

# Motivation to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies after a workshop

**Author:**Chantyclaire Tiba<sup>1</sup> **Affiliation:**

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Education, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa

**Corresponding author:**

Chantyclaire Tiba,  
3063369@gmail.com

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**Background:** Teachers are important role players in improving literacy; however, they lack the expertise to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. Studies have showed that when teachers are motivated to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms, learners' comprehension is improved.

**Objective:** The aim of the study was to investigate what motivates teachers to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms after a workshop.

**Method:** Purposive sampling was used and 20 teachers took part in this study. The research followed a qualitative approach, and the data were obtained from teachers' responses to an open-ended questionnaire. Thematic analysis using concepts from Shulman's 'Pedagogical Content Knowledge', Vygotsky's 'Social Constructivism', Bundura's 'Self-efficacy' and Chalmers and Gardiner's 'Academic Professional Development Effectiveness Framework' was conducted.

**Results:** One key finding was that teachers developed competence through effective pedagogical practices used by facilitators of the workshop; this boosted their confidence.

**Conclusion:** The findings suggest that professional development training plays an important role in making teachers aware of reading comprehension strategies, equipping them with skills that will enable them to guide learners to become proficient readers.

**Contribution:** The uniqueness of this study is that it hinged on collecting empirical evidence, within a South African context, on what motivates teachers to explicitly teach reading comprehension in their professional practice after being exposed to a repertoire of reading comprehension strategies during a workshop.

**Keywords:** explicit strategies; professional development; reading comprehension strategies; reading motivation; reading problems; reading proficiency; self-efficacy; teacher development.

## Introduction

It is important for learners to acquire reading skills as they will need these skills in all spheres of their life. Reading occurs on a daily basis as we:

have to read the newspaper in the morning, read typed text at the bottom of a television screen later in the afternoon, follow a recipe to make dinner, read a quick e-mail or text from a friend, study from a textbook for a high school quiz, or enjoy a novel before bed. (Marchand-Martella & Martella 2013:3)

The ability to read proficiently influences learners' academic performance (Boakye 2021), as it improves their understanding of various subjects across the curriculum (Schmidt, Condy & Tiba 2021). The importance of reading is acknowledged by Cekiso (2017) who states that all academic achievement depends on a learner's ability to read efficiently. However, many South African learners lack the ability to read for meaning as evident in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016 (Howie et al. 2017) and this, among other factors, has been attributed to teachers' training and teachers' lack of expertise to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies (Cekiso 2017; Phala & Hugo 2022). In 2012, the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) reported that many South African teachers lack the ability to answer questions that required higher cognitive functions of inference, interpretation and evaluation (Taylor et al. 2012). This suggests that some teachers lack the ability to strategically read a text for comprehension. If teachers cannot read for meaning, Medina et al. (2021) questioned whether they would be able to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies to learners. In Medina et al.'s study, teachers were taught how to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies, and they integrated these strategies during teaching which improved their learners' reading behaviour.

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It is against this background that a professional development training workshop was organised with the National Professional Teachers' Organisation in South Africa (NAPTOSA) and was aimed at making teachers aware of reading comprehension strategies, and equipping them with skills that are needed to explicitly teach these reading comprehension strategies. Researchers such as Ying and Aziz (2019), Boakye (2021) and Li et al. (2022) have acknowledged the importance of explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies as they have the potential to improve the reading ability of learners. With explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies, teachers show learners how to find information within a text through scaffolded and guided practice before the learners are required to perform the task on their own (Marchand-Martella & Martella 2013; Rupley, Blair & Nichols 2009).

Therefore, the teacher's role is important in making learners aware of reading comprehension strategies and intentionally teaching these strategies to learners so that they become competent readers. Muzammil and Suhono (2019) and Cekiso (2017) state that teachers have the responsibility to teach learners how to read and how to apply the knowledge to comprehend any text. Many studies on professional development in equipping teachers to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies have been conducted in developed countries such as the United States and Ireland (Concannon-Gibney & Murphy 2012; Medina et al. 2021). It appears evidence is lacking in South Africa regarding what motivates teachers, after a professional development workshop, to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms. The uniqueness of this study is that it hinged on collecting empirical evidence, within a South African context, on the impact of a workshop in motivating teachers to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their professional practice. Therefore, the researcher hoped to gather qualitative evidence that will show the impact of a workshop in motivating teachers to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms, and provide recommendations for future practice. The research question that guided this study was: what motivates teachers to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms? In understanding the topic under study, the following section focuses on existing literature in relation to reading comprehension, the benefits to learners and challenges teachers face regarding explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies as well as empirical studies in which professional development training developed teacher's knowledge and skills on how to teach reading comprehension strategies.

## Overview of literature review

Muzammil and Suhono (2019) explain that to be a good reader, one has to comprehend the text one is reading. Therefore, reading and comprehension are interlinked, and have been defined by Vongkrachang and Chinwonno (2015) as a learner's ability to recognise words, develop

and use vocabulary, and have the ability to use a variety of strategies to read a text for comprehension. The skills that learners need to read proficiently should be taught in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1–3) because this could ameliorate future problems with reading (Phala & Hugo 2022). Therefore, teachers have to make an intentional decision to explicitly teach learners reading comprehension strategies (Phala & Hugo 2022). According to Marchand-Martella and Martella (2013) and Hilden and Pressley (2007), explicit teaching requires teachers to skilfully teach a lesson through guided practice and monitor learners. An array of literature has shown the benefits when reading comprehension strategies are explicitly taught to learners. For example, Boakye (2021) reported that learners' understanding of texts improved after being explicitly taught reading comprehension strategies. Boakye found that deeper learning occurred as learners were engaged, which made it easier to understand concepts, and learners were confident in their ability to read text. Schmidt et al. (2021) examined the teaching of higher-order comprehension strategies to a Grade 2 learner who struggled to read for meaning. The 'Think Aloud', 'Anticipation Guide' and 'Magic Square' strategies were explicitly taught to the learner. The findings suggest that the learner felt safe and her confidence was boosted to read texts. These findings are congruent with the study of Li et al. (2022) which showed that after reading comprehension strategies were explicitly taught to Chinese English First Language (EFL) learners, the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group. This suggests that explicit teaching of reading strategies may improve reading comprehension. This is consistent with what Rouijel, Zohri and Bouziane (2019) concluded: that to improve a given cognitive skill, be it lower-order or higher-order, it must be taught purposefully and explicitly. In their study, explicit teaching of critical thinking skills had a positive effect on learners' use of higher-order thinking skills in reading comprehension. This correlates with other studies such as a study by Muzammil and Suhono which found that after the explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies, learners learnt to extract explicitly stated information, and make straightforward inference and prediction from a text. Despite these benefits, findings from studies by Hilden and Pressley, Klapwijk (2012) and Cekiso (2017) suggest that the time for training, the time for preparing lessons, the time for supporting learners, as well as overcrowded classrooms could hinder teachers from explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies. In a study by Hilden and Pressley in particular, teachers who declined to participate in a professional development training on explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies indicated other commitments, time conflicts and that the programme would be time-consuming. In the study by Klapwijk, she found that it took time and practice for teachers to realise that reading strategy instruction

is not separate from but related to their teaching of comprehension.

Professional development training can develop teachers' knowledge to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. For example, in a study by Medina et al. (2021), which focused on the influence of sustained, school-based professional development on explicit reading comprehension strategy instruction, the teachers participated in an intervention to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms. The findings revealed that teachers obtained knowledge and developed skills to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. These teachers were able to gradually release responsibility to learners during teaching. In Klapwijk's (2012) study, after a reading strategy instruction intervention, teachers developed confidence to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. For example, they changed the way they interacted with learners and texts and engaged more in reading strategy discourse. Concannon-Gibney and Murphy (2012) found that professional development deepened teachers' knowledge to teach reading comprehension strategies as they were given the opportunity to practise in their classrooms and share their experiences.

## Conceptual framework

Four frameworks guided this study: Shulmans's (1986, 1987) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-cultural Perspective of Learning, Bandura's (1977) Theory of Self-efficacy and Chalmers and Gardiner's (2015) Academic Professional Development Effectiveness Framework.

Shulman (1986, 1987) described three domains that are needed for effective teaching. These domains are Content Knowledge (CK), Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) and PCK. Content Knowledge refers to teachers' knowledge about the subject matter they teach; teachers were taught subject matter included in the Intermediate Phase. Pedagogical Knowledge refers to techniques or methods that teachers use in their classrooms. The facilitators used different pedagogical approaches such as group work and reflective feedback. Pedagogical Content Knowledge, according to Mishra and Koehler (2006:1027), is defined as: 'the ability of a teacher to know what teaching approaches fit a content and also knowing how elements of the content can be arranged for better understanding of learners'. Therefore, PCK is an amalgamation of CK and PK (Shulman 1986, 1987). In the context of this study, the facilitators taught content of the Intermediate Phase, using different pedagogical strategies that engaged the teachers. The PCK framework guided the facilitators when planning and delivering content during the workshop.

According to Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs in a social context where people learn from the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). The MKO, in the context of the workshop,

were the facilitators. A social environment was created wherein the teachers actively collaborated with their peers and the facilitators. While collaborating, knowledge was co-constructed through participation and interaction. To facilitate learning, the facilitators scaffolded learning within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) until teachers could independently practise in their classrooms and give feedback in class.

Self-efficacy is a component of Bandura's (1977) Social Cognitive Theory, and it is defined as one's ability to perform a given action to achieve a specific goal. In relation to this study, self-efficacy is the teacher's knowledge acquired during the workshop and the ability to use it in their classroom practice. The facilitators modelled, with authentic texts from the Intermediate Phase curriculum, how teachers could explicitly teach the three reading comprehension strategies. These teachers were given activities that required them to practise the three strategies taught to them in their classrooms. Because of these experiences, when analysing data, the researcher was interested in information that links to the teachers' self-efficacy.

In understanding the impact that the workshop had on teachers' motivation to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies, the Academic Professional Development Effectiveness Framework (Chalmers & Gardiner 2015) was used. The framework is 'designed as an evaluation tool to facilitate the systematic collection and analysis of data related to the intended outcomes of the teacher development programmes' (Chalmers & Gardiner 2015:81). Chalmers and Gardiner (2015) proposed four indicators that can be used to ascertain the impact of a professional development training, which are input, process, output and outcomes. Input indicators refer to the 'human, physical and financial resources dedicated to particular programmes'; output indicators are 'results or outcomes of the programmes which are measurable such as the number of programme participants'; process indicators have to do with:

how programmes are delivered within a particular context referring to policies and practices related to learning and teaching, performance management and professional development of staff, quality of curriculum and the assessment of student learning, and quality of facilities, services and technology. (Chalmers & Gardiner 2015:86)

Finally, outcome indicators 'focus on the quality of provision, satisfaction levels and the value added from learning experiences' (Chalmers & Gardiner 2015:86). In this current study, the outcome indicators assisted the researcher to collect as well as analyse data in relation to the impact the workshop had on motivating teachers to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms. Therefore, when analysing data, the researcher looked for evidence that links to the quality of the workshop, and the teachers' satisfaction with the value of the workshop.

## Professional development training with National Professional Teachers' Organisation in South Africa

There are many unions protecting the rights of teachers, and the quality of education in South Africa, among which is NAPTOSA – a professional organisation of teachers with headquarters in Pretoria. One of the goals of NAPTOSA is professional development of teachers. A Reading for Meaning (R4M) workshop was advertised and 20 Intermediate Phase teachers voluntarily enrolled. The aim of the workshop was to make teachers aware and deepen their knowledge of how they could explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms. The workshop took place online on MS Teams over three weeks. The workshop ran for 5 h from 09:00 to 14:00 every Saturday. Each week a strategy was taught to the teachers in order to give them enough time to practise using the strategy, and they were provided with PowerPoint presentations, texts and videos to deepen their knowledge of the strategies. The three facilitators scaffolded and explicitly taught three reading comprehension strategies. These strategies included: 'My Turn Your Turn', 'Anticipation Guide' and 'Think Aloud'. According to Schmidt et al. (2021:270), the 'My Turn Your Turn' strategy involves the teacher sharing an aspect of what was read, for example 'this reminds me of the time when ...' or 'how do you think the character is feeling?' and the learner then shares something in return. Schmidt et al. (2021:270) further indicated that one of the benefits of the 'My Turn Your Turn' strategy is that learners 'engage in active thinking during reading to gain a deeper meaning of the reading passage'. This strategy focuses on predicting, making connections, clarifying, paraphrasing, summarising and inferring. With 'Anticipation Guide', learners respond to a set of statements to activate their prior knowledge, get their opinions about statements and stimulate their interest to read the text (Roozkhoon & Samani 2013). This is a higher-order thinking strategy as it challenges learners' thoughts, assumptions and experiences. According to Rupley et al. (2009), 'Think Aloud' or 'Talk Aloud' involves teacher discussion and teacher-student interaction, and an important feature is that teachers verbalise what they are thinking. In other words, teachers model how strategic readers think when they read. For example: 'our country does not have that sort of thing but we have ...', 'I think I know what is coming next ...', 'I wonder what they are going to ...' and 'I can imagine what it is like to ...'. 'Think Aloud' is intended to help learners 'get inside the teacher's mind' and begin to understand what strategies they can use when doing similar tasks (Rupley et al. 2009:128). With 'Think Aloud' the key strategies to learn are predicting, making connections, paraphrasing and summarising, inferring, activating prior knowledge, visualising and generating questions.

After each strategy was taught, teachers were given a task to practise these strategies in their classrooms and provide reflective feedback during the next online session and on the

Telegram platform, which was used for communication. These enabled teachers to demonstrate understanding and reflect on using these three strategies in their different school contexts. The teachers and facilitators all discussed strengths and areas of improvement. In a study by Mathew, Mathew and Peechattu (2017) it was concluded that reflection leads to professional growth, as teachers may decide to do things in a different way or according to their strengths. Therefore, reflection could change teachers' practice (Avalos 2011 cited in Bevik 2014). This is evident in the study by Concannon-Gibney and Murphy (2012) where teachers' knowledge deepened because they were given an opportunity to reflect on their experiences explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms following professional development training.

## Methodology

This is a qualitative-interpretive study in which empirical data were collected and interpreted in relation to teachers' perspectives on the impact a workshop had in motivating them to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms. According to Creswell (2015), researchers should attempt to understand a situation from the participant's unique experiences.

Purposive sampling was utilised for this study as the researcher wanted specific participants who would provide information that would answer the research question. Therefore, the participants were information-rich as they had certain characteristics (Smith & Osborne 2008). This aligns with Punch and Oancea's (2014) definition of purposive sampling, as a deliberate selection of participants who are knowledgeable about a phenomenon of study. Twenty qualified teachers voluntarily participated in an online professional development workshop on MS Teams over 3 weeks. The researcher was one of the facilitators of the workshop. These teachers were trained on how they could explicitly teach three reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms. The Telegram platform was created for communication with the teachers.

This is an impact study; therefore, the 'outcome indicators' of the Academic Professional Development Effectiveness Framework (Chalmers & Gardiner 2015) guided the researcher when developing the questions in the open-ended questionnaire. The rationale of using a questionnaire was to adhere to the physical distance regulation during coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). The advantage of using an open-ended questionnaire was that the participants could freely express themselves, as it was anonymous, about the impact the workshop had on their motivation to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. An open-ended questionnaire was emailed to teachers after the workshop to solicit information on the following questions: 'what were the strengths of the workshop?', 'what were challenges of the workshop?', 'how could the workshop be improved?', 'what can you say about how the workshop was presented?', 'how has this workshop

influenced your teaching?’ and ‘would you like to add any other comment?’ All these questions link to issues of the outcome indicators, which include quality of the workshop, teachers’ satisfaction and how the workshop changed teachers’ pedagogical approaches.

The training workshop took place in 2021 on MS Teams over a 3-week period. Each week a strategy was taught to teachers and they were given a task to use the strategy in their classrooms and provide feedback to their peers and facilitators either during an online session on MS Teams or on Telegram.

Thematic data analysis was utilised and the following four phases suggested by Braun and Clark (2006) were used: (1) familiarisation with the data through reading and re-reading data, (2) colour-coding information that links to the research question, (3) searching for themes that link to what motivates teachers to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies, following a workshop, and (4) reviewing themes. The themes were reported in the findings and discussion section, linking these to the conceptual framework and literature.

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the university where she works (EFEC 2-8/2019). At all times, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained as participants’ names were not mentioned when reporting data. Teachers signed a written consent form agreeing to be part of this study. All data collected were in accordance with the ethical standards of the WCED. Trustworthiness was achieved as the other two facilitators, who were part of the team for the workshop, critically reviewed this article. They ensured that the themes discussed linked to the research question.

## Findings and discussion

The research question that guided this study was: what motivates teachers to use reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms? The findings are supported by comments made by teachers from the open-ended questionnaire. Each comment made by a teacher is in inverted commas or quotation marks when reporting findings. From the findings, it became evident that teachers were generally satisfied about the workshop and planned to integrate the strategies they were introduced to in their classrooms. The key finding was that teachers were competent as they acquired knowledge and skills to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. However, some teachers were concerned about time required to practise during the workshop and to implement the strategies in their classrooms.

### Teachers’ competence

Teachers developed knowledge and acquired skills required for them to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. The knowledge and skills were acquired through effective pedagogical practices used by the facilitators. During the

workshop, after each strategy was taught, teachers were required to teach it in their classrooms and reflect on their experiences either using MS Teams or Telegram. The teachers indicated in the questionnaire that the feedback sessions were beneficial. Eleven out of the 20 teachers made the following comments on the questionnaire: ‘The ability to provide feedback following implementation’; ‘... implement as well as feedback each week’; ‘Loved the different methods teachers were using and how it works in their schools’; ‘I love the sharing and feedback sessions. Very well presented course’; ‘... very engaging; very practical strategies and ideas-approach that ensures we are able to do it in the classroom’; ‘Excellent strategies and the ability to share experiences has been great’; ‘That we could go back to school and apply the topics and give feedback’; ‘I enjoyed hearing how other teachers approached the topics [*strategies*] and how they implemented them constructively’; ‘I loved that we were given a chance to role model all the reading strategies presented’; ‘Practical nature of the activities. Reflecting and feedback gap between first and second sessions gave us time to practice and reflect’; ‘... what was covered and then take it back and implement it in our classes’.

The findings suggest that through teachers’ application of and reflection on their practice, they developed competence, as their knowledge and understanding of the three strategies increased through discussion with their peers and facilitators. In the study by Concannon-Gibney and Murphy (2012), teachers improved their knowledge to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies because they shared their experiences with colleagues. Therefore, they recommended that future professional development training should give teachers opportunities to discuss and reflect on their practice. This reinforced what was found in a study by Medina et al. (2021): that professional development training equipped teachers with knowledge and skills to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies. The teachers in Medina’s study acquired knowledge that enabled them to gradually release responsibility to learners when teaching in their classrooms. The finding of this current study aligns with Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of the MKO. The facilitators who were the MKO modelled and guided teachers until they could independently implement the strategies taught to them during professional development training in their classrooms. In relation to the ‘outcome indicators’ of the Academic Professional Development Effectiveness Framework (Chalmers & Gardiner 2015), the teachers felt the reflective feedback sessions after implementation of strategies in their classrooms were relevant. This is because the teachers learn from each other’s experiences. It appears the teachers were satisfied as they gained knowledge through active participation during the reflective feedback.

Another pedagogical approach that the facilitators used was group work. According to the teachers, group tasks created an inclusive environment in which all of them participated and interacted in a risk-free environment. Through

collaboration with peers and facilitators, their knowledge of the three reading comprehension strategies increased. Ten out of the 20 teachers wrote the following comments in the questionnaire: '... the facilitators used strategies such as group work'; 'The interactive participation of everyone. The small group break away'; 'It was good that we participated in the activities because it made the understanding thereof easier'; 'The collaboration and interaction of teachers'; 'The small group sessions were excellent idea'; 'The interaction with the facilitators and workshop members as well as their encouragement'; 'Social constructivism at its best. Collaboration best practices shared. Safe learning environment'; 'The workshops were very informative. I enjoyed the discussions and the fact that we were actively involved'; 'All the teachers were given opportunity to participate in the classroom. When we work together, we learn from one another'; 'This course spoke directly to the need that ... it was interactive'.

The findings suggest that the teachers were satisfied with the interactions, engagements and discussion in the group sessions during the workshop. They experienced first-hand the benefits of the learner-centred approach, which changed their perspective of teaching. Social constructivist theorists such as Vygotsky (1978) emphasise that learning takes place when people construct their own knowledge rather than being passive. Therefore, the facilitators in this current study, who were the MKO, used group work as a pedagogical approach to facilitate construction of knowledge.

Eleven out of the 20 teachers suggested that a hands-on approach where they were engaged with the content developed their competence. The teachers wrote the following in the questionnaire: '... the hands on inclusive approach'; 'Each strategy was practiced by us, taught by us and reflected on by us ... wonderful job of modelling – clear – easy to follow – great notes'; 'Hands-on approach. Practical presentations'; 'I enjoyed the hands-on approach of the workshop. It was much easier to retain'; 'It has shown me once again that teacher centered teaching is not as effective as ...'; 'The practical part – drawing up the activities. Working in groups to share ideas'; 'I've been given practical skills to use'; 'I loved all the new strategies that was introduced to us and the manner it was demonstrated. It was all hands on learning'; 'I feel comfortable with all the strategies, I grew interest from the course and I quickly practice it and I presented it ...'; 'Yes more equipped ...'; 'The practical component will be able to use it across all subjects'.

General knowledge suggests that people learn by doing. From the findings, teachers felt competent as they gained knowledge from practical activities they were involved with, in the workshop. There is a high level of achievement when people are actively involved in their learning (Rupley et al. 2009). In a study by Concannon-Gibney and Murphy (2012) the practical activities facilitated teachers' implementation of reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms, as they had experienced how the strategies might work during

professional development training. The facilitators of the workshop in this current study did not teach content (CK) in isolation; teachers were supported using different pedagogical (PK) approaches that actively engaged them. According to Shulman (1986, 1987), effective teaching occurs when there is a blend of CK and PK. In relation to the concept of 'outcome indicators' of the Academic Professional Development Effectiveness Framework (Chalmers & Gardiner 2015), the hands-on activities made teachers confident and comfortable to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms.

Eight out of the 20 teachers were generally satisfied with the workshop and they made the following comments: 'It's my first year teaching language. This course certainly made me competent in teaching. Teaching these strategies to my learners as well as colleagues'; 'It has made me more aware of planning my lessons well and of focusing on strategies that will improve my learners reading for meaning'; 'I am definitely more confident in my teaching. I use it in most of my subjects'; 'I managed to share some strategies with a colleague'; 'It has motivated me to get back into classroom teaching, however I can encourage future teachers to use these strategies'; 'The course taught us great strategies and enhanced our knowledge greatly'; 'I knew very little in the beginning about the strategies being dealt with. After the course I feel more competent'; 'It opened my eyes to so many other strategies that can be easily integrated into my classroom'; 'Extremely positive influences. I've learnt so many classroom friendly techniques and methods'; 'The different strategies learnt it was quite relevant to use in the classroom. I have tried some of these strategies successfully and I have learnt new ways of doing something'.

The findings reveal that professional development training made teachers aware and developed their knowledge and skills to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies, which increased their self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1977), when an individual believes they can execute something, they will be motivated to do it. Teachers' high self-efficacy could be ascribed to the different pedagogical approaches used by the facilitators. It appears that some of the teachers in this current study knew about the reading comprehension strategies but the professional development training made them aware of how they could explicitly teach these strategies in their classrooms through guiding, modelling and supporting learners until they become independent readers. There is evidence that the workshop was effective which links to the concept of the 'outcome indicators' of the Academic Professional Development Effectiveness Framework (Chalmers & Gardiner 2015).

### Time as a challenge

Although some teachers indicated that they were adequately competent to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies, some were concerned about time in relation to the additional work that was required from them during the

workshop to do activities and time to assist learners in the classroom when reading comprehension strategies were explicitly taught. Four of the teachers mentioned the following: 'personally, time constraints', 'time', 'took too much time [workshop]', 'time to address struggling learners'.

One could infer from this finding that teaching explicitly takes time both in the preparation of and delivering the lesson. According to Marchand-Martella and Martella (2013), explicit teaching includes paying attention to instructional detail as teachers have to design their lesson in a way that they can teach learners skills and support them to become independent readers. In a study by Hilden and Pressley (2007), some teachers declined to participate in professional development training on explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies due to their workload. In a study by Klapwijk (2012), some teachers felt that reading instruction strategy intervention was an additional burden to their existing administrative workload. As a result, it took considerable time and practice for some teachers to realise that reading strategy instruction is not separated but is integrated into teaching comprehension. It appears that some of the teachers in this current study did not see explicit teaching as part of their daily teaching of reading comprehension.

## Conclusion and recommendations

This is a small-scale study that examined teachers' motivation to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classroom practice after attending a R4M workshop. The findings revealed that the teachers were generally satisfied and they planned to change their pedagogical approach to be more learner-centred. The teachers gained knowledge and skills to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies through effective pedagogical practices such as reflective feedback, group work and hands-on activities used by the facilitators. These findings link to the 'outcome indicators' of the Academic Professional Development Effectiveness Framework as teachers valued the quality of the workshop. These teachers were confident in their ability to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms. However, the teachers indicated time that was required from them to actively participate in the workshop and time to implement the strategies.

From the findings, the researcher concluded that teachers will gain knowledge and skills that are needed to teach reading comprehension strategies to learners when they are explicitly taught through guiding, modelling, scaffolding and reflective practice during professional development training. The facilitators of the workshop transferred knowledge gradually, using different pedagogical approaches, until the teachers could independently practise and reflect on their teaching. Teachers' perception of teaching reading changed as they experienced first-hand the benefits when reading comprehension strategies are explicitly taught in the classroom.

This is linked to the 'outcome indicators' of the Academic Professional Development Effectiveness Framework.

This study adds to the body of knowledge which reported that professional development training should focus on explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies to teachers, so that skills acquired can be imparted to learners (Ying & Aziz 2019). As Medina et al. (2021:828) note, 'teachers cannot effectively teach what they do not know'. Therefore, the Department of Education should invest in professional development training on teaching reading comprehension strategies.

The facilitators taught three strategies during the workshop. Given the importance of reading for comprehension and the crucial need to improve literacy in South Africa, it is recommended that professional development on reading comprehension should be ongoing over a longer period, including many strategies teachers could use to improve learners' comprehension. An ongoing workshop would equip teachers as they would have time to practise and also familiarise themselves with these reading comprehension strategies, enabling them to easily integrate these strategies into their classroom practice. In their study, Hilden and Pressley (2007) found that it took time before teachers became nearly proficient in using reading comprehension strategies in their practice. As a result, they recommended continuous professional development that could last a few years so that teachers are supported.

Another recommendation is that the R4M workshop should be made compulsory for all teachers every year to add to their existing repertoire of reading comprehension strategies. Teachers who had previously attended workshops should be encouraged to refresh their knowledge.

This study is limited as only 20 teachers participated, so the findings cannot be generalised due to the small sample size. Another limitation is that data were only collected using a questionnaire. It is recommended that in future studies, for more depth and objectivity of knowledge teachers acquired, a pre test and a post test should be administered. Another recommendation is that these teachers should be followed up in their classrooms and observed to see how they are implementing the strategies taught to them and to ascertain if new knowledge was actually acquired during professional development training. However, this small-scale study is important as it has provided additional insight into the role of professional development training in equipping teachers to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their classrooms.

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## Competing interests

The author has declared that no competing interests exist.

## Author's contributions

C.T. is the sole author of the article, from conceptualisation to the final write-up.

## Ethical considerations

Permission to conduct the study was granted by the university where she works (EFEC 2-8/2019). At all times, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained as participants' names were not mentioned when reporting data. Teachers signed a written consent form agreeing to be part of this study. All data collected were in accordance with the ethical standards of the university.

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## Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author, CT.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

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