

THE READING EXPERIENCES OF GRADE FOUR CHILDREN

Romy Ganasi

Master of Education

2010

THE READING EXPERIENCES OF GRADE FOUR CHILDREN

Romy Ganasi

Research Report Submitted for the Requirements for the
Masters of Education Degree, University of KwaZulu-
Natal, School of Education

Supervisor: Dr Nyna Amin

2010

DEDICATION

In loving memory of ...

SUMANT PILLAY (1991-2009)

**A very intelligent, dedicated and talented student who achieved
far more than many of us ever will.**

DECLARATION...

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

Researcher

Supervisor

APPRECIATION

I would like to place on record my heartfelt appreciation to my dearest mother, for her support, patience and encouragement during my studies.

To Dr Nyna Amin, thank you for sharing your passion, insight and expertise.

To all my dear friends and loving family, thank you for your support, help and belief in me.

To all the participants in my study, thank you for willingly sharing information that has proved invaluable to my study.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the reading experiences of grade four children from an affective perspective. The poor state of reading in the present South African climate incites individuals to be concerned about young children who may not acquire reasonable levels of reading proficiency for daily living or tertiary education. The decline of reading in the home, the lack of emphasis on reading in some schools, the decrease in children's motivation to read and South Africa's poor literacy performance in international studies are all reasons for concern.

Literature suggests that reading comprises both a cognitive and an affective component. Reading, in other words is not merely a mental skill, it is also influenced by emotions. Research shows that whether the cognitive aspects of reading are achieved will be determined by a child's affective disposition. In South African reading studies, a greater emphasis is placed on the cognitive aspects of reading. Not enough voice has been given to the children to find out about their personal feelings about reading. There are, however, international affective studies, but they cannot be applied fully to the South Africa context. This study, therefore, attempts to fill these gaps by focusing on the affective aspects of children's reading by interviewing the children themselves.

A qualitative research design was used to explore children's feelings about reading. The semi-structured interview was used as the main instrument. In addition three techniques, viz. thought-bubble drawings, storytelling and selection of reading material (four activities, each followed by an informal interview) were employed.

Even though each child expressed his/her emotions in a variety of ways, the analysis is presented according to the dominant emotions as exemplified by each child. Some of the emergent findings were that children preferred to read loudly as compared to reading silently, children generally displayed a positive attitude toward reading and children showed an interest in reading material that was based on popular culture.

The study concludes with recommendations for teachers and recommendations for further study.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	Racial composition of the learner component	10
Figure 2:	Home languages of the learner component	11
Figure 3:	Teaching staff	11
Figure 4:	Racial composition of teaching staff	12
Figure 5:	Outline of research techniques	25
Figure 6:	Biographic information of participants	26
Figure 7:	Blank thought bubble for boys	32
Figure 8:	Blank thought bubble for girls	32
Figure 9:	Reading material used in the display	35
Figure 10:	Feelings exemplified by participants	43
Figure 11:	Competitions in the March 2009 “Free 4 All”	48

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A:	Interview schedule	93
Appendix B:	Thought-bubble drawing	95
Appendix C:	Thought-bubble drawing	96
Appendix D:	Thought-bubble drawing	97
Appendix E:	Thought-bubble drawing	98
Appendix F:	Zambo’s coding system for the facial features in the drawings	99
Appendix G:	Zambo’s coding system for the thought bubbles	100
Appendix H:	Storytelling activity	101
Appendix I:	Page from “Free 4 All” newspaper	102
Appendix J:	Page from “Free 4 All” newspaper	103
Appendix K:	Comic strip from “Free 4 All” newspaper	104
Appendix L:	Letter from Department of Education	105
Appendix M:	Ethical clearance	106
Appendix N:	Letter requesting permission to conduct research at school	107
Appendix O:	Letter to parents requesting permission to interview children	108
Appendix P:	Letter to learners requesting permission to interview them	110

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	iii
DECLARATION	iv
APPRECIATION	v
ABSTRACT	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF APPENDICES	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix

CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCHING CHILDREN’S AFFECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF READING

Introduction to the Study	1
Research Question	2
Focus and Purpose of Study	2
Clarification of Concepts	4
Experience	4
Reading Experience	6
A Rationale for Targeting Affective Aspects of Reading	7
The Context of the Study	10

Research Design and Methodology	12
Format of the Study	13
Conclusion	13

CHAPTER TWO

READINGS ABOUT READING

Literature Review	
Introduction	14
Review of Related Literature	14
Cognitive Aspects of Reading	14
Studies on Cognitive Aspects of Reading	15
Affective Aspects of Reading	17
Studies on Affective Aspects of Reading	18
Conclusion	22

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction	23
Research Approach	23
Research Participants	25
Participant Recruitment	26

Piloting the study	27
Piloting Activity 1: Thought-bubble drawings	27
Piloting Activity 2: Storytelling	27
Piloting Activity 3: Selection of Reading Material and Discussion	28
Using a Teacher from another School	28
Interviews	29
Research Techniques	30
Thought-bubble drawings	31
Storytelling	33
Selection of Reading Material and Discussion	34
Data Analysis	38
Validity	38
Ethical Considerations	39
Limitations of Study	39
Conclusion	40

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S AFFECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF READING

Introduction	41
Analysing Children's Affective Experiences of Reading	41
Analysis	44

Experiencing Reading as Fun: Leo	44
Reading is about Learning: Nandi	53
Reading is about Girls' Stuff and Boys' Stuff: Lisa	59
Reading is Nice: Lindani	65
Reading 'New' Books: Zora	70
Cross-case Synthesis	75
Conclusion	76

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction	77
Findings and Recommendations for Teachers	77
The Influence of the Home on the Reader	77
Reading Aloud Versus Reading Silently	78
Challenges for the Teaching of Reading	79
Reading Experiences (feelings)	81
Recommendations for Further Study	83
Conclusion	83
References	85
Appendices	93

CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCHING CHILDREN'S AFFECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF READING

Introduction to the Study

Far more children today have access to education than in previous years. Despite increased access and efforts to ensure that children have writing, numeracy and reading skills, there is growing concern about the reading ability of children who will eventually go to universities as adults. This is not a problem peculiar to South Africa; it is a universal problem (Cramer & Castle, 1994).

The question that has to be asked is: Why is reading important? Reading impacts on a person's life in substantial ways. It affords readers independent access to information in an increasingly information-driven society (Pretorius, 2000). More and more information has to be dealt with using communication modes where reading is essential; for example, surfing the internet, decoding cellular phone messages and advertisements. More importantly, reading is a powerful learning mechanism; it is a means of constructing meaning and acquiring new knowledge (Pretorius, 2002); children and students need to be able to read in order to learn. If reading is not mastered, then the potential for success in the learning context is hampered from the start (Pretorius, 2000). If South Africa, as a developing country, wants to produce adults who will make their mark in society, then serious attention has to be given to improving the reading skills of children and to creating a culture of reading from primary school level.

There are a number of sources reporting on the state of reading which give rise for concern in South Africa about the low reading levels of school goers. For instance, a comparative study of literacy and numeracy skills of primary school children from twelve countries in Africa, found that South African children fared poorly in comparison with children in other African countries (Pretorius, 2002, p.172). Secondly, the Threshold Report documented the poor reading skills, especially the comprehension skills, of South African primary school children in township schools (Pretorius, 2002, p.172). Thirdly, Strauss (1995) found that while grade six black children had good decoding skills when reading English, their comprehension skills were poor.

Fourthly, the READ Annual Report showed that in rural areas the average age of entry into grade eight is 14.4 years but the children's reading levels were equivalent to children at age 7.6 years (Pretorius, 2002, p.172). The findings of these reports justify our concern about poor literacy in South Africa.

Poor reading levels are also evident at tertiary level (Pretorius, 2002, p.172). Webb (1999) found that many of the second language students at the University of Pretoria had reading levels of grade seven/eight students. Pretorius (2000) found that too many first year second-language Psychology and Sociology students at Unisa¹ were reading well below their assumed reading levels with an average comprehension level of 53% and in a test (Pretorius, 2002, p.174) the reading speed of a sample of first year, second-language students was 96 words per minute, which is below the minimum recommended speed of at least 160-180 words per minute.

With reference to the above, the reading situation within the South African educational context is clearly a dismal one; hence, if a problem exists then surely studies need to be done in order to find out what is going awry, and where. There have been numerous studies dealing with the intellectual and technical aspects of reading (De Witt, Lessing & Dicker, 1998; Wildsmith-Cromarty & Gounden, 2006); but what is also important, and which has been ignored to a certain extent in South Africa, are children's feelings and emotions about reading and when reading. Therefore, this study focuses on young children's affective experiences of reading.

Research Question

This study entails answering a single question: What are the reading experiences of grade four children? The focus on experiences is predicated on the understanding that experiences will reveal feelings.

Focus and Purpose of Study

The focus of this study is to explore the reading experiences of young children. By 'experience', I mean children's personal feelings about reading. The children targeted for this study are a group of grade four learners, aged between eight and ten. These are crucial ages, and grade four is a crucial stage for the unfolding development of reading, particularly in South Africa where

¹ Unisa is an abbreviation for the University of South Africa.

poor reading competency seems to feature at all stages and grades (e.g. Pretorius, 2002; De Witt *et al*, 1998). How grade four children experience reading will lay a strong foundation for reading competency or it may lead to a disinterest in reading.

By grade four, learners have or should have been exposed to the mechanics of reading (syllabification, phonics, vowel and consonant blends, word recognition) and been encouraged to read both prescribed and self-selected works which include age-appropriate fiction, non-fiction, periodicals, newspapers and graded readers. Additionally, they are expected to read fluently and with an understanding of the material suitable for their level of development.

In practice, however, the picture is quite different. A baseline study of grade three classes in two rural districts by Taylor (2008, p.26) found that although sufficient textbooks were available in 70% of the schools, in 90% of the language classes little or no individual reading by learners was seen. These findings are not surprising in the light of Pretorius's (2002, p.190) assertion that schools in South Africa that do emphasize reading skills beyond the early grades are the exception rather than the rule; this is the case in even the more privileged schools.

The decline of reading in schools is matched by a similar decline of reading in the home (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). This decline has been attributed to teaching that emphasizes competition and does not address children's interests (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). Research has also shown that motivation to read decreases with age, especially if children's attitudes to reading become less positive (McKenna, Kear & Ellsworth, 1995).

From my own experiences as an English teacher, I have noticed that the standard of reading ability of children in schools has declined. What is surprising to me is that this phenomenon affects both first language and second language children. Out of curiosity this year, I conducted a Burt's Word Recognition Test² in my grade four class. The test revealed that the children were reading at a level two years and three months below their chronological age.

² The Burt Reading Test determines the reading age of children. It consists of 110 words graded in approximate order of difficulty. The child is asked to read as many words as he or she can at his or her own speed. The child will continue until he or she cannot read ten consecutive words. By using the total number of words the child gets right and the table provided, one can ascertain the reading age of the child (*Burt Word Reading Test - 1974 revision manual*, 1976). This test was devised at a time when classes were homogenous. Despite this limitation, the test was a quick way to inform me about the reading ability of my children.

An international study also provides evidence of declining reading performance. South Africa was one of forty-five countries that participated in the PIRLS³ study and achieved the lowest score of all participating countries (Howie, Venter, Van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Scherman & Archer, 2007, p.27). Grade four learners achieved an average score of 253 and grade five an average score of 302 (Howie *et al*, 2007, p.27). The fixed international average was 500⁴ (Howie *et al*, 2007, p.27). South Africa's poor performance in the PIRLS study demonstrates the need for a greater focus on reading in schools.

It is evident from the PIRLS results that the lack of emphasis on reading in schools and in the home, and the decrease in children's motivation to read, requires children's reading experiences to be researched.

Clarification of Concepts

This study is underpinned by the concepts of experience and reading experience. An assumption is that one of the domains of experience is feelings. Through an exploration of an individual's experience one could access the individual's feelings. Hence, in this study feelings and experiences are used interchangeably.

Since my study is about the reading experiences of children, it is crucial to conceptualise the terms 'reading' and 'experience.'

Experience

As a general concept, experience can be defined as observation or practice that results in knowledge or skill (*Compact Oxford English dictionary, 2008b; Reader's Digest Southern African word power dictionary, 1996*). The above dictionaries further elucidate experience as

³ PIRLS is an abbreviation for Progress in International Reading Literacy Study. South Africa participated for the first time between 2004 and 2006. Three aspects of children's reading literacy are focused on in PIRLS: purposes for reading; processes of comprehension; reading behaviours and attitudes. (Howie, Venter, Van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Scherman & Archer, 2007, p.27).

⁴ The PIRLS benchmarks are a set of unchanging points along the achievement scale that can be used to measure student achievement. The benchmarks range from 400 (low) to 625 (advanced). An average of 500 points was obtained through the use of Item Response Theory scaling (Howie *et al*, 2007).

having an affecting dimension (*Compact Oxford English dictionary, 2008b; Reader's Digest Southern African word power dictionary, 1996*).

According to Du Toit and Kruger, experience is related to the affective or emotional aspect of being human (1991, p.19). It is evaluated in terms of varying degrees of pleasantness and unpleasantness (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988, p.83). Du Toit and Kruger explain further that experience cannot occur in a vacuum (1991, p.19). It is related to a person's situation (Du Toit & Kruger, 1991, p.19). For example, a learner who plays soccer will be overjoyed when he scores a goal for his team. The same learner will be disappointed when he hears that he has failed a test. Vrey, as cited in Du Toit and Kruger, says that "experience influences involvement in every significant action as well as the quality of the relationship formed" (1991, p.19). Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg also maintain that experience determines the quality of relationships (1988, p.83). The boy who succeeds in soccer and fails at school thinks of himself as incompetent at school and he regards school as irrelevant, but he thinks of himself as a talented soccer player; hence, a positive relationship is developed in terms of sports and a negative relationship is developed in terms of school. "The experience of a situation results in the integration of the specific experience and the meaning which has been attributed to it, giving the meaning an individual-personal dimension" (Du Toit & Kruger, 1991, p.19).

A brain surgeon, Wilder Penfield, maintains that all the living experiences of a person are stored in the brain (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988, p.83). In addition, the meaning assigned to the experience and the affectivity thereof is also stored (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988, p.83). Penfield discovered that there is a mechanism in the brain which interprets present experiences in terms of past experiences (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988, p.83). In addition, affective experience acts as a source of reference for the interpretation of meaning in new experiences (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988, p. 83).

Experience forms the basis of many philosophical theories such as empiricism, radical empiricism and pragmatism. The theory of empiricism maintains that human knowledge arises from experience and observation (*Compact Oxford English dictionary, 2008a*). For example, when a child touches a hot iron for the first time, he or she will experience pain and will move

his or her hand away. In radical empiricism, one experience leads to another, like a chain-reaction (Lark, 2004). For example, having experience in one particular job can mean being qualified for another.

John Dewey (an educational theorist) believed that it is only through experience that man learns about the world and only by the use of his experience can he maintain and better himself in the world (*Encyclopedia of education*, 1971, p.82). He developed a theory of education that was based on understanding experience. He believed that teachers must provide learners with experiences that will enable them to become valued members of society. For Dewey, not all experiences are valuable (1938, p.25). In other words, what is a rewarding experience for one individual may be a detrimental experience for another. He believed that everything depended on the quality of the experience (Dewey, 1938, p.25).

Dewey's principle of continuity of experience explains that "every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (1938, p.35); hence, we learn something from negative and positive experiences. What is learnt from these experiences will influence one's future experiences. Similar to Dewey's principle of continuity is the meaning of experience in functional psychology: Experience is the "totality of all mental processes involved in any given activity which, as a result, determine the course and the quality of the subsequent experience" (Harriman, 1977, pp.63-64).

Dewey's second principle of interaction explains how past experience interacts with the present situation, to create one's present experience (Dewey, 1938, pp.41-42). For example, one of the needs of a baby is food, but this does not mean that the parent must feed the baby at any time. A wise mother will draw upon the past experience of her own, as well as other experts, to decide when to feed the baby (Dewey, 1938, pp.41-42). Experience can thus be seen as a process of learning and relearning through adaptation and modification and which learning influences one's ability to make meaning of one's present situation.

Reading Experience

In order to understand what a reading experience is, it is important to understand what the word 'reading' means. Reading involves an interaction between the reader and a text. It is more than

mere word recognition and a transfer of information from the print to the reader's mind. It is a two-way communication process between the reader and the writer. The reader brings his/ her own experience, knowledge, interest and imagination to the reading process. It is desirable for the reader to interpret and extrapolate information from the text and give meaning to the written word. (Anderson, 1968, pp. 18-20; Spink, 1989, pp.1-4).

Based on my experiences as a teacher, the following could be regarded as aspects to explore to elicit understanding of children's experiences of reading:

- The different types of reading material used in the classroom and at home (for example, fiction, non-fiction, magazines, comics, newspapers)
- The types of reading activities engaged in by the child
 - silent reading
 - choral reading
 - individual-reading aloud
 - group reading
 - being read to (by teachers, family members, peers etc.)
- Children's attitudes towards reading
- Interpretation and understanding of what is being read
- Development of the imagination
- The purposes of reading (for example, reading for information, reading for fun)
- The reading abilities of learners
- Time spent on reading

My experiences of teaching reading will be seen, particularly in the methodological approach to the study, to influence the choice of research methods and reading activities to generate data.

A Rationale for Targeting Affective Aspects of Reading

Affective aspects of reading are targeted in this study because the emphasis in South Africa is still placed on the cognitive and technical aspects of reading (De Witt *et al*, 1998; Pretorius 2000; Pretorius 2002) and rightly so, because of the poor state of reading in the country.

Equally, one could argue for affective aspects. In recent years, internationally, there has been a

growing interest in the affective aspects of reading. Researchers and teachers are increasingly addressing issues about the role of reading attitudes and reading motivation (Davis, 1998; Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006) and there is an increasing realisation among many teachers that affective elements of reading instruction are essential to the development of good readers (Cramer & Castle, 1994, p.9).

For example, Mikulecky (1994) found that in America, adolescents from the bottom 25% of classes read very little during school, did little reading in the evenings and read virtually nothing during the summers⁵ when they could choose how their time was spent. Consequently, during a two-year period, tests showed a decline in reading ability (Mikulecky, 1994). The students improved slightly while they were at school and were forced to read a small amount. But over the summers, whatever reading abilities they possessed declined to the point where they lost more over the summer than they had developed during the previous year. This loss in learning is not surprising, with studies reporting that most adolescents engage in almost no literacy in school and even less for homework (Mikulecky, 1994). According to Mikulecky (1994), a positive reading habit has not been developed at schools and the education children are receiving is one-sided as it does not address both attitude and habit on the one hand, and skills on the other.

Mikulecky (1994) also worked with adults in workplaces and in literacy programmes. The adults he worked with reported that they did not read much after leaving school. They hated reading and felt very inadequate about succeeding in print-centred activities. For these individuals, therefore, as literacy demands increase, they find themselves ill-prepared both intellectually and emotionally and that their education has failed them because it has not helped to develop a literacy habit. Mikulecky (1994) further argues that a one-sided education system that ignores fostering positive reading habits and attitudes (i.e. the affective aspects of reading) can be detrimental as it squanders resources by attempting to teach narrow skills which will be lost by a large percentage of students. One could conclude, therefore, that concentrating on skills and not on good reading habits will result in individuals being ill-prepared for life in developing contexts.

⁵ The holiday at the end of the school year is in the summertime in the United States of America.

In the United States of America, children spend about twelve years learning how to read. In the early grades they learn the mechanics of reading whilst in the upper grades and high school, they learn to reconstruct, comprehend, extract, assimilate and use information from a variety of sources for many purposes (Cramer & Castle, 1994). After completing school, however, many of them do not choose to read voluntarily for their own personal pleasure or information (Cramer & Castle, 1994). For many years the notion of helping young children develop positive attitudes about the pleasures and values of reading has been stated, but has often been neglected by teachers (Cramer & Castle, 1994).

From a personal perspective, as a child in the junior phase of school, I too learnt the mechanics of reading very well. In the higher levels of school I learnt more sophisticated reading skills. Even though these necessary skills were adequately acquired, I do not read for enjoyment and pleasure today. I read only when required and I find reading tiresome. This has occurred because a love of reading and positive literacy habits and attitudes were not instilled in me during my schooling days. My experience, as well as that of many others, raises the following questions:

- Why do some people read?
- Why do other people, who can read, choose not to?
- What should schools do to foster the love of reading and to promote lifelong reading?

(Cramer & Castle, 1994)

A teacher wrote in 1915:

It should be the teacher's aim to give every child a love for reading, a hunger for it that will stay with him through all the years of his life. If a child has that he will acquire the mechanical part without difficulty.

(Cramer & Castle, 1994)

Cramer and Castle (1994) have submitted the following beliefs as being central in any literacy education programme:

- Affective aspects of reading are equal in importance to cognitive aspects.
- Affective aspects of reading instruction are too often neglected.
- Affective elements of reading can and should be measured.
- More systematic research is needed in the affective areas of reading.

In the light of the above arguments, I have been strongly driven to explore the decline in reading, not by directing attention to the cognitive aspects of reading but rather to focus on the affective aspects. The purpose will therefore be to seek deeper, nuanced understandings of grade four children's affective experiences of reading.

The Context of the Study

This study was carried out in a primary school that is situated on the Bluff area, in KwaZulu-Natal. The school was established in 1920, having only two classes. Today, the school has fifteen classes and it caters for children between the ages of 5 and 13 years (i.e. grades R – 7).

The Bluff was previously a working-to-middle-class residential suburb that was designated a White area. Since the late eighties and early nineties, however, desegregation has taken place; Coloured, Black and Indian people moved into the area.

Presently, the medium of instruction in the school is English. In addition, Afrikaans is offered from grade three to seven as a second language and isiZulu is offered from grade three to seven as a third language.

The school formerly comprised teachers and children who were all white. The school has been transformed over the last fifteen years. It now comprises a racially-mixed learner population (i.e. Black, White, Indian and Coloured) with the majority being Black. There were 520 children registered at the school in 2009. The racial composition of the children is depicted in figure 1:

Black	White	Indian	Coloured	Total
405	21	39	55	520
78%	4%	7.5%	10.5%	100%

Figure 1: Racial composition of the learner component

The children who attend the school come from Umlazi, Wentworth, Mobeni Heights and the Bluff area.⁶ The majority of the children come from Umlazi using private transport, buses or taxis. The children living in the area come to school by private transport or they walk.

The number of children whose first language is English, Afrikaans, isiZulu, Xhosa, Siswati, Setswana or Sesotho is shown in figure 2:

English	Afrikaans	isiZulu	Xhosa	Siswati	Setswana	Sesotho	Total
134	4	352	23	1	1	5	520

Figure 2: Home languages of the learner component

The composition of the staff is now also racially mixed, but the majority is still white. The school comprises fourteen teachers who are paid by the state, five teachers who are paid by the governing body and four teacher assistants who are also paid by the governing body. The composition of the staff is shown in figure 3:

Designation	Number
Principal	1
Deputy Principal	1
Head of Department	2
State paid level one teachers	10
Governing body paid teachers	5
Teaching assistants	4
Total	23

Figure 3: Teaching staff

⁶ These are suburbs found in the Durban area.

The racial composition of the teaching staff and teacher assistants is as follows:

Black	White	Indian	Coloured	Total
1	14	8	-	23

Figure 4: Racial composition of teaching staff

The teachers at the school traditionally taught English-first-language children. They now primarily teach second language children.

Research Design and Methodology

In this section, I introduce briefly, the research design and methodology of this study. Details are provided in chapter three.

A qualitative research design was used to research children's feelings about reading in my grade four class. The research is positioned within the interpretive paradigm, thereby allowing me to construct and make meaning from the data obtained (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a, p.99).

In this study, I assumed that my roles as teacher and researcher might influence the participants. I therefore, sought the assistance of a teacher who does not teach in my school to collect the data. Semi-structured interviews were used as instruments to gather information from the children. Three techniques, viz. thought-bubble drawings, storytelling and selection of reading material (four activities, each followed by an informal interview) were used to find out the children's feelings about reading.

The participants were drawn from my class and in chapter three I discuss in detail how participants were recruited for the study.

Data was collected at one-week intervals. All interviews were video recorded, transcribed and analysed. The analysis offers an understanding of children's experiences of reading not through thematic analysis but by presenting each participant as exemplifying a particular feeling resulting from the experience of reading.

Format of the Study

In chapter two, a literature review based on cognitive and affective studies regarding reading is presented. The emphasis on cognitive factors was noted and the silence on the affect was identified in South African literature.

In chapter three, the research design and the research methodology is discussed in detail. The following aspects are highlighted: research approach; participant selection; participant's background; research challenges; data production; research techniques; training of outside teacher; validity; ethical considerations; limitations of the study.

Chapter four presents the analysis not as themes but with each participant exemplifying a particular emotion. Five emotions were identified from the data. Each child's data was then analysed in terms of an emotion that was a dominant feature of each child's discourse.

In chapter five, the findings and recommendations emerging from the study are discussed.

Conclusion

In chapter one, the poor state of reading in the present South African climate and abroad has been discussed. I have provided evidence for being concerned about the reading ability of young children who may not acquire reasonable levels of proficiency for daily living or tertiary education. There is, therefore, a need for understanding how children feel about reading and this information could possibly contribute to improving the reading skills of children and promoting a culture of reading from primary school level. Hence, the focus of this study is on the reading experiences of young children and is limited to feelings connected to reading. In chapter two, literature on cognitive and affective studies regarding reading is reviewed.

CHAPTER TWO

READINGS ABOUT READING

Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of children's experiences, with particular reference to feelings about reading. Chapter one highlighted the present state of reading in our country and abroad. It also explained the need for an understanding of children's affective reading experiences. Chapter two reviews literature on both the cognitive and affective aspects of reading. The limitations that exist in cognitive and affective studies of reading are also presented, thereby offering an argument as to why a study on the affective aspects of reading is required.

Review of Related Literature

Reading has been extensively researched. A cursory exploration of foci demonstrates a wide range which include studies on reading motivation (Baker & Scher, 2002; Thomas & Loring, 1979), reading interests (Fisher, 1994), attitudes toward reading (McKenna & Kear, 1990), reading problems experienced by children (Bryant & Bradley, 1985), teaching of reading (Sprosty, 1993) and reading development (Wildsmith-Cromarty & Gounden, 2006). These readings suggest that reading comprises both a cognitive (reading problems, teaching of reading, reading development) and an affective component (motivation, interests, attitudes). Reading, in other words, is not merely a mental skill; it is also influenced by emotions. In researching reading experiences, it is necessary to generate a deeper understanding of the divide between cognitive and affective aspects which I will do hereunder:

Cognitive Aspects of Reading

The cognitive aspects of reading include the decoding (i.e. word recognition) of written symbols, interpreting the meaning of the symbols and applying the ideas derived from these symbols (Sprosty, 1993, p.2). Decoding comprises knowledge of letters and their sounds and knowledge of word structure. Interpreting or comprehension is the process of making sense of the text.

This process also involves understanding the intent of the author and going beyond literal recorded facts to hidden meanings and implications. Readers usually use their background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge and experience to help them understand the meaning of a text. Decoding and interpretation is consolidated and brought to maturity by application of the knowledge or information gained thus expanding the intellectual horizon of the reader (Sprosty, 1993, p.4).

Studies on Cognitive Aspects of Reading

Juel (1988) examined the reading and writing development of children from Texas as they progressed from first to fourth grade. Oral phonemic awareness tests, decoding skills tests, reading tests, language and comprehension tests, IQ tests, spelling tests, word recognition and vocabulary tests were administered on the children. Each year the children were also asked about their reading behaviours at home. In addition, questions were asked in order to determine the children's attitudes toward reading. In this study, the poor first-grade reader was almost invariably still a poor reader by the end of the fourth grade and the good first-grade reader almost invariably remained a good reader at the end of the fourth grade. Juel's study only reveals the status quo but does not give any ideas for intervention. The research does not reveal whether other factors like socio-economic factors, interest, aptitude and teaching methods impacted on the findings.

In South Africa, De Witt, Lessing and Dicker (1998) conducted a study where a comparison was made between the reading skills of non-mother-tongue learners and mother-tongue learners. The measuring instruments used in the research were the Transvaal Education Department One-Minute Reading Test⁷ and the Neale Reading Inventory⁸. The test results were then analysed using a statistical computer programme. The study found that there was a difference between the average chronological age and average reading age of non-mother-tongue learners. For the mother-tongue learners there was no significant difference between their average chronological

⁷ This reading test comprises a number of one-syllable words. The reader has one minute to read aloud as many words as possible. The raw mark is calculated by deducting the number of words which were read incorrectly from the total number of words read. The raw mark is then converted to a specific reading age using a standardised norm table (De Witt *et al*, 1998, p.120).

⁸ This reading test is used to determine reading speed, reading accuracy and reading comprehension (De Witt *et al*, 1998, p.120).

age and average reading age. The study concluded that the non-mother-tongue learners experienced problems with reading speed, reading accuracy and reading comprehension. Again the analysis did not factor in variables that could have influenced the results.

Hugo, Le Roux, Muller and Nel (2005) conducted a study in South Africa to determine the relationship between phonological awareness and reading success. This study was conducted as a means to verify overseas research that phonological awareness influenced reading ability. Phonological awareness tests and reading tests were administered. Statistical analysis was then performed on the test results. The research findings showed that phonological awareness impacted on reading success.

Kelly-Vance and Schreck (2002) conducted a study in the United States to determine the effectiveness of a collaborative family/school reading programme on reading rate. Additional purposes were to determine the impact of the programme on parents' attitudes toward reading, the amount of time parents spent reading with their child and the materials and activities parents used when reading with their children. Children's progress in reading was monitored using Curriculum-Based Measurement probes. These probes were designed by trained personnel in the district. Children from the programme were administered the probes for their specific grade-level placement. Their data was compared with children not on the programme and analysed using a statistical package. The gain in words per minute and the accuracy of reading was compared. The learners who participated in the programme had an accuracy rate of 23.7% and the matched control group's rate was 16.6% (Kelly-Vance & Schreck, 2002, p.49). Participation in the reading programme showed an increase in reading rate and accuracy in reading.

In the PIRLS study (Howie *et al*, 2007) a national assessment on reading was administered in South Africa to determine children's reading skills. The grade four and five learners did not reach the international average score of 500 (Howie *et al*, 2007, p.27). Questionnaires were also completed by learners, parents, teachers and principals. Many of the questions were in the form of a four-point Likert scale. The children's questionnaires focused on their attitudes toward reading and their reading habits. The questionnaires given to teachers and principals were used to gain information about the learners' school context. Parents' questionnaires were used to gain information about the home context. The following are some of the factors that influenced the children's scores on their tests: Children with more books in the home had higher scores.

Children with positive attitudes to reading performed better. There was a significant difference in the scores of children who read frequently and those who did not. Children who attended pre-school for at least a year scored better than children who did not. Children who came from smaller classes performed better. Children who were introduced to more complex reading strategies (for example, identifying the main idea in a text) in grade one performed better than children who were only exposed to these strategies in grade four. Children coming from economically-disadvantaged schools had the lowest scores. Children in schools with a library performed better than children in schools without a library.

The above-mentioned studies emphasize cognitive aspects of reading. These studies are very useful because they help us to learn more about reading development which is essential in a country like South Africa where there are so many factors affecting a child's reading development (for example, language, socio-economic issues, poorly resourced schools). Not enough voice, however, has been given to the children in these studies in order to find out about their personal encounters with reading which can perhaps be utilised to improve cognitive reading abilities; hence a limitation exists. An analysis of the studies by Juel (1988), De Witt, Lessing and Dicker (1998), Kelly-Vance and Schreck (2002) and the PIRLS study (Howie *et al*, 2007) all indicate the importance of cognitive skills for literacy competency. These studies, however, do not provide an in-depth understanding of how the psychology of reading influences reading competency. For example, how does reading interest and feelings about reading influence decoding? Additionally, there are scant details about the influence of socio-economic factors or whether the lack of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2001) significantly compromises learning. The studies are also adults' perspectives of reading. My study, however, explores children's experiences of reading from their perspectives, and could, therefore, be regarded as attending to a neglected area of research in the field of reading.

Affective Aspects of Reading

The affective aspects of reading refer to psychological aspects associated with reading. The affective domain includes the manner in which we deal with things emotionally, such as feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasm, motivation and attitudes (Clark, 2007). The affective aspects of reading include children's attitudes toward reading (refers to the feelings and beliefs an individual has with respect to reading), positive or negative self-concepts (how the child feels

about him or herself), the children's emotions which are aroused while they read (for example, delight, curiosity, excitement, surprise), whether they are motivated to read or not (refers to internal states that make people read or not), reading interests (refers to children's preferences) and reading habits (for example, when and where the child reads and period of time spent reading). (Sprosty, 1993, p.5).

Although the affective and cognitive domains are very different in nature, they are interlinked. In order to develop children's cognitive reading abilities, focus has also to be placed on the affective aspects of reading; the one depends on the other. According to Robeck and Wilson (1974, p.43), the emotional experiences of a child in the early stages of reading, i.e. decoding, will determine whether the child will persist until the process is mastered, or withdraw. Children who have positive associations with reading tend to read more often, for longer periods of time and with greater intensity (Henk & Melnick, 1995, p.470). This deeper engagement results in superior reading achievement (Henk & Melnick, 1995, p.470). Simultaneously, when children have negative feelings about reading, their achievement suffers (Henk & Melnick, 1995, p.470). Moreover, children's attitudes toward reading are an important factor affecting reading performance (McKenna *et al*, 1995, p.934). In other words, whether the cognitive aspects of reading are achieved will be determined by the child's affective dispositions. In view of the importance of both the affect and of cognition in reading competence, and the interconnectedness between these domains, it was surprising, therefore, at the silence of South African studies on the affective domain. The review of affective studies is, therefore, drawn from non-South African contexts.

Studies on Affective Aspects of Reading

Machet (2002) used a detailed learner questionnaire to find out what the reading interests and information use of South African children and youth were. In this questionnaire, learners had to choose from the options provided; learners had to choose between options like 'often' or 'very often' or 'sometimes.' The following were some of the findings: The most important factors influencing the choice of books were illustrations, the book cover and language. Magazines were the most popular forms of reading across gender and age groups. Primary school children spent more time reading than high school children. The majority of the readers regarded themselves as average readers. A key finding was that girls read more than boys.

Wray and Lewis (1993) conducted a study in Britain to find out what the reading experiences and interests of junior school children were. In this study, children completed a questionnaire in order to determine what they read in school and what their reading preferences were. In addition, teachers were interviewed to gain insight into what children read and what influenced their reading. The teachers were asked to rate specific reading activities according to a five point scale ranging from 'very useful' to 'not at all useful.' Some of the activities investigated were sustained silent reading, reading to children and children reading comics. The teachers were also asked to estimate their level of use of these activities according to the following scale: regular use (every day or few days); occasional use (from weekly to monthly); intermittent use (less than once monthly) and no use at all. The twenty class teachers of the children from the study were also interviewed. These teachers were asked to describe their aims in the teaching of reading and to list the resources and materials they were currently using to achieve this. A limitation of this study is that more emphasis is placed on what the teachers had to say and not on the children's opinions. The only information gained from the children was that regarding the books they read and what they liked to read. This study, therefore, interpreted 'experience' as to what children read, what influenced their reading and what their reading preferences were. No consideration was given to other affective aspects of their reading experience (for example, did they enjoy reading and how it made them feel).

Davis (1998) analysed stories that British children made up to determine their attitudes to reading. According to Davis, children do not want to say they do not like reading because they feel that teachers and adults want them to say that they do like reading (1998, p.12). Davis suggests that this tendency to please is strong in children and therefore traditional interview techniques can be less reliable (1998, p.12). Stories are usually expressed in the third person. This allows children to express themselves more honestly; they are not asked to talk about themselves (Davis, 1998, p.12). The usefulness of storytelling depends on the accuracy of the story's interpretation and on the degree to which the child uses the story as a means of expressing their view on the required topic (Davis, 1998, p.12). In studies conducted by Eiser, it was found that younger children's stories represent their own feelings and attitudes but older children can incorporate the perceptions of others (Davis, 1998, p.14). Davis suggests that this technique be used with children who are poor readers (1998, p.14). Poor readers tend to convey their direct experiences (Davis, 1998, p.14).

The research conducted by Davis (1998) allowed children the opportunity to make up and tell a story titled, “The child who did not like reading”.⁹ 88% of the children’s stories helped Davis (1998) determine the children’s attitudes to reading. The competent readers in Davis’s study (1998), tended to produce similar stories to each other. They saw a lack of suitable reading material as the main reason for disliking reading. The competent readers had little conception of the difficulties and anxieties experienced by children who find reading difficult. In addition, these children finished their stories with the character in the story liking reading. The poor readers produced short and simple stories which displayed negative attitudes to reading. (Davis, 1998).

Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) conducted interviews with children in America to find out what motivated them to read. The interview comprised fourteen questions. Follow-up questions were then asked to learn more about the children’s responses. Children’s motivation was influenced by their personal interests, book characteristics, the knowledge gained from reading and being able to choose the book themselves.

Pachtman and Wilson (2006) asked grade five American children to reflect on their grade four reading experiences to identify what classroom reading practices they were exposed to in grade four, that motivated them to read. The survey consisted of nineteen open-ended questions. The learners were also asked to rate eighteen practices from their fourth grade reading programme as ‘very important’, ‘important’, ‘not very important’ or ‘not important’ based on how they felt each practice influenced their reading habits and attitudes. In my opinion, asking children to rate their reading practices using a scale can be problematic; the child may not be able to draw a distinction between ‘not very important’ and ‘not important.’ On the other hand, if rating scales are commonly used, children may be able to use them well.

Raban and Nolan (2006) asked Australian parents to complete a questionnaire in order to find out about their pre-school children’s reading experiences. The study focused on the home literacy practices of the children; the questionnaires focused on access and usage of the local library services, the home reading routine of the children, the age at which the parent began reading to the child, the availability of information about reading to children and literacy

⁹ The title of the story appears in double quotation marks.

associated activities that the child is engaged in at home. An important finding from this study is how regularly parents are reading to and with young children and the early age at which it is starting. A limitation of this particular study is that only the parents were questioned and not the children.

The studies above give the reader an understanding of children's reading interests, their reading attitudes, what motivates them to read and their reading behaviours.

The above-mentioned studies focus on the affective aspects of children's reading experiences. Although these studies are very useful, the findings from the international studies cannot be fully applied to the South African context because of the large number of English-second-language-speaking children who learn through the medium of English in South Africa. Furthermore, South Africa is a third-world country still recovering from the affects of apartheid, and it has an enormous disparity in its schools; hence, a contextual limitation exists.

According to Cramer and Castle (1994) affective aspects of reading are equal in importance to cognitive aspects, and more systematic research is needed in the affective areas of reading. In South Africa, however, very little emphasis is placed on the affective aspects of reading. The lack of affective aspects of reading is most discernible in the studies of De Witt, Lessing and Dicker (1998) and Hugo, Le Roux, Muller and Nel (2005).

Of the above-mentioned studies only Howie *et al* (2007), Machet (2002), Wray & Lewis (1993) and Raban & Nolan (2006) used a Likert scale. Using a Likert scale to collect data can be limiting as well, hence, methodological limitations also existed:

- i) Answers may be forced with a Likert scale; children have to choose from the list provided (Maree & Pietersen, 2007a, p.167). They are not allowed to use their own words; the possibility exists that a child may have an answer that is different from the options provided.
- ii) When a four-point scale is used the middle option of neither agree nor disagree is not available to the child (Likert Scale, 2008).
- iii) The researcher may not be able to explore an issue in greater detail if he/she only uses the Likert scale. For example, a child may have indicated that he or she reads stories at home twice a month. Perhaps there is a valid reason for this occurrence. Perhaps

the child has no access to reading material; but the researcher is not able to find this out.

- iv) The researcher may not be able to inquire about a learner's unique perspective on a specific topic (using the Likert scale on its own). When using open-ended questions, however, the researcher may discover issues not referred to in the scale. The Likert scale is designed with a priori values with which the participant has to select. A Likert scale only discloses the participant's choice at the moment and not the reasons for it. Open-ended questions on the other hand, allows for probing and clarification. One could conclude therefore, that a Likert scale limits nuanced understanding.

Conclusion

The literature review revealed a greater emphasis on cognitive reading studies in South Africa, than on the affective aspects of reading. The literature also suggests that the cognitive and affective domains are interconnected and both are essential for the acquisition of reading ability and competence. A greater emphasis needs to be placed on the affective aspects of reading in South Africa. Furthermore, international affective studies, however useful they may be, cannot be applied fully to South Africa. In addition, two of the affective studies from the literature review (Wray & Lewis, 1993; Raban & Nolan, 2006) focus on the teachers' or the parents' views and not the children's. This study will therefore attempt to fill these gaps by focusing on the affective aspects of children's reading by interviewing the children themselves. In the next chapter I indicate the methodology of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed description of the research design and the research methodology. My research focuses on grade four children's affective reading experiences. In this chapter, the research approach, research participants, the pilot study, research techniques, training of the teacher who conducted the research, data analysis, validity, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study are discussed.

Research Approach

This study follows a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of his/her participants, asks broad general questions, collects data consisting largely of words (or texts), describes and analyses these words for themes and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner (Creswell, 2008, p.46). In qualitative research, the purpose statement and research questions also tend to be general and broad so that you can learn from the participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In addition, they seek to understand the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2008). Historical developments have led to the following characteristics of qualitative research that are recognised today:

- As researchers we need to listen to the views of participants in our studies.
- Research has a role to play in advocating for change and bettering the lives of individuals.

(Creswell, 2008, p.51)

A qualitative approach has been chosen for my study because the aim of this study is to explore how specific children (study participants) feel about reading and qualitative research helps to understand how people feel and why they feel as they do (Dickman, 2005). Furthermore, it helps the researcher and the outside world to experience participants' experiences as they describe them (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b, p.51). Finally, qualitative research has the tendency to address

research problems that require an exploration in which little is known about the problem (Cresewell, 2008, p.51). Using a qualitative approach, therefore, provided me with the opportunity to create meaning, thus making my research interpretive. The idea of this study is not to generalise reading experience but to get a contextualised understanding of how children experience reading.

This study is located within the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm involves taking people's subjective experiences as the essence of what is real for them (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006). In other words, people experience reality differently. The idea is not to pass judgement but to accept that people have different experiences. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), the main purpose of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the personal experiences of participants. This paradigm concurs with the aim of my research which is to explore the affective reading experiences of grade four children. In this study, therefore, I will explore each participant's experiences and I will attempt to understand their experiences from their own perspectives.

Qualitative research usually involves smaller numbers of participants than quantitative research studies (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c, p.79; Creswell, 2008, p.55). In this study, therefore, five children were selected from a grade four class (with a roll of forty) in a co-educational primary school where I am presently teaching on the Bluff in KwaZulu-Natal. These children were asked to volunteer their participation.

In terms of a qualitative approach, a number of methods were deployed to gain an understanding of the five participants' affective experiences. These methods will be explained in the section on 'research techniques'. At this juncture, however, I share the way in which the study unfolded, beginning with a pilot study and the order in which each method was used (see figure 5).

Piloting the Study	Participants not used in the main study	
Research Strategy	Description of activity	Follow-up activity
1.1. Thought-bubble drawing (Appendices B,C,D,E)	Each child chose one of two pictures and coloured in the drawing.	
1.2. Thought-bubble drawing (Appendices B,C,D,E)	Each child completed the thought bubble.	Informal interview
2. Storytelling (Appendix H)	Each child completed a story either orally or by writing it down.	Informal interview
3.1. Selection of reading material by learner	Each child chose one item from the display of reading material and read it silently.	Informal interview
3.2. Selection of reading material by learner	Each child chose one item from the display and read it aloud.	Informal interview
3.3. Reading by interviewer	The interviewer read a pre-selected text aloud to the child.	Informal interview
3.4. Discussion	Discussion about reading activities done at home and at school.	Each child must recommend what books he/she would buy for their classroom.

Figure 5: Outline of research techniques

In the next section, I discuss the study participants before elaborating on the pilot study, the training of the teacher (interviewer), and theoretical and empirical aspects of interviews, and the research techniques.

Research Participants

Purposive sampling¹⁰ was used to choose the research site (Creswell, 2008, p.214). The reason for the choice of site was that I am a member of staff at the school which allows me easy access to the children. Furthermore, by using this particular site, I avoided the option of having to take leave.

In homogenous sampling the researcher selects individuals or sites because they possess a similar trait or characteristic (Creswell, 2008, p.216). The similar characteristic that I looked for when I made use of the above-mentioned tool was that the children had to be in grade four

¹⁰ In purposive sampling researchers intentionally choose the participants and the site.

because the purpose of my study was to explore the affective reading experiences of grade four children.

Categories such as gender, race and reading ability of the children were not considered when choosing the participants as it is not the intention of this study to make a gender/race/class analysis but to get a nuanced understanding of how children's feelings influence their experiences of reading.

Participant Recruitment

I decided to use the children from my own grade four class in my study for ease of access. By doing so, I would not be disturbing another teacher's lessons. I explained to the children in my grade four class that I was trying to learn more about how children felt about reading and that the best way to find out was to ask them about it. I described to the entire class the different activities that they would be involved in, in detail. In addition, I explained to the children that consent would have to be obtained from their parents or guardians and that all the activities would be video recorded. The children were asked to volunteer for their participation. In addition, the children were told that they could withdraw from the activity at any point. Five children indicated by a show of hands that they did not wish to participate. The remaining children's names were placed in a container and five names were drawn at random by me.

Two of the children's parents indicated verbally through their children that they did not want their children to participate; therefore, another two children were chosen using the process mentioned above to replace the two withdrawals.

The five children who were chosen to participate in the study were Leo, Nandi, Lisa, Lindani and Zora¹¹.

Participant	Gender	Race
Leo	Male	Coloured
Nandi	Female	Black
Lisa	Female	Black
Lindani	Male	Black
Zora	Female	Coloured

Figure 6: Biographic information of participants

¹¹ These are pseudonyms. They have been used to protect the identity of the children in the study.

Piloting the Study

All activities were piloted by me over a week, with three children from my 2008 grade four class. This was done as a means to check the duration of each activity and the strength of the questions on the interview schedule. The pilot study was conducted at the end of the grade four year.

Piloting Activity 1: Thought-bubble drawings

When piloting this activity, I realised that it was necessary to explain to the children what the picture in the thought-bubble drawing was about. I had assumed that the children would understand what was happening in the picture and continue very easily. The first child, however, said that she was not sure what to do. I then explained that the child in the drawing was reading a book. Whilst reading, the child in the drawing was experiencing different feelings. I told the child from the pilot study to complete the thought bubble expressing the child in the drawing's feelings. The children were also told that they could give the book a title and an author. They could also colour in the picture if they so wished. All three children seemed more interested in colouring in the picture than completing the thought bubble. In addition, they spent more than twenty minutes colouring in their pictures. I then decided to include an additional session where each child merely chose a drawing and coloured it in. During the thought-bubble activity, all the children asked for help with spelling. Another difficulty was that the children completed the thought bubble in the third person and not the first person.

Piloting Activity 2: Storytelling

One child from the pilot study was hesitant to do this activity. I realised that this was the case because she experienced extreme difficulty whilst reading. I then read the story aloud to her and she completed the activity. In this activity the children's responses to my questions were limited. It was necessary for me to ask more questions about Connie (the child in the completing-the-story activity) in order to gain more insight. For example,

What does Connie like to read? Why?

Is there anything that Connie does not like to read? Why?

I included these additional questions in my interview schedule.

Piloting Activity 3: Selection of reading material and discussion

When the first two children from the pilot study made their selection from the display of reading material, they merely looked at the covers of the choices available. The third child, however, picked up several books, paged through them and read a few lines to herself before she made a choice. I realised that she was thinking very carefully before she made a choice.

Using a Teacher from another School

In this study I asked a teacher from another school to conduct the reading activities and interviews. My rationale is based on my experience as a grade four teacher; children usually give responses to questions that they expect their teacher wants to hear. In order to determine how children really feel about reading, a situation needs to be created where the children will feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts without fear (Zambo, 2006, p.798). In addition, it is necessary to avoid the researcher being seen as an authority figure (for example, their regular teacher) (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 375); hence, a teacher, who is not known by the participants to be a teacher, produced the data. This particular individual was chosen because she has been a grade four teacher for four years and has taught reading to grade four children. She has an excellent rapport with children and has completed Speech and Drama modules as part of her tertiary training which enables her to be highly animated when dealing with children. Her participation in this study is explained in detail in the research technique section.

A month before the actual interviews began, I familiarised the teacher who conducted the interviews with the school and the children by providing her with a detailed description of the school set-up, the staff composition, the learner composition, the socio-economic background of the children attending the school, the subjects offered at the school and the reading activities the children were involved in. The research design and methodology was explained to her in detail. She was encouraged to use prompts to clarify the questions asked, and to use probes to encourage the children to expand their responses. The semi-structured interview allows for the use of probing and clarification of answers (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c, p.87).

The pilot study was also discussed with the teacher in detail as a means to give her advice and training: Firstly, the teacher was asked to help the children with the spelling of words. Secondly, the teacher was requested to give examples to the children if their answers were not

forthcoming. Thirdly, the teacher was asked to read the story aloud to each of the five children (in the completing-the-story activity). Finally, the teacher was asked to encourage the children to browse through all the items in the display, page through them and read a few lines before making a choice (in the selection of reading material activity). This also provided the opportunity for the teacher to familiarise herself with the children and for the children to get used to her.

Interviews

In this study interviews were used with each of the research techniques. Using interviews in research highlights a move away from seeing human subjects as “manipulable” and data as external to individuals, towards viewing them as active participants who are involved in the creation of knowledge (Kvale as cited in Cohen *et al*, 2007, p.349). An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions in order to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c, p.87). The aim of the qualitative interview is to see the world through the eyes of the participants and to obtain rich descriptive data that will help the researcher understand the participant’s construction of knowledge and social reality (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c, p.87).

Using interviews in qualitative research has both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage of interviews is that they provide useful information when you cannot directly observe participants (Creswell, 2008). According to Creswell (2008), interviews allow the participants to describe detailed personal information. Additionally he intimates that the interviewer has better control over the information received as compared to an observation because he/she can ask specific questions to find out what he/she wants to know. Creswell (2008) identifies some disadvantages. First, the interview data may be deceptive because the interviewee may provide the perspective the interviewee thinks the researcher wants to hear. Secondly, the presence of the interviewer may affect how the interviewee responds. Finally, the data collected will be summarised according to the researcher’s view.

The interview was used in an informal manner in my study to explore the reading experiences of grade four children. By informal, I mean that the interview was conversational in nature. In

addition, everyday vocabulary was used and there was no reliance on a fixed way of asking the questions.

The interview technique was chosen because it allows the participants to express how they regard situations from their own point of view (Cohen *et al*, 2007, p.347). Tuckman as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.351) describes the purpose of an interview thus:

By providing access to what is 'inside a person's head', [it] makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs).

It was intended that the interview part of this study be conversational in nature. As I was reliant on another person to conduct the research process, guidelines (in the form of questions) were provided; hence a semi-structured interview was used (appendix A). Semi-structured interviews usually require the participants to answer a list of predetermined questions. These interviews allow for the probing and clarification of answers. Semi-structured interview schedules define the line of enquiry (Nieuwenhuis, 2007c, p.87).

I also made use of language that was appropriate to the ages of the children in my interview schedule, as the language used, can have a bearing on the children's responses (Cohen *et al*, 2007, p.374). For example, the words experience and affective were not used. Questions were simple and direct (see appendix A).

The interviewer worked with one participant at a time. Each activity with each participant was spaced out at one-week intervals. Thus there was a week's lapse between each of the four activities. Data was thus collected over a period of four weeks. The reason for limiting each participant to one activity per week was to ensure that the children were not disadvantaged by prolonged absences from lessons.

In an effort to preserve the original data, all activities were video recorded.

Research Techniques

In this section, I review three techniques: thought-bubble drawings; storytelling; selection of reading material and informal interviews (four activities, each followed by an informal

interview) and the reasons for using multiple techniques. This is followed by a description of each technique under selected headings.

Thought-bubble drawings (refer to appendices B, C, D and E)

Finding out how children feel about reading is not always easy because by the time children reach grade three level, they become very adept at hiding their true feelings and they become aware of how important it is to cover up negative emotions, especially in social settings like the classroom (Saarni, 1999). Drawing is one method that has been suggested to help teachers understand how children feel about reading because drawings allow children to express emotions and ideas that they may not necessarily express in words (Le Count as cited in Zambo, 2006). The possibility exists, however, that without guidelines, children may become inhibited or embarrassed when asked to draw freely according to Zambo (2006) and she therefore suggests the use of thought-bubble drawings¹² to find out how children really feel about reading because it includes drawings, and guidelines are also provided. Thought bubbles have been used previously in research to reveal children's ideas about thinking and mental states (Wellman, Hollander & Schult, 1996). Researchers also use thought bubbles because they help children express their ideas about abstract concepts and emotions (Zambo, 2006). In the first activity in my study, therefore, thought-bubble drawings were used as a stimulus.

In Zambo's (2006) research where thought-bubble drawings were used to find out children's perceptions and feelings about reading, she gave the children the pictures below. Figure 7 was used with boys and figure 8 was used with girls. Zambo then asked the children to complete what the child in the picture looked like while he/she read and to complete the thought bubble by writing what the child in the picture was thinking.

¹² In thought-bubble drawings, one sees a bubble above a character's head. These drawings are commonly seen in comic books or in cartoons.



Figure 7: Blank thought bubble for boys



Figure 8: Blank thought bubble for girls

(Zambo, 2006, p.799)

Zambo then analysed the drawings and the thought bubbles by using a coding system (refer to appendices F and G). To obtain a rating for each thought-bubble drawing, Zambo added the scores from the face and the thought bubble.

I based my thought-bubble activity on Zambo's research instrument; however, I made changes to her design. I decided to use pictures where the facial features of the children were completed because I did not want to make use of Zambo's coding system as it is slanted towards a quantitative process because of its use of numerical data (Maree & Pietersen, 2007b, p.145). Furthermore, the drawing ability of the children could determine whether the children completed the facial features adequately or not. Finally, drawings done by the children could be interpreted incorrectly during the analysis stage.

In the first session in my study, each child was given two thought-bubble drawings. In both drawings the same child was pictured reading a book. What were different in the drawings were the facial expressions of the child. In the first drawing the child looked happy and in the second, the child was unhappy. A female participant was given drawings of females and a male participant was given drawings of males. I decided to use pictures of females with the female children and pictures of males with the male children because I felt that the children would be

better able to relate to someone of their own sex. Each drawing was accompanied by a blank thought bubble. Each participant chose one of the two pictures and coloured it in.

This first session gave the interviewer the opportunity to familiarise herself with the children and for them to get used to her. The interviewer did this by asking the children about their families, where they lived, what their hobbies were, the activities and subjects they were involved in at school and their dreams and aspirations. The interviewer also gave the children the opportunity to ask her anything they wanted to know about her. She told them where she lived, about her family, her pets, her friends and her hobbies. I asked the interviewer to request that the children call her by her first name in order to create a more relaxed and friendly atmosphere and so that the children would not feel afraid to answer what was asked by the interviewer.

In the second session, each child completed the thought bubble that he/she had chosen in the previous week. Each child then engaged in an informal interview with the interviewer about why that particular picture was chosen and not the other one. In addition, each child was asked how he/she thought the child in the drawing was feeling and why he/she felt that way.

In the thought-bubble activity, the assumption that was made was that a child who liked reading would choose the picture of the child who was smiling and the child who did not like reading would choose the picture of the sad child. In this study, however, the children's choices seemed to be based on the children preferring a happy face rather than a sad face. The children did not link the emotion expressed by the child in the drawing to the fact that the child was reading. It was further assumed that by completing the thought bubbles, the children would be able to express their feelings about reading (Zambo, 2006, p.799).

Storytelling (refer to appendix H)

I decided to use storytelling because often children will not volunteer that they do not like reading because they perceive that teachers and other adults want them to say that they like reading (Davis, 1998, p.12). This tendency in children to please, therefore, makes traditional interview techniques with children less reliable (Davis, 1998, p.12). Storytelling, however, allows children to express themselves more openly, easily and honestly because they are not asked to talk about themselves. Stories are usually expressed in the third person (Davis, 1998,

p.12). According to Davis (1998), children project their own experiences on to a fictitious character when telling a story. The content and the construction of the stories that children tell give teachers and parents insight into the way they think and feel about their world (Booth & Barton, 2000). Dyson and Genishi (1994) also postulate that children use storytelling to shape and reshape their lives, imagining what could have or should have happened as well as what did happen. Furthermore, storytelling may be most usefully used when dealing with children who are poor readers because these children tend to convey their direct experiences when telling stories and because these children are the ones who are most reticent (Davis, 1998). In light of the above, therefore, in the second activity in my study, the children were asked to complete a story about reading.

In Davis's study (1998), children were asked to make up and tell a story with the title "The child who did not like reading". I decided to ask the children in my study to complete an open-ended story about reading; the story did not have a title. I wanted the children to decide for themselves whether the character/s in their story liked reading or not. I did not want a liking or dislike towards reading to be prompted by the title.

In my study, the children could complete the story either orally or by writing it down. I decided to give the children this choice because different children may be talented in a different area; the type of activity that the child is involved in should not hinder his/her response.

After the completing-the-story activity was completed, each child and the interviewer were involved in an informal interview about the story. The questions of the interviewer were aimed at finding out about each child's feelings about reading. The interviewer asked how the character in the story felt about reading and why.

In the completing-the-story activity, the assumption that was made was that the story written by the children would provide insight into their reading experiences and would give an indication of their feelings about reading.

Selection of Reading Material and Discussion

In the third activity the children were presented with a selection of age-appropriate reading material that they usually make use of in the classroom and school library. A display of

newspapers, worksheets, fiction and non-fiction books and graded readers was presented to the children (refer to figure 9).

Newspapers	Worksheets	Fiction	Non-fiction	Graded Readers
Free 4 All (March, 2009)	Pet parade (English-Comprehension)	An angel just like me	Whales and dolphins	The pink umbrella and other stories
The Independent on Saturday (March 14, 2009)	The chicken dance (Life Orientation)	The new adventures of Mary Kate and Ashley: the case of the haunted maze	Starting soccer	The perfect pair
The Mercury (March 16, 2009)	Important rules for a pedestrian (Life Orientation)	All because of Jackson	What's wrong with me? What happens when you are ill and ways to stay healthy	The super team
Southlands Sun (March 20, 2009)	Why do different animals and plants live in different places? (Natural Sciences)	Dumguisi and the river	A school like mine	Patricia the gardener
Sunday Tribune (March 15, 2009)	Materials (Technology)	Hans Christian Anderson fairytales	Celebrations: Easter	Zolani makes a difference
Daily News (March 16, 2009)	The flying machine (Social Sciences)	Chicken soup for little souls: the new kid and the cookie thief	Cockroaches up close	The money-box

Figure 9: Reading material used in the display

In order to give the children an ample selection, six of each category were made available. When choosing the reading material for the display, I took the following into consideration: personal interests of the children and characteristics of books. Edmunds & Bauserman's study (2006) revealed that children's reading motivation is positively influenced by books that are related to their personal interests; therefore, when choosing books for my display, I tried to provide books on topics that reflected the interests of my grade four children. According to Machet (2002) illustrations in a book, the book cover and whether or not a book is linked to a television programme or film are factors that influence children's choice of books. Again, I tried to take these factors into consideration when choosing the reading material. Edmunds and Bauserman's study (2006) also revealed that children placed a great deal of importance on the

information they could learn from reading non-fiction books. Machet (2003) found that girls prefer reading fiction and boys prefer factual sources of reading material. I therefore, included fiction books, non-fiction books and newspapers in my display. I also included worksheets in my display because at our school all the learning material is presented to the children in the form of worksheets; the children do not make use of textbooks.

This selection of reading material activity relied on the children making choices from the display. The reasons as to why I decided to allow children their own choice are discussed hereunder:

Giving children a choice is a very powerful tool that can be used from toddlers to teenagers (Pantley, 1996). Children love having the privilege of choice; it allows a child to feel in control which invariably makes a child more willing to comply (Pantley, 1996). One effective method to foster literacy development is by simply giving children the choice in their reading experiences (Brummit-Yale, 2007). We learn best when we are motivated but if children are always told exactly what to read they will come to view reading as something impersonal and they will become demotivated (Brummit-Yale, 2007). When children make choices about literacy, they gain responsibility for and control over their learning situation (Pachtman & Wilson, 2006, p.681). Pachtman and Wilson (2006) found that the element of choice was important to most children because they had interests they wished to pursue. One child stated:

“I like to choose my own books because sometimes I’m in the mood for a sad book, or a happy book, or a really different book” (Pachtman & Wilson, 2006, p.683).

The opportunity to choose fostered a sense of ownership which translated into children reading and enjoying more books (Pachtman & Wilson, 2006, p.683). In order to encourage ownership over their reading, therefore, children should be given the opportunities to read what is interesting and important to them (Brummit-Yale, 2007).

The importance of choice was further revealed in Edmunds and Bauserman’s study (2006) to determine what motivates children to read: Children were motivated to read both narrative and expository texts when they were given the opportunity to decide what they would like to read. When discussing the narrative text they were reading, 84% of the children spoke about books

they had selected themselves, while 16% discussed books they were assigned by their teachers. When discussing the expository text they were reading or had read, 76% of the children shared an expository text they had chosen themselves. The following responses reveal the effect of choice on the children's reading motivation in the study:

"I found it in the school library."

"It is the one I chose."

"I got it from the library at school. I picked it out myself."

(Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006, pp.417-418).

In the first part of the activity, each child chose one item from the display and then read it silently. The interviewer and the child then engaged in an informal interview. Each child was asked the following questions:

1. What did you choose to read? Why?
2. Why did you not choose something else from the display?
3. How did you feel when you had to choose something from the display?
4. How did you feel when you read silently?

In the second part of the activity, each child made another selection and read aloud to the interviewer. The interviewer and the child engaged in an informal interview about the activity done. The following questions were asked by the interviewer:

1. What did you choose to read? Why?
2. Why did you not choose something else from the display?
3. How did you feel when you had to choose something from the display?
4. How did you feel when you read aloud?

The interviewer then read a pre-selected text to the child aloud. Thereafter, the interviewer and the child engaged in a discussion. Each child was asked how he/she felt when he/she was read to. The children were also asked if they could have continued with any of the activities (i.e. reading silently, reading aloud or being read to) for longer, which one it would be and why.

An informal interview about the reading activities done at home and at school followed. The focus of the interview was the child's feelings about reading:

1. What are some of the reading activities you do at school? How do you feel about them?
2. What are some of the reading activities you do at home? How do you feel about them?

As a final question the children were asked to recommend what types of books they would buy for their classroom that would make them feel like reading.

Data Analysis

The data produced was transcribed from the video recordings. After reading the transcription of the data several times, it was evident that the children expressed a variety of emotions about reading. For each child, however, a dominant emotion came to the fore. Leo exemplified ‘fun’ which is associated with the emotion of happiness, Nandi focused on the cognitive aspect; she has positive feelings about ‘learning’, Lisa connected reading to ‘gender’ and Lindani expressed his feelings as ‘nice’, capturing the value of goodness whilst Zora had emotions related to ‘novelty’, (new books that she has not been exposed to previously).¹³ It was therefore decided to arrange chapter four according to the dominant emotions exemplified by each child. The data was then interpreted and analysed according to the five dominant emotions as exemplified by the five children.

Validity

Experience is deeply personal and individual. This study, therefore, is not a search for the truth about children’s experiences of reading. Rather, it is to understand in a deep and nuanced way how children experience reading. Whatever the participants said was accepted as truth.

Therefore, triangulation was not used for verification of the participants’ truths. It was deployed to verify the research claims made in the study. Trustworthiness in this study is about ensuring that the learners feel free to express themselves and their experiences, and to create the conditions for them to express it. This understanding of validity precludes generalisation. This study is generative (Vithal, 2003) in nature and relies on readers to draw their own conclusions of how the findings may find relevance in their own contexts.

¹³ What is exemplified is written in single quotation marks.

Ethical Considerations

Interviews have an ethical dimension. They involve interpersonal interaction and produce information about the human condition (Cohen *et al*, 2007, p.382); hence, the need for the protection of the participants in a study exists. The following ethical considerations were made to protect the participants in this study: Permission to conduct the research was gained from the Department of Education, the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the principal of the school, in writing (refer to appendices L, M, N). Informed consent was also obtained from the parents of the children beforehand in writing because they were all minors (refer to appendix O). In addition, informed consent was obtained from the children themselves in writing (refer to appendix P). Both the parents and the children were informed about the research. The parents and the children were informed that the children's names and the name of the school would be protected and that all the information obtained from the children would be treated in the strictest confidence. Furthermore, the parents were informed that participation was voluntary and that the children could withdraw at any time without fear of being penalised.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to the reading experiences of five children in one school in KwaZulu-Natal. The sample in this study was small and the findings of this research, therefore, cannot be generalised to all learners. Generalisations, however, were not the main purpose of the study. The main purpose was to explore and understand the affective reading experiences of grade four children. Perhaps a larger scale study across schools having different socio-economic backgrounds would reveal more insight into the feelings of children.

This study is also limited to the reading experiences of five learners in one class from a school in KwaZulu-Natal. The study could have included children from the other grade four class. This was not possible, however, because of timetabling and the availability of time.

The pilot study was conducted on children at the end of their grade four year. The actual study, however, was conducted on children in the beginning of their grade four year. The responses of the children from the pilot study were far more expressive and eloquent than the children from the actual study perhaps because their ability to express themselves at the end of the year was more developed. In addition, at the end of the year the children were older and more mature. It

is possible that these afore-mentioned factors enabled the children from the pilot study to reflect on their previous experiences and to respond with greater insight. It is feared that the children from the actual study were placed at a disadvantage because of the time of year at which the study was conducted. It is therefore suggested that a future study be conducted on grade four children at the end of their grade to gain more insight.

One particular child from the study was not as comfortable and spontaneous in his responses as the others were with the interviewer. A longer period of exposure to the interviewer before the actual study began, would be recommended.

A further limitation was that the interviewer did not probe the children sufficiently in order to gain descriptive responses.

Three of the children who participated in the study were English-second-language speakers. These children may have been able to respond better if they were interviewed in their mother-tongue. Due to a lack of financial resources, however, this was not possible.

The purpose of this study was to explore the affective reading experiences of grade four children. This was achieved by interviewing grade four children. Consequently, the study relied upon the integrity of the children's responses, which was a limiting factor. Despite the above-mentioned limitations, I believe that the findings of this study will prove to be valuable to teachers of reading.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained the research design and research methodology used in my study. I have also furnished the reasons for my choice of research design and research methodology. I have also explained the ethical considerations that had to be implemented, the limitations experienced and validity issues. In the following chapter, the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews, the thought-bubble drawings and the completed stories is analysed according to the dominant emotions exemplified by each child.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S AFFECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF READING

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research design and the research methodology was provided. In this chapter, I present the analysis of the affective reading experiences of five children in a grade four class. The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews, the thought-bubble drawings and the completed stories is analysed according to the dominant emotion exemplified by each child.

Analysing Children's Affective Experiences of Reading

This analysis answers the question about the affective reading experiences of grade four children. In this chapter, I analysed the affective component of the reading experiences of five participants, namely, Leo, Nandi, Lisa, Lindani and Zora. The analysis for each participant is organised around each data production method: thought-bubble drawing; completing the story; silent reading; reading aloud; being read to; reading activities done at school; reading activities done at home; the reading material that each child would buy for their classroom. Although each participant expresses his/her emotions in a variety of ways, I have chosen to analyse each as representing and exemplifying an overarching and dominant emotion.

Using examples is an approach theorised as exemplarity by Vithal (2003). According to Vithal (2003), exemplarity allows a researcher to understand a whole by looking at one or more (not all) of its parts. In the case at hand, by providing some understanding about how some children feel about reading, one could say something about reading. The idea is not to generalise, but to add to current understandings of reading.

Leo exemplifies 'fun' which is associated with the emotion of happiness, Nandi focuses on the cognitive aspect; she has positive feelings about 'learning', Lisa connects reading to 'gender' and Lindani expresses his feelings as 'nice', capturing the value of goodness whilst Zora has

emotions related to ‘novelty’ (‘new’ books that she has not been exposed to previously).¹⁴ This is not to say that each participant did not express/experience other feelings. Exemplarity as an analytical strategy was merely used to understand feelings in a deeper way.

The above-mentioned methods were used to glean the personal feelings of the children regarding reading. The intention of the thought-bubble activity was to provide children with two alternatives: a child who is happy to read and a child who is not. The choices the children made would either indicate a liking or a dislike of reading. The intention behind the completing-the-story-activity was to determine, from the children’s stories, their feelings about reading and to gain an insight into their reading experiences. In the thought-bubble activity and the completing-the-story activity, the feelings that were expressed by the children can, from a Freudian perspective, be viewed as the children’s own feelings and thoughts about reading. According to Freud, projection is the externalization of an internal process (Sandler, 1987). It involves ascribing one’s own unacceptable motivations, desires, thoughts and feelings on to someone else (Sandler, 1987). In the activity where each child chose an item to read silently, the children’s choices would give an indication of their preferred tastes while their answers to the questions that were posed would help to provide an understanding about their feelings regarding silent reading. In the activity where each child had to choose an item to read aloud, the children’s choices would again indicate their preferred tastes, and their answers to the questions that were posed would help to provide an understanding about their feelings about reading aloud. In the activity where each child was read to by the interviewer, the questions were asked in order to find out how the children felt when they were read to. The questions asked about what reading activities were undertaken at school were to determine what kinds of reading activities the children were involved in at school, and their feelings towards the different activities. The questions asked about what reading activities were undertaken at home were to determine what kinds of reading activities the children were involved in at home, and their feelings towards the different activities. The final question that asked the children what kinds of reading material they would buy for the classroom was aimed at finding out what the children liked to read.

¹⁴ What is exemplified is written in single quotation marks.

Together these methods provide a rich source of data to fathom the participants’ feelings about their reading experience.¹⁵

The children who participated in this study were approximately nine years old at the time when the study was conducted. Three of the five children are second-language learners, with isiZulu being their mother-tongue (the majority of the learner population at the school where the study was conducted are second-language learners). The children at this particular school come from lower to middle income backgrounds and their parents’ occupations include teachers, nurses, policemen or policewomen, soldiers, office workers, waiters, workers at supermarkets or shops and domestic workers. Consequently, it is a reasonable assumption that they do not have an elaborate vocabulary necessary to express their feelings in a Bernsteinian elaborate way.¹⁶ For example, the word ‘fun’ could have several meanings: enjoyable; exciting; adventure; but the child may not be able to express what he/she truly means because of a limited vocabulary. Through the process of analysis, therefore, I will try to elaborate on the feelings as described by the children.

Each of the five participants in this study exemplifies a particular emotion as detailed in figure 10.

Feeling exemplified	Participant
Reading is fun	Leo
Reading is about learning	Nandi
Reading is about girls’ stuff and boys’ stuff	Lisa
Reading is nice	Lindani
Reading new books	Zora

Figure 10: Feelings exemplified by participants

¹⁵ All words in italics and double quotation marks refer to actual data elicited from participants.

¹⁶ Based on empirical research, Bernstein (in Sadovnik, 2001) distinguished between the restricted code of the working class and the elaborate code of the middle class. These codes refer to the language usage of the different classes of people. According to Bernstein (in Sadovnik, 2001), the communication codes of working class children were different from middle class children. This difference is as a result of differences in societal class. With the restricted code, speakers draw on background knowledge and shared understanding. The elaborate code, on the other hand spells everything out, not because it is better, but because it is necessary so that everyone can understand it. The elaborate code is complete and full of detail and most hearing a conversation would understand it. With the restricted code, however, it is shorter, condensed and requires background information and prior knowledge. A person hearing a conversation full of restricted code would be quite lost. (Young, 2002).

In the analysis chapter, there is an uneven distribution of data obtained from participants. For example, there is more data on Leo than any of the other participants because he spoke more. Also, the responses of some of the children allowed for greater interpretation.

In the next section, I present the analysis.

Analysis

Experiencing Reading as Fun: Leo

Leo: Thought-bubble drawing

On the day of the interview Leo chose the thought-bubble drawing showing a boy with the happy face. Leo's choice, one could conclude, was a reflection of how he felt on that day and is not necessarily related to how he feels about reading.

When asked how he felt the boy in the thought-bubble drawing was feeling, Leo said, "*I think he feels happy.*" He also indicated that the boy in the drawing enjoys reading "*a lot.*" One may therefore draw the conclusion that Leo also enjoys reading; in other words, that enjoyment is associated with fun.

Leo gave the book that the boy was reading in the thought-bubble drawing, the title "The Iron Man Book".¹⁷ When asked why he chose to read that particular book, he said, "...*because Iron Man got a lot of action in it,*" and when asked if this boy enjoys action books, Leo responded in the affirmative. From the foregoing, it is apparent that Leo also enjoys action books which can be construed as a fun activity. It is possible that the "Iron Man" character has been observed by Leo on television or at the cinema.¹⁸ In a study conducted by Machet (2003, p.23), it was found that the most popular main character (when reading) for both boys and girls from grades five to seven was someone from television or the movies.

From my observation of boys in my classroom, they enjoy stories, movies and television programmes that revolve around a super hero. In addition, boys prefer a storyline that is full of

¹⁷ All names of books, stories, television programmes, movies and dolls will appear in double quotation marks.

¹⁸ "Iron Man" is a 2008 American superhero film based on the Marvel comic character of the same name.

action. As part of a survey to determine boys' reading interests, grade three boys were questioned about what they would like to read (Zambo & Brozo, 2009, pp.114-115). One of their responses was, "books that are action packed" (Zambo & Brozo, 2009, pp.114-115).

When asked if there were any books the boy in the thought-bubble drawing would not enjoy reading, Leo replied, "... *he wouldn't enjoy reading too hard books.*" One may draw the conclusion that Leo also does not enjoy difficult books. The question becomes raised as to what Leo is referring to when he speaks of "*not too hard books.*" Perhaps he is referring to books with multi-syllabic words that he cannot pronounce or to books with words that he does not know the meanings of. There is also the possibility that he may be referring to books that are above his knowledge range (for example, a grade ten Biology textbook).

Leo completed the thought bubble with the following, "*I like this book because it is easy to read and it is fun. I also like it because (because) there (there) are lots and lots of pictures to see. I enjoy it very very much (much).*" From Leo's written response, one may deduce that reading material has to be easy enough for the child to handle. If it is beyond the child's ability, the activity will no longer be fun for the child and the child may lose interest. In addition, it must have content that the child finds entertaining and contain visual stimulation in the form of pictures. According to Sullivan (2004, p.36), because boys use only half of their brains at any given time, when they read, they need an extra jolt of sound and colour. Furthermore, there is evidence that pictures can attract readers to a book (Andrews, Scharff & Moses, 2002), they can encourage a child to read the text in a book, they can stimulate affective responses such as enjoyment, they can affect attitudes and they can have an emotional impact (Newton, 1995). Pictures also repeat the information presented in words, thus making the reading experience more memorable (Newton, 1995). Pictures might also interpret the text and then translate the information into a more comprehensible form (Newton, 1995).

Leo: Completing the story

Leo completed the completing-the-story activity by writing it down. One may deduce that he is more comfortable with his writing ability than his verbal ability.

In Leo's story, he writes about the character, Connie, who is reading "Beauty and the beast" and she wonders what it would be like to be a princess; she decides to have a dress-up party and she

invites all her friends. At the party Connie was beauty and a boy named Jone was the beast. The children at the party all played and they were all happy. Leo's story is a happy story and it highlights the idea of fun.

Leo's version of "Beauty and the beast" makes no mention of incidents that actually happen in the traditional version of the story, indicating a lack of awareness of the actual story. This could be as a result of Leo's home background. The possibility exists that Leo has not been exposed to traditional western, middle-class fairy tales at home.

When asked how Connie (the character from the completing-the-story activity) feels about reading, Leo responded by saying, "... *I think she feels happy reading "Beauty and the beast" and I think, mam I think she-she likes this story the best.*" He also said that Connie enjoyed the story so much, "*because it was nice and it had a happy ending.*" For Leo, there seems to be a need for a happy ending. In other words, there is a need for the activity to be fun and enjoyable. Generally children and adults want a happy ending whether they are reading a book or watching a movie because there is an escape from reality to a place where everything is good, happy and safe. Psychological studies show that young children like stories with happy endings (Sharpe & Walgate, 2007).

Leo also says that Connie (the child from the completing-the-story activity) enjoys other books as well and she enjoys this time of day when they read silently because, "...*it's nice and there's no noise so she can concentrate.*" This seems to be in line with his need to enjoy reading a text that makes him feel happy.

Leo: Reading silently

For the silent reading activity, Leo chose to read a South African children's newspaper, the "Free 4 All".¹⁹

For this activity, Leo was asked to read silently. The interviewer mentioned three times that this particular activity was about silent reading. Instead Leo read aloud. The interviewer then said to him, "*Just do your silent reading, love. Read silently for yourself.*" Only then did Leo read

¹⁹ "Free 4 All" is a newspaper distributed to many primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. (Refer to appendices I, J).

silently. The act of reading aloud, even though he was asked to read silently, suggests, perhaps, that he prefers to read aloud. It is possible that Leo prefers to read aloud because he can understand what he reads better when he reads aloud, or perhaps he likes to hear himself read. There is also the possibility that when Leo reads aloud, there is the opportunity to sound out the words which may be useful for him.

While reading the newspaper, Leo opened his mouth wide in amazement; he gasped. He obviously read something or saw a picture of something that surprised or excited him which was confirmed by him saying, *“I’m even waiting for this thing so it can come to school. We get “Free 4 Alls”.”* When asked why he chose the newspaper, he said, *“I always read it and it’s one of the favourite, it’s one of the favourite stuff I like to read.”*

Leo also said that he chose the “Free 4 All” because it has “Ben Ten”²⁰, “The Honeyz”²¹ and competitions.

In this particular edition of “Free 4 All” (March 2009) there was a craft activity showing how to make an Omnitrix (a cardboard watch). The Omnitrix is Ben 10’s weapon which he uses to transform himself into different characters and fight off all the evil forces. This activity was advertised on the cover of the newspaper. It is possible that the cover attracted Leo’s attention. It is possible that he wanted to make this watch and use it and pretend to be a super hero.

Leo also indicated that the newspaper had “Honeyz” which was a reason why he chose it. “Honeyz” is a comic strip competition that allows children to send in their photograph and details. For every publication, one child is chosen and he/she is included as a character in the next comic strip. The comic also has big beautiful pictures and very few words. It has a short story line that is amusing and easy to follow. It is possible that Leo likes to read this comic because he wants to see if he or any of his friends has won, or that he likes to read comics which are fun and easy to read and follow because they comprise pictures and few words.

²⁰ “Ben 10” is an American animated television series about a boy who has a watch which is called an Omnitrix that can transform him into a variety of alien life-forms.

²¹ This is a comic strip found in the “Free 4 All” newspaper. (Refer to appendix K).

Another reason given by Leo for choosing the “Free 4 All” newspaper was that it had competitions. Some of the competitions featured in “Free 4 All” (March, 2009) are tabulated in figure 11:

Type of competition	Prize
Drawing competition	Hamper containing crayons, felt pens and colour pencils
SMS competition	A free meal at Spur
Completing a coupon	Chocolate hamper of Easter eggs
SMS competition	A school dictionary
Completing a coupon	Play Station Consol with games and software
SMS competition	Ben 10 toys
SMS competition	A laptop
Frodoku game ²²	Dried fruit called Fruit Zingers
Decorating an envelope	A Penflex hamper containing pens and markers

Figure 11: Competitions in the March 2009 “Free 4 All”

Reading “Free 4 All” gives a child access to competitions which is an added bonus because the opportunity to win something special is provided.

Leo also mentioned other newspapers that he has in the classroom; “The Daily News” and “The Sunday Tribune”, hence indicating an awareness of newspapers. This could be as a result of the influence of the home or the school environment. It is possible that Leo’s parents read these newspapers at home or that newspaper-based activities have been done in the classroom.

Leo said that he felt “*very excited*,” when he was asked to choose something to read because, “*I (he) like (likes) to read.*” He also said that he “*felt happy*” when he was reading silently because there was “*no noise.*” According to Chassee (2008), noise level has an impact on a child’s motivation to read. In her study, one of the children reported that he liked silent reading because “*nobody bothers me and I’m all by myself*” (Chassee, 2008, p.48). Another child said that he liked going to the library to read because in the classroom the children talked and it was noisy (Chassee, 2008, p.48). In the library, however, the children were not allowed to talk (Chassee,

²² This puzzle is played on a nine by nine grid. Pictures of fruit are provided. The reader is required to cut out the pictures and place them in the grid so that every row, column and min-grid contains all nine fruit.

2008, p.48). A third child commented that the thing she liked least about reading in school was reading with the class because it was too loud (Chassee, 2008, p.48). She explained that she could not concentrate when everyone was reading aloud (Chassee, 2008, p.48).

Leo: Reading aloud

Leo chose a non-fiction book entitled “What’s wrong with me?” to read aloud.

Leo asked the interviewer if the books from the display were new books. It appears to be important to find out whether the books were old or new, probably because there are certain emotions associated with new things. For example, when a child receives a gift it is almost always most likely to be something new and it is the newness of the present that is appealing and allows children to experience joy.

After Leo read aloud, the interviewer said to him, “*Good. You read really well.*” She also said to him, “*...you were very quick to figure out the new words and words that perhaps you weren’t familiar with. You did a good job of that.*” From the interviewer’s comments, one may perhaps surmise that reading aloud helped Leo to figure out how to read difficult words.

Leo said that he chose the book, “What’s wrong with me?” because “*it shows us what to do and what not to do.*” The book chosen was a non-fiction book that explains medical conditions and why they occur. For example, the book explains why we cough. Leo said that he chose this particular book because when he didn’t see the newspaper that he used in the first activity (i.e. “Free 4 All”), he saw that particular book and he liked it. Perhaps Leo chose that particular book because he found it interesting. Perhaps he has an enquiring mind and likes to know why things happen.

Leo “*felt happy*” to choose something from the display “*because I (he) could read another book.*” It is possible to infer that when a child is presented with a variety of reading material that sustains interest, he/she may want to explore and read more. It is therefore important for teachers to know what children’s favourites are. If these favourites are not made available, a child may be forced to choose something else, which may impact on reading enjoyment and lessen motivation to read. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) conducted a study to determine what motivates children to read. They recommend that one way to motivate children to read is

“access to books” (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). In their study, children indicated that access to books positively affected their reading motivation. Furthermore, it appears that children were motivated to read when they were given the opportunity to decide what text they would like to read. According to Edmunds and Bauserman (2006), a second way to increase children’s desire to read was to let them choose their own books. In Chassee’s study (2008), children also indicated that they enjoyed choosing their own book to read because if someone else chose the book for them, it might be boring or they may hate it.

Leo also said that it felt “*nice*” to read aloud and that he enjoyed it.

Leo: Being read to

The interviewer read from “Fantastic Mr Fox” by Roald Dahl to Leo. Leo recognised Roald Dahl as the author of “Charlie and the chocolate factory”; a book that was being read in his class. The story begins with three peculiar farmers who have very unusual diets. The chicken farmer only ate boiled chicken every day, the duck and goose farmer only ate doughnuts and goose livers and the turkey and apple farmer only drank cider made from his apples; he did not eat any food at all. In chapter two, Leo was introduced to Mr. Fox who would steal from one of the farmers to feed his family every night. This book was appealing to Leo because it is humorous and fun.

Leo said “*it feels nice*” to be read to. Perhaps Leo means that he enjoyed being read to, or perhaps he found it comforting and soothing to be read to. There is also the possibility that Leo enjoys the one-on-one situation. Leo also mentioned that when he goes to bed, his mother reads to him and that he enjoys listening to stories.

Leo: Which activity would you have liked to continue for longer?

If Leo could have carried on with any of the activities for longer he would have liked to have been read to. When asked why he enjoyed that activity, he said he didn’t know. It is possible that the home environment has been a contributing factor in the pleasure Leo experiences when he is read to. According to Cramer and Castle (1994), reading to children is one way to stimulate their enjoyment and appreciation of children’s literature. In addition, reading to children is one of the most effective ways of creating capable readers who continue to choose reading for a

lifetime (Cramer & Castle, 1994). According to Edmunds and Bauserman (2006), many of the children in their study revealed that they enjoyed being read to and that they were motivated to read when they were read to.

Leo: Reading activities at school

When asked what reading activities he was involved in at school, Leo mentioned reading aloud, spare-time reading, reading after break, lending books to each other and reading in the library at school. He said that he felt “*nice*” about these activities. When asked what his favourite things to do at school were, he said, “*...to go play at break, to go read in the library and to have fun.*” One can assume that a ‘favourite thing’ to do, is usually something that is fun and enjoyable; hence, Leo finds reading in the library fun. Leo also said that it was nice to read to the grade two children, “*So I can read to someone so I don’t have to read to myself.*” He also said that they read in groups and by themselves. He prefers to read in groups “*so everyone can have fun, so I can share the fun with them when we reading.*” It is possible to infer that Leo prefers company when he reads; he requires social interaction.

Leo also finds it fun to read along with the CD recording of “Charlie and the chocolate factory” at school. Perhaps Leo enjoys this activity because the voice on the CD helps with the pronunciation of difficult words. Or perhaps by listening to the narration of the story, the story comes to life in Leo’s imagination.

Leo: Reading activities at home

At home Leo reads to his small cousin and his older cousin reads to him. Leo and his small cousin duck under a blanket and read with the help of a torch. They read his “Gorilla book”, “Elephant book” and “Peter and friends”, indicating that he has access to reading material at home. Leo and his cousin read in unusual circumstances. They have created an exciting and adventurous situation which can be likened to a camping trip; they are having fun. Leo also reads newspapers at home. When asked if his parents take him to the public library he said, “*Mam I’m getting a library card mam.*” He also says that the school library is the first library he ever went into. One may infer that Leo has not been into a public library. Visiting public libraries helps children to know that there are many books to read and reading is one of the ways

of getting knowledge and information (Wang, 2000). Besides playing a vital role in introducing books to children, libraries also encourage children to read for pleasure (Machet, 2001).

Leo: What reading material would you buy?

When asked what reading material he would buy for his classroom if he had lots of money, Leo said he would buy fiction books like the readers on the table (Leo was referring to the graded readers in the display), non-fiction books, fun books, sad books, happy books, angry books, copies of “Free 4 All” and the “Daily News”. He said that he would buy the “Daily News” because he likes the cartoons at the back. It is possible that “*fun books*” refer to books with comics and “*happy books*” refer to fiction books that have endings where everyone lives happily ever after. It is difficult, however, to understand what Leo means by “*angry books*” and “*sad books*.” Leo seems to enjoy a variety of reading material, though funny and happy books dominate as a choice.

Summary: Leo as the exemplar of ‘reading is fun’

For Leo reading is fun when he reads stories that have action, stories that have easy words (i.e. suitable to his level), stories with a lot of pictures, stories about super heroes, stories that have happy endings and cartoon stories. Leo also finds competitions fun because there is the opportunity to win a prize. In addition, he enjoys reading when he has company so that he can share the fun.

Leo also enjoys listening to his mother read to him. Rasinski and Fredericks (1991a; 1991b) argued that the simple act of parents reading aloud to their children was one of the most effective activities parents could engage in with their children to promote achievement in and enjoyment of reading.

For the silent reading activity, Leo chose a children’s newspaper and for the reading-aloud activity, Leo chose a non-fiction book. He also indicated that he would buy readers, non-fiction books, fiction books and newspapers for his classroom. Leo is therefore able to enjoy a variety of reading material. His experiences of reading, one can conclude, are happy experiences.

Reading is about Learning: Nandi

Nandi: Thought-bubble drawing

Nandi chose the thought-bubble drawing with the happy picture because, “*I don’t like crying and I don’t like people sad.*” She explained that if the child in the picture was sad, then the person looking at it would also be sad. Nandi’s choice, therefore, was not related to the act of reading but rather to how it would affect her own emotions.

When asked how she thought the child in the thought-bubble drawing was feeling, Nandi explained that the child was feeling happy because she said, “*I wish the story was real.*” The fact that Nandi wanted the story to come to life shows that she thinks that the child in the drawing is enjoying the story immensely. She also felt that the child was happy because the story was about “Bratz”.²³ Nandi also wrote in her thought bubble, “*I wish I am famous and I am a singer.*” This is indicative of how reading, in this case, triggered imagination and aspiration; she has learnt about a possible future.

Nandi gave the book in the thought-bubble drawing the title “Bratz Book”. This is indicative of many young female children’s interest in the popular “Bratz” dolls and television series. When asked if the child in the drawing was happy to read any kind of book, Nandi said, “*She is happy because girls like “Bratz” and “Barbies”.*”²⁴ When asked if there were any books the child in the drawing wouldn’t look so happy reading, she said, “No.” One can draw a conclusion from Nandi’s response and that is, that she likes to read books about “Barbie” and “Bratz”. It is possible that by reading about “Barbie” and “Bratz”, Nandi is learning about fashion and dressing-up.

Nandi: Completing the story

Nandi completed the story by writing it out. She wrote two lines to complete her story: “*And read she likes to read her books that the best things that she likes to do.*” In other words reading is a favourite pastime for Connie (the character in the completing-the-story activity).

²³ “Bratz” is a popular line of fashion dolls. The original dolls generated a number of spin-offs such as films, music albums and the animated television series.

²⁴ “Barbie” is a fashion doll.

When asked how Connie felt about reading, she answered by saying, “*Exciting. Great. And maybe when she grow (grows) up she will be a reader.*” Nandi says that Connie enjoys this time of day when they read silently and she was reading, “*...one of the hard books... so that when she grow (grows) up she can read every word.*” Based on Nandi’s answer, a reasonable deduction might be that she holds reading in very high regard and that she has aspirations of becoming a good reader or extending her present reading abilities and that by practising her reading she will learn to become a better reader. Nandi’s focus is on learning and improving her reading skills.

Nandi: Reading silently

Nandi chose a book about soccer to read silently. The book is entitled, “Starting soccer”. This book shows a beginner the skills needed to play soccer. It describes how to control the ball, how to dribble, how to head the ball and how to tackle. It also includes tips on goalkeeping, scoring goals and how to outwit opponents.

Nandi took her time to open and look at the books before she made a choice; she made, ostensibly, a considered decision. She said she chose that particular book because “*it tells you how to play soccer,*” what takkies to wear and it tells you what “*you have to first do before, before the game starts and then after that you can take a break.*” In other words, she was learning about the game of soccer from the book.

Nandi also mentioned that she chose that book because it was “*easy.*” Children often feel confident when they have mastery of a text. According to Sullivan (2004, p.39), when you give children reading material that they are comfortable with, they will not regard reading as a chore.

Nandi said that she felt happy to choose something from the display “*because I (she) like (likes) to read.*” She also said that she felt happy to read silently “*because it’s thinking... you read like hard words in silence.*” In other words, it is easier to concentrate on the more difficult words when you are reading silently. Again Nandi focuses on learning; she wants to extend her vocabulary and improve her pronunciation of words. Reading develops important cognitive abilities such as vocabulary development (Machet, 2001, p.1).

Nandi: Reading aloud

Nandi chose one of the graded readers²⁵, “The pink umbrella and other stories” to read aloud. This book is written by the South African author, Jenny Seed, and it comprises six stories. The book is aimed at grade three level.

Nandi read “Lindiwe’s baby” from “The pink umbrella and other stories” aloud. She read from the beginning of the story. While she read, she experienced difficulty pronouncing some words. The interviewer helped her with her pronunciation. When she had finished, the interviewer said, “*You read very well...*”

Nandi said that she chose to read that story because she had read it before. She, therefore, made a choice based on her previous experiences. She seems to be happy with familiarity. Perhaps reading something she knows gives her confidence. There is also the possibility that by re-reading a text, Nandi is consolidating what she has already learnt from the text. She said that she did not choose anything else because “*some of them are hard and some of them are easy.*” But she was not sure if the one she chose was hard or easy. When asked if that particular book was just right for her, she responded in the affirmative. If a child is reading a text at the wrong level, it will frustrate the child and make him/her disillusioned and the child will not learn to read at that level (Maharaj, 2007, p.39).

Nandi said that she felt good about choosing the second time because when she chose the first time she didn’t realise that she could choose from all the books placed on the table. She felt happy about reading aloud because “*if you don’t know the word you can think it, you can say, you can, you can think it first say the ‘w’ and the ‘r’.*” In other words, you can sound out the words. Nandi is, therefore, making use of phonics, which forms part of the cognitive aspects of reading, when she is reading aloud. Nandi highlights the idea that in order to read, phonics is necessary. Furthermore, Nandi’s knowledge of phonics and her ability to use it to help her when she reads, affects her attitude towards reading. Learning for her seems to be a satisfying experience.

²⁵ The grade four children at this particular school read this set of readers in the classroom during their oral group reading time. The series is entitled “Readers are Leaders”.

Nandi: Being read to

The interviewer read from “Fantastic Mr Fox” by Roald Dahl to Nandi. Nandi said that she was happy to be read to *“because some of the words are long. So you can hear them and now you can now you can learn them and then you’ll learn them.”* Nandi seems very keen to learn new vocabulary and how to pronounce new words. This is in line with Nandi’s aspirations of becoming a good reader.

Some of the more difficult words in the passage were: smothered; dumplings; pot-bellied; shallow; doughnuts; beastly; orchard; gallons; cider. These words would be unfamiliar to Nandi because they are words not commonly used in everyday conversation. It is also important to keep in mind that Nandi is a second-language learner which is another possible reason why these words are difficult for her. De Witt, Lessing and Dicker (1998) conducted a study to compare the reading skills of non-mother-tongue grade two learners with those of mother-tongue grade two learners. The study showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the average chronological age and average reading age of the non-mother-tongue learners; whereas there was no significant difference between the average chronological and average reading age of the mother-tongue learners. Furthermore, the non-mother-tongue learners experienced problems in terms of reading speed, reading accuracy and reading comprehension.

Nandi: Which activity would you have liked to continue for longer?

Nandi said that she would have liked to have listened to the story for longer because *“it’s better to learn the hard words... When you grow up you can read all those words.”* An emphasis on learning and improving her reading ability is evident again. It is possible that the focus of Nandi’s learning is pronunciation and vocabulary extension.

Nandi: Reading activities at school

The following are some of the reading activities mentioned by Nandi that she is involved in at school: being read to by the teacher; reading silently in the classroom; group reading. She enjoys being read to by the teacher and she loves reading silently. She is also happy when she reads in a group. In addition, she mentioned that when she read in class and she came across a difficult word, she would write it down in her book and she would ask her father for help when she went

home. Again, an emphasis on learning comes to the fore. It is apparent that Nandi is trying very hard to improve her reading ability and her recognition of words. This is possibly as a result of the influence coming from her home environment or her own aspirations to be an outstanding reader. In Nandi's mind, learning to read is important and if she achieves her aspirations she will, no doubt, have positive feelings.

Nandi: Reading activities at home

Nandi said that she read newspapers and magazines at home and that she enjoyed reading them. She said that she read her newspaper and magazine cuttings more than once: "*I did read it yesterday and I read it, I read it again today when I came to school after I came to school.*" When asked if she read that for fun, she said she did - but also for "*learning.*" The many times that Nandi read the cuttings indicates the pleasure she gains from reading and the emphasis she places on learning. Generally, when one does something in a repetitive manner, it is for the purpose of mastery. Research shows that the more children read, the more vocabulary and knowledge they acquire, and the more fluent they will become in reading (Pang, Muaka, Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003, p.20). Furthermore, children cling to what is familiar and they will want to improve on what they already know (Cullingford, 2001). The desire to hear the same pattern of a story, to have each word in its own place, to exchange the same remarks are all part of a child's developing mastery (Cullingford, 2001). There is a trend amongst young children and girls to re-read (Hall & Coles, 1999, p.9).

Nandi also gets reading for homework. She reads when she arrives home and she reads again when her father gets home from work. He reads to her and then she reads to him. Nandi's father seems to be playing an important role in her reading education. According to Rasinski and Fredericks (1991a) in order for reading to flourish, children need to be reading at home with their parents. Nandi also reads in the morning. She finds all the reading at home enjoyable. Again the number of times Nandi is involved in reading shows a marked interest, enthusiasm, enjoyment and a focus on learning.

Nandi: What reading material would you buy?

Nandi said that if she was given money to buy reading material for her classroom she would use the money to build a library. In the library she would have “*hard books*,” “*like the teachers’ ones*” and she would buy books for the grade ones, twos, fours and sevens. It is possible that Nandi wants teachers’ books in the library (which she considers to be hard books) because she aspires to be able to read books of that level.

She would also buy a dictionary, encyclopaedias and non-fiction books about animals. She would buy books about animals to “*learn about saving the animals and the elephants...*” She would also buy “True Love”²⁶ magazine because she enjoys reading about the famous people. Nandi wants to buy a variety of texts. From the above, it is apparent that she wants to read for educational endeavours as well as for sheer entertainment. Nandi also said that it was better to buy big books with many different stories inside rather than one book with one story. She, therefore, wants to get more value while also wanting to learn more. A big book with many different stories inside usually contains shorter stories. One may assume that Nandi prefers short stories. This is probably related to her penchant for reading a text over and over again. It is easier to do so with short stories than with long stories.

Summary: Nandi as the exemplar of ‘reading is about learning’

With Nandi, the emphasis is very much on gaining knowledge and about improving her reading ability. She wants to grow up to become a good reader and to be able to read all the difficult words. Nandi was happy to read aloud because she made use of phonics to help her read. She was also happy to be read aloud to because the opportunity for learning was provided; she could hear the words which would help her with her reading and her pronunciation. Nandi writes down difficult words and asks her father to help her with them. She reads materials over and over again, thereby allowing for mastery of the text. She chose a book about soccer to read silently so that she could learn more about soccer; her choice is beyond gendered interests. Nandi also wants to buy non-fiction books that will teach her how to save animals.

²⁶ “True Love” is a women’s magazine sold in South Africa.

For Nandi, reading is a favourite pastime. She likes to read books about the “Bratz” and “Barbie” dolls and she also enjoys newspapers and magazines. From the afore-mentioned reading material, Nandi can learn about fashion, dressing-up and about current events.

Nandi wants to read reading material that she can cope with and that she is familiar with. Research findings show that “texts of the right reading level are neither too easy nor too hard for a particular reader” (Pang *et al*, 2003, p.17). “Choosing texts of the right difficulty and interest levels will encourage children to read and to enjoy what they are reading” (Pang *et al*, 2003, p. 17). Traditionally, vocabulary, word length, grammatical complexity and sentence length are used to indicate the difficulty of a text (Pang *et al*, 2003, p.17). It is also important to consider the subject-matter and assumed cultural knowledge when assessing the difficulty of a text (Pang *et al*, 2003, p.17). Wang (2000) says that some of the factors that influence a positive attitude toward reading are whether the children are reading interesting books that are predictable, have vivid pictures and are related to their lives. If children are therefore presented with a text that is of a suitable reading level, and appeals to their interest, reading will be enjoyed.

Reading is about Girls’ Stuff and Boys’ Stuff: Lisa

Lisa: Thought-bubble drawing

Lisa chose the thought-bubble drawing with the happy picture, “*because I like to be happy, not sad.*” Lisa’s choice, therefore, is not related to the act of reading; but to emotions that are triggered.

According to Lisa, the girl in the drawing, “... *feels happy cos (because) umm she reads a book with things that she likes.*” In other words it is important for Lisa to read about things that appeal to her interest and give her pleasure.

According to Lisa, the child in the drawing likes books about “Bratz”, “The Power Puff Girls”²⁷ and “Hannah Montana”²⁸. The common element in the above-mentioned books is that the central characters are female. Lisa also says that the child in the drawing does not like books about,

²⁷ The “Power Puff Girls” is an animated television series about three kindergarten-aged girls who have super powers.

²⁸ “Hannah Montana” is a television series about a girl who lives a double life. By day she is an ordinary teenager and by night she is a famous pop singer.

“...boys’ stuffs.” By “boys’ stuffs” Lisa could be referring to cars, guns, fighting, sports and action heroes like Spiderman. It is likely, therefore, that Lisa also prefers reading books where the central characters are female. Also, a distinction between girls’ and boys’ interests has been highlighted.

Lisa completed her thought bubble with the following words: “*I would like a Bratz movie and a Bratz doll.*” Coincidentally, Lisa has named the book in the thought-bubble drawing, “The Bratz Story”. Lisa’s reading preference indicates a fascination with the current popular television programme and the “Bratz” dolls as “The Bratz” series of books is based on the television programme. It is also about “*girls’ stuff.*”

Lisa: Completing the story

Lisa completed her story by writing it down.

In Lisa’s story, Connie (the character in the completing-the-story activity) read to the teacher and she read well. When Connie went home her father asked her to read for him and she read well so her father gave her a dress as a present. From Lisa’s story, it is evident that there is an emphasis on being able to read well. Perhaps Lisa is a good reader and that is why she says that Connie reads well. Or, perhaps, Lisa aspires to becoming a good reader. Or, perhaps, writing about success is easier than writing about failure. Children often do not want to say that they do not like reading very much (Davis, 1998). They perceive that teachers and other adults want them to say that they like reading (Davis, 1998).

When asked how Connie felt about reading, Lisa said, “*I think she feels it’s lovely to read,*” because “*she reads well. She reads for her reading.*” Lisa acknowledges the need for practice. Also, Lisa reported that Connie found it enjoyable to read because she was good at it. There is an assumption, therefore, that if Connie was not good at reading she would not find it enjoyable or that writing about success is easier than writing about failure. According to Lisa, Connie enjoyed reading for her father the most because he bought her a dress as a reward. It is evident from Lisa’s response that there is a presence of extrinsic motivation in the form of a reward. The dress is an example of extrinsic motivation because it encourages Connie to read but the gift given has nothing to do with reading itself. With intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, the child will want to read because he/she sees the value in reading.

Lisa: Reading silently

While the interviewer was telling Lisa about the activity, Lisa appeared to be fascinated by all the reading material on the table. Her attention was divided between the reading material on the table and the interviewer. When she was asked to choose a book, she chose immediately. She chose a reader, "The pink umbrella and other stories". Lisa read "The pink umbrella" silently.

Lisa chose that book because she liked it and she had read it before. She did not choose anything else because "*I (she) didn't know I (if she) would like them. Cos (Because) I like this one.*" She chose what she was familiar with. She did not even open the other reading material to see if she would like any of them. Wray and Lewis (1993) suggest that this choice could reflect a lack of knowledge or a lack of interest in books.

Lisa felt "*great*" about choosing from the display because "*I (She) love (loves) to read a lot.*" When asked how she felt about reading silently, she said, "*cos (because) I can't read silently. My mother says I must read silently. She teaches me to read silently.*" When asked again how she felt when she was asked to read silently, she said, "*I just did it cos (because) my mother teach taught me.*" The question emerging is: Why can Lisa not read silently? Perhaps she is not ready yet; perhaps she has not had sufficient opportunities to read aloud or perhaps it is her preference. According to Prior and Welling (2001), children are first exposed to reading when their parents read to them. In the early years at school, children learn to first read aloud with the support of their teachers. As their skills improve, children are encouraged to read 'in their heads.' A developmental model is therefore suggested: oral reading develops and is later followed by silent reading (Prior & Welling, 2001). Beginner readers and poor readers may not have successfully internalized their reading into the silent mode and benefit from the continued use of the oral mode (Prior & Welling, 2001). Furthermore, studies show that beginner and poor readers tend to comprehend reading passages better after reading the passages aloud (Prior & Welling, 2001).

Lisa: Reading aloud

Lisa chose the "The pink umbrella and other stories" to read again, but this time she read another story in it.

Lisa read “Lindiwe’s baby”²⁹. She read from the beginning of the story. While she read, she experienced difficulty pronouncing some words. The interviewer helped her with her pronunciation.

Lisa chose that book again because she said that she liked “*Lindiwe’s story*.” She said that she did not choose anything else because, “*I didn’t know the other books, maybe they will be more hard words.*” Again, Lisa opted for familiarity. Perhaps she lacks confidence to try something new, or perhaps she is afraid she will not be able to cope. The possibility exists that Lisa is functioning within a comfort zone.³⁰ In other words, Lisa has chosen to read a book with which she feels most comfortable. The security and predictability of the book she has chosen will not cause any anxiety.

Lisa said that it felt “*great*” to read aloud because, “*I like to read aloud to everybody.*” With Lisa, there is a need for an audience. Reading aloud makes sense, especially if someone is listening.

Lisa: Being read to

The interviewer read to Lisa from “Fantastic Mr Fox” by Roald Dahl. Lisa said that it was “*great*” to be read to because, “*I (she) can hear the words that I (she) don’t know.*” It is apparent from Lisa’s answer that she is keen on improving her reading ability. By hearing the words read aloud, she will be developing her reading ability.

Lisa: Which activity would you have liked to continue for longer?

Lisa said that she would have liked to have read aloud for longer because she was enjoying the story she was reading. This reiterates Lisa’s preference to read aloud. The question that emerges is whether enjoyment of reading is enhanced or reduced when one reads aloud or when one reads silently.

Unfortunately in many South African schools presently, time constraints exist which reduce the opportunities for reading aloud, especially with large class sizes. Teachers, therefore, opt for

²⁹ “Lindiwe’s baby” is a story in the “Pink umbrella and other stories”.

³⁰ The comfort zone is a behavioural state within which a person operates in an anxiety-neutral condition. This occurs without a sense of risk (Comfort zone theory, 2009).

silent reading because there is not enough time for each child to read aloud. Many teachers complain of the large class sizes and the high learner-teacher ratio in South African schools (Chisholm, Hoadley, Kivilu, Brookes, Prinsloo, Kgobe, Mosia, Narsee & Rule, 2005). Moreover, teachers are concerned that the large class sizes also increase the amount of marking and record keeping required of teachers (Chisholm *et al*, 2005). This in turn prohibits individual attention, especially with children experiencing problems (Chisholm *et al*, 2005).

Lisa: Reading activities at school

Lisa said that they read aloud at school and they read silently. When asked how she felt about reading silently, she said, *“it’s cool cos (because) I-I learned how to read silently.”* She said that she read for her small brother and cousin and that when she read to people, *“she feel (feels) great cos I (she) show (shows) people how I (she) read (reads) ...”* Although Lisa did say that silent reading was *“cool,”* all her remarks were connected to reading aloud and the enjoyment she experienced when she read aloud.

Lisa also said that she loved using the “Charlie and the chocolate factory” CD at school. She also mentioned reading in the library at school and reading worksheets.

Lisa: Reading activities at home

At home Lisa reads her reading book, magazines or newspapers which she finds fun. She also said that she felt *“great”* about her reading homework because she knew all the words and the spellings. For her reading homework, she usually read aloud when her father asked her to. She also mentioned that she read her sister’s books (her sister has completed grade twelve). When asked if there was any kind of reading that she did not enjoy, she said, *“...I never had to not enjoy reading,”* indicating a positive attitude towards reading. Perhaps this positive attitude towards reading had been inculcated by Lisa’s parents and by her teachers. Perhaps they have instilled in her the idea that reading is good for you and Lisa has merely adopted this attitude. Or, perhaps, Lisa’s reading experiences have all been genuinely good experiences.

Lisa: What reading material would you buy?

Lisa said that she would buy “Bratz”, “The pink umbrella and other stories” (the reader that she chose to read silently and aloud) and “Weens”³¹. She said that those books would make people excited about reading because girls like “Weens” and boys like “Ben 10”. She said that she would buy “Weens” or “Bratz” for the girls and “Ben 10” for the boys. Lisa again drew a distinction between girls’ and boys’ preferences. She made a gendered choice. Studies show that girls between the ages of nine and twelve prefer to read books where the main character is a girl and boys between the ages of nine and twelve prefer to read books where the main character is a boy (Machet, 2003, p.23). Lisa also said that she would buy newspapers and magazines for her class (e.g. “Free 4 All”, “The Daily Sun”³²).

Summary: Lisa as the exemplar of reading is about ‘girls’ stuff and boys’ stuff’

Lisa has drawn a distinction between girls’ and boys’ interests in their reading choices. She is very happy to read books that focus on female interests and where the central characters are female; however, she is not interested in books that are aimed at boys. In her choice of reading material to buy for the classroom, she again makes a gender distinction with the books she would buy for girls and the books she would buy for boys.

Lisa also wants to read books that are based on popular television characters.

Lisa acknowledges the need for practising reading. According to Machet (2002, p.2), reading, just like any other skill, improves with practice; therefore, the more children read, the better readers they will become (Machet, 2002, p.2).

Lisa seems to enjoy a reward when she reads. Studies have shown that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation predict the amount and breadth of reading but that the relationship is stronger for intrinsic motivation (Clark & Rumbold, 2006, p.9); but Ryan and Deci say that extrinsic motivation can be used to bring about intrinsic motivation (Clark & Rumbold, 2006, pp. 19-20). It appears, however, that literacy-targeted rewards (for example, books or book rewards)

³¹ I think that Lee-Anne is referring to “Tweenies” which is a television programme aimed at young children.

³² “The Daily Sun” is a South African newspaper.

are more effective in developing reading motivation than rewards that are unrelated to the activity (Clark & Rumbold, 2006, pp.20-21).

Lisa chose a book that she had read previously to read silently and aloud, indicating confidence in familiarity. Lisa seems to experience difficulty when reading silently and she prefers to read aloud. There is also an emphasis on wanting to improve her reading ability.

Reading is Nice: Lindani

Lindani: Thought-bubble drawing

When asked why he chose the thought-bubble drawing with the smiling boy, Lindani responded by saying, “*Because this one don’t-don’t want to read,*” and the child in the thought-bubble drawing he chose, did want to read. This could indicate a positive attitude towards reading or there is also the possibility that children don’t want to be associated with a negative connotation towards reading.

Lindani said that the boy in the picture was feeling “*fine and great,*” “*because he doesn’t have bad feelings.*” One may deduce that the child reading in the thought-bubble drawing finds reading to be a pleasant activity.

Lindani named the book in the thought-bubble drawing, “The soccer teme (team)”. According to Lindani, the boy in the picture was happy to read a book about soccer teams. He also said that he would be happy to read a book like the one the child in the drawing was reading. When asked what other types of books he would like to read, he said he would like books about rugby; thus indicating a liking for sports.

In his thought bubble, Lindani spoke of several things that the child in the thought-bubble drawing would like to do, for example, he wanted to watch wrestling, he wanted to be a “*cop*” when he grew up, he liked to play rugby, he liked to eat chocolate, his favourite game was soccer, he wanted to watch racing cars, he wanted to watch movies, he wanted to go to the Wimpy³³, indicating an interest in sports and a need for the gratification of his senses. Many of the activities that Lindani mentioned in his thought-bubble activity are typically associated with boys’ interests. According to Keith (2009), ten year-old boys are keen on playing sports, they

³³ This is a chain of hamburger restaurants.

love to watch television, they follow their favourite sports teams and know all the details of their favourite television programmes. They are also beginning to be aware of popular singers and many are becoming skilled at their favourite video or computer games.

Lindani: Completing the story

Lindani completed his story by writing it down; however, he did not do a rough copy first. Perhaps he wanted to complete the activity as quickly as possible. There is also the possibility that he is confident about his writing ability and does not require preparation.

In Lindani's story, the children read for half an hour. Then they go for break. The children like to read every day. The children also read to their parents before they sleep at night. They read before they go to school. They even read a book at break. The children also read loudly and clearly for their teacher. They love to read books. It's almost as if Lindani is telling the interviewer what he thinks she wants to hear. According to research, children are aware of how important it is to cover up negative emotions and to hide their true feelings in social settings like the classroom (Saarni, 1999).

Lindani said that Connie (the character from the completing-the-story activity) liked to read "*because she's clever at it.*" A reasonable assumption from Lindani's response would be that a child would not like to read if he/she was not good at it. Furthermore, according to Lindani, intelligence or some kind of cognitive ability was necessary to be able to read well.

According to Lindani, Connie's favourite type of reading was reading at home because there were no children to disturb her.

Lindani: Reading silently

While Lindani was being given instructions about this particular activity, he had a big smile on his face. It seems as though he saw something from the display that he liked. When he was choosing his book, he picked up a book about soccer and he paged through the entire book, indicating an interest in the book.

He eventually chose the book about soccer because he said that he liked soccer. He said he didn't choose the other books that he looked at because he didn't like them. He felt "*nice*" and

“*excited*” when he had to choose something from the display. He was also excited because he saw the book about soccer.

Lindani said that he felt “*nice*” when he read silently because he could concentrate on his reading. It is important to note that when Lindani was asked to read silently, he read aloud. Only when the interviewer said, “*You don’t have to read it aloud. You can read it silently to yourself. If it helps you to say the words that’s fine. But you don’t have to read it aloud, okay,*” did Lindani read silently. Again, an example of preferring reading aloud to silent reading comes to the fore.

Lindani: Reading aloud

Lindani chose “The pink umbrella and other stories” to read aloud.

Lindani read the story entitled “The pink umbrella”. He read the story from the beginning. The interviewer helped Lindani with one or two words that he experienced difficulty pronouncing. When he had finished reading, the interviewer said, “*Well done.*”

Lindani said that he chose that particular book because it was “*nice*” and he did not choose any of the others because they were “*boring.*” He said that he felt “*more excited*” when he got a chance to choose another book. He felt “*nice*” when he was reading aloud. When he was asked why he liked reading aloud, there was silence. He did, however, agree with the interviewer that it was nice to practise his reading and to hear himself reading aloud.

Lindani: Being read to

The interviewer read “Fantastic Mr Fox” by Roald Dahl to Lindani. Lindani said that he felt happy when he was being read to because the “*story was fun and nice.*”

Lindani: Which activity would you have liked to continue for longer?

If he could have continued any of the activities for longer, Lindani indicated he would have continued reading the soccer book silently because he liked learning about soccer and he liked to read silently. This is surprising because when he was asked to read silently, he read aloud. One can question what Lindani understands by silent reading and reading aloud. The other possibility is that Lindani was mumble reading. Mumble reading is a type of oral reading used by young

children; they are actually softly reading aloud to themselves (Kragler, 1996). According to Kragler (1996), young children seem to naturally want to read aloud and this should be encouraged until silent reading develops naturally.

Lindani: Reading activities at school

Lindani said that they read worksheets in class and that he was happy to do that. He also said that he enjoyed reading silently in their reading time after break. When asked if they read in a group, he said that they did not. He did, however, say that he read aloud to his teacher. When asked how he felt when he had to do that, he made a face and stuck his tongue out. The interviewer asked whether his face meant that he was nervous or whether he didn't like it much or whether he felt fine. Lindani responded by saying that he felt fine. On most occasions when you read aloud to your teacher it is for assessment purposes which can be quite daunting for a child; there is always the fear of performing badly. According to Rasinski (2003, p.23) many young people lack confidence in themselves as readers. It is because of their poor reading skills that they do not see themselves as successful or even potentially successful readers (Rasinski, 2003, p.23). Lindani also said that they read fiction and non-fiction books at school which they got from the school library.

Lindani: Reading at home

Lindani said that he read "Peter Pan" at home for homework which he enjoyed. His mother read to him and he also enjoyed that. His favourite story he reads at home is "The three little pigs". One wonders why Lindani is reading "The three little pigs" as children younger than Lindani would normally read it. Perhaps this is the only book he has available to him at home. Lindani also said that he read newspapers at home. When asked if there was any kind of reading that he didn't enjoy, there was silence. When asked if he found reading pleasant and if he liked doing it, he said he did. Lindani's silence could be interpreted as an indication that he couldn't think of anything else to say or perhaps he did not want to upset the interviewer so he responded by saying that he liked everything.

Lindani: What reading material would you buy?

Lindani said that he would buy books about soccer and books about sharks. When asked if he would buy story books, he said he would not. It is apparent that Lindani likes to read about real things, not fantasy. Sullivan (2004, p.37) postulates that non-fiction books satisfy boys' innate desires to make sense of the universe and to test its boundaries.

He said that he would also buy magazines and newspapers about "Ben 10". When asked if he would buy any books about girls, he said he would not. Lindani's choice of books about sports, wild animals and super heroes typically display boys' interests. According to Sullivan (2004, p.39) boys enjoy books about sports, non-fiction books, magazines, adventure and fantasy stories.

Lindani was asked if he would buy big books with long words or thinner books with tiny words and he said he preferred big books. He also said that he would buy books with pictures. Perhaps Lindani requires visual stimulation when he reads. Pictures can serve as an aid to comprehension and they may help beginner readers to comprehend the story and learn new words based on the pictures (Andrews *et al*, 2002). Also, pictures do not require reading and comprehension skills. One can infer one's own meaning. Pictures can also be a second line of communication so children can use them to avoid the words (Newton, 1995).

Summary: Lindani as the exemplar of reading is 'nice'

Lindani said that it felt nice to choose from the display when he was asked to read something silently. Furthermore, he said that it felt nice to read silently. He said that he choose "The pink umbrella and other stories" to read aloud because it was a nice book. In addition, he said that it felt nice to read aloud. Lindani said that "Fantastic Mr Fox" was also a nice story. Lindani uses the word "nice" to describe how he feels about the above-mentioned reading activities and the books he was exposed to. It is possible, that by "nice," he is referring to feelings of pleasantness and agreeableness (*Compact Oxford English dictionary*, 2009). Perhaps Lindani regards reading as something that evokes feelings of contentment. "Nice" can also be defined as satisfactory in terms of quality (*Compact Oxford English dictionary*, 2009). By using the word "nice," however, one does not get a feeling of either happiness or contempt. Lindani's use of the word "nice" could, therefore, indicate something ordinary, or neutral.

Lindani's reading interests are typical of boys. He wants to read about sports, animals and action heroes. He also likes books with pictures and he is of the opinion that if you are able to read well, you will enjoy it.

Reading 'New' Books: Zora

Zora: Thought-bubble drawing

In Zora's first interaction with the interviewer, she said that she loved to read. She liked reading "active books" the most; she had a library at school and that she and her mother go to the public library on the Bluff. It is not quite clear what Zora means by "active books." She also said that she bought a "whole lot of "Mary Kate Ashley" books" from the library, thus indicating an interest in this particular series of books.³⁴

When asked why she chose the thought-bubble drawing with the smiling girl, Zora said, "*Because she is more happier. And who would like to choose a sad face?*" Zora's choice, therefore, seems to be based on the child in the drawing's emotions. She had not related the child's emotion to the act of reading. When asked how she thought the girl in the picture was feeling, she said, "*She's feeling she is reading a book and this book is very interesting.*" She thus appears to be indicating a positive association with reading.

Zora completed her thought bubble with the following words: "*I like Butterfllys (butterflies.) I have a bike (.) I go to school every day.*" Zora was making mention of the activities that the child in the thought-bubble drawing enjoyed and she aptly gave the book in the drawing the title "I like activities". The fact that Zora mentioned a liking for butterflies in her thought bubble indicates that perhaps she, too, may also have a fondness for butterflies.

When asked how the girl in the picture was feeling, Zora said, "*... she's feeling she is reading a book and this book is very interesting.*"

³⁴ These books were a spin off from a television series. In the books the twins are special agents assigned to solve different mysteries around the world.

Zora indicated that the child in the drawing would be happy to read most “Mary Kate and Ashley” books as well as “Hannah Montana” books because girls like those types of books and they can relate to them. Again, a liking for popularised television and movie characters is noted.

Zora also indicated that the child would not like scary books because they would make you feel unhappy and they may cause you to have nightmares.

Zora: Completing the story

Zora did a written draft copy of her story first. In her story, the character Connie (this is the character in the completing-the-story activity) takes out a “*fun book*” to read. It was a “Barbie” book. In Zora’s story, Connie says to her friend that she enjoys the story. It is apparent from the above that Zora is fond of the “Barbie” series of books and that she enjoys reading them too.

Zora said that Connie “*is very happy about reading cos (because) reading is a very fun activity.*” When asked why Connie found reading fun, she responded by saying, “*Because there’s lots of words that you don’t know. In the story you get to know the words. And you understand them.*” According to Zora, therefore, reading was fun because it was a means whereby one would learn new words.

Zora: Reading silently

Immediately after being told what this particular activity was about, Zora indicated that she was not going to choose a certain book from the display because she had it at home. Zora seems to prefer to read something that she is unfamiliar with; something new. Perhaps she experiences pleasure and excitement when reading something new.

Zora chose one of the graded readers to read silently; she chose “The perfect pair”. This reader is aimed at grade four level and it is about a girl who goes shopping with her mother to buy shoes. Zora said that she chose this book “*because it looks (looked) like a very nice story.*” She said that she did not choose something else “*because she preferred that book,*” “*because it looks (looked) like a very interesting story.*” Perhaps Zora had never seen this book before; it was new to her so it appealed to her. Also, by using the word “*looks,*” Zora suggests that perhaps the cover of the book attracted her attention. According to Edmunds and Bauserman (2006, p .417), whether a book has an exciting cover or not affects children’s motivation to read.

Zora was “*very happy*” to choose from the display because she loves reading. She said that it was “*nice*” reading silently but she prefers to read aloud because “*if you don’t know a word you can at least if someone is helping you, you can ask them and they can help you.*” Zora is, therefore, confident that if she comes across a word that she can’t read, someone will help; she is not afraid to ask for help. Zora accepts that asking for help is part of the process of learning to read.

Zora: Reading aloud

Zora chose a book entitled “Hans Christian Anderson fairytales” to read aloud. The book consists of seven fairy tales. Zora chose to read “The princess and the pea” aloud.

Zora experienced difficulty with the pronunciation of some words and the interviewer helped her. She also misread some of the words.

When asked why she chose this particular story, Zora said that she had read most of the stories in the book and she wanted to read a “*new*” story. She wanted to see what it was about and “*how fun it is.*” In other words, Zora wanted to read something that she has never read before.

Perhaps she enjoys reading new material because she is exposed to different ideas, characters and places. She also said that she didn’t choose anything else from the display because she had read most of those books and she had many books at home. Again, Zora does not seem to want to read something that she has been exposed to previously.

Zora said that she was happy to choose from the display and it was nice to read aloud.

Zora: Being read to

While Zora was being read “Fantastic Mr Fox” by the interviewer she responded with exclamations and she laughed, indicating her enjoyment of the story. When asked how she felt about being read to, she said, “*It was very nice and the story is very funny.*” She said that she enjoyed being read to because “*sometimes you not really feeling to read.*” In other words, sometimes she would like to enjoy a story but she wanted it to be effortless.

Zora: Which activity would you have liked to continue for longer?

Zora would have liked to continue reading aloud for longer *“because sometimes it’s not so nice for a person to read to you, you rather read to them. So you can learn more about the story.”*

Zora, therefore, prefers to read to someone, than have someone read to her because by reading yourself, you learn new things. There is the possibility that Zora is referring to learning more about how to pronounce words and how to spell them.

Zora: Reading activities at school

Zora said that they were presently reading one of the readers from the display at school (“The pink umbrella and other stories”) and that she brought books from home to read. She brought “Stories that talk” from home. Also, they were busy reading “Charlie and the chocolate factory” at school. She also brings magazines from home. All these items that Zora brings from home, she reads during the silent reading period after break. She said that every day they read for ten minutes after break. *“But sometimes my (her) teacher lets us (them) read more than that.”*

When asked how she felt about this reading time she said, *“It’s very nice because people are silent and they reading and you getting spare time for yourself to read.”* This reading time is obviously a treat for Zora. From a survey carried out on sixth graders, it was determined that the number one reading activity was free reading time (Rasinski, 2003, p.19). The children appreciated reading silently and using materials of their own choosing (Rasinski, 2003, p.19).

Zora also said that they read the graded readers aloud in groups and she found that *“nice.”* Zora said that when they did tests that had a story in them, they also had to read that. *“And before we (they) do any tests we (they) first read through it to say what it is about.”* When asked if she enjoyed that, she said, *“It’s very nice.”*

Zora said that she did not read aloud to the whole class because she was very nervous. This is not surprising. Even adults are sometimes nervous to read aloud in front of a whole group. According to Kieltyka, the pressure to read orally in front of an audience may be stressful and daunting to some children (n.d., p.4). What comes to the fore here, is children’s preferences versus curricular demands. Obviously Zora does not like to read in front of the whole class, but the curriculum requires that children read aloud in front of the class.

Zora's teachers also read aloud to her and she quite enjoys that.

Zora: Reading activities at home

Zora said that the children borrowed books from the school library. These books are read at home for homework. Either the child must read to the parent or the parent must read to the child; depending on the instruction from the teacher. Zora said it was a very nice experience having her parents read to her the previous day. She also said, "*Most of the time I always read and sometimes my mother or father read for me. So I have a lot of experience from reading.*" Zora also said that she loved reading.

Zora's parents also read to her at bedtime. They usually read non-fiction books to her. (Zora refers to non-fiction books as "*true stories*"). Presently, her parents and she are reading a book about the human body. Zora also goes to the library with her parents, and she reads newspapers. When asked, "*And for you is it (reading) all good or is there anything that you don't really enjoy?*" She responded by saying that it's all good "*because I (she) love (loves) reading and everything that's in books they are they are interesting.*"

Zora: What reading material would you buy?

Zora said that she would buy stories that are "*true*"; in other words non-fiction books and she said that "*sometimes*" she would take fiction books. She would also buy "*stories that are fun.*" She wouldn't get horror stories or books about fighting. Perhaps it upsets her when people fight.

She would also get books with nice covers and pictures, magazines and newspapers. Whether the cover of a book is appealing or not, seems to be important to Zora.

She also said she would get a "*lot of books.*" At home she has "*a cupboard ... full of books.*" She also said that she could "*have many books*"; in other words, she could never have too many books. The number of books that she possesses and wants to buy indicates a genuine love for books and reading and perhaps Zora understands the value of books.

When asked if she would get easy or difficult books, Zora responded by saying that she would get "*normal*" books, nothing too hard or too easy. She would buy books that "*boys and girls can read. Things that got girl and boys. Not only girls or boys.*" Zora displays a maturity in her

choice of reading material that she would buy. Even though she has previously indicated her liking for typically stereotyped female books, Zora wants to buy books that will be of interest to both boys and girls. She wants to cater for everyone's interests and tastes.

Summary: Zora as the exemplar of the idea of reading 'new' books

Zora loves to read. She finds it pleasurable to read books that she has not read before. Instead of reading something that she has read before, she would rather read something unknown because she finds it fun to read something new and she is keen to find out new and exciting things from books.

Zora finds reading fun because it allows her the opportunity to learn new words. She prefers to read aloud because there is the opportunity to ask for help, especially if you are reading with someone. She also feels that you learn more about the story if you read aloud.

Zora likes to read "Hannah Montana", "Mary Kate and Ashley" and "Barbie" books, non-fiction books, newspapers and magazines. She is able to enjoy a variety of reading material.

Zora's parents spend a good deal of time with her, reading. Research has shown that whether or not parents hear their children read at home is a major contributing factor to children's reading progress (Topping, 1987, p.608).

Cross-case Synthesis

A synthesis of the findings suggests the following: Feelings are strongly implicated in the process of reading. Each child was able to identify and to articulate a range of feelings. In the main the feelings appeared to be positive. Words like "fun", "nice", "new" and "learning" indicate positive feelings. It also appears that girls' and boys' interest and choice of reading is influenced by their gender orientation as in the case of Lisa and Lindani. Based on Nandi's inputs, it seems future aspirations also influences how feeling is expressed. In Nandi's case, she is aware that she needs to be able to read well to succeed later.

From the children's responses, it appears too that a variety of reading materials are essential to sustain interest and to maintain positive feelings for reading. Leo was drawn by opportunities to

win prizes offered for competitions and Lisa was interested in books about popular television characters.

Based on the analysis of the children's comments, it seems that being able to make choices that were in sync with their own interests made reading an enjoyable activity. The children were also able to intimate that they enjoyed reading aloud.

Conclusion

In chapter four, the analysis was presented according to the dominant emotions as exemplified by each child: Leo exemplified 'fun', Nandi focused on the cognitive aspect of reading, Lisa connected reading to 'gender', Lindani expressed his feelings as 'nice' and Zora had emotions related to reading 'new' books. The analysis for each participant was organised around each data production method: thought-bubble drawing; completing the story; silent reading; reading aloud; being read to; reading activities done at school; reading activities done at home; the reading material that each child would buy for their classroom. The reading experiences of this group of five participants could be said to be positive, motivated by intrinsic and extrinsic influences, and spanned a variety of reading materials.

In the next chapter, a discussion of the key findings and recommendations will be provided.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study sought to explore the affective reading experiences of grade four children. In the previous chapter, an analysis of the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews, the thought-bubble drawings and the completed stories was undertaken. In this chapter, a discussion of the key findings is presented. Recommendations for teachers and further study are also included.

Findings and Recommendations for Teachers

The Influence of the Home on the Reader

Parents play a vital role in the development of children who have positive attitudes toward reading and who become successful readers (Spiegel, 1994). Research shows that parents' beliefs, aspirations and actions affect their children's literacy growth (Spiegel, 1994). Evidence exists that parents are interested in their children's success in reading (Spiegel, 1994). The data analysis revealed that the children from this study engage in reading activities with their parents in the home, thus indicating an interest on the part of the parents in their children's reading development: Leo's mother reads to him before he goes to bed and he enjoys this. In addition, when asked to choose which activity he would have liked to continue for longer, he said that he would have liked to have been read to for longer. Nandi indicated that while she is reading at school and she comes across a difficult word, she writes it down and asks her father to help her when she gets home. In Lisa's completing the story activity the character, Connie, preferred to read to her father than to the teacher because he presented her with a gift. Lisa's mother also has had a role to play in her silent reading. She has taught her how to read silently. Lindani also indicated that his mother read to him and that he enjoyed that. Zora's parents read to her often at home and they took her to the library. In addition, all of the children in the study had access to reading material in the home. According to Rasinski and Fredericks (1991b), when parents set up a home environment that is conducive to literacy activities, it is one of the most positive ways to inspire reading.

Reading Aloud Versus Reading Silently

The data analysis revealed that the children in this study preferred to read aloud as compared to reading silently: Leo read aloud even when requested several times to read silently by the interviewer. Lindani also read aloud during the silent reading activity. Lisa acknowledged that she experienced difficulty when reading silently and that her mother had to teach her how to read silently. Both Lisa and Zora indicated that if they could have continued any of the activities for longer, they would have liked to have read aloud. Nandi also indicated that she was happy to read aloud because the opportunity was provided for her to sound out the words. This is a very significant finding because teachers in the senior primary phase³⁵ at school have the tendency to focus on silent reading.

Numerous possibilities exist which could possibly explain why this preference occurred: Reading aloud may provide the opportunity for sounding out words. Comprehension may be aided during oral reading (Prior & Welling, 2001). Beginner and poor readers who have not successfully internalised their reading into the silent mode benefit from the continued use of the oral mode (Prior & Welling, 2001).

More important than the reasons for this preference of reading aloud are the implications thereof. Good oral reading results in good silent reading (Heinrich, 1976); therefore, a greater emphasis should be placed on oral reading at primary school level in order for teachers to support children's natural reading development. Teachers could possibly achieve this in several ways.

Firstly, guided reading could be used. In guided reading, the teacher guides the learners when they read the text aloud. The children are usually divided into small groups. The teacher works with each group while the rest of the children are involved in other reading activities. (Joubert, Bester & Meyer, 2008, pp.96-97).

Secondly, the technique of reading together can be used. Reading together refers to choral reading. The whole class, or a group or two friends may read the same text to foster fluency. Reading can take place with, or without, the supervision of the teacher. (Joubert, Bester & Meyer, 2008, p.98).

³⁵ The senior primary phase comprises grade four to grade 6.

Another way to emphasize oral reading is to get the class to make read-along tapes with music and sound effects (Cramer, 1994, p.132). Also, having a “Joke of the Day” read aloud by children on a rotating basis will allow children to practise reading aloud. Children can bring in their favourite jokes written on cards, place them in a box, draw one and read it aloud (Cramer, 1994, p.132).

Workshops can be held where parents can be trained and encouraged to practise paired reading at home.³⁶ A ‘buddies’ programme can also be established at school.³⁷ As a homework activity, the children can be asked to practise a fable or other short story of their choice to read aloud to the class (Cramer, 1994, p.132). Finally, children can be asked to read aloud the information from worksheets during lessons right across the curriculum.

Challenges for the Teaching of Reading

My research showed that one of the children from the study seemed to be engaged in mumble reading during the read aloud activity. Mumble reading, as previously mentioned in chapter three, is a type of oral reading where children read softly to themselves as a means to help them monitor their reading and comprehension (Kragler, 1996). According to Kragler (1996), young children seem to naturally want to read aloud and this should be encouraged until silent reading naturally develops. In addition, preventing children from mumble reading may delay reading development (Kragler, 1996). As a teacher, I often find that during the silent reading time at school, many children read aloud softly to themselves. I often discourage this and ask the children to read silently. In light of Kragler’s study (1996), I therefore recommend that teachers of reading be emphatic with mumble readers and encourage the use of mumble reading in the classroom. This will, however, pose a challenge to teachers of classes with large numbers of children. Many children reading aloud simultaneously will be noisy and may interfere with the

³⁶ Paired reading is an approach to help a child practise reading with the support of the parent. First, the child chooses a text which is discussed with his/her parent. The parent and child then begin reading simultaneously. When the child reaches a comfort level, the child will signal to the parent that he/she wants to read alone. The child will continue to read solo until he/she comes across a difficult word. Then the parent says the word and the partners resume reading together. They repeat this process throughout the book. While doing so, the parent praises the child. (Donovan & Ellis, 2005).

³⁷ A ‘buddies’ programme involves pairing up older children with younger children with the aim of getting the older children to read to the younger ones (Morrice & Simmons, 1991).

concentration levels of the other children. A further challenge for teachers will be how to wean children from oral reading and inspire them to read silently.

When making choices from the book display, both Nandi and Lisa chose books that they had read previously. Nandi and Lisa preferred to read that with which they were familiar. Their choices could also indicate fear and the lack of confidence in choosing something new. In addition, their choices could indicate a lack of knowledge or a lack of interest in books (Wray & Lewis, 1993). If we want children to become familiar with a wide variety of authors, book titles and genres of books in order to increase children's knowledge and confidence about books, teachers have to make this choice available to them (Wray & Lewis, 1993). One of the challenges that teachers face, therefore, is to continually provide children with access to a large variety of books. In addition, it is important to provide children with reading material that includes their favourites. To overcome this challenge, it is firstly recommended that schools raise funds on an annual basis to increase the reading resources within the school. Secondly, it is recommended that teachers provide extensive classroom libraries and allow children frequent access to school libraries (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). In addition, the class teacher should give the school librarian a list of topics that may be of interest to the children and then ask the librarian to spend a few minutes of the lesson sharing some of the library resources available (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). Thirdly, parents should be encouraged to take their children regularly to the local library and to develop the children's personal home libraries (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). This could be achieved by sending pamphlets or newsletters home on a regular basis. Another way to expose children to books is by providing a casual time for parents and their children to come to the school library on a Saturday morning (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006).

A striking finding from this study was that all the children displayed a positive attitude towards reading. This is a very surprising finding to me, as a teacher, because I come into contact with children on a daily basis, and many openly display a negative attitude towards reading. It is possible that the informal one-on-one interaction between the interviewer and the children allowed the children to experience and express positivity towards reading. Presently, teachers are experiencing the problems of big class sizes and the lack of time to adequately meet the needs of all the children within a class. A challenge, therefore, exists for teachers to recreate a

similar kind of one-on-one situation that requires the teacher to listen, talk, read to and read with the children in an effort to aid in their reading development and to foster positive reading experiences for them.

Another significant finding from this study was the children's overwhelming interest in popular culture: Both Lindani and Leo wanted to read about "Ben 10", Nandi wanted to read about "Bratz" and "Barbie", Lisa wanted to read about "Hannah Montana" and "Bratz" and Zora wanted to read "Mary Kate and Ashley", "Hannah Montana" and "Barbie" books. Children's interests in popular culture will pose a challenge to teachers who believe that children should only read texts of literary worth. A view prevails that the reading curriculum should have 'quality literature' (Marsh & Millard, 2000). Children, however, are placed at a disadvantage by a curriculum that limits reading to a series of set texts, or great works and approved children's fiction (Marsh & Millard, 2000). Even though teachers may try to ban popular culture from the classroom, it is impossible to prevent the excited discourse that children are involved in when there is a new comic character, television programme or new Disney movie with its related products (Marsh & Millard, 2000). Instead, teachers need to become more familiar with popular culture and with the books that children come into contact with outside of school as a means to motivate reading within the classroom. It is better to create a culture, a habit and a love for reading rather than have children read nothing at all.

A very important finding from this study was that one of the children did not want to be associated with a negative connotation towards reading. This supports both Zambo's (2006) and Davis's (1998) findings that children do not like to express their negative feelings towards reading. Teachers and researchers, therefore, face the challenge of finding ways and means to accurately determine children's true feelings about reading.

Reading Experiences (feelings)

The five children in my study generally displayed a positive attitude towards reading; they either "like" or "love" to read, they "enjoy" reading and they were "happy" to read. More importantly, however, is to bear in mind that the emotions that were evoked in the children were determined by what activity they were involved in, what they were reading and the environment:

The children in the study were “*happy*” and “*excited*” to choose items from the reading display. In other words, being given a choice in what they read positively influenced the children. According to Pachtman and Wilson (2006), the opportunity to choose fosters a sense of ownership which translates into children reading and enjoying more books. It is therefore recommended that as far as possible children are allowed to make their own reading choices. There are, however, situations where this would be impossible, for example, when the entire class is reading their literature novel. Self-selection could be encouraged during silent reading or free time reading.

Some of the children were “*happy*” to engage in the silent reading activity because there was no noise. According to Chassee (2008) noise level has an impact on a child’s motivation to read.

All the children indicated that they enjoyed being read to (by their parents or by the teacher) either because the story was “*fun and nice*” or because they could hear and learn the words they did not know. Edmunds and Bauserman (2006) indicated that children were motivated to read when people read to them. According to Cramer and Castle (1994), reading to children was one way to stimulate their enjoyment and appreciation of children’s literature. In addition, reading to children is one of the most effective ways of creating capable readers who continue to choose reading for a lifetime (Cramer & Castle, 1994). It is, therefore, recommended, that teachers read to their children on a daily basis (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). Also, the school librarian should be encouraged to read to the children during the library time (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). Finally, parents should be encouraged to read to their children on a daily basis through the use of newsletters or pamphlets (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). A technique that I often make use of in my classroom, to ensure that parents are reading to their children, is to give the children homework that requires their parent to read aloud to them.

Zora indicated that she would be “*nervous*” to read in front of the whole class and Lindani made a face and stuck out his tongue when asked how he felt about reading aloud to his teacher.

Positive emotions were expressed by the children when reading material of interest to them: Lisa said that the girl in her thought-bubble drawing “*feels happy cos ... she reads a book with things that she likes.*” Leo was excited to read the “Free 4 All” because it was “*one of the favourite stuff I like (he likes) to read.*” Nandi enjoys reading about famous people. Lisa enjoys reading

about “Bratz”. Lindani said that he felt “*excited*” when he saw the book about soccer in the display and he chose it because he liked soccer. He also indicated that he did not choose any of the other books because they were “*boring*.” Zora bought a large number of “Mary Kate and Ashley” books from the public library because she enjoys them. It is therefore important for teachers to provide books that match the personal interests of their children (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006) so that they are encouraged to read more and become lifelong readers.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study was limited to a single school and five children from a class of grade four children. It would be beneficial to conduct a similar study in communities of different socio-economic backgrounds as a means to determine if and how socio-economic factors affect children’s reading experiences.

I would also recommend that the same study be conducted on children of different grades. It may be beneficial to repeat the study with the same five children at the end of their grade six year (this marks the end of the intermediate phase³⁸) and again at the end of grade nine (this marks the end of the senior phase³⁹) as a means to determine if similar reading experiences exist and if similar feelings towards reading prevail. Additional motives would be to determine if and when a change takes place.

Conclusion

This study, conducted with grade four children tapped into a neglected area of children’s affective experiences of reading. Working with a small group of learners, this study sought to disclose a group of five children’s feelings about reading. The focus on children’s feelings about reading was guided by literature which revealed a predilection to study cognitive factors like decoding, comprehension skills and vocabulary acquisition and a marginalisation of the influence of the affect on reading. Using multiple techniques, this study revealed how the five participants in this study felt about reading. Five dominant feelings were identified: reading is fun; reading is about learning; reading is about boys’ and girls’ stuff; reading is nice; emotions

³⁸ The intermediate phase is from grade four to grade six.

³⁹ The senior phase is from grade seven to grade nine.

connected to reading new books. There was an overwhelming positive regard towards reading. Factors like gender, reading new books, reading at home, reading books that are familiar, reading books based on popular culture, being read to by parents or teachers, reading books that match one's interests and reading aloud contributed to positive feelings. What the study also reveals is how feelings towards silent reading, and noise could discourage reading interest. What is evident too is that reading to a teacher (the interviewer in this case) could have contributing to feeling positive. At present with large teacher-learner ratios in many schools, the opportunity to read to a teacher is greatly reduced and requires, perhaps thinking about ways to listen to children read in class. The role of the adult reader (the teacher) is also important as the participants explained they enjoyed being read to.

In this study at grade four level, therefore, there was a general liking and enjoyment of reading. The questions that must be asked then are why are children performing poorly in studies based on cognitive reading abilities, and why are children reading below their reading ages if they display positive attitudes towards reading? One may surmise that perhaps affect has no influence on cognitive ability. Alternatively, the possibility exists that affect does influence cognitive ability but that these feelings are temporal (linked to early years at school) and impermanent. In other words, that positive feelings cannot be maintained or are displaced by cognitive complexities as more complex reading texts are introduced. Thus, whilst the method of allowing choice in this study was valued by participants, the choice of reading material is often not an option when texts are prescribed. To that extent, this study does not indicate how these children feel towards prescribed texts.

There are still many questions that remain unanswered. For example, whether parents continue to support their children's reading development beyond the primary school years; whether positive feelings towards reading change over time; and whether feelings are linked to the choice of reading material. These answers will have to be found in future studies.

References

- Anderson, V. D. (1968). *Reading and young children*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Andrews, J., Scharff, L., & Moses, L. (2002). The influence of illustrations in children's storybooks. *Reading Psychology, 23*(4), 323-339.
- Baker, L., & Scher, D. (2002). Beginning readers' motivation for reading in relation to parental beliefs and home reading experiences. *Reading Psychology, 23*(4), 239-269.
- Booth, D., & Barton, B. (2000). *Story works: How teachers can use shared stories in the new curriculum*. Ontario: Pembroke Publishers.
- Bourdieu, P. (2001). *Language and symbolic power*. B. J. Thompson (ed.). (G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Brummit-Yale, J. (2007). The relationship between reading and writing. Retrieved 20 December 2009, from <http://www.k12reader.com/the-relationship-between-reading-and-writing/>
- Bryant, P., & Bradley, L. (1985). *Children's reading problems*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Burt Word Reading Test – 1974 revision manual*. (1976). London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Chassee, E. N. (2008). *Children speak out on classroom factors that negatively impact reading motivation, a thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Education*. Graduate College of Bowling Green State University, Ohio.
- Chisholm, L., Hoadley, U., Kivilu, M. W., Brookes, H., Prinsloo, C., Kgobe, A., Mosia, D., Narsee, H., & Rule, S. (2005). *Educator workload in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Clark, C., & Rumbold, K. (2006). Reading for pleasure: A research overview. Retrieved 17 November 2009, from <http://www.eric.ed.govERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno...>
- Clark, D. (2007). Learning domains or Bloom's taxonomy. Retrieved 5 July 2008, from <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html>

- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Comfort zone theory. (2009). Retrieved 10 November 2009, from <http://www.answers.com/topic/comfort-zone-2?&print=true>
- Compact Oxford English dictionary*. (2008a). Retrieved 2 April 2008, from http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/empiricism?view=uk
- Compact Oxford English dictionary*. (2008b). Retrieved 3 April 2008, from http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/experience?view=uk
- Compact Oxford English Dictionary*. (2009). Retrieved 4 July 2009, from http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/nice?view=uk
- Cramer, E. H. (1994). Connecting in the classroom: Ideas from teachers. In E. H. Cramer & M. Castle (Eds.), *Fostering the love of reading: The affective domain in reading education* (pp.125-141). Newark: International Reading Association.
- Cramer, E. H., & Castle, M. (1994). Developing lifelong readers. In E. H. Cramer & M. Castle (Eds.), *Fostering the love of reading: The affective domain in reading education* (pp.3-9). Newark: International Reading Association.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
- Cullingford, C. (2001). *How children learn to read and how to help them*. London: Kogan Page Limited.
- Davis, P. (1998). Attitudes to reading: What can stories tell us? *Reading*, 32(3), 12-15.
- De Witt, M. W., Lessing, A. C., & Dicker, A. (1998). The comparison of reading skills of non-mother-tongue learners with those of mother-tongue learners. *South African Journal of Education*, 18(2), 118-123.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Collier Books.

- Dickman, N. (2005). What is qualitative research. Retrieved 21 July 2008, from http://www.marketresearchworld.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10
- Donovan, H., & Ellis, M. (2005). Paired reading - more than an evening of entertainment. *The Reading Teacher*, 59(2), 174-177.
- Du Toit, S. J., & Kruger, N. (1991). *The child: An educational perspective*. Durban: Butterworths.
- Dyson, A. H., & Genishi, C. (1994). The need for story. In A. H. Dyson & C. Genishi (Eds.), *The need for story: Cultural diversity in classroom and community* (pp.1-7). Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Edmunds, K. M., & Bauserman, K. L. (2006). What teachers can learn about reading motivation through conversations with children. *The Reading Teacher*, 59(5), 414-424.
- Encyclopedia of education*. (1971). (Vol. 3). New York: The Macmillan Company & the Free Press.
- Fisher, P. J. L. (1994). Who reads what and when? In E. H. Cramer & M. Castle (Eds.), *Fostering the love of reading: The affective domain in reading education* (pp.55-65). Newark: International Reading Association.
- Hall, C., & Coles, M. (1999). *Children's reading choices*. London: Routledge.
- Harriman, P. L. (1977). *Handbook of psychological terms*. Totowa: Littlefield, Adams & Co.
- Heinrich, J. S. (1976). Elementary oral reading: Methods and materials. *The Reading Teacher*, 30(1), 10-15.
- Henk, W. A., & Melnick, S. A. (1995). The reader self-perception scale (RSPS): A new tool for measuring how children feel about themselves as readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 48(6), 470-482.

- Howie, S., Venter, E., Van Staden, S., Zimmerman, L., Long, C., Scherman, V., & Archer, E. (2007). *PIRLS 2006 Summary report: South African children's reading achievement*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Hugo, A. J., Le Roux, S. G., Muller, H., & Nel, N. M. (2005). Phonological awareness and the minimising of reading problems: A South African perspective. *Journal for Language Teaching, 39*(2), 210-225.
- Joubert, I., Bester, M., & Meyer, E. (2008). *Literacy in the foundation phase*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Juel, C. (1988). Learning to read and write: A longitudinal study of 54 children from first through fourth grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 80*(4), 437-447.
- Keith, K. L. (2009). Child development – the ten year old. Retrieved 14 November 2009, from <http://www.childparenting.about.com/od/yourtenyearold/a/tenyearoldplay.htm>
- Kelly-Vance, L., & Schreck, D. (2002). The impact of a collaborative family/school reading programme on student reading rate. *Journal of Research in Reading, 25*(1), 43-53.
- Kieltyka, A. (n.d.). Exploring the round robin oral reading strategy in the elementary classroom: An action research study. Retrieved 28 October 2009, from <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/.../Exploring%20the%20Effects%20of%20Round%20Robin%20Oral%...>
- Kragler, S. (1996). Mumbling into silent reading. Retrieved 25 October 2009, from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3614/is_199607ai_n8741478/
- Lark, V. (2004). Experience. Retrieved 31 March 2008, from <http://www.personal.ecu.edu/mccartyr/american/leap/experien.htm>
- Likert scale. (2008). Retrieved 4 May 2008, from http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Likert_scale
- Machet, M. P. (2001). Getting children to read. Retrieved 11 May 2008, from http://www.fs.gov.za/Departments/SAC/Library/getting_children_to_read_main_article_j

...

- Machet, M. P. (2002). Young people's reading interests in South Africa. *Mousaion*, 20(1), 44-72.
- Machet, M. P. (2003). Who reads what? Fiction reading by young people in South Africa. *Innovation*, 26, 20-28.
- Maharaj, C. (2007). *Teaching reading in the early grades- a teacher's handbook*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Maree, K., & Pietersen, J. (2007a). Surveys and the use of questionnaires. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp.155-170). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Maree, K., & Pietersen, J. (2007b). The quantitative research process. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp.145-153). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Marsh, M., & Millard, E. (2000). *Literacy and popular culture: Using children's culture in a classroom*. London: Paul Chapman.
- McKenna, M. C., & Kear, D. J. (1990). Measuring attitude toward reading- a new tool for teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, 43(9), 626-639.
- McKenna, M. C., Kear, D. J., & Ellsworth, R. A. (1995). Children's attitudes toward reading: A national survey. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30(4), 934-956.
- Mikulecky, L. (1994). The need for affective literates. In E. H. Cramer & M. Castle (Eds.), *Fostering the love of reading: The affective domain in reading education* (pp.249-254). Newark: International Reading Association.
- Morrice, C., Simmons, M. (1991). Beyond reading buddies: A whole language cross-age program. *The Reading Teacher*, 44(8), 572-577.
- Newton, D. P. (1995). The role of pictures in learning. *Educational Studies*, 21(1), 119-130.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2007a). Analysing qualitative data. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp.99-122). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2007b). Introducing qualitative research. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp.47-68). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2007c). Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (pp.70-97). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Pachtman, A. B., & Wilson, K. A. (2006). What do the kids think? *The Reading Teacher*, 59(7), 680-684.
- Pang, E. S., Muaka, A., Bernhardt, E. B., & Kamil, M. L. (2003). Teaching reading. Retrieved 17 November 2009, from <http://www.curtin.edu/iau/curtin/dept/smec/iae>
- Pantley, E. (1996). The power of choice. Retrieved 20 December 2009, from <http://www.childtoday.com/articles/development/the-power-of-choice-364/>
- Pretorius, E. J. (2000). Reading and the Unisa student: Is academic performance related to reading ability? *Progressio*, 22(2), 35-48.
- Pretorius, E. J. (2002). Reading ability and academic performance in South Africa: Are we fiddling while Rome is burning? *Language Matters: Studies in the languages of Southern Africa: Literacy in the African learning environment: Special issue*, 33, 169-196.
- Prior, S. M., & Welling, K. A. (2001). "Read in your head": A Vygotskian analysis of the transition from oral to silent reading. *Reading Psychology*, 21(1), 1-15.
- Raban, B., & Nolan, A. (2006, June). Preschool children's reading experiences. *Literacy Today*, 26-27.
- Rasinski, T. V. (2003). *The fluent reader: Oral reading strategies for building word recognition, fluency and comprehension*. New York: Scholastic.
- Rasinski, T. V., & Fredericks, A. D. (1991a). Beyond parents and into the community. *The Reading Teacher*, 44(9), 698-699.
- Rasinski, T. V., & Fredericks, A. D. (1991b). The second best reading advice for parents. *The Reading Teacher*, 44(6), 438-439.
- Reader's digest Southern African word power dictionary*. (1996). Cape Town: Reader's Digest Association.

- Robeck, M. C., & Wilson, J. A. R. (1974). *Psychology of reading: Foundations of instruction*. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Saarni, C. (1999). *The development of emotional competence*. New York: Guilford.
- Sadovnik, A. R. (2001). Basil Bernstein. *Prospects: The quarterly review of comparative education*, 31(4), 687-703.
- Sandler, J. (1987). *Projection, identification, projective identification*. London: Karnac.
- Sharpe, K., & Walgate, J. (2007). Happy endings and the just world effect. Retrieved 10 November 2009 from http://www.science-spirit.org/article_detail.php?article_id=40
- Spiegel, D. L. (1994). A portrait of parents of successful readers. In E. H. Cramer & M. Castle (Eds.), *Fostering the love of reading: The affective domain in reading education* (pp.74-87). Newark: International Reading Association.
- Spink, J. (1989). *Children as readers: A study*. London: Library Association Publishing Limited.
- Sprosty, L. (1993). *Teaching reading in the primary school*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Strauss, P. R. (1995). *Procedural knowledge of ESL readers in decoding expository text, a thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education*. Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg.
- Sullivan, M. (2004). Why Johnny won't read. *School Library Journal*, 36-39.
- Taylor, N. (2008, April). It's OBE, but not as it should be. *The Teacher*, 2-3.
- Terre Blanche, M., Kelly, K., & Durheim, K. (2006). Why qualitative research? In M. Terre Blanche, K. Durheim & D. Painter (Eds.), *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (pp.271-284). Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.
- Thomas, J. L., & Loring, R. M. (Eds.). (1979). *Motivating children and young adults to read*. London: The Oryx Press.

- Topping, K. (1987). Paired reading: A powerful technique for parent use. *The Reading Teacher*, 40(7), 608-614.
- Van den Aardweg, E. M., & Van den Aardweg, E. D. (1988). *Dictionary of empirical education/educational psychology*. Pretoria: E & E Enterprises.
- Vithal, R. (2003). *In search of a pedagogy of conflict and dialogue for mathematics education*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Wang, Y. (2000). Children's attitudes toward reading and their literacy development. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*. Retrieved 24 October 2009, from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0FCG/is_2_27/ai_63365166/
- Webb, V. (1999). *Language study and language use in South African schools: A view from the politics of language*. Paper presented at the NAETE 15th annual conference, SACTE, Pretoria.
- Wellman, H. M., Hollander, M., & Schult, C. A. (1996). Young children's understanding of thought bubbles and of thoughts. *Child Development*, 67, 768-788.
- Wildsmith-Cromarty, R., & Gounden, J. (2006). A balanced reading programme for grade one and two learners of English as a first and as additional language. *Per Linguam*, 22(1), 1-22.
- Wray, D., & Lewis, M. (1993). The reading experiences and interests of junior school children. *Children's Literature in Education*, 24(4), 251-263.
- Young, R. (2002). Basil Bernstein's sociolinguistic theory of language codes. Retrieved 1 November 2009, from <http://zimmer.csufresno.edu/%7Ejohnca/spch100/3-3-bernstein.htm>
- Zambo, D. (2006). Using thought-bubble pictures to assess students' feelings about reading. *The Reading Teacher*, 59(8), 798-807.
- Zambo, D., & Brozo, W. G. (1999). *Bright beginnings for boys: Engaging young boys in active literacy*. Ohio: The International Reading Association.

APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule

Activity 1: Thought bubbles

1. Why did you choose that picture and not this one?
2. How do you think the child in the picture you chose feels? Why?

Activity 2: Storytelling

1. How does the child in your story feel about reading? Why?
2. What does Connie like to read? Why?
3. What does Connie not like to read? Why?

Activity 3: Selection of Reading Material and Discussion

A. Each child will choose an item from the display of reading material and then read it silently

1. What did you choose to read? Why?
2. Why did you not choose something else from the display?
3. How did you feel when you had to choose something from the display?
4. How did you feel when you read silently?

B. Each child will choose an item from the display of reading material and then read it aloud

1. What did you choose to read? Why?
2. Why did you not choose something else from the display?
3. How did you feel when you had to choose something from the display?
4. How did you feel when you read aloud?

C. The interviewer will read a pre-selected text to each child

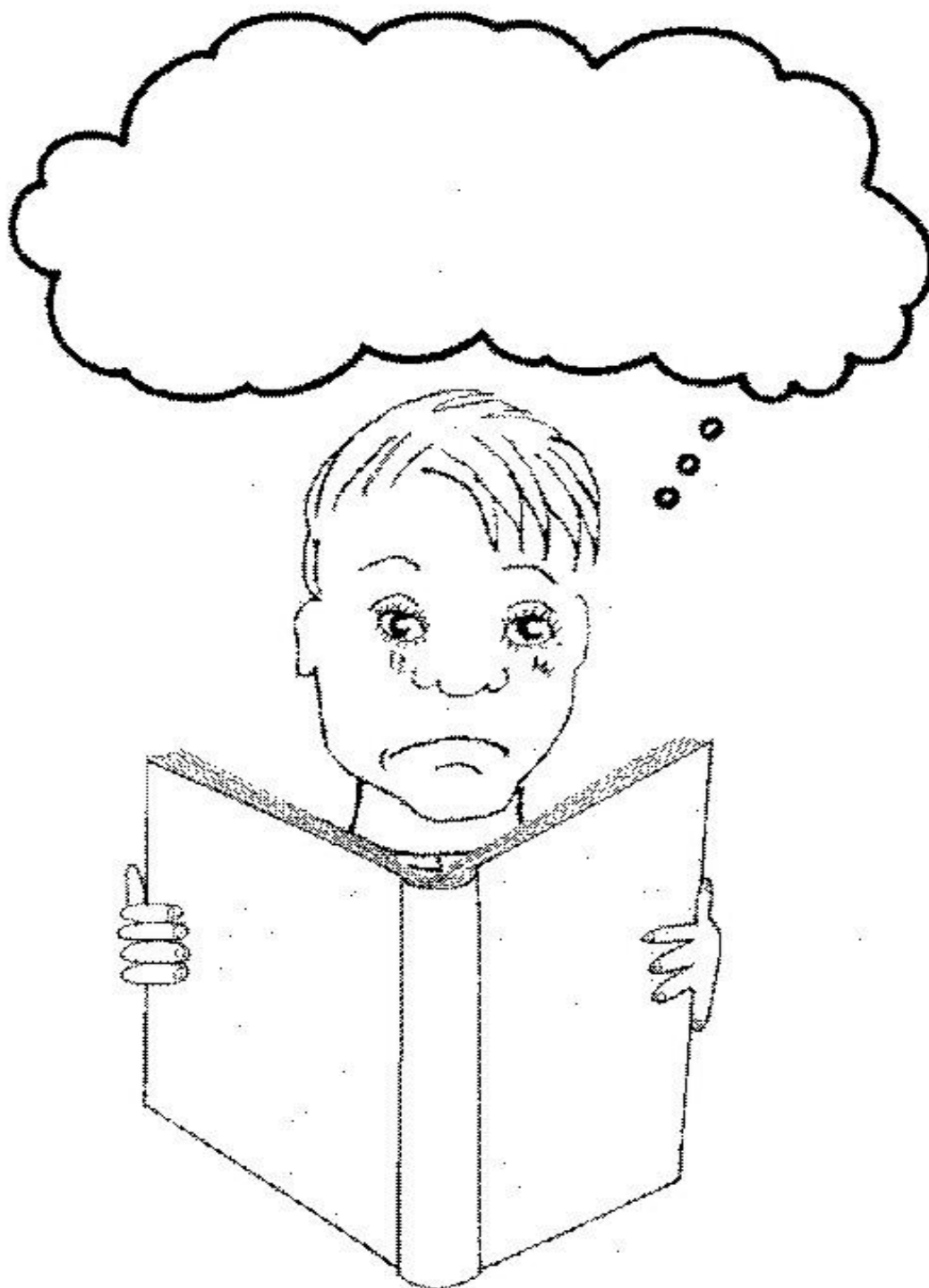
1. How did you feel when you were read to?

2. Would you have liked to continue any of the activities for longer (i.e. A, B or C)? Why?

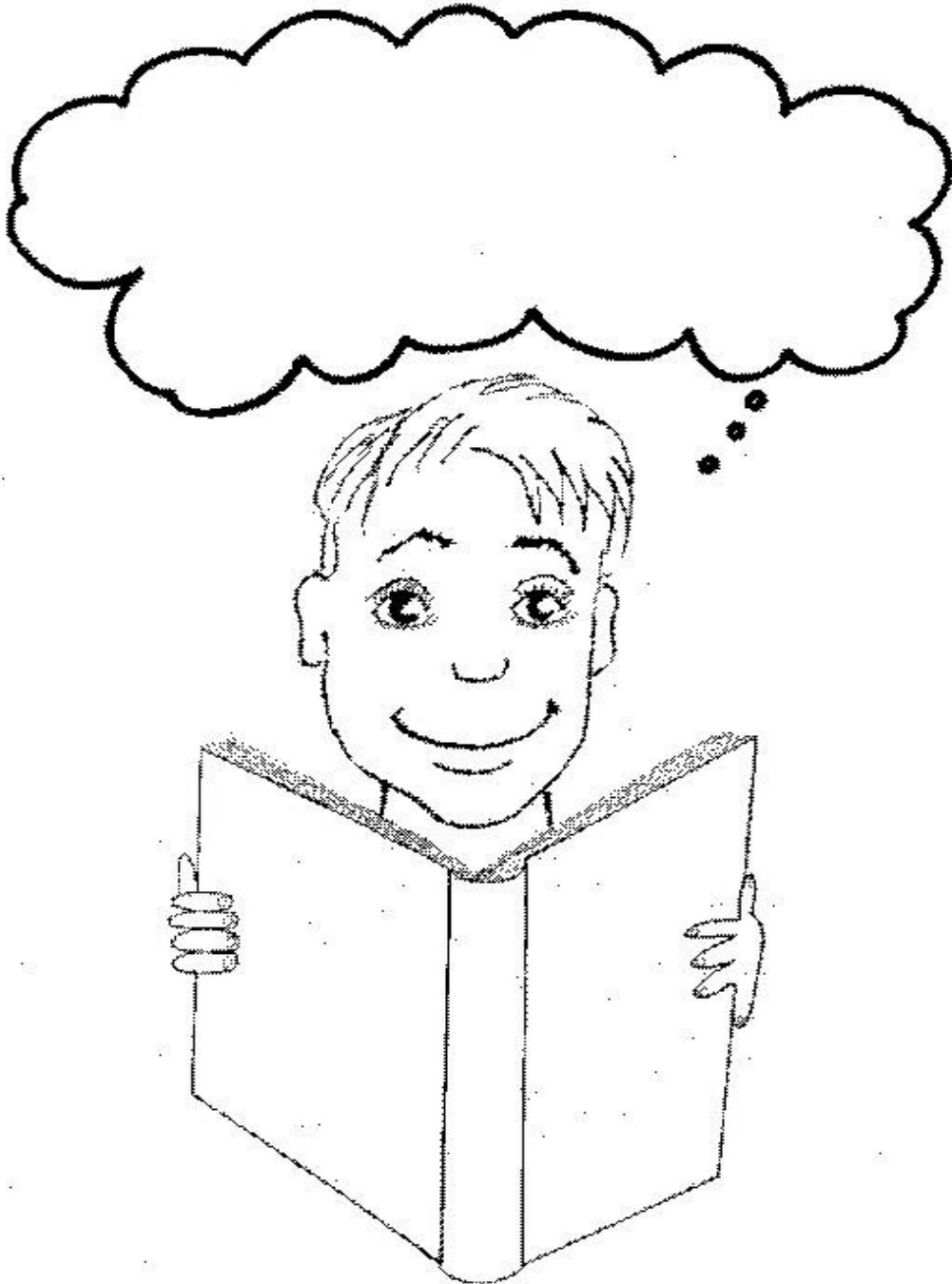
D. Discussion about reading activities done at home and at school

1. What are some of the reading activities you do at school? How do you feel about them? (Examples of reading activities: reading silently during free time, reading silently during the reading period, reading aloud in your reading group, reading aloud for the whole class, reading aloud for the teacher, being read to by the teacher, being read to by another child, reading to the grade twos)
2. What are some of the reading activities you do at home? How do you feel about them? (Examples of reading activities: reading aloud for homework, reading silently for homework, being read to by parents or other family members, reading for fun)
3. What kinds of reading material would you buy for your classroom that would make you feel like reading?

APPENDIX B



APPENDIX C



APPENDIX D



APPENDIX E



APPENDIX F - Zambo's coding system for the facial features in the drawings

Facial features (eyes, eyebrows, and mouth), ratings and clues		
Physical feature	Positive rating	Feature clues
Eyes Eyebrows	+1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wide open • upward slant • open with interest • have a spark to them
Mouth	+1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full smile (some with teeth showing; others without)
Physical feature	Neutral rating	Feature clues
Eyes Eyebrows	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • typical with no expression • no slant
Mouth	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drawn as a straight line • expression not clear or intriguing
Physical feature	Negative rating	Feature clues
Eyes Eyebrows	-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • downward slant, droopy lids • closed • dark circles underneath • drawn as spirals • slanted inward or down
Mouth	-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • portrays a frown • open in a scream • drawn as a jagged line
Symbols drawn on faces	-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tears • tongues stuck out and upward in frustration • teeth in a growl

(Zambo, 2006, p.800)

APPENDIX G - Zambo's coding system for the thought bubbles

Thought-bubble features, rating and clues		
Features	Positive rating	Feature clues
Symbols	+1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hearts • peace signs
Signs	+1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smiley face • thumbs up • pictures or characters from book
Words	+1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easy • good • fun • cool • I do well • really interesting
Emotional words (happiness)	+1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like/love • very happy • feels good
Features	Neutral rating	Feature clues
Symbols, signs, words	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no expression (e.g. a book title) • cannot discern
Features	Negative rating	Feature clues
Symbols	-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • question mark • zzzz's to indicate sleep/boredom • dark scribbles
Signs	-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child with a sword battling a book • hand holding a crumpled book
Words	-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dang boring • bla, bla • confused, hard, bad • never get done, no point • daydreaming • I don't want to read right now
Emotional words (dislike or anxiety)	-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hate • sad • can't • too hard • this stinks • I want to burn it

(Zambo, 2006, p.801)

Big and small

Smallest Reptile

The 16 millimetre long lizard, (Jaragua Sphaero or dwarf gecko), discovered on a tiny Caribbean island off the coast of the Dominican Republic, is the world's smallest reptile.

Largest Beetle

The Goliath Beetle, (*Goliathus goliatus*) is the world's largest beetle. They grow to 11 cm in length and can weigh up to 100g — that's more than a small bird. They are found in Africa.



Largest Reptile

The Australian Saltwater Crocodile, (*Crocodylus Porosus*), which grows to 7 metres in length, is the largest reptile.



Smallest Beetle

Featherwing beetles, (*Ptiliidae*) are the smallest known beetles, the majority of the species being a millimetre or less in length.



Biggest Butterfly

The biggest butterfly is the Queen Alexander Birdwing from New Guinea — it has a wingspan of up to 23 cm.



Smallest Butterfly

The smallest butterfly is the Western Pygmy Blue Butterfly. The scientific name is *Brephidium exilis* (*Lycaenidae*). It has a wingspan of only 5 to 7 mm.



Largest Insect

The Hercules moth, (*Coscinocera hercules*) of Australia, has a wingspan of about 35 cm — and is said to be the biggest insect.



Smallest Insect

Mymarid wasps (called fairyflies), which are less than 0.4 mm in length, are regarded as the smallest insects.



26 FREE 4 ALL Early Edition March 2009

Bostik

BECOME BEN 10™

MAKE YOUR VERY OWN OMNITRIX

CUT AROUND THE FLAPS SO YOU CAN INSERT YOUR ALIEN DISK

PASTE ONTO THIN CARDBOARD, AND CAREFULLY CUT OUT YOUR OMNITRIX



4 ARMS **WILDMUTT**

HEATBLAST **UPGRADE**

GREY MATTER **STINKFLY**

GHOSTFREAK **RIPJAWS**

DIAMONDHEAD **XLR8**

MAKE YOUR VERY OWN OMNITRIX BY FOLLOWING THESE VERY SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS.

- 1 Glue the Omnitrix and the aliens onto thin cardboard with your Bostik gluestick.
- 2 Cut around the flaps on the Omnitrix so you can insert your alien disk.
- 3 Cut out all the aliens.
- 4 Slot the alien that you want to become into the Omnitrix.
- 5 Have fun!

Bostik

Don't just stick it. Bostik it.

March 2009 FREE 4 ALL Early Edition 33

APPENDIX K



March 2003 FREE & ALL Early Edition 3

APPENDIX L



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO

Tel: 033 341 8610
Fax: 033 341 8612
Private Bag X9137
Pietermaritzburg
3200

228 Pietermaritz Street
PIETERMARITZBURG

INHLOKHOVISI	PIETERMARITZBURG	HEAD OFFICE
Imibuzo: Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar	Reference: Inkomba: 009/2009	Date: Usuku: 19 February 2009

Ms R. Ganasi
25 Sryinga Drive
Kharwastan
Durban
4092

PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS

The above matter refers.

Permission is hereby granted to interview Departmental Officials, learners and educators in selected schools of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal subject to the following conditions:

1. You make all the arrangements concerning your interviews.
2. Educators' and work programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, educators and schools and other Departmental Officials are not identifiable in any way from the results of the interviews.
5. Your interviews are limited only to targeted schools.
6. A brief summary of the interview content, findings and recommendations is provided to my office.
7. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers and principals of schools or heads of section where the intended interviews are to be conducted.

The KZN Department of education fully supports your commitment to research: [The reading Experiences of Grade Four Children](#)

It is hoped that you will find the above in order.

Best Wishes

R Cassius Lubisi, (PhD)
Superintendent-General

RESOURCES PLANNING DIRECTORATE: RESEARCH UNIT
Office No. G25, 188 Pietermaritz Street, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3201

APPENDIX M

20 January 2009

Faculty Research Committee
Faculty of Education
Edgewood Campus
University of KwaZulu-Natal



Dear Dr. Nyna Amin,

Consideration of Ethical Clearance for student:

Ganasi, Romy - 953018928

Your student's ethical clearance application has met with approval in terms of the **internal review process** of the Faculty of Education.


Approval has been obtained from the Faculty Research Committee, and the application will be forwarded for ratification (MEd) or recommended in the case of PhD and Staff applications, to the Ethics Sub-Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. All Masters applications approved by Faculty Research Committee may commence with research.

Both you and the student will be advised as to whether ethical clearance has been granted for the research thesis (PhD), once the Ethics Sub-Committee has reviewed the application. An ethical clearance certificate will be issued which you should retain with your records. The student should include the ethical clearance certificate in the final dissertation (appendixes).

Should you have any queries please contact the Faculty Research Officer on (031) 260 3524 or on the email buchler@ukzn.ac.za

Yours faithfully




PP Professor D. Bhana
Acting Deputy Dean Postgraduate Studies and Research

APPENDIX N - Letter requesting permission to conduct research at school

P.O. Box 21733

Bluff

4036

Date:

The Principal

_____ Primary School

Sir

Re: Requesting permission to conduct research in school

I am presently completing my Master's Degree in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. As part of my studies, I have to conduct a research study. For my research, I have chosen to explore the reading experiences of children in grade four at your school. I require your permission to embark on research within the school. Permission will be obtained from parents/guardians and the children themselves in writing. All information gathered from the children will be treated with confidence. The children's names and the name of the school will not be disclosed. Participation is voluntary. The children are free to withdraw from the study at any time and will not be penalised in any way.

Your assistance in the above matter will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

R. Ganasi (Miss)

I _____, principal of _____ Primary School hereby grant/do not grant permission to Miss. R. Ganasi to conduct research at my school.

Principal

Date

APPENDIX O - Letter to parents requesting permission to interview children

P.O. Box 21733

Bluff

4036

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am presently studying towards my Masters Degree in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). As part of my studies, I have to conduct a research study. For my research, I have chosen to explore the reading experiences of children in grade four at _____ Primary School. I require your permission to allow your child/ward to participate in my study. Your child/ward will be involved in three activities (each varying from ten to thirty minutes). These activities will take place over a two-month period. The first activity will require your child/ward to complete a thought-bubble drawing about reading. This will be followed by an informal interview. In the second activity your child/ward will be required to complete a story about reading. This will be followed by an informal interview. The next activity comprises of four parts. In the first part your child/ward will choose one item from a display of reading material and then read it silently. An informal interview will follow. In the second part your child/ward will choose an item from the reading display and then read it aloud. This will be followed by an informal interview. In the third part the interviewer will read aloud to your child/ward. An informal interview will follow. In the final part of this activity, the interviewer and your child/ward will engage in a discussion about the reading activities done at home and at school. All of the above activities will be videotaped. Permission has already been obtained from the school principal. All information gathered from your child/ward will be treated with confidence. Your child's/ward's name will not be disclosed. Participation is voluntary and your child/ward can withdraw from the study at any time and will not be penalised in any way. All written activities and videotaped interviews obtained during the study will not be used again. They will be disposed of as mandated by UKZN regulations concerning data. If you have any queries please feel free to contact my supervisor Dr. Nyna Amin on 031 2607255.

Your assistance in the above matter will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

R. Ganasi (Miss)

I _____, parent/guardian of _____
confirm that I understand the contents of this letter and I hereby grant/do not grant permission for
my child/ward to participate in Miss. Ganasi's research study. I understand that my child/ward is
free to withdraw from this study at any time. I agree to my child/ward being videotaped.

Parent/Guardian

APPENDIX P- Letter to learners requesting permission to interview them

P.O. Box 21733

Bluff

4036

Date:

Dear Learner

I am a student at the University of KwaZulu- Natal. I am investigating how grade four children feel about reading. Part of the investigation is to speak to grade four learners. I require your permission.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

R. Ganasi (Miss)

I _____, hereby agree/disagree to participate in Miss.
Ganasi's study.

Learner