

DECLARATION

I, **Agnes Florence Massanzi**, do declare that this dissertation is my own work and that it has never been submitted by anyone at this institution or at any other institution.

Signature:.....

Date:

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This thesis, of **Agnes Florence Massanzi**, is approved in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters in Education in Educational Psychology.

Signed: Date.....

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DEDICATION

To my daughter, Anastasia Thokozani whose childhood I missed out on because of my studies.

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May God Bless you all!

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ACRONYMS

BTL	Breakthrough to Literacy
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
MoE	Ministry of Education
NBTL	New Breakthrough to Literacy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Students Assessment
PRP	Primary Reading Programme
ROC	Read on Course
SITE	Step in English
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Aid
ZBEC	Zambia Basic Education Course
ZPC	Zambia Primary Course

ABSTRACT

The Ministry of Education undertook a number of reforms in the 1990s due to the decline in literacy levels in basic schools; the basic school curriculum was changed. New methods of teaching were introduced as measures of intervention. Pedagogies like the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL), Step in to English (SITE) and Read on Literacy Course (ROC) were introduced in basic schools. The current study sought to find out whether the numerous child centered methods, with particular attention to Read on Literacy Course (ROC), were effective in enhancing learner performance.

The descriptive survey design was used in conducting this research. The study opted to use this method taking into account the nature of the research.

This study used mainly qualitative methods of data collection. However, quantitative methods of data collection were also employed to yield pragmatic data to substantiate the qualitative data.

The study population was all basic schools in Mufulira district. The sample size consisted of 310 participants comprising 26 teachers (12 males and 16 females) and 284 pupils (161 boys and 123 girls).

In selecting the schools, purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling was used because it allowed the researcher to select the participants who could provide the richest information, more interesting and that which will manifest interesting characteristics (Kahn: 2008). In addition, at each school, probability sampling technique was used to determine teachers and pupils who should participate in the study. White (2005:117), states that “probability sampling technique ensures that every element in the sampling frame has an equal chance of being included in the sample”.

In collecting data, structured questionnaires, semi-structured interview schedules and focus group discussion guides were used. Data collection involved giving pupils class tasks. Two sets of task items which were taken from the Rainbow Workbooks were administered for each of the grades according to the ability groups as normal classroom activities. Rainbow workbooks are distinguished by the colours, blue, orange, green, red and yellow.

The findings of the study revealed among others that the one hour allocated for teaching ROC was inadequate. The study also showed that not all the teachers handling ROC were trained to teach it. Although the findings of the study revealed that schools had enough materials for teaching ROC, these were in most cases locked in cupboards in the school manager’s office. Further the study showed that most of these materials, though available, were either outdated or worn out. Furthermore, the findings revealed that teachers’ responses became more objective after the administering of test items to the learners. However the learner’s performance still remained generally poor.

In conclusion, the study has demonstrated that ROC, as a learner-centred pedagogy is not as effective as the educational expectations would like it to reflect. There is overwhelming evidence from the findings that indicate that the levels of literacy among the learners are not improving. The performance of the learners is a great contradiction to what the teachers’ state.

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i) The Ministry of Education should embark on providing more intensive training through in-service programmes in order to equip teachers with relevant skills to manage the execution of ROC.
- ii) The Zambian Government through the Ministry of Education should ensure that there is a constant supply of latest relevant teaching and learning materials that are need to sustain programmes.
- iii) Considering the overwhelming evidence from the findings of the study that schools had enough materials for teaching ROC but were locked up in the school manager's cupboards, there is need for the Ministry of Education to re-sensitize the school managers on the importance of availing these materials to the teachers whilst emphasising on maintenance of the same.
- iv) Since the findings of the study revealed that the one hour allocated for teaching ROC was inadequate, school managers should consider increasing the time allocated to teaching ROC.