

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**THE READING DEVELOPMENT OF LEVEL 4 ABET
LEARNERS**

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THE READING DEVELOPMENT OF LEVEL 4 ABET LEARNERS

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requirements for the degree of**

**MASTER OF EDUCATION
In the School of Adult Education**

Supervisor: Sandra Land

DECLARATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education, in the Graduate Programme in Adult Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I, Audrey Esther Pillay, declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
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December 2013
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Signature

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late Dad and Mum (Ivan and Stella Anthony) who have always instilled in me the importance of reading, speaking and writing correctly.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this enquiry was to explore reading development experiences of adult learners learning English Level 4. The research focused on their early reading experiences and the development of their reading experiences over the years and particularly in the present classes. The research site was an Adult Literacy Centre at a school in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. The study was conducted within a qualitative interpretive paradigm, using a case study approach. Data collection techniques employed included personal interviews, observations and a focus group interview. The data collection instruments used was: interview schedules, observation checklists and audio visual aids. Data was analysed thematically.

In exploring the participants' lived experiences in the development of reading; this study drew on the Landscape Model of reading by David Rapp and Paul van den Broek, as well as Vygotsky's social constructivism. The themes that emerged from the study were: reading development in Adult Basic Education (ABE) level 4 classes in relation to achieving the learners' goals, reading development in ABE level 4 classes in relation to achieving the goals of the curriculum, motivation to read, reading and family life, reading and life in general, learners' difficulties in expressing themselves, language gaps as a barrier to learning in the second language and finally, the functioning of and challenges faced at adult literacy centres.

The main reasons for adult literacy centres not being fully functional were: a lack of learning, teaching and support material due to insufficient funds, some educators are not qualified or lacked the skills to teach reading and writing, goals of the curriculum are too academic, the distances that learners have to travel to the centres are too long and the times of the classes are not always suitable to the learners, especially if they are employed.

Finally, the study presented recommendations to improve the functionality at adult literacy centres, to enable learners to gain maximum benefit. Recommendations were made for further research.

ACRONYMS

- ABE – Adult Basic Education
- ABET – Adult Basic Education and Training
- ANA – Annual National Assessment
- ATM – Auto Teller Machine
- ECD – Early Childhood Development
- FGI – Focus Group Interview
- GETC – General Education and Training Certificate
- KZN – KwaZulu-Natal
- LTSM – Learning and Teaching Support Material
- MKO – More Knowledgeable Other
- SA – South Africa
- SAQA – South African Qualifications Authority
- UK – United Kingdom
- UKZN – University of KwaZulu-Natal
- USA – United States of America
- ZPD – Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Whether one is a child or an adult learner, one has to be competent in reading. Reading opens the doors to many opportunities in life, especially to adults who are illiterate in our country, and reading in English is a frequent pre-requisite for training and work opportunities. Therefore, adults attending English classes can make dreams come true, as reading is knowledge and knowledge is power. Being able to read can empower people in many ways; they can learn business skills to assist them earn an income. Over a period of time, people can use their developing reading skills to help themselves out of poverty, to communicate with their children's school and fulfil the role of parents as partners in education. Developing reading skills can enable learners to improve their family health, as reading could increase awareness about health issues. Use of reading skills could assist them to become active citizens of the country by participating in community activities and democracy; and thus could even help to build social justice and equity (Sangonet, 2010).

1.2 CONTEXTUALISING ADULT BASIC EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to the South African Constitution (1996) all South Africans have a right to a basic education, which includes ABE and further education. Therefore, it is the obligation of the state to make this education available to all South Africans. Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) falls under the band of General Education and Training. The Ministry of Basic Education and Training is responsible for ABET (South African Qualifications Authority, 2008). ABE has been recognized by South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) as a priority in South Africa. The aim of ABE is to equip adult learners with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to play meaningful roles in society, by contributing to the workforce, community and economy. This could instil a culture of life-long learning in learners. In addition, learners could be provided with career opportunities and possible opportunities for employment (SAQA, 2008).

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

I developed an interest in this topic because of the context in which I teach. I teach at a school in Pietermaritzburg where the majority of learners and their parents or guardians speak isiZulu as their home language. Learners are taught in English and communication to parents is sent out in English. Many parents and guardians are unable to communicate with the school in English. In addition, they are not in a position to fulfill their role as partners in education. Therefore, I was interested in exploring the reading development experiences of a sample of adult learners, and discovering the extent to which they achieved their goals in wanting to learn to read and to what extent the goals of the curriculum were achieved. In addition, I gained an understanding of their motivations for developing their reading skills and how reading related to their family life and to life in general.

The nature of this study gave me direction as to the rationale for the choice of a case study research. Case study investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context (Maree, 2010). Within an interpretivist perspective, case study research allows the researcher to gain a holistic understanding of the interactions and relations amongst participants and how they make meaning of the phenomenon being studied (Maree, 2010).

1.4 RESEARCH APPROACH TO MY STUDY: CASE STUDY

1.4.1 Definition of case

The case was reading development experiences of three adult learners in the ABE level 4 English classes at the Adult Learning Centre in Maqongqo, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. Aspects of this case that were relevant to this study were: reading development experiences of these ABE level 4 learners in relation to achieving their goals; their reading development in the ABE level 4 classes in relation to meeting the goals of the curriculum; their motivation to read; reading in relation to their family life and to their lives in general. A case study approach was used as I wanted to conduct an in-depth investigation of a particular case in its context to generate knowledge (Rule & John, 2011). According to Stake (1995), case study research provides thick, rich and content-heavy descriptions of real people in real situations. Some of the features of a case study are: intensive, thick, rich descriptions in order to generate

understandings of the case in relation to its context, to explore a problem or issue within a limited focused setting and to bring to light other similar cases (Rule & John, 2011). Thus, the features of case study approach, as mentioned above, allowed me to use data gathered through multiple methods: personal interviews, observations, focus group interview and audio-visual recordings.

1.5 FOCUS OF THE STUDY

In this study, I focused on the development of reading experiences of three adult learners participating in ABE level 4 English classes at an Adult Learning Centre in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. During this study I explored with them their reading development experiences over the years; from the time they first learnt to read, to the classes they are attending. The study gave me an insight into what motivated them to read and whether their goals for learning to read and those of the curriculum stated in the Draft Assessment Policy for the General Education and Training phase, Grades 1-9 and ABET (1998) were met. Finally the study focused on how reading impacted on their family life and on other aspects of their lives that they saw as salient to their well-being.

1.6 AIM OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of this study was to explore reading development experiences of three adult learners attending ABE level 4 English classes. The study was channelled by five research questions:

- How do adult learners experience reading development in the ABE level 4 classes in relation to achieving their goals?
- To what extent does adult learners' reading development in the ABE level 4 classes meet the goals of the curriculum?
- What motivates these adult learners to read?
- How does reading relate to their family life?
- How does reading relate to their life in general?

1.7 RESEARCH PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVE

The purpose of interpretive research is to understand people's experiences in their natural settings (Neuman, 1997). It is characterized by 'concern for the individual' (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007, p. 21). Research conducted in the interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to interpret the data and look for ways the participants construct meaning in their lives (Henning, 2004). Therefore, in this study, I gained an insight into the reading development experiences of ABE adult learners, level 4, in the context of their school. I observed their reading lessons and talked with them about other aspects of their lives during my interviews with them. Given the nature of this study, I chose to locate my study within the interpretive paradigm.

This qualitative research was situated in the interpretive paradigm. Research conducted in the interpretive paradigm is to gain insight into the 'subjective world of human experience' (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007, p.21). The researcher takes an interest in and has concern for the individual and tries to get 'inside' the individual to gain an understanding from 'within' the person (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007, p.21). Hence I had to acquire a deep understanding of my participants' lived experiences and make interpretations about these in their social contexts.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF MY STUDY

In exploring the participants' lived experiences in the development of reading, this study drew on the Landscape Model of reading by David Rapp and Paul van den Broek as well as Vygotsky's social constructivism. Rapp & van den Broek (2005) refer to reading as very complex in nature and unique to human cognitive activities. The Landscape Model ties in very closely with Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism, as readers learn to read by constructing knowledge for themselves. Readers make meaning of texts through their interactions with each other; they do not find meaning (Kim, 2009).

Vygotsky's theory is that all knowledge is socially and culturally constructed. The teacher or parent provides opportunities for the learners to learn. Hence, learning is dependent on the interactions with more expert or knowledgeable others (parents,

teachers, peers, mentors). Vygotsky was interested in the social aspect of learning. He believed that learners learnt through interacting with each other. The learners are collaborative participants and the teacher's role is to scaffold learning within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Learners start off by not being able to do the task. They are then assisted by the educator. Finally the learners do it without assistance. In learning to read, learners initially cannot read alone, they are assisted by the educator or peers, and finally they are able to read without assistance.

1.9 FITNESS FOR PURPOSE

The importance of social context is an important aspect of understanding the social world (Neuman, 1997). Qualitative researchers place emphasis on social context, as this gives the researcher a whole picture of the focus of the study (Neuman, 1997). In this study, the social context of the participants was an important aspect of the study. When collecting data, I had to constantly bear in mind and relate it to the social context of the participants. They were adult learners who wanted to uplift themselves and progress in life, so that they could find stable employment. They needed to earn an income so that they could support their families and learning to read would also help them to assist their children with their schoolwork and in the daily running of their homes.

I believe that the case study was the most appropriate method for exploring reading development experiences of adult learners; it enabled me to gather thick, descriptive data through the use of multiple methods of data collection (Stake, 1995; Cohen, et al., 2007; Rule & John, 2011); interviews, observations, voice-recordings and video recordings.

1.10 THE LAYOUT OF MY STUDY

This dissertation encompasses five chapters. Chapter One introduces the study through a brief description of the context of Adult Basic Education in South Africa and an overview of the study in terms of the research aim and purpose, the research questions, the research paradigm and approach to my study, defining the case and the fitness for purpose. In addition, I provided a synopsis of the theoretical framework of my study, as well as the methodology employed.

Chapter Two is a review of literature related to my study, and a description of the theoretical framework.

Chapter Three focuses on the research design and methodology. A description of the interpretative paradigm is given, followed by the case study approach, the rationale for the choice and its fitness for purpose. Issues of access and ethical clearance are also dealt with in this chapter. Thereafter follows a description of data collection instruments and methods of data collection: observation schedules, personal interviews, observations, observation schedules, focus group interview and audio and visual recordings. The final section of the chapter focuses on challenges to data collection, data analysis, validity, reliability and trustworthiness of data and limitations of the study

In Chapter Four, the data is presented and themes that emerged from the raw data and my five research questions are discussed.

In Chapter Five, I draw conclusions based on my findings and recommendations for current practice and future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The fundamental skill of any educational program is reading. Rapp.*et.al.* (2007) argue that if children experience difficulty learning to read; these difficulties can continue into adulthood. According to Littlejohn (2011), reading is the core of learning and if a student is reluctant to read, he/she is immediately disadvantaged. This is echoed by Pretorius's (2000, p. 33) profound quotation "What they can't read will hurt them". This conveys a strong message; lack of reading skills can have negative consequences for a person. Pretorius (2000) contends that there is a strong relationship between the ability to read and academic achievement.

Research has confirmed that poor academic performance in South Africa is closely associated with poor reading skills (Pretorius, 2000). This was evident in the systemic evaluation conducted by the Department of National Education in the Foundation Phase in 2003 and in Grade 6 in 2006 (Hart, 2007). Moreover, the Report on the Annual National Assessments of 2011 revealed that the literacy levels of learners still show under-achievement (Annual National Assessments, 2011).

Results of the Annual National Assessment tests suggest that reading is usually not well taught in schools where the pupils are all speakers of isiZulu. In these tests in the KwaZulu-Natal province (KZN), where nearly 7.9 million of the province's 10.2 million people are first language Zulu speakers (Statistics South Africa 2011), Grade 3 children scored an average of 39% in literacy and Grade 6 children only 29% in 2011 (Department of Education, 2011).

This chapter provides a brief comparison of adult literacy internationally and within a South African context. It also includes a discussion on the most basic two components of reading; decoding and comprehension. The focus is on adult learners at level 4, their goals for wanting to learn to read, the goals and unit standards of the curriculum, the motivation of adult learners to read, and how their reading development impacts on their family life and on their lives in general. The theoretical frameworks that underpin this study are Rapp and van den Broek's Landscape Model of Reading and Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism.

2.2 ADULT LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of South Africa (1996) all South Africans have the right to basic education, which includes ABE and further education. With rights come responsibilities. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the South African Government to provide this right. To what extent adults are being enabled to claim this right is questionable. The Government claims to be making an effort to rectify the imbalances in education.

According to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA, 2008), the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) in ABET should provide adults with a basic general education. This should enable them to function in society, making a contribution to the workforce, community and the economy of the country (SAQA, 2008). In addition, it should provide them with the skills to promote justice and equality. Learners acquire knowledge, skills and values in Specified Learning Areas. These are: English, Mathematics, Biology, General Science, Chemistry, Physics, History, Social Studies and Computers (Edutel, 2013). ABE has been identified as critically important in South Africa (SAQA, 2008).

According to Cranton (1994) adult literacy is regarded as a process of being freed from the oppression of “ill-literacy”. Learners gain knowledge and skills in the hope that their learning needs will be satisfied. It is also a process that involves critical self-reflection and can eventually lead to transformation (Cranton, 1994). Finally, ideally, learners are instilled with a culture of life-long learning (South African Information Reporter, 2012).

2.3 ADULT LITERACY INTERNATIONALLY

In a study conducted by SAQA (2008), the South African General Education and Training Certificate: ABET was compared with similar qualifications in the United States of America (USA), Canada, Australia, Finland and the United Kingdom (UK).

In comparison to South Africa (SA), the USA programme focusses on the Fundamental Component of the GETC, that is, the ABET qualification. There are two main areas of focus: ABE and General Education Development. In the ABE programme the predominant focus is on reading, writing and mathematics. These classes cater for adults from the age of 18 years who lack these skills. Included in the ABE programme is a family literacy programme that assists parents to improve their literacy skills, thus enabling them to support their children. The SA qualification is much broader and offers more Learning Areas: Language, Literacy and Communication, Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics and Mathematical Science, Life Orientation and a choice of one other Learning area component (SAQA, 2008).

In Canada, basic reading, writing and number skills are offered. The adult literacy programme includes English, Mathematics, Biology, General Science, Chemistry, Physics, History, Social Studies and Computers. In comparison, SA offers more elective specialization areas, which extend over the vocational field. The Vocational related Learning areas are: Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Sciences, Ancillary Health Care, Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises, Travel and Tourism, Information Communication Technology, Early Childhood Development and Wholesale and Retail trade (SAQA, 2008).

In Australia, learners can choose from Core Units (reading, writing and mathematics) and specialist Core units. In the General Education for Adults, learners must choose three of the four reading core skills: engage with short simple texts for personal purposes; engage with short simple texts for learning purposes; engage with short simple texts for employment purposes and engage with short simple texts to participate in the community (SAQA, 2008). The Australian model is similar to the SA GETC: ABET, as it has Core and Elective Components. The core components are fixed: Language, Literacy and Communication, Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics and Mathematical Science Learning Area (Edutel, 2013). However, in Australia, the Elective Specialisation areas in the curriculum are divided into more learning areas. The Elective Specialisation areas are based more on curriculum topics that are based on the elective components. Learners are given a choice of a specific number of core skills in each Learning area, for example, in Numeracy and Mathematics, learners must choose two of the three core skills: work with time, money and directions in familiar situations, work with measurement and design in

familiar situations and work with numerical and statistical information in familiar situations. According to Edutel (2013) there is a choice between Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics and Mathematical Science. On the other hand, South Africa's GETC: ABET includes: Information and Communication Technology, Human and Social Sciences, Ancillary Health Care, Areas of community. However, it was lacking in history and research topics (SAQA, 2008).

In Finland, much of the adult education takes place outside formal educational institutions. The model of adult education in Finland differs from the South African context as it focusses on specific work-place skills and developing responsible citizens by promoting lifelong learning. Finland has an extremely good education system and a very high literacy rate, and no disadvantaged majority (SAQA, 2008).

The UK model of adult literacy is similar to the components of the GETC: ABET qualification, as it includes academic and vocational Learning Areas. However, the UK model offers a wider range of Vocational subjects (SAQA, 2008). These are at an entry level called certificates, and are developed to encourage and recognise achievement of learners in a variety of contexts. Over a hundred entry level certificates are offered in a wide range of subjects. These include: National curriculum subjects such as English, Science and mathematics; vocational subjects such as retail, hairdressing and office practice; general qualifications such as skills for working life and life skills and basic skills such as adult literacy and adult numeracy (Edutel, 2013).

In conclusion to the comparison on adult literacy, according to SAQA and Edutel (2008, 2013,) the SA model is most similar to the Australian and UK models, as there are fundamental or compulsory Learning Areas as well as electives similar to the Academic and Vocational Learning Areas. The GETC: ABET qualification has much potential in providing adult learners with a solid foundation for the vocational and occupationally related qualifications (SAQA, 2008). A common thread amongst all of the above models, is reading, for without being able to read, none of all of the above can be achieved.

2.4 READING

In the most basic analysis, there are two main components to reading: decoding and comprehension of texts (Pretorius, 2000; Rapp & van den Broek, 2005). When learners master only decoding of text, they encounter difficulty comprehending the text (Pretorius, 2000). Pretorius (2000) further postulates that decoding alone does not constitute reading, although it is a skill that is necessary. I agree with Pretorius (2000) that no matter what we read, or what purposes it fulfils, we must understand what we read. She stresses the importance of both decoding and comprehension, because through decoding 'we learn to read' and comprehension enables us to 'read to learn' (Pretorius, 2000, p.34).

The goal of reading is "to construct text meaning based on visually encoded information" (Koda, 2007, p.1). This means that a reader constructs meaning via decoding of symbols by reconstructing the language they represent in our minds (Littlejohn, 2011). Similarly, Grabe (2009) states that reading is being able to draw meaning from text, and interpreting it correctly. Further to this Littlejohn (2011) asserts that reading is an interactive process; besides the text conveying meaning to the reader, the reader also brings meaning to the text.

Both children and adult learners need to develop these skills from the moment they begin to learn to read, since, besides learning to decode text, it is imperative that they understand the text as well. If there is lack of comprehension of text, reading is then meaningless. As Gough, Hoover & Peterson (1996, p.3) say:

"A child who cannot decode cannot read; a child who cannot comprehend cannot read either. Literacy – reading ability – can be found only in the presence of both decoding and comprehension. Both skills are necessary; neither is sufficient".

I find the above quote very interesting as the majority of teachers I have come across in my 25 years of teaching experience speak of learners being "good readers" based solely on their decoding skills. Teachers themselves seem to lack knowledge about reading, and often fail to realise that whether one is a child or an adult, possessing both skills (decoding and comprehension) are necessary to be able to read.

2.5 DECODING

Decoding occurs when written symbols are translated into spoken language (Pretorius, 2000). Decoding skills are greatly emphasized when a learner starts learning to read. Grabe (2006) stresses the importance of word recognition for reading for comprehension; learners must be able to recognise words quickly and accurately, so that they can use this understanding to access the meaning contained in text.

Abadzi (2008) emphasises the importance of visual recognition of words and short - term memory. The mind must receive all the information in each sentence read fast enough to retain it in the short-term memory in order to integrate it with other information got from the text. Abadzi (2008) stresses that the only gateway to comprehension, is working memory. She states further that effective reading skills can only be achieved by practice. If learners lack reading fluency this impacts negatively on their entire education.

2.6 COMPREHENSION

Comprehension refers to the understanding of the text (Pretorius, 2000). A reader's basic decoding skill plays an important role in successful comprehension (Rapp. *et al.*, 2007). Meaning is constructed within sentences, between sentences and across larger units of text (Pretorius & Machet, 2004) thus, giving a reader the meaning of a text. Therefore, meaning is constructed in relation to the whole rather than a series of single words and sentences (Rapp.*et al.*, 2007). Research conducted by Rapp.*et al.*, (2007) confirmed that useful coherent mental representation of information in text is crucial to successful comprehension.

According to Grabe (2009) reading for comprehension is the most basic purpose for reading. I agree with this, as reading without understanding is futile. However Grabe (2009) asserts that reading for comprehension is not as simple as it sounds; the ability to comprehend is more complex. The process of constructing the meaning begins with recognizing the written words. In other words, readers must begin by focusing on smaller parts of the texts and build up their understanding of the whole. Often, inexpert readers do not get the whole meaning of the text.

Rapp. *et al.*, (2007) contend that there are two elements to comprehension: product and process. Product refers to the reader's knowledge and understanding after the text is completely read and process refers to the cognitive activities of the reader in order to arrive at the product. In other words, the process involved in how to comprehend a text gives rise to the product of reading the text, that is, the actual understanding of the text.

Van den Broek & Kendeou (2008) assert that a memory representation of the content of the text is constructed during comprehension, and is dependent on the reader's prior knowledge. Therefore, the success of comprehension depends on reader's prior knowledge together with the textual information (Van den Broek & Kendeou, 2008). Similarly Grabe (2009) contends that for successful comprehension, knowledge relating to the content of the text is essential. This enables the reader to link the text to his/her background knowledge or prior knowledge. Van den Broek & Kendeou (2008) also stress the importance of background knowledge. They assert that readers who have prior knowledge relating to the content of the text, have better memory of the content of the text once they have read it as opposed to those who do not.

Thus, background knowledge plays an important role in understanding of the text (Grabe, 2006). Al-Issa (2006) contends that learners gain a better understanding of text if they are familiar with the topic they are reading. Therefore, some background knowledge of what the text is about is important, because learners can relate what they don't know to what they already know (Al-Issa, 2006). With this in mind, educators must be mindful when selecting or introducing texts, as learners must be able to relate to the text via their background knowledge.

Background knowledge about second language culture makes comprehension of texts in the language of that culture easier (Walter, 2012). She claims that background knowledge has an effect on comprehension. If second language learners are given access to information of the culture of that second language, this assists learners with comprehending the text (Walter, 2012). In relation to reading for comprehension, Grabe (2009) argues that the reader must possess the ability to understand information in the text and must be able to interpret it correctly. Research

conducted by Anderson & Briggs (2011) confirmed that learners were able to make meaning of the text by drawing on background knowledge of the text.

Having discussed comprehension of text and stated the importance of background knowledge of a text, I think Hudson (2007, p.293) sums it up very explicitly:

“On a very basic level, it is clear that knowledge of any text topic is essential for successful comprehension regardless of the language of the text being processed”.

Thus for all learner readers, both adults and children, comprehension of text is simplified if the learner possesses background knowledge of the content of the text.

2.7 ADULT LEARNERS

According to Gravett (2005) it is difficult to say at which exact stage in one's life one becomes an adult. Although in South African law 18 years is the age at which one becomes an adult, a person is not necessarily regarded as an adult, as many individuals in South Africa still attend formal schooling at this age. Based on this, the law does not assist much in defining who an adult learner is (Gravett, 2005).

Who then is an adult learner? Gravett (2005) states that there is no 'typical' definition of an adult learner, as the concept of who an adult is, is socially constructed. Different societies view adults differently, but presumably an adult learner is someone who has the status of an adult and takes part in learning activities. Moreover, she states that adult learners bring accumulated experiences with them into the learning situations and their readiness to learn is dependent on their life roles and life tasks.

Adults who participate in ABE have certain expectations; expectations that would change their lives. They attend these classes with the expectation of fulfilling their needs, so that they could find jobs to earn an income to support their families. They also attend ABE classes with the expectation of awareness about life in their community, so that they can live more productive lives, to develop a better society. This would contribute to the development of the nation.

2.8 ABET UNIT STANDARDS FOR LANGUAGE LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION LEVEL 4 (LLAC4)

There are four Unit standards for LLAC4 as set out in the Examinations and Assessment Guidelines for The GETC in ABET (Department of Basic Education). The Unit Standards of Language Literacy and Communication according to ID Number and Unit Standard Title are:

- ID 119635: Engage in a range of speaking/signing and listening interactions for a variety of purposes.
- ID 119631: Explore and use a variety of strategies to learn.
- ID 119640: Read/view and respond to a range of text types.
- ID 119636: Write/Sign for a variety of different purposes (SAQA, 2008).

For the purposes of this study, I will focus on the Unit Standard, ID 119640: Read/view and respond to a range of text types (SAQA, 2008) as I am exploring reading development experiences with adult learners.

2.9 GOALS OF THE CURRICULUM

The goals are: learners must be able to read and view a number of different texts developed for different purposes, audiences and contexts; learners must be able to understand how language is used to convey meaning and to shape people's views and relationships and, learners must be able to find, sort and use information through reading and viewing.

This study aims to see to what extent these goals are achieved or not; whether learners are aware of these goals or whether the educator informs them of the goals of the curriculum. In addition, it would be useful to know the types of texts used and how learners are aided in interpreting them and gaining an understanding of the texts that are used in class.

2.10 REASONS WHY ADULT LEARNERS PARTICIPATE IN LEARNING

According to Gravett (2005) reasons why adult learners participate in learning, are complex; quite often they want to learn out of a sense of need. Reasons vary; some may want to learn for personal enrichment, or for specific life tasks, to increase their self-esteem, to address problems that they may encounter in their lives, or needs that may arise out of their roles as adults, either social or vocational. They engage in learning to assist them with their life problems or their life tasks. Adults learn out of their own will, depending on the circumstances that prompt their learning; it is entirely their own decision (Brookfield, 1986).

2.11 MOTIVATION TO READ

According to Rogers (2002, p. 95) motivation is 'a drive directed towards meeting a need or achieving an intention'; it is a kind of force that comes from within a person, resulting in him/her to behave in a certain way. Therefore, much motivation to read for adult learners is intrinsic. Rogers (2002) asserts that the need to read usually comes from within a person; therefore a person should be self-motivated to learn to read. This is usually for various reasons, some of which could be: for career advancement, self-improvement or self-empowerment (Wong, 2010). Other reasons could be for employment, to assist their children with their schoolwork, to improve their family life and to assist with the basic running of their households. Learners' sense that there is a need to learn and make that effort to meet those needs, is explained by Rogers (2002, p.95) as 'motivation as impulse'.

Motivation can also be directed by 'drives' within an individual Rogers (2002, p.97). These drives could be created by the environment and by the personality of the individual. Therefore, the environment in which one lives, and individual personality can motivate a learner to read. Grabe (2009) contends that motivation to read is generally initiated by a purpose or a task, depending on the need of the individual.

One of the aims of the National Reading Strategy (2008) is to promote a nation of life-long readers and this in turn, would promote life-long learners. Adult learners who participate in English classes could improve their communication skills and be

afforded the opportunity to become competent in their reading and writing skills (National Reading Strategy, 2008).

2.12 READING AND FAMILY LIFE

One way in which second language adult learners can become involved in their children's learning, is by learning to read English. This would create a positive literacy environment for their children. Parents will be able to read to their children and vice versa. In addition, they can assist their children with their homework.

2.13 READING AND LIFE IN GENERAL

According to van den Broek (2008) for one to function effectively in society, one must be able to read and comprehend various texts. In their work situations people need to fill out a job application and use reading to become more efficient at their jobs. This is so true, for without being able to read and comprehend, it would be difficult to fill out forms, to follow printed instructions and to read important documents.

In life in general, reading with understanding enables people to have a better quality of life, empower them as citizens of this country and it can impact positively in all facets of their lives. Therefore, reading with understanding, is a basic skill that every individual should possess in order to speak, write, and become empowered to change one's life in order to live in an optimal, productive way.

2.14 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.14.1 Introduction

This qualitative research is situated in the interpretive paradigm. Research conducted in the interpretive paradigm attempts to gain insight into the 'subjective world of human experience' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The researcher takes an interest in and has concern for the individual and tries to get 'inside' the individual to gain an understanding from 'within' the person (Cohen, *et al.*, p.21). In this study I had to acquire a deep understanding of my participants' lived experiences and make interpretations about these in their social contexts. In exploring the participants' lived experiences in the development of reading; this study drew on the

Landscape Model of reading by David Rapp and Paul van den Broek, (2005) as well as Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978).

2.14.2 Landscape Model

Rapp & van den Broek (2005) refer to reading as very complex in nature and unique to human cognitive activities. They contend that there are specific components that are intertwined and interact amongst themselves. The text that is read is understood through the activation of various concepts. As a result, the reader acquires a gradual interpretation of the text (Rapp & van den Broek, 2005). Further to this, there is a joint influence of the readers' understanding of the text and memory of what is being read. Comprehension encompasses a dynamic, interactive set of processes: firstly, activation of prior knowledge; secondly, the use of the activated knowledge together with current information from the text to gain understanding beyond what was already known and, thirdly, updating of the memory (Rapp & van den Broek, 2005). Drawing then from Rapp's explanation of comprehension, reading is seen as a more complex process than simply decoding of text to speech.

The Landscape Model includes various intellectual and textual factors. These factors trigger intellectual activity during reading (Rapp & van den Broek, 2005). In addition, during the reading experience, different schemas constructed from prior experiences and discoveries are stimulated, and shape a reader's understanding of a text, which is constructed as she progresses through the text. Schemata represent the prior knowledge of the reader. This knowledge helps to predict understanding and meaning of the text (Suh, 2005). Whatever schemata or prior knowledge the reader has relating to the text, assists in the reader in constructing meaning from the text.

Grabe (2009) states that when one reads, words are recognized and held in short term memory for a few seconds, in which time the reader integrates and makes sense of what was read in the preceding seconds. Meanings of these parts of text are then connected as the reader then constructs meaning of the whole (Grabe, 2009).

According to the Landscape Model of reading (Rapp & van den Broek, 2005) reading is based on four cycles: firstly, the text that your eyes see, that is, text input in the current cycle; secondly, information that is read from the previous cycle, that is, information that is stored in the readers' memory, residual information from the previous cycle; thirdly, meaning that is constructed from everything in the text that is read until that point, the memory representation; and, finally, previous knowledge that the reader has that relates to the text, that is, the reader's prior knowledge.

From cycle to cycle, concepts fluctuate in activation amongst the cycles. These fluctuations result in a "landscape" of activations, with concepts waxing and waning in activation over the course of reading. What this basically means is that, as a competent reader reads, he or she makes sense of:

- Cycle 1: The piece of text actually being focussed on.
- Cycle 2: The piece of text read just prior to the one in focus.
- Cycle 3: The sense the reader has of the text until the point just read.
- Cycle 4: The reader's prior or background knowledge.

In the Landscape Model, cycles two, three and four build on cycles one, two and three respectively. As a result, these cycles scaffold from one to the next for comprehension to occur (Rapp & van den Broek, 2005). The first cycle is straight forward as stated above; the text that your eyes see. The second cycle is information that was read and stored in the mind from the first cycle, which is integrated with other information in cycles 3 and 4.

Similarly Grabe (2009) states that when a text is read, the idea of the first sentence is kept in active memory as the next sentence of the text is read. The reader then attempts to link the main idea of the first sentence to the idea of the second sentence. The meanings of these two sentences are then integrated and together with prior knowledge of the text, meaning is then constructed. The reader interacts with the text and with his/her prior knowledge.

Van den Broek & Kendeou (2008) give a very explicit explanation of the framework of the Landscape Model. This model was developed to draw attention to the comprehension processes that occur during reading and the memory representation of a text. What actually happens is when a text is read, there is a fluctuation of

concepts that are activated as the reader progresses through the text (Van den Broek & Kendeou, 2008). The activation of some concepts continues while others wane and others are re-activated.

An important element of this model is the different concepts that come into play, variations as these are fundamental for comprehension (Van den Broek & Kendeou, 2008). The fluctuations in focus enable the reader to identify meaningful connections between elements or concepts of the text and between these elements and background knowledge (Rapp, *et al.*, 2007). The Landscape Model ties in very closely with Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism.

2.14.3 Vygotsky's Theory of Social Constructivism

Constructivism is a learning theory which originated from philosophy and psychology (Hoover, 1996; Doolittle & Camp, 1999). Learning is fundamentally actively constructed by the learner's integration of their own knowledge with meaning from new experiences (Doolittle & Camp, 1999). The central idea of constructivism is that learning is constructed as learners build new knowledge on previous knowledge (Hoover, 1996). Learners play an active role in the creation of personal knowledge that is contributed by individual and social experiences (Doolittle & Camp, 1999). Learning is seen as an active process rather than a passive one. Learners become actively involved in learning by constructing their own knowledge from what they already know, and new information they perceive, thereby building new knowledge. Fox (2001) stresses that constructivism is a metaphor for learning. The acquisition of knowledge is likened to a process of building or active construction. Howard, *et al.*, (2000) support this notion that constructivism involves learning as a result of learners and educators engaging in a community through interactions, reflections and experiences. Thus it can be seen that constructivism focusses on construction of knowledge through social interactions and experiences. According to Vygotsky (1978) human learning is social in nature, whereby children learn through interaction with people around them.

According to Doolittle & Camp (1999) there are various strands of constructivism; Cognitive Constructivism, Social Constructivism and Radical Constructivism. Merriam & Cafarella (1999) contend that learning takes place through interaction

between people, the learning processes and the socio-cultural context of the learning. Therefore, learning is a social experience.

Social constructivism is most associated with Lev Vygotsky, who was a Russian theorist, born in 1896. His philosophy emphasized the importance of one's social origins. His belief was that the general goal of education was to lead development, as the result of learning through cultural and social interactions and relationships (McLeod, 2007). People learn through cultural and social interaction with each other; they learn from each other, with each other, about each other's cultural and historical backgrounds and through interaction with the text.

Vygotsky's theory is that all knowledge is socially and culturally constructed; importance is given to social factors in learning (Gravett, 2005). Thus learning is a process of constructing knowledge; it takes place by making meaning of something and developing ideas around it (Gravett, 2005). For children, the teacher or parent provides opportunities for the learners to learn. The construction of knowledge is also a social process, as learners interact with other people (Gravett, 2005). Vygotsky placed emphasis on the social factors in learning. Hence, learning is dependent on the interactions with more expert or knowledgeable others (parents, teachers, peers, mentors). Vygotsky (1978) asserts that learning takes place first on a social level.

In this study, it is acknowledged that learning takes place via communication and co-operation with the more knowledgeable others (MKO) who could be the educator, peers, parents (if learners are children) or mentors.

Crawford (1996) asserts that Vygotsky placed emphasis on the connections between people and the socio-cultural context in which people act and interact in shared experiences. Learners play an active role in learning and there is a shift of emphasis on the roles of the learners and educators. The educator becomes the facilitator, thus making learning a reciprocal experience for learners and educators. This is where the social aspect of learning comes into play; educators and learners learn in collaboration with each other. Schaffer (1996) affirms that social interaction promotes cognitive development. McLeod (2007) lends support to this notion that learning takes place through social interaction with the educator. As a result of social

interaction, learning becomes more meaningful; learners are able to relate to each other's social contexts and learn about new social contexts.

Fox (2001) claims that through a process of active constructivism, human knowledge is acquired. Learners need to interact with each other (Fox, 2001). Maree (2010) agrees with this, that meanings of a situation are socially constructed by individuals through interactions with each other. This constructing of ideas takes place in the world in which they live and work. Therefore social constructivist researchers understand their participants by focusing on specific contexts in which they live and work (Maree, 2010). Further to this, Atherton (2011) affirms that the learner interacts actively with the educator, thereby constructing new meanings.

Thus it can be seen that Vygotsky stressed the importance of social interaction and that learning does not take place in isolation but by interaction with others and in collaboration with others. The learners are collaborative participants and the teacher's role is to scaffold learning within the ZPD (Wilhelm, Baker & Dube, 2001). According to McLeod (2007) one must understand two of the main principles of Vygotsky's work; the MKO and the ZPD. Having discussed the MKO, I will now discuss the ZPD.

The ZPD is the distance between the actual developmental level of a learner where the problem can be solved on his or her own and the potential development of the learner, where the problem is solved under the guidance of the MKO (McLeod, 2010), which could be a peer, an adult or an expert in the field. Read (2005) asserts that a MKO refers to a person who has more knowledge than the learner, one who is more skilled and is able to assist the learner. This area, in which the learner can perform a task with the assistance of the MKO, Vygotsky termed as the 'zone of proximal development' (Read, 2005, p. 2).

The following is an illustration of how the MKO is integrally related to the ZPD: McLeod (2007, Pg.6).

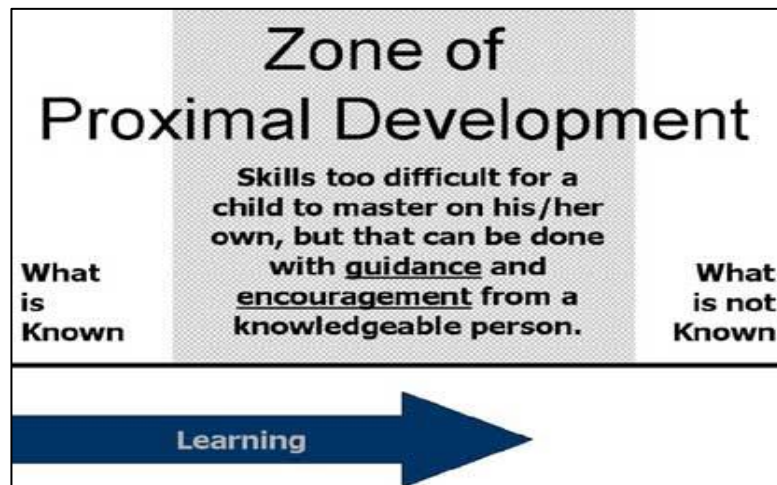


Figure 1: Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky (1978, p.85) refers to the first level of development as the “*actual development level*”. This is illustrated in the above diagram as “*what is known*”. With reference to adult learners, at this stage, the adult is at a stage of learning that has been developed over the years (what he/she already knows). When learning takes place with guidance and assistance from a more knowledgeable person, it is called the “*zone of proximal development*”. This is explained by Vygotsky (1978, p.86) as:

“It is the distance between the actual development level as determined by actual problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers”.

In other words, the ZPD is the area where the learner cannot solve the problem alone but can be successful under the guidance of or with assistance from or in collaboration with a MKO.

This concept is important as it indicates what a learner can achieve independently and what a learner can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a more knowledgeable person (McLeod, 2007). Vygotsky (1978) sees the Zone of Proximal Development as the area where the guidance should be given - allowing the learner to develop skills that will be used on their own, thereby, developing higher mental functions. Research conducted by Freund (1990) confirmed that guided learning within the ZPD is of greater benefit to learning than learners working in isolation or

through discovery learning. I concur with Freund (1990) as this is evident in my teaching practice. “*What the child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow*” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 87).

So, how does all of this fit in with reading? A learner is able to understand each successive part of a text by linking it to existing knowledge of the previously read section of the text, thus making meaning or gaining understanding of the text. This information gained from the text is used to extend existing knowledge, and synthesise new constructions. This study aims to explore how learners in the sample read and comprehend text based on their existing knowledge and with assistance from the educator.

2.15 CONCLUSION

For one to be successful academically, economically and socially, reading is essential (Rapp. *et al.*, 2007). Adult learners learn to read for various reasons; for instance for personal enrichment, specific life tasks, to increase their self-esteem, to address problems that they may encounter in their lives, or needs that may arise out of their roles as adults, such as social or vocational needs. In addition, they learn to read out of need in order to cope with real-life situations. Therefore, it is imperative that adult educators enable adult learners to learn to read in ways from which the adult learners benefit.

According to the vision of the *National Reading Strategy (2008)*: “*Every South African learner will be a fluent reader who reads to learn and reads for enjoyment and enrichment*”. To sum up this chapter, I end with a very interesting quote from the introduction of the *National Reading Strategy (2008, p. 4)*:

*“To read is to empower
To empower is to write
To write is to influence
To influence is to change
To change is to live”.*

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH - DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed description and discussion of the research design and methodology used in my case study research. This study is concerned with the reading development experiences of adult learners in ABET level 4 at a rural Public Adult Learning Centre. The design of any research must fit its purpose. The design type is: “a reflection of the methodological requirements of the research question,” and the “type of data that will be elicited and how the data will be processed” (Henning, *et al.*, 2004, p. 36).

The methodology is the general approach that the researcher uses to conduct the research, and this determines the research instruments that the researcher uses to collect data (Leedy & Omrod, 2005). Henning, *et al.*, (2004, p. 36) distinguish between the term “methods” and “methodology”: “method is a way of doing something while methodology refers to the coherent group of methods that complement one another”.

In this chapter, I describe the research paradigm used in the study. Thereafter, a discussion on the methodology, which is a case study, and the rationale for the choice of a case study, follows. An extensive section of this chapter is dedicated to a discussion on the sources of data and the data collection methods, which included interviews, observations, a focus group interview, audio and visual recordings. The final part of the chapter deals with issues of trustworthiness, ethical considerations, challenges to data collection and limitations of this study.

3.2 RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS

- How do adult learners experience reading development in the ABE level 4 classes in relation to achieving their goals?
- To what extent does the reading development of these adult learners in the ABE level 4 classes meet the goals of the curriculum?
- What motivates these adult learners to read?

- How does reading relate to their family life?
- How does reading relate to their life in general?

3.3 STYLE: QUALITATIVE

The study is a qualitative one, as it was my intention to gain a rich, deep insight into the reading development experiences of adult learners. Context is an important characteristic of qualitative research (Neuman, 1997). In this qualitative inquiry, the participants gave their views on reading during the interviews and demonstrated their reading abilities, comprehension and speaking skills during my observations of them in the classroom. Culture also plays an important part in social research. During this study, I had to constantly bear in mind the socio-cultural context of my participants, and that their perceptions might differ from mine, as similar events or behaviours can be seen differently by people of different cultures (Neuman, 1997).

3.4 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVIST

Interpretive social science goes back to the German sociologist Max Weber and German philosopher Wilhem Dilthey (Neuman, 1997). Dilthey's work was based on the argument that there were two different types of social sciences; the first being an abstract explanation ('Erklärung') and the second an understanding of everyday lived experiences of people in specific historic settings ('Verstehen') (Neuman, 1997, p.68). Weber's argument was that the study of social science should be based on meaningful social action, that is, it must have a purpose. He argued that it was important to know the personal motives that form a person's internal feelings (Neuman, 1997, p.68). Why then did I choose to work within this paradigm?

I chose the interpretive paradigm because I wanted to understand my participants' experience in their natural settings (Neuman, 1997). This allowed me to interpret the data and look for ways the participants construct meaning in their lives (Henning, *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, in this study, I gained an insight into the reading development experiences of three ABE adult learners level 4, from their point of view. I had to get 'inside' the participants and understand them from 'within' (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007, p.21). In addition, I gained insight into what was meaningful and relevant to my participants and how they experienced daily life (Neuman, 1997).

According to the interpretative theory of knowledge, knowledge is constructed not only from observable phenomena, but also through descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding (Henning, *et al.*, 2004). Maree (2010, p.59) asserts that interpretivism focuses on how people 'construct' meaning from their social interaction with each other. Working within the interpretative paradigm provided me with the resources for understanding what I observed of their classes and the reading development experiences of adult learners through what they told me of their daily, lived experiences.

3.5 APPROACH: A CASE STUDY

A case study is an in-depth study of one particular case (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). The case may be a person or a group of people. Cohen, *et al.*, (2007) assert that in a case study, the aim of the researcher is to capture the participants' real life experiences and thoughts about a particular situation. Rule & John (2011) concur with Cohen, *et al.*, (2007) that a case study is an in-depth investigation of a particular case in its context.

Merriam (1998) discusses the characteristics of qualitative case study as 'particularistic' because it focuses on a particular situation; 'descriptive' because of the phenomenon that is being studied and 'heuristic' because it brings to light the understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Thus case study methodology is appropriate for this study because it afforded an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. It also provided me with thick, descriptive data and I was able to capture the participants' real life experiences and thoughts about a particular situation. I concur with Yin (2003) in that the case study is an inquiry that investigates a phenomenon in its real-life context. I believe that context plays an important aspect in people's thoughts and behaviours.

Some of the features of a case study are: intensive, thick, rich descriptions in order to generate understandings of the case in relation to its context; to explore a problem or issue within a limited focused setting and to bring to light other similar cases (Rule & John, 2011). In this instance, I investigated reading development experiences of three adult learners studying at level 4 in the context of their school.

According to Cohen, *et al.*, (2007) a case study provides a distinctive example of real-life situations. It portrays the reality of people's lives in specific situations and gives the researcher thick descriptions of the participant's thoughts and feelings about their situations (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). In addition, a case study provides the researcher with a holistic view of a series of events as many sources of evidence are employed (Noor, 2008). Further to this, case studies can give a voice to the powerless and voiceless, for example children or the marginalised. This is essential as it gives researchers a profound understanding of the dynamics of a situation (Maree, 2010). Maree (2010) contends that when case studies are seen from an interpretivist perspective, a distinctive characteristic is that it attempts towards a holistic understanding of participants' relations and interactions amongst each other in specific situations and their meaning of a phenomenon under study.

According to Yin (2003) a case study approach is used when the focus of the study answers "how" and "why" questions; when the behaviour of the participants cannot be manipulated or when context plays an important part in the study. It is an approach that explores a phenomenon within its context and makes use of a variety of data sources, thus having a variety of lenses allowing for various facets of the phenomenon to be exposed and understood (Yin, 2003).

Creswell's (2007, p.73) understanding of a case study is:

"I choose to view it as a methodology, a type of design in qualitative research, or an object of study, as well as the product of the inquiry. Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information(for example, observations, interviews, audio-visual material, and documents and reports, and reports a case description and case-based themes".

3.5.1 The Context of the Case Study

The school is situated in a rural area in the Midlands in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, and approximately twenty kilometres from where I live. On arrival at the

school, there was a security guard who opened and closed the gate manually. However, this happened only on the first visit. There were a few cars in the car park. The school has a well-maintained garden, is litter free, neat and clean. The reception area has a very warm and welcoming environment, with chairs for visitors and is adorned with beautiful plants and photographs.

The inter-leading door from the reception area, led me to the classrooms where the adult literacy classes are held. Between the blocks of classrooms there is a neat and well maintained garden. Some of the windows in some of the classrooms were broken. There were a few charts on the walls. The fact that there were lots of empty spaces on the walls indicated that there were limited resources at the school. The classrooms looked like an atmosphere conducive to learning, apart from the fact that there were numerous other things (buckets, mops, brooms, plastic dishes) in one corner.

3.5.2 Rationale for the Choice of a Case Study

The nature of this study gave me direction as to the rationale for the choice of a case study research. Case study investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context (Maree, 2010). Within an interpretivist perspective, case study research allows the researcher to gain a holistic understanding of the interactions and relations amongst participants and how they make meaning of the phenomenon being studied (Maree, 2010).

3.5.3 Fitness for Purpose

A case study promises to provide thick, rich and content-heavy description of real people in real situations (Stake, 1995). It is for this reason that I felt a case study approach would fit the purpose of my study. According to Leedy (1993) the type of method that is used is determined by the research questions. The methods of data collection must match the kind of data the researcher wants to collect. *“The nature of the data and the problem for research dictate the research methodology”* (Leedy, 1993, p.139).

Thus multiple sources of information that were used in this case study were: observations, interviews, focus-group interview, audio-visual material and an interview of a member of staff at the ABET Directorate.

3.5.4 Sampling: Purposive

Although participation was voluntary, purposive sampling (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007) was used as I had already indicated to the educator that the participants must comprise three adult learners from the ABE English level 4 classes. My sample included two females and one male, ranging from twenty to fifty years old.

3.5.5 Participants

Participation was voluntary. Initially, it was my intention to interview three participants. These were my primary participants; two females and one male. Participants agreed on using pseudonyms to protect their identities. They will be referred to as Phyllis, Thembi and Paul throughout the study. All three were very eager to participate in the study. Phyllis was a mature lady, a bit more outspoken and confident than Thembi who was younger, shy and had a quiet disposition, while Paul came across as bold. All three participants signed consent forms. In order to seek confirmation and further understanding of data gathered through interviewing these adult learners and observing classes, I decided to include a secondary participant.

My secondary participant was Dudu Dlamini, who is a District subject advisor for ABET. She is friendly, well spoken, bold and confident. Interviewing her equipped me with a better understanding of the literacy classes, and gave richer context to the data gathered through other methods.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Three different data collection methods were used: individual interviews, a focus group interview and observations. The observation lessons were audio and video recorded. I begin with the presentation of the data and discussion of the findings. Each data collection method and the situation in which they were collected have been coded in Table 2.

<i>DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND SITUATION</i>	<i>LABELLING CODE</i>
Interview 1	I1
Interview 2	I2
Focus Group Interview	FGI
Observation	OB
Video Recording	VR
Interview Subject Advisor District Level	ISADL

Table 2: Labelling codes for data collection method and situation

Data were collected through multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2007) such as interviews, observations, and focus-group interview and audio-visual materials. The duration of the data collection was five months (June 2012 to November 2012). I made twelve visits to the adult learning centre. The interview with a subject advisor took place in January 2013. By conducting personal interviews, a focus group interview and lesson observations, gave me an understanding of the extent to which the participant's reading were being developed or not. Interview schedules, video and audio recordings were used. For each round of the interviews, an interview schedule was prepared with a variety of questions.

3.6.1 Interviews

The personal interview is a natural, flexible tool for data collection. It enables the researcher to interpret things that the interviewees are not saying, by merely observing their gestures and facial expressions. It has been the dominant interview approach in the field of qualitative research (Opdenakker, 2006). Respondents are able to give responses about complex and deep issues. In this study, the purpose of personal interviews was to see the world through the eyes of the participants. Each participant was interviewed twice. When I conducted the personal interviews, I used a voice recorder to ensure these were recorded accurately. I had to ensure that the interviewees were comfortable and the interviews were conducted in a quiet place free from any distractions.

3.6.2 Focus Group Interview

The focus group interview is a form of a group interview. Members in the group interact with each other and discuss the topic given to them by the researcher, thus getting a collective rather than an individual view (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Participants build on each other's ideas and comments; giving me an in-depth view. It encourages debate and conflict. It is through this interaction that the data emerge (Maree, 2007).

Focus group interviews give way to information that may not have been available in a straight-forward interview (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). They are used for developing themes and topics. They are also used to generate data quickly and at minimal cost involved and are used for gathering qualitative data. Data is gathered on attitudes, values and opinions. In addition, the participants are empowered to speak out and in their own words. They provide greater coverage on the topic in question than would be in a survey (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).

“Funnel structure” is a popular format in focus group interviews where the moderator directs the discussion (Maree, 2007). He/she starts with a less structured set of questions to put the participants at ease (Maree, 2007). From a single sentence, a discussion or debate is followed whereby participants engage in a discussion or debate flowing from the initial sentence. This is important in a focus group interview as the participants would be more relaxed and free to talk. This would then lead to a process where they would become actively involved in a debate. It is the role of the interviewer to elicit as many views and perceptions as possible from the group (Maree, 2007).

The purpose of this interview was to gather additional data. The focus group interview was conducted in a classroom a few doors away from the adult literacy classes. I had to obtain consent from the interviewees to participate in the study.

3.6.3 Observations

Observation is recording the behavioural patterns of participants, without questioning or communicating with them (Maree, 2007). Observation is used to gain insight and a

better understanding of the phenomenon being observed. Participants must be made aware of exactly what the researcher will be observing. In recording my observation, I envisaged capturing two dimensions; thick descriptions of their reading and the reflecting on what has happened by writing my own thoughts (Maree, 2007).

I observed two lessons which were video-recorded. This placed me in a position to look at the recordings and add information to supplement the data I captured from the interviews. In addition, during my visits to the school for the interviews, I was able to do some informal observations. Observations allowed me to present detailed information about the functioning of the adult literacy classes, which no other method would have provided.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION PLAN

I conducted two interviews with each of the primary participants, one interview with a subject advisor for adult literacy and one focus-group interview. The first interview was used as an ice breaking introductory experience and I hoped that by the time I got to the focus group interview, they would be relaxed with me. In this interview, their early reading experiences were discussed. In the second interview, the discussion focused on their reasons for wanting to improve their reading and on their progress or lack thereof towards achieving their goals.

With the focus group interview I hoped to obtain rich data which may be difficult to achieve with other research methods (Maree, 2007). In this type of interview, debate and conflict are encouraged. An in-depth view of a topic is provided, by participants building on each other's ideas. Information obtained from a focus group interview can add value to the study Maree (2007). However, there was not much debate during the focus group interview, except, strangely, about whether a section on 'hobbies' is included in a CV. Never the less, the data captured from the focus group interview contributed to this study.

In addition, I observed two of their lessons. This gave me an inside perspective of their reading development. I was also able to see whether they read with understanding. This gave me the opportunity to gain deeper insight of the phenomenon being studied.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

In planning the data analysis, I used themes. Common data were put together under themes and analyzed. Themes that emerged from the data analysis were: reading development in ABET level 4 classes in relation to achieving the learners' goals, reading development in ABET level 4 classes in relation to achieving the goals of the curriculum, motivation to read, reading and family life, the inability of learners to express themselves, language gaps as a barrier to learning and finally, the functioning of and challenges faced at adult literacy centres. Data from each theme was discussed based on evidence.

3.9 ISSUES OF ACCESS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics in research is very important, especially research that involves humans. Certain ethical principles were adhered to: autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2001, p.66). As this is the second phase of a reading research project undertaken by the UKZN Centre for Adult Education and M.Ed. students, ethical clearance for the whole research project was already granted. However, in an individual capacity, I had to apply for ethical clearance to conduct this study. Access to the school was negotiated with stakeholders, who were the Department of Education, and the principal. The participants in this research were three adult learners who were interviewed and observed in the classroom during two learning sessions, and a subject advisor from the directorate for adult literacy. The participants were asked to sign consent forms to confirm their willingness to participate in the research. They were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. The participants were made fully aware of the interview process and as the researcher, I guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality to them (Cohen, *et al.* 2007).

I explained the research to the participants so that they fully understood the implications of participating in this study. High standards of ethics were upheld. I assured the participants that all information will remain strictly confidential and that participation would cause no harm to them (non-maleficence). Pseudonyms were used. It was my responsibility to ensure that participants were exposed to questions

which were not stressful, embarrassing and diminishing their self-respect. The data will be stored at UKZN and destroyed after five years.

3.10 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY, TRUSTWORTHINESS:

The credibility and trustworthiness would have been compromised if I had not used multiple methods of data collection. According to (Tellis, 1997, p. 5) a case study is known as “*a triangulated research strategy*” in terms of trustworthiness, and in this case through the triangulation of data, for example by interviewing an official from the ABET Directorate, I enhanced the trustworthiness of my case study.

3.11 LIMITATIONS

The generalizability of the findings of this study is restricted because it is a case study conducted within the context of a specific adult learning centre (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, the findings cannot be assumed to apply to another school, but may have some transferability if the contexts are entirely similar. Other limitations were difficulties with arranging times to observe the classes that were held, which overlapped slightly with my teaching times, the travelling distance to the site, and the duration of the classes.

3.12 CHALLENGES TO DATA COLLECTION

There were a few challenges that I was faced with during the collection of data. Travelling on a deserted, long, winding and lonely road to the school was a new and challenging experience for me; a return trip of approximately forty kilometres. To my surprise, the road was well tarred and well-marked, with the exception of a few huge potholes. As I got closer to the school, I was faced with the challenge of avoiding animals wandering across the road and sometimes just standing still in the middle of the road. On occasions, I was forced to drive around them, as they refused to get off the road. In addition, the learners walked across the road in groups, as there was no pavement provided for them. I had to hoot well in advance so that they could get off the road in time. I sometimes, had to drive around the learners too, as they walked in big groups. Approximately 100 metres from the school, the tarred road ended. This

section of the road was gravel, bumpy, uneven with huge holes and very dusty. I had to drive very carefully and slowly to eventually get to the school.

On my visit to the school to conduct the first interview with two of the participants, there was no classroom available to use, as all were locked, with the exception of the ones being used for the adult literacy classes. The ABE level 4 educator advised me to sit on the corridor of the block of classrooms. Having provided me with two chairs and a desk, I set out to conduct my first interview with participant one. It was cold and windy. Quite early into the interview, the participant's interview schedule, together with mine and some other paperwork that was on the desk, flew away. I had to stop the interview and both the participant and I had to run after our papers. This wasn't all! Having resumed the interview, a huge truck drove into the school yard, causing quite a disturbance. However, both the participant and I were able to contend with the noise and remained focussed on the interview. Despite this, or even perhaps, because of this, we were quite relaxed with each other after these shared experiences, and we continued with the interview.

On my visit to the school for the second interview, participant two was absent, due to a taxi strike in the area where he lives. On my following visit to the school for the second interview for participant two and three, both were absent. The educator informed me that learners sometimes arrived late for classes because of the distance they travelled to school. Unfortunately, they did not arrive at all.

On the following visit to the school, I was set to observe a lesson on reading. I telephoned the educator and confirmed the arrangement was in place; however, on my arrival at the school, he informed me that for personal reasons, he had to leave early. I decided to make good use of the time. The educator present, advised me to interview participant three (second interview). I agreed. When asked for her, we discovered she was absent. After waiting for an hour, participant three arrived. I conducted the second interview with participant three.

An appointment was then made with the educator to observe a reading lesson. On the day of the appointment, I telephoned the educator to confirm my visit, however, he indicated he was very busy and I must postpone it to another day. Due to the

busy schedule at the adult literacy centre, I eventually availed myself to suit the educator and then conducted the observation lesson on another day.

Interviews must be conducted in a quiet place, free from any distractions. The physical setting of the interview must be comfortable for both the interviewer and the interviewee. However, this was not always possible as, circumstances dictated where I could have the interview and the amount of time that was available to me, as the educator needed to ensure that his work was getting done.

On examination of the data collected, I was worried that there was insufficient data, as learners that were interviewed did not fully understand me because of a language barrier. This for me, was the greatest challenge, as sometimes during the interviews I would ask a question and there would be complete silence. I had to repeat myself several times and sometimes try to simplify the questions as best as I possibly could, before I could elicit information. I was then advised by my supervisor to conduct an interview with a Subject Advisor for Adult Literacy, so that I could seek confirmation and gain a deeper understanding of data gathered through interviewing these adult learners and observing classes. This was conducted in January 2013. Having done that, I gained a better insight and understanding as to what was expected of learners and educators during these classes, and of the challenges facing the Directorate. Despite all of the above challenges, I was able to collect my data.

3.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a narrative and a discussion of the methodology employed in this case study. Having stated that my research was qualitative in nature, I argued for the suitability of the use of a case study. An extensive section of this chapter was dedicated to a discussion on the sources of data and the data collection methods, which included interviews, observations, a focus group interview, audio and visual recordings. The interviews were audio recorded and the observation lessons were audio and video recorded. The final part of the chapter dealt with issues of trustworthiness, ethical considerations, challenges to data collection and limitations of this study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data and to discuss the findings that emerged from my study. The data findings and discussions are thematically arranged in accordance with the five research questions, and three other themes which emerged from the data: the inability of learners to express themselves, language gaps as a barrier to learning in English and the functioning of and challenges faced at adult literacy centres. To recap, my research questions are:

- How do adult learners experience reading development in the ABE level 4 classes in relation to achieving their goals?
- To what extent does adult learners' reading development in the ABE level 4 classes meet the goals of the curriculum?
- What motivates adult learners to read?
- How does reading relate to their family life?
- How does reading relate to their life in general?

I proceed with this chapter by introducing my participants. My primary participants were three ABET English level 4 learners; Phyllis, Thembi and Paul (P1, P2 and P3 respectively). My secondary participant was a subject advisor in the ABET Directorate (district level).

A profile of the primary participants is reflected in Table 1 overleaf:

PARTICIPANT (P)	AGE GROUP	NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT	NUMBER OF MONTHS/YEARS ATTENDING CLASSES	DISTANCE FROM HOME TO ADULT LEARNING CENTRE
P1	51+	Unemployed	1year, 7 months	2km
P2	18-30	Unemployed	7 months	2km
P3	18-30	Employed as a panel beater at Morne's Panel Beaters.	6 months	2km

Table 1: Details of Primary Participants

4.2 THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE FINDINGS

To establish how adult learners experienced reading development, data from a range of data collection techniques was gathered. In case study research, multiple sources of evidence strengthens data collection as, it is a *“process of triangulation”* (Yin, 2003, p. 98) and enhances validity of the findings of the study. The broad themes that emerged from my analysis included: reading development in ABET level 4 classes in relation to achieving the learners' goals, reading development in ABET level 4 classes in relation to achieving the goals of the curriculum, motivation to read, reading and family life, reading and life in general, the inability of learners to express themselves easily in English, language gaps as a barrier to learning in English and finally, the functioning of and challenges faced at adult literacy centres.

4.2.1 Reading development in ABET level 4 classes in relation to achieving the learner's goals.

By attending these classes, there were certain expectations that the participants had. These expectations varied according to their needs, which were: to get a job; to have

a bright future; to assist their children with their homework and to be able to speak fluently in English. Some of the responses were: *“HmmmI expecting that maybe I got a...a... job. I got a job because I learning the ECD (Early Childhood Development) and I got a job for how to care child ... yes. I expect this”* (P111). This participant expects to find employment in the field of ECD, because she can read and she is studying ECD. P3 said that his goal is to be a politician or political analyst, *“My goal... I want to be er...errrr politician or a politician analyst. That is my goal”* (P311). He states further that *“the main thing I want to know how to talk, how to listen stories if the people talking with you in English.... and I want to work with the peoples all over, even overseas, right”* (P311). Participants in the focus group interview also focussed on getting a job. One participant said *“I...I hope that we are here because we want or we hope to get a better job after this”* (FGI). What is evident then, is that by attending these classes, the participants expect to get jobs or a better job.

Another goal of one of the participants was to have a bright future. This was evident in his response: *“ya it’s gonna achieve my life because after this, attending of this school, I gonna go to UNISA, maybe they gonna help me, or UKZN, anywhere, if I got my certificate in my hand”* (P311). He has great expectations that the adult literacy classes he is attending will be his ‘ticket’ to becoming a politician or get him into university. Similarly, P2 stated that she feels *“better”* (I1) about her reading and when asked in what way, her response was: *“Because when I’m thinking, I think my future will go where I want to be”* (P211). These participants are confident that attending these classes, will give them a kind of ‘passport’ to achieve their goals.

P1 said that *“It help me a lot attending this class, because I learn many things... I learn the things that I have not do last time, but now I do it and I.I...hope that I...I... pass my studies.... at the end of the year, yes, because I’m very power forward”*(P111). This participant has that zest in her to achieve, to better herself all the time, which was evident in her words *“power forward”* and she hoped to achieve this by attending these classes.

Participants mentioned that they were able to assist their children with their homework. One participant felt *“thatmaybe... I....ehhhh.... help my children to do the homework. Yes. I know how to do the homework for my children”* (P111). This was only possible because *“I gain many things because from now I know how to*

read, I know how to pronounce the words and I know how to explain it, I know how to explain it ” (P2I2). This participant seemed to be quite content with what she was learning at these classes, as she mentioned that she knows how to read and explain what she has read, as a result, she can assist her children with their homework. However, this seemed contrary to what I observed during one of the observation lessons, as learners were not able to answer very simple questions based on a passage they were reading. They seemed to lack comprehension skills. As mentioned in chapter 2, it is essential that a learner reads with understanding, in order to ‘read to learn’.

P1 seemed to have much confidence in thinking that she speaks very well, as she indicated that by attending these classes, it helped her to speak better and to understand tenses, which was evident in her words: “*Yes I...I.....I... develop a lot because eh my teacher teach me that and if...if...if...I talk with you now, is..is...is (pause) the present tense, present tense and the past tense I say was*” (P1I1). On the contrary, she indicated that one of her goals was to speak fluently in English: “*To talk English properly. You understand. I talk to you the previous days or weeks or months... er... I not talk English properly, but I hope, in the end of these classes, I will talk English properly*” (P1I1). She also indicated that she hoped to read the Bible in English which was evident in her response: “*I achieve that If I go to the church I read the Bible with English, by hope, by faith, because my teacher teach me how to spell the word.... How to spell this words I read with hope...or with faith*” (P1I1). Ironically, reflecting on the manner in which she responded, it was evident that she was unable to express herself properly, but seems to be satisfied with what she is learning because she can read. This could be due to the fact that it was possibly an improvement on what she could manage before.

Furthermore, she indicated that her reading has developed, which she expressed in the following words:

“Ohhhhhh.... It’s developed me a lot. I started to learn...eh.... last year. Last year I learn Life Orientation. In Life Orientation, I learn the types of foods ...the types of foods ... eh...eh... and something around eh. Who’s the president and eh. and who’s the eh...eh.. and something.. Many...many...many... and I learn Technology. In Technology, we learning the type of bridges and

ehhhh... types of foods ya ... types of food and the and the and the forces ... and types of forces... and types of energy” (P111).

Without doubt, this participant perceives that she has gained a great deal from attending these classes, both in speaking and reading skills. It seemed to the researcher however, that her skills were below what could be expected from a learner at level 4, which is, according to SAQA (2008): to read and view a number of different texts developed for different purposes, audiences and contexts, to understand how language is used to convey meaning and to shape people’s views and relationships, and to find, sort and use information through reading and viewing. She goes on to state further that:

“Because I am a sewing person for school uniforms, I learn at school, how how to measure. I using ... because I learn the the maths... how to measure the size of eh and write the minutes... how to write the minutes and I go to meeting. I attend the meeting for the project and I am a chair person in this meeting” (P111).

According to this data, P1 has gained much from these classes. She is able to apply her mathematical knowledge or skills of measurement to the sewing of school uniforms. She was certain that her attendance at these classes have met her expectations, which she confidently answered: “Yes yes yes ” when asked whether her expectations were met.

P1 indicated that her expectations were met which she conveyed in the words: “Okay eh hh.... By attending these classes eh hh... when I want to make the invitation, invitation and eh hh... or a memorandum, I doing very well, because I learn at school. I do invitation for myself” (I2). She was able to make her own invitations for her daughter’s 21st birthday because she learnt how to make an invitation during one of the lessons. This, she articulated in the words: “For maybe for ... if my my daughter..... celebrate the 21st birthday, ya I make the invitation. I invite my colleagues or learners, ya ... to attend this birthday for my daughter” (I2). In addition, she was very confident about her reading development which I gathered from her response: “Now I reading very well because my teacher, my class teacher, give us maybe the the books and I I read. If I read the wrong word, the teacher correct me. But now, I read very well and I read the newspaper for myself and I read very well.

All these things... I read" (P112). This participant is very confident about herself and emphasizes the fact that she can read very well. My observation of her reading confirmed that her decoding skills were good. She was able to read fluently without experiencing problems decoding the words. This was achieved by assistance from the educator and peers, who Vygotsky (1978) terms *'the more knowledgeable others'*. However, my impression of her ability to understand the information contained in the text, was that she lacked the skills to fully comprehend what she read (OB).

In his second interview, P3 indicated that his real goal is: *"to be a politician or a professional player. So I need to learn so I can... so I can make a communications with other peoples"*. Earlier he mentioned that he wants to communicate with people *"all over, even overseas"*. He felt that by being able to read, he was developing every day and that his goals were being achieved:

"Yes, yes, it's developing. Every day it's developing, developing. Cause teacher, he gave us the notes just to read. If we don't understand other words, we must call him to explain, must take a dictionary to check what does that mean. If you don't find it you must call him. Even himself... he say no I'll see tomorrow I'm gonna go somewhere to find that names. Every day it's developing, even today" (I2).

This participant has much confidence in his teacher. However, according to a subject advisor in the ABET Directorate, many of the teachers do not prepare well for their lessons or lack the skills to teach reading, which was evident in the words: *"he say no I'll see tomorrow I'm gonna go somewhere to find that names"* (P3I2). This could mean that the educator was not fully prepared for the lesson, or maybe, this was in response to an unexpected question, as a result, when the learners need any clarity on something they don't understand; he is not in a position to assist them. The reason, according to a subject advisor, for educators not being adequately prepared for their lessons is, they are *"double parking"* (ISADL). By this she means, they teach in the mainstream during the day and in the afternoons they teach adult literacy classes: *"In any case that person is tired because they have done their share for the day. So actually there's no justice. If, there is justice that is happening in adult education, it means they were robbing the... the mainstream. They can't be effective"*

(ISADL). This could be the case or, alternatively, it could be that many of these teachers simply have limited competence in English, and are inadequately trained in teaching a second language, so it would not make any difference if they stopped 'double parking'.

When the subject advisor was asked whether the goals of the curriculum are appropriate to the needs of learners, her response was: *"Err...mmmm I think the goals are appropriate, however, therethere is not much channelled to the Learning and Teaching Support Material.(LTSM) The goals of the curriculum, the policy... it's ...its good, but I think more money should be channelled on the LTSM to realise these goals of the curriculum"* (ISADL). She stated that the goals were appropriate to the learner's needs; however, funding seems to be the problem. There is lack of resources to realise these goals. There was evidence of this during my observation lessons, as the educator used *Day by Day Reader* (a grade 6 children's reader).

Having stated the reading development experiences in relation to achieving the learner's goals, there were certain goals the learners specified that they had not yet achieved, but that they hoped would be by the end of the year:

"To use computer. It help me because it's easy to make a CV. Ya. (P2 I2). In computer there is errr... the important things you like to know. There's need to use computer. Nowadays computer is very important because everything is dealing with computer" (FGI).

Participants felt it was necessary to be able to use a computer because everything these days deals with the use of the computer *"and I...I...I hope that we are here because we want or we hope to get a better job after this"* (FGI). Another participant mentioned *"To talk English properly. You understand. I talk to you the previous days or weeks or months... er... I not talk English properly, but I hope, in the end of this classes, I will talk English properly"* (FGI).

What has surfaced from the data, is that participants had certain goals in mind that they wanted to achieve. Some indicated, as mentioned in this chapter, that by attending these classes their goals were being achieved. The goals of Unit Standard: Read/view and respond to a range of text types are: learners must be able to read

and view a number of different texts developed for different purposes, audiences and contexts, learners must be able to understand how language is used to convey meaning and to shape people's views and relationships and, learners must be able to find, sort and use information through reading and viewing.

From my observation, comparison of the goals of the curriculum to what the learners are achieving, it was noted that learners are reading and viewing texts. However, because of the lack of resources, they do not have texts for different purposes, audiences and contexts. The educator uses whatever material he has available, and in the lesson I observed he used a Grade 6 reader. Learners are able to find information through reading and viewing. This was evident in the lessons I observed. However, the aspect of sorting and using information gained through reading and viewing was not evident.

There were also some goals they were still hoping to achieve, as mentioned above. In this study, the goals of the participants depended on their individual needs and life circumstances. Whether these are going to be achieved is dependent on the curriculum. According to a subject advisor *"to me, what...yes they are okay, but, they are too academic. If we...we...would focus on skills and have development in...in the form of artisan"* (ISADL). She means that the goals are too academic and should rather focus on the needs of the learners. She expressed her thoughts in the following extract:

"We would have a better country, but at the moment, it's so academic, ya. You know when if a learner, Audrey, a brilliant learner in adult education, would decide to go for a project of three months or whatever number of months, and ignore the classes, its saying something about the needs you know in...in..in..the outcomes. If the specific outcomes were addressing their needs, they would see it as important to stay here and they would know they are going to lose out if they leave and go for something else. So, we...we...we are still too far. There is a body that needs to sit down and review" (ISADL).

The subject advisor attributes the drop-out rate, which is commonly believed to be high, to this. Actual figures relating to drop-out from Public Adult Learning Centres

are not available, because, official records of drop outs are not kept since attendance is not compulsory at the Learning Centres (Personal communication with S Mncube, Department of Education, KZN, 6 December 2013). The subject advisor indicated that the setting of the goals come from a national level, and stakeholders need to be made aware that it is lacking in this area. The national planners need to be made aware, that on the ground they are not managing to achieve the targets. This was articulated by:

“Unfortunately I am at a... an implementation stage. Ya it’s done nationally and I don’t even know what plans they have at the moment, but if those people could be made aware you know to say, this is the area that is lacking” (ISADL).

To sum up this section, it is clear that evidence from participants revealed that some of their goals are being achieved, while others are not.

4.2.2 Reading development in ABET level 4 classes in relation to achieving the goals of the curriculum

The goals of the curriculum are:

- Learners must be able to read and view a number of different texts developed for different purposes, audiences and contexts.
- Learners must be able to understand how language is used to convey meaning and to shape people’s views and relationships.
- Learners must be able to find, sort and use information through reading and viewing. (SAQA, 2008).

All three participants were not consciously aware of the goals of the curriculum, which is understandable, as educators do not usually speak about these to the learners. However, it would be helpful if adult learners were made aware of the goals. This would assist the educator to determine the ones that meet the needs of the learners and then concentrate on those. P3 did not understand what I was referring to *“Mmmm..... I don’t understand it” (P3I2)*. P1 said *“Oh... we read, maybe the story, we read the story, and after that the teacher ask the questions and I answer those question for the teacher”*. This participant is referring to comprehension of texts. During the second observation lesson, it was evident that the educator focused on reading for understanding: *“Alright! I’m going to give you at least 5*

minutes to read through page 46, with understanding". The text used here was *Day by Day Reader Grade 6*. According to SAQA (2008) one of the goals of the curriculum is that learners must be able to find, sort and use information gained through reading and viewing. Learners are not aware of this, although they do practice it. Data from my observation of this lesson revealed that the text used was *The Adventures of Marco Polo*. With some acknowledgement that at level 4, they should be able to read new information, but that the educator should ensure that the information links with what they understand, and is not mystifying or meaningless. In this case, they did not have background knowledge of the text and were unable to relate to the content. As mentioned in the literature review, background knowledge of a text is important, as it assists learners with the understanding of the text.

At this stage, I would like to make reference to the Landscape Model of reading by Rapp and van den Broek (2005) which is concerned with the process readers go through to construct an understanding of a text. At no stage in the lesson did I observe the educator pause in the reading, to find out what readers understood what they were reading, at either sentence level, or at the meaning of the whole text. I observed the educator try to ensure learners got the meaning of new words, but he did not seem to consider going further than that, that is, to the meaning of sentences, concepts in text, or meaning of the whole text. In the lesson I observed, it would have been appropriate for the educator to ensure that learners did actually understand what they were reading, and to ascertain from them as to what they understood from sentences or paragraphs, or the whole text. He could have questioned them on their background knowledge of the text to enhance their understanding of the text. In addition, he could have stopped them during the reading of a sentence to see what they had grasped until the point they had read.

According to Rapp and Van den Broek's Landscape Model (2005), reading has four cycles: Firstly, the text that your eyes see, that is, text input in the current cycle (that is, part of the sentence in view). Secondly, information that is read from the previous cycle, that is, information that is stored in the readers' memory, residual information from the previous cycle (that is, part of the sentence read just prior to the part in view). Thirdly, meaning that is constructed from everything in the text that has been read up until that point, and the memory representation of its content. Finally, previous knowledge that the reader has that relates to the text, that is, the reader's

prior knowledge. If I were to examine their reading lesson through the lens of the Landscape Model, I can undoubtedly say that attention in this lesson was given to only the first cycle, that is, the text in the learners' view at any point. What led me to this conclusion was during my observation of them reading, learners were only directed to focus their attention on what they were reading currently, that is, the input cycle, the text that your eyes see (OB). These are just isolated words which are meaningless when looked at in isolation. Rather, if the educator looked at the meaning of the words in context of the sentence, learners would then activate their imagination. They would get a picture in their minds of what was read (a memory representation of its' content). In terms of Vygotsky's learning theory, if the educator had facilitated this lesson well, learners would have been able to construct meaning of the text with the help of scaffolding provided by the educator from one cycle of the Landscape Model to the next. However, the educator proceeded with the lesson and seemed to kill interest in the text by getting learners to read the passage repeatedly. What I found interesting was that when the teacher left the classroom, immediately, the learners began speaking in isiZulu to each other. They seemed to be talking about the reading, as their heads were down and focussed on the text (OB). This resonates with Vygotsky's social learning theory, since they were sharing information about what they had understood, and on the basis of their shared communication, perhaps were able to synthesise new conceptual understanding.

Learners learn through social interaction with each other. This is an important aspect of learning and should be happening frequently in classrooms. The educator was in the position of the MKO. With a better understanding of teaching strategies, his role and perhaps of the text itself, he could have interacted with the learners and the text, and, taken the learners to a point where they could understand what was being read. With assistance from the educator, learners could have reached the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). The ZPD and the MKO are two important principles of Vygotsky's learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978). It is useful for educators to use these two principles in their lessons because it assists with the scaffolding process of a learner's cognitive development. Together with the Landscape Model of reading, Vygotsky's theory of learning can be used by educators, whereby learners' potential can be extended to a great extent to assist with their cognitive development. Through the lens of Vygotsky's theory of learning, it was evident that the manner in which the educator conducted his lessons, was very limited.

By the educator leaving the classroom, I gathered that he did not seem to feel a sense of accountability for the time allocated for that lesson. The fact that the educator could leave the class and leave learners to take turns to read, is a point that the subject advisor raised as lack of commitment, is one of the contributing factors for the goals of the curriculum not being achieved.

The response from P1 on whether she thought the goals of the curriculum are being met was:

“Or... or... no... It’s only reading. Only read. If...if ... the teacher want to write, maybe he give us a topic, maybe ... ‘The role model’... write with the role model and I write it . ‘My role model’, and anytime the teacher give us the topic, may be write the orbital... you know the orbital?” (P112).

This participant knew what she was referring to but did not know how to pronounce the word *obituary* correctly. Upon reflecting on what she was trying to explain, it was only after she stated that she had to speak at a funeral, that I realised she was referring to an *obituary*. Therefore, by the kind of responses received from participants about the goals of the curriculum, it was evident that they were not made aware of the goals of the curriculum. However, they did achieve some of them.

The subject advisor raised some very interesting points with reference to the goals of the curriculum: firstly, due to the shortage of funding, there is insufficient LTSM: *“more money should be channelled on the LTSM to realise these goals of the curriculum”*; secondly, the curriculum is too academic: *“they are okay, but, they are too academic.”*; thirdly, educators have not been adequately trained to teach reading: *“So I would say very few educators err rmm... know how to teach reading because err mm they just don’t... they just lack the skills, the relevant skills o. .O...of reading”* and finally, the sequence of speaking, reading and writing as advocated by the subject advisor, are not followed:

“ also what I think is more problematic is the..the..the sequence of speaking, reading, writing is not followed: “You find that may be a teacher would just focus on a text that has been

extracted may be from a book or a newspaper when before focussing on reading as such , a lot could have been done around that particular theme you know. So the skills are not there” (ISADL).

In this study, during the first observation lesson, the learners read the passage and the educator went through each question from activity one from an exemplar of an examination paper. The learners had to answer the questions orally. This was quite a tedious process for the learners. In addition, learners were not very responsive and often when there was no response from learners, the educator would speak in isiZulu. What can be deduced from this, is that either the educator lacked vocabulary skills and was unable to explain in English, or he possibly thought the learners would not understand it if he explained in English, therefore he switched to isiZulu. This just confirmed what the subject advisor said in the above quotation: the sequence of speaking, reading and writing is not followed. The educator could rather have had a discussion around the text first, as this would actually set the scene for what is going to be read. Thereafter, the learners could read the text, thereby gain a better understanding of the text, then speak about it and, finally do the written work.

In order to read well, learners must know how words are pronounced. Reading development and listening skills are closely linked. They cannot learn to read better without extending their ability to understand spoken English, particularly because of its deep orthography. Therefore, learners must have good listening and speaking skills. Having discussed the goals of the curriculum for reading at ABET level 4, I now engage in a discussion of speaking skills at ABET level 3, to ascertain to what extent these goals were achieved.

Learners have not yet completed level 4; therefore it would not be reasonable to expect them to demonstrate speaking skills at level 4. According to SAQA (2008), the goals of level 3 speaking skills are:

“Learners should be able to communicate: one to one, in small groups, in larger discussion groups, with an audience; by telephone; with friends and family; acquaintances and strangers; with professionals, officials and colleagues and, with peers, subordinates and superiors”.

From my observation of my participants and from my interaction with them during the interviews and in the classroom, it was evident that they could communicate on a

one to one, in small groups as they discussed the text they were reading amongst themselves (OB) by telephone (they would answer their cellphones during the lessons (OB) with friends and family, acquaintances, professionals, colleagues and peers.

At level 3, learners must be able to communicate in the following settings: social, work, study; community and religious contexts, doctor, clinic or hospital, official or commercial (bank, government office). From my observation of my participants and from my interaction with them during the interviews and in the classroom, it was evident that these goals were achieved. Learners could interact on a social level; they attended community meetings and religious activities, clinic and used the bank.

In many instances, by achieving the above goals, learners would have learnt through social interaction with other people, whether it is peers, colleagues, teachers, nurses, doctors, bank assistants and whoever they came into contact with. Therefore, Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism fits in here with the learning process and learners learnt through social interaction with MKO.

4.2.3 Motivation to read

I would briefly like to refer to the section in chapter two on what motivates adult learners to read. According to Rogers (2002, p. 95) motivation is 'a drive directed towards meeting a need or achieving an intention'; it is a kind of force that comes from within a person, causing him/her to behave in a certain way. Therefore a person should be self-motivated to learn to read. The motivation usually comes from various reasons, some of which could be: for career advancement, self-improvement or self-empowerment (Wong, 2010). Other reasons could be to gain employment, to assist their children with their schoolwork, to improve their family life and to assist with the basic running of their households.

During my data collection, in answer to a question about what motivated them to read, there were various responses from the participants, some of which were: "*So I want to communicate, to communicate with everything in our lands, to know the stories for overseas. That side... everything I want to know it because it's going to help me in the future with the history*" (P3I1). This participant, as Rogers (2002)

stated has that drive towards meeting a need or achieving an intention. He feels the need to read so that he can communicate and gain more knowledge about everything, as he knows that it is going to help him in the future. Data gathered on 'motivation to read' echoes what Rogers (2002) says about motivation. Grabe (2009) contends that motivation to read is generally initiated by a purpose or a task, depending on the need of the individual. This was verbalized by P2: "*There's many thing when I'm reading, anything ... there's there's some things motivating my heart., like Bible is so special to me, it let my... it lets me be honestly and it's moving moods to me. ya. I'm feeling good*" (P211). Although not very well expressed, she was able to convey the message that reading the Bible motivates her to read because it teaches her to be honest, it gives her a very special feeling and makes her feel special by creating different moods in her. This makes her feel good.

Participant one's response to what motivated her to read was: "*Oh. It motivate me a lot. because I....I....I read a sentence. If I read a sentence ...oh..... I don't know this sentence by this name... I go to dictionary and I go to the meaning of this word and I got all the sentence what I see.... Yes*" (P111). This is the kind of drive or force that Rogers (2002) is referring to, because when she reads and she does not know the meanings of words, she just does not stop there, she has that drive to look up the meaning of the words in the dictionary, so that she can then understand the rest of the sentence, because she now knows the meaning of the words in the context of the sentence.

Motivation can also be directed by 'drives' within an individual (Rogers, 2002, p.97). This was evident in the response from P1, as she wants to read so that she can know everything that is happening around the world. During this study, the data revealed many purposes that participants had in wanting to learn to read. As this chapter gradually unfolds, these are exposed.

4.2.4 Reading and family life

One way in which second language adult learners can become involved in their children's learning, is by learning to read English. This can create a positive literacy environment for their children. They would realise the importance of reading, speaking and writing as their parents get involved in their learning. Parents begin to

feel empowered because they can assist their children with their schoolwork. Children would emulate their parents. Parents are then better equipped to play their roles as partners in education.

Reading assists with communication between the school and the home. When the school sends letters home, information is communicated from the school to the home. Parents read and explain the contents of the letter to their children. An example that P1 gave was:

“Ya...errr...the teacher teach me or teach us like that... when the child go to zoo with the school or write the things or tell the children the things that do not or do or do not do doing in this zoo ... yes .. and I read here those things and when my child go to somewhere to the zoo or to museum or royal show” (P112).

This data revealed that when learners go on excursions, the school sends letters to parents informing them about what is allowed and what is not allowed during the excursions. So parents must communicate this to their learners so that learners know what is expected of them during the excursions. In addition, they need to grant consent for their children to attend the excursion.

Sometimes, parents have to attend meetings at school to discuss their children's progress. As a result of being able to read and understand English, when they return from the meeting, they can speak to their children and explain to them how to correct or improve on their work. This was evident in the response from Participant 1:

“Ehhh... in other days, there's a meeting at school, meeting for parents. In those meetings the teacher says ehhhh... in the following days... come and see the the homework. How my children doing does and I see... this thing is right ... this things is wrong. Ya ... when I came at home, I...I. tell my children ... doing... make the.. put... put the power in that and that and that and that and I teach and I tell my children to sit here and I teach those things that they do not doing well” (P112).

Parents felt better equipped to assist their children with their homework because they feel more confident in their ability to read and write. A response from the focus group interview on being able to read was:

“Now I can do ...errr.. I have ... know... to....to teach my children how to write the homework at home....er... yes... I teach my children to write homework ... or to read something or read a books er...er.... And me too, I know how to read er... a newspaper, English newspaper... the Natal Witness... I take it and read and understand the topics here” (FGI).

P1 said that besides doing her own homework, she can now assist her child with her homework: *“And me toomy teacher give me the homework and I do the homework ... and in my child... I do the homework for my child ... ehhhh... maybe at school... the teacher give my my child ... the story... and in this conversation there’s a question.... This question My child wants to answer this question and I help her” (P111).* What surfaced from this data was that the learners lacked ways of expressing themselves and yet were understandable.

Interestingly, data from an observation lesson revealed that the educator also lacked ways of expressing himself in English. The questions that he asked learners were very poorly expressed: *“What was he wanted to do?”*; *“Did he able to play soccer?”* and *“What was his problem of playing soccer?”* (OB). The subject advisor attributes this to lack of teaching skills, and feels that educators are not trained adequately to teach reading.

One participant in the FGI related how she was taught to keep a diary and how it assisted her in her daily chores. She was able to pass this on to her family:

“In terms of diary.. errr... here at school, my teacher teach me how to do diary. At home, I teach my family to follow the instruction of diary.... . When I wake up in the morning, at 5 ’o clock I do this and this and this and I end, maybe at 6 o ’clock, and I start another thing, to clean my house and I end in 7 ’O clock and after that I start to make a tea or to bath and at the end I follow the instruction of ... er.. at the 8 ’o clock I complete these things and I errr..

Maybe it's the Sunday, I follow that er.... Maybe at 9 'o clock I go church. It's the diary, I teach my family diary" (FGI).

Another participant in the FGI said that she is able to educate her family on certain communicable diseases, after she visits the clinic, by reading the information she receives from the clinic: *"Er.... Another point.... When I...I...I... go to clinic, I got pamphlets, many pamphlets of TB, cholera or whatever... I take it and give my family to read and look the pictures" (FGI).*

P2 has two school-going children; one in pre-school (5 years) and the other in grade one (7 years) and because she is able to read, *"They also want to read. They learn to read" (I2).* She assists them with their homework and teaches them how to read by helping them to pronounce the words: *"In schoolwork for my children. Ya they doing it and I'm helping them to do it. And I'm helping them to pronounce what is written book and I'm teaching them how to read" (I2).* In addition, she indicated that she feels happy when her children bring letters home from school because she can read and sign them: *"Ya, It makes me feel happy every day I'm reading it and where I need to sign, I'm signing it" (I2).* She also communicates with the teacher when the need arises, by writing notes to the teacher: *"Ya, I'm writing it. About when you If the child got problem, I have to write the note" (I2).* Besides their schoolwork, her children also do other reading at home; they read: *"Magazines, all stories" and she also reads to them: "Maybe after having supper, just to read everything, even the Bible too, the English Bible" (I2).* This situation is congruent with a positive literacy environment.

4.2.5 Reading and life in general

According to van den Broek (2008) for one to function effectively in society, one must be able to read and comprehend various texts. In their work situations people need to fill out job applications and often need to be able to read to advance in their jobs. This is so true, for without being able to read and comprehend, it would be difficult to fill out forms, to follow printed instructions and to read important documents.

In life in general, reading with understanding enables people to have a better quality of life, empower them as citizens of this country and it can impact positively on

different facets of their lives. In this study, there were various reasons why the participants read. What follows is a discussion of these reasons.

When asked the question: *Why do you read?*” P1’s response was:

“Why? I read because I want to know something ... II....I...I want to know I want to.....(clicks her tongue) and will help me .. myself to... if I go to bank Or to the ATM.... I want to I w...w... want to help me ... myself... how to draw the money ... at the bank.. eh.. and eh... and I want to read the Bible .. how to read the Bible... and how to read the newspaper ehhhh... ya... somethings... eh.. many things” (P111).

Despite not being able to express herself very fluently, I gathered that she has many reasons for reading, the main one being: to function efficiently on a daily basis. Reading helps her in many ways: she reads when she wants to know something, when she goes to the bank or to the Auto Teller Machine (ATM) as she is able to follow the instructions when using the ATM, she wants to read the Bible and the Newspaper. These are everyday things that she is able to do independently because she can read.

P2 wants to read because she wants to know everything that happens in the world: *“I wanted to learn more and to know everything, what happened..... Eh...I want to know the news what happened in this world” (P211).*

Reading has empowered P1 to educate members of the community, because she has learnt about communicable diseases, she is in a position to speak to other community members, if she suspects that they have TB:

“Mmmmm..... eh.....I like to say in my community, as me...in my community..... When I see someone like with something or diseases like TB, I go to him or her to tell go to check the TB in the clinic, ya because I learn at school, to help other people, yes... and I ...I....I....teach those people to see the symptoms. What is the symptoms? If you see the symptoms of TB, like sweating, like cuffs (coughs), eh... likelike....like weight loss ... go to clinic, to check the TB, because I learn at school” (P11 2).

This participant advises people to go to the clinic, so that they can receive medical assistance, treatment and to be educated about their illnesses. Here again, although what she said was not very fluently expressed, I was able to make sense of what she was saying.

During the FGI, one participant said she can now read the prices in the shop and the labels on the clothes. This assists her especially when ironing, as she is able to adjust the settings on the iron. In addition, she says that some of the street names have been changed and because she can read, this assists her with the changes of the names of the roads. These were expressed by the words: *"I can see prices in the shop, and ...errrr. ...and reading the labels in my clothes that how I can adjust my iron if I'm ironing this T-shirt or this jacket and ...errrrr... even the streets, it have been changed, I can read the ... from East Street , it's now Masukwana... so its help me like that"* (FGI).

P1 indicated that when she goes to town, she tries to speak to other people in English because she feels confident about herself, although she admitted her *"English is not good, but I try it and if I...I...I.... go to town, I try to speak with the other Other nation with English not to ... to Zulu, with English... to communicate with English and I try it"* (P1| 2). This is very significant because having the courage to take risks and attempt to communicate is so important in language learning. Therefore, this is a big gain for her.

She stated further that *"in a bank, I know how to fill the forms, to deposit or withdrawal. I fill with myself"* (P1| 2). What I have gathered from this data is that she is now capable of doing her own banking because of her ability to read. She knows how to fill in the deposit and withdrawal slips at the bank.

A participant in the FGI mentioned how reading helped her with filing at home. She became more organised, as she could file all her important documents and access them easily. She expressed herself as follows:

"I'll talk about the point of filing. At home, we were putting my children's report in the box, eh... birth certificate and everything... the papers was kept in my box, now, I bought a file to

put it all in that file, so that anything...errrr...it is a document you can find in that file, so its help me now” (FGI).

Another participant in the FGI indicated that being able to read affects her chances of getting a job because *“when you want job you have to sign the forms, you have to read, then you can’t read English, you have to understand, you can’t get job without signing forms. I feel very happy because now I can..... Apply for the jobs” (FGI).* Being able to fill in forms is important to everyone. One participant expressed her excitement when she went to Johannesburg to meet funders for a project and she had to fill in an application for the funders. She said:

“And I..L...I... last ... last...last week ... I’m in Joburg...in there ...there are many funders and donors...and we get the application.... Ya.... Application for funders... and we take it... and now I know how to filled this form for funders” (FGI).

Watching television and understanding the news made a participant in the FGI *“feel happy because I listen the TV news... I understand about it....the TV news” (FGI).* Learners are able to read information on the television screen, for example, newspaper headlines and placards. Therefore, in life in general, there are many advantages that a person who is able to read has, over one who is not. These were discussed in detail and supporting evidence from the data was provided.

4.2.6 Learners’ difficulties in expressing themselves

Throughout the study, the participants struggled to express themselves in English. This, according to the subject advisor, is due to educators not following the sequence of reading, speaking and writing she says as recommended by the directorate. She stated:

“The sequence of speaking, reading, and writing is not followed. You find that may be a teacher would just focus on a text that has been extracted may be from a book or a newspaper, when before focussing on reading as such , a lot could have been done around that particular theme you know. So the skills are not there” (ISADL).

In other words, what the subject advisor is implying here is that before focussing on reading, educators should have a discussion around the text. This would then allow learners to develop their speaking skills. In this study, what I observed was that when the learners could not express themselves properly, the educator did not correct them because he also lacked competence in expressing himself in English. When there were no responses to the questions he asked, the educator would then speak in isiZulu (OB). This was done frequently and it provided “additional information” to the topic being studied. In this case the educator played the role of the MKO, as this assisted the learners with the understanding of the text. This exemplifies Vygotsky’s learning theory. The subject advisor indicated that:

“They struggle with emmm... the pronunciation. That’s the main and I’ve noticed that with pronunciation, pronouncing some of the words wrongly, sometimes distorts the meaning of the whole text. Also they struggle with the vocabulary themselves, because if they don’t have enough vocabulary, like, they get tempted, this is my observation, they get tempted, to explain, let’s say it’s a foreign language like Afrikaans or English, they get tempted to explain it in vernacular. When if they had enough vocabulary, they would use it in context and able to explain it in context, until the.. the.. the.. learner understands, instead of explaining it in another language” (ISADL).

What I found was, especially with P1, whenever she struggled to express herself, she would say *“and what and what and what...”* and *“I do that and that and that and this and this and this”* (P1I2). *“We were something like what and what and what ...in Western I learn something... What an what an what”* (P1I2). *“because I learn at school how to do this, this and this ”* (P1I2). This confirms what the subject advisor mentioned:

“I think the main problem is with expression. Once there is no vocabulary, then they can’t, even if they understand, but they can’t..... they can’t ...er.... You know say... in their own words what...what.... What is going on. Otherwise, if you say Say it in isiZulu ooooh they will tell you like it is . ya. . So the problem is with lack of vocabulary and... It hinders expression” (ISADL).

Therefore, because learners do not have adequate English vocabulary, they encounter difficulty expressing themselves. This in turn impacts negatively on their writing skills. This goes back to the point mentioned earlier by the subject advisor, of sequencing of speaking, reading and writing. The subject advisor attributes much of these to the lack of teaching skills on the part of the educators. Some educators are not adequately trained in teaching literacy, so this impacts negatively on the learners. This was expressed by the subject advisor in the following extract:

"I've got a different view, wha...wha... what is in place to me is okay, but maybe, if universities, could assist , by doing a lot of in-service training on specifically, reading skills. then some other time in-service training in writing skills, in-service training on speaking skills, and you find that, maybe educators attend, not once a year, maybe, something like quarterly, they are sharpened in.. in these skills" (ISADL).

Evidence was provided for learner's inability to express themselves fluently. Interestingly, data from the second observation lesson also revealed the educator's flawed English in expressing himself, for example:

- *"You are going to listen me."*
- *"You are going to look there and after that I'm going to give you chance to read for yourself."*
- *"Let us open in page 45."*
- *"Asia is too much big."*
- *"Why did many people wanted to go to China?"*
- *"I was trying to find out that when I was reading page 45, did you listen me?"*
- *"What was European wanted to do for themselves?"*
- *"Why did they not like to buy that goods from that people that you did not give me who were selling that goods."*

The above example extracted from the second observation lesson adds reliability to the data that the subject advisor provided: *"I think the main problem is with expression"*. Ironically, in trying to capture data for this section, it was evident that the educator also experienced difficulty expressing himself and this verified what the subject advisor said above.

4.2.7 Language gaps as a barrier to learning in English

The participants in this study, with the exception of the subject adviser, were ABET level 4 learners, which is equivalent to the GETC exit level (Grade 9). One of the findings of this study was language gaps present a barrier to learning in English. This was evident throughout the data collection process. Participants found it difficult to understand the questions during their interviews, as they often indicated in their responses. I had to re-phrase the questions many times to try and simplify them to a level that I thought they would eventually understand, however, this did not always work. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from the interview with P1, when asked “How often do you read?”

Interviewee: *Often What you say often?*

Interviewer: *How many times do you read?*

Interviewee: *How many times?*

Interviewer: *How often do you read? Every day or every second day or once a week or....*

Interviewee: *Oh. .O...okay.I learn once a week ... like today I learn ECD*

Interviewer: *For yourself... How often do you read?*

Interviewee: *A... everyday....every day I learn something.*

Interviewer: *And when do you read?*

Interviewee: *When... at home, if I get a paper, I take it and I read....ya...ya... Every day I read (P111).*

Similarly, P3 did not understand the same question: “*How often do you read?*” as his response was: “*Try to explain in other ways*” (P3I1). In the above extract, I tried to simplify what, to my knowledge I thought was a simple question (How often do you read?). However, little did I realise that the participants would find it difficult to answer. This suggests that this participant has very limited vocabulary. Both P1 and P3 did not understand the word “often”. Similarly, P1 was asked whether she has a spouse and her response was: “*No. what is a spouse?*”(P1I2).This was confirmed during my interview with the subject advisor as mentioned that some adult learners do have limited vocabulary: “*they struggle with the vocabulary.....they don’t have enough vocabulary*” (ISADL).

When P3 was asked “*Now how did you learn to read?*” his response was “*I don’t understand what you mean?*”(I1). I tried to re-phrase the question: “*How did you start reading in English?*” he still lacked understanding of my question. He responded: “*Try to explain in other ways, maybe I’m gonna understand easy*” (I1). I tried again: “*English was a new language for you, at what stage in your life did you start learning to read English?*”(I1). His response was: “*No....I’ll start to learn everything, because if you want to talk to other people, you just using English. I learn that the English is the very important thing in our life*”. It was quite evident that at this stage he still did not answer my question. Finally, I tried again: “*So from what age did you start learning to read in English?*” and his response was: “*I start maybe ...eh in ten years if I’m not mistaken*”. I finally understood that he began learning to read in English at the age of ten years.

In another instance, P3 could not understand my question which was evident in the following extract:

Interviewer: *When you enrolled for these classes here, what were your expectations of developing your reading?*

Interviewee: *Try again*

Interviewer: *What were your expectations of developing your reading?*

Interviewee: *Like how?*

Interviewer: *What you thought it’s going to do for your reading by these classes?*

Interviewee: *AyI don’t understand (P3I1) Er... maybe according to my understanding, you are trying to say , what is my purpose of reading the English word? Or what I want to do with my language English (P3I1).*

Lack of language ability as a barrier to learning also affected me because of my inability to speak and understand isiZulu. The word *read* is understood as *learn*. This occurred to me as the interviews progressed and was evident in the following extract:

Interviewer: *What is the best thing you have ever read?*

Interviewee: *Ever read? (Big sigh) ... mmmmm.... Is how to add something in maths... how to add the numbers... ehhhh... as well as how to ... the money ... I want to count the da money... myself..... and this thing help me a lot (P111).*

On reflecting on the above response, I realised that the participant understood the word *read* for *learn*, as the best thing she learnt was how to add and count her money. This could be because in isiZulu the same word is used for each of these.

When I asked the same participant in which language she first learnt to read, her response was: *"When I read here at school?"* (P111). Similarly, her response to the question: *"What have you read this week?"* was: *"I read how to ... there's ECD ... in ECD the early child... I read how... how to care.... the child... maybe ehhhh zero to three months... ehhhh... three months to nine months..."* (P111). After analysing the data did it occur to me that in isiZulu, the word *read* is understood for the word *learn*.

Another participant also understood the word *read* for *learn*. I realised this in the following extract:

Interviewer: *How often do you read?*

Interviewee: *Try to explain in other ways.*

Interviewer: *Like... eh... Do you read every day? Do you read twice a day? Do you read once in two days? Once in three days or once a week?*

Interviewee: *My English. I read the English once a week. But I also read every day when I'm reading newspaper, but I get in the class for the English once a week.*

Interviewer: *Your actual reading, do you read every day?*

Interviewee: *I read every day (P311).*

Here again, it took him a while before he really got down to answering the question. In response to another question: *"What motivates you to read? Why do you want to read?"* P1 did not understand the question, as I had to repeat the question a few times as can be seen in the following extract:

Interviewer: What motivates you to read? Why do you want to read?

Interviewee: *Oh... it motivate me a lot .. because I....I....I read a sentence. If I read a sentence ...oh..... I don't know this sentence by this name... I go to dictionary and I go to the meaning of this word and I got all the sentence what I see.... Yes*

Seeing that the response I received did not really answer the question, I tried again:

Interviewer: *So why do you want to read? What makes you want to read?*

Interviewee: *What?*

Interviewer: *What makes you want to read?*

Interviewee: *What makes me want to read?*

Interviewer: *Ya. Why do you want to read?*

Interviewee: *Because ... this at school... the school make me open my mind... ya the school open my mind ... I like to read (P111).*

When P2 was asked how she felt about the reading she did, she responded: *"I'm feeling gorgeous. Ya.... It makes me feel better. I don't think anything when I'm reading... ya.. no stress"*(P211). Her choice of word "gorgeous" indicated that she did not understand the question. In general P2 did not grasp an understanding of many of the questions. She also admitted this: *"I can't understand what you saying"* (P2, I2). Similarly, P3 also admitted that he did not understand the question: *"I don't understand it. Ay ... I don't understand."*(P3I2). When P3 did not understand some of the questions, his immediate response was: *"Hello?"* (P3I2). This is the kind of response one gets from a person who does not know what you are talking about.

These are second language learners. They lack extensive understanding of the English language, and their inability to express themselves adequately in English limited the kind of responses I received. This meant that they did not give me the thick data I was expecting. However, it brought to light other data that I was able to use in this study, and foregrounded the difficulties they faced in acquiring speaking and listening skills. What has surfaced from the data is that there was lack of understanding on the part of the participants, as they did not fully understand the questions, although I tried to simplify them. Reading development and listening skills are closely linked. Learners must have the ability to understand spoken English in order to read better. This then brought to light the standard or level of the functioning

of these learners and the challenges faced at adult literacy centres. This then gave rise to my next theme.

4.2.8 The functioning of and challenges faced at adult literacy centres

From an interview with a subject advisor who monitors adult literacy centres and based on my observations at the adult literacy centre where my research was conducted, I gathered data about the functioning of and challenges faced at adult literacy centres. It was evident that because of the challenges faced at these centres, it was not always possible for these centres to be fully functional. There were various reasons for this.

There is a lack of learning, teaching and support material, which she ascribed to insufficient funds. She mentioned that *“I think more money should be channelled on the LTSM to realise these goals of the curriculum”* (ISADL). She added that *“there is a very big shortage of textbooks in...in... in.. level 4, if I can be honest with you for the past 2 years, we haven’t been able to resource our centres with books, because of budget constraints”* (ISADL). Therefore, educators have to contend with the material they have and are unable to use a variety of different texts. Some educators are not qualified to teach English literacy or lacked the skills to teach reading.

In addition, some educators do not prepare for their lessons as the subject advisor states: *“because they are double parking”* (ISADL). Therefore, she feels that *“there’s no justice that is happening in adult education”* (ISADL). She stated further that *“number of times you find that maybe the lesson plan is not there”* and very early into the lesson educators are doing written work with the learners, when in actual fact they should be teaching first. This was articulated by the words: *“and you don’t know if they started writing because you...you....were parking the car and someone is not confident to teach in your presence”* (ISADL).

An important fact she mentioned was that the goals of the curriculum are too academic:

“They are okay, but, they are too academic. If we...we. Would focus on skills” (ISADL).

She feels that the curriculum is not meeting the needs of the learners. Therefore:

“A brilliant learner in adult education, would decide to go for a project of three months or whatever number of months, and ignore the classes, its saying something about the needs you know in...in..in..the outcomes. If the specific outcomes were addressing their needs, they would see it as important to stay here and they would know they are going to lose out if they leave and go for something else” (ISADL).

What she said was borne out at my research site, as at the beginning of the year there were about twenty learners and as the year progressed, the numbers decreased and eventually there were seven learners present on my last visit to the school. Therefore, if the curriculum is not suiting the needs of the learners, then learners stop attending.

Learner commitment was another challenging factor. There were various reasons for this; transport problems and the distances learners had to travel to the adult literacy centres. Sometimes the times of the lessons are not suited to the learners, as they may be employed and are unable to take leave to attend classes.

Given the fact that these are level 4 learners, they are equivalent to Grade 9, it can be seen that justice is not being done in terms of raising the standard of their literacy levels. There are many reasons for this, some of which were revealed during my interview with the subject advisor, as she monitors many adult literacy centres. Her observation of these centres was: *“that actually there’s no justice. If, there is justice that is happening in adult education, it means they were robbing the... the mainstream. They can’t be effective” (ISADL).* Some educators who teach in the mainstream during the day are not preparing for the lessons for adult literacy classes because they are tired. This is what she means by *“double parking”*. In addition she says that *“more money should be channelled on the LTSM to realise these goals of the curriculum” (SADL).* Therefore, lack of resources for both learners and educators, is a contributing factor for justice not being done at some of the centres. This was reiterated when she explained that *“for the past 2 years, we haven’t been able to resource our centres with books, because of budget constraints... Unfortunately*

Audrey, there is a very big shortage of textbooks in...in... in.. level 4 ” (ISADL). However, she raised the concern that nothing stopped educators from finding their own resources because, “I don’t know if it’s laziness. You find that they will tell you, they don’t have newspapers, when it’s so easy for me to...to...to find newspapers” (ISADL) and there is also “The Education library because like we have a shortage of books. So they are encouraged to go there, get their resources for that duration and then they bring them back, they can do that or just collect Learn with Echo from the University of Natal” (ISADL). It must be the responsibility of the educator to find resources or additional resources to supplement what he/she already has and I think according to a subject advisor, not many are making the effort to do that.

Another challenge raised by the subject advisor was:

“So the skills are not there..... they struggle with the vocabulary themselves, because if they don’t have enough vocabulary, like, they get tempted, this is my observation, they get tempted, to explain, let’s say it’s a foreign language like Afrikaans or English, they get tempted to explain it in vernacular. When if they had enough vocabulary, they would use it in context and able to explain it in context, until the.. the.. the.. learner understands, instead of explaining it in another language” (ISADL).

What is clear from the analysis of the above data is that some adult literacy centres are experiencing many problems. Educators have only some of the skills needed to teach reading. Therefore, skills like pre-viewing, scanning, skimming and summarising are not being taught. The sequencing of speaking, reading and writing as advocated by a subject advisor is not being followed. This was evident in this study during my observation lessons. The educator focussed on the reading of the text, instead of speaking about the text first, discussing the vocabulary so that it could be understood in context and linked to some background knowledge of the learner rather than allowing learners to come across new vocabulary and concepts in isolation. Focussing on these first, would enable learners to build some understanding of the text. Thereafter, a written exercise on the text can be given. Therefore, the correct sequence: speaking, reading and writing must be followed.

Insufficient vocabulary is another aspect that the subject advisor mentioned that poses difficulty when teaching reading. Educators are not equipped with an extensive vocabulary, so they are tempted to code-switch to the first language of the learners. This was observed in this study when the educator frequently switched from English to isiZulu.

Lack of preparation on the part of some educators is yet another concern that was raised by the subject advisor. She mentioned that when she visits the adult literacy centres where lessons start at 3pm, learners are already doing written work just ten minutes into the lesson. She expressed herself with regards to this by saying:

“..... you know when you go to class to monitor Audrey, what you find is the learners are writing , and you don't know if they started writing because you...you....you were parking the car and someone is not confident to teach in your presence. Most of the times, I have to ask teachers to teach. I have to ask. Like if I come in at ten past three, and the centre starts operating at three 'o clock and learners are already writing, then ay I just... I call the educator out. I say. It's just ten minutes into the lesson. Please I'm here to observe you teaching, because I want to assist you, I want to help you ... ya... and a number of times you find that maybe the lesson plan is not there and guess who are the most culprits? It's the double parkers” (ISADL).

Some teachers who are studying Bachelor of Education Honours at UKZN state that they write lesson plans for official purposes and do not actually follow them when teaching (Personal communication with S Land, UKZN, 28 11 2013). This could be one of the reasons why educators lack confidence to teach. According to the subject advisor interviewed, the educators that are guilty of this are the ones who teach in the mainstream during the day and also teach adult literacy classes in the afternoons. Their lesson preparations are not done. As a result, she believes that they are not doing justice to the lessons.

Finally, she mentioned “the *drop-out rate is very high*” (ISADL). This was evident at the learning centre where I conducted my research. Noted in my observation in general, that at the beginning of the year there were about twenty learners in the class, however, towards the latter half of the year, the numbers gradually decreased. Data on the drop-out rate is unobtainable and not even known by the staff of the ABE Directorate (Personal communication with S Mncube, Department of Education, KZN, 6 December 2013).

There are various reasons for the decrease in number of learners: some learners find employment during the course of the year, so the time of the classes is not suitable for them, some find it difficult to get leave from their jobs to attend these classes, while others feel that their needs are not being met “because *they are shy to say my..my needs are not met in.. I mean through ABC, so they will just disappear. At the beginning of the year, like this time its full, and that is the time when we hire more educators. By the time its middle of the year, we have to downsize, down scale ...*” (ISADL). In addition, it gets darker earlier in the middle of the year (winter). The subject advisor indicated that: “*they are at a disadvantage*” because it is difficult “*for a working person, because they still have to get home and cook*”.

In this study, most of the learners in the class were female. Statistics on this was also unavailable (Personal communication with S Mncube, Department of Education, KZN, 6 December 2013). It is quite understandable that if classes are in the late afternoons or evenings, this makes it difficult for females to attend, as they have the responsibilities of taking care of their children, supervising and assisting their children with homework and preparing meals for the family. Sometimes learners have to travel a distance to the learning centres. In this study, most learners travelled a distance of not less than 2 kilometres from their homes. Sometimes they have problems with transport so they are forced to stay at home or have to walk. I recall during a few visits to this learning centre, the attendance was poor due to a taxi strike. These are already disadvantaged learners and they are further disadvantaged because of the many difficulties and hardships they are faced with.

To sum up this chapter, evidence across the data revealed that in general, learners were satisfied with what was being offered to them in the adult literacy classes. This was so because, to a certain degree, it fulfilled their personal needs. However, while there was evidence of this from the data I collected, the findings revealed that:

- Learners considered themselves to be good readers in terms of the skill of decoding.
- Learners lacked comprehension skills.
- Learners had not developed fluent speaking skills.
- Learners were of the opinion that they have achieved much in the time that they have attended these classes and that this was going “to open doors” to their future.
- There was poor attendance by learners.
- The time allocated for the literacy classes is limited.
- The classes they are attending are failing them, as they feel it is a “ticket” for them to get jobs, to learn to speak English fluently and to give them a bright future.

In addition, the data collected from the subject advisor, revealed that:

- Some educators were not qualified to teach English literacy or lacked the skills to teach reading.
- Some educators do not prepare thoroughly for their lessons because they are “double parking”.
- Some educators have limited vocabulary and therefore cannot express themselves adequately.

Despite all of the above, learners mentioned that they could not imagine their lives without being able to read. These were expressed by the following responses: *“Ohhhh.... The mess (she laughs)... the mess... because in this country or in this world, there is a lot of corruption... and there’s a lot of bribes and there’s a lot of thieves, if you know nothing”* (P112). She feels that being able to read gives her some protection because of the corruption that prevails in this country. P3 said: *“I think that communication is not gonna be coming right if you don’t know how to read and how to talk with other people in English according to my understanding”No, when I’m reading, I’m feeling happy because I know everything about reading. I know the*

pronunciation of the words and understanding” (P3I2). In addition, P3 mentioned: “I think it’s going to be too much if I don’t know how to read, because I’m working with the foreign guys, coloured guys as well as the Indians” (P3I2).

In general, adult learners want to be able to earn a living from being literate. They believed that reading, writing, counting and speaking would ensure that they had a great future and that they attended these classes for individual specific needs; they had their own practical goals for learning to read, speak and write and felt that they were achieving these at the literacy classes. They felt motivated to read and found that being able to read assisted them, their families and their lives in general.

To sum up the analysis, multiple sources of data collection allowed for triangulation (Yin, 2003), and corroboration of data (Yin, 2003), thus enhancing validity of the findings. In addition, multiple sources of data collection also allowed me to maintain a chain of evidence for each of the findings, which, according to Yin (2003) increases the validity of the information in a case study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

My study investigated reading development experiences of ABET level 4 learners, and its findings are presented in Chapter Four. I found the case study approach most suitable, as this study was a single case and qualitative in nature, and this approach allowed for multi-methods of data collection, and consideration of all relevant aspects of the case. This is captured in Chapter three. The aim of this chapter is to present a conclusion to the entire study. A summary of the key findings, as discussed in Chapter Four is presented. Significant findings that emerged from my study were presented in the form of themes, some that were based on my research questions and others that arose from the data itself. Recommendations are presented on reading development, based on my findings. In addition, recommendations are made for future research in the field of adult literacy in general and specifically, in reading development.

5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The findings enabled me to answer the five research questions during my analysis of the data. In presenting the summary of findings, I refer to the five research questions. These related to: reading development in ABE level 4 classes in relation to achieving the learners' goals, reading development in ABE level 4 classes in relation to achieving the goals of the curriculum, learners' motivation to read, reading and learners' family life, reading and learners' life in general. I also refer to other themes that emerged from the study: the inability of learners to express themselves, language gaps as a barrier to learning in English and finally, the functioning of and challenges faced at adult literacy centres.

5.2.1 Readers' Motivation

It was evident in the findings that adult learners attended English classes because of their individual needs. They wanted to be able to read, speak, write, sign forms, count and equip themselves so that they could get jobs. They had their own practical reasons for doing these, which depended on their life circumstances and needs:

- To communicate with people.
- To find employment by reading advertisements.
- To be successful in life.
- To support their families.
- To assist their children with their homework.
- To be able to communicate with the school by receiving notes from teachers and writing notes to teachers.
- To uplift their communities in terms of educating them on communicable diseases by explaining the written content to them.
- To sign forms.
- To fill out job applications.
- To do banking in the bank and at ATMs.
- To read the Bible.
- Not to be robbed or cheated of what rightfully belonged to them, because they could read contracts, till slips, invoices, receipts and financial statements.

5.2.2 Reading development in ABET level 4 classes in relation to achieving the learners' goals

Mentioned above are the many gains or benefits the adult learners experienced by attending adult literacy classes. It was evident they could communicate in English, but not to the extent that is associated with ABET level 4. Some learners were able to find employment so that they could support their families. They assisted their children with their homework (primary school). If they had children in high school, they may not have been of much assistance to them, because of their levels of competency in speaking, reading and writing. They were able to educate their families and the community on communicable diseases and could sign forms and fill out job applications. In addition, they were now in a position to do their own banking, thereby preventing them from being cheated. There were many ways in which they benefitted from attending these classes. Their individual, personal needs were being met which was dependent on their life circumstances. Despite having achieved some of their goals, learners could not express themselves in the second language.

Simultaneously, the data revealed they did experience difficulty communicating with me, which added a nuanced effect to the data.

5.2.3 Reading development in ABET level 4 classes in relation to achieving the goals of the curriculum

Learners were not aware of the goals of the curriculum¹ although some of the goals were being achieved. My findings based on the interviews, the two observation lessons and my general observations, revealed that their competency in reading and comprehension skills were at a level that learners found acceptable, although not at a level that was in line with outcomes associated with level 4. Some learners were able to read fluently as their decoding skills were good, however, when asked to answer questions based on the text being read, not many of them were able. Therefore comprehension skills were lacking.

5.2.4 Reading and family life

Learners' gains in reading skills assisted with communication between the home and the school. The school communicated information via letters in English, thereby keeping parents informed about school matters, and these learners were able to read these letters. Two of the participants had school going children. Parents were confident to attend meetings at school because of the adult literacy classes they attended. They were able to communicate information from these meetings to their children after the meeting. Parents were able to communicate with teachers via letters in isiZulu, which created a good rapport between them. Besides the role that reading played between the school and the parents, reading also played an important role in their family lives. Parents and children read to each other. Parents felt better equipped to assist their children with their homework because they felt more confident in their ability to read and write. A participant in the FGI said that she is able to educate her family on certain communicable diseases, after she visits the

¹ The goals of the curriculum for unit standard: Read/view and respond to a range of text types are: learners must be able to read and view a number of different texts developed for different purposes, audiences and context; learners must be able to understand how language is used to convey meaning and to shape people's views and relationships and learners must be able to find, sort and use information through reading and viewing.

clinic, by reading and communicating to them the information she receives from the clinic. Besides their schoolwork, children also do other reading at home. Therefore, reading does play an important role in family life.

5.2.5 Reading and life in general

Findings of this study revealed that, generally, in life, reading with understanding enables people to have a better quality of life, empowers them as citizens of the country and impacts positively on different facets of their lives. They were able to assist their children with their homework, they had better communication with the school, and they attended school meetings. Family literacy was evident as parents and learners read to each other. Participants could do their banking. In addition they were in a position to help educate their families on communicable diseases. Being able to read assisted with filling out job applications. The participants could not imagine their lives without being able to read.

5.2.6 The inability of learners to express themselves in English

Throughout the study, the participants lacked the ability to express themselves in English (second language). When there were no responses to the questions asked by the educator, he would then speak in isiZulu (OB). This being their mother tongue, they understood the educator with ease.

5.2.7 Limited communicative competence in English as a barrier to learning

One of the findings of this study was language gaps as a barrier to learning in English. This was probably due to not having achieved all the outcomes and skills associated with level 3, which was reasonable to expect among level 4 learners. This was evident throughout the data collection process. With the exception of the subject advisor, the learners and educator experienced language gaps as a barrier to learning in English. This is a common problem experienced by second language learners. When participants did not understand me, they would sometimes give me a blank look, not respond at all or simply said that they did not understand me. This was very challenging for me. However, I persevered in trying to elicit as much data

as possible, by re-phrasing the questions several times, to a level I thought would be accessible to them, however, this too, was unsuccessful in most cases.

5.2.8 The functioning of and challenges faced at adult literacy centres

There were various reasons for this according to the subject advisor:

- There is a lack of learning, teaching and support material due to insufficient funds, according to a subject advisor.
- Some educators are not qualified or lacked adequate skills to teach reading and writing.
- Some educators do not prepare adequately for their lessons.
- Very early into the lesson, educators are doing written work with the learners.
- Goals of the curriculum are too academic, as not all of them parallel skills to generate income.
- The curriculum is meeting some of the needs of the learners.
- The distances that learners have to travel to the centres are too long. They sometimes experience transport difficulties.
- The times of the classes (2 to 4 pm) are not always suitable to the learners, especially if they are employed.

The learners experienced real gains but they fall short of the ideal situation. However, this applies to this centre and cannot apply to other adult learning centres.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study found that gaining skills in reading in English, assisted adult learners in many ways. There were many benefits that they experienced by attending these classes. However, in terms of the goals of the curriculum and meeting the needs of the learners, there are certain recommendations I would like to make. As this study was a small scale research of one adult literacy centre in a rural area in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, the findings cannot be generalized. In order to make some form of generalization, I recommend that the scope of this study be broadened to include several adult literacy centres from various districts across KwaZulu-Natal. Further possible research could be a comparative study of two or more districts.

In order to raise the literacy levels of adult learners, so that the centres can become fully functional and beneficial, I now turn to specific recommendations for adult literacy centres, so that the centres can become fully functional and beneficial to the learners, which were based on a limited sample. These could apply more widely if contexts are similar.

- Teachers should create their own resources in terms of learning, teaching and support material.
- Classrooms should be stimulating learning environments.
- The times of the classes must be suitable to the learners, especially if they are employed, or perhaps have two sessions, one suitable to those who are unemployed and the other at convenient times for those who are employed.
- Increase the time allocated for the literacy classes.
- Provide training in income generating activities.
- Teaching methods should be in keeping with the proficiency levels of the learners.
- Teachers should be trained adequately in teaching reading and writing.

Having provided the above recommendations, ideally, planners of the adult education curriculum should base the curriculum on the needs and goals of the learners. A needs assessment should be carried out in the community so that the curriculum planners are aware of the learners' needs, thus drawing up a curriculum to suit those needs. This would be the ideal situation; however, it would be a challenging task for the Education Department to manage. I say this because it would be extremely difficult to meet the needs of every community across the province. According to the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of South Africa, all South Africans have the right to basic education, which includes adult basic education and further education. However, despite all of these, learners were experiencing real gains in terms of fulfilling their personal everyday needs. Therefore, the findings revealed, that although all the goals of the curriculum were not being attained, the learners were still benefiting from these classes because their goals were being met.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF CONSENT TO THE PRINCIPAL

140 Sirkhod Road
Orient Heights
Pietermaritzburg
3201

15 May 2012

The Principal
Maqongqo Primary School
Table Mountain
Pietermaritzburg
3201

Sir

CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEACH

I am a M. Ed. Student (Student Number 208519159) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. In order to fulfil the requirements of the degree I am expected to conduct a research project. My research topic is: The Exploration of Reading Development Experiences of ABE Level 4 learners: A Case Study.

In this study, I envisage constructing a rich description and exploration of the development of reading experiences of three adult learners participating in ABE level 4 English classes.

I would appreciate your permission to conduct research in your school. Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence of educators. The identities of all who participate in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants and they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative consequences. However, participants will be asked to complete a consent form. In the interest of the participants, feedback will be given to them at the end of the study.

My supervisor is Sandra Land who can be contacted on 033-2605497 at the Faculty

of Education, Pietermaritzburg Campus . My contact numbers are 0844446780, 033-3914179 (home). You may contact my supervisor or myself should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours faithfully

.....
A.E.Pillay

APPENDIX B: DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PRINCIPAL

DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY PRINCIPAL

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I..... (full name of Principal) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and grant Mrs A.E. Pillay permission to conduct a case study research atPrimary School.

.....
SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

.....
DATE

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPANTS/ DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANTS

140 Sirkhod Road
Orient Heights
Pietermaritzburg
3201

10 May 2012

Dear Participant

CONSENT LETTER

You are invited to participate in a research project on reading development experiences amongst ABE level 4 learners attending English classes. This project will be conducted by Audrey Pillay.

In this project, I will observe and take notes during three English lessons, over a period of six weeks during this term to early next term. Each observation session will last for 30 – 45 minutes. In addition, you will be asked to participate in three 45 - minute interviews, which will be conducted by me. In these interviews, which will be audio-recorded with your permission, you will be asked to discuss your reading development experiences. The audiotapes and all other information obtained during this research project will be kept secure. The audiotapes will be transcribed and coded to remove individuals' names and will be erased after the project is completed.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time and for any reason without penalty. You are also free to refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. You will receive a copy of the research results after this project is completed.

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me at 033-3914179 or 0844446780.

Yours faithfully
Audrey Pillay

I _____ have read and understand the above information and voluntarily agree to participate in the research project described above. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

____yes ____no . I agree to have the interviews audio-recorded for the purposes of transcription.

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX D: DETAILS OF PRIMARY PARTICIPANTS

NAME: _____

PLEASE PLACE A TICK IN THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN

1. Gender

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

2. Age

18-30		31-40		41-50		51+	
-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	-----	--

3. Nature of employment

Permanent		Temporary		Unemployed	
-----------	--	-----------	--	------------	--

If employed, where do you work?

How long have you been working in the present job?

4. Number of years attending ABE classes:

5. Distance you travel from home to Adult Literacy Centre:

1. How many school going children do you have?

APPENDIX E: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULES 1 AND 2 – LEARNERS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 1

1. How did you learn to read?
2. What were your early reading experiences?
3. Why do you read?
4. What is the best thing you have ever read?
5. What have you read this week and why?
6. How has your reading developed as an adult?
7. What were your expectations of developing your reading when you enrolled for the ABE classes?
8. Have these expectations been met?
9. How do you experience reading development in the ABE classes?
10. How often do you read?
11. When do you read?
12. What motivates you to read?
13. If you read the newspaper, what is your favourite section?
14. Do you read for pleasure? /understanding?
15. How do you decide what to read about?
16. How do you feel about the reading you do?
17. Do you ever struggle with reading? When?
18. What do you do to understand something when it's difficult?
19. How do you feel about the reading you do?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 2

1. What are your goals in relation to reading development and how are they being achieved by attending these classes?
2. How are the goals of the curriculum being met?
3. How does reading relate to your: children/spouse/partner?
4. How does reading impact on your communication with your children's school?
5. If you had to imagine your life without learning to read, what do you think it would have been like?
6. What difference has being able to read made to you personally; to your work/job/ opportunities for employment; children; community; your education?
7. How has being able to read made a difference to you as a person? (Self esteem/confidence)
8. Do other adults in your home read? If "yes": What do they read? When do they read?
9. Do the children in your home read? (If answer is yes – What do they read? When do they read?)
10. Does anyone read to the children in your home?
11. For the time that you have attended ABE classes, how has your reading developed?

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – FOCUS GROUP

1. What are some of the things you can read (or do) now, but could not do before classes?
2. By being able to do these things now, who does this ability affect?
Yourself/child/husband/wife/partner/neighbours/people in your community.
3. What are some of the things you still can't do (or read) but hope to? Explain these (the list that you've made).
4. How has being able to read affected your ability to speak/talk/communicate?
5. How has being able to read affected your ability to write?
6. How has being able to read affected your opportunities for employment?
7. Now that you are able to read, has this changed your life? If yes, how?
8. How do you understand text when you read?
9. How has being able to read affected the running of your households?
10. How has being able to read affected your life in general?
11. Now that you can read, how do you feel?

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – SUBJECT ADVISOR

1. We all know about the poor ANA results – do you think the situation is better or worse or the same in adult classes? [NB discuss their answers – follow answers with more questions – then ask other suggested questions if only what they have said does not already
2. Do you think the goals of the curriculum are appropriate to real needs of the learners? [discuss]
3. Are there things that you think most educators manage well in teaching reading? [discuss what they are]
4. What do you think educators struggle with (on the whole) in teaching reading?
5. What do you think is the main difference between educators who teach reading well, and educators who don't teach reading well?
6. Do you think some educators manage to help learners enjoy reading? If yes, how do they do this? If no, why not?
7. Do you think there is a difference between the range of texts used in level 4 classrooms and the texts learners come across in their real lives? (if yes, what?)
8. Which texts used in level 4 classrooms are most liked by educators and learners? [most / useful/ least liked/ etc.]
9. Some staff at UKZN are concerned that educators are not getting trained in the skills they need to teach reading. Is there anything that you think universities could do to improve the training and education that they give educators?
10. What ways do you think educators use to teach learners to find particular information in texts?
11. What ways do you think educators use to teach learners the skills of skimming and scanning?
12. What ways do you think educators use to teach learners how to summarise?
13. Do you think educators teach skills like previewing? [If yes, how do they teach it?]
14. How do educators teach learners to find the meaning of unfamiliar words? Do you think learners learn how to find information in texts and apply it in different ways in different contexts? [If yes, how are they taught?]

APPENDIX H: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

DATE OF OBSERVATION: _____ TIME: _____

1. Levels of decoding of text:

Fully achieved:

Partially achieved.....

Found difficulty in achieving:

Achieved with assistance from educator:.....

Very little achieved:.....

2. Levels of fluency:

Very fluent reading:.....

Satisfactory fluency:.....

Not fluent at all:.....

3. Comprehension/understanding of the text:

Very good understanding of the text:

Satisfactory understanding of the text:.....

Very little understanding of the text:.....

Did not understand the text at all:

4. Manner in which learner understands the text:

On his/her own:.....

With the assistance of other learners:.....

With the assistance of the educator:

5. How is reading taught with reference to the following:

5.1. What signs, if any, does the reader show of understanding concepts as she/he progresses through the text?

5.2. What signs, if any, does the reader show of linking concepts in the text to one another?

5.3. Does the educator ensure that the learner is making sense of what he/she reads? & How?

5.4. Does the educator encourage the learners to relate what they are reading to other relevant knowledge they may have?

6. Confidence of learners in their learning environment:

Very confident:

A little confident:.....

Not confident at all:

7. The physical setting of the learning environment:

Conducive to learning:

Not conducive to learning:

Conducive to learning, with a few exceptions:

Explain:

8. Interactional setting of the environment:

Formal:.....

Informal:.....

Planned:.....

Unplanned:

Programme setting of the lesson:

Availability of resources: Many:

Limited:

Very little:

9. Are the goals of the curriculum being met?

Yes:

No:

Partially:

10. Are the learner's goals being met?

Yes:.....

No:

Partially:

11. Are learners reading abilities sufficient enough for them to assist their children with their schoolwork?

Yes:

No:

Partially:

12. Are learners reading abilities sufficient enough for them to function in life in general?

Yes:

No:

Partially:

13. Are learners reading abilities sufficient enough for them to run their homes?

Yes?.....

No:

Partially:

APPENDIX I: DoE - APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



kzn education
Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Tel: 033 341 8610

Ref.:24/8/200

Sandra Land, Mitasha Nehal, Jeff Mkhize, Nkanyezi Cele, Audrey Pillay, Rakesh Sivnarain, Mhlengi Shabane and Nazarana Mather

Centre for Adult Education
School of Education and Development
University of KwaZulu Natal
Private bag X01
SCOTTSVILLE
3209

Dear Sandra Land et al.

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **Developing a Reading Culture among Adults and Children at a Foundation Level in a School-Based Learning Community**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 May 2012 to 31 December 2013.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to the following schools and institution:
 - 10.1 Maqongqo Primary School and the attached Adult Learning Centre


Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education

2012/06/11
Date

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa

PHYSICAL: Office G 25, 188 Pietermaritz Street, Metropolitan Building, Pietermaritzburg 3201

TEL: Tel: +27 33 341 8610 | Fax: +27 33 3341 8612 | E-mail: sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za |
Web: www.kzneducation.gov.za

APPENDIX J: ETHICAL APPROVAL



24 June 2012

Mrs Audrey E Pillay (208519159)
School of Education

Dear Mrs Pillay

Protocol reference number: HSS/0429/012M

Project title: An exploration of the reading development experiences of three adult learners learning English ABE Level 4

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
/ms

cc Sandra Land
cc Academic Leader Dr MN Davids
cc School Admin. Mr N Memela / Mrs S Naicker

Professor S Collings (Chair)
Humanities & Social SC Research Ethics Committee
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
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Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Inspiring Greatness

