ELIZABETH MARY RALFE

CHANGING GENDER PERCEPTIONS: THE CASE OF A CLASSROOM BASED CRITICAL LITERACY INTERVENTION

Durban 2011

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Durban 2011

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal

DECLARATION

I ELIZABETH MARY RALFE declare that

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Signed: .....

Supervisor: .....
(Prof. R Balfour)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis reports on a critical literacy intervention with a grade 9 class the purpose of which was to raise awareness and change attitudes and perceptions towards gender. Texts are not neutral, and critical literacy is a way of examining a wide variety of texts in order to discern the values and ideologies behind them. In this way social inequalities and injustices are revealed and the reader is empowered to change the *status quo* (Janks 1993, 2001, 2010; Fairclough 1989 and 1992; Comber 2001 and others). At the same time their language and thinking skills should improve. Critical literacy is not separate from literacy, but rather an approach which raises awareness and facilitates critical engagement (Stevens and Bean 2007; Woodridge 2001). However, the ability to read effectively is important for the development of critical literacy (Sanders 1994; Hall 1998).

Attitudes towards gender are socially constructed and deeply acculturated. Despite gender rights being protected under the *South African Constitution* (1996), and social justice issues such as gender empowerment being articulated in *Curriculum 2005* this is not evident in schools where hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal attitudes manifest themselves in sexual harassment, gender violence and discrimination (Bhana 2005 and 2009; Morrell *et al* 2009). Changing these attitudes is difficult, but critical literacy offers an approach which can empower both boys and girls.

This research used a mixed methods approach as this is flexible and allows for changes as the research progresses. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques have been used in order to achieve triangulation and complementarity. Triangulation verifies, while comlementarity is used to enhance, clarify and elaborate on, data collected from different sources. Thus the mixed methods research leads to greater validity and reliability than a single method.

The findings of this research are threefold. The first is that a critical literacy approach is difficult to implement if learners have weak reading skills. In order to engage critically with texts learners need decoding skills and fluency (Rasinski *et*

al 2004; Morris and Gaffney 2011) as well as a range of skills such as the ability to draw inferences, make judgments, evaluate and analyse what they are reading. This research reveals that the learners in grade 9 do not have the requisite reading ability to engage meaningfully with critical literacy. Reading comprehension tasks are inadequately completed and they are reading at a level well below their chronological ages. Furthermore, few of them come from a background where books and reading is valued, therefore few of them read for pleasure. In addition, this deficit in reading affects their ability to decode visual texts in the form of advertisements effectively.

Changing attitudes to gender is challenging as these are deeply acculturated in the school and the wider society (Morrell *et al* 2009). In class when the message being imparted goes against embedded cultural values the boys decline to participate; in less formal situations the boys display hegemonic masculinity indicating that they have greater power and status than girls.

Although *Curriculum 2005* gives a special place to social justice issues and critical literacy is one of the Language, Literacy and Communication specific outcomes, the learners in grade 9A do not appear to have meaningfully engaged with it, despite being the only group to have followed *Curriculum 2005* since they entered school in grade 1.

The results of this research suggest that reading is central to creative thinking and problem-solving and thus needs to be addressed across all school grades, learning areas and subjects. In addition, if gender equity is to be attained, the school and the wider community need to be involved and public role models have to be seen to lead the way.

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Chapter 1 The spark is ignited …

Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.

(Kofi Annan 2004)

1.1 Introduction to the study

The research reported in this dissertation concerns two cornerstones of the *South African Constitution* (1996): empowerment and gender. It further examines whether gender empowerment can be facilitated through the development of critical literacy skills at school.

South Africa has one of the most gender-friendly constitutions in the world which is "founded on the values of non-racialism and non-sexism" (*South African Constitution* 1996, 3). Government policy reflects this in equity legislation that has been put in place to redress, together with race, the subordinate position women occupied prior to the 1994 democratic elections. That this legislation has borne fruit can be seen both in the business and political spheres. A greater number of women are in parliament than ever before and more women candidates stood for election in the last national elections which were held in 2009, and local government elections held in 2011, than was previously the case. Women's representation in parliament has increased to 45% since the general elections of 2009, 41% of the cabinet members and five of the nine provincial premiers and 40% of members of the executive in local government are women (Hicks 2010). Many of the large cities and towns boast women councillors and mayors. Although women still lag in the business sphere - according to Business Watch (2010) only 7.1% of all directors of JSE companies are female - there are a number who head up large business enterprises. The head of the South African reserve bank is a woman, Gill Marcus, as is the recently appointed public protector, Thuli Madonsela. There is a gender desk in parliament, a public holiday, 'Women's Day', set aside each year in August to celebrate the importance and status of women, and a period in November-December each year which draws attention to the plight of women and children who suffer abuse

which is known as the 'Sixteen days of activism'.

On the other hand, South Africa has high levels of gender-based violence. It has the highest incidence of femicide and rape in the world (Vetten 1996; Brown 2005; Verwey 2006; Matthews *et al* 2008). A report published by Statistics South Africa (2000) states that 55 000 South African women were raped in 1998, which is 134 in 100 000 of the total population (Hirschowitz, Worku and Orkin 2000). This translates into a woman raped every 16 seconds which is alarming. According to Interpol, South Africa has the highest rate of rape in the world (Smith 2004) and in research conducted by the Medical Research Council it was reported that one in four men in South Africa admitted to rape (Mail & Guardian June 18, 2009). High profile political and business leaders in South Africa have been accused of rape and sexual harassment, although they have not always been found guilty in court. All this suggests that, despite the Constitution and a discourse indicative of gender equality, there are deep contradictions which run through a society which is still strongly patriarchal (Balfour and Ralfe 2006).

Schools, which are a microcosm of the society in which they are located, are not exempt from this phenomenon and although little is acknowledged publically, one often reads about the worst cases of abuse in the press. Reports of rapes and assaults at school are commonplace, some examples being a 5 year old girl who was raped during school hours when she went to the toilet (Mhlongo 2004) and another of a 13 year old girl who was hacked to death in the school playground by a 16 year old boy after she spurned his sexual advances (Mthembu 2004). A 15 year old female pupil at a high school in Gauteng was allegedly given a drink spiked with a drug and had 'consensual' sex with two boys while others video-taped it taking place and later circulated it on their cell phones (Damon 2010). A similar case in Phoenix KwaZulu-Natal, led to the girl contemplating suicide (Mhlongo 2007). Research undertaken by CIET Africa (Community Information and Epidemiological Technologies) in 1998 reports that "one in every three Johannesburg schoolgirls has experienced sexual violence at school and, of these, only 36% said that they had reported the episode to someone" (Taylor 2002, 3), while Human Rights Watch (2001, 2) reports that "on a daily basis in schools

across the nation, South African girls of every race and economic class encounter sexual violence and harassment at school that impedes their realization to the right to education". Despite efforts by the government and the work of the Gender Equity Commission, South Africa remains a sexist and patriarchal society and the superior position of men is inculcated in both boys and girls at an early stage. It is against this backdrop that this research was undertaken.

Attitudes towards gender are socially constructed, culturally embedded, and engendered at a very young age. Language socialization further entrenches these attitudes and perceptions (Tannen 1990; Lakoff 1990), so much so that changing them may prove to be a difficult task (Corson 1993). Furthermore, according to Corson,

> Women in most cultural contexts are clearly an oppressed group when compared with men as a group. It follows that almost any gender differences in discourse are interpretable with respect to this clear difference in power between men and women.
>
> (Corson 1993,130)

This is particularly true of South Africa at present.

The government of South Africa is committed to establishing a non-racial and non-sexist society. To this end, the National Department of Education set up a task team in 1997 to look into gender equity. Following the publication of the Gender Equity Task Team Report (1998), a Directorate for Gender Equity was established and each province had to set up a department to deal with gender issues headed by a Gender Focal Person. Despite these efforts it is clear that attitudes on the ground have not changed appreciably as girls at school are still often sexually harassed. They are also often the target of sexual violence and aggressive behaviour by male learners and teachers (Morojele 2009; Bhana 2009).

According to a number of educational philosophers, education, and specifically language education, can provide a path to empowerment and change and facilitate a just dispensation for all (Dewey 1916; Freire 1970; Vygotsky in Van der veer and Valsiner 1994 among others). There is a belief that education should provide students with experiences that are authentic and identifiable and that these experiences should enable them to question society and the power

differentials which govern it. Critical literacy is a way of looking at oral, visual and written texts and questioning the attitudes, values and ideologies that lie beneath the surface. In doing this, social inequalities and injustices are revealed and the listener/reader/viewer is empowered. This new awareness and empowerment can change the *status quo* and consequently the behaviour of learners, while at the same time improving their language facility. According to Janks, "Critical literacy education, based on a sociocultural theory of language, is particularly concerned with teaching learners to understand and manage the relationship between language and power" and she goes on to state that the "shared goal of all critical literacy work (is) equity and social justice" (Janks 2000, 176 and 179). This view of language is supported by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1998) which in their final report on the nature of violence during the apartheid era state:

> It is common place to treat language as mere words, not deeds, therefore language is taken to play a minimal role in understanding violence. The Commission wishes to take a different view here. Language, discourse and rhetoric does things: it constructs social categories, it gives orders, it persuades us, it justifies, explains, gives reasons, excuses. It constructs reality. It moves people against other people.
>
> (TRC, 7, 124,294 in Janks 2000, 183)

A further reason for selecting to use a critical literacy intervention which might change the attitudes towards gender of adolescent girls and boys is that *Curriculum 2005* (Department of Education 1997) and the *National Curriculum Statement* (NCS) (Department of Education 2002), as well as the Grades R – 9 policy document – Languages (Department of Education 2002), place a strong emphasis on developing critical language skills. *Curriculum 2005* states that learners must think critically and "develop and reflect critically on values and attitudes" (1997, 21), while the preamble to the NCS document clearly articulates its aims which are rooted in "democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights" (Department of Education 2002,1). The critical outcomes focus on developing learners who can "identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking" and "critically evaluate information" (Department of Education 2002,1). Critical literacy works towards achieving these outcomes.

This research has been undertaken also against a background of growing disquiet

about declining educational standards (Jansen 2006). Concern is being expressed about the poor level of literacy skills that learners are developing as they pass through the school system (Majila and Pretorius 2004, Howie, Van Staden *et al* 2008) with many learners unable to read and write effectively. The PIRLS test (Howie, Van Staden *et al* 2008), the systemic evaluation tests conducted by the Department of Education (2000, 2004 and 2008) and the Annual National Assessments (ANA) results (2011), reveal the poor language abilities of learners. Such concerns will also be addressed during this research.

Finally, if it is possible to draw the attention of both boys and girls to gender inequalities and moderate behaviour and attitudes towards women through a critical literacy intervention of the kind proposed and explored in this project, then there is hope that learners can co-construct a new, just society in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution. Thus this research is motivated by a desire to use language to confront learners with their own prejudices, and to provide an intervention that will change learners' attitudes and perceptions about gender roles, while at the same time improving their ability to read and write through the medium of English, bearing in mind that many learners often speak a number of the official languages of South Africa in a variety of different contexts (Barnes 2004; Rudwick 2004).

1.2 Brief overview of literature: Language, gender and power

In this section literature pertaining to the two main areas of this study will be discussed: language and gender, and critical literacy, as the main discussion of literature will be in chapters 2 and 3.

1.2.1 Language and gender

Language plays an important role in the construction of gender roles (Brice Heath 1983; Corson 1993; Wood 2001) and discourse patterns which are set in

childhood continue into adulthood and are "transferred by modeling adults who themselves take the rules for granted" (Corson 1993, 139). By the time children reach school going age, 5 to 6 years old in South Africa, girls and boys have already internalized gender-differentiated language, and research suggests that these persist and are reinforced by schools (Swann 1992). Classroom researchers have found that boys are more outspoken, interrupt more and are more assertive than girls in the classroom (Swann and Graddol 1994; Delamont 1990). They are also more inclined to display their masculinity by using language which is discriminatory and disparaging towards girls (de Klerk 1995). This has been widely reported, as has physical sexual harassment at school (Morojele 2009; Bhana 2009; Balfour and Ralfe 2006; Robinson 2005; Kehily 2002; Skelton 2001; Shefer, Strebel and Foster 2000). Teachers tend to pay more attention to boys and will more readily accept poor behaviour, such as calling out, from boys than girls (Kelly 1988, Corson 1993, Swann 1992). Despite a plethora of research documenting gender bias in school textbooks, recent research (Wharton 2005, Buthelezi 2003, Zittleman and Sadker 2002) suggests that this has not been addressed by textbook writers or publishers. In addition, while Kenway and Willis (1998) suggest that Australian schools have become more aware of gender issues, this is not true in Africa. Researchers (James *et al* 2004, Mirembe and Davis 2001) working in the area of HIV/AIDS education report that despite increased levels of awareness, girls are under immense pressure from boys to engage in sex, with 31% reporting that they were coerced into sex and that it was "difficult for them to refuse unwanted sex or negotiate condom use" (Campbell and MacPhail 2002).

1.2.2 Critical literacy

Critical literacy has its roots in the work of John Dewey (1900 and1916) and later, Vygotsky (in Van der veer and Valsiner 1994) and Freire (1970/1996, 1988), the latter of whom refers to this critical practice as "praxis" meaning theory-based action/action-based theorizing. It is an approach that invites learners to develop critical thought on a range of social issues for example, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, culture, social class, religion and politics. While encouraging and developing critical thoughts in the learner, the teacher will

develop as "a critical democratic educator who becomes more informed of the needs, conditions, speech habits, and perceptions of the students" (Shor 2000, 9).

Critical literacy is associated with empowerment and social justice. Its aim is to make explicit ways in which language is manipulated in order to maintain the *status quo*. It interrogates the ideologies that lie behind the choices made by language users. It has also been referred to as "emancipatory discourse" (Janks and Ivanic 1992, 305) which means that it works towards achieving greater freedom and respect for all people. Seminal work on critical literacy has been done by Fairclough (1992, 1995 and 2001). In the mid-90s a group of theorists and practitioners in this area formed the 'New London Group' and broadened their scope to include what they term 'multiliteracies'. This term includes visual and media literacy all of which will be part of this study. Members of this grouping who have worked extensively in this area include Street (1995), Ivanic (2004), Comber (1993), Clark (1992), Cope and Kalantzis (1993 and 2000) among others. In South Africa the work of Janks (1992, 1993, 2000 and 2010), Granville (1993 and 2003), and McKinney (2004a, 2004b and 2005) have added to the corpus of research into critical literacy, while Balfour (2003) examined the responses of Zulu boys and girls to three short stories which deal with gender issues and found that using a critical literacy approach led the learners to have a greater awareness of gender power differentials.

Pitt (1995), Morgan (1997) and Freebody, Luke and Muspratt (1997) provide outlines in their publications of professional development courses and practical classroom material developed for and with teachers in Australia and these have informed this study. Hall (1998) discusses how critical literacy can be implemented in an infant classroom together with basic literacy. The development and use of critical literacy teaching materials for use in South Africa has been done by Janks (1993) and Mlamleli *et al* (2000 and 2001). These will be expanded upon in chapters 2 and 3.

It has to be noted that critical literacy is not an uncontested area. Researchers have reservations about the efficacy of using it with all learners. Hall (1998),

while advocating the introduction of critical literacy in the primary phases, cautions that without basic literacy, critical literacy is not possible. She says: "It is reasonable to say that basic literacy enables critical literacy. One cannot grasp a meaning from written text, let alone several meanings, unless one can decode it" (Hall 1998, 190). This view is supported by Macken-Horarik (1998) and Freire (1970).

In addition, there has also been a great deal of work on the engendered nature of literacy – ranging from gender and reading (particularly women and romance reading, women and magazine reading, genre and gender); gender and writing (journal writing, letter writing); to literacy and gender in school (boys and reading problems, feminization of reading and boys' lack of success in schools). What there has not been, to date, is a strong movement to see literacy (media literacy, reading and writing) as a tool for gender education in schools. Thus this work should be of interest to educators both in South Africa and abroad.

1.3 Overview of education in South Africa

As any classroom intervention involves engagement with the statutory approaches to the implementation of education and the curriculum prescribed by the National Department of Education, it is important to contextualize the political approach to education and the school curriculum against the broader history of the country.

Education is not neutral, nor does it occur in a vacuum. Education policy, which manifests itself in the approach and curriculum to be followed in the classroom, is strongly influenced by the government in power which "will attempt to develop educational paradigms which suit their specific cultural, economic, philosophical, political and social conditions" (Willemse, 2003, 163). Powers (2005) supports this view and argues "that all governments use public education as a vehicle for propaganda that 'socializes' children into certain mindsets, behaviors, and expectations so that they can become model citizens in the society that produced

them." (Powers 2005,1). Kallaway contends that crises in education reflect "stresses in the society as a whole" (1984, 12) and are strongly influenced by wider historical change. Furthermore, it is important to note that education policies today are influenced as much by broader political and economic pressures as they ever were in the past and "need to be understood within the framework of explanation of the broader periods of crisis and conflict in the economy and society" (Kallaway 1984, 7). Thus education policy in South Africa has been influenced strongly by the social ideology of the government of the time, and the need to develop the economy by providing a suitably skilled workforce to the labour market.

The ideologies which have underpinned South African education have led it to be in turmoil for many years. Willemse goes so far as to say that it "has been in the throes of constant, confusing and at times painful changes" (2003, 163). Much of this turmoil can be accounted for if one considers the attitudes of successive governments to the implementation of education. Thus it is important to provide a brief history of education in order to contextualize this study.

1.3.1 Brief history of education in South Africa until 1994

It is not within the scope of this research to provide an exhaustive account of the history of education in South Africa, but the legacy of past injustice and inequality still affects school children and is often articulated as the challenge to be overcome in the provision of quality education today. In this section 'black' education will be discussed because since the establishment of the first school in South Africa the pervading ideology has been one of subjugation on the basis of race.

Inequalities in education can be traced back to when the first schools in South Africa were established. According to Molteno (1984), the Dutch East India Company established the first school in the Cape on the 17 April 1658, shortly after the arrival of 170 slaves. In order to utilize the slaves effectively it was necessary for them to understand and speak the language of their masters while religious education united them in a common doctrine. Thus, through education

the slaves were "driven physically and psychologically into their masters' world" (Molteno 1984, 46). A second school was established in 1663, to cater mainly for the children of the colonists, but also some slave children. As the population at the colony grew, so did the desirability of having separate schools for colonists and slaves because "in this way the class divisions between slaves and colonists could be kept adequately clear" (Molteno 1984,46). Formal education was not a priority of the Dutch East India Company and was introduced largely to prepare the children of colonists and slaves for their respective positions in society. Religious instruction was considered central to an ordered, disciplined society and, according to Molteno, "the teaching of the three Rs tended to be almost incidental to religious instruction" (1984, 47). At the same time the school separated girls and boys, with the girls learning what they needed in order to fulfill domestic duties while some of the boys learnt trades.

Schooling developed very slowly during the 17th and 18th century, with a few elementary schools being established in Cape Town and the surrounding villages. Missionary education began in the 18th century when the Moravian Missionary Society started a school for Hottentots[1]. Here, too, "boys and girls were taught separately, and, while the former were trained in certain trades, handicrafts were emphasized for all" (Molteno 1984, 48).

The first formal schools, within an articulated schools system and provisioned by the state, in South Africa were introduced in the nineteenth century by the British colonists. These schools were established to provide education for the children of British civil servants working in the colonial government and tended to be located around the main urban centres. They catered for a relatively small, elite group and were modeled on the British educational system. Other population groups, including the Dutch settlers who were mainly engaged in farming activities, were ignored by the state. Education for African pupils was left to the missionaries who in addition to preaching the gospel "taught elements of the same culture to which the trader, the magistrate, and the farmer belong" (Cook 1949 quoted in Molteno 1984, 49). Thus the British government quietly supported the educational

[1] Hottentots were the indigenous population of the Cape when the first settlers arrived in 1652.

endeavours of the missionaries as they were perceived to be assisting the British in exercising social control by 'civilizing' the indigenous population and preparing them for the role which the colonial government wished them to occupy: namely labourers and servants. However, developments in the mining and agricultural sectors of the economy in the latter half of the 19th century, and the need for labour to develop these industries required the colonial government to take greater control of black schooling. Mission schools were required to register and received a small state subsidy and in return they were obliged to maintain a formal syllabus and were subject to regular inspections. The syllabus required that a fifth of the time should be spent in manual work such as carpentry for the boys, and that girls should learn dressmaking, cooking and laundering (Molteno 1984).

The end of the Anglo-Boer war in 1902 changed the *status quo* in South Africa. Many Boer farmers were forced off their land and had little in the way of skills or education. They moved to urban areas, lived mostly in abject poverty, and had to compete with black people for unskilled positions. The social problems associated with increasing urbanization forced the British colonial government to put in place formal policies to protect white interests, thus laws pertaining to job reservation, differentiated wages, and controls over the freedom of movement of black people were promulgated. At the same time the rich and growing mining industry and the associated increase in industrialization required that official policies be put in place. Politicians decided that 'Whites' would be educated to fill skilled positions while 'Blacks' would undertake the unskilled work. This was clearly spelt out in a report prepared in 1903 by Rev. W E C Clarke, the Transvaal's first Inspector of Native Schools, where he clearly articulates the purpose of black education was to 'teach the native to work'. This is reiterated in a document prepared by the Native Economic Commission 1930-1932 which stated that, "He (the native) must learn to school his body to hard work…" (Quoted in Molteno 1984, 62). At the same time the movement of black people was restricted and if they were not employed they were required to live in 'reserves' which had been set up under the Land Act of 1913. Black education was not deemed to be a priority and was consequently largely ignored, chronically under-funded, not compulsory, and left, as before, largely in the

hands of missionaries who operated mainly in rural areas. This situation prevailed for the first half of the twentieth century.

When the Nationalist government came into power in 1948, education became central to the implementation of the ideology it espoused. Education was seen as an important tool through which the preservation of a strong Afrikaner powerbase and identity could be maintained and expanded. Central to this was the total separation of races in the interests of maintaining ethnic purity and power, in other words, a divide and rule policy. Thus the already limited freedom of black people was further curtailed as they were forced into townships and newly established ethnic homelands. The policy of separation applied also to black people of Indian origin as well as people of mixed decent who were categorized by the government as 'Coloured'. This policy became known as 'apartheid'.

Educational policy was underpinned by Christian National Education, an ideology which was formally proposed as policy in 1948 following the publication of a policy statement by the Institute for Christian National Education in Potchefstroom. It was introduced by the National Party in 1948 as official education policy, and was rejected from the outset by the black majority (Christie and Collins 1984). According to Ashley (1989), "The Christian National conception of schooling is one which views the [education] process as essentially one of 'moulding'... The aim is to mould children into the image of their adults, founded upon Christian and national values." (1989,11). It also emphasized separation, justifying this on the basis that "hope for the child lies in his or her being schooled to adulthood within the context of a specific community, with its distinctive cultural character and tradition." (Ashley 1989, 10).

The restructuring of education was, therefore, a cornerstone in the implementation of this policy of separation and social engineering. In order to facilitate a coordinated approach to black education a Commission on Native

Education was set up under the chairmanship of Dr Eiselen[2]. The commission reported in 1951 and recommended "that black education should be an integral part of a carefully planned policy of segregated socio-economic development for the black people" (Molteno 1984, 160). Thus one of the first things the government did was to formally separate education in terms of race. The Bantu Education Act (1953) entrenched the separate and unequal nature of education in South Africa. The Minister of Education at the time, H F Verwoerd stated clearly the object of this act when he said. "There is no place for the Bantu in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour" (Verwoerd 1954, 24).

The new policy led to the cutting of the state subsidy to mission schools, causing many of them to close. This action was justified on the grounds that they were educating black children to fill roles that were not available to them in the emerging apartheid society. Prior to the imposition of the Bantu Education Act in 1953, 5000 black schools out of a total of 7000 in the country were missionary run. After its implementation all but 700 catholic schools remained while further restrictions imposed in 1955 led to more closures, leaving only 509 (Christie and Collins 1984). Night schools which were a prominent feature of black education had an enrolment of more than 12 000 in 1953/54 but after coming under state control in 1955 almost all of them were closed (Christie and Collins 1984). According to Hunt Davis (1984), prior to 1953 it was possible for at least some black South Africans to "seek an education that would lead to their assimilation into the modern sector of South African society" (1984,127) but after the Bantu Education Act this was impossible. To secure their hold on the sector there was an influx of white Afrikaans males into the administration of Bantu education while white teachers were withdrawn from black schools and their places were taken by mainly unqualified black teachers.

A commission on Coloured Education was established in 1953 which recommended that control of the education of coloured children be moved to the Department of Coloured Affairs. The coloured population fiercely opposed this

[2] Dr Eiselen was Chief Inspector of Native Education in the Transvaal. He was a descendant of the German missionaries. He was also an anthropologist and separate development theorist.

but was eventually forced to acquiesce following the passing of the Coloured Persons Education Act in 1963. Indian education followed with the passing of the Indian Education Act in 1964. As segregation policies became more entrenched so each ethnic group had their own 'government' and education department. According to Molteno (1984) 'Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education was designed to help remove them psycho-ideologically and 'resettle' them in their separate 'places' of subordination" (1984, 93).

In 1976 the government implemented a curriculum adjustment which decreed that black learners should learn through the medium of both English and Afrikaans. The policy which was seen as further entrenching the language and culture of the oppressor was rejected by black learners on practical and ideological grounds. After some months of simmering discontent, the issue led to the Soweto uprising which started on the 16 June 1976. This spread quickly to other parts of the country. The government backed down on the policy, but learners for the first time understood the power of numbers in acting against the government. According to Hunt Davis, by October 1977, 196 000 black pupils were absent from school for political reasons (1984, 350). In 1981 coloured scholars from the Cape joined in the protests intensifying the call for educational reform. Further pressure from 'capitalist' interests to improve education in order to address the skills shortage forced the government to consider change.

Initially, a number of mainly cosmetic changes were made to the black education system. In 1980 the government asked the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) to set up a commission to comprehensively review and make recommendations on all levels of education in South Africa. The chairman of the commission was Prof J P de Lange. The report called for sweeping changes including the abolition of separate education departments and the establishment of one, single education department, free and compulsory education, and equal educational opportunities and standards for all (Kallaway 1984; Hunt Davis 1984). The government did not implement the recommendations, choosing repression to deal with student unrest. During the remainder of the 1980's

political unrest frequently disrupted education while the slogan 'Liberation before Education' became the cry of black scholars.

Racial inequalities of the education policy are clearly demonstrated in the table below which is based on data collected just prior to the unbanning of the ANC and the beginning of negotiations towards a new political dispensation:

Figure 1.1: Comparative education statistics 1989.

	White Education	Indian Education	Coloured Education	African Education
Pupil-Teacher ratios	1:19	1:22	1:23	1:41
Under-qualified teachers (less than Std. 10 plus a 3yr teachers certificate)	0%	2%	45%	52%
Per capita expenditure (including capital expenditure)	R3 082,00	R2 227,01	R1359,78	R764,73
Std. 10 pass rate	96%	93,6%	72,7%	40,7%

(Hofmeyr and Buckland 1992, 22)

The government eventually made some tentative steps towards desegregation in education in 1989 when a system of models was first mooted by the Minister of Education, House of Assembly[3], Minister Piet Claase. This was motivated by the external and internal pressure being exerted on the government by opponents of apartheid, and a shortage of finance as the government attempted to equalise spending on pupils of different racial groups. The government of the time led by President P W Botha vetoed the proposals, but in 1990, following President de Klerk's February 2nd speech and the unbanning of the ANC, Minister Claase again began making statements about changes in the white education system. This culminated in the conditional opening of all schools to races in 1992. However according to Badat (1997) by 1993 there were only 60 000 black students enrolled at white schools. This was largely due to the high fees charged and because of residential areas still being separated. Thus "the only immediate beneficiary of the deracialisation of schooling was the small, emergent black middle class" (Badat 1997, 11). The opening of schools had little or no impact on the legacy of

[3] Under the apartheid government the Minister of Education, House of Assembly controlled 'White' education. 'Coloured' education was controlled by the Minister of Education, House of Representatives, Indian Education was controlled by the Minister of Education, House of Delegates, and 'Black' education was controlled by the various 'homeland' governments.

disadvantage experienced by black learners and did virtually nothing to address the structural inequalities, by now long established.

1.3.2 The School curriculum under apartheid

Prior to 1948, when all education came under the control of the provinces, the curricula followed by all learners were similar. While the imposition of Christian National Education principles affected Black, Coloured and Indian education the most, it was also rejected by certain sectors of the white community. English speaking teachers by and large followed the liberal tradition. They rejected Christian National Education on the basis that it was "narrow and chauvinistic, and likely to lead to Christian-National indoctrination of white English-speaking pupils in state schools" (Enslin 1984, 140). Furthermore, they objected to the imposition of a rigid curriculum, syllabi and textbooks clearly aimed at furthering the ideology of the ruling party.

Christian National Education, as its name suggests, is based on a particular interpretation of the teachings of the Bible, and consequently religious education was central. In addition there was the belief that the teaching of all subjects should focus on Christian nationalism. Geography, for example, should focus on instilling a love for the country and should prepare the learners to be willing to defend it and improve it for posterity. History should show the role of the Afrikaners in the development of the country and offer a Christian (Calvinist and race orientated) interpretation of historical events, with little or no attention paid to the Africans, Indians or English speakers. Biology, too, was influenced by Christian National Education and teachers were "warned against the uncritical acceptance of evolutionary theory, which failed to recognise God as the source of creation" (Ashley 1989, 22). Language was important with the mother tongue being the medium of instruction in all school subjects.

Literature and textbooks were required to support the Christian National ideology. A study of 53 textbooks done by du Preez (1983) found that Christian National Education was reinforced in all the textbooks examined. These findings are supported by UNESCO research analysing South African textbooks which

stated that: "white supremacist attitudes, glorified nationalism as a historical theme, discredited counter ideologies and negatively stereotyped black people" (Ashley 1989, 25).

Black education was similarly prescribed with primary school syllabuses which, "stressed obedience, communal loyalty, ethnic and national diversity, acceptance of allocated social roles, piety, and identification with rural culture" (Molteno 1984, 89). The lower-primary curriculum consisted of basic communication in the mother tongue, literacy and numeracy, and an introduction to either English or Afrikaans. Promotion was automatic and then at the end of 4 years a test was conducted to determine if the child could move on to higher-primary school. As Christie and Collins observe, "In a situation of poorly qualified teachers, lack of facilities, and a system of automatic promotion, it is not likely that academic standards would be high." (1984, 179). Higher-primary schools were an extension of lower primary schools, with the addition of vocational subjects such as Gardening and Agriculture (Christie and Collins 1984, 177).

Teachers working in these schools, under-qualified, under-resourced, and under political pressure, became unmotivated. Research conducted in classrooms under the control of the Department of Education and Training (which controlled all black schools which were not under the control of a 'homeland' government) reveals that interaction in black schools was characterized by a "rigid and didactic teaching style aimed at inducing rote learning of content" (Wallace-Adams 1996, 314/315). This resulted in passive, taciturn learners who existed in a state of "resigned docility" (Thembela 1986, 42). Schlemmer and Bot observed that "African children were actively discouraged from asking questions or participating actively in learning sessions. It was seen as bad manners and insubordinacy to ask questions and make suggestions in class" (1986, 80). Chick (1996) claims that teachers and pupils in these schools colluded by participating in what he terms 'safetalk'. This behaviour concealed the fact that little or no learning was taking place. Critical, independent thinking was discouraged at schools as rote learning was viewed as the way to succeed in the black school

system. The drop-out numbers were high with the vast majority of learners leaving before reaching high school (Hartshorne 1987).

1.3.3 Curriculum reform

Discussion about curriculum reform and alternatives to apartheid education began in the mid 1980s when it was clear that education was at the forefront of the struggle against apartheid and black pupils openly rejected Bantu education. At that stage reform was centred around a radical proposal that 'Peoples Education' might be a viable and acceptable alternative. The appeal of Peoples Education which was rooted in left wing liberal socialism, rejecting inequality, capitalism and authoritarianism, is easy to understand (Ashley 1989). Furthermore, it was everything that Christian National Education was not. Thus, where Christian National Education preached separation and inequality, Peoples Education spoke of social transformation and equality; where Christian National Education was inherently conservative and divided the curriculum into subjects which transmitted information via a set syllabus, so Peoples Education integrated subject matter and encouraged critical thinking and questioning; in Christian National Education the learners were viewed as passive receivers of information from a content-based syllabus; while in Peoples Education the teaching was learner-centred and paced at the level of the learner; the Christian National Education teacher had little or no autonomy because of heavy handed state prescription, the Peoples Education teacher would be an independent, professional, able to facilitate learning; finally, where in Christian National Education the community was excluded from the educational process, Peoples Education encouraged community participation at all levels (Kraak 1999, 2001).

Once negotiations between the ANC and the Nationalist government began in earnest in 1990, the discourse surrounding Peoples Education was largely abandoned as it failed "to link political and educational goals to curriculum transformation" (Badat 1997, 4).

A number of stakeholders produced documents which proposed reforms. The National Education Coordinating Committee, a broad grouping which included

representatives of labour and the ANC, came up with a policy document which was underpinned by progressive education theories and emphasized democratic values of non-racism, non-sexism, equality and redress as the basis for post-apartheid education, but was vague on the specifics of a curriculum. Many of these values are incorporated into the 1998 curriculum, but at this stage there was no mention of Outcomes Based Education[4] (OBE) (Jansen 1999, Young 2001, Kallaway, Kruss, Donn and Fataar 1997). The government came up with *The Education Renewal Strategy* which was closely followed by another entitled *A New Curriculum Model for South Africa* (CUMSA). The latter proposed "a rationalization of the inordinately large number of school syllabuses, the development of core learning areas, and a stronger vocational education emphasis in the school curriculum" (Jansen 1999, 5).

1.3.4 The South African curriculum post-1994

One of the first steps that the democratic government which was elected in 1994 took when they came into power was to restructure education, both in terms of administration and the school curriculum. Education was unequal, fragmented, and largely dysfunctional. Curriculum policy differed according to racial and gender groups (Christie 1991; Coutts 1992; Kallaway 1991). The first step to establishing equity in education was the abolition of "racially differentiated access" (Kraak 1999, 23) and the amalgamation of all the different controlling bodies, 14 in total, under one central Department of Education headed by one minister.

Once this was accomplished, the curriculum was addressed. Curriculum policy under the apartheid government was conservative and "based on rigidly-defined school subjects whose purpose was the unquestioned transmission of apartheid-determined syllabus content through rote-learning" (Kraak 1999, 23). The new government's answer to this was to introduce an Outcomes Based Education (OBE) curriculum called *Curriculum 2005* (Department of Education 1997a). It was unveiled in 1997 and implemented in grade 1 in 1998. According to Rasool

[4] Outcomes Based Education is an educational framework developed by William (Bill) Spady, a Harvard University academic. It will be discussed in greater detail in section 2.2.1 of this thesis.

(1999, 175), it represented "a starting point to view the world broadly, learn appropriately, develop new skills and competencies and find new ways to solve problems". It "incorporates values such as non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, equality and nation-building in a manner never imagined under the apartheid education system … and through a process of interaction and stimulation … enables learners to think critically" (1999, 177). However, from its inception it was viewed with scepticism. The change of classroom culture was difficult for teachers to cope with, particularly as it was implemented at the same time as the many different racially and ethnically based education authorities were being amalgamated into a single Department of Education. In addition, teachers were facing considerable job insecurity as the Department of Education launched a *'Rationalization and Redeployment'* policy that saw class sizes increase, school budgets cut, and many experienced teachers take severance packages and leave the employ of the state. Added to this, teachers had problems with the sophistication of the language used in *Curriculum 2005*, were given poor preparation and training to implement it (Lessing and de Witt 2004), and there was little guidance available to them as there were initially no textbooks because the policy required teachers to develop their own teaching resources (Jansen 1999).

In 2002, *Curriculum 2005* was rewritten and renamed '*The Revised National Curriculum Statement'* (RNCS) (Department of Education 2002). The principles underpinning *Curriculum 2005* have been retained, but the language has been simplified and the content and competencies more clearly articulated to make the document easier for teachers to interpret and utilize. The preamble to the document clearly articulates its aims which are rooted in "democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights" (Department of Education 2002b,1) while the critical outcomes focus on developing learners who can "identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking' and 'critically evaluate information" (Department of Education, 2002b,1). By the end of the General Education and Training (GET) phase (grade 9), the assessment standards indicate that learners should have mastered a number of sophisticated language skills and among them, critical literacy. However, despite the re-writing

of the curriculum it is perceived that the damage has been done and that learners exiting the system do not have the basic literacy and numeracy skills to enter the workforce.

A detailed discussion of the outcomes based curriculum known as *Curriculum 2005* and its practical implementation in the classroom will be discussed in chapter 2[5].

1.3.5 Gender in education policy

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the *South African Constitution* (1996) makes provision for gender equity. Thus in 1996 the Minister of Education, Sibusiso Bengu, appointed a Gender Equity Task Team to look into all aspects of gender equity in education. This task team made comprehensive recommendations, including the setting up of a Gender Equity Unit in the Department of Education (DoE) and the establishment of gender desks occupied by a gender focal person in each of the nine provinces. Following this, a number of policy documents were produced (Department of Education 2003), workshops and publications were issued by the Canada-South Africa Education Management Programme (Mabelane *et al.* 2001; Mlamleli *et al.* 2001; Mlamleli, Napo, Sibiya, and Smith 2000) and the DoE itself produced a volume for teachers on addressing gender in the classroom (Department of Education 2002a). However, despite the legislation and policy documents on this issue, most of the implementation has been in the area of improving the conditions of service of female educators rather changing gender attitudes towards classroom learners and teachers. According to Chisholm (1997, 60), "Issues of race and gender in both official curricula and curricula in practice have tended to be assumed rather than addressed". Thus, despite efforts by the government and the work of the Gender Equity Commission, South Africa remains a sexist and patriarchal society and the superior position of men is inculcated in boys and girls at an early stage (Coetzee

[5] Grade 9, the research class focused on later in this thesis, were the only class group to use *Curriculum 2005* for their entire GET phase. They were the first group to be exposed to *Curriculum 2005* as they were in grade 1 in 1998, the first year of its implementation. They were also the last grade in the GET phase to complete grade 9 on *Curriculum 2005* prior to the phasing in of the *National Curriculum Statement* (NCS).

2001; Guy-Sheftall and Hammonds, 2005).

1.4 Aim of the research

The aim of this research is to explore how young people can be sensitised to gender power through critical literacy. According to Luke and Freebody (1997), learners need to become proficient in four related areas of language in order to become truly literate. They need to become Code Breakers (able to encode and decode language); Text Participants (able to use their world, vocabulary and language knowledge to comprehend and compose texts); Text Users (able to understand how language varies according to context and purpose); and Text Analysers (able to critically analyse and challenge the ways that texts are structured and used to convey ideologies to the reader/ viewer). Critical literacy focuses on the last two skills, but is not discrete from the other two.

The aim of critical literacy is to encourage learners to question what they are hearing, reading and viewing. It requires them to look at the meaning, purpose and motive behind the way in which the text has been structured, organised and contextualized. Learners need to understand that there are multiple interpretations of any one text as readers decode texts according to their own value systems and beliefs. It requires learners to analyse their own attitudes and beliefs and to take a position on what they have heard, read or viewed. Once they have taken a position, the next phase is empowerment, social action and change.

In this way the research aims to empower the teacher and learners who participate in the project. According to Corson,

> power is the great variable that separates men and women from one another: routine female exclusion from public spheres of action also often excludes them from access to the creation, maintenance, and elaboration of dominant ideologies and the language used to express them.
>
> (1993,129).

The society into which we are born determines the roles boy and girl children are expected to play in that society (Brice Heath 1983), and when they see these roles being repeated the "ideologies associated with these conventional rules become

habitual … and they become socialized into reproducing these patterns themselves." (Corson 1993, 139).

This research also aims to encourage learners to interrogate their own attitudes, not only towards gender, but towards learners of different races, cultures and linguistic groups through a classroom based critical literacy intervention. There is a wealth of sociolinguistic research that confirms that stereotypes and attitudes are conveyed through the language spoken and the material read. It is therefore hypothesized that by developing critical literacy it will be possible to enable learners to consider their attitudes before stereotyping people and in that way achieve greater gender and cross-cultural understanding.

Furthermore, this project will raise awareness among educators and assist them in dealing with problems in the classroom and playground which frequently arise around issues of gender (Bhana 2009; Morrell *et al* 2009; Morojele 2009).

Finally, the intervention will involve the learners in reading, viewing, discussing and writing selected texts. Thus it is hoped that an important benefit from this intervention will be not only an adjustment of attitudes, but an increased ability to read and write coherently and correctly in English.

1.5 Research questions

The following questions have been formulated in order to guide the research:

- What are the perceptions and attitudes of learners in a co-educational high school towards learners of different gender?
- How do these perceptions and attitudes manifest themselves in the behaviour of the learners towards each other?
- In what way can a critical literacy intervention impact on the perceptions and attitudes of the boys and girls in the research class towards gender?
- What factors affect the successful implementation of a critical literacy intervention?

1.6 Research design and methodology

The research paradigm of this study follows a critical research approach, within the broad area of critical social science (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000) which aims to empower participants so that they can change society in some way, while the theoretical orientation lies in the area of language socialization (Freire 1970). This maintains that shared understandings are established in the process of interaction. These shared understandings can include unequal power relationships which allow people to "dominate others in culturally acceptable ways" (Thomas 1993, 5).

The critical literacy intervention described in this dissertation follows both an action research and a case study framework (Seliger and Shohamy, 1990). Action research is practical and directly related to a particular situation, it is adaptable and flexible and it "can provide an orderly framework for problem solving and new developments that is superior to fragmentary approaches" (Wallatt et al 1981, 109). According to Bertram (2004), the purpose of action research is transformation and the improvement of practice, both of which are central to this study. A case study "typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, 185). Both these approaches are utilized as the focus of the research is an in-depth investigation with a group of learners in order to describe and evaluate if, and in what way, their perceptions and attitudes towards gender change after using critical literacy materials focusing on gender issues in their English classes over the year.

In order to implement and test whether attitudes can be changed with specific reference to gender by using a critical literacy approach, a number of different research methods, both quantitative and qualitative, have been used. Data has been collected by means of questionnaires, tests, interviews - conducted both with groups and individuals - audio-taped lessons, photographs and field notes.

The critical literacy teaching materials developed for the intervention follow the examples set by Janks (1993), Bailey (1994), Arnesen and Riley (1995), Mlamleli

et al. (2000) and Mlamleli *et al*. (2001), but also conform with the demands of the *Curriculum 2005*. This material is designed to challenge the learners' views about gender. It examines how women are portrayed in advertising, magazines and newspapers, in fiction and a variety of other texts. It interrogates the language and representations of women used in these texts. The aim of this material is to raise the learners' awareness of how language is used as a social tool, and thus to achieve a change in their perceptions and attitudes. The activities require learners to speak, read and write. Whole class lessons, group work and individual oral presentations have been audio-taped, and written responses to tasks have been copied so they can be examined and analyzed.

One of the challenges of using qualitative, ethnographic research methods is ensuring that they are valid, reliable and generalizable. This is because the actual nature of the data to be collected is not clear at the outset of the research. An inductive approach was followed and the data carefully searched for recurring patterns which are evident across the different research instruments. These patterns have been categorized and interpreted. Inductive approaches require the "fullest possible records of classroom life from which theoretical frameworks can be inductively derived" (Ensor and Hoadley 2004).

A full and detailed account of the design and methodology followed in this research is provided in chapter 4. What follows is an outline of the organization and structure of this thesis.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is organized and sequenced in order to contextualize and present the research logically and coherently and address the research questions articulated in the previous section. A brief outline of the chapter contents follows:

Chapter 2 consists of a review of the key literature relevant to this study. The school curriculum is important in order to contextualize the research reported

here as it has been collected during a classroom intervention. Furthermore, the learners in the grade 9 research class started school in 1998, the year that the outcomes-based *Curriculum 2005* was first implemented and as this curriculum has been phased in year by year, this particular year group are not only the first to experience it, they are also the only group to be taught using this curriculum for the whole of their GET phase. The question of literacy, and its importance to critical thinking as well as reading, is also discussed and the importance of reading to the development of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) which facilitates critical, analytical thinking. Finally, gender in education is discussed and a number of issues surrounding the 'hidden curriculum' are explored. This discussion supports the clearly articulated social justice aspects of *Curriculum 2005*.

Chapter 3 provides the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. Critical pedagogy, the foundation of critical literacy is examined in detail, particularly the work of Dewey, Freire and Giroux. This is followed by a discussion of work done in the area of critical literacy by a number of scholars such as Fairclough and Lankshear and MacLaren, on the subject of language and power and is followed by a discussion of the work of Janks, Comber and other writers and researchers on the subject of critical literacy. The work of Janks (1992, 1993, 2000, 2001, 2010) in the area of Critical Language Awareness which influenced the material developed for the intervention is also discussed.

Chapter 4 provides an outline of the research framework. Central to this is the material which is used in the critical literacy intervention, and this is described in detail in this chapter which includes a rationale and examples of the activities and content covered during the course of the classroom intervention.

The data collection methods employed in this study and a rationale for their selection is covered in chapter 5, as well as details of the various research instruments used in the study and how data were captured, coded and analysed. Included in this section is a description of the research site and the sample chosen for the research, along with a rationale for the choice. As the research has been

conducted in a school with learners who are minors, an explanation of how the ethical issues have been dealt with is provided. The chapter includes a discussion of the challenges faced and the possible limitations of the study.

The classroom intervention generated a great deal of data. After careful examination the data was reduced and separated, and following this process three themes stood out: firstly, the poor reading ability of the learners; secondly, that the inability to read effectively affects the learners' ability to decode and engage not only with written text, but also with visual material; and finally, that gender permeates every aspect of classroom life. These themes, which are explored in chapters 6, 7 and 8 are a recurring feature through the data collected. Furthermore, they provide answers to the research questions articulated in section 1.5 of this chapter. They are explained in greater detail below.

As has been stated above, the first theme discussed is the importance of reading to the development of critical literacy and this is the central focus of the data presented in chapter 6. Data collected from a variety of classroom tasks which require learners to demonstrate their ability to read and understand text has been analysed and the findings support the view expressed by a number of researchers such as Freire (1970), Sanders (1994) Majila and Pretorius (2000) and Hall (1998) among others, whose work is discussed in chapter 2 and 3, that the ability to read is important in developing critical literacy. In addition the results of a reading test administered in order to gain some indication of the learners' reading ability, and a reading questionnaire which explores the learners' views of reading, is presented. The results obtained from these quantitative research tools support the findings from the qualitative analysis of the learners' individual responses to classroom tasks: that the majority of learners who took part in this intervention are poor readers and read very little. This compromises the learners' ability to engage with text in meaningfully. This view is expanded upon and supported in the following chapter.

The second theme, which is explored in chapter 7, is aligned to the first one which considers reading, but expands on this to consider visual literacy in the form of advertising. In this chapter a lesson activity focusing on the theme

'advertising' are presented and discussed. This topic is relevant as advertising explicitly uses language in order to achieve its aim which is to influence and persuade us to buy products. Furthermore, advertisements are a useful tool to demonstrate how language can be used to exert power and influence and thus to forefront critical literacy. In this chapter the final group activity which requires the learners to respond to a series of questions on an advertisement is analysed in detail, as are the learners' responses to a question on this topic in the June examination (2005). The data collected from these activities support the findings from the previous chapter and suggest that learners are unable to effectively decode visual messages if reading is compromised.

The third theme considers gender dynamics in the school and classroom and these are explored in chapter 8. In this chapter the learners' perceptions of gender roles and their gender attitudes as well as gender and power relations in the classroom are examined. The learners' behaviour in formal classroom activities which involve the whole class and small groups, as well as informal classroom interaction, is examined and analysed. The nature of hegemonic masculinity and its overt display by some of the boys, along with the responses of the girls in the class to this behaviour, is discussed. In addition, the results of a quantitative questionnaire which examines the learners' perceptions of gender roles and their gender attitudes is presented. This questionnaire was administered twice, once at the beginning of the year and then again at the beginning of the following year to see if there have been any changes in the responses following the intervention. Interviews, also reported on in this chapter, support the view that attitudes towards gender are deeply entrenched, and in general, tacitly supported by the school and community.

The final chapter reviews the findings, draws together the various strands of the research and draws conclusions based on the results of the various research instruments. It concludes with the view that implementing critical literacy is a legitimate and essential aspect of teaching as well as addressing the demands of *Curriculum 2005* with its focus on human rights. However, its implementation is challenging with adolescents who come from a society in which patriarchy is deeply entrenched. Changing gender perceptions in an environment in which they

are an accepted part of life, to such an extent that the injustice is imperceptible to the wider community, the school and the learners, requires consistent and long term implementation and should be started much sooner than grade 9. Chapter 9 goes on to discuss the relevance of the findings to the current debates around critical literacy and provides some concrete recommendations which will be of interest to education authorities, classroom practitioners and education policy makers.

1.8 Reflection

This chapter provides a detailed outline of the research to be explained and documented in this dissertation. It starts by providing a comprehensive motivation for undertaking the study by articulating the contradictions which exist in South African society over issues of gender. It then reviews a selection of the key literature on critical literacy and gender, both of which are important areas of this study. This literature will be discussed in greater detail in chapters 2 and 3.

The research is contextualized with the provision of a brief history of education in South Africa. This history provides a background of how the education system and the curriculum were used as a political tool to keep the majority of people in submission. This, in turn explains the changes in curriculum that have taken place since 1994 and provides a rationale for the implementation of an alternate curriculum.

The aim of the research, which uses a critical literacy approach in a classroom intervention with grade 9 learners in order to sensitize them to gender power, has been discussed, along with the potential for using critical literacy as a tool to address other social justice issues. Following the articulation of the research questions, a brief outline of the research design and methodology is presented. Finally, an outline of the structure and the various chapters that make up this thesis are provided in order to illustrate how the aims of the research and the

research questions have been addressed. All of this will be expanded on in later chapters.

No research occurs in isolation, but is built on the work of others. In the chapter that follows, a comprehensive overview of the literature which informed this research is discussed, while details of the theoretical framework underpinning this study will follow in chapter 3.

Chapter 2 What has been said and done: a review of relevant literature

I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform.

(John Dewey 1897)

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter research will be reviewed that will provide a context for the thesis and the pedagogic intervention undertaken in 2005. The review begins with a discussion of the South African school curriculum from 1994 to the present. This is important because it contextualizes the research which follows, as the Grade 9 learners who participated in the intervention started school in 1998, the first year *Curriculum 2005*, the outcomes-based curriculum, was implemented. Furthermore, they were the last group to complete grade 9 on *Curriculum 2005* as it was phased out to be replaced by the *National Curriculum Statement* (NCS). They were, indeed, the only group to have used *Curriculum 2005* for the entire duration of their GET phase, thus the outcomes, range statements, performance indicators and activities used in the intervention conform to the *Curriculum 2005* statements. The *National Curriculum Statement* (NCS) is not discussed in any detail in this review as it was not used in this intervention. The consequences of the introduction of OBE, test results and research on learners performance since its introduction is also discussed as much of the research is confirmed in the findings.

Literacy is closely allied with critical literacy. Freire (1970/1996) makes the point that language is central to critical thinking and other researchers (Sanders 1994, Hall 1998, Pretorius 2000) confirm this, for it is language that allows man to name and therefore change his world (Freire 1970/1996). Furthermore, in order to critique text and discourse, the ability to read effectively is vital because "to analyse and abstract, the mind must be able to return to a subject over and over for review" (1994, 19). Thus reading is covered in more detail than other literacy skills. As this is a school-based intervention the language required to succeed is

discussed, and the ideal of developing cognitive academic language proficiency in learners is explored.

Finally, gender in education is examined. Policy and practice are often at odds with one another and the hidden curriculum with regard to gender can be seen at work particularly in co-educational schools. Included in this section is a discussion of the Gender in Education Policy which was first put into place in 1994 in South Africa.

2.2 The South African school curriculum 1994 - 2010

Educational policy is seldom about education alone. It always reflects the dominant political view (Christie 1997, 1991, Christie and Collins 1984, Kallaway 1984, 1991, 1997, Rasool 1998, Cadiero-Kaplan 2002 and others). As Kallaway (1984) so aptly puts it, "the ideological balance within debates about education and the broader ideological struggles in the society at large are inextricably linked" (1984, 1). Thus, any classroom intervention is influenced strongly by the prevailing curriculum, which in turn, particularly in the case of South Africa, was not developed independently of wider political and economic concerns. As Gultig, Hoadley and Jansen (2002) contend, any curriculum is "a social construction that carries with it sets of political, social, and educational values and assumptions" (2002, ix) and these have a profound effect on "what is taught, how it is taught, and the impact this teaching has on different groups in society" (2002, ix). Giroux (1981) supports this view, stating that, "… the school institutionalizes, in various aspects of the curriculum, modes of knowing, speaking, style, manners and learning that most closely reflect the culture of the dominant social classes" (1981, 28).

Defining the term curriculum is problematic because it is always viewed in ideological terms. Those who have a conservative, narrow view of education consider it to be the various subjects or courses of study to be taken by learners, and the graded content which teachers have to cover in each, that is, the syllabus

and the methods, textbooks and material used to teach a given subject. Kincheloe (1998) defines the word curriculum, as derived from the Latin verb *currere,* which refers to running a race course; when used as a noun it comes to mean the track to be followed. This suggests that it is "dictated and static, not fluid and changing" (Cadiero-Kaplan 2002, 373). This is the view that prevailed in the Christian National Education curriculum which was discussed in the previous chapter. More liberal educationists view curriculum in a much more holistic way to include everything in the school environment that influences learning, not only the formal learning programme, but also the behaviour of learners and teachers, their attitudes and the entire school as a community (Graham-Jolly 2002).

As stated in the previous chapter, when a democratic government was installed in 1994, South African education was largely dysfunctional owing to ongoing protest action and a fragmented, inefficient management system. The curriculum had been founded on Christian National Education principles which were strongly patriarchal and authoritarian, and advocated separation in terms of race and language. Black education was,

> notoriously based on minimum literacy and numeracy for African boys and girls on the assumption that boys would become 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' while girls would become low-skilled, domestic and agricultural workers.
>
> (Chisholm 2003, 5).

Corporal punishment was used liberally, even for minor transgressions and "sexual harassment and rape was widespread" (Chisholm 2003, 5).

As was indicated in chapter 1, much of the organized resistance to the apartheid government was centred around education. The need for radical curriculum reform gave rise to a number discourses surrounding what policies might replace the abhorred Bantu education system. Peoples Education had been advocated during the 1980s as a solution as it promised a system based on the democratic principles of equality, was learner-centred, process driven, and would develop critical, independent thinkers who could fulfill the needs of their community (Kraak 1999, 2001). However, once negotiations began in the early 1990s it was abandoned as being too radical.

The ANC, aware of the need to address education, viewed curriculum reform as one of its major initiatives. However, while there was a broad commitment to a democratic system founded on principles of non-racism, non-sexism and equality, according to Badat (1997) initially there "was a silence on the concrete specification of the means by which the transformation of apartheid education was to be effected" (1997, 21). There were a number of attempts at policy revision and committees were set up look at textbooks and to "remove inaccuracies and outdated and contentious material, [and] to consolidate school curricula where possible" but "the result was a set of recommendations largely restricted to cosmetic changes to the existing curriculum, adding and subtracting material without touching the basics of the system" (Greenstein 1997, 131). A policy of continuous assessment was introduced, but "without any teacher preparation and with minimal guidelines as to how this could be achieved" (Jansen 1999, 7). However, there was widespread acknowledgment that South Africa needed an integrated education system which would produce "high ability-high quality products with the ability to solve problems, think critically and apply new skills and techniques to different situations." (de Clercq 1997, 156).

One of the major priorities when ANC took power in 1994 was that South Africa should be part of a rapidly globalizing world economy and education was central to this ambition. Initially, an OBE approach to education was the chosen for the training sector in order to "facilitate equivalence, articulation, flexibility, progression across different learning institutions and contexts" (de Clercq 1997, 157). This resulted from input from the National Training Board who produced a document entitled *The National Training Strategy Initiative* (1994) which proposed that labour and the training sector should be linked to education and that education and training qualifications should be integrated (de Clercq 1997, Jansen 1997, 1999). Although this document was essentially for the labour and training sector, it gave rise to the National Qualification Framework (NQF, 1995). The South African labour movement, COSATU, who were aware of the shortage of skills in the country and the need to develop the economy in order to provide employment and economic development, was keen on the implementation of a competency-based system of education, however, at this stage of the debate there

was "very little integration or interrogation of educational ideas into this labour-driven debate, at least from those working in schools" (Jansen 1999, 7). Then towards the end of 1996, without warning, the Department of Education issued a document which proposed the implementation of OBE in schools. This was followed by the launch of *Curriculum 2005* in March 1997 and the announcement that it would be implemented in Grades 1 and 7 in 1998 although later a decision was taken to implement it in Grade 1 only.

2.2.1 The Origins of Outcomes Based Education

Outcomes Based Education does not have any clearly defined roots and is only loosely linked to established learning theory (Malcolm 1999, Jansen 1999, Sarinjeivi 2000). It arose mainly from behaviorism and the work of Skinner, the curriculum objectives of Tyler (1949) and Magner (1962), Bloom's (1956) theory of mastery, and competency-based education (Jansen 1999, Soudien and Baxen 1997, Malcolm 1998, Sarinjeivi 2000, Killen 2002). This can be seen in the clearly articulated behavioral objectives, the emphasis on the ability of all learners to succeed given the right opportunities, time-frames and support and the criterion reference methods of assessment. OBE emerged in the USA in the late 1960s where changing needs in the labour market lead to questions as to whether education was adequately preparing young people for employment. At this time training was understood as distinct from education: training was designed to develop uniform behaviour to achieve a clearly articulated goal, while education "was intended to produce singularity" by developing pupils who could think and reason abstractly (Alderson and Martin 2007, 197). However, the increasing demands of globalization in South Africa have led to similar pressures as those prevailing in the USA in the 1960s, creating a need for "educational practices to be inextricably linked to possible and intended life roles" (Mahomed 1998, 160).

At the heart of OBE lies a training discourse which is rooted in the concept 'competency', and that given sufficient time and instruction everyone is able to master a particular outcome and achieve 'competence' (Soudien and Baxen 1998). Thus the achievement of a competence or outcome is the result of learners following a process which leads them to demonstrate that they have understood and can therefore apply what they have learnt to a variety of different contexts

(Kraak 1998, 2002). This demonstration leads to certification. Malcolm cautions that South African OBE, strongly influenced by the work of Spady (1994), takes an essentially behaviorist position where "outcomes must be demonstrations of performances, not thoughts, understandings, beliefs, attitudes, mental processes … what happens in the mind helps learning, but the outcome is behaviour" (Malcolm 1998, 91).

Much of the early work in developing OBE into a framework which could be applied effectively in classrooms was done by William (Bill) Spady, a Harvard University academic who is considered a world authority on the subject and is often referred to as the father of OBE (Killen 2002, Wilson 2000, Malan 2000 and others). According to Spady,

> Outcome-based Education means clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences. This means starting with a clear picture of what is important for students to be able to do, then organizing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment to make sure this ultimately happens.
>
> (1994, 1)

Spady (1994a, 1994b, 1998) articulates four principles which he says are crucial to the success of outcomes-based education. Firstly, there has to be a clear focus on significant outcomes or 'learning results' and this needs to be articulated at the outset and should be aligned with assessments. Secondly, educators need to focus all their classroom activities and instructional programmes on what the student needs to know, understand and be able to do successfully. In order to do this effectively they need to "design curriculum/learning experiences/ instruction systematically back from the ultimate, desired end" (Spady 2008, 3). Thirdly, he emphasizes that teachers need to have "high expectations for a high level of success" (2008, 3) from the learners but at the same time should challenge their learners to interrogate deeply what they are learning. Finally, he claims that all learners are capable of achieving the stated outcome provided they are given support in the way of expanded opportunities to demonstrate their competence (that is, more activities), and sufficient time. According to Spady, "this requires that time be viewed and used as a flexible resource, not as a calendar and schedule-bound "definer" of the educational process" (Spady 2008, 3), so the

"traditional concern for instructional time is replaced with a concern for student learning" (Killen 2002, 9).

During the course of 1997 the Department of Education sought input from a number of international experts and advisors, but the final product depended heavily on the work of Spady, who spent some time in the country as a guest of the United States Information Service (USIS) (Jansen 1998). However, during its construction it became significantly more complex and according to Spady, (2008) the final document was "a major disappointment" (2008, 6) which was not based on the third or perfected version of OBE which he called 'transformational' OBE. Furthermore, the fixed time frames imposed by a school-based system further militated against its success (Spady 2008, 2). In 1998 when he visited South Africa following the publication of the curriculum documents, he stated, according to Jansen, that,

> OBE had not worked anywhere in the USA and was unlikely to work within South African schools. Why? If political resistance from the Christian right wing spelt the doom of OBE in the USA, then the sheer deprivation of resources and inherited inequalities would damn OBE success in South Africa.
>
> (1999, 13)

2.2.2 Outcomes Based Education in South Africa

Given the history of South African education presented in chapter 1, the appeal of OBE to the educational authorities is clear. It is in diametric opposition to the hated Christian National Education system and heralded a marriage between the need for the development of skills as articulated in the competency-based training discourse, and the radical rhetoric of Peoples Education which, according to Kraak (1998), gave the policy legitimacy.

Figure 2.1 taken from the *Curriculum 2005* documents distributed by the Department of Education (1997a) gives a simple and brief outline of the differences between the old and the new curriculum:

Figure 2.1: Comparison between transmission model and Outcomes Based Education and training

	OLD TRANSMISSION MODEL OF LEARNING	NEW OUTCOMES-BASED MODEL OF LEARNING
THE LEARNER	Passive learners.	Active learners
ASSESSMENT	Graded. Exam-driven. Exclusionary.	Continuous assessment; learners assessed on an on-going basis.
ROLE OF TEACHER	Teacher-centred, textbook bound.	Learner-centred; teacher as facilitator; teacher constantly using group work and team work.
CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK	Syllabus seen as rigid and non-negotiable. Emphasis on what teacher hopes to achieve.	Learning programmes seen as guides that allow teachers to be innovative and creative in designing programmes. Emphasis on outcomes – what the learner becomes and understands.
TIME FRAMES AND LEARNER PACING	Content placed into rigid time frames.	Flexible time frames allow learners to work at their own pace.

Source: National Department of Education, (1997a, 6-7)

However, the figure above requires explanation in order to illustrate just what a huge shift in thinking and culture moving from the old system to the new required of both teachers and pupils. Learners, accustomed to rote learning in a content-heavy curriculum, are required to become independent, responsible, active participants in the achievement of the stated outcomes, as classrooms move to become learner-centred, and democratic. Listening to lessons presented in the old transmission style gives way to working co-operatively in groups on practical tasks which will actively engage learners in discovering for themselves, thereby encouraging independent, creative thinking and empowering them. Teamwork is emphasized as the assumption is that learners do not come to the classroom as blank slates, but have knowledge which is a resource for themselves and their group as they work together pooling their resources. During the course of group discussions and debates social skills will be developed as they will learn to listen and communicate effectively, respecting the views of others. Instead of writing regular tests, they are required to provide evidence that outcomes have been achieved by presenting a portfolio of work produced during a variety of group activities as evidence. There is an assumption that given sufficient time and assistance every learner is capable of achieving the stated outcomes.

The role of the teacher in *Curriculum 2005* becomes one of facilitator and classroom manager, leading, mediating, and assessing learning – 'the guide on the side rather than the sage on the stage' - a phrase often repeated in the OBE training sessions. In addition the teacher (now called an 'educator') is required to be an interpreter and designer of learning materials and learning programmes; a learning area, subject, discipline and/or phase specialist; fulfill pastoral and community roles; and be a "scholar, researcher and lifelong learner" (Department of Education 1997). The broad outcomes provided in the official documents means that teachers have autonomy in deciding how to structure their learning programmes and tailor them to the needs of the learners and the community, and then design suitable activities and provide relevant resources.

As the teacher is concerned mainly with what are essentially learner outputs in order to assess whether a given outcome has been achieved, there is a heavy emphasis on assessment, but not the standards based assessment teachers were accustomed to, but criterion-based assessment which focuses on whether competence has been achieved (Malan 2000). The curriculum lists 22 different types of assessment expressed in unfamiliar in terms such as "criterion-referencing", "formative assessment", "analytic assessment", "series assessment" "indirect assessment" and so on. (Department of Education 1997a, 26). The reason for this is that assessment should be viewed to be holistic and authentic. It should be holistic "in describing the competence of learners in terms of knowledge skills and values and assessing competence by using a variety of approaches" (Malan 2000, 26), and authentic in that the assessment tasks resemble as far as possible real-world situations in which the competence would be required. The overall principle is one of continuous assessment with both learners and teachers having to keep prescribed portfolios of activities that have been done. On the basis of these portfolios learners move up through the schooling system.

It is questionable whether the *Curriculum 2005* policy document which was distributed to schools in October 1997 could be described as a curriculum in the accepted sense by South African teachers. It is a broad document in which the

stated aim is to provide direction rather than to focus on specifics. It is "descriptive rather that prescriptive" (Department of Education 1997a, 2) and it emphasizes at the outset that it is not a syllabus and "should not be used as such" (Department of Education 1997a, 2) but a framework or guideline which may be used by teachers in developing their own curriculum. The guiding principles which inform the curriculum are listed and integration of subjects and of theory and practice is seen as paramount. Two diagrams, the first giving the structure of the National Qualification Framework (NQF), and the second illustrating the overall structure of the curriculum are given, the latter indicates the relationship between critical outcomes, specific outcomes, range statements, assessment standards and performance indicators. This is followed by an explanation of all the unfamiliar terms; details of the principles underpinning assessment, the different types, management and reporting of assessment; and then finally each specific outcome in the given learning area is expanded upon briefly in terms of the skills required to be mastered. Learning Programmes are seen as flexible with a high level of teacher autonomy in the selection of activities and resources while content is explicitly excluded (Department of Education 1997a).

This document was developed without input from the teachers who were expected to implement it. Although, according to Jansen (1999), some were later involved in its practical implementation, none were consulted in the decision to adopt it as policy or in its conceptualization. This is confirmed by Soudien and Baxen (1997) who in interviews with teachers who were on various learning area committees confirmed that all these were chaired by officials of the Department of Education with their staff making up the majority of the members, and other members were usually representatives of the teacher unions who were considered 'stakeholders'. Ordinary classroom teachers were excluded, thus this was essentially a top-down process. In March 1997 the Minister of Education announced that Outcomes Based Education, articulated in *Curriculum 2005*, would be implemented in Grades 1 and 7 in 1998 and thereafter it would be phased in grade by grade.

2.2.3 Responses to the implementation of Outcomes Based Education

As with any change, the announcement of the curriculum change to an Outcomes Based model generated a range of responses, some positive, but many skeptical. There was general consensus that education had to reform, but the wisdom of implementing such a major shift into what was already considered, following international experience, to be a controversial and in some cases, unworkable system was doubted (Jansen 1997, Parker 1997, Brookes 1997). In addition the change failed to take cognizance of conditions existing within schools. Years of turmoil and restructuring which had been on going since 1990, had led to low morale among teachers and conditions in classrooms were deteriorating as class sizes were increasing and resource provision dwindling. In 1997/1998 the Department of Education massively overspent, leading to large cuts in spending on teacher development programmes, subject advisory services and learning support materials among other things (Rensburg 2001). Almost simultaneously with the announcement of the introduction of the new OBE curriculum, 130 000 experienced teachers exited the system as a result of the 'Rationalization and Redeployment Policy' through which the government sought to trim the cost of education by redeploying staff and offering voluntary severance packages to teaching personnel who were willing to exit the system (Christie 1999).

One of the most outspoken critics of OBE is Jonathan Jansen, who gives ten reasons why he believes Outcomes Based Education will fail (Jansen 1997, 1998). He believes that the introduction of such a radical new system is a political decision and fundamentally flawed because in essence it is ideological and does not take cognizance of the realities of the South African classroom. Furthermore, he goes so far as to assert that it will "undermine the already fragile learning environment in schools and classrooms" (1997, 67). He argues that the language used in the curriculum documents is "complex, confusing and at times contradictory" (1997, 67) with the addition of "more than 100 new words to the curriculum landscape" (1999, 9), many of them inaccessible to the average teacher. In addition it ignores the kinds of classrooms and teachers in the system who are expected to implement the policy in their classrooms. The lack of curriculum content and the excessive demands of assessment will place a huge

administrative burden on teachers who are already struggling. He says the claims made that OBE will stimulate economic growth cannot be supported by research in other countries where school education and curriculum change has had no effect on job creation or the national economy. In addition he cites, the lack of teacher consultation, the trivial curriculum content, the focus on instrumentalism, and the poorly resourced state of education as reason why the policy was destined to fail (Jansen 1997, 1999).

During the course of 1997 the Department of Education defended the new curriculum. However, most of the arguments centred around the fact that the old system was untenable and a complete revision was necessary, rather than a strong defense of the choice of OBE as the vehicle of change. It was argued that the new curriculum was necessary in order to facilitate nation building and "de-differentiation" (Hindle 1997, 22) that it "carries the potential of reaffirming people's belief in themselves and can be a rehumanising force" (Mahomed 1999, 162), that it "builds in a national coherence in regard to outcomes, but also has a built in bias towards autonomy in respect of content and methods" (Hindle 1997, 23) and that the status of teachers would be increased as they would now be viewed as leaders "continually innovating and developing, experimenting, looking for new ways to achieve the agreed upon goals" (Hindle 1997, 24). Hindle does sound a note of caution acknowledging that effective management of the process of implementation is crucial to its success and that: "Poor management will induce a return to authoritarian and technicist approaches; prescription and control are much easier instruments to effect than those of co-operative governance" (1997, 27) which is what happened.

The introduction of OBE in 1997 was more than just the implementation of a new curriculum, it involved a huge paradigm shift in thinking from all educators, for it is underpinned by an entirely different and foreign educational philosophy, approach and methodology than they were accustomed to under Christian National Education. According to Olivier, "Outcomes-based learning reflects the notion that the best way to get where you want to be, is to first determine what you want to achieve" (1998:20). Strongly influenced by training, it presupposes

that the role of education is to empower learners by preparing them for life by being able to perform a particular job (Olivier 1998). Clearly from the above discussion what is important is how Outcomes Based Education is implemented in classrooms and this is what is explored in the next section.

2.2.4 Putting theory into practice: The reality of OBE in South African classrooms

2.2.4.1 Teachers and classroom practice

In January 1998 Grade 1 teachers across South Africa began implementing *Curriculum 2005* in their classrooms. The training of teachers was a provincial task and in most provinces they received a week of training. Jansen (1999) conducted research in a variety of schools and classroom settings across two provinces late in 1998. He found that there was no consistent understanding of OBE with considerable differences expressed even across the same schools, leading to it being implemented in different ways. Many teachers were unsure of whether they were actually implementing it in their classrooms and felt that the training offered was inadequate. There was a strong feeling that OBE was "not implementable in the early part of the school year with young children" (Jansen 1999, 209) and therefore many of them fell back on what they had been doing before.

The implementation of OBE has also not had the desired effect of improving the education of disadvantaged communities (Taylor 1999 and 2001, De Waal, 2004). Taylor argues that "the greatest obstacle to equity in any school system is the differential access to formal knowledge open to children of different social classes" (Taylor 2002, 91). Middle class children come to school with a wealth of experiences which support their success at school. In order to level the playing field children from disadvantaged backgrounds require explicit teaching in order to fill in the gaps (Bernstein 1996). *Curriculum 2005* depends on "the most superficial approach to hundreds of activities, most of which could be related to the personal experiences of the learners, but few if any of which are likely to result in solid conceptual development" (Taylor 2002, 97) simply perpetuating the disadvantage they experienced under apartheid education.

In his research on the implementation of *Curriculum 2005* in grade 7 classes in historically disadvantaged schools in the Western Cape, De Waal (2004) found that teachers were struggling to implement the curriculum in their classrooms with some of them displaying "feelings of despondency in themselves and their teaching abilities" (De Waal 2004, 74). Large class sizes, problems with discipline, inadequate resources and difficulty translating the curriculum into practice led to low morale.

2.2.4.2 Standard assessments of competence

A number of national and international baseline assessments have been conducted by both the state and private institutions. All have revealed very poor results in literacy and numeracy. It needs to be stated that large scale testing was not done prior to the implementation of *Curriculum 2005* for obvious reasons.

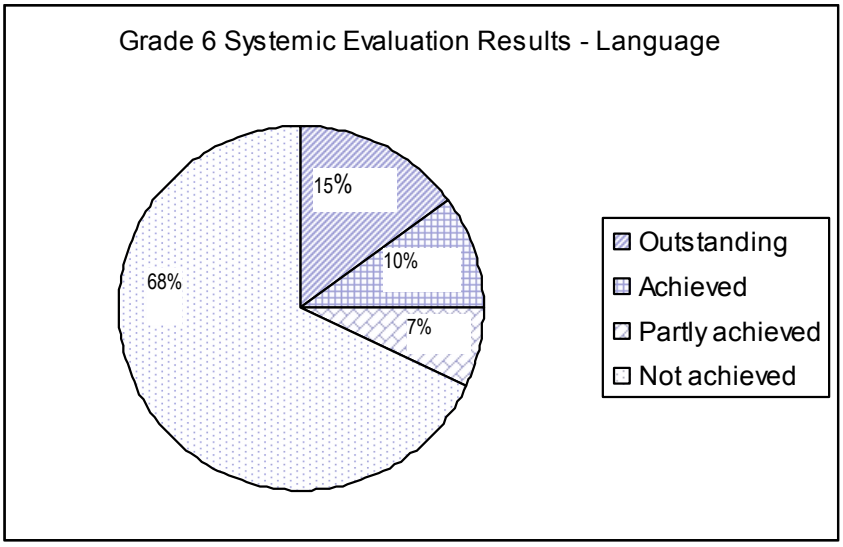
Assessments undertaken by Joint Education Trust (JET) in 2001 in over 500 rural and township schools reveal that learners in grade 3 are on average two years behind what is expected of them. The research further revealed that,

> Most pupils are barely able to write their names and are only just beginning to learn to read. While the majority are able to complete word recognition tasks, there are dramatic declines in performance from these elementary skills to the more complex task of sentence completion, and uniformly very low results across schools on the comprehension of simple passages.
>
> (Taylor 2001, 9)

That same year systemic evaluations were conducted with 51 000 Grade 3 learners randomly selected across the country. This test revealed that while 54% of learners passed the literacy test, when the results were broken down into oral, reading and writing, the average attained in reading and writing was only 39%. The results were even worse for numeracy. When separating the schools the learners came from into the departments which administered their education during apartheid, the results indicate a huge achievement gap between schools previously administered by the Department of Education and Training (African) and schools administered by the House of Representatives (Coloured) whose results were dramatically lower than those achieved by learners in previously white schools (Fleisch 2008).

Systemic evaluations conducted by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education in 2005 with grade 6 learners in KwaZulu-Natal indicate that 68% of the learners have failed to achieve the performance required, while 7% have only partly achieved it (Department of Education 2007). This means that 75% of Grade 6 learners in the province are below the required benchmark (see Figure 2.2 below). The mathematics results were even worse, with 81% not achieving and 7 % partly achieving adding up to 88% not achieving competency.

Figure 2.2: Percentage of learners at each achievement level in Language



Source: KwaZulu-Natal DoE Systemic Evaluation Report (2007)

As part of the UNESCO *Education for All* campaign, tests were conducted with a national sample of grade 4 learners with South African pupils coming bottom of the 12 African countries in which the test was conducted. Similarly, the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) test conducted in 2003 with grade 8 learners again saw South African learners coming bottom (Fleisch 2008).

The PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) conducted in South Africa reveal similarly concerning results in tests conducted with Grade 4 and 5 learners. The PIRLS test is different from the systemic evaluation in that it was conducted in all 11 official languages while the systemic evaluation was conducted in the language of learning and teaching (LOLT). Despite this, South

African learners came bottom out of the 45 countries in which the test was administered. Furthermore, there was little difference between the results of learners who wrote the test in English and their mother tongue (Howie *et al* 2008).

While these poor results cannot be laid at the door of OBE only, decades of educational disadvantage prior to 1994 have certainly played a part, it is certainly a contributing factor. Taylor writes that when conducting classroom research it was

> noted that there is very little writing in the classes observed and what does occur is often in the form of single words or phrases, with very little or no extended writing. Instead, children sit in groups and talk about their everyday experiences, often with little or no conceptual content or direction to this activity. A number of researchers also noted that books are very rarely used in the classes observed, even in those schools well supplied with books.
>
> (2001, 9-10)

The above behaviour could be a result of the use of textbooks being discouraged and the reliance on teacher developed resources which came with the introduction of *Curriculum 2005*.

2.2.4.3 Critical thinking and the OBE *Curriculum 2005*

One of the stated aims of *Curriculum 2005* is to encourage and foster critical thinking. It clearly articulates the importance of critical thinking in all its curriculum documents:

> Learning programmes should promote learners' ability to think logically and analytically as well as holistically and laterally. This includes an acknowledgement of the provisional, contested and changing nature of knowledge and of the need to balance independent, individualized thinking with social responsibility and the ability to function as part of a group, community or society.
>
> (Department of Education 1997a, 9)

Furthermore, the first of the critical outcomes asserts that learners will, "Identify and solve problems in which responses display that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made"; while number 4, states that they will "collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information"; number 6 states that they will "use science and technology effectively and critically"; and number 7 emphasises "problem-solving" (Department of Education 1997a, 15).

Given the above, it may be assumed that learners emerging from this system, where 4 of the 7 critical outcomes require critical thinking, should be able to think critically.

Research conducted by Lombard and Grosser (2008) reveals that a group of South African first year students who had gone through the OBE system fell badly short when their critical thinking skills were tested, coming considerably behind a similar profile group of students in the USA and even behind grade 12 learners in the USA. They attribute this to "teachers' teaching practices, educational change, the socio-cultural environment and language ability" (2008, 572). They assert that it is widely accepted by researchers in the educational field that teaching strategies and methods are crucial elements in developing critical thinking and that learning which is "focused on activities by which the learners acquire facts, rules and sequences, and the majority of lessons require outcomes only at the lower levels of cognition: knowledge, comprehension and application" (Lombard and Grosser 2008, 572) militate against the acquisition of high level critical thinking abilities.

The poor results and a realization that something needed to be done prompted the education authorities to review *Curriculum 2005*. Although OBE remained, the need for giving teachers more direction was acknowledged as the review process began.

2.2.5 Curriculum review and the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS)

In 2000 a committee was appointed by the Minister of Education to review *Curriculum 2005* (Chisholm 2003). It recommended that a number of adjustments to *Curriculum 2005* should be made and the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was unveiled in 2002. In this document the language of *Curriculum 2005* has been simplified, content has been added, and it has been made more accessible, so the majority of the criticisms leveled at it have been addressed, although it is still based on the same fundamental outcomes based

principles as *Curriculum 2005* (Chisholm 2003). Jansen and Taylor (2003) refer to it as "a streamlined curriculum (or thin version of *C2005*), removing some of the burdensome language architecture and establishing a much simpler and more accessible curriculum framework" (Jansen and Taylor 2003, 39).

2.2.6 The end of OBE?

While the end of OBE has not been officially announced and the NCS remains the curriculum, announcements by the Minister of Education suggest that there is a 'return' to more conventional methods of teaching. The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (2010), still in draft form indicates that the Department of Education is now committed to resourcing schools with text books, learning areas are in future to be referred to as subjects, annual national assessments are to be conducted at the end of each phase, teacher support material is being distributed to all schools and continuous assessment requirements have been reduced thus easing the burden on teachers.

The next section moves from a general discussion of Curriculum 2005, to examine the Language, Literacy and Communication Learning area outcomes and range statements, as this is the learning area that is relevant to this study as the critical literacy intervention took place during English lessons.

2.2.7 Curriculum 2005 Language, Literacy and Communication Learning Area – Senior Phase.

As the research presented in this thesis has been done in a grade 9 classroom where the learners have been following *Curriculum 2005* since they entered school in grade 1 in 1998, it is important to consider the expectations of the *Curriculum 2005* policy document in this learning area and phase as the intervention was designed following these guidelines.

The Language, Literacy and Communication learning area consists of seven specific outcomes. These are:

Outcome 1	Learners make and negotiate meaning and understanding.
Outcome 2	Learners show critical awareness of language use.
Outcome 3	Learners respond to the aesthetic, affective cultural and social values in texts.
Outcome 4	Learners access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations.
Outcome 5	Learners understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context.
Outcome 6	Learners use language for learning.
Outcome 7	Learners use appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes and situations.

(Department of Education 1997a, LLC, 3)

The document is somewhat optimistic and idealistic in its expectations. It stresses additive multilingualism, empowerment, and views literacy in its broadest sense as a "cognitive process that enables reading, writing, and numeracy" (Department of Education 1997a LLC 5), while "literacies" is defined as "the issue of access to the world and to knowledge through the development of multiple capacities within all of us to make sense of our worlds through whatever means we have, not only texts and books" (Department of Education 1997e, LLC, 5). The specific language outcomes aim to create "an ideal language user" and the teacher is urged not to consider outcomes as isolated statements, but to integrate language activities as they achieve the specific outcomes "through the integrated use of listening, observing, speaking, signing, reading and writing skills" (Department of Education 1997e, LLC, 7).

Without going into detail about the specifics of each range statement, and performance indicator listed under the Language, Literacy and Communication learning area, it is worthwhile focusing on some of the expectations of learners articulated in this document. Learners in the senior phase are required to make inferences, assess ideas, interpret meaning, critically reflect, argue, recognise genres, be critically aware, identify, analyse, evaluate, discern powerful and powerless language, recognise 'hidden agenda' and access information, among many other sophisticated language skills (Department of Education 1997e). These are all sophisticated skills. However, the difficulty in implementation lies in the interpretation of these performance indicators and the levels of complexity required at the end of each grade, given that learners should proceed at their own pace and the role of the teacher is one of facilitator. Furthermore, the document

states that the development of language is not a linear process, without explanation or elucidation, again making interpretation problematic. Providing activities for learners based on these performance indicators is consequently not straightforward.

2.3 Language, literacy, and critical literacy

Critical pedagogy and critical literacy are key concepts and as such make up the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of my research. Foundational work done by Dewey, Freire and Giroux, and the work of Fairclough, Janks, Luke, Shor and others in the critical literacy field will be discussed in chapter 3. However, language proficiency and literacy are key in achieving the ultimate aim of developing a critically literate human being. The link between literacy and critical thinking has already been mentioned in a previous section of this chapter. In this section literacy and the importance of language in developing the critical and academic skills required to achieve success are examined.

2.3.1 What is Literacy?

In a research project that draws upon critical literacy and its promotion as a method in the classroom, the question of what literacy entails is an important one. Defining literacy is a complex task, because literacy is not a fixed or unchanging concept. It has evolved and expanded in the light of new technologies and the widespread availability and accessibility of these technologies as the world is increasingly becoming a global village (Castells 1996). Literacy is also not immune to changing political agendas, as the efficient functioning of an education system and the implementation of curricula are under government or state control. Thus literacy is important to politicians as it can be used to regulate society and prepare citizens for the role they will be expected to play in the society when they are adults (Cadiero-Kaplan 2002). This section will examine the changing definitions of literacy and contextualize this in the light of this study,

before examining the different types of literacy necessary in order to negotiate life in the 21st century.

In its most narrow and traditional sense, literacy can be described as the ability to read and write (Harris and Hodges 1981). However, as the world has developed and become more complex socially and technologically, so the definition has expanded to include a multiplicity of understandings of what constitutes literacy and the various types of literacy which need to be acquired in order to function efficiently in a given society. Thus we have categories like basic or functional literacy, media literacy, computer literacy, cultural literacy, visual literacy, numerical literacy and a plethora of other types of literacy. This supports Lankshear and Knobel's (1997) contention that "Literacies are many, not singular" and that these literacies are "socially created constitutive elements of larger human practices – discourses – that humans construct around their myriad purposes and values" (1997, 96). They go on to define literacy from a language perspective as "those 'language bits' [in discourses] that involve text" (1997, 97).

There are also a number of ideologies which underpin the route taken to achieve literacy (Cadiero-Kaplan 2002). Thus the pedagogical practices used in literacy teaching can have a functional literacy ideology, which views literacy as the acquisition of a set of skills; a cultural ideology which views literacy as a way of teaching morals and values (Lankshear and Knobel 1997) and introducing learners to the cannon of classics or 'Great Books' (Hirsch, 1988 in Cadiero-Kaplan 2002); a progressive ideology, which is essentially learner centred and based on the constructivist view of learning; and finally, a critical literacy ideology.

Cairney (1995) considers literacy to be a cultural practice because it both reflects and shapes culture. He gives the example of different communities placing a different value on books and literacy and cites his work with young offenders in prison who saw no value in becoming literate. Brice Heath's (1983) research supports this view as she found differing cultures of literacy across three communities she researched which led to different levels of success at school.

Mainstream children were prepared for school in the way they acquired their mother tongue and their literate home environment, while children from the non-mainstream community were disadvantaged as the language they acquired in their home environment did not support the language of the classroom and no value had been placed on literacy in the home. Gee suggests that literacy is used as a tool "to solidify the social hierarchy, empower elites and ensure that people lower on the hierarchy accept the values, norms and beliefs of the elites" (1990, 40) while Meek (1991) clearly articulates the power of literacy in the modern world as follows:

> Because we can read we can also question the authority and the apparent dominance of those whose forcefully written documents urge something upon us. We can query the gas bill. We write as well as speak to register our protest against injustice. By learning to read we gain knowledge. In writing we come to ask ourselves what it is that we know and understand, so that we too can go 'on the record'.
>
> (1991, 3-4)

According to Barton and Hamilton (2000), literacy is "a set of social practices" which cannot be separated from the contexts, institutions, power relationships and cultural practices in which it is embedded. They call these "literacy events", the term suggesting that literacy is dynamic and acquired informally and formally as we make sense of our world, also that there are many forms of literacy giving rise to the use of the term "literacies" (2000, 8). The term multiliteracies, coined by the New London Group[6] encapsulate the different literacies required to negotiate the changing face of the 21st century. Cope and Kalantzis explain it as follows:

> Multiliteracies' – a word we chose because it describes two important arguments we might have with the emerging cultural, institutional, and global order. The first argument engages with the multiplicity of communication channels and media; the second with the increasing salience of cultural and linguistic diversity.
>
> (Cope and Kalantzis 2000, 5)

What is clear is that literacy is all of the above and that while there is a continuum of skills being developed as the child moves through the educational system, these skills are not discrete or acquired in a linear fashion. Being a

[6] The New London Group was the name given to contributors who authored the *Pedagogy of Multiliteracies* manifesto in September 1994 at a meeting in London. This manifesto was first published in 1996 in the Harvard Educational Review (Cope and Kalabtzis 2000, ix).

competent literate involves being able to interpret, analyse, evaluate, synthesise and criticise a wide range of texts (Lankshear and Knobel 1997).

According to Luke and Freebody (1997), learners need to become proficient in four related areas of language in order to become truly literate. Firstly, they need to become Code Breakers meaning that they are able to encode and decode language. To achieve this they need to have the requisite word, and sentence recognition skills and the required language competence. Secondly, they must be what they term Text Participants, meaning that they are able to use their world, vocabulary, and language knowledge to comprehend and compose texts. In order to become Text Participants they need to have the appropriate background knowledge or schemata. Thirdly, they must be Text Users and able to understand how language varies according to context or purpose of the communication. In order to achieve this they must be able to perceive how texts are structured and organized in order to achieve a particular purpose. Finally, they need to be Text Analysers, which means they are able to critically analyse and challenge the ways that texts are structured and used to convey ideologies to the reader/viewer. However, curriculum designers and policy makers do not always acknowledge the importance of all of the above. Much of the focus has been on the development of first two (Code Breakers and Text Participants). The reason for this, according to Stevens, is because of "a narrow definition of reading that focuses strongly on oral reading fluency and automaticity of word calling" (Stevens 2001 in Stevens and Patel 2007, 2), while decoding and comprehending are important in order to become a skilled reader, they are not enough to negotiate the demands required in "today's text-saturated world" (Stevens and Patel 2007, 2). It is therefore important to consider the different levels of literacy required in order for a person to fulfill their potential.

2.3.1.1 Functional literacy

The development of literacy is a process which should progress through school years and into adulthood. However, there are different levels of literacy, the most basic or minimal being termed 'functional' literacy. According to Harris and Hodges (1981), functional literacy can be defined as "a level of competence in

reading and writing essential for working and living" (1981, 125). They go on to quote the definition provided by Gray:

> A person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is assumed in his culture or group
>
> (Gray (1956) in Harris and Hodges 1981,126)

UNESCO similarly defines someone who is functionally illiterate as one

> who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing, and calculation for his own and the community's development.
>
> (quoted in Panday 2005, 272)

There are a number of measures applied to gauge basic or functional literacy. According the Shindler (2005), any person who has completed at least seven years of education can be considered to be functionally literate. This is the benchmark used by Statistics South Africa in determining the illiteracy levels in the country. However, this measure is debatable. In South Africa many learners who have passed grade 7 are not functionally literate as the tests cited in section 2.2.4.2 of this chapter indicate. Poor resources, poorly trained teachers and problems with English as the language of learning and teaching mean that many learners reach high school without developing functional literacy. This has consequences because of the strong link between literacy and critical thinking (Sanders 1994; Hall 1998) which has already been mentioned in this chapter and which will be discussed in greater detail later in this thesis.

It has been said that man became civilized when he began to use rudimentary tools, the discovery and use of the wheel being the most important. However, Gordimer argues that "man became man not by the tool but by the word." (Gordimer, 1988 in Sanders 1994). In other words, it is literacy, which facilitates and gives a voice to thinking, which defines civilization. Central to this is the ability read effectively, and this will be discussed in the following section.

2.3.1.2 Reading

Developments surrounding new and multiple literacies have been discussed in a previous section of this chapter and suggest that reading applies to a number of

activities involving the decoding of various stimuli, not only print. In the discussion which follows the traditional understanding of reading is explored and it is argued that the reading of print is crucial to developing critical literacy.

Worldwide there has been a decline in interest and proficiency in reading. Educators and teacher librarians lament the fact that young people do not or will not read extended texts (Pruet 2007). The 'Harry Potter' phenomenon briefly gave hope, but the most recent research reveals that fewer people are using libraries and reading than 20 years ago. Concerns have been expressed in the UK that teenagers "lack reading stamina" (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 2005 quoted by BBC News). The reason is that the curriculum relies too heavily on short stories, newspaper articles and extracts and consequently learners are unable to cope with sustained texts. Research in Australia reveals that 30% of learners are entering secondary school unable to read and write sufficiently well to cope with the curriculum (Hempenstall 2005), while there is ongoing concern about poor levels of literacy in the USA (Santa 2006). South Africa is following this trend as the systemic evaluation and PIRLS results presented in a previous section show and there is concern that literacy levels are low and declining (Mangxamba 2007; Davies 2006; Naidu 2006; Daniels 2006).

According to Pretorius, research "consistently shows a strong correlation between reading proficiency and academic success at all ages, from primary school right through to university level" (Pretorius 2000, 35). She argues that reading increases general language proficiency and that it is "a distinctive cognitive-linguistic meaning construction skill that develops through constant exposure to the printed word" (2000,37). An additional concern is the Matthew effect[7], which suggests that weak readers read very little and get weaker, strong readers read more and become stronger, for this presents a picture of adolescent readers having very poor reading ability which will not improve as lack of success causes motivation and interest in reading to wane.

[7] The term comes from the Bible, Matthew 25:29: *For unto them that have shall be given, and they shall have in abundance, but unto them that have not shall be taken away even that which they have.*

However, at the same time, the demand for literacy is increasing, and is, indeed, exceeding what was required in the past. According to the International Reading Association:

> Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives. They will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the world of the future. In a complex and sometimes even dangerous world, their ability to read will be crucial. Continual instruction beyond the early grades is needed.
>
> (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, and Rycik, 1999, 99).

The following section will argue that while there are many different kinds of literacy, and that they are all important to succeed in our rapidly changing and technological world, they are not all of equal importance. For example, while having the ability to read and write an SMS, or interpret a film may be an important literacy skill, it is not as important as being able to read and comprehend a text (Pretorius 2000). Furthermore, and in order to succeed academically, reading is more cognitively demanding and the processes involved promote and facilitate the development of critical literacy (Pretorius 2000). It is thus important to explore what constitutes reading and this will be discussed in the following section.

2.3.1.3 What is reading?

Reading is the most important of the literacies, because recognition and understanding of texts is a prerequisite for educational success and empowerment. As with literacy, reading, how it should be taught, the materials that should be used and its function in society, is a contested question. According to Luke and Freebody (1997), these questions "have been at the centre of continuous and often acrimonious debate in many countries over the last 100 years, at least since the commencement of legally mandated state schooling" (Luke and Freebody 1997, 185). They go on to define reading as follows:

> …reading is a social practice using the written text as a means for the construction and reconstruction of statements, messages, and meanings. Reading is actually "done" in the public and private spaces of everyday

> community, occupational and academic institutions. Reading is tied up in the politics and power relations of everyday life in literate cultures.
>
> (Luke and Freebody 1997, 185)

According to Kennedy (1984), "reading represents a unique challenge to anyone seriously interested in human thought processes. It is an activity that binds together perceptual, memorial and linguistic functions and … allows the minds of two people – reader and writer – to be more intimately joined than any other form of social encounter" (1984, xiii). While for the purposes of the PIRLS test Howie *et al* (2008) used the following definition of reading literacy as,

> … the ability to understand and use those written forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. Young readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment.
>
> (Mullis, Kennedy, Martin and Sainbury, 2006, 3).

The three definitions of reading offered above, although similar in essence, view reading from different standpoints, all of them legitimate. Luke and Freebody (1997) focus on the social and empowerment aspects of reading, Kennedy (1984) on the communication between reader and writer – the meeting of minds – that occurs when reading, while Mullis *et al* (2006) emphasise the construction of meaning, the social aspects and, perhaps most importantly, the pleasure that reading can offer. To summarize, reading is a complex, cognitively demanding activity that is all of the above and crucial to academic success. The next section will explore how learners learn to read.

2.3.1.4 How do we read?

Reading involves the use of high-order cognitive processes as well as lower order decoding skills. Decoding skills are the technical or bottom-up processes such as letter, syllable, word and sentence recognition. Without knowing these reading text would be impossible. However, reading is much more than this. Understanding what is read is paramount to the process. Comprehension involves the top-down processes involved in understanding the meaning of the passage as a whole unit (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983, Matjila and Pretorius 2004; Hall 1998 and many others). Being able to comprehend a passage effectively requires both the low order decoding skills, known as bottom-up processing, and high order or top-down processing which facilitates interpretation of the text.

Learners need background knowledge, referred to as schemata (Anderson *et al* 1978, Howard 1987, Carrell and Eisterhold 1983), in order to understand what they are decoding so they can properly comprehend and interpret texts. Research has revealed that "reading is only incidentally visual" (Clarke and Silberstein 1977, 136) because readers contribute more to making meaning of texts than the print on the page. Readers construct an understanding of what they are reading by measuring what is on the printed page against their own schemata (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983; Braunger and Lewis 1998).

According to Howard (1987), schemata are acquired from birth and continue to develop and adapt throughout our lives. They constitute all our experience and knowledge of the world and how it operates including how we communicate. They are located deep in our long-term memory, and we use them as a basis for predicting and interpreting events. Our schemata lead us to have certain expectations based on our previous experience of the world and of language use. Thus we are able to predict how certain events are likely to unfold by projecting these expectations or schemata onto what we already know. We are also able to make inferences, evaluate, analyse and interpret events because we have schemata made up of similar events which we have experienced in the past. In essence, schemata can best be described as a mental filing system in which all past experiences, concepts, actions and objects are stored and used to make sense of any new input (Ralfe 1998) and they are crucial to making meaning from texts.

As reading skills develop dependence on bottom-up processing decreases and decoding becomes automatic as reading speeds up and becomes silent (Flanagan 1995). However, the more complex the text, the greater the reliance on top-down processing in order to perform high order tasks such as the ability to interpret, infer, evaluate, and assess the content of the passage being read, as well as the ability to refer back to key elements of the passage (Clymer 1972; Braunger and Lewis 1998).

In the early years of schooling the priority is the development of basic decoding skills, although most teachers will encourage the development of both top-down

and bottom-up processes. Decoding is usually accomplished through the use of simple graded basal readers, flash cards of words, and instruction in phonics (Flanagan 1995). Learners develop word attack and word recognition skills. As greater proficiency in the decoding skills is acquired the focus moves from decoding to comprehension. During this time it is important for the child to have opportunities to read aloud to an adult daily, preferably the teacher who can take note of the progress that is being made, identify any problems and take steps to remedy them, assist with vocabulary development by discussing new words and check comprehension (Flanagan 1995). Top-down processes are developed as children talk about books and are encouraged to make inferences and judgments about pictures, stories and characters (Fink and Samuels 2007).

During the first three years of schooling the focus is on 'learning to read'. Once the child has moved into the intermediate phase the assumption is that they have mastered decoding and encoding skills and are ready to 'read to learn'. Therefore often no further explicit reading instruction is given (Pretorius 2000; Matjila and Pretorius 2004). However, even with the ability to decode and the requisite background knowledge, learners may still have problems with reading comprehension tasks. There is a strong link between reading fluency and comprehension even where word recognition is good (Morris and Gaffney 2011; Rasinski *et al* 2005). Fluent oral reading suggests automaticity which facilitates understanding. Rasinski *et al* (2005) found in a study conducted with grade 9 learners that although they,

> …read with a high degree of accuracy, they had to invest so much of their limited cognitive energy in accomplishing this task that they drained cognitive capacity away from where it could and should have been used more profitably – to comprehend the text.
>
> (2005, 26)

Fluency is a necessary prerequisite for the development of reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, previewing and critical comprehension. Fluency can be attained only if learners read frequently and independently in order to practice the skill they have acquired (Morris and Gaffney 2011; Rasinski *et al* 2005). Furthermore, learners need to apply their knowledge of reading to a variety of

texts of different genres and for different purposes and as they do so they will develop deeper understanding and comprehension.

The provision of suitable reading material is important in developing reading as children learn to read by practice. Where there is a paucity of books both at school and in the home this development is compromised (Land 2008, Matjila and Pretorius 2004, Brice Heath 1994, Conlon, Creed and Tucker 2006). The fact that very few South African schools have libraries, or even classroom book corners, goes some way to explaining why learners have been achieving so inadequately in both national and international reading tests (Department of Education 2008b).

In the introduction to *The National Reading Strategy* published by the Department of Education (2008b) it is conceded that developing a literate nation is a challenge. A number of reasons are given for this: the poor culture of reading at home; lack of reading materials at school - out of 25,145 schools surveyed only 1,817 (just over 7%) "had library space that was stocked with books" (Department of Education 2008b, 8); overcrowded classrooms and high pupil-teacher ratios; poor print environment; poorly trained teachers and the mismatch between the home language and the language of learning and teaching. They further concede that the implementation of *Curriculum 2005* had lead to "a misunderstanding about the role of the teacher in teaching reading … many teachers believed that they did not have to 'teach' reading, but simply had to facilitate the process; they believed that learners would teach themselves to read" (Department of Education 2008b, 8). Furthermore, "the expectation that teachers had to develop their own teaching materials and reading programmes further aggravated the situation" (Deaprtment of Education 2008b, 8).

2.3.1.5 Reading and comprehension

The written word has facilitated a major step forward in the process of thinking because writing fixes words in time and space and allows the reader to,

> go over the same sentence time and again, puzzling out its meaning, analysing its structure, teasing from it every nuance of meaning. A sentence could be scoured and sifted, finally for the very last drop of its truth. Reading and writing provided the key exercise for the literate mind,

> allowing a critical eye to be turned to everyday experience.
>
> (Sanders 1994, 19).

Sanders reports the work of Alexander Luria, a psychologist who undertook research among illiterate peasants in remote areas of Uzbekistan and Kirghizia in Russia during the 1930s. Luria found that they answered his questions in concrete, operational terms, but were unable to cope with any level of abstraction. However, when they could read and write, even if only a little, the situation changed and "they showed signs of categorical, abstract thinking" (Sanders 1994, 28). He concluded that "in oral cultures, there is simply no substitute for actual, real-world experience. Abstract talk will not take a person anywhere" (1994, 29). Sanders goes on to state that,

> As the nature of reading changed from sounding words aloud to reading in silence, it enabled a person to read letters and reflect on their meaning at the same time. The activity forced the reflective self into existence.
>
> (1994, 30)

He concluded that people who cannot read and write "do not think in highly abstract categories [because] reading and writing radically alter perception" (1995, 31) and they do not have what he called "text-formed thought" (1994, 31). He states that,

> Any paper-test – indeed most questions posed by a literate interviewer – strains the oral person to do something he or she seems unable to do, which we call by any number of different names – decontextualization, abstraction, disembeding, defining, describing, categorizing.
>
> (1995, 32)

According to Hampton and Resnick,

> comprehension is a complex, highly interactive thinking process that cannot be defined in simple terms. As they make their way through a text readers build understanding in their minds using the text and their own knowledge, experiences and purposes. They synthesize the language, information and ideas presented in the text with what they hold in their own minds… Comprehension then is a dynamic cognitive process in which information in the text mingles and blends with information in the reader's mind.
>
> (2008, 22)

Hampton and Resnick (2008) argue that there are two fundamental components of reading comprehension: the one involves developing what they term a

'textbase' and the other 'building a mental model' (2008, 22). A textbase is a network of ideas that develop as the reader draws meaning "from phrases to clauses and sentences to larger ideas" (2008, 22) that is broadly speaking an understanding of language, while building a mental model refers to the readers background knowledge. Although the terminology is different, in essence, this is similar to the topdown and bottom up processing proposed by Carrell and Eisterhold (1983). The textbase constitutes knowledge of language, while the mental model refers to the world, topic and discipline knowledge of the reader, in other words, their schemata. They argue that as readers become more proficient they use both simultaneously as they adjust their understanding in the light of new information, in other words "there is a dynamic interplay in the reader's mind between the textbase and the mental model" (Hampton and Resnick 2008, 22). However, in order to achieve comprehension and before this "dynamic interplay" can happen, readers need to have achieved reading fluency. According to Darrell and Gaffney,

> Above first grade, students need to read text with sufficient speed and rhythm if they are to (a) enjoy reading, (b) concentrate on meaning, and (c) complete reading assignments in a reasonable time.
>
> (2011, 331)

Research undertaken by Rasinski *et al* (2005) found that if learners have not achieved automaticity in word recognition (fluency) then they are forced to expend a significant amount of their cognitive attention on low-level decoding and this negatively affects their reading rate and their comprehension. In a study they conducted with grade 9 learners they discovered that 61% were reading at an excessively slow pace and require considerably more time to complete a reading assignment than learners who read at a normal rate. This led to "frustration, avoidance of reading, and ultimately, school failure" (Rasinski *et al* 2005, 26).

Reading fluency develops as learners discover the joy of recreational reading for pleasure. However, this has declined and fewer learners are reading for pleasure than in the past (White and Dewitz, 1994, McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth, 1995). Furthermore, learners who read seldom and avoid reading experience problems

with comprehension (McKenna, Kear, Ellsworth 1995; Bean, 2000). According to Bishop, Reyes and Pflaum,

> True reading comprehension and subsequent reading engagement requires more than cognition; it means entering textual worlds, maintaining a balance between engrossment and critical distance, and formulating one's own responses to various dilemmas in text.
>
> (2006, 66)

They go on to argue that efficient readers need to have problem-solving skills, be able to support their reading by paraphrasing, note-taking, discussion and re-reading, and have global reading strategies in that they can relate what they are reading to their own experience, are able to make predictions and can skim texts in order to select important information.

In addition to being able to fluently decode text and make meaning through using a mental model, learners need to have mastered certain reading strategies before they can successfully comprehend a reading passage. These have been identified as: summarising, creating meaningful connections, self-regulating and inferring (Lanning 2009); activating, inferring, monitoring, clarifying, questioning, searching, selecting, summarising, visualising and organising (McEwan 2004); connecting, predicting, questioning, monitoring, sythesising and summarising (Oczkus 2004) and activating prior knowledge, summarising, using imagery, asking and generating questions and prompting thinking aloud (Allington 2001). Independent readers are able to do all the above and more.

The benefits of independent reading have been widely reported. Some of these are that independent readers have an much larger vocabulary (Brozo and Hargis 2003); that they perform better on standardised tests (Donahue *et al* 1999; Goodman 1998); read more and are better readers and writers than those who are not independent readers (Guthrie *et al* 1999); are more successful at comprehension (Kelley and Clausen-Grace 2007); have a better attitude towards and desire to read and therefore read more (Arthur, 1995); and finally, display greater confidence and overall self assurance in class than learners who who do not read independently (Clay, 1991).

By contrast, poor readers who need to read frequently spend the least amount of time reading for pleasure (Kelley and Clausen-Grace 2008). They also engage in something Kelley and Clausen Grace refer to as "fake reading" (2008, 8) where they appear to be reading, but are not. According to Kelley and Clausen-Grace, "these students rarely, if ever, read. They might fidget, talk, gaze around the room, shuffle from the bookcase to their seats and back, switch books, or never finish reading a single book" (2008, 9).

While learners who are reading through their mother tongue can fail to achieve the required proficiency in reading fluency, independence and comprehension, this is exacerbated for learners whose mother tongue is not English, but who are required to learn with English as their medium of instruction. This is the situation for many learners in South Africa and it will be discussed in the next section.

2.4 Language of learning and teaching *versus* the mother tongue

Problems in acquiring basic literacy skills are often blamed on the fact that many learners in South Africa are obliged to do their schooling through a second, and sometimes even third, language (Kaschula 2004). While this is to a certain extent true, many urban children are multilingual, speaking a range of African languages as well as English or Afrikaans and therefore failure at school cannot always be blamed on the fact that learners are not learning through the medium of their mother tongue (Winkler 1997).

Winkler (1997) views the concept 'mother tongue' to be a problematic one in the South African context, particularly with regard to learners who reside in urban areas. Her contention is that many children in South Africa grow up to be multilingual. Often children who identify themselves culturally with a group use the language of that group in specific settings only. She surveyed black learners at her English medium school in Johannesburg. The survey revealed that most of the learners were multilingual and spoke a number of different languages. Often,

for example, a learner who classified themselves 'Zulu' spoke both English and isiZulu at home with their parents or caregivers; sometimes they spoke English to their parents and isiZulu to grandparents. The books, newspapers and magazines in their homes were English and they watched English TV programmes. She argues that language mixing of this type is common and that problems with language are associated less with the notion of 'mother tongue' and more with the failure to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). This view is supported by research conducted in Southern California where second generation Mexican children grow up speaking Spanish and English and move effortlessly between the two (Johns 2005 personal communication) and by Matjila and Pretorius (2004) with grade 8 learners who spoke both Setswana and English. It is therefore important to consider Cognitive Academic language Proficiency in greater detail and its link to reading.

2.4.1 Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

It was Cummins (1979 and 1991) who drew a distinction between the kind of language one uses to operate effectively in everyday life and the kind of language used in learning. The former he termed Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills, or BICS for short. The language of BICS is everyday language that is context embedded which assists the learner in making meaning. He stated that this was very different from the kind of language that learners needed to succeed academically at school. School learning requires Cognitive Academic Language (CAL) and in order to succeed in the academic environment, learners need to have Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). CALP requires learners to operate in a variety of academic genres which are routinely context reduced. Learners need CALP in order to answer high-order questions, to sequence, order, select, compare, predict, argue and a host of other academic tasks. In order to achieve these it is important that learners have critical reading skills.

Pretorius and Machet (2003) support the view that reading is important to achieving academically because efficient readers are able to do a great deal more than simply decode words. They are able to construct meaning from the written

word and the more they read, the more sophisticated become their reading skills. Good readers do well academically because they have the high order skills required by CALP (Pretorius and Machet 2003).

2.5 Gender

As indicated in the previous chapter, gender is part of the 'hidden curriculum' and of all the human rights, one of the most neglected. While gender rights are specifically mentioned in the *South African Constitution* (1996), and in the *South African Schools Act*, (1996), gender equality in education is often approached by authorities in a mechanistic way. For example, gathering statistics which indicate parity in the numbers of girls enrolled at school may not tell the whole story as they do not document attendance, achievement, subject choices or the discrimination girls may be suffering at school (Unterhalter 1988). By the same token, the gender regimes imposed by institutions such as schools are part of the gender order of society and are difficult, although not impossible, to change (Connell 2002). They are infused with relations of power, control and oppression which make attaining equality and equity problematic. These issues will be explored in this section.

The discussion that follows considers gender with specific emphasis on gender in the school context. It starts with a review of education policy on the issue of gender policy and its implementation. It then explores the alignment of the curriculum and gender policy, before considering wider research on gender and gender in education. The study of gender in education is wide, and covers a number of areas which are not relevant to this study. Therefore, only those which relate directly to the research reported on in this project will be discussed. Thus, this review will consider gender in relation to language, classroom interaction, masculinity and femininity, and the discrimination and harassment experienced by girls. As was indicated in chapter 1, evidence of such behaviour and incidents of sexual violence and harassment appear in the national press from time to time (Mhlongo 2004 and 2007; Mthembu 2004; Damon 2010). It is therefore

important to explore this issue in greater detail. However, the foundations of gender equity are described in policy so that aspect will be examined first.

2.5.1 Gender in education policy

As this research considers, not only the learning and teaching articulated in *Curriculum 2005*, but also issues surrounding gender, it is important to consider how the curriculum reflects the position of female learners in the school system.

The democratic government which took power in 1994 recognised that women as a group had been subordinated during apartheid so they set about putting in place a number of policies to ensure gender equity. In 1996 the Department of Education appointed a Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) whose task it was to advise the Minister of Education on all aspects of gender equity in the educational arena so that gender balances could be addressed. In particular they were to consider gender imbalances in enrolments, dropouts, subject choice and performance; consider the advisability of separating of sexes at school; provide guidelines for textbooks so that they would be more gender inclusive; introduce affirmative action so that women would be more fairly represented in management structures; develop a policy on sexual harassment; and liaise with a variety of stakeholders in order to enlist their support and co-operation (Department of Education 1997). The stated vision of the Department of Education is that there "should be a gender sensitive education system that facilitates the development of a non sexist society, as envisaged in the Constitution". (Department of Education 1997, 1)

Following the completion of the report of the Task Team, structures were to be set up in each provincial education department which would be headed by a Gender Focal Person who in turn would be a member of the National Gender Co-ordinating Committee. The task of the Gender Focal Person is to monitor and forefront gender in the provincial departments. The GETT made a number of other recommendations including a number on the rights of learners to be free from sexual harassment and discrimination. They recommended that legislation be put in place to protect learners from discrimination, harassment and sexual

violence in educational settings and to take "pro-active steps towards promoting a strong human rights environment in educational settings" (Chisholm 2003, 4). They further recommended that every adult in positions of authority in schools, including school governing body members, should be obliged to undertake training, and that resources should be provided so that teachers could include issues surrounding gender and violence in the curriculum (Chisholm 2003, 4).

2.5.1.1 The Implementation of gender policy

Few of the recommendations of the Gender Equity Task Team have been put into place (Chisholm 2003). Although there is a gender equity directorate in the National Department of Education "it is not functioning as well as it should" (Pandor 2004, 2) having been "gradually dismantled and disempowered …educational legislation is mainly symbolic with regard to gender, and has little procedural or regulatory force" (Chisholm 2003, 4). Much of what has been achieved is limited to improvements in the service conditions of female teachers, but little has changed at the chalkface (Chisholm 1997 and 2003). This has been acknowledged by the previous Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, in a keynote speech given at the Gender Equity in Education Conference (2004) where she decries the lack of progress in implementing a number of gender equity goals repeating a view which she had first expressed in 1999 that, "there are clear indications that South African educators and policy makers hold the view that there is no gender equity challenge confronting girls and women in the education sector" (2004, 1). She goes on to provide what might be the reason for this lack of progress in achieving gender equity, stating that "the education departments in provinces and nationally are staffed by males at senior level and seemingly convey the view that education is the domain of male expertise and competence" (Pandor 2004, 1).

2.5.1.2 Curriculum 2005 and gender policy

General issues surrounding gender and the curriculum and gender research will be discussed in detail later in this review so the comments here refer to the presence of gender in *Curriculum 2005* only. As has been stated elsewhere, the rhetoric of Outcomes Based Education articulated in *Curriculum 2005* has its foundation in human rights and one of its promises is an inculcation of the

principle of non-sexism. However, much of the criticism surrounding *Curriculum 2005* suggests that these expressed principles are absent in the practical implementation of the curriculum. Chisholm aptly suggests the "issues of race and gender in both official curricula and curricula in practice have tended to be assumed rather than addressed" (Chisholm, 1997, 60). Pandor (2004) is more outspoken as she articulates the limitations placed on girls in the classroom by the hidden curriculum and other ways "in which gender is not so much hidden as absent" (2004, 3) which the implementation of *Curriculum 2005* has failed to address.

The curriculum review committee set up in 2000 pinpointed a number of shortcomings with regard to gender in *Curriculum 2005* (Chisholm 2003). They proposed that the human rights aspects of the curriculum needed to be strengthened and articulated unambiguously in simple and clear language, and that human rights should be a thread running through all learning areas rather than a specific focus on gender because "human rights is foundationally anti-discriminatory, inclusivist, about citizenship, peace, a conducive and healthy environment and centrally about working in democratic ways within democratic contexts" (Carrim, 2002, 4 cited in Chisholm 2003, 8). This aspect was therefore viewed as a priority in the reviewed *National Curriculum Statement* (2002).

Aside from the absence of gender in the curriculum and the imperative to focus on human rights which are enshrined in the *South African Constitution* (1996), there have been increasing incidents of violence and sexual harassment taking place at schools (Morrell *et al* 2009; Bhana 2009), some of which were mentioned in the previous chapter. This is a further reason for addressing gender explicitly in the *National Curriculum Statement* (2002) as will be explained in the section which follows.

2.5.1.3 Policy context and gender-based violence

The high incidence of gender based violence in South African schools, examples of which were given in chapter 1, has led to the development of a number of policies by the Department of Education to address this problem. Policies include the documents: *Workbook on Signposts to Safe Schools* (Department of Education

2001), *Issues on Gender in Schools: An introduction for teachers* (Department of Education 2002), *Handbook for Teachers: Addressing Gender Equity in Education* (Deaprtment of Education 2005), and *Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Sexual Violence and Harassment in Public Schools* (Department of Education 2008). However, in spite of these policy interventions, gender based violence continues to escalate (Chabaya *et al* 2009). Chabaya *et al* (2009) found that very often teachers were not aware of these documents. A further hindrance to the effectiveness of these policies is the lack of communication between the Department of Education, the South African Police Service and schools. While most schools have other measures in place to deal with gender based violence, such as Life Orientation programmes, which are part of *Curriculum 2005*, and a school Code of Conduct, concerns have been raised by participants in the study that Life Orientation is often taught by unqualified teachers and that the Code of Conduct has little power over teachers who transgressed (Chabaya *et al* 2009).

The research reported by Chabaya *et al* is supported by a number of other researchers (Leach 2002 and 2003, Haffajee 2006) who have found that despite gender policies being in place, little has changed in schools. However, the problems associated with translating policy into practice are not limited to South Africa and have their roots in perceptions and attitudes towards gender in the wider society and this will be explored in the next section.

2.5.2 Gender, Culture and Identity

Before exploring gender in the school and classroom, it is important to define and contextualize it in terms of this study. It is therefore useful to consider what gender is and the part it plays in constructing identity.

Firstly, it is necessary to draw a distinction between sex and gender. These terms are often used interchangeably, but they refer to different things. Sex is a biological classification while gender is socially and psychologically constructed (Wood 2001). According to Wood, "gender is neither innate nor stable… [it is] acquired through interaction in a social world, and it changes over time" (2001,

22). It relies heavily on culture and cultural practices: Society determines the position, what is considered acceptable behaviour, and what the expectations are, of its male and female members. These in turn grow out of the collective values and beliefs of that society. In other words, "a culture constructs and sustains meanings of gender by investing biological sex with social significance" (Wood 2001, 22). Thus gender can be defined as,

> A social, symbolic system through which a culture attaches significance to biological sex. Gender is something individuals learn, yet because it is constructed by cultures, it is more than an individual quality. Instead it is a whole system of social meanings that specify what is associated with men and women in a given society at a particular time.
>
> (Wood 2001, 35)

Gender is learned behaviour and as such it can be changed. Furthermore perceptions of, and meanings attached to, gender differ across cultures and are open to change over time. However, it is deeply inculcated as children learn their language and acquire their culture. Change, when it happens, tends to be slow. In addition, cultural practices can be so deeply entrenched "that they pervade our daily existence, creating the illusion that they are natural, normal ways for women and men to be" (Wood 2001, 28) and making change extremely difficult.

One of the difficulties in changing gender attitudes is that gender roles are so deeply acculturated that they become "internally part of who we are" (Wood, 2001, 56). At a very young age girls and boys understand and accept their roles in a given society and that these roles are different and unequal (Brice Heath 1983). In the process of becoming socialized these gendered identities are reinforced in family and social lives until they shape our very understanding of our "culture and our own places, opportunities, and priorities within it" (Wood 2001, 61).

While early socialization occurs in the home, schools are "powerful agents of socialization" (Wood 2001, 221) and as such they join and follow these early agents of socialization "to communicate what identities we are expected to assume and what personal, civic, and vocational opportunities are open to us" (Wood, 2001, 221). According to Delamont (1990), schools are actively responsible for perpetuating and reinforcing the behavioural differences between

males and females. This they do in a variety of ways which will be explored in the following sections of this review.

2.5.3 Gender in education

Examining the role of gender in education is an important aspect of this research as it is classroom-based and seeks to change established attitudes toward gender in order to empower both boys and girls. Schools contribute in a number of ways to reinforcing and sustaining the gender roles endorsed by society. These will be explored in the following sections of this review.

2.5.3.1 Masculinity/Femininity in schooling

Understanding gender and how it is played out through daily practice, means examining ways in which, for example, "girls construct and enact collective femininity and their individual femininities" (Paechter 2006, 254). This distinction between collective and individual gender identities also applies to boys and masculinity, and is useful in distinguishing between dominant or hegemonic and subordinated masculinities which recognises that "in any social grouping there are a number of masculinities, with intersecting power relations" (Paechter 2006, 254). Gender identities therefore cannot be viewed only in terms of the two polar opposites of masculine and feminine, but should rather be viewed as a spectrum of interpretations and constructions of the two. Further, it is necessary to view gender as relational and in terms of research, to focus both on girls and boys (Skelton and Francis, 2003, 4).

However, while many interpretations of each exist, commonly held ideals of each present themselves as "popular". Frosch, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) examined hegemonic masculinities through boys' narratives of popularity and found that these intersected with the characteristics identified by other researchers as belonging to a dominant or ideal form of masculinity (Gilbert and Gilbert 1998; Renold 2001; Robinson 2005). These, in particular, included two main aspects: Firstly, that boys must maintain their difference from girls and therefore avoid activities and behaviour seen as belonging to girls. Secondly, 'hardness', sporting prowess, 'coolness', casual treatment of school work, swearing, dominance and

control were all features associated with popular masculinity (Frosch, Phoenix and Pattman (2002, 77). However, this hegemonic masculinity also gives rise to problems for girls as it can express itself in sexual harassment (Morojele 2009). This aspect will be examined in greater detail below.

2.5.3.2 Hegemonic masculinities and sexual harassment

Sexual harassment and sexual violence are means through which hegemonic masculinities are constructed and maintained. Robinson (2005, 20) points out that sexual harassment is not about sex but about power and that it reflects not only one individual's problems, but also the perspective that prevails in the dominant discourse of society regarding gender relations. This broader interpretation means that it therefore functions as a means of social control over all girls and women, even when not experienced personally (Lahelma 2002, 302).

These aspects of social control and power are also enacted within the classroom. Robinson's (2005) study on boys and their construction of their masculinity through sexual harassment points out the normalisation of this behaviour to the point where the line between sexual harassment and 'normal' heterosexual courting becomes blurred and difficult to distinguish. She further states,

> Some, if not all, of these behaviours can be offensive and uncomfortable to some girls but this can become a secondary consideration if boys perceive sexually harassing behaviours as something they 'have to do' in order to attract girls and as an inherent performance of their masculinity. (2005, 27)

Robinson further argues that sexual harassment is as much about male power within male groups as it is about expressing power over females (2005, 20). She states, "Sexual harassment and sexual violence become part of the performance of hegemonic masculinity that can cement gendered cultural bonds between those boys and men who take up this form of masculinity as their own, creating a sense of identity" (2005, 20).

However, schools go beyond simply functioning as sites where learners act out or perform dominant masculinities and femininities, and actively shape these dominant forms through either implicit or explicit support for various behaviours

and ways of being feminine and masculine. Gilbert and Gilbert point out that it is easy

> to see the tensions and contradictions within schooling patterns that endorse and sustain masculinist culture through the valourisation of male competitive sport and sporting heroes, through the reinforcement of maths and physical sciences as the most institutionally prestigious of schooling subjects, and through the structure of the teaching workforce, within which key authority and power is embodied by men.
>
> (1998, 18)

Academic achievement has come to be associated with girls and consequently positioned boys who achieved as "effeminate" and therefore falling outside of the defined hegemonic masculinity (Arnot, David and Weiner 1999; Renold 2001, 369). Consequently, Lahelma argues that the impact of hierarchies based on a hegemonic masculinity, such as the sexual harassment of girls, is overlooked in the face of (some) boys' failure in academic terms (2002, 302).

Morojele's study on the experiences of gender violence in three Lesotho primary schools shows how the high levels of enrolment by girls is contradicted by girls' lived experiences of gender violence in the schooling system (2009, 86). Morojele explores this contradiction and shows that gender inequality is underpinned by both female teachers and boys in the classroom. This indicates that societal forces and culture spill over into the classroom environment and undermine gender equity. How gender plays out in the classroom environment will be explored in greater detail in the following section.

2.5.3.3 Gender in the classroom

On the one hand, girls' behaviour in the classroom is generally less confident than boys' and they occupy a more marginalised position, from which they service and facilitate boys (Skelton and Francis 2003, 9). On the other hand, boys are often labelled with the term underachievers, particularly in relation to their female peers (Reay 2003). However, Skelton and Francis (2003, 5) point out that this focus on boys' perceived underachievement does not adequately take into account the differences within each gender group, for example, class. Social class, more so than gender, is a far greater determinant of learner success and achievement (Skelton and Francis 2003, 6).

Concern over boys' underachievement has also seen a resurfacing of biological accounts of gender (Gurian 2001). Skelton and Francis argue that this does not provide new evidence for gender differences based on physiology and biology (2003). However, they go beyond traditional sex role theories by suggesting that boys and girls develop their gender identity in relational terms, for example a boy demonstrates he is a boy by acting out behaviour that is the opposite of what he observes is expected of girls. This approach to understanding gender identity, regards gender as fluid rather than fixed and rejects the notion of stereotypes such as the idea that all girls are quiet, hardworking and good at writing, while all boys are competitive, assertive and better at science. In addition, viewing gender construction as relational, recognises children as active in the construction and maintenance of their gender identities (Skelton and Francis 2003, 14).

2.5.3.4 Gender and communication in the classroom

Many of the interactions between boys and girls in the classroom have been observed in the behaviour of adults, because of this before considering gender interactions in the classroom, a brief overview of the key differences in the communicative behaviour observed by linguists who have researched mixed gender interactions will follow.

Over the last forty years many linguists have researched gendered talk. They have reported differences in language use in social interactions between males and females (Lakoff 1975, Spender 1980, Cameron, 1997, Tannen 1990, and others). They discovered that women construct their talk in different ways to men both in language and style. In social situations they avoid confrontation and defer to men. Tannen (1990) suggests that in interactions women's conversations are characterised by linguistic features which she refers to as 'rapport-talk', meaning that they tend to focus on maintaining a social connection, while she refers to men's conversations as 'report-talk', which suggests that they use language which asserts their status, authority and power. This is supported by other researchers (Hall and Carter 1999, Carli 2006), with Carli stating that differences "typically reveal more status asserting, dominant and negative communications by men and more collaborative, warm and supportive communications by women" (2006, 70). Furthermore, according to Carli, men are more likely to ignore the

communications of others, to issue directives and instructions, to interrupt the conversations of others in order to take the floor in discussions, and "talk more than women in a wide variety of social and professional contexts" (2006, 70). On the other hand, women are willing to offer encouragement and support to others engaged in conversation by nodding and offering supportive verbal responses. Carli goes on to assert that the behaviour of men and women in mixed gender small groups reveals that women tend to engage in more co-operative and compromising behaviour, while men are more likely to engage in direct disagreements. When placed in leadership positions,

> female leaders display a more democratic style, encouraging collaboration and involving subordinates in decisions, whereas male leaders display a more autocratic style, discouraging participation by subordinates in favour of asserting the leader's control and authority.
>
> (Carli 2006, 70)

In addition they tend to be "warmer, more open, and more socially supportive of others" (2006, 71) than men. However, when women are too assertive and competent in the leadership role they tend to be negatively viewed by both males and females in the group.

O'Barr (1982) concluded that gender *per se* did not influence communicative style, but that this was determined by power. After examining data collected in court cases he concluded that the language style used by many women is also used by powerless men. He concludes that what is referred to as 'women's language' should be termed 'powerless language'. However, it cannot be denied that in general men do possess more power than women, mainly because of the social roles assigned to them which give them more authority, higher status employment, and greater economic power than women.

However, when considering mixed gender interactions it is important to take note of the caution sounded by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) that these claims are generalisations based on interactional observations, and may not apply to all interactions. They argue that gender manifests itself in a range of communicative behaviour and there are often similarities among males and females. What is important to bear in mind is that "gender is built on a lifetime of differentiated

experience, and as a result is inextricably mixed with toughness, occupation, entitlement, formality, class, hobbies, family status, race and just about any other life experience you can name" (2003, 89-90). At least some of this differentiated experience occurs during classroom interaction, where girls are marginalized from whole class teacher led and small group discussions by the dominance of boys (Howe 1997), as will be apparent in the discussion which follows.

2.5.3.5 Gender in whole class interaction

Howe (1997) reports that despite changes in curricula and teaching approaches, teacher led whole class interactions have changed little over time. Teacher talk still dominates classroom interaction. Accordingly, Flanders 'two-thirds rule', meaning that during two-thirds of lesson time someone is talking, two-thirds of that talk is done by the teacher, and two-thirds of the teacher's talk is made up of lecturing and posing and answering questions (Flanders 1970 in Howe 1997,7), is as true today as it was forty years ago. In mixed sex classrooms Sadker and Sadker (1985) found that the two-thirds rule also applies, as boys speak three times as much as girls. Furthermore, there has been little change in the initiation-response-feedback structure of teacher led interaction identified by early classroom researchers (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975, Edwards and Mercer 1987, Mehan 1989).

Boys dominate mixed gender classes in a number of ways. They talk and engage verbally with the teacher more than girls (Delamont 1990, Swann and Graddol 1994, Howe 1997, Wood 2001), they interrupt more and show a greater willingness to contribute to group discussions (Bousted 1989), and are evaluated more by the teacher, both negatively and positively (Swan and Graddol 1994; Howe 1997). According to Swann and Graddol (1994), when answering questions boys are more likely to give extended explanations while girls tend to offer more succinct factual statements. Boys are more likely to 'chip in' or shout out when they have not been selected to answer (Sadker and Sadker 1985, Boustred 1989); they put their hands up more quickly than girls when the teacher asks a question (Swann and Graddol 1994); and according to Howe,

> Boys are more likely than girls to create conditions where their contributions will be sought by teachers, and they are more likely than girls to push themselves forward when contributors are not explicitly selected.
>
> (Howe 1997, 11)

A consequence of this is that boys receive greater teacher feedback than girls.

Eckart and McConnell observed in mixed groups that as the learners moved into adolescence they developed new gender norms in the classroom. She reports that,

> it became 'childish' for girls to engage in public clowning – to make raucous jokes, perform funny walks, and do 'stupid' things. Boys on the other hand continued to gain status for skill in such things. Raising one's hand without knowing the answer, or in order to give a silly answer, was one such antic.
>
> (2003, 117)

This attitude could explain the girls' reluctance to bid to answer questions if they are not sure of the answer and the fact that they are slower to raise their hands than boys.

Teachers' responses to the behaviour of boys and girls is also different. It is reported that they are more tolerant of calling out from boys than from girls. In addition, teachers look directly at boys more than at girls. They also shift their gaze from girls to boys more quickly and notice more readily when a boy raises his hand (Sadker and Sadker 1985; Swann and Graddol 1994). However, this may not indicate that they favour boys over girls, but because the behaviour of boys more frequently required control. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that the gender of the teacher makes any difference to the way the learners are treated (Howe 1997).

Myhill (2002) found in her research into classroom interaction that underachievers, both boys and girls, participated less in class discussions, high achieving boys participated less as they got older, while high achieving girls remained constant. She argues that while gender is a variable which cannot be discounted, other causes of differing behaviour should also be acknowledged as having an effect on interactions in the classroom.

A final point to be made is that there no evidence that the girls' relative silence and the boys dominance in whole class interactions have any affect on academic

performance. Howe suggests that this may be because learning involves listening and understanding more than talking or that girls may make use of other strategies (Howe 1997, 15/16).

Whole class teacher led interaction is not the only way that learning is accomplished in the classroom. Cooperative small group interaction is viewed as a method of learning that facilitates independent learning and is officially advocated in *Curriculum 2005*. This will be explored in the next section.

2.5.3.6 Gender and group work

Cooperative learning is a cornerstone of outcomes based teaching methodology. It is therefore useful to explore this in general terms before considering gender in small group interactions.

Blatchford *et al* (2003) define group work as learners working together as a group or team to accomplish an activity or task where "the balance of ownership and control of the work shifts towards the pupils themselves" (2003, 155). According to both Howe 1997 and Blatchford *et al* 2003, there is little research on small group collaborative learning in the classroom, and this might be because "it is viewed by many teachers as problematic" (2003, 156). What research is available has found that where learners sit in groups in the classroom, little of their time is spent on group tasks. Furthermore, Howe reports that when learners are expected to work collaboratively the length of contribution averages less than 25 seconds, that little of this focuses on the task, and that,

> When such conversations do occur they can seldom be regarded as adding quality to the task. In so far as they do relate to the quality of the task (and they are quite likely to focus on last night's television or this evening's activities), they are typically limited to how much has been completed and/or on how resource materials should be shared.
>
> (Howe 1997, 18)

Blatchford *et al* state that the reason that group work fails to achieve its educational potential is because teachers and learners have no training in using it effectively, and "no awareness of the social pedagogic potential" (2006, 750) it offers. Furthermore,

> in many classroom settings, students are actively discouraged from interacting with their classmates and so they fail to develop skills that will help them behave in ways that are productive for learning.
>
> (Blatchford *et al* 2006, 751)

Gillies (2003) lists the many benefits of group work which include social skills such as "listening to each other during class discussions; acknowledging others' ideas and considering their perspective on issues; stating ideas freely; resolving conflicts democratically; sharing tasks equitably; and allocating resources fairly among group members" (2003, 36). She also claims that learners who engage in group work achieve better academically and have a greater understanding of the task content (2003, 37).

In planning for effective group work the group size and composition have to be taken into consideration. A further point to be considered in assigning group work is the nature of the task and the structure of the activity, as these have been identified to be a problem associated with group work (Blatchford *et al* 2003). According to Howe (1997), it is imperative that discussions are organised, structured and directed because the task requirements have important implications for learning in small groups. Tasks which require the learners to provide their own interpretations are far more effective than tasks which provide a tick list or direct learners to fill in words (Howe 1997, 20). A final point made by Howe on the efficacy of collaborative group work is that pupils benefit from it even when the group interactions are poor, "because group interaction can act as a catalyst for subsequent reflection on learning, regardless of the interaction itself" (Howe 1997, 20).

Very little research has been found on the effect of gender on group activities in the classroom, although it is presumed that the dynamics found in all mixed gender group interaction is probably evident here too. Webb (1984) found that in small groups doing mathematics girls tend to request help more than boys and these requests are twice as likely to be ignored than requests for assistance made by boys. The result of this is that boys receive more explanations than girls do. Conwell *et al* (1993) found that in science practicals boys tended to monopolize the apparatus while Rennie and Parker (1987) observed that girls listened and watched and were

less actively involved when they were in mixed sex groups. Howe (1997) found that where focused group work has been researched, two conclusions can be drawn: first that even in small groups boys dominate the discussion, and that when help is required boys are "seen as the primary source of help by both boys and girls" (1997, 18); furthermore, this does not affect the academic performance of either girls or boys.

The interactions of both boys and girls are said to be established at birth and as they learn their first words. The final section of this chapter will consider how gender is acculturated into children as they learn language.

2.5.3.7 Language, culture and gender

As has been indicated in chapter 1, language plays an important role in the construction of gender roles. A number of researchers have studied the language socialization of children, and identified differences between the ways that boys and girls acquire their mother tongue. Brice Heath (1983), in her groundbreaking work researching three communities, noted that boys and girls were socialized differently into the world of language. In the community she called Trackton, girls were prepared for motherhood and domesticity while boys were prepared to participate in the world of men where interaction involved joke telling, boasting and verbal aggression. Philips (1987) confirms these findings and notes that, "parents speak differently from each other; they speak differently to boys than to girls; and boys and girls speak differently" (1987, 1). Corson (1993) suggests that these discourse patterns which are set in childhood continue into adulthood and are "transferred by modeling adults who themselves take the rules for granted" (1993, 139). According to Corson (1993), "Women in most cultural contexts are clearly an oppressed group when compared with men as a group. It follows that almost any gender differences in discourse are interpretable with respect to this clear difference in power between men and women" (1993, 130) and this oppression is perpetuated and reinforced in the home and the language practices of parents, caregivers and the community.

It is for these reasons that critical literacy is seen as an effective approach in countering hegemonic masculinity and developing gender awareness as it raises awareness of inequalities and injustices in society, "focuses on issues of power and promotes reflection, transformation, and action" (Freire 1970/1996, 36). As critical literacy is central to this research it will be examined in greater detail in chapter 4.

2.6 Reflection on the literature

This chapter has considered research surrounding the three important cornerstones of the pedagogic intervention reported on in this thesis: the curriculum in place when the intervention was undertaken, which was *Curriculum 2005;* selected scholarship concerning literacy, with a special focus on reading; and finally, gender in education. Although these areas seem disparate, I have chosen to locate these in one chapter because curriculum, language and gender are integrated in the South African schooling system as part of the broader transformation project in education.

The first section makes the point that all curricula are influenced by the government in power. However, while the government can change the curriculum, they cannot easily change the culture and mindset of teachers, particularly when faced with poor resources and inadequate training. Many in education welcomed the change to the OBE *Curriculum 2005* which was perceived to be a more democratic curriculum, more in tune with the democratic government and the *South African Constitution* (1996), and with its focus on a more critical approach rooted in social justice, offered an opportunity to change society. On the other hand, researchers who understood the reality of the situation in South African classrooms were sceptical that such a curriculum could succeed, particularly at a time when education budgets were being cut and class sizes were increasing, as many experienced teachers took retrenchment packages and left the system.

Despite the promise of developing independent, critical, active learners, national and provincial assessments undertaken after the implementation of *Curriculum 2005* reveal that South African learners have fallen badly behind international benchmarks in both literacy and numeracy. In addition, the disadvantage suffered by learners during apartheid is perpetuated as learners in advantaged schools have better resources and better qualified teachers. This led to the review of *Curriculum 2005* and the implementation of the *National Curriculum Statement* (2002). However, national and international testing reveals little improvement and a further review has been conducted resulting in a new document entitled *Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement* (CAPS) (2011) which proposes the reintroduction of textbooks, regular national testing at the end of each phase, and a reduction in continuous assessment.

Reading and academic achievement are closely linked. Research supports the view that learners who read well do well academically. The ability to decode and encode words, to have the requisite background knowledge and to have developed fluency and automaticity in reading are essential in facilitating comprehension. This in turn leads to the development of Cognitive Academic Proficiency (CALP) which is required to succeed at school. The development of these skills supports critical literacy which will be explored in depth in chapter 3 which considers the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study.

Finally, issues surrounding gender and gender in the classroom have been examined, particularly in relation to language use. The gender policies put in place by the education authorities have been acknowledged to have been poorly implemented in practice and many educators remain unaware of them. Despite a number of policy documents on gender, classrooms and playgrounds are sites where girls are marginalized and hegemonic masculinity practices are played out, accepted and internalised. Research into classroom interaction both in whole class teacher led discussions and in group activities reveals that boys dominate the verbal space, but this does not appear to have academic consequences for the girls. Language socialization supports the view that gender roles are internalised

at a very early age and reinforced by society and therefore may be difficult to change.

Chapter 3 will consider the theoretical and conceptual framework of this study which lies in the area of critical pedagogy, from which critical literacy has emerged. The links between critical literacy and critical theory and its suitability to the broader aims articulated in curricula in South Africa are also discussed as the choices made when designing this study were influenced necessarily by the context in which the study is located. Thus this is the focus of following chapter.

Chapter 3 Empowering learners: considering critical pedagogy and critical literacy

…what is needed in our society is a different definition of literacy, one that acknowledges the hegemonic power structure and that values the discourses of groups that traditionally have been marginalized.
(Powell 1999, 20).

3.1 Introduction

The research reported on in this thesis aims to change the perceptions and attitudes towards gender of a group of grade 9 learners, and specifically empower the young women in that class by implementing a critical literacy approach during English lessons. In the previous chapter a detailed discussion of the OBE curriculum, literacy and gender were provided.

This chapter will discuss the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study, by first of all, discussing briefly the broad field of critical research, which views the research undertaking as a tool for emancipation and action. Secondly, critical educational research which is closely aligned with critical pedagogy will be discussed, and finally, critical literacy, which underpins the research undertaken and reported on in this thesis, will be examined in detail specifically in relation to its practical application in the classroom.

This chapter will argue that critical research, critical pedagogy and critical literacy have been employed as the framework of this study as they explicitly address issues surrounding social justice and promote the emancipation of sectors of society who are oppressed. Furthermore, the school curriculum, *Curriculum 2005,* as pointed out in the previous chapter, promotes the social justice values espoused in critical pedagogy and critical literacy. It is therefore an appropriate framework for this study.

Critical literacy, which directs learners to interrogate and question texts and argues that texts are not neutral but are tools which can be used to empower or suppress, is then discussed. Practical insights into the implementation of critical

literacy in the classroom and the challenges associated with using this method are also explored.

3.2 Critical research theory

Critical social science research "seeks to emancipate the disempowered, to redress inequality and to promote individual freedoms within a democratic society" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, 28). Its aims are overtly transformative: to emancipate the oppressed and free individuals and society from domination. Thus the purpose of research from a critical theory perspective is not merely to report or describe, but to change the *status quo* (Bertram 2003; Fay 1987). Critical educational research examines the relationships between the school and society and how inequalities are perpetuated and reinforced in the school setting, in other words, "how power is produced and reproduced through education" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, 28).

Critical research theory, based on the work of Habermas, a German philosopher and critical theorist, has its roots in Marxism. Habermas (1972) argues that all knowledge serves particular interests and that these interests are socially constructed and, at base, ideological. While he acknowledges the significance of the positivist research paradigm, which positions the researcher as a disinterested objective outsider, and the interpretivist or naturalistic paradigm which subjectively describes social interaction, he believes that "emancipatory interest subsumes [them] ...it requires them but goes beyond them" (Habermas 1972, 211). Habermas (1972) suggests a method which he terms ideology critique[8]. He views ideology as the means by which powerful groups retain and perpetuate their privileged position. Ideology critique is a way of exposing this. It has four stages: the first stage describes the prevailing situation; the second stage involves analysing the interests and ideologies at work in the particular situation; the third stage establishes a plan to alter the situation; while the fourth and final stage is an

[8] Habermas's ideology critique needs to be distinguished from Foucault's ideology critique, in which he expresses reservations about the concept of ideology, suggesting that it is unattainable because it implies a universal rationality and objectivity.

evaluation of what has been achieved (Habermas 1972, 230). Eagleton (1991) argues that ideology critique is more than just a theory as it has strong practical implications in terms of methodology with the preferred method of achieving this being action research, which will be discussed in the following chapter where the research methods are explored and explained.

One of the major criticisms of Habermas's theory is that "the link between ideology critique and emancipation is neither clear nor proven, nor a logical necessity" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, 31). This view is supported by Lakomski (1999) who says that social change is simply a speculation as Habermas's work offers no indication of this having occurred. A further criticism lies in the overt political agenda it espouses, with some researchers expressing the opinion that the lack of disinterestedness and neutrality "violates the traditional objectivity of researchers" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, 32). However, there is a counter argument that it is impossible for any researcher to be totally disinterested (Kemmis 1982). Despite this criticism much of the work in curriculum theory is underpinned by critical theory because "curriculum is an ideological selection from a range of possible knowledge" and thus is "neither neutral nor innocent" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, 33). Furthermore, critical theory provides a useful paradigm from which to study the values and interests which underpin not only what knowledge is considered important, but how that knowledge is transmitted.

Aspects of critical theory have influenced the framework of this research. The emancipatory and transformatory aspects, which are also part of critical pedagogy, feminist research and critical literacy, and which will be discussed in the following sections of this chapter, are central in this research. In addition, the incorporation of naturalistic and positivist research methods and of an adapted version of Habermas's (1972) four stages has been incorporated into the research design. This will be discussed and explained in greater detail in the following sections.

3.3 Feminist research

Feminist research is closely connected to critical research theory (Usher 1996) and it resonates strongly with the work of Freire in "conscientization" (1970/1996). The research reported in this thesis relates to gender empowerment and many of the principles of feminist research have been considered in the conception and design. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), "in feminist research, women's consciousness of oppression, exploitation and disempowerment becomes a focus for research – the paradigm of ideology critique" (2000, 36). Wadsworth (2001) presents a subtly different slant on feminist research when she writes that it is "not 'knowledge for its own sake' but rather is knowledge explicitly dedicated to bringing about change and improvement in our situation as women" (2001, 1) she goes on to articulate its purpose which is "to derive better understanding, and identify ways to bring about change to alter the subordinated and oppressed position of women" (2001, 3). Sarantakos states simply that it is "research on women, by women and for women" (2005, 54).

Feminist research tends to be very flexible, rejecting disciplinary boundaries and, as with critical research, incorporating the positivist and naturalistic paradigms if they are going to have the desired effect of altering the positions of women (Usher 1996; Wadsworth 2001). Feminist research argues that research itself is imbued with sexism because of the social construction of the world. Many researchers are males, and view the world through a male perspective, tending to use male criteria and standards, often ignoring gender as a variable in their research (Sarantakos 2005; Robson 1993). Furthermore, Ezzy (2002) suggests that gender is a lived experience and cannot be judged from a male standpoint.

Because of this focus on women's issues feminist research tends to be subjective rather that objective, in its stated aim of building "on and from women's experience" (Sarantakos 2005, 57). It employs both quantitative and qualitative methods although, according to Sarantakos, "they adjust the latter to meet the requirements of the feminist paradigm" (2005, 56). The method or methods used

are chosen to achieve the aim which is to give women "a voice to speak about social life from their perspective" (Sarantakos 2005, 55).

While not all aspects of this research lie in the domain of feminist research the purpose, raising gender awareness by using a critical literacy intervention, is in line with its central aim which is to change the *status quo* and empower women (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000; Wadsworth 2001).

3.4 Critical pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is important in the framing of the research reported on in this thesis, both in terms of the emancipatory possibilities of curricula and the teaching approach it advocates. According to Giroux, critical pedagogy is an approach to teaching that seeks to give both teachers and learners "a sense of critical agency and empowerment" (Giroux 1988, 87). Furthermore, the work in critical pedagogy, initially articulated by Dewey (1900, 1916), and later in the work of Paulo Freire (1970/1996), which will be examined in detail in this section, was influential in the development of critical literacy as an approach to teaching language.

One of the first theorists to urge educationalists to consider social justice as an inherent aspect of education was Dewey, who realised that people's class and social positions are perpetuated by the kind of education they received. He argues that education which only serves the purpose of supplying the job market is undemocratic and unjust (Dewey 1916). Furthermore, he is critical of the traditional education offered to the masses, which he views as rigidly didactic, highly structured and prescribed, focusing on the development of the 3Rs. Dewey claims that differentiations in the provision of education perpetuate class distinctions and are deeply entrenched. He promotes a progressive system of education which he maintains will liberate students and facilitate their becoming democratic, thinking members of society. Dewey's view that education serves the purposes of the privileged class resonates with the situation in South Africa described in chapter 1, where racially differentiated education was used as a tool

to subjugate people and limit their possibilities of advancement, and the transmission model was used widely across education authorities.

The work of Freire (1970/1996) is foundational in the development of critical literacy because it addresses two important aspects of this research: oppression and critical thinking and reasoning. While Freire did not address the power relationships and oppression surrounding gender, his general comments about the nature of oppression and the centrality of education in overcoming that oppression and achieving emancipation are relevant to this study, especially in the light of the increasing awareness of gender violence and harassment mentioned in both the previous chapters.

In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/1996) Freire examines the nature of oppression and he equates it with dehumanisation. He states that dehumanization is "…the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanises the oppressed." (Freire 1970/1996, 26). He furthermore states that freedom from oppression is difficult to accomplish because people are often unaware that they are oppressed because "the very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped" (1970/1996, 27) and thus "their perception of being oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the reality of oppression" (1970/1996, 27). Sometimes they recognise that they are oppressed. However they have adapted to the situation and are resigned to it and consequently unwilling to fight against it. Others have what he refers to as the "fear of freedom" (1970/1996, 28) which will lead them to wish the *status quo* to remain unchanged. The solution he states lies in the oppressed realising that oppression is not "a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform." (1970/1996, 31)

Liberation from oppression does not only affect the oppressed but also the oppressors. According to Freire, many oppressors do not consider themselves in this way and are in a state of denial, while others who become aware of their position as an oppressor may feel great anguish leading to a rationalizing of "guilt

through paternalistic treatment of the oppressed, all the while holding them fast in a position of dependence" (1970/1996, 31). Others know that to give up their position of power is not in their interest and "what is to his interest is for the people to continue in a state of submersion, impotent in the face of oppressive reality" (1970/1996, 34).

Freire suggests that the solution to this dilemma lies in what he terms '*praxis*' which he defines as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (1970/1996, 33). He claims that reflection will lead to a critical confrontation with reality and should then be followed by action in order to transform his/her world. This action will benefit both the oppressed and the oppressor: the oppressed will be liberated because in taking away the oppressors' power their humanity will be restored.

Education is central to this liberation. However, Freire is critical of the education offered at schools which he refers to as "the 'banking' concept of education" (1970/1996, 53). This is education in which the teacher talks and the students listen, memorise what the teacher has said, and then repeat it in order to succeed. He states that "liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information." (1970/1996, 60). He therefore advocates what he refers to as 'problem-posing' education which will lead students to become critical thinkers. He defines this as follows:

> Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation... Problem-posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming.
>
> (Freire 1970/1996, 65)

Central to problem-posing education is the belief that students do not come to education as 'blank slates', they have knowledge of their world and they are able to think and reason and make sense of it, and it is this that will lead them to transform it.

Freire claims that the starting point to any problem-posing educational programme is dialogue. Through dialogue people will become critical thinkers and engage with critical thinking which he defines as,

> thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them – thinking which perceives reality as a process, as transformation, rather than a static entity – thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved.
>
> (Freire 1970/1996, 73)

However, the challenge for educators is achieving critical thinking and Freire contends that this can be done by "utilizing certain basic contradictions, we must pose this existential, concrete, present situation to people as a problem which challenges them and requires a response – not just at the intellectual level, but at the level of action" (Freire 1970/1996, 77). Language is central in this confrontation as language "cannot exist without thought; and neither language nor thought can exist without a structure..." (Freire 1970/1996, 77).

Friere advocates that before any programme is developed and implemented a "thematic investigation" (Freire 1970/1996, 88) should be undertaken. Thematic investigation involves investigating people's thinking. He argues that "I cannot think for others or without others, nor can others think for me." (Freire 1970/1996, 89). The rationale for this view is that action has to come out of an individual's own situation and concerns and that these cannot be imposed by others. This aspect of his work sounds a note of caution to school teachers. Freire worked with illiterate adults who were not confined by formal curricula and subject to educational authorities. They therefore worked independently and autonomously. Teachers in schools are prescribed in many ways that may make devising such a programme difficult or even impossible as Luke and Freebody so aptly comment, "what might count as critical literacy in schools and classrooms is, of course, contingent on the national, local, and regional politics of the curriculum – the enabling historical conditions that generate change in educational ideologies and practices" (1997, 15).

It is Giroux (1988) who took critical pedagogy from the realm of adult literacy into the school and classroom. He views schools as "social sites constituted by a complex of dominant *and* subordinate cultures, each characterised by the power they have to legitimate a specific view of reality" (1988, 7). This 'view of reality' is at odds with that of many of the learners who come from the oppressed classes and who are consequently excluded. He argues that teachers need to acknowledge that schools are not neutral sites, nor is the curriculum, and that,

> What the students learn from the formal curriculum is much less important than what they learn from the ideological assumptions embedded in the school's three message systems: the system of curriculum; the system of classroom pedagogical styles; and the system of evaluation.
>
> (Giroux 1988, 29)

Thus the 'hidden curriculum' assumes the ascendant role and "students internalize values which stress a respect for authority, punctuality, cleanliness, docility and conformity" (Giroux 1988, 29). Furthermore, not only learners, but teachers need to be empowered in order to become more critical and have greater autonomy to "combine theory, imagination and techniques" (1988,8) so that social justice will prevail. This will involve allowing teachers to develop their own materials and work plans and to have the freedom to interpret the curriculum in their own way.

In order to counter the 'hidden curriculum' and develop a more democratic classroom, Giroux (1988) suggests a number of measures, among them: the elimination of 'tracking' and the rearrangement of classes into mixed ability groups; the diffusion of the authority of the teacher by allowing learners to assume positions as group leaders; giving learners the opportunity to direct their own learning; the introduction of 'dialogic' grading in which "the criteria, function and consequences of the system of evaluation" (1988, 39) are discussed; providing for group activities and interaction so that learners can learn from each other and will appreciate the value of sharing, co-operation and social learning; and finally for learners to be able to pace their own learning without the constraints of given time frames. It is significant that all of these measures are explicitly articulated in *Curriculum 2005* which is the curriculum being followed by

the South African learners in this study and has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

In conclusion, this section has discussed the work of Dewey, one of the earliest proponents of a democratic education system which would empower all learners. This was followed by an examination of the educational philosophy developed by Freire which was foundational in the development of critical literacy, and which led to many critical literacy theorists (Macedo 1987; Giroux 1988; Lankshear 1993; McLaren 1993; Shor 1999; Luke 2000 among many others) building on his work. Freire's criticisms of formal education resonate with the context which prevailed in South Africa during apartheid. In addition, his philosophy, which views education as a means of liberation and empowerment, is evident in some of the statements included in *Curriculum 2005.* Finally, the work of Giroux is discussed and while he is not a proponent of OBE, his stand against the institutional power vested in schools and teachers, and his commitment to social justice in the classroom certainly resonates with much of the educational philosophy underpinning *Curriculum 2005*.

3.5 Critical literacy

Critical literacy was defined and discussed in considerable detail in chapter 1, however, as it is central to this study further exploration is necessary. In addition to expanding on the theoretical underpinnings of the approach, the materials, practical application of the approach in the classroom, and the challenges involved in its implementation are also discussed as they form an important part of the overall research framework.

Over the last 30 years there has been a growing understanding of the importance of a critical stance with respect to literacy by a number of researchers (Freire 1970/1996, 1983; Fairclough 1989 and 1992; Lankshear and Mclaren 1993; Comber 1993; Luke and Freebody 1997, 1999; Janks 1993, 1997, 2000, 2010 and others). However, before entering into a detailed discussion of critical literacy, it is useful to step back and consider the meanings and values inherent in the

different understandings of literacy, some of which were discussed in the previous chapter. This is important if one accepts the view of Auerbach (1991) that "there can be no disinterested, objective, and value-free definition of literacy: The way literacy is viewed and taught is always and inevitably ideological" (1991, 71).

In the traditional sense, literacy can be defined as the ability to read and write. This definition is inadequate in its perceived neutrality and narrowness, as it fails to acknowledge the social nature of literacy (Street 1994) and the ideologies which underlie the teaching and practice of literacy, thereby reducing literacy to the level of functionality. Holme (2004) asserts that "literacy's social function cannot be separated from the economic advantage it clearly confers upon the societies that make use of it" (2004, 4). While this is certainly true, and becoming literate is essential in order to operate effectively in the world, it is no guarantee that one will gain employment or become either politically or economically empowered because "agents acting within established power structures and dominant ideologies effectively determine what literacy will be for others" (Lankshear and McLaren 1993, 4) through the curriculum and teaching method promoted. Thus education policy makers and curriculum designers have the power to either liberate or subordinate because "any methodological approach to what it means to be a 'literate' person is based on an ideological construct that is inherently political" (Cadiero-Kaplan 2002, 373).

When learners are taught following a rigid transmission or "banking" method, reading and writing loses its potential to transform, as facts are seen to be fixed and unchanging and passive acceptance becomes the norm (Freire 1970/1996; Lankshear and McLaren 1993). Thus school practices, far from being transformative and empowering, become tools for oppression and the maintenance of the *status quo* (Lankshear and McLaren 1993). It therefore follows that in essence there are only two positions towards literacy: the one valuing "individual empowerment and personal voice, basic morality and skill" (Luke 1988, 17) and the other focusing on "rudimentary functional job skills" (Luke 1988, 17) which are necessary to equip learners to enter the labour market. The former position values engaging "children in dialogue to critically examine and

challenge the content of texts and discourses" (Cadiero-Kaplan 2002, 373) while the latter "concentrates on teaching sounds, symbols, and direct comprehension of text through skill and drill processes, that focus on understanding rules, comprehending factual information, and being able to follow directions" (Cadiero-Kaplan 2002, 373).

The differentiated schooling offered to learners of different race groups in South Africa, described in the two previous chapters has left a legacy which is still evident despite over 16 years passing since the establishment of democracy. Large class sizes, passive learners and transmission methods still characterise the education provided to the poor, while the elite who attend previously 'white' schools experience significantly different pedagogies which are more progressive and open, and which prepare them for higher education and the professions. According to Lankshear and McLaren (1993), this is the most obvious link between literacy and power and "its implications for whose interests were served (and whose were not), which interests were served, and how they were served" (1993, 6) are immense.

Critical literacy, then, refers to the political dimensions of literacy which enables human beings "to understand and engage the politics of daily life in the quest for a more truly democratic social order" (Lankshear and McLaren 1993, xix). It is an approach that invites learners to develop critical thought on a range of social issues such as gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, culture, social class, religion, politics.

> … critical literacy necessarily involves taking textual representations of social practices, processes, and their material outcomes, and subjecting them to critique in ways that embodied action for informed and responsible change within public spheres. More proactively, perhaps, critical literacy includes generating representations of social reality (possible worlds) with a view to mobilizing such reality.
>
> (Lankshear and Knobel 1997,137)

However, as Wooldridge (2001) and Stevens and Bean (2007) emphasise, critical literacy is not separate from literacy and the activities of encoding and decoding text, nor is it "a technique or set of strategies, but rather, part of a pedagogy underpinning a whole approach or classroom practice. A critical approach to

literacy is about decoding and encoding the social, political, and ideological situatedness of literacy" (Wooldridge 2001, 259). Luke and Freebody's four resources model (Luke and Freebody 1997, 1999), which was discussed in section 2.3.1 of the previous chapter, makes the same point and argues that in order to read effectively, readers need a range of skills to become what they term 'Text Analysts', meaning they are able to critique the text and question the underlying ideology. This involves asking questions like, "What is this text trying to do to me? In whose interest? Which positions, voices, and interests are at play? Which are silent and absent?" (Luke and Freebody 1997, 214). Furthermore, these roles are not hierarchical and teachers need to address all of "these roles systematically, explicitly, and at all developmental points … analytic or critical resources are not supplementary add-ons, but an integral part of what counts as literacy for all learners" (Comber 2002, 2).

Critical literacy has developed from a number of different strands or theoretical standpoints (Maclean and Green 1996; Stevens and Bean 2007; Janks 2010). The most influential of these are Critical Pedagogy (Freire 1970/1996, Freire and Macado 1987, Giroux, 1981, 1988) which has been discussed in the previous section of this chapter; Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1985; Fairclough 1989); Multiliteracies, (Gee 1990, Barton 1994, Street 1984, New London Group 2000, Kress 2003); and Critical Language Awareness, a term coined by researchers and educators from Lancaster University in the UK (Fairclough 1989, 1992, Janks 1992, 1993, 2000, 2001, 2010, Janks and Ivanic 1992). While these strands have a slightly different slant towards critical literacy they are united in their belief that education in general and literacy education in particular "is not a neutral activity" (Janks 2010, 22) but is imbued with power, which is used to either effect change or maintain the *status quo*.

Janks[9] (2000 and 2010) provides a theoretical account of how the "different realizations of critical literacy operate with different conceptualizations of the relationship between language and power by foregrounding one or other of domination, access, diversity or design" (Janks 2010, 23). She argues that

[9] Janks has done seminal works in the area of Critical Language Awareness in South Africa. She has edited a series of publications and written widely on the subject.

conceptualisations are "crucially interdependent" (Janks 2010, 23) and that all four of these, domination, access, diversity, and design, should be considered when implementing critical literacy. Janks argues that language is a "powerful means of maintaining and reproducing relations of domination" (2010, 23). This domination can be countered by the use of discourse analysis which translates in the classroom to Critical Language Awareness. Critical Language Awareness involves the deconstruction of texts and a consideration of the choices made by the writer and the underlying purpose behind these choices. However, awareness of domination is not sufficient on its own. Janks (1993, 2000; 2010) argues that in order to be able to counter domination, students need to have access to the powerful discourses. She offers as an example academic discourse which can serve to exclude students from access to educational opportunity and empowerment. This access can be achieved by providing explicit instruction in the dominant languages, varieties and genres. Janks further argues that diversity needs to be acknowledged and all educational institutions need to be "more inclusive of students' diverse languages and literacies" (Janks 2010, 25). The concept of design emerged from the work of the New London Group and it "emphasises multi-modal production and reconstruction using a range of media and technologies" (2010, 26). Janks emphasises the interdependence of each of these stating that "any one of domination, diversity, access or design without the others creates a problematic imbalance" (2010, 27).

3.5.1 Critical literacy in practice in the classroom

It is widely acknowledged that "critical literacy in the classroom is neither a simple nor well-agreed-upon venture" (Stevens and Bean 2007, 91). Comber suggests that the implementation of critical literacy in the classroom is complicated because the move from literacy to literacies and "what counts as literacy" (Comber 2001, 271) is further complicated by the addition of the word 'critical' to 'literacy'. In addition, critical literacy "is not just a neat little kit that can be simply delivered because its fundamental concerns are with difference, justice, power and language and these are intrinsically political and complex" (2002, 13).

According to Luke, the practice of critical literacy in the classroom "has come to refer to such a wide range of educational philosophies and curriculum interventions that their family resemblances and shared characteristics would be hard to pick" (Luke 1997, 1). Furthermore, teachers working in the broad area of critical literacy use a variety of methods and approaches but are united in their commitment to the potential reading, writing, "and other modes of inscription, offer for social change, cultural diversity, economic equity, and political enfranchisement" (Luke 1997, 1). Thus, as Behrman comments, the application of critical literacy appears "to lack a consistently applied set of instructional strategies that would mark it as a coherent curricula approach" (2006, 480).

Despite the problems and challenges associated with its use in the classroom, the fact that "it is not always obvious what the pay offs might be" (Comber 2001, 272), and that taking a critical position can be unpredictable in the classroom situation (O'Brien 2001), Wallace argues that "critical literacy is a practice that finds its distinctive place within educational as opposed to everyday contexts" (2001, 213) and that it is particularly suited to the classroom where it can be "intertextually constructed and scaffolded, across disciplinary areas within schools" (Wallace 2001, 213). She rejects Gee's somewhat dismissive view of schooling as a site which offers opportunities for "expository talk within contrived situations" (1990, 42) and asserts that,

> Critical literacy awareness and use is dependent on the exercise of certain kinds of metalevel awareness that are not so much acquired naturalistically in a day-to-day sense, as developed in educational settings. They are abilities that are learned rather than acquired.
>
> (Wallace 2001, 213)

Wallace argues that the explicit and elaborated nature of classroom discourse allows for the reading of texts using a critical stance which is "atypical of day to day conversation" (2001, 213). In her view, critical literacy is not just a question of raising awareness and interpretation of texts but also in talking about issues in texts. The talking "may create the opportunity for either multiple, differentiated readings or consensual interpretations of texts" (2001, 216). Furthermore, after reading, and through talking, about texts it is possible for students to revisit their understandings and re-evaluate their position, or they can maintain their position and defend it. She claims that "this wider view of the reading process is what I claim is a key aspect of

critical literacy" (2001, 216). Wallace's view is supported by Cadiero-Kaplan (2002) who argues that it is "within the context of schools that such questioning and reflection most naturally occur [and that the school context] can only enhance students' sense of place in the world through critique, dialogue, and reflection on their learning processes" (2002, 378).

According to Stevens and Bean (2007), critical literacy as a teaching approach "views text meaning-making as a process of social construction with a particular critical eye towards elements of the various historical, social, and political contexts which permeate and foreground any discourse" (Stevens and Bean 2007, xiv). In the classroom literacy teachers can be said to work "with others to make meaning with or from texts" (Janks 2010, 19), while the critical literacy teacher, in addition to assisting with the 'meaning-making' defined by Stevens and Bean above, also assists "students to rewrite themselves and their local situations by helping them to pose problems and to act, often in small ways, to make the world a fairer place" (Janks, 2010, 19).

Thus in the classroom the aim of critical literacy is to encourage learners to question what they are hearing, reading and viewing. It requires them to look at the meaning, purpose and motive behind the way in which the text has been structured, organized and contextualized. Learners need to understand that there are multiple interpretations of any one text as readers decode texts according to their own value systems and beliefs. Furthermore, it requires learners to analyse their own attitudes and beliefs and to take a position on what they have heard, read or viewed. Once they have taken a position, the next step is empowerment, social action and change. Talk is key to achieving this critical awareness as it is through talk that the learners are scaffolded and become active participants in the classroom community exploring in "productive ways the ideological meaning within texts" (Wallace 2001, 222).

3.5.2 What does a critical literacy approach entail?

The implementation of a critical literacy approach in the classroom "argues for an active, challenging approach to literacy" (Green 2001, 9). It can involve a number

of different literacy activities, not only in the language classroom, but across the curriculum. It aims to provide learners with a range of tools in order to read, write and view critically.

The critical reading of a variety of texts will lead to learners becoming aware of how texts are structured in order to position and influence the reader. According to Singh and Moran, critical reading,

> involves explicitly teaching them [the learners] how to read between the lines, to seek out themes that may not be explicitly stated, to read for absences as well as presences, to decode the textual so as to discover suppressed meanings … Students need to be taught to critically reread and rewrite a range of texts. One possible strategy… is that students learn to re-examine texts, such as newspapers, television news reports, and textbooks, to reveal and make problematic the 'hidden' stories they tell…
>
> (1997, 129)

Singh and Moran further state that critically engaging with texts involves four distinct steps: the first step involves the reading of the text and "discussing the reality it constructs, its positioning of the reader, and the meaning the reader is expected to make of the text" (1997, 130), while the second step involves students "acquiring a meta-language or a range of ideas and conceptual resources to inform alternative readings" (Singh and Moran 1997, 130) The third step requires students to re-read the original and discuss how it may be rewritten following discussions, and the fourth step involves rewriting the text but this time "exploring alternative constructions" (1997, 130).

Janks (1993) supports this view arguing that deconstruction, "the unmaking or unpicking of the text" (1993, iii), shows the reader the choices the writer has made and raises the questions: "Why did this writer or speaker make these choices? Whose interests do they serve? Who is empowered or disempowered by the language used?" (Janks 1993, iii). Asking these questions raises an awareness of the empowering or disempowering role inherent in many texts.

When encouraging the development of critical reading skills, Wallace (1992), in her work with non-mother tongue speakers of English in Britain, prefers working with the framework provided by Kress (1989) which suggests that three simple questions be asked about any text: "Why is this topic being written about? How is

the topic being written about? What other ways of writing about the topic are there?" (Wallace 1992, 71). She adds that while these questions form a starting point, it is often, because of the choice of text, necessary to add others such as, "Who is writing to whom?" or "What is the topic?" (1992, 71).

However, there are other frameworks which might be employed. The Tasmanian Education Department (2004) suggest applying the following steps in order to develop critical literacy: immersion, prediction, deconstruction, reconstruction, and finally, taking social action. While Pitt (1995, 2) offers a comprehensive set of questions which can be asked of most written or visual texts which bear repeating. These are:

- Why am I/are we reading this text?
- Who benefits from the text?
- In whose interest is the text?
- What is the text about?
- What view of the world is the text presenting?
- What kind of knowledge is presented/not presented in the text?
- How do I feel about the text?
- How many interpretations of the text are possible?
- What kinds of social realities does the text portray?
- How does the text depict age, gender, culture?
- How is the child / how are the children constructed in this text?
- How are the adults constructed in this text?
- Why has the author portrayed the characters in this way?
- What kind of language is used?
- Why is the text written the way it is?
- How else could it have been written?
- What is missing from the text?
- What questions about itself does the text not raise?

(Pitt 1995, 2)

According to Pitt (1995), applying these questions to texts will encourage learners to think critically and develop the skills and awareness which will empower them.

The above suggests that while there are some key questions which need to be explored when implementing a critical literacy approach, they tend to be flexible and vary slightly with some offering more explicit direction than others. They were all considered when the classroom intervention reported on in this thesis was planned although in practice not all were covered and many differed as content, context and responses could not be predicted in advance.

3.5.3 Implementing critical literacy in the classroom

As has already been stated, implementing critical literacy in the classroom is challenging for a number of reasons. Stevens and Bean (2007) contend that implementing critical literacy in the classroom is like trying to follow "a moving target" (2007, 62). It is impossible to pre-package lessons because "how questions are posed, who takes them up, and what their potential outcome might be is productively elusive of prediction" (2007, 63). They caution that an "overly technical implementation of too-specific sequences of strategies" (2007, 64) may not produce the desired result. Comber (2001) supports this view and aptly states that there is no simple, one-size fits-all formula to using it, because "there is no one generic critical literacy, in theory or in practice" (Comber 2001, x), nor is there any certainty about the outcome. The diversity of participants who come to classrooms with their own cultures, histories, languages and schemata, can make the outcome unpredictable and the results unexpected.

Different stances towards critical literacy have led to a range of different methods being utilized to interrogate a variety of different text types and literacies across the school curriculum. While the empowerment agenda is always present, the form that this emancipation takes differs. Sahni (2001) points out that the attainment of power is a relative concept. Critical theorists like Freire and Giroux see power in macropolitical terms, and critical literacy as a means of achieving political and social transformation "because they are men in a world structured largely by men" (Sahni 2001, 31). However, for those further down the power hierarchy, such as women and children at school, attaining this kind of power is inconceivable. This is not a criticism of critical literacy, but a caution that implementing a critical literacy approach in schools, which are sites where power is inherent and explicitly exercised, often involves taking small steps towards the ultimate goal of empowerment and its results can be almost imperceptible.

On the other hand, as both Dyson (2001) and Sahni (2001) report, considerable gains are to be made in the learners' discovery of their own voice in the classroom through the use of participatory forums, or finding a personal space in which they can construct a new world view.

Working from the standpoint that language is never neutral, but always exists to promote one ideological standpoint over another (Fairclough 1989, Janks 2001) the materials used in developing critical literacy can come from a wide range of sources. While much of the documented research deals with reading a variety of genres and types of texts, for example, fictional stories (O'Brien 2001, Mellor and Patterson 2001), advertisements (Janks 2000, 2010), junk mail catalogues (O'Brien 2001), dvd's (Bigelow 2001), television programmes, films (Dyson 2001) and writing, much has also been achieved through speaking (Vasques 2001).

In examining the corpus of literature on critical literacy, there seems a smaller amount of reported research on its implementation in high school classrooms than in the primary classroom and the tertiary sector. This may be because primary school teachers are less constrained by curriculum demands and timetabling. Researchers report being welcomed into primary school classrooms, and given the freedom to conduct small scale research and observe lessons (Dyson 2001, Sahni 2001, Stein 2001). Tutors working at the tertiary level do not have to face national testing and have greater autonomy in their own lecture rooms (McKinney 2004a, 2004b, McKinney and van Pletzen 2004; Granville 2003; Ellsworth 1989). High school teachers know that their learners will face formal national testing at the end of Grades 9, 11 and 12 and that a nationally prescribed curriculum has to be covered. Furthermore, Comber comments that,

> many studies indicate that children's questions diminish as they advance in school. While schools may engage with the educative discourse of the importance of children's questions and inquiry models of learning, in fact schools as institutions often work to silence hard questions and censor out the things that count in children's worlds.
>
> (Comber 2002, 8)

3.5.4 Using critical literacy to raise gender awareness

Critical literacy is an approach which aims at raising awareness of inequalities and injustices in society and changing them in the interests of achieving social justice. The majority of women worldwide are a marginalised group, as has been indicated earlier in this thesis. The womens' movement, according to Singh and Moran,

> is oriented not simply to rejecting the existing textual representations of the patriarchal 'order' (the 'malestream' as it is more appropriately termed), but must also participate in it, engage with it, in order to make meanings for effecting change in it.
>
> (1997, 132)

They further assert that critical literacy is an important part of putting into practice this policy as the women's movement,

> uses critical media literacy to reject the commodification of human relations, feelings, and sexuality that challenges the manipulation of needs and desires by commercial propaganda where women are frequently represented as sex objects.
>
> (Singh and Moran 1997, 132)

Furthermore, critical literacy is used by the women's movement to raise awareness of the patriarchal nature of society and in this way rejects the view that "the existing patriarchal 'order', the malestream, should be taken for granted or as 'natural'" (Singh and Moran 1997, 132).

However, despite the efforts of the women's movement across the world few inroads have been made. While some women have achieved political, economic and social equality, and even power, the majority still remain in inferior positions. According to UNESCO, two thirds of the illiterate people in the world are women (Williams and Loupis 2002). This would impact on the aim of the women's movement to use critical literacy to raise gender awareness. Furthermore, it needs to be acknowledged that not all women desire to change the *status quo* in this regard.

The next section deals with research which suggests that critical literacy is often met with resistance and even hostility.

3.5.5 Resistance and challenges to critical literacy

Reading Today, a widely circulated newspaper produced by the International Reading Association, conduct an annual survey called *What's Hot* in order to establish which areas of literacy are currently receiving attention by educators in relation to those previously considered important. The focus is essentially on reading instruction rather than on all aspects of language teaching. The 2010

survey reveals that critical reading and writing is '*Not hot'* among the teachers who responded, although experts indicated that it *Should be hot* (Cassidy, Valadez and Garrett 2010, 645). The article presenting the results does not discuss this particular finding as it focuses on other debates surrounding the teaching of reading. However, these results do give credence to O'Quinn's view that curricula implementation which emphasises "career preparation and labor supply rather than the quality of life achieved through the ability to think creatively and question critically" (O'Quinn 2005, 264) could be at least part of the reason for this. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, where the South African school curriculum is examined, curricula are designed to promote a particular ideology and in that way produce a certain kind of person (Janks and Prinsloo 2002), and the goal of education is not always Dewey's ideal of advancing "students' ability to understand, articulate, and act democratically in their social experience" (Shor 1999, 7). A number of critical literacy researchers have experienced resistance from people who wish to maintain the *status quo* and therefore consider critical literacy subversive (Giroux 1987, Shor 1999, Cadiero-Kaplan 2002, Vasquez 2001). Cadiero-Kaplan (2002) regard this reluctance as understandable as "such processes reveal the underlying hegemony of literacy practices and further, work to unveil the structures of repression and domination within school practices and curriculum" (2002, 378).

While this is one of the reasons, there are a number of other explanations why both learners and teachers may be resistant to critical literacy. O'Quinn speculates that many people grew up being told that politics and religion should not be talked about because of their potential "to explode into unpleasant arguments" (O'Quinn 2005, 264). While Beck (2005) suggests that part of the problem "relates to the absence of a single, widely accepted definition of critical literacy or a template for bringing critical literacy to pedagogical practice" and that "because critical literacy has resisted distillation into a single formulaic method, ... teachers may perceive the lack of method as overwhelming" (2005, 395). She further agues that an additional problem is the place or site where critical literacy is to be implemented. Transferring power from the teacher to the students can be a risky undertaking. Beck makes the point that students "who have been conditioned by

the majority of their educational experiences to expect classrooms that position the teacher as the sole authority, "often do not want [authority], or know how to use it" (Shor 1999, 10; Beck 2005, 396).

Furthermore, students may not realise that having a voice themselves, necessarily means acknowledging the voices of others and this could lead to conflict and division in the classroom. On the other hand, as has been stated earlier in this chapter, traditional schools operate with a top-down management style where hierarchies of power and authority are accepted as the norm. In this environment teachers may feel reluctant to take a critical stance if it means opposing the school structure and "pressured to adopt practices that conform to the existing school culture" (Beck 2005, 396). She acknowledges that in her work as a literacy teacher in a correctional facility the nature of the place, a prison, and reason for the inmates being incarcerated in that place, has to be taken into consideration in her teaching. Prisons are sites where individuality is suppressed and replaced by community rights, where inmates "are subject to an autocratic ruling system that maintains rigid hierarchical divisions" (Beck, 2005, 398). She argues that she needs to take cognizance of this, by keeping a balance between having a classroom which encourages "exchange and debate … but also raises awareness of what constitutes responsible voice and action" (2005, 399), but avoids controversial provocative issues which might lead her incarcerated pupils to take action which might oppose the institution.

McKinney found students at a conservative, Afrikaans, mainly white university in South Africa where she taught a first year English course, resistant to texts and literature which challenged racial stereotypes and racism in a first year university tutorial group. (McKinney 2004a, 2004b and McKinney and van Pletzen 2004). The reasons for this resistance were complex and tied to the students' identity as young South Africans who wished to shake off the apartheid past but found their privileged position made this difficult, if not impossible. While they acknowledged the injustices of apartheid they could not identify with being "positioned alongside 'white' oppressors" (McKinney 2004b). She concludes that the constant focus on the past made it difficult for the students to move forward

into the future and she comments that "In this case, critical literacy is working to disempower these students, rather than engaging them in a process of 'self-empowerment'" (McKinney 2004a, 71).

Granville had a similar experience when using a critical literacy approach with a multiracial and multicultural group of student teachers in South Africa. The conflict which emerged in the class led to polarization and tension between the members and the eventual separation of the class into opposing groups. This was extended to her and she found herself "unable to penetrate the wall of reserve that they had built around themselves" (Granville 2003, 11). She cautions that "this situation can severely retard learning and entrench conservative attitudes rather than encourage students to change their practice" (2003,13). Furthermore, she observed that "most students' belief systems were so naturalised that they could only grasp other positions momentarily" (2003, 14). Finally, she states that the real challenge of a critical literacy intervention is getting students to learn "to accept difference as a normal feature of human experience – not as a reason for fear, hostility and conflict" (Granville 2003, 16).

Ellsworth (1989) questions whether using the school as a vehicle to further political ideals is appropriate. She argues that "in schools, rational deliberation, reflection, and consideration of all viewpoints has become a vehicle for regulating conflict and power to speak" (Ellsworth 1989, 301) because power relationships are inherent in classrooms where there are institutionalised power imbalances between students and teachers which make it difficult for students to articulate their points of view. Furthermore, she argues that "no teacher is free of these [racism, classism, ableism, or sexism] learned internalised oppressions" (1989, 308), and he/she brings to the classroom "interests of her or his own race, class, ethnicity, gender, and other positions. S/he does not play the role of disinterested mediator on the side of the oppressed group" (Ellsworth 1989, 309). In other words, it is impossible for an educator to know what each individual learner has experienced or how these experiences have been understood and therefore "to assume a position of center or origin of knowledge or authority, of having

privileged access to authentic experience or appropriate language" (1989, 310). In addition she suggests that,

> there has been no consideration of how voices of, for example, White women, students of color, disabled students, White men against masculinist culture, and fat students will necessarily be constructed in opposition to the teacher/institution when they try to change the power imbalances they inhabit in their daily lives, including their lives at school.
>
> (Ellsworth 1989, 310)

Dialogue is an important component of critical pedagogy as members of the classroom community discuss the issues being explored. The classroom should be viewed as a safe, democratic space in which everyone is free to express their opinions and given an equal opportunity to contribute. However, often individuals and groups decline to contribute. Ellsworth contends that silence indicates the asymmetrical positions between the group members and the teacher therefore they,

> are declining / refusing to talk at all, to critical educators who have been unable to acknowledge the presence of knowledges that are challenging and most likely inaccessible to their own social positions.
>
> (Ellsworth 1989, 313)

She goes on to contend that,

> power relations between raced, classed, and gendered students and teachers are unjust. The injustice of these relations and the way in which those injustices distort communication cannot be overcome in a classroom, no matter how committed the teacher and the students are to 'overcoming conditions that perpetuate suffering'.
>
> (1989, 316).

However, Shor (1999) has a different view of silence, maintaining that when students' "vital interests [become] disconnected from classroom discourse, the students lose touch with the purpose of human communication … they lose their articulateness along with their motivation" (Shor 1999, 7). A further point that Shor makes is that change takes time because, "the forces that need questioning are very old, deeply entrenched, and remarkably complex, sometimes too complicated for the interventions of critical pedagogy in a single semester" (Shor 1999, 8).

Talib (1995) argues that critical literacy may not be viewed particularly positively in some third world countries where it is perceived to have western origins and to

be "not really necessary for economic growth or the general well-being of the country, and that it may bring more harm than good" (Talib 1995, 567). He goes on to say that those educators implementing this approach may well be considered "troublemakers" (Talib 1995, 567) as the local community "fail to see a problem within the complex networks of contexts which its analysis demands" (Talib 1995, 566).

Kramer-Dahl (2001) reports that the critical reading and writing course she undertook with undergraduate students met with resistance for a number of reasons, the main ones being: feeling threatened that disagreeing with the tutor and voicing a contrary view would lead to poor marks; and an unwillingness to move beyond the tried and tested techniques which had seen them achieve good marks throughout their school years. She concludes that "it takes a lot to change habitus" (Kramer-Dahl 2001, 27); in other words, views that have been internalised and become part of the schema of the students, are difficult to change during the course of one module in reading and writing.

Janks wrote a series of Critical Language Awareness (CLA) (1993) materials for use in high school classrooms in South Africa because "in education CLA can contribute to processes of resistance and transformation by denaturalizing dominant discourses" (2001, 139). When trialling the material in a multicultural Grade 10 classroom in Johannesburg she found that the first few comments made by the learners were positive, but then became negative. The adolescents she surveyed stated that they found the material boring. The reasons they gave were that it is "boring because it labours the idea that meanings shift according to one's position, physical, social, political, ideological" (2001, 141) and because it "generated conflict in the classroom that the students and the teachers were unable to resolve" (2001, 141). She says that despite the fact that the learners claim that the material is repetitious "they are clearly not able to apply it to their own lives. They appear to understand the point theoretically but politically and psychologically they need to defend their point of view and this produces serious conflict in the classroom" (2001, 145). She quotes Tatum (1992) who maintains that introducing issues surrounding oppression can give rise to "powerful

emotional responses in students that range from guilt and shame to anger and despair", and that in addition, "if not addressed these emotional responses can result in resistance to oppression-related content areas" (Tatum 1992 in Janks 2001, 145). Janks further observes that,

> where students have been schooled to believe that meaning is singular and that there are right and wrong answers it becomes important for them to convince the others that their position is right. There is a great deal is at stake where, if one is not right, one is necessarily wrong.
>
> (Janks 2001, 145/146).

She states that this response is emotional and psychological rather than rational because their "identities are at stake" (Janks 2001, 146) and "when classroom materials or other reading matter touches something sacred to a student, the student is not happy to have his or her closed meanings opened out… sacred meanings are those that for the students, are constitutive of their identity" (Janks 2001, 149).

Woodridge (2001) questions, not only texts, but the assumptions which underlie a teacher's understanding of the world that is presented in that text. She argues that while questioning texts is useful, the answers are not always straight forward. She provides the example of a film on Vietnam and the anger expressed by a student from South Vietnam on the inaccuracies of the film which was presenting a North Vietnamese perspective. She argues that "different truths are highlighted by different frames" and "nothing is innocent (2001, 264). Teachers need to acknowledge this if they are to use critical literacy successfully in their classrooms. In a similar vein, Bell (2001) showed a movie aimed at an adolescent, school-going target audience to a group of student teachers. Although they found the movie powerful themselves, they were not prepared to show a film with coarse and profane language to their learners because of their belief that they must conform as individuals. Bell argues that this attitude perpetuates the gulf between the school and the learners' lives and that,

> while longing for certain emancipatory changes within school life, these student teachers are reluctant to accept the kinds of upheaval and

> professional vulnerability that will occur in their own lives in the wake of such changes.
>
> (Bell 2001, 243)

Finally, Prinsloo, when presenting a critical literacy module to a group of student teachers found that "particularly privileged, educational backgrounds appeared to predispose groups of students to success in a critical literacy course" (Prinsloo and Janks 2002, 22); that is, that the module was more successful with teachers who had attended what she termed "historically advantaged universities and schools" than those who had attended "historically disadvantaged schools" (Prinsloo and Janks 2002, 22). She researched three of the Home Language curricula in place before the demise of apartheid: English, isiZulu and Afrikaans. She discovered that the English home language curriculum was different to that of the other home language curricula offered to speakers of other languages in South Africa, including Afrikaans speaking learners. She concluded that while the English curriculum focuses on reasoning and morality and "constitutes the English subject as socially mobile and part of a global elite" (Prinsloo and Janks 2002, 24), the Afrikaans curriculum was underpinned by a "conservative form of Calvinism" and aims to "construct a sense of Afrikaner identity" (Prinsloo and Janks 2002, 25). When working with texts and in the formulation of questions the expression of personally held positions was discouraged. The isiZulu curriculum, which was the same one in place for all the Bantu languages, was similar to the Afrikaans curriculum with "the wording of large sections … being identical" (Prinsloo and Janks 2002, 26). This is a significant finding because it suggests that even after achieving a relatively high educational standard the teachers resist change because of their own educational experiences. It also suggests that critical literacy needs explicit instruction.

The above cases suggest that critical literacy is a contested area for a number of reasons, and that care has to be taken when introducing it to learners if is to be successful.

3.6 Reflections on critical pedagogy and critical literacy

This chapter has reviewed critical theory, feminist theory, critical pedagogy, and explored in detail critical literacy as an approach towards empowering students and transforming their lives. It is these areas of research that have influenced the conceptual and theoretical framework used in the research reported in this thesis for they are all concerned with empowerment and transformation.

The overt aim of critical research theory lies in emancipating those people in society who are oppressed. Feminist research argues that women world wide are in a subordinate position and therefore the main aim of feminist research is to raise awareness of this. Feminist research aims to change the *status quo* and to empower women, an aim that is congruent with the research being reported on in this thesis.

Critical pedagogy addresses oppression directly and provides a route to escaping from it through education. Prominent education theorists and practitioners such as Dewey, Freire and Giroux raise the issue of education being hostage to the governing elite, who entrench their position though the 'hidden curriculum' which aims to maintain the status quo. They argue for a more democratic system of education which will empower all learners regardless of their social position.

Critical literacy is a practical means of addressing the power differentials in society. Language is not neutral, it reflects ideology and as such has the potential to influence in both a positive and negative manner: it can liberate and empower or it can be used to subordinate. The deconstruction of texts can raise the awareness of the learners to how language is used as a tool to regulate society and the importance of questioning texts.

However, changing deeply embedded societal views is not a simple thing for in doing so complex, uncomfortable and powerful interests are exposed. The resistance to critical literacy experienced in a variety of contexts, and the challenges and dangers it poses to those who use it, along with the delicate balance between freedom and restraint required in its implementation has been

explored. This is illustrated by examples taken from a number of researchers who worked in a variety of educational institutions. Often this resistance is so great that it is impossible to get any degree of homogeneity in the experience. This sounds a note of caution that critical literacy needs to be approached carefully and with sensitivity and that success is not assured.

Chapter 4 and 5 which follow will discuss the research design, methods and data collection techniques used in this study. Insights gained from this chapter, have been incorporated into the design elements of the classroom intervention described in chapter 4.

Chapter 4 Research design for the critical literacy intervention

Knowing about the world involves knowing how to change it.

(Satya Mohanty 1997)

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to empower the learners in a grade 9 class by implementing a critical literacy intervention with the aim of raising their awareness to gender power. It is hypothesised that once their awareness has been raised by this intervention their attitudes will change, primarily towards gender, but also towards other areas where social injustice is present. The study aims to produce learners who are sensitive to each other and to gender power, and are able to perceive how gender roles are perpetuated by language and culture. At the same time the intervention is premised on the idea of enhancing learners reading abilities as suggested in chapter 2.

Critical literacy is, in the words of Gee, "socially perceptive literacy" (2001, 15). It involves reading a variety of texts and looking behind these texts in order to see how they seek to establish power over us and others, and what, or whose, interests this power serves (Luke 2004). This awareness leads to reflection and then action in order to counter the social injustice revealed.

As stated in chapter 1 and 3, the applied research reported on in this thesis broadly follows a critical research paradigm which is located in the area of critical social science (Bertram 2004, Spata 2003, Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000). Critical research has as its purpose emancipation from oppression in order to change society for the better. According to Bertram, its aim is "the transformation of society and individuals" (2004, 45). This is closely aligned to feminist research that "challenges the legitimacy of research that does not empower oppressed and otherwise invisible groups – women" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, 35), and critical pedagogy as expressed in the work of Freire (1970/1996). Issues of

power and empowerment are at the heart of the education approach espoused by Freire, whose work in the area of critical pedagogy has been discussed in all the previous chapters.

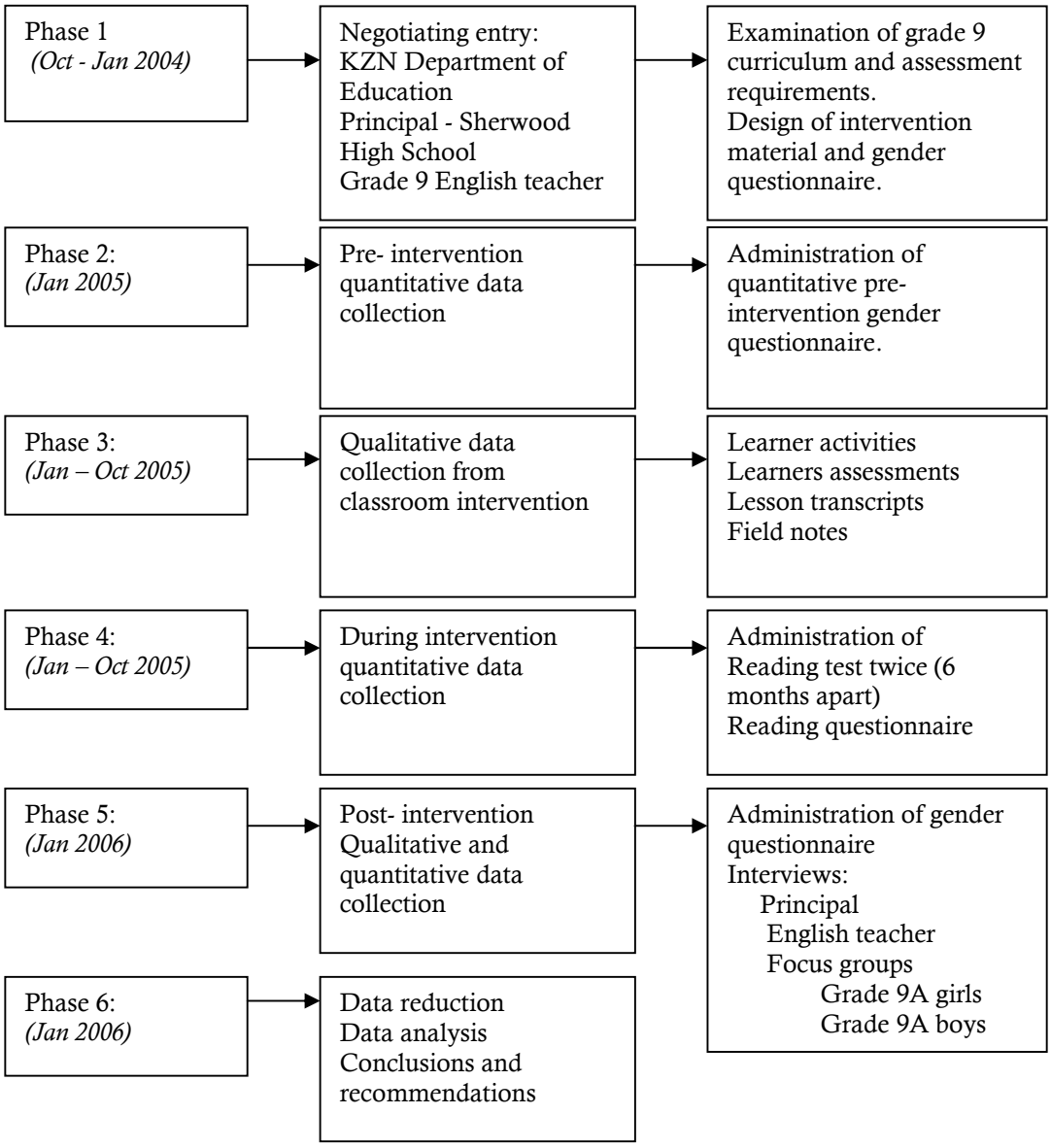
According to Hatch and Farhady, research is "a systematic approach to finding answers to questions" (1982, 1) and this was borne in mind when designing the research. Thus, while the research paradigm lies in the area of critical research, in order to address the research questions listed in chapter 1, a pragmatic approach has been taken in the research design and methodology. Mixed methods research strategies have been used which means that both qualitative and quantitative methods have been implemented.

This chapter presents in detail the research design and describes the material used in the classroom intervention which was undertaken with the grade 9A learners at Sherwood High School, providing an outline of the activities and materials used in the critical literacy intervention (CLI), which was central to the project. The design will indicate a systematic and considered approach to this research which focuses on discovering answers to the research questions which were posed in chapter 1, and utilizing the literature, theory and principles articulated in chapters 2 and 3.

4.2 Design of the critical literacy intervention

The critical literacy intervention was purposively designed in a series of phases in order to address the research questions directly and these are illustrated overleaf in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1. Outline of the critical literacy intervention: Research design



As has been indicated in Figure 4.1, a number of instruments, both qualitative and quantitative, were used in this research. The qualitative data collected in this study emanated from three main but interrelated sources: the material used and lessons delivered in the course of the critical literacy intervention; interviews conducted with the principal, the grade 9 English teacher and two focus groups of grade 9A learners – one a group of 5 boys and the other a group of five girls – and, field notes which record observations noted after each lesson and other incidents of interest which occurred when the school was visited. While all of these have a place in the research, the classroom intervention holds the central position as it is here that awareness is raised which should facilitate the

empowerment and change that a critical literacy approach promises. For this reason it will be discussed in detail.

4.3 The classroom intervention

The classroom intervention generated a large quantity and wide variety of classroom data. However, as has been explained above, before discussing the data collected and the methods used to capture and analyse it, it is important to give an outline of the intervention material and lessons, and the rationale behind the choice of this material for the purpose of developing critical literacy and raising awareness about gender as well as how it conformed to *Curriculum 2005,* the curriculum in place at the time.

The critical literacy teaching materials developed were influenced in the main by the examples set by Janks (1993), Mlamleli *et al*. (2000 and 2001), Bailey (1994), and Arnesen and Riley (1995) although other resources were also used. While this material conforms to the demands of *Curriculum 2005* it has been specifically designed to challenge the views of the learners' about gender. It examines how women and men are portrayed in advertising, magazines and newspapers, in fiction and a variety of other texts. It interrogates the language and representations of men and women used in these texts. The aim of this material is to raise awareness of how language is used as a social tool and to achieve a change in the learners' gender perceptions and attitudes. The activities require learners to speak, read and write. Whole class lessons, group work and individual oral presentations have been audio-taped, written responses to tasks have been copied so they could be examined and analysed.

In designing a learning programme, such as the one which will be described in the following section, consideration has to be given to the link between the learning which should occur and the material or syllabus design. Crombie (1985) argues that in designing a scheme of work the focus be "not only on isolated linguistic units, but on coherent spoken and written discourse" (1985, 2) if it is going to be

effective in keeping the learners motivated. He continues that they need not be linear, but can also be cyclic in structure: meaning that they consist of "the same construction several times at different places … each time associated with the realisation of a specific structure-related meaning" (Crombie 1985, 11). The spiral syllabus design articulated by Brumfit (1980) supports this view. The design of the material used in the intervention can described as spiral or cyclic because it does not follow a linear progression, building in degrees of difficulty. It covers different topics, but the questions posed tend to be similar in structure and standard as the focus is to develop the learners' critical thinking and critical literacy.

The intervention generated a great deal of data and only a selection is analysed and discussed in this thesis. Those activities will be described in detail together with the data and analysis in the chapters 6, 7 and 8. Thus in the section that follows a brief description of the material will be provided in order to provide an overview of the entire programme. This will be followed by a discussion of the challenges surrounding the implementation of the material in the classroom.

4.3.1. Description of the teaching and learning material

The material falls into five main themes. These are personal identity; love, romance and relationships; gender roles; and gender and the media, and gender in society. In addition to activities that focus on gender, other more technical aspects of language such as punctuation, direct and reported speech, vocabulary development and active and passive voice were also covered, although these were taught in context and when relevant, for example, active and passive voice was taught prior to the investigative report being written because the learners would need to use it when writing their report (Balfour 2002).

The material was designed to conform to the demands of *Curriculum 2005* both in terms of the articulated outcomes and range statements and the number of portfolio assessments required. Because the material was to be used with all the grade 9 learners, and not just grade 9A, the research sample, the teacher in charge of English in the grade checked over the material and indicated her approval before it could be used. While many of the activities are made up of fairly

traditional content and questions suitable for grade 9 learners, the questions which guide the group discussion call for a more critical response. This is expanded in the whole class discussion which follows the group work. Thus it is possible to use the material using a variety of approaches: grade 9A followed a critical literacy approach.

Both the long and short reading texts were selected so that learners could interrogate the themes and the way the text is structured, and consider, through discussion, where it positions the reader with regard to a number of different aspects concerning gender. The basis for doing this rests on asking the critical questions articulated by Janks 1993, Singh and Moran 1997, Wallace 1992, and others researchers who are seasoned practitioners in the field of critical literacy. Although in *Curriculum 2005* film study is included, the intervention does not include it because the school does not have the equipment.

As has been stated before, a great deal of work was covered during this intervention, what follows is essentially a brief outline of the main themes covered during the year. Full details of particular activities which have been selected for analysis and reporting will be presented when the findings are discussed. Figure 4.2 sets out in table format the themes, readings, activities and assessments covered. A brief explanation and rationale with examples from each unit will follow.

Figure 4.2 Lesson material and activities

	Lesson material	***Activity***
Unit 1 **Theme – Me**	The Ugliest of them all.	*Group discussion report back.*
	Personal Identity Chart. Poem: Self-examination.	*Group discussion and report back.*
	Poem: My parents kept me from children who were rough; The Real Bully	*Class discussion* *Assessment: Answer questions*
	Keeping a diary: Extracts from: Bridget Jones Diary Diary of Ann Frank	*Class Discussion* *Individual Assessment: Answer questions*
	Writing a diary entry	*Assessment: Individual writing activity*
Unit 2 **Theme – Love, Romance, and Relationships**	Thinking about love	*Group discussion and report back*
	Poem: Letter from a contract worker	*Group discussion and report back*
	St Valentine's Story	*Listening comprehension*
	Short Story: The Winner	*Group discussion questions* *Structured paragraph writing* *Assessment: individual reading*
	The dating game	*Oral role plays and discussion*
	What's in a song	*Class discussion*
	Comprehension: A Birthday Song	*Assessment: Answer questions*

Unit 3 **Theme – Gender Roles**	Male and female roles	*Awareness raising – class discussion*
	My Mother's Life Compare-contrast paragraph	*Interview using framework* *Essay writing: Biography of own mother's life*
	Fact Sheet: Women, Education, Work Reading between the lines	*Group/ class discussion*
	What does the constitution say? Cartoon analysis	*Class discussion.*
	Comprehension: Passage taken from '*Nervous Conditions*' by Tsitsi Dangarembga.	*Assessment: Answer questions.* *Writing assessment: Write a letter to Tambu.*
	Short Story: The Hajji	*Pre-reading group discussion questions* *Crossword: How well did you read?* *Post Reading questions*
	Poetry: Holding my beads	*Class discussion*
	Poetry:A woman is not a potted plant	*Group + class discussion* *Assessment: Answer questions*
	Comprehension: My life as a househusband	*Assessment: Answer questions*
	Short story: Manhood	*Pre-reading discussion questions* *Crossword: How well did you read?* *Group discussion* *Assessment task: Write a dialogue* *Design a book cover*
Unit 4 **Theme – Gender and the Media**	The Advertising Message Slogans History of advertising How does advertising work? Target audience etc.	*Group discussions* *Class discussion: Deconstructing an advert* *Group work: Writing an advert* *Group work: Analyse an advertisement.*
	Cartoons: Interpretation or text and illustrations Gender and cartoons	*Class discussion.* *Analysis of cartoons*
Unit 5 **Theme - Gender in society**	Short Story: Sisters	*Class discussion*
	Slang Connotation and denotation	*Group and class discussion and worksheets*
	Photo task – Picturing gender	*Taking photographs in groups* *Posters* *Booklets and captions*
	Investigative Report Using the passive voice Letter to the editor	*Group task* *Conduct an investigation (interviews, questionnaires, data examination)* *Analyse findings* *Write the report* *Report on the findings in a letter to the editor*

Unit 1 - Me

The first unit, 'Me' which was covered with the learners dealt with identity. This was done for three specific reasons: firstly, in order to raise the learners' awareness of their own identities, attitudes and perceptions; secondly, it enabled the researcher to get to know the learners in the research class; and, thirdly, to start raising awareness about gender and power. As has been discussed in chapter 2, gender is deeply acculturated and part of identity (Wood 2001; Lakoff 1990; Tannen 1990; Brice Heath 1983).

The intervention started with a short passage entitled *The ugliest of them all* (Ibekwe 1992, 24) written by a girl of 16. It deals with lack of confidence and some of the insecurities that adolescents feel as they are growing up and finding their place in society. It is also something of a riddle because the identity of the 'Ugliest of them all' is implied rather than stated. The group discussion questions, which can be seen in Figure 4.3 below, facilitate co-operative learning which is a major feature of *Curriculum 2005*, and introduce the issue of gender in the final question.

Figure 4.3 Group discussion questions on *The Ugliest of them all* (Ibekwe 1992, 24)

1. Who is the ugliest of them all? What clue does the title give you about this?
2. When did you first begin to think that you had guessed the identity of the mysterious 'she'?
3. In what way do you think she is a 'trespasser' on the writer's conscience?
4. Have you ever thought or felt like this?
5. Do you think the feelings described in this story are experienced by many people as they grow up?
6. Do you think both boys and girls experience these feelings? Why?

Following this, each learner was required to complete a *Personal Identity Chart*. Photographs had been taken of each learner on the first day of school and these were fixed in the central block, with 11 blocks surrounding the photograph, like a spider diagram. Each block was headed as follows: Race, Education, Gender, Nationality, Language, Appearance, Religion, Family, Hobbies, Sports, Community. These blocks had to be filled in, and then, on a separate sheet provided afterwards, they were required to rank these in order of importance. A group discussion then followed where group consensus on the ranking had to be reached. This activity was followed by group discussion of a short poem on a similar theme as *The ugliest of all* (Ibekwe 1992) entitled *Self-examination* (Tsenoli, 1996).

Stephen Spender's poem, *My Parents kept me from Children who were Rough* (1971) a poem which considers issues such as bullying, masculinity and discrimination followed. The questions were answered individually by every learner in grade 9. It was marked and formed part of each learners' portfolio of work. However, another short poem entitled *The Real Bully* (Robinson 1996) was discussed as a group activity as it also focused on a boy's response to hegemonic masculinity

which is evident in this type of bullying.

Two reading passages, written in the form of diary entries, one from *Bridget Jones, the edge of reason* (Fielding 1999) and the other from *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Frank 2001) follow. They were selected not only because they focus on male/female relationships and issues of power which characterize them, but because diary writing is specifically mentioned in *Curriculum 2005* thus these two passages are a fitting introduction to a written assessment task for the learners' portfolios. In addition, each learner in grade 9A was given a writing notebook for them to record their own personal diary entries each day. The film version of *Bridget Jones, the edge of reason* (Fielding 1999) had recently been on the film circuit and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Frank 2001) is a text frequently selected as a reading text in grade 9.

The questions on the passage from *Bridget Jones, the edge of reason* (Fielding 1999) start to explore critically the way males and females respond to the opposite sex and the pressures that women/girls feel to conform to societal expectations to have a boyfriend and marry. The power relationship between males and females, are demonstrated clearly in the passage where women feel pressured to change their behaviour in order to keep the relationship going and please the man in their lives. Examples of some of the questions which were discussed are presented in Figure 4.4 below:

Figure 4.4 Selection of questions from those set on *Bridget Jones, the edge of reason*

1. What do the words 'love reject' (line 2) suggest about Bridget's life before she met Mark Darcy?
2. Why do you think it is 'a relief to have a fag out in the open and not be on my best behaviour' (line 5). What does this statement suggest about her relationship with Mark Darcy?
3. Why does she find it 'horrifying' (line 9) that she wants to go to the supermarket? What changes has the relationship brought to her life?
4. Do you think all women behave this way when they are in a relationship with a man? Give reasons for your answer.
5. Do you feel the same way as Bridget when you are in a new relationship? How do you feel and behave in a similar situation?
6. Do you think that women/girls are under greater pressure than men/boys to make a relationship work? Give reasons for your answer.

Unit 2 - Love, Romance and Relationships

This unit was specifically timed to coincide with Valentines Day which is celebrated enthusiastically by the learners and teachers at the school. It is a day on which chocolates and cards are shared and there is a general atmosphere of excitement in the school. Furthermore, it links up seamlessly with the final two reading activities in Unit 1.

The unit starts with a class discussion about love and what the various religions say about it. It is followed by listening comprehension which presents a quasi-historical account of the origins of Valentines Day. It moves on to discuss the poem, *Letter from a contract worker* (Jacinto 1961). This is a poignant love poem which has a twist at the end when the 'writer' indicates that he is illiterate. This provides an opportunity to engage with the importance of literacy in the class discussion.

The short story entitled *The Winner* by Barbara Kimenye (1983) is an interesting and amusing story set in Uganda. It provides an alternative view of male/female relationships and opens the way for discussion on male/female stereotyping and debates the issue of who is the real winner in the story. The words 'hero' and 'heroine' are examined in the context of the story and in terms of the connotation and denotation of the words. In addition, this story is used as a vehicle to teach paragraph structure as can be seen in the question in the following box:

Figure 4.5 Example of a question set on *The Winner* (Kimenye 1983)

At the end of the story, Salongo comments of Sarah: *'She's the real winner!'* Write a paragraph of approximately 100 words in which you either agree or disagree with the statement.

This question provides scope for the learners to explore the gender issues raised implicitly in the story, but explicitly in the class discussion.

Next in this theme is an oral role play activity entitled '*The Dating Game'* which formed the oral assessment for the 1st term. This is based on a television game show in which contestants have to choose from three the person they would like

to date. The oral activity is followed up with a group discussion on the theme 'Love, romance and relationships' after which learners had to write a paragraph on what they learnt from the activity and the discussion. This activity allowed them to interrogate their own prejudices and stereotypes in an enjoyable way and the writing forced them to confront these prejudices by writing them down.

The final activity in this theme is a formal comprehension which the learners across the grade had to complete as a portfolio assessment. It examines a different kind of relationship between two children at school who come from a different social class and home environment and looks at prejudice from another perspective.

Unit 3 – Gender Roles

The third unit focuses directly on gender empowerment as it explores 'Gender Roles' and considers the roles assigned to the genders by society. Learners are required to interrogate how society assigns roles and influences perceptions of what is appropriate for males and females.

This unit begins with a short questionnaire on gender roles in terms of jobs that people do in order to raise awareness of how society influences perceptions of what is appropriate for males and females. As this is an awareness raising activity and a gender questionnaire has been administered at the beginning of the intervention, this was not used as a data collection instrument.

The first reading is entitled *My mother's life*. It is written by the researcher and gives details of her own mother's life. The purpose for using this reading is to examine the roles assigned to women and specifically mothers, and the inferior position they are forced into by patriarchal societies. As the woman whose life is presented is clearly older than the learners' mothers this reading provides scope to discuss if and how women's position in society has changed over time. In addition, this reading provides an example of the biography genre and provides a model for the writing activity they are going to have to do later in this unit where they interview their own mothers and write a similar biographical piece. This

reading is followed by another factual piece entitled, *Facts: Women, education, work* which presents the reality of gender discrimination which is widespread, particularly across the third world today. These two passages lead to a class discussion of the following questions in Figure 4.6 and then an individual compare and contrast paragraph writing activity which is presented in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.6 Questions set on *Facts: Women, education and work*

1. Why do you think literate, educated women have fewer children than illiterate or poorly educated women? Give all the reasons you can think of.
2. Why do you think illiteracy is higher among women in rural, agricultural societies than it is in industrial urban societies?
3. Do government sponsored literacy programmes help women to become more powerful and influential members of society? Explain your answer.
4. How difficult is it for women? List at least three difficulties women are faced with in school and the workplace.
5. Does the future look more promising for women? Give reasons for your answer.

Figure 4.7 Paragraph: writing a comparison

Write a short paragraph in which you show how ***My Mother's life*** is similar to some of the facts given in ***Facts: Women, Education, and Work***. Try to find at least three similarities. Make sure you structure your paragraph properly!

The group discussion which follows these two passages looks at an extract from the *South African Constitution* (1996) and leads on to a class discussion about the extract and a cartoon depicting a man watching television and responding with anger to a woman who is presenting the position of women in society. This activity emphasises the social justice aspect of gender empowerment and the difficulties of achieving it in the face of male prejudice.

A formal comprehension passage follows, taken from *Nervous Conditions* (Damgaremba 1988). The passage deals with the disappointment experienced by the main character, Tambu, when she is not sent back to school because there is no money to pay the school fees, while sacrifices are made so that her brother, Nhamo, can keep going to school. The comments made by both her father and mother highlight the gender inequalities inherent in the society and household. An activity requiring the learners to write a friendly letter to Tambu offering her advice on how to solve her problem is attached to the reading passage.

The short story, *The Hajji* (Essop 1978), provides insights into a different dimension of discrimination that is uniquely South African as the main character's treatment of the white woman in the story and his muslim wife are in sharp contrast. This story deals with family and community values, religious and gender discrimination, all placed against the backdrop of apartheid, which raise particular issues regarding power and privilege. The materials include pre-reading group discussion questions which have been set to raise the learners awareness of the main issues in the story, a crossword puzzle based on the story to test the learners' reading retention, and questions which focus on short story structure but include questions on the main character's attitude and behaviour towards the two women in the story and his attitude towards women in general. These questions open the way to a more in-depth discussion of gender and power.

The unit moves on to consider three poems about women. The first is *A woman is not a potted plant* by Alice Walker (1995). This poem directly addresses the position of women in society using the extended metaphor of a potted plant. After reading the poem the class is required to discuss it in groups and with a series of questions to guide their discussion. After this discussion they have to respond individually and in writing to the following questions:

Figure 4.8 Questions set on *A woman is not a potted plant* (Walker 1995)

1. What figure of speech is used throughout this poem? How is this effective?
2. How does the poet use various parts of the plant to demonstrate woman's lack of freedom or her inferior situation?
3. How is the adjective 'trained' (line 18) particularly degrading of women's position?
4. The last verse (line 27 – 36) contrasts with the previous three as the poet sets out her ideas on woman and her status. Discuss her ideas of what a woman should be with particular reference to the phrase 'wilderness unbounded' (lines 27/28).
5. Although 'honeysuckle' and 'bee' (lines 37/38) have attractive qualities, the poet rejects them. Why does she do this?

Still focusing on gender roles, the next comprehension passage is called *My life as a househusband* (McGrady 1975*)* This passage sees a reversal of the traditional roles as the man of the house stays at home and looks after the baby while the wife goes out to work. The responses of the writers' male friends, other mothers, and the community in general to this atypical situation provide an opportunity to

discuss another aspect of gender roles.

The final activities in this unit are built around a story called *Manhood* (Wain 1979). This story deals with the expectations a father has of his teenage son and the boy's difficulty in conforming to these expectations, which are that he should be able to demonstrate his masculinity, manhood, by showing his physical ability in traditional male activities like rugby and boxing. This story lends itself to a discussion of masculinity and this is done in the pre-reading discussion questions which ask learners to respond to questions such as:

Figure 4.9 Example of pre-reading questions on the short story *Manhood* (Wain 1979)

1. The title of the story is *Manhood*. What do you think it will be about?
2. What does it mean to be a man?
3. What qualities do you think men should have? What qualities do you think women should have? List the in the table in order of importance.

MEN	WOMEN

4. What do you think of men who do not have the qualities listed above?
5. What role should father's play in the lives of their sons? How does this differ from the role they play in the lives of their daughters?

Other activities on this short story include a crossword which tests reading retention in an enjoyable way, comprehension questions, a written task which requires the learners to write a dialogue between the parents and their son, and finally, designing a book cover. This included two short writing activities: a summary and a review which had to appear on the back of the cover.

Unit 4 – Gender in the Media

The fourth unit, 'Gender and the media' explores the role of the media in reinforcing the gender roles assigned by the society, although a number of other activities were included here.

The first topic in unit 4, which is covered extensively, is advertising. It includes group discussions, logo identification, notes of the history, and general working principles of advertising including considering the target audience and the persuasive techniques advertisers use to sell their products. Learners are required to design a small advertising campaign in groups as an oral assessment task as shown in Figure 4.10 which follows:

Figure 4.10 Activity set for grade 9 -Creating an original advertisement

Imagine that you are a small team designing an advertising campaign for a new product. In your group you must:

1. Decide on the product you are going to sell. Make sure that you have an suitable name for it, and you know **exactly** what it is and what it does.
2. Decide on the target audience at which you are going to aim your advertisement.
3. Think of a catchy and original slogan.
4. Present an oral TV advertisement for the product to the class.

The final activity requires the learners to analyse an advertisement in groups. Each group of learners are given an advertisement, all of which relate to gender in one way or another, pasted onto a sheet of cardboard together with a set of questions which they are required to discuss and then write their answers in the space below the advertisement and then present to the class as a poster. The group responses to this is activity are described in detail in chapter 6.

Cartoons are the next topic covered in this unit. Cartoons use stereotypes to represent characters and events for humorous effect and they frequently focus on gender. The activities on cartoons involve group and whole class discussion which centre around both the visual impact and the text attached to cartoons.

Unit 5 – Gender in society

This unit considers gender in the broader society. It begins with the short story *The Sisters* by Pauline Smith (1925). This is a story which tells of the harsh treatment of Marta by her father who arranges her marriage to a much older man in return for his being able to draw water for his farm, and the subsequent cruel treatment she suffered which led to her death. This story raises many issues about power and status and the lengths to which men will go to save their pride and get what they want. Examples of some of the questions set on this story are in Figure 4.11 which follows:

Figure 4.11 Example of questions set on *The Sisters* by Pauline Smith (1925)

"I will **take** your daughter, Marta Magdalena, instead." (pg 121)
Consider carefully the use of the word take in the first line of the quote above.

1. What does *take* usually mean?
   a. What does Jan Redlinghuis's use of the word *take* suggest about his feelings towards Marta?
   b. What does the use of the word *take* suggest about his feelings towards Marta's father?
2. "Your father ***sold*** me his daughter for his lands. Let him now look to his lands and leave me his daughter." (pg 124)
   a. What does this quote suggest about the nature of the marriage?
   b. About Jan Redlinghuis's character?
   c. About Marta's father?

The unit goes on to consider denotation and connotation and slang along with the part it plays in society and specifically in the demeaning of women. After a discussion on the use of slang, learners were required to fill in an activity sheet which required them to write down the slang names they know which are used for girls and the slang names they know which are used for boys and then indicate next to each slang name whether it has positive or negative connotations. They were then required to answer the questions in Figure 4.12:

Figure 4.12 Questions to be addressed in the activity on slang

1. Which group has the most slang names?
2. Do most of them have positive or negative connotations?
3. Did you find the same number of words for males and females?
4. Why do you think this is the case?

The next activity involves group photography and writing. The learners were separated into groups along gender lines – three groups of boys and three groups of girls. Each group was given a disposable camera and asked to work as a group on the themes 'Feeling safe', 'Feeling Unsafe' and 'Feeling weak' and 'Feeling strong'. When the photos had been developed the group tasks included the making of a poster explaining their photographs, and a small booklet with the remaining pictures, captioned with an explanation or story. The reason for separating the class into gender specific groups is because the conception of feeling safe/unsafe and weak/strong expressed by girls may be very different to that conceived of by boys. Furthermore, boys tend to dominate group activities and it was felt that if the groups are mixed the girls would be silenced (Howe 1996).

The final activity is writing an investigative report. Detailed notes on how to approach an investigative report were provided and the genre and style discussed in detail, including a lesson on the purpose and use of the passive voice in reports along with a worksheet. Six different report topics all of which related to some area of gender were given to the groups. Part of the task involved conducting research such as questionnaires, interviews or examination of data, for example, text books or the television sports programme, in order to find the information necessary to write the report.

The topics given to each group to write a report on were: gender in the textbooks they have at their disposal at school; gender in South African sport; gender in advertising; gender in the Sherwood High School community; gender violence experienced by girls in Sherwood High School; and finally, gender in popular music listened to by learners at Sherwood High School. This final topic particularly relates to the depiction of women in rap music. Some information in the form of an article or reading was offered as a starting point. After the report was completed the learners were required to write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper drawing attention to the findings of their investigative report.

In addition to the material described above, other material was used, but this was not part of the intervention and dealt with more technical issues considered important by the English teachers at the school, an example of this is punctuation.

While the content of the texts used in this intervention followed the themes listed above, another criteria was that the text must accessible to adolescent learners in grade 9, so each passage was tested to determine its age-suitability. This was done using a reading clarity test referred to as the FOG index (Gunning 1952; Adey and Andrew 2000) which is explained below.

4.3.2 Reading clarity (Gunning FOG Index 1952)

All the texts in the material used in the intervention were tested using a reading

clarity index to ensure their suitability. The reading clarity or FOG index (Gunning 1952) was developed by Robert Gunning, an American businessman, although it has been adapted over the years. He aimed to find an objective method of estimating the level of difficulty of a reading text. Research revealed that teachers' assessment of the readability levels of texts is unreliable (Harrison 1977, 65). In order to assist teachers a number of readability or clarity formulas are available. According to Harrison (1977), "readability formulas offer, in exchange for some rather tedious arithmetic and word counting, an objective estimate of text difficulty" (Harrison 1977, 66). The two most common variables used in determining the level of difficulty of a text are sentence length and word length. The longer the sentence, the more subordinate clauses it contains causing it to become more linguistically intricate and consequently more difficult to read and comprehend. Vocabulary difficulty can be determined by the length of the word measured in terms of the number of syllables it contains (Harrison 1977).

In order to establish that the readings set were at the right level to suit a grade 9 learners, all the readings, both longer and shorter, were tested using a clarity or FOG index. There are a number of different clarity indexes available but the one chosen came from Adey and Andrew (2000, 169). This index uses the average number of sentences in a given passage to work out the average sentence length, and the number of words of over 3 syllables in the same passage. A mathematical formula is applied to these and the resulting FOG index indicates the grade suitability of the text. The mathematical formula used can be seen in appendix B, pg. 28.

Examples of the clarity or FOG index of some of the reading passages used in the intervention can be seen in Figure 4.13 below:

Figure 4.13 Examples of FOG Index (Gunning 1952) of selected passages

Text	No of Words (A)	No of sentences (B)	No of words more than 2 syllables	FOG INDEX	Grade level
Bridget Jones	550	43	16	6.28	6 - 7
Anne Frank	779	53	34	7.63	7 - 8
St Valentines	567	49	15	5.69	5 - 6
Birthday Song	380	29	11	6.40	6 - 7

4.3.3 Factors affecting the materials used in the classroom intervention

There are a number of factors which need to be considered which might affect the successful implementation of a critical literacy intervention such as the one being reported on here. These will be discussed below.

Stevens and Bean (2007) argue that in order to be successful a critical literacy approach needs to be implemented in all areas of the subject syllabus and, indeed, the whole curriculum, however, this is not always possible. In the first place it involves a 'buy in' from all the teachers in the school which, given the conservative culture of the research school, is unlikely. Furthermore, in the English discipline, certain more technical areas of language do not lend themselves to a critical literacy approach although throughout the intervention, the content of all the material provided related to gender issues.

The implementation of critical literacy is constrained by the demands of the English curriculum, as viewed by the class teacher who is ultimately responsible for the progress of the learners. Luke and Freebody (1997) acknowledge this as a factor which has to be taken account of when dealing with schools. They state that "what might count as critical literacy in schools and classrooms is, of course, contingent on the national, local and regional politics of the curriculum- the enabling historical conditions that generate change in educational ideologies and practices" (Luke and Freebody 1997, 15). While the *Curriculum 2005* articulates a critical stance, the teacher's view of what is important and needs to be covered during English lessons takes precedence over the research as she is ultimately responsible for the learners' progress. Therefore not all the material used had critical literacy as its primary focus although attempts were made to make even the most mechanistic activities relevant by incorporating material which focused on some issue related to gender or gender empowerment.

4.4 Reflections on the elements of a classroom based critical literacy intervention

Outcomes Based Education methodology and *Curriculum 2005* was used in the development of the material. As the curriculum specifically redefines the role a teacher should play in the classroom, as indicated in Chapter 2, the role of 'teacher' was purposefully adjusted to be that of 'facilitator'. Furthermore, activities were specifically designed so that learning could be accomplished by means of co-operative group work. However, this was not always possible. Learners were unused to the autonomy OBE gave them as it was contrary to the methods employed by other teachers at the school who, despite the introduction of OBE, continued using the traditional 'teacher-tell' method. The learners therefore lacked confidence and required a high degree of direction and assistance in order to do even the simplest of tasks in groups. Thus much of the material was approached using whole class discussion.

The final point relates to the school policy that all the learners in a grade should use the same materials, cover the same content and write the same tests and examinations. Because of this, and the fact that half of the grade 9 English classes experienced a number of teacher changes and none of them were interested in participating in the research or implementing critical literacy in their classrooms, the material had to be adapted so it was acceptable to both teachers and suitable for use across the grade. This was addressed by focusing more closely on critical literacy during the whole class discussion part of the lesson and through oral questioning thus using the material in a critical way.

As was indicated at the outset of this chapter, data was not only collected during the classroom intervention. Interviews were conducted, field notes written up daily, as well as quantitative research tools in the form of questionnaires and a reading test, was also used. These instruments as well as the research methodology employed will be described in the following chapter.

Chapter 5 A Research Methodology for a Critical Literacy Intervention

Research is driven by the human need to know – to discover answers to questions we might have about ourselves, our world, and others.

(Spata 2003, 3-4)

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an outline of the research framework and time lines of this project, indicating the phases that the critical literacy intervention followed. In addition, it described and gave examples of the materials and activities developed and used in the CLI.

As has been stated earlier, this research follows a critical research paradigm as it aims to empower and transform learners by changing their perceptions and attitudes towards gender and language.

This chapter will consider carefully the approach and methodology followed in the study. It will provide information about the data sources, the data collection and the analyses, as well as the additional research instruments implemented in order to answer the research questions.

5.2 Research approach and methodology

The CLI described in this thesis follows an action research approach and a case study framework. Action research is practical and directly related to a particular situation, it is adaptable and flexible and it "can provide an orderly framework for problem solving and new developments that is superior to fragmentary approaches" (Wallat *et al*, 1981, 109). Furthermore, action research aims to find solutions to problems teachers experience in the school and classroom (Bertram 2003) and to empower both teachers and learners. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison, "case studies investigate and report the complex dynamic and

unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance" (2000, 181). They are concerned with describing in detail events which are relevant to the case which is being studied.

The focus of this research is an in-depth investigation with a group of grade 9 learners in order to describe and evaluate if, and in what way, their perceptions and attitudes towards gender change after being exposed to a classroom intervention using a critical literacy approach focusing on gender issues in their English classes over the period of three school terms. The interventionist, participatory and empowerment aspects of the research are characteristic of action research, while in-depth collection of data from a wide range of both qualitative and quantitative sources and its holistic treatment of phenomena are characteristic of case studies.

The research design focuses on finding answers to the research questions which are as follows:

- What are the perceptions and attitudes of learners in a co-educational high school towards learners of different gender?
- How do these perceptions and attitudes manifest themselves in the behaviour of the learners towards each other?
- In what way does a critical literacy intervention impact on the perceptions and attitudes of the boys and girls in the research class towards gender?
- What factors affect the successful implementation of a critical literacy intervention?

A pragmatic approach and a mixed method research design have been selected as these offer the most effective means of answering the questions which underpin this study.

According to Burke, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, a pragmatic approach advocates,

> a needs-based or contingency approach to research method and concept selection … it offers a practical and outcome-orientated method of

> inquiry that is based on action and leads, iteratively, to further action and the elimination of doubt; and it offers a method for selecting methodological mixes that can help researchers answer many of their research questions.
>
> (Burke, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, 17)

Put more simply, a pragmatic approach argues for flexibility in the choice of research methods and instruments. In other words, it allows one to "choose the combination or mixture of methods and procedures that works best for answering your research questions" (Burke, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, 17). Furthermore, a pragmatic approach is more flexible because it allows for changes in the design as the research process progresses. Thus additional research instruments can be added should they be deemed important in answering the research questions. In this study, while the research questions listed above influenced the choice of data collection methods initially, as further questions arose in the course of the research, additional research instruments were added. In this way the research design is flexible and focused on answering the research questions posed at the start of the project.

According Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007), mixed research methods focus on the collection, analysis and mixing of both qualitative and quantitative research data into a single study. The rationale for using this methodology being that it provides a means of better understanding and explaining the research results than either method can on its own.

Both qualitative and quantitative research has strengths and weaknesses. Quantitative research gives breadth to a project as it facilitates the gathering of information surveyed from a large range of samples and allows the identification of generalisable trends. Data collection is relatively quick as the same instrument is applied to all the subjects, and it generates precise numerical data which can be analysed using statistical software which can validate and identify key trends in the data. On the other hand, the results may be too general to apply to specific situations and the quantity of data may cause the researcher to miss significant phenomena (Burke, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Qualitative research allows for in-depth examination (Bertram 2003) and is used to explore and

describe how and why certain phenomena occur. It is useful for studying a limited number of cases and describing complex phenomena "as they are situated and embedded in local contexts" (Burke, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, 20). Data is collected in naturalistic settings and tends to be flexible as the researcher is able to respond to changes that occur during the course of the research and can therefore shift the focus of the study to accommodate this. The weakness of qualitative research is that because of the limited sample size it may not be possible to generalize to other subjects or settings. For the same reason it is also more difficult to test hypotheses or make predictions. In addition, data collection and analysis is time consuming and the results can be influenced by the personal biases of the researcher.

Mixed methods research allows the use of multiple research instruments, both quantitative and qualitative, in order to seek answers to research questions. According to Burke, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, mixed methods research,

> is inclusive, pluralistic, and complementary, and it suggests that researchers take an eclectic approach to method selection and the thinking about and conduct of research.
>
> (2004, 17)

It is also said to be more creative and less limiting as the researcher follows the research question in order to find the answer and is not constrained by the use of a single methodology. In addition it can address a broader range of research questions because the researcher is able to use a multiplicity of methods. Mixed methods can provide insights that the use of a single method might have missed and increase the generalizability of the data, leading to a more complete knowledge and understanding.

There are a number of different ways that mixed methods research can be designed and the choice is governed by the purpose which is articulated in the research questions. It routinely involves a cyclical, recursive and interactional process. In the research reported in this thesis it is used for triangulation, that is the verifying and corroborating of results from two different methods testing the same phenomenon, and for complementarity, that is, "seeking elaboration, enhancement, illustration and clarification" (Burke, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, 22) of the results from one method with that of another. The quantitative

Gapadol reading test was administered for the purposes of triangulation, that is, to verify and corroborate the findings in terms of reading of the qualitative intervention, while the reading questionnaire sought complementarity, as its purpose was to enhance and clarify those findings in order to explain them. The gender questionnaire sought to verify and corroborate whether the critical literacy intervention had achieved its purpose, which was to change gender attitudes and perceptions.

Before discussing in detail the research instruments which were utilized in this research, it is important to give a brief outline of the site at which the research was undertaken.

5.3 The research site – Sherwood High School

According Anderson and Irvine (1993), critical literacy as an ideology is an approach which seeks to transform and emancipate. Schools can be agents of change, simply by their culture and ethos, therefore the research site is an important aspect of the project.

This research was conducted during the 2005 school year in a co-educational state school in the Durban area which I have called Sherwood High School. Although it is now controlled by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and open to learners of all races, during apartheid, the school was under the control of the House of Representatives, that is, it was exclusively for the use of people classified 'Coloured' and is located in a previously 'Coloured' residential area. With the opening of schools to all race groups there has been considerable change in the learner demographics. Now it is a multiracial and multicultural school with a pupil population drawn from across the city.

The location of the research school close to a major motorway allows easy access to black learners who reside in the townships of Durban, while a number of learners, who live in a nearby informal settlement, walk to the school. Thus,

although there are still some 'Coloured' children from the surrounding community attending the school, it now has a majority of African learners. The racial breakdown of the learners is not available because the school does not keep these statistics. However, observation and the fact that over two thirds, that is 161 out of 229, of the learners' in grade 9 chose isiZulu as their choice of first additional language provides some indication.

The school, although not categorized by the education authorities as a disadvantaged one, is clearly under resourced. The fees are set at R850.00 per year and approximately 40% of the parents pay them. No text books or reading texts were issued to grade 9 in English during the year. Although this is congruent with the philosophy underpinning Curriculum 2005 which discourages the use of textbooks in favour of teachers developing their own resources, it is unusual for a school of this kind not to issue a reading book or fiction text for the purposes of literature study.

The school has little in the way of facilities. There is no library or computer room for the learners. All classroom material has to be duplicated and the children are required to provide a quire of blank paper for this purpose at the beginning of the year. However, a number of learners fail to bring paper. When the paper runs out, no duplicating is done until the learners bring paper. This means that for fairly long periods of time there is no regular supply of teaching and learning material. The material used in this research was copied outside of the school and provided by the researcher.

The school has 850 learners on the role during 2005. This is made up of 390 boys and 460 girls. The staff of the school is made up of 29 educators, including the principal, 2 of whom are paid by the governing body of the school.

The culture of the school can be described as conservative with few of the teachers embracing the changes required by the introduction of *Curriculum 2005*. The principal, management team and the teachers, with the exception of the isiZulu teacher, are from the previously designated 'Coloured' race group and

many of them have been teaching at Sherwood High School for a number of years. Although *Curriculum 2005* has been in place for eight years and the learners are supposed to be taught using the OBE approach, with a focus on group work, this is not happening. A 'walk about' at the school revealed that in every classroom the desks and chairs were arranged in rows facing the chalkboard, with the notable exception of the one in which the research was being undertaken. Furthermore, during my initial interview with the principal she indicated that her staff had not embraced the change to Outcomes Based Education (Interview with Principal, see appendix C, pg. 66).

The research conducted by Prinsloo and Janks (2002) which was discussed in the previous chapter, reported that the home language curriculum offered to Afrikaans, isiZulu and other indigenous language groupings under apartheid, was conservative, discouraging critical engagement and personal responses. While Prinsloo did not examine the language curriculum in place in the 'Coloured' schooling system during apartheid, it is safe to assume that it was probably more closely aligned to the Afrikaans language curriculum than the English. This assumption is made because the language and geographical distribution of the previously designated 'Coloured' community is greater in the more conservative areas of South Africa, that is the Western and Northern Cape, where many members of the community are bilingual or Afrikaans home language speakers (UNESCO 2000). Furthermore, the Department of Education, House of Representatives, which administered 'Coloured' education during apartheid was situated in Cape Town, as that is where the majority of the 'Coloured' community reside. As the teachers at this school are products of the racially segregated 'Coloured' Department of Education in place during the previous apartheid government, it can be deduced that they, too, may be resistant to critical literacy because their education did not promote questioning or critical thinking, as Prinsloo discovered among her students. It is therefore unlikely that they would promote questioning and critical thinking in their own classrooms as research has found that teachers tend to teach the way they themselves were taught (Britzman, 1991; Lortie, 1975).

This school was carefully selected as it is not considered an elite school nor is it disadvantaged in the context of South African public education. The provincial Department of Education rank it as advantaged because it is located in an urban setting, has easy access via a tarred road, and reasonable buildings with running water and electricity. It can therefore be considered broadly representative of an urban South African school. It was purposively decided by the researcher that this research would be more appropriate if conducted at a site where learners would not be considered to be part of an elite and powerful social group.

5.3.1 The research sample - Grade 9A Group

The choice of the 2005 grade 9 cohort was purposive as it was the only grade which experienced Curriculum 2005 throughout their General Education and Training (GET) phase, that is, from grade 1 to grade 9.

The research class was grade 9A. The 'A' stood for Afrikaans as the learners in that group had all elected to take Afrikaans as first additional language. In addition, while some of them can speak an African language, they have all attended English speaking schools since grade 1 and perceive English to be their primary language.

An additional advantage attached to using this group is that because relatively few learners have chosen Afrikaans as their first additional language the two Afrikaans classes are relatively small in comparison to those taking isiZulu first additional language where the four classes are in excess of 40 learners. At the beginning of the year there were 34 learners in grade 9A, 16 girls and 18 boys. At the end of the first term one girl and one boy did not return to school.

The initial research plan anticipated that the researcher would observe the English teacher using the critical literacy material. However, the teacher was unwilling to have her lessons observed, so the researcher became the grade 9A English teacher and presented all the lessons and assessed their work during the period of the intervention.

It needs to be noted at the outset that this research did not collect any data from internet or mobile phone sources or touch on the new technology aspects of critical literacy as few learners at the school have access to these[10].

The sections which follow will provide details of the data instruments, sources, collection, methods and analysis.

5.4 Data sources, collection and analysis

As has already been indicated earlier, both qualitative and quantitative data was collected in this study. An explanation of the different research instruments, how they were used and what each entailed as well as some of the advantages and limitations will follow, starting with the qualitative research.

5.4.1 Qualitative research

The qualitative data comes from two main sources: the classroom intervention which was described in detail in the previous chapter, and the interviews which were conducted with the learners, teacher and school principal.

The critical literacy intervention generated a large quantity and variety of qualitative data. Lessons were audio-taped and those which were relevant transcribed. The learners written responses to lesson activities, tests and examinations have been collected and examined, along with the assessments, rubrics and mark lists. Finally, observations and field notes were written daily. Each of these will be discussed below.

[10] None of the learners in the research class has a computer at home or access to one. The school has one computer which is used for school business. There were no public computers at the local library when this study was undertaken and no internet café in the vicinity of the school. Only two learners had mobile phones and one of the phones was stolen early in the school year and not replaced. The school rules prohibit learners from bringing mobile phones to school.

5.4.1.1 Audio-taped lesson interactions

During the critical literacy intervention lessons and group work activities were audio-taped. These were then examined carefully and selected lessons and parts of lessons were transcribed and analysed. An example from an audio-taped lesson is provided in Figure 5.1 below,

Figure 5.1 Extract from lesson on slang (27/07/05)

Teacher:	Now listen. Do you think it is a nice compliment to be called a 'handle'?
Learners:	(In general chorus) No Miss.
Teacher:	To call a girl a 'handle' is an insult. So that has a connotation that is negative.

Using audio-taped and transcribed lessons has both advantages and disadvantages. Cohen, Manion and Morrison argue that in the transcription there "is the potential for massive data loss, distortion and the reduction of complexity" (2000, 281). This happens because the particular nuances of a social encounter are lost in transcription, such as tone of voice, speed of the speech and other events that are taking place at the same time. Audio-taping in a classroom context carries with it other challenges, as audibility cannot be guaranteed and it has the potential to generate large quantities of transcribed data, not all of which is relevant to the research being undertaken. It is for this reason that selected transcriptions of relevant material rather than entire lessons have been transcribed. However, the advantage of using transcriptions is that a verbatim account is available and this can be examined and analysed.

In this research audio-taped data is used together with data collected from other sources in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the effect of the critical literacy classroom intervention on the learners' understanding of social injustice with regard to gender.

5.4.1.2 Written responses to classroom activities

Written tasks undertaken by the grade 9A learners during the course of the intervention were copied and later examined in order to establish whether the learners were able to apply the critical literacy skills which were being focused on during the lessons to their written responses to tasks. This written work forms a

corpus of documentary data. This written material has been used, together with data collected from other sources to validate any claims made.

Data in the form of written records are useful in that they are low cost, factual and always available. However, they may also be "heavily inferential, difficult to interpret, and may contain elements whose relevance is questionable" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, 147). In the case of this research they are important in gauging to what extent the learners are able to express what they are thinking in written form. It is also the primary assessment tool as the portfolio of written work determines whether the learners have reached the required level of competence in English.

5.4.1.3 Observations and field notes

Participant observation was undertaken as the researcher became the English teacher of the class. A participant observer is a researcher who takes on an insider role in the research being conducted. According to Bertram (2004), the participant observer

> joins the everyday routines of those she wishes to study. The researcher will usually stay in the situation for a long time, in order to reduce the effect of her presence.
>
> (Bertram 2004, 95).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison state that there are degrees of participant observation from what they term a "complete participant", where the researcher becomes part of the group and conducts covert research, to a "participant-as-observer" where the observer is known to the group as a researcher and usually "has less extensive contact with the group" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, 310). In this project, there are elements of both, as the researcher is part of the group but the group knows they are being researched, although over time she was just accepted as their English teacher. The advantage of being a participant observer is that the researcher does not have to rely upon the opinions or perceptions of others and can observe objectively what is happening. On the other hand, as the researcher is so closely involved in the situation misunderstandings can happen. It is impossible to observe everything that is taking place at a given time, and, additionally, bias is inevitable as which events are recorded and how

they are recorded is the subjective choice of the observer.

Observation data is collected in the form of field notes. These are descriptive accounts of what has been observed and can be expressed in the form of short fragments or detailed narratives of key observations.

Field notes were written up after each lesson. It is impossible to follow a detailed, formal observation schedule while engaging in teaching, so these are subjective accounts of what took place during the lesson and include details of responses, interpersonal dynamics which operate during the lesson, problems which occur and successes which are observed. These are extensive accounts and therefore only key areas which are the subject of discussion have been transcribed in appendix B (see pg. 51 – 56). An example from the field notes can be seen in Figure 5.2 below:

Figure 5.2 Example taken from field notes 26/01/2005

> I started with some pre-reading discussion about diaries and diary entries and moved on to talk about relationships. The boys think keeping a diary is a 'girl thing' and something that boys don't do. I asked them why they thought this but was met only with laughter. The girls said nothing.
> (03/02/2005)

Because of the subjective nature of observations and field notes it is important that as far as possible this data is verified through the use of other data sources, as has been done in this project. A discussion of the final qualitative tool used in this research, interviews, follows.

5.4.1.4 Interviews

An interview can be described as a structured conversation during which one person, the interviewer, solicits particular information from another person, the interviewee or interviewees. Interviews are useful tools for finding out what a person knows, understands and thinks as well as their attitudes, beliefs and preferences (Bertram 2003). The potential for misunderstanding is minimised as the interviewer is present and can clarify or explain questions. In addition, the interviewer can request clarification or add questions in order to elicit further information. In general the verbal responses given in interviews are fuller and

more detailed than written responses and thus they are a useful tool to collect in depth information from a small sample. On the other hand, because interviews are closely related to every day life, it is impossible to control every aspect of the interaction. In addition, they can be influenced in a variety of ways. Power differentials between the interviewer and the respondent may influence the answers as the respondent may seek to impress the interviewer, limit the type of information that is provided, or avoid certain questions. However if mutual trust between interviewer and respondent is established then interviews are a very useful way to collect textual, descriptive data (Bertram 2003, Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000).

Four structured interviews were conducted during the course of this research. In each case a formal interview schedule was prepared beforehand to guide the interaction. However, while the questions are structured, they allow for open-ended, unstructured responses, as can be seen from the extract from the interview schedule in Figure 5.3, which was used when interviewing the principal of Sherwood High School:

Figure 5.3 Extract from interview schedule used when interviewing the school principal

4	Are any issues surrounding gender addressed explicitly in the school curriculum? If so, what specific learning area or subject deals with this?
1.	Have you, or the school management team, made any overt attempts at engaging learners on issues surrounding gender, sexual harassment, sexual violence etc.

After transcription the interviews were examined, selected parts analysed and interpreted in order to detect patterns and themes which recur or support other data sources.

Four structured interviews were conducted, one with the school principal, another with the grade 9A the English teacher, and two with focus groups of grade 9A learners, one made up of 5 girls, and the other of 5 boys.

The interview with the school principal was done in order to establish the demographic profile and culture of the school as expressed by the head of the institution. The focus of the research, critical literacy, gender and the school

curriculum, was discussed in order to discover the principal's beliefs about these issues. Figure 5.4 provides an example taken from that interview.

Figure 5.4 Example taken from interview with the principal of Sherwood High School

Interviewer: Do you think that OBE has been a good idea?
Principal: Actually no. I don't think so. For instance, I don't think that it prepares our children for grade 11/12 adequately. Our highest training is up to grade 10. Of course, OBE is not really used here. And our children come out knowing very little. Most of them cannot read, or read with insight anyway, they are innumerate, the maths is just absolutely bad. Yet they are not asked to memorize, they are not asked to memorize anything, they are not asked to memorize or learn facts so they know very little fact about anything. They are just too used to worksheets and where they are given all the answers and just asked to match column A with column B. there's just no memory work. I don't think that they are even taught to be analytical.

(Interview pg 2 lines 82 – 92 19/05/2005)

The interview with the grade 9A English teacher was conducted at the end of the year in order to establish the teacher's perceptions of the classroom intervention and whether she believed that it had been effective in its aim, which was to use critical literacy as a means of changing the gender perceptions and attitudes and attitudes of the learners in grade 9A. An example of the kind of information this elicited is shown in Figure 5.5 below,

Figure 5.5 Example taken from interview with the grade 9A English teacher

Interviewer: In what way do you think this impacts on the way that males and female learners interact with each other at school in a co-educational situation? How do you think they interact?
Mrs Foster: Well, at this school, they seem to interact very well with each other although I do find there's an extreme over-familiarity with the boys in their attitude and reactions towards the girls. We have many incidents of - sometimes I stand outside my classroom, I've got to chastise somebody because a boy is touching a girl where she shouldn't be touched.

(Interview pg 1 lines 7 – 14 01/12/2005)

Focus group interviews with grade 9A girls and boys were held on the second day of term in the year following the intervention, therefore the learners had just started grade 10 when the interviews were conducted. The 5 girls and 5 boys who had been in grade 9A the previous year were interviewed in two separate groups. The reason for separating the genders is because in mixed gender groupings boys tend to dominate the discussion (Sadker and Sadker 1985; Delamont 1990, Swann and Graddol 1994, Howe 1997, Wood 2001). For this reason it was felt that the girls would be less inhibited and more forthcoming if they were interviewed separately from the boys.

Focus group interviews were selected as according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), they are less intimidating than individual interviews and in the group situation learners will often challenge and extend the ideas of other group members generating a richer, wider range of responses. This can be seen in the example below, Figure 5.6, taken from the focus group interview with the girls:

Figure 5.6 Extract from focus group interview with girls who were in grade 9A

Interviewer: Now when you say other people, do you mean the boys or other people in the school?
…….
Norma: Miss, it's like you're acting too posh if you don't talk to them and stuff like that.
Natasha: And when you do so then they call you names, you're acting so ...(inaudible) or something of that sort. So, now you never know how to act with them.
Patti: It's like when you're intelligent and then you don't talk to other children because they may think oh you're stuck up.
Norma: You're too intelligent to speak to them or something like that.
(Interview pg. 5 lines 204 – 211 19/01/2006)

The section which follows discusses the quantitative methods employed in this research. These were used to triangulate and complement the qualitative data collected and to assess whether any of the findings could be generalized to a larger sample.

5.4.2 Quantitative Methods

Quantitative methods were used in order to elicit information from all the learners in grade 9 in the conducting of two research instruments: the gender survey, the reading survey, and approximately half of the grade 9 group with respect to the Gapadol reading test, although only the grade 9A data will be discussed in this thesis. Surveys are a useful method of collecting large-scale data quickly and efficiently. They can target the gathering of specific information to particular groups and can generate data which "enable generalizations to be made about given factors or variables" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, 171). The purpose for conducting the questionnaires and the reading test was in order to triangulate, complement and explain data collected by the qualitative instruments mentioned in the previous section. These quantitative instruments will be discussed below.

5.4.2.1 Gender survey

The critical literacy intervention aimed at changing the views of the grade 9A learners towards gender. The gender survey (see appendix D, pg. 74 – 78) was conducted in order to answer the research questions: What are the perceptions and attitudes of learners in a co-educational high school towards learners of different gender? and, In what way does a critical literacy intervention impact on the perceptions and attitudes of the boys and girls in the research class towards gender? Thus the quantitative questionnaire was designed to elicit the learners' views on gender prior to the intervention taking place and to see whether these views had changed after the intervention. It was therefore administered twice, first at the beginning of the intervention and then a year later at the beginning of the following school year. While the results of grade 9A are of particular interest, as has been indicated previously, the whole group was surveyed on both occasions.

The questionnaire was made up of 96 items (see appendix D, pg. 74 - 78). The first 6 elicited personal information which facilitated categorization in terms of demographics and social background. The learners indicated their responses to the remaining 90 questions on a Multiple Choice Question sheet (see appendix D, pg. 78) so that the responses could be scanned and captured quickly and accurately using the [11]Likert scale that gave them a choice of five response options: A - Strongly Agree, B - Agree, C - Neither Agree nor Disagree, D - Disagree, E - Strongly Disagree. Examples of some of the statements they are required to respond to are indicated in Figure 5.7 which follows:

Figure 5.7 Example of questionnaire statements

8	Men should invite women on dates
13	Men and women should not share the housework
16	Women are not suited to taking leadership roles at work
17	Men should take the lead in a relationship
19	Boys are more likely to become bosses when they grow up

[11] 'The Likert scale (Likert (1932)) asks individuals to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether they 'strongly agree' (SA), 'agree' (A), are undecided (U), 'Disagree' (D) and 'Strongly Disagree' (SD) with each statement. 'Strongly Agree' may be assigned a weight of 5 points, while 'Strongly Disagree' may get a score of 1. Thus, in an attitude questionnaire, for example, favourable attitudes are reflected in higher scores' (Seliger and Shohamy, 1990).

The responses were captured from the computer answer sheets by means of a Multiple Choice Scanner, transferred into a spreadsheet and then into a specialist statistics programme (SPSS) for analysis. Statistical analysis facilitates the reduction of large scale data into a manageable form so that tests can be conducted and conclusions can be drawn from it (Bertram 2003). In this way it allows researchers to "organize and summarise their data, and to interpret and generalize their findings" (Spata 2003, 82). Following data capture and cleaning, statistical tests can be applied.

The data was analysed using inferential statistics. These are tests which determine whether data collected from a sample is generalisable to the population. They are used in hypothesis testing, which means that they allow a researcher to test whether the differences observed between a set of responses are due to the effects of an independent variable, in this case gender.

The following statistical tests were applied to the data: Cronbach's Alpha, a test which measures internal consistency and reliability, and Pearsons correlation coefficient which when applied to pairs of items tests whether a similar idea is measured and whether the responses are consistent. These will be explained in further detail when the results are reported in chapter 8 of this thesis.

5.4.2.2 The Gapadol reading test

A reading test was not part of the initial research plan, but confronted by the weak reading ability of the learners, who appeared unable to read effectively either silently or aloud, it was decided to conduct a test in order to establish the reading standard they had attained. The Gapadol reading test (see appendix E, pg. 79 – 94) is a commercially available standardised test. It was recommended by a local remedial school who had found it a reliable indicator of reading proficiency. It was conducted twice in 2005, once in the 2nd term (12/05/2005) and a second time, at the end of the intervention with grade 9A (25/10/2005).

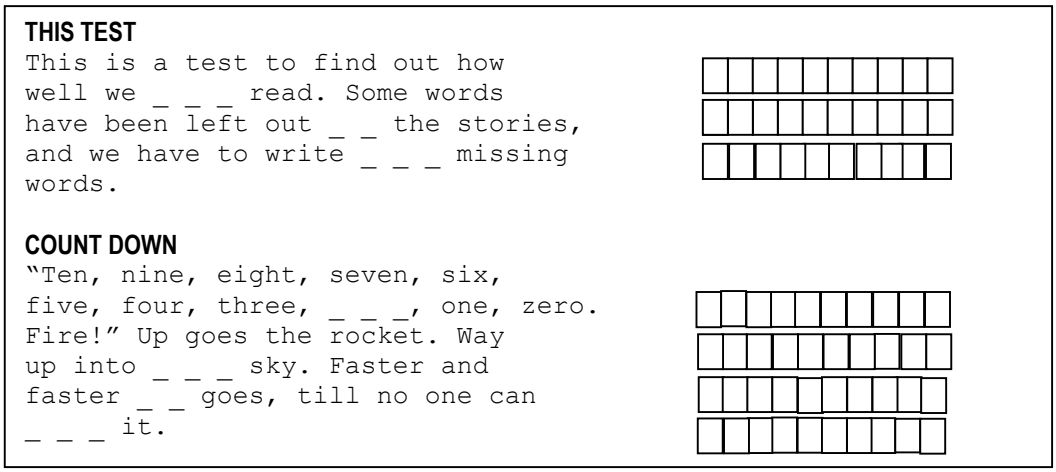
The Gapadol Test (see appendix E, pg. 79 - 94) was devised in Australia in the early 1970's. It is designed for adolescent readers and assesses reading up to age 16 years 11 months, whereas most other available tests only test learners up to 12

years old or the end of primary school. It is specifically intended for adolescents who have a range of reading levels (Mcleod and Anderson 1973). It is a test of power rather than speed, so no conclusions can be made about reading speed from the results. The test comes in two parallel but alternative versions, each packaged in booklet form labelled Form G and Form Y so that comparisons can be made or large groups tested together using alternative forms to prevent the possibility of copying. (see appendix E, pg. 79 - 94). Each test consists of six passages, the longest being 146 and the shortest 97 words in length. The passages range in terms of sentence length, vocabulary complexity, content and genre. They are cloze procedure tests because according to McLeod and Anderson (1973), cloze procedure techniques match the normal reading process more closely than conventional reading tests. They argue that by the time learners reach adolescence

> they have assimilated the contrastive patterns of auditory and visual signals to an extent such that their decoding of grammatical and syntactic structure is largely automatic and below the level of conscious response.
>
> (McLeod and Anderson 1970, 117)

Furthermore, they argue that reading is a guessing game fuelled by the readers underlying memory store which is programmed with the "transitional probabilities of the particular individual" (1973, 117). This memory store is used when filling in the gaps in a cloze procedure test. Although this test is an old one having been first published in 1972, cloze procedure tests are still considered a reliable measure of reading proficiency. According the Matjila and Pretorius, cloze procedures "indicate the extent to which a reader is able to follow the sense of a text. In particular, it assesses a reader's use of language context as a strategy for understanding what is read" (2004, 8-9). An example of the Gapadol reading test can be seen in Figure 5.8,

Figure 5.8 Example taken from the Gapadol reading test



There are many advantages to using a standardized reading test. The main advantage being that because these tests have been professionally produced, "the items in the test will have been extensively trialed, analyzed and revised in the light of pupil responses" (Teale and Rowley 1984, 12). Furthermore, it will have been subject to careful statistical testing in order to confirm its validity and reliability.

Standardized reading tests have different purposes. Some are diagnostic and serve to inform remediation techniques or the resources to be used in teaching reading. Others test different reading skills, for example, reading comprehension, vocabulary, word recognition and fluency, while still others test the subject's strengths and weaknesses in reading. In this case the purpose was assessment of reading age, so a slightly adapted version of the Gapadol reading test (McLeod and Anderson 1970) was selected. The adaptations involved changing imperial measures which are not used in South Africa to metric measures with which the learners are familiar.

Reading tests, while widely used, are subject to criticism on a number of counts. Critics argue that the narrowness of focus makes them largely unreliable in making judgments about reading development as they cannot take into account all the cognitive processes and strategies that learners use when they read. Furthermore, they are not authentic as they focus on specific aspects of reading. They assert that individual assessment and observation is more effective as it is

then possible to isolate specific problem areas and address them (Braunger and Lewis 1998). The Gapadol test is criticized firstly, because it tests reading comprehension only; secondly, because the results are expressed in terms of reading age rather than percentile norms which some experts consider more reliable; thirdly, because it is a cloze procedure test it gives no indication of what reading strategies learners lack that might have caused them to score badly; and finally, because the variation in difficulty between the passages may cause the learner to become frustrated (Teale and Rowley 1984).

The reading test was administered to three grade 9 classes, grades A, C and E in the course of 2005. As with any large scale survey, using a larger number of respondents is preferable so trends in the results can be identified. Each learner was given a booklet and they had to write the missing word in the blocks provided (see Figure 5.8). They had 45 minutes in which to complete the test.

A second test was administered to grade 9A approximately 6 months after the first (25/10/2005) in order to establish if there was any discernable change in the results. Learners responded to the alternative test, that is, if they answered Form G in the first round of testing they now answered Form Y and *vice versa.*

The tests were marked according to the marking memorandum provided and the marks translated according to the table provided into reading age (see appendix E, pg. 98 – 99).

5.4.2.3 Reading Questionnaire

A reading questionnaire (see appendix F, pg. 100 – 102) which investigated the learners reading history and elicited responses about their reading interest and preferences was administered with all the grade 9 learners. It was conducted after the reading test discussed above had been administered and the results captured.

As has been discussed in both Chapters 2 and 3, the ability to read is important, not only in the development of critical literacy skills, but also succeeding academically in at school (Freire 1970, Macedo and Freire 1987, Hall 1998, Matjila and Pretorius 2004). Furthermore, it is widely accepted that

comprehension and critical engagement with texts cannot occur until decoding skills have developed sufficiently (Hall 1998; Pretorius 2000; Matjila and Pretorius 2004). There is a large body of research which supports the view that literacy is developed in the home and that the school builds on those early literacy experiences (Brice Heath 1983, Delpit 1988, Pretorius 2000, Matjila and Pretorius 2004, Land, 2008). In addition, learners fail to learn to read effectively because their home environment does not support the literacy practices of schools. According to Land: "The affective quality and frequency of family reading and writing activities is a dependable predictor of children's future academic performance" (2008,55), while Matjila and Pretorius state

> that if children come from homes with few or no books, if they live in communities where reading for pleasure is not highly valued … then their reading skills may not be properly developed and they may even have a negative attitude to reading… If neither their home nor their school contexts provide sufficient practice in reading skills and exposure to books, then learners may find 'reading to learn' difficult.
>
> (Matjila and Pretorius 2004, 6)

Thus, as research suggests that reading ability is an important factor in the development of critical literacy, the reading questionnaire was considered an important addition to the research instruments.

The reading questionnaire consisted of 22 questions. The first 6 questions were demographic questions which requested information on their age, gender, class group, mother tongue and the additional the languages they were studying, thus 16 questions related to reading. Learners were not required to put their names on the questionnaire, so it is not possible to cross tabulate their responses to the questionnaire to their results in the reading test. The entire sample consisted of 203 grade 9 pupils. However, in the analysis, the results obtained from pupils in class 9A have been separated and compared to the results for the grade as a whole. An example of the types of questions asked is provided in Figure 5.9 below,

Figure 5.9 Examples of questions taken from the reading questionnaire

2.	Do you enjoy reading?
	Not at all ☐ A little ☐ Quite a lot ☐ Very Much ☐
4.	When you were a small child, did your parents, or anyone else in your home, read a story to you:
	Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Hardly ever ☐ Never ☐

The reading questionnaire was administered during class. A single English period was used for this purpose. Each learner was provided with a copy of the questionnaire and required to indicate their answers on it.

The information from the reading questionnaires was captured manually and entered into a spreadsheet programme. Descriptive statistical techniques were applied to it and cross tabulations done in order to verify the responses.

5.4.3 Data selection

The previous section has discussed both the qualitative and quantitative data collection methods used in this research, given an explanation of each one, provided a rationale for their choice and given details on data capture and the analyses used. However, during the course of an intervention such as this, where a number of different research instruments have been used, a large quantity of data has been collected, much of which cannot be incorporated into a single thesis. Therefore it has been necessary to carefully categorise the data into manageable proportions by making careful selections. In doing this all the data collected was carefully examined, sifted, sorted, interpreted and reflected upon. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), this "process is akin to funneling from the wide to the narrow" (2000, 148). In doing this, linked and recurring themes and patterns emerged. It is data related to these main themes that will be the focus of Chapters 6, 7, and 8.

However, it needs to be noted that all research projects, and particularly those which make use of naturalistic approaches, have limitations, challenges and problems. The next section of this chapter will deal with these.

5.5 Limitations and challenges

Research seldom runs smoothly or to plan (Bak 2004) and according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) all research has its limitations. This section will present the limitations and challenges faced in the course of this research.

5.5.1 Reactivity (the Hawthorne effect)

The Hawthorne effect relates to participants in a research project knowing that they are the subjects of research, and as a result behaving atypically. The name Hawthorne was derived from the Hawthorne plant of General Electric where this phenomenon was first recorded during the 1920s (Cohen, Manion and Morrison2000). It suggests that the position of the researcher as an outsider in the classroom will effect the data collected, as their presence in the classroom will inevitably change the classroom dynamics. This can be lessened by spending an extended period of time in the field and this was done as the research ran over three school terms. However, it cannot be completely obviated. While the researcher was the grade 9A English teacher during the course of the year, the learners were aware that she was not a formal member of the school staff complement. Furthermore, the researcher's race, 'White', distinguished her from other teachers and the learners at the school who were either 'Coloured' or 'Black'. There is no way to estimate how far this might have been a limiting factor in this research.

5.5.2 Technology issues

Audio-taped data and the transcription of it posed particular problems and to some degree limited the data collection. Although more than one tape recorder was used to record lessons, and they were placed strategically around the room, there were high levels of peripheral noise and distortion which made transcribing them accurately difficult.

Attempts to audio-tape group work were made with a varying degree of success. A tape recorder was placed in each group and the learners were instructed that one person was to speak at a time. The tape recorder was compared to the conch in *Lord of the Flies* (1954) and the learners were told that only the one holding the conch (tape recorder) should talk and that when another person indicated they wished to speak the tape recorder should be passed on. This strategy worked for a while. There were also certain learners who fiddled with the controls and some

learners switched the tape recorder off. Background noise also affected the audibility of these recordings. Furthermore, some the learners were aware of the tape recorder and may have behaved atypically as a result.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are important in any research, but particularly in school-based research which deals with minors. The main reason for this is that it can be difficult for researchers "to strike a balance between the demands placed on them as professional scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects' rights and values potentially threatened by the research" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, 51). Furthermore, the power differential between the researcher and the subjects of the research can lead to problems thus it is imperative that ethical issues are addressed sensitively throughout the research process and that researchers present "themselves as competent, trustworthy, and accommodating" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, 55).

A number of steps were followed in order that the research reported here is ethical. These steps are described below.

5.6.1 Access to the research site

Official permission was sought from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education to conduct this research, and this was given (see appendix A, pg. 2). After the official permission had been granted by the authorities, the school was approached and an initial interview was undertaken with the school principal and her management team. During this interview the research aims and the research plan was explained in detail and following discussion the principal gave permission for the school to be used as the research site. This was done in the year prior to the research commencing.

As both the grade 9 English teachers were leaving the school and new teachers

starting at the beginning of the following school year it was impossible to discuss the research plan or obtain permission for access to the classroom from the teacher or teachers whose classes were to be the subjects of the intervention until just prior to the research starting. Writers on research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, Hammersley and Atkinson 1983) caution that for a number of reasons access cannot be guaranteed even after permission has been sought and given, furthermore, that it would be considered unethical to force participation.

In the case of this research, one of the grade 9 teachers was only prepared to allow the quantitative research to be undertaken with her three classes. She refused to have her lessons observed but used the teaching material prepared for the intervention so that all there would be uniformity in what the learners covered. The teacher of the research class, grade 9A, who also taught English to two other grade 9 classes, was willing to open her classroom to the research, but was unwilling to be observed teaching. It was therefore decided at short notice, that the researcher would teach the class.

5.6.2 Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants. At the beginning of the year a consent form in both English and Zulu was sent home with each learner for their parents or guardian to sign, and in addition each learner was required to sign a consent form.

Although the learners consented to their real names being used, and on more than one occasion indicated this verbally, names have been changed to protect their identities.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) include showing appreciation to the subjects at the end of a research project as an ethical consideration. They contend that "researchers need to reflect attitudes of compassion, respect, gratitude and common sense without being too effusive" (2000, 59-60). At the end of the year in which the research was undertaken, each learner who participated was given a

gift wrapped book, the teacher was given a book voucher, while the school was given a box of fiction books which could be used either as a class library or put into the 'library' which they were hoping to tidy up and reinstate, as a token of appreciation. Furthermore, their participation has been acknowledged at the beginning of this thesis.

This section has provided a detailed description of the research site and the learners who make up the research sample in order to contextualize the research. It has also described how the ethical issues have been dealt with. The following section will move on to discuss validity and reliability, both of which are important aspects of a research project such as this.

5.7 Validity and reliability

The validity and reliability of the research are important because the integrity of the project rests on instruments which measure any phenomenon accurately and objectively. According to Seale (1999), the "trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability" (1999, 266).

Put simply, validity refers to whether the research methods measure what they were intended to measure, as Joppe (2000) suggests any researcher ask: "does the research instrument allow you to hit "the bull's eye" of your research project?" (2000, 1 quoted in Golafshani 2003, 597). Reliability is the extent to which the results are consistent which is determined by the amount of error in the measurement.

The mixed methods design of this project, discussed in section 5.2 of this chapter, which includes both quantitative and qualitative research, has been selected to ensure validity and reliability. Firstly, as has been indicated earlier in this chapter, mixed methods research, because of its versatility and the range of data collection instruments it uses, provides better understanding and explanation of results than

using qualitative or quantitative instruments alone (Cresswell and Plano-Clark 2007; Burke, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Secondly, its focus on answering the research question without being constrained by a single method leads to a more comprehensive understanding of what is being researched (Burke, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Finally, the use of mixed methods has allowed for triangulation. These three, taken together, ensure the validity and reliability of the findings and results.

5.8 Reflections on methods and approaches

This chapter deals with the methods employed to answer the four research questions namely: What are the perceptions of learners in a co-educational school to the other gender? How do these manifest themselves in behaviour towards one another? In what way does critical literacy impact on these perceptions and attitudes? and, finally, What factors affect its successful implementation?

A mixed methods research design was implemented which allows the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods and a variety of data collection tools. This flexibility provides the most effective way of gaining holistic insights into, and understanding of, the various aspects of the study. In the case of this research, the qualitative methods involved the audio taping and transcribing of lessons, examination and analysis of written work, observations, the writing up of field notes and interviews with key personnel and learners. The quantitative method relied on two surveys, one on gender perceptions, the other on grade 9 learners background and interest in reading, and a reading proficiency test. No data collection method can be said to be without both strengths and weaknesses, and these were highlighted. However, using quantitative and qualitative methods and a range of research instruments has allowed for triangulation and confirmation of the findings, and greater insights than had just one method been used. The combinations of methods have enabled me to achieve a richly textured and multifaceted perspective on reading development for critical literacy skills and

insights into the way gender is played out in the classroom, school and playground.

Sherwood High School was carefully selected because it is neither an elite school nor disadvantaged when measured against many other schools in South Africa. Furthermore, it is a co-educational school and the demographics of the pupil body suggest that it is typical of many urban schools across the country. The choice of grade 9 was purposive because they are the only group of learners who have experienced *Curriculum 2005* throughout their GET phase. In addition, adolescents have reached the stage where they are aware of gender. Thus it is possible for a critical literacy intervention such as this one to make an impact on the lives of the learners and to change perceptions and attitudes towards gender.

It is important to consider that with an intervention designed to achieve impact, ethical concerns were heightened precisely because a change in behaviour and thought was anticipated through the critical literacy intervention itself. Critical literacy challenges learners to think against the grain, which may not be acceptable to the wider community. Thus particular care was taken with this aspect and the necessary approval from the Department of Education and the school, parents and learners at the school was obtained.

The next chapter, Chapter 6, will discuss the first of the three main themes which are to be presented in relation to the data obtained for this thesis. It deals with the importance of literacy and the ability to read with fluency and comprehension to being able to approach texts critically.

Chapter 6 Responding to texts: Reading and critical literacy

The majority of schools fail to teach critical thinking and, as a result, the majority of our populace does not practice it.

(Mendelmann 2008)

6.1 Introduction

As has been indicated in the previous chapter, the research undertaken generated a large quantity of data. After a process of careful examination followed by data selection, three main themes emerged, the first of these explores reading and critical literacy, the second considers the practical application of critical literacy to an advertising task, and the third theme looks gender and at how it is played out in interactions in the classroom. These will be discussed in this chapter and the two chapters to follow. The theme which is the focus of this chapter is reading, and how the inability to read effectively can be a barrier to the development of critical literacy.

A number of researchers have stated that in order for critical literacy to be effective learners need to be able to read (Freire 1970; Hall 1998; Pretorius 2000; Rasinski *et al* 2005) while some even go so far as to state that abstract thinking is impossible without literacy (Sanders 1994). As has been discussed in previous chapters, the ability to decode and encode text efficiently, read fluently, and have the requisite background knowledge to extract meaning from a text, is crucial in facilitating the comprehension of texts and the development of critical literacy.

Firstly, before presenting and discussing the data collected it is important to examine the Curriculum 2005 Language, Literacy and Communication document (Department of Education 1997e) to establish what the specific outcomes and assessment criteria are with regard to reading and understanding, in order to assess whether they are being achieved and if the aim of developing more critical learners is being realised.

Secondly, this chapter will deal with the grade 9A learners' responses to texts in what are commonly referred to as comprehension activities. While it is regretted that longer texts (complete novels or plays) were not undertaken, this was not possible as the school did not have longer texts available for grade 9 learners and did not have the resources to purchase these. Furthermore, in the interests of keeping the work covered by all grade 9 learners consistent, as they were all doing the same or similar assessments and examinations, the teacher was reluctant to allow the research class to be given material which was different from that being done by the rest of the grade.

Comprehension activities require close reading of texts which are appropriate to the learners in terms of their age, grade, interests and culture and the questions set should assess their ability to understand, recall, interpret, make inferences, evaluate and analyse that reading passage (Barrett, 1972). The analysis of data here considers the overall results achieved by the grade 9A learners in reading comprehension tasks over the first two terms of the year, with a close examination of responses to a short reading comprehension taken from the June examination.

The Gapadol reading test (see appendix E, pg. 79 – 99) which was discussed in section 5.4.2.2 of the previous chapter and will be explained in detail in section 6.4 of this chapter, was administered to three grade 9 classes after the weak reading ability of many of the learners was observed. The third part of this chapter will discuss the results achieved by the grade 9A class in this test. In addition, details of the results of the second reading test which was administered to grade 9A learners approximately 6 months after the first one will be provided.

Fourthly, the results of a Reading Questionnaire (see section 5.4.2.3) which was answered by all the grade 9 learners will be discussed. This questionnaire was undertaken in order to provide an explanation for the learners' inadequate reading skills and the results they achieved in the Gapadol Reading Test and the reading comprehension activities. A number of researchers (Pretorius 2000,

Matjila and Pretorius 2004, Brice Heath 1994, Land 2008) emphasise the importance of early reading experiences in developing reading later on in a learner's school career. They assert that children who have been read to and come from an environment where print material is available and seen to be read are far more likely to enjoy and become proficient in reading than those children who have not. Thus, establishing the reading backgrounds of the learners is important.

Finally, the data collected and presented in the above four sections will be discussed in relation to the development of critical literacy.

6.2 *Curriculum 2005* on 'Responding to Texts'

The senior phase Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC) curriculum document (Department of Education 1997e) suggests a sophisticated range of reading skills and strategies should have been mastered by grade 9, which is the end of the GET phase, both in the reading of macro-texts, that is, longer literature texts of different genres such as novels, plays and films, and micro-texts, which are short texts commonly known as comprehensions. According to the LLC curriculum document, comprehension tasks are "short analysis tasks" applied to "micro-texts" which should test "a range of analytical skills" (Department of Education 2001, 32) and address specific outcomes 1,2,3,4 which are:

- Learners make and negotiate meaning and understanding.
- Show critical awareness of language use.
- Respond to aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values in texts.
- Access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations.

(Department of Education 1997e, 2001)

Although these are the primary outcomes to be covered, other specific outcomes and assessment criteria may also be included in some activities. The assessment criteria listed under each of these outcomes in the curriculum document gives direction on the particular skills which need to be addressed in both micro and macro responses to texts, thus it is important to consider each one.

Specific outcome 1, making and negotiation of meaning, suggests a wide spectrum of reading skills ranging from the ability to identify, clarify and respond to specific, explicit information in the text. These are what Barrett (1972), who developed Barrett's Taxonomy which categorises comprehension questions (see Figure 6.1 overleaf), would define as literal understanding of the text. He categorises this as recognising implicit meanings in texts which allow for the making of inferences, understanding how context can affect meaning, being able to reflect on a writer's point of view and understanding how personal, social and cultural differences can affect meaning in a text.

Specific outcome 2, in which a learner has to demonstrate critical awareness of language, states that the learners should be aware of the purpose, audience and sources of texts, can identify how language is used as a tool to manipulate people, and that they are able to identify features of written language such as exaggeration, sarcasm, bias and emotive language. It is this specific outcome which addresses critical literacy as learners are further required to understand that language is not neutral and can be used as a tool to either empower or disempower people.

Specific outcome 3 aims to develop the learners' appreciation of the stylistic devices used by writers and how these enhance the text. Artistic features such as the imagery used to create a particular mood or atmosphere are covered under this specific outcome as well as the ability to evaluate, form an opinion and provide justification for it. This specific outcome, while relevant to all texts, would have specific application to the appreciation of poetry.

Specific outcome 4 calls for the learners to develop the ability to access, process and use information from a variety of sources, which is a necessary skill when reading. Making sense of texts requires the use of prior information and background knowledge. These are the top-down processing skills driven by our schemata (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983, Flanagan 1995) mentioned in Chapter 2. Schemata are used extensively in making sense of written text. However, this

outcome also applies to reading across the curriculum where a variety of sources and genres may be encountered and synthesised or summarised.

The specific outcomes and the assessment criteria mentioned above echo the skills articulated by Barrett (1972) in his taxonomy (see Figure 6.1) and in Luke and Freebody's (1997, 1999) four resources model which has been discussed in chapter 1 and 2.

Barrett (1972) outlines five categories of questions which reading comprehensions need to ask in order to test high order reading skills. An outline of these categories can be seen in Figure 6.1, below,

Figure 6.1 Outline of Barrett's Taxonomy (1972)

BARRETT'S TAXONOMY
COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE DIMENSIONS OF READING COMPREHENSION

1.0 LITERAL COMPREHENSION
- **1.1 Recognition**
  - 1.1.1 Recognition of details
  - 1.1.2 Recognition of main ideas
  - 1.1.3 Recognition of sequence
  - 1.1.4 Recognition of comparison
  - 1.1.5 Recognition of cause and effect relationships
  - 1.1.6 Recognition of character traits
- **1.2 Recall**
  - 1.2.1 Recall of details
  - 1.2.2 Recall of main ideas
  - 1.2.3 Recall of sequence
  - 1.2.4 Recall of comparison
  - 1.2.5 Recall of cause and effect relationships
  - 1.2.6 Recall of character traits

2.0 REORGANISATION
- **2.1** Classifying
- 2.2 Outlining
- 2.3 Summarising
- 2.4 Synthesising

3.0 INFERENTIAL COMPREHENSION
- **3.1** Inferring supporting details
- 3.2 Inferring main ideas
- 3.3 Inferring sequence
- 3.4 Inferring comparisons
- 3.5 Inferring cause and effect relationships
- 3.6 Inferring character traits
- 3.7 Predicting outcomes
- 3.8 Interpreting figurative language

4.0 EVALUATION
- **4.1** Judgements of reality or fantasy
- 4.2 Judgements of fact or opinion
- 4.3 Judgements of adequacy and validity
- 4.4 Judgements of appropriateness
- 4.5 Judgements of worth, desirability and acceptability

5.0 APPRECIATION
- 5.1 Emotional response to the content
- 5.2 Identification with characters or incidents
- 5.3 Reactions to the author's use of language
- 5.4 Imagery

As can be seen in Figure 6.1, the first and easiest category to answer is literal questions. However, as one moves down the categories more sophisticated reading skills are required.

A final point needs to be made with regard to the *Curriculum 2005* assessment guidelines. Language structure and grammatical correctness which is articulated in the curriculum in specific outcome 5, are excluded when assessing responses to texts, therefore marks may not be deducted for poor language use, grammatical errors, incorrect punctuation or spelling unless a question specifically focuses on testing these. This means that the assessment emphasis is entirely on the learners' understanding of the passage they have read. When allocating marks learners are given credit for showing even the smallest signs of understanding. Fragments, single words and part answers are allocated a mark providing they hold something of the answer expected. Furthermore, considerable flexibility is exercised in that even unexpected answers are allocated marks providing they show evidence of having been logically reasoned, can be justified, or are informed by the reading text.

During the classroom intervention 6 formal reading comprehensions activities were completed by the learners. The following section will consider these and the learners' responses to them. One particular activity, the June examination, will be discussed in detail.

6.3 Reading and Critical literacy - Considering texts

As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, this section will examine the responses to short comprehension passages in order to assess the standard the grade 9A learners have reached in reading and understanding texts. As has been argued earlier in this thesis, the development of critical literacy is facilitated when reading has been mastered (Freire 1970, Sanders 1995, Hall 1998, Pretorius 2000, Luke and Freebody 1997), making reading crucial to the development of critical literacy.

While it can be argued that school based comprehension tasks are not meaningful to the learners, lack authenticity, and test only a discrete set of skills (Beach *et al* 2010), they can provide a guide to the teacher of what reading skills have been acquired. In addition, they are required in terms of the *Curriculum 2005* assessment standards document (Department of Education 2001). At grade 9 level teachers assume that the learners can read and do not focus on teaching the basic decoding skills which should have been acquired in the foundation phase. However, this is not always the case as the discussion which follows will show.

A consistent and recurring theme which is expressed in the field notes written at the end of each lesson is the poor reading ability of the learners in grade 9A. This is mentioned in various degrees of detail in no less than eight field note entries[12] for the first term including reports on tests and the examination. This was noted the first time that the learners were given a short passage to read, and is evident in their behaviour while reading silently, the poor fluency of their oral reading, the oral responses during whole group discussion of texts, and finally, in their written responses to formal reading comprehension tasks. In the sections which follow, the results achieved by the learners in micro-reading activities will be discussed generally, while their June examination reading activity will be discussed in greater detail, together with the observations noted in field notes, and examiners reports. The findings suggest that developing critical literacy skills is challenging, if not impossible, when the learners are weak readers. If learners have problems reading beyond the word level, have poor fluency and reading speed, and cannot infer or evaluate what they are reading, they will experience difficulty engaging with critical literacy (Pretorius 2000; Hall 1998; Sanders 1994).

6.3.1 Responses to reading short texts – comprehension passages

This section reports on the learners' responses to short texts in what are commonly termed comprehension tasks. Presented here are comments extracted from field notes and interviews, an analysis of the tasks and the learners' achievement in such tasks by considering the texts and questions asked, providing

[12] See Appendix B Pg. 52 – 56

a breakdown of the marks the learners have attained in such tasks during the course of the year, (see Figure 6.2) and, finally, a detailed analysis of their responses to the June examination. The rationale for focusing on the June examination is that it is the only activity during the year that the learners completed alone and independently without assistance and support from either the teacher or other group members. At the end of the grade 9 year assessment is done by means of the Common Task Assessment (CTA), an English test set externally by the Department of Education, and this is done both in groups and individually and carefully scaffolded (Wong-Fillmore 1994), thus it cannot be compared with the situation which prevailed during the June examination where learners are required to respond individually and under strict examination conditions. It therefore provides a more accurate indication of each learner's ability to respond to questions set on a short text.

The six comprehension passages dealt with in the course of the year were carefully selected to fit in with the phase organiser, which was 'Personal Development and Empowerment' and the programme organisers which were 'Relationships' and 'Gender Empowerment' for the first and second terms respectively. Phase and programme organisers can be described as themes which run across all the learning areas and provide coherence across the curriculum as material in all learning areas should be linked to that central theme or topic.

As can be seen from Figure 6.2, the passages ranged in length from 435 to 779 words and in grade suitability from grades 4 -5 to grade 8 when tested on the reading clarity index, which was discussed in chapter 4. This may suggest that these are too easy for a grade 9 class. However, the difficulty of a comprehension activity does not lie with the difficulty or ease of reading the passage only, but also the types of questions asked (Barrett 1972). It is usual for comprehension passages to begin with a number of literal questions and move to more sophisticated questions which require learners to use their background knowledge by making inferences, evaluations and personal responses showing appreciation of the reading passage set. Although a range of question types were asked in the passages set for grade 9, the majority of the questions required literal

understanding of the particular passage. This is the simplest type of question as it requires recognition and recall of the contents of the passage (see Barrett's Taxonomy Figure 6.1). Inferential questions requiring learners to infer from the information given and their own background knowledge form the next largest number of questions. Evaluation and reorganisation questions follow, with only one question on appreciation asked.

In addition to the six written comprehension tests, two listening comprehensions were completed, but these will not be discussed because the passages were read to the learners by the teacher and the questions were all literal, calling for recognition and recall only. A list of the reading passages set can be found in Figure 6.2., while a brief description of the content and the rationale for the choice of each can be found in section 4.3

Figure 6.2 Overview of texts, questions and responses grade 9A

Text	Question types According to Barrett's Taxonomy	Length of text in words	FOG or clarity index	Grade suit-ability	Class avg. %	Top mark %	Low-est mark %
Bridget Jones Diary	Literal – 4 Inferential – 3 Evaluative – 1 Appreciation - 1	550	6,28	6	30	80	0
Anne Frank's Diary (Section B)	Literal – 4 Reorganization - 2	779	7,63	7 - 8			
Birthday Song	Literal – 4 Inferential -3 Evaluation - 1	873	6,40	6	55	87 ½	10
Nervous Conditions	Literal – 3 Reorganisation - 1 Inferential - 3 Evaluative – 1	435	5,75	5 - 6	40	67 ½	15
My life as a house-husband	Literal – 6 Reorganisation - 1 Inferential – 2 Evaluative – 1	735	8.50	8	40	74	20
June Examin-ation - Chandra	Literal - 4 Inferential - 4 Evaluation - 1	625	4,83	4 - 5	44	78	20

The procedures followed with the comprehension passages completed in class were similar. The lesson began with a pre-reading discussion which introduced the main themes covered in the passage and related these to their lives in order to raise the learners' schemata and to link the passage to the programme organizer for the term. This is an important first step as it allows the learners to make connections, assists their facility to visualize and makes drawing inferences easier (Harvey and Goudvis 2000; Athans and Devine 2008). For example, in the case of the passages taken from *Bridget Jones, The Edge of Reason* (Fielding 1999), the lesson began with a brief discussion of boy/girl relationships and the expectations and insecurities experienced when one has a new boyfriend / girlfriend. Similarly, with the passage taken from *Diary of a Young Girl* (Frank 2001), the learners were asked to imagine how they would feel if they were confined in a small place together with a number of different people of different age groups. Questions were posed about the hardships Anne might have experienced and what the tension of constant fear of discovery might have caused her to feel. Learners were asked to think of the things they would want to have with them if they were in the same situation, and what they might do all day. In addition the pre reading drew the learners' attention to diaries as a genre, the style of writing one might expect in a diary, and the sort of content a young person might include in a diary. This was done because the learners were to write a diary entry on their own as a written assessment task.

Following the pre-reading discussion, the class were required to read the passage and the questions silently. The reason for this is that silent reading should be quicker and thus more efficient in terms of comprehension (Rasinski *et al* 2005), and the learners can read at their own pace when they are reading individually. When they had all completed reading on their own, the passage was read aloud by the teacher. Reading aloud is a modelling technique which assists the learners to understand the structure and genre of texts (Kelley and Clausen-Grace 2007).

Before writing down their answers the learners were reminded of the necessity to reread the passage and questions carefully a number of times on their own. This is in order to have a thorough understanding of the passage before writing their

responses to the questions (Sanders 1994). When they had completed the task it was handed in for assessment. When the scripts were returned to the learners the passage was read again and discussed because "classroom talk makes it possible for students to learn from hearing, considering, and responding to the interpretations and ideas of their peers" (Hampton and Resnick 2008).

The June examination comprehension questions were based on a passage taken from the novel *Chandra* by Frances Mary Hendry (1995) (see appendix B, pg. 24 – 27 for the examination paper and appendix B, pg. 29 – 51 for the learners' full responses). The passage is taken from a section of the book where the heroine, Chandra, an eleven year old girl, is discussing her forthcoming arranged marriage to a sixteen year old cousin she has never met with her grandmother. The FOG or clarity index (Gunning 1952) is 4.8 suggesting that is suitable for a grade 4 – 5 class, although the subject matter suggests that it would be better suited to grade 6 - 7. The passage contains some foreign words which might inhibit the learners' understanding so these are explained in a glossary box below.

Figure 6.3, below, indicates the question types in *Chandra* (Hendry 1995) and distribution of marks across the questions.

Figure 6.3 Break down of results - Question 1 June examination comprehension

			Marks achieved							
Ques. No.	**Question type**	**Max. mark possible**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1 ½**	**1**	**½**	**0**
1	literal	5	1	7	9	7		6		3
2	literal	5	3	10	13	6		1		0
3	inferential	2				9	2	3		19
4	inferential	2				7	2	5		19
5	literal/inferential	3			3	4	2	10		14
6	literal	2				12	1	6	1	13
7	evaluation	2				9	5	12		7
8	literal	2				6	3	3	1	20

6.3.2 Analysis and discussion of grade 9A reading comprehension activities.

As has been indicated earlier in this chapter, the learners responded to 6 comprehension activities during the first half of 2005, 5 during class and 1 in the June examination that was done independently. What is significant about the responses to these comprehension passages is that the results do not show any appreciable improvement over the 6 months. As can be seen in Figure 6.2 pg. 171, despite following the procedure outlined in the previous section as well as distributing explicit notes on how to approach this sort of activity, the class average for the first task was 30% and the final task 44%. An examination of the learners' responses and the field notes written up after these activities provides an indication of why this is the case.

From the field notes and an analysis of the learners responses to the comprehensions, there are three main, and closely related, findings that emerge. The first, and most important, is their weak reading abilities. The second arises from the first and relates to the reluctance of many of them to return to the passage and reread it a number of times in order to thoroughly understand it. The third and final finding is the challenge they experience understanding the demands of the questions set on the text. These findings will be discussed in greater detail in relation to the field notes taken and the analysis of the learners' responses to the comprehensions.

6.3.2.1 Finding 1: The weak reading ability of the learners in grade 9A

The weak reading abilities of grade 9A manifests itself in a number of ways, and one of the most obvious is when they are required to read silently. The first formal reading task was a short passage which had been adapted from the book *Bridget Jones, The Edge of Reason* (Fielding 1999) (see appendix B, pg. 3-4). An example of the pre-reading discussion questions was provided in the previous section and following this the class were required to read the passage silently. However, the learners had difficulties doing this. After the lesson, the following observations were noted in the field notes:

> I then asked the class to read the passage from *Bridget Jones Diary* silently. This progressed very slowly. It is clear that few of the class are readers.

> Even though the passage was not very long it seemed to take ages for most of them to complete reading the passage, and some did not finish it at all. Some learners used their rulers to keep their place and follow down the lines with it, others followed the words slowly a word at a time using a finger, still others were vocalizing (and annoying their neighbours as they painfully whispered the words), and others were sub-vocalizing. One or two made no attempt to read the passage and spent the time looking around or out of the window. After the majority appeared to have finished reading I asked for a volunteer to read the passage out aloud. No one would do so. In the end I read the passage out aloud to them and they listened. I tried to start a class discussion but failed because none of the learners would engage. The bell rang ending the lesson soon afterwards.
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 52, 03/02/2005)

A similar observation was made when the passage from *The Diary of a Young Girl,* by Anne Frank was presented to the learners:

> While some got on with the task, some seemed unable to read silently. About half a dozen of them were vocalizing and sub-vocalizing, repeating each word as they slowly went through the passage. Some others were following the words with their rulers; many used their fingers to point to each word as they went along the lines while others just seemed to stare at the paper. Two closed their eyes and pretended to go to sleep – one being Ken, the same boy who did not read or submit the comprehension last week… Again no one would read the passage aloud, even when I allocated the task. This resulted in a howl of protest.
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 53, 07/02/2005)

After observing similar behaviour to that recorded above when the learners read silently, it was decided that they should take turns in reading aloud. The learners were reluctant to read aloud in class and the reason for this became evident when they were reading the short story *The Winner* (Kimenye 1983). It was then found that,

> Their oral reading is poor. Most of them are very hesitant oral readers and lack fluency. As it was killing the story for them, I took over and read the story to them but many were not following the reading in their books.
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 54, 21/02/2005)

According to Braunger and Lewis (1998), there is a significant relationship between oral reading proficiency and comprehension. The ability to read orally, to decode accurately and meaningfully aloud, is related to reading fluency and has "as much to do with gaining meaning from the text as it does being highly accurate with words" (Braunger and Lewis 1998, 49). Each time the grade 9A learners were required to read, either silently or aloud, similar observations were

made, suggesting that many of the learners' decoding skills are weak and therefore meaningful oral reading is difficult.

In addition to the challenge they experienced reading silently and aloud, the weak reading ability of the learners was also evident in their responses to the comprehension tasks. This is clear in the comprehension set on the passage from *Chandra* (Hendry 1995). The overall average mark attained by the learners on this comprehension test is 11 out of 25 marks (44%). The lowest mark is 5 out of 25 marks (20%) while the highest is 19½ out of 25 marks (78%). This is despite marks not being deducted for poor language and expression, as indicated in the *Curriculum 2005* assessment document, and considerable latitude being given in the assessment of responses including credit for partially correct answers being given.

Their weak reading ability is observed in their responses to question 1 which is made up of 5 multiple choice questions, where learners have to select the most accurate ending to the sentence. These can be categorised as literal questions because the information required to answer them correctly is explicitly given in the text and the preamble. However, as indicated in Figure 6.3 pg. 173, there was a considerable variation in the total marks achieved for the question across grade 9A, with only 1 learner scoring full marks, and 3 scoring nothing. This could indicate that the learners had not read and understood the passage efficiently, leading them to make their choice of ending in a fairly random way. Similar results were evident in the answers learners gave across all the comprehension passages they completed during the first half of the year which further supports the finding that their reading and comprehension abilities are weak.

As can be seen on Figure 6.2 pg. 171, when tested on the reading clarity or FOG index the grade suitability of the reading passages ranges from grade 5 to grade 9 and should therefore not have provided the learners any particular difficulty. In addition, scaffolding was provided, as discussion preceded the reading, and where there were difficult words a glossary was provided to assist them.

As reading develops and becomes more fluent, automaticity in word decoding is achieved and the bottom-up or decoding skills become less important. Without these Fink and Samuel (2007, 119) argue, comprehension cannot take place. Fluency is important because it facilitates understanding and is necessary in the development of reading strategies (Braunger and Lewis 1998; Rasinski *et al* 2005). As evident in the field notes and the analysis of the comprehension, many of the learners in grade 9A appear unable to read with the level of fluency required to read aloud or for understanding and comprehension. Furthermore, many have rudimentary decoding skills at best and this impacts on their ability to engage with texts meaningfully. In some cases they are unable to respond to literal questions correctly, which casts doubt on their ability to respond to higher order questions and their ability to engage critically with texts.

In addition, there are some learners in grade 9A who are what Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2008) refer to as fake readers. They describe fake readers as learners who "look like they are reading but are really just passing their eyes over print without attending to meaning" (2008, 8) or "they might fidget, talk, gaze around the room" (2008, 9) all behaviours observed in grade 9A. The following observation noted in the field notes suggest that some of the learners in grade 9A are fake readers

> … he did nothing the entire period. He seemed unable or unwilling to even attempt to answer the questions or read the passage. When I tried to force him to read the passage by standing over him, he just looked down fixedly at it but there was no sign that he was trying to read it. At the end of the 45 minute period he had only written his name on the top of his paper.
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 52, 04/02/2005)

While not all the learners are such weak readers that they cannot decode or read fluently, there are others who refuse to engage with the reading text in sufficient depth to facilitate high order responses. These will be discussed in the next section.

6.3.2.2 Finding 2: Unwillingness to engage with the text

As stated at the outset of this discussion, the second finding relates closely to the first, and explores the strategies many of the learners' use when approaching a

comprehension task. These are demonstrated clearly in the following observation recorded in the field notes:

> They were given paper to write on but many had failed to bring the material which was handed out yesterday, with them to class. New copies of the passage and questions were distributed. However, despite my urging them to reread the passage and think before they wrote down their answers, few of them bothered to do this and the majority launched straight into writing their answers to the questions. Few seemed to refer back to the passage from help answering questions and many finished before the time was up…
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 52, 04/02/2005)

The behaviour described above was observed in other comprehension activities completed in class. The learners' strategy when answering comprehensions appears to be to rely on their memory of the oral reading of the passage as far as possible to answer the questions, and to do so as quickly as possible, probably so they do not forget what they have heard. This results in poor marks being achieved, as noted in the observations on the marked comprehension in the field notes,

> … they did not bother to read the passage and simply wrote down anything. Most failed to use full sentences. It is clear that the literal questions are easier for them to cope with because they just lifted a sentence or two from the passage. In response to questions which called for interpretation or evaluation the answers were poor or simply not tackled at all. Some of the learners did not seem able to express their own opinions while others did not seem to be able to supply reasons for their opinions or thoughts. A number answered just 'Yes' or 'No' and failed to justify their answers.
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 53, comments on marked comprehension)

The problem is exacerbated further when the learners have to write control tests or examinations, and they cannot depend on the oral reading. In these cases it was observed that,

> Many of the weaker learners did not read either the passages or the questions efficiently. In many cases they failed to answer the question asked, even when the question was at the basic, literal level.
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 56, marker's report: June examination)

The learners' reluctance to engage with the text was again evident in their responses to the task from *Chandra* (Hendry 1995), which was completed under exam conditions. Despite scaffolding being provided during the term in the form of strategies to use when answering comprehension questions, and learners being reminded to go back and reread the text before responding to the questions, few of the learners were able to put these into practice and the responses are indicative of this. The final question, *Why did her grandmother insist that Chandra should go to*

school? (Question 8), is a literal one, with an explanation of Chandra's grandmother's reason given in the passage – "that women have rights and duties" (line 33). What is clear from the responses of the 20 learners who were not awarded a mark for this question is that few of them went back to the passage and reread it before writing a response. Two learners did not attempt to answer the question and of those remaining many drew inferences that could not be supported, for example, "So she can have a BA degree just like her mother did" (Tatum); "So she could be like her mother and find a good guy in the library" (Simon); and "Her own nani did so" (Simphiwe). Others failed to supply a reason and repeated the statement that she wanted Chandra to have an education, for example, "She wanted Chandra to be well educated", and "Chandra had to get an education" (Milly). Another offered a personal opinion: "I think school is important first then other things" (Nomusa).

Reading the passage more than once is important if learners are to engage the high-level thinking processes they need to draw inferences and make judgments. Fink and Samuel (2007) report that when readers read a passage more than once "each successive reading led to higher levels of word recognition, reading speed and comprehension" (2007, 121). It is difficult to judge whether the grade 9A learners are unwilling to read the passage multiple times, or whether they are depending on the oral reading to answer the questions and thus did not read it in the first place.

6.3.2.3. Finding 3: Challenge of reading and understanding the question

The third reason for the weak results in reading comprehension activities has been identified as the inability of many of the learners to address the questions set on a passage, particularly when they require higher order thinking. This was observed in all of the comprehension activities covered during the first two terms.

Understanding what the question is asking and how to extract the relevant information from the passage is important for deep comprehension (Fink and Samuels 2007). They say that developing the ability to do this starts early in a child's literate life when children are asked thought-provoking open-ended

questions. According to Fink and Samuel "deep comprehension requires learning thoughtful, questioning habits of mind as early as possible – preferably before children can read independently" (2007, 51).

Figure 6.3 pg. 173, provides a breakdown of the learners' results in the June examination comprehension based on *Chandra* (Hendry 1995) and what is immediately clear is the inability of learners to respond to higher order questions. It is noticeable that learners performed better on questions 1, 2 and 7. Question 1 is made up of 5 multiple choice questions, question 2 consists of 5 statements which learners must identify as True or False, and question 7 is an evaluation question based on a quote from the passage. Questions 1 and 2 are literal questions and the information required to answer them correctly is given in the text and the preamble to the passage, while question 7 calls for a personal judgement and given the preamble and quote supplied, the learners do not need to read the passage in order to answer this question. Thus the mark distribution shown in Figure 6.3 suggests that learners found these questions the easiest to answer.

On the other hand, the questions with which the learners experienced the greatest difficulty were questions 3, 4, and 8, with over half the class getting no marks for these questions. As indicated in Figure 6.3, two of these, questions 3 and 4, are inferential questions which require the learner to use their prior knowledge, personal experience or intuition as a basis for informed conjecture. The important point is that the answer is not stated explicitly in the text but the learner has to use a process of reasoning in their response.

The students' inability to respond to higher order questions is clear when analysing their responses to Question 3 of the comprehension based on *Chandra,* which asks, *Why does it shock Chandra when her grandmother tells her that her mother married for love?* The answer to this question has to be inferred although a strong clue is given in the preamble to the passage when Chandra's own arranged marriage is referred to and in her shocked response to her grandmother, "Like Europeans? Never!" (line 9), after being told the circumstances of her mother's

marriage which was not arranged suggests that while this is acceptable in European culture, it does not happen in Indian culture. However, despite these clues over half the learners, 19, failed to provide an answer which could be supported by the information given in passage. Of these, 2 learners did not attempt to answer the question, while the remaining seventeen incorrect answers can be placed into three broad categories. The first category is those responses which have failed to draw the inference from the contextual clues in the passage although they show evidence of having read it. An example of this is the response given by David, who answers, "It shocks her because her father abuses her when he's drunk". While this statement is true, but it cannot be accepted as the reason for her shock. The second category is the largest and involves responses which provide evidence that cannot be supported by the passage. Examples are the following responses, "She is shocked because she thinks she is going to get married for love" (Simon); "He married her because she had a BA degree" (Anna), and "Because they met by surprise she saw him in the library and fell in love with him Chandra is shocked because her mother and father are not together no longer" (Leon). The final category is those respondents whose responses are irrelevant and have been copied totally or partially from the passage. An example of this is "She had a happiness; she paused, an eyebrow raised. Chandra nodded; most of the time, it was true" (Farida).

The responses to Question 4, which asks *Why does Chandra's grandmother say that her father would 'have been horrified if he knew'? (line 13)?* offers further evidence that the students are unable to respond to higher order questions that require superior reading skills. This question is a cause and effect inferential question which requires the learners to hypothesise about the reason a character may respond in a particular way. The answers which the learners may give are that her father has traditional values, a fact emphasised by Chandra's grandmother throughout the passage, and he would be unhappy if he knew that the tradition of families arranging their children's marriages had been broken. An alternative might be that he was not aware that her mother had fallen in love with him before their marriage had been arranged by their families. He therefore believed that it was coincidence that they knew each other from meeting at the library.

Despite the presence of a number of contextual clues about the circumstances of the marriage, 19 learners obtained no mark for this question. Instead of answering the question a number of respondents simply wrote a statement which did not supply a reason why her father might be horrified. For example, Neil writes "Nani nearly fell in love with him too". Others again, have simply copied parts of the passage verbatim which fails to explain how this quote from the passage might provide a reason for his being horrified. However, the largest category is those who have given incorrect answers, such as Steven who writes, "I think the wedding was not planned by the father. Her father wants her to get married for love. So he would get horrified because of that." Another example comes from Ken who says: "He would been hit because she shakes her finger after crying", and yet another which responds, "The reson why it because, her father is very stret" (Eric). These responses again display their inability to address the demands of the question.

6.3.3 Discussion of the results of the responses to texts

As a comprehensive discussion which will include all the research instruments examined will follow at the end of this chapter, this will be a brief summary and discussion of the findings presented in this section.

The analysis above suggests that the majority of learners in grade 9A have not developed the advanced reading skills required to answer comprehension questions effectively. Some have a problem at the basic level of decoding, while others have sufficient decoding skills to make limited sense of the text and can manage to answer literal questions, but do not have high level skills, such as the ability to draw inferences, essential to thoroughly understand what they are reading. According to Lanning (2009), inferring is associated with top-down processes which assist readers to activate prior knowledge, determine the writer's purpose, recognise subjective views, opinions and biases, make predictions, and connections, and draw conclusions. It is crucial to comprehension because "it helps unlock and personalise that which the author has not made explicit" (2009, 95).

Classroom observations, written up in field notes during reading comprehension activities suggest that the learners struggle to read texts and lack the fluency which is necessary for comprehension (Rasinski *et al* 2005). These learners do not have either the decoding skills or the strategies necessary to respond to reading comprehension activities effectively neither do they have the top-down skills required in order to engage in high level textual analysis. In class they rely on their memory of the oral reading of the passage in order to answer the questions. This suggests that grade 9A learners will experience difficulty mastering critical literacy (Hall 1998; Sanders 1994).

While the observations and responses to the reading comprehension passages provide a strong indication that the learners are weak readers, it was decided to conduct a reading test in order to confirm this and, if this is indeed the case, to have some indication of the extent of the reading deficit. This will be discussed in the following section.

6.4 The Gapadol reading test

6.4.1 Rationale for conducting the Gapadol reading test

As has been indicated in the previous section, the inadequate results attained by the learners in their responses to reading passages, suggests that the reading ability of some of the grade 9A learners was not up to the expectations articulated in the *Curriculum 2005* Language, Literacy and Communication outcomes discussed in section 6.2 of this chapter. It was therefore decided, together with the teacher, that a reading test be conducted in order to establish each learner's individual reading proficiency.

As indicated in section 5.4.2.2, considerable controversy surrounds the use of standardized tests to monitor reading. While these criticisms are valid, it is acknowledged that there is, nevertheless, a place for standardized large scale testing (Braunger and Lewis 1998).

As the conducting of a reading test did not form part of the original research plan finding a test that was suitable for adolescents, and one which could be administered to all the learners simultaneously because teaching time was so limited, was problematic. Eventually, a local remedial school recommended the Gapadol Test. It was the test they used to assess reading proficiency as they found it quick to administer and reliable. Furthermore, the test has undergone extensive statistical testing in order to confirm its reliability (Mcleod and Anderson 1973).

6.4.2 The Gapadol Reading Test

As this test was discussed in section 5.4.2.2 only a brief discussion will be offered here. It is a silent reading cloze procedure test, taking approximately 45 minutes to administer and consequently quick and convenient to use with a large number of learners. The content of the passages is culturally neutral so comprehension should not be affected by differing schemata; and finally, it tests the ability of learners to implement advanced reading skills such as the ability to contextualize and make anaphoric links. It is thus a quick indicator of under achievement in reading.

There are two forms of the test, namely G and Y (see appendix E, pg. 79 – 94), so that comparisons can be made by giving the same group the tests separately to assess if reading proficiency has improved, or large groups can be tested together using alternative forms to prevent the possibility of copying.

The test has six short reading passages. They are the types of passages which a learner would be likely to come across in the school context. In Test Y there is a passage taken from a work of fiction, a non-fiction passage on polluted beaches, instructions on applying paint, a history text, another on the brain and yet another entitled 'Is there life on Mars?'. Test G is structured in exactly the same way, but the passages are different. The words which have been deleted are not difficult or long. They are words that refer back to information which has previously been read. Learners are not penalised for poor spelling.

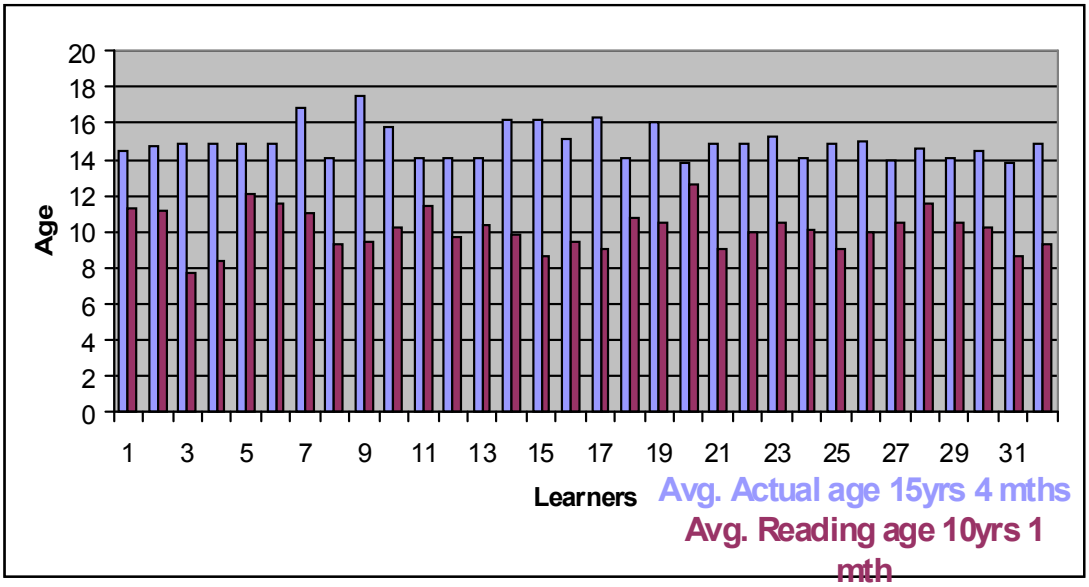
The administration of the test is carefully laid out in the 'Administration Instructions' (see appendix E, pg. 95 - 98), with verbatim directions to be given by the administrator to respondents on how the test is to be conducted. Before the actual test is started an explicit demonstration and example passage is done so that participants are not confused about what they are expected to do.

The test was administered to the research group (12/05/2005) and two other grade 9 groups in April 2005. This was done to see if there was a correlation between the reading levels attained across the groups. The results were similar with some groups registering even lower reading ages than the research group. However, although these will be mentioned in the discussion which follows, the detailed discussion will be confined to the results of the research group, grade 9A, only. The test was administered a second time to the grade 9A learners only, approximately 6 months (25/10/2005) after the first test. Learners were given the alternative test so that they did not complete the same one they had done earlier. The second test was done in order to assess whether there was any improvement in their performance over the period of the intervention.

6.4.3 Results of the Gapadol reading test

The results of the reading test reveal that the majority of the learners in the grade 9 classes tested are reading well below their chronological ages. Figure 6.4, illustrates the difference between the learners' chronological and reading ages and suggests that most of the learners in grade 9A are reading at frustration level. According to Matjila and Pretorius, frustration level is when "the reader reads with less than 90% decoding accuracy and 60% or less comprehension. These readers have reading problems, especially with comprehension, and are reading below maturational level" (2004, 5). Furthermore, according to Matjila and Pretorius "they require intensive reading programmes to raise their reading level" (2004, 5).

Figure 6.4 Results of the first reading test grade 9A



Therefore, although grade 9A have completed 8 years of formal schooling, they cannot be considered to be functionally literate at the level at which they are reading. The average chronological age of the class is 15 years and 4 months while the average reading age is 10 years and 1 month. This means that they are on average 5 years and 3 months below standard. The highest reading age recorded was 12 years 10 months by a learner whose chronological age is 14 years 8 months. The lowest reading age recorded was 7 years 7 months by a learner whose chronological age was 14 years and 9 months. This particular learner, Dillon, often refuses to engage in written tasks. He seldom hands anything in for assessment and at the end of the year his portfolio was almost empty. He failed most subjects at the end of the first and second term when formal control tests were held. In the comprehension test analysed in the previous section of this chapter he achieved 5 out of a possible 25 marks or 20% for the June examination. This questions how this particular learner has been able to progress to grade 9 with a reading age of grade 1 level.

The other two grade 9 classes, grade 9C and 9E, achieved similar results for the test, with grade 9C having a slightly higher average reading age of 10 years and 7 months while grade 9E had a slightly lower average reading age of 9 years and 6 months. This suggests that the weak reading ability observed in grade 9A learners is not confined to this class only, but across the entire grade.

The results achieved by the learners in this test support the results of other reading tests, both small and large scale, which have been conducted in South African schools and which reveal that the majority of learners have very weak reading ability. Some of these have been confined to township schools (Kapp 2004, Matjila & Pretorius 2004 and Pretorius 2000) while others have been conducted across all schools, such as the systemic evaluation conducted by the Department of Education (KZN Department of Education 2005) and the PIRLS test (Van Staden 2008). They also support the findings recorded in the previous section of this chapter which reported on reading comprehension activities undertaken by grade 9A during the first half of the year.

A second reading test was administered 6 months after the first, and reveal that on average the learners had made progress during that period, as can be observed in Figure 6.5. The average reading age has improved by 6 months to 10 years and 7 months. Although they are 6 months older, their average chronological age now being 15 years and 10 months they have made some progress.

Figure 6.5 Results of the second reading test grade 9A

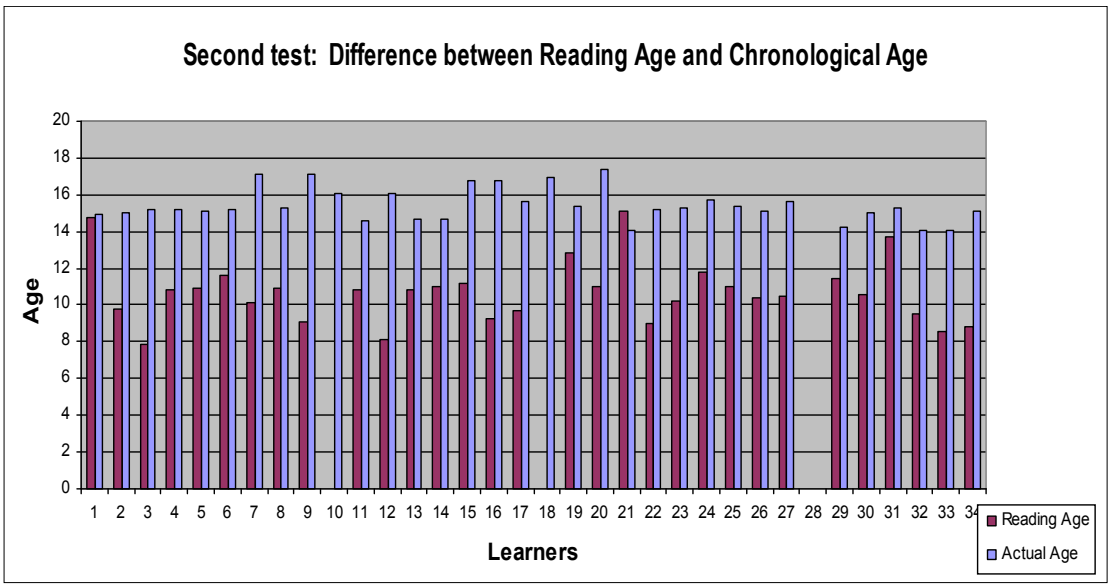
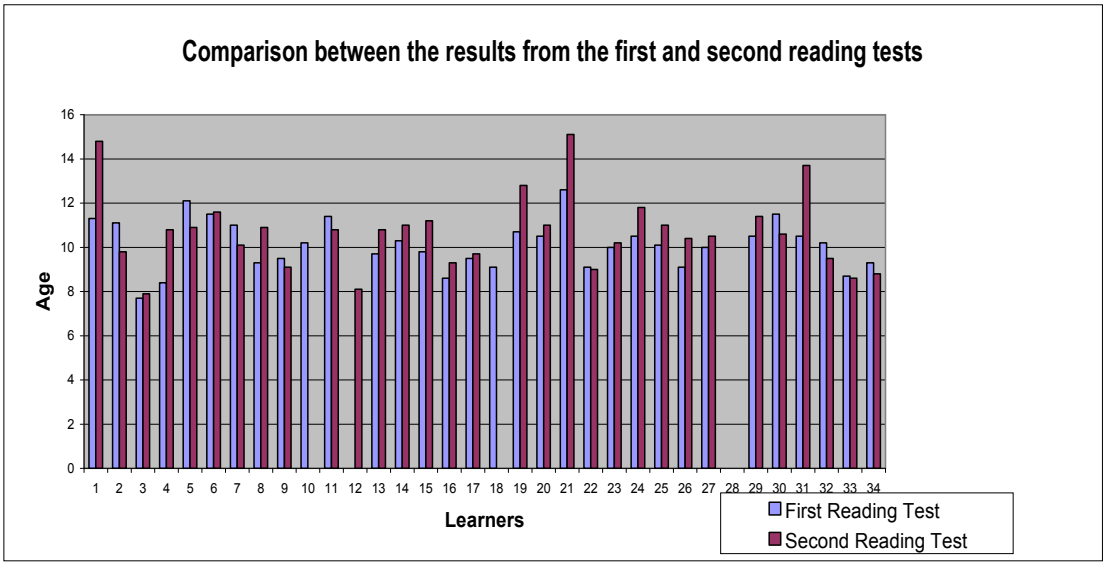


Figure 6.6 illustrates the improvement over the 6 month period and offers a comparison of their results on the first and second reading test. While not all the

learners show improvement, 21 of them, approximately two thirds of the class, have increased their scores.

Figure 6.6 Comparison between the grade 9A results of the two tests



6.4.4 Discussion of the results of the Gapadol reading tests

The results of the reading tests confirm the observations articulated earlier in this chapter regarding the poor reading and comprehension observed and explain the learners' limited ability to respond effectively to questions set on short reading passages. However, they do not explain why, after eight years of schooling, they have not yet mastered reading, something which should have been taught in the foundation phase and developed through the intermediate and senior phases. Reading needs to be addressed at every stage in a learners' school career so that they develop beyond the decoding skills taught in the foundation phase. According to Matjila and Pretorius, by grade 9 "learners should be reading from a wide variety of texts with different viewpoints. By this stage readers should achieve holistic integration of information across texts" (2004, 6).

There is considerable evidence that children develop an appreciation of books and reading in their homes and communities, and that children who come from a literate environment are better readers than those who do not (Brice Heath 1983 and 1994; Braunger and Lewis 1998; Pretorius 2000; Peregoy and Boyle 2001; Matjila and Pretorius 2004; Pretorius and Machet 2004; Conlon *et al* 2006; Fink

and Samuels 2007). Learners who come from homes where there are few if any books, where access to books is limited and where reading is not highly valued often experience difficulties reading and "may even have a negative attitude to reading" (Matjila and Pretorius 2004, 6). As Braunger and Lewis comment, "children need many opportunities to engage with print in meaningful ways ... and a supportive environment for successful literacy acquisition and development" (1998, 31).

In order to explain the learners' poor attitudes towards and ability in reading, a reading questionnaire was devised which was given to all the learners in grade 9. This questionnaire will be discussed in the following section.

6.5 The reading questionnaire

Reading questionnaires are a common method used to collect information about the reading backgrounds, attitudes and preferences of learners and a number of them are available. Teachers and librarians use them routinely to find out the kinds of books learners enjoy reading to guide their choice of class reading texts. They are also advocated as a way teachers can get to know their learners in a meaningful way and find out their feelings about and interest in reading at the start of the school year in order to address any problems. The questionnaire used with grade 9A is a combination of these, as it aims to find out about the learners reading backgrounds, attitudes and preferences.

The reading questionnaire (see appendix F, pg. 100 - 102) consists of 22 questions. The first 6 are demographic questions which request information on the respondents' age, gender, class group, mother tongue and the additional languages they are studying, thus the remaining 16 questions relate to reading. Learners were required to indicate their grade, but not required to put their names on the questionnaire, so it is not possible to cross tabulate their responses to the questionnaire to their results in the comprehension activities or Gapadol reading test. The entire sample consisted of 203 grade 9 pupils. However, in the analysis,

the results obtained from pupils in grade 9A have been separated and compared to the results of the grade as a whole.

The complete statistical analysis is not discussed here as it is complex and detailed, consisting of the results from each question and a series of cross tabulations across questions. Thus a summary of the salient results and cross tabulations only will be provided in this section.

6.5.1 Results of the reading questionnaire

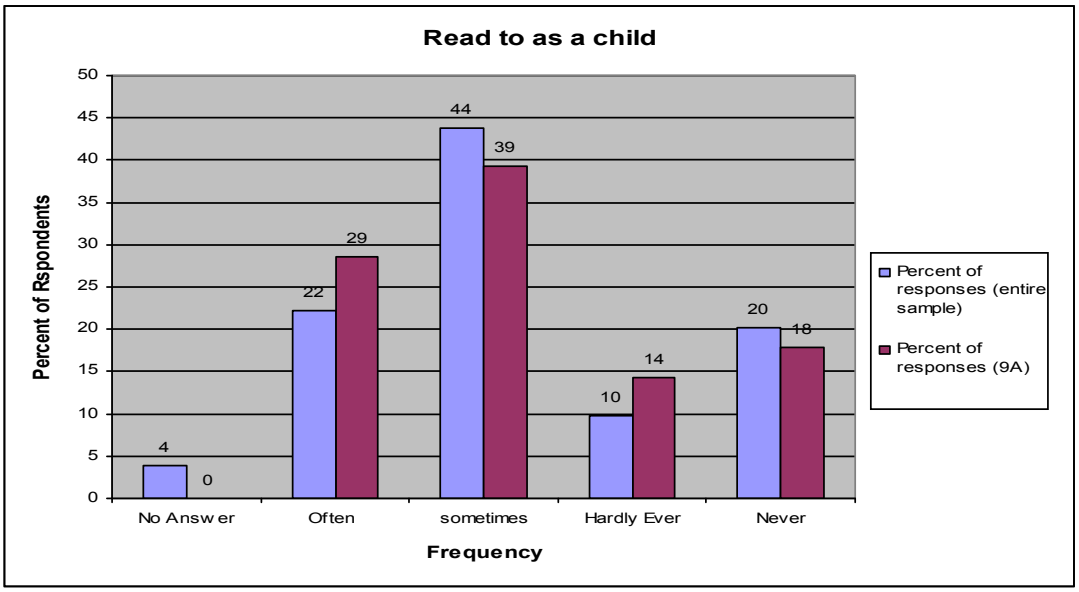
As has been indicated previously, sixteen questionnaire questions were designed to elicit information about three specific aspects: the literate environment the learners' experience at home and their reading backgrounds, their personal interest in and attitudes towards reading, and perceptions about their reading ability. These three aspects will be discussed in the following sections.

6.5.1.1 The literate background of grade 9A learners

In order to establish the literate environment from which the learners have come, a number of questions were asked about literacy in their homes. As discussed earlier in this thesis, early experiences with text influence the acquisition of literacy once the learner moves into the school environment (Brice Heath 1983; Matjila and Pretorius 2004; Peregoy and Boyle 2001; Conlon *et al* 2006). Other questions were asked about the learners' attitudes towards, interest in and perceptions of their ability to read. These questions have been distributed across the questionnaire.

The question was posed, *When you were a small child, did your parents, or anyone else in your home, read to you?* (No 18). As can be seen in Figure 6.7, the largest proportion of respondents (44% for the grade as a whole, and 39% of grade 9A) reported being read to 'sometimes' as a small child, while 28% of grade 9A stated they had been read to 'often', 14% stated 'hardly ever' and 18% of grade 9A reported 'never' being read to as a child, a combined total of 32%. A larger number of grade 9A, 29%, reported that they had been read to 'often'.

Figure 6.7 Responses to the question 18, ***When you were a small child, did your parents, or anyone else in your home, read a story to you?***



Cross tabulations were done in order to establish relationships between the learners' answers to this question between the questions which asked whether or not respondents were read to as a child, and how much they enjoyed reading (question 7). Over half the respondents (55%) who indicated that they had been read to 'often', said that they enjoyed reading 'very much', or 'quite a lot'. While 63.4% of those who stated that they had never been read to as a child indicated that they enjoyed reading 'a little' or 'not at all'. In addition, those who had been read to 'hardly ever' or 'never' spent less time reading during a week (question 8) and were less likely to be library members (question 16), with a majority of those who reported never having been read to as a child also reporting that they were not members of a library. It is significant that those learners who were read to 'often' as children, rate themselves as better readers (question 19), while those who responded that they had 'never' been read to as a child rate themselves, on average, as somewhere between average and slow readers.

These results support research by Land 2008, Majila and Pretorius 2004 and Brice Heath 1983 and others that learners who had been read to as children are more motivated to read and enjoy it more. Braunger and Lewis (1998) emphasise the importance of significant adults interacting with children over texts stating that,

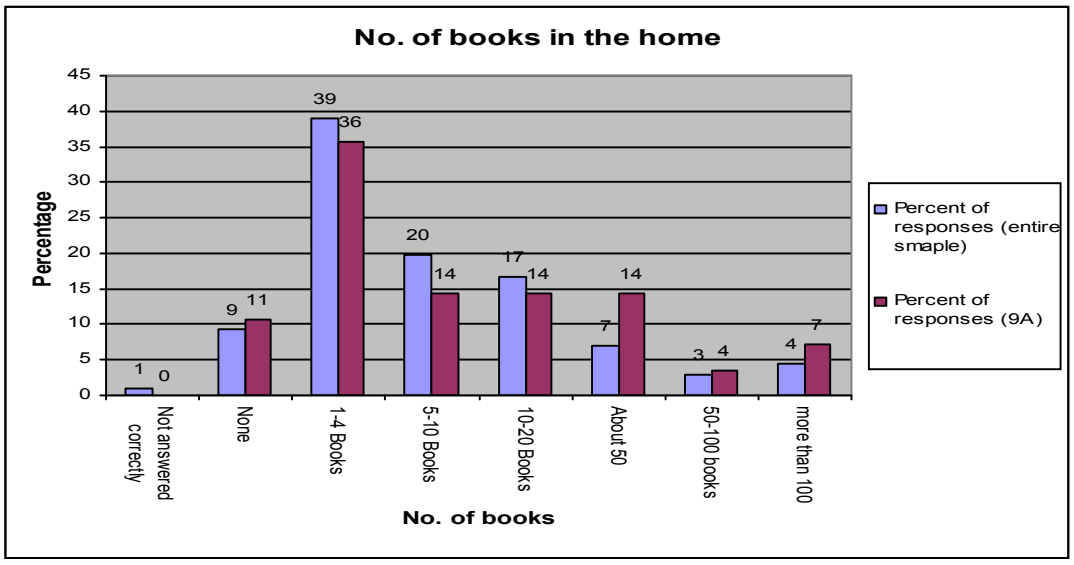
> these interactions – with others and within a variety of print settings – teach children the societal functions and conventions of reading and

> writing and help them link reading with enjoyment and satisfaction, thus increasing their desire to engage in meaningful literacy activities.
>
> (1998, 31)

The reading and discussion of story books in a warm supportive atmosphere is one of the greatest contributors to success in both reading and writing, as they learn the structure of stories, and through interaction about stories learn top-down skills such as inferring and evaluating (Fink and Samuel 2007; Braunger and Lewis 1998).

Questions 9, 10, and 11 seek to establish the quantity and type of reading material available in the learners' homes. Question 9 asks, *Do you have any books in your home?* and requests the learners to select an approximate number, offering seven choices. Although the answers are similar across the grade, as is evident in Figure 6.8 below, the grade 9A pupils showed a greater variety of responses, recording a greater percentage of pupils with no books at all at home, as well as a greater percentage of pupils on the upper end of the scale. However, the mean for grade 9A was slightly, but not significantly, higher than the whole grade with pupils in 9A, recorded something between 5 - 10 books and 10 - 20 books in their homes.

Figure 6.8 Responses to question 9*, Do you have any books in your home?*



Questions 11, *How often is a newspaper bought in your home?* and question 12, *How often are magazines bought in your home?* have been asked in order to establish the learners' exposure to printed material other than books at home. The responses to question 11 suggest that a fairly high proportion of grade 9A (35.7%), live in households where a newspaper is available daily. There are also a greater number of households who have a newspaper available 'sometimes' (35.7%) and 'never' (7.1%). The mean indicates that a newspaper is brought into the households of grade 9A learners on average once a week. Significantly, where newspaper purchase frequency increases, so does magazine purchasing frequency. This suggests that in households where newspapers are available, magazines are as well, indicating that there is a parent or caregiver who purchases and reads them.

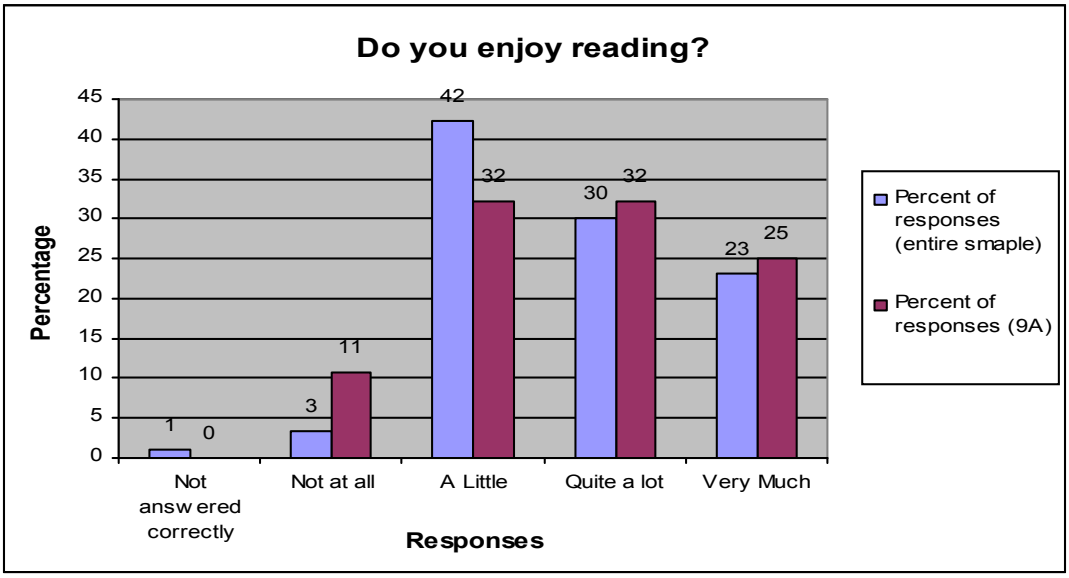
While being read to as children is important, the modelling of reading by adults and the value placed on books and reading material also has an impact on children's attitudes towards reading. A print rich physical environment and observing adults read, develops positive attitudes towards engagement with texts and emphasises the value of books (Braunger and Lewis 1998).

6.5.1.2 Reading attitudes of grade 9A learners

Reading attitudes are manifest in the enthusiasm, interest and motivation the learners have to engage with text. While social engagement with reading in the home environment is important, children's experiences when they get to school can also create a positive attitude towards reading. Print-rich classrooms with a wide variety of colourful storybooks on hand, and teachers who read aloud to learners and engage them in meaningful discussions about books, all build positive attitudes towards reading and lead to it being considered a pleasurable activity (Braunger and Lewis 1998).

Question 7 is a direct question which asks, *Do you enjoy reading? a*nd offers them a choice of any one of 4 responses: 'Not at All', 'A little', 'Quite a Lot' and 'Very much'. As can be seen in the Figure 6.9, the majority of learners, 42% of the whole grade and 38% of grade 9A, state that they like reading only 'A Little'.

Figure 6.9 Learner response to question 7: ***Do you enjoy reading?***



As can be seen above, compared to the entire sample, a greater proportion of the grade 9A students are on the upper end of the scale, indicating that they enjoy reading. On the other hand, a greater proportion of 9A pupils are also found on the bottom end of the scale compared to the sample as a whole. Thus, the results for grade 9A show a greater variety than the sample as a whole. The average response from grade 9A for enjoyment of reading is somewhere between "a little" and "quite a lot".

The purpose of questions 8, *How much time do you spend reading in a week?*, 14, *How much time do you spend watching TV?,* and 15, *What do you do in your spare time?,* is to rate the importance of reading to the learners when put against other leisure activities.

The responses to question 8, *How much time do you spend reading in a week?*, indicate that on average learners, both from grade 9A, as well as the sample as a whole, read slightly more than 1 – 2 hours per week. The question did not stipulate whether their response should include reading done during school time, but even if this is not the case this response suggests that most learners spend very little time reading. A small number (7.1%) of grade 9A learners indicate that they

spend more than 5 hours a week reading. As the learners were not required to put their names on the questionnaires it is not possible to establish any correlation between time spent reading and the result achieved on the reading test.

Learners were given six common leisure activities and asked to rank them. These were: *Play sport; Watch TV; Read; Listen to music; Go shopping and Hang out with friends.* The ranking given to these activities is similar across the grade and grade 9A, with listening to music being ranked first, watching TV coming second, hanging out with friends being third, reading fourth, shopping fifth and playing sport last.

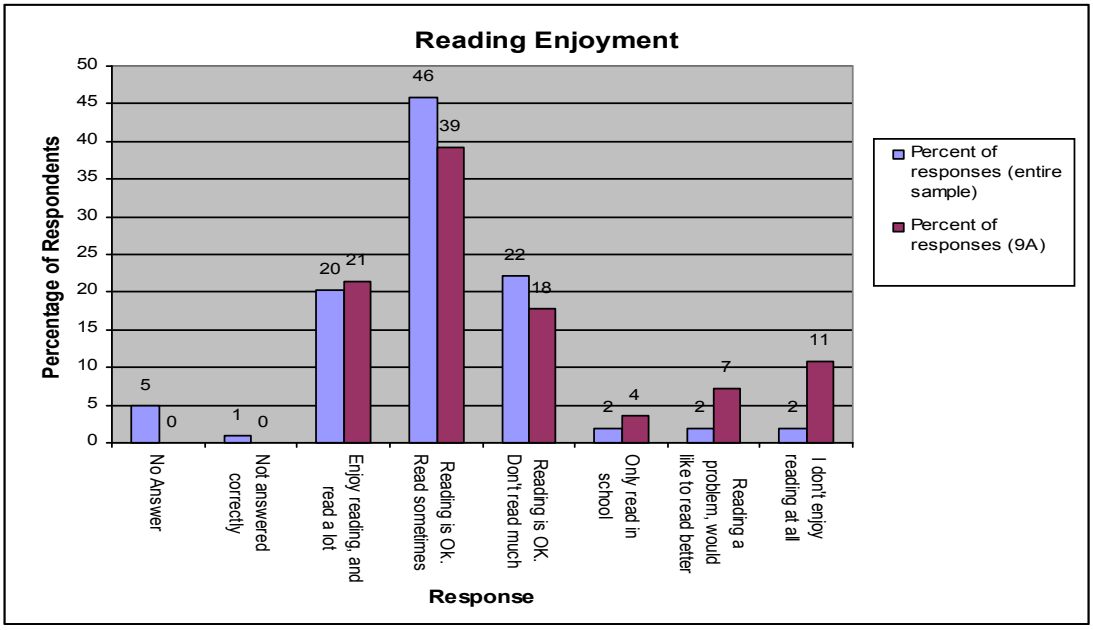
Watching TV, although ranked second when the responses are averaged, is revealed to be an activity attributed high importance by many learners. The majority of the responses from grade 9A clustered around 1 or 2, indicating that a large proportion of those in grade 9A consider watching TV to be either their most important, or second most important pastime.

The relationship between the amount of time spent watching TV in a day (question 15), and the amount of time spent reading per week (question 8) indicates that these variables are clearly related, because as the amount of time spent reading decreases, the amount of time spent watching TV increases. This is to be expected, as the learners have a finite amount of time for recreational activities. Thus if they choose to watch a lot of TV they will have less time available for recreational reading.

There were a variety of responses given regarding the importance of reading as a pastime. The majority of learners in the grade as a whole rank reading as either third, fourth, or least important activity. On average, the grade gave reading a rank of 3.74, indicating that the average pupil in the grade considers reading to fall somewhere between their third and fourth favourite activity. On average, the grade 9A pupils gave reading a lower ranking at 3.40, thus reading ranks fourth, with only shopping and playing sport ranking lower.

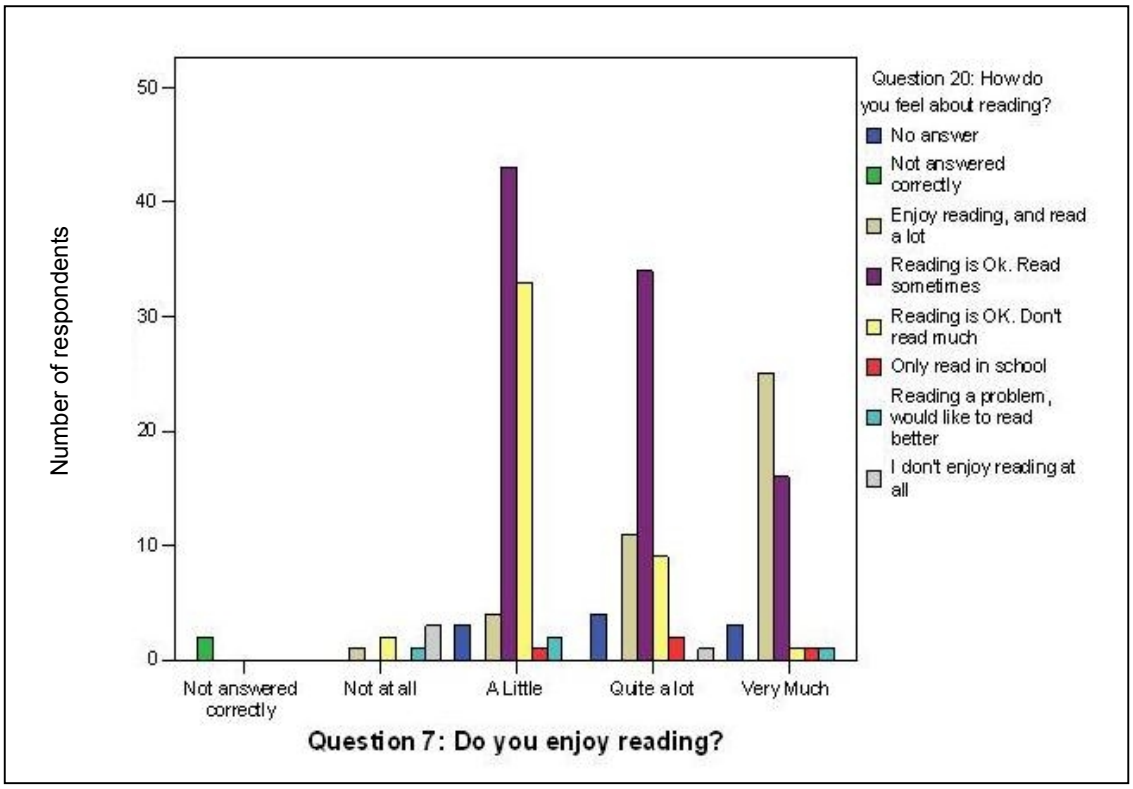
Question 20 required the learners to answer the question, *How do you feel about reading?* They were given a number of different responses from which to choose. These were as follows: I enjoy reading and read a lot; Reading is OK, I sometimes read a book or a magazine; Reading is OK, but I don't read much; I only read when I have to read for school; Reading is a problem for me but I would like to read better and finally, I don't enjoy reading at all. This question is aimed at trying to determine the respondents' feelings about reading. While the previous question looked at reading ability, this question considers reading enjoyment. Figure 6.10, shows the results for grade 9A, as well as the grade as a whole.

Figure 6.10 Learners' responses to question 20: ***How do you feel about reading?***



The largest number of grade 9A, as well as the sample as a whole responded "Reading is OK. I sometimes read a book or a magazine". Nearly half of the sample (46%), and 39% of grade 9A fell within this category. A higher proportion of grade 9A respondents, compared to the sample overall, are also evident at the bottom end of the scale, with 11% of grade 9A pupils indicating that they do not enjoy reading at all. The validity of the responses was tested by cross tabulating the responses to this question with that of question 7, *Do you enjoy reading?,* which also relates to feelings about reading. A correlation between the two variables is clearly indicated in the graph overleaf, suggesting consistency in the responses.

Figure 6.11 Cross tabulation of responses to question 7 *Do you enjoy reading?* and question 20, *How do you feel about reading?*



As stated in the previous section, research in emergent literacy shows that the foundations of reading are laid in the home environment, when children are read to often and observe adults engaging with reading material (Land 2008; Matjila and Pretorius 2004; Peregoy and Boyle 2001). It is therefore unsurprising that when asked to indicate their enjoyment of reading, the majority of learners in grade 9A state that they like it 'a little'. This is borne out by the small amount of time they spend reading which is on average between one and two hours a week only.

Reading enjoyment arises from success and success arises from engagement (Fink and Samuel 2007). If learners do not engage with reading they cannot develop the cognitive skills they need in order to read effectively. This is evident in the findings presented in section 6.3 of this chapter, where many of the grade 9A learners are not able to engage with the comprehension passages. Furthermore, if learners are not frequent readers, they will not become fluent readers (White and Dewitz 1994; Braunger and Lewis 1998). Struggling readers lose the motivation

and desire to read as they end up expending a significant amount of effort decoding words, this in turn affects their reading rate and fluency (Rasinski *et al* 2005). Therefore reading is not a pleasurable activity.

6.5.1.3 Grade 9A perceptions about their reading ability

The learners' perceptions about their own reading was elicited in their responses to questions 13, *Do you think you have any reading problems?*, 19, *How do you rate yourself as a reader?*, 20, *How do you feel about reading?* and 21, *When I read the main problem I have is* - followed by the choice of 5 statements to complete the sentence that best describes the problem experienced.

The responses to question 13, *Do you think you have any problems reading?* indicate that a high proportion (78.3%) of the grade as a whole, and an even higher proportion of 9A (78.6%) do not think they have any problems reading while 17.7% of the grade and 14.3% of grade 9A concede that they do have difficulty reading. A cross tabulation between the amount of time learners spend reading, and whether or not they feel they have problems with reading yields interesting results in that all the learners who indicates that they have difficulty with reading report spending under two hours a week reading.

Question 19 asked the learners *How do you rate yourself as a reader?* and required them to choose one of the following statements: I am a fast, good reader and I understand everything I read; I am an average reader and I understand most of what I read; I am a slow reader but I understand what I am reading; I am a slow reader and I have problems understanding what I read; I struggle reading and I don't understand much of what I read.

Figure 6.12 Learners responses to the question: ***How do you rate yourself as a reader?***

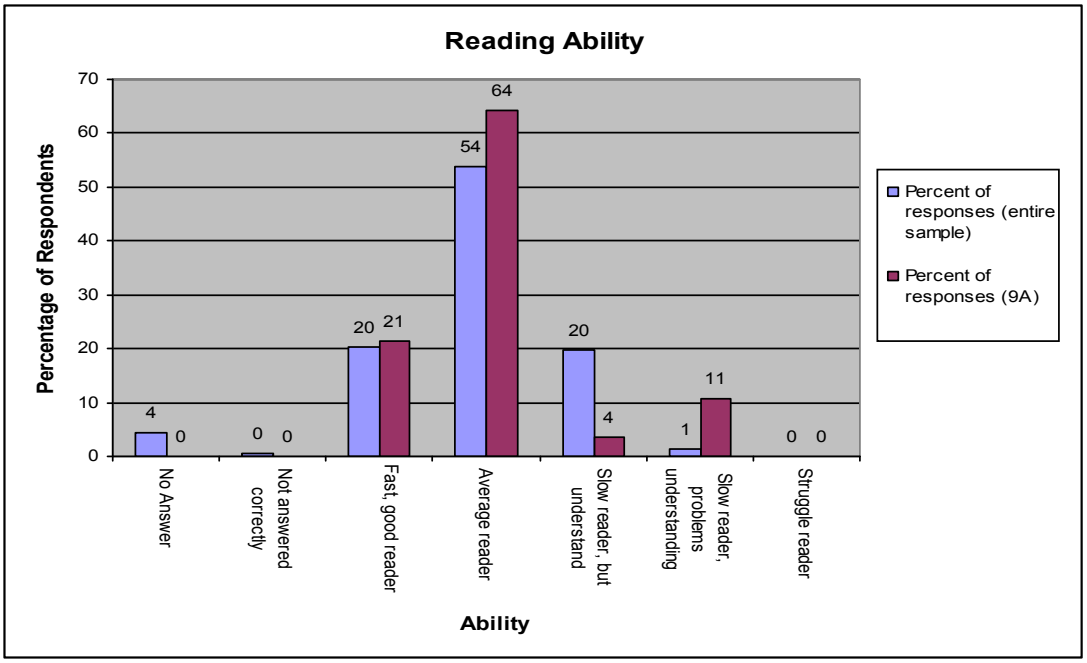


Figure 6.12 shows that the statement that was chosen by most respondents to reflect their own assessment of their reading ability is "I am an average reader and I understand most of what I read". Over half of the respondents, 54%, in the grade and 64% of grade 9A chose this response. In addition a larger percentage of grade 9A learners (11%) concede that they read slowly and have problems understanding.

In order to check the validity of these responses, and to determine whether or not respondents are being consistent, these results were cross tabulated with question 13, that asked: *Do you think you have any problems reading?* The responses given to these two questions correlate, indicating that respondents are being consistent. Thus those who indicate that they do have problems with reading are more likely to rate their reading ability as average to slow. Further cross tabulation reveals that the more time learners spent reading, the higher they rank their reading ability.

Question 21 requires learners to point out their main problem with reading, given a list of possible options. These options are as follows: 'I don't understand all the words'; 'I have problems understanding grammar'; 'I read too slowly'; 'I find it

hard to concentrate'; and, 'I have no real problems with reading'. A high proportion of respondents (30% of the grade as a whole and 39% of grade 9A) said that they had no problems with reading at all. A large portion of the sample (36% of grade 9A learners and 31% of the sample as a whole) point out that they have problems with vocabulary, or not understanding all the words when they read.

The validity of the responses to this question can be checked against question 19 that asked respondents to rate themselves as readers. Those who said that they were slow readers indicated that they had problems understanding the grammar, or understanding all of the words. By far the highest proportion of those who said that they were fast, good readers indicated that they had no real problems with reading. These results are to be expected, and confirm that respondents were being consistent in their responses.

It is interesting that despite the low scores that most of the learners are attaining in reading comprehension activities discussed in section 6.3, and on the Gapadol reading test, section 6.4, most of grade 9A rate themselves as 'average' readers. While some concede they have difficulties with some aspects of reading, none of them consider themselves to be a 'struggling reader'. Similarly, when asked whether they think they have problems reading, 78.6% of grade 9A respond in the negative. When asked how they feel about reading, the majority of grade 9A indicated that 'reading is OK. I read sometimes'. This finding is similar to that of Baruthram (2006) and Balfour (2002). They asked university students who were weak readers whether they had any problems reading and they responded in the negative. It is speculated that this response suggests that because learners do not come from a literate background they have little awareness of their own limitations in terms of reading.

The findings from the reading questionnaire indicate that most of the learners do not come from literate backgrounds which to some extent explains the results recorded in the previous two sections, where the difficulties the learners experience with reading comprehension, and the results of the Gapadol reading

test are examined. The section which follows will discuss the results and findings from the three research instruments reported in this chapter.

6.6 Discussion of the findings: Reading and critical literacy

A variety of data related to reading collected during the course of this research has been presented, analysed and discussed in this chapter in order to support the view that learners who cannot read effectively experience difficulty with answering literal, inferential and evaluative questions on written texts and lack the ability to engage effectively with the critical literacy demands articulated in *Curriculum 2005*.

Curriculum 2005 requires learners in the senior phase to make inferences, assess ideas, interpret meaning, critically reflect, argue, recognize genres, be critically aware, identify, analyse, evaluate, discern powerful and powerless language, recognise 'hidden agenda' and access information, among many other sophisticated language skills (Department of Education 1997e). The findings of this study indicate that the grade 9A learners are not able to successfully achieve these outcomes.

The learners' responses to the texts read in class show that they are not able to respond to literal, reorganization, inferential or evaluative questions set on texts effectively. Despite the relatively low level of the readings, which range from grade 4 to grade 8 level, the majority of the learners are not able to respond to comprehension questions based on the texts, with the average class mark across the five marked texts ranging between 30% and 55%. Learners coped better with the literal questions, which are the simplest questions to respond to as they require only recognition and recall of the passage (Barrett 1972). However, the higher order questions which require them to make inferences, interpret meaning, offer opinions, critically reflect, analyse, and so on, were generally poorly answered, despite these skills being a senior phase requirement of *Curriculum 2005.* Furthermore, *Curriculum 2005* aims to produce learners who are critical, logical

and analytical thinkers. The analysis of the learners' responses to texts has shown that the majority of learners are not critical, logical or analytical thinkers and are not able to engage with texts beyond the most rudimentary level.

Furthermore, when analysing the learners' level of reading in terms of Luke and Freebody's (1997, 1999) model of reading, one can conclude that the majority of the learners in grade 9A are not effective readers. They are not 'Code breakers' as they are not able to decode or encode text beyond the most basic level. They are not proficient 'Text participants' in that, while some of them are able to understand texts, the majority of them are not able to interpret them and are only able to answer literal questions. It is noted that in the responses to the passage taken from *Chandra* (Hendry 1995) that required interpretation or evaluation, "... the answers were poor or simply not tackled at all" (see appendix B, pg. 56). They also cannot be considered 'Text users' or 'Text analysers' as they are not able to understand the purposes of different written texts or discern that texts have been written in a particular way in order to influence the reader. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapters 7 and 8. Their responses and engagement with the texts raise questions about their reading ability.

Reading is taught in the first three years of schooling and the assumption is that learners can read and often after this point no further instruction is given (Pretorius 2000; Matjila and Pretorius 2004). Grade 9A, and in fact all the grade 9 learners at Sherwood High School, are found to be reading at a level well below their chronological ages, with the majority of the learners reading at frustration level (Matjila and Pretorius 2004, 5). Matjila and Pretorius further contend that by grade 9 "learners should be reading from a wide variety of texts with different viewpoints. By this stage readers should achieve holistic integration of information across texts" (2004, 6). This is not the case at Sherwood High School and research has shown that even texts well below the grade 9 level, pose problems for the grade 9 learners.

Research indicates that if learners are not reading fluently, their reading rate and comprehension are affected negatively (Rasinski *et al* 2005), which will lead to

"frustration, avoidance of reading and ultimately, school failure" (Rasinski *et al* 2005, 26). The grade 9A learners fall into in this category. It was found that when reading a text with a grade 6 suitability, many "...progressed very slowly...[and] some did not finish at all. Some used their rulers to keep their place... others followed the words … using a finger... others were vocalizing … [and others] sub-vocalizing" (see appendix B, pg. 52, 03/02/2005). It is clear that many grade 9A learners are not fluent readers and therefore not able to "achieve sufficient comprehension levels, enjoy reading or complete reading tasks in a reasonable amount of time" (Morris and Gaffney 2011, 331).

Furthermore, without fluency in reading, learners will not be able to succeed at higher level reading tasks, such as summarising, creating meaningful connections, self-regulating and inferring (Lanning 2009). Nor will they display competence in activating, inferring, monitoring, clarifying, questioning, searching, selecting, visualising, and organising (McEwan 2004). They will not be able to connect, predict, question, monitor, synthesize, (Oczkus 2004), activate prior knowledge, use imagery, ask or generate questions or think aloud (Allington 2001). This is true of the grade 9A learners who are found to be reading at frustration level and consequently are not able to respond to questions aside from those at the most basic literal level.

Research carried out by Land (2008), Matjila and Pretorius (2004), Brice Heath (1994) and Conlon, Creed and Tucker (2006), among others, indicates that in order to be good readers, children need to have been read to and surrounded by books at home. A significant number of the grade 9A learners, were read to 'hardly ever' or 'never' as children. In turn, the majority of these learners enjoy reading only 'a little' or 'not at all' have few books at home and are less likely to be library members.

In the functional sense of the word, literacy is seen as the ability to read and write (Harris and Hodges 1981). However the term has changed and developed and has come to involve the ability to interpret, analyse, evaluate, synthesise and criticise a wide range of texts (Lankshear and Knobel 1997). Critical literacy

takes literacy a step further and invites learners to "understand and engage in the politics of daily life in the quest for a more truly democratic social order" (Lankshear and McLaren 1993; xix). Critical literacy requires learners to develop critical thought (Lankshear and Knobel 1997, 137), and to encode and decode "… the social, political and ideological situatedness of literacy" (Wooldridge 2001, 259). Janks (2010) contends that critical literacy involves the deconstruction of texts and a consideration of the choices made by the writer and the underlying purpose behind these choices. Wallace (2001) concurs, maintaining that critical literacy is a way to raise awareness and interpretation of texts as well as talk about the issues raised in texts. She goes on to claim that after reading texts and thoroughly discussing them, students are able to revisit their understandings, re-evaluate their position, or maintain their position and defend it (Wallace 2001, 216). The findings in this chapter indicate that the learners in grade 9A do not have the reading capacity to adequately engage with texts in the way described above. They are not able to interpret, analyse, evaluate, synthesise, infer or criticise texts and some of them do not display the level of reading and writing proficiency required to be termed functionally literate. Thus, they do not fulfil the requirements laid out in the Language Literacy and Communication outcomes with regard to responding to texts and cannot engage effectively with critical literacy.

Critical literacy encourages learners to encode and decode texts. They need to question the texts they are hearing, reading and viewing and are required to look at them in a critical and questioning manner, take a position on them and become active participants in the deconstruction of the text. This requires higher level thinking from learners. Not only do they need to be able to decode and encode the text, they need to analyse it in terms of their own opinions and beliefs, unpack it and make sense of it. Then, through talk and social action, become active participants in the exploration of "the ideological meaning within texts" (Wallace 2001, 222). Sanders argues that people who cannot read and write "do not think in highly abstract categories" (1994, 31) and are not able to decontextualise, disembed, define, describe or categorise. Morris and Gaffney (2011) agree,

arguing that in order to achieve comprehension, readers need to have achieved fluency.

It is therefore not surprising that the grade 9A learners are unable to respond to questions set on texts well below their grade level. Due to their inadequate reading skills they are unable to master any advanced decoding or encoding of texts. It is plausible to argue that until learners reach reading fluency, they will not be able to competently respond to any higher level reading questions and will therefore not be able to successfully engage with any texts in a manner sufficient to allow them to engage with critical literacy.

6.7 Reflections on reading and critical literacy

This chapter provides data from three different research instruments: the first examines and analyses in detail the grade 9A learners' results and responses to a range of reading comprehension tasks; the second assesses learners reading age using the Gapadol reading test; while the third elicits information about attitudes towards reading in the learners' home environment and learners own perceptions about reading and their reading ability.

The comprehension tasks described in section 6.3 were poorly done and despite discussion and careful instruction in how to approach such tasks, little improvement was perceived over the half year period. Learners have problems decoding and encoding texts effectively and have poor reading fluency. This effects their ability to understand what they are reading (Rasinski *et al* 2005; Morris and Gaffney 2011). Their engagement with the written texts seldom went beyond the literal level and thus they fail to achieve the outcomes articulated in *Curriculum 2005*.

The results of the Gapadol reading test confirm that the learners are reading below their chronological ages and although their reading improved slightly over the period of the intervention, this is not sufficient to remove the deficit

appreciably. As the ability to read is important in developing critical literacy, this is severely compromised.

Finally, the results of the reading questionnaire reveals that many of the learners do not come from the literate environment so important to developing a love of reading (Brice Heath 1983 and 1994; Braunger and Lewis 1998; Pretorius 2000; Peregoy and Boyle 2001). They seldom read in their leisure time, but believe that they do not have any problems with reading.

The above suggest that developing critical literacy, which requires learners to recognise how the writers' choice of words might influence the reader, is problematic.

The next chapter will analyse data taken from an activity which calls upon the learners to engage with an advertisement. Advertisements are characterised by their use of manipulative language in order to persuade potential customers to purchase goods and services. They also use gender in a variety of ways for the same purpose.

Chapter 7 Language and Power: Advertising[13]

In order to comprehend the impact of all this advertising on society we must learn how to see through advertisements, for they are not just messages about goods and services but social and cultural texts about ourselves.

Frith (1997)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter, as with the previous chapter, focuses on reading, but the texts are advertisements. Advertising is a topic which lends itself to demonstrating an understanding of critical literacy and critical language awareness. An activity which the learners in grade 9A completed as the culmination of a series of lessons on the topic 'advertising' will be examined. Studying advertising invites learners to consider the different strategies that advertisers use in order to sell their products, by reading the visual design and textual content of adverts. The multimodal nature of advertising means that language along with the visual and social images portrayed, combine to deliver a particular message (Thomas 2004). Thus illustrations, pictures, names, colours, slogans, jingles, print type and size, language structure and choice of words, all combine to persuade a particular preselected target group to buy a particular product.

A number of different techniques are used by advertisers in order to sell products in what Freire refers to as the "populist manipulation of the masses" (Freire 1971, 40). Gender is used extensively in advertising with sexual exploitation and gender stereotyping frequently and disproportionately utilised. Conventional cultural stereotypes are routinely portrayed in advertisements with women depicted as excessively feminine and shown in traditional roles such as mothers, housewives, caregivers, and sex objects, while men are portrayed in roles of authority, action and dominance over women. Sex is used to sell goods and commodities, as objects are associated with sexual attraction and general desirability to the opposite sex (Frith 1997). The objectification of women in advertisements, the

[13] The findings that relate to the classroom activity on advertising reported in this section have been published in 2009 in an article by Ralfe entitled 'Policy: powerful or pointless? An exploration of the role of critical literacy in challenging and changing gender stereotypes.' In *Language Learning Journal,* 37(3), 305-321.

limited options for women they represent, and the underrepresentation of women particularly in professional roles has been widely condemned by feminists (Friedan 1963; Courtney and Whipple 1983). Furthermore, advertisements are powerful in "reinforcing gender-role attitudes, values, perceptions, beliefs and behaviours" making them "particularly potent socializing tools in the development or reinforcement of gender roles" (MacKay and Covell 1997, 573/4) so much so that they are said to "organize our experiences and understanding in a significant way" (Kang 1997, 980).

The aim of the research reported in this thesis is to explore whether the learners in the research class can be sensitized to gender power through critical literacy and advertising offers a useful tool in order to do this. Critical literacy calls for an awareness of the "political, social and cultural forms of subordination that create inequalities among different groups as they live out their lives" (Giroux 1988a, 165). Embedded in advertisements are not only messages that attract buyers, but the cultural values and roles that are played out in society at large. Deconstructing an advertisement and looking critically at the way language and visuals are used can expose the power structures in society. Thus, when using them in the classroom learners are encouraged to read them critically and question the ideologies which lie behind the writer's linguistic and visual choices.

The language of advertising is unashamedly loaded as the purpose of advertising is to persuade people to buy a particular product or service. Thus the topic 'Advertising' provides a useful platform to introduce critical language awareness. Luke and Freebody's (1997) four-tiered approach to reading instruction, explained in detail in chapter 2 of this thesis, can be put into practice as learners are offered a number of focused activities which can illustrate to the learner that "the text is dependent for its meaning and its functioning on meanings outside of itself" (Piem 1993, 91) and that they must look beyond the dominant or ideological ideas which are written into the text. In this way they can understand and challenge these ideologies. Furthermore, the world is becoming increasingly globalized and hi-tech (Castells 1996) and although these learners did not have access to technology such as computers and cell phones when this research was

undertaken, they will in future be faced with the marketing of ideas and products via sophisticated and multimedia channels. The importance of learners becoming aware of the above is clearly indicated in the outcomes articulated in the *Curriculum 2005* language curriculum which was discussed in chapter 2 and will be discussed in more detail in relation to the activity being reported on later in this chapter.

The data analysed in this chapter comes from two different activities. The first was generated by a group activity done in class which was the culmination of a series of lessons on the topic, 'Advertising'. The activity requires the learners to make use of the content knowledge and the critical skills that they have acquired during the course of earlier lessons in responding critically to an advertisement. The second comes from a question on advertising which was included in the June examination which required learners to answer three questions, similar to those set in the class activity, on an advertisement provided. The individual examination responses are also analysed. The purpose of reporting the June examination is similar to that expressed in the previous chapter: that the question was answered independently, without assistance from the teacher or other learners.

The advertisements were all taken from the South African edition of the *Cosmopolitan* magazine. This publication was purposefully selected because while it claims to be one of the best selling young women's magazines in the country it also includes men's issues and according to its website has a substantial and growing male readership (www.cosmopolitan.co.za). This is confirmed by the All Media and Products Survey (AMPS) which found that 31% of its readers are men (AMPS 2006), supporting the view expressed by the magazine that the messages it contains are reaching an audience more diverse than its stated target market. Four of the advertisements were taken from a motoring supplement published by, and included with the *Cosmopolitan* magazine entitled *Women on Wheels*.

The responses to the advertisements are analysed and then compared to the learners' reading ages taken from the Gapatol reading test which was discussed in

section 6.4 of the previous chapter. As with the comprehension activities discussed in chapter 6, the responses to these two activities suggest that the learners' inability to read and comprehend affects their ability to engage critically with the advertisements they were given.

In this chapter firstly details of the *Curriculum 2005* outcomes which were addressed in the series of lessons on advertising will be discussed, secondly, the activities which preceded this activity will be explained, and thirdly, the responses to the final activity and the examination question will be analysed, and compared with the reading ages of the learners in each group. Finally, the findings will be discussed in detail before concluding.

7.2 Grade 9 Learning experience of advertising

7.2.1 Learning Outcomes – Curriculum 2005

Curriculum 2005 addresses in the topic, Advertising' as part of Language, Literacy and Communication Specific Outcome 2: "Learners show critical awareness of language usage". According to the curriculum documents:

> This specific outcome aims to develop a learner's understanding of the way in which language is used as a powerful instrument to reflect, shape and manipulate people's beliefs, actions and relationships. The complexity and sensitivity of a multi-lingual context specifically requires the development of a learner's skills to interpret and consciously reflect on how language is used. For this reason the development of decoding skills (reading, listening and observing) is emphasized.
>
> (Department of Education 1997e:17)

The following assessment criteria attached to this outcome are addressed in this task: assessment criteria 1, which requires the learners to identify and analyse the purpose, audience and source of texts; assessment criteria 2, which requires the learners to explain the ways in which language is used to transmit and shape socio-cultural ideas and values; 5, which calls on them to identify, analyse and respond effectively to the manipulative uses of language and texts; 6, which calls on them to identify and analyse visual and non-verbal features of texts; and, finally, assessment criteria 7 which calls on the learners to identify, analyse and respond effectively to ideologically driven and biased language, are specifically

addressed. The range statements attached to these assessment standards reiterates the analysis and discussion of language as a social construct with a particular emphasis on a number of contexts, one of which is gender (Department of Education 1997e).

Although the main outcome addressed is outcome 2 as indicated above, a number of other outcomes and assessment standards are also encompassed in this activity. Outcome 1: "Learners make and negotiate meaning" focuses on the centrality of meaning in communication and as such requires that learners are able to identify and clarify key messages in texts, are able to make inferences from texts, are able to critically reflect on the point of view of the writer and can develop a reasoned argument about interpretation and meanings embedded in texts. Outcome 3: "Learners respond to the aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values in texts" has a number of assessment standards and range statements which apply to the advertising task which the learners are undertaking as they are asked to critically evaluate texts, give their opinions on texts, justify them and link their responses to their personal life and the lives of others. Range statements focus on the "enriching effects of texts" when they are considered in terms of the power relationships, social sensibilities, human rights and emotional identification, amongst others things, that are communicated (Department of Education 1997e).

It needs to be emphasized that the outcomes listed above taken from the senior phase curricula are not limited to grade 9 but are rather a culmination of the skills they should have developed at the end of the GET phase. The document articulates clearly the developmental aspects of the acquisition of skills from foundation phase and intermediate phase through to the senior phase. For example, the outcome 2 assessment standards for foundation and intermediate phases, that is from grade 1 upward, make specific mention of learners developing the ability to recognize the "ways in which language is used to transmit and shape socio-cultural ideas and values" (Department of Education 1997e, 6) how texts are used to manipulate people and to recognize bias and other features of visual, spoken and written texts (Department of Education 1997e).

7.2.2 Description of the activities set on advertising

The topic, advertising, was covered over a series of lessons. In keeping with Curriculum 2005 many of the activities involved working in groups or pairs with the teacher moving from group to group assisting where necessary. When whole class activities took place these involved discussion and a concerted effort was made to elicit information and facilitate learning rather than use the old-fashioned 'teacher tell' approach. In the absence of a textbook and because the entire grade needed to be offered similar lessons as they would sit the same mid-year examination, a variety of material in the form of activity and worksheets were provided to focus the discussions (see appendix B, pg. 3 – 27 for a selection of the material given to the learners).

The first lesson began by raising awareness through posing a number of questions for discussion about the nature of advertising. This was followed by a variety of group and whole class discussions and activities around the importance and effectiveness of logos and slogans. Notes were then given which presented information about the history of advertising and the various media used to put across the advertising message. The techniques used by advertisers and how the target markets are persuaded to purchase things was covered. Activities required learners to interrogate their own susceptibility to advertising, particularly with regard to the purchasing of clothing of specific brands or labels. They also had to create their own advertisement in groups following the principle that construction should always precede deconstruction (Buckingham 2002).

The data presented and analysed in the following section comes from the final task on the topic, advertising, that the learners were required to do. They were divided into groups of 5 or 6 learners and each group was given an advertisement pasted on a large sheet of poster board. A list of questions which, although similar, included some questions specific to the advert was provided to direct their discussion (see Figures 7.1 – 7.8). The advertisements selected for this task are as follows:

Group 1 - Adidas advertisement of Laila Ali, female boxer (see Figure 7.1 pg 217).

Group 2 - Hi-Q advertisement of hands on a wheel spanner (see Figure 7.3 pg 220).

Group 3 - Soviet clothing (see Figure 7.5 pg 223).

Group 4 - Ford Fiesta motor car (see Figure 7.7 pg 226).

The final 2 advertisements, one advertising the Isuzu double cab answered by group 5, and the other advertising BP petrol answered by group 6, will not be discussed. This is because they do not offer anything new to the analysis of the previous 4 advertisements and they do not relate as directly to the themes of reading and gender.

The task requires the learners to discuss the advertisement, answer the questions, and then write their answers using a heavy marker in the blank space below the advertisement so that these can be presented and displayed. Each group was given a different advertisement to discuss. At the end of the 45 minute lesson, each group reported back to the class briefly, and their posters were pinned up around the classroom.

During the discussions of advertising, which took place over a number of lessons, most learners appeared to be able to evaluate an advertisement critically when the teacher led the discussion and directed their thinking with focuses questions. However, when they came to do the task without this assistance, they were unable to cope, as the following answers discussed in section 6.2.4 clearly illustrate. What follows is a rationale for the selection of the advertisements and an analysis of the final group task completed on the topic: advertising.

7.2.3 Rationale for the selection of advertisements

Running through this thesis are two main strands: reading and gender. The last chapter dealt with reading and the difficulty learners experience engaging with texts critically when they cannot read effectively, while the next chapter examines gender attitudes and perceptions. This chapter deals with both of these themes as the advertisements selected all represent gender and use it in a specific way to sell their product. At the same time, the learners are required to decode both the

visual and the textual features of an advertisement. Thus the selection of the advertisements was done purposively to address both the themes in order to see whether the learners will recognize and comment on the way gender is portrayed and used in the specific advertisement.

According to Bovee and Arens (1986), "most readers of advertisements (1) look at the illustration, (2) read the headline, and (3) read the body copy, in that order" (1986, 47). This suggests that both visual images and print are important in conveying the message. It is for this reason that all the advertisements selected are double paged and consist of both a visual and a text message.

The Adidas advertisement of Laila Ali (see Figure 7.1 pg. 217) was selected because it is unusual in that it goes against the female stereotype by showing a woman in a male dominated space, a boxing ring, wearing clothing and equipment associated with a male-dominated sport. The text reinforces the breaking of traditional boundaries as does the headline: "Impossible is Nothing", an inversion of the common saying, nothing is impossible. While the text emphasises the determination and the desire of all athletes to push the limits, this advertisement goes further in that it challenges the stereotypical view of women as the weaker sex and calls men who wish to retain the status quo "small".

The Hi-Q advertisement (see Figure 7.3 pg. 220) pictures a woman's arm and hand holding a wheel spanner firmly. This draws ones attention because this image goes against the stereotype of women who are not usually associated with tasks such as changing a motor car wheel. The headline of the text states, "Because I can", suggesting that women are capable of changing tyres. This is reiterated in the text with the words "Yes, today's woman can change a tyre". However, this liberated message of gender equality is negated by the following words, "But really, why ruin a perfect manicure?" which falls back into stereotyping women as vain and focused on their appearance.

Soviet clothing is a well-known and popular brand name in South Africa and therefore is well known to the learners. This advertisement (see Figure 7.5 pg.

223) was selected as it pushes the boundaries by showing naked women in the background, with a colourful young woman wearing soviet clothes in the foreground. It is significant that this advertisement shows only women naked, while the men are clothed. The text message suggests that women find taking off their clothes fun, but wearing Soviet clothing is "more fun". There are explicit sexual and stereotypical overtones both in the picture and the text which invite discussion.

The Ford Fiesta advertisement (see Figure 7.7 pg. 226) was chosen because it uses sex explicitly to sell a vehicle. It is a double page spread where the left hand page shows a picture of a man and woman who are not wearing any visible clothing and the right hand side shows the Ford Fiesta motor car. The text contains sexual innuendo, suggesting that the driving of a Ford Fiesta is a sensual, sexual experience. It invites discussion of the exploitation of a woman's body to sell a product.

As has been explained in the previous section, the class was separated into 6 groups and each group had a different advertisement to discuss and answer questions on. However, only 4 advertisements will be analysed in the following section because the learners responses to the remaining 2 do not offer any new insights.

7.2.4 Group responses to final advertising activity

7.2.4.1 Responses to advertisement - Group 1

Group 1 was made up of 6 learners, 4 girls and 2 boys. They were given a list of questions to focus their discussion (Figure 7.2) and an Adidas advertisement featuring Laila Ali, daughter of the famous boxer, Mahommed Ali. She is dressed in boxing gear and posed with her arms outstretched against the ropes surrounding a boxing ring. On the top left there is a picture of the USA and then a small box with "Los Angeles – USA 2003" followed by her signature. Under that in small block capitals it reads "How does a girl fight her way out from under her father's shadow? Laila Ali started by winning three supermiddleweight

championships". On the right hand side of the page in large block capitals, the text reads:

> Impossible is just a big word thrown around by small men who find it easier to live in the world they've been given than to explore the power they have to change it. Impossible is not a fact. It's an opinion. Impossible is not a declaration. It's a dare. Impossible is potential. Impossible is temporary.
>
> Impossible is nothing.

Then, in the bottom right hand corner there is the Adidas slogan "Forever Sport" followed by the company logo (see Figure 7.1 overleaf).

This group completed only 3 of the 10 questions set. (see questions Figure 7.2) However, those answers are significant because they provide insight into the overall comprehension levels of the learners in the group.

In answer to the first question, "Does the advertisement catch your eye? Why? Why not?", the group answers in the affirmative and offers the reason that the picture shows "a beautiful woman doing a man's sport, showing that with Adidas nothing is impossible." This answer acknowledges that while boxing can be done by women, it is generally a "man's sport". The reformulation of the text into "with Adidas nothing is impossible" suggests that the learners have accepted uncritically the message of the advertisement that without Adidas, such a thing would be impossible. The selection of these two things as worthy of comment suggests that the group accepts the stereotype of women, bearing in mind that Laila Ali is presented as an exception to that stereotype. The answer to the second question, "What can you see? What is the effect of the photograph? (Look at the colour, background, the person, etc.)" provides insight into their comprehension of the text in the advertisement. The answer, "We can see everything clearly, and the poster has a very good effect because it shows that impossible is not a declaration", suggests that they have either misunderstood or do not understand the question, they fall back on the strategy of simply quoting from the text in the hope that that quote may be relevant or even correct. This is the same strategy that learners use when answering written reading comprehension questions as

Figure 7.1 Poster produced by Group 1[14]

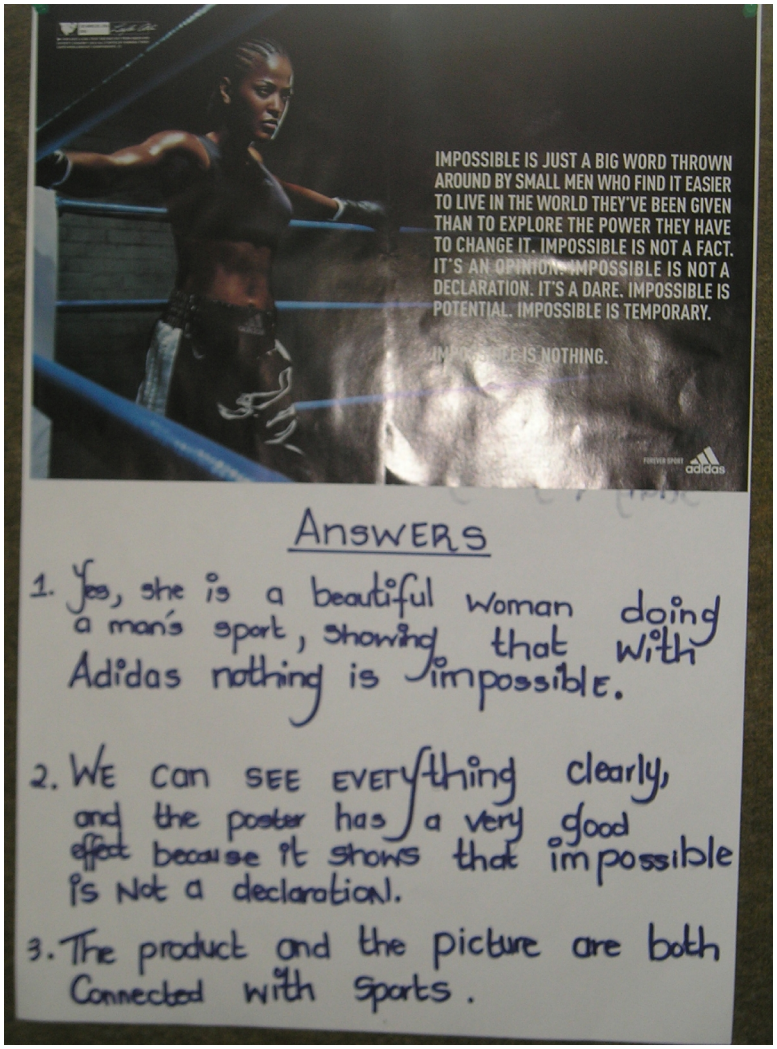


Figure 7.2 Group 1 Questions set on Adidas advertisement

GROUP 1 – ADIDAS

Discuss the questions below and then fill in your answers in the space below the advertisement.

1. Does the advertisement catch your eye? Why? Why not?
2. What can you see? What is the effect of the photograph? (Look at the colour, background, the person, etc.)
3. What is the connection between the picture and the product?
4. Look at the words used by the advertiser. Who are 'they' referred to in the words?
5. Why is the word 'impossible' repeated in the advert? What is the effect of this?
6. Would the advertiser have used the same words if the model had been a man? Why do you think this?
7. What does this advertisement tell you about the product?
8. What image does the logo promote?
9. What kind of buyer would be attracted to this advertisement?
10. What is the **main** advertising technique used in this advert?

[14] Advertisement reproduced with kind permission from *SA Cosmopolitan Magazine* © 2004. Every attempt has been made to obtain permission from Adidas to reproduce this image.

discussed in section 6.3 of the previous chapter. Question 2 gives clear direction about what is expected as this is clarified in the bracketed section. However, the group ignores these and simply answers that they can "see everything clearly". The clarity of the picture is not mentioned in the question; however, "colour, background, person, etc." has been synthesized and understood, or expressed by the learners, as such. The effect is said to be "good", a vague and general word suggesting overall approval and the reason, "because it shows that impossible is not a declaration", is a quote from the text that is meaningless in the context of both the question and the answer.

The answer to question 3, "What is the connection between the picture and the product?", is short and to the point, "The product and the picture are both connected with sports", but adequate as both the picture and the text are connected to sport; however, a more comprehensive answer was expected. Because of the limited number of questions answered, three out of a possible ten, it is not possible to draw any positive conclusions regarding their ability to engage critically with advertisements; however, these three responses suggest that the group has not interrogated the advertisement they were given critically.

The average reading age of the group according to the Gapadol test, details of which are provided in the previous chapter, is 10 years and 7 months (approximately grade 5 level) while the average chronological age is 15 years and 1 month. The highest reading age is 12 years and 1 month and the lowest 9 years and 3 months. The highest chronological age is 17 years and 5 months while the lowest is 14 years and 1 month.

7.2.4.2 Responses to advertisement - Group 2

The questions given to Group 2 are shown in Figure 7.4. These relate to a double page advertisement from a large chain of tyre retailers (see Figure 7.3). The picture shows a large wheel spanner being held firmly by a woman's hand. In the centre of the opposite page the following is written:

Because I can.

> Yes, today's woman can change a tyre. But really, why ruin a perfect manicure? When you can drive into Hi-Q – any one of 137, countrywide. Centres that combine expert service, with real value on South Africa's most trusted tyre brand, Goodyear. So next time you need new tyres, come to Hi-Q. And go with Goodyear.

What is clear from the responses of this group is that they have failed to engage on any meaningful, critical level with the advertisement. Questions 1, 2 and 3 deal specifically with the visual impact of the advertisement. The response of the group to question one, asking if the advertisement catches the eye, dismisses the picture as "not eye catching" because of the perceived lack of colour and the minimalist picture of the hand clasping the "spaner" [*sic*]. While it may be argued that the learners are justified in expressing their own opinion here, the reasons given are unsubstantiated and do not reveal an understanding of the principles involved in advertising, dealt with in the preceding lessons on this topic. Question two requires a response which indicates some critical engagement with the picture. The question asks: 'What can you see? What is the effect of the photograph?' and includes prompts (Consider the composition, colour, background, etc.) to direct the group discussion and assist the learners to answer. However, despite this assistance, no mention is made of the composition of the picture or the advertiser's choice of a spanner and a woman's forearm to advertise a company selling tyres. Furthermore, no comment is made on the size of the photograph in relation to the text on the facing page.

The link between the picture and the product is made in question 3 where the learners state that the "spaner [*sic*] is used to tighten and losen [*sic*] the tyres" indicating that they know the advertisement is about tyres. However, they fail to make any comment about the arm and hand grasping the spanner, which is unusual or unexpected because it is clearly that of a woman. Question 4 requires the group to consider the accompanying text and the response indicates that this has not been done. The use of the words, "It shows…" indicates that the learners are still focusing on the picture, rather than the accompanying text. While the response recognizes the hand as being that of a woman, and the message that

Figure 7.3 Poster produced by Group 2 [15]

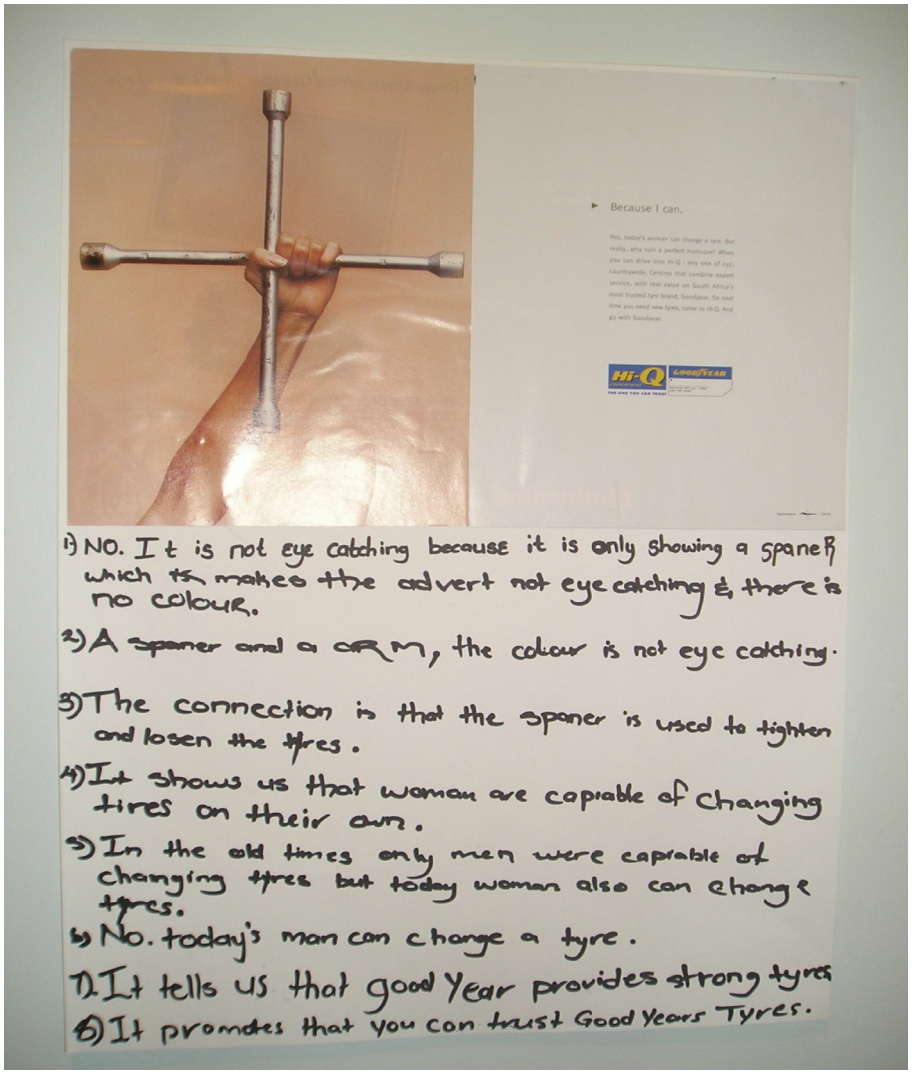


Figure 7.4 Group 2 questions on Hi-Q advertisement

GROUP 2 – Hi-Q

Discuss the questions below and then fill in your answers in the space below the advertisement.

1. Does the advertisement catch your eye? Why? Why not?
2. What can you see? What is the effect of the photograph? (Consider the composition, colour, background, etc.)
3. What is the connection between the picture and the product?
4. Look at the words used by the advertiser. What stereotype of women is being emphasized here? What effect does this have on you?
5. Why does the advertiser use the words 'today's woman'? What is the effect of this?
6. Would the advertiser have used the same words if the ad had been focused on men? How might the words have been changed?
7. What does this advertisement tell you about the product?
8. What image does the logo promote?
9. What kind of buyer would be attracted to this advertisement?
10. What is the **main** advertising technique used in this advert?

[15] Figure 7.3 Advertisement reproduced with kind permission from *SA Cosmopolitan Magazine* © 2004 and Hi Q.

women can change tyres has been understood, it is clear that the group has not engaged with the text as directed. The question on stereotypes, which is clearly expressed in the words "But really, why ruin a perfect manicure?", is avoided, as is the second part of the question which gives them an opportunity to express their own opinion on the stereotyping of people.

Question 5, 'Why does the advertiser use the words "today's woman"? What is the effect of this?' is only partly answered, but the response that "today woman also can change tyres" does not interrogate the advertiser's choice of words in the text, nor the message conveyed by this choice. The answers to questions 6 and 8 suggest that the learners have not engaged with the text adequately, while the response to question 7 does accurately identify the product being advertised (see Figure 7.3). Asked to make some critical assessment of whether the advertiser would have used the same text if the advertisement had been focused towards a male target market, the group offers the answer "No. today's man can change a tyre." This answer not only fails to address the question, it also reveals that the learners believe the gender stereotype that men are more able to engage successfully with activities such as changing a tyre than women.

What is clear from the above answers is that the learners have failed to meet the outcomes articulated in the curriculum document. They reveal no ability to evaluate, critically analyse or interpret either visual or written texts. The subtle sexist message in the text - which draws on the message of women's liberation in order to be sexist - has been totally overlooked by the learners who have focused primarily on the visual image and 'read' the message in the most literal way. This concurs with the findings of chapter 6 which suggest that learners are unable to engage with texts beyond the most rudimentary level.

The average chronological age of the group members is 15 years and 3 months, while the average reading age is 10 years and 4 months, a difference of 4 years and 11 months between the two. The oldest group member is 16 years and 5 months while the youngest is 14 years and 6 months while the highest reading age is 11 years and 5 months and the lowest 9 years and 5 months.

7.2.4.3 Responses to advertisement Group 3

Group 3 were given a double page advertisement for a well known South African clothing label named Soviet. The picture is taken in a club, which is identified in the small print on the bottom left of the photograph as the "House of Lords". The young woman in the foreground is clothed in Soviet clothing and pictured in colour against a grainy, black and white background of scantily clothed women who appear to be pole dancing. She has the zip of her trousers and the buttons of her blouse undone revealing black underwear. She is holding a pole and dancing on a bar while a man, with a beer next to him is looking up at her and smiling in admiration. The text reads: "Wearing your clothes can be more fun than taking them off". On the bottom right hand side of the picture is the Soviet logo and the slogan "Enter our dimension" (See Figure 7.6).

Group 3 answered 4 of the questions set on this advertisement. In answer to question 1 which asked whether the advertisement was eye catching and then required them to provide a reason, the group response indicates that it is eye catching because "the advertisement has an attractive lady and the name brand is eye catching". This is an adequate answer as the woman and the red star above the 'I' in the brand name 'soviet' show up clearly against the grey background as those are in colour. The second question asks them what they can see, and what effect the photograph has, drawing their attention to the background and the use of colour. Again, this group provides an adequate, but thin answer when they write, "The lady is the only one in colour and the picture is not trying to advertise clothes only but is also trying to advertise sex appeal to the consumers". No explanation is given as to how the advertisement is using sex appeal to sell this product, and the colour and the subjects in the background are not mentioned when answering this question. Question 3 asks the group what the connection between the picture and the product is and it is here the group correctly responds "the picture is taken in a strip club and the women in the background are almost naked and the lady in colour is not naked and is wearing soviet clothes". However, no comment is made on the choice of setting and why the advertiser might have chosen to set an advertisement for jeans in a club where most women are naked.

Figure 7.5. Photograph of poster produced by Group 3[16]

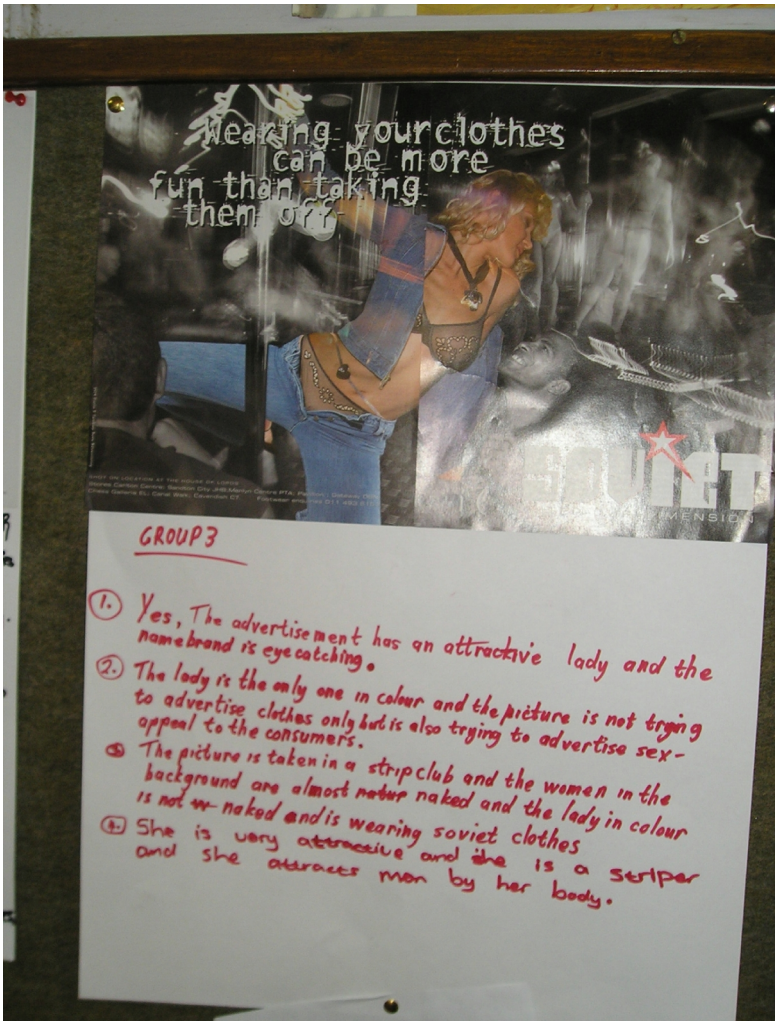


Figure 7.6 Group 3 questions set on Soviet advertisement.

GROUP 3 - SOVIET

Discuss the questions below and then fill in your answers in the space below the advertisement.

1. Does the advertisement catch your eye? Why? Why not?
2. What can you see? What is the effect of the photograph? (Look carefully at the background and the use of colour when you answer this question.)
3. What is the connection between the picture and the product?
4. Look at the words used by the advertiser. What stereotype of women is being emphasized here? What effect does this have on you?
5. Why does the advertiser refer to the reader using the pronoun 'your'? What is the effect of this?
6. Would the advertiser have used the same words if the ad had been focused on men? How might the words have been changed?
7. What does this advertisement tell you about the product?
8. What image does the logo promote?
9. What kind of buyer would be attracted to this advertisement?
10. What is the **main** advertising technique used in this advert?

[16] Figure 7.5 Advertisement reproduced with kind permission from *SA Cosmopolitan Magazine* © 2004. Every attempt has been made to obtain permission from Soviet to reproduce this image.

Question 4 directs the group to look at the words used by the advertiser, by asking what stereotype of women is being emphasized by the choice of words, and what effect this has on the group. The group responds, "She is very attractive and she is a striper [*sic*] and she attracts men by her body". This response ignores the words at the top of the advertisement, "wearing your clothes can be more fun than taking them off", and repeats what can be deduced from looking at the picture, expressed slightly differently but in essence the same points made in their responses to the earlier questions.

The responses of this group are disappointing. They have recognized the setting and are able to comment on the picture, but once the questions move to the advertising copy they fail to answer the question, and then do not attempt the rest of the questions which require a more in-depth consideration of the written text. This further supports the findings reported in the previous chapter.

The average reading age of the learners in this group is 9 years and 9 months while the average chronological age is 14 years and 8 months a difference of 5 years and 1 month. The oldest learner in the group is 16 years and 8 months and the youngest is 13 years and 8 months, while the highest reading age in the group is 11 years and 11 months and the lowest 7 years and 7 months.

7.2.4.4 Responses to advertisement activity - Group 4

Group 4 was given the Ford Fiesta advertisement, Figure 7.7 overleaf. The picture is coloured in shades of brown and pictures the upper body and part of the face of a man and a woman. The lips of both the man and the woman are visible, and the woman's lips are coloured, full and sensuous. The caption says, "So how does this feel?" The picture on the left of the page is of a tan coloured Ford Fiesta parked on shining dark brown brick paving against a brown wall and glass windows. In the upper right hand corner is the Ford logo and the word "No Boundaries" while underneath the car, almost in reply to the question on the previous page, are the words, "A lot like this." Underneath the picture the text reads:

> Breathe in. Open your eyes. Bite your lip. There are smooth curves and cheeky lines involved. Experience the ultimate in handling and control with the spaciousness only a Ford**Fiesta** can give you. You'll get carried away once you've driven the new Ford**Fiesta**. Now breathe out.
>
> [Then, on the right hand bottom] 'The new Ford**Fiesta. Feel it.'**

While the answers given by group 4 show that the group understood the sexual nature of the message conveyed in the advertisement; their answers still reveal a lack of depth in their engagement with the advert. The answer to question one states that the picture is eye-catching and provides the reason for this being that "nude people attracts everyones eye". No mention is made of the car and the text on the other side of the advert. The answer to question 2 which asks: "What can you see? What is the effect of the two photographs? (Look at the use of colour, the background, the models, etc.)", does not answer the question set. One assumes that they are referring to the shades of the same colour which is carried across both pages of the advertisement when they answer, "Two similar pics, they symbolize one theme." They fail to state in what way they see the two pictures as similar and how they "symbolize one theme" or indeed what that theme is. The question requiring them to interrogate the connection between the picture and the product is also misinterpreted as the learners' respond that it is "Trying to sell the product to both sexes" but again they provide no rationale for this answer. Question 5 specifically directs the group's attention to the text attached to the advertisement by asking them to consider the words rather than the picture. In their response the sexual nature of the advertisement has been recognized but as no specific words from the advertisement have been cited in the answer, it is difficult to judge whether this answer arose from the reading text or looking at the picture. Questions 6 and 7 have not been answered, instead the group simply focus on the sexual appeal of the advertisement, responding "Yes. It talks about sex" (question 6) and "Its very sexy" (question 7). Question 9, which requires them to indicate the type of buyer who might be attracted to an advertisement such as this, is again answered without providing a reason as, "Someone who likes being in the spotlight". Question 10 is correctly answered with the advertising technique recognized as being sexual.

Figure 7.7 Group 4 Poster on Ford Fiesta advertisement[17]

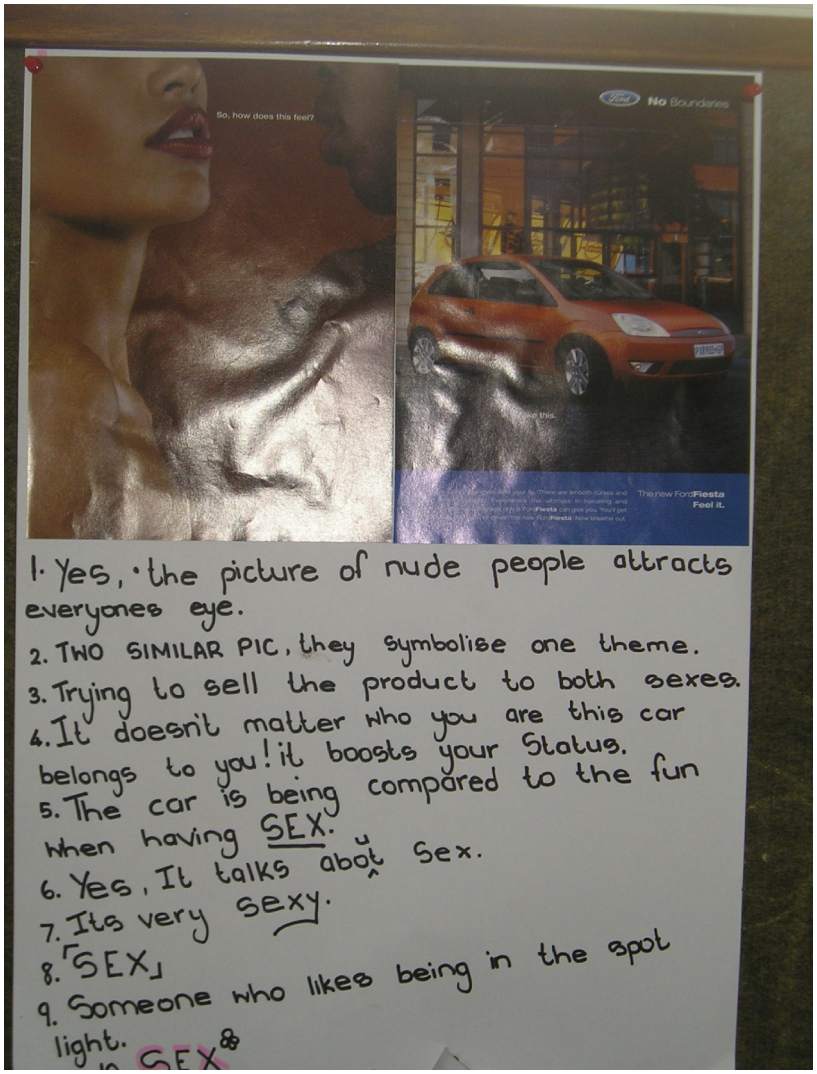


Figure 7.8 Group 4 questions set on the Ford Fiesta advertisement

GROUP 4 – FORD FIESTA

Discuss the questions below and then fill in your answers in the space below the advertisement.

1. Does the advertisement catch your eye? Why? Why not?
2. What can you see? What is the effect of the two photographs? (Look at the use of colour, the background, the models, etc.)
3. What is the connection between the pictures and the product?
4. Look at the words used by the advertiser. What is being emphasized here? What effect does this have on you?
5. Why does the advertiser use the words 'So, how does this feel?'? What is the effect of this? What do the words 'A lot like this' suggest about the product?
6. Do you think this advert is focused on men or women? Why?
7. What does this advertisement tell you about the product?
8. What image does the logo promote?
9. What kind of buyer would be attracted to this advertisement?
10. What is the **main** advertising technique used in this advert?

[17] [17] Figure 7.7 Advertisement reproduced with kind permission from *SA Cosmopolitan Magazine* © 2004. Every attempt has been made to obtain permission from Ford to reproduce this image.

While this group fared better than the other groups discussed in recognizing the appeal of the advertisement, their lack of engagement suggests that the only reason they did so is the explicit nature of the picture. Furthermore, they have failed to recognize the exploitative nature of this type of advertising.

This group has the highest average reading age on the Gapadol test of all the groups at 11 years and 2 months. The average chronological age is 14 years and 4 months, the difference between the two being 3 years and 2 months, less than the other groups. The highest chronological age is 14 years and 10 months and the lowest is 13 years and 8 months, while the highest and lowest reading ages are 12 years and 10 months and 9 years and 7 months respectively.

7.3 Responses to the mid-year examination question on advertising

As was indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the topic 'advertising' was covered during the second term, the final activity being completed about 2 weeks before the mid-year examinations commenced. Therefore a question had to be included on this in the mid-year English examination paper. As the paper was only one hour in duration and carried a total of 50 marks, this section consisted of 3 questions, each being allocated 2 marks, adding up to 6 marks altogether (see appendix B, pg. 24 – 27 for a copy of the examination paper). A requirement when setting the examination paper was that the questions had to be formulated in such a way that no learner should be either advantaged or disadvantaged because of the teaching that they had received. As three of the grade 9 classes were taught by a teacher who declined to be part of the project the questions set were general questions about advertising, with only one of them dealing explicitly with gender. Thus, while the questions did not require that the learners approach them from a critical literacy perspective, they were phrased in such a way as to allow a learner who had understood the issues of power and control which surround the choice of language and visual material in advertising, and how these are used to support stereotypes and maintain the status quo, to comment on this

aspect.

The advertisement selected was a Standard Bank advertisement. It pictures a young woman leaning on a video or DVD machine, looking up at three electrical cords – one white, one black, and one red. Her perplexed expression suggests that she is confused about which cord should be plugged into which point. The caption reads: "If only everything else was as simple as switching to a Standard Bank account" (see Figure 7.9). There are a number of aspects of the advertisement which the learners could comment on. For example, the choice of a woman suggests that women – even contemporary, attractive, young women such as the one in the picture – are unable to cope with technology, as even the simple task of plugging in three colour-coded electrical cords is a challenge, and, in contrast to the caption, 'not simple'. The electrical cords also suggest the word 'current', which is applicable to both electricity and bank accounts. The choice of a young person is also deliberate, as young people are unlikely to have current accounts, with most only qualifying for savings accounts.

The responses analysed in this section are taken from grade 9A, the research group, and the same group of learners whose responses are presented in the previous section.

In general this question was poorly answered, especially given that the learners had been given explicit instruction and explanatory notes on this particular section only a few weeks prior to the examination. Furthermore, the marks achieved are higher than they might have been as I was informed by the teacher that credit had to be given for any answer that revealed that the learner had some understanding of what was expected, and also that, as in the case of the comprehension test discussed in chapter 6, marks could not be deduced for poor spelling, expression or language. Despite this, the results support the findings of the previous chapter and section of this chapter: that the learners' poor reading skills inhibit their ability to meaningfully engage with any text.

Figure 7.9 Advertisement used in the June examination

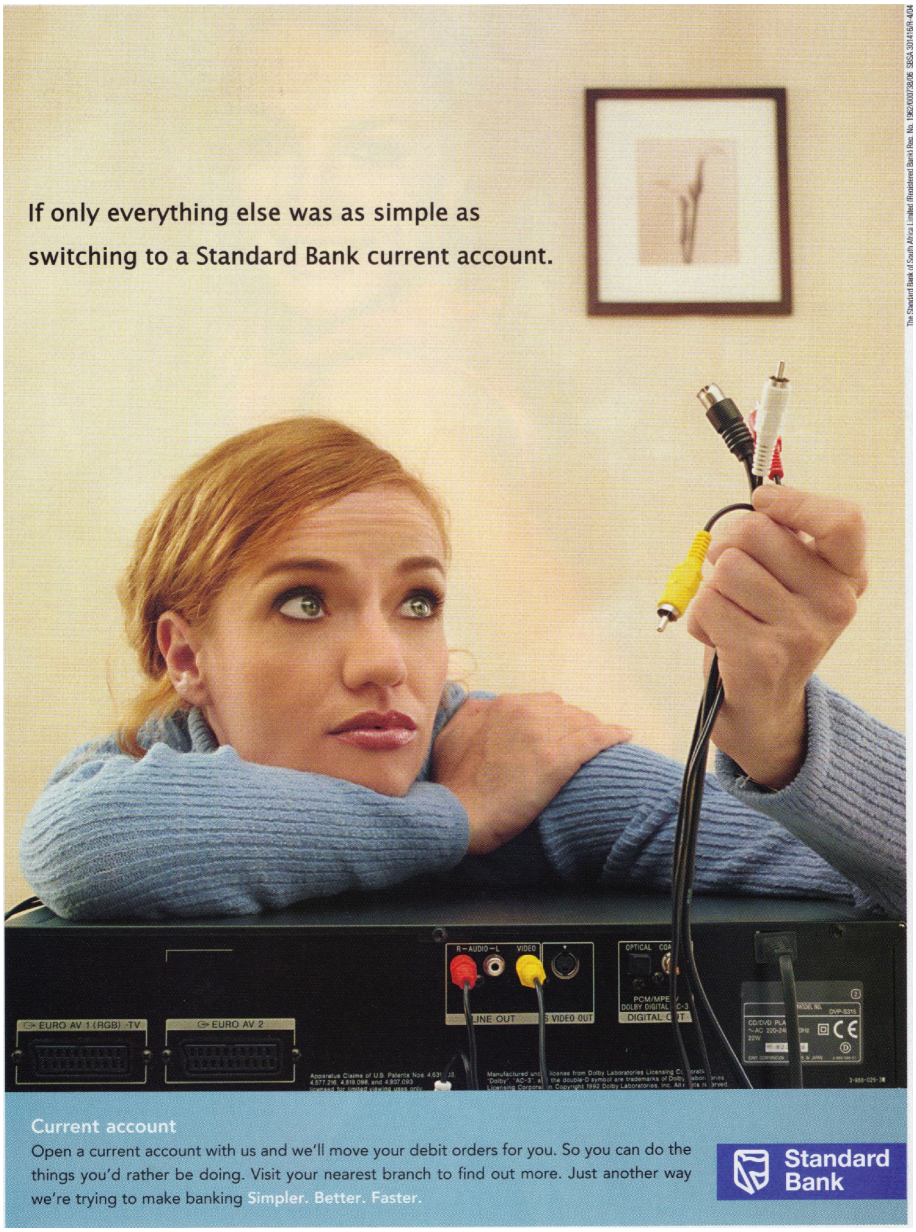


Figure 7.10 Questions set on advertisement in June examination

Questions

Look at the advertisement attached to this paper, and then answer the following questions.

1. Who do you think this advertisement is aimed at (The target audience)? Give reasons for your answer. (2)

2. What stereotype of women is the advertisement using? How do you think women might feel about the use of this stereotype? (2)

3. Look at the words above the picture. What do they suggest about Standard Bank? (2)

[6]

7.3.1 Analysis of results

The examination was written by 33 grade 9A learners, but only 32 responded to the question on advertising (see appendix B, pg. 29 – 50 for their full responses). Analysis of the marks achieved reveals the following overall results:

Figure 7.11 Breakdown of June examination marks – Section C

	Total marks achieved out of a possible maximum of 6							
Marks achieved	5	4 ½	4	3 ½	3	2	1	0
No. of learners	1	1	4	2	6	9	5	4
% of total learners	3,125	3,125	12,25	6,25	18,75	28,125	15,875	12,5

This table reveals that not one of the learners in grade 9A attained full marks for this question, while over half the learners, 56,5%, failed to achieve the required competence by achieving half the marks allocated in this section of the examination paper.

Question 1 asked the learners who they thought the advertisement is aimed at, offering the term "target audience" which was used in the notes distributed to them, as a clue to the answer. They were then asked to provide a reason for their answer. The anticipated response is that the target audience is young people, probably young women, the reason being that the model in the picture is a young woman, although credit was given to any well supported answer.

Almost half the class (15 learners) were not allocated any marks for this question. The incorrect answers fall into three main categories, which have already been identified in the previous chapter. Firstly, a number of the learners could not answer the question because they did not understand it. Learners could not identify the target audience, providing mostly irrelevant answers. For example, Farida answers by asking a question, "Is that a woman is holding a cound in her hand"; while Mike states: "Yes. To show that with Standard Bank current account everything is simple"; Clive gives a similar response, stating "It a simple Bank", while yet another writes, "Its got to do with money and how to use a bank" (Dawn) and another, "No, cause you can see that the writing that is eye

cating is standard bank" (Eric). A second category of responses declared the advertiser, Standard Bank, to be the target audience, for example, "Standard bank, the lady looks Terrified because of the plugs" (Anna) and "It is aimed at Standard bank because it talks about standard bank" (Joelene). A third group offers answers so general that the target audience could be anyone, for example, "male and female, because both male and female use standard bank" (Nomusa), "it is aimed a people who have money and need to save it in a place" (Nasreen), "It is aimed to the people around the world. Its because ownly people use banks" (Mavis), and, "Its aimed at people who be free and doing other than stuck doing hard work" (Dennis).

The examples offered above do not only illustrate the learners' poor understanding of advertising and advertising techniques, but also their poor ability to write English, which is also evident in their responses to comprehension questions discussed in the previous chapter.

Question 2, deals with the issue of stereotyping and specifically gender stereotyping in advertisements. The use of gender stereotypes was discussed in detail during the lessons on advertising and all of the advertisements on the posters analysed in the previous section had at least one question which related to the use of gender in advertising. These questions were poorly answered in that activity, with the only aspect discerned being sex. When the posters were presented, the questions were discussed orally, so it was anticipated that the learners would not experience problems answering this question. However, despite this, the learners in grade 9A achieved even poorer results on this question than the previous question, with 19 of the 32 learners, nearly 60% of the class, being awarded no marks for this question and not a single learner being awarded the full 2 marks allocated.

Question 2 poses the question: "What stereotype of women is the advertisement using? How do you think women might feel about this stereotype?" The expected answer would be something along the lines that women are stereotyped as being useless at things like fitting plugs in the right holes or that anything slightly

technical is challenging for women. Many women would be offended at this as they are able to do these things.

As with the previous question the incorrect answers fell into three categories. The first is those answers which suggest that the question has not been understood. For example, Clive answers with one word, "ambiguity" suggesting the assumption that a stereotype might be a type of figure of speech or language device; while Simon states that "She's an electrician" indicating the understanding that a stereotype might refer to the type of work the young lady does. The second category of answers describes the feelings of the young woman in the picture. For example, Dillon answers "wire code, scared" suggesting that the young woman portrayed in the advertisement may have been feeling frightened or fearful although there is no indication of that in the picture; Dawn writes that "she is very confused" and while this may be so, this answer offers no explanation of the stereotype; then Farida says that "She looks sad and she is using Standard bank". Again, there is no evidence of this emotion in the picture and the question has not been answered. A third category gives answers that appear to indicate an understanding of stereotyping but which are incorrect, such as Barbara who states: "This woman is board and wants to do everything easy or simple. This advertisement is saying that woman are inactive", and Natasha who answers: "They are using a blond, the one's with blonde her might feel bad, but not anyone else". While blonde women are often stereotyped as unintelligent this answer does not address the question set.

Question 3 asked the learners to look at the words above the picture and state what they suggest about Standard Bank. The expected answer to this question is that using Standard Bank is simple – much simpler than putting the correct plug into the back of a video/CD/DVD machine. The learners in grade 9A scored best in this question with half the class (16 learners) being awarded the full 2 marks. However, despite this improvement nine learners (28%) were awarded no marks.

Those learners who failed to score any marks on this question did so because they failed to understand the question, for example, Farida answers that "It is a bad

bank to put your money in standard bank", an answer which is not only incorrect but suggests that the function of the advert and advertising in general has been misunderstood. Dawn answers that "If you could or not use a card in the bank and just take out money" which does not refer to the words at the top of the advert and while banks offer cards, no mention of this is made in this particular advertisement. Yet another respondent answers: "It means that if the women had a Standard bank account, she have been watching the video" (Nomusa), a proposition which can be supported from the picture, but which has not relationship to the words at the top or the link between the picture, words and message which the creator of the advertisement meant to be made, while Philani simply repeats the words "you could do anything simpler, better and faster" but fails to make any suggestion as to how this links to the advertiser's message. This echoes the findings of chapter 6, which discussed the learners' failure to understand questions.

7.4 Discussion of the results

The previous chapter presented findings and results which support the view that grade 9A struggle to read and answer questions on written texts, experiencing particular difficulty with higher-order questions which require inference. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the ability to infer, and in this way explain or speculate on information which has been read, is crucial to comprehension no matter what the length. (Lanning 2009). As discussed in chapter 6, grade 9A have an average reading age which is 5 years and 3 months below their chronological age when tested on a standardized, commercially available reading test; and, according to their responses to the reading questionnaire, few of the learners come from a literate home environment. However, according to the questionnaire they spend a considerable amount of time watching television, grade 9A reporting that 43% of them watch TV more than 4 hours a day[18]. It was therefore assumed that they would be able to decode visual messages and short pieces of text more effectively than they could the comprehension passages presented in chapter 6.

[18] See chapter 6 section 6.5.1

The responses by all the groups to both the group activity and the June examination on advertising are of concern as they point to learners who appear to have learnt little about advertising, despite the lessons and notes which have been given to them on the topic (see appendix B, pg. 15 – 21), and are unable either to engage with the advertisements provided or effectively express their thoughts clearly in writing. The poor quality of the answers, which focus largely on the visual aspects of the advertisements, suggest that most of the groups did not read the text attached to the advertisement and use it to come up with reasoned responses to the questions. While their weak reading has been discussed in the previous chapter, the texts in this activity are all considerably shorter than the reading comprehension passages. However, like the comprehension texts discussed in chapter 6, grade 9A are similarly unable to offer a higher order analysis of the advertisement.

There are a number of other factors which might account for their weak answers. In the first place, it may be that they failed to take the task seriously. This is unlikely as they knew that the class task was to be assessed and that there are consequences attached to failing to achieve to the required standard in the June examination. It may also be that the task is new to them. This may be discounted as they were routinely required to make posters in other learning areas and the deconstruction and construction of advertisements had been done in class prior to this activity. The dynamics at play in their groups may also be responsible for the poor answers. A group activity will be discussed in chapter 8 where disruptive group behaviour is shown to distract the attention of group members from the task. In addition, it needs to be acknowledged that the posters may not be an indication of the quality of group discussion which took place, which may have been more insightful than the written answers suggest. As their group discussions were not audio-visually recorded, it is impossible to assess if this was the case. However, the group activity which will be discussed in chapter 8 suggests that this was not the case. Another reason may be that they were not able to complete their discussions effectively given the time available, and had they had more time, more insightful answers may have been expressed. This is unlikely as approximately 25 minutes was allocated to this group task which should have

been sufficient time. It is significant that only one group completed all ten questions, while two groups only finished three. It may also have been that the space on the poster allocated to writing was too small to accommodate their answers, and once it was filled the learners deemed the task completed. However, additional sheets of poster board were available. In addition, the time of the day, the weather, what happened in the previous lesson and what was going to take place after this lesson could all have influenced the performance of the learners in the group class activity. However, few of the above reasons can account for the poor quality of the responses to the June examination, where knowledge and understanding are tested under very different conditions.

It is significant that group 4 who responded to the Ford Fiesta advertisement had the highest average reading age, 11 years 2 months, and the lowest chronological age, 14 years 4 months, were the only group to complete the task in the allocated time. In addition the responses from this group indicate that they answered the questions set better than the other groups. This group also has the smallest difference between their chronological and reading ages at 3 years 2 months. The rest of the groups have a significantly greater difference between their chronological and reading ages, with the group 2 having a difference of 4 years 6 months and the difference in groups 1 and 3 being 4 years 11 months. This supports the view, expressed in section 6.3.4 of this chapter, that the ability to read affects the quality of the responses and learners ability to apply their minds to thinking critically about the advertisement.

Other than in the most obvious advertisements, which are the Adidas advertisement of Laila Ali boxing and the Ford Fiesta advertisement of the man and the woman, the lack of gender awareness displayed in the answers given by the groups confirm the view that advertising is culturally bound, supporting the cultural expectations of the reader or viewer (Kang 1997, Hall 1997). Therefore, despite being taught about stereotypes and the way gender power is exercised through advertising, the learners fail to recognize stereotyping in these advertisements. Thus the gendered comment in the text of the HiQ advertisement, "But really, why ruin a perfect manicure", is unnoticed, as is the

fact that the women are naked and the men are clothed in the Soviet advertisement, and that women are technologically inept as suggested by the Standard Bank advertisement.

Hall (1997) emphasizes the importance of shared meanings in advertising. If an advertisement is to be successful it needs to be constructed with concepts, images and ideas which interpret the world in similar ways in order to achieve that shared meaning (Kang 1997). Clearly in the case of these learners the cultural message is stronger than the desire to critically interrogate the message.

7.5 Reflections on the advertising activities

This chapter has explored two specific classroom activities on the same topic, advertising. In the first, an advertisement which was given to each group of learners, and they were required to answer ten questions on the advertisement and write their answers on poster board. The second presented the learners responses to a question on an advertisement set in the June examination.

It is clear from the results that the demands of *Curriculum 2005* both in terms of developing the learners' critical skills and in terms of social justice and gender awareness have not been met. The weak reading proficiency of grade 9A, discussed in chapter 6, affects their ability to engage with the advertisements in any depth (Sander 1994; Pretorius 2000). Barrett's taxonomy (see Figure 6.1), which was discussed in section 6.2 of the previous chapter, indicates that in order to understand a message, learners' need to be able to draw inferences and make judgments from what they read (Hampton and Resnick 2009; Fink and Samuels 2007 and others). Grade 9A experience difficulty doing this effectively, as was also evident in the data presented in chapter 6.

The discussion concedes that classrooms are complex social places, and that the successful achievement of an expected outcome in the classroom context can never be attributed to a single factor. However, following a careful analysis of the responses provided by each group, it is concluded that the learners' inability to

read efficiently has played a major role in their inability to complete the above task effectively. At the same time the gender message transmitted by the advertisements is largely unnoticed or ignored despite active reading against gender stereotyping. This is attributed to the learners decoding the message according to their shared social and cultural knowledge, which supports the gender stereotype presented.

Changing deeply held beliefs which have been acculturated and reinforced in the community, home and school is challenging. It is this aspect of the research which will be explored in the next chapter which will focus on gender played out in classroom interaction and on the playground. The interactions between the learners in a variety of contexts is presented and analysed. Interviews undertaken with both learners and teachers are discussed, and the results of a gender questionnaire which required learners to express their gender attitudes and perceptions are presented.

Chapter 8 Critical literacy and gender identities: challenging the stereotypes

The emotional, sexual, and psychological stereotyping of females begins when the doctor says, "It's a girl".
Shirley Chisholm (1973)

8.1 Introduction

The research reported on in this thesis focuses on the implementation of a critical literacy intervention undertaken with a group of grade 9 learners. The purpose of the intervention is to expose the power differentials which exist between male and female learners and through the examination of a variety of texts, using a critical literacy approach, to raise awareness of how these maintain and reinforce the status quo (Janks, 1993 and 2000; Granville, 2003). Ultimately the aim is to empower both boys and girls, to encourage critical engagement with texts and develop critical language awareness. Thus during the course of the intervention teaching and learning material focused on gender issues.

As has been stated in chapter 1, three central themes emerged from the data. The previous two chapters examined two of these: the first focuses on the importance of reading in developing critical literacy, while the second provides data that supports the view that poor reading affects the learners' ability to decode visual texts effectively. This chapter focuses on the third theme: gender power relations as manifest in the classroom and the learners' perceptions and attitudes towards gender.

The data presented comes from three discrete research instruments used in this study which are both qualitative and quantitative. The first explores gender played out in the classroom and examines this, analysing data which has been audio-recorded and transcribed from three lessons. Two of these are whole class interactions with the teacher leading the discussion while one is a group task and the interactions of the groups are analysed and discussed. The third explores and reports on the learners, behaviour in informal classroom and playground settings.

The final set of data is quantitative and has been collected from the gender questionnaire which was administered twice, once at the start of the research, and a then a year later. This has been done to establish the learners' gender perceptions and attitudes at the start of the intervention and to gauge whether there has been any change following the intervention.

Although gender and *Curriculum 2005* has been discussed in detail in section 2.5.1 of this thesis, a brief discussion will follow in order to contextualise the data analysis which will follow.

8.2 Gender, policy and *Curriculum 2005*

As has been stated at the beginning of this thesis, social justice is the foundation of the *South African Constitution (1996)* and as such should form the guiding principle behind all policies, including the school curriculum. Gender rights are entrenched in this document and they are explicitly addressed in *Curriculum 2005* as well as a number of other documents and publications by the Department of Education which were discussed in section 2.5.1 of this thesis. In addition, a Gender Equity Task Team has been established and a Gender Focal Person appointed to each provincial department. However, this focus on gender equity has not filtered down the system and into schools and classrooms (Chisholm 2003, Pandor 2005) which is evident in the interactions which are reported on in this chapter. These will be explored in detail, but before doing so some general comments about gender attitudes in the school will be presented in order to contextualise the analysis that follows.

8.3 Gender attitudes at Sherwood High School

It has been clear from the outset, that gender attitudes do constitute a problem at Sherwood High School. The year prior to the commencement of the research, a visit was made to the school in order to discuss the project with the principal and

her management team, and solicit her approval for the research to be undertaken in the school. During this meeting, which included the Principal, Deputy Principal and the Head of Department in charge of the Language, Literacy and Communication Learning Area at the school, who are all women, the view was expressed that such an intervention is welcome. During the course of the discussion reference was made to the attitude displayed by some of the boys towards the girls at the school and concern was expressed at the number of learners who became pregnant during the year. One of the members of the school management team indicated that she taught a Grade 11 class and while the boys were willing to engage in debate and discussion the girls said very little and did not contribute much, seeming to accept the superiority of the male learners. She also commented that the boys were "quite protective of the girls" even extending this protective attitude to herself on occasions (see appendix B, pg. 51, 27/10/04). This comment, made without question and with a tone of pride, suggests that the teacher accepts the stereotype that men are the stronger sex while women are weaker and require 'protection'. Thus this attitude exhibited by the boys is viewed in a positive light by the authorities at the school.

The 'protective' aspect of the boys' behaviour is not evident in any of the data. However, audio-recorded and transcribed data collected during lessons confirms the view of the Head of Department that the boys are more willing to contribute. In whole class lessons and small group activities the boys dominate discussions in a variety of ways, as they also do in the playground and corridors (Myhill 2002; Arnot, David and Weiner 1999; Howe 1997). In lessons it has also been observed that on occasions when the boys do not contribute, class discussion is difficult to sustain. Furthermore, observation reveals the lesson content, and the discussion around this content, which aims to raise awareness, modify and change attitudes has not been internalised as it has not translated into changed behaviour. This will be discussed further in the following section which explores how issues surrounding gender play out in the classroom environment.

8.4 Gender in the Grade 9A classroom

The data presented in this section comes from three classroom activities. These have been selected from the large quantity of classroom data collected because they demonstrate gender attitudes manifest in three different ways. The first set of data was collected during a group discussion activity. The discussion is on a poem and the teacher provided questions to guide the discussion. The second examines a whole class discussion on a reading which deals with the position of women in the world today, and the third describes behaviour which follows a lesson during which slang words used to describe girls and boys was discussed. The section which follows, which analyses the group discussions, is more detailed than the other two, although all three taken together demonstrate that masculinity rules at Sherwood High School.

8.4.1 Group discussion on "A Woman is not a Potted Plant"

This section analyses and discusses group interaction collected during an activity in which the learners in grade 9A were given a number of questions on a poem which they were required to discuss in groups. Firstly, it will consider OBE and what *Curriculum 2005* states with regard to the use of group work as a teaching and learning strategy. Secondly, it will provide a brief outline of what small group communication theorists have to say about the nature of group work and what determines its success or failure. Thirdly, it will explain how the analysis was undertaken and the rationale behind the choice of small group communication theory as a tool to explain the interaction. This will be followed by a description of the activity and a detailed analysis of the data. Finally, there will be a discussion of the findings.

8.4.1.1 Group work and OBE

Group work is an important teaching tool in the OBE curriculum. As was indicated in chapter 2, the introduction of OBE saw a paradigm shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred education. The change in the teachers' role from conveyor of knowledge to that of facilitator in the acquisition of knowledge precipitated a shift from competitive to co-operative learning on the part of the learners. Group work, in which learners work as a team to attain a particular

goal, is viewed as a route to improved learner achievement as they learn from each other through discussion, debate and feedback, and develop more positive attitudes to school and learning (Slavin 1995; Nelson 1990). Furthermore, there are social benefits as learners are given the opportunity to work together on tasks and motivate each other. Working in groups is reported to enhance motivation, build relationships and develop positive personal qualities such as responsibility, commitment, empathy and resourcefulness while increasing the knowledge base (Hoover 2005, Keyton, 2002, Napier and Gershenfeld 2004).

8.4.1.2 Small group communication theory

Small group communication can be defined as "communication in a particular setting among a limited number of people for the purpose of achieving a common objective" (Samovar, Henman and King 1996, 8). However, this simple definition belies the difficulties encountered in guiding the group and focusing their attention and energy on achieving a common objective.

In order for a group to work towards achieving a specific goal successfully a number of factors have to be taken into account. Most important are group cooperation and cohesion. According to Johnson and Johnson, "without strong cooperation among the members there is no co-ordination of behaviour, no communication, no prolonged interaction" (1976, 151) making it a crucial aspect of working effectively in groups. Secondly, the group should be cohesive. Napier and Gershenfeld state that "the more cohesive the group, the greater likelihood that members will conform to group norms, and the greater the pressure members exert on others to conform" (2004, 139). According to Keyton (2002), cohesiveness is a difficult feature to observe because it is an emotional feeling of closeness that the group develops as they work towards a common goal. It is this bond that keeps all the members of the group focused. Co-operation and cohesiveness are mutually dependent: co-operation fosters cohesiveness, while cohesiveness facilitates co-operation. Thus without these two a group cannot operate effectively. Both develop over time and as group members get to know each other. They are imperative in developing a supportive atmosphere, countering dominance, and following rules or norms that structure interaction and behaviour so that the focus is on the attainment of the goal.

In order to achieve and maintain cooperation and cohesiveness, group members need to feel satisfaction, equity and trust. Keyton defines satisfaction as "the degree to which you feel fulfilled or gratified as a group member" (2002, 133) and states that satisfaction manifests itself in a greater commitment to the group and willingness to work harder in order for the group to succeed. Equity means that group members are "rewarded proportionately for the work they do in the group" (Keyton 2002, 140). While it needs to be accepted that there are circumstances where all group members do not make an equal contribution those who make a bigger contribution should be acknowledged or the result will be resentment. Trust is more difficult to accomplish than satisfaction and equity as it is something which develops over time with individuals who are part of the group. Furthermore, "it is fragile; once broken it is hard to reinstate" (Keyton 2002, 140).

Small group theorists (Cragan and Wright 1986, Keyton 2002, Hoover 2004, Beebe and Masterson 2006 among others) identify a number of roles which group members can play in the course of completing a task. These can be either task-orientated, in that they focus on accomplishing the goal; supportive or maintenance roles, in that they keep the discussion moving towards the finding of a solution; or they can be what is termed dysfunctional roles, in that they disrupt the group process.

The leadership or coordination role is an important one, as leaders influence what the group does and how they "perform their activities and achieve their goals" (Keyton 2002, 206). Although it is sometimes static, in that it remains with a single person, in many groups it is dynamic, moving in response to changing situations within the group. Keyton (2002) makes the point that leadership is impossible if others are not following and that being appointed to the position is irrelevant if this is the case. Furthermore, leadership and power are not necessarily synonymous, even though this is sometimes the case.

Effective leaders need to display skill in two distinct but related areas in order to coordinate the activities of the group, helping them to function effectively. Firstly,

they have to be competent at managing the task. In order to do this they need to be able to analyse the problems, summarise contributions, identify potential solutions, and generally facilitate discussion and problem-solving. Secondly, they need to maintain the interpersonal relations of the group by attending to social issues. These include ensuring that all group members have an opportunity to participate, managing and defusing conflict, and keeping relations within the group harmonious.

While group members may be allocated a formal role, such as scribe or reporter, there are many informal roles which group members assume during group interaction. Group roles rely heavily on the context and may be assumed and changed a number of times during the course of a meeting or discussion. They emerge from the interaction that takes place within a particular group of people and individual behaviour may differ from behaviour in another group with a different set of members (Keyton 2002). As has been stated earlier, group roles fall under three main categories: task roles, group maintenance roles, and individual or dysfunctional roles, and within each of these groupings there are a number of different sub-groups to distinguish particular behaviour. Keyton (2002) makes the point that not all the roles will be evident in every group, and that sometimes behaviour will be displayed by a group member that is not directly congruent with the roles which theorists have identified; because of this not all the possible roles will be discussed.

Task roles are supportive behaviour which focuses on solving the problem or completing the work of the group efficiently. Some of the informal roles which members can play are that of elaborator, taking up and expanding on the ideas or suggestions of other members; energiser, stimulating the group towards higher quality discussion; evaluator, practically considering the suggestions of others and assessing whether they are logical or feasible; and, information and opinion giver, members who offer well-reasoned opinions and facts which contribute to the discussion.

Maintenance roles are those which consider the social relationships within the group, and thus there are roles such as compromiser, one who tries to offer solutions by suggesting compromise so as to avoid conflict between members; encourager, who responds positively to contributions, offering praise and accepting the points of view of other group members; gatekeeper/expeditor, who works to keep communication channels open and to make sure everyone participates and is heard; and, harmoniser, who works to reduce tension, disagreements and conflict in the group.

While both task and maintenance roles support the work of the group, leading it to become more cohesive and cooperative, "individual roles are typically counterproductive for the group, diverting attention from the group and its goal" (Keyton 2002, 48). For this reason they are sometimes referred to as dysfunctional roles, because they inhibit the work of the group. Some of these roles are the aggressor, who attacks other group members or the topic under discussion without regard for the feelings of others; the blocker who resists the direction taken by the group; the dominator who asserts authority, interrupts, gives directions and generally seeks to manipulate the group negatively; the evader who introduces opinions and comments which are unrelated to the discussion or work of the group; and the player or joker, who displays a lack of involvement with the group and the task by distracting the group from their purpose by cynical comments, jokes and horseplay (Keyton 2002).

In addition to group roles, group norms are also important to the efficient accomplishment of a group task. Keyton defines a norm as "an expectation about behaviour, an informal rule adopted by the group to regulate group members' behaviour" (2002, 52). Norms develop from past experience working in a group, and how interaction unfolds in that setting and they "shape your beliefs and attitudes about what will happen" (2002, 52) this includes appropriate behaviour. Often they are unspoken but they nevertheless exist and guide group behaviour.

The transcribed group discussions undertaken by grade 9A will be analysed using small group theory. The behaviour, roles and norms will be discussed in the following sections.

8.4.1.3 Description and analysis of the activity

As these learners have been subject to the OBE *Curriculum 2005* since they first came to school in Grade 1, it was assumed that they are accustomed to working in groups. During their English classes the learners sit in groups. They elected where they were going to sit and with whom when they arrived in the classroom for their first lesson of the year and by and large they remained in those places unless they were moved because of excessive talking or disruptive behaviour. This happened with only one learner. Therefore the learners knew the other members of their group and in some cases are their particular friends.

During the second term the poem "A Woman is not a Potted Plant" by Alice Walker (1995) was set. In keeping with *Curriculum 2005* which emphasises the use of group work, the learners were set the task of discussing the poem together in groups. This was a preliminary activity set to raise the learners' awareness and to encourage them to think about the poem prior to a whole class discussion and a written activity on the same poem.

Before the discussion each learner was provided with a handout (see appendix B, pg. 13) to guide their discussion. As with the reading activities discussed in chapter 6, the learners first read the poem silently, then it was read out aloud to them, before the group discussion commenced. Each group was given a tape recorder so that the discussion could be recorded and a group leader was selected by the group members. Before the group discussions commenced, the teacher explained the importance of consideration, co-operation and team work in accomplishing a group task successfully. The role of the group leader in directing the work and ensuring that every member of the group participates was also discussed. The tape recorder was compared to the conch in the book "Lord of the Flies" (Golding 1954) and it was suggested that in the interests of maintaining order only one person should speak at a time, and that should be the person holding the tape recorder. This is to avoid interruptions and obviate the tendency

of group members to talk over each other, although this did happen in most of the discussions.

Before analysing the group discussions three important points have to be made. Firstly, the groups which the learners usually sit in were not changed for this activity, consequently the gender composition of the groups is not equal. Secondly, as can be seen in Figure 8.1, in the case of 3 groups it was not possible categorise the interaction in order to establish how much of the discussion was on the task, and how much was dysfunctional because the tape recorder had been stopped, rewound and parts deleted, leading to an incomplete record of the interaction. Finally, group C organised their task differently to the other groups as they allocated questions to group members, using the jig-saw technique (Hoover 2005). Thus each group member gave their answer to a question with little or no comment from the rest of the group. This strategy limited discussion although the group did interact more as the recording progressed. However, for this reason this group will be omitted from the analysis.

The tape recorded group discussions have been transcribed (see appendix B, pg. 60 - 65) and analysed using a framework informed by small group communication theory. This reveals that the boys dominate the discussions in all the groups, even where they have not been allocated a leadership role. Furthermore, the boys' behaviour and contributions to the discussion are often dysfunctional and prevent the group engaging constructively with the poem, distracting them from the task of answering the questions set on it effectively. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections where the group discussions are analysed. This analysis does not include detailed comment on the quality of the content of the discussions, the accuracy of the answers, or the learners' understanding of the poem, but at the group and gender dynamics which can be identified during the discussions.

8.4.1.4 Analysis of group poetry discussion: Challenging the girls

As has been indicated in the previous section of this chapter, the analysis which follows will examine the behaviour of the learners during a group discussion activity. It will focus on the roles which the learners assume, the gender

dynamics, and the behaviour of boys and girls in these interactions. Figure 8.1 provides details of the different groups in terms of their membership, the length of the different group interactions and, where available, the percentage of the discussion during which task, group maintenance and dysfunctional group roles were evident. It needs to be noted that in the case of groups D and E this was not possible because the whole interaction was not available.

Figure 8.1: Small group poetry discussion: A woman is not a potted plant (Walker 1995)

	Group A	Group B	Group D	Group E
Leadership role	Girl	Girl	Girl	Boy
No of boys	3	2	2	4
No of girls	3	4	4	0
Length of discussion	99 lines	144 lines	37lines	49 lines
% of discussion: Task role	23%	72%	The tape recorder tampered with – turned on and off, rewound or parts deleted.	
% of discussion: Group maintenance	16%	4%		
% of discussion: Dysfunctional	61%	24%		

As group leadership is the most important factor in small group communication, this aspect will be discussed first.

8.4.1.4.1 The leadership role

As has been stated earlier in this chapter, group leadership is important as the quality of leadership determines the success of the group interaction (Keyton 2002). This is evident in this particular group activity where different leadership styles and how leadership is accepted by the group members contribute to the success or failure of the group task. In this activity 3 of the group leaders are girls and 1 is a boy. The girls lead mixed gender groups, while the boy leads a group of 4 boys.

According to Keyton (2002), effective leaders need to display skill in two distinct but related areas in order to coordinate the activities of the group, helping them to function effectively. Firstly, they have to be competent at managing the task. In order to do this they need to be able to analyse the problems, summarise contributions, identify potential solutions, and generally facilitate discussion and problem-solving. Secondly, they need to maintain the interpersonal relations of the group by attending to social issues. These include ensuring that all group members have an opportunity to participate, managing and defusing conflict, and

keeping relations within the group harmonious. All the group leaders try to some extent to do these things. For example, all the group discussions begin in the same way with the leader assuming the task role of co-ordinator/orientor and introducing the first question, with the exception of group E (all boys) which starts with an argument over who is touching the tape recorder. All the leaders, including that of group E the majority of whose interaction is dysfunctional, attempt to some extent to keep the discussion on track and moving forward by posing questions and encouraging group members to participate.

Patti, the leader of group B is the most successful in maintaining group cohesion and focus on the task. As can be seen in Figure 8.1, a large proportion of the interaction of group B, 72%, is focused on completing the task. She coordinates the group, moving the discussion forward by posing questions which require the group to think and respond. Where necessary, she elaborates on these in order to assist the group. However, all of the girls face challenges to their leadership role although how they deal with them differs, as is illustrated in the section which follows.

8.4.1.4.2 Leadership challenges

Challenges and changes to group leadership are not unusual. Sometimes the leadership role moves naturally from one person to another in response to a particular situation (Keyton 2002). This can be seen in group E where Bert and Leon share both the task and leadership role trying, in the face of the dysfunctional and uncooperative behaviour of the other two members, Dillon and Ken, to get the discussion going.

However, in the mixed gender groups the difficulties that the female leaders face in directing their group towards the goal of answering the questions is evident at the outset, as the two extracts that follow illustrate:

Norma:	The first question is, list everything you know about plants, how they are they cultivated how they grow, what they look like, where they are found, how they are looked after, what function they perform in our lives etc. Can we have your opinion? OK. You can all have your opinion. We will… we will be proud to hear from you.	7
Sam:	Sangoma, sangoma, sangoma (*in a sing song voice in the background*)	10

Sipho: OK, let me tell you… they say here this… all the plants… all the plants know… What is important about plants?

(Group A)

Nasreen: And now we will start our discussion. First question. Question number one is: List everything you know about potted plants. For example, how they are cultivated, how they grow… 331

Dennis: *(interrupts in a silly voice, inaudible speaking)* Don't play the fool. Be cool. Go to school. 334

(Group D)

In the first extract, Norma, leader of group A, takes control co-ordinating and orienting the group by reading out the first question. She encourages them to freely express their opinions and "we will be proud to hear from you" (lines 8). Her choice of the pronoun 'we' shows that she acknowledges the team work and co-operation required in order to complete the task efficiently. Similar behaviour can be seen in group D, where Nasreen does much the same thing as Norma, but is interrupted before she can finish reading out the question. Both are challenged by the dysfunctional behaviour of male members of their group, Norma by Sam, who sings, and Sipho, who interrupts and talks without making a coherent contribution; Nasreen by Dennis who assumes the role of joker, showing his disregard for her and the other members of the group by making irrelevant comments (line 334). All of these are calculated to distract and disrupt the efficient completion of the task before it has even started.

Norma, leader of group A, of all the leaders has to face the strongest challenge to her leadership as the boys slowly take over the leadership role and exclude the girls from the discussion. She takes on a number of task roles, among them co-ordinator, initiator, clarifier, elaborator, as well as the group maintenance roles of encourager and harmoniser, as she attempts to control and move the discussion forward and gives all the group members a chance to participate. However, the dysfunctional behaviour of the boys undermine her efforts. She takes on the group maintenance role of encourager as she attempts to draw comment from one of the girls who has not yet had a chance to contribute, "Mavis, could we have your opinion here?" (see Appendix B, pg. 60, line 18). She attempts to clarify contributions by rephrasing them and expressing them in a way that adds to the discussion: "So… Pot plants… pot plants would be treated very nice… very well…

because people look after their pot plants." (see Appendix B, pg. 60, line 31) before trying to move the discussion forward by posing the question: "How would you treat a pot plant if it was a woman?" (see Appendix B, pg. 60, line 33). She persists in her efforts to include the include Milly and Mavis in the discussion, as can be seen in the extracts from the discussion below:

Milly:	A plant may die. It may lose its nourishment and she doesn't become…	57
Sam	And she doesn't become… doesn't become… *(inaudible talking in background)*	
Norma:	Listen, listen. Please continue Milly..	
Sam:	Lets …	
Norma:	Milly, Milly can we have your comments please. You keep on laughing there…	
	(Rebuke to boys followed by inaudible reponse)	
Norma:	Milly we listening now. Can we please have your opinion please?	
	(inaudible) Milly you're not talking. Please say something… Mavis?	63
	Come on… *(noise – inaudible answer*)	
Sam:	See here OK. Let's go to question 4. Why do you think the poet refer to a woman and not women, which is the plural noun, throughout the poem?	66

… then, 5 lines later…

Norma:	Milly may we please have your opinion about this.	72
	(Inaudible reponse) and Mavis? What do you think?	
Mavis:	Isn't a woman as one woman, you're talking about one person?	
Sam:	Look carefully at the sentence of the poem *(laughter)* Why do you think the poet choose not to use capital letters and punctuation …	
Eric:	The poet chose not to use those things so the children can understand what it is about.	
Sipho:	We must have punctuation like simple vocab…	77
Sam:	Exactly. Exactly. OK.	
Eric:	Exactly, exactly.	
Norma:	Milly, will you please give your opinion about this number 5. May we just have your opinions about this? *(no answer)* Mavis may we just have your opinion on this…	81
Mavis:	No comment.	

(see appendix B, pg. 60 – 61)

These extracts demonstrate how Norma tries to control the discussion and maintain group cohesion by urging the boys to listen to Milly's contribution (line 59), reprimanding them for laughing (line 61 – 62) and then pleading with her to participate (line 63 – 64). However, despite Norma's pleas, repeated in line 72, Milly has had enough and declines to speak. The same applies to Mavis who when directly requested to make a contribution responds, "No comment" (line 82). Neither Milly nor Mavis spoke again during the discussion. They have been silenced by the boys. At this point the leadership role moves to the boys.

Small group communication acknowledges that the leadership role in a group is not static, often moving from person to person as the discussion moves forward and different group members use "positive influence to direct and coordinate the activities of group members towards goal accomplishment" (Keyton 2002, 313). However, when Sam usurps the leadership role (line 37) his intention is to dominate the group and exclude the girls from the discussion. This becomes more obvious as the interaction progresses. Norma tries a number of times to focus the discussion on the task, (lines 83 – 85, 99 – 104), but fails each time as the boys ignore her attempts and dominate the interaction. The discussion appears to have been hijacked completely by the boys who have taken on the dysfunctional roles of dominator, blocker, joker or player and despite Norma's the best attempts, the interaction fails to achieve its goal.

Patti, the leader of group B is a competent, self-assured young woman who is top of the class in most learning areas and the girls in this group tend to be high achievers. While the discussion begins in a businesslike fashion, with Patti assuming the role of co-ordinator, initiator and orienter, she too has to face challenges from the boys, Neil and Nigel, who assume dysfunctional roles aimed at disrupting the work of the group. However, the response of Patti and the other girls in the group to the behaviour of the boys, while not overtly stated, is demonstrated clearly in the interaction which follows.

Natasha:	Cos' the poet is taking about herself…	186
Nigel :	Ai ai ai ai ai ai	
Tatum:	Woman or man?	
Nigel:	See now this here…	
	(Inaudible but seemingly inappropriate comment made by boy)	
Patti:	Be quiet. They are talking about women in general.	191
Natasha:	I think the poet is talking about herself.	
Patti:	Are they talking about themselves? No, they are talking in general for all women.	
	(Inaudible comments)	
Patti:	A woman is not a potted plant… (*inaudible)*	
Tatum:	Yeah.	196
Natasha:	Woman…	
	(Inaudible discussion)	
Neil:	Could you please …	
	(*the boy is cut off and ignored)*	
Tatum:	Because she knows how other women feel.	201
Neil:	What is the plural noun ?	
Patti:	Plural noun?	
Neil:	… of woman	

Patti: A woman lots of women.
Neil: And not men… 206
Patti: Look carefully at the structure of the poem, what do you think the poet chose to use… Why do you think the poem chooses not to use capital letters or punctuation?
Natasha: …because..
Neil: *(interrupting)* because it is a stanza …
Natasha: Because she doesn't want to pause in between her poem. Because she is trying to give the poem a flow … 211

(see appendix B, pg. 62)

What is interesting about this interaction is that the girls make an unspoken, implicit decision to exclude Nigel and Neil from the discussion. Earlier on in the discussion Nigel's dysfunctional contributions are responded to with a "Shhh" (line 172). This is followed by a direct command that he "Be quiet" (line 191). Neil's attempts to contribute, (line 199) is ignored and his question "What is a plural noun?" (line 202) is answered by Patti almost in passing as she moves the discussion forward. His next interruption (line 210) is also ignored. It seems here that the girls have decided to show their disapproval of his earlier behaviour by ignoring him. This persists until the discussion ends.

Throughout the interaction of group D the two boys in the group, Dennis and Kevin assume dysfunctional roles. Nasreen, the leader, appears to ignore the dysfunctional interruptions and comments from Dennis and Kevin, but it can be assumed that she is responsible for censoring some of the interaction as no response to question two has been recorded and after she has read out question 3 she urges Dennis to give a "different answer" (line 339) suggesting that his previous, now deleted, answer was inappropriate.

As can be seen from the above, the group leaders have different ways of coping with the leadership challenges posed by dysfunctional members. Norma ignores Sipho, Sam and Eric, but eventually loses the leadership role to the boys as the interaction becomes dysfunctional. Patti asserts her authority by telling Neil and Nigel to "Be quiet" (line 191) and excluding them from the discussion. Nasreen also ignores the behaviour but turns off and rewinds the audio-tape so that Dennis's comments are erased. Finally, Bert responds by pleading: "Guys now, now … come on…" (line 392), "Come on guys… come on… (line 402), and "come on let's discuss this now. Yes boys, come on…" (line 409).

It is significant that Patti is the only leader to reject the challenge and assert her authority. Myhill's (2002) research conducted in Exeter, revealed differences in classroom interaction not only in gender terms, but also in terms of achievement. She found the high achieving girls tended to be more assertive. Patti's position as top achiever in the class gives her more confidence and makes her more able to counter the boys in her group than Norma and Nasreen.

8.4.1.4.3 Gender and Group Roles

As has already been discussed previously in this chapter, group roles fall into 3 broad categories, task roles, group maintenance roles and dysfunctional roles. Task roles are "those that move the group forward with its task or goal" (Keyton 2002, 48), and while the group leader carries the greater responsibility for this task as coordinator, other group members assist in a range of roles.

An examination of the transcribed data shows that group B spends the most amount of discussion time on the task and the group members assume a variety of task roles such as information-giver, opinion-giver, clarifier, and information seeker. However, this group is exceptional. Both groups A and E spend very little time on the task, while group D appear to have changed their strategy after turning off the tape, and are following group C by allocating the answering of questions to particular group members. What is evident when examining the interactions is that the girls are more focused on the task than the boys in all the groups. This is because the girls are generally more "compliant, conformist and willing to please" (Myhill, 350).

Group maintenance involves building and maintaining relationships within the group. It manifests itself in conciliatory behaviour, such as compromising, empathising and encouraging. While Norma tries to draw Milly and Mavis into the group A discussion, and Nasreen thanks members of group C for their contributions, there is little evidence of this in the interactions of group members.

Individual or dysfunctional roles make up the majority of interactions in group A and group E. These are roles which inhibit and disrupt the work of the group and

prevent it from reaching its goal. In these interactions all the dysfunctional roles are assumed by boys and often involve intimidating and sexist behaviour as can be seen in the following extract,

Sam: Which means this title means a woman … a woman deserves to be treated like a plant … deserves to be treated like a plant. You see she deserves to be treated like these plants. You know why? You know why? *(inaudible answer and talking in the background)* 47
Sam: You know why? You know why? Dignity…Dignity
Norma: Come on…
Sam: And there is a reason why we treat you like that…
Sipho: It is the reason we treat a woman like that…
Norma: What is the reason? 54
Sipho: A woman… a woman - come closer *(soft, intimate tone of voice)*, come closer is soft and gentle that is why she deserves to be treated like a plant because when you treat a plant…
Milly: A plant may die. It may lose its nourishment and she doesn't become…

(see appendix B, pg. 60, lines 47 - 57)

The repetition of the question 'You want to know why?' four times suggests their determination to get the attention of the girls and hold the floor. The boys' tone becomes more sexist and personal as Sam's use of the pronoun 'you' (line 52) suggests. It is clear they are no longer considering women and potted plants in any abstract way but are addressing the girls directly. Norma's attempt to refocus the discussion, "Come on…" (line 51) is ignored as Sipho urges the girls to "come closer" twice. The tone of the discussion becomes more intimidating and sexist as Sipho lowers his voice as he refers to them as "soft and gentle" (line 55). The atmosphere is broken as Milly breaks in with her comments that "It may die…" (line 57) and the discussion moves forward.

Similar sexist comments are made by Kevin in group D who says that, "the owner of the plant will like water the plant everyday and keep the plant clean and I think that's how women should be treated like" (lines 335 - 336). Later in the interaction when answering a question Dennis says, "What tone does this give the title? Well, it gives… it give it … it a low tone because the woman is mainly emphasised. That's what I think" (lines 341 - 342). What is interesting about these interactions is that the girls ignore the behaviour of the boys. They ask for no clarification, offer no comments, and simply move on with the discussion.

Boys in group A and group B refer to 'compost', 'manure' and 'dog shit' being necessary for a potted plant,

Eric:	When you treat a woman as a plant…*(laughter of a boy in the background)* as a plant you need to feed it, water it, you need to feed it, manure it, take care of it, manure it … (group A)	40
Neil:	I think they need compost.	144
Patti:	Ok, what function do they perform in our lives?	
Tatum:	They're decorations.	
Neil:	I think they need manure which is like dog shit. (group B)	

Again, while there is laughter in the background, the girls simply ignore the comments and move on.

Almost all the discussion in Group E is dysfunctional as the boys squabble over the tape recorder, laugh and joke. Leon and Bert make some attempt to get the discussion going but without success.

8.4.1.5 Discussion of the findings from group activity

There are a number of prerequisites for the successful functioning of groups, among these are respect, recognition that all group members are equal and the importance of civility and politeness (Gillies 2003, Hoover 2005). Research reported by Howe 1997, Blatchford *et al* 2003 and 2006, and Gillies 2003, support the view that classroom group work is often characterised by dysfunctional behaviour and that little of the discussion is around the task set. They believe that this is because learners are unaccustomed to group work because teachers tend to avoid it and because the tasks are not sufficiently structured. In the case of the activity above, the task was structured, with a number of focused questions provided. However, the assumption made by the teacher that the learners are accustomed to doing group work because of the central place given to this kind of activity in *Curriculum 2005* is clearly erroneous. Slavin (1995) maintains that for a group to work well there needs to be group goals and individual accountability. It is possible that when these are not in place, incentives drop and dysfunctional behaviour results.

Gender permeates the interaction of all the groups discussed in the preceding section. In group A the girls are systematically marginalised, silenced and excluded; in group B the boys challenge the girls, but are rebuffed by the female group leader, who is confident in her position as the top academic achiever in the class, and are themselves sidelined; group D have censored their discussion suggesting that they are unwilling to expose more of the dysfunctional behaviour of the boys in the group or share contributions they deem to be inappropriate; while group E, made up entirely of boys, fail to get to grips with the task at all, but would like to because "we all boys and we'll beat those girls" (see appendix B, pg. 65, line 411).

All the dysfunctional roles in the interactions are assumed by boys in the class, and this is not unusual as researchers have observed that in small groups boys are dominant (Webb 1984, Rennie and Parker 1987, Conwell *et al* 1993, Howe 1997). This is supported by the findings reported by Blatchford *et al* (2006), that in group work undertaken by learners who had not received any prior instruction in group behaviour, "boys engaged in more pupil-pupil off-task talk and less on-task talk" (2006,761) than girls. They add, somewhat enigmatically that even after instruction on group behaviour there were few signs that the group work training "worked in a positive way to reduce differences between boys and girls that might have been expected in general" (2006, 761). This means that as has been recorded in other research, the boys dominated the discussions, interrupted more readily, joked more and monopolized apparatus (Howe 1997). It would therefore seem that even after training which aims to reduce dysfunctional behaviour and enhance group work as a learning tool, the gender differences still prevail. Girls on the other hand are less actively involved in group discussions in mixed gender groups, tend to listen intently, and pose more questions to the boys in the group (Webb 1984, Rennie and Parker 1987, Conwell *et al* 1993, and Howe 1997). Furthermore, these gendered behaviours are even more apparent in whole class teacher led interactions, which will be discussed in the next section.

8.4.2 Teacher-led discussions

During the course of the year a number of whole class teacher-led discussions took place. The teacher, in planning for these learning experiences deliberately avoided a 'talk and chalk' approach and focused on facilitating discussion around high-order questions which encouraged the learners to think and reason for themselves, in keeping with the spirit expressed in *Curriculum 2005*. At the beginning of the year the learners were quiet, reticent and reluctant to engage in these discussions. As they became familiar with the teacher and accustomed to her methods, lessons became more interactive and they were willing to participate and offer their opinions on a range of issues under discussion. The whole class discussions in this class conformed to the findings reported by Howe (1997), Swann and Graddol (1994) and Sadker and Sadker (1985), and with the interactions in the small groups reported in the previous section, with the boys tending to dominate by calling out and answering most of the questions. Sometimes discussion became quite animated when the topic particularly interested them and they had something to contribute, so much so it would be difficult to control their behaviour as learners called out, interrupted and spoke over others in their enthusiastic attempts to be heard. However, if the issue under discussion ran counter to their accepted norms, and challenged these, they withdrew from the discussion and failed to participate as is clearly demonstrated in the lesson description and analysis which follows.

8.4.2.1 Teacher-led discussion on 'Facts: Women, Education, and Work' (see appendix B, pg. 57 - 59)

The first set of activities in Unit 3 which focuses on Gender Roles starts with a reading entitled 'My Mother's Life' and then goes on to another reading entitled 'Facts: Women, Education, and Work' (see appendix B, pg. 8 – 9) a non-fiction passage which documents the position of women today. The rationale behind the choice of texts and the teaching and learning material which accompany them is to provide texts for the learners to read and then discuss with them the "reality it constructs" (Singh and Moran 1997, 130), that is, how it positions the reader, what it is trying to do and whom it is intending to empower or disempower (Singh and Moran 1997, Janks 1993). A final activity requires the learners to

interview their own mother and write her life story and see if the same themes are discernible. This way they will become aware of how gender roles are constructed to keep women in the position prescribed by a particular society.

The passage, *My Mother's Life* was written by the researcher and the contents were a biographical account of her own mother's life. The purpose of this was to illustrate the limited educational and career choices young women had in the past, and that although in times of crisis women were willing and able to take on tasks which were previously considered 'men's work' once the crisis was over they were expected to return to the roles which society dictated: that of wife and mother. Furthermore, these roles did not change when she went out to work, despite her contribution to the family income.

As with the comprehension passages discussed in chapter 6, the learners were first asked to read the passage silently, then it was read aloud by the teacher and then discussed. The learners' contributed willingly to a class discussion about their own mother's lives. They were also able to identify the hardships experienced by their own mothers which were similar to those experienced by the woman in the passage. As stated in the field notes: "When all the background is provided, they are able to discuss a topic and this happened today" (see appendix B, pg. 55, 11/04/05), and then, the final sentence in the entry for that lesson states: "All in all this reading generated a lot of discussion, but because of their enthusiasm it was difficult to control. A lot of shouting out and a lot of noise, but focused on the issues" (see appendix B, pg. 56, 11/04/05). However, there are hints in the entry for that day of deeply held attitudes towards gender displayed in the discussion by some of the boys, as the observation written in the field notes quoted below demonstrates:

> The issue of a female president was raised but the boys totally reject this notion. Sam made the point that in African culture this would not happen: "It's our culture, Miss, our culture… the ladies… they can't be president… it's our culture". When I pressed for a more valid reason than culture, a response was not forthcoming.
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 55 11/04/05)

In addition, the lack of engagement from the girls in the class is commented upon:

> What is interesting is that most of the girls said nothing during this discussion and the loudest and most vociferous were the boys even though I tried to include them [the girls] by asking for their contributions.
> (see appendix B, pg. 55, 11/04/05)

This kind of behaviour is common in mixed gender classrooms (Myhill 2002; Howe 1996; Swann and Graddol 1994; Swann 1994).

In the following lesson, which took place two days later, the reading entitled 'Facts: Women, Education, and Work' (see appendix B, pg. 9) was discussed. The purpose of this reading is to broaden the discussion about gender roles from the learners' personal experience, as in the discussion about their own mothers, to the general position of women prevailing in the world today. The content of these two passages is also to be the basis for a more technical lesson teaching the writing of compare and contrast paragraphs, comparing the life of their mothers with the general situation of women as expressed in the fact sheet. A further activity involves considering what the *South African Constitution* (1996) says about gender equity and analysing a cartoon (see appendix B, pg. 10). The purpose of the reading is to raise awareness of the plight of women world wide in the hope that this awareness will make the learners think about social justice issues pertaining to women and work towards change. However, as will be seen in the analysis of discussion which follows, this particular reading was not well-received by the learners and failed to achieve this.

8.4.2.2 Responses to the reading, 'Facts: Women, Education, and Work'.

At the beginning of the lesson the learners were instructed to read the passage on their own silently. Although many struggle to read independently, as has already been reported and discussed in Chapter 6, it is important to persist with this practice in order to offer the learners the opportunity to practice and improve their reading, and to allow those who are better readers to consider the content prior to the class discussion commencing. While it is conceded that the passage is more difficult than the others used in this intervention, having a FOG or clarity index (see chapter 4 section 4.3.2 for a detailed explanation of the FOG index) that suggests that it is more suitable for a grade 11 or 12 than grade 9 learners, the frequent repetition of the longer words and the bullet points serve to simplify the

reading. Furthermore, much of the vocabulary which makes this passage difficult, as well as the themes contained in it, have been discussed in the previous lesson which focused on the reading entitled "My Mother's Life" (see appendix B, pg. 8).

A cursory glance at the transcript of the class discussion (see appendix B, pg. 57 – 59) indicates that the discussion was difficult to sustain and that most of the talking was done by the teacher. Of the 225 lines which make up the interaction, approximately 208 lines are spoken by the teacher and only 17 by the learners, much of which is inaudible. During the course of the discussion the teacher poses 66 questions on the topic under discussion and learners answer only 14 of these. Most of these are answered by girls after considerable prompting, and most of the answers are inaudible. While technical problems relating to audio-recording can be partly blamed for this, the quiet, hesitant tone used when making these responses is also responsible. According to Myhill (2002) this is common in mixed gender classrooms where girls are listeners rather than speakers.

From the outset of the lesson there appears to be resistance from the learners, particularly the boys. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher encourages the learners to respond with "Come on… Someone must have an answer…" (line7) and later, "Put your hands up if you know the answer. Come on… Yes. Why is this? Ok. What do you think?" (lines 63 – 64). Throughout the lesson she repeats and rephrases questions to assist the learners with answering them as the example below illustrates:

> Teacher: Rural means country. And it says here they are dependent on agriculture. What sort of people are dependent on agriculture? *(Pause)* What do they do? *(Pause)* They work in the fields. So who work in the fields? *(Pause)* Come on… People who are farm workers… they tend to be illiterate. Can anyone tell me why? *(Pause)* Why?... *(pause)*
>
> (see appendix B7 pg. 57, lines 50 – 55)

However, she achieves little success in motivating them to respond, eventually resorting to answering the questions herself. In the field notes written immediately after the lesson the following is recorded:

> … in contrast to the discussion on Monday, this one was very heavy going! I felt as if I was dragging information out of them. They weren't badly behaved in general – just uncommunicative, particularly the boys, who just seemed to have withdrawn from the lesson.
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 56, 13/04)

While the boys' reluctance to engage is commented on immediately after the lesson, it is only later, after examination of the transcribed interaction that the extent of their disengagement is revealed. Throughout the lesson the boys make few if any bids to respond to questions. They show their attitude by declining to answer questions, even after putting up a hand, feigning sleep, laughing at incorrect answers and laughing and talking quietly amongst themselves, as can be seen in the examples below:

> Teacher: Didn't you put your hand up? Well… why did you put your hand up? You need to keep your hand down if you are not going to answer the question. (*laughter in the background*) Gentlemen, gentlemen.There are two gentlemen in the back group who are sleeping and wasting their time. Wake up. *(Laughter)* Would one of you like to try? *(Laughter)* You're going to have a task to do at the end of this…
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 58, lines 66 – 70)
>
> Teacher: And lower infant mortality rate… what does this mean? What does mortality mean? *(Pause)* What does mortality mean?
> Learner: I think it means power. *(laughter)*
> Teacher: No… No, it means… Don't laugh at least she was prepared to try…It means death… and in this case infants – small children…
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 58, lines 78 – 82)
>
> Teacher: Ok. Now that's enough you boys. This is not funny. Why are you talking among yourselves? Didn't you put your hand up? Stop now. Put your hands up and let everyone hear your comments. This is meant to be a discussion.
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 58, lines 95 – 97)

The behaviour described above could be calculated to show their disapproval of, or disdain for, the reading under discussion. This is similar to the resistance Ellswoth (1989) experienced when her students refused to engage, as well as that Janks (2001) experienced with adolescent boys who declared her lesson 'boring'. She maintains that their response arose from their inability to apply the material to their own lives.

There are two occasions in the lesson when the boys react to points made in the passage. The first is when the statement "The international labour organization says that women do two thirds of the work in the world" is read out. This is followed by a "hub-bub of responses" which leads the teacher to say, "Don't shout out. One at a time… Put your hand up" (see appendix B, pg. 59, line 126). The second which follows on a statement about teenage pregnancy, is recorded below:

> Teacher: Having a baby makes it much more difficult to continue your studies because who has the responsibility for the baby when it is born? *(Pause)* Is it the father? *(pause)* When the baby is born the father just melts away
> Learners: (*Inaudible comment followed by a buzz of voices*)
> Teacher: It is all very well. But the reality of the situation is that you may have the intention to look after the baby, and maybe you as an individual would take care of your baby but most schoolboys and young men do not. *(loud hubbub. Boys shouting out "No" while girls clearly agree with the statement)* The majority of schoolboys do not take care of the child – the girl does it! *(Loud hub-bub)* Ok, Ok… Let's move on…
>
> (see appendix B, pg. 59, lines 162 – 171)

Unfortunately, none of the responses are audible, but it can be deduced that the boys emphatically disagree with both statements, so much so that they cannot maintain their appearance of disengagement and resist the statements loudly. A discussion on what this may mean follows.

8.4.2.3 Considering the classroom interaction

Research on whole class teacher led discussions has established that boys dominate lessons in mixed gender classrooms in the same way they dominate small group discussions, and this classroom is no different. According to a number of researchers (Delamont 1990, Swann and Graddol 1994, Howe 1997, Wood 2001) they engage more verbally, raise their hands quicker, callout and interrupt more than girls, much like the dominant and dysfunctional behaviour observed in the previous section which considered small group interaction. However, in this interaction the boys are silent except when statements they strongly disagree with are made. Although this leaves the space open for the girls to participate, they do not take this opportunity.

There are a number of reasons why learners do not respond in the classroom. Unequal power relations (Ellsworth 1989), fear of giving the wrong response (Kramer-Dahl 2001), challenging deeply held belief systems (Shor 1999; Granville, 2003; McKinney 2004a,b, and c), and fear of conflict (Janks 2001) can all be reasons why learners are silent.

There are a number of interesting conclusions which can be drawn from this data. The first is that when the subject matter under discussion runs counter to their deeply held beliefs, the boys choose, as a group and without making a conscious decision or prior planning, to withdraw from engaging with it. This resonates with the findings of Granville (2003) and Shor (1999). However, this withdrawal does not mean that they are not listening to the discussion or that they do not understand the points being made, because at times they cannot silence their protests and show this in the examples above. Secondly, that the boys dominate classroom discussion. This point is already well established in the literature (Swann and Graddol 1994, Delamont 1990, Corson 1993) but what is interesting here is that when the boys choose not to engage in the discussion, the girls fail to step in to the vacuum and fill the space. Thus the patterns of interaction which have sidelined the girls are also deeply acculturated. Finally, changing attitudes which are deeply held, or to repeat the words spoken by Sam, "… in our culture, Miss, our culture…" (see appendix B, pg. 55, 05/04/05), is not easily or quickly achieved. This final point is reinforced when considering the behaviour of the boys and girls in less formal contexts in the classroom and the playground, and these will be explored in the following section.

8.4.3 Gender in informal settings: the classroom and playground[19].

While gender during formal lesson settings has been explored and seen to pervade interactions, as has been explored in the previous two sections, the analysis which follows explores evidence of behaviour in less formal school and teacher-directed settings. It considers behaviour exhibited in the classroom following a lesson which explicitly dealt with gender attitudes inherent in the use of language, and

[19] Parts of this section, 8.4.3, have been published in Balfour, R. and Ralfe, E. (2006) 'Hit me baby one more time': the engendering of violence in childrens' discourse in South African schools . *Journal of Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies. 24 (4) pp. 523-525.*

while an application activity which called for independent engagement was being done. It then goes on to explore some of the behaviour observed in informal classroom and playground interaction between boys and girls.

The first incident to be explored follows a lesson which began by discussing the features and uses of slang. During this part of the lesson the teacher first discusses the function of slang and then goes on to demonstrate how slang can be used to denigrate people who are not members of the 'in' group, including members of the opposite sex. An activity sheet was distributed (see appendix B, pg. 22 - 23) and the class were asked to fill in the slang words they used for girls and boys

Teacher: What I want you to do in your groups is to write down some slang words you use for the opposite sex. Write them in on your sheet of paper.
(hum of discussion)
Teacher: Sorry… Let me explain the term connotation.
(There follows a discussion of the meaning of connotation and denotation) For example, let's think of a slang name given to a girl… Let me give you an example the word 'cherrie'. When a boys talks about a cherrie is he talking nicely about a girl or badly about a girl?
Learners: *(General calling out)* Badly Miss.
Teacher: So what is the connotation?

(see appendix B, pg. 65)

The learners were then required to discuss the various slang names they used for girls and boys in groups and then state whether these words had positive or negative connotations. They were given a worksheet (see appendix B, pg. 22 – 23) to direct their discussion. During the report back session one of the boys used his ruler to hit the ponytail of the girl in front of him. Her initial response was to shrug her shoulders and move her head from side to side in irritation. When this did not stop him she turned around and glared at him, much to his amusement. When this, too, failed to stop him she turned around and asked him to stop. This had no effect and it was only when the activity changed and she was able to re-orientate her body that the behaviour stopped. This behaviour had been observed earlier in the year. The attitude of the boy who openly smiled and sniggered at her discomfort indicated that he viewed his behaviour towards her as a joke. This is a common excuse given to justify sexually harassing behaviour (Robinson 2005; Kenway and Fitzclarence 1997). The boy's actions support the view expressed by

Robinson that "… sexually harassing girls was something to break the boredom of the school day, making it more 'interesting'" (2005, 25) However, while the boy involved might have considered the behaviour as fun, this was clearly not the case with the girl (Kehily and Nayak 1997) who obviously felt uncomfortable and irritated.

The second incident of sexual harassment was observed and recounted to me by a teacher. The boy involved, Dillon, was a member of the intervention group and the incident took place towards the end of the year after he had been exposed to the critical literacy material for some months. She recounted the incident as follows:

> this boy had his - was physically manhandling this girl, sexually manhandling her and the two of them had the cheek to say that, "We were only playing". The girl appeared affronted [with the boy] when the teacher was angry, but the boy said, he actually said, "I've never seen such an actress. I do this with her every day, Miss and why is she making a fuss about it now?" So, the girls seemed to accept. They may not really like it, but they seem to accept the way the boys treat them.
>
> (see appendix C, pg. 67, lines 13 – 18, Interview 1/12/05)

The boy's response to the teacher that they "were only playing", makes it clear that he considered his behaviour as normal and not as sexual harassment. According to Robinson, boys can construe this kind of behaviour as "something they 'have to do' in order to attract girls and as an inherent performance of their masculinity"' (2005, 27). Kehily (2002, 136) suggests that there is a strong link between heterosexuality, masculinity and sexual activity which is "desired and expected" and discussed within groups of young men. Thus the ability to touch a girl inappropriately offers status as the boy has succeeded in 'getting there'. Dillon's comment that the girl was enjoying his attention is a common response and supports other research where the perpetrator lays blame on the victim as being partly, if not wholly, to blame (Leach 2002). The teacher's comment that the girls accept such behaviour suggests that the power relationships between the boys and girls make resisting such behaviour difficult, and that girls realise that doing so may have consequences for them in and beyond the context of the school; as Bhana (2005) has suggested, schools are not safe spaces.

The final two incidents concern the same boy, Dillon, but a different girl, Patti. The first occurred towards the beginning of the year before the intervention had become fully operational, while the second occurred towards the end of the intervention. The boy involved is tall and socially self-assured in class. In the classroom he often sprawls across the desk and his body language suggests a lack of interest and disdain. His language work is extremely weak. He seldom completes a task and a reading test reveals his reading age to be 7 years and 7 months, far below his chronological age. By contrast, the girl, Patti, is a popular, attractive, articulate and academically able member of the class.

The first incident took place as the class were lining up before walking into the classroom. He put his arm around the girl, put his hand over her breast and squeezed it. The teacher saw this happen and called both of them aside. She forced him to apologise and told him that she was going to take him to the school principal at the end of the lesson. The victim refused to accept his apology and told the teacher that she wanted his behaviour reported to a higher authority. However, by the end of the lesson she had changed her mind and she asked the teacher not to report him to the principal this time. The second incident occurred much later in the year during class when he called the same girl "a fucking whore". During the focus group interview which was done some months later, at the beginning of the 2006 school year, he referred to this second incident. He claimed that she had "irritated" him and argued that he was justified in calling her by this epithet. In the same interview he said that she had irritated him so much that he "wanted to klap her". He goes on to say: "And we were in Foster's [the teacher] class that time and she ...(inaudible) and I just wanted to klap her...(inaudible) throw her down". (see appendix C, pg. 72, line 47, Interview 19/01/2006).

These two incidents of sexual harassment, bordering on physical violence suggest that this boy harboured deep feelings of anger and aggression towards the girl and the female teacher who overheard the incident and reported it. During the interview he attempted to justify his actions by suggesting that by irritating him

she was 'asking for it' and that she deserved to be spoken to in that way. Robinson found in her research that "If girls made some boys angry, sexual harassment was used as a powerful weapon of retaliation to 'put girls back in their place'" (2005, 29). Furthermore, her status as popular, clever, and female threatened his hegemonic masculinity and the power he felt was vested in him by his maleness, and thus his response was sexual harassment. Prendergast and Forrest (1997, in Lahelma 2002) present research which supports the view that classroom relationships between working class boys and girls have become more conflictual in recent years. They suggest that boys have lost ground to girls both academically and socially and that "sexual harassment is a way of counteracting the current challenges to male hegemony" (2002, 302). Certainly as much is also evident in observations of school children at play, conducted as part of Bhana's (2005) study of the engendering of playground interaction. In the Sherwood research the boy's recounting of the incident showed his lack of respect for the female teacher (who had observed the incident together with the researcher) by referring to her by surname only and omitting the formal mode of address (Mrs Foster).

These observations contradict the comment made by the member of the school management team that the boys were 'protective' of the girls. However, this attitude is indicative of hegemonic masculinity as protection suggests that the boys have the power and status to fulfill this role and the girls do not.

What is clear from the above discussion is that the critical literacy intervention has not achieved its goal of changing the gender attitudes and perceptions of the boys in grade 9A. Furthermore, that resistance to critical literacy is not unusual when deeply held beliefs are challenged (McKinney 2004a, 2004b, 2005; Janks 2001, 2010).

The data reported on in the preceding sections of this chapter have moved from group, to class and finally to playground interaction exploring how gender is played out in these contexts. The following section considers gender perceptions and attitudes in an even wider context: that of all the grade 9 learners.

8.5 Gender Survey

The gender survey (see appendix D, pg. 74 – 78) was administered in order to answer the research questions: What are the perceptions and attitudes of learners in a co-educational high school towards learners of different gender? And in what way does a critical literacy intervention impact on the perceptions and attitudes of the boys and girls in the research class towards gender? The reason for using a quantitative research tool is that while the observation of gender attitudes and perceptions which are recorded in field notes and interviews provide insights into individual behaviour, a questionnaire provides quantitative insights into a group which observations cannot capture. Furthermore, a quantitative tool is useful in triangulating the results.

The survey was administered twice, firstly to all the grade 9 learners during the first week of the school year, and then again during the first week of grade 10, a year later. This was done in order to establish whether there had been any change in their responses following the intervention. The learners' responses were marked on computer answer sheets and captured electronically (see appendix D, pg. 78). The survey was conducted in the classrooms, under the supervision of a teacher and the researcher.

8.5.1 Questionnaire and data layout

The survey is in the form of a closed questionnaire made up of 96 questions (appendix D, pg. 74 – 78). The first 6 are designed to collect personal information while the final 90 are subdivided into 9 different issue categories of 10 questions each, although this number has been reduced in the final analysis, as will be explained later in this section. Each question is in the form of a statement to which the respondents indicate their extent of agreement from a choice of strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. The responses are coded as follows: 1 for strongly agree, 2 for agree, 3 for neither agree nor disagree (neutral), 4 for disagree and 5 for strongly disagree. The purpose of the analysis is to establish the views of boys and girls on these issues and to see if these change in any significant way after the intervention.

When the questionnaire was first administered at the beginning of grade 9, 198 learners (119 girls and 79 boys) responded. The following year 176 learners (100 girls and 76 boys) responded. This discrepancy can be explained by learners moving from one school to another at the end of the school year or failing to be promoted and remaining in grade 9.

Following the administration of the survey the data was captured and coded. The direction of some of the questions was changed for consistency and the data was cleaned. This is necessary to ensure an effective comparison between the responses across the year. The responses from grade 9A learners were separated from the group. This was done as they are the subjects of the intervention and it is necessary to establish whether their attitudes and perceptions have changed in relation to the whole group. The data set was examined and following difficulties with establishing consistence and reliability over the whole set of questions and categories, 22 questions were selected for analysis as they most accurately measure chauvinistic attitudes and perceptions. The data has been analysed using a number of statistical tools which will be explained as the results of each are recorded in the following section.

8.5.2 Analysis of responses

It needs to be stated at the outset, that the analyses presented in this section are a brief summary of the results. The reason is that the questionnaire has been used as a tool to triangulate and confirm the results of other qualitative research tools and as such reporting a full analysis, which could be a research project on its own, is not relevant.

The responses to the questionnaire have been analysed both inferentially and descriptively, but the results of the inferential analysis are reported here. Inferential statistics entails applying a test or series of tests to a given set of data in order to establish if the results can be used to draw generalised, reliable inferences about the population.

8.5.2.1 Inferential statistical analysis

As has already been pointed out, inferential statistics determines whether data collected from a sample can be generalized to the population. They are routinely used in hypothesis testing, which means that they allow a researcher to test whether the differences observed between a set of responses are due to the effects of an independent variable. In the case of this questionnaire the set of responses come from grade 9A learners and the independent variable is gender. Thus the hypothesis which is being tested in the inferential analysis applied to this questionnaire tests whether the responses from learners who responded to the questionnaire are significantly different in their responses to the 22 selected statements and whether after the critical literacy intervention any further difference in their responses can be discerned. In order to do this a number of tests are applied to the data, and these will be described below.

8.5.2.1.1 Reliability and Consistency

Internal consistency is the most common form of reliability. In this analysis, internal consistency is measured using the Cronbach alpha method. Pearson's correlation is also applied to pairs of items that measure a similar idea in order to test consistency of responses.

8.5.2.1.2 Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's alpha tests for internal consistency and reliability. When tested over the whole sample, with the 90 questions divided into the 9 themes or categories, the results showed inconsistency of the groupings since the alpha values were too low. However, after careful examination, a set of 22 questions, Figure 8.2 overleaf, which are a measurement of chauvinistic attitudes has been isolated from the set.

Figure 8.2 Set of questions included in analysis

Q8	Men should invite women on dates
Q13	Men and women should not share the housework
Q16	Women are not suited to taking leadership roles at work
Q17	Men should take the lead in a relationship
Q19	Boys are more likely to become bosses when they grow up
Q20	It's the woman's place to look after the children
Q34	Men make better bosses
Q40	Men are better at sport than women
Q42	It's not OK for men to stay at home and look after the children
Q44	The man should be the head of the home
Q50	Men are better drivers than women
Q52	Boys make better prefects than girls
Q55	Women are the weaker sex
Q57	Women are dependent on men
Q63	Men should be breadwinners
Q65	Men should be strong and not show their emotions
Q67	Men who show their feelings are weak
Q81	Women should wait for men to make the first move
Q82	It's not OK for men to cry
Q84	Men are more suited to becoming doctors than girls
Q87	A woman must listen to her husband
Q94	Men should work while women should stay home and look after the children

When the above 22 questions are tested with Cronbach's alpha over the whole group the result is an alpha value of 0.8058 which is good and indicates that the chosen questions measure the same idea and are therefore consistent and reliable.

8.5.2.1.3 Pearson's correlation coefficient

In designing the questionnaire a number of questions which test similar things were included in order to test the reliability of the responses. It is assumed that similar questions will receive similar responses and if this is confirmed then the responses can be deemed to be reliable.

Correlations test whether two variables are related. Pearson's correlation was applied to a number of pairs of questions which measured similar things, while those indicating significance are listed in Figure 8.3.

Figure 8.3 Results of Pearson's correlation (paired) between selected questions in each grouping

A	B	Pearson's correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
World of Work				
Boys are more likely to become bosses when the grow up	Men make better bosses	.271**	<.0005	Agreement with A correlates significantly with agreement with B
Emotions				
Men should be strong and not show their emotions	Men who show their feelings are weak	.354**	<.0005	Agreement with A correlates significantly with agreement with B
Men who show their feelings are weak	Its not OK for men to cry	.274**	<.0005	Agreement with A correlates significantly with agreement with B
Social Behaviour				
Women make the best cooks	Men make the best chefs	-.269**	<.0005	Disagreement with A correlates significantly with agreement with B
Dating				
It's not OK for women to phone men and invite them on dates	Women should wait for men to make the first move	.139*	0.05	Agreement with A correlates significantly with agreement with B
Women should not have to pay for anything when on a date with a man	Women should not pay when out on dates	.324**	<.0005	Agreement with A correlates significantly with agreement with B
Marriage/home/family environment				
A woman must listen to her husband	The man should be the head of the home	.386**	<.0005	Agreement with A correlates significantly with agreement with B
It's not OK for men to stay at home and look after the children	It's the woman's place to look after the children	.297**	<.0005	Agreement with A correlates significantly with agreement with B
It's the woman's place to look after the children	Men should work while women should stay at home and look after the children	.344**	<.0005	Agreement with A correlates significantly with agreement with B

8.5.3 Interpretation of statistical data

Cronbach's alpha when applied to the 22 questions listed in Figure 8.2 shows that the responses are consistent and therefore the set of questions does indeed measure the construct of chauvinism.

Because there is significant correlation between the responses of various pairs of similar questions, Pearson's correlation co-efficient proves that the data collected is reliable and reflects the opinions of the respondents.

8.5.4 Comparison of pre and post intervention results

Paired sample t-tests were carried out on the data collected in the first and second questionnaires to see whether there was any significant difference in the average responses before and after the intervention. Results show that the average score in the first questionnaire (3.0022) is not significantly different from the average score

in the second questionnaire (2.9824). Thus it can be concluded that perceptions and attitudes of the respondents did not change.

Thus inferential testing has revealed that over the 22 selected questions the data collected is reliable and consistent, while the paired sample t-tests conclude that there was not a significant difference in the results from the first and second questionnaires.

8.5.5 Discussion of results – gender questionnaire

The results of the questionnaire reveal that all the learners in grade 9A have conventional, chauvinistic views with regard to gender. This finding is consistent with the qualitative research reported earlier in this chapter. The fact that there was no significant change in the grade 9A responses to the second questionnaire which was administered after the intervention supports other research (Wood 2001) which suggests that gender attitudes and perceptions are deeply acculturated and therefore it is not an easy task to change them. Furthermore, this confirms the findings of chapter 6 and 7 in which it is hypothesised that a critical literacy intervention would have limited success with learners who have weak reading abilities.

8.6 Reflections on perceptions and attitudes towards gender

The findings reported in this chapter focus on perceptions and attitudes towards gender evident at Sherwood High School. It analyses data collected from ever widening circles of interaction, moving from qualitative small group interaction to a quantitative large scale questionnaire, in order to show how gender is played out in a number of contexts across the school.

The chapter starts by exploring gender in small group interaction and concludes that boys are more likely to behave in a dysfunctional manner than girls during this kind of activity. In mixed gender groups they dominate the discussion, disrupt the effective completion of the task, and challenge the leadership of girls

(Howe 1996). The one exception to this is where the girl who is group leader has sufficient confidence in her academic and social position in the class to reject this behaviour.

This is followed by an examination of gender played out in a whole class teacher led discussion and concludes that, as has been found by other researchers (Swann and Graddol 1994; Howe 1996) who have explored classroom interaction, that boys dominate whole class interaction but when the subject matter of the lesson runs counter to their deeply held beliefs they choose, as a group, not to engage with the lesson (Ellsworth 1989; McKinney 2004a, 2004b and 2005; Janks 2001, 2010).

In the third section of this chapter, the context moves from formal classroom interaction to examine evidence of gender in informal classroom and playground mixed gender interaction. This reveals that girls are frequently harassed by the boys as incidents of hegemonic masculinity are played out (Robinson 2004; Morrell *et al* 2009; Bhana 2005 and 2009). It also suggests that the 'protective' attitude displayed by the learners is an extension of this as the ability to protect suggests power and status and relegates the girls to a position of weakness and dependence.

Finally, it reports on the findings of a large scale questionnaire which suggest that gender roles are deeply ingrained in both boys and girls in grade 9A in the school and in the broader community from which they come and as such strongly resistant to change.

The final chapter will discuss these findings, together with those of the previous two chapters, drawing the threads together.

Chapter 9 Retrospection and reflection on the Critical Literacy Intervention

There is nothing like looking, if you want to find something. You certainly usually find something, if you look, but it is not always quite the something you were after.

(J R R Tolkien 1936)

9.1 Introduction

Chapter one described the rationale, outline and questions which gave rise to this research. In order to conclude the thesis this chapter will look back, review the findings and results, relating these to the literature and theoretical framework in order to draw the threads together critically.

Firstly, this chapter will reconsider the questions posed and the purpose for the research being undertaken before going on to draw together the findings and results and interpret them in the light of the literature discussed in chapter 2 and theoretical framework presented in chapter 3. Here, too, the research questions will be revisited and answered. No single research can cover every aspect of a particular topic; so thirdly, the gaps, anomalies, and unexpected findings will be discussed. Fourthly, the chapter considers the significance of these results to classroom practice and wider debates about the school curriculum, which is about to be changed as this it being written. Finally, I describe further research which arises from these findings and recommendations in terms of curricula and subject content.

9.2 Retrospection: Looking back at the critical literacy intervention

This thesis reports on the results of a critical literacy intervention conducted with grade 9 learners in a school which was under apartheid designated for the 'Coloured' community. The purpose of the critical literacy intervention was to change gender perceptions and empower the learners to challenge conventional,

societal views on this issue while at the same time addressing the demands of the language curriculum and improving the learners' language facility.

As has been stated earlier in this thesis, despite South Africa having a gender-friendly constitution and legislation in place to ensure gender equality and equity, the society is still essentially patriarchal, with women taking the traditional roles in both the home and the wider community. Furthermore, women are often the victims of abuse and violence at the hands of men, evidenced by the fact that South Africa has one of the highest incidents of rape and femicide in the world. The school context is not isolated from the wider society and girls often report sexual harassment and violence against them taking place within what should be a safe space for all learners regardless of their gender (Morrell *et al* 2009; Bhana 2009; Morojele 2009).

The purpose of this research has been to use critical literacy as a tool to change gender attitudes and perceptions, and to raise the learners' awareness of the need for gender equity, while at the same time improving the learners' language facility. Schools have been widely identified as sites which perpetuate and reinforce gender inequality. Furthermore, gender attitudes are a deeply entrenched part of social and cultural life in South Africa and changing them is difficult (Morrell *et al* 2009). Many public role models exhibit patriarchal attitudes in both their professional and private lives, and in homes, family life reinforces these beliefs.

Language and culture are closely linked and many educationalists believe that critical literacy can be used successfully as a tool for empowerment and change (Fairclough 1989 and 1992; Janks 1993, 1997, 2000 and 2010; Comber 1993 and others). A critical literacy approach examines texts and questions the choice of words and way they are structured and organized, drawing attention to the subtle way they are used to maintain or challenge the *status quo*. In addition the school curriculum in place at the time the intervention was undertaken, *Curriculum 2005*, focuses on human rights and the development of critical thinking and language

skills, with one of the outcomes stating specifically that "Learners show critical awareness of language use" (Department of Education 1997e, LLC, 3).

The research has been conducted against a backdrop of educational change which cannot be ignored. Years of racial separation, discrimination and differentiated curricula have left deep scars on South African education that are still evident today (Ashley 1989; Badat 1997; Christie 1997; Jansen 1999; Kraak 1999 and 2001 among others). The changes both in structure and approach have not been easy for teachers, who have found the imposition of OBE in the form of *Curriculum 2005* and its practical implementation difficult to manage. This situation is exacerbated by large class sizes, difficulties with administration and discipline with little support from educational authorities (Taylor 1999 and 2001; De Waal 2004).

At the outset of the research four research questions were posed:

- What are the perceptions and attitudes of learners in a co-educational high school towards learners of different gender?
- How do these perceptions and attitudes manifest themselves in the behaviour of the learners towards each other?
- In what way does a critical literacy intervention impact on the perceptions and attitudes of the boys and girls in the research class towards gender?
- What factors affect the successful implementation of a critical literacy intervention?

In order to effectively answer these questions the research followed an action research approach and a case study framework. It took the form of a classroom intervention which was undertaken in a grade 9 class at a co-educational high school in KwaZulu-Natal which had in the days of apartheid been designated 'coloured'. While not categorised by the educational authorities as disadvantaged, in comparison with other schools in the immediate surroundings it can clearly be considered as such.

The classroom intervention involved the provision of teaching materials, activities and texts that, while conforming to the demands of the curriculum and fulfilling

the demands of the language teachers at the school, forefront gender and focus on developing an awareness of issues surrounding it through the use of critical literacy where possible. However, as has been reported earlier in this thesis, this proved challenging as will be explained in the following section which will summarise the results and findings.

9.2.1 Summary of findings and results obtained from the critical literacy intervention

The research reported upon in this thesis generated a large quantity of data. After careful examination and selection, three main themes emerged and they were discussed in chapters 6, 7, and 8. The first emphasizes the importance of literacy, and particularly reading, to engaging with texts critically and finds that poor literacy skills affect the learners' ability to comprehend and therefore engage critically with texts. The second theme extends the first and finds that poor literacy skills affect the learners' ability to engage with visual material, even when the subject is advertising, a topic which lends itself to demonstrating how language can be used as a tool to persuade consumers to buy. It also raises the question of whether a critical literacy intervention can be successful if reading capabilities are weak. Finally, it presents examples of the learners' engagement with materials which focus on gender in three classroom activities, as well as their off-task behaviour in the classroom and playground, which supports the finding that gender attitudes, perceptions and behaviours are deeply acculturated therefore difficult to change in a relatively short term intervention in language lessons. These findings are confirmed by the results of the qualitative questionnaire which indicate that there is no change in the learner responses after the intervention. The findings from each of these themes will be summarized in greater detail below.

Problems with the learners' reading proficiency became evident early in the intervention when it could be observed that a substantial number of grade 9A learners experienced difficulty reading. They read slowly, their oral reading lacks fluency, and when reading silently many of them vocalize and sub-vocalize, while

some fail to attempt to read at all. This inability to read effectively led to their achieving poor marks on comprehension activities. Despite scaffolding and explicit instruction on how to approach activities which required them to respond to texts, assessments did not improve[20]. A close analysis of their responses to the June examination reveals that most of the learners are unable to respond to higher order questions which involve the ability to reorganize, make inferences, interpret, evaluate, and hypothesize on information from texts that they have read.

In order to get some idea of the learners' reading ability, the Gapadol reading test was administered to the grade 9A class and two others. The results indicate that all the learners tested have reading ages well below their chronological ages. The average reading age of grade 9A is 10 years and 1 month, while their average chronological age is 15 years and 4 months, indicating that they are on average 5 years and 3 months below standard[21].

In seeking an explanation for the above, a reading questionnaire was designed to elicit information on the learners reading backgrounds and early engagement with activities which promote reading, as well as their interest in and perceptions about reading. The results indicate that most of the learners read very little, have access to little reading matter at home, and enjoy reading only a little. At the same time they consider their reading ability to be 'average' suggesting that they think they read adequately[22].

Chapter 7 examines the learners' responses to a group activity on the topic advertising, and then their responses to a similar question set in the June examination. Following explicit instruction on the topic, the learners were required to respond to questions on advertisements which had been pasted on to boards. These responses were to be written on the cardboard and then reported back to the whole class orally before being pinned up on the wall. The responses to this activity reveal that the learners have little understanding of the

[20] See chapter 6 section 6.3.2 for full details.
[21] See chapter 6 section 6.4 for full details of the Gapadol test and the results.
[22] See chapter 6 section 6.5 for full details of the reading questionnaire.

advertisements provided[23]. The June examination included a question on advertising and the findings from this activity confirm that of the group class activity: that they are unable to manage this sort of activity effectively[24]. It is therefore concluded that their limited reading ability has impacted on their ability to complete this task competently. While most of the learners are able to decode the picture, few engaged with the text revealing that they are unable to draw inferences, evaluate or analyse the advertisements in any depth.

The final theme considers gender in the classroom and provides data from a small group activity, a whole class teacher led discussion, and then observations of gender at play informally in the classroom and playground. The small group interaction, which involved audio-taping and transcribing group discussions on a poem suggest that the boys took on dysfunctional roles in the groups, challenged the leadership role allocated to girls, and in one group marginalized the girls completely and excluded them from the discussion. However, in another of the groups where the girl who was leader was confident and academically able, the boys' attempts were rebuffed and they were ignored[25]. In whole class discussion, where research confirms that boys dominate in a variety of ways, the boys declined to participate actively in a class discussion which considered the position occupied by women in the world except when they felt they could not withhold their disagreement[26]. Informal observation both in the classroom and playground suggest that the boys display hegemonic masculinity and the girls are sexually harassed in a number of ways[27]. Taken together these suggest that gender differences are deeply entrenched in the culture of the learners, the school and the community. Boys consider themselves to have greater power and status than girls and this view is seldom if ever challenged at Sherwood High School.

The following section will explore these findings and relate them to the literature and theory presented in chapter 3 and 4.

[23] See chapter 7 section 7.2 for full details of the advertising activity.
[24] See chapter 7 section 7.3 for full details of the June examination question.
[25] See chapter 8 section 8.4.1 for full details of the group discussions.
[26] See chapter 8 section 8.4.2 for full details of the whole class interaction.
[27] See chapter 8 section 8.4.3

9.3 What does it all mean? Interpretation of the results

As has already been stated, the purpose of the classroom-based intervention was to raise gender awareness and change the learners' attitudes and perceptions towards gender by using a critical literacy approach in the English classroom. In looking at the results and findings articulated in the previous section, it is striking to note how little impact the intervention appears to have made and to speculate on the reasons for this.

In essence three main conclusions arise from the findings. Firstly, that the curriculum has failed in its stated aim of developing high level thinking skills as basic skills such as reading are absent. Secondly, that reading facilitates thinking and learners need to read effectively in order to critically engage with texts. Furthermore, learners do not perceive their reading skills to be weak or problematic and do not consider reading to be a critical skill in the first place. Finally, that negative gender perceptions and attitudes are alive and well and can be observed across all spaces and members of the Sherwood High School community, and that changing such deeply acculturated attitudes is difficult over the limited period of this intervention.

On the face of it the school curriculum, *Curriculum 2005*, would seem to be promoting the development of logical, analytical, critical and lateral thinking learners who are able to go out into the world with a variety of skills and 'competencies' (Department of Education 1997a and 1997e), understanding "the way in which language is used as a powerful instrument to reflect, shape and manipulate people's beliefs actions and relationships" (Department of Education 1997e, 5). Yet the rhetoric of the document is belied by the results of this research, both in terms of literacy and gender and supports the findings reported by Taylor (2001) and Howie *et al* (2008), which find that in reality the learners have not mastered the basic foundational skills which are a prerequisite for achieving these outcomes, neither are they emotionally or academically able to accommodate the discourse of human and gender rights the curriculum outlines explicitly (Morrell

et al 2009; Bhana 2009). In addition, the extent to which participants are unable to engage with learning material focussed explicitly on gender issues, suggests that the literacy barriers to learning affect not only the absorption of content covered within the curriculum (irrespective of the subject area), but also the learners' ability to engage optimally with such subject matter through text, as is clearly demonstrated by this study.

The learners in the research class have been following *Curriculum 2005*, since its inception in 1998 when they entered school in grade 1. What is striking about the findings is how little effect this has had on the learners understanding of the discourse of empowerment, social justice and critical thinking articulated in that document. While there are a number of systemic factors that may have contributed to this, such as large class sizes (Parker 1997) and the lack of resources such as libraries in schools to support independent learning (Pretorius 2000; Department of Education 2008b), it is the fundamental theoretical underpinning of outcomes based education which has failed our learners when it comes to developing critical thinking.

Jansen (1997 and 1999) predicted that OBE would fail because it was based on "flawed assumptions" (1997, 69). He has been proved to be correct after observing the practices and attitudes of teachers at Sherwood High School. *Curriculum 2005*, envisages active engaged learners, working independently of educators in groups and teams using learning programmes as guides to direct innovative and creative teachers who are designing their own materials and assessments which will determine whether learners have met the stated level of competence in the given learning area (Department of Education 1997a). This research reveals that this is very far removed from the actual situation which prevails in classrooms. Teachers have had poor training (Lessick and de Witt 2004) and many reject OBE, preferring to fall back on what they consider to be the tried and tested methods of the past, as expressed by the principal of Sherwood High School (see appendix C pg. 66)

While it may be argued that there is a multiplicity of reasons why OBE might have failed the learners in grade 9A, one of them is the essentially behaviourist focus on outputs rather than inputs (Malcolm 1998, Kraak 1998 and 2002, Malan 2000), that is, what learners can actually do. The high numbers of assessments which have to be included in learners' portfolios reduces teaching time (Jansen 1997 and 1999) as Mrs Foster, the grade 9 English teacher, felt that these should be conducted during school time in order for them to be competently completed. In addition to this, examinations and control tests were conducted at the end of each term removing even more teaching time. Grade 9 learners have only four 45 minute periods a week allocated to English, and given the number of assessments required in the assessment guidelines (Department of Education 2001) there is little or no time to remediate learners' problems or focus on assisting them to develop skills which they failed to master earlier in their school careers (Brookes 1997). Furthermore, the relegation of the position of the teacher to 'guide on the side', facilitating learning by encouraging learners to discover for themselves, does not achieve the same result as explicit focused teaching which is necessary to effect remediation. In addition, the curriculum assumes that given time, all learners will master and achieve a stated outcome, thus specific, targeted remediation is absent (Brookes 1997). Thus it is fair to say the *Curriculum 2005* is assessment driven and given the time frames, which run counter to Spady's conception of OBE which envisages learners revisiting material until it is mastered, it is extremely easy for learners to be left behind, particularly if they fail to acquire basic skills in the foundation phase (Spady 1994).

A further problem lies with the articulation of the *Curriculum 2005* Language, Literacy and Communication outcomes themselves which do not explicitly mention the teaching of reading in the foundation phase (Department of Education 2008b). This shortcoming, coupled with the change in the status of the teacher led to a fundamental misunderstanding on the part of foundation phase teachers that reading should be facilitated rather than taught (Department of Education 2008b). The expectation that these teachers should develop their own teaching material further exacerbated the problem, leading to many children moving up the school system with weak reading skills (Department of Education

2008b). This is obviously the case with grade 9A as it explains how they have managed to reach grade 9 without their weak reading ability being exposed and addressed.

At the planning stage, after examination of the Language, Literacy and Communication outcomes and the associated range statements articulated in *Curriculum 2005*, it was assumed that most of the learners would be able to read aloud fluently, would have a reasonable speed when reading silently, and would understand what they had read. The findings of this research and others (Taylor, 1999 and 2001; Pretorius 2000; Davies 2006; Mangxamba 2007) reveal this not to be the case. While weak reading is only one reason which is responsible for the learners failing to engage with texts critically, given the body of research which ties literacy to the development of critical thinking (Friere 1970/1996; Sanders 1995; Hall 1998 and others), its importance as a major factor in this research, cannot be understated.

What is clear from the findings is that after 8 years of schooling, the learners in grade 9A have failed to achieve proficiency in any of the four areas Luke and Freebody (1997) argue are necessary to be considered literate. They are not efficient Code Breakers as their ability to encode and decode text is generally weak, neither are they Text Participants, as their comprehension and ability to compose texts is also limited as can be seen in the findings and results presented in chapter 6. Their inability to master the first two, makes achieving the final two, becoming Text Users and Text Analysers, extremely difficult. Thus they cannot be considered to be skilled readers (Braunger and Lewis 1998; Stevens 2001; Stevens and Patel 2007; Fink and Samuels 2007).

The difficulties the grade 9A learners experience with decoding texts affects their fluency, which is an important aspect of comprehension. They are slow when reading silently and hesitant when reading aloud[28]. Rasinski *et al* (2005) make the point that learners who have problems decoding words read slowly and this negatively affects their understanding of what they are reading. Furthermore, it is

[28] See chapter 6 section 6.3.1

difficult to activate the textbase or top-down processing (Hampton and Resnick 2008; Carrell and Eisterhold 1983) necessary to activate background knowledge which will facilitate understanding. Fluency and reading speed develop when learners read extensively for pleasure (McKenna, Kear and Ellsworth 1995; Bean 2000; Bishop, Reyes and Pflaum 2006), something which the results of the reading questionnaire[29] indicates is not happening despite learners mostly denying difficulties with reading (Balfour 2000a; Baruthram 2006). In addition fluent readers develop reading strategies which assist them in answering comprehension activities. These strategies include summarizing the salient points, making inferences, predicting, evaluating, synthesizing, among others (Lanning 2009, McEwan 2004, Oczkus 2004 and Allington 2001). Analysis of the grade 9A responses to comprehension questions suggests that these strategies are absent.

A critical literacy approach requires that texts be deconstructed and questioned in a variety of different ways in order to effect social change and empowerment (Luke and Freebody 1997; Janks 2000 and 2010; Woodridge 2001; Comber 2002; Behrman 2006). Being able to read is an important and some consider vital part of this process. Friere (1970/1997) makes this point when he states the necessity of adult literates being able to read before they can change their world, while other reading theorists believe that reading facilitates abstract thinking through the complex cognitive processes which reading requires (Sanders 1995; Hampton and Resnick 2008) and yet others have found that the ability to read is crucial to achieving academic success (Pretorius 2000). However, reading provides only part of the reason a critical literacy intervention such as the one reported in this thesis might not achieve a paradigm shift in attitudes. A number of researchers have cautioned that social transformation is slow and sometimes painful particularly when established power relations are challenged (Sahni 2001; Dyson 2001). Furthermore, according to Comber (2002), high school learners pose fewer questions and are less likely to challenge the *status quo* than learners in primary school. She argues that this is because teachers censor the learners and shut down debate in classrooms. However, it may also be that resisting established societal and cultural norms is particularly difficult for adolescents who view these as fixed

[29] See chapter 6 section 6.5

and unchangeable. Thus changing gender perceptions and attitudes which have been reinforced since birth and are part of their everyday life is particularly difficult and challenging.

As has already been stated, critical literacy challenges learners to question their deeply held values and perceptions and as such this research is not unique in terms of the difficulties experienced in using this method to effect change. While critical literacy theorists (Luke and Freebody 1997; Janks 1993; Pitt 1995 and others) provide guidelines on the implementation, as Comber (2001) so aptly points out, there are many hurdles to be overcome that are impossible to predict at the outset of a research project such as the one reported in this thesis. These can be caused by diversity issues such as by the participants' culture, personal histories, race and language as well as attitudes within the wider society. In South African society there is the *Constitution* (1996) and a public discourse which supports gender equality, however the behaviour of public role models suggests that only lip service is paid to gender equality issues. Therefore the response from learners who refused to engage seriously, or at all, with the lesson material which explored gender issues as reported in chapter 7 is not unusual.

The behaviour of the grade 9A learners at Sherwood High School is similar to that observed by a number of other critical literacy researchers and practitioners who have faced resistance to the challenge inherent in this approach (McKinney 2004a, 2004b and McKinney and van Pletzen 2004; Granville 2003; Janks 2001; Woodridge 2001; Kramer-Dahl 2001) which has led to polarization and conflict in the classroom. While the resistance in grade 9A did not lead to open conflict, the boys showed their opposition by refusing to engage with the material while the girls remained passive. Clearly at Sherwood High School and the communities from which the learners come, gender relations are an established part of culture and are therefore difficult to change over a relatively short period of time and with an intervention in only one learning area, English (Morrell *et al* 2009). This can be seen in how the girls in grade 9A are positioned by boys, and how girls sometimes position themselves, as subordinate to male interests and defenceless. This is particularly evident in the group discussion activity where

boys took over and dominated in most groups[30]. A related point is that the language and behaviour of girls, who might seek access to a discourse of human and gender rights, is dependent on an appeal to male favour or reasoning; in the face of verbal and physical abuse the best response is to avoid rather than confront the perpetrator[31]. In the language of the male and female participants, masculine hegemony is maintained, recognizing perhaps that the environmental factors mentioned earlier prescribe the extent to which girls and boys can access a discourse of gender rights legitimately without inviting further abuse or the threat of violence from male figures of power (fathers, older, stronger and more violent men).

The behaviour of the boys and the girls in grade 9A is not unusual, nor even unexpected. The enactment of hegemonic masculinities is common among adolescent boys (Morrell *et al* 2009; Bhana 2009; Morojele 2009; Robinson 2005). In the Sherwood High School community boys have grown up assuming that they have greater power and status than girls (Morojele 2009; Morrell *et al* 2009; Robinson 2005; Connell 2000). In the classroom this status is challenged, particularly if a girl is academically stronger and shows more confidence in that environment, as in the case with Patti in grade 9A. Sexual harassment, sexual violence, swearing, treating school work casually, all of which can be observed in grade 9A, are ways of reinforcing and maintaining dominance (Howe 1997). On the other hand, girls in grade 9A are generally quieter and less assertive in the classroom, and are marginalized during classroom interaction (Howe 1997). However, this acceptance of a less powerful status does not affect their academic performance (Howe 1997; Myhill 2002). They appear to accept the position their gender has determined for them without question.

In conclusion, as is evident from the findings of this research, *Curriculum 2005* has failed these grade 9 learners in a number of ways. In addition to problems associated with reading which has made implementing a critical literacy approach challenging, the social justice aspects with relation to gender articulated in *Curriculum 2005* are not evident in the classroom (Chisholm 2003; Pandor 2004;

[30] See chapter 8 section 8.4.1
[31] See chapter 8 section 8.4.3

Chabaya et al 2009; Leach 2002; Haffajee 2006; Bhana 2009). If they had been adequately addressed throughout their schooling, then grade 9A would be exposed to other social justice issues and have been accustomed to discussing these and challenging them in the classroom. However, a major difficulty in translating policy into classroom practice lies in the entrenched nature of gender attitudes in culture and the society at large (Morrell *et al* 2009; Bhana 2009). Many teachers accept the *status quo* and see no reason to challenge it. This appears to be the case at Sherwood High School where smoking in the school toilets is seen as a serious transgression of the school code of conduct, but where no action is taken with regard to gender harassment if the victim indicates to the teacher that she does not wish the incident to be reported to a higher authority, as was recounted in the incident involving Patti and Dillon reported in the previous chapter.[32] Thus there is little scope for the emancipatory and questioning stance espoused by critical literacy theorists following *Curriculum 2005* at Sherwood High School.

While acknowledging that the classroom intervention did not achieve a paradigm shift in the learners' attitudes and perceptions of gender, it did make the learners think about the issues under discussion, even if it was to argue that change would not happen because gender roles are deeply entrenched in their culture. It is possible that as the learners grow and mature, they will think more deeply about the issues raised during the intervention, and change may happen. As Sahni (2001) so aptly comments, there is much to be gained from learners having the space to think about these issues and give a personal voice to them. Often change is achieved in small and almost imperceptible steps.

At the outset of the research four questions were posed which guided the study. These have been answered implicitly in the discussions in the preceding sections. However, in the next section the research questions will be addressed explicitly.

[32] See chapter 8 section 8.4.3

9.4 Responding to the research questions

Before the research was undertaken four research questions were articulated. These questions have been the foundation of the research which has been reported on in this thesis. They are as follows:

- What are the perceptions and attitudes of learners in a co-educational high school towards learners of different gender?
- How do these perceptions and attitudes manifest themselves in the behaviour of the learners towards each other?
- In what way does a critical literacy intervention impact on the perceptions and attitudes of the boys and girls in the research class towards gender?
- What factors affect the successful implementation of a critical literacy intervention?

Because the questions have been addressed in earlier sections of this thesis, they will be responded to explicitly but briefly here.

The first question asks what the perceptions and attitudes of learners in a co-educational high school towards learners of different gender. The research reported found that at Sherwood High School the grade 9A learners have traditional views of gender roles which see the boys viewing themselves as having power and status by virtue of their masculinity and the girls accepting this. This is evident in data collected from interactions and observations both in and out of the classroom and supported by the responses to the gender questionnaire reported in chapter 7.

These perceptions and attitudes manifest themselves in the behaviour of the learners towards each other in a number of ways. The boys engage in hegemonic masculinity practices both in the classroom and on the playground, while the girls are acculturated into a much less powerful position where they are often the victims of sexual harassment and violence (Robinson 2005; Morojele 2009). In small groups the boys dominate the discussions and are mostly dysfunctional and disruptive. They compete for the leadership role and will usurp and take it over if

they are given the opportunity (Conwell *et al* 1993; Howe, 1997; Myhill 2002; Blatchford *et al* 2003 and 2006). In whole class interaction they dominate classroom talk, which becomes more clearly discernable then they withdraw from discussion as the teacher struggles to elicit comments from the class (Delamont 1990; Swann and Graddol 1994; Howe 1997; Wood 2001). In the classroom and playground boys display their hegemonic masculinity, harassing girls both verbally and physically (Morrell *et al* 2009; Bhana 2009; Morojele 2009). The boys appear to believe that the girls sanction and even enjoy this attention, although this is not the case (Robinson 2005). Girls accept this behaviour and do not openly challenge it. In situations where sexual harassment has taken place, despite being angry and hurt by the incident, they will allow the boy to get away with the behaviour (Morojele 2009).

The success of the critical literacy intervention in changing these attitudes has been limited. Gender attitudes and perceptions are deeply acculturated and changing them is difficult (Morrell *et al* 2009). An intervention over 10 months and in one learning area, English, is not enough to change attitudes which have been engendered since birth and are reinforced by the school and the community. However, this is not to suggest that critical literacy has no value or that the learners in the research class gained nothing from the intervention, for by the end of the year some progress was evident. The constant focus on thinking, actively interrogating and interacting with texts and genre based writing did bear some fruits. Their English teacher who marked their English examination at the end of the year had this to say:

> They are thinking on a much higher level than the other grades. The other grades, their marks may be higher because they regurgitate. These are thinking, the Grade 9As, and that was just so obvious to me and I actually told a few teachers, "Look at this. There is a big difference between, you know, their insight now compared to other grades". That's one thing I did notice… And when I marked the exam papers I could see that, it was so evident. In our memo, there was one answer that was 'yes', and give the reasons, and there were about three of the Grade 9As who took the opposite view. 'No' was completely the wrong answer, but they motivated so for that. So, I had to mark it right, I'd never even thought that way. So, I was very pleased with that as well.
>
> (Appendix C pg. 69 Interview 1/12/2005)

However, while independent, critical thinking may have improved in some areas

this does not necessarily translate into a change in deeply held power relationships between genders. In fact interviews with learners held in the first week of the following school year suggest that this has not been the case. The girls indicate that they often feel harassed and vulnerable at school. As one girl, Norma, said:

> Because, Miss, you can't even wear anything, the boys are going to come and touch you and all that, and that's not nice at all, or they tell you, "Why you wearing something like this. You were looking for it"
> (Appendix C, pg. 71 Interview 19/01/2006).

The final question asks what factors affect the successful implementation of a critical literacy intervention and as has been clearly demonstrated by the data presented there are two main factors that militate against the successful implementation of a critical literacy intervention. The first is the learners' poor reading abilities (Sanders 1994; Hall 1998; Pretorius 2000) and the second is the deeply entrenched nature of gender perceptions and attitudes. These have been discussed in detail in the previous section of this chapter, so will not be repeated here.

In the next section it will be argued that these findings are relevant and valuable, adding to the corpus of educational knowledge and understanding about both reading and addressing social justice issue in schools.

9.5 The relevance and value of the study

This research will be of value to curriculum designers, education planners, educators, as well as researchers and academics with an interest in social justice, critical literacy, reading and gender in education. The relevance to each of these groupings is explained below.

The shortcomings so evident in *Curriculum 2005* have been recognized by education authorities and the school curriculum has been redesigned and repackaged twice, first in the form of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and more recently in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)

(Department of Basic Education 2011) which are to be phased in from the beginning to 2012. The focus on social justice, equity, problem-solving and creative thinking articulated in *Curriculum 2005* remains in the NCS. It also provides greater guidance to teachers with regard to the content and skills which learners must attain as they move through the phases. However, our learners are still failing to learn basic literacy skills such as reading (Howie *et al* 2008 Department of Education 2005 and 2008b) suggesting that curriculum change has had very little effect on the overall reading performance of learners (Taylor 2001).

However, the findings reported here are relevant as they re-iterate and re-emphasise the central role reading plays in creative thinking and problem solving and support the findings of other researchers in this area (Brice Heath 1994; Sanders 1994; Braunger and Lewis 1998; Pretorius 2000). They caution that addressing social justice issues in the classroom is challenging as there are a number of barriers which have to be overcome. These issues, such as HIV, gender and race, are now being explicitly addressed in Life Orientation classes (Department of Education 2004). However, they are unlikely to lead to empowerment or be successful in changing attitudes and perceptions unless all teachers are committed to these and they are taken up across all learning areas. Schools are powerful media of socialization and they are the place to start if there is to be a change in the social order, but this requires commitment from entire communities and all stakeholders including public roles models, if fundamental acculturated beliefs and attitudes are to change (Morrell *et al*; Bhana 2009).

Literacy practitioners and educators will find this research of interest as it emphasizes the key position reading plays in thinking and reasoning and its importance to implementing critical literacy and affecting the change critical literacy envisages (Sanders 1994; Hall 1998). It re-emphasizes and confirms Freire's view that in order to read the world it is necessary to read the word (1970/1996).

Finally, this research is relevant to those who have an interest in gender in education. It supports the view that gender attitudes are deeply entrenched in

culture and society and reiterates the difficulties involved in changing these (Morrell 2009; Bhana 2009). Concrete recommendations to address these issues are presented in the following section.

9.6 Recommendations which arise from the research

There are a number of recommendations which can be made following this research, many of which relate directly to the relevance of this study to the situation in South African Education today.

The first and most important is that reading be prioritized by the education authorities. In order to have a problem-solving, creative, thinking nation, reading must be addressed directly and as a national priority. The link between reading, thinking and academic success is well established in research (Sanders 1994; Pretorius 2000; Braunger and Lewis 1998 and others). The CAPS curriculum acknowledges this as explicit direction is given to teachers in both the foundation and intermediate phases on the time to be spent on developing skills and reading strategies each day. It prescribes specific times to be allocated to each of these (Department of Basic Education 2011), but fails to acknowledge two fundamental points: firstly, that curriculum change alone does not change classroom practices (Jansen 1997) and, secondly, that the majority of schools have few books to support reading either in English or the vernacular languages. It is impossible to teach reading without books, and lots of them (Pretorius 2000), and this leads to my next recommendation.

The establishment of libraries and book corners in classrooms is a crucial element to improving reading and developing a reading culture in learners (Pretorius 2000). At present only 7% of schools in South Africa have libraries (Department of Education 2008b, 8). It is important that there is an adequate supply of enjoyable, engaging reading material in every school and the provision of such books should be considered as important as the supply of text books if a reading culture is to be instilled in our children and reading is to be established as a

pleasurable activity. In addition, a trained teacher librarian should be allocated to each school whose responsibilities should include promoting and monitoring the learners' reading.

Teachers should receive training in teaching and remediating reading across all the GET phases, and in the strategies they should use to encourage and support reading in the classroom. Priority should be given to re-skilling foundation phase teachers so that they are able to lay solid foundations in reading. The situation which prevails at present, where the common practice of employing under or unqualified teachers in the foundation phase (Department of Education 2008b, 8) should be addressed with urgency and extensive in-service training offered. However, training needs to be focused on all aspects of teaching reading and teachers should feel confident that they are able to manage in the classroom once they have completed that training (Lessing and de Witt 2004). In addition, teachers need to be encouraged and supported to become readers themselves so that they can talk about books with their learners.

The training of pre-service teachers in all phases and specializations should provide at least one module on teaching reading across the curriculum so that all teachers are aware of the importance of reading and are able to offer learners strategies which will assist them reading more complex texts.

Consideration should be given to the development of national reading tests, that are uniquely South African and which cater to needs and culture of this country. The tests should be comprehensive, assessing all aspects of reading. Separate tests should be available for learners of different ages and phases. This reading test should be available without charge to reading professionals and should measure learners reading achievement in terms of all four of Luke and Freebody's (1997, 1999) resources.

Family literacy projects, which are presently run by the NGO sector and exist in isolated pockets, should be supported by the government and their work should be extended (Desmond 2008). There is a corpus of evidence which supports the

view that if children come from a literate environment they will become better, more motivated readers (Braunger and Lewis 1998). This is supported by the findings recorded in chapter 6 of this thesis. Approximately 66% of adults in South Africa are functionally illiterate (machete 2002), but there are many parents who understand the importance of literacy and want to see their children attaining a better start in life than they had (Desmond 2008; Brice Heath 1983; Land 2008). These projects could be linked to other social services offered by government. For example, women who are collecting maternity benefits or attending post-natal clinics could be offered instruction in the benefits of introducing their children to books early, how to 'read' picture books and environmental print with their children, and the open-ended questions they should be asking as they do this (Fink and Samuels 2007). In addition, adult education programmes focusing on building a literate society should be widened. According to Machet (2002) only 34% of adults in South Africa are functionally literate and reading behaviour is poorly developed.

Book clubs should be established at all municipal libraries. Holiday and weekend programmes that include a variety of pleasurable activities around reading should be held. Activities should include story telling, reading stories aloud, talking about books, readers theatre where stories are dramatized, and generally instilling a culture that enjoys and values reading in our children (Edwards 2008).

Critical literacy, or at the least a critical stance, should be adopted in all subject classrooms. Learners should be challenged in all learning areas and not just English. Questions set should encourage the learners to summarise, draw inferences, evaluate, analyse and critique all educational inputs. Learners should be encouraged to think deeply and independently in order to form their own opinions on all issues which affect society.

However, before this can be done, reading needs to be addressed at all grade levels through the school and not just in the foundation phase. Explicit instruction and remediation should continue into the intermediate and senior phase, and even the FET phase should this be necessary, in order to build word

recognition and fluency (Pretorius 2000; Braunger and Lewis 1998; Rasinski *et al* 2005). A variety of interesting reading material of different genres should be available to learners, and teachers should facilitate dialogue and critique. Challenging, high order, rather than literal, low order recognition questions should be posed to learners from an early age and they should be encouraged to think and reason for themselves (Fink and Samuels 2007; Hampton and Resnick 2008; Lanning 2009). In order to accomplish this, teachers need to be given extensive in service training in the teaching of reading using Luke and Freebody's (1997) four resources model so that all aspects are covered.

Teachers of all subjects need to be encouraged to become readers themselves. It is reading that extends their knowledge and keeps them abreast of changes and developments in their discipline. Therefore reading should be included as an important aspect of all teacher performance assessments.

The importance of reading should be impressed upon Principals and School Management Teams. Departmental officials should monitor the implementation of reading policies, such as the Drop all and Read policy (Department of Education 2008b) which insists on a dedicated half hour allocated to reading silently each day. This should be timetabled into the school day so the whole school, including the teachers, principal and administration staff should be reading at the same time.

Turning to gender, explicit policies with regard to gender should be included as an important aspect of all school Codes of Conduct. What constitutes sexual harassment should be spelt out unambiguously and in detail. In addition the public display of hegemonic masculinity should be discouraged and boundaries set to this behaviour (Bhana 2009, Msibi 2009). Transgressing these boundaries should be treated as serious infringements of the school rules, indicating that these are taken seriously by school authorities. Teachers, who are often complicit in incidents of gender violence and sexual harassment (Morojele 2009) should be made aware of the seriousness of their conduct (Chabaya *et al* 2009).

Furthermore, girls should be encouraged to report incidents of sexual harassment without fear of victimization (Morojele 2009).

9.7 Postscript

The findings of this research may paint a bleak picture of the learners' abilities and suggest the need for a more sustained engagement with reading in the curriculum. However, it did achieve some positive results. In the first place during the course of this research the learners engaged with a large quantity of teaching and learning material in following the prescribed curriculum and despite their academic shortcomings, grade 9A had 100% pass rate, and all the learners moved on to grade 10. The materials and classroom interactions which encouraged thinking and questioning did bear fruit, even though major changes in thinking and skills were not immediately discernible.

A number of follow-up visits were made to the school following the intervention and friendships made in the staffroom continued over the years. The grade 9A English teacher saw the value of the intervention and continued to use much of the material and methodology in subsequent years. Learners were always happy to meet with the researcher and she would be greeted warmly and enthusiastically and according to the teacher was regularly referred to as "the lady who taught us to think…" (Informal conversation).

It was impossible to track the learners as they moved into different classes in grade 10 according to their subject choices and became distributed across the grade. However, the progress of two of the learners was informally followed. Patti, the academically able young woman in grade 9A went on to become Head Girl of the school (there was also a Head Boy, but he was not from grade 9A) and Dux of the school at the end of grade 12. Dillon dropped out of school during the course of grade 10.

Finally, this research serves, not to discredit critical literacy as a legitimate and

valuable classroom method, but to caution on two counts. First, that critical literacy has to be coupled with explicit reading instruction and assistance. If learners decoding skills are poor and their reading rate is very slow their comprehension is compromised (Rasinski *et al* 2005; Morris and Gaffney 2011). Without comprehension critical interrogation of texts is impossible and thus shifting attitudes and negative perceptions or behaviours become more difficult. Second, and contrary to belief, raising awareness does not necessarily translate into changed behaviour. Gender attitudes which give rise to displays of hegemonic masculinity are deeply entrenched in the culture of both young men and women, thus for change to take place change has to occur in the attitude of communities and the wider society.

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APPENDICES

APPENDICES

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17 OCTOBER 2005

MRS. EM RALFE (761761791 / 96193)
EDUCATION

Dear Mrs. Ralfe

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER : HSS/0511SA

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project subject to confidential information being securely stored:

"Exploring pupil's perceptions and attitudes towards language and gender in a multicultural high school in kwaZulu-Natal: The case of a classroom based critical literacy intervention"

Yours faithfully

MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA
RESEARCH OFFICE

PS: The following general condition is applicable to all projects that have been granted ethical clearance:

THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE CONTACTED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY APPROVAL SHOULD THE RESEARCH INVOLVE UTILIZATION OF SPACE AND/OR FACILITIES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS/ORGANISATIONS. WHERE QUESTIONNAIRES ARE USED IN THE PROJECT, THE RESEARCHER SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE QUESTIONNAIRE INCLUDES A SECTION AT THE END WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE PARTICIPANT (PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE) INDICATING THAT HE/SHE WAS INFORMED OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT AND THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

cc Faculty Research Office (Derek Buchler)
cc Supervisor (Dr. R Balfour)

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATAL
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ENQUIRIES: S. R. Alwar
REFERENCE: Permission Research

DATE: 01 November 2004

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to serve as a notice that **Ms E. M Ralfe** has been granted permission to conduct research with the following terms and conditions:

- That as a researcher, she/he **must** present a copy of the written approval from the Department to the Head of the Institution concerned before any research may be undertaken at a departmental institution.
- Attached is the list of schools she/he has been granted permission to conduct research in. however, it must be noted that the schools are not obligated to participate in the research if it is not a KZNDEC project.
- **Ms E. M Ralfe** has been granted special permission to conduct her/his research during official contact times, as it is believed that her/his presence would not interrupt **education programmes.** Should education programmes be interrupted, she/he must, therefore, conduct his/her research during nonofficial contact times.
- No school is expected to participate in the research during the fourth school term, as this is the critical period for schools to focus on their exams.

Comments: _____

_____

Thandiwe Zungu
Deputy Director: **Research, Strategy and Policy Development**

Comments: _____

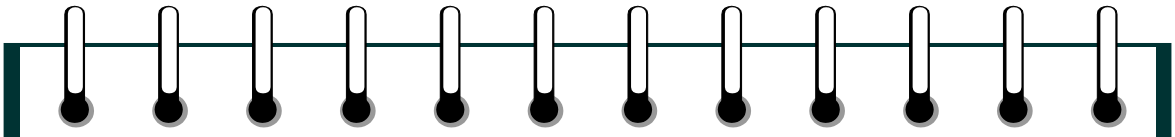
_____

Dr B. H. Mthabela
Director: **Research, Strategy Development and ECMIS**

Keeping a Diary

Keeping a journal or a diary is a good way to improve your written language. Putting your thoughts down on paper forces you to organize and structure what you are writing, even if you write in a sort of 'shorthand' and leave words out, as Bridget sometimes does in her diary. Diaries are also important as historical documents. If people in the past had not kept diaries we would not know how they lived, and how they felt about their lives. Anne Frank and her family were in hiding in the attic of a building in Amsterdam for a number of years during the 2nd World War. Her diary expresses her innermost thoughts and feelings and gives the readers a sense of what it was like to live in a confined space with the threat of discovery always hanging over you.

Below is an extract adapted from *'Bridget Jones' Diary'* and another taken from the *'The Diary of a Young Girl'* by Anne Frank. Read them carefully then answer the questions that follow.



MONDAY 27 JANUARY

63kgs (total fat groove), boyfriends 1 (hurrah!), calories 2,100.

7.15 a.m. Hurrah! The wilderness years are over. For four weeks and five days now have been in a relationship with adult male thereby proving I'm not a love reject as previously feared. Am going to make Mark Darcy a fantastic fried breakfast with sausages, scrambled eggs and mushrooms… except I do not have mushrooms…. or sausages…. or eggs… or – come to think of it – milk!

8.45 a.m. In Coins Café having cappuccino, chocolate croissant, and cigarette. It's a relief to have a fag in the open and not to be on my best behaviour. It's very complicated having a man around. It's very embarrassing now simply to keep my clothes in a pile on the floor. Also he is coming round again tonight so have to go to the supermarket either before or after work. Well, do not *have to* but the horrifying truth is that I *want to*!

8.50 a.m. Mmm. Wonder what Mark Darcy would be like as a father (father to own children, mean. Not self.)

8.55 a.m. Anyway, must not obsess or fantasize.

9 a.m. Wonder if Una and Geoffrey Alconbury would let us put marquee on the lawn for the reception… Gaaah! Was my mother, walking into my café bold as brass.

'Hello, darling,' she trilled. 'Just on my way shopping and I know you always come in here for your breakfast. Thought I'd pop in and see how you're getting on. How's it going with Mark?'

'Lovely,' I said moonily, at which she gave me a hard stare.

'You're not going to you-know-what with him, are you? He won't marry you, you know.'

Grrr. Grrr. No sooner have I started going out with the man she's been trying to force me onto for eighteen months ('Malcolm and Elaine's son, darling, divorced, terribly lonely and rich') than I feel like I'm running some kind of army obstacle course, scrambling over walls and nets to bring her home a big silver cup with a bow on it.

Drat. It's 9.15. Am going to be late for the morning meeting. 'Must whiz. Byee!'

11 a.m. Was lucky only two minutes late for meeting, also managed to hide coat by rolling it into ball to create pleasing sense of having been in for hours and hours and merely delayed on urgent trans-departmental business elsewhere in the building. Made my way in calm manner through open-plan office towards where Richard Finch was shouting at the assembled twenty-something research team.

'Come on, Bridget Droopy-Drawers Late Again,' he yelled spotting my approach. 'I'm not paying you to roll coats into a ball and try to look innocent, I'm paying you to turn up on time and come up with ideas.'

Honestly. The lack of respect day after day is beyond human endurance. Must find more worthwhile fulfilling job of some kind. Nurse, perhaps?

11.03 a.m. At desk. Can't stop thinking about Mark Darcy. Wonder if it is too early to ring him at work?

11.05 a.m. Yes. As it says in *How to Get the Love You Want* – or maybe it was *Keeping the Love You Find?* – the blending together of man and woman is a delicate thing. Man must pursue. Will wait for him to ring me.

Glossary

fag (slang) (line 5) - cigarette
responsive (line 34) - sharp, quick
moonily (line 16) – dreamily
obsess (line 11) - thinking about it all of the time, having a fixation
fantasize (line 11) - make-believe, daydream, imagine
innocent (line 27) – blameless
human endurance (line 28) - as much as a person can bear

Questions

1. What do the words 'love reject' (line 2) suggest about Bridget's life before she met Mark Darcy? (2)
2. Quote one word in the first entry which suggests that she has not had a boyfriend for a long time. (1)
3. Why do you think it is 'a relief to have a fag out in the open and not be on my best behaviour' (line 5). What does this statement suggest about her relationship with Mark Darcy? (3)
4. Why does she find it 'horrifying' (line 9) that she wants to go to the supermarket? What changes has the relationship brought to her life? (2)
5. Why does she roll her coat into a ball (line 24) when she goes into work? (2)
6. How do you know that Bridget is often late for work? (2)
7. Do you think Bridget has the qualities to make a good nurse? Give reasons for your answer. (2)
8. Do you think all women behave this way when they are in a relationship with a man? Give reasons for your answer. (3)
9. Do you feel the same way as Bridget when you are in a new relationship? How do you feel and behave in a similar situation?
10. Do you think that women/girls are under greater pressure than men/boys to make a relationship work? Give reasons for your answer. (3)
11. After reading this diary entry you should have some idea about the kind of person Bridget is. Write a short character sketch and support your points by quoting from her diary.

[Total: 20]

Extract from *'The Diary of a Young Girl'* by Anne Frank.

Anne Frank was born on the 12 June 1929. On Wednesday, 8th July 1942, just after Anne's 13th birthday, she and her family went into hiding in the attic of an office building in Amsterdam. They did this to escape the Germans who were rounding up Jews and transporting them to concentration camps. In total there were 8 people living in hiding in the small attic: the Frank family made up of Mr and Mrs Frank, Anne and her older sister, Margot; Mr and Mrs Van Daan and their son, Peter, and Mr Dussel.

In the passage over the page, taken from her diary, she writes about the changes in her life since going into hiding.

TUESDAY, 7 MARCH 1944

When I think back to my life in 1942, it all seems so unreal. The Anne Frank who enjoyed that carefree life was completely different from the one who has grown wise within these walls. Yes, it was wonderful. Five admirers on every street corner, twenty or so friends, the favourite of most of my teachers, spoiled rotten by Father and Mother, bags full of sweets and loads of pocket money. What more could anyone ask for?

You're probably wondering how I could have charmed all those people. The teachers were amused and entertained by my clever answers, my witty remarks, my smiling face and my critical mind. I had a few plus points, which kept me in everybody's good books: I was hardworking, honest and generous. I would never have refused anyone who wanted to peek at my answers. I shared my sweets, and I wasn't stuck up.

How did they see me at school? As the class comedian, always the ringleader, never in a bad mood, never a cry-baby. Was it any wonder that everyone wanted to cycle to school with me or do me little favours?

I look back on that Anne Frank as a pleasant, amusing but shallow girl, who has nothing to do with me.

What remained of that Anne Frank? Oh, I haven't forgotten how to laugh or answer back, I'm just as good, if not better, at speaking my mind, and I can still flirt and be amusing, if I want to be…

But there's the catch. I'd like to live that seemingly carefree and happy life for an evening, a few days, a week. At the end of that week I'd be exhausted, and would be grateful to the first person to talk to me about something meaningful. I want friends, not admirers: people who respect me for my character and deeds, not my flattering smile. The circle around me would be much smaller, but what does that matter, as long as they're sincere?

In spite of everything, I wasn't altogether happy in 1942; I often felt I'd been deserted, but because I was on the go all day long, I didn't think about it. I enjoyed myself as much as I could, trying consciously or unconsciously to fill the emptiness with jokes.

Looking back, I realize that this period of my life has come to a close; my happy-go-lucky, carefree schooldays are gone forever. I don't even miss them. I've outgrown them. I can no longer be frivolous, since my serious side is always there.

I see my life up till New Year 1944 as if I were looking through a powerful magnifying glass. When I was at home, my life was filled with sunshine. Then, in the middle of 1942, everything changed overnight. I was caught off guard, and the only way I knew how to keep my bearings was to talk back.

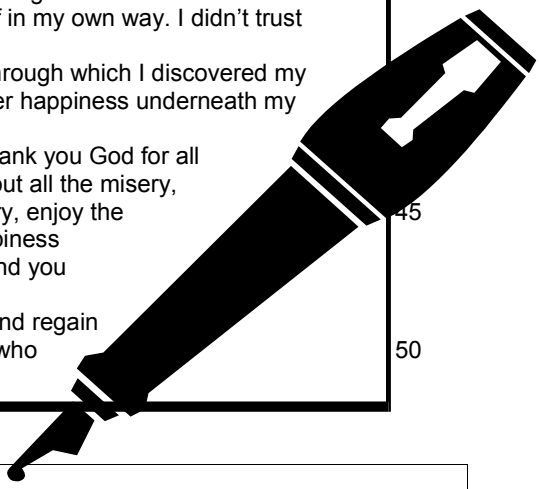
The first half of 1943 brought crying spells, loneliness and the gradual realization of my faults and shortcomings, which were numerous and seemed even more so. I filled the day with chatter, but I was on my own to face the difficult task of improving myself so I wouldn't have to bear their reproaches, because they made me so despondent.

The second half of the year was slightly better. I became a teenager, and was treated more like a grown-up. I began to think about things and to write stories, finally coming to the conclusion that the others no longer had anything to do with me. I wanted to change myself in my own way. I didn't trust anyone but myself.

After New Year the second big change occurred: my dream, through which I discovered my longing for, not a girlfriend, but for a boyfriend. I also discovered an inner happiness underneath my superficial and cheerful exterior. From time to time I was quiet.

I lie in bed at night, after ending my prayers with the words 'Thank you God for all that is good and dear and beautiful'. I am filled with joy. I don't think about all the misery, but the beauty that still remains. My advice is: 'Go outside, to the country, enjoy the sun and all nature has to offer. Go outside and try to recapture the happiness within yourself; think of all the beauty in yourself and in everything around you and be happy'.

If you just look for it, you discover more and more happiness and regain your balance. A person who's happy will make others happy; a person who has courage and faith will never die in misery!



Glossary

charmed (line 6) – won over, pleased, made happy
witty (line 7) – funny
critical (line 7) – clever, good at making judgments
generous (line 9) – kind, willing to give
stuck up (line 10) – full of self importance, proud
comedian (line 11) – joker
shallow (line 14) – superficial, having no depth
flirt (line 17) – tease
exhausted (line 19) – very tired
flattering line 21) – praising, trying to get favour
sincere (line 22) – real, honest, truthful
frivilous (line 28) – silly, flighty
bearings (line 31) – sense of direction, position
gradual (line 32) – slow, little-by-little
reproaches line 34) – reprimands, finding fault
despondent (line 35) – down-hearted
superficial (line 42) - shallow
exterior (line 42) - outside
misery (line 44) – deep unhappiness
regain (line 49) – get back
balance (line 50) – stability, judgement, levelheadedness

Questions

Read the passage carefully then answer the question below with True (T) or False (F)
Don't look back to find the answers, see if you can remember them.

A

1. Before 1942, Anne describes her life as
   - 1.1 free from all trouble and responsibility. _____
   - 1.2 full of worries about the future and the family safety. _____
   - 1.3 having a large circle of very close friends who respected her. _____
   - 1.4 always playing tricks on teachers and having fun at school. _____
   - 1.5 tiring because of all the activities she was involved in. _____
   - 1.6 financially very secure. _____
   - 1.7 full of many friends who admired her and wanted to be with her. _____
   - 1.8 having loving, caring parents. _____

2. As she looks back on that life she realizes that she has changed and now in 1944
   - 1.1 she is no longer a happy person. _____
   - 1.2 she realizes that she was a shallow self-centred person in 1942. _____
   - 1.3 she would love to go back to the person she was in 1942. _____
   - 1.4 she is a much more serious person. _____
   - 1.5 her life hasn't changed much since 1942. _____
   - 1.6 she has now discovered an inner peace that she never had in 1942. _____
   - 1.7 she is happier now than she was then. _____
   - 1.8 she is lonely and unhappy, often cries. _____

The exercise above will give you some idea of how well you read. Re-read the passage and then answer the questions below. Use your own words as far as possible.

B.

1 How old was Anne when she wrote this diary entry? How long has she been living in hiding?
2 Briefly describe the person Anne was before the family went into hiding. Support your answer by quoting from the passage.
3 Explain the kinds of friends she would like to have around her now.
4 As she looks back, Anne realizes she wasn't really happy in 1942. Why?
5 Anne went through a number of stages after the family went into hiding. Explain her behaviour at each stage.
6 What did Anne discover in the second half of 1943?
7 State briefly in your own words what Anne believes in at this point in her life.

C.

Consider both the diary entries you have read.

1 In what way does the language used in the two diaries differ? What does this difference suggest about the two writers?
2 Write a short paragraph in which you compare Bridget and Anne.

WRITING TASK

Write a diary of your own. Try to write something that is important to **YOU**. Your entry or entries should be at least 100 words in length.

What happened to Anne Frank?

On August 4, 1944, the building they were hiding in was raided, probably as the result of a tip-off, and all of them were arrested. They were first taken to a prison in Amsterdam and then transferred to a transit camp for Jews in the north of Holland. They were deported on 3 September 1944 and sent to Auschwitz, a concentration camp in Poland. From there Anne and her sister, Margot, were transported to Bergen-Belsen, a concentration camp near Hanover, Germany. They both died in late February or early March of 1945 from typhus as a result of the horrendous hygiene conditions. Anne was 15 years old. The bodies of both girls were probably dumped in Bergen-Belsen's mass graves. Anne's father, Otto, was the only survivor. One of the office workers who had helped them found Anne's diary after they had been arrested and gave it to her father after the war.

HOW TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON
COMPREHENSION (READING STUDY) PASSAGES.

1. Read the passage through several times, depending on the length and difficulty of the passage and **your** understanding of the passage. If you are not sure you understand it, read it again.

2. After your first reading, try to work out the meaning of any unfamiliar words. Read the sentence the word is in, and then the paragraph, this should assist you in working out the meaning in context.

3. Turn to the questions and read them through. Don't attempt to answer them. This reading will give you a 'feel' of what the questioner wants.

4. Now read the passage again, deciding what the main point of the passage is and how the various ideas fit in with the main theme. Try to work out the author's attitude to his subject e.g. humorous, light-hearted, serious, concerned etc.

5. If you are satisfied that you really do understand the passage, read all the questions again **thoroughly** before you pick up your pen and start writing your answers.

6. Be sure you understand the questions. Answers off the point earn no marks. Only when you know **exactly** what the question asks are you in a position to give a satisfactory and intelligent answer.

7. Always look at the mark allocation when planning your answer. Use these to work out the length of your answers. If a question is worth 2 marks then the answer should be no more than 2 - 3 lines, and should have two points, whereas a ten mark answer (if required in paragraph form) would usually be 10 - 15 lines long.

8. Unless you are given instructions to the contrary, always use **full, complete sentences**. Use **your own words** in preference to the words used in the text.

9. **Never** answer simply 'yes' or 'no'. **Always** explain your reasoning.

10. Unless told otherwise, base all your answers on the information given in the text. If your own ideas are wanted, this will usually be stated.

11. When quoting from the passage, always give the line/lines where the quote can be found and use quotation marks. Only give the first and last words. Use leader dots '... in between.

12. If asked to express an idea in your own words, do use your own vocabulary. **Never** use a word to explain itself, e.g. 'logical' - something which uses logic.

13. If asked to explain a phrase, e.g. 'What is meant by "the status of a television compere (line 5)?"', first consider each word separately and then join them together to form a clear explanation.

14. Always check the spelling of difficult words in the passage. You will lose marks if you misspell a word when the correct spelling is in the passage.

15. Always lay out your work carefully. Leave a line between answers so that the person marking can see where one answer ends and another begins. A second margin on the right will give the marker space to write marks.

16. Work that is neat and legible creates a good impression. Work that is messy and untidy creates a bad impression.

Unit 3 – Gender Roles

The story of a person's life written by someone else is called a **biography**. When a person writes about their own life then it is called an **autobiography**. Read the biography below entitled *'My Mother's Life'*, and then turn over the page and read the section entitled '*Facts: Women, Education, and Work'*.

My Mother's Life

My mother was born in Burma on the 28 October 1917. She was the second eldest of five children. Her father was a District Governor in the British Colonial Service. Her early life was hard as they lived deep in the jungle in a remote part of the country. There were no other children to play with and no schools or towns close by.

At the age of eight, she was sent to a boarding school in England to be educated. She was a good student and achieved well at everything she did. She played the piano so well that her teacher suggested that when she finished school she might become a concert pianist. She was also good at learning languages and could speak very good French. She thought she might study further and become a translator or interpreter. However, when she finished school she was not given the opportunity to further her studies. Her mother, my grandmother, decided that she should become a dressmaker as it was a suitable job for a young woman who would soon marry and settle down to a life of raising children and looking after a husband. Sewing would always come in handy for a girl who was going to be a homemaker. So she was apprenticed to a tailor in London who made designer suits and dresses for rich men and women.

As an apprentice she had to work with a team of young girls in a dark basement, tacking and ironing seams, and sewing beads on to fancy evening dresses. She was not very happy because the work was not interesting and the pay was poor. However, young women had very few career choices in those days and most of them became nurses or school teachers. She didn't want to do either of those things, so she carried on and became extremely skillful at sewing.

When war broke out in 1939, everyone was called up. While the men joined the army, navy and air force, women were called up to work in factories and do the jobs previously done by men. My mother joined the London Fire Brigade. It was tough and often very dangerous. London was the target of heavy bombing and they were kept busy putting out the fires these caused.

In 1940 she married my father who was an officer in the air force. Before long children came along, first a girl and then a boy. Even though she had a small children she continued working in the Fire Brigade, leaving my sister with her mother, my grandmother, while she spent long hours on duty.

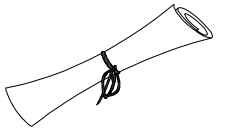
When the war ended my mother was no longer needed in the fire brigade as the men returned to the jobs they had done before the war. My father decided to immigrate to South Africa. He flew ahead to find a job, while she stayed behind to pack up their small home before getting on a boat with their two small children to sail to Durban.

Soon after arriving in Durban I was born, followed by my brother. The increase in the size of the family put a strain on the family finances. My mother realized that one salary was not enough to feed and educate four children. Although she had no qualifications, she was an attractive, warm person, and she managed to get a job as a saleslady. Each day she went out to work, and on her return would help us with our schoolwork, check our homework, cook the dinner, and then call the family together for evening prayers. Finally she would settle down at her old sewing machine and sew until late at night. Saturday was baking day and the delicious smell of fresh biscuits, cakes and pies would fill the house.

She had a dream to start her own business, but before she could do this she had to get together enough capital and learn a number of new skills, for example, how to keep a set of books and how to drive a car. Eventually she achieved her dream. Her business was very successful and for the first time she was able to save money to buy a few luxuries for us.

She was determined that we, her children, would not have to struggle the way she did. She made sure that we got the best education she could give us so that we would have a better chance of being successful in life.

Facts: Women, Education, and Work



- In societies where illiteracy is common, most of the illiterate people are female. Two out of every three women in Africa, and one out of every three women in Asia, are illiterate.
- Illiteracy is higher among women in rural areas and societies' dependent upon agriculture than it is in industrial, urban societies.
- Women who are educated have fewer children than poorly educated and illiterate women. Lower infant mortality rates are reported in societies that provide women with literacy and education.

- Government sponsored literacy programmes promote literacy as a way of making women better mothers and household managers rather than more independent and involved citizens.
- In most societies women are considered to be inferior and subordinate to men in areas of work and activities.

- In most societies men work outside the home while women work in the home, thus it is considered more important that they (men) become literate.

- The International Labour Organization reports that women do two-thirds of the work in the world.

- Figures reveal that girls graduate from high school behind boys in mathematics and science.
- Recent studies have shown that classroom teachers tend to pay more attention to boys than they do to girls.

- Sexual harassment in schools is on the increase, as is the rate of teenage child-bearing.

- The single greatest source of injury to women is wife beating.

- Most women take lower paying jobs, work longer hours, are less educated, have less work experience and fewer marketable skills than men.

- Women have many problems when they enter the workforce – co-worker discrimination, husbands who do little to help at home, and guilt over trying to have a career and children too.

- While women made significant economic and employment gains during World War II, those gains were lost when men came home from the war.

- Women earn one-third of all professional degrees.

- Eighty percent of women who qualified in 1960 did so in the areas of nursing, teaching, social science and the civil service. Today more women than ever before are entering previously male dominated professions, such as medicine, law, management, construction, and law enforcement.

- Three percent of top corporate executives are women.

GROUP DISCUSSION

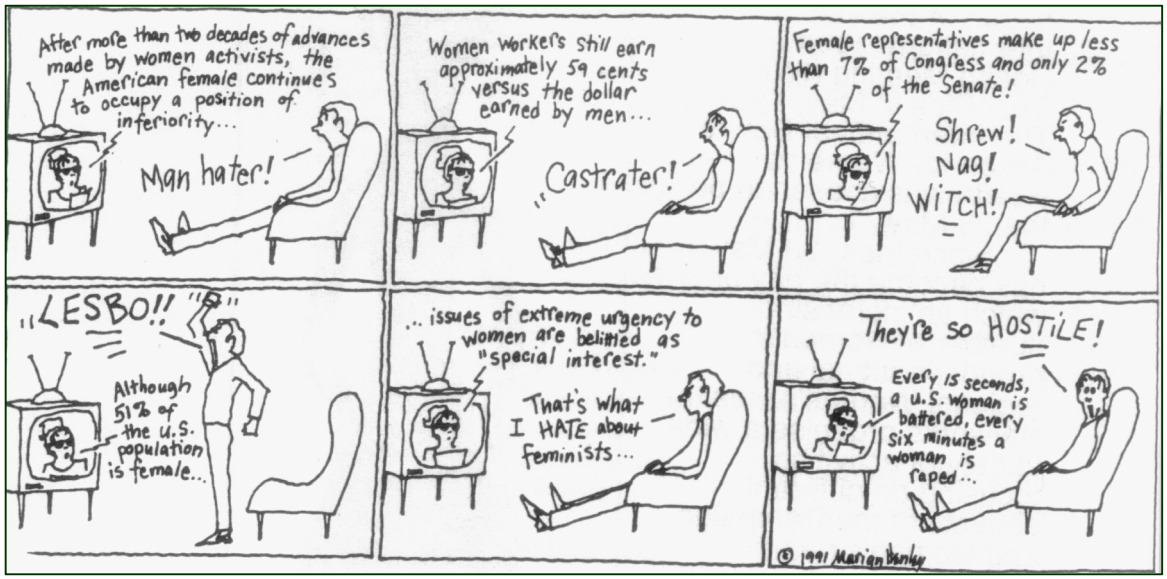
What does the constitution say?

Constitution of South Africa

Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.
The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

- After what you have read, do you think the above section of the constitution is being followed in South Africa?
- Give an example of where it is not being followed. Give an example of where it is being followed. You can draw on your own experience here.

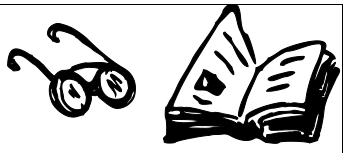
CARTOON



Read the cartoon above.

- Compare what the SA Constitution says about the rights of individuals with the views expressed by the man in the cartoon.
- How does the cartoon show the TV presenter and the viewer? Why?
- What sort of man is he? Look carefully at the pictures as well as what he says.
- Why do you think he is responding in this way? What view does he have of women?
- The TV presenter and the man are using different types of language. Why?
- What point do you think the cartoonist is making? Is it a valid point?
- Could this cartoon have been written differently? Give an example/

TASK 1



READING BETWEEN THE LINES

Read the information given in the sheet entitled ***Facts: Women, Education, and Work'*** then answer the following questions. Some of the answers require you to think and give your own opinion; other answers will depend on drawing conclusions from the facts given.

1. Why do you think literate, educated women have fewer children than illiterate or poorly educated women? Give all the reasons you can think of. (4)
2. Why do you think illiteracy is higher among women in rural, agricultural societies than it is in industrial urban societies? (3)

3. Do government sponsored literacy programmes help women to become more powerful and influential members of society? Explain your answer. (2)

4. How difficult is it for women? List at least three difficulties women are faced with in school and the workplace. (3)

5. Does the future look more promising for women? Give reasons for your answer. (4)

6. Write a good news / bad news description of women's experience in the workplace today. (4)

[20]

TASK 2

CASE IN POINT

Re-read the biographical sketch entitled ***'My Mother's Life'*****,** and consider how her life compares to the statistics in the fact sheet.

1. Write a short paragraph in which you show how ***My Mother's life*** is similar to some of the facts given in ***Facts: Women, Education, and Work***. Try to find at least three similarities. Make sure you structure your paragraph properly! (10)

2. Suppose my mother were beginning her working life now. How do the facts suggest that her life might be different? (5)

3. How did this working mother benefit her children (beyond the salary she brought home)? Try to support your answers with reference to what I have actually said about my mother. (5)

[20]

TASK 3

PREPARING TO WRITE

Using the biographical sketch as your guide, think about your mother's life story. For each area below jot down two or three sentences stating what you know about her.

1. **Early years. Where was she born? How many brothers and sisters did she have? What was her life like when she was a child?**

2. **Education. How much education did she have? What did she like about school? What did school prepare her to do?**

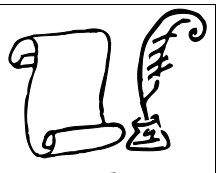
3. **Romance. Where did your mother meet your father? How did her life change as a result of meeting him?**

4. **Work. What kind of work, both outside and inside the home, has your mother done in her adult life? How much time does she spend working?**

5. **What does she do in her spare time? What are her hobbies and interests?**

6. **What would she consider a highlight in her life? Or, if she had her time over, what would she change about her life?**

TASK 4
FORMAL WRITING TASK



Use the points you have written down in the exercise above to write a biography of your mother. Your biography should be about 400 words in length. Each one of the points above can be extended into a paragraph.

A Woman is not a Potted Plant by Alice Walker

GROUP MEMBERS:

……..

……..

Group discussion questions

1. List everything you know about potted plants e.g. how they are cultivated (grown), what they look like, where they are found, how are they looked after, what function they perform in our lives, etc. etc.

2. Consider all you wrote down about potted plants. If a woman were a potted plant what would she be like? How would she be treated? Who would treat her this way?

3. Consider the title of the poem. Read it out aloud. Which word or words do we emphasise when we say it out aloud? What tone does this give the title?

4. Why do you think the poet refers to 'a woman' and not 'women', which is the plural noun, throughout the poem?

5. Look carefully at the structure of the poem. Why do you think the poet chooses not to use capital letters and punctuation?

6. Read the 2nd stanza (lines 4 – 8) of the poem and consider the lines, "*her leaves trimmed // to the contours // of her sex"* (lines 6 – 8). What pressures exerted on women is the poet referring to?

7. In stanza 3 the poet refers to "*the fences // of her race // her country // her mother // her man*" (lines 13 – 17). In what way could these things restrict women?

8. What is the main point the poet is making? Write this down in one sentence.

POETRY

A Woman is not a Potted Plant

by Alice Walker

her roots bound
to the confines*
of her house

a woman is not
a potted plant
her leaves trimmed*
to the contours*
of her sex

a woman is not
a potted plant
her branches
espaliered*
against the fences
of her race
her country
her mother
her man

her trained blossom
turning
this way
& that
to follow
the sun
of whoever feeds
and waters
her

a woman
is wilderness*
unbounded
holding the future
between each breath
walking the earth
only because
she is free
and not creepervine
or tree.

Nor even honeysuckle
or bee.

Confines – limits
Trimmed – pruned
Contours – outline
Espaliered – trained
Wilderness – a vast area that is uncultivated and uninhabited

QUESTIONS ON THE POEM

1. What figure of speech is used throughout this poem? How is this effective? (3)
2. How does the poet use various parts of the plant to demonstrate woman's lack of freedom or her inferior situation? (4)
3. How is the adjective 'trained' (line 18) particularly degrading of women's position? (3)
4. The last verse (line 27 – 36) contrasts with the previous three as the poet sets out her ideas on woman and her status. Discuss her ideas of what a woman should be with particular reference to the phrase 'wilderness unbounded' (lines 27/28). (3)
5. Although 'honeysuckle' and 'bee' (lines 37/38) have attractive qualities, the poet rejects them. Why does she do this? (2)

[TOTAL: 15]

Unit 4 - ADVERTISING

GROUPWORK

Below are some statements about advertising that you are to discuss in your groups.

Advertising benefits consumers as it informs them about the benefits of buying products.

Big business doesn't care for consumers, it just wants to sell its products.

The government should control advertising and should be able to ban certain adverts.

Advertising is an effective way to inform people.

Advertising is a waste of money and simply adds to the price of products.

Adverts sell an image and a brand rather than a product.

We have freedom of the press in South Africa, so advertisers should be able to advertise as they like.

Identify the logos above. What company does each logo represent? What do you know about each company? Write down as many things as you can about each company. How do you know these things?

ADVERTISING

FACT FILE

Did you know?

Advertising has been with us much longer than you think. Over 3000 years ago the Babylonians put up signs on their walls to advertise for the return of runaway slaves. In Roman times doctors, physicians as they were known then, used to press an advertising message on the surface of their ointments with a small stone printing stamp.

Trade signs were an early form of advertising, one of the first, a sign advertising an inn, dating back to Roman times. When paper came into use advertising messages were written on it and put up on walls or posts. The original meaning of the word 'poster' came from this type of advertising.

However, the invention of the printing press led to a huge increase in advertising. The earliest known printed English advertisement appeared about 1480 and was posted on church doors. The first advertisement in a newspaper appeared in Germany in 1525 and gave details of medicine for sale. One of the earliest known advertisements in a magazine appeared in 1625 and advertised the sale of a book. The following advertisement appeared in a periodical on the 30 September 1658.

> That excellent, and by all Physicians, approved *China* drink, called by the Chineans *Tcha*, by other nations *Tay* alias *Tee*, is sold at the Sultaness Head Cophee-House, in Sweeting's Rents, by the *Royal* Exchange, London.

We are all influenced far more than we realise by advertising. Advertisers exist to sell products and they have many ways to persuade us to buy. They also spend millions of rands studying our behaviour so that they can aim their adverts at the right market and sell their products effectively.

We all have certain feelings and fears and advertisers take advantage of these emotions. For example, we all want to be popular and liked by others. We also want to be successful, healthy and attractive to others. By playing on these emotions advertisers can make us believe that certain products will improve our lives and give us that sense of security and confidence that we all need.

Look carefully at the TV adverts you see tonight and try to work out what feelings each one is trying to appeal to in order to sell their product.

THE ADVERTISING MESSAGE

THE MEDIA

THE PRESS

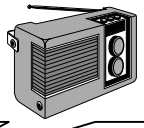
National Dailies
Sundays
Evenings
Local Weeklies
Periodicals
Trade Press

TELEVISION

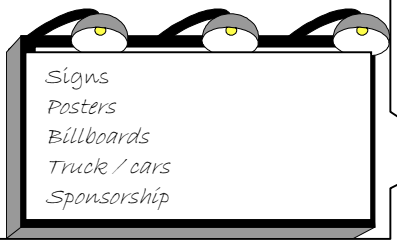
SABC
ETV
MNET
Satellite (DSTV)
Closed Circuit – Hotels
- supermarkets
-Hospitals ETC.

RADIO

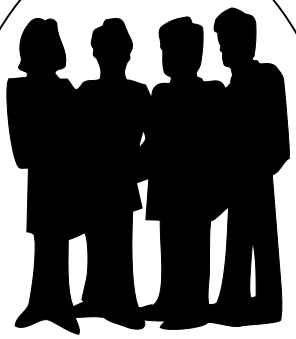
Public Broadcasting (SABC)
Commercial Radio
International radio stations.



OUTDOOR



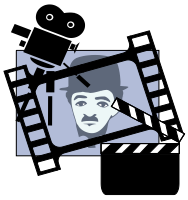
Signs
Posters
Billboards
Truck / cars
Sponsorship



THE PUBLIC

CINEMA

Slides
Films



CELL PHONES

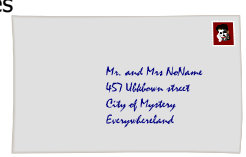
SMS's
Phone messages

THE INTERNET

Shopping Sites
E-mail

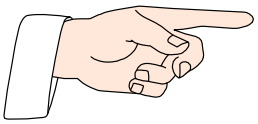
DIRECT MAIL

Personal letters
Brochures
Catalogues
Samples



EXHIBITIONS

Trade shows
Speciality shows e.g. Garden and Home Shows, Decorex



MERCHANDISING MEDIA

Packaging
Stickers
Showcards
Shop signs
T-shirts

GROUP TASK

Catchy slogans are one way manufacturers sell their products. How many of the slogans below can you identify?

Fill in the product that is advertised by the slogan below:

1. Everything keeps going right. _____
2. Finger Lickin' Good. _____
3. Have a break, have a _____
4. Where the fun never sets _____
5. The quest for zero defects. _____
6. Tell someone. _____ for yourself.
7. From the ground up. _____
8. For the love of People's Cars. _____
9. Triple distilled. Twice as smooth. _____
10. Real food made real good._____
11. Fresh from the griddle._____
12. People with a taste for life._____
13. Always _____
14. Yello Summer._____
15. Life's good._____
16. Just do it._____
17. Between Friends._____
18. For a 25 hour day._____
19. Delivered smartly. _____
20. Does it all in one, Mum. _____
21. There's _____ spirit in everyone.
22. Simpler, Better, Faster. _____
23. Home of the hits. _____
24. Get your own back. _____

- In your group think of as many other slogans as you can. (At the end we will see which group thinks of the most slogans)

Answer the following questions (be as honest as possible):

1. How affected are you by adverts? Do songs or images from adverts stick in your head? Can you think of your favourite advert and describe it to your group?

2. How important is it to you to be fashionable? Have you ever purchased something because it was "cool" or "fashionable"? Have you ever bought something because of its advert?

3. How would you describe yourself? How does your clothing help to cultivate this style (if at all)?

4. What was the last thing that you purchased? Why did you purchase it?

5. What was the last item of clothing that you purchased? Why did you purchase it? Did the store that it came from or its label influence your purchase in any way?

6. Do you pay attention to where a product is made?

7. Consider the following brands. Using appropriate adjectives describe the brand and the type of person associated with that brand. Do you have any other examples?
   - Nike
   - Volcom
   - Tommy Hilfiger
   - Roxy
   - Puma
   - Soviet
   - Fubu

8. What did you wear when you went out over the weekend? Add up the cost of everything that you wore (include the cost of your jewelry, shoes and any other items that you had on). Add up the cost of the clothing of all the people in your group. Are you surprised by the cost? Is it worth it?

9. Name your favourite
   Restaurant
   Bookshop
   CD store
   Clothing store
   Grocery store

   Why do you like them?

MORE ABOUT ADVERTISING

How does advertising work?

Successful advertising doesn't just happen! Advertisements are carefully designed and many millions of rands can be spent on a single advertising campaign. Successful advertising is still based around what is known as the **AIDA** theory. AIDA stands for, **A**ttention, **I**nterest, **D**esire and **A**ction.

Attention
Each advertisement in a magazine, newspaper, on the TV etc. has to compete with hundreds of other adverts, sometimes for products that are very similar. The successful advertisement is the one that stands out from the others and catches the attention of the reader, listener or viewer.

Interest
Once the advertisement has attracted attention it has to keep it by appealing to the interest or need of the reader, listener or viewer.

Desire
Once the above two have been done, then the advertisement has focus on the attractiveness or desirability of the product to create in the reader, listener or viewer the desire to have the object or service being advertised.

Action
Finally, the advertisement must encourage the reader, listener, or viewer to purchase the product. Often a telephone number will be provided and the product can be ordered immediately, sometimes there are incentives like free gifts or reduced prices if the reader, listener or viewer responds quickly. Other ads have details of where the product can be purchased.

Designing an advertisement

1. Who is the advert being aimed at?

When designing an advertisement you need to consider your **target audience**. For example, advertisements for washing powder are usually designed to appeal to housewives, while many advertisement for sweets, for example, Smarties, are designed to appeal to children. When designing a successful advertisement one needs to think of some of the following:

- **AGE** - Young people have different needs and desires than older people.
- **SEX** - Some products are used by, or appeal more to, women, others to men. Also, sex is often used to sell products.
- **BACKGROUND** - Here you need to consider things like culture, experience, life style etc.
- **EDUCATION** - People who have different educational backgrounds will have different levels of understanding and different desires.
- **INTERESTS AND OUTLOOK** - Some people like the outdoor life, others enjoy more intellectual activities, others, again, enjoy being creative, etc.

2. How is the target audience persuaded to buy?

Copywriters (the name given to the people who write advertisements) use many tricks to sell their products. Here are some (but not all) of them.

- **Flattery.** These adverts suggest that the reader is smarter, or more beautiful, or a higher achiever than those who don't use the product. E.g. "Beautiful women use…" or "Intelligent people like you …"
- **Sex Appeal.** We all want to be attractive to member of the opposite sex. Often the sex element in these adverts have nothing to do with the product.
- **Appeal to the 'herd' instinct – being like others.** People who want to be part of the 'in' crowd would be drawn to these adverts. Teenagers are often drawn to these and want the latest clothes, cell phones etc.
- **Appeal to the individual – individuality.** These focus on a person's desire to be different; not to be part of the pack.
- **Snob Appeal.** Many people are attracted to products that make them feel they have status because they use them. E.g. adverts set in exclusive expensive environments, or adverts for expensive jewelry.
- **Power of Science and Statistics.** People in white coats who claim to have conducted laboratory tests, adverts with graphs, diagrams and chemical formulae which "prove" them to be superior.
- **Fear.** These warn people of serious consequences of their actions and play on their fears. E.g. Drinking and driving adverts; adverts for burglar guards and security systems.
- **Famous / popular people.** Well-known personalities are used to give products their personal approval.
- **Economy – saving money.** Adverts which emphasise bargains E.g. "Two for the price of one" "Buy one and get one free." Etc.
- **Lifestyle.** These will appeal to people who like to live a particular type of life. Some people like excitement and adventure, others like a peaceful, tranquil life.
- **Emotion.** Love and romance appeal to some people; others are moved by babies or animals. People are more likely to buy a product if they can picture themselves in a similar situation, having similar feelings.

ORAL ASSESSMENT TASK

This task is to be done in groups of THREE.

Imagine that you are a small team designing an advertising campaign for a new product. In your group you must:

- Decide on the product you are going to sell. Make sure that you have an suitable name for it, and you know exactly what it is and what it does.
- Decide on the target audience at which you are going to aim your advertisement.
- Think of a catchy and original slogan.
- Present an oral TV advertisement for the product to the class.

Oral Assessment: 20 Marks

SLANG

What is slang?

Slang is informal, colloquial language which will often identify people with a particular group.
It is one of those things that everyone can recognize but it is difficult to define. Sometimes slang becomes part of the language itself, sometimes it dies out or is used only by people of a particular generation. e.g. *klaar out* - to finish one's period of compulsory national service; *min dae* - not long till you can leave the army; *stepouts* - dress uniform, are no longer used as young white men no longer have to undergo compulsory national service.
Then there are words from the drug culture like *'acid'; 'zonked out'; 'high'; 'crack'*; *'pot'; 'grass'; 'spaced out'* .
Some words which began as slang are now accepted such as *'hot dog'* and *'fan'* from *'fanatic'*.
Some slang is used by a particular race or cultural group.

Group discussion

- Do you use slang?
- Why do you use it?
- What slang words do you use most frequently? List them.
- Consider each word you have listed.
- When do you use these words?
- Do you use all these words with the same group of people?

In the space below write down three basic purposes of using slang.

_____

_____

_____

Do you think using slang is good or bad? Write the good and bad points in the space below.

GOOD POINTS	*BAD POINTS*

Task 1

Write down the slang words that you know for girls and boys in the **first** column.

Names given to girls	Connotation

Names given to boys	Connotation

In the **second** column write down whether the names have positive or negative connotations.

- Which group has the most slang names?
- Do most of them have positive or negative connotations?
- Did you find the same number of words for males and females?
- Why do you think this is the case?

[redacted] School

Grade 9

Examinations: June 2005

Time: 1 hrs

Marks: 50

Languages Learning Area: English Home Language.

Section A: Comprehension

The passage below is taken from the novel '*Chandra*' by Frances Mary Hendry. It is set in India and is the story of a girl of eleven whose family arrange for her to marry a boy aged sixteen. In the passage below she is discussing her forthcoming marriage with her maternal (her mother's mother) grandmother.

Her grandmother tut-tutted doubtfully. 'Chandra, my dear. Are you sure you're happy about this?'

'Ai nani, what will go wrong?' Chandra shook her head reassuringly. 'If my mother-in-law doesn't like me I'll just try harder to please her. Don't worry, I'll be OK.'

Her grandmother sighed. 'I suppose so. You're a good girl, my dear. You do your best. But somehow … Your bapa's family are all so traditional …' She paused, her soft lips pursed in thought, smoothing her sari with a thin, wrinkled hand. 'In the city here, we're modern. Out in the country, it's like a hundred years ago… But your parent's must know best, of course, and if the young man is a cousin…' She shook her head, with one of the impish smiles that Chandra loved. 'You know your mata married for love?'

'What?' Chandra gasped. 'Mata? And bapa? Like Europeans? Never!'

'Oh, don't ever tell your bapa!' her grandmother chuckled. 'She saw him in the library, and fell in love with him. I nearly did myself! He hasn't changed much; he's still handsome and elegant, almost military, with that thin moustache. He wasn't well off, but it wasn't his fault. Anyway, we arranged it with his family as if they'd never met. He'd have been horrified if he knew.' She shook her finger at Chandra. 'And your "modern-minded" Roop will probably be just as traditional.' She chuckled at Chandra's expressive rolling eyes, and then sobered. "What's your mother's name, my dear?'

Chandra stared. "Name? Mata's name? Is it – it's Varahi. Isn't it?" She was frightened, somehow.

Her grandmother nodded. 'Her husband calls her "my wife", you and your brothers call her "mata", I call her "beti". In some places she will be called "mother of Kirpal", because he is the first born son, and nothing else. A woman's name can be lost, forgotten, among her relationships. Ji haa, her name is Varahi. She has a BA degree, did you know? And she was a librarian. But when she married, your father told her she must give it all up to look after him and their children, and she obeyed. Tradition says that it is the mother who creates the atmosphere in a home. She has created happiness.' She paused, an eyebrow raised. Chandra nodded; most of the time, it was true.

Nani nodded in satisfaction. 'Yes. She's been fairly happy herself, I think, because he is a good man, even if he is poorer than we thought he'd be, and … irritable.' Well, that was one way to put it. He didn't use his stick only for walking … Four welts on Chandra's legs ached in memory of the last time he'd been drunk, but she said nothing. It was his right, and daughters didn't complain about their fathers. 'Besides, she has had her family only an hour away, to talk to. But you'll be away out alone.'

Oh, this was silly! 'Ai, why should I be unhappy, nani? Roop's nice, great-aunt said so. And besides, it's a woman's duty to love her husband and serve him, to worship him as her god. Great-aunt used to pray to her husband every morning, she said.'

'That's your bapa's family.' Grandmother sighed. 'My own nani did so, also. But things are changing nowadays. I insisted you go to school; you must know women have rights as well as duties! We fought for them at independence, my friends and I, and we thought we had won them.' She shook herself, trying to dismiss her doubts. 'But you're quite right. There's no reason for all this doom and gloom! A happy marriage is the same as a happy life. It's made, my dear, it doesn't come ready built. You must work at it.'

Glossary

Nani – granny mata – mummy beti – daughter baba – daddy Ji haa - yes

Choose the correct ending to these sentences. Do not write out the whole sentence. Write the number and the letter you have chosen.

1.1 Chandra's grandmother is
- (a) happy about her marriage.
- (b) trying to warn her about the difficulties of marriage.
- (c) disapproving of her marriage.
- (d) Explaining to her that women are inferior to men.
- (e) worried that she is too young for marriage.

1.2 Chandra is
- (a) very unhappy about her up-coming marriage.
- (b) horrified about being forced to marry so young.
- (c) excited about being the centre of attention at her marriage.
- (d) happy about her up-coming marriage.
- (e) desperately in love with her fiancé and wants to marry him quickly.

1.3 Chandra's parents' marriage was
- (a) a love-match.
- (b) very happy and fulfilling for both of them.
- (c) abusive because her father was an alcoholic.
- (d) arranged after her mother saw her father and fell in love with him.
- (e) arranged by their parents who thought they would get on well together.

1.4 Roop, Chandra's future husband, is
- (a) a good friend of hers.
- (b) a modern, free-thinking young man.
- (c) a nice young man.
- (d) keen to marry Chandra as soon as possible.
- (e) living with his family in the city.

1.5 Chandra was determined to
- (a) ignore any complaints made by her mother-in-law.
- (b) be a modern, independent wife.
- (c) rise above any hardships she might face.
- (d) complete her education so she could get a degree like her mother.
- (e) be a loving and dutiful wife to her husband.

(5)

2. Indicate whether these sentences are TRUE (T) or FALSE (F) Do not write the whole sentence. Write just the number and true or false next to it.

2.1 Chandra is in love with Roop, the young man she is to marry.
2.2 People who live in the country are more traditional than those who live in the city.
2.3 Chandra's grandmother has modern views of marriage.
2.4 A woman's first name is seldon used after she marries and has children.
2.5 Married women in India have lots of freedom.

(5)

The following questions are to be answered in **FULL** sentences.

3. Why does it shock Chandra when her grandmother tells her that her mother married for love? (2)

4. Why does Chandra's grandmother say that her father would '*have been horrified if he knew*.' (line 13) (2)

5. 5.1 How is it that '*A woman's name can be lost, forgotten, among her relationships.'* (line 19)?
   5.2 What does this suggest about a woman's place in society? (3)

6. How did Chandra's mother's life change when she got married? (2)

7. Chandra's father beat her with his stick when he was drunk. She states that '*It was his right, and daughters did not complain about their fathers.*' (line 27). Do you agree with her? Give reasons for your answer. (2)

8. Why did her grandmother insist that Chandra should go to school? (2)

9. In line 15 Chandra's nani asks her, '*What's your mother's name, my dear?*'
   9.1 Explain why there is an apostrophe in the word 'what's'.
   9.2 Explain why there is an apostrophe in the word 'mother's'. (2)

[25]

Section B: Poetry

Read the poem below carefully, and then answer the questions that follow.

The Wife's Lament

My life is like daytime
With no sun to warm it!
My life is like night
With no glimmer of moon!
And I – the young woman –
Am like the swift steed
On the curb, the young swallow
With wings crushed and broken;
My jealous old husband
Is drunken and snoring,
But even while snoring,
He keeps one eye open,
And watches me always,
Me, poor little wife!

By Nikolay Nekrasov

Glossary
Lament – expression of sorrow and grief
Steed – horse
Curb – rein, bridle, halter.
Swallow – a bird

1. Read lines 1 – 4 carefully. Describe **in your own words** the kind of life the wife has? (3)
2. In lines 5 – 8 the wife describes herself.
   2.1 What figure of speech does she use to do this? (2)
   2.2 Explain carefully why this figure of speech is effective. (3)

3 Explain in your own words what her husband is like. Refer to lines 9 – 11. (2)

4 How do you know that the wife is trapped in this marriage? (2)

[12]

Section C: Advertising

Look at the advertisement attached to this paper, and then answer the following questions.

1. Who do you think this advertisement is aimed at (The target audience)? Give reasons for your answer. (2)
2. What stereotype of women is the advertisement using? How do you think women might feel about the use of this stereotype? (2)
3. Look at the words above the picture. What do they suggest about Standard Bank? (2)

[6]

Section D: Cartoon

Examine the cartoon below and then answer the questions that follow.

1. Explain the ambiguity in the cartoon above. (2)
2. Explain how the cartoon stereotypes women. (2)
3. Explain the function of the apostrophe in '*Ma'am*' (frame 2) (1)
4. Would you say this cartoon is written in a formal or informal style? Provide one word that will prove your answer. (2)

[7]

FOG INDEX OR CLARITY INDEX

(Formula to work out the readability of a passage)

1. Choose a random section of about 200 words
   Count the number of words: a

2. Count the number of full stops, question marks, colons, and exclamation marks: b

3. Divide *a* by *b*. This gives and average number of words in a sentence: $\frac{a}{b}$

4. Count the words of more than 2 syllables. Exclude proper names and three-syllable words ending in *es*, or *ed*: c

5. Divide *c* by *a* and multiply by 100: $\frac{c}{a} x\, 1\,0\,0$
   This gives the percentage of words of more than two syllables.

6. Add the average number of words per sentence $\left(\frac{a}{b}\right)$ to the percentage of words of more than two
   syllables: $\frac{c}{a} x \frac{100}{1}$
   This is the Clarity or Fog index: $\frac{a}{b} + \left(\frac{c}{a} x \frac{100}{1}\right)$

7. Multiply your answer by 0,4 or $\frac{4}{10}$: $\left(\frac{a}{b} + \left(\frac{c}{d} x \frac{100}{1}\right) x \frac{4}{10}\right)$

The purpose of the final multiplication by 0,4 is to bring the index into line with the number of years schooling a reader may have had. If the answer to (6) was 25 then multiplying this by 0,4 would have produced the answer 10. This would mean the person should have had 10 years of schooling and therefore should be in Grade 10.

16 June 2005 10/50

English Control TEST

DILLON

Grade: 9A

Answers

Question1

1.1(c) X
1.2(a) ✓
1.3(a) X
1.4(b) X
1.5(a) X

1

2.1) True X
2.2) True ✓
2.3) True ✓
2.4) True ✓
2.5) False ✓

4

3) ~~She~~ does ~~not~~ not know nothing about marriage and she is not ready. X 0
4) b Her father was not ready for marriage. 0
5) Once a woman is married her ~~surname~~ will change and be forgotten. X 0
6) s.2) woman are raw in place of society. X 0
6) She became a woman and got a man. X 0
7) Never, most girls are scared of boys so it does not 'get' her farther that is drunk to give her a beating with a stick. Confused. 0
8) So she can learn about realionship in H.O. X 0
a.1) instead of saying what she says what's

5/25

a.2) there are a lots of mothers. X 0

Question2

1) She has a boring life? and cold night. ✓ 1
2) 2.1) Common figure X 0
2.2) She uses ~~am~~ all over. X 0
3) Jealous old, drunken and smoking 2
4) The husband is Jealous and old. X 0

3/10

Question3

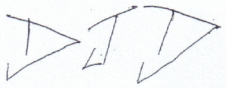
1) Young, to show some people are ~~confused~~ careless about ~~ou~~ ? 1
2) wire code, ~~scard~~ scared. X 0
3) If only everything is simple like a switch. X 0

1/6

Question4

1) pun X 0
2) upset and mad X 0
3) The man is scared. X 0
4) informal, The man is writting a fine for the women and then he pays it way. X 0

1/7



11½/50

ENGLISH PAPER — JUNE EXEMANATION
EDUCATOR: M — GRADE: 9A
ANNA — HOURS = 1

QUESTION: 4

1.1 = D ✓
1.2 = B X
1.3 = ~~B~~ a X
1.4 = C ✓
1.5 = d X

2

TRUE OR FALSE

2.1 = TRUE X
2.2 = FALSE X
2.3 = TRUE ✓
2.4 = FALSE X
2.5 = FALSE ✓

2

Answer in full sentences!

In 3 he married her because she had a B.A degree. X 0
4. The people Arranged it with his family as if they'd never met. ✓ 2
5 She said that because ~~if~~ she was called in different names. 0
5.2 ? 0
6 Because Tradition says its mother who create Atmosphere at home X 0
7. No, because its no use beating a person and he doesn't learn a right. ✓ 1
8. So she can know her rights. ✓ 1
9. What's = She was asking a question. Mothers = She was 'Stepmother'. X 0

3/25

1. She is lonely ✓ with no one to spend the day with. X 0
2. Swallow, No One cares X 0
3. He goes deinting and comes back and sleep he is lazy but knows how to take care of his wife.?? 1½
4. The husband is selous. ✓ 1

2½/10

5. Advertising.

1. Standard bank, the lady looks terrified because of the plugs. X 0
2. DVD Vidio. X 0
3. Simpler, better, FASTER. ✓ 1

1/6

CARTOON

1. ? 0
2. The drawing X 0
3. The Officer means Mom. X 0
4. Informal, GOTTA WATCH. 2

2/7

VERY HEIRD.
You need to learn your notes on figures of speech, advertising and cartoons. If you had done so you would have found this paper easier!

22/50

TATUM

Grade: 9a

June Examinations 2005

English.

Section A

1)

1.1) B ✓
1.2) D ✓
1.3) D ✓
1.4) D X
1.5) a X

3

2)

2.1) T X
2.2) T ✓
2.3) T ✓
2.4) F X
2.5) F ✓

3

3) It shocks her because she knows that she is not ~~married~~ marrying for love. X 0

4) In her father's ~~Her~~ tradition they don't marry for love and her mother married her father because she loved him. ✓ 2

5) 5.1) It goes according to tradition and in her husbands tradition they don't call their wife's by name and ? 1

5.2) They don't have a strong hold in their lives men do. X

14/25

6) It changed like this She no longer had to work she had to stay at home and look after her husband and children. ✓ 2

7) No I don't, You can't just hit your daughter with a stick for no reason, that is child abuse. ✓ 2

8) So that she can have a BA degree just like her mother did. X 0

9) 9.1) It is to shorten the word what is. ✓
9.2) It is to make the word mother sound more reasonable because if you say mother is it does not sound nice X

Section B.

1) I think the wife has a boring ✓ life it's like daytime and night. 1

2) 2.1) Personification X 0
2.2) She is comparing herself to a swift ~~steed~~ horse. X 0

3) He's just like a drunken he never does anything at home instead he drinks and sleeps. ✓ 2

5/12 4) Her husband is always watching over her like a hawk. ✓ 2

Section C

1) Teenagers, There is a teenager in the picture and some teenagers still need ~~e~~ to open up a bank account and she's encouraging them to open at Standard Bank. 1

2) ~~It's~~ Teenager's ~~Teleg~~ service, I think women will feel good. X 0

3) It's (What?) e very simple and it's everything you need. 1

2/6

Section D

1) It has the same meaning X 0

2) They use old women who ~~that~~ can't understand or read X 0

3) It's to tell you that moom is one word. X 0

4) Informal ✓, I Think X 1

1/7

11½/50

DAWN

Grade 9A — 14.06.005 — English

Question 1

1.1) a X
1.2) a X
1.3) b X
1.4) d X
1.5) d X

0

Question 2

2.1) False ✓
2.2) True ✓
2.3) ~~False~~ True ✓
2.4) False X
2.5) false ✓

4

3.) She was so young and had to marry just like her mother did. X 0

4) She shook her head, with one of the impish smiles that Chandra loved. You know your mata married for love? what? Chandra gasped. Mata? And bapa? like Europeans? Never! And then she said and don't tell your bapa. X 0
You have not answered the question.

has to be treated with respect just like other women. (refer only to the first 4 lines) 1

2) She talking about herself, how she is crushed and broken. X 0

2.2) torn and broken apart that how she feels. X 0

3) He thinks of himself and does not care and worry about his wife, all does is drink and get drunk. 1

4) She has made a vouse to stay with him forever. X 0

3/10

Section C

1) Its got to do with money and how to use a bank. X 0

2) She is very confused. X 0

3) If you could or not use a card in the bank and just take out money. X 0

0/6

Section D

1) The lady is tired of parking tickets X 0

5) When you get married your surname or his surname has to change X

5.2) That now she is married and no larger ~~st~~ with her parents. X ?

6) She had to give it (what?) all up and look after him and all her children, Tradition says that it is a mother who creates the atmosphere in a home. She has created a happy home. ✓

7) It is not right when he beats her with sticks, he should (n't) abuse her when he is drunk it is not fear to see a women fearly beaten for no reason.

8) So she could know women have rights as well as duties. ✓

9) She already knew. X
9.2) It is got to do with ~~Women~~ X

8½/25

Section B

1) She is broken apart ✓ and feels like she has nothing and is nothing, she feels that she is not a women, she feels she

2) She very angry. X C
3) She is telling him what to do. X C
4) formal X 0
You have not answered the questions.

0/7

23
50

NEIL
Grade 9A

14 June 2005
Languages learning Area: English Home

1.1 b) ✓
1.2 b) X
1.3 d) ✓
1.4 d) X
1.5 e) ✓

3

2.1 false ✓
2.2 true ✓
2.3 True ✓
2.4 True ✓
2.5 false ✓

5

3 Chandra thought it was arranged like all the other marriages. ✓

2

4 Nan nearly fell in love with him too X

0

5 In some tradition when you get marriage are given a new name. X

5.2 This suggest women are treated as someones property and given no right in society ✓

1

6 Chandras mothers life changed because when she got married she had to leave her job and look after her husband and children. ✓

7 From my points of view it seems as if he had a reason for doing such a thing. X

8 So that she could get a degree like her mother. X

0

9 She said the words 'whats' in B or she coo what is ✓

10 When asking something that belongs to someone ✓

1

14/25

Section B: Poetry

1 She is in a relationship where she is not happy in a dile? world.

1 2d Comparison You need to be specific.
2 She compares nature with human activities X

3 He is an alcoholic who snore at night ✓

4 She is always watched. ✓

12

Section C Advertising

1) It is aimed at adults and business people X because children don't really / large amounts of money to save

1

2) A confused women ✓ don't think she would feel any thing because she is been ~~paid~~ for this

1

3 They make banking simple and easy. ✓

2

4/6

Section D: Carboons

1) The sign say she park but she is given a parking fine. X

0

2) Women can't X

0

3) Mu ma = Mam X

0

4) Informal ✓ it is very funy

1

1/7

11½/50

JOELENE

14 May 2005

Grade: 9A

SECTION A

1.1 c X
1.2 b X
1.3 d ✓
1.4 b X
1.5 d X

2.1 TRUE X
2.2 TRUE ✓
2.3 false X
2.4 FALSE X
2.5 false ✓ 2

3) Chandra was shocked because she never thought that Indian people would marry for love. ✓ 2
4) She says it because if he knew that her wife would be forced to marry him it would horrify him. X 0
5) It would be lost because if they in a relationship they would give her a new name. X 0
6) It suggest that she is being bothered. X
6) Chandra's mother changed her life she was a very good wife and she praised her husband like God. X 0
7) NO, I don't because she also got rights not to be bitten up and she can also report it to the police or to Mother in law. but this would not help in India. 1
8) She wanted Chandra to be well educated. Why? 0
9) The is a Apostrope because the is a singular noun X

9.2) The is a apostrophe because the word mother's ~~name~~ have the plural noun. X

6/25

SECTION B

1) She has a wife who which was very sad ✓ as if she had no husband who could love her worm her or even comfort her. ✓
2) She is using a comparesin X
2.2) She is using this because she compares her self it many thing. X
3) She means that her husband is always drunk ✓ and do give a damn about her this wife. he is always watching her everything she does. ✓
4) She is trapped because she says that she is like a swift steed on the curb, young swallow with wing crushed and broken to ... ? How does this trap he Explain.

2½/12

SECTION C

1) It is ~~Cancel Etc~~ at that parking thing the board thats on the pole because it is talking about the parking sign.
3)
3)

1) It is aimed at standard bank because it talks about standard bank. X 0
2) She is using a down stereotype she must be feeling sad. X 0
3) They mean if only everything was as simple ✓ as standard Bank current account. 1

1/6

SECTION D.

1) Parking X 0
2) Old With long nose and very tired. X 0
3) The singulare nouin X 0
4. formal Oh officer NOT another parking ticket
INformal Gotta Watch where you park, Ma'am. X 0

0/7

you need to learn your figures of speech and the notes on advertising and cartoons.

NATASHA 2.5/50

Grade - 9A

English

Section A:

Comprehesion.

1.1 B ✓
1.2 D ✓
1.3 D ✓
1.4 C ✓
1.5 E ✓ 5

2.
2.1 True X
2.2 ~~False~~ True ✓
2.3 True ✓
2.4 False X
2.5 False ✓ 3

3. ? 0

4. He is traditional and he wanted his mother and father to arranged the marriage. 1

5.1. He husband calls her my wife, her children call her imata and her mother calls her "bebi." 1

5.2. ?

6. Before Chandra's mother got married she was a librarian but when she got married, her husband told her to stay at home and take care of him and the children.

7. No, Your father can not hit you for nothing even if his not in his right mind

8. So she can work and be independ.

a.1 Her ~~gra~~ nani new what her mothers name was, but she was just checking to see if Chandra knows what's her mothers X

a.2 She is not talking about alot of mothe she is only talking about 1 mother. X

14/25

Section B

Poetry

① She gets know time to herself X

② Smile ✓

2.2. She is comparing herself to other X
③ He is jealous and always drinking and sleeping but he always keeps a eye on h wife

6/12 ④ Her husbands always watches her, eve when his sleeping.

Section C

Advertising.

① People who do banking, so they can bank at standard Bank. X 0

② They are using a blond, the one's with blonde hair? might feel bad, but not anyone else. X 0

2/6 ③ That Standard Bank is simple! ✓ 2

Section D

Cartoon.

① She tought the sign said its fine to park here, but what it was really saying is if you park here you will have to pay a fine. 2

② The lady is a blond? and people say blonds are ~~sup~~ipted. X 0

③ That is not the man's mother X 0

2/7 ④ ~~Yes~~, Another Formal X 0

BARBARA

23/50 — 14 June 2005

English.

~~Section A~~

Que 1

1.1) E X
1.2) A X
1.3) B X
1.4) C ✓
1.5) C X — 1

Que 2

2.1) False ✓
2.2) false X
2.3) True ✓
2.4) false X
2.5) false ✓ — 3

~~Que 3~~

3) She's shocked because her marriage is arranged and not about love, she must have thought that all marriages are to be arranged. ✓ — 2

4) Her farther ~~would~~ would be horrified because this was not part the tradition. ✓ — 2

5) 5.1) Tradition when a woman ~~get~~ marriade her name and surname change. X
5.2) That the name she used before she got married will be forgotten in the society. X 0
This is Incomplete!

8/25

Section B Que 1

1) This means her life is dry ✓, without love and it is as if k she's on an Island alone with ~~hee~~ none to comfort her.

2) 2.1) Similie ✓
2.2) The young woman is compared with the swift ~~as~~ steed - Incomplete. Why is this effective

3) He is a jealous man ✓ and a drunk~~ard~~ ✓

4) She is always watched ✓ He keeps one eye open, and watches me always, me, poor Little wife, This means she has no freedom.

18/20

Section B C

1) Mainly adults both sexes Be more specific
2) This woman is board and wants to do everything easy or simple? This advertisement is saying that woman are inactive. X

3) It means standard Bank makes everything simple for you. ✓ — 3/6

Section D

1) Gotta watch where you Park, Ma'am. Fine for Parking ~~beer~~ here. X
2) It stereotypes ~~women~~ women Plz check on it
3) They have left out the letter D (Madam) ✓
4) Informat, Homicide Dentail X — 2/7

NIGEL

16½/50

Grade: 9th
June 2005

1. b. ✓
2. ~~d~~ c X
3. d ✓
4. c ✓
5. c ✓ — 4

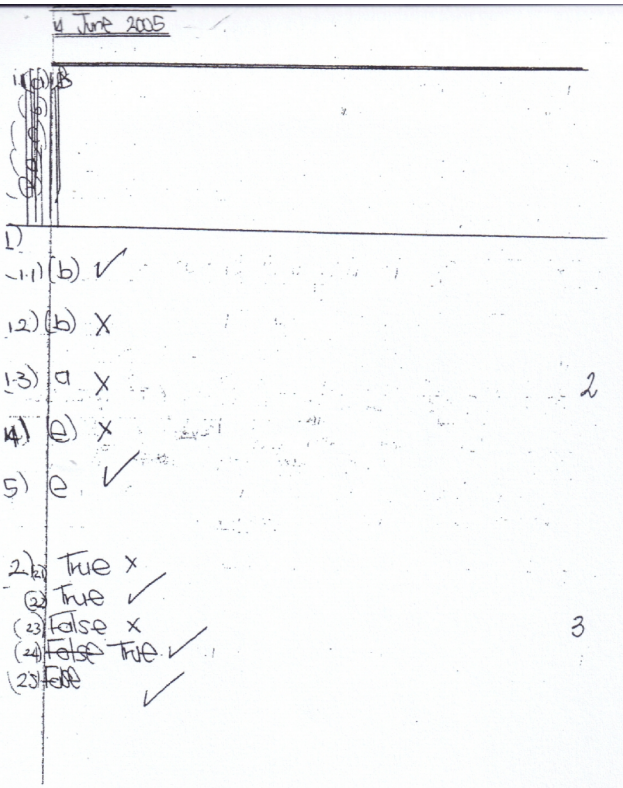
2.1 True X
2.2 True ✓
2.3 True ✓
2.4 False X
2.5 False ✓ — 3

3. I think because they were not European but married like European. X 0
4. They because it well off and had a his mustache ? and the wedding was arranged with his family as if they'd never met ✓ — 1
5.1 Because When a woman is married people call her by different names and at different places and certain people.
5.2 That sometimes when she's known she's like not known because of those different names, good that confuses. X — 2
6. She had to give it What up, tok after him and their children and she obeyed. — 1
7. Polygyny because that was called abuse of a person ~~got not~~ a Wright to beat a child under its legs or any part of the body especially on girls and ~~must be anything that~~ caused by alcohol ? — 1
8. Things were changing and she had to know that women have rights as well as duties and she had to know that How Family had to fight for they rights. — 1½
9.1 Spelling the word which is ✓
9.2 Speaking of ~~Alfred~~ of ~~mother~~ single mother X — 1

4½/25

1. I would say its like her life goes according to time or it goes with the flow X 0
2.1 Personification X Woman compared to a swiftd steed on the curb. Le hands are wings and jealous compared to her husband. X 0
2.2 swiftlad steed on the curb with wings crushed and broken. X 0
4
5. He can be drunk and can be singing He keeps one eye open and watches her always. ✓ — 2

2/10



4 June 2005

1)
1.1) (b) ✓
1.2) (b) X
1.3) a X
1.4) e) X
5) e ✓

2) 21) True X
22) True ✓
23) False X
24) ~~False~~ True ✓
25) ~~False~~ ✓

2
3

Poetry

(1) A Bad life x 0

(2) Simile ✓ 1
22 describe to thing. x 0

(3) Is a old ~~jelousy~~ jealousy man and a drukcer. 1

(4) The way she describe Her self x 0

2/10

Advertising

She think is at The park there because of the word fine.
It ~~the~~ a simple Bank x 0
(2) ~~Ambegare~~ ambiguity. x 0

2/6 (3) if only everything else was so simple as standard Bank. ✓ 2

(1) same word different meanings What word? Explain. 0
(2) Ambyguity. x 0
(3) a A diffrent ~~U~~ Langerges ~~st~~ saying Mrs x 0
(4) In a famal x 0

0/7

(4) Because he did not know or that he's marriage was set in the wrong cases he did not know that Chandra's mother fell in love with ~~the~~ him.

(5) It can be ~~Egg~~ forgotten because of the names that family or friend call you.

(5.2) ~~It~~ That She is very well known, and respect

(6) Her life changed a lot Because she ge married to the man she loved and not someone who got arranged to her and ...? you have not answered the questio

(7) NO, I dgnot agree with other ~~he is~~ he is not supposed to hit ~~his~~ her ~~child~~ it is wrong thing to do and I think a man should never hit a women.

(8) ~~b~~ To get her B+ degree like her mother. x

(9) ~~c~~ ~~to~~ To see if she still know her mot names x

9.2 BECAUSE She refering to both of ~~Asher~~

9/25

34½/50

DAVID Grade: 9A

14 June 2005

Languages Learning Area: English Home language

Section A: Comprehension

1.1 (b) ✓
1.2 (d) ✓
1.3. (d) ✓
1.4 (e) X
1.5 (e) ✓ 4

2.1 True X
2.2 True ✓
2.3 True ✓
2.4 True ✓
2.5 False ✓ 4

3. It shocks Chandra because her father abuses her when he's drunk. X 0

4. Chandra's grandmother is saying this because she knows that her father didn't know what they had planned. ✓ 2

5.1 When a woman is married and has children, the children don't call their mother by name and other people call her by Mrs, and the surname she's married to. ✓

5.2 This means that a woman is essential to the society also in and around the city. ? 2

6. When she got married, she gave up work and looked after her husband and children. ✓ 2

7. No, I disagree because nobody has the right to abuse other people especially women and children. It's against the law. here ✓ 2

8. She insisted Her to go to school so that she could know that women have rights as well as duties. ✓ 1½

9.1. Contraction ✓
9.2. Possessions ✓ 2

(14½/25)

Section B: Poetry

1. What she realy means is that her whole life is not fair or boring because she's ate always feeling. There's no happiness. ✓ 1½

2.1 Simile ✓ 2

2.2 It's effective because she's comparing herself to the swift steed. ✓ It means she has been treated badly. how? Be specific. 1

3. Her husband is an old nasty person who likes to drink beer and sleeps noisily and is also jealous or selfish. ✓ 2

4. In the heading she's showing her expression of sorrow and grief and her husband keeps one eye opened, like she's a slave ✓ 1

(7½/10)

Section C: Advertising

1. This advertisement is aimed at ~~teens~~ adults between ~~between~~ the age of 25 - 50. Adults work for their money and think everything is hardwork. 1

2. Women are useless in electrical appliances. ✓ It is not true but sometimes there is women who are useless but men too. ✓ 1½

3. They are suggesting that people should switch to a Standard Bank current account because it very simple. ✓ 2

(4½/6)

Section D: Cartoon.

1. Another - meaning that she has got the first one. X 0
2. Women are useless drivers and they are not care or reliable. 0
3. Contraction ✓ 1
4. Informal style - 'Gotta'. ✓ 2

(3/7)

10/50

14 June 2005

FARIDA
Grade: 9A

June Examination
English

Section A

1.1) A X
1.2) B X
1.3) C X
1.4) C ✓
1.5) E ✓ 2

2.1) F ✓
2.2) T ✓
2.3) T ✓
2.4) ~~F~~ F X
2.5) F ✓ 4

3) She had a happiness; She paused, an eyebrow raised Chandra nodded, most of the time, it was true. X 0

4) 'Oh, don't ever tell your bapa!' her grandmother chuckled. 'She saw him in the library, and fell in love with him. I nearly did myself. He ~~was't~~ hasn't changed much; he's still handsome and elegant, almost military with that thin moustache. X you have not answered the question 0

2) young woman and young swallow. X 0
2.2) Because, She want the people to know her. X 0

3) He alway goes places and drunks with his friends ✓ 1

4) Yes, Because She has know space in her own life ✓ 1

2/12

Section C

1) Is that a ~~e~~ women is holding a cound in her hand. X 0

2) She looks sad and she is using Standard bank. X 0

3) It is a bad bank to put your money in standard bank. X 0

0/6 you have not answered the questions.

Section D

1) The lady is getting a parking ticket X 0
2) She is scared that he is giveing her a ticket. X 0
3) Because She is old ~~inthere~~ en to be hes mother. X 0
4) ~~Inf~~ formal the word is 'Ma' 'Ma' X 0

0/7

5.1) Because he is the first born son, and nothing else. A woman's name can be lost, forgotten, among her relationships. Ji hoa, her name Varahi. She ~~must~~ has a BA degree, did you know? and she was a librarian. X

5.2) It must be nice X

6) But when she married, her father told her she must give it all up to look after him and their children, and she obeyed. Tradition says that it is the mother who creates the atmosphere in a home. Quote, You must indicate this

7) No, Because she must have went to report him to the polices and he should have went to jail.

8) So, she can finish her schooling and then get a nice job to ~~sta~~ support her family. X

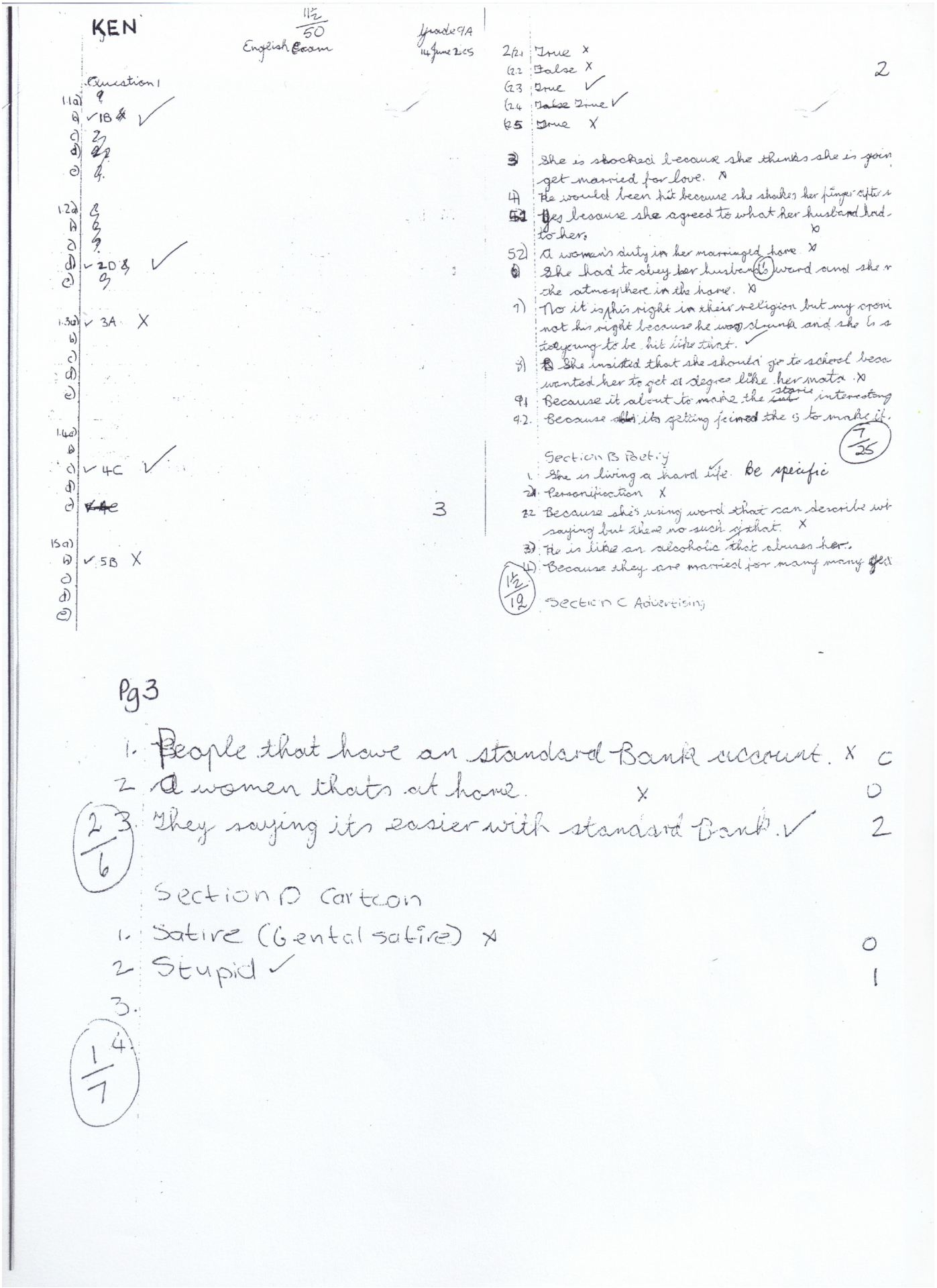
9) She is trying to say where is her mother. X

9/25

9.2) Maybe her mother passed away X

Section B

1) She is trying to say the she is busy day and night X



KEN

11½/50

English Exam

Grade 9A

14 June 2015

Question 1

1.1 a) ?
b) ✓ 1B ✗ ✓
c) 2
d) 2
e) 4

1.2 a) 3
b) 3
c) 3
d) ✓ 2D ✗ ✓
e) 9

1.3 a) ✓ 3A X
b)
c)
d)
e)

1.4 a)
b)
c) ✓ 4C ✓
d)
e) ~~4e~~

3

1.5 a)
b) ✓ 5B X
c)
d)
e)

2.1 True X
2.2 False X
2.3 True ✓
2.4 ~~False~~ True ✓
2.5 True X

2

3 She is shocked because she thinks she is going get married for love. X

4 He would been hit because she shakes her finger after s

5.1 Yes because she agreed to what her husband had to her. X

5.2 A woman's duty in her marriaged home X

6 She had to obey her husband's word and she r the atmosphere in the home. X

7) No it is/is right in their religion but my opini not his right because he was drunk and she is a teenyeng to be hit like that. ✓

8) She insisted that she should go to school beca wanted her to get a degree like her mate X

9.1 Because it about to make the story interesting

9.2 Because ~~she~~ its getting ~~f~~ coined the s to make it.

7/25

Section B Poetry

1. She is living a hard life. Be specific

2.1 Personification X

2.2 Because she's using word that can describe wh saying but there no such ~~s~~that. X

3) He is like an alcoholic that abuses her.

4) Because they are married for many many ~~yea~~

1½/10

Section C Advertising

Pg3

1. People that have an standard Bank account. X C
2. A women thats at home. X 0
3. They saying its easier with standard Bank. ✓ 2

2 3/6

Section D Cartoon

1. Satire (Gental satire) X 0
2. Stupid ✓ 1
3.
4.

1/7

19½/50

MAVIS

Grade 9A

English Paper

Section A: Comprehension

1.1 b ✓
1.2 a X
1.3 a X
1.4 c ✓
1.5 e ✓

3

2.1 false ✓
2.2 true ✓
2.3 false X
2.4 false X
2.5 false ✓

3

3 I think it shocked her because she knew that in those days you can't marry for love. Your parent had to choose your husband or wife. ✓

4 I think it because, they would be confused if they knew that the people they were going to make get married to know one another. You have not answered the question 0

5.1 It could mean that the women has no say in the household. The man will just come and tell the women to do something and she must jump up and do it. It is also implying that it's a women's place to be a house wife X 0

6 ?

7 No! the man has no right to take out his anger on other people. When he drinks and get's drunk he should go sleep instead of beating his wife?

8 So that Chandra would know her place as a women, learn to be independent also 0 ✓ 1

9.1 it's a shorter way to say "what is" ✓
9.2 It means 1 person X 1

11/25

Section B: Poetry

2.1 She has a dull boring life. She is living in misery. 1

2.2 Personification X
2.2.2 She is giving non-living thing human qualities X

2.3 Her husband is like a hawk. He watches her every move she make's that why she says even when he is snoring he keeps an eye open You were required to refer to lines 9-11.

2.4 By the way she expressed her feeling's in the poem and can also sense she was in a good mood when she wrote this poem. X

2½/12

Section C Advertising

1 It is aimed to the people around the world, It's because as only people use banks. X 0

2 different gender I think ??: They might feel that the men think they can't use electrical appliances or correct it to DUO the men are undermining the women power. 1

3 They suggest that it is very easy to open up a Standard Bank current account. 2

3/6

Section D Cartoons

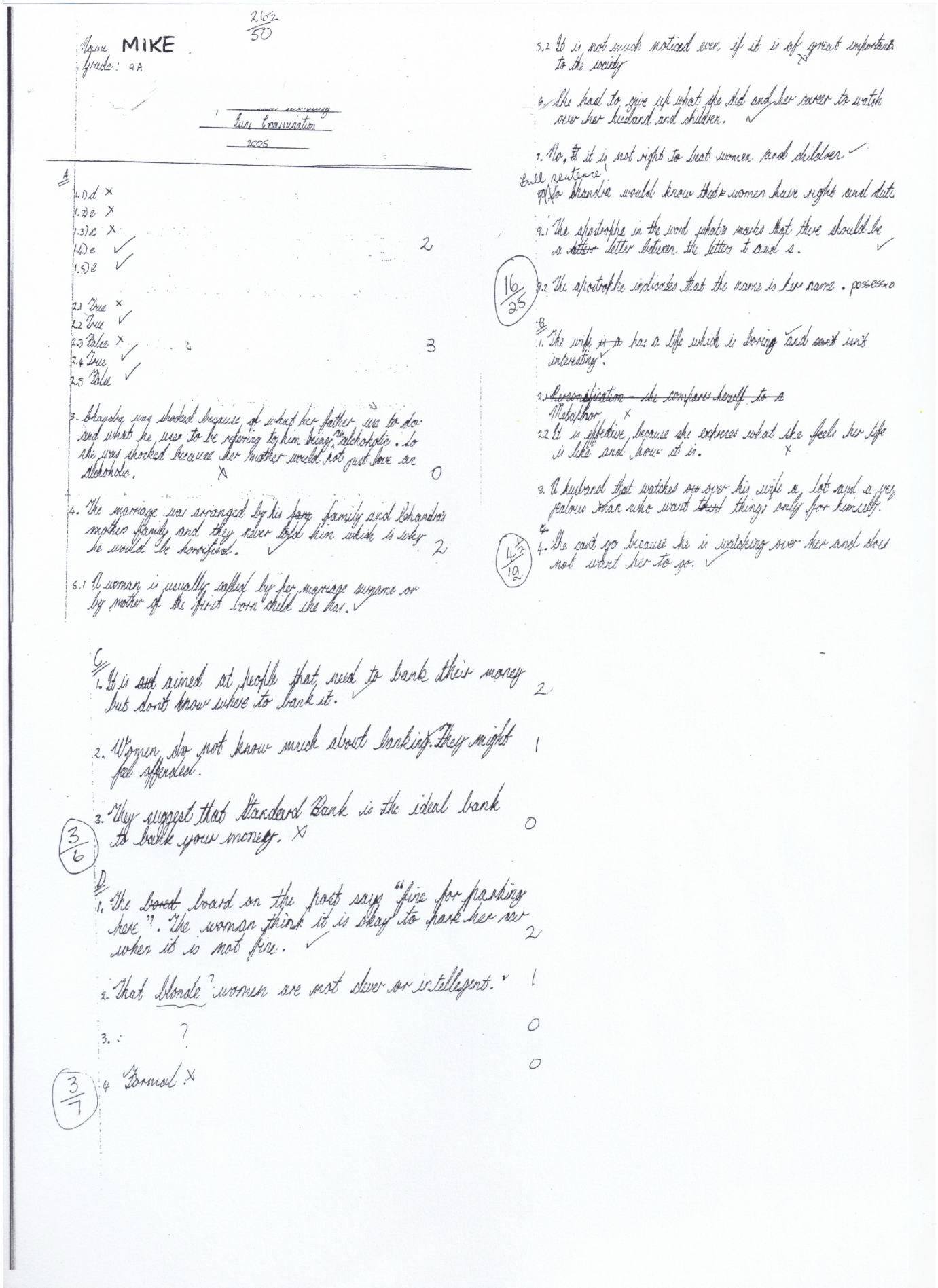
1 The ambiguity is where the lady says I even made sure I parked by that sign X 0

2 It stereotype, Lawen by think that they don't know much about driving and reading signs ✓ 2

3 ? 0

4 Informal style: Homicide Detail X 1

3/7



Name: MIKE
Grade: 9A

2.62/50

Class Conversation
2005

A
1.1) d ×
1.2) e ×
1.3) c ×
1.4) e ✓
1.5) e ✓
2

2.1 True ×
2.2 True ✓
2.3 False ×
2.4 True ✓
2.5 False ✓
3

3- Khanyisa was shocked because of what her father use to do and what he use to be refering to him being "alcoholic". So she was shocked because her mother would not just have an alcoholic. ✗ 0

4. The marriage was arranged by his ~~fam~~ family and Khandia's mothers family and they never told him which is why he would be horrified. ✓ 2

5.1 A woman is usually called by her marriage surname or by mother of the first born child she has. ✓

5.2 It is not much noticed even if it is of great importance to the society ✗

6. She had to give up what she did and her career to watch over her husband and children. ✓

7. No, it is not right to beat women and children ✓
Full sentence:
No, Khandia would know that women have rights and duties

9.1 The apostrophe in the word jokata marks that there should be a ~~letter~~ letter between the letters t and s. ✓

9.2 The apostrophe indicates that the name is her name . possessio

16/25

B
1. The wife ~~is~~ has a life which is boring and ~~sad~~ isn't interesting. ✓

2. ~~Personification - she compares herself to a~~
Metaphor ✗
2.2 It is effective because she expresses what she feels her life is like and shows it is. ✗

3. A husband that watches ~~his~~ over his wife a lot and is very jealous man who want ~~that~~ things only for himself.

4. She can't go because she is watching over her and does not want her to go. ✓

4½/10

C
1. It is ~~and~~ aimed at people that need to bank their money but don't know where to bank it. ✓ 2

2. Women do not know much about banking. They might feel offended. 1

3. They suggest that Standard Bank is the ideal bank to bank your money. ✗ 0

3/6

D
1. The ~~board~~ board on the post says "fine for parking here". The woman think it is okay to park her car when it is not fine. ✓ 2

2. That Blonde woman are not clever or intelligent. ✗ 1

3. ? 0

4 Formal ✗ 0

3/7

MILLY

2/50

GR8 : 9A

JUNE EXAMINATIONS

ENGLISH 14 June 2005.

Section A

1.1) B ✓
1.2) A X
1.3) D ✓
1.4) C ✓
1.5) E ✓ 4

2.1) True X
2.2) True ✓
2.3) False X
2.4) True ✓
2.5) False ✓ 3

3) Chandra gets a shock may be because Chandra's mother and father never showed each other how much they love one another - X 0
4) Chandra's father doesn't know that their families arranged for Chandra's parents to ~~marry~~ meet ✓ 1
5.1) A woman's first name is seldom used after she marries and has children ✓ 1
5.2) It are she's married her whole ^ is changed ?
6) Chandra's mother had to give up her job and stay at home to look after her husband and their children. ✓ 2
7) No. Children have the right to express their feelings and adults ? 1½
8) Chandra had to get an education Why ? Explain . 0
9.1) The name does not belong to either one of them : X
9.2) The name belongs to her mother. ✓ ~~the~~ possessive apostrophe ½

13/25

Section B

1) The wife has a very boring life. During daytime there's nothing she does that is fun and during the night it's the same.

2.1) Similie ✓

2.2) She compares (the) her boring life to the dull daytime with no sun to warm it and no moon in the night. ✓ so . . . ?

3) I think her husband is a very jealous person ✓ and he does not trust his wife and is very (~~brutal~~) over protective of her. Refer to lines 9-

4) Me, poor little wife ! (If) She must have been force to marry an old man that she doesn't even love, if she wasn't forced she wouldn't be feeling sorry for herself. X You have not answered the question.

6/12

Section B : Cartoons

1) The lady comes from shopping and an officer writes and gives her a another parking ticket. X

2) That woman would do anything for shopping even park the car in the wrong place. ✓

3) The apostrophes in 'Ma'ma' are used to show that the officer drags the word mama X

4) Informal ✓. Irony X

3/7

Section C : Advertising

1) Yes . To show that with Standard Bank current account everything is simple. X 0

2) It shows that if women open a Standard Bank current account every thing is simple even putting plugs together. X 0

3) They suggest that Standard Bank current account is ✓ simple it's not confusing like other Bank accounts. 2

2/6

You need to read the questions more carefully & make sure you answer what is asked.

14 June 2005

Name NOMUSA

Grade 9 A

English

1½/50

1.1. C X
1.2. d ✓
1.3. d ✓
1.4. e X
1.5. b X

2

2.
2.1. False ✓
2.2. ~~True~~ False X
2.3. True ✓
2.4. False X
2.5 False. ✓

3

3. It because where they stay women are told ~~Who they are going to be married~~ to marry. X 0

4. That her grandmother chuckled 'she saw him in the library and fell in love with him. ~~And~~ and ~~they~~ They arranged it with his family as if it was they first time met." 1½

5.1. When she has children X 0

5.2/3 That women had no freedom in those days. 1

6. She had children and her name also changed and she had to give up work !

7. NO Reasons? 0

8. I because school is important first then other things. X C

9 2 The talking about lot of mother's. X C

8½/25

B

1. She is not free, she always at the house and she ~~has~~ is alone.

2.1. Smile

2.2. She is like the swift steed on the curb, the young swallow with wings crushed and broken That is not true, because she is human and not an ~~ani~~ animal.?

3. ~~He is a jealous husband, he is always~~ drunk. He is a husband that do n't care about her wife. and like his wife to do what he is saying at all times. X

4½/10 4. His husband always watches her even when he is sleeping.

C.

1. male and famele, because both male and female use standard Bank. X 0

2.
2. A women that have no money X women will feel unhappy, because ~~not all women~~ women are not the same. X 0

3. It means that if the women had a standard bank account, she have been watching the video. X 0

0/6

D. Satire X 0

2. That women don't watch were they paking all the times! 2

3. mother X 0

2/7 4. formal X, officer X 0

SIMPHIWE 29/50 Grade 9A

English Examination

Question 1

1.1 a ✗
1.2 b ✗
1.3 a ✗
1.4 c ✓
1.5 a ✗ 1

2.1 True ✗
2.2 True ✓
2.3 True ✓
2.4 false ✗
2.5 false ✓ 3

3 She thought everything was traditionals when you have to marry a man you must do it. 1
4. He(Dube) thought that His family arranged to met. ? 0
5.1 Because it is changed when she gets married ?
5.2 She is not very important ✓ ?? What things? 1
6. She had to give all her things up to Be specific 1
look after him and their children
7. NO, because he had no right of hitting 1
his daughter when he is drunk
8. Her own nani did so. ✗ 0

9.1 They is a letter missing between what and s ; the ~~was~~ letter missing is i / she could have said what is but she shorten it and said what's. ✓
9.2 She meant that she has more then one mother ✗ 1
(9/25) you have not answered in full sentence

Poetry

1. That is no fun in her life. ✓ 1
2.1 Simile ✓ 1
2.2 Because she comparing herself withe "the swift steed on the curb" and she is using the word like. meaning? Explain. 1
3 Her husband is lazy ✓ and he is Jealous of her ✓ 2
4. She speaks badly about him ✗ 1
(6/12)

Advertising

1. At people who have a bank account ✗
2. She is says it is easy to switch to standard bank. the women would feel bad because this advert is say that women can not switch on a video. ✗
3. It ~~Suggest~~ saying that the bank will do anything for you
(2/6)

Cartoon

1. the ambiguity is fine the lady thinks it is fine to Park where she is Parking but the sign she will get a fine if she parks

Pg3

2. the stercotype is saying that women can't read ✗ 0
3. It is separate ma'and ma ✗ 0
4. informal ; fine ✗ 1
(3/7)

50

12 June 2015.

June 2005 Examination
LCCI: English.

STEVEN

Grade: 9A.

Question 1. Section A.

1.
1.1. b. ✓
1.2. b. X
1.3. b. X
1.4. b. X
1.5. A X

1

2.
2.1 False. ✓
2.2 True. ✓
2.3 True ✓
2.4 True ✓
2.5 False ✓

5

3. Chandra was shocked because her marriage won't be for love, it is a planned wedding. Planned by their parents that she would marry a particular boy. ✓

1

4. I think the wedding was not planned by the father. Her father wants her to get married for love. If he would get horrified because of that. X

0

5.
5.1. They never call her by the first name, so many people get used to the other names and her real name ✓ get forgotten or lost.

5.2 When a women get married her manners get lost, because they never call her by her real name. X

6. Her life changed because she had to give up her job and all she has ever worked for. ✓

7. No. Women and children should not get beaten up by their fathers. It is against the law. That is called abuse. ✓

8. So she would get a degree like father name. X

9
9.1 She is shortening the word except of saying what is, she says what's.

9.2 It is Anything that is owned by something or someone get letter "S" at the end of their name. ✓ possession

13½/25

Section B. Poetry.

1. I think she is saying that her life is like a prison. locked in all day long. With no light. ✓

2.
2.1 Personification.
2.2 It is effective because ~~[illegible]~~

Pg3

2.1 similie. ✓

2

2.2 It is effective because the word "like" is used. ~~the~~ ~~staying~~

0

3. He is a jealous man, always keeping an eye on his girl wife, an alcoholic and he most piobably likes to sleep.

2

4. The wife maybe do not want to devorce him because maybe she is a house-wife.

1

8/19

Section C.

1. To people who wants to open a bank account or to people who want to change to another bank. Some other banks whenever you want to move your debit order you have to pay, but standard bank does it for you.

1

2. A women who cannot do things for themselves always need help from men or other people. I think she feels down and out about it..?

1

6/7

3. It is easy to switch to a standard bank current account.

2

Section D.

1. The ~~women is~~ X

0

2 Women get parking tickets most of the time.

1

3. He was trying to say mom ahead he hesitated. X

0

Pg4

2. ~~In~~formal. Born loser X

0

1/7

SIMON 13/50 Grade 9A

14 June 2005

English June Exam.

A

1.1 (b) ✓
1.2 (d) ✓
1.3 (d) ✓
1.4 (e) X
1.5 (a) X

3

2.1 True X
2.2 False X
2.3 ~~Fa~~ True ✓
2.4 False X
2.5 True X

1

3 She didn't know that her mother was married of love and they don't use that way they have thier own way to get a marriage. X 0

4 He wanted her daughter to get married when he's ready for her to get married. X 0

5. They will give her a new name that they want to give her. X

5.2 A woman's duty is to love her husband and serve him, to worship him as her god. X

6 She had to worship her husband and to what the other wife are doing. X

7 I disagree, It's not a good right to abuse someone ✓

9 So she could be like her mother and find a good guy in the library. X

10 5/25

B

1 She has no freedom and enjoyment in her marriage ✓

2.1 Similie ✓

2.2 She compares her self with a swallow with wings c and broken, she doesn't have wings so...? ✓

3 He's a ~~jelous~~ jealous man ✓ he doesn't want her out and to talk to other people

4.5.4 10 He The man that she's with is not the person e thought is. X

5 C

1 It is aimed at ~~drivers~~ all people who don't do banking a Standard Bank, to try and make them use ~~the~~ Standard Bank. X

Pg 3

1) She's an electrician X 0

3 Standard Bank is an easy way of banking ✓ 2

2/6

D

1 Homicide Detail X 0

2 Heavy loaded in her hands X 0

3 Thats it ~~is not~~ said as one word joined together. X 0

4 Informal ✓ Homicide X 1

1/7

NASREEN 26½/50

Grade : 9A

Date : 14 June 2005

English

Question 1

1.1) e X

1.2) a X

1.3) a X

1.4) b X

1.5) c X

0

2.1) False ✓
2.2) True ✓
2.3) True ✓
2.4) False X
2.5) False ✓

4

3) Chandra is used to people getting married through their families telling them what to do and who to marry. ✓ 2

4) Chandra's Father taught Chandra that they should marry according to tradition, and so the doesn't want Chandra to marry out of tradition because he did. Do you think he knew? ✗

5.1) If her parents call her daughter, her children call her Mother, her husband call her 'my wife', everybody will advot to calling her Mother, daughter, my wife they will eventually forget her name having to have called her that for so long.

5.2) It suggests that a woman is not called by name but called by that person according to the kind of relationship she or he holds against her. X

5.3) She had to give up everything to look after him and her children. ✓ 2

6) No, A man does not have the right to hit a woman whether he is her Father or not, children have the right to have a say to what ever they fell is not right. ? /

7) Chandra is still young for marriage and she should marry a person she loves because marriage is not built. X C

8.1) To separate the word what to s, because whats is shortned for what is. ✓

8.2) To show possession. ✓

13½/25

Section B

1) She has a dark life whereby she has to do everything she is told and she does not have freedom to do and say what she wants. you should have referred to lines 1-4.

2.1 Metaphor, X

2.2 She compares describes her life as a wife like swift stuck with broken wings / no freedom ✓

3) Her husband is jealous of her, very strict and always watching her, he wants her to do what he wants. lazy, drinking 1

4) He is always watching her monitering her behaviour. ✓ 2

6½/19

Section C

1) It is aimed a people who have money and need to save it in a place. X 0

2) Women might feel tell angry as this suggests that women are not so good at many things like doing what men would rather do. 1

3) It suggests that Standard Bank is makes your life easier and helps you to handle your money ~~are~~ in a more simpler way. ✓ 2

3/6

Section D

1) ? 0

2) It makes it seems like women are stupid. ✓ 2

3) To separate ~~to~~ the two a's. X 0

4) Informal style, 'Gotta'. ✓ 2

4/7

13/50

Name: ERIC

grade 9th

Date: 14 June 2005.

English 4 June Exam

1.1. E X
1.2. A X
1.3. D ✓
1.4. C ✓
1.5. D X

2

2.1 /true X
2.2 /true ✓
2.3 /true ✓
2.4 true ✓
2.5 false ✓

4

3. It "Shock Chandra when her grandmother tells her that her mother married for love", because Chandra doesn't know things about love. X

0

4. "the reason why it because, her father is very strict?

0

5.1. the Womens name can be lost forgotten because, A women's first name is not used after she marries and has children. X

0

5.2. That women must teach they child about marries. X

0

6. her mother life after she married was a happeness. X

7. No, the daughters is Not Mothe it father child. ??

8. To complete her education so she could get a degree like her mother. X

9. it is only the Saund that make like it is different form the athers. X

10. It is including like to the all ~~methods~~ women who are mother's. X

7/25

Section B

1. It is a ~~good~~ life that is very poor, life that hworking hard to get some ~~toos~~ thing. life that very power less ✓

2. Simile ✓

2.2 She is compuring his life like the horse no a Salter?

3. No a very jalus ~~hap for~~ husband.

4. We know because she sayes "He keeps one eye open and watches me always." ✓

4.5/12

Pg3

"Section C"

1. No, cause you can see that the writing that is eye Cating is Standard Bank X 0

2. it is women who is very Sad and ~~dont~~ donit know ~~wther~~ what to do. there might go to Standard bank if they are Sad and the will be helped. X 0

0/6

3. if you want help go to ~~Sat~~ standard. X C

"Section D:"

12½/50

English Exam
June 2005

LEON
grade: 9A

Section A: Comprehension.

1.1 B ✓
1.2 D ✓
1.3 D ✓ 4
1.4 D. ✗
1.5 E. ✓

2.1 true ✗
2.2 true ✓
2.3 false ✗ 2
2.4 false ✗
2.5 false. ✓

3. Because they met by surprise she saw him in the library and fell in love with him. Chandra is shocked because her mother and father are not together no longer. ✗ 0

4. The grandmother says that because if the father knows that Chandra is getting married he won't want her to do it. ✗ 0

5a.) A woman's real prince can be forgotten if married but sometimes depends on the woman's husband's tradition it may change. ✗ 0

5.2) It suggest that a woman can still have her name. but depends on the society where she 0

4. because her husband watches he always he keeps one eye open even when sleeping her wings crushed and broken. ✗ 2

2½/10

Section C: Advertising

1. this ~~advertisement~~ ad advertisment is ~~aimed~~ aimed at people who want simple switching and ~~mainely~~ mainely to older people who got bank accounts 1

2. they are useing a sad lady ✗ 0

3. the words are telling you that when you uses standard bank's every thing gets better and simple. 1

2/6

Section D: Cartoon.

1. Watch, Where. ✗ 0

2. the officer is always gives the ~~toys~~ to woman parking tickets. 1

3. they are separating it some it would be long like 'Mi Mja' ✗ 0

4. I think this cartoon is in interval because on frame 2 the officer says 'Mia Mia' ✗ 1

2/4

6. Her mother's life changed when she got married she couldn't do the things she did before her husband always there to watch her. like what? Be specific

7. I don't agree with her because if her father is abusive she must go to tell someone? her my be also touching her places were he must not touch. ✗

8. So that her grandmother insisted that she must go do school because she must get an A* degree and be come something one day. ✗

9a.i). there whats a apostrophe because she asking her ~~wants~~ her mother's name she want to find

6/25 9a.2. because she wants to know her mother's name. you need to read and follows instructions more carefully, leroy.

Section B: Poetry

1. The wife have a hard life her husband always watch her lives like anytime when she's not and no sun to warms when she's cold. Confused answer.

2.2) ? You need to learn the figures of speech.

2.2. ?

3. her husband is like abusive someone always ~~a loss always~~ Controling her live. ✗ Refer to lines 9-11!

Initial Meeting with the principal of Sherwood High School – 27 October 2004

Today I met with the principal of [redacted], [redacted], in order to discuss the research project I want to undertake there with her. She was very welcoming and had her deputy, [redacted] and the HOD of English, [redacted] present with her. She was positive about the research and happy to allow me to do it in her school. She indicated that gender was a problem, but one that tended not to be in the forefront of her concerns as there were more pressing and immediate concerns to be addressed. However, there were problems with learners falling pregnant as well as gender abuse in the homes.

The English HOD indicated that she noticed that the boys took the lead in her grade 11 classroom, debating and discussing issues, while the girls tended to contribute very little. She said it seemed that they were happy to sit back and accept the superiority of the male learners. She then seemed to back pedal a bit, saying that at the same time the boys were quite protective of the girls, and even herself at times. She said that once the learners had reached grades 11 and 12 they were more mature. However, the younger learners seemed still to be coming to terms with their sexuality and that the intervention was needed in grade 9.

They told me that there would be no point meeting with the grade 9 English teachers as they would not be there the following year. The school was in the process of interviewing to fill this post. They hoped to have an experienced teacher accept this post as grade 9 tended to be a difficult group. They had therefore shortlisted only experienced teachers.

It has been arranged that I will contact [redacted] at the end of the term and she will give the name and contact details of the new teacher.

FIELD OBSERVATION NOTES

First Term - 19 January – 24 March

3 February – Thursday
An interesting incident took place today. Before the class can come into the classroom they have to line up against the wall in two parallel lines – one line boys and the other girls. The girls are closest to the wall and when all the learners are quiet they lead in, the girls going in first and boys following.

While the class was lining up outside the classroom waiting to lead in a very tall, self-assured (cheeky!) boy in the 9A class put his arm around one of the girls and then put his hand on her breast and squeezed it. This was done in front of me and the teacher. It was a blatant exhibition of sexual harassment. Fortunately Denise Foster saw it. She pulled him out of the line and told him to apologise. Eventually she had to force him to do so. She said that she was going to take him to the principal when the lesson was over. The victim, a quiet girl called Norma, refused to accept his apology and initially expressed her desire that he be sent to the principal. However, at the end of the lesson she came up to the front and asked if we could "leave it this time". As she had to move on to the next lesson I was unable to ask why she had changed her mind. The boy, on the other hand, spent the lesson sulking and refused to participate or do any of the work set. Anyway, he was not sent to the principal so he escaped unpunished.

I started talking about diaries today and introduced the passage from Bridget Jones Diary. I was surprised that not one of the class had seen the film, as it was quite popular and the second one had been shown at Christmas. I started with some pre-reading discussion about diaries and diary entries and moved on to talk about relationships. The boys think keeping a diary is a 'girl thing' and something that boys don't do. I asked them why they thought this but was met only with laughter. The girls aid nothing. The class were also confused about the distinction between an autobiography, biography and a diary. However, at that point I came up against some poor behaviour from the boys in the class. They became silly and there was no point in continuing the whole class discussion.

I then asked the class to read the passage from Bridget Jones Diary silently. This progressed very slowly. It is clear that few of the class are readers. Even though the passage was not very long it seemed to take ages for most of them to complete reading the passage, and some did not finish it at all. Some learners used their rulers to keep their place and follow down the lines with it, others followed the words slowly a word at a time using a finger, still others were vocalizing (and annoying their neighbours as they painfully whispered the words), and others were sub-vocalizing. One or two made no attempt to read the passage and spent the time looking around or out of the window. After the majority appeared to have finished reading I asked for a volunteer to read the passage out aloud. No one would do. In the end I read the passage out aloud to them and they listened. I tried to start a class discussion but failed because none of the learners would engage. The bell rang ending the lesson soon afterwards.

They are so reluctant to engage in any kind of coherent discussion. It either turns into unruly calling out or they say nothing. Tomorrow I will give them the Bridget Jones comprehension to do in class. This will be for their portfolio so maybe I will get a chance to see what standard they are. So far my observations suggest they are weak readers.

4th February – Friday
Today they were required to answer the Bridget Jones Diary comprehension. This is a task which will be assessed (by me) and will form part of their continuous assessment mark for the year with the completed task going into their portfolio. It is a typical February afternoon, hot and humid, also the last lesson of the day and the week.

Overall it did not go well. They were given paper to write on but many had failed to bring the material which was handed out yesterday, with them to class. New sheets were distributed. However, despite my urging them to re-read the passage and think before they wrote down their answers, few of them bothered to do this and the majority launched straight into writing their answers to the questions. Few seemed to refer back to the passage from help answering questions and many finished before the time was up. Unfortunately I was not prepared for this and had no additional work to give the early finishers. There were some tricky moments and discipline was not easy to maintain.

One boy, Ken, did nothing the entire period. He claimed that he was being disturbed by members of his group, but according to them, he was the one doing the disturbing. According to one of the group members who spoke to me after the lessons he was making racist comments to and about the black learners in his group (he is coloured). Anyway, he did nothing the entire period. He seemed unable or unwilling to even attempt to answer the questions or read the passage. When I tried to force him to read the passage by standing over him, he just looked down fixedly at it but there was no sign that he was trying to read it. At the end of the 45 minute period he had only written his name on the top of his paper. I wonder if he can read?

As they finished I took in their papers. I will mark them this weekend.

Comments on marked comprehension
The answers are very poor. There were many – the vast majority – who failed. One learner got 0, another got 1 and there were many 2, 4, 5 and 6 out of 20 marks. It is clear that they did not bother to read the passage and simply wrote down anything. Most failed to use full sentences. It is clear that the literal questions are easier for them to cope with because they just lifted a sentence or two from the passage. In response to questions which called for interpretation or evaluation the answers were poor or simply not tackled at all. Some of them did not seem able to express their own opinions while others did not seem to be able to supply reasons for their opinions or thoughts. A number answered just 'Yes' or 'No' and failed to justify their answers. All in all a very disappointing pile of paper which were depressing to mark.

I will provide them with a list of guidelines to follow when answering a comprehension and hope that they will be better next time.

7th February – Monday
This morning I handed back the Bridget Jones comprehensions as well as a note on how to approach answering a comprehension passage. I went through each point one by one and related it to the comprehension they had just done on Bridget Jones Diary. I explained that it is important to read the passage and the questions a number of times, before starting to answer the questions. I told them that they would get a chance to do another comprehension so they could put into practice the method of answering comprehensions that we had just discussed.

We then turned to the Anne Frank passage, and I started by reading the short preamble about the family and why they went into hiding. I also told them what happened to her and how her diary came to be published after the war. I them posed the pre-reading questions which I had planned. Anne Frank was then about the same age as these learners – How would they like to be confined in a small space with so many people? What may cause problems between them? What sort of hardships do people experience during war time? How might these have been worse living in hiding in this way? If you were going into hiding, what things would you want to take with you? What would you do all day, if you were confined to a small space? How would you feel, living with the threat of discovery hanging over you? The learners responded fairly well to some of the questions and were able to give some ideas, but the discussion was cut short because some of the learners became silly. This is a problem with oral work – either they don't say anything, or they all talk at once and become noisy.

They started silently reading the passage taken from The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank. However, I noticed the same behaviour as I did when they were reading the Bridget Jones passage. While some got on with the task, some seemed unable to read silently. About half a dozen of them were vocalizing and sub-vocalizing, repeating each word as they slowly went through the passage. Some others were following the words with their rulers; many used their fingers to point to each word as they went along the lines while others just seemed to stare at the paper. Two closed their eyes and pretended to go to sleep – one being Ken, the same boy who did not read or submit the comprehension last week. I am beginning to wonder if he really can't read – is illiterate. He definitely has a concentration problem as he seems to be unable to focus on anything.

Again no one would read the passage aloud, even when I allocated the task. This resulted in a howl of protest. So in order to save time I started reading the passage to them. The bell rang before I could finish reading the passage aloud to them. They are to complete reading the passage and, using the method I gave them today, to complete the comprehension for homework. I will take them in and mark them and hope there will be an improvement.

10th February – Thursday
I have marked the Anne Frank comprehension. Not very many had done the task, as it was set for homework, and many of them just don't do homework. (I can see the reason why Mrs Foster likes them to do all their portfolio assignments during class!) Still they achieved poor results. I went through the comprehension carefully with them in class and we did the corrections together on the chalkboard. This is just SO time-consuming, but it has to be done as they need to learn how to approach comprehension passages independently. They will meet this kind of task in their CTA at the end of the year and right up to matric.

We are moving SO slowly through the material. The diary handouts look set to take 2 weeks to complete. I expected that they would take half that time. I need to get busy on the gender material, but the teacher wanted the romance theme to coincide with Valentines Day, and it has now been planned, so I can't abandon it now. The learners write exams in a month and the second term has less than 8 teaching weeks, with all the public holidays, before the half year examinations. These learners need to be taught basic language skills, but what with only 4 periods a week, the number of assessment tasks required for the portfolio, the chunks taken out of teaching time at the end of each term for examinations and control tests, there seems to be little time available for actual teaching… sorry, in the parlance of Curriculum 2005 – facilitating! The reality on the ground is that as appealing as Curriculum 2005 sounds in the documents, it is really difficult to practice in the classroom!

14th February – Monday
… One of the boys was irritating one of the girls by hitting her ponytail with a ruler. She kept asking him to stop and eventually I had to intervene. What was interesting was his attitude towards her. He sniggered and laughed and took no notice of her polite requests that he stop. He chose a particularly quiet and physically small girl to harass (Farida). Some of

the girls would have got cross and challenged him – she didn't. One could see that he felt powerful and that she was powerless to stop him.
The learners were thrilled with the heart-shaped chocolates!

17th February – Thursday
……. During break I observed a physical altercation between a boys and a girl. He seemed to have grasped her by the wrist and she was trying to bite his hand in order to force him to let go. Mrs Foster was with me and she called out of the window and he let her go and they stopped, but I do wonder what would have happened if she had not.

18th February - Friday
….. The lesson began with the pre-reading discussion questions on 'The Winner'. I really battled to get the learners to respond to questions. Then they had to read the story silently. Same problems were experienced with the silent reading as with the comprehension: very slow, and many of them making no attempt to read, some looking out of the window, others, staring at the page. The lesson was shortened and the learners were restless. None of them managed to finish the story. The weather was extremely hot and humid – not conducive for learning. The last lesson of the day on a Friday seems to often be a problem…

21st February - Monday
….. Continued with the story, 'The Winner', but found the class restless and rather unco-operative. I started by getting them to read the story aloud, going one by one and forcing them to read. Their oral reading is poor. Most of them are very hesitant oral readers and lack fluency. As it was killing the story for them, I took over and read the story to them but many were not following the reading in their books. They have a very short attention span. I completed reading the story to them then set them 10 questions to answer, but it is so difficult when they don't have their own books. Their reading is weak and this affects discipline, concentration, and their entire academic performance.

23rd February - Wednesday
I came in to video-tape the Grade 9A plays. These had been prepared in groups and are part of their Arts and Culture assessment. For the most part, they weren't very good. What struck me, however, was how their plays seem to mirror their lives. There was quite a lot of domestic violence portrayed as well as crime, bag snatchers, gangsters and other criminals. Also, social problems like teenage peer pressure, drinking, smoking, taking drugs and boys. One of the plays portrayed a father physically abusing his wife and daughter. It was very realistic and could easily have arisen out of personal experience. Out of the presentations, one can see a picture of their lives emerging…

10th March – Thursday
… What is clear is that they are not used to giving their own ideas. It seems that they feel most comfortable simply regurgitating what they have been told. They don't have any confidence either in their opinions or in how I will respond to these opinions.

It would seem that despite all the grand hopes expressed in OBE creating critical thinking learners, this is not happening. They are simply not used to engaging with activities and critically **thinking** about them. I have given them the next worksheet to complete at home and will go through it with them when I take in their books on Friday.

ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE – MARCH CONTROL TEST

MARKER'S REPORT – GRADE 9A

The test paper was fair and of the required level for this grade. The comprehension passage was not difficult and the learners should have been able to identify with the content. The class have done three comprehensions during the term, all of which have been assessed. Furthermore, they have been given notes which outline explicitly how they should approach a comprehension passage. They have also done two poetry analyses which were formally assessed and been taught figures of speech and how to approach them when analysing poetry.

However, despite all the above, the responses to this paper were disappointing. It is clear that many of the learners find reading difficult. They do not read the passage enough times, nor are they able to contextualize the content. Questions which deal with literal comprehension are in many cases responded to by copying sections from the passage (often with spelling and language errors despite the fact that they are copying!). Questions which require contextualisation i.e. reading behind the line, are poorly done although these have the potential to gain them the most marks as they require them to give their own personal responses. The questions on language usage were particularly disappointing as the learners have been taught punctuation this term. They were unable to explain why or where an apostrophe should be used in a contraction although they could supply the extended form of the word, they also confused the hyphen with the dash and could not explain its use

in the word 'self-respect'. Many replaced the informal language in the sentence with other forms of informal language e.g. "Are you mad?' and 'Are you out of your mind?' although all recognised that 'bucks' was slang.

Many of the comments made about the responses to the prose passage apply to the responses to the poem. The poem, *Shanty Town*, is particularly suitable and all the learners should have been able to visualise the scenes described in the poem – they see them daily as they pass through area like Cato Crest and Kennedy Road Squatter camps which are quite close to the school. Again, it is their poor reading that has let them down and their inability to contextualise what they are reading. However, in addition it would seem that few of them troubled to revise their notes on Figures of Speech prior to this test and therefore failed to identify the sustained personification in the 2nd stanza.

Second term – 4 April – 24 June.

5th April - Tuesday
Very short lesson today – probably less that 25 minutes. The bell went 15 minutes late for the first lesson. I so hate missing even a second of teaching time because there seems to be so little of it!

I started by giving them the gender questionnaire – it is the first task on the theme gender roles and just looks at occupations and gender. Not as indepth as the big questionnaire, but enough to raise their schemata and prepare their thinking for what is to come. After they had done it, I gave them the rest of the teaching material for this section – the two readings, 'My Mother's Life' and the 'Facts: Women, Work and Education'. I asked them to read the first one entitled 'My Mother's Life' silently. This is obviously a difficult task for many of them, but I refuse to give it up and just read the passage out to them. They have to try to cope on their own. Many have such a short concentration span reading even a short passage is a problem. Four or five of them thought they could better use the time trimming the notes and sticking them into their books. When I walked past Nigel he had the reading upside down and was just gazing at it – he could not possibly have been making any attempt to read it. Norma and Neil also had problems focusing on the reading. She kept raising her head and looking out of the window, while he appeared to find it difficult to maintain any eye contact with the actual reading. I did suggest that they follow the words with their fingers or a ruler, or a pencil and that that would help them to follow the words on the page. The class had not completed the reading when the bell rang. This is just so time-consuming as many read more slowly than they speak!

Poor reading is a huge concern of mine and they simply can't be performing optimally in any subject as it seems their reading is so weak! This is confirmed by their poor performance in comprehension questions, and in the March examination. Many of them depend on the whole class reading that seem to be the norm here. Only then are they able to discuss the issues. They are never going to be able to really progress unless this issue is addressed. A further concern is their very limited vocabulary and the fact that few own a dictionary and most don't know how to use one. Also, resorting to a dictionary is the only strategy that have at their disposal.

Another big issue is that the continuity of the lesson, which has been designed to be a series of activities has been broke. Thursday is Sports Day so no lessons, Friday there is something else happening and the lesson after lunch has been cancelled (mine, English) so next time I will see them is Monday. By then they will have forgotten what they read today – 6 days is a long time in a learners life – so I am going to have to start all over again, I suppose!

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11 April – Monday
I started the lesson on 'My Mother's Life' again. As I thought, most had forgotten what they had read a week ago! So we went through the reading step by step. I told them that I had written this and this was the story of my own mother's life and I wanted them to think of their mother's life. When all the background is provided they ARE able to discuss a topic and this happened today.

It turns out that ALL their mother's work and play roles are similar to those in the reading – but this was conceded only after much discussion. Initially they tried to persuade me that mothers and fathers don't play different roles in the household. However, later in the discussion it became clear that there is a division of roles in their households. The boys conclude that this is because women have to bear the children – and I suppose there is some merit in that point. An interesting interaction took place over the issue of teenage pregnancy. Mike, one of the boys, said that he thought the reason girls fell pregnant was because they could them get the child grant. This was denied by Elsie who said that R180 a month was hardly enough to keep a child and for such a little money, it was not worth it. This was supported by Joyce who said that no girl would deliberately fall pregnant for the grant. What is interesting is that most of the girls said nothing during this discussion and the loudest and most vociferous were the boys even though I tried to include them by asking for their contributions.

The issue of a female president was raised but the boys totally reject this notion. Sam made the point that in African culture this would not happen: "It's our culture, Miss, our culture… the ladies… they can't be president… it's our culture". When I pressed for a more valid reason than culture, a response was not forthcoming.

After the lesson I gave them homework which required them to interview their mothers and find out something about their lives, in preparation for the essay and the compare/contrast paragraphs I am going to do with them.

All in all this reading generated a lot of discussion, but because of their enthusiasm it was difficult to control. A lot of shouting out and a lot of noise, but focused on the issues.

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13 April –Wednesday
After this I moved on to discuss the reading 'Facts: Women, Work and Education' and it proved to be a difficult discussion. The rationale behind setting this reading was to put the life of their own mothers against the facts presented in the reading and compare and contrast the two. Also, the two are written in different registers and styles and it was hoped to draw their attention to this. However, in contrast to the discussion on Monday, this one was very heavy going! I felt as if I was dragging information out of them. They weren't badly behaved in general – just uncommunicative, particularly the boys, who just seemed to withdraw from the discussion. At times they showed their disagreement with the statements made in the reading. One of them was when the reading stated that women work much harder than men. And the other was when the issue of women/girls having the responsibility for looking after the children/babies. They tried to argue that men do take responsibility for their children, but clearly this is not the case when thinking back on yesterday's discussion. Many of them come from households where there is no male present, which makes this observation interesting. Again, the girls were quite and unwilling to say much. This is problematic as for once they had a chance because the boys contributed so little!

MARKER'S REPORT: JUNE EXAMINATIONS GROUP 9A

Overall the results were as expected and in most cases they correspond with the term assessment mark achieved by the learners. In many cases the answers were poor or simply not tackled at all. What is clear, is that those who did not achieve in this paper did so for the following reasons:

- Poor reading ability.

  Many of the weaker learners did not read either the passages or the questions efficiently. In many cases they failed to answer the question asked, even when the question was at the basic, literal level. This was particularly obvious in the multiple-choice section of the comprehension.

- The perception that English is not a learning subject.

  Basic questions asking for the naming of obvious figures of speech were often answered incorrectly. The learners all have notes on these and they have frequently been alluded to in poetry lessons and tests yet there are still a number of them who are unable to identify a simile. The same goes for punctuation such as the apostrophe, where detailed notes have been given, and terms such as ambiguity, stereotyping, target audience etc.

- The inability to express their thoughts coherently on paper.

  Poor writing ability lost many learners marks. Learners who are fairly articulate when speaking simply cannot write a grammatical, understandable sentence. Extreme examples of this can be seen in the responses of Dillon and Sam, although there are many others who have similar problems. While this problem persists it is unlikely that they will able to improve their results.

Some learners achieved exceptional marks on this paper. Patti got 84%, followed by Joyce and David with 69% and Carol with 65%.

Transcription of Lesson: Facts: Women, Education and Work (13/04/05)

Teacher: I want you to turn over the page… We.. er…we're going to have a look at what we read yesterday…and … and… now these facts …these facts… Let's start by asking, what is a fact?

Learners: *(No response)*

Teacher: OK. What is an opinion? *(pause)* Come on… *(Pause)* Someone must have an answer…

Learner: *(Pause. Inaudible response)*

Teacher: Alright. So it is something that somebody thinks. So then that's an opinion… What is a fact? (*pause)* Is a fact and an opinion the same thing?

Learners: No *(chorused)*

Teacher: No. OK then. If an opinion is what someone thinks, then what is a fact? (*Pause. No response*)

Teacher: OK let's look at it in another way. Is an opinion always correct? *(Pause)* OK. Let me give you an example. If I say to you Isidingo is the best soap opera in the world is that fact or opinion? Does everyone think the same?

Learners: (*Inaudible*)

Teacher: Yes, yes – it's my opinion… it's what I think. But if I say to you… er.. er… the earth is a planet, is that just what I think, or is it true?

Learners: True (*Chorused)*

Teacher: So when something is true it is a fact. So these facts here… are facts that… are true, not only of here or Africa but of the whole world and as I just said a fact is something that can be… proved and is true because it comes from research, it's not just what someone thinks… Do you think that facts are used to influence us?

(buzz of talking in background)

Teacher: Come on… So now let's look at it. Read the first fact … *(Pause)* Ok, Now the first point says that "In societies where illiteracy is common, most of the illiterate people are female. Two out of every three women in Africa, and one out of every three women in Asia, are illiterate" *(Reads first bullet point on worksheet.)* So what does it mean to be illiterate?

Learner: (*Inaudible response – followed by laughter)*

Teacher: Don't laugh. At least she tried… So what is illiteracy?

Learner: You can't read or write (*Spoken quietly and just audible*)

Teacher: OK… so illiteracy is not being able to read and write… Now… now…(*laughter and inaudible talking in the background)* Now…

Learning how to read and write is actually a relatively new thing. A hundred years ago few people across the world went to school and literacy was not essential… also, not something that everyone was always able to do… Think of your grandparents? I'm sure some of them couldn't read or write. But because of progress we all need to read and write these days. It's become more important, because of progress. In fact it is essential to getting on in life today.

Teacher: So today it says two out of every three women in Africa and one out of every three in Asia can't read or write. So two out of three on this continent cannot read and write. What are the consequences if one cannot read and write?

Learner: *(Inaudible)*

Teacher: Yes, and that is a very sad fact… because if people cannot read and write there are consequences. Ok, what does it mean when I talk about the word consequences? Do you know what this means? (*Pause)* Anyone want to try? (*Pause*) Well, consequences mean that something results from that… It means things flow from that… *(Pause)*

Ok. Let's move on… the next point says that "Illiteracy is higher among women in rural areas and societies' dependent upon agriculture than it is in industrial, urban societies". So what does rural mean? *(Pause)* Rural means country… they live in the countryside rather than in the cities. If you don't know the meaning please write it in on your piece of paper. Rural means country. And it says here they are dependent on agriculture, what sort of people are dependent on agriculture? *(Pause)* What do they do? *(Pause)* They work in the fields. So who work in the fields? *(Pause)* Come on… People who are farm workers… they tend to be illiterate. Can anyone tell me why? *(Pause)* Why?...

Learner: *(Inaudible comment/response)*

… Whereas people who live in the towns tend to be literate, I mean if you are a factory worker you need to be literate because you need to be able to read instructions and things.

"Women who are educated have fewer children than poorly educated and illiterate women. Lower infant mortality rates are reported in societies that provide women with literacy and

education." So women who cannot read and write tend to have larger families. And larger families are problematic. Why? *(Buzz in the background)* Why is it difficult if you are really poor and you have a large family? *(Hum of talking but no bid to answer)* Put your hands up if you know the answer. Come on… Yes. Why is this? Ok. What do you think?

Learner: *(Inaudible answer)*

Teacher: Didn't you put your hand up? Well… why did you put your hand up? You need to keep your hand down if you are not going to answer the question. (*laughter in the background*) Gentlemen, gentlemen.There are two gentlemen in the back group who are sleeping and wasting their time. Wake up. *(Laughter)* Would one of you like to try? *(Laughter)* You're going to have a task to do at the end of this…

Learner: *(Inaudible response. Long pause and laughter in background)*

Teacher: Yes, you would have to buy more food, and you would have to share the food between more people and maybe it won't go around… Ok… Let's move on.*(Reads bullet)* "Women who are educated have fewer children than poorly educated and illiterate women. Lower infant mortality rates are reported in societies that provide women with literacy and education". Firstly women who can read and write have fewer children. Why do you think this is the case? *(Long pause.)*

Teacher: And lower infant mortality rate… what does this mean? What does mortality mean? *(Pause)* What does mortality mean?

Learner: I think it means power. *(laughter)*

Teacher: No… No, it means… Don't laugh at least she was prepared to try… It means death… and in this case infants – small children… babies… that more babies die. Why do you think there is a greater infant mortality? (*Pause)* Well, in rural areas the children get ill … there's nowhere close to go for help … so in rural areas among illiterate women more babies die. What would the situation be like in a rural area if your baby got sick? How do you think it would be? What would you do if you couldn't read or write and there was no clinic or hospital close by? *(Humm of noise and inaudible talking)*

Teacher: Stop being silly. You gentlemen over there… Stop behaving like children, if you continue like this. I will treat you like children. Sit up and listen. There are tasks to be done with this reading… Sit up and fold your arms…Think about what we are reading…

Teacher: So why is it really difficult if you are illiterate and your baby is sick? Well, getting to a hospital would take time and money and you may need to read directions and so on to get there. Also you couldn't just look up the symptoms in a book yourself.

Learners: (*Hum of inaudible talking in background)*

Teacher: Ok. Now that's enough you boys. This is not funny. Why are you talking among yourselves? Didn't you put your hand up? Stop now. Put your hands up and let everyone hear your comments. This is meant to be a discussion.
(Silence)

Teacher: Ok. Let's continue. "Government sponsored literacy programmes promote literacy as a way of making women better mothers and household managers rather than more independent and involved citizens". Why would governments sponsor literacy programmes? Government sponsored literacy programmes… What would they do? What would they do this for? Put your hands up and answer. *(Pause)*
Come on, think… Why would government want to make rural women literate?

Learner: *(inaudible reply)*

Teacher: Yes. So they can look after their families better. But do they really empower them? … When they teach them to read an write what kind of material do they give them?... They give them material… they give them things like recipes, how to keep your house neat and tidy, reading around things like cooking, how to provide proper nutrition to your family. Some of the literacy material I've seem involves recipes, how to grow things and that sort of thing… They don't provide material that empower women… make them more powerful than they are… that give women a wider knowledge of life, of things like politics… They don't try to empower them… make them more powerful. They want them to stay in their domestic roles.
Ok. Let's look at the next one… "In most societies women are considered to be inferior and subordinate to men in areas of work and activities". What does inferior mean? What does inferior mean?
It means beneath, under, below and … and subordinate? Subordinate means almost the same thing – basically that women are below men in status. This is not specific to our country but do you think South Africa is any different?
Hey, you boys… Put your hands up and share with us all.

Learners: *(Pause. The boys do not respond)*

Teacher: "The international labour organization says that women do two thirds of the work in the world". How do you think this is? Can you explain why women do two-thirds of the work in the world? How is this? How is it that women do two thirds of the worlds work?

Learner: (*Inaudible)*

Teacher: Don't shout out. Put your hand up.

Learner: *(Inaudible)*

Teacher: They go out to work and when they get home they have to prepare dinner they have to look after the children, they have to see that the house is clean. They get up early, they make the breakfast, see their children off to school before they go off to work. That way they do much more work than men who come home from work and settle down and sit down in front of the television, read the newspaper or do something that does not involve housework or cooking. I know many of you help your mothers with cooking but the responsibility for the cooking, buying the food and cleaning rests with the woman or mother in the household.

(Pause)

Teacher: "Figures reveal that girls graduate from high school behind boys in mathematics and science". And again that is the case even here in KZN. Many more boys take maths and science than girls even in KZN. Any idea why? *(Pause)* Why? *(Pause)* Well many of the boys schools around here make maths compulsory. All the boys at the school has to do both of them Why? If they want to do engineering or medicine if they want to do accountancy or a B Comm they have to have Maths and science to study them at university. Girls tend to take other subjects like art, home economics, subjects like that… The truth of the matter is that if you go to look at engineering at the university on campus you will see loads and loads of young men and very few girls. Few girls choose to do these sorts of things. Also most of the girls are in chemical engineering. Girls go for different careers. Do you agree with this?*(Pause)* Do you think I'm right? Do you think this is how it should be? *(Pause)* Think about it! (*Longer pause then moves on to the next bullet point)*

"Recent studies have shown that classroom teachers tend to pay more attention to boys than they do to girls" … and that is true. Boys get more attention in class because they talk more than girls. *(Buzz of talking in the background)* It's true. There's lots of research to prove that it is true. Why do you think they do this? Think… Who has talked the most in this lesson? *(Pause)* Me! Why? Why have I talked the most? What do I have that you don't?

Learners: You're the teacher.

Teacher: Yes, that right… And in this classroom what do I have? Power. I have the power… So what does this mean about boys? Think… think…

(Pause)

"Sexual harassment in schools is on the increase, as is the rate of teenage child-bearing". Sexual harassment… What does this mean? Come have a try… *(Pause)* It is when girls are being bothered by boys in a sexual way. I know that has probably happened to some of you at school… And the issue of pregnancy… It is interesting because there has never been an easier time not to fall pregnant because there are lots of birth control methods freely available and yet the figures of teenage pregnancy are very high here in KZN. Having a baby makes it much more difficult to continue your studies because who has the responsibility for the baby when it is born? *(Pause)* Is it the father? *(pause)* When the baby is born the father just melts away

Learners: (*Inaudible comment followed by a buzz of voices*)

Teacher: It is all very well. But the reality of the situation is that you may have the intention to look after the baby, and maybe you as an individual would take care of your baby but most schoolboys and young men do not.

(loud hubbub. Boys shouting out "No" while girls clearly agree with the statement) The majority of schoolboys do not take care of the child – the girl does it! *(Loud hub-bub)* Ok, Ok… Let's move on… "The single greatest source of injury to women is wife beating". In South Africa a woman is murdered by her partner every 6 hours. When you watch or read the news hardly a day goes by when some husband does not murder his wife or boyfriends murder their girlfriends…

Bell Rings.

Please I want you to finish reading this for homework and to think about it. We have some tasks to do with it tomorrow.

Lesson ends.

Transcription of group discussion:. Poetry: A Woman is not a potted plant (13/05/05)

Group A: Milly, Norma, Sam, Eric, Sipho, Mavis (3 girls, 3 boys)

Group Leader: Norma (Girl)

Norma: The first question is, list everything you know about plants, how they are cultivated how they grow, what they look like, where they are found, how they are looked after, what function they perform in our lives etc. Can we have your opinion? OK. You can all have your opinion. We will, we will be proud to hear from you.

Sam: Sangoma, sangoma, sangoma (*in a sing song voice in the background*)

Sipho: OK, let me tell you… they say here this… all the plants… all the plants know… What is important about plants?

Norma: A pot plant is a plant that is put in like a bath or tub. You put it by the window and you give it water, you put it in shade, and it will grow…

Eric: No, die…

Sam: *(together)* It'll die in.. in shade, it'll die in the shade…

Sipho: In the house the plants…

Eric: Inside the house and …er…

Sipho: …and the plants… you know it follows mostly like … it follows like what you call… the fairies … and as they say here in the poem… a woman… a woman is not a potted plant… that's follows…

Norma Mavis, we would like to have your opinion here please…

Mavis Mmm… you have to like water it twice a week and you have to take it into the sun if it is in shade.

Norma OK. OK. Let's go to question 2. Consider all you wrote down about potted plants. If a woman were a potted plant what would she be like? How would she be treated? Who would treat her this way?

Mavis Her husband…

(Boys interrupt. Inaudible comments)

Norma Now come on … people… people…

Obviously … people …

Sipho: Like a mother to me *(inaudible)* I treat a plant like a… mother, because a plant it, it like a special thing in the house …

Norma: Mmm humm…

Sam: One of the precious things in our house… it's precious like gold…

(inaudible)

Sipho: Now a plant, it is a special thing to have in your house, see?

Norma: So… Pot plants.. pot plants would be treated very nice… very well… because people look after their pot plants.

Mavis: You've got a lot of pot plants by your house.

Norma: How would you treat a pot plant if it was a woman?

(singing and background laughter)

Eric: When you treat a woman as a plant…*(laughter of a boy in the background)* as a plant you need to feed it, water it, you need to feed it, manure it, take care of it, manure it …

Sam: Question 3 Consider the title of the poem. Read it out aloud. Which word or words do we impressise… (*hesitates unable to pronounce the word)* when we say it..

Sipho: Emphasise, emphasise …

Sam: …emphasise when we say it out aloud? What tone does this give the title?

Sipho: *(Laughter)* It gives the title an effect that it comes alive. A human being from a plant… It come alive…

Milly: Trying to compare… *(interrupted)*

Eric: Comparing a human being from a plant. I think I know … Personification

Sipho: Personification. Comparing with the other … Giving a plant a life

Sam: Let's do another one ….

Eric: Which means the title is right. They mean that a potted… potted… potted …*(Pause)* So what is a potted plant?

Sam: Which means this title means a woman … a woman deserves to be treated like a plant … deserves to be treated like a plant. You see she deserves to be treated like these plants. You know why? You know why?

(inaudible answer and talking in the background)

Sam: You know why? You know why? Dignity…Dignity

Norma: Come on…

Sam: And there is a reason why we treat you like that…

Sipho: It is the reason we treat a woman like that?

Norma: What is the reason?

Sipho: A woman… a woman - come closer *(soft, intimate tone of voice)*, come closer - is soft and gentle that is why she deserves to be treated like a plant because when you treat a plant…

Milly: A plant may die. It may lose its nourishment and she doesn't become…

Sam And she doesn't become… doesn't become… *(inaudible talking in background)*

Norma: Listen, listen, Please continue Milly..

Sam: Lets …

Norma: Milly, Milly can we have your comments please. You keep on laughing there…

(Rebuke followed by inaudible reponse)

Norma: Milly we listening now. Can we please have your opinion please? *(inaudible)* Milly you're not talking. Please say something…

Mavis? Come on… *(noise - inaudible answer*)

Sam: See here OK. Let's go to question 4. Why do you think the poet refer to a woman and not women, which is the plural noun, throughout the poem?

Eric: The plural noun is … you see…plural noun… when the woman… woman .. because of the woman *(laughter)* Its potted plants… what is the plural noun?

Sipho: You making a mistake…

Shhh *(from someone in group)*

Do you know the answer? We know what is the plural noun.

Norma: Milly may we please have your opinion about this.

(Inaudible reponse) and Mavis? What do you think?

Mavis: Isn't a woman as one woman, you're talking about one person?
Sam: Look carefully at the sentence of the poem *(laughter)* Why do you think the poet choose not to use capital letters and punctuation …
Eric: The poet chose not to use those things so the children can understand what it is about.
Sipho: We must have punctuation like simple vocab…
Sam: Exactly. Exactly. OK.
Eric: Exactly, exactly.
Norma: Milly, will you please give your second opinion about this number 5. May we just have your opinions about this? *(no answer)*
Mavis may we just have your opinion on this…
Mavis: No comment.
Norma: OK. We moving on to the next sentence
(inaudible – lots of laughter)
Norma: The second stanza line 8. The lines …
(Laughter and inaudible comments)
You know what I think…
Sipho: The structure of a woman's body the curves in her body trim… like a… I can't understand these words trimbled … trimbled …
Norma: No, the word is trimmed… trimmed…
Sipho: … see the body of a plant is structured like a woman's body … which means they trim the plant …
Sam: No, no, the plant is already trimmed.
Eric: Ohh… It's a natural resource.
Sam: It means the structure of a woman's body. The body of a plant is structured like an… a woman's body
Sipho: I can't understand these words… trimbled… trimbled..
Sam: Which means they trim the plant…
Sipho: No it's a natural resource…
Eric: You see I keep a plant as a pet because I don't have any cat, rats, dogs or anything… I prefer blondes *(Laughter)*
Sipho: I prefer a plant… it's my baby because remember it gives us oxygen… oxygen…
Norma: We left the point…
Sipho: You see oxygen…
Norma: OK, boys. That's enough…
Sipho: They say… they say… they say..
Norma: Number 8. What is the main point the poet is making? Right?
Norma: Sam may I please have your opinion…
Sam: The poet… the poet…The plant is shaped like a body, a woman's body…

TAPE ENDS

Group B discussion on poem: 'A woman is not a potted plant'.
Group members: Patti, Neil, Nigel, Tatum, Natasha and Dawn (4 girls, 2 boys)
Group Leader: Patti (Girl)

Patti: First question: What do you know about potted plants? For example, how they are cultivated, what they look like and where they are found, how they are looked after and what function they have in our lives etc. Ok.
(Inaudible. Handing around of tape recorder)
Dawn: Potted plants, they need to be watered every morning.
Neil: Yeah, watered every morning, and they need to be by the sun.
Dawn: And they shouldn't be over watered because they could die.
Tatum: It can't be the type of plant that is too big and can't fit in the pot. The plant must fit in the pot.
Patti: The next question asks what they look like.
Neil: What they look like?
Patti: Ja, what they look like and where they are found.
Natasha: They are found in many peoples homes. People can make their own plants but they need to buy a pot and then growing it in it.
Dawn: You can also use a bean and grow a bean on tissue paper and put it in a pot.
Patti: How are they looked after?
Natasha: They are usually are watered every morning and every night
Patti: How are they cultivated?
Dawn: What does cultivation mean?
(Inaudible response)
Neil: I think they need compost.
Patti: Ok, what function do they perform in our lives?
Tatum: They're decorations.
Neil: I think they need manure which is like dog shit. *(Inaudible. Laughter)*
Nigel, what do you think Nigel?
Nigel: Hau!!
Neil: Just say something.
Nigel: About what?
Neil: Question one…
Patti: How about the title of the poem? Read it out aloud.
Nigel: *(Mimicking a stereotypical weak female voice*) … lonely girl… *(inaudible talking)*
Patti: No, its 'a woman is not a potted plant'. Why would a woman be like a potted plant?
Natasha: Healthy, fit
Patti: What would a woman be like if she was a potted plant?
Neil: It would depend on what type of girl it was.
Nigel: Ja
Natasha: Healthy fit…
Neil: If she was a weed then I would not… *(Inaudible as the rest of the group laugh)* but she could be a sunflower.

Dawn: She would be a sunflower? What about more like a potted plant that is ever beautiful?
Nigel: Who asked you?
Dawn: He would be a sunflower. He said she would be a sunflower and I think it is a nice idea.
Nigel: She needs fertilizer or something-
Neil: Yes
Patti: Who would treat the flower this way?
Tatum: What?
Patti: How would she be treated?
Tatum: What the flower?
Patti: Who would treat her this way?
Tatum: A man. A man.
Neil: A truly romantic man. Like…
Patti: Consider the title of the poem… A Woman is not a potted plant… Consider the word or words emphasized when you say it out loud.
Tatum: Woman, woman.
Patti: Ja.
Natasha: A Woman Is not a Potted Plant. Woman and potted plant.
Neil: Woman and potted plant.
Patti: What tones does this give the title?
Neil: Toes?
Patti: No, tone
(General laughter)
Natasha: A Woman is not a potted plant, it gives it a …
Nigel: *(clicking sound)* screwable. *(said quietly with following words inaudible. Someone says* shhh *and discussion resumes)*
Dawn: It gives it a strong tone.
Tatum: A true tone.
Neil: A true tone.
Patti: Ja, a strong true tone.
Nigel: What's a tone?
Dawn: The way you say it.
Patti: What kind of feeling it brings.
Nigel: Oh… Ja..
Tatum: A strong, a deep meaning …
Neil: Is that now no 4?
Patti: Why do you think the poem refers to a woman and not women?
Tatum: Cos' sometimes it's only one woman that-
(Boy cuts her off but the dialogue is inaudible)
Natasha: Cos' the poet is taking about herself…
Nigel: Ai ai ai ai ai ai
Tatum: Woman or man?
Nigel: See now this here…
(Inaudible but seemingly inappropriate comment made by boy)
Patti: Be quiet. They are talking about women in general.
Natasha: I think the poet is talking about herself.
Patti: Are they talking about themselves? No, they are talking in general for all women.
(Inaudible comments)
Patti: A woman is not a potted plant… (*inaudible)*
Tatum: Yeah.
Natasha: Woman…
(Inaudible discussion)
Neil: Could you please …
(*the boy is cut off and ignored)*
Tatum: Because she knows how other women feel.
Neil: What is the plural noun ?
Patti: Plural noun?
Neil: … of woman
Patti: A woman lots of women.
Neil: And not men…
Patti: Look carefully at the structure of the poem, what do you think the poet chose to use… Why do you think the poem chooses not to use capital letters or punctuation?
Natasha: …because..
Neil: *(interrupting)* because it is a stanza …
Natasha: Because she doesn't want to pause in between her poem. Because she is trying to give the poem a flow …
(Pause - inaudible discussion in background)
Natasha: …she is trying to give the poem a flow and she doesn't want to pause.
Tatum: She is trying to say that it is a poem and not a selfish saying.
(Inaudible discussion between the boys)
Neil: Ja she isn't even stopping once.
Tatum: … ja, but the poem…
(Inaudible)
Patti: Look carefully at the structure of the poem. (*pause*) Why do you think poet chooses not to use punctuation and capital letters?
Tatum: We've already answered that.
Natasha: Because she is trying to give it a flow to show that when you are reading it you get the full sense that you are reading a poem. She is trying to give it feeling, she is trying to give it meaning.
Patti: Ok, read the second stanza lines four to eight in the poem and consider the lines. 'her leaves trimmed to the contours of her sex-'
Tatum: Ok well… oh, not finished
Patti: … what pressures exerted on a woman is the poet referring to?

Tatum: Ok, read the second stanza. Read the second stanza
Natasha: She's repeating…
(Inaudible sounds of arguing)
Nigel: Give here…
Neil: … Bring here…
Patti: Read the second stanza
Nigel: See like a DVD eject. Can you see eject?? *(seems to be discussing tape recorder)*
Patti: Stop, we are still busy *(aside to the boys)*
… of the poem and read the word…
Nigel: I've got the… (*rest of sentence inaudible)*
Tatum: What pressures on women is the poet referring to?
Patti: What does it mean by line…
Teacher: Are you working hard?
Tatum: We are working hard.
Patti: No7, no 7… Ok. Right read lines four and eight of the poem and consider the lines. Lines four and lines eight. 'considered the contours of her sex' and line eight 'leaves trimmed to the contours of her sex' what do they mean by that?
Neil: Her leaves are pruned to her sex. Oh the leaves go to her because she is a female. Something like that. Meaning that she is so delicate is only… she is strong… Yes.
Patti: No 8 what is the main… no sorry… sorry no 7. The poet refers to the senses, aha ha ha *(Laughter)*
Tatum: Ok.
(inaudible)
Patti: In stanza three the poet refers to sensors of her race, her country, her mother, her man. In what ways do these things restrict women? Ok. In what ways do these things restrict women?
Tatum: Ahhh, what do they mean? Miss Miss?? We don't understand number 7.
Teacher: What way could these things prevent women from being herself.
Patti: In what ways could these thing prevent women from being herself. So her race?
Tatum: Her country, her mother and her man?

TAPE ENDS

Group C poetry - A woman is not a potted plant
Group members: Carol, Simphiwe, Farida, David (2 girls, 2 boys)
Group Leader: Simphiwe (Boy)

Carol: What do you know about potted plants? For example, how they are cultivated, grown, what they look like, where they are found and how they are looked after. What function do they perform in our lives etc? Now the.. .the answer to the first question which is list everything you know about potted plants and how they are cultivated and grown. Well, most plants are grown is a very precious way, a very special way. And I know this because at home we have a potted plant at home and sometimes my mother she talks to it, like the potted plant and everything, like they treat it special. And umm… how they are looked after. *(inaudible as another learner interrupts)* No, no, the potted plant, they are very special plants and … and… I think they should be looked after very well and … and … carrying on answering the question they are looked after in a very special way because it like reflects the er… er… reflects to the woman's personality in others words, in my… in my… opinion and where they are found well they can be found anywhere … outside the home, inside the home at schools… anywhere… and even in shops er.. at the managers table. And um.. um… How are they looked after? Again… potted plants should be looked after specially… pot plants in our lives… they perform a very special function… they perform a very special function in our lives… and I have to say pot plants to me are very special. That's all.
Farida: OK. Right. If a women were a potted plant what type of potted plant would she be like? I think she would be friendly and honestly. How would she be treated like? I think she would be treated like a queen and…. respectful. .. And beautiful, OK? Who would treat her this way? I think who would treat her this way is her family or her husband if she is married… and her children.
Simphiwe: Thank you. Question number three is consider the title of the poem. Read it aloud, which words or word do we emphasize when we say it aloud? What tone does this give to the title. Now please share your answer with us.
David: Ok, number threes answer is comparing a woman to a potted plant.
Carol: But the question says consider the title of the poem. Read it aloud, which words or word do we emphasized when we say it aloud? What tone does this give to the title. It doesn't mean that you should compare it.
Simphiwe: The poet is saying that a woman's life is not like a potted plant. Plants are special but also woman are special,
David: Yeah but...
Simphiwe: Read the title of the poem aloud, which word or words are emphasized when you say the poem aloud.
David: Ok, let's move onto... (*Inaudible)*Um um um tone?
Simphiwe: Yes
David: I can see from the poem it … it has… it sounds wonderful… um… inspiring. Every women would like to have... Everyone would like to have that that life.
Simphiwe: Every woman would like to have to be treated like that...
David: Yeah. Let's move on to question four.
Farida: But no, the *(inaudible*) there is a paradox in the …(*inaudible)*
Carol: A woman is what? ...
inaudible
David: Ja!
inaudible
Carol: People listen here, people listen here. I was saying something... I was saying that in paragraph two... Ja, they say a woman is not a potted plant...
David: Yes
Carol: But, it is similar to a plant. They are not actually saying they is a plant, no woman is a plant but it is treated like a plant.
David: Like a plant - very specially.
Farida: Very specially… And very kind…
Simphiwe: Ok, please let's move on to question four.
Farida: Right
Simphiwe: Question 4 says why do you think the poet refers to a woman and not women?
Carol: Women. Which is a plural noun throughout the poem…

Farida: It shows that this poet, maybe she… that's Alice Walker... Maybe she's talking about just one woman… maybe she's talking about herself? But she's referring to one woman…
David: Yes maybe it is a wife or something like that…
Simphiwe: Or it's her...
David: Maybe it is… maybe it is.. a wife or something like that Ok.. No..
(Inaudible discussion)
David: Ok, ok, ok. Let's look at number 5 now.
Simphiwe: Number 5 says look carefully at the structure of the poem. Why do you think the poet chooses not to use capital letters and punctuation? Please tell us the answer to number 5.
Carol: I'm not sure but it's talking about one person and the words its not like…*(inaudible)*
Simphiwe: The question asks you that. Why the poet chose not to use punctuation.
Carol: Well… In my opinion… I think… I'm not sure… but I think … maybe it's because it is about one woman… She's talking about one person… and the words… it's not like written in a shortened form… you know… it's written in the proper register form.
David: Register? Excuse me… *(inaudible)*
Simphiwe: Farida will you tell us the answer.
Farida: I think the poet… No… I actually think the potted plant… I mean the poet… writes the poem in one long sentence…
Carol: It's long… it's like it doesn't… … like have any structure…
David: But that does not answer the question. Why do we use capital letters?
Carol: I'm telling you the answer is because the sentence is actually long…
David: What difference does it make?
Carol: Look the verses they go one, one, one..
Farida: Yes that's what I mean the sentences are long.
(Inaudible talking)

TAPE ENDS

Group D - discussion poetry - A woman is not a potted plant
Group members: Kevin, Anna, Barbara, Dennis , Nasreen, Joelene (4 Girls, 2 boys)
Group leader: Nasreen (Girl)

Nasreen: And now we will start our discussion. First question. Question number one is: List everything you know about potted plants. For example, how they are cultivates, how they grow…
Dennis: *(interrupts in a silly voice, inaudible speaking)* Don't play the fool. Be cool. Go to school.
Kevin: She would be treated like an egg. The owner of the plant, the owner of the plant… yeah I know, the owner of the plant will like water the plant everyday and keep the plant clean and I think that's how women should be treated like.
(tape switched off and then restarted)
Nasreen: Question three. Consider the title of the poem. Read it out aloud. Which word or words do we emphazise when we say it out loud. What tone does it give the title? Please Dennis give a different answer
Dennis: Ok, when you read out aloud the thing the title 'A Woman is not a Potted Plant' the word emphasised is woman. It tells us that the poem I mainly about woman being compare to a potted plant. What tone does this give the title? Well, it gives… it give it … it a low tone because the woman is mainly emphasised. That's what I think.
Nasreen: Thank you very much Dennis. Now it's Joelene reading the next question.
Joelene: Question four. Why do you think that the poet refer to a woman and not women. Which is the popular noun?
Dennis: Popular noun?
Joelene: Oh! Plural noun … throughout the poem.
Dennis: *In a stereotypical high- pitched Indian voice, but words are inaudible*
Joelene: It's because some women are treated very badly but other people and some women are treated very nicely that's why.
Nasreen: Thanks you for that opinion. Number 5. Look carefully at the structure of the poem. Why do you think the poet has chosen not to use capital letters and punctuation? Barbara??
Barbara: Barbara is going to answer this question. Because I think… This is written in small letters to prove in a way that the poet … writer think that women should not be treated like pot plants because of the way that women are treated in reality they are not treated nicely the way they should be. They are like discriminated and bad things happen.
Nasreen: Ok, question number 4. No, I mean number 6, question number 6. Read the second stanza line four to eight of the poem and considered the lines 'her leaves are trimmed to the contours of her sex'. Line six to eight what pressures exerted on women is the poet referring to? And it's going to be answered but who? By Anna…
Anna: The pressure exerted on women is a …
Dennis: *(inaudible high pitched voice interrupts)*
Anna: …is um.. um.. her branches against the fences and everything. Yes.
Kevin: Ok now Miss is taking our photo.
Number 7 in stanza three the poet refers to the fences of her race, her country, her mother her man (line 13 to 17). In what way could these restrict women?
Joelene: What was that?
Anna: Restrict women…

TAPE ENDS

Group E: Dillon, Ken, Leon, Bert (4 boys)
Group Leader: Bert (Boy)

Bert: Don't touch it. Leave it now *(Sound of arguing over the tape recorder followed by laughter.)*
Leon: First question. List everything you know about potted plants, for example how they… how they …
Bert: What they look like, what their function… *(inaudible interruption)*
Hey Miss, we are writing it down... Number one
Dillon: *(Sound of a rap song being sung by Dillon)*
Leon: Stop singing you guys you're ruining our work…
(singing continues, then laughter and all talk at once)

Bert: Miss.. Miss…Why you say Leon? It's Ken, it's Ken *(laughter)* stop it..
(Sound of tape being switched on and off)
Teacher: Stop being silly and answer the questions.
(Argument about who is going to hold the tape recorder)
Leon: Don't touch it…
Now let's discuss and answer the questions…
Ken: OK let's discuss…
Bert: Let's write down our answers…Give me a pencil… *(slowly, as writing down*) OK… must… have… soil.
Leon: They need a brownish clay pot
Bert: But they must have soil… they can't live without soil
Leon: And a clay pot.
Bert: OK. Where are they found?
Leon: In gardens
Ken: They have a what? *(Laughter then inaudible talking in the background)*
Bert: Guys now, now… Come on…Number 2. Consider all you wrote down…
(Tape recorder is turned off then on again)
Bert: Guys, guys… *(Banging on tape recorder)*
What would she be like?
Leon: Ladies… she'd be a lady…
Dillon: Right… she would be like a movie star with beautiful lips… *(laughter)*
Leon: The title of the poem read it out aloud which word or words…A woman is not a potted plant … that means…
Dillon: A woman must not be smoking weed or not… *(laughter)* Let's have a smoke… *(more laughter and inaudible discussion)* It's crazy shit.
Ken: Give me a gwaii… *(Inaudible discussion which appears to be about smoking. Laughter)(Pause. Banging and then singing)*
Leon: What you doing? You're not listening… What you doing… Leave it… leave it… Miss… miss… he touched the recorder, Miss…
Bert: Right. Number 3. Come on guys… (*Inaudible)* Come on…
Consider the title of the poem. Which word or words are emphasized when we say it out loud what tone does this give the title. The answer is potted plant. Number 4. Why does she use woman and not women.
Dillon stop messing about… stop disturbing us…
Ken: And the only answer could be because every woman is different not the same has different personalities and different ways of living.
Leon: A woman has different ways to other women.
Bert: Number 5. Look carefully at the structure of the poem why do we think the poet not use capital letters and punctuation.
Come on let's discuss this now. Yes boys, come on…
(Inaudible laughter and silly talk)
Ken: Hey Dillon, come on we going to beat all those other groups. We all boys and we'll beat those girls… *(laughter)*
Bert: She thinks we naughty but we not..
Ken: Miss, we not naughty you just give us so much work…
Leon: Miss, must we answer all the questions…?

TAPE ENDS

Extract from transcription of lesson: Slang (27/07/05)

Teacher: What I want you to do in your groups is to write down some slang words you use for the opposite sex. Write them in on your sheet of paper.
(hum of discussion)
Teacher: Sorry… Let me explain the term connotation.
(There follows a discussion of the meaning of connotation and denotation) For example, let's think of a slang name given to a girl… Let me give you an example the word 'cherrie'. When a boys talks about a cherrie is he talking nicely about a girl or badly about a girl?
Learners: *(General calling out)* Badly Miss.
Teacher: So what is the connotation?

Extract from interview with the Principal of Sherwood High School (19/05/05)

I: The next question is about OBE. How closely has your school involved itself, generally, in the implementation of the OBE curriculum? How do you think your teachers are committed to OBE?

P: You know those who understand it and have been trained in it are committed. I think when you understand something it's not so frightening. And they who have been trained 5 - 6 years ago they have taken it well and there were some that were thrown into the deep end. They were dragged out of grade 10 or 11 and pushed down to grade 8/9 because we are bottom heavy. And they haven't been trained, so they are learning as they are 'going along and its very frustrating and they don't feel confident. They are willing to learn but with the huge classes it doesn't help.

I: Do you think that OBE has been a good idea or would you disagree?

P: Actually no. I don't think so. For instance, I don't think that it prepares our children for Grade 11/12 adequately. Our highest training is up to grade 10 of course OBE is not really used here. And our children come out knowing very little. Most of them cannot read, or read with insight anyway, they are innumerate, the maths is just absolutely bad. Yet they are not asked to memorize, they are not asked to memorize anything, they are not asked to memorize or learn facts they know very little fact about thing, they are just too used to worksheets and where they are given all the answers and just asked to match column A with column B. there's just no memory work. I don't think that they are even taught to be analytical.

I: No, I don't think they are either.

P: So they battle with the Sciences as they go further up and they are supposed to be learning facts in history which they are obviously having problems with.

I: I'm so glad you say that because it concerns what I found. They have no long term memory at all. You do something one day, for example I did poetry and then we talked about the poem and they did a pre reading exercise and then when I came after the weekend on Monday they had completely forgotten.

P: You had to start all over again?

I: I had to start all over again.

P: Ja, that's with everything…

I: Really?

P: Yes, with everything. They are not, from primary school… they will even tell you - that they were never given anything to learn off by heart such as a poem as we did in the old days. We would learn a short poem for a presentation you know that's not how it goes anymore. Even capitals of countries, capitals cities it's a trouble to get them to remember which city is the capital of which country. Simple things like that.

…

P: You see I've asked my teachers to just, I've really asked my teachers to ignore the rubbish of OBE and it was a terrible thing for me to have said. We sat in the, they sit and discuss something in this group, they may be discussing it.. they may be talking about something else

I: You never know!

P: The quality of it might be off topic completely because you cannot be with five to seven groups at the same time. There is just something that is not meaty enough. You know after a week of dealing with a topic they really really can't tell you much.

I: I can believe that.

P: They can't tell you much.

I: You got to actually force them to interact.

P: And I believe there are certain things that they need - notes in history, they need notes in Geography after you have taught your lesson because they need to learn something.

I: You can't just discover.

P: No.

I: It doesn't apply out in the real world.

P: I know,

I: But on the other hand the document, the expectations in the document, are so sophisticated. If you look at the grade nine outcomes which I looked at prior to coming and you see the level for the kind of outcome, and the assessment standards that are in the document, and you face the reality. I mean you're living in another world.

P: Of course. And I've said this for years and I got into trouble as a level one teacher for not wanting to, not too long ago, for not understanding how I was to get those you know. I couldn't reconcile the two. This is my outcome, this is where I need to get to, but how am I going to get there with this? And I just ignored it totally and taught mathermatics, that's my subject, and I taught mathematics as I know it should be taught. No, children discover about integers and fractions and rational numbers. Those things are another story. So I just did pure maths and those two came up in taught maths.

I: And it was fine.?

P: They passed matric. Outstandingly.

Extract from interview with Mrs Foster, the Grade 9A English teacher (01/12/05)

I: Okay. Now, I've just got a few questions about gender. Sherwood High School is a co-educational school.

F: Mmmm.

I: In what way do you think this impacts on the way that males and female learners interact with each other at school in a co-educational situation? How do you think they interact?

F: I don't know where to start. Well, at this school, they seem to interact very well with each other although I do find there's an extreme over-familiarity with the boys in their attitude and reactions towards the girls. We have many incidents of - sometimes I stand outside my classroom, I've got to chastise somebody because a boy is touching a girl where she shouldn't be touched. There are many incidents of this, Liz. I have been witness to three with Ms [redacted], I don't know if you know the HOD, where she was going hysterical because this boy had his - was physically manhandling this girl, sexually manhandling her and the two of them had the cheek to say that, "We were only playing". The girl appeared affronted when the teacher was angry, but the boy said, he actually said, "I've never seen such an actress. I do this with her every day, Miss and why is she making a fuss about it now". So, the girls seemed to accept. They may not really like it, but they seem to accept the way the boys treat them. But also that's not 100% of the cases. Of course there are boys who do respect the girls, females, but I also think it's necessary for them to be in this co-ed school so they can learn how to deal with each other, you know, as far as respect and that is concerned.

I: Ja.

F: Ja.

I: And the interesting demographic here is that males are actually outnumbered by females. Do you think that has any effect at the end of the day? There are quite a few more, there's about a 100 more girls in the school than there are boys.

F: Ja, ja. Well, I don't know if it has any effect on the boys, but the girls seem to be a bit more desperate for attention from these boys. So, I assume that is why the boys are able to treat the girls with such disrespect, because everyone is vying for their attention and, ja.

I: I see. And now you've already said you have seen incidents of sexual harassment?

F: Absolutely. It really shocked me. The first time I saw when I had to chastise a couple who were on the stairs and he was touching this girl. She didn't really like it. She was pulling away, but she had a big smile on her face. So, it seems as though they are not brave enough, the girls, to say, "I don't like this", because they want boys' attention and as we know, there are a few boys here, and school for these children is just a meeting ground for couples. So, yes, we have many, many incidents and as I say, the boys don't see anything wrong with it and the girls accept it. They also sometimes see it as a compliment, you know, when a boy touches their bottoms and things like that. So, ja, we have many, many incidents of that.

I; Does the code of conduct have anything with regard to gender that you're aware of, because I know you operate very closely with the code of conduct.

F: Ja. Not specifically.

I: Not specifically?

F: No, not specifically gender orientated, ja.

I: Now, issues surrounding gender, are they addressed explicitly in the school curriculum, do you know if they are?

F: In the curriculum, no. No, I wouldn't say so. No, no, I think everything is just general. I don't think there's any specific direction towards making the learners aware of the equality of gender, sexes. No, no. I think this year was the first year that we honed in with you, Liz, that we honed in on gender equality.

I: Ja.

F: It's definitely not in the curriculum throughout every subject.

I: And the HIV/AIDS, is it life orientation?

F: Ja, life orientation. Yes, and every opportunity we get we are encouraged to speak about HIV/AIDS. We do have talks. So, the children are very much aware, especially some of them actually are not ashamed to stand up and speak about it in their own families. So, you know, we deal with that often.

I: But that's sex education ...(inaudible).

F: In the curriculum?

I: Ja.

F: No. What it's supposed to be included in ...(inaudible). Arts and culture touched on but not specifically on the syllabus, but definitely life orientation. So, it plays a big part in that subject.

I: But that's sex education rather than gender equality issues.

F: Well ja, with the HIV you would say it's more sex education, not gender issues, no. As I say, gender issues are not dealt with. Everything is just treated generally, there is no honing in specifically. So, ja. But AIDS is definitely dealt with in - the children say they are sick of AIDS and HIV issues because they're learning this *ad nauseam*. They hear it all over. So, they've blocked off to it now. They switch off as soon as they hear about AIDS, as soon as we start talking AIDS. So, somehow they feel saturated and don't listen.

I: They don't listen any more?
F: Ja.
…
I: Have any of the learners been victims of sexual violence, that you have knowledge of?
F: Yes. I cannot say that the learners specifically have spoken to me, but they have been pointed out by certain teachers. When I've had behavioural problems with especially matrics and then I speak to a teacher about the child's behaviour then they give me the history of rape, sexual abuse, violence, violence at home by parents, or you know, just strangers. So, ja, but the child, nobody has spoken directly to me, but I know of cases, yes.
I: Okay. The incidence of pregnancy in this school?
F: Very high.
I: Very high?
F: Very high. As young as Grade 8 at the moment we have one who should be giving birth right now. In Grade 9 there are at least four, two in the classes that I teach. There is a Grade 10 girl and a matriculant that I have seen obviously on the verge of giving birth, yes. The children, when I once in one lesson, arts and culture, they had to make protest posters, one group decided on writing, "Stop pregnancy at Sherwood High School". Many of the others are quite disgusted by the number of girls who get pregnant, but it's a high rate, high incidence.
I: And do they hang on here at school till the very end?
F: Most of them do, depending on the grade. The Grade 8s usually leave. Grade 11s, 12s and the Grade 10, they stay on, come back and write. They usually leave for a little while and then just come back to write the exams. Whether they have the baby or they're still pregnant. They don't stay right through, but the Grade 8s don't return at all.
…
I: That is interesting. In the subject package choices do you see any differences between the choices of boys and girls? I don't know, you probably haven't seen any this year.
F: No. No, I don't have wide enough experience of that. I mean, I wouldn't be able to tell you about Grade 10 subject choices.
I: Ja.
F: Ja. I don't know if more boys choose maths or what. I wouldn't know, no.
I: Do you think after a year of material that's raised awareness about gender, that behaviour has changed in any way?
F: You're speaking about the class ...(interjection).
I: Ja.
F: Yes. Yes, definitely. I would compare the boys' attitudes, even if we speak about Dillon at the beginning of the year and how different he thought about females towards the end of the year. There is definitely a difference. They are more aware. They do see the injustices now and some of them even would stand up for a girl if a boy is speaking to her badly, or perhaps touching her you know, just in a certain way
…
F: Ja, regarding that class, there is a definite change in their attitude and I find the girls are a lot more outspoken about their feelings, about how they see things than they were at the beginning of the year. They were a little bit submissive at the beginning of the year and the boys were riding the crest of the wave and they would be a lot more assertive, but that seems to have changed. The girls were more assertive towards the end of the year, which is a good thing.
I: Yes, actually that is great.
F: Ja.
I: Because I wasn't always aware of that.
…
F: Definitely, definitely.
I: Well, that's encouraging, because I wasn't always sure that it made any real difference.
F: Now, when I compare them to other classes, I find the girls are still wild, hankering after the boys' attention, but also submissive in a way. I don't know how to explain it. The boys are just the kings in the class and the girls are performing to get their attention all the time, but they don't see themselves as equal. They're waiting for the boys to pick and choose and you know, just give them some attention. Not like the 9A girls who are more serious about themselves, where they're going, more assertive and they don't bother with the boys in a sexual way.
I: Ja.
F: Like the other classes still do. Ja.
I: Okay, let's go on to literacy levels, which is the next thing. How would you rate the overall language proficiency of your learners?
F: Can the tape see me shaking my head. (LAUGHTER) Very, very poor. I don't even know where it's coming from, it's even hard to think of how to remedy this, because this is already Grade 9 and their literacy skills are so poor. But firstly, before even reading, I don't know which comes first though, they have a problem with listening and understanding. So, it's just so hard to know where to start. Where do you go back to you know. It's very, very daunting in that task, because there's reading, their eyes gloss over the word, there's no understanding at

all, most of them. You get very few in a class, about four in a class who actually read and you can pick them out, you know, they're better at the language, but the rest very, very poor skills. And it can't be that children are becoming weaker and weaker. What is the problem you know? That's why I say, you don't know where to start. Each year it gets worse and worse. Where's that coming from, because surely from primary school that's the first thing they're taught, to read and then here it's just weak, weak, weak. They're like ...(inaudible) two level at Grade 9, ja, in Grade 9.

I: Okay, and the percentage of learners. Now, quite a few of the learners, I'm going to test this again, said that their mother tongue was isiZulu.

F: Mmmm.

I: About half in that Grade 9 class.

F: Yes.

I: But do you think that that issue really affects the literacy?

F: I don't think so. I don't think so, Liz, because all our children, there is nobody who is straight from a Zulu medium school who has come here. All of them are from Sub A in English medium schools. So, I don't think that that would affect their literacy at all. Perhaps as far as access to books, libraries, whatever ja, there. But other than that, you hear when they speak, they're fluent in how they speak. There seems to be no problem when they speak. So, I don't think that can be taken into account as a factor at all, ja, that a second language for them that is not their mother tongue, ja. Ja, because the girl who got the English award, [redacted], she is Zulu.

I: Okay. My research is that they're pretty well - you can't tell the difference.

F: Ja, ja.

I: You can't tell the difference. Okay. Now, language across the curriculum, is it encouraged at the school? Are people in other learning areas doing anything about language or do they just leave it in English?

F: Absolutely not. Completely left to the English teacher. There's no correction of perhaps a spelling error you know, in content. There's no correction of grammatical errors when speaking or in content. No, it's left entirely to the teacher. Ja, to the English teacher. They don't have reading programs, or you know, perhaps where the child will read notes, speak about the notes, nothing like that, or speak about what they understand. It's just study my subject and pass.

I: What about OBE then?

F: No, OBE is not done. I can't even say it properly or correctly. It's not really done here and not done properly in most of the schools. The teachers themselves don't really understand how to go about OBE, and I think that's the confusion, the teachers don't understand. And there should be an OBE Committee every week, every second week, get together to discuss and you know, what's that word that ...(interjection).

I: Brain storm.

F: Brain storm and include all different aspects of different subjects, but there's nothing like that here. Not one OBE meeting ever. When I took out an OBE sheet, lesson planning sheet, they asked me "What's that, phase organising program ...(inaudible)".

I: So, they're not making - there's no OBE ...(inaudible)?

…

F: Ja.

I: How would you rate this - oh, we've already talked about that. Are there any policies in place to encourage and improve reading?

F: Well, we're going to have one next year I'm sure.

I: Ja, ja.

F: (Inaudible)... accelerated reading program, which the English department begged for and, Liz, we're going to have two extra periods in Grade 10 to 12 and one extra period in Grade 8 and 9. I'm so happy, in English.

I: Oh, that is fantastic.

F: Ja. So, we've got that right eventually.

I: Well, that is nice.

F: Ja.

I: Because more periods - but most schools are operating on four.

F: Oh, that's ridiculous for a language, for English. Ja. I don't know if this comes into the question, but I wanted to say about this 9A class. I can see, even if you know, some of their marks may be lower than the other classes. Liz, you have instilled the power of thinking. They are thinking on a much higher level than the other grades. The other grades, their marks may be higher because they're regurgitate. These are thinking, the Grade 9As, and that was just so obvious to me and I actually told a few teachers, "Look at this. There is a big difference between you know, their insight now compared to other grades". That's one thing I did notice. So, that's a lovely thing. I just wish some ...(interjection).

I: (Inaudible).

F: Ja, I just wish that it wouldn't stop you know, because they have to keep at it. Ja.

…

F: And when I mark the exam papers I could see that it was so evident. Our memo, there was one answer that was yes, and give the reasons, and there were about three of the Grade 9s who took the opposite view. No was

completely the wrong answers, but they motivated so for that. No, I had to mark it right, I'd never even thought that way. So, I was very pleased with that as well.

I: And were those Grade 9As?

F: Grade 9As, yes. Ja.

…

I: I notice that there wasn't a text set in Grade 9. Are you planning to set one next year? Are you going to be teaching Grade 9 again?

F: Ja, ja. You mean the literature?

I: Ja, the literature.

F: Well, Liz, I know the school is not going to buy any books. I know that these books that they've got are ancient. So, I was planning to use actually a plan for the first term already and I was planning to start with the stories that you had left.

I: Well, you've answered this really, because I was saying the demands of formal reading comprehension questions are the learner is able to read critically, to evaluate, to inference, to interpret and to relate what they're reading to their own experience ...(inaudible).

F: Overall, as I was saying, the Grade 9As are slightly you know, a little more advanced in that field than the others, but generally no skills of interpretation at all. Most times they just look at the question, word in the question that's asked, look for that same word in the passage and give you sentences from the passage. Very seldom you know, can you see that they've internalised, they've processed and they're giving their own opinions…. Very seldom…. So, their skills with formal comprehension not good.

I: Not good. Okay.

Extract from focus group interview with the girls (19/01/06)

Interviewer: Okay. Now, I want to ask you about being in a co-educational school. Do you like being in a co-educational school?

Patti: Sometimes it's like a privilege and sometimes it's not.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, what are the advantages then? What are the privileges?

Tatum: Miss, in the educational ...(inaudible).

Interviewer: No, with this school. Your own personal view.

Norma: Okay, Miss. Personally, because I've been to a girls school only, Miss, sometimes like the boys they underestimate the girls and stuff like that, and they take us for advantage and stuff. If you become too friendly then they take it ...(inaudible) and stuff and you know you have a certain limit okay, and then other people take you like not seriously and stuff like that. They look at you in another way.

Interviewer: Now, when you say other people, do you mean other people in the school?

Norma: Yes.

Tatum: Yes, Miss, in your class as well.

Interviewer: In your class?

Tatum: Yes.

Interviewer: That's if you don't let the boys ...(interjection).

Tatum: Yes, Miss.

Interviewer: Go over ...(interjection).

Norma: Miss, it's like you're acting too posh if you don't talk to them and stuff like that.

Natasha: And when you do so then they call you names, you're acting so ...(inaudible) or something of that sort. So, now you never know how to act with them.

Patti: It's like when you're intelligent and then you don't talk to other children because they may think oh you're stuck up.

Norma: You're too intelligent to speak to them or something like that.

Patti: Miss, and just say you're a girl and like there's no other girl in the school that like you and you don't have friends. So, you get close to the boys, Miss, because they're the only people that you can actually talk to and be yourself and all the people just see only the girl with a whole lot of boys. They'll be like "Oh, she's loose. Oh, she's like this". They judge you for what they see but they don't really know you.

Interviewer: They don't really know you. And tell me, do you find that the boys take chances with the girls? Do you ever feel harassed by the boys?

Patti: Yes.

Norma: Yes.

Natasha: Yes, Miss.

Norma: Yes. Because, Miss, you can't even wear anything, the boys are going to come and touch you and all that, and that's not nice at all, or they tell you, "Why you wearing something like this. You were looking for it". And no, Miss, if you want to buy something you want to wear, you want to wear it for you not for anyone else.

Interviewer: So, you do find that, and here in the school, within the school do you find that there's any harassment goes on here?

Norma: Yes.

Patti: Yes, Miss, because like if your friends are like boys and stuff and you like know them well and like you laugh at them all the time and stuff, then they start taking advantage and they like, "Oh come on" and stuff. You know, they're like watching you, "Come on" ...(inaudible).

Tatum: Because if you say no, they think oh you're ...(inaudible). You must just agree to what they say.

Natasha: And they do funny things to you.

Norma: Like they've got this thing that when you say no, they think you mean yes.

Natasha: Yes. Miss, because it's not nice and then, Miss, you end up becoming violent because now you're trying to prevent yourself and then people think ...(inaudible). Because, Miss, there's nothing you can do if they are pulling you and all that. So, you just have to fight back or something of the sort.

Interviewer: And you found that does happen?

Norma: Yes.

Patti: Yes, Miss, lots.

Interviewer: And then the advantages about being at a co-educational school?

Norma: Well, Miss, as I said, personally from being from a girls school like you get to learn things about what boys do and stuff like that, and how to ...(inaudible) and stuff, and how they think and everything. So, that's the advantage of it.

Interviewer: It's the advantage, okay.

Extract from focus group interview with the boys (19/01/06)

Interviewer:	Now, [redacted] is a co-educational school. Do you like being in a co-education school?
Bert:	Ja, it's all right, Miss.
Interviewer:	Now, you said you don't.
Dillon:	No.
Interviewer:	Why don't you? Dillon, why don't you like being in a co-educational school?
Dillon:	Miss, I can't explain it.
Interviewer:	Well, just say it. You don't like having girls?
Dillon:	No, Miss, some teachers here too, ...(inaudible) they're trying to push you to the max.
Interviewer:	Some teachers?
Dillon:	Ja.
Interviewer:	Female teachers or male teachers?
Dillon:	Female and male.
Interviewer:	Female and male. Well, then that has to do with school.
Dillon:	No, Miss, but you only ...(inaudible) and they push you further.
Interviewer:	Ja, but that's just school. That's not being in a co-educational school. I'm talking about a school with girls as well as boys.
	...
Interviewer:	And they put you off you say, Dillon?
Dillon:	Ja.
Interviewer:	How do they put you off?
Dillon:	(Inaudible)... feel like they're cold the beginning of the year.
Interviewer:	Mmmm?
Leon:	You should have hit her.
Interviewer:	Mmmm? You should have?
Leon:	Hit her.
Bert:	No, you don't hit girls.
Interviewer:	You should have hit her?
Bert:	(Inaudible). No, you don't hit girls.
Interviewer:	Now, just explain this again. Patti did what?
Dillon:	Miss, I forgot what she done to me, but it just irritate me and then I called her something, a bitch or whore or something.
Interviewer:	You called her that?
Dillon:	Ja.
Interviewer:	That's yesterday?
Dillon:	Yes, Miss.
Interviewer:	A bitch or a whore.
Bert:	Not yesterday.
Clive:	Not yesterday.
Dillon:	Last year.
Interviewer:	Oh last year.
Dillon:	And we were in Foster's class that time and she ...(inaudible) and I just ...(inaudible) throw her down.
Interviewer:	You wanted to hit her?
	(Inaudible).
Bert:	You must not hit girls.
Dennis:	Dillon gets angry quick.
Interviewer:	Now, tell me, would you hit a girl?
Leon:	Miss, if I've got to.
Interviewer:	If you have to?
Leon:	Yes.
Dennis:	Miss, if it's like a raw girl, Miss, ...(interjection).
Bert:	You just walk away from the situation and leave it like that.
Dennis:	Ja, but if it's a girl like Patti, Miss, you can't ...(interjection).
Bert:	You can't hit a girl.

Dennis: Because she's a girl-girl, Miss. But if it's ...(inaudible) girl you can.
Ken: (Inaudible). Well, Miss, that's the lowest ...(inaudible).
Interviewer: Okay, all right. What would you do? What would you do?
Bert: I'll move my hand away, I'll go and report her.
Dillon: No, you will have to hit her.
Interviewer: Then you'd have to hit her?
Dillon: Ja.
Leon: You have to.
Bert: You push her away or something, but you can't hit her.
Clive: You can't hit a girl.
Bert: Push her away or something.
Dennis: (Inaudible)... hit her or push her away, ja.
Bert: Not if it's a girl.
Interviewer: You two don't think you should hit her?
Bert: No.
Clive: No.
Interviewer: The three of you. But you say sometimes you should?
Leon: Miss, he has ...(inaudible).
Dennis: All right. No, no, listen here, she goes ...(inaudible).
Dillon: She can swear you.
Bert: If she swear you just walk away. I'd rather just walk away and leave it.
Interviewer: Rather than hit her?
Bert: Ja.

QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the following instructions carefully before you start filling in your answers.

- This survey is made up of 96 questions.
- Answers are to be indicated on the answer sheet provided. DO NOT WRITE ON THE QUESTION PAPER
- Use H.B. pencil ONLY.
- Make dark heavy marks that fill the oval completely, however, take care not to smudge the card or to colour outside the lines.
- Erase unwanted marks cleanly using a soft rubber.
- Do not doodle or make any stray marks on the answer sheet.
- Do not fold or bend the answer sheet.
- Make sure that the number that you are answering and the number on your answer sheet correspond.
- Section 1 of the questionnaire requires you to mark the letter which applies to you.
- When answering Sections 2 please mark clearly on the card the letter which expresses your opinions most closely.

STRONGLY AGREE	***[A]***
AGREE	***[B]***
NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	***[C]***
DISAGREE	***[D]***
STRONGLY DISAGREE	***[E]***

SECTION 1 - PERSONAL DETAILS

Please mark clearly in pencil on the card the letter which applies to you. DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAPER.

1. What is your home language?

Zulu	[A]
English	[B]
Afrikaans	[C]
Xhosa	[D]
Other	[E]

2. How old are you?

13 years old or younger	[A]
14 years old	[B]
15 years old	[C]
16 years old	[D]
17 years old and older	[E]

3. What is your sex

Male	[A]
Female	[B]

4. What Grade are you in?

Grade 8	[A]
Grade 9	[B]
Grade 10	[C]
Grade 11	[D]
Grade 12	[E]

5. Do you belong to any religion?

Yes, Christian	[A]
Yes, Hindu	[B]
Yes, Muslim	[C]
Yes, Other	[D]
None	[E]

6. Who do you live with?

Mother and Father	[A]
Mother only	[B]
Father only	[C]
Family (e.g. aunt, uncle, grandmother etc.)	[D]
Other	[E]

SECTION 2

DO NOT WRITE ON THIS CARD.
PLEASE MARK CLEARLY ON THE CARD THE LETTER WHICH IS YOUR CHOICE OF ANSWER. YOUR CHOICE IS AS FOLLOWS:

STRONGLY AGREE	***[A]***
AGREE	***[B]***
NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	***[C]***
DISAGREE	***[D]***
STRONGLY DISAGREE	***[E]***

7. Women are more suited to caring jobs like nursing than men.
8. Men should invite women on dates.
9. Women are more affectionate than men.
10. Men expect that the woman they are dating will have sex with them.
11. I am aware of how HIV Aids is transmitted.
12. Girls who play football are tomboys
13. Men and women should share the housework.
14. Women are too emotional to fire an employee
15. Boys are more willing to speak out in class.
16. Women are suited to taking leadership roles at work
17. Men should take the lead in a relationship.
18. Women love shopping
19. Boys are more likely to become bosses when they grow up.
20. It's the woman's place to look after the children.
21. I feel that to show my love I have to have sex with my partner
22. Men are more suited to doing heavy work.
23. Mothers are closer to their children than fathers.
24. Sports played by women have less status than those played by boys.
25. Men shouldn't cry
26. A girl shows her love for her boyfriend when she has sex with him.
27. Fathers are the chief discipliners in the family.
28. If a woman is dating a man she should have sex with him.
29. I enjoy watching men play sport.
30. I know how to prevent being infected with HIV Aids.
31. I enjoy watching women play sport.
32. Football is a game for men
33. A woman can kiss a man first
34. Men make better bosses.
35. Dancing is for women rather than men
36. Men need sex more than women.
37. Women are more artistic than men.

DO NOT WRITE ON THIS CARD.
PLEASE MARK CLEARLY ON THE CARD THE LETTER WHICH IS YOUR CHOICE OF ANSWER. YOUR CHOICE IS AS FOLLOWS:

STRONGLY AGREE	***[A]***
AGREE	***[B]***
NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	***[C]***
DISAGREE	***[D]***
STRONGLY DISAGREE	***[E]***

38. I often watch men playing sport on TV.
39. Women make the best cooks
40. Men are better at sport than women.
41. omen are more fashion conscious than men.
42. It's acceptable for men to stay at home and look after the children.
43. Women don't enjoy action movies
44. The man should be the head of the home.
45. Women are the gentler sex
46. Men don't enjoy romance movies
47. Girls work harder at school than boys
48. It's OK for men to fight.
49. I would not want to watch women playing rugby
50. Men are better drivers than women
51. It's OK for women to cry.
52. Boys make better prefects than girls.
53. Women are emotionally stronger that men.
54. Men like dressing in the latest fashion.
55. Women are the weaker sex
56. Boys should obey the instructions given by female prefects.
57. Women are emotionally dependent on men.
58. Men find it hard to talk about their emotions
59. It's OK to have sex without using a condom.
60. Women take more trouble to look good.
61. Men hate shopping
62. Women gossip more than boys.
63. Men should be breadwinners.
64. I will not have sex until I am married.
65. Men should be strong and not show their emotions.
66. At school girls are less likely to be given positions of leadership than boys.
67. Men who show their feelings are weak.
68. Women enjoy reading more than men.
69. Men talk more than women.
70. Women who wear revealing clothing are sluts.

DO NOT WRITE ON THIS CARD.
PLEASE MARK CLEARLY ON THE CARD THE LETTER WHICH IS YOUR CHOICE OF ANSWER. YOUR CHOICE IS AS FOLLOWS:

STRONGLY AGREE	***[A]***
AGREE	***[B]***
NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	***[C]***
DISAGREE	***[D]***
STRONGLY DISAGREE	***[E]***

71. Learners pay more attention to male teachers.
72. When a woman says no to sex she actually means yes.
73. Men make the best chefs
74. Women shouldn't play rough sports
75. Many men are bullies.
76. Girls who are prefects should not be allowed to tell boys what to do.
77. Men think more about sex than women.
78. It's OK for women to telephone men and invite them on dates.
79. When I have sex I will use a condom.
80. Boys work harder at school than girls.
81. Women should wait for men to make the first move.
82. It's OK for men to cry.
83. Women should not have to pay for anything when on a date with a man
84. Men are more suited to becoming doctors than girls.
85. Women should pay when out on dates.
86. Teachers prefer teaching girls.
87. A woman must listen to her husband.
88. Men make better teachers than women.
89. Women can't keep secrets.
90. Men make good secretaries.
91. Women make poor politicians
92. It's OK for a man to hit his wife.
93. I often watch women play sport on TV.
94. Men should work while women should stay at home and look after the children.
95. I am afraid of being infected with HIV aids.
96. Men are good dancers.

READING COMPREHENSION

FORM G

NAME .....

SCHOOL .....

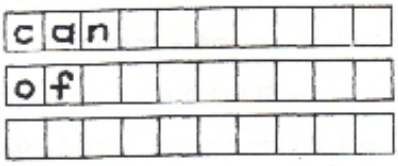
CLASS .....

DATE .....

Do not turn the page until you are told

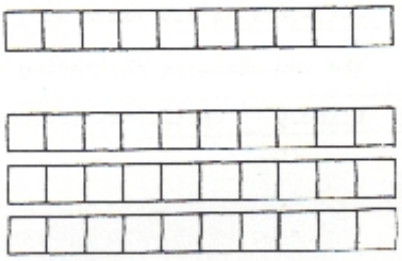
THIS TEST

This is a test to find out how well we ___ read. Some words have been left out __ the stories, and we have to write ___ missing words.



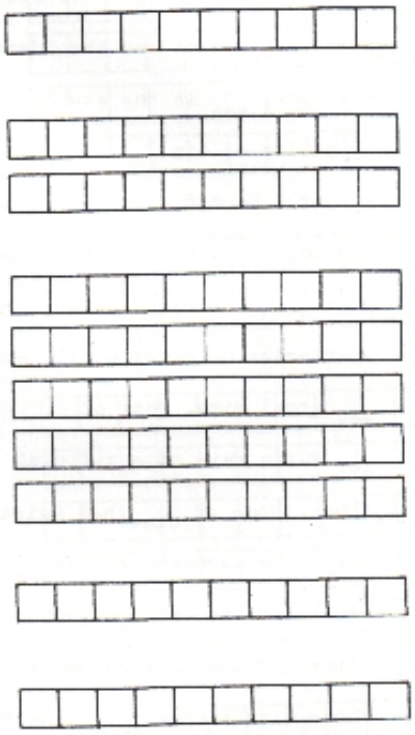
COUNT DOWN

"Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, ___, one, zero. Fire!" Up goes the rocket. Way up into ___ sky. Faster and faster __ goes, till no one can ___ it.



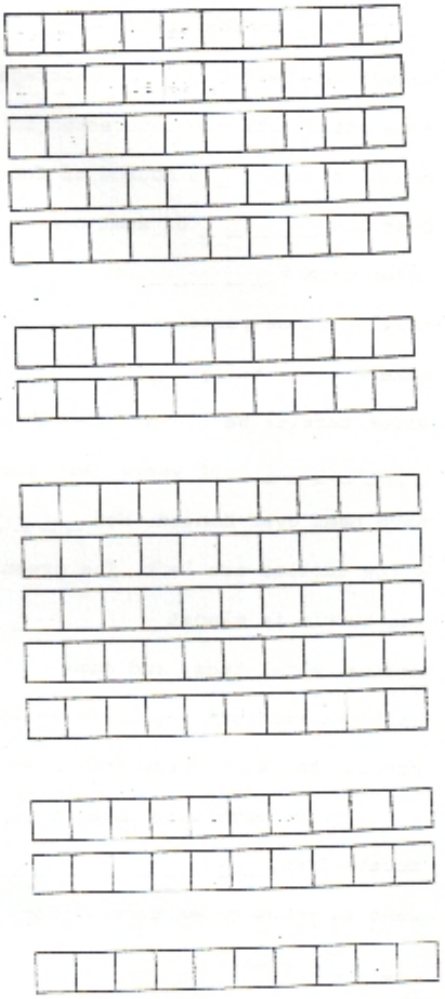
THE CHASE

Jane and Michael raced across the square, around a corner, down a street, through a narrow alley, and across another street. On and __ they ran. Once during their pell-mell flight, a hungry-eyed mongrel scrambled ___ of a doorway to snap viciously at _____ heels. And once a toothless old crone ____ her head tied up in a ragged kerchief _____ to lay her bony claws on them. "____ with me, my dears," ___ wretched creature begged. "Granny'll hide you ____ and sound." This promise from the evil-looking old woman only ____ the two children skittering off blindly __ another direction.



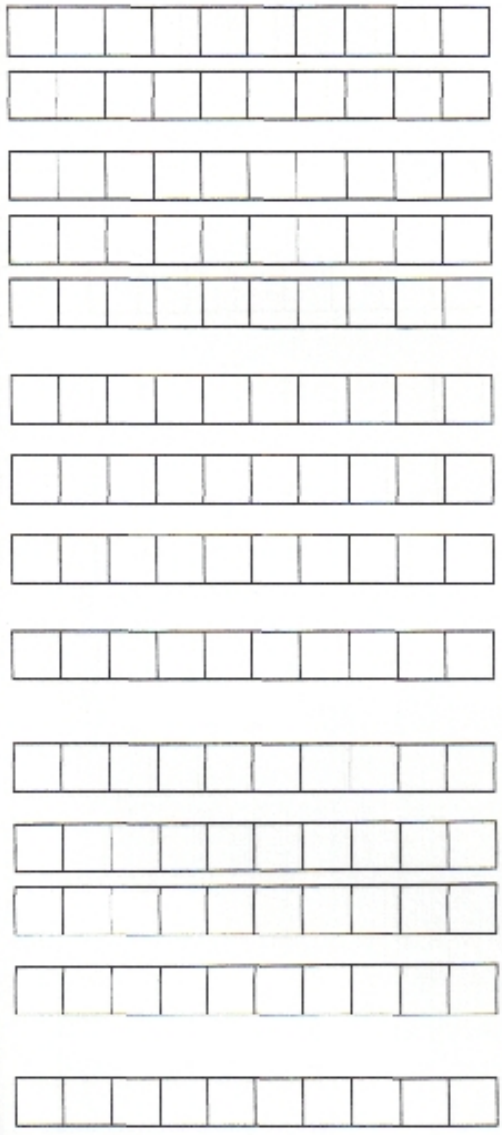
A DESCRIPTION OF LEAMAS

Leamas was a short man with close, iron-grey hair, and the physique __ a swimmer. He was very _____. This strength was discernible in ___ back and shoulders, in his neck, ___ in the stubby formation of his _____ and fingers. He had a utilitarian approach __ clothes, as he had to most _____ things, and even the spectacles he occasionally wore ___ steel rims. Most of ___ suits were of artificial fibre. None of ____ had waistcoats. He favoured shirts __ the American kind with buttons on ___ points of the collar, and suede shoes with rubber _____. He had an attractive ____, muscular, and a stubborn line to his thin mouth. His ____ were brown and small.



TURTLES MAY FEED THE HUNGRY

The world is bursting with people.
In 33 years there may be 14 billion
_ _ _ _ _ _ in the world. Many
scientists fear a _ _ _ _ shortage.
Some scientists are interested in
green turtles _ _ a source of food.
Over 120 _ _ _ _ _ of meat can be
taken from a _ _ _ _ _ grown
turtle. Other parts of the turtle
make a rich, tasty _ _ _ _.
Green turtles have been eaten for
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ of years. But they
have been over-hunted. Now _ _ _ _
a few turtles are left. The green
sea turtle is almost _ _ _ _ _ _ _.
Radios, metal tags, and huge
balloons were put _ _ these green
turtles to learn where they nest.
_ _ _ _ the eggs were taken to a
turtle farm. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
want to raise green turtles for
_ _ _ _ _ meat.
Can turtles be raised like cows?
Some scientists believe _ _ _ _
can.

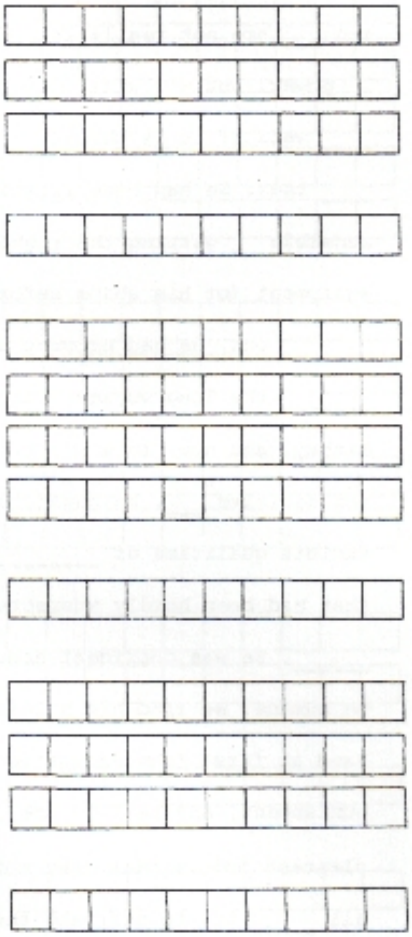


SIMPLE CONCRETE WORK

The ingredients of concrete are sand, water and aggregate consisting __ stones, broken brick or shingle. __ is essential that all __ these materials should be clean, as any foreign substance, such __ loam, greatly reduces its strength.

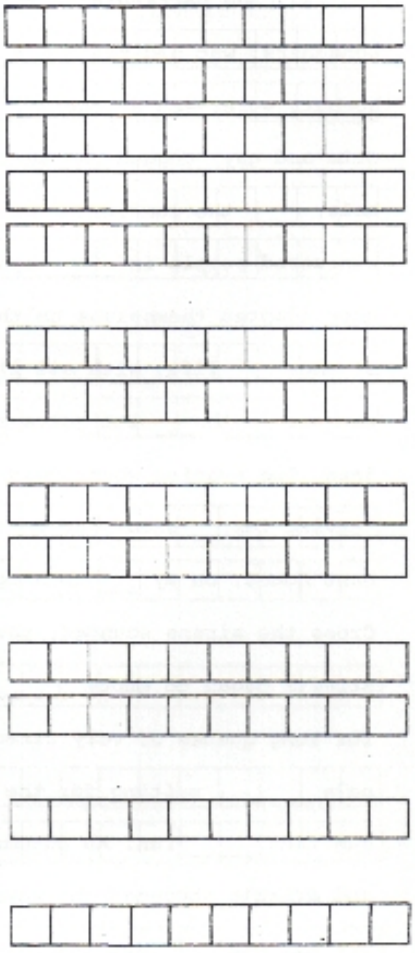
It is ____ necessary that the concrete _____ be properly mixed, and this is ___ merely a matter of _____ the ingredients carelessly and hoping for the ____.

A good strong concrete mixture for small ____ can be made from one ____ cement, two parts sharp sand and three parts __ coarse aggregate, with sufficient water to ___ them thoroughly.



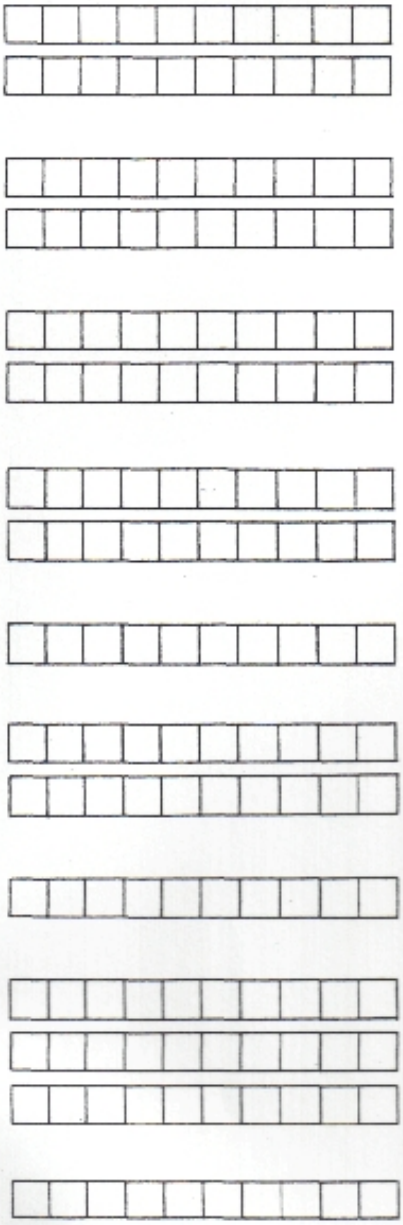
CAPTAIN PHILLIP

Phillip, however, seems to have been one of those quiet, competent men ___ are not really interested __ power, but who will use it ____ well if it is thrust ____ them. He had been firm and sensible __ getting the right equipment for his ships before _____ out, he had brought them _____ the long voyage without a mishap, and now, in a practical and decisive ___, he began to exhibit qualities of _____ that had been hardly suspected _____. He was confident enough to be humane. We find him holding ___ hand at first from excessive punishment, and he ____ the clearest orders that they must at all _____ try to befriend the aborigines.



'LONDON CAN TAKE IT'

These were the days when the English, and particularly the Londoners, who had the place __ honour, were seen at their ____. Grim and gay, dogged and serviceable, ____ the confidence of unconquered people in _____ bones, they adapted themselves to this strange ___ life, with all its terrors, with ___ its jolts and jars. One evening when I was leaving for __ excursion on the East Coast, on my ___ to King's Cross the sirens sounded, the streets began to empty ______ for long queues of very tired, pale ______, waiting for the last bus that _____ run. An autumn mist and drizzle shrouded the scene. The air was ____ and raw. Night and the enemy were approaching. I ____, with a spasm of mental pain, a deep sense of ___ strain and suffering that was _____ borne throughout the world's largest _____ city.



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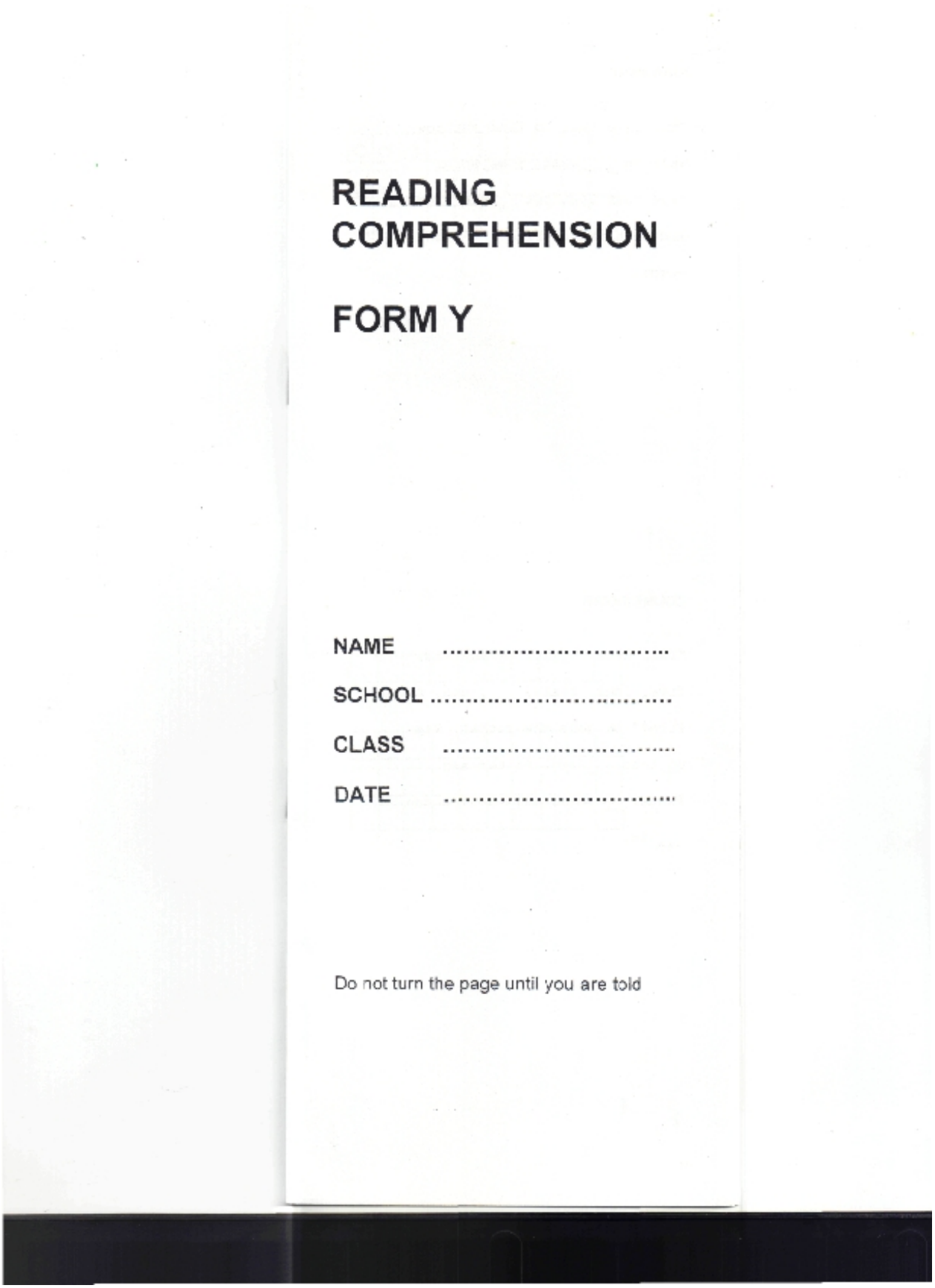


READING COMPREHENSION

FORM Y

NAME .....

SCHOOL .....

CLASS .....

DATE .....

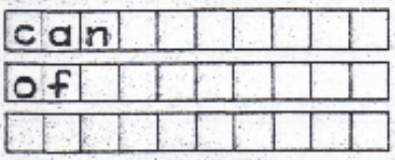
Do not turn the page until you are told

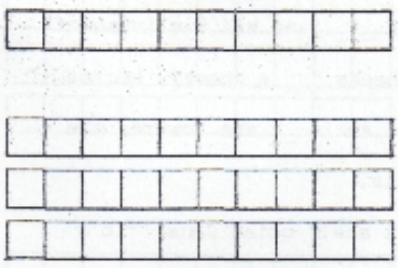
THIS TEST

This is a test to find out how well we ___ read. Some words have been left out __ the stories, and we have to write ___ missing words.

COUNT DOWN

"Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, ___, one, zero. Fire!" Up goes the rocket. Way up into ___ sky. Faster and faster __ goes, till no one can ___ it.

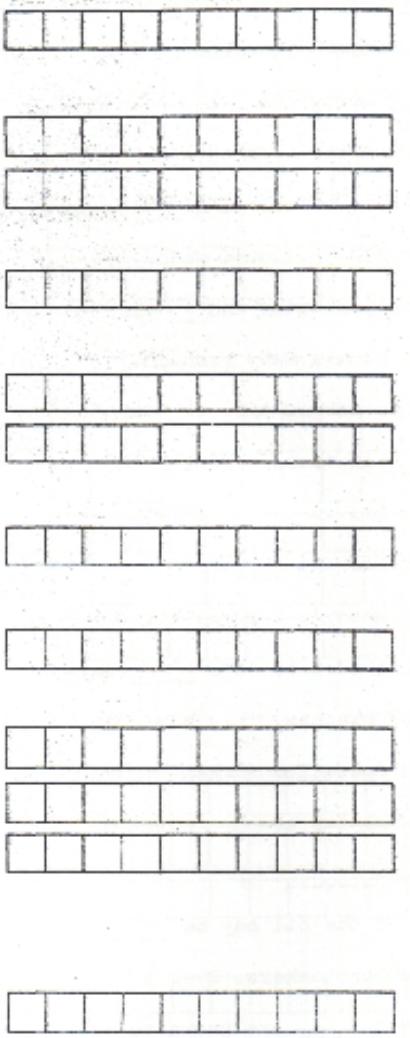




THE ARRIVAL OF MARY POPPINS

The person was holding fast to the handle of an open _____, dangling by one hand like a doll fastened __ the string of a balloon. With the _____ hand she kept a firm grasp on an oversized carpetbag. ___ floated gently down Cherry Tree Lane, and the children could ___ that in spite of the east ____ her clothes were un-ruffled and her chestnut-brown ____ was unmussed. She kept her high-buttoned black shoes pointed primly outward as ___ settled to earth in the Bank's dooryard, and Michael ___ Jane had a glimpse of rosy cheeks ___ a cheery, secret sort of smile __ she lowered the umbrella.

"It's she!" cried Jane. "It's the nanny. She _____ our advertisement!"



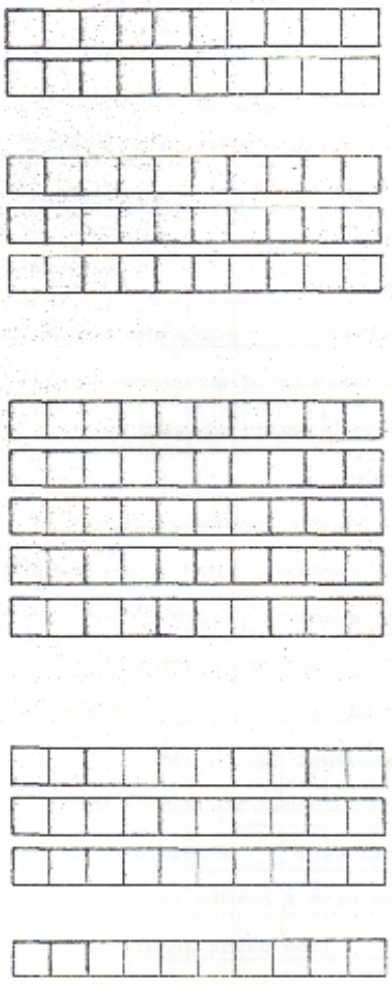
POLLUTED BEACHES

Some of our country's beaches are turning black. The sand __ becoming dirty and oily. Ever ___ air around the beaches smells unclean. Many of our fine _____ are becoming polluted with ___.

Oil in the water and __ the beaches causes many problems. People no longer like to play and ____ in these polluted places. Oil in ___ water also kills birds and ____.

___ country's leaders feel something must be done _____ our polluted beaches. They have started Operation Sunken Tanker which will try to ____ ways to save our _____.

Some of the oil may be _____ from sunken tankers. Over a hundred _____ are known to be on the bottom of the oceans around our country.

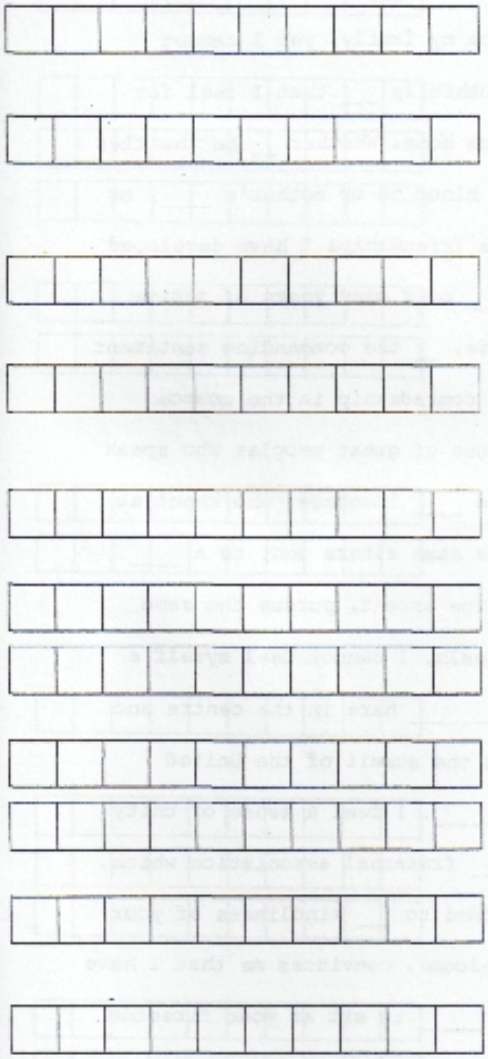


THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERCOATING

In applying paint of the same colour as the original paintwork, an undercoating _ _ _ be omitted, But a more durable surface will result if two coats _ _ _ given, as this builds up a firm solid foundation.

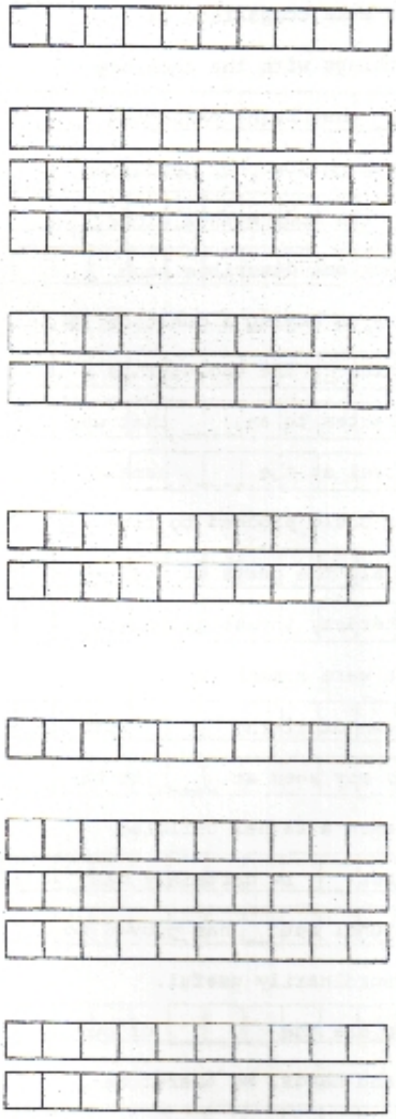
Assuming that _ _ _ coats are to be given, consisting of an under-coat _ _ _ a gloss paint, proceed as follows:

First stir the undercoating paint _ _ _ _ a round stick until all the ingredients are thoroughly _ _ _ _ _ , leaving no trace of sediment in the _ _ _ _ _ _ of the container. Pour out enough _ _ _ _ _ to cover the bottom of a paint "kettle", _ _ a decorator's paint pot with a handle is _ _ _ _ _ _. The paint should not be more than two centimetars deep _ _ a greater depth means dirty work.



CHURCHILL'S CHRISTMAS IN WASHINGTON

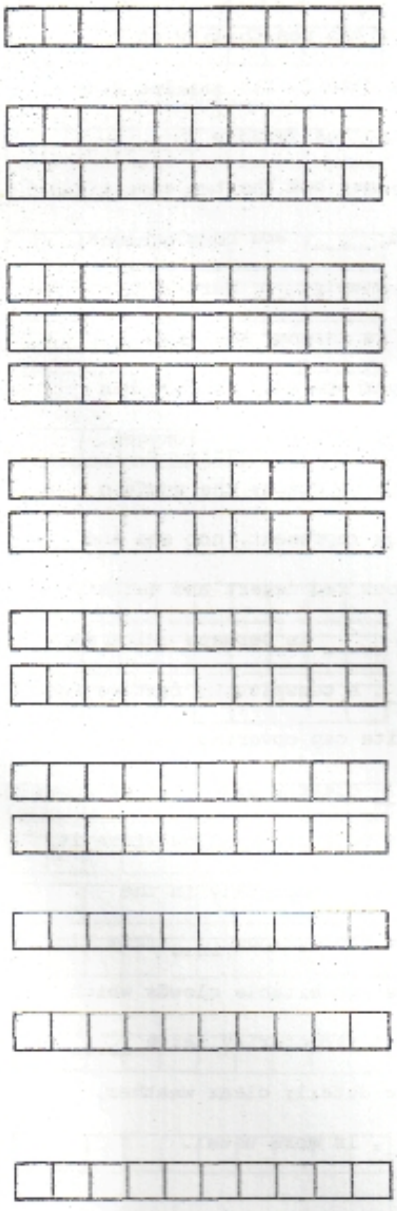
I spend this anniversary and festival ___ from my country, far from my family, yet I cannot truthfully ___ that I feel far from home. Whether __ be the ties of blood on my mother's ____, or the friendships I have developed ____ over many years of active life, __ the commanding sentiment of comradeship in the common cause of great peoples who speak the ____ language, who kneel at the same altars and, to a ____ large extent, pursue the same ideals, I cannot feel myself a _____ here in the centre and at the summit of the United ______. I feel a sense of unity ___ fraternal association which, added to ___ kindliness of your welcome, convinces me that I have a _____ to sit at your fireside and ____ your Christmas joys.



BRAINS AS MACHINES

In the seventeenth century people began to make comparison of living things with the machines that ___ then being perfected. The French philosopher Descartes _____ the body with a clock. In a clock one describes each __ the parts as having a function in the working __ the whole. This led Descartes to an ____ that was quite novel at the ____, namely that one could proceed to find ___ how all the parts of the ____ interact, investigating it as if it were a machine. Comparison of living _____ with machines may seem at _____ to be crude, even a rather childish procedure, ___ it certainly has limitations: but __ has proved to be extraordinarily useful. Machines are the _____ of our brains and hands. We therefore understand ____ thoroughly and can speak conveniently about other things by comparing them with _____.

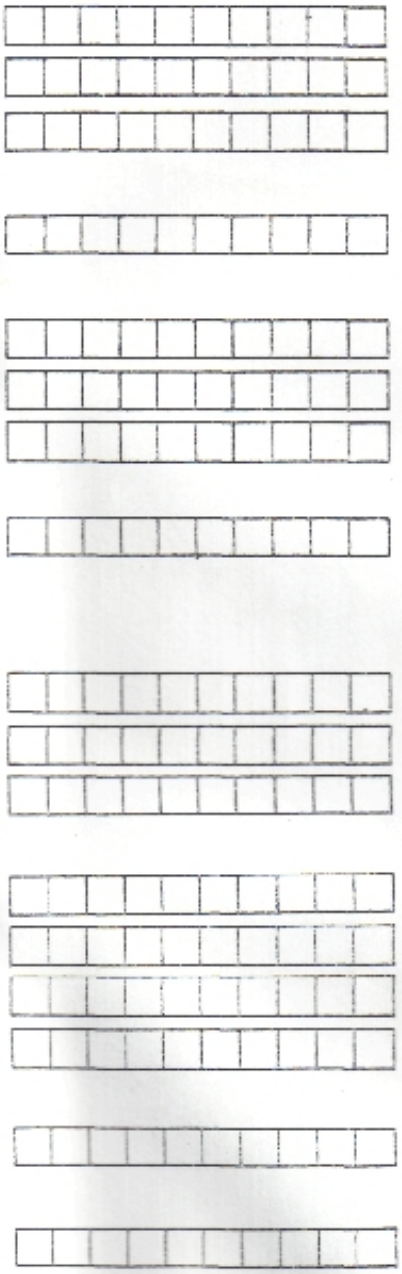
12



13

IS THERE LIFE ON MARS?

Mars is the only planet whose solid surface can be ____ and studied; and it tempts __ to consider the possibility of ____ in more detail. Its smaller size leads to considerably _____ conditions; but the two essentials, air and _____, are both present, though scanty. ___ Martian atmosphere is thinner than our own, ___ it is perhaps adequate. It has been proved to _____ oxygen. There is no ocean; the surface markings represent, not sea and ____, but red desert and darker ground _____ is perhaps moist and _____. A conspicuous feature is the white cap covering the pole, which __ clearly a deposit of snow; __ must be quite shallow since it _____ away completely in the summer. Photographs ____ from time to time indubitable clouds which blot out temporarily large _____ of surface detail; clear weather, _____, is more usual.



ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

Do what is underlined. SAY what is not.

Hand out the booklets, face upwards, and instruct the students not to turn over the page until they are told.

At the top of the page where it says 'Name' print your name. (Pause) Now print the name of your school and your class and today's date/ (Have the name of the school, class and date on chalkboard)

This is a test to see how well you can read. There are stories in the books but some of the words are missing. Turn to the first page 2 and see. Do you see where the words are missing in the first story? (Indicate) You have to read the story, the PRINT in the column marked for answers (Indicate) the ONE WORD you think should go in each space. Some words may be long words, like 'television' or they may be short words like 'and' or 'on' or 'the'. The small dashes will show you how many letters there are in a word, for example, if the word is 'cat' there are three dashes; if it is 'of' there are only two dashes.

Let's do one together. Look at the piece called THIS TEST. (Hold up to demonstrate.) You listen while I read it. (Read fairly slowly and clearly.)

"This is a test to find out how well we (pause) read."

What word do you think should go in the first space? (Obtain the answer 'can'.) Do you see where it has been printed in the ANSWER COLUMN? (Hold up and demonstrate.) Let's read some more. You follow as I read:

"This is a test to find out how well we can read. Some words have been left out (pause) the stories."

What word should go in the second space? (Obtain the word 'of') Do you see where it has been printed in the ANSWER COLUMN? (Hold up to demonstrate.)

Now I want you to do the next one yourselves. Just PRINT in the ANSWER COLUMN the ONE WORD that you think should go in the next space. Do that, then put down your pencil.

When most have finished.

Who has the answer? (Obtain 'the')

Ask if anyone has any other answers (You will probably get 'in', 'down', 'out') Point out that these words would fit but that 'the' is probably the better word.

Well that is what I want you to do. Just read the story and PRINT in the ANSWER COLUMN the ONE WORD that you think should go in each blank. Try to fill every blank but if you cannot think of a word, go on to the next one. Do not be afraid to guess. Some stories may be hard to read, but even these have some easy blanks. When you finish the test, go back and try to guess the words that you left out. Try every blank. If you cannot spell a word, just PRINT it the way it sounds. No marks will be taken off for wrong spelling.

Well, you try the next story yourselves. COUNT DOWN. Fill in all the missing words. Do that now. Then put your pencils down. (While students are doing this, walk around and check that answers are being printed in the right place in the answer column.)

When most have finished.

Let us check that answers you have finished. (Read the story aloud, stressing the words in CAPITALS.)

"Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, TWO, one, zero. Fire!" Up goes the rocket. Way up into THE sky. Faster and faster IT goes, till no one can SEE it."

Does anyone want to ask any questions? (Answer any questions.) When you turn over, there are fifteen pages. As you finish each page, go straight on to the next page without waiting for me to tell you. Is everybody ready? Turn over and begin.

Start stop watch, or note the exact time (hour, minutes, seconds) from a clock or watch with a second hand, on a piece of paper, and write down the exact time it will be in thrity minutes. Check that students are recording their answers in the right place. DO NOT HELP IN ANY WAY. As students finish and check through their work, collect papers and allow them to carry on quietly with some other activity.

After 25 minutes say:
You have five more minutes

After 30 minutes say:
Stop. Pencils down, please.

Collect those papers which have not already been collected.

ALTERNATE FORMS

The GAPADOL tests are power tests rather than speed tests, and are therefore relatively free from practice effect. However, any possibility of practice effect can be eliminated, for example, in regular assessments for record card purposes, by alternating between form G and Form Y of the tests for successive assessments.

As with the GAP tests, the two forms of the GAPADOL test may be administered simultaneously to a group of children, as they have the same initial practice items. If learners are seated so that those sitting next to each other are answering different forms, any possibility of cheating is obviated.

Alternatively, greater sensitivity and reliability may be achieved by administering the two forms of the test on the same day or on successive days, and averaging the child's reading ages on the two tests. This is equivalent to having administered a test of double length, with a reliability of approximately .95.

MARKING KEY

FORM G		
CHASE	**TURTLES**	**PHILLIP**
ON	PEOPLE	WHO
OUT	FOOD	IN
THEIR	AS	VERY
WITH	KILOS	UPON
TRIED	FULLY	IN
COME	SOUP/MEAT	SETTING
THE	HUNDREDS	THROUGH
SAFE	ONLY	WAY
SENT	EXTINCT	LEADERSHIP
IN	ON	BEFORE
	THEN	HIS
	SCIENTISTS	GAVE
	THEIR	TIMES
	THEY	
LEAMAS	**CONCRETE**	**LONDON**
OF	OF	OF
STRONG	IT	BEST
HIS	OF	WITH
AND	AS	THEIR
HANDS	ALSO	NEW
TO	SHOULD	ALL
OTHER	NOT	AN
HAD	MIXING	WAY
HIS	BEST	EXCEPT
THEM	JOBS	PEOPLE
OF	PART	WOULD
THE	OF	COLD
SOLES	MIX	FELT
FACE		THE
EYES		BEING
		CAPITAL

FORM Y		
POPPINS	**UNDERCOATING**	**BRAINS**
UMBRELLA	MAY	WERE
TO	ARE	COMPARED
OTHER	TWO	OF
SHE	AND	OF
SEE	WITH	IDEA
WIND	MIXED	TIME
HAIR	BOTTOM	OUT
SHE	PAINT	BODY
AND	AS	THINGS
AND	CALLED	FIRST
AS	AS	AND
ANSWERED		IT
		PRODUCTS
		THEM
		MACHINES
BEACHES	**CHURCHILL**	**MARS**
IS	FAR	SEEN
THE	SAY	US
BEACHES	IT	LIFE
OIL	SIDE	DIFFERENT
ON	HERE	WATER
SWIM	OR	THE
THE	SAME	BUT
FISH	VERY	CONTAIN
OUR	STRANGER	LAND
ABOUT	STATES	WHICH
FIND	AND	FERTILE
BEACHES	THE	IS
COMING	RIGHT	IT
TANKERS	SHARE	MELTS
		SHOW
		AREAS
		HOWEVER

A student should not be penalized for
spelling a correct answer incorrectly.
E.g.

CHASE
Item 3 - **there** for **their** – correct
Item 5 - **tries** for **tried** – incorrect

TABLE 2: READING AGE FROM RAW SCORE

FORM G		FORM Y	
SCORE	**READING AGE**	**SCORE**	**READING AGE**
1	7.5	4	7.6
2	7.7	5	7.8
3	7.9	6	7.9
4	7.11	7	7.11
5	8.1	8	8.1
6	8.2	9	8.2
7	8.4	10	8.4
8	8.6	11	8.6
9	8.8	12	8.7
10	8.10	13	8.9
11	8.11	14	8.10
12	9.1	15	9.0
13	9.3	16	9.2
14	9.5	17	9.3
15	9.7	18	9.5
16	9.8	19	9.7
17	9.10	20	9.8
18	10.0	21	9.10
19	10.2	22	10.0
20	10.4	23	10.1
21	10.6	24	10.3
22	10.7	25	10.5
23	10.9	26	10.6
24	10.11	27	10.8
25	11.0	28	10.9
26	11.2	29	10.11
27	11.4	30	11.1
28	11.6	31	11.2
29	11.7	32	11.3
30	11.9	33	11.5
31	11.11	34	11.7
32	12.1	35	11.9
33	12.2	36	11.11
34	12.4	37	12.3
35	12.6	38	12.8
36	12.8	39	13.2
37	12.10	40	13.7
38	12.11	41	14.1
39	13.1	42	14.5
40	13.3	43	14.9
41	13.5	44	15.0
42	13.7	45	15.3
43	13.10	46	15.6
44	14.3	47	15.8
45	14.8	48	15.11
46	15.1	49	16.1
47	15.6	50	16.4
48	15.11	51	16.7
49	16.3	52	16.8
50	16.10	53	16.11

GAPADOL TEST 9A

	Date of birth	Chron Age on 17-05-2005	Test 17/5/05	RawScore 17/5/05	ReadingAge 17/5/05	ChronAgeon 25/10/05	Test 25/10/05	RawScore 25/10/05	ReadingAge 25/10/05
PATTI	14-01-91	14.4	Y	32	11.3	14.9	G	45	14.8
JOELENE	1990/06/10	14.7	G	31	11.11	15	Y	20	9.8
DILLON	15-08-90	14.9	G	2	7.7	15.2	Y	6	7.9
SAM	04--8-90	14.9	G	7	8.4	15.2	Y	27	10.8
TATUM	18-09-90	14.8	G	37	12.1	15.1	Y	28	10.9
DENNIS	31-08-90	14.8	Y	33	11.5	15.2	G	28	11.6
KEVIN	21-09-88	16.8	G	25	11	17.1	Y	23	10.1
DAWN	25-07-90	14.10	Y	17	9.3	15.3	G	23	10.9
NEIL	1987/07/12	17.5	Y	18	9.5	17.10	G	17	9.1
NORMA	1989/04/09	15.8	G	19	10.2	16.1	Y	36	11.11
NATASHA	1991/04/04	14.1	G	27	11.4	14.6	Y	27	10.8
CLIVE	18-12-88	16.5				16.10	G	5	8.1
SIMPHIWE	23-04-91	14.1	G	15	9.7	14.7	Y	27	10.8
CAROL	23-04-91	14.1	Y	24	10.3	14.7	G	25	11
JOYCE	20-03-89	16.2	G	16	9.8	16.8	Y	31	11.2
FARIDA	31-03-89	16.2	Y	11	8.6	16.8	G	13	9.3
BARBARA	1990/05/04	15.1	Y	18	9.5	15.6	G	15	9.7
NIGEL	1989/03/02	16.3	G	17	9.1	16.9			
DAVID	1990/05/06	14.11	G	22	10.7	15.4	Y	38	12.8
MAVIS	1988/07/06	16.11	Y	25	10.5	17.4	G	25	11
PHILANI	30-09-91	13.8	G	35	12.6	14.1	Y	48	15.11
NOMUSA	1990/12/08	14.9	G	17	9.1	15.2	Y	15	9
MILLY	14-07-90	14.10	Y	22	10	15.3	G	19	10.2
STEVEN	1990/04/03	15.2	Y	25	10.5	15.7	G	28	11.8
MIKE	13-06-90	14.11	Y	23	10.1	15.4	G	25	11
SIMON	1990/08/09	14.8	Y	21	9.1	15.1	G	20	10.4
SIPHO	1990/07/05	15	Y	22	10	15.6	G	25	10.5
ELSIE	1989/06/04	16.1							
KEN	1991/11/08	13.9	Y	25	10.5	14.2	G	27	11.4
BERT	29-11-90	14.6	Y	33	11.5	15	G	21	10.6
NASREEN	18-07-90	14.10	Y	25	10.5	15.3	G	42	13.7
LEON	14-12-90	14.5	G	19	10.2	14.10	Y	18	9.5
ANNA	1991/11/09	13.8	Y	12	8.7	14.1	G	8	8.6
ERIC	1990/09/09	14.8	Y	17	9.3	15.1	G	9	8.8

Please mark your answers to the questions below by putting an X in the block which applies to you.

1. What language do you speak most often at home?
   - Afrikaans ☐
   - English ☐
   - Zulu ☐
   - Other ☐ Name the language _____

2. Indicate in the blocks your ability in the following languages

	Understand	Speak	Read	Write
Afrikaans	☐	☐	☐	☐
English	☐	☐	☐	☐
Zulu	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other _____ *Name the language*	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. How old are you? _____

4. What is your sex? Male ☐ Female ☐

5. What Grade are you in? _____

6. What class are you in?
   - Grade 9A ☐
   - Grade 9B ☐
   - Grade 9C ☐
   - Grade 9D ☐
   - Grade 9E ☐
   - Grade 9 F ☐

7. Do you enjoy reading?
   - Not at all ☐
   - A little ☐
   - Quite a lot ☐
   - Very Much ☐

8. How much time do you spend reading in a week?
   - Less than an hour ☐
   - 1-2 hours ☐
   - 2-3 hours ☐
   - 4-5 hours ☐
   - More than 5 hours ☐

9. Do you have any books in your home?
   - None ☐
   - 1 – 4 ☐
   - 5-10 ☐
   - 10-20 ☐
   - About 50 ☐
   - 50-100 ☐
   - More than 100 ☐

10. What do you read, do you read mainly?

- Books ☐
- Magazines ☐
- Newspapers ☐
- Comics ☐

11. How often is a newspaper bought in your home?

- Every day ☐
- Once a week ☐
- Sometimes ☐
- Never ☐

12. How often are magazines bought in your home?

- More than one a week ☐
- One a week ☐
- One a month ☐
- Sometimes ☐
- Never ☐

13. Do you think you have any problems reading? Yes ☐ No ☐

14 How much time do you spend watching T.V.?

- Less than an hour a day ☐
- About 1hour a day ☐
- 1-2 hours a day ☐
- 2-3 hours a day ☐
- 3-4 hours a day ☐
- More than 4 hours a day ☐

15. What do you do in your spare time? *(Put in order from 1 to 6. Number 1 being what you do most and number 6 being what you do least)*

- Play sport ☐
- Watch TV ☐
- Read ☐
- Listen to music ☐
- Go shopping ☐
- Hang out with friends ☐

16. Do you belong to a library? Yes ☐ No ☐

If you answered No to question 16, why not?

_____

_____

If you answered yes to question 16, how often do you use it?

- About once a week ☐
- About once every two weeks ☐
- About once a month ☐
- About once every three months ☐
- About once every six months ☐
- About once a year ☐

17. What type of books do you enjoy reading?

- Adventure ☐
- Romance ☐
- Science Fiction ☐
- Non Fiction ☐
- Humour ☐
- Sport ☐

Other (specify) _____

18. When you were a small child, did your parents, or any one else in your home, read a story to you?

- Often ☐
- Sometimes ☐
- Hardly ever ☐
- Never ☐

19. How do you rate yourself as a reader? *(Choose ONE from the list below)*

- I am a fast, good reader and I understand everything I read ☐
- I am an average reader – I understand most of what I read. ☐
- I am a slow reader but I understand what I am reading ☐
- I am a slow reader and I have problems understanding what I read ☐
- I struggle reading and don't understand much of what I read ☐

20. How do you feel about reading*? (Choose ONE from the list below that best describes your feelings)*

- I enjoy reading and read a lot ☐
- Reading is OK. I sometimes read a book or magazine ☐
- Reading is OK, but I don't read much. ☐
- I only read when I have to read for school. ☐
- Reading is a problem for me but I would like to read better ☐
- I don't enjoy reading at all ☐

21. When I read, the main problem I have is *(Choose ONE statement from the list that best describes your problem)*

- I don't understand all the words ☐
- I have problems understanding the grammar ☐
- I read too slowly ☐
- I find it hard to concentrate ☐
- I have no real problems with reading ☐

22. If you are reading a book at the moment, write the title and the author below.

_____

_____

NAME _____ (optional)

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire.

Liz Ralfe