University of KwaZulu- Natal

An exploration of the reading choices of grade four learners in a public primary school in KwaZulu-Natal

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DEDICATION

THIS RESEARCH STUDY IS HUMBLY DEDICATED TO:

❖ My mum and dad: Mrs. Thayamma Govender and Mr. Vedachalam Pulliar Govender.

Your timeless wisdom through adversity is forever remembered, your generosity emulated and your presence sadly missed. Just a reminder of my progress. Thank you.

❖ My late sister: Thanga Govender.

Your expression of happiness at my undertaking the masters' study. An inspiring memory! Also for bequeathing financial aid in my time of need. Thank you.

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DECLARATION

I, KISTENSAMY GOVENDER, declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted previously for any degree in any university.

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SUPERVISOR   DATE

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List of Abbreviations

LRE- Library resource education.

ANGELA – Respondent one.

BRENDA –Respondent two.

CANDICE – Respondent three.

DEBORAH –Respondent four.

EVELYN –Respondent five.

P1 – Parent one.

P2 – Parent two.

P3 – Parent three.

P4 – Parent four.

P5 – Parent five.

PIRLS - The Progress in International Literacy Study (2006)

DoE – Department of Education

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ABSTRACT

The advent of technology, especially the electronic media, heralded a new era of communication. Together with this boom came a host of reading challenges that has affected the learner and learner performance in the classroom. In the PIRLS report (2006) an emergence of a "non-reading" culture was noted as a result of poor performance by learners in South Africa.

This research aims to explore the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read. The research was conducted at a public primary school in the Chatsworth region in KwaZulu Natal. This research used the qualitative case study approach which is set within the interpretivist paradigm. The main source of data generation was the semi-structured interviews of five learners and their respective parents. In addition to this method, two structured observations were conducted: observations of the reading- for- pleasure lessons and the LRE lessons. To conclude the data collection, a case scenario, where the learners created their own reading room, was used. This multi-pronged approach was adopted to fill in the information gaps and omissions that arose from the interviews.

The analysis of the data indicates the following: girls read more frequently than boys, newspapers form the bulk of the reading at home, billboards are an interesting addition to their reading list, girls are intrinsically motivated. Findings show that the electronic media require higher levels of literacy skills to access the highly- textual society of the workplace. It becomes imperative that reading be motivated, taught and encouraged. The definition of literacy by the school and the home should be revisited and reviewed so that learners are not disadvantaged. Furthermore, the teachers and the librarians will thus have a greater degree of flexibility in selecting reading materials for the classroom and the library respectively. It becomes vitally important that we heed the warning of Alvermann (2001, p. 680) who argues that "the possibility that as a culture we are making struggling readers out of some adolescents who for any number of reasons have turned their backs on a version of literacy called school literacy is a sobering thought".

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The 21st century heralded an influx of technology that captured the imagination of people all over the globe. When browsing the net, playing with faulty handsets and passing of SMSs and mxit seem to be the order of the day, reading a book has become an archaic idea for many people (Tella, 2007). The reading habit seems to be "fast vanishing into thin air" (The Hindu, 2004, p1). The call for quality basic education demands a development of good reading habits in both children and adults. This will change the stigma associated with Africa as a continent with "Poor Reading Culture" (Tella, 2007).

Kress (2003) argues that children are increasingly surrounded by multimodal forms of text. Williams (2007, p. 636) concurs with this philosophy; he states that from the "lightening fast pace of television programming to the barrage of interactive images on the internet and in new video games there's no doubt that today's children are growing up in a world saturated by multiple forms of media." By implication this phenomena is continental rather than local, but this research attempts to elicit data that will assist in answering the question: What do grade 4 learners read in the local context? It must be stated that the concept "reading materials" is wide and varied and includes novels, encyclopaedias, comics, newspapers, magazines, posters, advertisements, pamphlets, internet, television, letters and diaries, to name but a few. It is also quite clear that the visual medium is fast becoming easily accessible and more popular in order to gain information.

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2006) reports that South African grade 4 and 5 learners failed to achieve the benchmark of 500 points. This was a source of consternation. Grade 4 learners achieved on average 253 points (SE=4.6) while the grade 5 learners achieved on average 302 (SE=5.6). South Africa achieved the lowest score of the 45 participating education systems (Van Staden & Howie, 2008). In looking at the South African education system, Long and Zimmerman (2008, p. 2)

argue that the curriculum "acts as a skeleton which shapes and gives direction to instruction in the education system." The English Home Language Learning Area assessment standards identifies that the learner 'needs' to be able to:

"*read a variety of texts for different purposes; view and comment on various visual texts; describe their feelings about texts giving reasons; discuss how the choice of language and graphical features influence the reader; identify and discuss aspects such as central idea, character, setting and plot in fiction texts; infer reasons for the actions in a story; recognise the different structures, language use and purpose of different types of texts; identify and discuss values in texts; understand and respond to information texts; interpret simple visual texts and select information texts for own information needs*" (DoE 2002, p. 72-77).

In order for the learner of grade 4 to be able to fulfil these assessment standards the choice of different texts is a pre-requisite for success. An endeavour shall be made to ascertain the choice of reading texts of the grade 4 learners and their rationale for the choices. Long and Zimmerman (2008, p. 4) argue that for success in reading the following assessment standards need to be implemented in the foundation phase: 'identifying the main idea of text; explaining or supporting understanding of text; comparing texts; predicting outcomes and making generalisations and inferences.'

1.2. Topic:
An exploration of the reading choices of grade 4 learners.

Critical questions:

1. What do grade 4 learners read?
This question examines the selection of reading materials made by grade 4 learners.

2. Why do grade 4 learners choose to read what they read?
This question explores the learners' rationale for the selection of their reading materials.

1.3. Purpose of the study [Rationale]

This study will explore the reading choices of Grade 4 learners in a South African public primary school. As an educational practitioner teaching English, the researcher has observed that grade 4 learners perform poorly in oral reading and reading with comprehension. It is the intention of this study to explore the reading choices of grade 4 learners in order to assist the teacher to select appropriate comprehension passages. The research will be valuable in the selection of reading material for the classroom library corner and for use during the reading lessons. In addition, the English teacher and the librarian will gain insight into the selection of books for the library that will interest the learners. This research will assist in illuminating the knowledge base of the relevant stakeholders within the institution so as to be able to perform their functions, especially in the learning area of English with a broad view to improve the quality of the language in general and reading in particular

1.4. Methodology

This particular research approach is qualitative in nature. It is an exploration of the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read. The research involves a qualitative case study situated in the interpretivist paradigm. According to Henning (2005, p. 21), interpretive research is fundamentally concerned with meaning and it seeks to understand social members' definitions and understanding of situations. It produces 'descriptive analyses that emphasize deep, interpretive understanding of social phenomena.' Selected interviews and observations are the main source of data collation.

❖ The combination of the informal conversational interview and the interview guide approach will provide in-depth, 'rich' data on the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read. The combination increases the relevance and comprehensiveness of the data. Gaps are

anticipated and closed because interviews are built on and emerge from observations. In the primary school context, learners respond more freely to semi-structured or conversational situations. Interviews are the ideal source for data collection as it will provide direct evidence of what they read, and probing questions will be able to elicit why they read what they read. Oral questions are easier for grade 4 learners to comprehend than written questions as the teacher can explain the questions to the learners immediately in a face to face interview. Parents of the learners will also be interviewed to plug the anticipated gaps and information that would not be forthcoming during the interviews with the learners themselves. The interviews will be tape recorded and a transcript generated.

❖ Observations of the learners in their natural environment will be conducted, that is, in the reading for pleasure lessons which are conducted in their form classes and the library resource education lesson which is conducted in the school library resource centre. All observations will be recorded in a journal.

❖ Scenario: The learners will be given the task of creating their own reading room. The learners will have a free reign in filling the shelves with reading materials that they choose.

1.5. Outline of the study

Chapter one introduces the research study and highlights the central issues of poor reading choices and a brief analysis of the PIRLS report on the state of reading in the subject of English. Included in this chapter is the purpose of the study, the scope of the study, methodology, key research questions and the topic.

Chapter Two contains the literature review, which elucidates the idea of reading and a selection of definitions are presented and discussed. This is followed by an examination of children's literature and children's choice of reading materials. Also included is the

conceptual framework which previews the concepts of choices and interests that underpin the entire framework of the research.

Chapter Three details the research design and methodology that was selected for use in this research study. The research design is a case study which is qualitative in nature set in the interpretive paradigm. The terms "case study", "qualitative", "sampling" and "interpretive paradigm" will be discussed in detail. The data collection plan is devised and presented on a table. The chapter also contains the research instruments and the research schedules, namely interviews and observations. A case study scenario engaging the respondents in order to create their own reading room will be analysed so as to respond to the two critical questions. Finally, the ethical considerations will be examined in detail.

Chapter Four presents the analysis of data collected via the interviews of learners and parents. The analysis contains related literature used after each theme was identified by the researcher. Secondly, the analysis of the observation of the reading- for-pleasure lessons and the library resource lessons will be conducted. Similar research literature will be presented after each theme. Finally, the learners' sketches will be analysed to respond to critical question one.

Chapter Five begins with the summary of findings analysed from the data collected and concludes with a proffering of suggestions and recommendations that are arrived at after the completion of the interpretative analysis for educators to consider. Included in this chapter are the limitations of the study and the conclusion.

1.6. Conclusion

In this chapter the introduction and the background to the study was explained. Secondly, the topic and the two critical or key questions were listed and an explanation was offered. Thirdly, the rationale for this research study was discussed. Fourthly, the general methodology of data collection was described. Finally, the outline of the

research study was provided in which each chapter was briefly explained and scanned. In the next chapter a review of the literature was undertaken and a conceptual framework that frames the entire research study was developed.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

In presenting the literature review, it is imperative to state that the study is focused on the reading choices of learners and not on the teaching of reading. The study will begin with scanning the field by unpacking the idea of reading as used in this study. Secondly, a selection of the definitions of reading are presented and discussed. It does this through Tella (2007), Leipzig (2001), Cziko, Greenleaf, Hurwitz and Schoenbach (2000), Taylor (1998), McTavish (2007) and Van Staden (2008). Thirdly, it examines the definition and the types of children's literature which include visual literacy, the difficulties that learners face and the PIRLS study in South Africa. Fourthly, this chapter provides a detailed description of the popular choices of reading materials that learners usually select. In addition, it explains the barriers that affect learners' reading choices. Finally, the conceptual framework is offered in which the theories of choices and interests are examined and their influences on reading choices of grade 4 learners are discussed.

2.2. What is reading?

Reading has been described as the art of interpreting printed and written words. It is regarded as one of the most effective processes of conscious learning which influences the extent and accuracy of information as well as the attitudes, morals, beliefs, judgement and action of the reader (Tella, 2007). Tella (2007) argues that reading is recognised as an art capable of transforming man's life and his entire society. Reading is a very important issue which is not only about enjoyment but a necessity, the basic tool of education. Tella (2007) further argues that a child can know much about his own environment if exposing him or herself to reading books, newspapers and magazines.

As the child is exposed to reading and develops the love for books, he or she finds it easier to explore the wealth of human experience and knowledge.

Leipzig (2001) argues that reading is a multi-faceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. Cziko, Greenleaf, Hurwitz and Schoenbach (2000) concur by arguing that reading is not a straightforward process of lifting words off the page. It is a complex process of problem solving in which the reader works to make sense of the text not just from the words and sentences on the page but also from ideas, memories, and knowledge evoked by those words and sentences. Reading is in truth active and populated by a rich mix of voices and views: those of the author, of the reader, of others the reader has heard, read about, and otherwise encountered through life.

Taylor (1998) argues that "literacy is a part of the very fabric of family life." Literacy is literally woven throughout the child's life. McTavish (2007) also argues that "young children learn about reading and writing before they come to school from the beliefs, functions and values of the people with whom they are involved." According to Cziko, Greenleaf, Hurwitz and Schoenbach (2000) reading is influenced by situational factors, among them the experiences readers have had with particular kinds of texts and reading for particular purposes.

Van Staden (2008) argues that the PIRLS framework acknowledges "that reading is a constructive and interactive process involving interaction between the reader and the text." It conveys the "notion that reading involves developing an understanding of text, thinking about it and reading different text for various purposes."

The next section presents the different reading texts that fall within the ambit of children's literature and the popular reading materials in both the European and South African contexts.

2.3. Children's Literature

Sutherland, Monson and Arbuthnot (1981) argue that anything children read and enjoy is part of their literature; however, they hold that children's literature consists of books that are not only read and enjoyed but "also meet high literary and aesthetic standards." Anderson (2006) defines children's literature as all books written for children excluding comics, joke books, cartoon books and non-fiction such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias and reference materials.

2.3.1. Types of Literature

Stewig (1980) argues that the term children's literature more accurately indicates the myriad facets this field includes. It includes genres, by age and series.

Anderson (2006) has delineated six major categories of children's literature in terms of genre:

- ❖ Picture books which include board books, concept, pattern and wordless books.
- ❖ Traditional literature which consists of folktales conveying legends, customs, ballads, fairy tales, superstitions and beliefs of people in past times.
- ❖ Fiction, including fantasy and realistic fiction.
- ❖ Non fiction.
- ❖ Biography including autobiography.
- ❖ Poetry and verse.

Children's literature by age category is divided into four sub-categories due to the divergent interests of children.

- ❖ Picture books for pre-readers ages 0-5.
- ❖ Early readers books appropriate for children ages 5-7.
- ❖ Chapter books appropriate for children ages 7-11. Short chapter books for children ages 7-9 and long chapter books for children ages 9-11.

❖ Young adult fiction appropriate for children ages 13-18.

Books that prompt the author to continue the story in a sequel or to launch a series, such as *Harry Potter, Nancy Drew, Wizard of Oz. Enid Blyton and R.L. Stine* has a series of books. It becomes imperative to also present a historical perspective of some children's literature. 1 5th Century: *Morthe d'Arthur, Tales of Robin Hood.* 17th Century*: Red Riding Hood. Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella.* 19th Century: *Snow White, Rapunzel, The Ugly Duckling, Alice in Wonderland, Heidi.* 20th Century: *Wizard of Oz, Little House on the Prairie, The Chronicles of Narnia, Harry Potter.* 21st Century: *Artemis Fowl.*

The list provided above is distinctly Eurocentric with the absence of any South African flavour.   An analysis of the data by the researcher also revealed that the books that the learners selected were basically Eurocentric.   The main source of the reading materials of the learners was the school library. The school library contained mainly Eurocentric literature. The data presented will provide ample assistance to answer my research questions: What do grade 4 learners read? Why grade 4 learners choose to read what they read?

2.3.2. Children's reading materials

In presenting what children are reading, this study draws on two studies: Weinreich's Danish Survey of 2000 and Machet's Pilot Project of 2001 in Gauteng. Weinreich's (2000) Danish Survey reveals the following list of books in order of popularity: *The Brothers Lionheart, Love at the First Hiccup, Goosebumps (series), Fairy Tales, Harry Potter (series), M1., my son, The Witch Herself, Little House on the Prairie, Winnie the Pooh.* The survey reveals that girls like reading about everyday situations, problems and recognizable feelings. Weinreich (2000) argues that girls read "inside themselves" and boys read "outside themselves." The survey also reveals that boys read science fiction, historical novels, thrillers and classical adventure books.

According to Machet's (2001), pilot study reveals that the choice of comics was not popular but its visual presentation was its draw card. The comics have western influence or orientation where the humour, attitudes and values were not accessible or interesting to South African children. 'Boys appear to be more avid comic but not magazine readers than girls when they get older' (Machet, 2001, p. 54).

Machet's (2001, p. 54) study indicates that 'magazines were the most popular form of reading material because of its accessibility and value for money. Magazines are one of the most popular forms of reading matter across genders and age groups.' They are easily obtainable and accessible. They are frequently borrowed from parents (a revelation that they are available in the home). 'Their popularity is also indicated by the fact that a relatively high proportion of respondents are prepared to buy them for themselves.' Girls read magazines far more than do boys. There are far more girls' and women's magazines available that deal with these issues. Machet argues that a greater access to this kind of material would increase the extent to which reading influences boys. Girls preferred narrative structures as compared with boys. Information in magazines is presented in narrative form (true-life stories) and is a reason why this format is popular with girls."

Although adventure stories were very popular, school and religious stories were more popular with the primary school respondents. Religion plays an important role in many of the respondents' lives. The popularity may lie in the fact that many school libraries have a quantity of religious reading materials including magazines. In terms of fiction, school and religious stories were followed by adventure stories.

Horror stories, although popular overseas, were not well received in Machet's (2001) pilot study. "Only 35% of the boys and 28% of the girls in primary schools indicated that they read this type of fiction 'often' or 'very often'". Information and non-fiction books propped up the rear of the list. The reasons commonly cited for reading these books were for homework or school research. The figures for girls were still above 60%. Girls

have more interest in factual material because they read to find things out for themselves.'

Books on audio-cassettes were more popular with children ages 7-11 than adolescents. Films and television have an important impact on children's reading in that they often influence children to read the book version. In both studies there is an absence of technological manuals as a reading source. Many children read these manuals to enable them to use the internet, television, DVD recorders and radio systems.

Most of the books comprise an international list favouring western orientation and Eurocentric influence and a lack of South African influence. The gap in the literature, it is hoped will change with the introduction of books being published by South African authors.

Machet (2001) argues that the most frequently selected single category for boys in both primary and secondary schools was sport. Girls read considerably less on sport with their reading on this topic peaking at 53% in the primary school. The interest in materials on 'animals and plants' were displayed more by respondents in the primary schools. Interest by girls in the categories 'how things work', and 'stars and outer space' also peaked at the primary school level. Machet (2001) adds that encyclopedias are the least popular form of factual reading and magazines the most appealing to both primary and secondary respondents but enthusiasm for factual information develops with age.

Sangkaeo cited in Tella (2007, p. 121) argues that we are not a reading society in Africa but a chatting society; the background of learning is through culture; the cultural habit of people who prefer listening and chatting to reading. Van Staden (2006) refers to a study conducted by the Department of Education in 2003 which indicates the 61% of grade 3 learners cannot read and write and 18.5% fail the grade and have to repeat the grade. Van Staden argues that the trend continues into high school. The transition of language of learning in grade 4 is also a root cause of poor or non-existent reading by learners.

This barrier affects the lives of about 70% of learners in South Africa. Weinreich (2000) argues that the culture of the book as a medium has lost its dominant role. The book is merely one medium among many.

In the next section Weinreich will be referred to in order to explore why children don't read. Weinreich (2000) argues that television and the internet have long since replaced books as they provoke social debate and contribute to a changing society. Kress (2003) argues that children are increasingly surrounded by multimodal forms of text. Williams (2007) concurs with this philosophy; he states that from the "lightening fast pace of television programming to the barrage of interactive images on the internet and in new video games there's no doubt that today's children are growing up in a world saturated by multiple forms of media." Ehrenworth (2003, p. 44) argues that visual literacy may be more accessible to younger children "who look before they speak, who sometimes know more than they can say." The study found that young people's households have more television sets than books.

Weinreich's (2000) survey reveals that 35% of children watch television or videos or sit at a computer for several hours a day; 15% of the children whose lives centre around play find it difficult to conform to institutional norms which require them to sit and concentrate for long periods; 5% of the children who work to supplement family income do not have the time to read.

Horn (2008) cites teacher's ill-informed choices of literature for classrooms as one of the reasons children are not motivated to read. Horn (2008) argues that teachers do not read children's literature and this is the reason for their failure to make the correct choice of reading materials to create interest and motivation. Wang (2000) argues that access to books and children's negative attitudes towards reading will hinder reading improvement.

Wang (2000) cites the following factors that influence children's attitudes towards reading: children's personal experience in reading, children's confidence in reading,

parent's attitude towards reading and teachers' ways of teaching. Tella (2007) is also of the view that access to resources and teacher influence are factors that contribute to the problem of children not reading. The literature review provides the context for this research study. The next section develops and defines this research study's conceptual framework of choices and interests.

2.4. Conceptual framework

According to Henning (2005, p. 25) a theoretical framework positions one's research in the discipline or subject in which one is working. It enables one to theorise about one's research. It is like the lenses through which one views the world. A theoretical framework also provides the orientation to a study, reflecting the stance the researcher adopts in his or her research; it 'frames' the work.

Holliday (2001), cited in Henning (2005, p. 26) refers to a theoretical framework as a 'conceptual framework.' He defines a conceptual framework as 'covering the main features of the research and their presumed relationships and says that it forces you to be explicit about what you think you are doing.' According to Henning (2005, p. 26) a conceptual framework is an 'alignment of the key concepts of the study.'

A conceptual framework includes a literature review, which signals the importance of the researcher's contribution to the production and interpretation of knowledge in a domain. This research study is based on the theory of choices and the theory of interest which the researcher relates to reading. The conceptual framework of choice and interest assisted the researcher in the analysis of the data collected through the interview instrument. In responding to the learner's reading selection the theory of choice provides the control that learners have over their reading materials. Self-selection provides greater motivation to read more and to show enhanced literary awareness.

This section examines the theory of choice and interest. This is done using the works of Clark and Phythian-Sence (2008), Choi (2005), Krashen (1993), Ainley (2006), Edmunds and Bauserman (2006), Kragler (2000) and Gambrel (1996).

2. 4.1. Choices and interests

Clark and Phythian-Sence (2008, p. 3) argue that it is widely accepted in educational circles that providing students with choice and control over their reading material enhances their involvement with and enjoyment of reading. Choices have been linked to greater levels of intrinsic motivation, greater persistence, better performance, more positive effect and higher satisfaction. It leads to independent thinking and feelings of autonomy. It promotes positive feelings about reading and improved achievement. Ryan and Deci (2000) define intrinsic motivation as having a personal interest in an activity. Readers who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to find a variety of topics that interest them. According to Clark & Rumbold (2006), intrinsic reading motivation is linked to: greater reading frequency and greater breadth of reading (Hidi, 2000) and greater reading enjoyment (Cox & Guthrie, 2001; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Wang and Guthrie's (2004) study reveal that children who were intrinsically motivated read fiction at least once a week, and in some cases almost daily.

Interest is closely related to choice. Ainley (2006) argues that interest arises from either situational stimuli or well-developed individual interest and is 'an integration of feelings, motivation and cognition.' Interest appears to have an effect on the quality of learning by increasing recall and levels of processing (Naceur & Schiefele, 2005). Interest in its many guises clearly motivates individuals to read. This is corroborated by Johns & Van Leirsburg (1994, p. 96) who argue that "helping students locate materials of interest and at desired levels of difficulty is a key aspect to improving their level of immersion in available printed materials."

Choi (2005) argues that according to the reader response theory, the readers bring their interest, personal background and prior experience to the reading process. Research related to self-selection of reading materials shows that through this shift in power,

learners take greater ownership in their learning process and their motivation to read increases. Thus in order to relate students with varied backgrounds to the reading materials and to motivate them to read and construct meaning, learners should have choices or be allowed to select their own reading materials.(Choi, 2005). Krashen (1993) argues that students who choose what they read tend to be more motivated, read more and show greater language and literacy development. Teachers like to provide choice in the classroom because they believe that it increases motivation and learning (Flowerday & Schraw, 2000). According to Gambrel (1996) 80% of pupils said that they had enjoyed books that they had selected themselves.

Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) concur with the view that children were motivated to read when they were given an opportunity to decide what they would like to read. The children were more likely to share and discuss the text they chose. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) further argue that children's reading motivation was positively influenced by books that were related to their personal experience or interests. Kragler (2000) argues that having learners choose their own reading materials is supported by Olsen's (1959) theory of child development, which states that children are 'self seeking, self selecting, and self pacing organisms.'

The theoretical framework selected is based on choice and interest. It frames or covers the main features of this research study and critical questions. The theory of choice and interest will assist in providing data to answer the two critical questions. In responding to critical question one, the theory of choice established what grade 4 learners read. In responding to critical question two the theory of interest examined why grade 4 learners choose to read what they read. This was done through the interview instrument. Self selection and personal interest are cornerstones in determining what grade 4 learners read.

2.5. Conclusion

In this chapter the idea of reading was unpacked and defined. Secondly, the definitions and types of children's literature were examined. Thereafter a detailed description of genre of the reading materials that were popular among learners was presented. This

chapter also examined some barriers that affect learners' reading choices. Finally, the conceptual framework was offered in which the theories of choice and interest were discussed.

In chapter three, a description of the research design and selected methodology will be presented. In addition to the research instruments, schedules and related terminology, a data collection table will be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed description of the research design and the methodology that was selected to generate data for this study. It begins by focussing on the scope of the study and discussing the following terms: qualitative method, interpretive paradigm, case study, and sampling. Secondly, a table depicting the data collection strategy will be presented. Thirdly, the research instrument is designed in which interviews and observations are discussed. The profiles of the learners and the research sites which include both the school and the school library are then developed. Finally, the ethical considerations governing qualitative research methodology is examined.

3.2. Scope of the Study

The research explores the reading choices of grade 4 learners at a public primary school in the Chatsworth District of the Umlazi Circuit. Five learners from grade 4 were selected to be interviewed and observed. The parents of all five learners were also interviewed but only to ascertain what was not observable during the observation and the interviews with the learners. The grade 4 English lessons comprise of an hour library resource education lesson and an hour of formal reading lesson alternating with a reading-for-pleasure lesson. These lessons provided the researcher with the opportunity to conduct the interviews and the observations 'in-situ' (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p.51). The learners come from middle to upper middle class economic environments, where the access to reading materials and the library is readily available.

The research undertaken at this public institution will provide data that is 'rich and thick' (Geertz cited in Henning, 2005, p. 6). Data should also yield the success of the reading-for-pleasure lessons conducted in the foundation phase. It is also necessary to state that

the data and analysis collated is not an indictment on the foundation phase educators. The observations entail detailed descriptions of the reading-for-pleasure lessons and the library resource education lessons with specific focus on what reading materials the learners bring to school and where and what reading material the learners select from the library and their rationale for the selection.

Access to learners and the school was not favourably welcomed by the principal of the institution. Although permission was granted, it was done with stringent pre-conditions that made access very difficult. Access to learners had to be made after school hours. The researcher had to abide by the conditions in order to complete data collection during the stipulated period between September and October. The rapport that the researcher has with the selected learners as their English educator was immensely beneficial to the research study.

3.3. The qualitative method

The research approach is qualitative in nature. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 3) define qualitative research as a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews and recordings. It involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach and the studying of things in their natural settings. It interprets the phenomena "in terms of the meaning people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Qualitative research uses multi-methods to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomena. Multi-methods add "rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry" (Flick, 2002, p. 229). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that qualitative researchers stress the socially-constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry, emphasizing the 'value-laden' nature of the inquiry, seeking answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. Research that produces 'rich descriptions' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 16)

or 'thick descriptions' (Geertz cited in Henning, 2005, p. 6) of the social world are valuable.

In response to the above description, the only way to acquire detailed data was to work within the learners' own environment. A naturalistic approach meant that the researcher interacted with participants in a day-to-day context. The data-collecting process meant that the researcher could not disturb and disrupt the normal course of the classroom time-table as it unfolded during the school day. This was also important in pursuing the pre-conditions set by the principal of the institution. The researcher interacted with and observed the participants in the natural setting of their classrooms and their school. The reading-for-pleasure lesson falls within the parameters of the English Language time-table. The Library Resource Education lesson is conducted in the school library and presented the opportunity of observing the selected participants in the school library and in their classrooms, that is, the natural setting of the learners.

This dissertation falls within the qualitative paradigm (Henning, 2005, p.3). To qualify this contention, it is imperative at this juncture to extrapolate the concept "qualitative paradigm." In a qualitative study the strength lies in the quest for understanding and for in-depth inquiry (Henning, 2005, p.3).Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.50) argues that qualitative research 'attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied.' Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.51) adds that qualitative research 'concerns with understanding the process and the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioral patterns.'

 Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.51) observes that a qualitative approach 'typically studies people, observing participants in their natural environment (in situ) and focuses on their meanings and interpretations' (Holloway & Wheeler, 1996). The emphasis is on quality and depth of information and not on the scope or breath of the information provided (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p.51).

Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.51) further argues that qualitative research methodology places little importance on developing statistically-valid samples or on searching for statistical support for hypotheses or on measuring the size or scope of phenomena. Qualitative research focuses on describing and understanding phenomena within their naturally-occurring context, called naturalistic context, with the intention of developing an understanding of the meanings imparted by the respondents – a 'seeing through the eyes of the participants' – so that the phenomena can be described in terms of the meaning that they have for the actors or participants or " concern for the individual or the meaning and purpose of those people who are their source" (Cohen et al, 2007).

The researcher observed the participants through their "eyes" with the express intention of developing an understanding of the meanings that they impart. The observations were two-fold: Observe the participants in the library and during the reading-for-pleasure lessons, to ascertain what reading materials they select in the library and what reading materials they bring to the reading-for-pleasure lesson. The next section describes the paradigm in which the study is situated. The exploratory nature of this research study falls within the interpretive paradigm.

3.4. Interpretive Paradigm

This research involves a qualitative case study situated in the interpretivist paradigm. According to Henning (2005, p. 21), interpretive research is fundamentally concerned with meaning and it seeks to understand social members' definitions and understanding of situations. It produces 'descriptive analyses that emphasize deep, interpretive understanding of social phenomena.

This section of the essay concerns the way in which research is framed. 'Research cannot be conducted in a theoretical vacuum, even though it may be exploratory' (Henning, 2005, p.12). When a researcher sets out to investigate an issue he/she does from a position of knowledge and this knowledge can frame his/her inquiry (Henning,

2005, p.12).   At this point it is imperative to indicate that the researcher is an English educator at the research site and this position of knowledge frames his inquiry.

In classifying research, Chua (1986), Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991), Henning (2005) suggested 3 categories, based on the underlying research epistemology: positivist, interpretative and critical framework. This research epistemology is the interpretivist framework.   At this juncture, a brief overview of the framework will help to elucidate the argument: Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.58) contends that interpretivism has its roots in hermeneutics, the study of the theory and practice of interpretation. Interpretative studies generally attempt to understand phenomena through meanings that people assign to them.   The ultimate aim of the interpretivist research is to offer a perspective of a situation and to analyze the situation under study in order to provide insight into the way in which a particular group makes sense of the situation or phenomena they encounter (p. 59-60).

Cohen, et al (2007, p.21) argue that the interpretivist paradigm is characterized by a concern for the individual. The interpretivist paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. To retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to get inside the person and understand from within. Interpretative researchers begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them (Cohen et al, 2007 p.22).

The researcher attempted to get inside the person and to understand from within. The interpretive paradigm frames this research as it enables one to investigate what grade four learners read and why they choose to read what they read. Interviews were conducted with the selected 5 learners and their parents. The interviews with parents re-enforced what the learners divulged but of paramount importance was the fact that a large body of facts was given by parents that would not have been forthcoming from learners during their interviews. Two major observations of learners in their natural environment were also conducted. The participants in the classroom during the reading-

for-pleasure lesson and in the school library during the library resource education lesson were also observed.

Henning (2005, p. 20) argues that unstructured observation, open interviewing, idiographic descriptions and qualitative data analysis are all ways to capture "insider" knowledge that is part of an interpretivist paradigm. It helped the researcher gain "first-hand holistic understanding of the phenomenon" (Reid and Smith, 1981, p. 87-89, cited in Cohen, et al, 2007).

3.5 The research design

This research uses an in-depth case study which is an essential facet of this interpretive research. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 253) define case study as a 'specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle. The single instance is of a bounded system, for example a child, a clique, a class, a school, a community. It provides a unique example of real people in real situations,'
This study will focus on the 'specific' instance of a public primary school with its 'specific' participants who are the five grade four learners and their parents and the bounded system consists of the grade four English classes.

Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.70) argues that a research design is a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selections of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done.   Sharan Merriam (1999, p18-19) argues that a case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved.   The interest is in process, context and discovery rather than outcomes, variables and confirmation.   According to Bromley (1991, p302, cited in Cohen et al, 2007), case study is a 'systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aim to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest.'   Cohen et al (2007, p253) refer to case study as a specific instance designed to illustrate a general principle. It provides a unique example of real people in real situations.

The researcher has access to the "real people in real situations" in the context of this public primary school, its participants and its environment. The grade four learners in their English language class lessons provide the in-situ environment.

Nieuwenhuis (2007, p75) argues that case studies strive towards a comprehensive (holistic) understanding of how participants relate and interact. Geertz (1973, p6-10) states that "the case study strives to catch the close-up reality and 'thick description' of participants' lived experiences, thoughts and feelings for a situation." Stake (2005, p. 444) argues that the "case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied." Jupp (2006) argues that "'case' can be an individual person, an event, or a social activity, group, organization or institution."

 'Case' in this research will refer to 'exploration of the reading choices of grade 4 learners.' The concept of reading choices and interests of grade 4 learners will be investigated in detail to ascertain 'thick descriptions'(Geertz cited in Henning, 2005, p. 6) of the phenomena and how it manifests itself or how it is played out in the grade 4 classroom with grade 4 learners in this public primary school. This research has been confined to only one public primary school and, in particular, the grade four class within the school. This scenario was selected to provide the researcher ample opportunity and access to the participants and the school as the researcher is an English language educator of the grade 4 class at this institution.

Schrank (2006) argues that case study must involve a wide array of different data sources and analytical strategies. The researcher used a wide array of data sources: Semi-structured interviews for learners and parents, observation schedules for reading-for-pleasure lessons conducted in the grade 4 classroom and library resource education lessons conducted in the school library, and the specific scenario, where the selected learners were given the floor plan of the school library and told to insert the reading materials that they would select for themselves and their friends in the floor plan, were

included in the array of sources selected because they fall within the ambits of case study research.

3.5.1. Sampling

Nieuwenhuis (2007, p. 79) notes that sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for study. Schrank (2006) argues that the qualitative researcher tends to study small samples of purposively chosen cases of a given event or process. Gobo (2007) argues that purposive sampling consists of 'detecting cases within extreme situations as for certain characteristics or cases within a wide range of situations in order to maximize variation.' Creswell (2008) argues that purposeful sampling involves the researcher intentionally selecting individuals or 'researchers handpick cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality.' Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 103) argue that the purpose is "to learn from and collect data about the central phenomenon." The central phenomenon in this case is 'the exploration of the reading choices of grade 4 learners.'

To this end, the researcher selected 5 learners whose performances ranked in the top 10 in the grade 4 classes. The learners were selected because they would provide "rich descriptions" (Geertz cited in Henning, 2005, p. 6) or "information rich" (Patton, 1990, p.169, cited in Creswell, 2008) data to answer the critical question: What do grade 4 learners read?

'Homogeneous sampling' (Creswell, 2008) was selected because the learners have 'similar traits and characteristics.' The learners were all 10 years old, come from the same site and appear in the top ten ranking in their grade and are avid readers. The fact that all 5 learners were female is not incidental. The study by the Clark & Foster (2005) have shown that boys enjoy reading less and therefore read less than girls, while children from lower socio-economic backgrounds read less for enjoyment than children from more privileged social classes (Clark & Akerman, 2006), justifies the selection.

Five learners from the grade 4 classes have been accessed. This is case study research which requires 'thick descriptions' and a selection of 5 learners will assist in eliciting this 'rich' data. This study is concerned with the understanding of the reading phenomena and detailed interviews and observations of 5 learners will provide answers to the critical questions. The learners' academic performance was used to select the learners. Learners were also questioned about their reading habits and frequency of reading before the final selection was made. The academic performance was ranked in merit order to facilitate the selection process. The assumption is that learners who perform well academically would be able to generate the 'rich' data that is required to answer the two critical questions. The researcher planned the interviews, with the express purpose of safeguarding the ethics of the research process and not to compromise the anonymity and confidentiality of the selected participants and that of their parents, and finally, that of the selected public primary school. After careful consideration, purposive sampling to select participants was used. Five learners of a total of 58 learners in the grade 4 classes were selected. Consent from the parents of the learners for learner and their own (parent's) participation was sought and received via consent forms (see annexure A-J). The venue for learner interviews was negotiated with the learners. The initial venue was to be the school's computer room because it is sound-proofed but learners wanted to be interviewed in their own classrooms with other learners present. A negotiated agreement was eventually reached with the entire class in terms of the use of the classroom with the express condition that the functionality of the time table was not compromised. The five learners were given pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of the selected learners.

Five parents of the final selected learners were accessed. The choice of the parents was made to add the 'rich' data that was generated by the learners and to fill the gaps that were observable during learner interviews and also to corroborate the information gleaned from the learners.

3.5.2. Profile of the research site

The intention of the study is to analyse the 'reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read.' The site selected is Sapphire Jade Primary School [pseudonym], a public primary school in the Queensburgh Circuit of the Umlazi district. The school is situated in a suburb that lies in between the township of Chatsworth and the suburbs of Malvern and Hillary. The school is 41 years old. It is an ex- House of Delegates school that previously catered for the Indian population. There are 412 learners which comprises of 1, 2% African, and 0% White, 4% Coloured and 98.4% Indian learners. The population includes learners from the districts of Malvern, Hillary, Umhlatuzana Township, Chatsworth, Merebank, Pinetown, and Shallcross and as far afield as Dassenhoek. Female learners constitute 51, 45% of the population. An interesting fact that emerged from the statistics of pupil performance in the 2008 final examination reveal that 12 of the 15 top achievers were female learners (80%). Hence the sampling of learners selected from grade 4 purposively favours the female learner. Although the school is easily accessible via six entrances to the suburb, the learner population is on a steady decline. Most of the necessary infrastructure is prevalent and therefore the school is considered to be advantaged, although the school lacks a sports field. The school does not have a fully-fledged library. The library is presently housed in a classroom and is fairly functional. The majority of learners are of lower to upper middle class economic status. The rest are divided between the rich and economically-poor class. The medium of instruction is English. The school has 16 teachers of Indian descent and one African teacher. All teachers have an English bias. Sixteen teachers have professional qualifications to teach. The two educators who are in charge of teaching English are professionally-qualified. One has a Bachelor of Pedagogic degree with English III as her specialization. The other educator has a Bachelor of Education Honours Degree and is currently in his second year of the Master in Education programme in education.

3.5.3. The school library

The school library is an ordinary classroom situated in the junior primary section of the school. The block, being in the confines of the foundation phase, is extremely noisy and not conducive to conducting library activities in silence and in accordance with existing norms. The room can only cater for a maximum of 15 learners at a time, but by library standards this number is too large by far. The shelves are placed against the windows creating an atmosphere that is stifling and stuffy so it is not a very healthy situation. The lights have to be switched on continuously which adds to the heat that is present in the room. Comparatively though, the library does provide a service by its mere presence and functionality.

An audit of the library conducted for this research study reveals the following statistics depicted in the table below.

GENRE	NUMBER OF BOOKS
Encyclopaedia	71
Novels	28
Magazines	54
Short Stories	542
Fairy Tales	530
Detective Stories	2
Zulu	158
Senior English	326
Afrikaans	284

Table 1: Number of reading materials in the library.

The library did not receive any new novels in the past 10 years. The government subsidy to upgrade library resources was halted to engage in transformation. Second-hand books were sponsored by the American Institute, which comprised of predominantly English language textbooks. The table above suggests that the library has more short stories and fairy tales. The records of the borrowing power of the learners from grade 4 to 7 reveal an interesting set of statistics. The total number of books borrowed is 135. Sixty one books of this total were borrowed by the grade fours.

Most grade 4 learners borrowed about 10 books in 2009. Respondent 4 and respondent 5 were amongst the most prolific borrowers in grade 4 (12 -13 books). Although the library is open for borrowing on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the grade 4 four learners borrow their books during the Library Resource Education [LRE] lessons. During these one-hour lessons the class is split into two groups. One group attends the Computer Lesson and the other the LRE lesson. This compromise assists the librarian in conducting the act of borrowing successfully by working with a smaller number.

The librarian is also an educator who teaches other learning areas. During the periods when the librarian is busy teaching, the library is closed. If any teacher wishes to use the library for lessons, permission has to be sought from the principal. Very few, if any, lessons are taught in the library. A valuable opportunity to promote the library as the hub of learning is lost through this bureaucracy.

The librarian is employed by the school governing board. She is currently in her second year of study for her teaching degree through correspondence. There is a distinct lack of library expertise. Given the fact that the library only became functional at the end of April, the number of books borrowed by the individual grade 4 learner was 10. There is no record of the titles of books borrowed by each learner. Records of what genre of books were borrowed and by whom with specific emphasis on grade 4 learners were clearly omitted. This would have provided the researcher with data on what genre was most frequently, or least frequently, borrowed by the five selected respondents.

The researcher attempted to gain some insight by organising the research plan into scenario, observations and interviews. The analysis of the data would reveal the success of this venture. This library, however, displays a distinct lack of "up-to-date or attractively packaged" reading materials (Moss and McDonald, 2004, p. 406).

Moss and McDonald (2004) argue that their study revealed that "girls were not borrowing significantly more books than boys (an average of only one more than the boys)." They also argue that the teaching class comprise of "similar proportion of boys

and girls, an equal spread of educational attainment and the economic status being middle class."

By comparison Sapphire Jade Primary has a similar economic trait but contrasts in "educational attainment" (Moss and McDonald, 2004, p. 406) and the borrowing power of girls. Girls' "educational attainment" is far superior to boys. The results of the 2008 examinations show that 12 of the top 15 learners in the senior primary phase were girls. More girls borrow books from the library than boys. The library records reveal that only 61 books were borrowed by a total of 56 learners in grade 4. There is no record of what books are read in the library or if the books are read continuously over the weeks during the LRE lessons. Each grade has one LRE lesson per week. The librarian also does not have a record of what books are passed from one child to the next before the text is returned to the library. This is an opportunity for an analysis of the "reading networks of genres," (Moss and McDonald, 2004, p. 411) which could be explored in future research in South African primary schools. The lack of relevant data in the library record will be supplemented by information supplied by the respondents during their interviews.

3.5.4. Profile of the learners

It is imperative to present a profile of the selected grade four learners. The researcher has used purposive sampling to select 5 grade 4 learners from Sapphire Jade Primary. The criteria used were the following: age (learners were 10 years old at the time of selection), avid readers, grade (learners had to be from the grade 4 classes), performance (learners were selected from a merit list drawn from the June Assessment Schedule). Their academic attainment placed them in the top 5 positions in their respective classes. An exposition of their results revealed the following statistics in the table below.

RESPONDENTS	ENGLISH %	AGGREGATE %
Angela	92	88
Brenda	84	88
Candice	89	92
Deborah	83	90
Evelyn	83	85

Table 2: June (2009) academic results of the selected learners.

The selection of learners from one racial group was incidental rather than deliberate and merely represents the learner population of the site. Ninety eight percent of the school population comprise learners of Indian origin. The sampling strategy resulted in the selection of learners from advantaged, upper-middle class economic backgrounds.

The researcher selected learners who could best provide the necessary data to answer the two critical questions: What do grade 4 learners read and why do they choose to read what they read? The five learners were articulate and understood the questions posed in the interviews and were able to complete the tasks of selecting library books during the LRE lessons, present their selection of reading materials for the reading-for-pleasure lessons as well as completing the scenario of creating their own reading room using the present school library floor plan. They were the best informers of data. The researcher's selection was based on the criteria that to achieve or collect 'rich descriptions' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 16) or 'thick descriptions' (Geertz cited in Henning, 2005, p. 6), the best informers needed to be purposively selected.

The learners are referred to as respondents, here-in cited as ANGELA, BRENDA, CANDICE, DEBORAH, and EVELYN and their respective parents are cited as P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5 for convenience and ease of reference.

3.6. Data collection plan

Before defining the parameters for each question, it is necessary to list the method adopted. The main sources are interviews. Use was made of Vithal and Jansen's (1997, p. 22-23) data collection strategy table to develop a data collection plan. The table that follows here-under presents the plan with the rationale for the choices made.

Table 3: Data Collection plan

CRITICAL QUESTIONS	❖ What do grade 4 learners read? This question examines the selection of reading materials made by grade 4 learners ❖ Why do grade 4 learners choose to read what they read? This question explores the learners' rationale for the selection of their reading materials. (Data derived from question one will be used to answer question two.)
1. Why is the data being collected?	❖ To determine what grade 4 learners read and gain insights about why grade 4 learners choose to read what they read.
2. What is the strategy?	❖ **Interview:** Grade 4 learners to ascertain what they read and why they choose to read what they read. Design interview instrument and record data. ❖ **Interview:** Parents of selected grade 4 learners will be interviewed only to ascertain what is not observable during lessons. The researcher will design the instrument and record data. What do the children read? Can they read the weather report? Do they read the recipe when you are cooking or baking? ❖ **Observation:** The grade 4 learners will be taken to the library to observe the type of reading materials that they choose: comics, newspapers, books, magazines, or electronic media. Data will be recorded. ❖ Observation: During the reading-for-pleasure lesson, the researcher will observe what reading materials they bring from home to read and data will be recorded. ❖ **Scenario**: Grade 4 learners will be presented with the scenario: If you could plan a reading room, what reading material would you put in it? Observe and record data.

3. Who or what will be the sources of the data?	❖ Grade 4 learners will be interviewed and observed. ❖ Parents of grade 4 learners will be interviewed.
4. How many of the data sources will be accessed?	❖ Five learners from the grade 4 class will be accessed. This is case study research which requires 'thick descriptions' and a selection of 5 learners will assist in eliciting this 'rich' data. This study is concerned with understanding of the reading phenomena and detailed interviews and observations of 5 learners will provide answers to the critical questions. ❖ Five parents of the selected learners will be accessed.
5. Where is the data to be collected?	❖ The 5 learners will be interviewed and observed and 5 parents will be interviewed at a public primary school in the Chatsworth district.

6. How often will the data be collected?	❖ One interview per learner. ❖ The first part of the interview will elicit what they read. ❖ The second part will probe the reason for their choice of reading materials. ❖ Three observations over a fortnight: In the library and during the reading-for-pleasure lesson. ❖ One detailed interview per parent over a fortnight.
7. How will the data be collected?	❖ Data will be collected through tape recorded interviews in the school where the learners and parents are comfortable and safe. ❖ A transcript of the interview of the parent and the learner will be generated for data analysis and corroboration. ❖ Detailed notes of the observations will be recorded in a journal.
8. Justify this plan for data collection. Why is this the best way of collecting data for these critical questions?	❖ 1. The combination of the informal conversational interview and the interview guide approach will provide in-depth, 'rich' data on the reading patterns of grade 4 learners: what do grade 4 learners read and their choices for the reading materials that they read. The combination increases the relevance and comprehensiveness of the data. Gaps are anticipated and closed because interviews are built on and emerge from observations (in the library, during reading-for-pleasure lessons,

	during the scenario. In the primary school context learners respond more freely to semi-structured or conversational situations. Interviews are the ideal source for data collection as it will provide direct evidence of what they read and probing questions will be able to elicit why they choose to read what they read. Oral questions are easier for grade 4 learners to comprehend than written questions, as the teacher can explain the questions to the learners immediately in a face-to-face interview. Interviewing the parents of the selected learners will assist the researcher to ascertain what is not observable during the lessons and the scenario. Parents will be able to accurately reflect what transpires outside the school setting and provide the necessary data to the two critical questions. Taped recorded interviews and the transcripts generated from them will attest to its validity and reliability

3.7. The research instruments

3.7.1. The semi-structured interview

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) define an interview as an interchange of views between people on topics of mutual interest. They believe in the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production. Interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, from their own view point. It involves data collection through direct verbal interaction between individuals.

This research study involves knowledge production and the research design requires an interaction between people of mutual interest. Data collection also requires personal views of the participants; an interview is ideally suited to this process. The semi-structured interview has been selected as the primary source of data collation. In the primary school context learners respond more freely to semi-structured or conversational situations. The combination of the informal conversational interview and

the interview guide approach provides in-depth, 'rich' data on the reading choices of grade 4 learners: what do grade 4 learners read and what are the reasons for their choices for the reading materials that they read. The combination increases the relevance and comprehensiveness of the data.

Creswell (2008) argues that interviewing is as popular as observation in qualitative research. In qualitative research open-ended questions are asked to enable the participants to voice their own opinions sans the perspectives of the researcher or past research. The researcher audiotapes the conversation and transcribes the information into words for analysis. Creswell (2008) advocates the use of one-on-one interviews where the researcher works with one participant in the study at a time.

In this qualitative research project several one-on-one interviews were used. Five semi-structured interviews with learners in their natural setting and five semi-structured interviews with the parents of the five selected learners were conducted. The purpose of the interview was to generate data to answer two critical questions: What do grade 4 learners read and why do they choose to read what they read?
The strategy selected to collate data follows:
1. Interview: Five grade 4 learners to ascertain what they read and why they choose to read what they read. The researcher designed the interview instrument and recorded the data that was generated.
2. Interview**:** Parents of the five selected grade 4 learners will be interviewed only to ascertain what is not observable during lessons. The researcher designed the interview instrument and recorded the data that was generated. What do the children read? Can they read the weather report? Do they read the recipe when you are cooking or baking?

The researcher used 'one-on-one interviews' (Creswell, 2008) with the learners where only one participant at a time was interviewed. The learners were given a demonstration on the use of the tape recorder. Initially they were quite apprehensive but after the demonstration they took to it 'like a duck to water.' The sound of their

voices on tape for the first time was a novelty that carried on throughout the interview. This casual and relaxed approach enabled the learners to be totally comfortable and they eventually forgot about the tape recorder. The disadvantage of the tape recorder is usually that respondents present answers that they think are appropriate for the interviewer. To this end, the researcher conducted parental interviews to fill the gaps as they appear, and to present information that would not be readily forthcoming from the interviews of the learners. A moot point to note at this stage is that the learners' answers were honest and succinct. The principal researcher resisted the temptation to make any input other than asking the questions from the interview schedule and resultant questions. This was extremely important in eradicating subjectivity and personal bias on the part of the interviewer. Their willingness to participate was commendable and gratifying. Transcripts of the learners' interviews were given to the learners so that they could make their additions, amendments and deletions that they saw fit in consultation with the interviewer. The transcript was then ready for analysis.

The venue for the parental interviews had to be selected. The researcher's classroom was chosen to conduct these interviews. This was done prior to the start of the school day and after school hours as per the pre-conditions set by the principal of the school in acceding to the researcher's request for the use of the premises to complete the research project. The times were prudently selected to ensure and maximize the opportunity to conduct the interviews in a noise and disruption free environment. The interview schedule was given to the parents prior to the interview for perusal with the sole purpose of familiarity and understanding of the questions and the purpose of the study. The researcher acceded to parental requests to ensure that the parents were as comfortable as possible.

The presence of the parents in the early hours of the school day attests to their commitment to the success of their child's education. The comfort of the parents became increasingly obvious when they displayed complete oblivion of the presence of the tape-recorder. By implication, the researcher concluded that information was not withheld in any form and was freely divulged. The researcher's casual briefing

regarding the purpose of the interview and the nature of the study ensured that the interviewees were at ease and a casual rapport ensued.

The researcher was fortunate that two parents were directly involved in the research process themselves. One was currently engaged in a Master in Nursing programme herself and the other works in the research facility in a university. This ensured that there was no resistance to their participation in the study. At this stage it is also important to add that written consent had been obtained from the parents themselves.

The researcher's technical expertise in the use of the tape recorder facilitated an interview process that was smooth and trouble-free. Extra batteries and audio cassettes were taken into the interview room and prior testing was conducted to eradicate any and all mishaps. This was done to ensure that no intrusions were present during the interview process. The tape recorder proved to be a technical advantage to the process of transcript generation after the interviews. The transcripts were given to the interviewees at this stage of data generation for perusal to ensure its accuracy. The parent had the right to make any additions, amendments and deletions if they so desired, provided there was a negotiated agreement between them. The transcript was then ready for analysis and recommendations.

3.7.2. The interview schedule

The researcher designed an interview protocol in accordance with Asmussen & Creswell (1995) and Gay & Airasian (2003) as cited in Creswell (2007). According to Creswell (2007, p. 230) the 'checklist represents the order in which one might consider before, during and after the interview.' The researcher approached both sets of interviews with two sets of questions-one set for the parents and the other for the learners. "The direct verbal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee to gather research-relevant data," (Cohen, et al, 2007, p. 269) was conducted to answer the critical question: What do grade 4 learners read?

Oral questions are easier for grade 4 learners to comprehend than written questions, as the teacher can explain the questions to the learners immediately in a face-to-face interview. The questions for the learners were to ascertain what they read and why they choose to read what they read. The set of questions began as simple ice breakers to the more complex that elicited a detailed response from the learners about their choices. Initial questions elicited responses of a factual information-gathering nature to the complex reasoning form.

The format was similar to that of the learner interviews; however, the set of 12 questions for the parent component of the interview process was designed to fill in the gaps or present information that would not be forthcoming from the responses of the learners during their interviews. Parents are able to accurately reflect what transpires outside the school setting and provide the necessary data to answer the two critical questions. The questions also attempted to corroborate relevant data that was offered by the learners.

The interview schedule created an order by which the process unfolded and avoided unnecessary repetition and time-consuming readjustment or realignment of the questions. The interview schedule also has the added advantage of presenting a preamble to the interviews which sets out the conditions and all the ethical issues associated with the process of interviews.

3.7.3. Observations

In addition to conducting interviews with both the learners and their parents, the researcher used observation as a tool for generating the required data to be able to answer the two critical questions of the study. According to Creswell (2008), observation as a tool is as popular as interviews in gathering data. Creswell (2008, p. 221) argues that it is a "process of gathering open-ended, first-hand information by observing people at a research site." He further argues that observation requires 'careful attention to visual detail' (p. 222). Observations used as a data-capturing mechanism are 'attractive as they afford the researcher the opportunity to gather 'live'

data from 'live' situations (Cohen, et al, 2007, p. 305). It accords the researcher the opportunity to "see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed and to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations" (Cohen, et al, 2007, p. 305).

The researcher recorded detailed "descriptive field notes" (Creswell, 2008, p. 225) on the following strategies that were adopted to generate the necessary data.

- ❖ Observation 1: The researcher took the grade 4 learners to the library to observe the type of reading materials that they usually choose: comics, newspapers, books, magazines, or electronic media. He recorded the data as he observed the learners 'in-situ.' Special emphasis was placed on the type of reading materials that they selected and to which section and shelf they proceeded as soon as they entered the library. Careful observations were made on how they went about selecting the reading materials before they sat down to begin to read. Questions on how and why they selected that particular material to read were posed to them to add to the 'richness' of the observable data that was recorded. Four learners proceeded to the Senior/Junior Section containing fairy tales and adventure novels. One learner went directly to the encyclopaedia section of the library then proceeded to the Science section and selected a novel on planets. This observation and responses to the questions were recorded in the journal.

- ❖ Observation 2: During the reading-for-pleasure lesson, the researcher observed the reading materials that they brought from home to read and recorded the data that was observed. An interesting feature was that each learner brought a minimum of five reading materials to school. Observations on what they chose to read first were recorded: The following respondents, ANGELA, BRENDA, CANDICE and EVELYN selected adventure novels and fairy tales to read. DEBORAH selected her Child Craft encyclopaedia to read. A casual chat about the remaining four reading materials with each respondent ensued. An acutely observable trait among the girls was their interest in reading a 'Bratz' magazine which contained general information that pertains to teenage girls. Topics

ranging from cosmetics, fashion, celebrities and music were discussed. DEBORAH, who brought the magazine, was hesitant to discuss the magazine because the learner's mum was unaware that she was reading her elder sister's magazine, because she was fascinated by it.

❖ Scenario: The researcher presented the grade 4 learners with the scenario: If you could plan a reading room, what reading material would you put in it for yourself and your friends? They were presented with a floor plan of the school library in order to create a tangible and realistic working environment for the learners to plan their version of a reading room. The floor plan was collected and their responses that they recorded on it were analysed.

3.8. Ethical considerations

This research is a qualitative case study which "involves taking extensive data from the people being questioned or observed" (Bassey, 1999, p. 77) and there after conducting an extensive analysis of the given data. Bassey (1999) contends that 'in order to sustain the concept of 'respect for persons' and their co-operation to use the data it is customary to seek their permission in writing prior to collation. In this regard the researcher employed the following steps. Firstly, he sought permission from the Department of Education, principal, learners and the parents of learners. Secondly, he assured the learners and parents of their anonymity and confidentiality of their participation in the study. Thirdly, he prepared and sent consent forms (see Annexure A-J) prior to any data collection exercise. Data collection commenced only when all consent forms were signed and returned by the parents. When the principal of the school gave consent for the use of the premises, he began data collection by giving the learners and the parents the interview questions in advance, as requested. Fourthly, the interview schedule indicated to learners and parents that they could withdraw at any time. The schedule also indicated to learners and parents that they could change answers after reading transcripts of interview. Moreover, he assured the learners and the parents in the preamble to each interview that findings would not be divulged without

prior approval and the express consent in this regard. He indicated that the findings would only be used for research purposes. Furthermore, the learners and parents were assured that participation was voluntary and not compulsory. In addition, the learner and parents were informed at the interview that resultant questions would be posed during and or after the interviews. Finally ethical clearance from the ethics committee was sought prior to the undertaking of the research study.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter discussed at great length the research methodology selected by the researcher and the rationale for his choices. The chapter unfolded with a definition of the qualitative method which is set within the interpretive paradigm. Secondly, the concept of interpretivism was discussed. Thirdly, case study and its methods were explained. Sampling was extrapolated at length. Fourthly, a profile of the research site was generated which included both the school and the library as sites that generated data. A profile of the learners was presented which included the pseudonyms that were provided to ensure anonymity of the respondents. A data collection plan was drawn up and discussed. The research instruments and the schedules were devised. These included interviews and observations. Finally, the ethical clearance that governs qualitative research was detailed. In the next chapter the data collected will be presented and analysed. The chapter will begin with the analysis of the main source of data collection: the interviews. Thereafter the observations and the scenario will be analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of all the data collected using the different strategies which fall within the ambits of a qualitative case study. The chapter begins with the data analysis of interviews of learners. The interviews will be presented in the form of responses to themes that the researcher has identified from the data collected. Secondly, the interviews of parents will be analysed and presented in the same manner as that of the learner interviews. Thirdly, the two sets of observations, which contain both the reading-for-pleasure lessons and the LRE lessons will be analysed. Finally, the case study scenario will be examined. Thereafter, a summary of the chapter will be developed.

4.2. Findings:

4.2.1 Interviews

This section begins with the interviews with learners and presents the findings and analysis of the data collected. Secondly, the interviews with the parents are presented and analysed. Finally, a conclusion is presented.

The interviews with learners were conducted only after all the ethical considerations governing interviews with learners had been completed and met. Consent forms were sent to the parents, learners, the principal of the site, the University and Department of Education. Only when the consent forms were signed by all respondents and participants and collected by the researcher, did the interviews commence. The researcher accepted and abided by the stringent pre-conditions set by the head of the selected site. Interviews were conducted during the breaks and after school hours.

The first sets of questions were ice-breakers to get the respondents to be as comfortable as possible. The researcher is currently the grade 4 English educator. This created a rapport which was conducive for eliciting the 'richest' data from the respondents. For the purposes of this research study the questions will be presented as themes.

In response to the question of whether the participants read, it was found that all five respondents responded in the affirmative. This was expected as they were selected because of their reading prowess.

4.2.1.1. Reading frequency

ANGELA: "I read almost everyday."
BRENDA: "I read half an hour when I come from school and half an hour in the
        evening."
CANDICE: "At school and after school."
DEBORAH: "Sir, twice a week."
EVELYN: "Twice a week."
 In response to reading frequency of the respondents, it was noted that the reading patterns differ: DEBORAH and EVELYN read twice a week and ANGELA, BRENDA and CANDICE at least once a day. This does not include all the reading that takes place during school hours. Whether they are taking down notes from the board or completing an exercise or referring to a chart or poster when the teacher is teaching is considered reading.   According to Clark and Foster (2005), 42% of the girls indicated that they read almost everyday and 33% indicated that they read twice a week. Weinreich's (2000) study revealed that 63% of girls read often and 19% read regularly. The data of this study concurs with these two studies even if this is on a smaller scale.

4.2.1.2. Reading times

In response to reading times learners differed with regards to their reading habits. Some preferred reading at school while others preferred reading at home.

4.2.1.3. Best reading times

ANGELA: "In school. Because, there are a lot of things to read like charts, worksheets and so on."
BRENDA: "My best time to read is in the afternoon."
CANDICE: "The best time for me to read is at school."
DEBORAH: "At night."
EVELYN: "In the afternoon."

In response to the best reading times, 60% of the respondents indicated that they read in the afternoons and 40% indicated that their favourite time was in school. Angela and Candice's responded that their best time to read was in school.

4.2.1.4. Reading companions

All respondents indicated that they read alone. CANDICE felt that she should read alone because people disturb her. EVELYN reads in the afternoon because her sister goes to sleep and there is no noise. Clark and Foster's (2005) study reveal that girls read with their mothers and teachers (46% and 41% respectively) contrary to what this interview revealed at 0%; although the parents of DEBORAH and BRENDA indicated that they did converse with their children about what they read.

4.2.1.5. Reading choices

ANGELA: "I read magazines, novels, comics, newspapers, billboards."
BRENDA: "I read novels, newspapers, comics, billboards and magazines."

CANDICE: "I read novels about super heroes, and about cartoon characters, about comics, magazines, newspapers, billboards, the T.V."

DEBORAH: "Encyclopedias, science, child craft, horror books and novels."

EVELYN: "Magazines, books, newspapers, billboards, storybooks, adventure."

READING MATERIALS (April- September 2009)	PERCENTAGE of RESPONDENTS
Magazines	80
Newspapers	80
Novels	80
Billboards	80
Comics	60
Encyclopaedias	20
Science	20
Horror	20
TV.	20

Table 4: Percentage of respondents reading materials choices

The learners were asked to provide a list of five reading materials that they usually read. The table above reflects data of materials read during the period April to September. The library only opened in April. The percentage reflects the total of the 25 materials that was provided by the learners. In response to the reading choices of the learners, it was found that magazines, novels and newspapers were popular reading materials of 80% of the respondents while 20% preferred encyclopedias, and science materials, especially in the case of DEBORAH. The English study of Clark and Foster (2005) reveal the following statistics: magazines-82.9%, fiction-54.1%, newspaper-44.3%, encyclopeadias-17.3%. Coles and Hall's (2002) study concurs, "Girls' non-book reading, of magazines and periodicals, is also a very significant part of their reading diet." An interesting reading material that appeared in this study was billboards; an indication that reading is not confined to the home or the school but also on the 'run or in motion.'

4.2.1.6. Reading undertaken at school

In response to the reading materials read in school it was found that textbooks, charts and worksheets formed the bulk of the reading materials followed by books and then the chalkboard. A notable omission was the computer, given the fact that they have computer lessons every week. This is illustrated by the learner's responses and in the table provided below.

ANGELA: "I read textbooks and worksheets."

BRENDA: "I read worksheets, charts, books, textbooks."

CANDICE: "I read novels, charts, textbooks, chalkboard and worksheets."

DEBORAH: "In school I read worksheets and charts and I read books from the library."

EVELYN: "I read worksheets. I read charts and I read books and textbooks."

READING MATERIALS	PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS
Worksheets	100
Textbooks	80
Charts	80
Novels	80

Table 5: Reading materials read by respondents in school.

4.2.1.7. Reading undertaken at home

ANGELA: "I read newspapers, recipes."

BRENDA: "I read story books, newspapers, magazines."

CANDICE: "Novels, newspaper, the T.V. and magazines."

DEBORAH: "At home I read the child craft books and charts."

EVELYN: "At home I read the T.V. I read the computer. I read the newspaper and I read books."

RESPONDENTS	READING MATERIALS READ AT HOME
Angela	Newspaper, recipes
Brenda	Newspaper, magazines, story books
Candice	Newspaper, magazines, T.V., novels
Deborah	Child craft, charts
Evelyn	Newspaper, books, TV., computer

Table 6: Reading materials read at home.

In response to what the learners read at home, it was noted that newspapers formed the bulk of what was read at home, followed by magazines, books, T.V., computer and recipes. DEBORAH reads child craft books and charts. There seems to be a decided lack of variety in the choice of reading materials at the home of DEBORAH, yet there is no decline in her reading interest. Another interesting factor emerged, in terms of the culture of reading: the reading materials that were read at school differed from that read at home. In school, worksheets formed the bulk of the reading materials and the newspaper formed the bulk of what was read at home. The only constant in the selection of similar reading material was that of Deborah who reads child craft books.

4.2.1.8. Favourite reads

ANGELA: "Firstly, I read magazines, then novels, story books, comics about cartoon characters, billboards."
BRENDA: "Number one is fairytales. Number two is religious stories. Number three billboards. Number four comics and number five newspapers."
CANDICE: "Novels, T.V., newspaper, comics, cartoon characters and charts."
DEBORAH: "Encyclopaedias, science, child craft, horror and novels."
EVELYN: "Number one is adventures and books on animals. Number two is magazine. Number three is newspapers. Number four is the television and number five is novels."

RESPONDENTS	FAVOURITE READS
Angela	Magazines, novels, story books,
Brenda	Fairy tales, religious stories, billboards
Candice	Novels, TV., newspaper
Deborah	Encyclopaedias, science, child craft
Evelyn	Animal adventure, magazines, newspaper

Table 7: Preferred reading materials

This study reveals the following preferred choices of the respondents: ANGELA-magazines, BRENDA- fairy tales, CANDICE- novels, DEBORAH- encyclopaedias, EVELYN- animal adventure books. Of the 25 listed reading materials the following percentages were noted: novels 0.16%, newspapers 0.12%, comics 0.12%, magazines, billboards, T.V. 0.08%, Encyclopaedias, science, child craft, horror 0.04%. DEBORAH was the only respondent who was consistent in reflecting what reading materials she reads. Coles and Hall (2002) point out that "as a proportion of their total reading diet, girls read comparatively more adventure, horror/ghost, animal, school-related stories and books about relationships and romance." The choice of DEBORAH and EVELYN concurs with this study.

4.2.1.9. Reading enjoyment

ANGELA: "Yes, I like to read. I like to read because there are a lot of things you can learn. You can learn different words. Your vocabulary builds up."
BRENDA: "Yes! I like to read because of the environment and many more things".
CANDICE: "Yes. I think when I read I get new words so it largens my vocabulary."
DEBORAH: "Yes. Reading is educational and it helps you learn more words everyday."
EVELYN: "Yes. I like to read because I can understand things a lot more and I can also do my work easier."

In response to their enjoyment of reading all the respondents indicated that they liked to read. All respondents suggested that they fully understood the educational value of

reading and how it affected them in a personal capacity and in the academic sphere of the school. Angela, Candice and Deborah pointed out that reading increased their vocabulary as the major benefit. Brenda revealed that she read so that she got more information about the environment. Evelyn, on the other hand, gained a better understanding of things and work becomes easier. This knowledge is what creates their 'intrinsic motivation' to read. Ryan and Deci (2000) define intrinsic motivation as' having a personal interest in an activity. Readers who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to find a variety of topics that interest them.' According to Clark & Rumbold (2006) 'intrinsic reading motivation' is linked to 'greater reading frequency and greater breadth of reading (Hidi, 2000) and greater reading enjoyment' (Cox & Guthrie, 2001; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Wang and Guthrie's (2004) study reveals that children who were intrinsically motivated' read fiction at least once a week, and in some cases almost daily.'

4.2.1.10. Reading motivation

ANGELA: "My parents and teachers."
BRENDA: "My mum and my sister. Sir, they are always reading. They read to me. They read aloud. They read to themselves."
CANDICE: "My grandmother. She reads all the time and to the baby she takes care of."
DEBORAH: "Both my parents. My mother is studying and she reads a lot of articles and my father is also studying and he reads most of his notes everyday. He's also on the computer and searches for information on the internet."
EVELYN: "My parents. My parents always like me to read so I can read to my sisters and they won't have to read hard words to me."

In response to reading motivation ANGELA, DEBORAH and EVELYN indicated that it was their parents who had the greatest influence on their reading habits. BRENDA is from a single parent family whose influence is her mother and sister. CANDICE spends a large portion of the day with her grandmother so it is understandable that she would exert a greater influence than her working mother. Margaret Meeks (cited in Pinsent,

1990, p. 17) supports this view arguing that the parent is the child's 'natural teacher.' Both Tizard and Hughes (1984) and Wells (1987, cited in Pinsent, 1990, p. 17) view the home as a 'powerful learning environment.' When parents read to children, interact with them about the print they see in the world and encourage and support their early writing efforts children establish a firm foundation for learning to read (Cunningham and Allington, 2007, p. 44). "Parental involvement in their child's literacy practices is a more powerful force than other family background variables, such as social class, family size and level of parental education" (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004, cited in Clark & Rumbold, 2006).

4.2.1.11. Reading hindrances

In response to reading hindrances the respondents pointed out that there seemed to be no major hindrances with the exception of EVELYN who had to contend with her younger sibling and the fact that her mother had to make an economic decision to purchase magazines. Evelyn's response sums up the problem that she has:
EVELYN: "My sister because she makes noise when I read and she always interrupts me. Yes, my parents. My mum sometimes doesn't like to buy magazines for me. Because she says if she has to buy for me she has to buy for my sisters."

4.2.1.12. Personal selection

ANGELA: "Yes."
BRENDA: "Yes."
CANDICE: "Yes."
DEBORAH: "Yes."
EVELYN: "Yes, sometimes. Because I know what I like to read."

In reaction to reading selection all respondents indicated that they had the power to select their own materials but the parents of BRENDA, DEBORAH and EVELYN stated that they did have an influence on their children's choices. How much was not

determined but there is an assumption that parents were not intrusive, judging by the mere fact that the children love to read. Learners also have the ability to select that which is within the scope of their capacity to read.

Clark and Phythian-Sence (2008, p. 3) argue that it is 'widely accepted in educational circles that providing students with choice and control over their reading material enhances their involvement with and enjoyment of reading. Choices have been linked to greater levels of intrinsic motivation, greater persistence, better performance, more positive effect and higher satisfaction. It leads to independent thinking and feelings of autonomy. It promotes positive feelings about reading and improved achievement.' Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) concur with the view that 'children were motivated to read when they were given an opportunity to decide what they would like to read.' The children were more likely to share and discuss the text they chose.

4.2.1.13. Reading materials selected by others

ANGELA: "Yes. I read. I can borrow from my friends, cousins. We can also swap books."
BRENDA: "Yes. I borrow books from my neighbours and friends."
CANDICE: "Yes. We swap books."
DEBORAH: "Sometimes. My father brings worksheets and other books from his school. It's not what I like to read. Sometimes they give me books to read for educational purposes."
EVELYN: "Yes. I read things that my father brings from work and I read the recipe my mother bakes with or cooks with."

In reaction to reading materials selected by others, it was noted that although they read books selected by others it had to tweak their interest enough to be able to swap books. They usually swap with their friends. The assumption then is that the swapping was done between respondents for they have similar interests. This was corroborated by DEBORAH who indicated that "it's not what I like to read," and by EVELYN who read the recipes.

4.2.1.14. Reading material selection methodology

The respondents have acquired the methodology on their own. The selection of reading materials displays very sophisticated styles that the respondents have acquired. Machet (2001) argues that in choosing books, 'illustrations were the most important factor influencing choice.' This is illustrated by the following response:

CANDICE: "Firstly, I look at the cover then I look at the back of the book, then I open the book and see whether the pictures are interesting and look at how many lines in one page how many lines there are to read?"

A frequently-mentioned factor influencing the choice is the appearance of the cover. Publishers are very aware of the importance of the cover in attracting readers. Other factors, affecting their choice of which books to read was: the title, personal recommendations and whether a book was linked to a television programme or film. This interview revealed that the respondents adopted a similar strategy to select their reading materials. This is demonstrated by the responses of the following learners:

ANGELA: "I went to the senior primary section and there were quite a few very hard books, then I went to the junior primary section and I saw a little bit easier books so I saw how much writing there was on the cover page, the pictures. Sir, I saw other people looking for the books. They went to the place. They search for a particular book which they wanted."

BRENDA: "I look at the pictures, the cover and the back of the book."

DEBORAH: "I learnt about it on my own."

EVELYN: "I learnt it on my own. Then I saw the person at the library, they were doing the same thing. They were looking at the book and then they were looking at the title of the book. When I mostly go to the library I do that because if I don't like the book, I won't read it because it won't be interesting for me."

4.2.1.15. Borrowing sites

ANGELA: "I go to the stores where they sell books and go to another library near my house. It's called Woodhurst Library."
BRENDA: "I go the library, the public library. Woodhurst Library."
CANDICE: "I go to the library called Woodhurst and I borrow books. I buy books from CNA. I borrow books from my friends."
DEBORAH: "I go to the computer room at home and borrow the books. I also go to the Woodhurst Library."
EVELYN: "I borrow reading materials from Montclair Mall Library. Sometimes I buy and sometimes I borrow from my neighbours, sisters and my cousins."

In response to alternate borrowing sites it was noted that all the respondents indicated that they visited the public library in addition to the school library. This was corroborated by the parents who indicated that they normally took the learners to the library on Saturdays.

4.2.1.16. Reasons for reading choices

CANDICE: "Because I want to know what happens in the book and the world."
DEBORAH: "What I choose to read is what I like."
EVELYN: "I choose to read what I read because I know what I like to read. And the books that I like to read are nice for me."

In response to the reasons for their reading choices all the respondents have indicated that the books that are selected reflect their taste and preferences.
ANGELA: "Because I like I like things about the book."
BRENDA: "Because of the pictures, the attractiveness and the words."

Also inferred is that selection is done by them because they know what they like to read. This is best summed up by DEBORAH:" What I choose to read is what I like."

4.2.2. Summary

This interview was the primary source of data collection. The data that was collected and analysed responded to the two critical questions: What do grade 4 learners read? Why do they choose to read what they read? The 'rich' data that was collected validates the sampling strategy in selecting these five respondents. Best informers provide 'in-depth' description of data. What emerged from the analysis, although confusing at times, was the fact that magazines proved to be the most popular of the reading materials. Absent from this list was the electronic reading materials and devices which include computers and the internet, audio books and the television. The list, when analyzed, revealed an obvious bias towards female reading materials and clearly shows that the respondents tended to shy away from technical and sporting reading materials.

Cole & Hall (2002) argue that girls are more likely to see the educational benefits of reading than boys and are more likely to think of reading as a leisure pursuit. This was clearly evident in the interviews when they were asked if they liked to read. The reply that best describes the academic benefits is:
"Yes. Reading is educational and it helps you learn more words everyday."

Cole & Hall (2002) point out that girls' vernacular literacy equips girls well for school literacy requirements. Girls tend to adapt well to the reading curriculum because it matches their tastes and habits and school literacy practices mirror their vernacular practices.

4.2.3. Interview with parents

Parents of the learners were also interviewed to plug the anticipated gaps and information that would not be forthcoming during the interviews with the learners themselves. The interviews were tape recorded and a transcript generated. The interviews were conducted before and after school hours. The researcher selected his classroom because it was quiet and the parents were quite familiar with the site. The interview schedule was sent to the parents prior to the interview. They were also familiar with the questions.

In response to the question of whether their children read the news headlines, all the parents indicated that their children read the news headlines either alone or with them. In reaction to the question of whether their child read the recipes it was noted that there was consensus that the reading of recipes did take place. Only P3 answered in the negative because the child spent more time with the grandmother who was the babysitter.

4.2.3.1. Weather reports

In response to the question of whether their child read the weather report, P1 and P3 stated that their children did read the weather report but P2 indicated that her child read it sometimes. P4 said that her child rarely read where as P5 indicated that his child read the report from his cell phone (electronic media). Weinreich (2000) points out that 'children live in a world with a high degree of intertextuality.' The choice of the child of P5 merely attests to the intrusion of the electronic medium into the lives of the young; a positive intrusion though because the child is reading. This is demonstrated by the following responses:

P 1:" Yes."
P 2:" Sometimes."
P 3: "Yes."

P 4:" Rarely."

P 5: "She doesn't physically read the weather report from a newspaper. What she does is, she uses my cell-phone and she gathers the information with regards to the weather. If I say that she reads the newspaper it would not be correct but she does get information for the weather report from the electronic media via my cell-phone."

4.2.3.2. Selection of reading materials

P 1: "She selects her own reading materials."

P 2: "Yes but I also supervise but often she chooses what she likes."

P 1: "She does select her own reading materials."

P 4: "Sometimes, but sometimes I do try and encourage her to read the newspaper to keep updated with what's current."

P 5: "She chooses her own books but I tend to oversee what she does choose and sometimes I point away from certain books but generally she has a very good choice in terms of what she wants to read or not."

In reply to the question of the selection of reading materials it was found that although all respondents responded in the affirmative, P2, P4 and P5 indicated that they did supervise their children's choices. Generally they did allow their charges to do their own selection. Clark and Phythian-Sence (2008, p. 3) argue that 'choice has been linked to greater levels of intrinsic motivation, greater persistence, better performance, more positive effect and higher satisfaction. It leads to independent thinking and feelings of autonomy. It promotes positive feelings about reading and improved achievement.' The fact that they were selected to participate in this research project because of their avid reading ability concurs with the literature on the topic of 'choice.'

4.2.3.3. Favourite reads

In listing their children's favourite reads, the responses from the parents of the selected learners corroborated the choices made by the learners. It also filled the gaps that

appeared during the interviews with the learners. P5 indicated the name of his child's favourite novel series, *"Mary Kate and Ashley."* He also supplied information on the child's choice of magazines, "*India Fair* magazines." This information was not supplied by the learner because there was an assumption by the learner that it was not the kind of reading that the teacher would approve. Coles and Hall (2002) argue that school definitions of literacy have to change, and need to acknowledge the changing nature of literacy in society. Literacy is not just about an ability to read and write fiction. School literacy practices must therefore complement and enhance home and community literacy practices. Teachers must acquire a detailed knowledge of the vernacular literacy practices of their pupils to be in a better position to help establish a literacy education which encourages positive self-esteem in relation to literacy. The parents are also aware of the popularity of magazines in the reading patterns of their children. This is illustrated in the response of the parents that follow below:

P1: "Magazines, novels, comics, cartoon books, billboards, etc.

P2: "Number1, story kind things and I think current trend kind books and then she's also into teenage magazines and then the 'comics' where there are jokes and then religious kinds of things.

P3: Novels, billboards, T.V., newspaper and charts.

P4: The child craft books are the first one. I got a set of that so she enjoys reading that. There are about 15 to 20 books in that set. Story books will come second and last on the list the newspaper.

P5: I'd say number one being novels like "*Mary Kate and Ashley*." Number two being magazines like *'Bratz'* magazine or should I say the *"India Fair"* magazines. Number three being newspaper articles. Four: I think on top the child's choice would be television but that obviously would be looking materials; the other one would be charts and billboards.

4.2.3.4. Reading motivation

The parents were asked to indicate who or what motivates their children to read and they responded in the following manner.

P1:"The parents and educators."

P2: "I think I as a parent, I emphasize the importance of reading. I always encourage them to read."

P3: "To better her education and I think my mum pushes her to read."

P4: "Myself and my husband."

P5: "I think her interest in certain things like animals. If she sees a book on animals she takes it very seriously and reads it and if she sees an article in the newspaper about children, she takes a keen interest in that and tends to read it."

In responding to reading motivation P1, P2 and P4 indicated that 'parents' were the key factor responsible for motivating the learner to read. P3 indicated that the grandmother was the motivating factor. Flouri & Buchanan (cited in Clark & Rumbold, 2006) believe that "parental involvement in their child's literacy practices is a very powerful force." P5 as well as P3 on the other hand believe that it is the intrinsic motivation of the learner that is responsible for their positive reading patterns. Reading motivation is defined as "the individual's personal goals, values and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading" (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 3 cited in Clark and Rumbold, 2006). All 5 learners were intrinsically motivated. This is reflected in their academic performance. They realize the importance of reading as a tool for academic success. The response of P5 contradicted the response of his daughter who reported that her parents were her reading motivators.

4.2.3.5. Reading hindrances

P1:"Nothing or no one hinders my child's reading choices."

P2: "I think I as a parent am guilty of this. I don't take her as often as I should take her to the library. Maybe I should do this more often."

P3: "Nothing."

P4: "She likes more the T.V. So I think it will be a factor for that particular day or time. I also think time from us as parents as well is a bit of a problem because to get her to the library is a bit inconvenient at the moment because of our busy schedule."

P5: "I think that personally we don't have anything that hinders her."

In reply to the question on reading hindrances P1, P3 and P5 indicated that there was nothing that hindered their children's reading patterns. P2 and P4 responded that as parents who did not take the learner to the library often created a hindrance. Only P4 indicated that she believed that the television was a factor that had to be considered a hindrance. Basically the respondents did not have any barriers to reading for pleasure.

4.2.3.6. Reasons for choices

P1:" It depends on how interesting the book is."

P2: "She has a mind of her own and lately I noticed that she's quite into science books and experiments. She seems to have an enquiring mind for the small kind of science experiments. You can see that it's more slanting towards science."

P3: "I guess that's the interest she takes in reading those materials. So that's her choice."

P4: "She tends to like science a lot and factual information. She is very curious and always asking questions so I think that's the reason she prefers to read."

P5: "I think it's more of self interest in terms of what she likes. She has an independent mind and I think she does things that she likes to do so she obviously would choose things that she wants to read."

In reaction to their children's choices all parents indicated that they believed it was their child's personal interests and intrinsic motivation that determined their choice of reading materials. The benefits of being intrinsically-motivated has been extensively researched and quoted. The learners knew these benefits and acted accordingly.

4.2.4. Summary

The main task of the interview of the parent was to plug the gaps that would have been identified after the interviews with the learners. The analysis of the interviews shows that the aim has been achieved. The responses from parents at times corroborated the learner's responses and also supplied information that was omitted by the learners during their interviews. Clearly evident from the interviews, was that the parents could provide a great deal of information about their child's reading habits. The interviews also revealed that the parents knew the benefits of good reading habits and patterns and assisted their children achieve it. It becomes prudent at this point to quote Flouri & Buchanan (cited in Clark & Rumbold, 2006) who believe that "parental involvement in their child's literacy practices is a very powerful force." This research confirms just that.

4.3. Observations

The data recorded from observations relies solely on what is observed. In this study it serves to answer only the first critical question: What do grade 4 learners read? To answer the second critical question: Why do they choose to read what they read? it becomes imperative to conduct casual chats with the respondents during the observation sessions. This strategy was employed for both the LRE lessons and the reading-for-pleasure lessons, to be able to collate the 'rich' data required for this study. The researcher's main aim was to observe what reading materials the learners brought to the reading-for-pleasure lessons and what reading materials they selected during the LRE lessons in response to the critical question: What do grade 4 learners read?

4.3.1. The reading-for-pleasure lessons

These lessons are conducted in the classroom by the English educator. The principal researcher is the English educator of the grade 4 class. This resulted in the learners being comfortable when engaging in the task as it was part of their own lesson. The researcher's task was to observe the five respondents "in-situ" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007,

p.51) to ascertain what reading materials were presented by them during these lessons. The learners were given prior instructions to bring reading materials to read during this lesson. The lesson duration is an hour. The observable data was recorded there after. The first observation recorded by the researcher was the number of reading materials selected for the lesson. The table below indicates the number of reading materials brought by each respondent.

RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF READING MATERIALS
Angela	3
Brenda	1
Candice	2
Deborah	2
Evelyn	5

Table 8: Number of materials brought by learners.

The table below depicts the reading materials by names that were presented by the respondents for the reading-for-pleasure lessons conducted in the grade 4 classrooms.

RESPONDENTS	TITLE OF READING MATERIAL
Angela	1. *The Famous Five*: Enid Blyton 2. *Children's Stories*: D.Jesse 3. *YOU* Magazine: August 2009.
Brenda	1. *Tales of Magic*: Walt Disney
Candice	1. *Camp Rock* (The junior novel): Lucy Ruggies 2. *Arts and Crafts* Magazines
Deborah	1. *First Picture Encyclopaedia* 2. *Science, Technology and Society*.
Evelyn	1. *Incredible Journey*: S. Burnford 2. *High School Musical* (Crunch Time): N.B. Grace 3. *Hanna Montana* (Face the Music): B. Beechwood 4. *Children of the New Forest*: C. Marryat. 5. *Bratz* Magazine: Issue 26 April 2009.

Table 9: Reading materials presented by the learners.

Having gained an insight into the number of reading materials per respondent, the researcher then recorded the different genres selected by the respondents.

The table below indicates the different genres selected by the respondents.

RESPONDENTS	GENRE	NUMBER OF GENRES
Angela	1. Adventure 2. Children's Stories 3. Magazines	3
Brenda	1. Fairy Tales	1
Candice	1. Teenage Novels 2. Arts and Crafts	2
Deborah	1. Encyclopaedia 2. Science	2
Evelyn	1. Adventure 2. Teenage Novels 3. Teenage Magazines	3

Table 10: Genre of reading materials.

The number of reading materials presented by ANGELA and EVELYN appeared to be a bit too ambitious for a one-hour lesson but a casual chat revealed that the material represented what they normally read or like to read rather than what can be read for an hour. The chat and observation also revealed what they would begin to read and why they chose to read that particular reading material.

BRENDA began to read the *Tales of Magic* by *Walt Disney* (Fairy Tales), which was her birthday present.

BRENDA: "I like fairy tales. I selected the book because I like the pictures."

ANGELA read *The Famous Five by Enid Blyton* (adventure).

ANGELA: "I shall read the *Famous Five* first. It looks interesting because I looked at the cover." It is interesting to note that the cover had the characters of the books drawn in cartoon form. Machet (2004) argues that the cover is one of the most important features that attracted the learner to a particular book or the selection of reading materials. This feature is evident in all the interviews with the learner.

CANDICE read *Camp Rock by L. Ruggies.*

CANDICE: "I began reading it at home and wanted to complete the novel in school."

DEBORAH read *the First Picture Encyclopaedia.*

DEBORAH: "It has everything about the world. I can go to different places."

EVELYN read *Incredible Journey by S, Burnford* (adventure).

EVELYN: "Because I like books on animals. This is a story about two dogs and a cat."

The reading materials that the respondents began to read in the class indicate their preference for a particular genre. Upon further investigation and observation an interesting factor emerged. ANGELA and EVELYN began reading what they perceived to be the reading material that the researcher would approve of or thought that it was the right material to be read during this lesson. Their real preference was the magazines that they brought. ANGELA brought the *YOU* magazine and EVELYN brought *Bratz* magazine (a popular teenage magazine currently on sale). The *Bratz* magazine caters for teenage fashion, music, cosmetics and their favourite celebrities. This is the trendy reading fare of young girls which seems to have the attention of EVELYN. This fact will also be corroborated by the interview with the father of EVELYN, who said that the second favourite read of his child was the *Bratz* magazine.

Although they were granted permission to read magazines, the learners refused to read this material because they were taught by parents and teachers that only novels were to be read in class, especially during the reading-for-pleasure period. Any attempt by the researcher to dispel this notion proved fruitless. The researcher speculates that the selection made by DEBORAH had some parental involvement. The evidence to support this speculation was corroborated by the interview with the mother who indicated that the DEBORAH's father tells her "to read about science" and provides materials from his school about science. This stifles a learner's freedom of choice.

Research related to self-selection of reading materials shows that through this shift in power, learners take greater ownership in their learning process and their motivation to read increases. Thus in order to relate students from varied backgrounds to reading materials and to motivate them to read and construct meaning, learners should have choices or should be allowed to select their own reading materials.(Choi, 2005).

Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) concur with the view that children were motivated to read when they were given an opportunity to decide what they would like to read. The children were more likely to share and discuss the text they chose. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) further argue that children's reading motivation was positively influenced by books that were related to their personal experience or interests.

Whether DEBORAH would be able to sustain this trend of reading encyclopaedias in the upper grades is arguable.

4.3.2. Summary of the reading-for-pleasure lesson

The observation of the reading-for-pleasure lesson did reveal what the grade 4 learner reads and why they choose to read what they read but with a great degree of reservation in terms of parental selection of reading materials for the respondents or parental influence of their child's selection. It would be an interesting exercise to present the research of Choi (2005) and Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) to the parents to read before they take their children to the library. Further revelations from the LRE lesson observation that follows should consolidate the researcher's speculation.

4.3.3. The Library Resource Education lessons

The researcher began data collection by observing the library resource education lessons which were conducted in the school library. The main task of this observation is to ascertain what reading materials the grade 4 learners select from the library during the LRE lessons. The duration of this lesson is 30 minutes. These lessons are conducted in the library resource centre, which is currently housed in a classroom. The lessons are conducted by the librarian, who is also a teacher at this institution.

The researcher observed each respondent independently and recorded the data. ANGELA, BRENDA and CANDICE proceeded directly to the Junior Primary (J.P.) section of the library but ANGELA and BRENDA went to the reference section. DEBORAH walked to the science section and EVELYN went to the encyclopaedia section but moved quickly to the Senior English section. ANGELA scanned 9 books the first time and 5 books the second time from the reference section. BRENDA scanned one book from the junior primary section, one book from the reference section and one magazine from the magazine wrack. CANDICE scanned 6 books from the J.P. section. DEBORAH scanned one book from the Science section. EVELYN scanned two books in the Senior English section.

ANGELA selected the 9th book.
ANGELA: "The cover looked attractive. I looked at the pictures to see what was happening. It looked like a nice interesting story."
ANGELA gave the library card to the teacher. ANGELA selected the 5th book from the reference section.
ANGELA: "I want to know what the environment is like and what other people do in their environment. Also it has pictures."

BRENDA selected the first book she took from the J.P. section.
BRENDA: "I looked at the cover. I look for pictures. I like religious stories."
BRENDA then perused the reference section and selected one book on dogs.

BRENDA: "I like animals. I like to read about animals and animal stories."

BRENDA left the book on dogs back on the shelf because it was a reference work (not for loan). BRENDA perused the magazine rack. She selected a magazine on the 'Hare Krishna Movement.'

BRENDA: "I like to read about my religion. I want to borrow it but it does not have a card. I don't understand books without pictures."

CANDICE selected the 6th book from the J.P. section.

CANDICE: "I looked at the cover. I opened the book. It wasn't boring and had a lot of pages. I looked at the pictures. It wasn't baby pictures. It was interesting pictures. The title: I want to know what Katy did. I prefer books with pictures. It is harder to imagine at the same time while you are reading. Instead of imagining a different house, you see it in the picture."

DEBORAH knew exactly what to look for in the library. She selected one book from the reference section on science.

DEBORAH: "I mostly like science and encyclopaedias. It is interesting to read. I liked the words. It is more educational than reading normal story books. I look at the introduction and contents page." She also indicated the word science in the title helped her to select the book.

EVELYN selected the second book after scanning the Senior English section.

EVELYN: "I like children's adventure stories. I read the back cover and liked the story. I mostly like books about animals or adventure. I look at the title and cover. If I like the title, I flip over and read the back cover. If I like it, I select the book."

The table below shows the books and magazines borrowed by the respondents during the LRE lessons observed by the researcher.

RESPONDENTS	TITLE/ AUTHOR	NUMBER OF READING MATERIALS
Angela	1. *The Snowman's Secret*: R. Barry (1975). 2. *The Study of the Environment:* E. Lea & A.M.J Geldenhuys (1976)	2
Brenda	4. *The Prayer of Jabez*: B. Wilkinson (2001). 5. *Hare Krishna: Back to Godhead.*(Magazine: May/ June 1997. vol.13 no. 3	2
Candice	1. *What Katy did?:* S. Coolidge (1979)	1
Deborah	1. *Science, Technology and Society:* P. Hodgson (1999)	1
Evelyn	1. *Children of the New Forest*: C. Marryat (1983)	1

Table 11: Reading materials borrowed by learners from the library.

4.3.4. Summary of the LRE lesson

The observation of the LRE lesson provided sufficient data to respond to the first critical question: What do grade 4 learners read? Although the library is not sufficiently stocked, the learners managed to find reading materials that tweaked their interest enough for them to borrow. The focus again is on DEBORAH who selected the encyclopaedia with factual information. Her preference is unusual for her age group.

Machet (2001) adds that encyclopedias are the least popular form of factual reading and magazines the most appealing to both primary and secondary respondents. Whereas the other four respondents selected materials with stories, DEBORAH preferred to focus on educational materials; unusual but not unlikely. Machet's (2001) study also adds that enthusiasm for this type of reading material develops with age.

The casual chat provided insights into critical question two: Why do grade 4 learners choose to read what they read? Inherent in their responses is their methodology of selection of reading materials.

Machet (2001) argues that in choosing books, illustrations were the most important factor influencing choice. A frequently-mentioned factor influencing the choice is the appearance of the cover. Publishers are very aware of the importance of the cover in attracting readers. Other factors, affecting their choice of which books to read are: the title, personal recommendations and whether a book is linked to a television programme or film. The respondents in this research study used the cover, illustrations, the title and the language. The methodology is further corroborated in their interviews where they indicate how they came to know how to select reading materials from the library. Clearly evident is the involvement of the people from their homes.

McTavish (2007) argues that young children learn about reading and writing before they come to school and form beliefs, functions and values of people with whom they are involved. This is fairly obvious in the case of DEBORAH whose father is a teacher and mother is a nurse. On the other hand Edmunds & Bauserman (2006) assert that materials which are selected by the learner and which interests the learner, sustains and strengthens reading in young learners.

Also observable is the absence of sports and the creative arts. This is not disconcerting, given that young girls are compassionate and caring which is reflected in the selection of ANGELA, BRENDA and EVELYN. Being religiously inclined their interest is reflected in their choices. Machet's (2001) study also reveals that 'school and religious stories were more popular with the primary school respondents. Religion plays an important role in many of the respondents' lives. The popularity may lie in the fact that many school libraries have a quantity of religious reading materials including magazines.'

In terms of the sports genre, Machet (2001) agues that the most frequently-selected single category for boys in both primary and secondary schools, was sport. Girls read considerably less on sport with their reading on this topic peaking at 53% in the primary school. The interest in reading materials on 'animals and plants' was displayed more by female respondents in the primary schools. Interest by girls in the categories 'how things work', and 'stars and outer space' also peaked at the primary school level.

The case study scenario learners shed further light on the subject in responding to the two critical questions.

4.4. Scenario: Create your own reading room

The respondents were tasked to create their own reading room in the school library. They were given a clean slate. They chose to use the existing floor plan because they indicated that they were not adept at sketching or drawing. The main aim of this task was to ascertain what type or genre of reading materials the respondents would include in the room to attract readers in general and their friends and themselves in particular. They were told to be as creative as possible. This was sadly lacking in most cases.

ANGELA placed her favourite reading materials on the shelves. These included the following: magazines (religion, make-up, and fashion), novels on super-heroes, and books on cartoon characters, books on technology and houses and finally textbooks, especially mathematics text.

BRENDA re-arranged what goes on to the shelves. She divided the shelves into the following sections: English novels, Afrikaans novels, textbooks, dictionaries, and encyclopaedias. On the tables in the centre of the room she placed comics and religious texts. On the tables adjacent to the windows she placed newspapers, novels and magazines.

CANDICE used the tables against the windows to set out Afrikaans texts, history textbooks and famous leaders (biography). The adjoining shelf was for books on fairy tales, cars and technology. On the shelf opposite the door she set out English dictionaries, novels on super-heroes and musicals. The magazine rack in front of the class had newspapers and different types of magazines (not specified).

DEBORAH changed the outlook of the library. She placed party "stuff" at the door. She separated the table next to the window into three sections: child craft encyclopaedias, Junior English story books, and science and geography books. The shelf that is adjacent was divided into two sections. The first half had joke books and natural science on it. The second half had the following: *Harry Potter*, people and inventions, technology and dinosaurs. The shelf to the west was divided into three sections. One had horror books, fairy tales and *Hanna Montana*. The second section had *High School Musical*, animal books and religious books. The third section had *Goosebumps*, books on life and nature and novels and dictionaries. The old magazine rack in the front of the room had 3 new sections for: magazines, comics and worksheets. There was also a poster bin next to the rack. The tables in the centre of the room had 4 computers and two tables had the games scrabble and chess respectively. In the front of the class she set up a television set and there were two billboard props.

EVELYN converted the table adjacent to the east window into a two-sectioned magazine rack. The first section had: *Bratz, High School Musical, Hanna Montana and Barbie.* The second section had *Superman, Batman and Camp Rock.* A computer with a printer was added in the front of the room. The adjoining shelf had three sections. Section one: sports, animal books and fairy tales. Section two: *Mary Kate and Ashley* novels, science and story books. Section three: encyclopaedias, novels and The *Secret Seven*. The shelf to the west wall was divided into four sections. Section one: Afrikaans*, Hanna Montana*, and *Camp Rock.* Section two: isiZulu and *High School Musical*. Section three: Mathematics and *Wizard of Waverly*. Section four: books on actors and the earth. EVELYN set up a television set in the front of the room.

The sketches from ANGELA and BRENDA were rather staid. The only difference was that the materials selected reflected their choices and interests. The arrangements were similar to the existing library. The selected materials merely corroborated their choices which were analysed in the observation session. CANDICE had a similar arrangement with the exception of the introduction of books on cars (not in the school library), technology and world famous leaders. DEBORAH was the most creative and inventive. She introduced computers, chess and scrabble to the library. There was a wider selection of reading materials that catered for different interests and tastes. The magazines, comics and worksheet rack together with the poster bin would certainly be a draw card for the primary school learner in general and the grade 4 learner in particular. For those learners not engaged in reading or any one of the other activities, a television set had been provided. The library for her would definitely be the hub of learning at this institution and an exciting place to visit.

The diagram overleaf shows the floor plan of the school library. As mentioned in the introduction the learners chose to use the existing floor plan because they indicated that they did not have the ability to draw properly.

Table 12: Floor plan of the school library

	Board	
West		East

Magazine rack

door

Shelf

Learners' tables

Table

Shelf

South
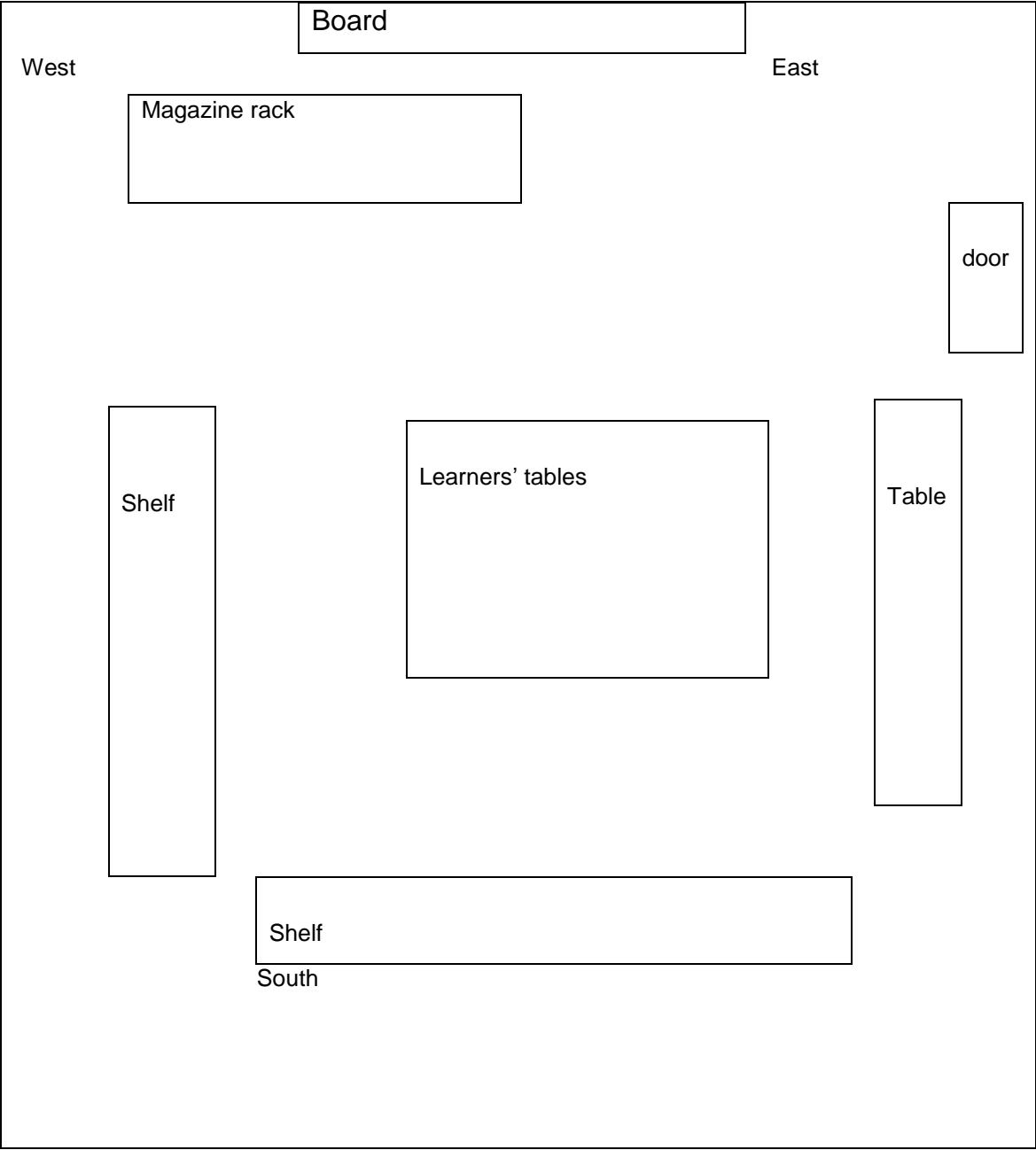
4.4.1. Summary of scenario

Firstly the section began with a brief rationale for this strategy. It responded to critical question one which concerns the learner's choice of reading materials. By sketching what reading materials they include in their own reading room they indicated what they chose to read. Secondly, the section analysed the sketches of each learner in terms of what they drew. Thirdly, a sketch of the existing floor plan of the library of Sapphire Jade Primary School was presented. This was included to assist the researcher in analysing the sketches of the learners. The sketches of the learners are included as appendix L-P which appears on pages 94-98(The limited choices that they included on their sketches merely reflect their age and what they were exposed to at this stage of their lives.)

4.5. Summary of the chapter

The chapter presented an analysis of the data generated through a varied mix of methods associated with qualitative case study research. The data was presented in three sections which included the following: interviews with learners, interviews with their respective parents, observation of the reading-for-pleasure lessons, observation of the LRE lessons, scenario: design your own reading room. Section one presented the interviews and the questions in the form of themes that the researcher identified for both the parental and learner interviews. A detailed analysis of each theme was explored and relevant literature was presented. Section two examined the observations of the reading-for-pleasure lessons and the LRE lessons and the analysis was explored in a similar manner to the interviews. The data that pertains to observation was collected to respond to the first critical question. To respond to the second critical question: Why do they choose to read what they read? Casual chats were conducted to elicit this important data. Section three delved into the case scenario of creating a reading room. The sketches were analysed and the data was recorded. The researcher used multiple strategies to obtain 'rich' and 'in-depth' data to successfully answer the two critical questions. In the next chapter an introduction will be presented and a summary of the

findings will follow thereafter. Secondly, the limitations of the study will be discussed.
Thirdly, the researcher will explore the recommendations of the study. Finally, the
conclusion to the study will be offered.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This report is based on qualitative case study research methods and methodologies conducted in a public primary school using interviews, observations and case scenarios. It explores what grade 4 learners read and why they choose to read what they read. The literature presented shows the benefit of reading for pleasure for primary school learners in particular. A perusal of the library records, however, reveals that there is a steady decline in the number of books that are borrowed by learners. Given that the reading habit is "fast vanishing into thin air" (The Hindu, 2004, p1), the call for quality basic education demands a development of good reading habits in both children and adults. This will change the stigma associated with Africa as a continent with "poor reading culture" (Tella, 2007).

The Progress in International Literacy Study (2006) reports that South African grade 4 and 5 learners failed to achieve the benchmark of 500 points. Grade 4 learners achieved on average 253 points (SE=4.6) while the grade 5 learners achieved on average 302 (SE=5.6). South Africa achieved the lowest score of the 45 participating education systems (Van Staden & Howie, 2008).

This research responds to that call. It was the researcher's intention to explore the reading choices of grade 4 learners and to assist the teacher to select appropriate comprehension passages. The research study will be valuable in the selection of reading material for the classroom library corner and for use during the reading lessons. In addition, the English teacher and the librarian will have insight into the selection of books for the library that will interest the learners. This research will assist in illuminating the knowledge base of the relevant stakeholders within the institution so as

to be able to perform their functions, especially in the learning area of English with a broad view to improve the quality of the language in general and reading in particular. This chapter will focus on the insights based on the data captured in chapter 4. It will also present recommendations and conclude by presenting a reflection of the research study.

5.2. Summary of findings

Notwithstanding Machet's (2001) findings that South Africans low level reading skills is recognized as a problem, this research was conducted in order to examine the relationship between achievement in English and the reading habits of grade 4 learners in a public primary school. The following were the findings of the research study:

- ❖ Contrary to the studies of Clark & Foster (2005) and Coles & Hall (2002) which propound the popularity of magazines, this study reveals that the choices of the learners proved to be newspapers and novels. Newspapers peaked at 80% of what is read at home and novels peaked at 0.16% of their popular choice.

- ❖ Learners select their own reading materials in the main: 60% by themselves and 40% through the influence of their parents; ultimately, however, it is up to the learner to select what is read.

- ❖ All these learners are intrinsically motivated. The parents of the learners are all professionally-qualified and thus are reflected in this middle class culture of achievement.

- ❖ The ideas about literacy among the learners and the parents indicate that they believe that reading involves books (novels). The reading of magazines is frowned upon by the adults (both teachers and parents).

- ❖ The learners select reading materials that reflect their personal choice and interests and are thus motivated.

- ❖ There is a high degree of parental involvement which is reflected in the enthusiasm shown by the learners to read at home in the evenings. Parents in this study lead by example. Learners are inspired by their parents' reading and study habits.

- All the respondents, both the parents and the learners, understand fully the academic benefits of reading and its implications for future success.
- The procedure for selecting reading materials from the library has been learnt through emulation. Learners use the methodology that is typical of international methodology. They skim and scan the cover, title, illustration and length of the reading materials.
- Only 20% of the readers read materials that have factual information; this study therefore concurs with Machet (2001) and Clark & Foster (2005).
- An interesting finding is the appearance of billboards as a reading choice, indicating the diversity of the learners' choices.
- Only 135 books were borrowed by the grades 4-7. Interestingly though, 61 books (45%) of this total were borrowed by the grade 4 learners. Most of the books were borrowed from the Junior English section.
- The more children read and are exposed to reading the better is their academic performance.
- Learners indicated that they read almost everyday (60%) and some read twice a week (40%). All learners indicated that their favourite time to read was in the evenings; this concurs with the studies of Weinreich (2000) and Clark & Foster (2005).
- The reading of comics did not feature on the table depicting what reading materials were read at home and at school. This finding is similar to that of Weinreich's (2000) study. One cannot assume that comics are never read by these learners.

5.3. Limitations of the study

The research is a qualitative case study which is not generalisable. The research findings and conclusions cannot be transferred to any school or the grade 4 classes within any other school. Access to learners in-situ had to be done after school hours as per the pre-conditions set by the principal of the site. Learners gave answers that they perceived that the researcher wanted and not the expected answers.

5.4. Recommendations

Weinreich (2000) points out that "books have shown themselves to be an excellent technology among other technologies. Today books are stronger than ever before." But despite the strength of this timeless media, children are not reading as much as fifty years ago. Machet (2001) argues that we still live in a text-based society, and in order to succeed, it is necessary to be a fluent reader. The only way to become a fluent reader is to read extensively. Using this as a premise the following recommendations from this exploratory research study are proffered.

A synergy should be established between the school and the home with a strong view to improving reading frequency. The school should be sending regular feedback to the parents in terms of the reading culture of the child and in turn the home needs to reciprocate. Schools' literary programmes should enhance and compliment the home and that of society (Coles &Hall, 2002).

The role of the parent has to be increased in the reading life of the child. Weinreich (2000) argues that the more reading aloud there is at home, the more children read later in life. Children whose parents read to them when they are small seem to read more books when they are older.

Schools' and the parents' definition of literacy needs to change to meet the demands and the changing needs of society. It must include non-fiction materials that are needed to compete in the home and work place. Included in this package should be visual literacy that requires text reading. Coles & Hall (2002) point out that if girls do not encounter technological information, numbers, instructions and factual reports in their leisure time, then it is important that schools equip girls with the necessary confidence and competence to approach this kind of reading positively.

The introduction and teaching of the electronic media requires a far higher level of literacy than ordinary textual literacy. This would mean that those that have a low

literacy level will be further disadvantaged. The motivation to read is required more by those individuals. School and the home should home-in on the gap immediately to rectify the challenge.

If possible, a specialist in teaching reading should be employed at every school or teachers ought to be retrained in the skills and capacity to teach reading. The time deployed for reading lessons should increase accordingly. Currently the schools in the USA have reading lessons of an hour and half duration per day.

The school library needs a complete revamp in terms of what reading materials they have in stock, especially reading materials that assist the learner to be able to compete in the technical environment of the home and the workplace.

Readers with no literacy skills need the intervention of specialists immediately.

Saturday mornings could be set aside for parent/ child reading consultation and library visits. It is "a pie in the sky notion" but a necessity to improve the overall literacy of, not only the individual, but of society at large.

Choice and selection of reading materials should be left to the children. There a greater degree of motivation and pleasure in reading when a learner does the choosing.

An inventory of the reading materials in the library and in the home should be compiled to ascertain the suitability of the materials to the learner needs.

 A culture of reading should be encouraged, both at school and in the home to foster enthusiasm in reading.

5.5. Conclusion

This study has shown what grade 4 learners read and it also established why they choose to read what they read. What also emerged from the study was that the more children read the more fluent they become. The researcher concludes by concurring with Machet (2001) who argues that "it is essential if new or reluctant readers are to be turned into fluent, voluntary readers to understand and have insight into the needs and interests of young readers. Once children can read fluently, finding something for them to read which is rewarding and allows them to experience the pleasure of reading is crucial if they are to be turned into lifetime readers."

The intention was to explore the reading choices of grade 4 learners and thereby assist the teacher to select appropriate comprehension passages. The research study will be valuable in the selection of reading material for the classroom library corner for use during the reading lessons. In addition, the English teacher and the librarian will have insight into the selection of books for the library that will interest the learners. This research will assist in illuminating the knowledge base of the relevant stakeholders within the institution so as to be able to perform their functions especially in the teaching of English. To improve the quality of language in general and reading in particular, it is hoped that the intention has been successful. At all costs Alvermann's warnings should be heeded.

According to Alvermann (2001, p. 680) ,"the possibility that as a culture we are making struggling readers out of some adolescents who for any number of reasons have turned their backs on a version of literacy called school literacy is a sobering thought".

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APPENDICES FOR DISSERTATION, KG2009;11;24

K.GOVENDER 8422599
2009-11-24

SAMPLE COVER PAGE
NOT FOR USE.

LETTER OF REQUEST

University of KwaZulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag x03
Ashwood
3605

2009

The Principal
Sapphire Jade Primary [Pseudonym]
Chatsworth
4093

Re: Letter of Request

I, K. Govender [8422599] student at the above-mentioned institution record my request to conduct research among 5 grade 4 learners and their parents at your institution. I am a Masters student under the guidance of Professor Reshma Sookrajh, tasked to research reading in grade 4. My research task will focus on the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read.

I shall do my best to conduct my research as efficiently and discreetly as possible, with the express understanding that the general functioning of the school will not be compromised.

Learners who wish to participate will require their parents' consent first. Kindly find attached a consent letter to parents of learners. Semi-structured tape recorded interviews will be conducted as well as observations made in the second half of the year.

It would be appreciated if you could kindly afford me the opportunity to conduct my research at your school.

I thank you in anticipation of a favourable response.

For further clarity, kindly contact me at 0846867111 or personally at a time convenient to you and your office.

_____
K, Govender   [H] 031-7062200
8422599
 [W] 031-4031043

15 Grassmere Dr. Nagina, Mariannhill.

CONSENT LETTER.

Mr. K. GOVENDER [Researcher]

I hereby agree for my school to be used as a site for your research study. I understand that the participation of both the learners and their parents is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time. I also understand that privacy, anonymity and confidentiality will be assured at all times and that the dignity of all participants would be respected at all times. I am assured by your commitment to ensure that the general functionality of the school will not be compromised. Permission has been granted.

Principal print name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of school: _____

School stamp:

Chairman of the Governing Board: _____

TOPIC: An exploration of the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read.

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH LEARNERS.

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Parent/ Guardian _____

I am a master's student currently collecting data for my dissertation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, under the guidance of Professor Reshma Sookrajh. My research study will focus on the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read. The study entails observing the learner during the reading lessons and an informal, friendly tape recorded interview will be conducted.
Your child/ ward _____ [name] _____ has been selected to participate in my study.

It would be highly appreciated if you would grant permission for your child/ward to participate in this research project.
I assure you that:
   ❖ The confidentiality of your child, should this be required by you, will be protected. The learner will be referred to as "respondent" in the research.
   ❖ All information will not be divulged to anyone. The only persons with access to information will be Prof. R. Sookrajh [supervisor] and I.
   ❖ The information gathering process will not disrupt the teaching and learning process at school.

The interview and observation will be conducted in the second half of 2009. Kindly find attached a letter of consent to be signed by you, the parent/guardian. Once you have confirmed that your child/ward is willing to participate, I shall personally contact you telephonically to confirm date, time and venue of the interview.

For further clarity, kindly contact me @ 0846867111 or personally at a time convenient to you.

Thanking you in anticipation of a favourable response.

Yours faithfully

_____
K. Govender [Researcher]
8422599
UKZN- Edgewood Campus

Supervisor:
Prof. R. Sookrajh
Tel. 031-260 7026

TOPIC: An exploration of the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read.

University of KwaZulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag x03
Ashwood
3605

CONSENT LETTER
Mr.K.Govender

I hereby agree for my child/ward _____ to participate in the above research project. I understand that his/her participation is voluntary and that he/she may change his/her mind and refuse to participate or withdraw at any time. He/she may refuse to answer any question/s or may stop the interview or change the answers/responses after reading the transcript of the interview. He/she understands that some of the answers/responses may be directly quoted in the text of the final dissertation and subsequent publications.

With the understanding of the above, I hereby agree for my child/ward to participate in the above research.

Parent's name: (Block letters) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: K.Govender

Date: _____

15 Grassmere Drive
Nagina, 3610
[H] 031-7062200
[W] 031-4031043
Cell: 0846867111

Supervisor: Prof. R. Sookrajh

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Tel.: 031-260 7026

TOPIC: An exploration of the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read.

University of KwaZulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag x03
Ashwood
3605

PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW PARENT/S

Dear Parent
Mr. /Mrs. _____

I, K. Govender [8422599] student at the above-mentioned institution record my request to conduct research among 5 grade 4 learners and their parents at your institution. I am a Masters student under the guidance of Professor Reshma Sookrajh, tasked to research reading in grade 4. My research task will focus on the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read. This study entails interviewing parents of learners selected to participate in the research project. As a selected respondent, your assistance will be required in accessing information about the reading choices of your child/ward_____(name)_____ and why he/she choose to read what he/she reads?

I understand that you are extremely busy with your obligations; however, it would be highly appreciated if you could kindly afford me the opportunity to interview you. I shall do my best to conduct my research as efficiently and as discreetly as possible. A semi-structured tape recorded interview will be conducted in the second half of 2009. Kindly find enclosed a letter of consent to be signed by you. Once you have confirmed your willingness to participate in the study, I shall contact you telephonically to confirm date, time and venue of the interview.
I promise
  ❖ To ensure your confidentiality, should this be required by you, you will be referred to as "respondent" in the research.
  ❖ That all information will not be divulged to anyone. The only persons with access to information will be Prof. R. Sookrajh [supervisor] and I.
  ❖ That the information gathering process will not disrupt the teaching and learning process at school.

Thank you in anticipation of a favourable response.

_____
Researcher: K.Govender

Date: _____

15 Grassmere Drive
Nagina, 3610
[H] 031-7062200   [W] 031-4031043
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TOPIC: An exploration of the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read.

University of KwaZulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
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Ashwood
3605

CONSENT LETTER

Mr.K.Govender

I hereby consent to participate in the above research project. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may change my mind and refuse to participate or withdraw at any time. I may refuse to answer any question/s or may stop the interview or change the answers/responses after reading the transcript of the interview. I also understand that some of the answers/responses may be directly quoted in the text of the final dissertation and subsequent publications.

With the understanding of the above, I hereby agree to participate in the above research.

Parent's name: (Block letters) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: K.Govender

Date: _____

15 Grassmere Drive
Nagina, 3610
[H] 031-7062200
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Cell: 0846867111

Supervisor: Prof. R. Sookrajh

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Date: _____

Tel.: 031-260 7026

TOPIC: An exploration of the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read.

University of KwaZulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag x03
Ashwood
3605

> Mr. Phiwa Duma
> The Research Officer, RESEARCH, STRATEGY, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ECMIS
> DIRECTORATE, G 23 - Metropolitan Building, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
> Office number is: 033-3418611 or 033 341 8612
> Email: Michell.Francis@kzndoe.gov.za

Sir

Re: Permission to conduct research: Durban South, Umlazi district
[K. Govender, 8422599, M.Ed. UKZN, Edgewood]

I, K. Govender, 8422599, am a student reading for my Masters Degree in Education at the UKZN, Edgewood Campus under the guidance of Prof. R. Sookrajh. In collecting data for my research, I request permission to interview selected learners and their parents of the Erica Primary School in the Queensburgh Circuit if the Umlazi District. The study entails interviews and observations of the learners during the reading lessons. The research will focus on the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read.

I will do my best to conduct my research as efficiently and discreetly as possible with the understanding that the general functioning of the school will not be compromised in any manner whatsoever. Access to the learners, parents and classrooms will be negotiated with the principal, Governing Body and the parents by me. The confidentiality of the participants will be guaranteed and respected. A copy of the findings will be lodged with the Regional Senior manager on completion of my studies. No individual will be forced to participate and all ethical considerations governing research will be strictly adhered to by the researcher and the respondents.

I thank you in anticipation of a favourable response.

Yours faithfully

_____
Researcher: K.Govender

Date: _____

15 Grassmere Drive
Nagina, 3610
[H] 031-7062200
[W] 031-4031043
Cell: 0846867111

TOPIC: An exploration of the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

As the principal researcher, I shall conduct the interviews. It will be a semi-structured interview for learners in grade 4. The purpose of the interview is to generate data on what grade 4 learners read and why they choose to read what they read. The data generated will be used for research purposes only. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants will be guaranteed and respected. The interview is entirely voluntary. The participants are not compelled to participate and have the right to withdraw at any given time. They also have a right not to answer any question should they so desire. The questions will be presented to the participants prior to the interview for perusal. The participants will be notified that leading and resultant questions will be posed during the interviews that do not appear on the interview schedule. Leading questions allow for new ideas to enter the research and for me to gain clarity on the area of reading that is being researched. The participants will be informed that the interviews will be tape recorded so that important information will be captured. Written consent will be sought from the parents of selected learners. Participants can also change the responses/answers after reading the transcripts of the interviews.

Interview schedule for learners:

1. What do you understand by the term 'reading'?
2. Do you read?
3. How often do you read?
4. When do you read? When is your best time to read?
5. Do you read alone?
6. What reading materials do you read?
7. How do you select the reading materials? Explain.
8. What do you read at school?
9. What do you read at home?
10. Is the reading material the same for number 8 and 9?
11. If the answer is no, what is the difference?
12. Why is it different?
13. List in order of popularity the reading materials that you read. (Number one being the most popular and number 10 being the least popular.)
14. Do you like to read? Explain your choice.
15. Who or what motivates you to read?
16. What hinders or affects your reading choice?
17. Do you select your own reading material?
18. Do you read materials selected by others? Explain.
19. Why do you read what you choose to read?

TOPIC: An exploration of the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

As the principal researcher, I shall conduct the interviews. It will be a semi-structured interview for parents of learners in grade 4. The purpose of the interview is to generate data on what grade 4 learners read and why they choose to read what they read. The data generated will be used for research purposes only. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants will be guaranteed and respected. The interview is entirely voluntary. The participants are not compelled to participate and have the right to withdraw at any given time. They also have a right not to answer any question should they so desire. The questions will be presented to the participants prior to the interview for perusal. The participants will be notified that leading and resultant questions will be posed during the interviews that do not appear on the interview schedule. Leading questions allow for new ideas to enter the research and for me to gain clarity on the area of reading that is being researched. The participants will be informed that the interviews will be tape recorded so that important information will be captured. Written consent will be sought from the parents of selected learners. Participants can also change their responses/answers after reading the transcripts of the interviews. Each interview will last for 30-45 minutes or until the desired results are achieved.

Interview schedule for parents:

1. Does your child read?
2. When does he/she read?
3. Does he/she read the news headlines?
4. Does he/she read the recipe when you cook or bake?
5. Does he/she read the weather report?
6. What does your child read?
7. Does he/she select his/her own reading material? If no, then who does?
8. Does he/ she enjoy reading materials selected by others? Explain.
9. List your child's reading materials in order of popularity, one being most popular and ten the least popular.
10. What motivates your child to read?
11. What are factors that hinder your child's reading choices?
12. Why do you think your child chooses to read what he/she reads?
13. What do you think of his/her choice of reading materials?

TOPIC: An exploration of the reading choices of grade 4 learners and why they choose to read what they read.

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE [duration: 3 weeks]

I shall observe the grade 4 learners in three focus areas:

1. Reading-for-pleasure lessons.
2. Library lessons.
3. Scenario: If you could plan a reading room for your school, what reading materials would you put in it?

Reading for pleasure lesson:

1. What reading materials do they bring to the lessons to read?
2. Record the data in my journal.

Library lessons:

1. Observe the learner in the library.
2. Where does he/she go to first?
3. What reading materials does he/she select to read?
4. How does he/she select the reading materials?
5. Record the data in my journal.

Scenario:

1. Give them a clean slate to work with.
2. Record the data.
3. What do they select for the room?
4. Where do they position/place these reading materials?
5. Why did they select these reading materials?
6. List the reading materials in terms of popularity and importance.
7. Is the selection wide and varied? Record.