However, the phonics approach has the following disadvantage: firstly, the emphasis on word pronunciation may be at the expense of comprehension. Secondly the student may become confused that there are exceptions to the phonetic rule. Lastly, after learning associated sounds, the student may have difficulty blending the sounds to form complete words. Not all words are spelt phonetically. Many English words are not spelt the way they sound, which can be frustrating for new readers who depend on the

phonetic approach. Reading using the phonetic approach can lead students in the wrong direction when faced with words such as “said”, “ocean”, “sugar”, or “Wednesday”. Using the phonetic approach, “said” would be read as “sayed”. Instead of reading letter by letter, children must learn to memorize these types of words so they can immediately recognize them and read such words correctly (Mahlburgand Lynchburg, 2013).

The phonetic approach may help children read words on a page, but the method does not focus on comprehension of those words. Using only the phonetic approach, a student may read an entire sentence without understanding it. The whole language approach to reading is an example of a different method that emphasizes meaning in language rather than just decoding skills. If students learn that words ending in “ing” show action, for example, they have a better chance of understanding “ing” words while reading. They may even have a better chance of decoding them quickly if they understand the context in which they appear (Alnahdi, 2015). While the phonic approach was recommended by the aforementioned study as an instructional method used to teach reading skills among learners with reading difficulties, it was not known whether the phonic approach was also used to teach reading skills among learners with reading difficulties in special schools in Kabwe District.

2.2.3 Linguistic approach

The linguistic-based approach has been defined as instructing children to read by using both fiction and non-fiction literature, written for purposes other than text use for teaching reading (Esther, Rachael and Mary, 2016). It is known as the top-down approach, going from the whole to the part. Its advocates believe that reading materials should be unabridged pieces of literature and that instruction in strategies and skills should be presented in the context of real reading and only on an as-needed basis. There is no pre-reading vocabulary study. While the focus is on constructing meaning or understanding what is read, there are no comprehension worksheets although children are offered choices in their literature selections, which cover a wide range of genres, including multicultural books.

Many linguistic approaches to reading stem from the ideas of various linguists. Linguists who are mainly concerned with oral communication have provided important information about the nature and structure of language (Scruggs, 2008). In many linguistic reading materials, a whole word approach is used. This approach does not use exercises in sounding and blending. Words are taught in words families and only as a whole. In beginning reading, words are introduced that contain a short vowel and consist of consonant-vowel-consonant pattern. The words are selected on the basis of similar spelling pattern (such as cab, lab, and tab); a child must learn the relationship between speech sounds and letters (that is, phoneme and graphemes). The child is not taught letter sounds directly – he or she learns them through minimal word difference. Words that have irregular spelling are introduced as the child progresses, and he learns them as sight words. After the words are learned in the spelling pattern, they are put together to form sentences (Scruggs, 2008). However, what was not known was whether or learners with reading difficulties had words that had irregular spelling and introduced as the child progressed and learnt them as sight words, making it difficult for them to know how to read, especially among special schools in Kabwe District.

The linguistic approach differs from the phonics approach in that linguistic readers focus on words instead of isolated sounds. It differs from the basal reading approach in that linguistic instruction places emphasis first on breaking the written language code before meaning and comprehension are considered, thus many linguistic series contain pictures or illustrations which may provide clues and tempt the student to guess rather than decode the printed words (Scruggs, 2008).

2.2.4 Language Experience Approach

Another method used in teaching reading is the Language Experience Approach (LEA). This method can be used to teach reading using learners' own words and texts they have composed, as well as providing word recognition instruction to help them to read. The LEA is founded on the theory that reading and comprehending written language are extensions of listening to and understanding spoken language (O'Connor and Vadasy, 2011). The experiences of the children form the basis of reading materials because it is

widely believed that everything that students read in early reading instruction should be as relevant to them as possible, and certainly the children's own language is the most meaningful of all to them.

Gipps (2002) states that the language experience approach builds upon the notion that if children are given materials to read things they are already familiar with, it will help them to read. This method is based on two related ideas. Firstly, learning should move from the familiar to the unknown. Secondly, the readers whose world knowledge or schemata are similar to that underlying text they can read and their readings will enable them to make sense of the text. The language experience approach integrates the development of reading skills with the development of listening, speaking and writing skills. What the student is thinking and talking about make up the material. LEA stresses each child's unique interest. The approach is based not upon a series of reading materials but upon the child's oral and written expression. The child's experiences play a major role in determining his or her reading materials.

O'Connor and Vadasy (2011) add that the child dictates stories to the teacher; these may be taken at first from the child's own drawings and artwork. The teacher writes down the stories, and they become the basis of the child's initial reading experiences. Thus, the child learns to read his own written thoughts. In this approach the language patterns of the reading materials are determined by the child's speech, and the content is determined by his experiences. The teacher tries to broaden and enrich the child's base of experiences from which he can think, speak, and read. Eventually, with help the child can write his or her own stories. Further, the study reported that the programme, language experiences in reading, consists of three levels, each of which is divided into units. The teacher's resource book gives valuable information and suggestions for each lesson; for example, concepts to be developed or reviewed, language skills emphasized, description of words to work with the pupils' books, and suggestions of supplementary books and filmstrips.

The language experience approach uses a student's own language as the focus of the reading program. It incorporates speaking, listening, and writing skills into the reading

programme and makes the student more sensitive to his language environment and experiences. Also, the student's interest level tends to be high and creativity is encouraged in writing original stories (Mahlburgand Lynchburg, 2013). Emphasis is placed on the student's own experiences and his speaking vocabulary; however, there may not be enough structure in this approach to develop vocabulary or to generalize from speaking and listening vocabularies to reading and writing vocabularies. When teacher organization is provided, and when word-attack and comprehension skills are taught, the language experience approach may be used effectively to handle children with learning difficulties. Also, it may be used to improve comprehension skills of older students who have developed basic decoding skills to maintain interest and motivation (Mahlburgand Lynchburg, 2013).

2.2.5 Neurological Impress Method

According to Kirk (2006), the neurological impress model is defined as “the process by which learners achieve the ability to use a language when their attention is focused on conveying and receiving authentic messages”. This thinking of interactivity has been linked to the teaching of reading, writing, as well as listening and speaking skills. But, to other authors such as Paris (2005), the idea of the interactive model refers to the simultaneous use by readers of both the top-down and bottom-up processing reading comprehension styles.

The method consists of joint oral reading at a rapid pace by the student and the teacher. It is based on the theory that a student can learn by hearing his or her own voice and someone else's voice jointly reading the same material. The student is seated slightly in front of the teacher and the teacher's voice is directed into the student's ear at a close range. There is no special preparation of the material prior to joint reading. The objective is simply to cover as many pages as possible in the allocated time without tiring the student. At first the teacher should read slightly louder and faster than the student; the student should be encouraged to maintain the pace and not worry about mistakes. The teacher slides his finger to the location of the words as they are being read. As the student becomes capable of leading the oral reading, the teacher lowers his

or her voice and reads slightly slower and the student's finger can point to the reading. Thus the student and the teacher alternate between leading and following. No attempt is made to teach any phonic skills or word recognition, and no attention is given to comprehension of material being read. The basic concern is for the student to attain fluent reading automatically (Mahlburgand Lynchburg, 2013).

Among advantages of this approach of oral read-along practice is the fact that it provides one-on-one language modelling using a fluent reader in a relaxed non-threatening environment. It is ideal for our "parent as partner" nightly reading at home especially with the predictable literature of songs, poems, and rhythmic rhyming language. A child's eyes sweep across the page, as the teacher's finger movement and voice are synchronized to the words. The child will greatly benefit from repeated readings familiar language along with the teacher's voice as a model. Soon, the child will be able to independently read with fluency, expression, confidence and delight. The main disadvantage of neurological impress method is that it is time-consuming as it is anchored on repetition. Besides it encourages rote learn as learners merely memorise, a justification enough for the current study (Mahlburgand Lynchburg, 2013).

2.2.6 Multisensory Reading Method

The Multisensory reading method is based on the premise that some children learn best when content is presented in several modalities. Frequently, kinaesthetic and tactile stimulation is used along with the visual auditory modalities. The multisensory programme features tracing, hearing, writing, and seeing are often referred to as VAKT (visual-auditory-kinaesthetic-tactile). To increase tactile and kinaesthetic stimulation, sandpaper, letters, finger paint, sandy trays, raised letters and sunken letters are used. Some research support the use of the multisensory method among retarded readers. The method has mainly been used in remedial and special education (Esther, Rachael and Mary, 2016). This was a reason enough to assess the appropriateness of instructional methods used to teach reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in special schools in Kabwe District.

Not all learners process information in the same way. Most students have a learning type, or a way of receiving information that is optimal to their personality and cognition. Some students are strong auditory listeners and can understand concepts by listening to an explanation, while others may need to draw out concepts with a pencil and paper. However, even learners who do respond to the watch-and-listen technique, for example, may not be processing information as well as they should be doing. Multisensory teaching ensures that each student, regardless of learning type, is provided with a means of understanding the information in a lesson (Esther, Rachael and Mary, 2016).

Ahmad and Awang (2016) further state that multisensory learning environment enhances brain function. Each sensory system has targets in the brain that stimulate cognitive functioning. Somatic/ tactile learning promotes fine motor skills. Vestibular/kinaesthetic learning promotes body memory. Olfactory/gustatory systems provide sensation that remains strongly connected to the information they are associated with. Because of this, when students hear information that is connected to another sense, they can conceptualise and later apply that information better than students who just watch and listen.

Multisensory teaching technique stimulates the brain in a variety of ways so that each sensory system becomes more developed and higher functioning. This improves essential functions of the brain such as listening skills, movement, vision, tactile recognition and conceptualization. Students are attentive when multisensory teaching techniques are used because of the many ways the brain is being stimulated at the same time. If a student is doing something tactically or physically, while listening to instructions and seeing information, there is not much of an opportunity for one's attention to stray (Ahmad and Awang, 2016). The main disadvantage of the multisensory reading method is that it calls for a lot of planning and demands the use of a variety of material. Besides, it calls for a lot of time.

Teaching reading and writing requires effective and appropriate approaches, methods and techniques (Hedge, 2010). Some methods and key areas have been subjected to

research and their effectiveness tested; such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, sight-word acquisition, comprehension, and vocabulary. But a teacher needs to understand why each of these components should be taught. For instance, phonemic awareness is said to be the first step in mastering the alphabetic principle, the ability to map letters onto the spoken sounds of a language. However, each method may work according to many competing factors such as teacher knowledge of how and why the methods should be used, teacher qualification, motivation, commitment, resource provision and use, linguistic nature of each society (bilingual or multilingual), learning environment and many other factors each society is faced with. This is in agreement with McIntyre et al. (2011), who state that there are competing perspectives on the most appropriate programme, materials, and methods for teaching reading, especially to children from populations who have historically struggled with reading. Zambia has been using English as the medium of instruction since 1965 (MOE, 1996). For many years, reading problems have persisted among primary school-going children.

Mahlburgand Lynchburg (2013) recommends five important evidence-and research-based elements as key to learning to read: phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, and fluency in word recognition, vocabulary and comprehension. Therefore, if children with reading difficulties are exposed to these elements at an early stage, they may develop the reading skill. Children pass through a gradual and systematic developmental reading process from logographic reading (use of visual cues) through phonological reading (use of phonetic cues) to orthographic reading (attainment of decoding skills). Reading instruction that recognises these factors may succeed. For the purposes of research, however, this study focused on phonemic awareness and phonics decoding skills only. Also, the route from logographic reading to phonological reading, the first important step towards reading, is phonemic awareness. As one of the important elements in learning to read, phonemic awareness is about the knowledge that words are built up of sound units. It is no longer a disputable matter that phonemic awareness plays an important role in reading development as well as in identifying learners with reading difficulty. The researcher was is not sure whether or not teachers in the study schools were using the stated teaching method and how it impacted on pupils' reading skills, hence the study.

This formation of accurate memory for the spelling patterns comes as a result of the connections that the learner makes between graphemes (alphabetic letters) and phonemes (basic sound units) and “meanings”. It is through phonemic awareness that children become familiar with print. Therefore, practices in teaching reading that take phonemic awareness into consideration may succeed if well implemented because they help learners understand how words are formed. The understanding of how words are formed together with letter knowledge leads to phonics. Phonics as a method of teaching refers to helping children understand the “mappings between letters and sounds”. Through exposure to this instruction, learners will be able to grasp the alphabetic code and learn how to read and write. Whereas phonics is an instructional aspect, decoding is a skill a learner develops. So decoding is the ability to separate and distinguish between different sound units (phonemes). For example, the word ‘big’ is made up of three different sounds /b/ /i/ /g/ which are also letters. As far back as the 1960s, it was established that phonics played an important role in reading acquisition process (Phajane, 2014).

The 1990s and 2000s have seen a number of researchers in agreement with these findings that phonics is key in acquiring reading skill and basic with regard to preventing reading problems. Having defined some terms that are necessary for this study, there is need to briefly discuss the reasons why some children have difficulties learning to read. Solutions to reading difficulties can only be found if “teachers develop a firm understanding of why some children struggle with reading”. The same authors state that many of the children struggle with reading difficulties due to lack of phonological awareness resulting from socio-cultural factors. So some causes for these difficulties can be accounted for. Environmental causes may also include language usage in the child’s home or community. If the child does not have adequate oral language or does not have access to reading materials or a stimulating environment, then he or she may have reading difficulties or disabilities later in life, hence the need to understand the type of teaching method the teacher has to use among such learners (Bulgren and A Eta’, 2013).

In addition, although there are opposing views among scholars, there is evidence that class size, as an environmental factor, has an implication on student performance. In Zambia, where class sizes in some schools reach an average of 60 per class, it can be assumed that children with reading difficulties may never have adequate attention from the teacher. As of 2010 the pupil-teacher ratio for primary schools in Zambia was 58.00 (www.indexmundi.com/zambia/). This makes the teaching of reading very difficult. The government (as of September 2011) proposed the use of local languages as media of instructions in the first 4 years of primary education. At times, teachers who are not familiar with the medium of instruction for teaching reading and writing will always struggle. As a result, it impacts negatively on the children who also come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This is a socio-cultural factor as the situations in countries where they have only one or two languages used may be different. The aforementioned study was insightful to the current study in that it provided direction on contributing factors to reading problems in Zambian schools. However, it did specify on the types of instructional methods used to teach reading skills among learners, an issue that the current study covered in Kabwe District's special schools (Maambo, 2011).

There is also empirical evidence to show that socio-economic status may have adverse effects on the acquisition of reading skills (Martin, Martin and Carvalho, 2008). Children that come from well-to-do families or homes where both or one of the parents has a stable income, tend to do fairly well at school with a lot of self-esteem and concentration levels compared to those who come from poor and starved homes. This may especially be the case for Zambia where majority of children come from poverty-stricken homes. In some schools, food supplements in terms of meals provided to such learners may help them develop motivation to learn not only how to read but also to attend other subjects on the curriculum (Matafwali, 2010).

However, vocabulary development is another basic aspect in learning to read. Empirical findings show that children born in a literacy stimulating environment where they have adequate practice of oral language and are introduced to print at an early age, such children will have advantages in vocabulary and oral comprehension (McIntyre et al, 2011). Vocabulary acts as a firm foundation for phonemic awareness. Once children are

equipped with decoding skills through phonics and supported by comprehension, they will be able to read new words. The opposite is also true: children that are poor in these skills will often have difficulties learning to read. Many studies have shown that inadequate decoding skills result in impaired reading comprehension and word recognition and, as such, it is a major contributor to children with reading and writing problems (Hlalethwa, 2013). Having ended with differing views in the above models, there is need to turn to another approach. This approach builds from the two already cited models and advocates that there are three interacting processes in reading, namely sound, visual cues and meaning. In other words, the reading process involves phonics (letter-sound), visual identification in the whole-word method and, of course, the meaning aspect and prediction of words which are realised through context. The three processes can further be described as linguistic, visual and auditory (Ngorosho, 2009). Without an understanding, on the part of the teacher, of these factors and how they contribute to the pupils' reading difficulties, the entire reading instruction will be compromised.

The auditory factors include recognition of letter sound groups/ patterns, sequencing them, matching them to visual stimuli, distinguishing them from other sounds, as well as within words using their shapes. If a learner has difficulty in any of these areas, reading difficulty is imminent. Research also states that some pupils' reading difficulty may be a result of a mixture of phonological processing, visual and auditory system failure or due to neurological and genetic reasons. This is usually the case for children with dyslexia. Such children are born with the potential for a reading disability (Paris, 2005). In fact at times this challenge may run in families. For these children, prevention policy is extremely important.

It is also interesting to note that some children struggle to read due to lack of motivation in learning to read. Gipps (2002) cite three motivational aspects for reading by learners: developing self-confidence towards reading; realizing both their strengths and weaknesses; and appreciating the benefits/ rewards of reading. Usually, children with reading difficulties lack self-confidence and esteem because they feel inadequate when they compare themselves to their classmates. Sometimes they may not even realise their

own weaknesses and strengths unless they have a good teacher. Worse still, some teachers always emphasise the learners' weaknesses rather than strengths. This is against the socio-cultural theory which underpins this study. Because of these reasons, motivation is key in learning to read. There is need to know the causes of reading difficulties before intervening. It is very difficult for a problem to be solved without understanding its cause (Mwanamukubi, 2013). Teachers can help the pupils with reading difficulties.

Although early identification and intervention for young children with a reading disability leads to better school adjustment and performance, recognizing reading difficulties throughout a child's school years is important. In the early elementary years warning signs may include difficulty with: recognizing and naming letters; developing a store of sight words; demonstrating an understanding of sound-letter relationship. Poor readers with word recognition difficulties generally over-rely on textual cues such as pictures and other words to identify words in a passage that are unknown to them ((Paananen et. al., 2009). Overusing textual cues to identify unknown words reduces the likelihood of transforming unknown words into sight words. Many errors are made when children use semantic contextual approaches rather than sounding out words. Children need opportunities to sound out words even if this means they have to struggle (Paananen et. al., 2009). This may be easier said than done as many children do not know how to begin to sound out words. Some poor readers have limited letter-level knowledge or an understanding of the alphabetic principle. Typically, these types of readers are limited to being able to sound out only the beginning letter of a word.

Further, the inability to sound out words can be attributed to phonological processing difficulties. Weak phonological processing accounts for the largest population of students classified as having reading difficulties or individuals with severe word recognition difficulties. Phonological awareness is a crucial component to becoming literate. This has been verified through studies that examined long-term effects of phonological awareness training in preschool and kindergarten on subsequent reading achievement performance of first, second, and third graders (Maruyama, 2007). Phonemic awareness means knowing that spoken language is made up of discrete,

operable sounds. Rhyme production, sound blending, sound deletion, sound substitution, and sound segmenting are among the many ways individuals can operate on spoken words. Developmentally, children begin with rhyme activities and then progress to segmenting sounds in words. Among phonemic awareness exercises, phonemic segmentation is the best predictor of word identification for primary grade children (Maruyama, 2007). This is cardinal for learners learning to read. While this was true for the aforementioned studies reviewed and conducted developed in countries, it was not known whether the trends would be evident even in developing countries like Zambia, especially in among special educational needs children in Kabwe District.

Other learners develop phonemic awareness through literacy experiences at home before entering school while others have limited exposure to print and role models who engage in reading and writing. Some children, regardless of their environmental conditions, struggle with grasping phonemic awareness. Thus, children who lack phonological skills and have a limited vocabulary will have difficulty phonologically "re-coding" letters back into their constituent sounds when they encounter print. When most children initially encounter a printed word, they go through a process of sequentially decoding the word by attempting to make letter-sound conversions. Phonological re-coding occurs as children check to see if the word they made matches a word that has been stored in their memories (Kail, 2007). At advanced stages of this process, children learn to decode words hierarchically. Hierarchical decoding involves using letters in words to cue the sounds of other letters, for example, using the "e" at the end of the word "came" to say the "a" as a long vowel sound.

Related to phonological re-coding is orthographic processing. This refers to recognizing and remembering letters, and includes noting sequences of letters in words and being able to distinguish among spelling patterns of words. Although smaller in population compared to those with phonological deficits, some children with reading and spelling problems have difficulty processing words orthographically. Children need to become automatic at recognizing words to free up their cognitive energies to gain meaning from text. Poor readers not only struggle with recognizing words in text but also have difficulty suppressing irrelevant information in text which places limitations on the use

of their short-term capacity for comprehending printed material. These students have particular difficulty grasping an understanding of texts that contain words with multiple meanings (Mwanamukubi, 2013).

Acquisition of skills usually goes with challenges. Concerning reading difficulties in a second language, Mokhtari et al (2010) indicate that children who are taught read in a language that they have not yet mastered orally perform poorly. Because reading instruction strongly builds on oral language proficiency, second-language speaking children may therefore experience a considerable gap. Further Mokhtari et al (2010) argue that for second-language readers, it can be expected that the network of connections between the various graphemic, phonological and semantic nodes needed to read will be weaker than for the first language reader. Paris (2005) reveals that research on assessment and instruction shows that alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness and oral reading fluency are the enabling skills and significant predictors of later reading achievement. Unfortunately, there has been less emphasis on vocabulary and comprehension to date perhaps because of the difficulty in assessing and teaching these skills to children who are beginning to read.

Martin, Martin and Carvalho (2008) state that more inconsistent orthographies seem to force the reading system into developing multiple grain size mappings, and so learning to read inconsistent orthographies depends on greater development of flexibility and the development of extra-cognitive architecture. Other findings suggest that morphological awareness in spelling is first phonetic, and it is only later that children make links to grammar. In other words, children may need to have grasped phonological consistency before morphological consistency becomes salient.

Bulgren and Eta' (2013) also indicate that languages vary greatly in their graphic-phonetic regularity. At one extreme, we find such a language as Finnish which has a very regular system, at the other we find such a case as English where there is a marked degree of irregularity. The consistency problem reflects the fact that some orthographic units have multiple pronunciation and phonological units with multiple spellings. Such types of inconsistency are assumed to show reading development problems and English

language is also such a language with orthographic units with multiple pronunciation and phonological units.

In addition, Paris (2005) observes that although it is clear that phonemic knowledge is used for reading and spelling by kindergartens (pre-schools) in North America, the same might not be true for bilingual English-speaking children elsewhere. This suggests that the influence of a child's home language on English literacy development is not unitary, and cross-linguistic transfer could have negative as well as positive consequences. They further argue that particularly where literacy in the home is in a home language until children start school, and where the objective is transition, from home language to the school language for all further educational purposes, it is very likely that once literacy in the latter (school) is attained, it seems to be implicitly accepted that most of those who do not speak the school language at home, in comparison to those who do, will remain permanently retarded in education. However, for the child who, before entering school, has become familiar with material written in the language of his/ her parents, even though he/ she may not have learned to read, the school experience may easily be felt as an extension of the home experience, and the transition from primary to secondary socialisation may be experienced with a minimum of trauma.

With regard to writing problems, Gipps (2002) states that, "In all languages studied so far, a group of children experience severe reading problems (developmental dyslexia) despite normal intelligence, good educational opportunities and no obvious sensory or neurological damage." This point suggests that reading skills in irregular languages like English pose more literacy development challenges than is the case with regular ones. Remarkably, approximately 5-18% of the population is affected by dyslexia, and individuals with dyslexia often have associated difficulties with writing, spelling, motor co-ordination and attention abilities which vary across individuals, making it difficult to specify the ethnology.

Hedge (2010) and Kruidenier, MacArthur and Wringley (2010) record that literacy acquisition often entails learning new phonological information and the ability to

reliably assign this information to the appropriate graphic representation. Therefore, the challenge of learning to read and write in two orthographies simultaneously or immediately one after the other is a great challenge on the learner, especially in initial grades. In attempting to remedy early reading difficulties, Hedge (2010) notes that when a phonological awareness deficiency is identified as a major contributor to a child's reading and spelling difficulties, it is, in a way, a relief because it is a 'trainable' system that can be taught and practised, especially in the early stages of reading development. Training undoubtedly improves reading and spelling systems. Learning to read is one of the greatest accomplishments in childhood because it is the foundation for learning and academic achievement later in someone's life. Therefore, it is not surprising that debates among educators about how best to help children learn to read have been intense and unsettled for many years (Paris, 2005).

On the other hand, Sangeeta (2011) holds the view that because of the substantial body of research spanning two decades that demonstrates the crucial role of phonological awareness in reading acquisition in an alphabetic language, researchers and educators agree that a conscious awareness of the sounds of oral language is a necessary precursor skill to the acquisition of the alphabetic principle. What is yet unknown, however, is the extent to which this skill plays a similar role in learning to read in a second language and whether language-specific factors increase levels of difficulty in literacy acquisition. Phonological awareness is a skill that is entirely linguistically interdependent, in which a general meta-linguistic ability underlies phonemic analysis on both L1 and L2 regardless of similarities and differences in the elements that make up the phonological repertoires of the two languages.

Phonological ability could also depend on the extent to which phonological inventories of L1 and L2 overlap or share certain features such as phonemes and syllables. Furthermore, language transfer and phonological awareness abilities might interact with reading ability because of the reciprocal development of reading and phonological awareness. Skilled and less skilled readers might be differentially affected by the demands inherent in processing phonological elements that are L2-specific. In other

words, children who are less skilled readers might be those who are less competent at processing the phonemes and phonemic contrasts that are specific to L2.

Matafwali (2010) observes that a spoken language does not require a conscious awareness of the speech sounds in words. Speech is produced and understood automatically, with little conscious attention given to sounds. However, phonological awareness is the conscious awareness of the sounds of language. It is the ability to reflect on the sounds in words separately from the meaning of words. As the alphabet represents speech sounds, the beginning reader must become aware of these sounds in order to understand how the alphabet works, but awareness of these sounds may not always be easy for young children, hence the need for systematic phonemic instruction in order to attain superior performance in reading.

Bulgren and Eta' (2013) also hold the view that the development of reading depends on phonological awareness across all languages so far studied. However, languages vary in the consistency with which phonology is represented in orthography. Phonologic step implies that reading takes place letter by letter, with large units gradually being built. The two points presented above can apply to all languages although there could be certain peculiarities which cannot be ruled out. Phonological awareness, therefore, follows a developmental schedule, with awareness of syllables developing before awareness onset, which in turn develops awareness of phonemes. An awareness of phonemes and the ability to reflect on and manipulate them increases the chances that young children will develop good decoding skills, leading to success at reading from an early stage. On the same point, phonics is the relationship between the sounds of a language and the letters used to represent them. In the classroom, phonics is instruction that guides children to decode words using this relationship, in order to learn to read. It has been agreed upon by many scholars that in order to read and also write successfully, learners must be aware of sound/ symbol relationships. Conclusions from many scholarly works indicate that phonics instruction is important for many children in the earliest grades.

With specific focus on initial literacy, Alnahdi (2015) observes that using one's mother tongue is of utmost importance because it facilitates children's development of concepts that enable them to easily acquire knowledge in second or third language and to further expose the children to cultures of their communities. This is made possible by the psycholinguistic argument which suggests that people think in mother tongues and then attempt to translate or articulate their thoughts in a foreign language such as English. In addition, Chuunga (2013) states that for children to acquire reading, they must learn codes used in their culture for representing speech as a form of visual symbols. Learning to read is thus fundamentally a process of matching distinctive visual symbols to units of sound (phonology). In most languages, the relationship between symbols and sound is systematic. This is the case with Zambian languages such as Bemba. In such languages, the first step of becoming literate, therefore, requires the acquisition of the system for mapping between symbols and sound. Mastery of this system allows pupils to access thousands of words available in their spoken lexicons. The process of learning and applying these mappings is called phonological re-coding.

In most countries with regular orthographies, there is little or no reading preparation before formal schooling. This sweeping assertion has empirical backing. Gipps (2002) found that English pre-schoolers were far superior in naming letters, word reading, phonological awareness, and knowledge of environmental print compared with matched German speakers. Chuunga (2013) also notes that accurate pronunciation of words that follow regular orthographic conversions is believed to provide a window into which phonological skills are directly applied to reading. This is only more applicable to languages that are consistent and regular in terms of phonemic and orthographic dimensions.

2.3 Studies done on reading based on African context

Africa like other continents, responded positively to issues of literacy among the people, especially learners in schools (Bulgren and Eta', 2013). This was so because reading played an important role in the successful completion of academic learning process. Selecting proper text is important both for learners and teachers. There must be an

appropriate, selected teaching material that depends mainly on the learner's cognitive level. In fact, learners themselves should select materials that go with their interests. It is better to let the learners select what kind of texts they prefer to read and which topics interest them most. Above all, carefully selecting texts creates a kind of motivation and participation in the classroom and it is helpful for both the teacher and the learner. Text selection takes into account several factors that can lead to the successful use of texts; among them the use of authentic materials since the reader can react whenever learners read texts. While this information was authenticated in the aforementioned study, which highlighted issues of teaching material that depends mainly on the learner's cognitive level, the current study dwelled on the instructional methods responsible for improving reading skills in learners with reading difficulties.

Hudson (2007) found and revealed that children go through certain phases of reading development from preschool through third grade, and from exploration of books to independent reading. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are regarded as the four fundamental skills to acquire/ learn a foreign language. Reading is a necessary skill for language acquisition because it has positive effects on vocabulary knowledge, spelling, as well as the writing skill. Reading is viewed as an interactive process between the reader and the writer in which the former has to understand the message of the passage and then decode it. Moreover, it is a dynamic process in which information from the text and knowledge possessed by the reader interact to enable him to construct meaning before, during and after reading. While the above study brought out issues concerned reading skills, which are necessary for language acquisition because it has positive effects on vocabulary knowledge, spelling as well as ability to write, it was however, not clear whether these skills in learners with reading difficulties would promote language acquisition among learners with reading difficulties in Kabwe District.

Flores and Ganz (2009) reported that the bottom-up model emphasizes the written or printed text, which is also called data-driven. This model stresses the ability to decode or put into sound what is seen in the text in which the readers derive meaning in a linear manner. Moreover, the bottom-up focuses on the readers' background knowledge in the reading process in which meaning takes precedence over structure. Hence, it tends to

neglect that grammar is important for the use of higher levels. While the aforementioned study was conducted in Nigerian schools and managed to bring out issues on the bottom-up model, emphasizing the written or printed text, it was not known whether model as an instructional method could be used among learners with reading difficulties in Zambian schools.

Flores and Ganz (2009) contend that the interactive reading model recognizes the interaction of bottom-up and top-down processes simultaneously throughout the reading process. Hence, it relies on both graphic and textual information, which means that there is a combination of both surface structure systems (bottom-up model of reading) and deep structure systems (top-down aspects of reading) to build meaning when these processes occur at the same time. Every learning process has a component of interaction for learners to enjoy and achieve their educational goals, and this reason prompted the researcher to undertake the current study.

Hoff (2003) states that the interactive model combines the bottom-up and top-down models and views the reading process as an interaction between the readers and the text. It assumes that students are simultaneously processing information from the materials they are reading (i.e., the bottom-up model) and information from their background knowledge (from the top-down model). The interactive model is based on the schema which explains how readers receive, store, and use knowledge in the form of schemata. The objective of this approach is to teach student, strategies that will help them develop into independent readers who can monitor their own thinking while reading and link prior knowledge to the new material in their text. But to other authors such as Ngorosho (2009), the idea of the interactive model refers to the simultaneous use by readers of both top-down and bottom-up processing reading comprehension. However, it was not known whether the learners with reading difficulties would obviously be used to help them learn how to read and acquire reading skills.

The whole word approach based on the work of Hedge (2010). Whole word is a method of teaching reading by way of introducing words to children as a whole unit without investigating their sub-words parts. The method involves teaching children to sight-read

the words so that they will be able to pronounce the whole word as a single entity. The instruction of using the whole word involves associating word names with printed words. By repeating an exposure to words in a meaningful context, children are expected to learn to read the words, with no conscious attention to the sub-words object. The goal of whole word instruction is therefore based on whole word recognition and whole word vocabulary development.

A top-down model is a revolutionary approach or more holistic approach to reading. It is not merely extracting meaning, but is rather a process of connecting the information in the text, with the knowledge that the reader brings to the action. This method views reading as a dialogue between the reader and the text. It is an active cognitive process in which the reader's background knowledge plays a role in extracting the meaning. Furthermore, it is believed that reading is not a passive mechanical activity but purposeful, rational and dependent on the prior knowledge and expectation of the learner. Whole word is also called a word method or sight method. It is a method for teaching children to read, commonly used in teaching reading in a mother tongue, in which children are taught to recognize whole words rather than letter names (as in phonics). It usually leads to the sentence method, whereby whole sentences are used (Hedge, 2010). The aforementioned studies made it clear and contributed immensely to the direction of the current study as it brought out information on the whole word approach, but it was known whether teachers used the whole word approach as an instructional method to teach reading skills in learners with reading difficulties in Kabwe District.

Reading is recognized as an art capable of transforming man's life and his entire society (Tella and Akande, 2007). However, in the World Children Report by UNICEF, (1999), it was stated that nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or write their names. This is also found in a study conducted during the period 1995-1998 by the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), which measured primary school children's reading literacy against standards established by national reading experts and sixth grade teachers. It was reported that, in four out of seven countries, fewer than half the six graders achieved

minimum competence in reading. Additionally, this study was compared with another done by SACMEQ two years later in 2000, which saw literacy scores falling even further in five out of six countries (UNESCO, 2004). In Africa, the reading habit of children is waning due to poor reading culture among Africans generally, and other notable factors like non-availability of reading materials (books). Reading habits are best formed at a young impressionable age in school, and once formed, they can last one's life. Young children acquire reading literacy through a variety of activities and experiences within different contexts. The authors further reported that children missing the opportunity of getting in touch with books at this stage find it difficult to acquire reading habits in later years and this was not an exception to learners with reading difficulties, especially those in special education units in Kabwe District.

One of the most important topics addressed in the Proceedings of the 1st Pan-African Reading for All Conference (1999) was the role that language plays in early literacy development. More prominent were issues involving mother-tongue literacy, illiteracy, and the formation of practical national language education policies. The interest of this study concerning the statement above is the use of mother tongue in literacy. The Six-Year Primary Project acted as a prototype for solving Africa's early literacy problems. As a review of previous evaluation reports of the Western Nigerian project, the government's paper advocated the use of Yoruba, the mother tongue in the region, as the medium of instruction for the first six years of a child's education and the use of English thereafter. The project also showed that the mother tongue was a more effective medium of instruction when compared to English. In terms of learning, literacy was more easily acquired through Yoruba than through English. In the case of the current study, there was no empirical evidence on the instructional methods used to teach reading skills to learners with reading difficulties among Zambian special schools.

The Malawian situation - Mchazime's paper about Malawi's early literacy also suggested the advantages of bilingual literacy instruction using the mother tongue while acknowledging the need for English as a language of literacy in the region. Their study investigated reading proficiency in English and ChiChewa, the mother tongue, in primary schools. The study also found that reading, listening comprehension, and

speaking in the mother tongue were much easier for students who participated in the study than were the same activities when conducted in English (Sampa, 2003). While the aforementioned study was conducted in Malawi and investigated reading proficiency in English and ChiChewa, the mother tongue, in primary schools, the current study investigated the instructional methods used to teach reading skills in learners with reading difficulties in selected special schools in Kabwe, Zambia.

Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland situations - In Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, the implementation of bilingual programme has been reported, addressing the advantages of literacy programme in African schools. For example, the Namibia Early Language and Literacy Project was designed primarily to support the development of materials for lower primary classes in all African languages in the country, while the Namibia Teacher Development Project worked to increase the language proficiency of junior- and primary-level teachers. In addition, the Secondary Education Project in Lesotho supported the production of bilingual reading materials for remote highland schools. A similar project in Botswana was producing reading materials in both English and Setswana in remote rural junior secondary schools. Again, these bilingual projects were reported to be beneficial to the pupils involved (Sampa, 2003). While all the information reported above was revealed and applicable in the light of countries such as Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, what was not known was whether Zambian schools could also have the same reflection of findings, especially among special schools in Kabwe District.

2.4 Studies done on reading based on Zambian context

The Ministry of Education policy document (2010) estimates that only six per cent of pupils have desirable levels of performance in literacy, and about 10 per cent have desirable levels in numeracy (MOE, 2010). This in part accounts for the failure by an average Zambian pupil to read or write irrespective of the level of education. The results of various scheduled educational assessments and examinations confirm this dismal picture. With the high numbers of school dropouts, poor school attendance and the general lack of literate environment children do not read for knowledge. The reading

that is common is specific, short-term and often examination-focused. This has led to underdeveloped literacy abilities among children and youths. But even those that are able to read progressively read less and less. The situation seems to be worse with learners with reading difficulties, but there was no empirical evidence to prove this, especially among learners with reading difficulties, hence the need to verify the implication of the instructional methods the teachers were using to teach reading in primary schools in Kabwe District.

The Ministry of Education policy document *Educating Our Future* (MoE, 1996), brought in the Step into English (SITE) course of the Primary Reading Programme in Zambia with the intention of enabling learners to read fluently and write clearly and accurately in English in Grade Two, building on the skills developed in the Zambian language through the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL) in Grade 1. This programme came into effect in order to help alleviate the reading problem the country is being faced with (Mubanga, 2010).

Zambia has not been spared from the problem. In fact a study by Matafwali (2005) revealed that 'reading levels of majority of Zambian children were regrettably still low and that there was a downward performance even for children who had shown an initial boost at reading in grade one. These results suggested that the majority of pupils at grades 3 and 4 were weak in reading Nyanja and such results have been attributed to learners not paying attention to reading and lack of learning and teaching resources, but less attention has been paid to technicality on the application of instructional methods put in place to teach reading by teachers in schools. Grade 6 pupils too were not on the whole very proficient enough to warrant any positive performance. The apparent weakness of the pupils in reading Nyanja and many other languages merited further investigation, especially on learners with reading difficulties in Kabwe District.

Tambulukani and Bus (2011), in their article 'Linguistic Diversity, A Contributory Factor to Reading Problems in Zambian Schools', argue that linguistic diversity in Zambia might be responsible for most reading difficulties. Since Zambia uses English as a medium of instruction from grade 1 to university, although literacy has been taught

in Zambian languages for some time now in grade 1 and English introduced in grade 2, this factor could be true. The government (as of September 2011) proposed the use of local languages as media of instructions in the first 4 years of primary education. Despite that kind of policy put in place, learners with reading difficulties are still unable to read, hence the need to understand the proposition of the instructional methods on reading among learners with reading difficulties. At times, teachers who are not familiar with a medium of instruction for teaching reading and writing will always struggle. As a result, it impacts negatively on the children who also come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This is a socio-cultural factor as the situations in countries where people have only one or two languages used may be different. The aforementioned studies, especially Tambulukani's (2011) study, *Linguistic Diversity, A Contributory Factor to Reading Problems in Zambian Schools*, and the current study, assessed the instructional methods used to teach reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in Kabwe District.

Another study by Kalindi (2005) reported that most teachers are not oriented towards helping poor readers in their classes. In their training, they were not adequately prepared to teach all children according to their needs. Therefore, even in cases where reading materials are adequate, reading skills of poor readers are not improved. The most important person, who is the teacher in this case, does not know how to help the poor readers. While this information could be true and authenticated as reported in the aforementioned study, it was not known whether in the current study teachers also were not orienting learners towards reading skills, especially learners with reading difficulties.

Mwambazi (2011) reported that teachers have been working under difficult circumstances such as too many pupils in classes and erratic pupil attendance, among others. When there are too many pupils in a classroom, it becomes difficult for teacher to give individual attention especially to those who may be lagging behind in reading. Furthermore, serious shortages of teaching and learning materials, as well as poor staffing, especially in remote areas, also prove to be a challenge for teachers in teaching reading (MoE, 2008). A teacher may have the required skills in teaching reading, but it

becomes difficult for him/ her to teach effectively if the necessary teaching and learning materials are not in place. Poor staffing levels means teachers have to attend to more than one class, hence they are overburdened. In turn, they will not be able to pay particular attention to those learners who have difficulties in reading. While teaching challenges such as shortages of teaching and learning materials, as well as poor staffing are among those faced by teachers in the teaching/ learning process, it was not known whether the same challenges were faced by teachers in teaching learners with reading difficulties in Kabwe District.

The Ministry of Education policy document, *Educating Our Future* (1996), states that, in the Step into English (SITE) course of the Primary Reading Program in Zambia, learners are unable to read fluently and write clearly and accurately in English in grade two as they build on the skills developed in the Zambian language through the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL) in Grade 1. However, this assumption has not been so due to a number of factors such as consistency and regularity of Zambian language versus the inconsistency and irregularity of English in phonemic and orthographic features. It is important for teachers to understand the critical elements of reading instruction. Students who have a reading disability will require intensive direct instruction. The critical elements of reading instruction include: strategies for reading comprehension; strategies for building meaning using cues and conventions of language (including phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, awareness of sentence structures, awareness of text structures and organizational patterns, and the pragmatics of text); and reading fluency. Despite the appropriateness of the instructional method, little is known about its validity with regard to teaching learners with reading difficulties (Tambulukani, 2006).

The Revised Curriculum Framework (2013) revealed that learners have different learning abilities. The category of learners with special educational needs include; the hearing, visually, physically, intellectually impaired, as well as the gifted/talented ones. Teachers and teacher-educators should be equipped with knowledge and skills to enable them to identify, screen and assess them. They should also provide appropriate interventions to learners with special educational needs in learning institutions.

Learning institutions should ensure that these students are provided with appropriate resources for quality learning. Therefore, the Revised Curriculum Framework (2013) brought to light issues surrounding individuals with learning difficulties. However, it did not report how learners with reading difficulties learn reading skills in schools, especially in Kabwe District

2.5. Knowledge gap

The above reviewed literature, both from developing and developed countries, had a lot to offer to the current study in that it has clearly shown that no country would ever attain its objectives of adopting instructional methods through the teaching and learning of reading skills aimed at providing quality education to the 21st century teachers and learners in the absence of qualified teachers, appropriate educational materials, proper funding, suitable school infrastructure and community participation. Although many studies world over have clearly shown the role of instructional methods in education, no clear documentation of comprehensive literature was found by the researcher on the implications of instructional methods in the teaching reading skills to learners with reading difficulties. This study thus investigated the implications of instructional methods in teaching reading skills among learners with reading difficulties, particularly in special education unit classes in Kabwe District.

2.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the literature review. It began by reviewing studies done at global level. This was followed by studies conducted within Africa with an exception of Zambia. Eventually, studies done in Zambia were reviewed. From the foregoing review of literature, it was observed that at global, African and Zambian levels, the importance of reading skills and knowledge was recognised. This was clearly demonstrated by the various findings reviewed in this chapter. It was also observed that in Zambia, particularly Kabwe District, Central Province studies showing the effects of instructional methods in teaching learners with reading difficulties had been inadequate, thereby creating a knowledge gap that the current study intended to address. The next chapter discusses the methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter presents the methodology used in the study which included research design, population, sample and sampling techniques. It further explains the research instruments, data quality assurance, as well as data collection and analysis procedures. This section ends with ethical considerations and a summary.

3.2 Research Design

Kombo and Tromp (2006) define a research design as glue-like structure that holds all the elements in a research project together. This study utilised a descriptive research design by qualitative approach. With a descriptive research design, therefore, the researcher aimed to gather an in-depth understanding of the subject. To study this problem, the researcher used inductive techniques in collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study. This helped to establish patterns or themes. However, the qualitative data can provide entirely new various viewpoints on the topic and instructional methods used to teach reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District.

3.3 Study Population

In research, population is defined as a group of individuals and objects from which samples are taken for measurement (Kasonde-Ng'andu, 2013). The population for this study consisted of all special education teachers and learners at three selected primary schools with special units in Kabwe District, Central Province.

3.4 Sample Size

Creswell (2012) indicates that sample size refers to the number of participants selected from the population with common characteristics, know-how and accessible to help in the study under investigation. The sample size comprised 30 participants - 15 teachers and 15 learners, who were perceived to have reading difficulties from selected participating primary schools in Kabwe District. Teachers were chosen for the study

because they were in direct contact with learners and it was their responsibility to teach learners how to read and use instructional methods appropriately. The learners were involved as they are the recipients of the teaching services from the teachers on how to read.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

Sampling technique is a process a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study on (Creswell, 2012). Specifically, purposive sampling was employed in this study for selection of 15 teachers and 15 learners and this enabled the researcher to select a sample based on a certain purpose. It was used in order to reach research participants who had specific information required for the study. These were teachers and learners who were potentially familiar with the teaching and learning of reading skills in primary schools with special units. For learners, only those with reading difficulties were involved as they had the experience in terms of struggling to know how to read.

3.6 Research Instruments

Kasonde-Ng'andu (2013) defines research instruments as tools that researchers use in collecting the necessary data. In view of this, this research used semi-structured interview guides, focus group discussion guides and non-participant observation to collect data.

3.6.1 Interview Guide

On the interview guide (appendix A), questions are asked orally (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). One-to-one interviews were used to collect data from teachers on the basis that qualitative inquiry usually produces in-depth data. It is from the thick description that the researcher was able to understand the implications of instructional methods used to teach reading skills in learners with reading difficulties. Kombo and Tromp (2006) state that semi-structured interview guides are based on the use of an interview guide, which is a list of questions or topics to be covered by the interview. Interview guides are flexible because they consist of open-ended questions. They are important because they gather in-depth information which gives a researcher a complete and detailed

understanding from open-ended questions. Therefore, using an interview guide enabled the researcher to get first-hand information from teachers about the teaching of reading skills to learners with reading difficulties holistically.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion Guide (FGDG)

Focus group discussion guide (appendix B) is designed to obtain information on implications of instructional methods, and participants' experiences, beliefs and perceptions on a defined area of interest. One focus group discussion comprising five pupils with reading difficulties was conducted at each of the schools where this study was done. The purpose of focus group discussion was to obtain in-depth information on concepts and ideas of the group due to its open-endedness that enables it to collect subjective views from participants.

3.6.3 Non-Participant Observation (NPO) Checklist

The researcher also employed the non-participant observation guide (appendix C) in order to witness and capture the teaching and learning activities and instructional methods used as they took place in the natural setting. This was done through lesson observations when teachers and learners did their practical work of teaching reading to learners with reading difficulties.

3.7. Data Collection Procedure

To enable the researcher to collect the needed data from the sampled participants, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Assistant Dean for Postgraduate Studies at the University of Zambia, School of Education. The researcher used the introductory letter to further seek and obtain permission from the head teacher at each of the schools where data was collected. Interviews were conducted with teachers using the interview guide. She then went on to administer focus group discussions among the learners which lasted for 60 minutes, and a semi-structured interview guide with teachers on different days, each taking 40 minutes, and translated into 1 hour 20 minutes. The observation checklist was used by the researcher in the classroom during lessons to observe instructional methods used by teachers when teaching reading.

3.7. Data Quality Assurance (DQA)

The state of acceptability in terms of it being a true and unique academic product was done using Guba's four trustworthy strategy, which is ideal for all qualitative studies. In this study, *credibility* was ensured through the correct plan from the beginning to the end, which was a descriptive design that coincided with the study title; hence quality of data was assured. *Transferability* was ensured through contextualising with other studies in which similar information was found and new information was added on to the body of knowledge, hence data quality was assured. *Dependability* was also employed through making research instruments reliable by conducting a pre-testing or pilot study, and *confirmability* was used through "Bracketting" or "Epoche" taking the information as it came from participants through verbatim reporting (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

3.8 Data Analysis

Kasonde-Ng'andu (2013) defines data analysis as a manipulation of the collected data for the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect on the interest, ideas and theories that initiated the study so as to uncover the underpinning structures and extracting cardinal variables thereby testing any underlying assumptions. The researcher used thematic analysis. These techniques allowed for narration of themes which were coded. The analysed data was then presented descriptively and, where possible, verbalisms were used to indicate actual voices of the participants. Whenever learners had difficulties in expressing themselves in English during the discussion, they were encouraged to use a vernacular language which they were familiar with and the researcher had to interpret it into English when reporting.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2012) explains that ethical issues are matters which are highly sensitive to the rights of others. In this regard, ethical issues were upheld in the study. First and foremost, a clearance letter was obtained from the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies and the researcher sought consent from the University of Zambia ethical committee,

District Education Board Secretary (DEBS), school managers from the respective secondary schools, and participants, to find out whether they were willing to participate in the study. The researcher explained the main aim of the study before subjecting the respondents to the study. The researcher also maintained strict confidentiality about the information obtained from the respondents as no personal details of the respondents were supposed to be revealed in any of the records, reports or to other individuals without the respondents' permission.

3.10 Limitations of the study

Limitations of a study are potential challenges anticipated or faced by a researcher. Likewise, this study faced some limitations. For instance the researcher only managed to sample 30 in Kabwe District of Central Province. This number was small compared to the target population of the province and the nation at large. Teachers were also skeptical about being interviewed for reasons best known to themselves. However, the researcher did everything possible to ensure that the findings of the study would remain valid.

3.11 Summary

This chapter discussed the research design that was used, target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instruments, data quality assurance, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical issues. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the study as they were provided by the participants. The findings are presented according to the study questions. To begin with, findings concerning the background characteristics of the respondents are presented. The study questions were as follows:

- i. What are the types of instructional methods used by teachers in the teaching of reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District?
- ii. What are the implications of using the instructional methods in the teaching reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District?
- iii. What are the challenges faced by teachers who impart reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District?

4.2 Background characteristics of participants

The information in Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by status and gender of participants.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Status and Gender

Status	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Learners	7 (23.3%)	8 (26.7%)	15 (50.0%)
Teachers	7 (23.3%)	8 (26.7%)	15 (50.0%)
Total	14 (46.6%)	16 (53.4%)	30 (100%)

Source: Field-work Data (2018)

In relation to status and gender of the participants, there were 14 males. Out of that number seven were learners and eight teachers. There were 16 female participants, eight learners and eight teachers,

Furthermore, teachers were required to submit their qualifications, and in Table 2 is the information submitted.

Table 2: Teachers' qualifications

Qualification	Frequency
Master's	0
Degree	8
Diploma	5
Certificate	2
Total	15

Source: Field-work Data (2018)

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution of teachers according to qualification. From the table, eight (8) teachers had a qualification of a degree in special education while five (5) held a diploma in special education and two (2) had a certificate and none had a master's degree.

To find out how long teachers had been in the service of teaching, they were asked to submit the number of years they had been in service, and below Table 3 shows the data.

Table 3: Teachers' number of years in service

Years in service	Frequency
1-5	1
6-10	3
11-15	8
16-20	3
21-30	0
Total	15

Source: Field-work Data (2018)

Table 3 shows the frequency distribution of teachers according to their years in service. Out of fifteen (15) teachers, one (1) had been in service for a maximum of 5 years,

while three (3) had been in service for the period between 6 to 10 years. The age range of service 11-15 years only constituted six (6) of the teachers and three (3) served in the range 16-20 years.

4.3 Question 1: What are the types of instructional methods used by teachers in the teaching of reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District?

The researcher took time to interact with the participants through interviews and focus group discussion and observation so as to appreciate teachers and learners' personal views on the instructional methods used in the teaching reading skills to learners with reading difficulties.

4.3.1 Teachers' view on types of instructional methods in teaching reading skills

The presentation of the first question regarding what types of instructional methods were used to teach reading skills among learners with reading difficulties had several responses, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Types of Instructional Methods in Teaching Reading Skills

Instructional methods	Frequencies
whole word	3 (20.0%)
Phonetics	8 (53.3%)
Basal reading	3 (20.0%)
Language experience	1 (6.7%)
Total	15 (100%)

Table 4 shows the responses of teachers on the types of instructional methods used to teach learners with reading difficulties how to read in three selected primary schools. From the table, three (20.0%) teachers mentioned whole word first among other instructional methods used to teach learners with reading difficulties. Another group of eight (53.3%) teachers reported phonetics method, followed by the other three (20.0%) teachers who stated the basal reading method and one 1 (6.7%) mentioned language

experience as one among other instructional methods used to teach reading skills in learners with reading difficulties. Further, the study found other instructional methods such as neurological impress, multisensory reading, linguistic and content-focused learning as the most important instructional methods that were used to teach learners with reading difficulties in the three selected primary special schools in Kabwe District. Furthermore, one female teacher (**T1**) had this to say:

The usage of the phonics and whole word makes our pupils really understand the teaching of reading skills because they are able to make sense out of the formation of letters into words. And this imparts into our pupils the writing skills as they develop all the strategies of reading.

Further, one male teacher (**T3**) stated that:

Phonic as a strategy or method used to teach learners with reading difficulties by using word recognition, phonics, helps children to associate sounds with printed letters and leads to independence in unlocking new words. In phonics instruction, children study the shapes and sounds of alphabet letters so they can identify them on the page when reading. This skill helps children decode, or breakdown, new words into shorter sounds, which can be blended together to form words.

From the observation, in addition to the instructional methods discussed above, the teachers had to include motivating children by expanding their real potentials, using suitable teaching aids, media and visuals while teaching, repeating instructions, touchable media and teaching aids, social interaction with children, talking to them in a polite manner, providing many examples and allowing them to use various learning objects. Other instructional methods observed being used were syllabic method; phonetics, skimming, scanning, whole word method and alphabet in teaching reading skills among learners with reading difficulties.

Generally, the responses were that whole word, phonetics method, the basal reading method and language experience were among common instructional methods used by the teachers in teaching reading skills.

4.3.2 Learners' views on the types of instructional methods from focus group discussion guide

In relation to the question concerning the types of instructional methods used to teach learners with reading difficulties, the learners reported that the methods used were phonetics, basal reading, learner-centred, content-focused learning, language experience, alphabet, syllabic and the use of whole words to support the teaching of reading skills. In view of this, one male learner (**L1**) stated that:

The teacher teaches us how to pronounce sounds of letters of the alphabet. So the alphabetical order is one instructional method that teachers use to teach us how to read. We even see and say of the whole word.

Additionally, another male learner (**L6**) made the following remarks:

Sometimes teachers teach us how to sound letters and later form words. The teacher tells us how to sound a letter and form a word using the same letter. This makes us understand faster first by identifying the letter and sound, and reading comes last after formation of letters according to their sounds.

Further, one female learner (**L3**) also stated that:

Learning how to read is very difficult because there so many things involved. For example, teachers will make you understand and master all the alphabet letters. This makes it possible for us to match the letter sound and make sense of words.

Another female learner (**L4**) added by stating that:

Beyond this core content of these instructional methods, it is clear that those who struggle with reading need enhanced teaching, and for many struggling readers, and particularly readers with dyslexia, the phonic element is most important emphasising the need for multi-sensory programmes that target phonic knowledge.

From the findings, the learners also acknowledged the use of phonic knowledge, alphabetical order and word sounds in teaching reading skills among learners with reading difficulties.

4.4 Question 2: What are the implications of using the instructional methods in the teaching reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District?

The second question of the study was based on the implications of using the instructional methods in the teaching of learners with reading difficulties in primary schools with special units. The participants gave various views as presented below.

4.4.1 Teachers' views on the implications of instructional methods in the teaching of learners with reading difficulties

In relation to the question on the implications of instructional methods in teaching learners with reading difficulties, the study found that the instructional methods enabled the learners to learn reading skills. To this end, the study showed that the instructional methods helped learners to understand thoroughly the concepts of reading. To support this finding, one male teacher (**T8**) had this to say:

The word sound and mastering the alphabetical order is very key and important in the teaching and learning of reading skills among our learners. This is to say our learners are exposed to so many words at an early stage that would compel them to start studying the words and make sense out of them for the forming of reading culture and would improve their vocabulary.

Further, another male teacher (**T5**) added by stating that:

We are privileged to know how to use look and say, whole word and letters at our disposal. All we need is to know how best to apply them when teaching these children because already they have a limitation in their reading abilities. With these instructional methods, I can proudly say teachers are enjoying teaching and really benefit immensely, something that must be encouraged not only to learners with reading difficulties but also to those without any difficulty.

The study further found that the instructional methods aided and inculcated reading culture among learners. In support of this view, one female teacher (**T1**) said that:

This type of teaching method has really helped the learner to get interested in reading whatever they see if it's accompanied by a picture. Learners are always trying to read to the teacher in class.

The methods encouraged and made it possible for learners to know and develop a reading culture that helped change their reading attitudes, perceptions and interest. To support this, another male teacher (**T9**) had this to say:

Developing reading habits in these children is something that is easy to do. All that is required of us teachers is to be reminding them every day of these obligations so that they make it part of their daily life and activities.

The study also revealed that the instructional methods provided information and skills they needed to build on their vocabulary that enhanced the communication skills both at school and in the community. To support this finding, one female teacher (**T6**) had this to say:

This system of teaching reading skills to learners with reading difficulties for me is of great value because it enlightens most of our pupils with relevant and critical information concerning their English, both spoken and written. The teaching aspect provides the learners with means and ways of understanding the concepts of reading.

Additionally, another female teacher (**T3**) made the following remarks:

One of the advantages of these methods in teaching reading to learners with reading difficulties is that they encourage and plant a reading culture in our children. This comes with the introduction of literacy policy that has been introduced in schools to foster the reading skills among learners. This further makes a concrete foundation for literacy.

On the other hand, the study also concluded that the implication of the instructional methods was seen as a disadvantage to other learners. This finding was further explained by one female teacher (**T8**), who reported that:

In as far as these instructional methods are of great benefit, they have, on the other hand, some limitations which are explained in the area of not considering other learners' differences. It's worth mentioning that they do not capture individuals' differences in terms of their abilities. I can give you the best example of one of these methods, the basal reading approach, which only encourages teaching reading in groups rather than concentration on the individual differences and needs, which is not good at all.

The study also revealed that learners had difficulties blending the sounds to form a complete word because not all words are spelt phonetically. In addition, one male teacher (**T2**) stated that:

It is really difficult to blend the sounds to form some complete words. This so because some words are not spelt the way they sound; words like phone, sugar and Wednesday.

The study also found that the methods required learners to memorize vowels and syllables. This proved very futile because most learners failed to memorize all the vowels and syllables, and this made it hard for them to learn how to read and eventually possessing the comprehensive and writing skills. Also, the instructional methods were not learner-centred meaning most of the instructional methods were teacher-centred, which was seen as an unproductive method of teaching because it did not benefit the learners but teachers, who were already knowledgeable as opposed to the learners. Though being central, it was not appreciated because it had minimal impact in as far as imparting reading knowledge and skills to learners with reading difficulties were concerned.

4.4.2 Learners' views on the implications of instructional methods in the teaching of learners with reading difficulties.

In relation to the question on the implications of instructional methods in the teaching of learners with reading difficulties, the study found that the methods empowered learners with how to learn faster and understand the reading concepts. Further, the strategies of reading brought by the instructional methods were recommended and appreciated by the learners as they provided them with the platform to develop and solidify their literacy skills. This was supported by the verbatim from one male learner (**L7**), who stated that:

Reading is a skill that requires constant practice and availability of story books or novels. So, in order to perfect our reading skills, we need more time to practise with a lot of different books that have attractive and interesting stories.

The study also reported that the instructional methods provided learners with opportunities for rehearsals of pronouncing words and letters as they were exposed to

them at an early age. The study further stated that this exposure enabled the learners to grasp the reading concepts. This was based on the assumption that having good reading skills would enable a learner to perform positively in most all the subjects. This was further explained on the premise that the skills and knowledge surrounding reading make a person complete as most of the subjects are written and questioned in English. To authenticate this, one female learner (**L16**) reported that:

Learning to read comes with massive exposure to books and more vocabulary of reading and writing. This is accompanied with knowledge of letter identification that will later build on our reading skills which acts as a foundation to literacy levels.

Further, the findings showed that the instructional methods used in the teaching of learners with reading difficulties required providing learners with lifelong skills for communications' sake. As learners were in a position to ask and answer questions from teachers, through communication skills learnt as a result of understanding the reading strategies provided by the instructional methods, not only those with reading difficulties but also those without were benefiting entirely from the methods. One male learner (**L19**) had this to say:

Reading is very important and, as such, it comes through having both writing and reading skills that are witnessed through the usage of appropriate instructional methods. This makes it possible for us to get to know the skill of reading as it border on issues of communication, especially in schools.

While the aforementioned instructional methods were used to teach and promote reading skills among learners with reading difficulties, on the other hand it did not promote teaching of reading skills to such children in schools due to lack of learners 'centeredness, lack individualistic traits, promotion of rote memory, failure to spell some word sounds such as phone and sugar, difficulties in blending sounds to form words and promoting favouritism among the learners who were faster at learning how to read as opposed to those who were slow at grasping the concepts of reading.

Generally, the findings showed that the instructional teaching methods being used in school had are bearing in promotion of reading skills among learners with reading difficulties.

4.5 Question 3: What are the challenges faced by teachers who impart reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District?

The study sought to establish challenges faced by both teachers and learners in the teaching of reading skills to learners with reading difficulties. In trying to answer this issue, the data presented below was collected from the teachers and learners from the sampled schools.

4.5.1 Teachers' views on the challenges faced by teachers and learners in the teaching of reading skills to learners with reading difficulties

In relation to the question of challenges faced in the teaching of learners with reading difficulties, the findings of the study revealed that teachers reported the following: lack of finances to construct universal literacy centres, inadequacy of appropriate teaching and learning materials, lack of literacy centres and lack of qualified teachers in literacy education. Further, one male teacher (T10) stressed lack of transport as he stated that:

Lack of literacy banks makes it hard for our learners to put into practice what they learn in reading. The absence of these facilities really has proved to be a menace in as far as improving reading skills is concerned and the monitoring impossible. As you must be aware, monitoring is very important as it enables the district office to evaluate teachers' teaching and know where the children and their teachers need help. However, in this case, it is difficult to embark on monitoring tours due to lack of literacy banks, commonly known as centres in schools.

Further, lack of sufficient knowledge on reading programmes hampered the reading skills among learners with reading difficulties, and one male teacher (T1) was quoted as saying:

Reading is a milestone in one's cognitive development. As such, information must be made available to the general populace/ especially

in our communities, so that they know the importance of educating our children at an early stage of life through literacy learning ventures. Therefore, lack of sufficient information on reading really disadvantages them to freely participate in the education activities, hence the need for information to be availed to the intended recipients.

The study also revealed that there was lack of funds in schools to help buy all the school reading materials. Suffice to say that these children, due to their inabilities to acquire reading skills as result of the disability, they required a well-stored and stocked resource room of teaching and learning materials, a situation that was opposite to what was on the ground. Stressing further on lack of funds to support the teaching and learning of reading skills, for example, one female teacher (**T2**) reported that:

In our school, there is erratic funding and this makes it impossible for us to carry out the daily teaching and learning activities such as the procurement of the needed resources to support and encourage reading among our learners. As such, so many reading activities are compromised. This has also affected the infrastructure in terms of having the designated classrooms for literacy in our schools. The ones that we have are not even in a good state to accommodate and support the teaching and learning of such reading skills, thereby posing a challenge both on us as teachers and learners with reading difficulties.

Furthermore, one male teacher (**T3**) also stressed the challenge of overcrowding as he stated:

Overcrowdings is one of the sensitive challenges that we are encountering in the teaching of learners with reading difficulties. This is to say these children are already disadvantaged because of the condition in which they are, which demands for an individualised education plan that is not possible when classes are flooded with big numbers of learners. So the teacher-learner ratio is so big that we cannot even use the acquired knowledge and skills in special education courses to help these children.

Further, teachers felt frustrated in implementing reading strategies because of heavy workloads. Large numbers of learners in classes increased the workload in all teaching areas such as marking and preparation of lessons, leaving teachers feeling over-worked and resentful. Parents' limited involvement with their children's schoolwork is another challenge teachers are facing in implementing reading strategies. In support, one male teacher (**T10**) had this to say:

Sometimes parents could not assist in their children's schoolwork as they themselves did not understand English.

From the observation, most students were still not able to memorize the letters A through Z. They were also found unable to read certain words, mostly at the stage of spelling words. The teachers also said these children cannot pronounce words correctly. The students mostly had problems with pronunciation and could not read complex words. They also had difficulties reading long words, and often reduced the letters in a sentence.

From the findings, it can be concluded that teachers witnessed challenges which ranged from lack of transport, insufficient knowledge, erratic funding to overcrowding in class to effectively teach reading to children with reading difficulties. Besides, those children have difficulties to memorize the alphabet, pronounce some words, read complex sentences and comprehend the reading. It also showed that the majority of students had problems reading complex words.

4.5.2 Learners' views on the challenges faced by learners with reading difficulties in the learning how to read in primary schools

In relation to the question of challenges faced by learners in learning reading skills, the study found that there were a number of challenges as reported by the learners. These ranged from: limited time, inadequate teaching and learning materials, inappropriate sanitation, lack of reading rooms or libraries in schools and unfavourable infrastructure, low participation by parents in school activities, to overcrowding in classes due to over-enrolment by the schools.

It was also found that lack of sufficient knowledge on reading programmes contributed to most them not engaging much in developing their reading skills. On lack of sufficient information literacy programmes, one male learner (L5) was quoted as saying:

Reading is good to us because it makes us know how to read and write in schools, and if these skills are not given to us at a time we need them, then the impact will not be felt very much as most of us will remain illiterate. This will disadvantage us from freely participating in the

education activities such as reading, and for this to be okay in schools, we as learners need much information to be availed to us through purchasing of more educative novels and other reading books like story books to help us improve our reading culture and as a school we don't have a library.

Furthermore, one female learner (**L6**) also stressed that overcrowding makes it difficult for a teacher to look at the individual needs of each learner, and she stated that:

Overcrowding is not good because it brings a lot of negatives on our reading skills and knowledge. The way it is ...is not good because we are too many in the classes for sharing of books. This is because some of us are delayed by our friends who do not have knowledge and skills of reading faster when given individual tasks due to sharing of books. I'm not saying sharing of books is a bad idea, but sometimes there are certain topics that would require you as an individual to perfect some of your skills and this requires ample time and patience.

Another female learner (**L7**) said:

The other challenge is that because of overcrowding, in most cases time is always limited to finish our tasks, and teachers also fail to manage us all due to inadequate reading materials in school.

From what the researcher observed, students who have difficulty in reading choose neither to read nor to engage in other tasks involving reading. Students do not get chance to read on their own. As a result, they struggle with the new text in making sense out of it in real-life situations. Moreover, there are some other related issues such as lack of knowledge of the target culture, difficult vocabulary, too much emphasis on bottom-up approach by the teacher, lack of motivation to read on the part of the students, no sufficient preparation in teaching, etc. All these challenges, as a whole, make reading text difficult and boring to learners.

Generally, there are so many issues and challenges in teaching reading to learners with reading difficulties such as de-contextualized reading text, difficult vocabulary, difficult level of text, lack of motivation to read, no reading habits, excessive use of bottom-up approach, no sufficient preparation in teaching, etc. Among them, selection of appropriate reading text and designing tasks for teaching reading appear main issue regarding overcrowding in class. Lack of appropriate infrastructure like libraries and

inadequate learning and teaching resources impact negatively on the effectiveness of the instructional methods used to teach reading skills to learners with reading difficulties.

4.6. Summary

The study established that whole word, phonetics, alphabet, and language experience were among instructional methods used by teachers in teaching reading skills among learners with reading difficulties. The study findings also indicated that the instructional methods used increased literacy skills among children with reading difficulties and increased phonetic awareness in improving their reading skills. Also, challenges faced in teaching reading to learners with reading difficulties included inadequacy of appropriate teaching and learning materials, unfavourable infrastructure, low participation by parents in school activities over-enrolment, lack of sufficient information on literacy and children having difficulties memorizing the alphabet, pronouncing some words, reading complex sentences and comprehending what they read. The next chapter presents the discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. Overview

The present chapter discusses the findings of the study. The discussion has been done under the following sub-headings which have been derived from the research objectives:

- i. Instructional methods used by teachers to teach reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District.
- ii. Implications of using instructional methods in teaching learners with reading difficulties reading skills in selected primary schools in Kabwe District.
- iii. Challenges faced by teachers involved in the teaching of reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District.

5.2 Instructional methods used to teach reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in primary schools

The findings of the study revealed that teachers used phonetic as an instructional method in the teaching of reading skills to learners with reading difficulties. This finding is consistent with the works of Mwanamukubi (2013), who looked at reading difficulties among grade six learners and challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading: a case of Chadiza and Chipata districts, and reported that early systematic instruction of teachers' knowledge in phonic content and methodology was also noticed during lesson observation sessions in literacy. For example, to teach words such as 'put' and 'but' and 'pan' and 'pane', teachers could not pronounce such words correctly and confidently. However, it was further noticed that some teachers could not properly clarify and demonstrate relationships and differences in areas such as letter names and their sounds and mixed up vowels such as 'a' and 'e' and 'e' and 'i'. These difficulties were also noticed among some pupils, most of whom related such to sounds in Bemba. Such are some of the reading and writing difficulties learners face in initial literacy in English, especially if they come from a local language background and if teachers were not adequately trained in phonics content and teaching methodologies. This was seen by

the researcher reported by the participants in the study as it impacted on the reading skills of learners with reading difficulties. As such, knowledge and skills for both teachers and learners is required for the realisation of improved reading skills. Therefore, the Ministry of General Education should see to it that teachers are trained adequately to teach reading skills among children with reading difficulties in schools in order to meet the diverse educational needs of every child.

The study also revealed that teachers used the whole word, as an instructional method to teach learners with reading difficulties in schools. The method helps learners to understand how to recognize words in relation to other words, in their context, and as a representation of what the words mean. The study found that whole word approaches used by teachers emphasized learning to read through the act of reading. Learners had to recognize words as whole units without breaking them down into sounds or letter groupings. This focuses on the word as the minimum unit of meaning and therefore the essential base element of reading. The findings were in line with Esther, Rachael and Mary (2016) who said whole word methods are commonly used to teach children to read high frequency sight words. They may also be used to improve overall reading ability and fluency alone, or in combination with phonics-based reading programme for those learners with problems in reading. The learners were just looking at the general appearance of words. Then from the shape of a word's appearance, the pupils were expected to memorize the sounds that should be spoken.

Another instructional method used to teach reading was the basal reading. This instructional method was supported by Runo (2010), who attributed it to changing learners' progression from grade level readers corresponding to stages in development. For this instructional method, many teachers use it in a reading series as the core of their reading programme. These series include a sequential set of reading texts and supplementary materials such as workbooks, flash cards, placement and achievement tests, and film strips. What was observed teaching reading, the teacher used a comprehensive teacher manual that explains the purpose of the programme and provides a precise instructional plan and suggestions for skill activities. The teacher's manual is usually high-structured and completely outlines each lesson. For example, in

addition to lesson activities, the manual may include skill objectives, new vocabulary words, motivational activities, and question for checking comprehension on each page of the text. This means that the readers in the basal series usually begin with pre-primary and gradually increase in difficulty, continuing through the eighth grade.

In this version, the content is based upon common child experiences and well-known interests of children. This instructional method systematically presented reading skills using word recognition, comprehension and word attack, and the teacher was able to control the vocabulary from level to level thereby making it possible for learners to develop comprehension and increasing reading rate steadily (Runo, 2010). Learners with reading difficulties will have reading skills developed in a systematic, sequential manner in which basic vocabulary would be established and repeated throughout the sequence to provide reinforcement and make available assessment, evaluation, and diagnostic materials.

Further, the study found that among the instructional methods used by teachers to teach learners with reading difficulties was language experience. This finding is consistent with the findings of Kalindi (2005), who says the Language Experience Approach integrates the development of reading skills with the development of listening, speaking and writing skills. This instructional method entails that what the students were thinking and talking about made up the material that would deal with the following thinking progress such as what a child thinks about, he/she could talk about, what a child says, he/she could write or what someone could write for him/her and what a child writes or others write for him/her, and what he/she could read. The approach is based on the concept that “reading skills hold the most meaning to a pupil when the materials being read are expressed in his or her language and are rooted in their experiences”. In the language experience approach, each student is encouraged to proceed at his own rate. Progress is evaluated in terms of a student’s ability to express ideas in oral and written form and to understand the writing mechanics, spelling, vocabulary and sentence structure, and depth of thinking is evident in the student’s written work. This implies that the language experience method stresses that each child’s unique interest should be considered and realised as the approach is based not upon a series of reading materials,

but upon the child's oral and written expression. This entails that a child's experiences play a major role in determining his or her reading materials. As such, this should be encouraged and supported by teachers and parents, who are the closest allies in enhancing children's reading development skills and knowledge.

The other instructional method used by teachers was neurological impress. The finding is in agreement with Kail (2007), who argued that neurological impress was developed to teach reading to children with severe reading disabilities and further reported that the method consisted of joint oral reading at a rapid pace by students and teachers. During the lesson, students could learn by hearing their own voice and someone else's voice jointly reading the same material. This happens when a learner or student is seated slightly in front of the teacher and the teacher's voice is directed into the student's ear at a close range. There was no special preparation of the material prior to the joint reading exercise. The objective was simply to cover as many pages as possible in the allocated time without tiring the student. At first the teacher should read slightly louder and faster than the student; the student should be encouraged to maintain the pace and not worry about mistakes. The teacher slid his or her finger to the location of the words as they were being read. As the student becomes capable of leading the oral reading, the teacher lowers his or her voice and reads slightly slower and the student's finger can point to the reading in order to attain fluent reading automatically.

The study showed that the linguistic method was also used as an instruction to teach learners with reading difficulties. Using this method, teacher adheres to the phonic method, but they try to avoid the deception of deliberately showing misspelled words to children. Instead, they search for those few English words that are already spelled consistently and they use only those words to instill the concept that letters are trustworthy indicators of sounds to be uttered. This finding is consistent with the findings of Maruyama (2007), who noted that when the teachers are not fluent in English and African languages, they make mistakes in teaching reading. Furthermore, Sangeeta (2011) pointed out that reading instructions depend in part on the teacher's knowledge and effective use of instructional methods. In this regard the role of the teacher is of great influence in as far as reading and writing achievement is concerned.

In this study, it was noticed that some teachers struggled to teach certain words. As a result their pupils were not guided properly in certain instances and this, to some extent contributed to failure to understand and perform well in the reading activities. In order to solve this discrepancy, teachers should attain a high degree of knowledge and skills for they are charged with the responsibilities to teach and correct learners in their education endeavours. For this initiative to be made realistic, the Ministry of General education should make sure it engages more teachers and those educational facilities are adequate and favourable for the teaching and learning activities to effectively take place.

The study also found that multisensory reading instructional methods which involve tracing, hearing, writing, and seeing were used to teach learners with reading difficulties in schools. This finding is in line with the findings of Matafwali (2005), who stated that the multisensory reading method is based on the premise that some children learn best when content is presented in several modalities. Frequently, kinaesthetic and tactile stimulation is used along with the visual auditory modalities. This method has worked and improved the reading skills and knowledge among some learners with reading difficulties as explained in the study and supported by Kalindi (2005).

The study also revealed that teachers used phonics instruction, whereby children are taught the sounds of the letters. What is important is that a child comes to associate the shape of the letter with the sound it makes. Once individual letter-sounds are mastered, children are taught how to blend them together to read words. Similarly, children taught through the phonics method can learn how to spell correctly by sounding out the word. The phonics method requires teachers to guide learners to think of the sound(s) that should normally be associated with syllables in each word. This method demands "sounding out" exercises in which a whole classroom "sounds out" together. The names of the alphabetical letters are a prerequisite to the use of this method, but the sounds associated with each syllable are the main points of focus (Phajane, 2014).

Further, whole language method was another instructional method used to teach reading to children with reading difficulties primary schools with special units. This method

goes by different names: whole language, look and say, sight reading, or whole word. It is as much an educational philosophy as a reading method, for it emphasizes capturing meaning over systematic decoding of sound parts. The whole language emphasis considers language as a natural phenomenon and literacy a natural function. The finding was in line with Alnahdi (2015), who said with the whole language method, children are taught to recognize the whole word, rather than its letter parts. Theoretically, the method goes from the whole to the part. Flash cards and graded readers are features of this approach.

To sum up, when a teacher is ready to start teaching reading to a child with reading difficulties, there are instructional methods available that would help the child to learn how to read. Despite all other reading methods, there are essentially two approaches, or a combination of the two. These are the phonics method and the look-say / whole-word / whole language method which effectively help learners with reading difficulties.

5.3 Implications of the instructional methods in the teaching of learners with reading difficulties in primary schools with special units.

With regard to the implications of the aforementioned instructional methods, the study found that, phonic approach benefited learners with reading difficulties as it emphasised word recognition and helped children to associate sounds with printed letters and led to independence in unlocking new words. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Maruyama (2007), who observed that, phonetic method increased awareness of the sounds of language which made learners to reflect on the sounds in words separately from the meaning of words, but awareness of these sounds may not always be easy for young children, hence the need for systematic phonemic instruction in order to attain superior performance in reading. In this instruction, children study the shapes and sounds of alphabetical letters so they could identify them on the page when reading. This skill helped children with reading difficulties to decode and break down the new words into shorter sounds, which were blended together to form words. This method is often referred to as “invented spelling”. While it may not lead children to a correct spelling of a word, it may provide a starting point for learners to have a strong chance of

spelling the word accurately or at least close enough that a teacher could understand the intended word. This is so because the phonetic approach to spelling helped children with reading difficulties to understand writing tasks that might otherwise be too challenging. This method of teaching helped improve the reading skills of the learners and, therefore, must be recommended for its application in schools to continue yielding positive results.

It was reported by teachers that this instructional method promotes reading skills among learners with reading difficulties. This was so because learners were exposed to so many words at an early stage that would compel them to start studying them and make sense out of them for the forming of reading culture and improvement of their vocabulary that would aid communication skills. This finding is in line with the findings of Scruggs (2008), who indicated that reading and writing are highly complex skills that help in word sounds and be transformed into a language of communication. This was seen as both a skill and a means of self-expression which integrates and depends on visual, motor and conceptual abilities. Further, Ngorosho (2009) also supports the finding when he asserts that writing skills are the best correlate of reading skills which involve transforming thoughts and ideas into meaningful words and sentences. It was further argued that reading and writing have long been thought of as complementary in addition to motor ability and functionally recognizing words; to read was to interpret language while to write was to plan and produce language so that it could be read. Therefore, it is assumed that being able to read implies being able to write or at least being able to spell. It is further assumed that when learners face reading difficulties, they are very likely to experience writing problems as well because reading and writing are complementary skills that usually develop simultaneously.

Further, the findings of the study revealed that the instructional methods empower teachers with the knowledge and skills to teach children the reading skills to learners with reading difficulties because, already, those children had some limitations in their reading abilities. This finding was supported by Kirk (2006), who contended that the instructional methods empowered teachers with adequate skills of interventions that may be preventive or aimed at solving the already existing problem through preventive

activities and alleviate pupils' difficulties. It was further argued that instructional methods which focused on these prerequisites may succeed (Scruggs, 2008). This entailed that teachers were proud as they enjoyed teaching learners with reading difficulties.

The study further found that the instructional methods aided and inculcated the reading culture among learners. The methods encouraged and made it possible for learners to know and develop a reading culture that helped change their reading attitudes, perceptions and interest. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Mokhtari, Porter and Edwards (2010) who identified and concluded that instructional methods have an effect on learners' reading abilities as it looked at the following domains which were not limited to the time to assess learners' reading strengths and needs: using assessment information collected to inform instructional decisions; monitoring learners' reading patterns not only as a group but as individual learners, organizing instructions based on group needs of the learners; recording how learners are responding to assessment and teaching; and the teacher reflecting on instructional practices in view of the learners' performance and cultural beliefs. These were highly rated and considered in the study as they played a pivotal role in shaping the learners' learning behaviours. This meant that in any learning environment, such aforementioned factors ought to be taken into consideration as they have an immense impact on the learning patterns of the children in schools.

The study also revealed that the instructional methods provided adequate and educative information and skills teachers required to build learners' vocabulary that enhanced the communication skills both at school and in the community. This finding was in contrast with the findings of Tambulukani and Bus (2011). In their article 'Linguistic Diversity, A Contributory Factor to Reading Problems in Zambian Schools, they argue that linguistic diversity in Zambia might be responsible for most reading difficulties. Further, MoE (2013) states that since Zambia uses English the medium of instruction from grade 1 to University, at times teachers who are not familiar with the medium of instruction for teaching reading and writing will always struggle and fuel complications

about the language that children should use for communication. As a result, it impacts negatively on the children, who also come from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

In as much as the aforementioned instructional methods were of great benefit to both teachers and learners with reading difficulties, they had, on the other hand, some limitations which were explained in the area of not considering others learners' differences as each and every learner was considered as an individual. This finding is in agreement with Ball (2010), who found that some instructional methods used to teach learners with reading difficulties were not well designed as they lacked elements of individualistic traits among the learners. In most cases, was observed that learners lacked some motivational aspects towards reading, self-confidence and esteem because they felt inadequate when they compared themselves to their classmates. This system de-motivated the learners as they felt left out in the teaching of reading concepts due to inadequacies of structuring the teaching methods that would completely capture and take into consideration individuals' differences in terms of their abilities. The best example cited for such a one method was the basal reading approach, which only encouraged and considered teaching reading in groups of individuals rather than concentration on the individual differences and needs.

The study also revealed that in teaching learners with reading difficulties, children were having some difficulties blending the sounds to form a complete word because not all words are spelt phonetically. This finding is in tandem with Ball (2010), who attributed some instructional methods to be blunt in nature as they fail to maximize their effectiveness in accomplishing their designs' purpose as most learners face difficulties to blend the sounds and form some complete words. This was so because some words were not spelt the way they sound, for example phone, sugar and Wednesday. This, therefore, prompted learners to start memorizing words, vowels and syllables and henceforth proved very futile because most learners failed to memorize all the words, vowels and syllables. This made it hard for them to learn how to read and eventually possess the desired comprehensive and writing skills.

5.4 Challenges faced by teachers involved in the teaching of reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected primary schools in Kabwe District.

In relation to the question of challenges faced in the teaching of learners with reading difficulties, the study revealed that the phonics approach emphasised word pronunciation that may be at the expense of comprehension and confused learners who were exceptions to the phonetic rule. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Kirk (2006), who argues that reading difficulty is often associated with some neurological impairment that results in poor word recognition skills, including phonological processing. Slow rate of reading, erratic oral reading, misuse of function words and suffixes, and reading comprehension difficulties on timed reading tasks were among the symptoms commonly associated with dyslexia learners. Further, the study reported that learners may have difficulty blending the sounds to form complete words. This entailed that not all words are spelt phonetically and this may cause confusion among learners, especially those with reading difficulties. Many English words are not spelt the way they sound, which could be frustrating for new readers who depend on the phonetic approach while reading using the phonetic approach, could lead students in the wrong direction when faced with words such as “said”, “ocean”, “sugar” or “Wednesday”. Using the phonetic approach, would be read as “sayed” instead of reading it letter by letter. Children must learn to memorize these types of words so they could immediately recognize and to read such words correctly. Teachers were heard teaching the sounds of blended vowels in order to cope with reading words of that nature.

The other challenge that was faced by teachers in the teaching of learners with reading difficulties was the negative attitude from parents toward the promotion of reading skills among children. This finding is in line with the findings of Mwanamukubi (2013), who asserts that parents are not concerned with the affairs of their dyslexic children due to negative attitudes and lack of interest. This made them unaware of what was happening to their children in schools as they paid less attention to the school demands of their children. However, in normal settings where parents take interest in what their children are doing in schools, the key is for parents and teachers to be aware

of how young ones are doing and to act immediately if they suspect there is a problem. This came to light when teachers reported that from the time teaching and learning literacy in schools started, some parents had been having a negative attitude towards supporting it. This was because the subject demanded more than what parents could afford. Teachers attested to this when they attended Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and discovered that the teaching and learning of reading skills in question was received with mixed feelings. Most parents were not in support owing to the fact that they could not afford to spare any extra money to purchase whatever subject demanded whenever materials the need arose, hence they could not cooperate.

Parental involvement was lacking with regard to assisting children improving their reading skills even at home. Parents did not have much knowledge and skills due to lack of valuable information about how important it was to teach their children reading skills and help reduce reading difficulties. This made parents' involvement questionable. This finding is in line with Tambulukani and Bus (2011) who carried out a study on *Linguistic Diversity: A Contributory Factor to Reading Problems in Zambian Schools*, and revealed that there was lack of information in familiarity with the language of teaching as this was blamed on illiteracy levels that most parents had. However, despite the fact that the aforesaid study was done countrywide, its findings and recommendations were insightful and applicable to this study. In other words, more knowledgeable parents should and are needed to be brought on board to avoid this discrepancy and make school attendance among learners a success.

The findings from the study further revealed that teachers and pupils at the three selected primary schools bemoaned the lack of teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, novels, story books and other relevant materials. This finding is in line with Maambo (2011), who posits that the major challenges in teaching and learning among learners with reading difficulties are serious shortages of teaching and learning materials, as well as poor staffing level especially in rural areas. Further, Kalindi (2005) adds that inadequate reading materials contribute to poor reading skills among learners in schools. This means a teacher may have the required skills in teaching reading, but it becomes difficult for him/her to teach effectively if the necessary teaching and learning

materials are not available. Lack of materials such as textbooks and other facilities compromised the standards of teaching and learning as it made its objectives of helping learners with reading difficulties futile. The absence of these materials in schools made it hard for teaching and learning to be meaningful. This was so because for meaningful teaching and learning of literacy to occur, it ought to be accompanied and supported by the required teaching and learning materials as well as other necessary facilities.

This implies that without these, the teaching and learning process would be in vain. The whole process would be baseless because there would be no sources of information for pupils when given an academic task. This implies that, for quality education to be achieved, it requires the availability and use of prescribed textbooks and other educational materials in that particular domain. However, without such aids in the teaching and learning of computer studies, effective teaching and learning would be hampered (Maambo, 2011). Therefore, there is great need for the Ministry of General Education through the relevant authorities to distribute the necessary teaching and learning materials in schools in order to make teaching and learning in computer studies meaningful. This is because suitable materials enable learners to acquire and apply knowledge, learn at their own pace, and assess their own progress.

Teachers added on lack of sufficient knowledge on literacy or reading programmes as a challenge that hampered the reading skills among learners with reading difficulties. This finding is supported by the findings of Mwanamukubi (2013), who contends that reading difficulties occur on a continuum, meaning that there is a wide range of students who find challenges where reading is concerned. However, it seemed only few teachers had this knowledge, particularly those that have done special education. In regular schools and among regular teachers, knowledge about reading difficulties seemed to be rare because in their training the course does not adequately cover that content. The study further found that, because of that discrepancy, many felt the children were not better kept and taught at all in schools. To further amplify on lack of sufficient information on literacy programmes, one teacher was quoted stating that literacy is a milestone in one's cognitive development. As such, information must be made available to the general populace, especially in communities so that people know the importance

of education and that it should begin at an early stage in one's life through literacy learning ventures. Therefore, lack of sufficient information to really disadvantages many people to freely participate in the education sector, hence the need for information to be availed to the intended recipients.

Also, there was shortage of trained teachers to facilitate the teaching and learning process of reading skills among learners with reading difficulties. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Kalindi (2005), who argue that most teachers were not oriented towards helping poor readers in their classes. This was so because in their training, they were not adequately prepared to teach all children according to their needs. Therefore, even in cases where reading materials were adequate, reading skills of poor readers were not improved. The most important person, who is the teacher in this case, does not know how to help the poor readers. This was a menace to the realisation of those children who had reading difficulties to progress in their education expectations. It made it even harder for learners with reading difficulties in the schools where this study was done to improve reading skills, as it was observed that even teachers themselves were not fully trained to be in the rightful position to impart such skills as reading to young ones in schools. Therefore, this calls for immediate and urgent attention from the Ministry of General Education to intervene in the promotion of quality education with quality personnel on board.

The study also found that there was lack of funds in schools to help buy all the school requisites that would support the reading activities of learners with reading difficulties in schools. This finding is in line with the findings of Matafwali (2005), who contends that lack of learning and teaching resources due to lack of funding muscle and teachers having no special education background contributed to the slow pace at which the acquisition of reading skills are done by learners with reading difficulties. This entails that funding towards acquiring teaching and learning materials was lacking. Therefore, the absence of necessary equipment and learning materials compromised the delivery of concepts in reading skills among children with reading difficulties. Suffice to say that these children, due to their inabilities to acquire reading skills as result of disability,

required a well-stored and stocked resource room of teaching and learning materials, a situation that was opposite to what was found on the ground.

The erratic funding made it impossible for most of the school activities to be carried out normally, as such, so many reading activities were compromised. This was so because the infrastructures that were found in the schools where this study was conducted were not even in a good state to accommodate and support the teaching and learning of such reading skills thereby posing a challenge both to teachers and learners with reading difficulties (Mwambazi, 2011). Therefore, a recommendation was put forward for the Ministry of General Education to make sure infrastructures in schools are rehabilitated to ensure safety learning environments with enough reading books to stimulate and facilitate reading skills not only in learners with difficulties but also among those without reading difficulties in schools.

In view of the numerous challenges that surrounded the teaching and learning of reading skills of learners with reading difficulties, the study also found that teachers and pupils faced challenges of overcrowding in classes. This finding is consistent with the findings of Maambo (2011), who says teachers have been working under difficult circumstances, such as too many pupils in classes and erratic pupil attendance, among others. The study further revealed that when there are too many pupils in a classroom, it becomes difficult for the teacher to give individual attention especially to those who may be lagging behind in reading. Overcrowding proved to be a barrier to effective learning as most of the pupils were delayed by their friends who were not acquainted with the knowledge and skills of reading. This scenario entailed high teacher-learner ratio as classes had more than the required number of learners as opposed to the numbers of teachers to teach them the skills. Furthermore, time factor was also mentioned in passing. This was viewed by pupils as being a major barrier in their learning how to read because of being overcrowded in classes, and that the individualised learning style demanded by the subject was impossible due to limited time.

5.5. Summary

The chapter has presented the discussion of findings of the study according to the research objectives. The study found the following as types of instructional methods which were learner-centred: phonetics, basal reading, language experience, neurological impress, multisensory reading, content focused learning and linguistic. These were mostly used in teaching reading to learners with reading problems. It was further found that the instructional methods used improved literacy skills, academic performance, and were used as a ladder for language development. Also, the implications of the aforementioned instructional methods were presented in terms of them lacking the consideration of individualistic differences and posing difficulties among learners in blending letter sounds to form words. Also, lack of funds to construct universal literacy centres, inadequacy of appropriate teaching and learning materials, lack of qualified teachers in literacy, and unfavourable infrastructure were some of the challenges faced in the teaching of reading to learners with reading problems. In view of this, it is vital for teachers in schools to use instructional methods that are responsive to the reading desires of learners with reading difficulties and meet their individual needs. The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Overview

This chapter concludes the study, makes recommendations and suggests areas of further research based on the findings of the study.

6.2. Conclusion

It is evident from the study findings that learners with reading difficulties were taught using phonetics approach, basal reading approach, language experience approach, neurological impress approach, multisensory reading approach, and linguistic approach. The instructional methods used helped to yield better understanding of reading skills among the learners with reading difficulties. The learners were exposed to reading activities, awareness of what materials to read, and writing skills, which are used as a ladder for language development. However, the above-mentioned success could not go without some challenges. In this vein, the challenges which were faced in the teaching of reading skills among learners with reading difficulties included inadequacy of appropriate teaching and learning materials, lack of qualified teachers in literacy and over-enrolment. Nevertheless, both teachers and learners were still optimistic that the Zambian education system would benefit greatly in the long run if those instructional methods were being used effectively.

6.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following key recommendations emerged:

- i. The respective schools should scale up continued professional development in order to provide a platform for adequate training to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills in instructional methods which they should use to teach reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in schools.
- ii. Teacher are expected to provide explicit and systematic instruction with lots of practice with or without teacher support and feedback, including cumulative

practice over time in order to improve and bring about desirable change in reading among learners.

- iii. There is need for the Ministry of General Education to ensure the teacher training syllabus is sufficiently developed with relevant resources so as to prepare teachers for teaching of reading using appropriate instructional methods for reading based on individual needs.
- iv. There is also need for the Ministry of General Education to supply necessary teaching and learning materials for teaching reading skills among learners in schools.
- v. Teachers are the role models for children; they should play their role to positively influence the learners. They should be creative in using various instructional strategies available as they teach reading.
- vi. Children with reading difficulties must be encouraged to learn to read as this would enhance their understanding of other subjects at school and in life in general.

6.4. Areas for further research

Arising from the research findings of this study, some other aspects of this study area may not have been studied and they may need to be explored. The areas which may be studied further include:

- i. Research to quantify the effects of instructional methods used to both learners with reading difficulties and those without in schools.
- ii. Future research may also be conducted to investigate which ones among the instructional methods positively influence reading skills in learners with reading difficulties.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide for Teachers

Dear participants

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia pursuing a Master of Education Degree in Special Education. I am conducting a research entitled **Implications of instructional methods on reading to learners with reading difficulties in selected schools in Kabwe District**. Kindly feel free, open and honest in your responses as all answers you give will be treated confidentially. However, should you feel at any point of the study like during interview that you cannot continue, you are free to withdraw.

1. Gender of the participants
2. What qualification do you hold?
3. Do you have learners with reading difficulties at this school?
4. How often do you interact with them in terms of teaching in a week?
5. What is the enrolment for the classes of learners with reading difficulties at this school?
6. Is the number of teachers enough to handle the number of learners with reading difficulties at this school?
7. If not enough, explain strategies put in place by the school to allow learners to learn?
8. What teaching instructional methods do you use when teaching learners with reading difficulties at this school?
9. What are the implications of using such instructional methods when teaching learners with reading difficulties at this school?
10. What are challenges that teachers face during the teaching process of reading skills among learners with reading difficulties at this school?

11. How best do you think the teaching of learners with reading difficulties could be done in schools?

Thank you for your time!!

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Learners

I would like to have a discussion with you on the **Implications of instructional methods on teaching reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected schools**. Be rest assured that there is no right or wrong answer. Please freely share your true feelings and opinions with me on this topic. The discussion will be kept confidential. Please feel free to participate. However, should you feel at any point of the study like during discussion that you cannot continue, you are free to withdraw.

1. Let's start by talking about reading skills; do you learn how to read at this school?
2. How do you learn how to read at this school?
3. Are the periods adequate for learning how to read at this school?
4. If not adequate, what do you normally do in order to learn how to read?
5. Is the number of teachers enough to handle you in reading skills at this school?
6. If not enough, explain how you learn how to read?
7. What instructional methods do your teachers use when teaching you how to read at this school?
8. What are the implications of those instructional methods in your reading abilities?
9. In what ways have the mentioned instructional methods at your school benefited you in reading skills?
10. What are the challenges faced during the teaching of reading skills at this school?
11. How best do you think the teaching of reading skills should be done at this school?

Thank you for your time!

Appendix C: Observation Checklist

S/ N	Area of concern	Points/ marks				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Content of the lesson plan					
	Nature of disabilities, etc					
	Objectives: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound					
2	Lesson presentation/ development					
	The preparedness of the teachers in teaching the subject.					
	The teacher–pupils relationship for the learner to be ready for the lesson					
	Teacher’s ability to understand pupils’ learning levels					
	Observe the type of instructional method used by the teacher to teach reading.					
	Check if the instructional methods used are properly applied for the class.					
	Observe if the instructional method used enable learners to follow and participate in the lesson.					
	Observe if there are challenges experienced by the teacher in the use of instructional method planned for the lesson.					
	Observe if the challenges pupils are facing to cope with the instructional method used by the teacher.					
	Teacher’s ability to understand pupils’ learning levels.					
	Observe the type of instructional method used by the teacher to teach reading.					
	Check if the instructional methods used are properly applied for the class.					
3	Appearance of teacher					

Points: 1= unsatisfactory, 2=fair, 3= good, 4= very good, 5= excellent