UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

READING INTERVENTIONS FOR GRADE 8 LEARNERS STUDYING ENGLISH AS A HOME LANGUAGE IN A RURAL SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL

Kayley Pandohe

217007888

A thesis submitted to the School of Education of the University of KwaZulu-Natal in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Language and Media Studies

Supervisor: Dr Bridget Campbell

Co-supervisor: Khanyi Mbambo

30 January 2024

Declaration

I, Kayley Pandohe, declare that,

(i) The research reported in this dissertation/thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.

(ii) This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

(iii) This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs, or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

(iv) This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' writing unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:

a) their words have been re-written, but the general information attributed to them has been referenced.

b) where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.

(v) Where I have reproduced a publication of which I am the author, co-author, or editor, I have indicated in detail which part of the publication was actually written by myself alone and have fully referenced such publications.

(vi) This dissertation/thesis does not contain text, graphics, or tables copied and pasted from the Internet unless specifically acknowledged and detailed in the thesis and the References section.

Signed: [redacted]

Kayley Pandohe

As the candidate's Supervisors, we agree to the submission of this dissertation/thesis.

Signed:

[redacted]

Dr Bridget Campbell

[redacted]

Ms Khanyi Mbambo

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Grade 2 Kayley, who sat in the classroom but looked out of the window because her imagination ran wild. This thesis is also dedicated to Grade 6 Kayley, who did all she could but, against her best efforts, still got sent to remedial classes. Finally, I dedicate this thesis to Grade 10 Kayley, who walked the halls of high school with a book in hand and a story in mind.

Acknowledgements

I am eternally grateful to my beloved parents, whose steadfast belief in me has been a constant source of inspiration. A special thank you to my father, Francis Pandohe who said that I could be anything I wanted to be if I just put my mind to it. A special thank you to my mother, O'hara Pandohe. She always told me, "Your toes have no nose," her whimsical way of suggesting that the path of life is uncertain, and one cannot foresee the twists and turns ahead. I also want to recognise my cherished significant other, his family and my family, your love has been my refuge during challenging times, and I am profoundly grateful.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my exceptional critical friend, who transcends the boundaries of a colleague. A true friend and confidant, your invaluable contributions to the development of the intervention programme, coupled with your generosity of time and talent, have left an indelible mark on my personal and professional growth.

I am truly thankful to my school principal, for not only allowing me to conduct my master's research at our school but also for enabling me to seize the opportunity of an exchange programme to Norway. Your encouragement to embrace every available opportunity has been instrumental in shaping my academic journey.

To my extraordinary supervisor, Dr. Bridget Campbell, a beacon of intelligence, brilliance, compassion, and talent, I strive to emulate your sensitivity to students' needs. Your meticulous examination of my work has played a pivotal role in shaping me to be the best researcher I can be. Special gratitude to my co-supervisor, Khanyi Mbambo, whose valuable insights have been immensely appreciated.

Most importantly, I am grateful to the Almighty God. He opened the heavens and sent rain on my land and blessed the work of my hands.

Abstract

This autoethnographic self-study delves into the implementation of a 12-week reading intervention programme for grade 8 English second language learners in a rural South African school. This study is vital as it confronts the urgent challenge of reading difficulties faced by learners. It provides actionable insights into transforming educational outcomes for these learners, through effective educational practices. The first research question explores learners, reading experiences. The second research question considers what measures can be implemented in response to learners' reading experiences. The third research question examines my experiences while implementing the reading intervention programme. The literature review of this thesis establishes Sociocultural Theory as the guiding framework for implementing a reading intervention programme. It also delves into various critical aspects surrounding reading interventions and their implementation. It highlights the importance of reading across the curriculum, the relationship between language skills, and factors contributing to reading challenges. Additionally, it explores intensive and extensive reading strategies and previous research on reading programmes and evaluates South Africa's National Reading Strategy, including its implementation and associated challenges. This research adopts an autoethnographic self-study approach rooted in the interpretive paradigm. The research process is transparent through reflexivity and collaboratively involving a critical friend. The study includes 8 learner-participants. Data sources comprise reflective journaling, critical friend engagement, and arts-based methods, such as participant-produced metaphor drawings. Thematic analysis was employed to code and identify patterns within the dataset systematically. Initial codes emerged from observations, reflections, and feedback. Codes were categorised into major themes: teacher activity, reading material, and learner activity. This process serves as a tool facilitating the extraction of meanings from the dataset. The findings indicate a positive shift in learners' attitudes through engaging activities and a supportive environment. The study contributes insights into effective reading interventions, emphasising strategic planning and adaptability.

Contents

Figures

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ART	Ask, Read, Tell
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
Covid-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DAR	Drop All and Read
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
ER	Extensive Reading
FAL	First Additional Language
FET	Further Education and Training
GER	Guided Extensive Reading
GET	General Education and Training
IR	Intensive Reading
MCQ	Multiple choice question
MKO	More knowledgeable other
PD	Peer discussion
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
RAC	Reading Across the Curriculum
SQ3R	Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review
SSR	Sustained Silent Reading
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
USSR	Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading
VSS	Vocabulary self-selection
ZPD/zoped	Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter 1

My Voyage of Discovery Begins

Charting the Course of This Study

1.1. Introduction

Rich literary experiences have impacted me personally, and linguistically, and I count myself fortunate. The reading deficits some learners face at school are not only harmful to academics, but they also deprive learners of the opportunity to discover new worlds through reading. I crafted this autoethnographic self-study capturing the ups and downs of implementing an extra-curricular reading programme for grade 8 English second language learners by engaging in a cycle of deep reflection on what can be done to assist learners with reading deficits. I reflected systematically on how each reading intervention session was conducted, what reading materials were used, issues and critical incidents that arose, and what improvements could be made for future sessions. The literature referenced in this study surrounds reading interventions, the importance of reading, factors influencing reading difficulties in learners, remedial strategies for reading, and policy documents discussing reading instruction in South Africa.

The first data source was my reflective journal, where I recorded my reflections on the activities that took place in the class, any critical incidents, and my responses to them. The second data source was my critical friend, who walked with me through the implementation of reading interventions. She gave me direction, corrected me, and offered sage advice. The third data source was various artworks that participants produced. I have adopted an arts-based approach to understand and share the thoughts of my participants. At the centre of my arts-based approach is participant-produced metaphor drawings. Painting, collaging, and beadwork feature less frequently. These drawings gauged my participants' experiences and feelings towards the extra-curricular reading programme. Since I am cognisant of my role in the study, I see myself as a participant. As such, I have produced my own drawings depicting my teaching highs and lows as I waded through the deep water of this reading intervention

programme. The participants in this study have all been selected from the school in which I teach. This chapter of the study aims to clarify the purpose of this research and the objectives that drive this study. It also provides a roadmap of how this study was conducted.

My first metaphor drawing ‘Optimistic, Ambitious or Naïve?’ is discussed in more detail in chapter 5, depicts the optimism and hopefulness I experienced at the start of the intervention programme. I assumed that with all the research that has already been conducted surrounding reading; the road was already paved. I thought I would stumble upon a magical approach to use as a blueprint for my intervention programme. I did not anticipate the challenges I faced later. After reading about previous intervention programmes and various reading models, I assumed my task would be simple. All I had to do was choose from the already-forged paths and imitate them in my setting. I assumed this would ensure success. In my mind, success meant performing a reading miracle and bringing learners to read fluently proficiently for enjoyment and to learn. I did not realise at the time that this experience with the learners would give me more insight into my practice than I could give to learners regarding reading.

1.2. Background

Upon officially entering the teaching profession as a novice educator in 2021, I had high hopes and ideas about what it would be like to be a teacher. As a teacher of English in a South African secondary school, I was soon disillusioned when I faced many of the same challenges I had read about in academic articles as an undergraduate student. In a community plagued by crime, inadequate services, and drug prevalence, our school operates amidst socio-economic challenges. Located away from suburban comforts, our students face economic disadvantages as the norm. In operational schools in the area, educators are diligent, but it is not enough to offset the inherent disadvantages learners face. Their parents may struggle to provide rich literary experiences crucial during their children's formative years. Consequently, due to this dearth of early exposure, our learners find themselves starting behind their counterparts from more privileged backgrounds. These learners enter formal schooling already disadvantaged, lacking the foundational literary exposure that could enhance their academic development.

Many of the learners I teach in the English Home Language classroom are not English mother-tongue speakers. In fact, my interest in this research stems from my personal experience as an educator in a school where most of the learners speak African languages as their mother tongue but are receiving their education in an English medium school where English is the only Home Language option offered to learners.

1.3. Rationale

My personal experience as an educator in this context shed light on the stark differences between these learners' experiences and mine. It struck me as profoundly unfair that learners could reach high school age without basic reading proficiency. Reflecting on my own educational journey, which was not without its struggles, I recognised the transformative power of reading. It served as both an outlet for my active imagination and a tool that significantly improved my academic performance. The idea that learners could miss out on such a positive and impactful educational experience is deeply troubling to me. My pursuit of this study stems from a sense of injustice and an unwavering belief that something can be done to combat these reading deficits.

I entered the profession at a particularly challenging time during the Covid-19 pandemic. I believe that the unforeseen disruptions caused by the pandemic have gravely affected the learners entering high school now. The revised annual teaching plans[1] (ATP) and rotational timetables forced teachers to push forwards with the curriculum regardless of who was left behind. I am currently encountering several learners in grade 8 with very low reading proficiency. This is evident in the vast number of learners failing to read with fluency and understanding. The empirical data gleaned from the 2021 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), released in 2023 (DBE, 2023) evince the need for this research. The country's literacy levels have experienced a significant decline. As South Africa grapples with the consequences of the Coved-19 pandemic, the PIRLS results show a critical need for targeted

[1] The Department of Basic Education (DBE) implemented revised annual teaching plans during The National State of Disaster due to Covid-19 and the resulting lockdowns. One goal of the revised annual teaching plans was to reduce the curriculum to manageable content in alignment with the available teaching time. Another goal was to avoid compromising learners' progress and transition between grades (DBE(d), 2020).

interventions and a plan to reverse the downward trend in literacy. These challenges motivated me to implement a reading intervention programme to bridge some gaps created when learners could not attend school.

Given the current educational landscape, this research is more important than ever. The pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing educational inequalities, making it essential to address these challenges urgently. Without immediate and effective interventions, the repercussions on learners' academic and future career prospects could be devastating. The decline in literacy levels not only hampers individual growth but also threatens the socio-economic development of the nation. Therefore, this study aims to implement a reading intervention programme to bridge some gaps created when learners could not attend school. By focusing on enhancing reading proficiency, we can equip learners with the fundamental skills necessary for their overall academic success and lifelong learning. This research is particularly timely and critical as it seeks to mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic on education and pave the way for a more equitable and effective learning environment.

1.4. Purpose of the study

The 8 learner-participants selected for this study displayed difficulty in their reading ability, speak English as a second language and are in grade 8. These learners have transitioned from primary school to high school without mastering basic reading skills. These learners cannot read at an appropriate level for the learning they engage in at high school. This low level of reading proficiency poses a challenge for the learners and their teachers. It is apparent to my critical friend and I that, without the necessary reading skills, learners are unlikely to succeed and learn effectively in high school. This study focuses on how I went about implementing a reading intervention programme to assist learners in developing reading skills. It is not just a list of strategies that can be used in the intervention programme, but it is a reflection on what a teacher can do to develop a reading intervention programme that suits the learners' needs.

1.5. Literature Review

My literature review begins with an in-depth review of the Sociocultural Theory and the concepts that underpin it. I have also explained why the Sociocultural Theory is the most suitable theoretical framework for my study. This study focuses on implementing a reading intervention programme that I gradually developed and facilitated in collaboration with my more experienced critical friend.

The literature review surrounding reading begins by defining what reading interventions are, why they are implemented, and ways they may be implemented. It then establishes why reading is essential, particularly reading for learning across the curriculum. It looks at the relationship between language skills and how they work together to impact learners' language acquisition. Discussing these concepts is vital because reading fluently improves comprehension skills necessary for learning in all subject areas. Reading is also vital in assisting learners in developing language skills. For these reasons, reading is viewed as a powerful weapon for learners to excel academically and in their lives as a whole. The literature review then shifts its focus to factors which contribute to reading challenges faced by learners. These include inadequate primary school preparation, teacher's lack of time and instructional knowledge to teach reading, unavailability of reading materials, lack of learner motivation, and lack of parental involvement. It is essential to discuss these challenges as they contribute to the low reading proficiency among learners and act as barriers to learners' academic success. Intensive and extensive reading strategies are discussed, as these are strategies that will be used in the implementation of the reading intervention programme. The last aspect of the literature review is The National Reading Strategy. This South African policy document provides a guide for the expectations of teaching reading in schools.

The literature review sets the stage for the rest of the study by defining and outlining various concepts and issues that become pertinent during my own attempts to implement a reading intervention programme in a school context where learners are English as a second language speakers. Some of these concepts have either helped or hindered my implementation of the reading intervention programme.

1.6. Sociocultural Theory

The Sociocultural Theory suggests that development occurs when learners participate in family life, peer group interactions, school activities, sporting events and other contexts. The Sociocultural perspective focuses on how an individual's mental functioning relates to the individual's cultural, institutional, and historical context. It focuses on the roles that participation in social interactions and culturally arranged activities play in influencing psychological development (Scott & Palinscar, 2013). "… All children bring to school rich linguistic abilities acquired through social interaction in their homes and communities" (Meier, 2003, p. 242). This shows the importance of social interactions in the development of learners' language skills.

According to Wertsch (1991), a child's cultural development aids their social and psychological development. When learners participate in a range of joint activities and internalise the effects of working together, they are able to acquire new strategies and knowledge of their culture and the world. In writing of socio-culturalism, Vygotsky (1979), the father of the Sociocultural Theory, was not only interested in what the knowledgeable individual or 'expert' brings to the interaction but also what the child brings to the interaction. Wertsch (1991) and Lantolf (1994) cite semiotics as the tool with which humans facilitate the co-construction of knowledge. Semiotics refers to signs and symbolic tools, such as mnemonic devices, algebraic symbols, diagrams, graphs, and language (Scott & Palinscar, 2013).

The Sociocultural lens is suited for my study as it suggests that learners can benefit greatly from assistance provided by teachers and peers in the classroom. I had to discover what the learners in my study can achieve independently and use the knowledge of their capabilities to craft activities, which enabled me to provide assistance to learners while they tried to achieve tasks that may have been too challenging for them. I had to structure activities to scaffold learners in a way that helped them re-access their earlier stages of development while they navigated their way around overcoming new and challenging tasks. The Sociocultural Theory also suggests that learners can make discoveries when they work together. In this intervention programme, learners engaged in activities that involved collaborations in the classroom, where more capable learners worked together with learners who were in need of assistance (Lantolf, 2006). I subscribe to the belief that learning is social in nature and meaning is derived through language use within the social context of the

learners (Hecht et al., 2000). This means I am cognisant of the reality that the learners participating in the study are English second or third-language speakers from a range of social and linguistic backgrounds. Each of them has vastly different language repertoires (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978).

The Sociocultural perspective requires an understanding that learners are nurtured and scaffolded by all environments in which they operate (Behroozizad, Nambiar & Amir, 2014). According to Meier (2003), "… children from every linguistic community learn to use language in ways that are highly complex and that provide a strong linguistic foundation for teachers to build on in literacy instruction" (p. 242). The Sociocultural Theory views learning as a social activity that is not about individual cognition but the mental activity of members of the same social community (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). According to the CAPS document for English Home Language in the FET phase, by the time learners enter the FET phase, many of the activities that were emphasised in the Senior phase "should need little individual emphasis: they have been part of the learner's progress through preceding phases" (DBE(c), 2011, p. 11). This shows that learners should be scaffolded based on what they have been taught in previous years (Chansa-Kabali, Serpell & Lyytinen, 2014). For all these reasons, the Sociocultural Theory is the most appropriate theory to frame my study.

1.7. Research Questions

1. What are the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school?

To capture the essence of learners' attitudes towards reading before, during and after the intervention programme, I turned to metaphor drawings as part of an arts-based approach.

2. What measures can I implement in response to the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school?

I kept a reflective journal before the programme began and continued it once the intervention sessions commenced. In this journal, I was able to document my plans for each session and how I executed them. During each session, I was observed by

my critical friend, who provided insight into the appropriateness of the reading material, the activities I set out, my actions during the session, and ways to improve next time. Through this cycle of reflection and action, it felt like we were chiselling a concrete slab, and with every chip that fell, our reading intervention programme got better.

3. What were my experiences of implementing an extra-curricular reading programme for Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school?

I understand my role in this study affected my learner-participants and critical friend. As such, I am a participant in this study, too. To capture my experiences implementing this intervention programme, I relied on my reflective journals and metaphor drawings. This study is not simply about the reading programme; it centres around my actions. The reflections tap into my beliefs, values, attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses. They reveal who I am as a teacher and how I handle setbacks. My critical friend produced a metaphor drawing titled ‘Sink or Swim’ showing that, at times, this intervention programme became overwhelming. She knew I would have to ‘dig deep’ if I wanted it to succeed.

1.8. Research Objectives

1. To determine the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school.

2. To implement measures in response to the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school.

3. To reflect on my experiences of the measures that I implemented in response to the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school.

1.9. Problem Statement

Many Grade 8 learners in rural South African schools, who speak English as a second language, struggle with reading proficiency, posing significant challenges to their academic success. These challenges are further compounded by socio-economic disadvantages and the educational disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aims to investigate the reading experiences of these learners, implement measures to address their reading difficulties, and reflect on the effectiveness of these interventions.

1.10. Methodology

This study is an autoethnographic self-study exploring my experiences of implementing a reading intervention programme for grade 8 learners. According to du Preez (2008), autoethnographic research is frequently thought of as synonymous with reflective or reflexive practice and, at times, these terms are used interchangeably. Although an autoethnography is deeply personal and self-reflective, my research does not aim to use a literary approach to stir emotional resonance in my audience. Instead, my research aims to implement and report on an extra-curricular reading programme for selected grade 8 learners by engaging in reflexivity and self-conscious introspection. I have acted reflexively in this study by making the research process as transparent as possible. Another way I have acted reflexively is by engaging in collaboration with my participants through the inclusion of participant-produced drawings.

In addition to reflective journaling and participant-produced artworks, critical friend engagement played a pivotal role in this study, particularly as a critical reader. A critical friend is an experienced colleague who provides valuable insights and constructive feedback on one's work, helping to improve the quality and effectiveness of projects or initiatives through thoughtful critique and analysis. My critical friend, a seasoned educator with 13 years of experience, meticulously analysed the materials learners were given, my plans, and my reflections on the execution of the reading programme. With a keen eye for detail and guided by specific questions, she provided valuable feedback and constructive criticism aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the programme. Throughout the study, my critical friend's role as a critical reader involved

carefully examining the materials used in the intervention sessions, evaluating their suitability and effectiveness in facilitating learning. Additionally, she closely reviewed my plans for each session, offering insights and suggestions to enhance their alignment with instructional objectives and learner needs. Furthermore, my critical friend engaged in thoughtful reflection on my execution of the reading programme, identifying areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. Through collaborative dialogue and exchange of ideas, we worked together to refine instructional strategies, address challenges, and optimise the learning experiences for the participants. In this way, critical friend engagement as a critical reader contributed significantly to the research process, enriching the analysis and interpretation of data while promoting continuous improvement and refinement of the intervention programme. By leveraging her expertise and insights, we were able to enhance the quality and impact of the reading intervention, ultimately benefiting the learners and advancing our understanding of effective literacy instruction.

The study spanned over 24 months, while the intervention programme itself was implemented over a period of 12 weeks. This duration was influenced by various factors that necessitated careful consideration and planning. While the overall study spanned 24 months, the initial 12 months were primarily dedicated to obtaining ethical clearance and approvals necessary for data generation to begin. This process was essential to ensure the integrity and ethical conduct of the study.

Regarding the duration of the reading intervention programme, it was constrained by the school's academic calendar and existing programmes. In order to minimise disruption to learners' study and revision schedules, particularly as examinations approached, the intervention sessions were conducted for four weeks in each school term. Additionally, considerations were made to conclude the programme before the commencement of the fourth term, a period known for its demands due to final exams.

It's important to acknowledge that while these timeframes were dictated by the school's academic schedule, they may not align perfectly with the optimal duration for developing learners' reading proficiency. However, the decision to adhere to the school's examination and revision plans was made in the interest of minimising disruption to learners' academic progress and ensuring the smooth integration of the intervention programme within the existing school framework.

These data generation methods and the data sources work together to produce a deeply personal and reflective autoethnography bolstered by my critical friend's praise and critiques, the visual depictions provided by my learner-participants, my own visual reflections, and my reflective journal.

1.11. Layout of chapters

Chapter 1 provides a roadmap for this study. It begins with a personal reflection on the impact of reading and introduces my autoethnographic self-study. The background section provides the context for the study. The purpose of the study is clearly defined, targeting grade 8 learners with reading difficulties. I provided an overview of the review of literature. The Sociocultural Theory is explained, justifying its selection as the study's theoretical framework. There are 3 research questions and objectives which are outlined. The autoethnographic approach is briefly described, emphasising transparency and collaboration with participants. Data sources, including reflective journals, critical friend engagement, and participant-produced artworks, are explained, providing insight into the research process.

Chapter 2 begins by setting the theoretical framework for the study, grounding it in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and providing an in-depth exploration of the theoretical framework. The literature explored surrounds diverse approaches to address reading deficits, emphasising the role of reading in academic success. The chapter underscores the interconnectedness of language skills and addresses critical factors contributing to reading challenges. It delves into research on intensive and extensive reading methods. The shortcomings of South Africa's National Reading Strategy are discussed, revealing issues in teacher confidence, training, and resource distribution. Overall, the chapter builds a comprehensive foundation, intertwining theory with practical applications for effective reading interventions.

Chapter 3 details the research design that drives the exploration and development of the study. It begins by navigating the interpretive paradigm and framing the research design within an autoethnographic self-study to explore the challenges of implementing an extra-curricular reading programme in a South African school. Thematic data analysis is discussed as aligning seamlessly with the interpretive paradigm's goals. A description of how purposive convenience sampling was used is

provided. Emphasis is placed on trustworthiness through collaborative data sources, including reflective journaling, a critical friend, and arts-based methods like participant-produced drawings and metaphor drawings. These diverse sources intricately capture the multifaceted experiences and challenges encountered in implementing an extra-curricular reading programme in a South African school, elevating the richness of the research. Additionally, the chapter addresses ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 is the data generation section, focusing on the implementation of the extra-curricular reading programme across 12 intervention sessions. Each week, I detailed the session plan, execution, critical friend feedback, and my reflective thoughts in retrospect. These sessions, held on Wednesdays, involved learner-participants and my critical friend in my classroom. The study's arts-based approach is reflected in visual depictions, including metaphor drawings from learners, my critical friend, and myself. This chapter captures the intricacies of each intervention session, highlighting my efforts to tailor the programme to the participants' needs and circumstances.

In chapter 5, I presented a thematic analysis that highlighted recurring patterns in the data. These patterns form the themes that unveil meaningful findings. The thematic analysis thus serves as a pivotal link, connecting the data generated to the overarching research objectives.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the study in relation to three research questions, revealing shifts in learners' reading experiences and presenting successful measures implemented in response to those experiences. Limitations are discussed, acknowledging the study's small-scale design and contextual constraints. Avenues for future research were proposed. The research journey is summed up in the conclusion.

1.12. Conclusion

I have situated myself within this study regarding the context in which I operate as an educator. I posed research questions that will address the learners’ reading experiences and what I can do as an educator to assist learners and attempt to bridge the gaps in their reading proficiency. I provided a snapshot of my data generation methods and hinted at the reflexivity in this study through collaboration with my participants. I provided an overview of the Sociocultural Theory which guides my

beliefs, thoughts, and actions throughout this study. Finally, this chapter provides a concise breakdown of the structure and layout of chapters in this study. The chapter that follows will consider what has been said by other researchers and academics about the importance of reading, defining reading interventions in schools, the challenges that affect the development of learners' reading proficiency, and South Africa's National Reading Strategy.

Chapter 2
The Discoveries of Others

A sea of relevant literature

2.1. Introduction

The previous chapter shared the background and overview of this study. It introduced the focus of the study and the methodology used to evaluate my implementation of reading interventions. There is an array of elements that can make the reading issues faced by learners complicated. The purpose of the current chapter is to outline the theoretical framework underpinning the study and explain the concepts relevant to it.

The literature review focuses mainly on why reading is important, the challenges faced by learners in secondary schools regarding attaining reading proficiency, the previous research on reading programmes and campaigns, and finally, what is written in South Africa's National Reading Strategy with regards to reading in schools. I believe it is important to note the significant impact these elements can have on learners' reading ability and, subsequently, in the success of their school lives.

2.2. Theoretical framework - Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) is the father of the Sociocultural Theory, which emphasises learners' culture and the social forces that shape development. Sociocultural Theory argues that human mental functioning is a mediated process that takes place through cultural artefacts, activities, and concepts. While certain human biological characteristics are necessary for higher-order thinking, the most significant forms of cognitive activity take place through engagement with social and material environments (Allahyar & Nazari, 2012). Vygotsky believed children engage in meaningful learning through the assistance of more capable others (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Learners' complex forms of thinking originate in social interactions and not in their private explorations. This means that learning does not happen by self-discovery when a learner has reached a particular level of development, but that learning takes

place through the assistance of others who are more knowledgeable than the learner. The Sociocultural Theory views a learners' social environment as an active force in their development, actively shaping learners' growing knowledge to fit into the broader culture in which the learner operates. The Sociocultural Theory requires understanding five concepts: mediation, regulation, internalisation, imitation, and the zone of proximal development (Lantolf, 2000). The first of these is mediation. To understand psychological mediation, we can turn to the relationship between humans and their physical world, which tools mediate (Newman & Latifi, 2021).

2.2.1. Mediation

Vygotsky believed that the human mind is special because of its capacity for voluntary control over biology through higher-level cultural tools, such as language, literacy, numeracy, rationality, and logic (Silalahi, 2019). To understand psychological mediation, we can turn to the relationship between humans and their physical world, which tools mediate. Modern humans rarely engage in non-mediated activities (Newman & Latifi, 2021). As previously stated, this depiction of how physical tools allow us to act on our physical world is useful for understanding psychological mediation through higher-level cultural tools (Ameri, 2020). Since my study makes use of an arts-based approach, there are reading intervention sessions that require learners to engage in creative activities that relate to the content of the text. These crafty pre-reading activities play a significant role in establishing interest and providing some background to help learners develop a deeper understanding of the text. We engaged in painting, collaging, drawing and beadwork. These activities all involved physical tools that mediated learners' understanding of the texts. The arts and crafts used as pre-reading activities are semiotic tools used to mediate learners' reading development.

The Sociocultural Theory suggests that humans have the capacity to use symbols, signs, and semiotics as tools (Newman & Latifi, 2021). Symbols, unlike outwardly directed physical tools, cannot control or affect the physical environment (Newman, 2018). Symbols are inwardly/cognitively directed tools that are used to mediate psychological activities. Symbols allow humans to control psychological processes voluntarily and intentionally (Shabani, 2016). This ability enables humans to react to

stimuli thoughtfully and consider various actions and possibilities before realising them on the objective/physical plane. To illustrate this, think of a spider that spins its web without planning but relies entirely on its instincts. This contrasts with a human architect who relies on extensive planning and develops a blueprint sensitive to the science of the concrete world. This blueprint is a culturally constructed artefact that represents the physical building and serves as a means to mediate the construction of the building (Lantolf, Poehner & Thorne, 2020). Language is the most powerful cultural artefact that humans have to mediate their connection to the world, to each other, and to themselves. Humans use 'private speech' to regulate their mental functions. The features of private speech are abbreviation and its meaning (Lantolf & Xi, 2019). For example, think of a child solving a puzzle. While engaging in the activity, the child might talk to himself using common expressions encountered in private speech, such as, "Oh!" "Next?" "Ok." "Let's see…" "There!" (Lantolf, 2000, p.203). These utterances are not expressed for others to interpret but are addressed by the child to himself (self-directed). The purpose of these utterances is to focus the child's attention on the task, how to accomplish it and then to evaluate what has been achieved (Mahn, 1999). This way, higher-level cultural tools such as language are used for psychological mediation. Human action is thus mediated by instruments, signs, symbols, and semiotic tools that facilitate the co-construction of knowledge and the means that are internalised to aid future independent problem-solving (Yıldırım, 2008).

Metaphor drawings are part of this study's arts-based approach. These drawings are symbolic, semiotic tools and are meant to be interpreted to capture the experiences of the participants. My critical friend and I created metaphor drawings depicting our struggles, joys, and observations throughout this intervention programme. We chose not to use language solely as the cultural artifact to mediate and express ourselves to one another and the world. These tools allowed my participants and I to work together and co-construct knowledge in this study. The participants also produced drawings to depict their attitudes and feelings.

2.2.2. Regulation and Internalisation

There are three stages of regulation. The first stage is object-regulation, whereby children use objects to think. An example of this could be a child learning mathematics and finding it challenging or impossible to carry out addition inside their head; the child might turn to objects such as counting blocks or an abacus for external support to accomplish their task. In this way, the child uses an object to regulate their mental activity (Pathan, Prabhu, & Siddalingaswamy, 2018). In this study, the artwork learners crafted as pre-reading activities are objects used to assist learners develop an understanding of the texts they read. They use these objects as a tool to help them think about and relate to the stories. The second stage is other regulation, which involves mediation that a child receives from a more knowledgeable other (MKO), such as parents, peers, teachers, and siblings. Other regulation can involve varying levels of assistance and scaffolding. In this study, I acted as an MKO to my learner-participants, I guided and assisted them during their reading. My critical friend is a colleague with more experience than me. She acted as an MKO to me in this study. She provided feedback that shaped the way I planned activities during the interventions (Shabani, 2016). The final stage is self-regulation, which refers to a child's ability to accomplish tasks with minimal or no external support. Self-regulation is made possible through internalisation, which allows cultural artefacts such as language to take on a psychological function. Internalisation is vital for the formation of higher mental processes.

Every psychological function occurs twice: first, it occurs between people on the objective plane, and then it occurs within the individual on the psychological plane – internalisation. It is the process of taking the external assistance that was provided and making it a resource that is internally available (Turuk, 2008). This is practically demonstrated in this study. I used arts and crafts to mediate learners' understanding of the texts they read. During these activities, learners acted on the objective plane. Then learners were faced with reading and understand the text, and at times responding to questions. During this time, learners acted on the psychological plane. The key to self-regulation is internalisation, and the key to internalisation is linked to imitation. Imitation is not the mindless copying associated with behaviourism; instead, it involves engaging in intentional and self-directive behaviour. First, a child imitates, and then they internalise. For example, while children are problem-solving, they might

engage in self-talk or private speech; they use the dialogues they engaged in with more capable others and apply it while talking to themselves to work out a problem independently (Marginson & Dang, 2017). This self-talk will eventually become internalised, and the child will no longer need to speak aloud to solve the problem. As a result, the child may no longer need assistance from objects or others to complete challenging tasks. However, self-regulation is not a stable condition. For example, even a proficient language user may need to rely on a dictionary at some point. In this way, people can re-access their earlier stages of development as a way to navigate and overcome new or challenging tasks that they are faced with (Arievitch & Haenen, 2005). This is relevant in my study, as learners tapped into early reading skills, such as sounding out words, writing vocabulary lists, and using visuals. During week 9, I observed learners helping one another through the reading. When one learner did not understand what 'mango and melons' were, her peer code-switched and explained the meaning to her. While she was able to read, and mostly understood, the text, when she got stuck, she had to tap into translation to get back on track.

2.2.3. Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Scaffolding

The zone of proximal development – sometimes referred to as ZPD or zoped - refers to the distance between the learners' actual developmental level and the potential development level of the learners. The actual developmental level of the learners can be determined by what the learner can achieve through independent problem-solving (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). The potential level of development can be determined by what the learner is able to do under guidance and in collaboration with more knowledgeable others. According to Silalahi (2019), the ZPD theory claims that "… a learner can do what he can almost do alone with the presence of assistance" (p. 169). Scaffolding is a process that takes place to help learners develop their ZPD. Scaffolding enables a learner to solve a problem or complete a task which would have been beyond his efforts if he went unassisted (Howe & Mercer, 2012). Scaffolding involves a more capable other controlling the elements of the task that are beyond the learner's capacity. This will allow the learner to complete the parts of the task that are within his competencies (Hodges et al., 2016). To develop learners' ZPD, a particular kind of assistance is necessary. This assistance requires the more capable other to gauge learners' prior knowledge before deciding how to assist (Goodman & Goodman,

2014). This approach allows a teacher to find the zone where a learner can perform successfully with appropriate assistance. This is more constructive than simply assuming that a learner is not ready to attempt a particular task (Thorne, 2005). The ZPD theory also explains how students can understand new concepts they did not previously understand by participating in them with someone else.

2.2.4. More Knowledgeable Others

Vygotsky's concept of ZPD hinges on the involvement of more knowledgeable others. The origin of knowledge construction cannot be found in the mind, but in the social interaction between more and less knowledgeable individuals. The concept of ZPD is the distance between a learner's reading ability, determined by independent reading and the learner's potential reading level, determined through reading under the supervision of an adult or guidance by a more capable peer (Bunyakarte, 2010). The Sociocultural Theory's concepts operate on two planes in this study. First, I act as one of the MKOs for learner-participants in the study. I operated in their ZPD by guiding, advising, and scaffolding them during reading interventions. Next, my critical friend acted as an MKO to me. She is a more capable and experienced peer. She guided me and advised me so that I could not only implement a reading programme but also evaluate the effectiveness of my practices in doing so. A learner's potential is learned through interactions with others on a social plane, and others play a significant role in a child's learning. Learners can perform better when collaborating with a more capable person. Those who can teach, assist, and guide are 'more knowledgeable others' (MKO) (Amerian & Mehri, 2014).

MKOs have a better understanding of reading or a higher reading ability level than the learner. Learning occurs just above the learner's current level of competence. A MKO could be an adult, parent, teacher, peer, sibling, or a younger person (Shabani, 2016). The MKO can advance and further the learners' competency level through the process occurring in the ZPD, and later, these skills can be mastered on an individual level by the learner. MKOs do not complete reading activities for learners. They are there to guide, support and stretch the learners' understanding of reading skills (Abtahi, Graven & Lerman, 2017). Teachers have the task of assisting learners and directing their reading activity. At the start, teachers should take on the leading role during

reading activities, but gradually, the accountability should move to the learner (Bunyakarte, 2010). The child will later imitate the teacher and re-create the past classroom collaboration to engage in reading activities independently. This is a process known as scaffolding (Van der Stuyf, 2002).

According to the Sociocultural Theory, a teacher's primary role is to provide scaffolding which assists learners on tasks within their ZPD (Abtahi, Graven & Lerman, 2017). Scaffolding ignites interest and engages learners using knowledge and skills from previous experience to gradually move learners from simple subtasks to tasks and finally to more complex tasks (Shabani, 2016). The MKO is only there to provide structures that help the learner reach a higher stage of development. Scaffolding is, thus, temporary. Once the learner's abilities increase, the scaffolding support provided by the MKO is gradually withdrawn (Mcleod, 2014). This keeps learners from becoming frustrated as they continuously move through the steps of their development. The reading activities provided in scaffolding instruction should be just beyond the levels of what the learners can do alone. Learners must work with a challenge close to their current ability (Kumar & Ali Mubarak BB, 2017). In this process, a MKO builds on prior knowledge to help students internalise new information. The scaffolding provided by the MKO is successful when the learner is able to complete the literacy task independently. It is vital the MKO does not control the scaffolding process with rigid rules and structure. Rather, MKOs should work together with learners. An MKO plays a significant role in teaching reading (Palinscar, 1998; Scott & Palinscar, 2013).

Speech (talking) develops uniformly across various languages. It is directly associated with specific brain and motor structures. However, reading is a complex, rule-based activity that must be imposed on brain and motor structures (Frey & Fisher, 2010). Learners are born with these biological structures, but they do not inherently know how to carry out reading. Therefore, quality reading instruction is critical – especially in the early and foundational years. As MKOs, teachers can provide quality reading instruction by scaffolding learners in various ways (Shaikh, Karim & Asif, 2017).

Teacher modelling, demonstration, and thinking aloud are ways children can learn through imitation. How learners experience teacher modelling affects how they perform and execute reading tasks on their own. Modelling is one of the best ways to

introduce skills and strategies to readers (Pathan et al., 2018). Teachers can also group less competent readers with more competent readers to construct their learning and teach one another. All learners benefit from interactions between struggling learners, more capable peers, and the reading content (Purwanti & Hatmonto, 2019).

The Sociocultural Theory rejects the notion of an all-knowing MKO who dominates the teaching and learning process. Teachers are mediators, collaborators, scaffolders, and facilitators in the teaching and learning process. An educator who endorses the Sociocultural perspective leads and supports learners by incorporating social and cultural traits rather than passively lecturing learners (Mcleod, 2014).

2.3. Literature Review

2.3.1. The implementation of reading interventions

Reading interventions, programmes, and campaigns can all be defined as reading remediations implemented to assist learners who experience reading deficits. These programmes meet the needs of learners at risk of reading comprehension failure due to delays in vocabulary and grammatical progress (Bowyer-Crane et al., 2008).

These interventions are not implemented in the same ways. Firstly, they do not have to be initiated by a teacher. They could be initiated as part of a whole-school programme, by an involved parent, or as an initiative in the broader community (Braunger & Lewis, 1997). Teachers, schools, or parents could craft these interventions to meet the specific needs of individual learners or the teachers' instructional goals. They can also be purchased as ready-made programmes to be implemented as is (Dewitz, Jones & Leahy, 2009). These programmes can be implemented at any stage during a child's school journey. However, the research which follows this section suggests that reading interventions should ideally be implemented as early as possible (Kim & Hall, 2002).

According to Jamashidifarsani (2019), there are five essential components of a reading campaign: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. The traditional methods of instructing these components are time-consuming, and adequate vocabulary acquisition is not possible during school time

(Boulhrir, 2017). Reading intervention programmes could be an effective way of preventing and addressing reading difficulties. It is easy for Foundation phase educators to incorporate reading programmes into their classrooms (Wifgield, Gladstone & Turci, 2016). This could be done by dividing learners into small groups according to their reading level to engage in peer reading. Reading campaigns are not only implemented to address the 'five essential components of a reading campaign.' They could also be implemented to encourage reading for enjoyment or increase reading motivation among learners (Dunn, 2010).

2.3.2. Why Reading Is Important

The ability to read requires understanding words in a text and using them to gain knowledge for personal growth and development (Bakken & Lund, 2018). Reading is an important academic skill for learning across the curriculum (Owusu-Acheaw, 2014). Learning across the curriculum is a strategy that involves teaching language in a content-based manner across all learning areas in the curriculum. Reading fluency improves comprehension skills, which are necessary for learning in all learning areas. Reading is also vital in assisting learners in developing language skills. For these reasons, reading is viewed as a powerful weapon for learners to excel in academia as well as in life. Thus, reading ability is linked to academic success and achievement (Bakken & Lund, 2018). Six main reading benefits are pertinent to this study: reading for learning across the curriculum; reading effects on cognitive processes leading to academic achievement; reading to develop language skills; reading assists second language acquisition, and reading provides enjoyment (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2010; Sadiku, 2015; Smith et al., 2012). According to the specific aims cited in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for English Home Language in the Intermediate, Senior and FET phases, learners should be able to read in the home language with confidence and enjoyment as these skills form the basis for lifelong learning (DBE(a), 2011; DBE(b), 2011; DBE(c), 2011). The language should be used to access and manage information for learning across the curriculum and in a wide range of other contexts. Learners should also use the home language to read texts for a variety of purposes, such as enjoyment, research, and critique. (DBE(b), 2011). Learners should develop proficiency in reading and viewing a wide range of texts through classroom and independent reading in order to become critical and creative

thinkers. Both CAPS for English Home Language in the Senior and FET phases state that learners must acquire a high level of proficiency in the language for higher education and the world of work (DBE(b), 2011; DBE(c), 2011).

2.3.2.1. Reading Across the Curriculum

Reading in the various content areas of the curriculum is essential for developing learners' literacy through the grades (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2010). In academic settings such as school, literacy involves interaction with learning materials in print form. The information found in these learning materials is accessible through reading (Pretorious, 2002). Thus, literacy empowers learners across a wide variety of disciplines and subject areas (Bruce & Wasser, 1996). According to May and Wright (2007), language has a significant role in learning. Reading well-constructed literature, including informational texts found in textbooks, increases learners' knowledge base, and makes them smarter (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2010). Reading across the curriculum (RAC) is a school of thought that has embraced the idea that every teacher is a teacher of reading – no matter the learning area, all teachers should see literacy integration and reading comprehension support as imperative to address learners' needs and achieve instructional goals (Le Cordeur, 2012).

To understand why reading is important for learning across the curriculum, it is necessary to understand the nature of developing reading skills. The ability to read begins with an understanding of sound-symbol relationships - this process is known as decoding (Hudson, Lane & Pullen, 2005). According to the CAPS document for English Home Language in the intermediate phase, reading and viewing combine strategies for decoding and understanding texts and applying knowledge of text features (DBE(a), 2011). Before considering fluency, learners must acquire the decoding skills necessary for reading. Learners must be able to identify the sounds represented by letters or letter combinations, blend phonemes, read phonograms, and use letter, sound and meaning cues to determine the pronunciation of words in a text. Without these skills, any learning that requires the ability to read cannot take place. Once learners have mastered decoding skills and are able to read, they must develop the skill of reading with understanding (Owusu-Acheaw, 2014).

Learning to decode words effectively leads to an unconscious recognition of words, which frees the necessary cognitive energy for comprehension. According to Laberge and Samuels (1974), automaticity and working memory are interrelated because there is a limited capacity for attention and working memory in cognitive processing. Since learners' attentional capacity is limited, automaticity makes mental resources available for comprehension. The decoding process needs to occur automatically and relatively effortlessly for learners to focus on understanding what they have read. While automaticity is necessary, learners must still decode words accurately. Poor reading accuracy negatively impacts reading comprehension because readers who cannot read words correctly cannot understand the intended message within the text (Abu-Leil, Share & Ibrahim, 2014). According to a study by Spooner, Baddeley and Gathercole (2004), low comprehension performance can reflect weak decoding ability and children with weak decoding skills are at a disadvantage. When learners make accuracy errors that change the meaning of the text, they are unable to comprehend its meaning effectively.

The findings of the study by Spooner, Baddeley and Gathercole (2004) suggest that comprehension performance is mediated by decoding ability. Prosody is another aspect of fluency that can affect the learners' interpretation of a text. Prosody refers to the skill of reading with the correct intonation and taking appropriate pauses (Groen, Veenendaal & Verhoeven, 2019). It allows readers to make inferences about a text using information that is not specified within the text. Prosody is thus linked to proficient reading, whether silent or oral. To read fluently and with comprehension, learners should use their voices to convey meaning when reading (Godde, Bosse & Bailly, 2019). Proficient readers can effectively convey the meaning of a text by reading with expression, varying their tone and pitch accordingly when reading (Erekson, 2010). Prosody also refers to the reading rate. Word reading rate is related to the basic speed of processing in the visual and auditory modalities activated during reading. Reading rate is also viewed as an outcome of effective word recognition skills and comprehension. If a learner reads too slowly, the reading fluency is diminished (Breznitz & Berman, 2003). According to Breznitz (1997) and Breznitz and Berman (2003), reading acceleration enhances working memory processing since it promotes more rapid and automatic word recognition, making more cognitive resources available for comprehension. Learners who pause inappropriately during reading

cannot identify critical phrase boundaries marked by punctuation; this results in an incorrect interpretation of texts (Rasinki, 2012). These reading and comprehension skills are necessary in all subjects and spheres of school education because, in all learning areas, learners are expected to develop the ability to understand and to use of an array of texts (Frey & Fisher, 2010).

Bakken and Lund (2018) conducted a study investigating Norwegian lower-secondary English teachers' reasoning about their classroom reading practices. They stated that "… learners are supposed to read to acquire insight and knowledge and to work with reading strategies and different objectives for reading" (p. 79). Similarly, Owusu-Acheaw (2014) posits that, "Effective reading is an important avenue of effective learning and reading is interrelated with the total educational process" (p. 3). Reading is thus an important skill for learning. Effective learning in all the learning areas of the curriculum relies on learners' ability to read fluently with comprehension. To read with comprehension is important in the context of my study because my learner-participants are in high school, where literacy has shifted from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn.' If learners hope to succeed at this level, they need a firm grasp on basic literacy skills.

2.3.2.2. The Relationship between Language Skills

Every language comprises four basic language and communication skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Reading and listening are receptive skills that refer to the ways people extract meaning from what they see or hear. This process involves receiving and decoding language to understand the message (Al-Jawi, 2010). Writing and speaking are productive skills that refer to the active skills needed to generate language and communicate ideas through speech or text (Sreena & Ilankumaran, 2018). These language skills are not developed independently. Instead, they are highly interrelated and work simultaneously to develop effective communication skills among learners (Sadiku, 2015).

Listening is a receptive skill that allows for the precise analysis of sounds heard. Learners will struggle to develop reading and writing skills if the sounds that make up the basis of language are not recognised and thoroughly analysed. Learners who are unable to analyse the sounds of a language might battle to translate the sounds of the

language into their written form (Yalçınkaya, Muluk & Şahin, 2009). Yalçınkaya et al. (2009) further state that learners' listening ability is likely to affect the quality of the learners' spoken, written, and reading language development. Decoding involves the analysis of graphic images or letters which represent sounds. Children who have not developed adequate listening skills will experience difficulty identifying phonemes, ultimately affecting learners' reading ability, spelling, and phonics (Davis, 2013). While listening skills are necessary for reading and writing, listening skills are also necessary for speaking.

According to the findings of research conducted by Yalçınkaya et al. (2009), there is a cyclical relationship between speaking and listening in that receptive skills are built on spoken and heard language. In order for writing skills to develop, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the sounds that form the basis of language. Similarly, written spelling and letter writing are not merely acts of memorising visual forms of letters and words. "… spelling requires learning to create connections between the spoken and written forms of words" (Berninger et al., 2006, p. 67). In order to engage in productive skills like writing, a good reading habit is beneficial. Reading a variety of texts helps readers learn about the structure of the texts, text patterns, text organization and even clues about the appropriate tone to use (Blanton, Wood & Moorman, 1990; Sanacore & Palumbo, 2010). This shows that all language skills, including reading, should be developed simultaneously for learners to achieve optimal language learning.

2.3.3. Factors related to Reading Challenges

2.3.3.1. Inadequate Early Years and Primary School Preparation

Children who are unable to gain an adequate level of reading proficiency from an early age will have difficulty catching up to their grade-level reading and are at risk of falling further behind as they move to higher grades (Stoffelsma, 2019). According to the National Assessment of Education Progress (2017), around one-quarter of students in the United States in eighth and twelfth grades fell short of expected skill levels in critical areas, such as comprehension. The early years are one of the most important

phases in developing reading skills (Mo & Troia, 2017). This is the time when most learners are first exposed to reading. The quality of reading instruction in the early years significantly impacts the development of children's reading skills (Taylor et al., 2020). A study by Joshi et al. (2009) found that while pre-service and in-service teachers believe that educators in the early years should know how to teach phonics, their scores on a survey related to teaching phonics revealed that they lacked the basic knowledge. Enighe and Afangideh (2018) concur with the views of Joshi et al. (2009) in that they believe the competency levels of teachers affect how they are able to teach specific techniques for reading achievement among learners. Enighe and Afangideh (2018) also believe that "… young learners who are taught by a teacher who diversifies his strategies to accommodate good and poor readers stand the chance of better academic achievement at any level…" (p. 1165).

One of primary schools' main goals is mastering reading with comprehension. South Africa's poor literacy levels among learners were first identified by the results of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2006) (Mullis et al., 2004). The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is a comprehensive international assessment that evaluates reading comprehension skills among grade 4 learners. South Africa has participated in PIRLS four times, in 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2021 (van Staden, Roux & Tshele, 2023). The South African PIRLS results in 2006 described the reading achievement among grade 4 and 5 learners. South Africa's grade 5 learners scored the lowest of the forty-five participating education systems. In 2011, South Africa opted to participate in the PrePIRLS – a less challenging version of the PIRLS- allowing developing countries to assess learners' reading skills. The PrePIRLS (2011) findings showed learners' continued underperformance in grades 4 and 5, even with the more straightforward assessment. South African grade 4 learners scored 461 – well below the international median of 500 (Combrinck, van Staden & Roux, 2014). Howie et al. (2012) found that 71% of South African grade 4 learners reached the low international benchmark of 400 points. This means 29% of South African grade 4 learners did not reach the low international benchmark in the 2011 PrePIRLS. In 2016, South Africa's mean achievement score in PIRLS was 320 points. Comparing PIRLS 2016 and 2021, South Africa experienced a decline in achievement scores from 320 to 288 (Mojapelo, 2023). South Africa's PIRLS 2021 results revealed a significant negative impact from the pandemic, with a score of 288, well below the

international average of 500 (van Staden & Combrinck, 2023). The majority of grade 4 children (81%) could not reach the lowest benchmark, indicating a struggle to retrieve basic information from texts (Gustaffsson & Taylor, 2023). South Africa has lost a decade of progress, with the percentage of children unable to read for meaning increasing from 78% in 2016 to 81% in 2021. South Africa faced the largest decline in reading outcomes (-31 points) among 33 regions with available data (Böhmer & Willis, 2023).

Zimmerman (2014) states that the poor development in reading literacy comes from learners' results in primary school (Department of Education [DOE], 2005). The reading difficulties learners face in secondary schools may result from comprehension backlogs dating back to the Foundation Phase (Zimmerman, 2014). In the Intermediate phase (grades 4, 5 and 6), learners should extend their knowledge and read a broader range of texts than in the Foundation Phase (Naidoo, Reddy and Dorasamy, 2014). Ngussa and Mjema (2017) conducted a study in Tanzania. They found that most children completing primary education do not have adequate basic literacy skills, which lay the foundation for secondary school education.

A study on government primary schools in Botswana (Biakolo, 2007) found that there was a low level of reading achievement among primary school learners and that learners carry these challenges to their secondary school education. One of the reasons cited in the study is that teachers in Botswana government schools are unaware of the reading level of the learners they teach. Learners do not have teachers to supervise and model good reading instruction. Biakolo (2007) believes that the primary years are the bedrock for learning to read. The findings of this study show serious flaws in what is considered reading instruction in schools. Undergraduate student teachers need extensive experience during training to observe emergent and developing readers and writers in primary school classrooms (Biakolo, 2007). O'Brien and Stewart (1990) considered preservice teachers' views on who is responsible for teaching reading. They found that preservice teachers believe secondary school teachers resist teaching reading because they feel ill-equipped and assume that basic reading skills have been mastered in the primary years. Lyon (2003) believes that many preservice teachers are taught ineffective techniques for reading instruction. Verbeek (2010) shares Lyon's (2003) views that South African children receive reading instruction using bottom-up approaches despite research findings that they

are ineffective. Reeves et al. (2008) conducted a study in Limpopo and found that the whole-language, constructivist, and communicative approaches to language teaching are ineffective in underprivileged contexts. For this reason, teachers must be intentional in their instructional practices to ensure that learners are taught to read in a way that helps them improve meaning-making and comprehension (Verbeek, 2010). Eshiet (2014) acknowledges that there is an assumption and expectation that learners have mastered basic reading skills by the end of the primary years, but realistically, there are gaps in the curriculum as far as reading is concerned. If learners do not master the foundational principles, they will drift through the primary school system and enter secondary school without being able to read or write a decent sentence (Eshiet, 2014).

Most teachers do not receive training on providing reading instruction to learners (Harris & Sass, 2011). The learners who come from print-rich environments and have a solid home grounding can quickly become independent readers in the early years and are adequately equipped to begin learning in the later primary years. Unfortunately, learners who do not receive such grounding and emergent literacy are not adequately prepared. These learners are significantly disadvantaged in secondary school (Naidoo, Reddy, Dorasamy, 2014; Rose, 2006).

2.3.3.2. Teachers Lack the Time and Instructional Knowledge to Teach Reading

When learners enter high school, they are expected to have reached a particular level of proficiency in reading since reading development occurs in primary school. High school teachers are generally unprepared to teach learners to read or develop positive attitudes towards reading. This is because the curriculum demands that high school learners read to learn (Rautenbach, Olifant & Cesko, 2019). However, teachers' instructional knowledge is vital for the success of reading instruction.

While a range of factors may contribute to reading deficits in learners, one of the main causes is instructional factors. This includes a poor school literacy environment, ineffective instructional methods, and teachers' lack of knowledge regarding English language and structure (Joshi et al., 2009). According to Fielding-Barnsley and Purdie (2005), for teachers to effectively teach reading, they "need to understand the

relationship between speech and print because these basic language processes are often deficient in cases of reading failure" (p. 65). However, many pre-service and in-service teachers are not familiar with the linguistic knowledge necessary for improving students' literacy skills, as Coltheart and Prior (2007) reported that teacher education programmes generally do not provide teachers with this information. The teacher education I received was grounded in the expectation that all learners would know how to read by the time they entered grade 8. This expectation has left me wholly unprepared to remediate learners with reading deficits. My teacher education prepared me to teach learners who had already acquired the necessary foundational skills to survive and thrive in high school. I was not extensively prepared or trained about phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

Moats (2009) reported that teachers generally do not feel prepared to meet the instructional demands of students with reading problems. Bos et al. (2001) conducted a study examining the perceptions of preservice and in-service teachers about early reading instruction. Both studies concluded that preservice and in-service teachers had limited phonological awareness knowledge and perceived themselves to be somewhat prepared to teach reading in the early years. Dawkinz, Ritz and Louden (2009) reported in their study that teachers felt concerned about their knowledge of literacy instruction, particularly about spelling, grammar and phonics. One of the reasons cited for this feeling of uncertainty is that teachers are not able to teach what they do not understand themselves. Spencer et al. (2008) reported on the phonemic skills of reading and special education teachers – they found that the phonemic skill level of these educators was insufficient to provide accurate interventions to improve learners' phonemic awareness. Akyeampong et al. (2013) believe that in order to address learners' challenges, it is necessary to understand how initial teacher education affects teachers' understanding of effective practice in learning to teach reading. One of the reasons for teachers' ineffectiveness stems from the preparation teachers receive – it strongly emphasises the theoretical and does not focus enough on practical knowledge (Westbrook et al., 2009).

2.3.3.3. Unavailability of Reading Materials

According to Ternenge and Agipu (2019), the success of an education system depends on the availability, accessibility, and utilization of information. Similarly, the development of reading skills relies on the use of appropriate instructional resources. A shortage of instructional resources leads to enormous problems since reading is a crucial aspect of language learning (Omuna, Onchera & Kurgatt, 2016). Schools should provide learners with adequate learning and teaching material, but the reality is that most schools have inadequate instructional resources to develop reading skills both in terms of quantity and variety (Ngugi & Mberia, 2014; Wangui, 2012). Nassimbeni and Desmond (2011) investigated the effect of providing storybooks to twenty disadvantaged primary schools in South Africa. The study acknowledges that many South African children are being taught in print-poor environments and that access to books will benefit the learners' literacy skills and confidence. In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2010) expressed concern for the low performance of South African learners in standardised literacy measures compared to their global counterparts. In 2011, the Annual National Assessment results revealed unacceptably low reading comprehension levels in South African public schools (Motshekga, 2011).

Howie et al. (2008) noted that the pupils from schools with sufficient books, functioning libraries, and a variety of instructional resources available scored better than schools without these resources. The findings of Howie et al. (2008) are corroborated by Krashen (2004), who noted the relationship between an adequate supply of books in the classroom and the increased time spent on reading. In instances where learners are required to bring their own novels and reading materials from home, reading levels decline. Children who live and learn in print-poor areas are presented with barriers to their learning (Nassimbeni & Desmond, 2011). The study by Nassimbeni and Desmond (2011) shows that insufficient reading materials in schools are disadvantaging learners. As reported by Ternenge and Agipu (2019), there is a general misconception that the library is a luxury and learners in secondary schools can do without it. The International Reading Association (2000) states that the best readers are children with positive attitudes towards reading and who read for enjoyment. This implies that access to reading materials is meaningless without the will and motivation to engage in reading.

2.3.3.4. Learners' Lack of Reading Motivation

As defined by Ahmadi (2017), reading motivation refers to "… one's own purpose, idea, and interest related to the title action and the consequences of the reading." It does not matter that teachers have a wealth of knowledge and experience and a full repertoire of reading strategies that have been proven effective at their disposal; if learners have no sense of motivation to read or learn, then there is nothing that teachers can do (Applegate & Applegate, 2010). Motivation to read is a powerful contributor to reading achievement. Learners who are positively motivated to read perceive themselves as competent in different tasks and are intrinsically motivated to learn. (Guthrie et al., 2009).

There are different types of motivation which should be discussed in relation to reading motivation: intrinsic, extrinsic, integrative, and instrumental. Intrinsic motivation pushes learners to read without external rewards (Cantrell et al., 2018). It is the reward that comes from reading. Learners who are intrinsically motivated voluntarily learn the things that they regard as important to them. They have an internal desire to read and find enjoyment from learning (Naeghel et al., 2014). Intrinsic motivation is a form of self-motivation that leads learners to go beyond what is required to progress. Extrinsic motivation refers to the external input that impacts learners' motivation. Extrinsically motivated learners engage in activities to avoid punishment or receive a reward. There is a strong emphasis on external input, which means learners are not self-motivated. Instead, they learn because they are pushed by their interest in receiving rewards or avoiding punishment (Wigfield, Gladstone & Turci, 2016). When these rewards are not offered, and there is no risk of punishment, extrinsically motivated learners will not show any eagerness to read or learn. Integrative motivation refers to learners' desire to be significant community members. It is based on learners' interest in learning a second language to connect with those who use it. Learners who experience integrative motivation learn for personal development (Pitcher et al., 2007). Their self-motivation is stronger than that of extrinsically or instrumentally motivated learners. Instrumental motivation refers to learners' need to learn a language for a practical purpose, such as to enable them to read academic materials, for admission to a university, or to obtain a job (Kirchner & Mostert, 2017).

A strong relationship exists between learners' motivation to read and their reading proficiency. Rautenbach, Olifant and Cesko (2019) note that positive attitudes towards

reading and good reading habits will likely assist learners in progressing intellectually and academically. Reading attitudes are the feelings that learners harbour related to reading. If learners have a high self-concept as readers, believe reading is important, enjoy reading and grow up in a verbally stimulated and interactive social context, they will likely have strong positive attitudes towards reading. As learners without these resources progress through the grades, they may compare themselves with their classmates, leading to an inferiority complex that leads to learners developing negative attitudes towards reading. Gordon and Lu (2021) noted that struggling readers are generally perceived to be low achievers who are unmotivated, disinterested, and apathetic towards their schoolwork. In my study, I found that female learner-participants are more open to attempt work that challenges them. They do not display apathy but are low achievers at risk of failing the grade. My male learner-participant presented himself as unmotivated and disinterested. At the start of the programme, he complied maliciously with instructions and activities before I learnt how to capture learners' interest and extrinsically motivate them.

Melekoglu and Wilkerson (2013) noted in their study that most adolescent learners devote less time to reading than younger learners. They found that the lack of motivation to read is detrimental to secondary school learners' success. Students who perceive reading to be difficult have a negative attitude towards reading and are likelier to avoid reading. Due to this avoidance, these students will not develop their reading proficiency. Rautenbach, Olifant and Cesko (2019) interviewed teachers attempting to cultivate positive attitudes towards reading among their learners. The teachers reported that the learners they taught had negative attitudes towards reading and were reluctant to read. Some teachers believed that the learners' reading skills had not been adequately cultivated in the primary grades and that high school teachers could not go back to teaching learners to read (Okebukola, Owolabi & Onafowokan, 2013).

2.3.3.5. Lack of Parental Involvement

Parents are the first teachers that children encounter. Children who have a solid grounding from early home literacy activities quickly become independent readers in the Foundation Phase. These children are more equipped to use reading for learning, while their less-equipped counterparts are significantly disadvantaged. Early home

literacy activities encompass those that happen before pupils begin primary school. Late parental literacy activities are the home-based activities that take place while children are of primary school age (Topping & Wolfendale, 2017). The distinction between early and late parental involvement reflects the fact that children experience a process of socialisation during different phases of life. The primary socialisation process begins in early childhood and among the family. Secondary socialisation continues in the school environment. When children start school, their primary and secondary socialisations co-exist and interrelate. This is why parents need to model literacy activities that are crucial for academic success. The early years are a pivotal period, and parents must take an active role in their children's education during this phase (Naidoo, Reddy & Dorasamy, 2014). Parents are responsible for facilitating reading at home, providing reading materials, and creating a conducive learning environment outside of school.

Combrinck, van Staden and Roux (2014) conducted a study that analysed how early home literacy activities aided the development of comprehension skills (and subsequently reading literacy achievement) among grade four learners in South Africa. This study found that parents should introduce reading skills and strategies before learners enter school. The early introduction of reading skills and strategies positively affects children's reading achievement. The study highlights how active parental involvement in early home literacy activities assists children in developing cognitive and linguistic skills, which results in higher reading achievement rates. Otieno and Hesbon (2021) conducted a similar study investigating the relationship between parental involvement and reading culture among secondary school learners in international schools. Otieno and Hesbon (2021) state that education stakeholders, such as parents, should actively participate in their child's education instead of shifting the burden of addressing education issues solely to teachers. Parental involvement in literacy activities influences children's interest and perceptions of reading. This is because children learn through observing their parents before they start school. Parental input in developing reading will improve learner attitudes towards reading. Parents should instil a love of reading in their children (Anderson & Minke, 2002).

According to Mudzielwana (2014), most parents associate reading with schoolwork. This means that parents only encourage their children to read for the sake of their academic performance. As a result, learners do not associate reading with leisure or

enjoyment. Ideally, parents should read with their children at home to expose learners to books early and give them a competitive edge over their peers. Parents tend to underestimate their role in influencing the reading culture among children. The support and willingness of parents are essential to improve the literacy levels of children. A stimulating home environment and parental modelling have positive associations with academic success. This means that parents need to cultivate a positive attitude towards reading and provide support to their children for literacy development to be successful (Benner, Boyle & Sadler, 2016). Parents should read with their children at home to identify areas of weakness - where corrective action can be taken. Parental interest in a child's education dramatically impacts their academic and non-academic performance throughout their schooling. In a study by Saro et al. (2022) it was discovered that learners in schools with high parental involvement performed better than learners attending schools with low parental involvement and guidance. This confirms the strong positive association between reading achievement and parental involvement. Reading is a complex skill that children cannot learn on their own. Children need help from teachers and their parents. If children receive parental help, reading difficulties in the future can be avoided (McCormick et al., 2020). There are barriers which families experience that affect and prevent parental involvement. Socio-demographic factors such as marital status, educational level and economic circumstances have an impact on parental involvement (Otieno & Hesbon, 2021).

Parental involvement at home is socioeconomically stratified. Factors that contribute to a low socioeconomic status include limited level of education, single-parent status, and number of children in the home (Harji, Balakrishnan & Letchumanan, 2016). The role of mothers has changed since more women sought careers outside of the home. This means they are less available for involvement in their children’s academics. Highly successful parents may not have the time to assist children, but they are more likely to have the financial means to hire a suitable tutor. Parents from low socioeconomic status families are less likely to engage in their children’s educational activities. Some lower socioeconomic status parents believe that it is not their responsibility to manage their children’s education and are less involved in at-home and in-school activities as a result. Higher socioeconomic status parents tend to invest more time in early literacy activities and instilling skills in children before their primary school education begins (Hemmerechts, Agirdag & Kavadias, 2017). This involvement

transmits the value of reading to children. Parents with higher degrees are more likely to teach their children the alphabet and provide early reading exposure to children than parents without a high school education (Echeverria, Hemmerechts & Kavadias, 2019). Most parents who have completed secondary school or have higher degrees help learners complete their homework. Parents with a low educational background are unable to help their children because of their limited knowledge (Klemenčič, Mirazchiyski & Sandoval-Hernández, 2014).

Parents should be more active in extending school activities at home. They are responsible for creating a conducive learning environment for their children outside of school (Mudzielwana, 2014). There is a need for parent-teacher partnerships to overcome the dichotomy that exists between school and home. While the benefits of parental involvement are undeniable, many barriers pose a challenge and prevent parental involvement in educational activities (Saro et al., 2022).

2.3.4. Intensive and Extensive Reading

Intensive and extensive reading are both approaches to reading that are associated with different benefits and challenges. Extensive reading is known as ‘wide reading’, mainly for enjoyment, while intensive reading is known as ‘narrow reading’, which is done to develop language and grammar skills (Al Aghar et al., 2023). In order to maximise the benefits of reading interventions and ensure that the appropriate strategies are being used to provide assistance to learners, it is necessary to understand what intensive and extensive reading are and how teachers can use them to assist learners (Melani & Syafitri, 2020; Neisi, Hajijalili & Namaziandost, 2019).

2.3.4.1. Intensive Reading

Intensive reading (IR) requires learners to be active readers, interrogating the content of the texts they read. It helps learners analyse a variety of short texts surrounding similar or varying topics to carry out a detailed analysis of the text's vocabulary, content, and grammatical structures (Andrés, 2020). IR focuses on accuracy rather than fluency by placing emphasis on studying vocabulary and grammar in detail. Since reading is not an isolated process, IR can improve learners’ grammar and vocabulary,

leading to improving other main language skills (Nation, 2004). IR activities increase learners' vocabulary, which will help learners decode unknown words they encounter in other texts (Park, Isaacs & Woodfield, 2018). IR is particularly beneficial to learners in an English First Additional Language (FAL) environment as it allows readers to comprehend a text in a step-by-step manner. IR strategies provide a framework learners can follow to comprehend a text. Schnorr (2011) regards IR as important for understanding texts more analytically. One way to engage in IR is using story maps, which provide learners with a roadmap to sequence the events of a story in a systematic way (Hidayanti, 2018). It allows learners to organise and learn the elements of a story. It can be used to help learners gain an understanding of the plot, draw character sketches, and identify the setting, as well as the source of conflict in a story. For example, Freytag's Pyramid is a simple plot diagram that can be used to identify the exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution/denouement of a story (Ciğerci & Yıldırım, 2023). A story map can help learners comprehend texts with non-linear plots (Williams, 2021). Texts with plots that are episodic, parallel, cyclical or involve flashbacks may become confusing to learners. In these cases, story maps are particularly useful. This will give learners an opportunity to read texts in an organised and detailed manner. There are other approaches to IR, such as the three phases of reading (pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading), vocabulary self-selection, and Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review (SQ3R) (Ala & Derequito, 2022; Aziz, 2020; Park, 2020).

The three phases of the reading process (pre-reading, during-reading, post-reading) involve different steps and activities to be executed at different stages of the reading process (Akkaya & Demirel, 2012). Teachers should engage in pre-reading activities that motivate learners and spark their interest. This means that teachers have to help learners make the connection between the texts they read and their own lives. Pre-reading involves activating learners' background knowledge (Ekaningrum & Prabandari, 2015). Teachers should probe what learners already know about the topic and/or text type. During the pre-reading phase, teachers should also consider the vocabulary used in the text and identify difficult words, phrases and concepts which may challenge learners. Pre-reading activities are meant to stimulate learners' reading comprehension before going straight to reading the text (Saricoban, 2002). One way of doing this is by allowing learners to share their predictions about the text during pre-

reading. During reading, the teacher's role is to monitor the learners' understanding of the text as they read. Teachers can draw the learners' attention to the critical parts of the text by asking questions periodically or reiterating the predictions made by learners as they become pertinent during reading (Tarshaei & Karbalaei, 2015). Learners should make inferences, integrate their background knowledge, and make connections between the main ideas in the text during reading. Post-reading is the concluding step. Post-reading involves discussing the text, summarising the main ideas, and recalling the important points (Lambe, 2018).

Vocabulary self-selection (VSS) is a strategy that allows learners to develop a list of new words to learn. The focus of this strategy is developing learners' vocabulary with the goal of improving their language literacy. The list of words is derived from texts and oral language that learners encounter. One way of engaging in vocabulary self-selection is by selecting a text and reading it aloud to learners (Masoudi, 2017). While reading, any words that are determined as complex are selected, and the teacher must display the word's importance in the text. In this way, teachers are modelling what the learners will be doing. The teacher should then provide learners with a text that they will read. During reading, learners should select several new or unknown words, write them on a page and then justify why those words are important in the passage. This approach promotes learners' autonomy while integrating new words into their working vocabularies. The purpose of VSS is to develop learners' consciousness towards words (Ala & Derequito, 2022).

Survey, question, read, recite and review (SQ3R) is a five-phase intensive reading strategy which can help learners understand a text as they read it. During the survey stage, learners should skim through the text to get a general overview of the content. Learners should then organise and share their predictions and thoughts about the text (Andrés, 2020). The question phase requires learners to ask questions about the title, headings and subheadings which were surveyed. Learners should then read the text with the aim of answering the questions. During this stage, learners should be encouraged to highlight relevant information, take note of new vocabulary, and jot down questions that may arise while reading (Green, 2020). In the recite stage, learners should put their notes away and think their ideas through, organising their thoughts on paper or out loud. They should sort the information they have accumulated in the previous stage (Jannah, 2018). In the review stage, learners review the

information they have gathered and use it to create flashcards, mind maps, tables, diagrams, and timelines or share their ideas with peers. This is also the stage where learners may discuss questions that arose during the reading phase (Green, 2020).

These intensive reading strategies may improve learners' reading ability and help them make predictions, ask questions, analyse, and summarise the text and their ideas (Andrés, 2020). While this is beneficial to learners, there are some challenges surrounding IR. Intensive reading aims to develop learners' language knowledge and language skills – this means that during IR, the reading class must become a grammar class (Tuğrul Mart, 2015). The texts used for IR are 'reading skills texts', which are generally complicated, and they require slow, systematic reading – and in some cases, they require the use of a dictionary (Waring, 2011). Another challenge is that IR may not foster reading for enjoyment. The analytical nature of IR puts pressure on learners as they read, and this does not encourage reading for recreation and relaxation (Tuğrul Mart, 2015). These are some reasons why engaging in intensive reading alone is not adequate to develop learners' reading proficiency in a variety of text types. However, there is an alternative: extensive reading.

2.3.4.2. Extensive Reading

Extensive reading (ER) encourages learners to read longer texts that are easy to understand promoting reading for enjoyment while developing learners' fluency, reading speed and general comprehension (Park, 2020). Learners reading extensively should read quickly, for enjoyment with adequate understanding, so that they do not require a dictionary – learners should read a great deal at a fast pace without performing tasks after reading (Day, 2015). When learners engage in ER, they should focus on the text's overall meaning and message instead of the language. The selected text should not be too challenging and should have a high volume of words already known to learners (Bell, 2001). ER should encourage the practice of reading a lot of easy-to-read texts. Suppose learners are struggling with the text and begin to read slowly. This indicates that they have stopped reading to understand the content and are now focused on the language/vocabulary items (intensive reading). ER should be carried out fluently, smoothly and with comprehension (Iwahori, 2008). Park (2020) suggests that English FAL learners should obtain a certain level of English proficiency

to gain functional target language ability. If this proficiency threshold is not reached, learners will not experience the enjoyment of fluent and pleasurable reading. After my first intervention session, my critical friend commented, “I think that learners complied but did not necessarily understand the articles. The materials do not accommodate learners with minimal English language abilities… [they] would have been excellent for learners with better reading competency.” This shows that without an adequate language level, and low vocabulary, learners are not able to understand or enjoy their reading.

According to Asraf and Ahmad (2003), students who spend more time reading books in English can improve their reading ability and vocabulary knowledge – this is because extensive reading increases language proficiency levels. One benefit of ER is that learners will be able to encounter various words more frequently, increasing the chances of long-term acquisition and, in turn, increasing their English proficiency (Waring, 2011). Anandari and Iswandari (2019) describe ER as reading books for academic purposes and for enjoyment. Teachers should not test learners on the content of the text, as testing learners will give the impression that all reading must be examined or graded – this does not coincide with the spirit of ER. Day (2015) provides a list of ten principles that teachers should adopt during ER: the reading material must be easy, a variety of reading materials surrounding a variety of topics should be provided, learners should choose what they want to read and read as much as they can, the purpose of the reading is to enjoy reading and see the reward in the activity of reading, the reading speed of learners should be faster rather than slower, reading should take place silently and individually, teachers should provide guidance to learners and, the teacher should be a role model to learners. My intervention programme had a shaky start, and I struggled to comply with all of Day’s (2015) principles. I was able to achieve some aspects at one time, and other aspects at other times. During my first intervention, I gave learners a variety of news articles to choose from. They selected their own readings and read silently, without intervention, from me. However, when learners were asked to give a summary of what the articles were about, they could not respond. I then discovered that the material was too difficult for them. Going forwards I did not trust learners to read silently, so I gave them all the same reading materials. I took these principles and adjusted them to fit the needs of my learners.

There are different approaches to ER. These approaches include book flood programmes, sustained silent reading (SSR), uninterrupted sustained silent reading (USSR), guided extensive reading (GER), supervised ER and independent ER – these approaches will be discussed later (Motjuwadi, 2021; Renandya & Jacobs, 2002). There are many factors which determine the success of an extensive reading programme. Some of these factors are school support, reading materials and book availability, home literacy environment, frequency, and consistency of the programme, and reading attitudes (Anandari & Iswandari, 2019; Loh, 2009; Nishizawa et al., 2010; Park, 2020; Waring, 2011). Many ER programmes are running successfully, and there are also many that have not succeeded or lasted. The reasons behind the failure of ER programmes are poor planning and execution (and limited resources). The first step in ensuring the success of an ER programme is to find a way to make the programme fit within the goals of the whole school. The programme will likely fail without school support due to lack of purpose, focus and direction (Waring, 2011). There should be good teamwork between the school management team and the teachers to develop an ER programme that will stand the test of time. Obtaining the full support of the school management team will allow the programme to be beneficial for the school, students, and teachers. Teachers should all be given the opportunity to integrate reading for enjoyment in their respective classes (Anandari & Iswandari, 2019).

It is crucial for learners to have access to comprehensible reading materials at the learners' language level to develop their reading proficiency. The reading material selected for the ER programme is significant. Depending on the availability of books, graded readers are one way to ensure that there is material for learners at various levels of difficulty. According to Anandari and Iswandari (2019), the availability of books in a school will greatly impact the longevity of an ER programme. It is crucial to start with simple materials when introducing the ER programme and gradually incorporate the reading over a series of weeks (Nishizawa, Yoshioka & Fukada, 2010).

The home literacy environment also influences the success of ER programmes. There is a strong link between the home literacy culture and learners' reading habits as well as their attitudes towards reading (Loh, 2009). Parents model behaviour that has an early influence on learners. This is why the atmosphere created by parents at home

greatly impacts learners' attitudes towards reading. Parents can promote their children's engagement with reading by reading regularly around their children at home from an early age (Anandari & Iswandari, 2019). As Loh (2009) states, children who begin reading books at an early age are more likely to develop their language skills and are, in turn, better at comprehension than children who are reluctant readers. Learners who are exposed to reading at home from a young age are more likely to respond positively to an ER programme than those who did not have many reading experiences at home (Loh, 2009).

The frequency and consistency of the programme are also essential factors to consider. The efforts of a school ER programme will be in vain if parents do not endorse it. ER programmes need consistent support because the benefits of ER depend on learners doing ER consistently (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003). The most critical factor in an ER programme is the volume of reading. According to the study by Nishizawa, Yoshioka and Fukada (2010), the benefits of an ER programme show once learners have reached the threshold of reading 300 000 words. To achieve this amount of reading, ER programmes should occur for a minimum of 2-3 consecutive years. Short-term ER programmes of one year or less are not as effective. However, The National Reading Panel (2000) proposes that intense interventions made up of three sessions per week for three months are more effective than those with one session per week for nine months. For ER programmes to succeed, they have to be frequent, consistent and long-term.

The last factor to consider is reading attitudes. Park (2020) acknowledges reading attitudes as a critical affective factor in reading achievement. Learners who have a positive reading attitude will continue with independent, self-directed reading. If learners find reading enjoyable, they will read at a quicker pace and comprehend the text better, leading them to read more (Kush, Watkins & Brookhart, 2005). Reading attitudes arise from the repeated success or failure that learners experience during reading activities. This creates a vicious cycle where learners with higher levels of reading proficiency have a positive attitude towards reading, while learners with lower reading proficiency levels must overcome their negative reading attitudes in order to develop their reading skills. This causal relationship between reading proficiency levels and learners' attitudes towards reading will likely affect the success of a reading programme.

According to Tuğrul Mart (2015), extensive reading is not adequate to provide learners with a holistic mastery of their target language. Effective language learning will not occur without an in-depth analysis of texts and language conventions. This implies that learners in English FAL environments will benefit greatly from a programme that utilises both intensive and extensive reading approaches. A programme that places too much emphasis on IR will not do enough to develop learners' fluency levels. Tuğrul Mart (2015) advocates for a well-balanced reading programme that combines intensive and extensive reading, as this will lead to greater proficiency gains in the language learning process. Teachers can use these approaches in a complementary way where learners are able to transfer the skills they have gained from intensive reading to extensive reading. When ER and IR approaches are used, explicit and implicit learning occurs simultaneously (Miftah, 2013). Programmes with more emphasis on IR run the risk of studying language features, but learners will be unable to use them in other contexts – this will gravely affect the learners' progress. Integrating ER will enable learners to make the link between the linguistic elements they study and what they read in their daily lives (Waring, 2011).

2.3.5. Previous Research on Reading Programmes

There are several types of reading programmes that have been developed, tested, and evaluated. Some of these programme categories/types are book flood, extensive reading, comprehensive programme, sustained silent reading (SSR), guided reading, levelled literacy intervention, mixed method models, strategy instruction, comprehensive school reform, peer mentoring, computer-assisted instruction and instructional process programmes (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003; Calhoon, 2005; Chua, 2008; Hausheer, Hansen & Doumas, 2011; Loh, 2009; McCallum et al., 2011; Slavin et al., 2009). Different reading programmes can be categorised according to these types.

'Ask, Read, Tell' (ART) is categorised as a cognitive strategy instruction programme. McCallum et al. (2011) evaluated the implementation and outcome of educators' ART programme to assist at-risk secondary school learners. ART does not require a complicated procedure. 'Ask' prompts learners to read the title of a passage and ask themselves questions regarding the material – these are pre-reading activities that are used to activate the appropriate schema and enhance learner motivation to read for

comprehension (Wellons, 2022). ‘Read’ prompts learners to pause at the end of each paragraph and evaluate whether they understood everything they read and that the text still makes sense to them – these are during-reading strategies that can help learners identify words or phrases that they do not understand and work out the meanings of these words in the context of the passage (Putri, Sutarsyah, & Suparman, 2018). ‘Tell’ prompts students to reflect on the questions they asked in the pre-reading ‘Ask’ phase and to develop responses to those questions based on what they have read in the passage. McCallum et al. (2011) not only evaluated the ART programme but also investigated whether including post-reading peer discussion (PD) would lead to more enhanced comprehension than ART alone (Fahmi, n.d.). The findings indicated significantly higher comprehension when teachers made use of ART and PD together. PD motivates learners to verbally summarise the content of the text they read, while ART alone does not reinforce learners’ comprehension of the text. ART without PD did not prompt unmotivated learners to read and follow the pre-, during, and post-reading activities appropriately. PD requires learners to engage with peers about the text. This may provide unmotivated readers with a reason and purpose for reading the text and develop thoughtful reflections (McCallum et al., 2011). I engaged in a modified version of ART. The ‘Ask’ phase in my study leans into my arts-based approach. In many of these sessions, learners engaged in an artistic or crafting activity related to the reading material's content. It created curiosity, it helped learners make predictions and made them more motivated for the rest of the ‘Reading’ phase. At the outset, I thought I could leave learners to read independently, but I soon realised this was ineffective. It became a common practice to read the material twice. First, I would read, stopping to clarify in some areas. Then I would share the reading among learners, allowing them to read aloud. The ‘Tell’ phase varied with the goal of each session. Sometimes we answered multiple-choice questions and self-corrected, sometimes I asked learners to share what their favourite and least favourite part of the story was, sometimes I asked learners to share how they relate with the protagonist and at times I did not ask them anything at all.

The Reading Edge programme is a comprehensive instructional process programme. The Reading Edge programme was initially developed to assist middle-grade learners, whether they are struggling with reading or advanced readers (Miyata & Miyata, 2006). The programme calls for learners to be grouped according to their instructional level

at the beginning of the programme, but they are reassessed quarterly to determine their current performance level and to adjust learners to new groups accordingly. The assessment results enable teachers to monitor learner progress and move learners to more challenging groups when they are ready to advance (Sapp, 2012). The Reading Edge programme offers differentiated and targeted instruction. It enables learners with decoding and phonics problems to work through appropriate texts, while other more advanced learners use novels or expository texts to improve their fluency (Slavin, Chamberlain & Daniels, 2007). The findings of a randomised evaluation by Slavin (2009), a developer of The Reading Edge programme, report modest effect sizes. The randomised design was cited as a reason for the modest effect sizes. It was also reported that teachers struggled without the support of a full-time facilitator to assist them in implementing the programme.

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) or Uninterrupted Silent Reading (USSR) is an individualised extensive reading programme. It is implemented in schools to encourage free voluntary reading or reading for enjoyment and requires schools to allocate time for everyone to drop everything and read. According to Chua (2008), SSR programmes are schools' most widely applied reading programmes. Most SSR programmes involve learners being provided time to do nothing except read silently without interruption for the duration allocated. Loh (2009) noted one major issue surrounding the SSR programme (Lee, 2011). All teachers should act as reading role models and play an important role in harnessing learners' motivation to read. If teachers display a task-oriented attitude towards reading, it does not inspire enthusiasm among learners. Even the school's administrative leadership should participate in the SSR programme and not perceive themselves as exempt from modelling good reading habits (Cho, 2018). Even with an appealing novel, a conducive reading environment and non-accountability, if the teachers do not engage in persistent modelling, then learners will be reluctant to engage in reading. While SSR has the potential to yield positive outcomes and improve learners' attitudes towards reading, it can also have adverse outcomes, such as reducing learners' interest in reading. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) evaluated SSR and found no positive influence on learners' independent reading and reading achievement because of SSR. Chua (2008) noted that it is difficult to evaluate the effect of SSR on out-of-school reading habits since the SSR programme is

implemented during the school day. Chua (2008) evaluated the outcomes of an SSR programme implemented by teachers in grade 8 classrooms. The teachers allocated the 20 minutes of the first period to SSR every school day for 12 months. The learners were free to select any books they would like to read, and all teachers, students and staff members used the 20 minutes allocated to do nothing but read a book. This study's outcome indicates that SSR significantly affected learners' reading habits (Guo, 2020). While the programme impacted learners' reading habits and enjoyment of reading, the effects did not extend to learners' reading habits outside of school. This creates a question — if learners enjoy reading, why are they not motivated to read outside of school? Loh (2009) believes that students do not see the value of reading for leisure.

2.3.6. South Africa's National Reading Strategy

2.3.6.1. National Reading Strategy

South Africa's Department of Education is cognisant of the reading challenges faced in schools. The National Reading Strategy (DOE, 2008) was developed to improve the reading competency of all learners in all phases of schooling. It addresses South Africa's need for a common approach. The Department of Education's National Reading Strategy expresses a vision for schools in South Africa. The document discusses factors contributing to reading challenges in schools, why reading should be improved, stakeholders responsible for addressing the reading problem, and strategies to implement in schools (DOE, 2008).

The vision of the National Reading Strategy is that all learners become fluent readers who can read for enjoyment, enrichment, and learning. The aim is to promote a nation of lifelong readers and learners. Addressing South Africa's reading difficulties is vital to the DOE because reading is part of nation-building (Molotja & Themane, 2018). Improving reading helps learners move through the education system, improve matriculant's results, and develop communication skills, translating to competent workers and economic benefits. There are many purposes that the National Reading Strategy is meant to serve in schools. It indicates how the DOE (2008) intends to

achieve its vision for improving reading. According to the National Reading Strategy, teachers have a modest understanding of teaching reading and are unfamiliar with suitable teaching methods and approaches. The National Reading Strategy was developed to put reading firmly on the school agenda. It simplifies curriculum expectations related to reading (DOE, 2008). It promotes reading across the curriculum. It involves teachers, learners, parents, and the broader community in promoting reading (Molotja & Themane, 2018).

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements for English Home Language express various learning outcomes (DBE[a], 2011; DBE[b], 2011; DBE[c], 2011). In the National Reading Strategy, one of these learning outcomes is spotlighted – 'Reading and Viewing.' This learning outcome sets a goal for learners to read and view for information and enjoyment. It highlights how learners' language competencies affect their performance in all subjects – if reading competence is poor, comprehension competence will be poor. The National Reading Strategy acknowledges that most developing countries struggle with literacy. The document states that more than half of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa has no literacy skills. Poor literacy and numeracy are related to historical disadvantages and poor socio-economic conditions. These issues are addressed through the National Reading Strategy (Molotja & Themane, 2018). The principles of the National Reading Strategy state that reading is a foundational skill for all learning, and all children — with the appropriate support — can be taught to read. Every learner has a right to quality education (DOE, 2008). The intended outcome of the National Reading Strategy is that all learners should be able to read basic texts by the end of grade 3. After that, all learners should develop reading comprehension skills according to the requirements of each grade level. The National Reading Strategy suggests six key pillars that can be adopted in schools and broader communities to achieve this outcome (Molotja & Themane, 2018).

The first pillar is 'monitoring learner performance.' Teachers need to assess and evaluate the reading level of each learner. Teachers should determine whether the education system has achieved the reading goals by measuring learner performance. The second pillar is 'teaching practice and methodology.' Teachers should convey the value and joy of reading. They must actively teach reading because it is not a skill that learners 'pick up'. Teachers are responsible for including learners with barriers and

adapting teaching and learning styles to the needs of the learners. Teachers also oversee the ‘Drop All and Read’ campaign (DAR). The DAR campaign states that all schools should arrange a daily time when everyone reads for enjoyment, including learners, teachers, principals, and support staff. The DAR should create a school reading culture and raise literacy. The third pillar is ‘teacher training’. The DOE expresses a commitment to provide teachers with training courses in strategies for teaching reading (Singh, 2012). The DOE also commits to providing schools with a manual for reading strategies. Family reading programmes are to be implemented so parents can support their children in reading after the school day ends. The fourth pillar is ‘management of the teaching of reading’, where principals are responsible for implementing the National Reading Strategy. Principals should take a direct and personal interest in reading to ensure all learners are taught to read (Molotja & Themane, 2018). They should take steps to promote reading. Principals are responsible for integrating reading strategies into all subjects and instilling a reading culture across the entire school. The fifth pillar is ‘resources.’

Teachers need access to various suitable reading materials to implement the DAR campaign. The National Reading Strategy states that some schools in disadvantaged communities have been supplied with reference materials, including multi-lingual dictionaries, to support reading in all eleven official languages (Molotja & Themane, 2018). All Foundation and Intermediate phase classrooms should have reading corners with storybooks. Schools are expected to set aside funds for creating reading corners in classrooms. The sixth and final pillar is ‘research and partnerships.’ The DOE welcomes partners in these reading campaigns to provide training and resources. The DOE relies heavily on universities and reading organisations to offer assistance (Molotja & Themane, 2018).

The National Reading Strategy proves that the DOE in South Africa is aware of the reading deficits among learners in the country. It also shows that the DOE is aware of the various challenges that schools face in improving the literacy levels of learners. This document was published in 2008 – it is fifteen years later. The problem of learners being unable to read still exists despite the implementation of the National Reading Strategy (Singh, 2012).

The strategy expresses a vision and hopes to turn South Africa's literacy crisis around using vague approaches and methods (that may not be practical for all schools) to achieve the intended outcomes. Fifteen years after its implementation, it is clear that the National Reading Strategy is flawed.

2.3.6.2. Problems with the National Reading Strategy

Teachers' confidence level in teaching reading and implementing the National Reading Strategy is incredibly low. In the absence of workshops and professional development programmes, there is a conflict between teachers' existing knowledge and the requirements of the National Reading Strategy (Singh, 2012).

Maebana, Molotja and Themane (2022) conducted a study investigating the challenges experienced by teachers in implementing the National Reading Strategy. They found that teachers lack the proper skills to interpret the National Reading Strategy. Teachers participating in this study showed a narrow understanding of the National Reading Strategy. When educators were quizzed about the definition of the strategy, they all gave different, incorrect responses. Nothing has been done to precisely explain the meaning of the National Reading Strategy as it applies to teachers in various phases of education. In addition to the problem of defining the National Reading Strategy, teachers were not ready to implement the strategy. In the study by Maebana, Molotja and Themane (2022), teachers were not confident that they were doing the right things. They felt that they lacked training in implementing the National Reading Strategy. Educators struggle with learners who are experiencing barriers. These learners remain disengaged from literacy activities, and teachers feel they are not equipped with adequate tools to remediate these learners.

The study found that most teachers have no exposure to teaching reading – they had no form of professional training even though the National Reading Strategy committed to providing training and support for educators. Teachers felt that more could have been done in terms of workshops and professional development to prepare them for the successful implementation of the policy (Singh, 2012). The DOE failed to make any follow-ups regarding the progress of the National Reading Strategy. The promise of ongoing professional development programmes was not honoured as outlined in

the policy. Another area of concern relates to resources (Maebana, Molotja and Themane, 2022)

Improper distribution of resources is a challenge in implementing the National Reading Strategy, especially for schools in rural areas. The National Reading Strategy expresses a commitment to provide various materials to selected schools. Teachers need access to a variety of suitable reading materials to implement the DAR campaign. The National Reading Strategy states that some schools in disadvantaged communities have been supplied with reference materials, including multi-lingual dictionaries, to support reading in all eleven official languages read (Molotja & Themane, 2018). All Foundation and Intermediate phase classrooms should have reading corners with storybooks. Schools are expected to set aside funds from their budget for creating reading corners in classrooms. Without a plan to make these materials equitably available to all schools, the National Reading Strategy contradicts its statement that the policy is inclusive of all learners, even those with barriers (Maebana, Molotja and Themane, 2022). Although rural schools are generally under-resourced, there are quantile 2 and 3 schools in urban and semi-urban areas that do not have the funds in their budget to create reading corners in classrooms. The National Reading Strategy also acknowledges the issue of overcrowding in classrooms. Over-crowded classrooms leave minimal to no space for reading corners in classrooms. These challenges were not practically considered during the formulation of the National Reading Strategy. The DOE has failed in this regard (DOE, 2008).

The DOE implemented the National Reading Strategy to show that they have taken steps to address the literacy problems in South African schools. However, there were significant oversights in the practical implementation and monitoring of the programme. Justice has not been done in terms of preparing schools to implement the National Reading Strategy.

2.3.7. Conclusion

This review of literature has presented and connected theoretical underpinnings, critical concepts, and contextual considerations, setting the stage for the exploration of a reading intervention programme within the Sociocultural framework. The discussion on reading interventions highlights the crucial role they play in addressing challenges faced by learners, illuminating the path towards improved academic success. As the lens zooms into the South African context, the examination of the National Reading Strategy reveals both its potential strengths and limitations, shedding light on areas where further attention may be required. With a holistic understanding of theoretical constructs, existing challenges, and strategies, this chapter lays the groundwork for my exploration of effective reading interventions in my specific context. Having navigated the theoretical landscapes, challenges, and strategies in Chapter 2, the focus now shifts to the practical realm. Chapter 3 delves into the methodology and research design of this study.

Chapter 3

Driving My Voyage of Discovery

Methodological Routes to Uncover Raw Data

3.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 delves into the research design and methodology of this autoethnographic self-study, with the purpose of comprehending and responding to the reading experiences of grade 8 English second language learners in a rural South African school. Rooted in the interpretive paradigm, this study harnesses the power of autoethnography to navigate implementing a reading intervention programme. The qualitative approach is well-aligned with the interpretive paradigm, emphasising personal experiences, feelings, and perspectives, making it particularly suited for capturing both personal and participant experiences. The inclusion of arts-based methods, such as participant-produced metaphor drawings, adds a creative dimension, providing a unique and holistic perspective on the experiences within the reading intervention programme. This research design is interpretive, prioritising understanding through lived experiences, focusing on context-specific reading experiences, and incorporating the subjectivity of the teacher-researcher. The chapter outlines the dynamic data generation methods, including reflective journaling, critical friend engagement, and artworks. Collaborative data sources, ethical considerations, and a transparent approach underscore the trustworthiness of the study.

3.2. Interpretive Paradigm

The interpretive paradigm was adopted in this study because it allowed me to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants. It allowed me to interact with the participants for four months, constructing rich, context-embedded life experiences (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). There are studies focussed on why reading is essential, how to teach reading correctly and how to provide remediation for struggling readers. However, in this study, my participants and I shared reading

experiences weekly in our specific context. These experiences are the essence of this study because they allowed my participants and me to create meaning that was valuable to us. What makes these experiences useful is that they take into consideration the conditions we operate in. The aim of interpretive research is not to prove a hypothesis, but rather to achieve an understanding of a particular phenomenon in a particular context. In this case, the phenomenon being investigated is how I implemented an extra-curricular reading programme for selected grade 8 learners, capturing their reading experiences and using my critical friend as a resource to improve my reading remediation and intervention strategies. To achieve these understandings, the interpretative paradigm hinges on naturalistic settings (Alvermann & Mallozzi, 2010). Naturalistic research is undertaken in natural contexts as the researcher intends to be non-intrusive. This complements my study since I already act as the teacher and engage with participants daily at school and in the classroom. The interpretive paradigm highlights the importance of my subjectivity, which is appropriate since I am the teacher and researcher in the study (Taylor & Medina, 2011).

3.3. Research design and methodology

3.3.1. Autoethnographic Self-study

The term ‘autoethnography’ has Greek origins. ‘Autós’ means ‘self,’ implying that autoethnographic projects place the self at the centre, acknowledge subjectivity, and value personal experience. ‘Ethnos’ means ‘people,’ suggesting that autoethnographies explore phenomena relating to a group or culture's beliefs, identities, and practices. ‘Graphia’ means to describe or interpret, and this suggests that autoethonographers should use writing or other artefacts (such as drawings) to represent their narratives about the group under study (Poulos, 2021; Adams & Hermann, 2020). Autoethnography is a form of personal narrative research that has helped me situate myself in this study (du Preez, 2008). Huber et al. (2013) understand personal narrative inquiry as “acting on [an] experience by co-inquiring with people who interact in and with classrooms, schools, or in other contexts” (p. 213). Schwandt's (2007) view of autoethnography is that of a union of ethnographic intentions (looking outward into the world beyond one’s own) and autobiographical intentions (looking

inward towards oneself). Autoethnography is a research method that has assisted me in examining self-experiences relative to the context in which I teach (Ellis et al., 2010; Chang, 2008). It is a research method that has helped me place myself at the centre of the study and consider my experiences in interaction with participants (Edwards, 2021).

Since I evaluated my own practices in this study, it has self-study elements. Self-study research is a journey through a process, rather than an evaluation of outcomes. This study is not just about improving learners' reading abilities. It is also about the role I play as a teacher and how my actions affect learning (Tidwell, Heston & Fitgerald, 2009). The reading programme is a means to an end, and that end is improving my instructional practices, particularly surrounding reading. Self-study calls for 'stepping back' from experiences and examining them with the aim of improving (Dinkelman, 1999). It has allowed me to become engrossed in self-experience "while observing, writing, journaling and reflecting" (Edwards, 2021, p1). This aligns with my study, which requires me to 1) capture the reading experiences of selected grade 8 learners using metaphor drawings and an arts-based approach, 2) implement measures in response to learners' reading deficits after careful reflection and meditation of critical friend feedback, 3) reflect on my actions and material selections, to evaluate my ability to improve my reading intervention practices.

Telling stories has allowed my learners, critical friend, and me to interpret and make sense of our experiences (Bruner, 1991). According to Clandinin and Connelley (2004), experiences should be understood as "… the stories people live. People live stories and in the telling of them, reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones" (p. 415). Personal narratives operate as meaning-making structures (Reissman, 2002). Narratives are not just about individuals, but also about the societies they operate in and the situations they experience. In this case, the narratives surround the experiences of my participants and me in implementing reading interventions (Bold, 2012). Jalongo, Isenberg, and Gebracht (1995) argued that narratives are integral for the authentic study of teaching, stating, "… until we understand the context and appreciate the perspectives of those involved, any understanding of what it means to teach and learn will remain fragmented and disconnected from the real world of teaching" (p.16). The continuum of autoethnographic research categorises stories according to whether they are 'evocative' or 'analytic' depending on the orientations of

the research in terms of whether it is social-scientific, interpretive-humanistic, critical, or creative-artistic (Le Roux, 2017). Adams and Manning (2015) note that while these four distinct orientations exist, it is normal for autoethnographers to blend the goals and techniques of each approach in a single study or, as they write about the same experiences over time. However, this may lead to complications in evaluating the trustworthiness of the research, as Anderson (2013) suggests that each variation on approaching autoethnography requires different evaluative criteria. There are two main reasons why I did not select an evocative approach for my autoethnography. Firstly, my research does not aim to use a literary approach to stir emotional resonance in my audience. Instead, my research aims to implement and report on the efficacy of my extra-curricular reading programme for selected grade 8 learners by engaging in analytical reflexivity and self-conscious introspection. Secondly, it is important to me that my autoethnography is more than just a story and that it displays scholarship. This signifies that my research will have a social-scientific orientation, and thus, it is an analytical autoethnography (Le Roux, 2020). This orientation also aligns with one of the three ways of crafting ethnographic narratives proposed by Van Maanen (1988), where the research includes confessional tales in which the ethnographer explores their responses to whatever is at play in the field using a personalised voice.

According to du Preez (2008), autoethnographic research is frequently thought of as synonymous with reflective or reflexive practice and, at times, these terms are used interchangeably. Clandinin, Cave and Cave (2011) worked on the concept of narrative reflective practice to illuminate the knowledge expressed in participants' practice. The reflective process undertaken in this study has allowed me to retell and relive experiences, revealing my tacit knowledge. The potential of teachers' personal narratives is untapped unless it is used as a tool for reflection (Jalongo, Isenberg & Gebracht, 1995). Farrell (2013) furthers the ideas of Brookfield (2000) and Tripp (1994) in suggesting a system for reflecting narratively on critical incidents which occur. As Bell (2002) noted, narrative reflection is more significant than simply telling stories about general occurrences in the classroom without any focus. To operationalise autoethnographic research, it must feature recounts of specific classroom events and experiences that teachers deem critical for their professional development. McCabe (2006) developed a framework for analysing the narratives from which critical incidents emerge. This framework includes orientation,

complication, evaluation, and result. Orientation refers to who was there when the critical incident occurred or who was involved in the occurrence of the critical incident. Orientation also refers to when and where the critical incident took place, as well as what occurred. The complication should outline what happened and the problem that arose, as well as any turning point. Evaluation requires reflection on the significance of the occurrence. Evaluation asks, 'What does this mean for the participants?' The results should explain the resolution to the problem or crisis (McCabe, 2006).

Richards and Farrell (2005) suggest that formally analysing critical incidents allows teachers to uncover new understandings of their practice. They turn to the work of Tripp (1994), who proposed that reflection on critical incidents comprises two phases: description and explanation. The description phase involves documenting what was observed, and the explanation phase involves interpreting and analysing the incident's meaning, value, and role. Thiel (1999) suggests four vital steps to follow when reporting on critical incidents: self-observation, detailed description of what happened, self-awareness, and self-evaluation. Self-observation refers to identifying noteworthy events that occur in the class. A detailed description of what happened refers to the incident itself (what happened leading up to the event and what followed). Self-awareness refers to the analysis of why the incident occurred. Self-evaluation considers how the incident could lead to a change in the understanding of teaching (Thiel, 1999). Thiel (1999) suggests that critical incidents do not always have to chronicle problems and negative events but can also present positive events. Thiel (1999) refers to positive events as teaching highs and negative events as teaching lows, and views both teaching highs and lows as equally crucial for reflection.

Two data sources were used for self-evaluation in this study. My reflective journal documented my thoughts during the planning of intervention sessions. During the planning phase, I propose the kind of text we will read and the reading activities we will engage in. My reflective journal also described the events that took place in the classroom from my perspective. I described the icebreaker, pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading activities. I reflected after the session on what I think of the occurrences, what I think worked and what needs improvement. I expressed what I hoped to achieve in the future. My critical friend also provided feedback to me using the observation schedule I developed (see annexure 7). These two data sources worked together to evaluate my plans and the execution of them.

My autoethnographic accounts are self-reflective and deeply personal. They required highly personalised, revealing texts to tell stories about my own lived experiences in the classroom (Spry, 2001). This highlights the critical element entailed in writing about myself. Jalongo, Isenberg and Gebracht (1995) acknowledged that teachers can reflect inwardly using their own voices to examine and re-examine who they are as teachers, or they can engage in public discourse, which allows teachers to think aloud in the company of colleagues. "…sharing personal narratives can both validate teachers' experiential knowledge about practice and act as a catalyst for change" (Olson, 1997, p. 493). One way to engage in public discourse with colleagues is by employing the help of a 'critical friend' or 'critical colleague'. I engaged with my critical friend during my study. She sat in during reading intervention sessions and provided valuable feedback, critiquing areas of weakness and praising well-executed aspects. I have discussed the concept of a critical friend as a data source in greater detail (see section 3.4.2.).

By engaging in this autoethnography, I am well-informed about my practice and can better evaluate what aspects of my teaching need to be adjusted (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). Analytical autoethnographies are self-reflective stories which are a rich source of information that has allowed me to reflect on how I got where I am today, how I conducted my practice and the problem-solving I employed to meet the needs of my learners (Farrell, 2013). It has highlighted underlying assumptions, values and beliefs which have ruled my past and current practices. By telling these stories, I can make sense of my seemingly random experiences (Johnson & Golombek, 2002).

3.3.2. Reflexivity

There is no clear framework or step-by-step process for practising reflexivity. It has been termed 'turning back on itself' (Fook, 1999). It is used to monitor and audit the research process continually and is employed differently depending on the researcher. According to Bieler et al. (2021), reflexivity is "A practice of continuous movement between theory and empirical inquiry, a necessary to-ing and fro-ing" (p. 78). This 'to-ing and fro-ing' occurs between fieldwork and concept work (Bieler et al., 2021). Reflexivity refers to the relationship between the researcher and the field. It has required me to question how I generate data and use it to make deductions and

conclusions (Cunliffe, 2003). Reflexivity acknowledges that the researcher is unavoidably located in the research. It involves recognising how my own assumptions and actions influence a situation in the classroom (Fook, 1999). According to Maton (2003), reflexivity requires researchers to explicitly position themselves in the study to allow the audience to assess the researchers' knowledge claims in relation to their social selves, values, and assumptions.

Reflexivity can also be used to monitor and audit the research process continually. I have done my best to make the research process transparent and transform my personal experience into public, accountable knowledge (Finlay, 2002). I have made my research available as a confessional tale and a transparent account of the research process. One way of acting reflexively is to engage in a collaboration with participants. This means recognising research as co-constituted accounts whereby participants also have the capacity to be reflexive beings. Collaboration has allowed me to feature multiple perspectives in my research study (Finlay, 2002; Greenbank, 2003). To ensure that my study considers the participants perspectives I have used an arts-based approach to allow participants to express their feelings and ideas (Engward & Davis, 2015). I could check in on learners' evolving attitudes towards reading and their perceived progress through the arts-based approach and metaphor drawings.

3.4. Data Sources

3.4.1. Reflective journaling

Reflective journaling was therapeutic when I faced trouble navigating through this study. Even without solutions, writing about stressful situations and how they made me feel has helped me sort through my emotions and 'get back on my feet'. When I started my reflective journal, my writing and attitude were very serious and rigid, with pre-determined questions like, "How do the goals for this session align with the activities set out?" After just two sessions, I realised that having pre-determined questions would not work. I reflected on the change I had made, writing, "Since this intervention programme has affected me personally, I will allow myself to reflect in a more personal way… makes it feel more authentic… I am allowing things to happen

and taking everything as a lesson." I thought writing my reflections digitally would be very modern, safe, and secure on my password-protected digital devices. Something interesting happened when I decided to free myself from pre-determined questions. I wrote, "Writing on paper instead of typing also makes it feel more authentic, it is a symbol that I will share the occurrences honestly and share my feelings openly." At the start, I planned to reflect in 3 ways: Reflection-before-session, reflection-after-session, and reflection after critical friend feedback. After two sessions, I looked back and re-read my previous reflections. As I read, I felt a gap between the reflection-before-session (the plan) and reflection-after-session (in retrospect), so I added a session summary which I called, 'the execution' to my reflective journal.

At the outset, my reflective journal seemed as impersonal as a lesson plan, but as the study progressed, it evolved and began revealing my fears, biases, values, and attitudes and how they affected my teaching practice and participants. I asked myself things like, "… my plans are repetitive. Is this positive? Am I experimenting enough? How do I know whether this approach is the best one?" Some journal entries reflect a calm clarity, "Although my teacher-brain tells me to stress about instilling skills, my Kayley-brain tells me that enjoying the experience of reading together is the most important lesson. If learners don't enjoy reading, they won't do it. If teachers don't enjoy teaching reading, they won't do it." Before this study, I did not journal or keep a diary. Reading my reflections and being more intentional about my teaching practices has been illuminating. I know who I am as a person, but I did not know who I was as a teacher or researcher. Reflective journaling has revealed that I kept who I am very separate from my teaching practice. Teacher-Kayley is strict, serious, and rigid, but Kayley is sensitive, idealistic, and deeply empathetic. Reflective journalling has shown me that part of being an effective teacher (and researcher) is being the most authentic version of myself.

Reflective practice enables educators to engage in introspection and retrospection, leading to improved classroom practice and professional development (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019). This study aims to implement and evaluate the quality of an extra-curricular reading programme for selected grade 8 learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school. To accomplish this goal, I have engaged in reflection. According to Zajic and Maksimovic (2020), "A reflective practitioner is an active individual, willing to re-examine their own opinions and explore

various possibilities and procedures in order to solve practical problems encountered in everyday practice" (p. 356). Therefore, reflective practice is a cyclical experiential learning process (Finlay, 2008). Reflections have assisted me in rejecting impulsive reactions and ritualised behaviour/routines. My reflections enabled me to learn from past experiences, to make informed decisions, and to take planned action in the future. Before this study, I never journaled or kept a diary. I knew that reading was a cause for concern and that I needed to find a way to help learners, but I never took the time to reflect on my experiences and struggles in the classroom. I crafted one metaphor drawing titled, 'Optimistic, Ambitious or Naïve?' at the outset of the intervention programme to capture the sense of anticipation and optimism I experienced.

During reflections, I have outlined, analysed, and planned ways to improve my practice in response to the need to enhance the reading abilities of grade 8 learners. The reading difficulties that have challenged learners made it necessary for me to act purposefully and intentionally to develop activities that benefit learners and demanded that I reflect on the execution of those activities in a systematic way (Gnawali, 2008). Reflective journaling has been an effective tool for me, since rich textual data is necessary to supplement my study's trustworthiness (Anney, 2014).

Reflective journaling has proven helpful in that it acted as a record to track the thoughts and ideas that have led me to engage activities or make certain decisions. I have engaged in reflection according to a variation of the different models proposed by many researchers: Reflection-before-lesson, reflection-during-lesson, and reflection-after-lesson (Schön, 1987; Farell, 2013; Olteanu, 2017; Cirocki & Widodo, 2019) (see annexure 8). I have kept a reflective journal that has enabled me to plan the reading intervention activities carefully and adapt the activities to respond to the specific needs of the learners. Reflection-during-lesson encompassed analysing events that took place during the lesson. While guiding learners to execute the activities planned, I have observed their interaction with the work and how they responded to the tasks set. I have described my responses to various classroom situations, whether they are negative, positive, expected, or unexpected. This phase of the reflective process allowed me to deal with difficulties as they occurred. Reflection-after-lesson enabled me to retrospect on what has occurred in the classroom and make the necessary amendments to subsequent lessons (Ní Chróinín, Fletcher & O'Sullivan, 2018). Fletcher and O'Sullivan (2018) used the following questions to help them be reflective:

"How were my assumptions challenged?" "What challenges did I face in articulating the reasons behind my teaching decisions and actions?" "How was I made vulnerable during the lesson and how did I handle this?" "What moments were joyful or meaningful to me?" What insights and understanding about the teaching and learning did I gain?" (p. 11-12). I adapted these questions to suit my study and use them as a starting point for my reflections while also leaving room for open-ended reflection (see annexure 8).

3.4.2. Critical Friend

Critical friends provide a specific form of support that requires trust and a formal process. Those who take on the role of a critical friend provide crucial assistance to their colleague through critiquing and analysing their work and actions (Baskerville & Goldblatt, 2009). They encourage discussion and reflection to improve teaching and learning quality (Farrell, 2001). My critical friend in this study provided critique surrounding the implementation of the reading programme, the activities I engaged in and the events that I regarded as critical incidents. My critical friend is female and is forty years of age. She has thirteen years of teaching experience. She has a Bachelor of Education degree with a specialisation in languages. She and I are both post-level-one[2] educators, and we have worked together closely for 3 years in classrooms next door to one another. She joined me once a week after school and sat in on my reading intervention sessions, noting what took place and reflecting on ways I could have improved.

As a critical reader, she engaged in weekly sessions, carefully noting the nuances of each intervention and reflecting on ways to enhance its effectiveness. Outside of this study, we engaged with one another almost every school day. She has been an invaluable resource and source of support for me. During each intervention session she would read the materials which were provided to learners and make comments on their suitability. She also engaged with my journal entries where I noted my plans for each session as well my rationale for the reading materials and activities set out.

[2] Within a school, there are different rankings which are dependent on the number of years teaching, experience, and competence. As these rankings increase, so do responsibilities and salary notches. There are 3 types of post-level 1 (PL1) teachers: Teachers, Senior teachers and Master teachers. Departmental Heads take up promotional posts and are PL2 teachers. Deputy Principals take a higher promotional post and are PL3 teachers. Finally, the highest post-level within a school is PL4, the principal (DBE, 2022)

We engaged in rich conversations, where her role as a critical reader was paramount in challenging my practices and pushing me towards new directions.

We collectively developed strategies to improve the programme (Varasunun, Sujiva & Wongwanich, 2013). This relationship has been a collaboration to discover solutions targeted to the needs of the learners. This exchange of ideas has led to expanded knowledge, which has been enlightening and resulted in improvements to the programme. My critical friend has acted as a professional sounding board, asking questions that have helped me see things in a new light. She has stimulated my thinking and offered ideas I had not thought of before. While being slightly removed from the reading programme, she still understood it because we share the belief that reading and literacy levels in our school are a cause for concern, and a commitment to turning the problem around is crucial (Altrichter et al., 2018). My critical friend and I had already cultivated the friendship part of our relationship before we embarked on the collaboration in this study. We often worked together to develop resources and projects for grade 8 learners, so I knew she would motivate me and provide reassurance. Our relationship's challenge was that she was not entirely comfortable going beyond niceties to keep me on track and push me to find new directions as she deemed it necessary (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). To see the programme succeed, we had to engage in richer and deeper conversations where my critical friend asked challenging questions about my practice in the programme. I crafted an observation schedule (see annexure 7) with leading questions to help her move away from sugar-coating and towards improving the intervention programme. She worked hard to be unafraid of challenging me and my actions. While we are friends, for the study, we could not neglect our relationship's ‘critical’ nature. If my critical friend acted overly sensitive to my feelings and emotions, she risked not providing enough critical support when I experienced frustration and uncertainty. However, being overly challenged also posed a risk to the programme, as it could have caused the programme to become stagnant. Overzealous criticality could have led to contention in the critical friend relationship. Thus, we needed to find a balance as she waded between being critical and being a friend (MacPhail, Tannehill & Ataman, 2021).

Having a critical friend has been vital in my self-study research. Russell and Schuck (2004) believe that a critical friend is essential in self-study autoethnography research to critique existing practices and rethink/reform practices. Ovens and Fletcher (2014)

support this idea and believe that a significant requirement for engaging in self-study research surrounding education is a clear and explicit focus on self-in-practice while acknowledging the central role of others in the research process. LaBoskey (2004) stated that “Garnering multiple perspectives on our professional practice helps to challenge our assumptions and biases, reveal our inconsistencies, expand our potential interpretations and triangulate our findings” (p. 849). In my research, I did not have a critical friend group providing “multiple perspectives”, instead I had one critical friend who was there to offset my personal bias and self-justification. For our critical friendship to work, I had to be open to sharing my vulnerabilities. I had to desire the help of my critical friend to assist with my autoethnographic study and be willing to be challenged with critical feedback. At first, the ‘critical’ aspect of my relationship with my colleague was foreign territory. Before the study, we had shared advice and ideas but had never done this through a formal process (Yeigh, 2008).

The first step when working with my critical friend was to hold a preliminary conversation discussing the starting points of my research. I also discussed some ideas for the initial stages of the reading programme (Fahey, 2011). Swaffield and Jones (2005) suggest that there are four phases of a critical friendship, and the success of each phase depends on preparation: initiation, negotiation, action, and cessation. In the initiation phase, my critical friend and I established that we share similar values and are compatible. This is important because it is better to terminate the relationship with critical friends who will make value judgements. My critical friend and I had already bonded over many shared values. Firstly, we believe that the Senior Phase (grades 7-9) sets the foundation for learners before they enter the FET phase (grades 10-12), and in many ways, it is more important than any of the following grades. Secondly, we generally lamented the emphasis placed on the FET phase, particularly on matriculants in the school. We believe it is late and nonsensical to try to address reading and literacy deficits in grade 12. Thirdly, we believe that reading and literacy levels in our school are a cause for concern, and a commitment to turning the problem around is paramount. We established expectations, boundaries, ground rules, and protocols in the negotiation phase. We both had to be clear about the purpose and focus of the critical friendship and what it would entail.

My critical friend and I agreed that we should limit the programme to once a week to accommodate her schedule. We also agreed to vote with the learners to decide which

weekday is suitable. I set my expectation that she would attend and sit in on my intervention sessions and take notes on what happened in the class. I also informed her that I would provide her with guiding questions. I requested that she try her best to provide the feedback two days after each intervention session to prevent the work from rolling over to the following week. This is also the phase where confidentiality issues were addressed regarding what can be shared and reported and to whom. Critical friends must know the extent of their freedom within the school to talk to people regarding the project. I cited the 'informed consent' stating that her identity, and that of the learners, will remain anonymous. I explained that she has a key role in the research, and with that comes a responsibility to protect the anonymity of all participants. I also requested that any information shared during the interventions be kept confidential. She committed herself to upholding the best interests of the learners, the intervention programme and me. The action phase considered practical steps that would make a critical friendship run smoothly. We agreed that as long as we follow through with being present for the programme and actively involved in its improvement, we will do justice to the programme and the learners who participate in it.

3.4.3. Arts-based methods

Participatory visual methods, such as participant-produced drawings or metaphor drawings, concisely present participant experiences. Participant-produced drawings offered an opportunity for me to involve research participants in the generation of data about their experiences (O'regan et al., 2019). This approach goes beyond traditional techniques to gain an understanding of the experiences of the participants. Drawing is an ideal visual method for generating data on complex and emotional issues that are difficult to articulate verbally. It provides an outlet for deeply embedded thoughts which may not come to light through other data generation methods. In my study, drawing helped learners to depict thoughts and emotions that they could not verbally articulate. Drawing elicited honest expressions of my participants' emotions, feelings, and beliefs (Kearney & Hyle, 2004).

Metaphor drawings were used in my study to draw out and represent our experiences and the roles we played in the programme. Metaphor drawings are a simple yet mighty

device that were used to share and gain deep insight into the multiple perspectives of my participants and ensure their perspectives were seen – in this way, metaphor drawings were used as a reflexive tool (Van Laren et al., 2014). It is a way to engage in the co-creation of knowledge through participant collaboration. This visual method is an accessible way for participants to document their thoughts and feelings. It provided insight into how my participants frame their worlds (Tracy & Redden, 2015). For instance, during one reading intervention session, learner-participants were asked to draw a picture showing the place where they do the most reading.

Figure 1: ***Where Do You Do the Most Reading?***

The prompt that was posed to learners resulted in rich visual descriptions. The feedback that was received revealed much about where and how learners experience reading in their everyday lives. The learner who produced this drawing elaborated that she does not bother trying to read during class time because her teachers move too quickly. She engages in meaningful reading during our reading sessions.

These hand drawings are unthreatening and playful, but still reveal critical issues to be explored. It is an imaginative approach that relays implicit assumptions that may not otherwise be articulated (Pentassuglia, 2017). They provide a way to make sense of difficult questions that cannot be answered by linear telling. They helped my participants and me to narrate the things that were not easy to define or the things we

had not yet thought through. Metaphor drawings allowed me to see points of view that may have been overlooked had I used more traditional research methods. This method was used for collaborative introspection of our experiences and understandings (Redden 2017). It made my participants and I think deeply about our attitudes and beliefs to evaluate aspects that need to change. It compelled us to share and learn from one another, and it inevitably enhanced this self-study research. Self-study is not an isolated, private, and personal affair. It is bolstered by interaction between the researcher and the participants. In my study, I relied on the ideas and perspectives of others (Black, 2020). To conduct a rigorous self-study, I pushed myself to be critically reflective. I asked myself questions that went beyond the constraints on daily practices. I oriented myself and my study to work in collaboration with others (Finley, 2011). It is difficult to express what is important to us or why we acted in a particular way, but metaphor drawings played a key role for my critical friend and me, in that it created a mirror for self-reflection (Mannay, 2015). It enabled me to sort through and reflect on my own experiences. By doing this, I was able to go beyond restrictions that stifle communication. The words of Placier et al. (2005) resonated with me, “I continually encounter sharp curves, steep hills and detours that are difficult to understand in a system that outwardly speaks of creating knowledge, change… at all levels” (p.53).

Participant-produced drawings supported the reflexivity of my study in that they fulfilled the ethnographic principles of collaborative research and empowered participants to decide on the content and message of the image they produced independently of me (Guillemin & Drew, 2010). Allowing participants to shape their images encouraged collaborative meaning-making, resulting in reliable and trustworthy data (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Learners experienced positive and negative emotions during the intervention programme, and these emotions affected the behaviour of those involved in classroom activities (Mazzetti, 2020). These emotions affected learners’ willingness to learn and perform. Visual methods fit my study appropriately because they produced rich data, providing insights into learners’ lives and feelings. Learners perceive drawing as a way of expressing themselves (Symon & Cassell, 2012). As stated by Kuzle (2021), “… guided by emotions, children communicate through drawings what occupies them, what is important to them and what they experience and thus provides a holistic insight into their emotional lifeworld” (p. 849). Participant-

produced drawings were also helpful when participants could not adequately express or verbalise content, as they require little language mediation. Visual methodologies do not demand an immediate response from participants – this gave learners time for reflection so that participants could produce images that portrayed what they wanted to convey (Mazzetti, 2020). Participants were made aware that no artistic ability is required to produce a drawing – my purpose is not to judge their drawing. Instead, I delve beyond the aesthetics of the image and use it as a tool to prompt abstract concepts (Symon & Cassell, 2012).

As my research and the reading intervention programme progressed, my arts-based approach became a part of the reading activities we engaged in. I saw the anticipation that participant-produced drawings created, so I applied that to the content of the text. For instance, during week 9 we read a story called “The Boy and the Rainbow” As part of the pre-reading activity, learners created paintings of their own rainbows and used these painting to predict what the text would be about. By incorporating the arts-based approach into the readings, learners embraced reading tasks in a different, deeper way. It took reading, activity learners generally deem mundane, and made it exciting. At different points in the programme, learners engaged in beadwork, painting, drawing, and collaging.

3.5 Thematic data analysis

Braun and Clark (2012) describe thematic analysis as an accessible, flexible, and reflexive method of qualitative data analysis. “A flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (Braun & Clark, 2006, p.78). Systematically identifying and organising themes across a data set allows researchers to see shared meanings and common experiences in the data. The goal of this approach is to identify themes and patterns that are important and use them to address the research question (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

According to Braun and Clark (2012) what is common in the data is not necessarily important but, the patterns of meaning that emerge can allow the researcher to produce an analysis that illuminates the answer to a research question. They also suggest that the flexibility of thematic analysis makes it compatible with a variety of research questions and topics. In this study, I engaged in an inductive thematic

analysis which allows themes to emerge from the data in a bottom-up approach. The codes and themes developed in an inductive thematic analysis are derived from the data so that what is discovered during the analysis closely matches the content of the data. Braun and Clark (2012) have proposed a six-phase approach to conducting thematic analysis, including familiarisation, initial codes, search for themes, review themes, define themes and writing the report. This six-step framework has been endorsed and further explored by Maguire and Delahunt (2017) as well as Xu and Zammit (2020), who describe it as one of the most influential approaches in the social sciences. The work of Braun and Clark (2012) provides a guide illuminating the systematic process of coding qualitative information and how themes emerge from the data.

Alhojailan (2012) describes thematic analysis as a comprehensive process where a researcher identifies cross-references between the data and evolving themes. It is a qualitative analysis that presents the data in great detail through interpretations — thus, it is compatible with the interpretive research paradigm. Instead of the six-phase model proposed by Braun and Clark (2012), Alhojailan (2012) suggests three principles for conducting a thematic analysis. The first principle is to compact extensive and diverse raw data into a concise form. This involves transcribing oral data and organising all textual data into charts and tables to compare the data and determine what to focus on. The second principle is to find relationships between the research objectives and the summary formulated. The third principle is to develop a model and improve the conceptual basis of the research. This model reflects that thematic analysis is, "… used to analyse textual data and elucidate theme… the systematic process of coding, examining of meaning and provision of a description of the social reality through the creation of a theme" (Vaismoradi et al., 2016, p. 100-101).

The model that I am most interested in for this study is presented by Peel (2020), not only because it is presented as the preferred research approach for the case study design in educational research, but also because it combines the work presented by Braun and Clark (2012), Creswell (2013), Merriam and Tisdell (2015) and Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2018) who all proposed different frameworks and approaches to conducting a thematic analysis. The points raised by Peel (2020) have drawn parallels between my study and inductive thematic analysis. The ontological implications of this approach support multiple realities from the researcher and the

participants. There is no one true way of seeing the world and these multiple realities are socially, experientially and time dependent. Since this framework warrants the multiple realities that are used to interpret the meanings of the participants' experiences, it is oriented towards interpretive research.

Since my study surrounds implementing an extra-curricular reading programme for selected grade 8 learners, the six-stage approach proposed by Peel (2020) is appropriate. This approach suggests that I generate the data, engage with the data, code the extracts from the data, generate the code categories from the coded extracts and contextualise/present the findings.

3.6. Location of the Study

The study is located in a secondary school in a rural settlement known as Bhobhoyi in the province of KwaZulu Natal. The school is a quintile three school that caters for grade 8-12 learners. There are 33 classrooms in the school, with up to 50 learners per classroom. The official medium of instruction in the school is English, and the school offers two languages: English Home Language and IsiZulu as First Additional Language. The learners I teach are mostly Zulu mother tongue speakers. The area surrounding the school is plagued by various issues Many walk long distances from home to school with no money for public transport. Some learners live with their grandparents, who are pensioners and depend on social grants for a living. Other learners live with their parents who struggle to find employment and thus cannot provide for their children financially. The school is a section 21 school, and the DBE has implemented a nutrition programme to give the learners free meals during the lunch break. The school is a public, no-fee school, and parents with the means are encouraged to pay a voluntary admission fee.

3.7. Sampling

3.7.1. Learners as participants

Purposive convenience sampling was used as a method of sampling for this study. Participants were chosen through non-random methods based on a particular set of

criteria (Robinson, 2014). In this case, the participants had to display difficulty in their reading and be in grade 8. Grade 8 is the foundational year of high school, and, in many ways, it sets the stage for learners' later years. Ideally, struggling readers should be identified and remediated much earlier than grade 8. While I cannot turn back the hands of time, I can attempt to learn some strategies to help learners who have entered high school with reading deficits. This is why I have targeted grade 8 as my specific group of learners as participants. I expect approximately 8 participants because I currently teach the group and know who requires reading interventions. After engaging in a reading assessment during the first term, I identified these learners as weak readers. Throughout the year, I have monitored their progress reports and found that the same learners are at risk of not progressing to grade 9. This group of learners made up the sample for my study. The sample was selected from the school I operate in; hence, the sampling method was also convenient. Purposive convenience sampling is ideal because this study is specifically invested in the experiences of grade 8 learners who cannot read adequately in a specific school. I have ensured that the particular target group is included, not necessarily the wider population. The sample was chosen for a specific purpose; in this case, it is appropriate since I do not aim to generalise the findings (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Of my 8 participants, 5 are repeating grade 8, and 3 are non-repeaters. Of the 5 repeaters, there are 4 females and 1 male. All 3 non-repeaters are female. Although 4 more males were invited to participate, they decline for lack of interest. The concern that arose among my 8 learner-participants was that their reading would be assessed. They were very concerned about being forced to read aloud in front of their peers. I assured learners that this reading time we share is not being assessed and does not count for marks. I explained that I was there to help them 'get better' at reading. I also assured learners that while I may request that they read aloud, they are free to decline and will not be penalised or removed from the programme. I assured them they would not be 'kicked out' of the programme, and it would only be voluntary if they left.

3.7.2. Critical Friend as a Participant

The critical friend in this study has been my colleague for the past three years. During the three years, we have worked together in classrooms next door to one another. We often shared resources and crafted assessments for grade 8 learners. She is a female

and is forty years of age. I selected this colleague as my critical friend because I knew she had a vested interest in improving the literacy levels of learners in the Senior phase. I also chose her because we have had a close and healthy work relationship for three years, where we supported, corrected, and assisted one another.

3.7.3. Myself as a Participant

Since my research is a collaboration between my learner-participants, critical friend, and I, we worked together and unavoidably affected one another. While I sought out my participants to play a role in this study, I cannot ignore the role that I played. I am a twenty-five-year-old female with three years of teaching experience in the school where my study is located. I obtained my Bachelor of Education degree in 2021 with specialisations in the Senior and FET phases. In 2021, I also obtained a Level 5 Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). I began my post-graduate studies and completed a Bachelor of Education Honours in Language and Media Studies in 2022. Being in the Senior and FET phases means that my teacher education prepared me to teach learners who had already acquired the necessary foundational skills to survive and thrive in high school. I was not extensively prepared or trained about phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. The teacher education I received was grounded in the expectation that all learners would know how to read by the time they entered grade 8. This expectation has left me wholly unprepared to remediate learners with reading deficits. The TEFL certificate I obtained could not bridge these gaps, as the course was a 168-hour online course with no practical application. As a participant in my study, I am aware that I may not be the best teacher to tackle the reading challenge in my school, and I am certainly not adequately trained for it. My experience as a teacher in this school has shown me that with or without the necessary skills to remediate reading, I will be faced with learners experiencing reading deficits and other barriers year after year. While I carry the baggage of inadequacy in terms of skills and experience, I also carry the teacher label. As such, it is my duty to do something towards assisting learners facing challenges.

3.8. Validity and trustworthiness

The term validity is not applicable to interpretive research. Instead, interpretive research is evaluated according to the concepts of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, since the aim of qualitative research is to describe and not to measure (Le Roux, 2017). Validity is also not appropriate since 'truth' is understood as subjective in the interpretive paradigm (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Following the suggestion made by Ellis and Bochner (2000), 'truth' in this research means that my work evokes a feeling that the experiences described are lifelike, believable, and possible. To enforce this, my data sources capture collaborative experiences of all participants. There are excerpts of my reflective journal used, excerpts of my critical friend feedback, and metaphor drawings from all participants. The data sources depict the real-world experiences of my participants. Tracy (2010) proposes 8 criteria for evaluating the quality of qualitative research, including worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence. For Ellis (2007), conducting good qualitative research requires researchers to conduct their research in the same way they conduct themselves in their personal lives and 'seek good' with honesty towards themselves and the audience.

Autoethnographic research has been subjected to scrutiny due to the presence of highly personalised accounts, which require researchers to draw on their personal experiences to broaden their understanding of a particular discipline. By placing myself at the centre of my research, I am challenging the accepted views about silent authorship, wherein scholarly writers are expected to stay on the sidelines and keep their voices out of the research (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997). Holt (2003) calls this "A mistrust of the self as a research vehicle…" (p. 24). Adams et al. (2014) state that critics of autoethnography have refused to evaluate the method as scholarship because they believe that personal, autobiographical, and aesthetic work cannot be assessed for its explanatory power, scholarly insights, or impact on social change. In a debate with a colleague, Tony Ellis stated, "I do not want to hide behind the text or claim that my work is objective or value free… Dismissing an entire project solely for the use of 'I' is unfortunate and naïve" (Adams et al., 2014, p. 100).

In 2001, the American Psychological Association (APA, 2001) published a manual with ethical and content guidelines. These include: “Is the research question significant, and is the work original and important? Does the research design fully and unambiguously test a hypothesis? Is the research at an advanced enough stage to make the publication of results meaningful?” (APA, 2001, p. 6). Richardson (2000) described five factors that she uses when reviewing personal narrative papers, including substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, impact, and expression of reality. Substantive contribution considers whether the research contributes to understanding social life. Aesthetic merit considers whether the research text is artistically shaped, satisfyingly complex, and not dull. Reflexivity considers how the author came to write the text and how the author's subjectivity has been both a producer and product of this text. Impact considers whether the research has an emotional and/or intellectual effect and whether it generates new questions. Expression of reality considers whether the text displays a complete sense of lived experiences using dramatic, unusual phrasing and strong metaphors (Richardson 2000). Ragan (2000) suggests that for researchers to evaluate the quality of an autoethnography, they must establish whether the narrative is engaging and accurate, whether the fundamental issue addressed in the narrative is important, whether the readers will learn anything from reading the narrative, and whether the narrative has potential to contribute to the academic discipline as well as to scholarly enquiry in general.

In view of the endless criteria suggested to evaluate the quality of autoethnographic research, I agree with Le Roux (2017), who states that “… It is unviable to attempt to arrive at an all-inclusive list of criteria for determining the academic rigour of autoethnographic studies… “(p. 203). According to Anderson and Glass-Coffin (2013), autoethnographic research is not guided by specific criteria for data collection, but rather by a series of ethical, aesthetic, and relational sensitivities.

3.9. Ethical considerations

In terms of ethical considerations, as the researcher, I am responsible for upholding the rights of the people involved in the research to ensure that they are valued and respected (Peel, 2020). I have adhered to the basic ethical principles and guidelines.

These basic ethical principles are procedural ethics, which include respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. In addition to these, fundamental ethical principles are process consent, ethics of consequences, protecting privacy, and relational ethics — these principles refer to ethics in practice (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). I will discuss both procedural ethics and ethics in practice and discuss how reflexivity has been an effective way of engaging in ethical research practices (Adams et al., 2014)

I have ensured respect for those participating in my research by treating my participants as the autonomous people they are. I acquired their informed consent to participate in my research project (see annexure 3 and 4). I also provided protections for those who have diminished autonomy by seeking consent from their parents or guardians to participate in the research. I acquired informed consent from the parents or guardians of my learner-participants (see annexure 5). I committed myself to ensuring beneficence - ensuring participants' well-being by doing no harm and maximising the possible benefits of the research (Mackenzie, McDowell, & Pittaway, 2007). While evaluation of my performance in implementing the intervention programme is central to the study, developing sound reading strategies and remediations is also central to the study. Continuously evaluation my ability to remediate learners' reading benefitted learners in this study because they gained more exposure to different text types and various activities. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any time. Participants signed consent forms confirming that they agree to take part in the study, and these forms were accompanied by a clear explanation of what the research study requires of them. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any stage without having to declare their reasons (Nnebue, 2010). This allowed participants to make an informed decision regarding consent. All participants, including the school, were assured of the confidentiality of their identities and the information supplied by them (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Peel (2020) refers to Shank's (2005) description of an ethical researcher as '… being open, honest, and careful, and as doing no harm' (p. 11). The principles mentioned are all procedural ethics principles which researchers generally engage in when seeking approval from relevant ethical committees to undertake research involving humans. However, there are many situations that arise unexpectedly during data generation, which can have adverse consequences. Procedural ethics cannot provide all needed for dealing with ethically important

moments arising during fieldwork. My duty as a researcher is also to consider 'ethics in practice' (Guillemin & Gillam, 2014).

Ethics in practice refers to everyday ethical issues which arise in doing research. One example is 'process consent'. I have checked in with participants during each stage of the intervention programme to ensure that they are still willing to participate in the research (Adams et al., 2014). Process consent means viewing consent as dynamic and ongoing. According to Adams et al. (2014), autoethnographers must never assume that informed consent forms are the best (or only) way to discuss and obtain consent. Another example is 'ethics of consequence', where I have discussed the positive and negative reasons for participating in my study. The intervention programme might help learners improve their reading attitudes and abilities but requires them to sacrifice their time. Being a part of the programme might give my critical friend a sense of fulfilment, but it requires her to give up her personal time. I worked the programme to minimise the power dynamic by making decisions collaboratively. I did not dictate how many times a week the intervention programme would take place. I also did not dictate which days are suitable for the programme. I left these decisions entirely up to my critical friend and learner-participants (Mackenzie, McDowell, & Pittaway, 2007). Another example is 'confidentiality', where researchers develop strategies for protecting the identity and privacy of participants. Autoethnographers' research insights are grounded in experiences and recollections that could potentially embarrass, harm, or expose others. For this reason, it is essential that I consider whether including details such as a name, gender, race, ethnicity, age, title, or other identifying features may lead to others identifying my participants- for this reason, I have pseudonyms for all participants. It also means being savvy about the tools I use during data generation. These choices must ensure secure storage of data (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

Initially, when I began my data collection, I had planned to store everything in digital format. The rationale behind this was that storing resources digitally means they are password protected and easily accessible at any given time. When I began my reflective journal, instead of using pen and paper, I used an application called 'Good Notes' and wrote on my iPad using an Apple Pencil. Any work produced by learners was immediately scanned and saved to a folder in my Microsoft OneDrive account. I also believed that using OneDrive protected me from potentially losing my work in the

event that my computer crashed. While these benefits may still hold true, my digital plan did not go as I had hoped. Firstly, saving the work in different folders made accessing and seeing links between the data very difficult. It was a challenge to organise the work in a user-friendly way. With this change in perspective, I shifted my data storage plan to a ring binder. In the binder, I organised the learners' work in two ways. Each learner had their own compartment in the file and each compartment was organised by weeks. For example, the cover page for a learner's compartment might say 'Pandohe', the next page would say 'Week 1', followed by any work the learner produced during that week. The next section would say 'Week 2' and so on. My reflective journal also switched to pen and paper. I am meticulous and found myself spending too much time fussing about writing straight and neatly. I also found that writing on my iPad had an effective on the quality of my reflections. They were superficial and did not accurately depict the way I really felt and the depth of my experiences. So, while storing data digitally seemed like a good idea initially, I am not afraid to admit that this did not work well for me. I also believe that my ability to identify problems and adapt my style says something about my practice. I am open-minded and I believe this is a good trait.

Relational ethics refer to prioritising the relationship with participants. It recognises and values the connectedness between the researcher and the communities in which they live and work. It values mutual respect and dignity – I have done my best to support my participants and not make inappropriate demands on their time, resources, and emotions. I have been willing and opened to changing the pattern of interaction to accommodate my relationship with my participants (Adams et al., 2014). I have, to the best of my ability, conducted my research collaboratively with the participants. This the ethical principles were achievable in my study because the data generation methods of this research include an arts-based approach which captures the learners' emotional responses to the extra-curricular reading programme at various stages of the project (Cloke et al., 2000)

It is also essential to care for the self during autoethnographic research. I have engaged in this research and shared my experiences to work something out for myself and my learners. It is important to consider that autoethnographic research can create personal and professional risks and vulnerabilities that may be felt in the way the audience responds to the autoethnographers representations. The personal risks

involved can be significant; thus, it is vital to engage in autoethnography ethically (Cloke et al., 2014). Guillemin and Gillam (2004) suggest that practising reflexivity is a useful way to strike a balance between procedural ethics and ethics in practice. Research is primarily an enterprise of knowledge construction. This active process requires scrutiny, reflection and interrogation of the data, the researcher, the participants, and the context. As the researcher, I had a duty to take constant stock of my actions and my role in the research (Cloke et al., 2000). I subjected myself to the same critical scrutiny that I applied to the rest of my data. I did not simply report the facts of the research, but instead, I actively constructed interpretations while questioning how these interpretations came about. I took take two steps back from the research. The first step back was to reflect on the observations made during data generation and ask myself, ‘What do I know?’ The second step back required me to think about how I have interpreted what I have observed by asking myself, ‘How do I know this?’ (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

Reflexivity is an active and ongoing process which has helped me engage in ethically sound research by taking two steps back and looking critically at my actions and role in the research process. By ensuring that I fulfilled the required procedural ethics and engage in ethics in practice, I was able to engage in ethical research practices. Metaphor drawings were used in my study to draw out and represent our experiences and the roles we played in the programme. They were the device used to share and gain deep insight into the multiple perspectives of my participants. In this way, metaphor drawings were used as a reflexive tool (van Laren et al., 2014). They created a mirror for self-reflection, enabling me to sort through and reflect on my own experiences. By doing this, I was able to go beyond restrictions that stifle communication. Reflective journalling also enabled educators to engage in introspection and retrospection, leading to improved classroom practice and professional development. Reflective journaling has proven helpful in that it acted as a record to track the thoughts and ideas that have led me to engage in particular activities or make certain decisions. The thoughts in my reflective journal and my actions are either corroborated or challenged by my critical friend in her feedback. For example, during week 1 of my intervention programme, I wrote reflections on the execution of the session. I observed that “Verbal responses were very poor. Learners answered in as few words as possible or not at all. There was a lot of eliciting from

me.” My critical friend extended on what I had observed writing, “I think that learners complied but did not necessarily understand the articles. The materials do not accommodate learners with minimal English language abilities… [they] would have been excellent for learners with better reading competency.” Through the narratives in my reflective journal and that of my critical friend, I am opening my decisions and actions for scrutiny. This collaboration and openness make my practices reflexive.

3.10. Conclusion

Chapter 3 has displayed the methodological framework that underpins this study, navigated by the interpretive paradigm and employing an autoethnographic self-study approach. Through reflexivity and the visual display of participants' viewpoints in reflective journaling, participant-produced metaphor drawings, and critical friend feedback, this research is a collaborative venture, enriching the authenticity and depth of the findings. A commitment to transparency contributes to the trustworthiness of the study. Having laid the methodological groundwork in Chapter 3, the focus now shifts to the practical application of these methodologies in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 will delve into the data generation providing a detailed account of how an extra-curricular reading programme was implemented and the experiences of the participants involved.

Chapter 4

Data Generation

Navigating the Classroom Landscapes, One Week at a Time

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I present a detailed account of what happened in my classroom during each session of the 12-week reading intervention programme. This includes insights into my plans, how each session played out, feedback from my critical friend, my reflections afterwards, and drawings created by the participants. This information serves as my raw data. Once a week, on a Wednesday afternoon, my learner-participants and critical friend gathered in my classroom for intervention sessions. To accommodate my critical friend, I facilitated the programme once a week. We involved learners by allowing them to take a vote on the day which best suited them. Being at school as a teacher or learner is incredibly demanding and tiring. I did my best to be sensitive to what my participants were going through. My critical friend faces stressors in her workplace and at home. I understand that asking her to be at school beyond the stipulated time was no small request. My learner-participants start their school day at 7:30. They are at school for 7 hours and are dismissed from their final lesson at 14:30. Of the 7 hours learners are at school, they attend classes for 6. In each of these 6 classes, different teachers place different demands on them. By the time these learners arrive at my class, they have already been through a long and exhausting day. I was very aware and sensitive to these factors during the intervention programme. I made every effort to accommodate the needs of my learner-participants and my critical friend.

4.2. Weekly intervention sessions

Week 1

The Plan

As this was the first intervention session, I felt it was prudent that learners established their attitudes towards reading by crafting participant-produced drawings. This activity was for them to think about their attitudes as well as for me – I needed to know how they feel about reading. I planned to develop extensive reading skills by giving learners a variety of news articles to choose from. During this session, I aimed to encourage learners to engage in reading texts from different genres. I sourced a variety of current articles on sports, celebrity news, entertainment, lifestyle, etc., from South African publications.

At this stage, my reflective journal was ruled by a list of questions. Question 2 was, "What reading activities will learners engage in?" To which I responded, *"… learners will be allowed to select the article which interests them, and then they will be given time to read it. After they have read it once, I will ask them to read it again, highlighting any words they do not know. I will use these words to create a vocabulary list in a later session."*

The Execution

I asked learners, *"How does reading make you feel?"* I then demonstrated on the chalkboard. I drew the outline of an open book with planet Earth on the page. I explained that reading helps me see the world and experience new things through the characters in the stories. Learners were then given 20 minutes to complete their drawings, which were very telling. Learners drew pictures which are shared and analysed in Chapter 5. These images express negative attitudes such as fear, confusion and distress towards reading.

Once the drawings were completed, I laid out twenty news articles on the unoccupied desks in my class. I invited the learners to look at each article and choose one that best interests them to read. Each learner selected an article and returned to their seat. I asked participants to read their articles slowly and enjoy them because they chose a story they liked. I observed them reading without interrupting. After 20 minutes, I asked

the learners to stop reading. I requested they reread the article, underlining any words they did not know. After 20 minutes, I asked each learner to share about their article. In my lesson summary, I noted, *"Verbal responses were very poor. Learners answered in as few words as possible or not at all. There was a lot of eliciting from me."*

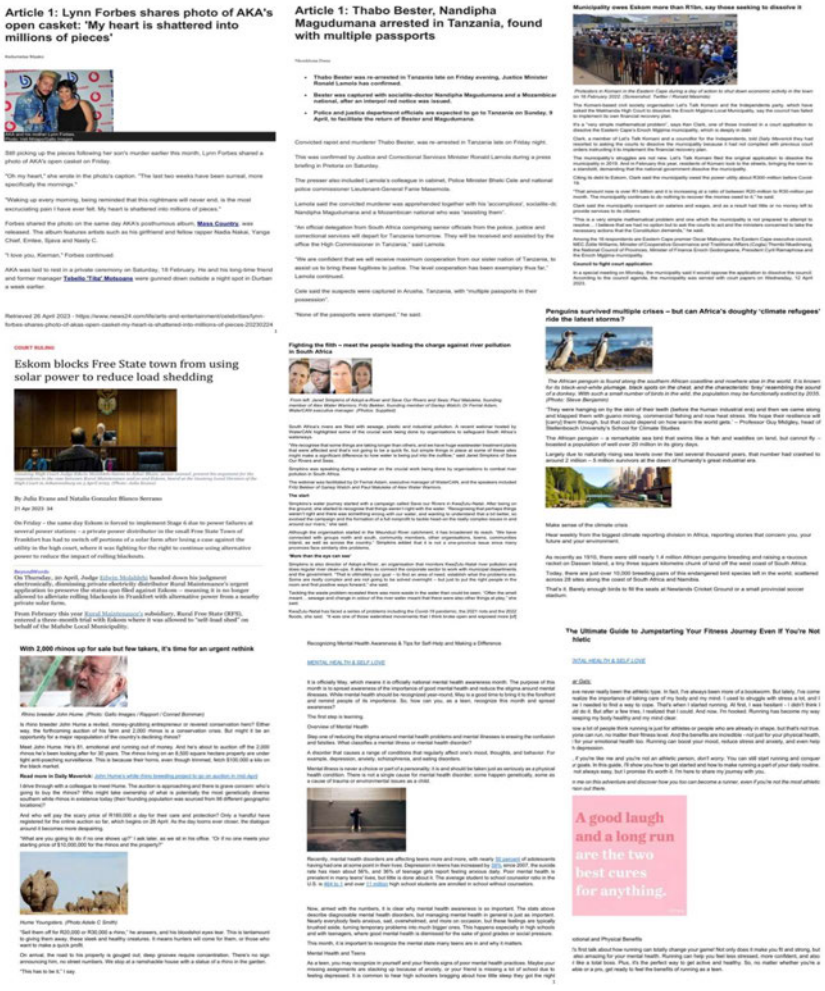


Figure 2: *Reading Material* (*News Articles*)

These are some of the news articles that were selected as the readings for this week (Sources: Carnie, 2023; Duma, 2023; Evans & Serrano, 2023; Gala, 2023; Kriel, 2023; Li, 2023; Maako, 2023; Pongweni, 2023; Sgqolana, 2023).

Critical Friend Feedback

My critical friend sat in on this session as a silent observer. She did not participate in activities but made notes on what took place and used the observation schedule (see annexure 7) I had crafted to guide her feedback. Her feedback went back and forth between praise and critique. I have broken up her feedback into comments on the reading material, learner motivation and teacher actions.

With regard to my choice of texts, my critical friend raised concerns. Firstly, she commented, *"I think that learners complied but did not necessarily understand the articles. The materials do not accommodate learners with minimal English language abilities… [they] would have been excellent for learners with better reading competency."* Secondly, she commented, "*News topics… [are] used in comprehension texts for exams, so the effort to expose them to the useful vocabulary is noble, however… does not meet the needs of the learners."*

She made observations about learners' engagement in the activities. Regarding the participant-produced drawings, she stated, *"Learners were enthusiastic about doing their drawings… [they] did not expect to draw as part of a reading programme."* Regarding the material, learners *"seemed curious… it is unusual for them to choose what they read. Most of the reading they do is at school, and teachers choose for them."*

"Learners were given the freedom to choose their reading material. This is good because learners are more likely to enjoy reading content that interests them." "Most of the reading [learners] do is at school and teachers choose for them." She then stated that she does not believe using vocabulary lists is an effective way to develop learners' vocabulary.

She commented on my actions during the session and found that the scaffolding in this session was not sufficient. She recommended I take a more involved role "to set learners up before they read on their own." She also wrote, *"At this stage, I don't think learners can cope with this amount of independence… need more involvement until they can manage… on their own."* Her final recommendation was that I *"have a step-by-step plan for guiding learners through the reading."*

In Retrospect

After the intervention session, I thought about the occurrences and the feedback my critical friend offered. Although learners did not say they struggled with the texts, it was my observation that they struggled realised that learners were likely unwilling to share what their articles were about because they did not understand them. In my reflective journal, I wrote, *"I now realise that these texts were simply too complex… I need to plan more carefully how I will scaffold learners."* I planned for the future and hoped to *"make the sessions more exciting… drawings revealed negative attitudes towards reading."*

Week 2

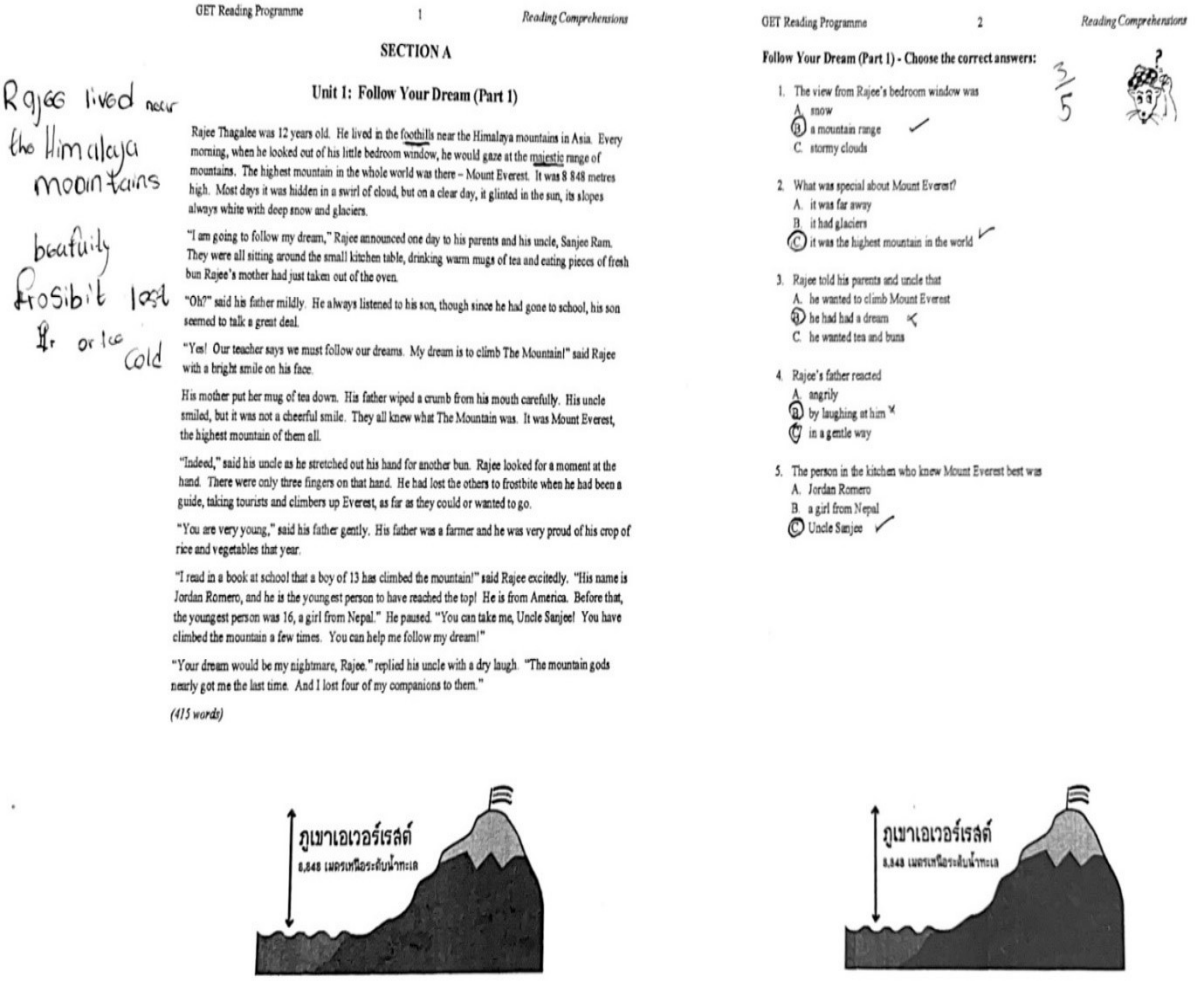
The Plan

To combat the sense of reluctance in the previous session, I planned to guide learners through interactive intensive and extensive reading activities. I planned to try a new approach that tackled aspects of intensive and extensive reading. I decided to do this because I found that learners become bored when they engage in one activity for too long. While observing learners in the previous session, I noted that they start activities like reading with energy, but quickly become distracted and agitated. I planned to start with a short comprehension passage followed by multiple-choice questions. After that, learners would be guided through reading an excerpt from a novel. I believed that the inclusion of multiple-choice questions would keep learners more involved and interested in the reading materials. In my reflective journal, I wrote, *"Although utilising questions is not in the spirit of extensive reading, I have found that without a set of questions to keep learners engaged, they do not see the point or value in engaging in reading."*

The Execution

Unfortunately, my critical friend could not make it to this session, so I was left to execute and evaluate this session. Learner attendance was also poor with only 4 learners in attendance. I asked the learners to arrange their chairs in a semi-circle at the front of the class. I wanted learners to feel like they had entered a different space, unlike the typical classroom setup and experience. I began this session with a short

passage titled ‘Follow your dreams,’ and the multiple-choice questions that followed. ‘Follow your dreams’ (Tennant, n.d.) is one of many passages in the ‘GET reading programme’ pack that I purchased from a company called Macrat Publishing. I treated this short comprehension exercise as an icebreaker. Each learner was given the passage and 10 minutes to read it. Once learners read the passage individually, I read it aloud during the second reading. I paused at points to elaborate on or explain tricky vocabulary. Once the reading was complete learners were asked to circle the correct answers to the 5 multiple choice questions that followed the passage. We then discussed each question. I explained and broke the questions down, learners went back to the passage to work out whether the answers they circled were the correct ones. I saw learners actively self-correcting; they were able to identify where they went wrong with some guidance from me.



GET Reading Programme 1 *Reading Comprehensions*

SECTION A

Rajee lived near the Himalaya mountains beautiful frosbit 10% for ice cold

Unit 1: Follow Your Dream (Part 1)

Rajee Thagalee was 12 years old. He lived in the foothills near the Himalaya mountains in Asia. Every morning, when he looked out of his little bedroom window, he would gaze at the majestic range of mountains. The highest mountain in the whole world was there – Mount Everest. It was 8 848 metres high. Most days it was hidden in a swirl of cloud, but on a clear day, it glinted in the sun, its slopes always white with deep snow and glaciers.

"I am going to follow my dream," Rajee announced one day to his parents and his uncle, Sanjee Ram. They were all sitting around the small kitchen table, drinking warm mugs of tea and eating pieces of fresh bun Rajee's mother had just taken out of the oven.

"Oh?" said his father mildly. He always listened to his son, though since he had gone to school, his son seemed to talk a great deal.

"Yes! Our teacher says we must follow our dreams. My dream is to climb The Mountain!" said Rajee with a bright smile on his face.

His mother put her mug of tea down. His father wiped a crumb from his mouth carefully. His uncle smiled, but it was not a cheerful smile. They all knew what The Mountain was. It was Mount Everest, the highest mountain of them all.

"Indeed," said his uncle as he stretched out his hand for another bun. Rajee looked for a moment at the hand. There were only three fingers on that hand. He had lost the others to frostbite when he had been a guide, taking tourists and climbers up Everest, as far as they could or wanted to go.

"You are very young," said his father gently. His father was a farmer and he was very proud of his crop of rice and vegetables that year.

"I read in a book at school that a boy of 13 has climbed the mountain!" said Rajee excitedly. "His name is Jordan Romero, and he is the youngest person to have reached the top! He is from America. Before that, the youngest person was 16, a girl from Nepal." He paused. "You can take me, Uncle Sanjee! You have climbed the mountain a few times. You can help me follow my dream!"

"Your dream would be my nightmare, Rajee." replied his uncle with a dry laugh. "The mountain gods nearly got me the last time. And I lost four of my companions to them."

(415 words)

GET Reading Programme 2 *Reading Comprehensions*

Follow Your Dream (Part 1) - Choose the correct answers: 3/5

1. The view from Rajee's bedroom window was
   A. snow
   B. a mountain range ✓
   C. stormy clouds

2. What was special about Mount Everest?
   A. it was far away
   B. it had glaciers
   C. it was the highest mountain in the world ✓

3. Rajee told his parents and uncle that
   A. he wanted to climb Mount Everest
   B. he had had a dream ✓
   C. he wanted tea and buns

4. Rajee's father reacted
   A. angrily
   B. by laughing at him ✗
   C. in a gentle way

5. The person in the kitchen who knew Mount Everest best was
   A. Jordan Romero
   B. a girl from Nepal
   C. Uncle Sanjee ✓

ภูเขาเอเวอร์เรสต์
8,848 เมตรเหนือระดับน้ำทะเล

ภูเขาเอเวอร์เรสต์
8,848 เมตรเหนือระดับน้ำทะเล

Figure 3: ***Reading Material (Follow Your Dreams)***

This learner made notes in the margins while working out answers to the multiple-choice questions. They marked their work and made corrections in cases where their answer was incorrect.

We then moved on to the extensive reading portion of this session - the novel. I chose the novel 'The Merchant of Venice'. It is read by grade 9 learners and is readily available in the school. This novel was meant to be enjoyed by learners and not tested with questions in any way. I gave some background about the main characters and allowed each learner to read 5 lines aloud. No questions followed; however, I did stop learners periodically to check-in and elaborate as I did not want any learners to be left behind.

Critical Friend Feedback

My critical friend was unable to attend this session. The absence of my critical friend, coupled with the poor learner attendance, alarmed me. I expressed these thoughts in my reflection-after-session.

In Retrospect

After this session I was overwhelmed. I feared that the reading interventions were failing, I feared that my participants were all backing out of the study. As I sat with my list of questions for 'reflection-after-session' I realised that answering those questions would not capture what actually happened or my thoughts on the occurrences. I wrote, *"I recall asking the 4 learners to set their chairs in the form of a half-circle at the front of my class, I wanted learners to feel like they had entered a different space… I thought it would help learners be more relaxed and opened. Instead, they seemed shy and uncomfortable."* The change in their seating arrangement had backfired, instead of making them feel at ease, it alarmed them. I was disheartened and "*it seemed like everything was wrong from the start."*

I then reflected on my novel selection. *"At the time this book selection seemed like a good idea but now I know I have reached a point where I am overthinking the reading materials."* My head was swirling with options, so I hastily grabbed one without taking a moment to consider that these learners are not proficient readers. I asked each learner to read 5 lines from the novel. *"Their voices were low, and the reading was*

slow. The pauses were in all the wrong places, and it was clear that the learners did not understand the story." It was very quiet in my class, and I felt uncomfortable. I know that if learners cannot understand what they read, they will not enjoy reading.

As I sat and reflected, I realised that the best way to capture my feelings of distress would be to sketch a metaphor drawing. The drawing, 'Lost in A Wasteland' is shared and analysed in Chapter 5 and contrasts with the drawing I sketched before the interventions commenced 'Optimistic, Ambitious or Naïve?'. It depicts the reversal of my optimism and a loss of confidence.

After this session, I was overwhelmed. I feared that the reading interventions were failing; I feared that my participants were all backing out of the study. As I sat with my list of questions for 'reflection-after-session', I realised that answering those questions would not capture what actually happened or my thoughts on the occurrences.

Week 3

The Plan

In my reflection-during-planning I spent a lot of time organising my thoughts about the previous session. *"I have decided that going forwards, I will not allow myself to be overwhelmed with endless reading materials. I will stick to simple readings with simple questions. I will not discourage learners by choosing materials that are too difficult."* In the process of journaling, I found a way to overcome what felt like personal failure by admitting that *"I cannot control all the variables in this programme, I am allowing things to happen and taking everything as a lesson."*

By this point I had more time to think about different aspects of the previous session and what went wrong. First, I reflected on the reading materials, *"Previously [the reading materials] have been too complex and well above learners' actual reading ability. The texts are too lengthy, and the content is not appealing to learners. I need to select easier, topical texts."* I then reflected on my decision to implement intensive and extensive reading activities in one session, *"This is overwhelming for learners, I will narrow this session down to intensive reading only. My focus will be creating excitement and interest in reading material that is relevant to their lives."*

I planned to adapt and paraphrase a news article on fast fashion. I knew that teenagers are very interested in trendy clothing, and I could spin the activities to make the text relevant to them. I wrote, *"Learners will be guided through the reading. I will ask pre-reading questions and allow them to make predictions about the text. I will read the text first and provide explanations, then I will divide the text among learners, so they read aloud. As a post-reading activity, I will spark a discussion relating the article to our lives."* I proposed some questions that I would ask as a post-reading activity. *"What are some of your favourite clothing shops? Why do you purchase clothing at these fast-fashion shops, as opposed to designer clothes? Do you keep your clothing for a long time, do they last or are they ruined after washing? Knowing what you know now, about the impact fast fashion has on our planet, will it stop you from supporting shops like Mr Price, Sportscene, The Fix, Truworths, etc.?"*

The Execution

Attendance was up slightly this week, with 5 learners in attendance. The increase in attendance gave me hope that I could salvage the intervention programme if I was willing to make necessary adjustments. My critical friend was also in attendance, and she was given her observation schedule to fill out. Having my critical friend in attendance gave me a sense of security, I felt safe with her there to see what I could not. I had immense trust in her. I started with an icebreaker where learners could draw a sketch depicting their thoughts on one of the following topics:

A – Where do you read the most?

B – How does reading in class and at school make you feel?

Learners were given blank pages and pencils and there was excitement, I sensed their energy towards this task. Learners spent 15 minutes on their drawings. These drawings are presented and discussed in Chapter 5. *"One by one learners came to the front of the class. They were having fun, giggling about their drawing abilities and that of their friends. Each learner kept their drawing secret, pressed to their chests. After a drum-roll they turned their drawings around. Once their laughter died down, we began to discuss their thoughts."* One child's response to question A was, *"We spend a long time reading in the class, but the time teachers give us to finish reading is not enough."* Another learner shared, *"I only read in class. Teachers teach and read at the same time."* One said, *"I read in the reading group. In my drawing some of us enjoy*

reading, some are bored, and some don't pay attention just like in the reading group." Responses to question B were, *"Reading is very stressful because learners laugh, and teachers ask questions"* and *"I feel tired and under pressure. I go through a lot."*

What I ascertained from the drawings is that the bulk of their reading takes place during their classes and is determined by the teacher as well as the demands of the learning area.

I then settled the learners so that we could begin the pre-reading reading questions. I asked learners what some of their favourite clothing shops are. Learners responded with, Mr Price, The Fix and Sportscene. I then asked learners why they liked these shops and got responses like, *"The clothing is trendy and not too expensive."* The learner who said he liked Sportscene said, *"I like sneakers and Nike the most."* I accepted these answers and began with the reading stage of this session. I did not give them a copy of the text for the first reading. I did not want them to stare at the page while they are truly lost or scramble to keep up while finger-pointing at words. I wanted them to listen first. I read the title of the text which I had adapted, 'The problem with Shein: A Noble contributor to the Fast Fashion Crisis'. I stopped here to ask learners, *"What is Shein? What is fast fashion? Do you think fast fashion is good?"* It seemed I had done something right; learners were interested in the text because they love fashion trends. I got responses like, *"Shein is a Chinese clothing shop,"* and *"Shein is for shopping online."* A learner attempted to answer my question on fast fashion, *"It is clothing that is made very fast."* I paused to elaborate by telling learners that fast fashion is indeed made fast, because it is lower quality clothing. It is also made fast because it meant to keep up with the most recent trends. Because it is bad quality, the clothing lasts for a short time, and as the trend dies, so do the clothing. I read the passage loudly and very slowly. I did my best to be expressive and even dramatic. I also stopped periodically to elaborate on some points. I then gave learners the passage and allowed learners 5 minutes for them to scan over the texts. I then split the reading among the 5 learners and let them each read their paragraph. At the end of the text, I asked one question, *"Knowing what you know now, would you shop from Shein?"* There was one overarching response. *"Yes. We don't have money for fancy expensive clothing. Even if it is bad for the planet, we have to shop from cheaper shops."* I was satisfied because we had discussed a lot and learners participated enthusiastically. The session was simple, but it was a success.

Critical friend feedback

My critical friend responded to the questions on the observation schedule. She began with*, "You reverted back to the news articles, but you did it better than the previous news article session. Learners were all given the same article this time, and it was easy to understand. You created a good background before the reading and learners listening to the text first seemed to work well."* My critical friend was also pleased with the way learners engaged in drawing; she believed that making it into a game helped set the mood for a fun session. She also liked that they, *"… were offered the chance to share about their drawings… made them feel comfortable reading aloud… more opened to share when asked questions."*

In the previous session my critical friend attended, she commented on my lack of involvement. She had noted an improvement this week, stating, *"You clearly put more thought into your plan. The reading material was relevant to learners and by guiding them you helped them achieve a link between their shopping habits and the environment."* She also made positive notes on my line of questioning, *"This session had a structure. Pre-reading questions gave earners a good background. The reading was done collaboratively. The post-reading question drummed up a lot of discussion. Learners put thought into their responses."* She made one key comment about what I could do to improve future sessions. She wrote, *"Although news articles are relevant, I think it would be good to branch out and try different reading material."*

Based off my critical friends' comments, it is clear that I had a few wins in this session. The way I guided learners was fruitful. I also felt that by asking learners specific questions for metaphor drawings, I got better depictions than when I asked open-ended questions.

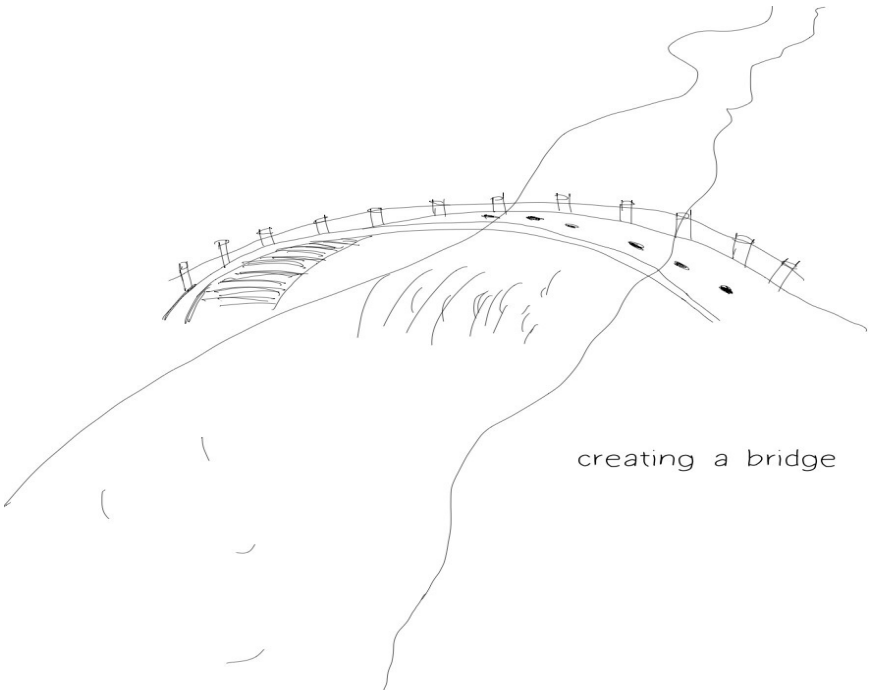


Figure 4: ***Creating a Bridge***

Week 4

The Plan

During this session, I aimed to maximise on the arts-based approach and incorporate art and crafts into the icebreakers. I sourced some reading materials that lend themselves to different art and crafting activities. This week I planned to give learners materials to make their own bracelets as a pre-reading activity. The text selected for this session is a short story called 'The Bracelet' (Uchida, 1945). I have also devised a plan to improve the attendance of these intervention sessions. I will be providing some refreshments to learners before we start our intervention session. I am hoping that by building rapport, I can generate enthusiasm for the programme.

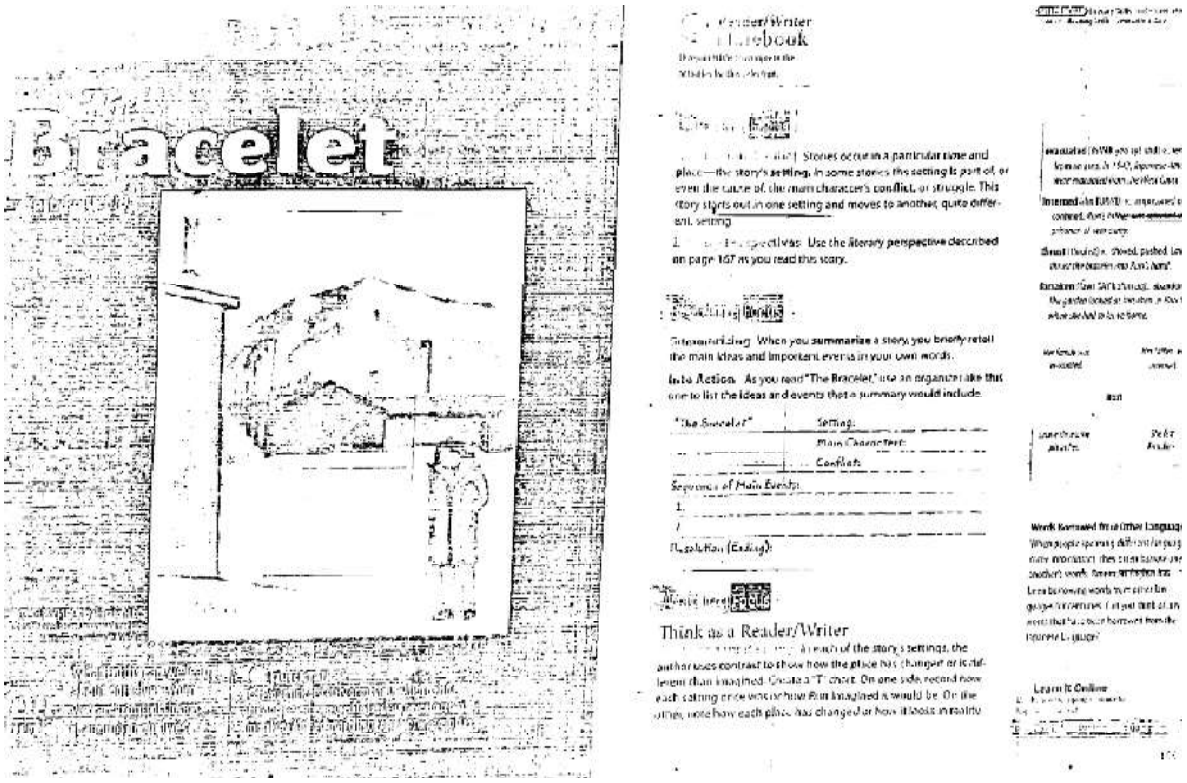


Figure 5: ***Reading Material (The Bracelet)***

The Execution

During week 2 of this intervention programme, I conducted a session where I requested that learners arrange their desks in the formation of a semi-circle. My intention was to make the intervention programme feel different from the usual classroom experience. However, this did not go well during week 2. I decided to revisit that idea during this session, but this time I asked my 8 participants to arrange their chairs in two columns of 4, facing one another. I put out some paper plates and cups and distributed refreshments. I gave learners 10 minutes to socialise and eat while I organised the crafting activity. I then handed out string, scissors, and beads. Learners were asked to make their own special bracelets. They were very excited to engage in this fun and creative activity.

As a pre-reading activity, I asked learners what they know about World War 2. They had already learnt about it in history, so they had the background knowledge necessary to understand the short story. I introduced 'The Bracelet' and handed each learner a copy of the short story. They were instantly excited because they had already

made their own bracelets. I began the reading and read the first page. I then asked a learner to take over. After reading the page, the next learner read and so on.

While learners read very slowly, they remained engaged and did not quit. When we reached the end, I asked 2 post-reading questions. My first question was, *"What makes your bracelet special?"* Some responses from learners were, *"It has my nickname." "It's the name of someone I love," and "I made it on my own."* The second question I asked was, *"What are your most and least favourite parts of the story?"* Responses from the learners were very similar. *"My favourite part is when Lauri gave the girl the bracelet. My least favourite part is where the girl lost the bracelet." "Favourite part – when Lauri gave Ruri a bracelet as a gift. Least favourite – when Ruri lost the bracelet." "Favourite – When Ruri and her family were all together on the bus and got to the camp all together. Least favourite – when Ruri was given a bracelet by Lauri and lost it, but she kept looking for it till it was dark, and they had changed the area they lived in, but she had to forget about the bracelet." "I like it when Ruri's mother told her that she doesn't need a bracelet to miss her friend. It was sad when she lost the bracelet."* After learners shared these responses, we ended off the session.

Figure 6: ***Making Bracelets***

Critical Friend Feedback

My critical friend made many positive notes about this session. She noted that learners were excited and enjoyed the reading. She felt that allowing learners to socialise and craft I am making the idea of reading fun. *"It really broke the ice. By doing this you are creating a lot of excitement and joy around this project. The reading seamlessly fit with the fun beadwork. The activities planned worked together so well that they sparked motivation and interest that resulted in better engagement in the reading, and better comprehension of the text."* She observed that I had a plan to guide and scaffold learners. *"You assisted and collaborated with learners during the making of their bracelets. You are building a relationship with them that will stand the programme in good stead. You built excitement to get to the reading part of the session."* She also

felt that after socialising learners feel less pressure when they are asked to read aloud. There is one notable comment she made in her feedback, *"While reading for fun is important, remember to strike a balance with instilling reading skills.*

In retrospect

Based on this feedback, I was proud of what I achieved in this session. I had come a long way from when I started the programme. This session was exciting for me and for the learners. Between the food, the crafts and the story, learners were energetic, excited, and enthusiastic. The frills around this session really created a fun atmosphere. The introduction to the reading was done so well that when the reading began, learners were more opened and confident. All of them were happy to read aloud. They all responded well and engaged during the post-reading discussion. For me, the highlight of this session is how learners enjoyed everything that took place. By making enjoyment the focal point, I was motivated just as much as learners were. I feel that I breathed new life into the programme. I looked forwards to where these new ideas would take me.

Week 5

The Plan

The following week, I was still thinking about the sweeping success of last week's intervention session. I planned to continue developing fun pre-reading activities that link with the content of the texts to be read. *"I noticed a spike in attendance ever since I introduced 'snacks and socialising' as icebreakers. I suspect that learners circulated news that they had an enjoyable time during our week 4 session."*

During week 5, I planned to read a story titled 'The Most Beautiful Garden'. I purchased paint, paintbrushes, card paper and glue. Learners were going to paint flowers, cut them out and paste them on the card paper to form flower collages. This pre-reading activity will prompt learners to make predictions about the text.

The Execution

I asked learners to rearrange the desks in my class. During week 4, I asked learners to sit in a semi-circle at the front of my class, but their proximity to me alarmed them

and it jeopardised that session. So, this time I asked them to arrange the desks in two columns facing one another. This made them comfortable because they faced their peers. I also hoped that it would lead to more peer interaction. I put some refreshments out and allowed learners to socialise for a little while. I believe that this time allows learners to take a mental break and recharge before they start with the reading.

I then began preparing for the pre-reading activity. Learners were given paint, paintbrushes, and flower templates. They were also given card paper and glue. I asked learners to begin by painting the flowers on the templates they were given. This was time consuming, but because this was our last session for the term, we started earlier than usual and had extra time together. When learners had enough flowers painted, I asked them to cut their flowers out and paste them on the card paper in the form of a collage. Learners were confused when I used the word 'collage' so I explained that they would have to stick their flowers really close together, making them overlap and leaving as little gaps as possible. They clearly understood the concept of collaging, even though the word itself was unfamiliar to them. In the end, learners produced beautiful and creative collages that saw me beaming with pride.

I gave learners a minute to reveal their collages to one another and then I asked a question. *"What do you think todays story is about?"* I received answers like*, "flowers," "making a garden," "nature"* and *"painting"*. I then revealed that the text we were going to read was titled, 'The Most Beautiful Garden'. I asked learners to close their eyes and imagine the most beautiful garden, a special garden that would make people happy. While they did this, I handed out the text. I then told learners to pay attention to the text and find out whether such a garden could ever exist. I began by reading the introduction of the story. I then asked each learner to read 4 lines of the story so that the reading was equally shared amongst them. Each learner followed carefully because they did not know what sequence they would be called in to read. I suspect they were so attentive for fear that they would look silly if they were called to read and were lost.

I asked one post-reading question, *"What is the main message of this story?"* Learners shared various response. One learner responded, *"Gardens and flowers make people happy."* Another said, *"It is not good to be unhappy"*. With these responses we ended the session.

Figure 7: ***The Flower Collages***

Critical Friend Feedback

My critical friend observed this session. She and I both joined in the fun and painted with learners. In her observation schedule she focused more on the reading aspects of the session.

"Learners made predictions about the text because you built suspense and anticipation during the pre-reading activity. Learners are enjoying these sessions because they are not just about reading, they have a practical aspect that makes reading come alive." She also made notes about my involvement. She noted that, *"Learners were happy when you sat and painted with them. Learners have trust in you. You led activities without hovering. You have moved away from perfecting reading and towards enjoying reading."* She made one critical observation. She noted that during the reading I did not interrupt learners to check whether they understood the story periodically. She noted that although the text seems easy, I should not take it for granted because, *"Learners may be left behind but are too shy to ask for assistance."*

In Retrospect

I reflected on this session, writing, *"… learners were happy, and they engaged in the painting with zeal. I was pleased to see that they no longer seemed 'out of place' during these interventions."* I felt that my pre-reading activities were a success because learners were able to interpret them and make predictions about the text's contents. I noticed that the icebreaker made learners comfortable, so they were not hesitant to participate in activities and read aloud. I did not want my participants and I to lose focus of reading as the centre of this programme. In my reflections I wrote, *"Next week I will slow down on the arts and crafts and go back to basics, this will be a way to remind myself of the fundamental aspect of this programme, reading."*

Week 6

The Plan

During this point in the term grade 8 learners were working on an English group project that required them to give an oral presentation. I sourced a story that discusses this issue. I wrote in my reflection*, "While this lesson will not have the crafty flare of the previous session. I am hoping that the contents of the reading material will resonate with learners. I hope to see learners relate to the struggles that the main character faces."* I knew that while art and crafts are exciting, they cannot replace the main purpose of the programme – reading.

The Execution

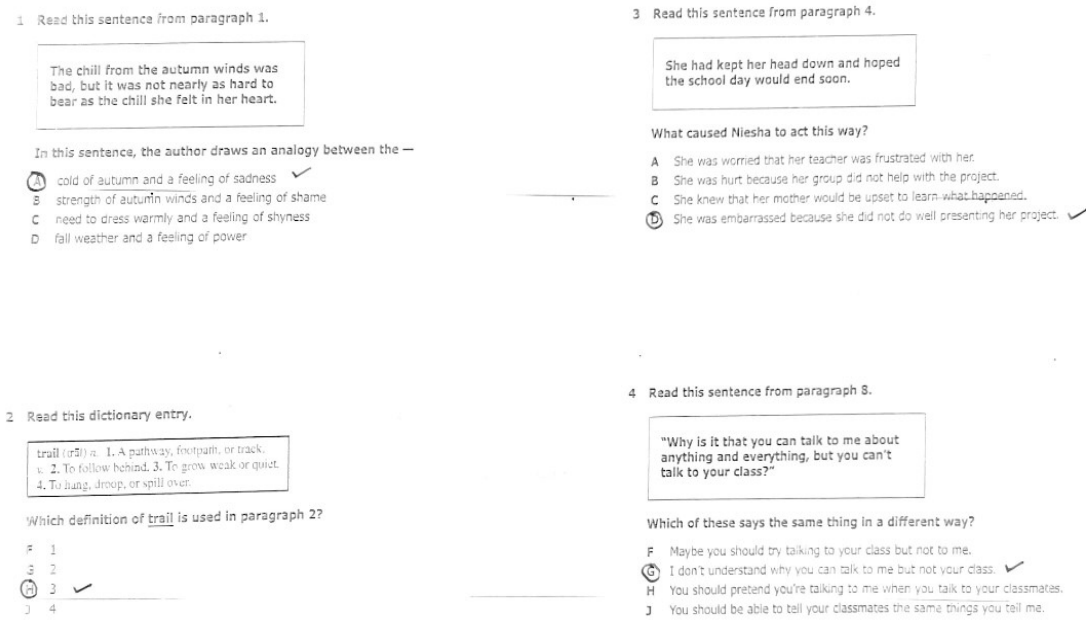
I started the session with a pre-reading activity to establish learners' feelings on oral presentations. Learners shared that they strongly disliked delivering speeches because their peers laugh at them and make them feel nervous. They also shared that oral assessments put them under pressure because they know that their results depend on their presentation skills.

In a previous session, I discovered that allowing learners to listen to the passage before providing them with a copy worked well. I began the reading, slowly and expressively. I paused periodically to check in that learners are still following. I then gave learners a copy of the text titled, 'Finding Neisha's Courage'. I asked each learner

to read 1 paragraph slowly. After each paragraph, I paused to ask learners if they had questions, but none of them did.

After the reading, there were 10 multiple-choice questions that learners answered. I read the first question with learners and underlined the root of the question. I then asked learners to go back to the passage and find the part of the passage that relates to the question. We read it together and then I asked learners to select one of the multiple-choice answers. I then read the next question with learners and followed the same procedure as question 1. I observed that learners were answering questions thoughtfully and selecting answers carefully. I liked the way we moved through the reading slowly. Learners tend to struggle, panic, and make mistakes when they are rushed and pressed for time. I was pleased to see learners thoughtfully considering questions and referring to the text before selecting the answer.

When learners marked their work, I did not just tell them the answers; I worked collaboratively with the learners. We discussed the questions, went back to the passage, and read the parts of the text that were relevant to the question. I then went through all the possible answers and let learner self—assess their work and make corrections.


1 Read this sentence from paragraph 1.

The chill from the autumn winds was bad, but it was not nearly as hard to bear as the chill she felt in her heart.

In this sentence, the author draws an analogy between the —

A cold of autumn and a feeling of sadness ✓
B strength of autumn winds and a feeling of shame
C need to dress warmly and a feeling of shyness
D fall weather and a feeling of power

3 Read this sentence from paragraph 4.

She had kept her head down and hoped the school day would end soon.

What caused Niesha to act this way?

A She was worried that her teacher was frustrated with her.
B She was hurt because her group did not help with the project.
C She knew that her mother would be upset to learn what happened.
D She was embarrassed because she did not do well presenting her project. ✓

2 Read this dictionary entry.

trail (rāl) n. 1. A pathway, footpath, or track. v. 2. To follow behind. 3. To grow weak or quiet. 4. To hang, droop, or spill over.

Which definition of trail is used in paragraph 2?

F 1
G 2
H 3 ✓
J 4

4 Read this sentence from paragraph 8.

"Why is it that you can talk to me about anything and everything, but you can't talk to your class?"

Which of these says the same thing in a different way?

F Maybe you should try talking to your class but not to me.
G I don't understand why you can talk to me but not your class. ✓
H You should pretend you're talking to me when you talk to your classmates.
J You should be able to tell your classmates the same things you tell me.

Figure 8: ***Multiple Choice Questions (Finding Neisha's Courage)***

Learners worked through the reading slowly and when they were asked to respond to the multiple-choice questions they selected answered carefully and thoughtfully (Source: Weebly, n.d., p. 6-11).

Critical Friend Feedback

In my critical friend feedback, she noticed that the text I chose related to the project grade 8 learners were working on. *"Learners were asked pre-reading questions that resulted in a conversation about group work and oral presentations. Listening carefully and asking learners follow-up questions makes learners share more and open up about their experiences."* I had been working on building a relationship with learners and she observed that I had made progress in that regard. *"They openly discussed difficulties they have been facing in their own group work."* She found that I took a more active role in the session, writing, *"You were supportive without stifling learners' independent reading and discovery."* In my previous session she commented that I need to ensure I focus on instilling comprehension skills. This session she noted that, *"You have instilled skills for learners to answer and decode comprehension questions. They can apply this knowledge in future if you continue to reinforce it."* When asked what I can do to improve future sessions, she said, *"Always strike a balance between the fun and meaningful reading activities."*

In retrospect

Even though this session went well, in my reflection I expressed anxieties around the programme and the study. I had lingering concerns. I wrote, *"Is this study useful without a standardised test to evaluate reading improvements?"* I worried about whether I should have included art in the reading session. *"Narrative studies allow participants to make meaning from experiences. Using the arts-based approach as part of the reading, it creates an experience which allows learners to make meaning during the reading."*

I was teetering between placing focus on intensive reading and extensive reading. *"Using pre-reading and post-reading activities has been fruitful but does that mean I am repeatedly engaging in intensive reading. Is it possible to engage in intensive reading for enjoyment?"* I started to feel that I was too laid back, and I was not sure if this was a positive thing. *"Should I have been more rigid, or has this laid-back style been the best approach. All I know is, when I started this programme and had strictly*

outlined plans and complex texts, nobody wanted to be there, and the attendance was proof of that."

Week 7

The Plan

During this week's session I hoped to build on what was achieved last week. I did not plan any crafts, but opted to revert to metaphor drawings, since it is important to check in with learners periodically.

"This session will focus more on comprehension skills. I plan to work through the texts with learners' step by step to understand the text, decode questions, scan the text, and select answers. Skimming and scanning are the main skills which will be practiced."

The Execution

Learners were asked to create drawings that show how they feel about reading. I asked, *"What happens in your brain when you have to read?"* Learners did a 'big reveal' of their drawings, and I asked each learner to say one keyword that relates to their drawings. Some of the keyword's learners shared were, *"confused," "hopeless," "not motivated," "alone," and "frustrated."* Some learners elaborated more saying, *"I can read the words, but I don't see the picture." "Nobody helps when I'm stuck."* To end the icebreaker, I sympathised with learners and shared that our group is about overcoming those negative feelings. These drawings are displayed and analysed further in Chapter 5.

I then moved on to the reading. I introduced the story, 'Pole Bean Pursuit' (Weebly, n.d., p. 18-22) and asked learners to close their eyes, take a deep breath and listen carefully. I read the story slowly to ensure that no learner was lost or left behind. I hoped that by asking them to listen to the story before reading it for themselves, it would help them understand the contents and assist them in their reading. I then gave each learner a copy of the text and time to it read independently. Once learners completed the reading, we worked together on selecting multiple choice answers together.

I read and explained the first question. I asked learners to find the relevant passage in the text. We then read the question and all answers again. We referred back to the passage and then each of us chose a letter. I assisted learners with each question in this way. Once we had completed all the questions, we went back to the start to self-correct. Learners repeated the process to check whether they selected the correct answers and, in many cases, peers assisted one another.

Critical Friend Feedback

In her feedback my critical friend wrote that the reading activities for this session were simple. *"Learners listened carefully while you read aloud, then they read the text by themselves. The sessions order is very similar to week 6. Learners heard the story, read the story and followed steps to answer the multiple-choice questions."* She noted that learners drew pictures, *"showing what reading looks like in their brains."* She saw the way learners engaged in activities. *"Learners have picked up many skills. They have been following a similar comprehension procedure for a number of intervention sessions and they are starting to apply these skills without being prompted by you."* She also made observations about my behaviour and the way I instructed learners. *"Learners were guided while still having room to make mistakes. Allowing them to make mistakes and self-correct is good because they will be more perceptive and evaluate their own responses in future."* She implies that I have progressively allowed learners to take ownership of their comprehension tasks and now they are beginning to apply these skills without instruction from me. Her final remark was, *"It has been good to repeatedly practice these basic skills but remember not to lose that spark of excitement."*

In Retrospect

In my reflections I noted that the session *"felt flat".* There was little excitement and not much to spark enthusiasm in the learners. The text was just right, it did not seem too easy or overly difficult. The steps that were followed to comprehend the text were valuable for learners, however, *"Without the sparkle of fun icebreakers and refreshments learners seemed less interested in comparison to the days when we craft."* I needed to work on creating a more constant sense to excitement around the programme while being careful not to mix the programme up too much. I was afraid

that, *"The progress learners have made is delicate… I fear that if I stop reinforcing them, they will be lost."*

I also reflected on the feedback my critical friend provided, *"… raises feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy. I have come into this research with very limited knowledge on remediating reading."* I went between worrying about "doing it right" and feeling satisfaction for trying to do something at all. Although this study prompted me to take an active role in addressing this issue, at times it stifled me too. I kept associating research with something complex and I grapple with the idea that research does not have to be complicated to be good. *"This study has taught me that teaching and learning should always be practical."* I sketched metaphor drawings during these reflections to depict my thoughts in a tangible way. I learnt a lot about myself and my learners from the drawing which is shared and analysed in Chapter 5.

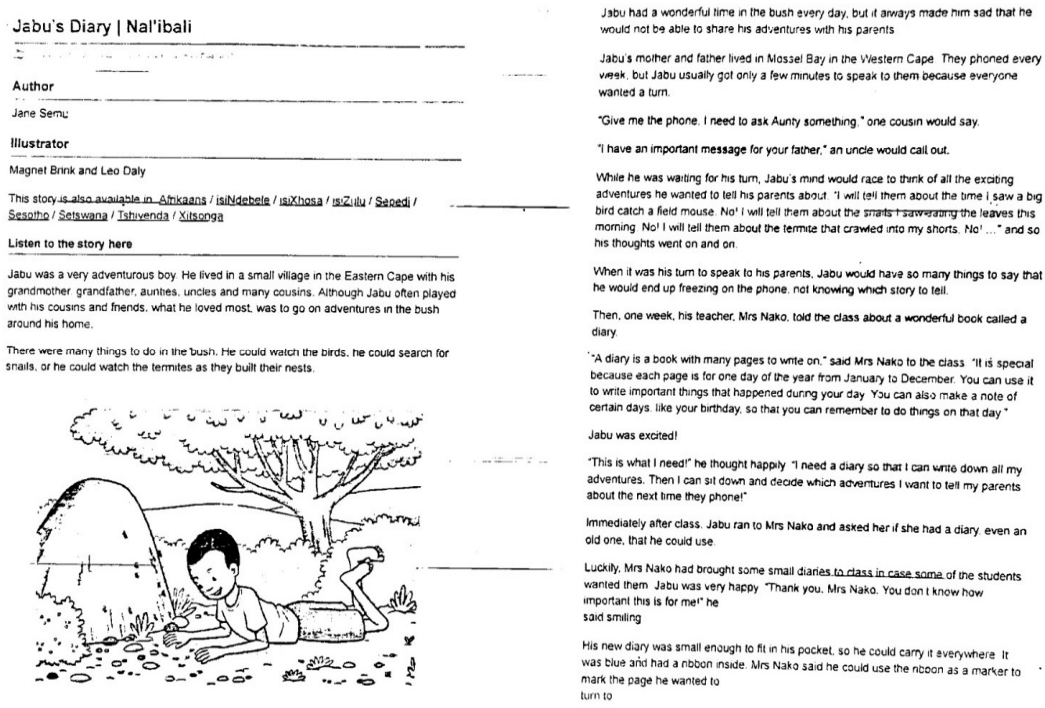
Week 8

The Plan

For this session I planned to serve refreshments as I have in previous sessions. I planned a pre-reading drawing activity that links with the content of the story this week. The story for this session was sourced from "Nal'ibali"[3] and is titled 'Jabu's Diary' (Source: Semu, n.d.)

Since I planned the session for enjoyment, I did not develop in depth questions for the post-reading. In my reflections I revealed and assumption that, *"I selected a very simple text that learners can comprehend on their own."* When I think about this statement now, I realise that I struggle to relate with the difficulties learners face. Since I am long past struggles with reading proficiency in my own life, I have lost sight of the fact that at some point in the learning process everyone struggles. Just because a task seems easy to me does not mean it is easy for the struggling learners.

[3] Nal'ibali is a South African organisation. They provide a range of stories that learners can connect with. The main goal of this campaign is to cultivate a culture of reading among South African children. Nal'ibali is ultimately a national reading-for-enjoyment campaign.



Jabu's Diary | Nal'ibali

Author

Jane Semu

Illustrator

Magnet Brink and Leo Daly

This story is also available in: Afrikaans / isiNdebele / isiXhosa / isiZulu / Sepedi / Sesotho / Setswana / Tshivenda / Xitsonga

Listen to the story here

Jabu was a very adventurous boy. He lived in a small village in the Eastern Cape with his grandmother, grandfather, aunties, uncles and many cousins. Although Jabu often played with his cousins and friends, what he loved most, was to go on adventures in the bush around his home.

There were many things to do in the bush. He could watch the birds, he could search for snails, or he could watch the termites as they built their nests.

Jabu had a wonderful time in the bush every day, but it always made him sad that he would not be able to share his adventures with his parents.

Jabu's mother and father lived in Mossel Bay in the Western Cape. They phoned every week, but Jabu usually got only a few minutes to speak to them because everyone wanted a turn.

"Give me the phone. I need to ask Aunty something," one cousin would say.

"I have an important message for your father," an uncle would call out.

While he was waiting for his turn, Jabu's mind would race to think of all the exciting adventures he wanted to tell his parents about. "I will tell them about the time I saw a big bird catch a field mouse. No! I will tell them about the snails I saw eating the leaves this morning. No! I will tell them about the termite that crawled into my shorts. No! ..." and so his thoughts went on and on.

When it was his turn to speak to his parents, Jabu would have so many things to say that he would end up freezing on the phone, not knowing which story to tell.

Then, one week, his teacher, Mrs Nako, told the class about a wonderful book called a diary.

"A diary is a book with many pages to write on," said Mrs Nako to the class. "It is special because each page is for one day of the year from January to December. You can use it to write important things that happened during your day. You can also make a note of certain days, like your birthday, so that you can remember to do things on that day."

Jabu was excited!

"This is what I need!" he thought happily. "I need a diary so that I can write down all my adventures. Then I can sit down and decide which adventures I want to tell my parents about the next time they phone!"

Immediately after class, Jabu ran to Mrs Nako and asked her if she had a diary, even an old one, that he could use.

Luckily, Mrs Nako had brought some small diaries to class in case some of the students wanted them. Jabu was very happy. "Thank you, Mrs Nako. You don't know how important this is for me!" he said smiling.

His new diary was small enough to fit in his pocket, so he could carry it everywhere. It was blue and had a ribbon inside. Mrs Nako said he could use the ribbon as a marker to mark the page he wanted to turn to.

Figure 9: ***Reading Material (Jabu's Diary)***

The Execution

I began the session with an icebreaker. Learners were given refreshments and a small break before we began. As a pre reading activity I asked learners if they know what a diary is. All of them were familiar with the concept because they have written diary entries in English early in the year. I then asked, *"If you had your dream diary, what would the cover look like?"* Learners then drew their dream diaries. They were given colour markers and pencils to make their drawing more interesting.

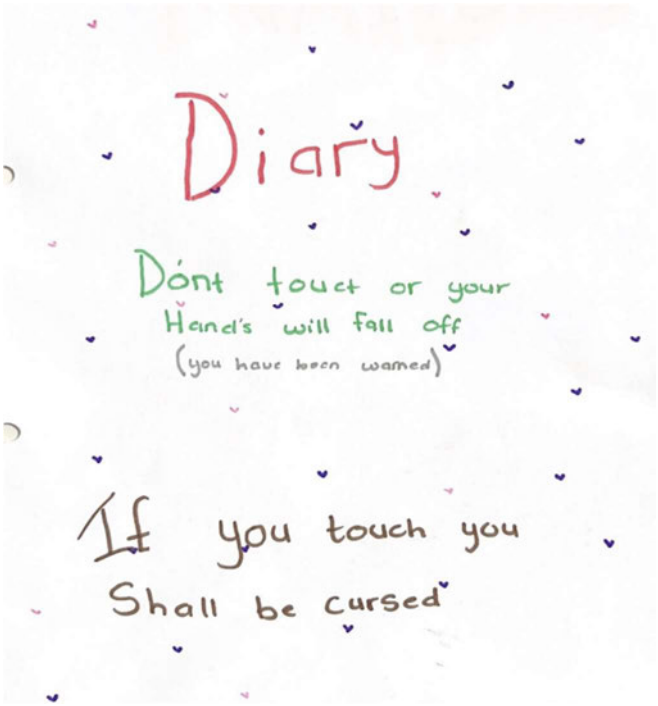


Figure 10: ***Learners' Diary Covers***

I then began the reading without giving learners a copy. I wanted them to hear the story and visualise the events before giving them a copy to read independently. Learners did not seem to struggle with the reading and there was no peer involvement during the reading – in previous sessions peers would assist one another where reading errors were made. In this session although few errors were made, no peers interrupted to assist. Once the reading was complete, I asked learners, *"What was your favourite part of the story?"* Some of the responses received were, *"When Jabu fell in the puddle." "When his teacher gives him the diary." "When Jabu gets excited to speak to his parents." "When Jabu was excited to tell his granny about his new diary."* The session ended with these responses.

Critical Friend Feedback

My critical friend observed that as a pre-reading activity learners drew their own diary covers and *"enjoyed playing with colours."* She described the order in which the activities occurred as *"standard procedure"* which highlights the repeated behaviour. *"There was minimal interference from you or their peers… no pressure in terms of questions."* She implies that while it is important for learners to associate reading with

enjoyment, I have to maintain a balance between *“skills and motivation/enjoyment.”* This seems to be a recurring message throughout this intervention programme.

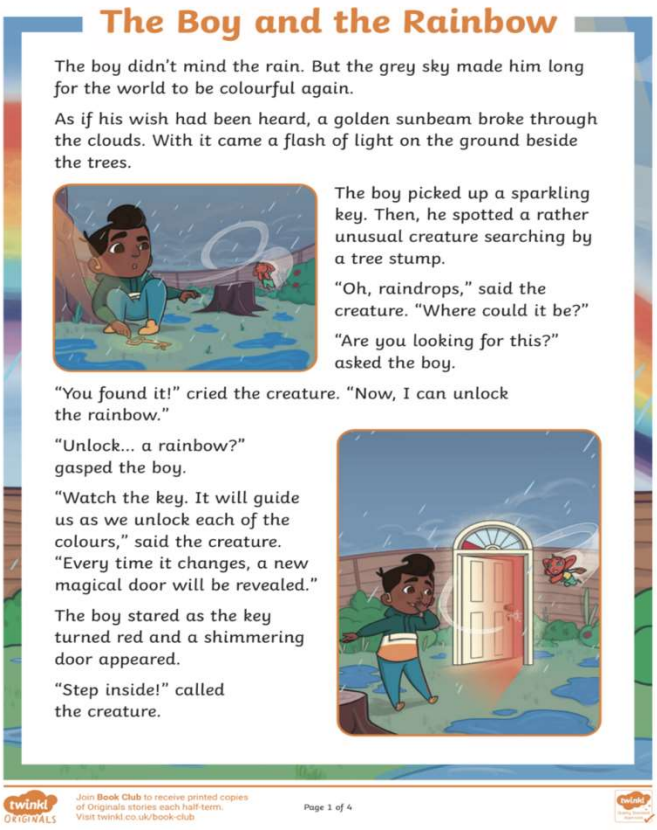
In Retrospect

In my reflection I noted that that learners seem to enjoy practical activities before the reading begins. *“I had hoped to slow down on the crafts because I don’t want to lose sight of the main goal in this programme. I have since realised that a big part of improving reading is reading motivation.”* I decided to solidify crafts as pre-reading activities that relate with the reading materials for each session. One thing I could not account for in this session was the lack of engagement between peers. I wondered whether this lack of engagement was a direct result of my low involvement.

Week 9

The Plan

Since crafting was given a permanent place in this programme, I began to source materials that lend themselves to artsy activities. This week’s story was, “The Boy and the Rainbow’ (Twinkl, n.d.). For the pre-reading activity, I printed some rainbow templates, and learners will be painting them.



The Boy and the Rainbow

The boy didn't mind the rain. But the grey sky made him long for the world to be colourful again.

As if his wish had been heard, a golden sunbeam broke through the clouds. With it came a flash of light on the ground beside the trees.

The boy picked up a sparkling key. Then, he spotted a rather unusual creature searching by a tree stump.

"Oh, raindrops," said the creature. "Where could it be?"

"Are you looking for this?" asked the boy.

"You found it!" cried the creature. "Now, I can unlock the rainbow."

"Unlock... a rainbow?" gasped the boy.

"Watch the key. It will guide us as we unlock each of the colours," said the creature. "Every time it changes, a new magical door will be revealed."

The boy stared as the key turned red and a shimmering door appeared.

"Step inside!" called the creature.

Figure 11: ***Reading Material (The Boy and the Rainbow)***

The Execution

I followed a similar procedure to previous sessions by beginning with 'snacks and socialising' as an icebreaker. The desks were arranged to face one another. Learners enjoyed refreshments while I began to prepare the pre-reading activity. I handed out paint, paintbrushes and templates of the rainbow.

When the pre-reading activity began, learners were asked to paint the rainbows in front of them using the correct colours. While the painting took place, learners enjoyed a debate about whether purple is in the rainbow. Once the paintings were complete, learners each held their rainbows up and revealed them to one another. I then asked some background questions before the reading commenced. I first asked, "*When do we usually see a rainbow?"* Hands shot up and the first learner to respond said, *"When it is hot, and it rains."* I asked learners if anyone disagreed with this answer, but they all agreed so I continued with my questions. I asked, *"What do you think today's story will be about?"* I received answers like, *"The Bible story with the animals!"* and *"A*

rainbow." With these responses, the reading began. I gave each learner a copy of the story. I asked the 'best reader' to start the reading for us. I refer to her as the 'best reader' because she pronounces the words well and has good voice projection. Her weak point seems to be pausing and phrase boundaries. As she made some errors with her pronunciation, her peers corrected her, and she would repeat the words correctly before continuing with the reading. After completing a page, another learner picked up the reading without instruction from me. Once again, peers assisted one another, and I was able to take on the role of an observer/facilitator. When one learner could not understand the words 'melon' an 'mango', another code-switched to isiZulu and translated for her.

Figure 12: ***Painting the Rainbows***

Figure 13: ***The Rainbow Paintings***

Critical friend Feedback

My critical friend observed that in this session learners interacted and assisted one another more than in the previous session (week 8), *"… were very active and assisted one another without being told to."* She noted that the pre-reading painting correlated with the content of the story and the fact that learners were able to make predictions about the text corroborate this statement. My critical friend also noted that, *"Learners were eager to paint, and they argued over the colours of the rainbow which was comical. When the reading took place, they corrected one other's errors as they went along. I noticed that learners were also translating some words for one other."* She commented on my involvement and noted that learners were able to work together while I had an outside role. One positive comment she made was that *"Learners have adjusted to this programme well and they are using skills they were taught to help*

themselves and help each other." In contrast with this positive feedback, she advises me to include post-reading activities. She wrote, *"A few MCQ's could have been beneficial just to check-in with learners and make sure they understood what they have read."*

In Retrospect

In my reflections I agreed with my critical friend, that simple multiple-choice questions might have added something to this session. I worried that my critical friend and I were both getting comfortable with a 'procedure' that entailed: icebreaker, pre-reading, reading and post-reading. It seemed like any time I strayed from this expected code, we both noted that 'something' was missing. This was not my only concern, *"I worry that by making a ritual of asking questions after reading, I will reinforce the idea that reading is only useful when there is a test afterwards."* I proposed a solution - I would try to formulate prompts that can be used for a post-reading discussion. I noted that I would have to be careful because learners are reluctant to speak English for extended periods of time. When they read, they have comfort in that the correct words have been set out for them in the correct order. They become nervous during impromptu English conversation. During my daily interactions with learners, they speak isiZulu to me, and I speak English to them. Although I cannot speak isiZulu well, I understand the language. Learners cannot speak English well, but they understand the language. At a stalemate, our impromptu interactions and conversations continue in this way. I decided to try prompts or talking points in the next session, but I knew I would have to plan these carefully.

Week 10

The Plan

This week I sourced a story called 'Bookworm Babies' (Kanika, 2014). The content of the story relates to the reading programme. The story relates to our own reading programme. The story is about children who love reading so much that they decided to start their own reading group. I planned to work on prompts for a post-reading discussion.

The Execution

During this week, my critical friend was unable to attend the session because of a prior engagement. I continued with the session as I had planned. We began the session with ‘snacks and socialising.’ Learners arranged their desks in two columns, and they enjoyed their refreshments while I organised the pre-reading activity. I handed learners templates of a book and a variety of colour paper. I also gave each learner a pair of googly eyes. *“Learners were asked to cut different size circles with the colour card. They then posted the edge of each circle to another in the form of a worm. They stuck the googly eyes on the worm they had created. They pasted the worms to look like they were emerging from the book template they were given.”* I realised that the word ‘bookworm’ is an idiom and that it may not be obvious that today’s story is about someone who enjoys books. I asked learners, *“Do you know what a bookworm is?”* Some learners seemed to have an answer in mind, but they did not express these answers, so I rephrased the question. I asked, *“Why would we call someone a bookworm?”* One learner explained that a bookworm is someone who enjoys reading.

Since this story is eighteen pages, I read the first two pages slowly and expressively and then asked the learner at the front of the column to read 2 pages and then pass the reading down the column with each learner reading 2 pages. Learners found the story fascinating because elements of the story link with our own reading programme. I took advantage of the links between the story and our lives when formulating prompts for a post-reading discussion. I asked learners, *“Are you a bookworm? Why or why not?”* Some learners laughed aloud, presumably because they find the prospect of loving reading laughable. One learner said he likes to read sometimes but not always. Another said he likes reading more now than she used to. I continued probing, *“What does Tania and Tanisha’s reading group have in common with our reading group? What are the differences?”* One learner answered, *“They had the idea themselves, and not with a teachers help.”* Another learner responded, *“Their group has snacks just like ours!”* In between decisive responses from learners there was indistinct chatter among them. With this post-reading discussion our session ended.

Figure 14: *Book Worms*

In Retrospect

During this reading programme, I have been trying to find a balance between fun crafts and, reading and post-reading activities. In my reflections of week 10's intervention session I wrote, *"I feel like I achieved balance during this session. The artsy aspect was not too time consuming. It was relevant and learners engaged in discussion freely."* I felt that the reading went well. Learners made an effort to read clearly, and their pace has improved. During week 2 of this reading programme, I described learners' reading as 'low' 'slow' and the pauses were 'in the wrong places.' Now in week 10 their reading pace has improved, and their reading is mostly clear with some inconsistencies. The post-reading prompts worked well and, *"… unlike previous lines of questioning, the openness of a discussion meant that learners were able to share more without the pressure of being wrong or right."*

Week 11

The Plan

I planned ‘Golly Grue’s New Hat’ as the text for Week 11. The text was not too complicated, so I planned for learners to attempt the post-reading activities independently. Since the story I planned was about a yellow hat, I planned to ask learners to make yellow hats as a pre-reading activity. In my reflection I wrote, *“I am still trying to work out a way of including some vocabulary into the pre—reading, however it did not work out during week 1. I need to try something different and creative.”*

The Execution

During the icebreaker, learners arranged their desks in two columns facing one another and enjoyed ‘snacks and socialising’. I then prepared for the pre-reading activity by giving learners yellow paper and markers. I carefully instructed learners through the pre-reading activity so that they would make their hats correctly. I wanted the learners’ hats to match the description of the hat in the story, so I guided learners carefully. After drawing patterns on their yellow and fraying the edges to form a brim, learners rolled their hats into a cone shape. I then asked learners to write 4 vocabulary words and definitions on their hats: dwarves, quilted, stitched, and brim.

We then began the reading. I gave each learner a copy of the story and each learner read a portion of a page. As learners read, I asked them to underline the vocabulary words on their hats. I directed learners to check the definitions of these words on their hats if they could not understand the words. The learners then engaged in 2 post-reading activities. First, I allowed them to work together to answer 3 multiple-choice questions. Thereafter, they were given 4 events from the story, and they needed to sequence the events in chronological order.

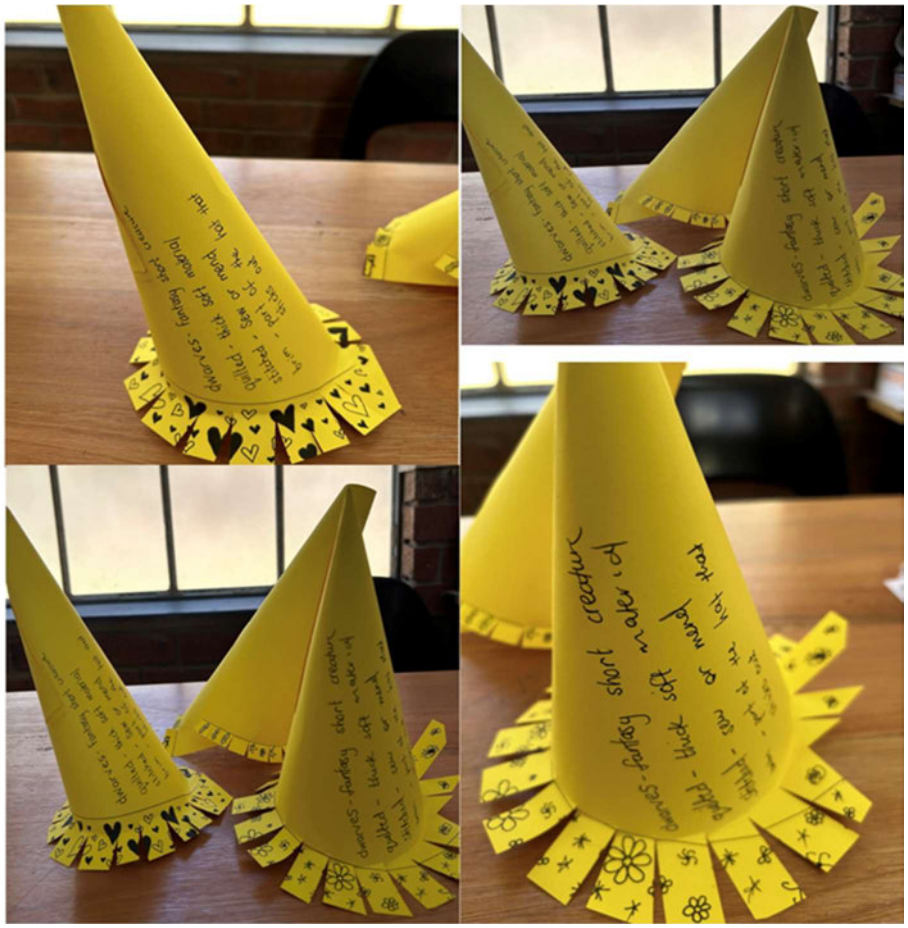


Figure 15: ***Learners' Hats (Golly Grue's New Hat)***

These are some of the hats that were produced by learners during this week's pre-reading activity. I sourced the story 'Golly Grue's New Hat' from k5learning (n.d.).

Critical Friend Feedback

My critical friend was pleased with the pre-reading activity which she described as a *"crafting activity that incorporated vocabulary words and linked to the reading portion of the session".* She noted that learners enjoyed the vocabulary and hat-making activities. She described the story as "funny" and that it was an appropriate difficulty level. Finally, my critical friend commented, *"You facilitated well, you have learnt to balance guiding learners and allowing them to make mistakes without being instructed. It is good to allow learners to work together to decode questions".* The only concern she noted is that I should be wary of selecting texts that are too easy even for learners of this calibre.

In Retrospect

I liked how the pre-reading activity overlapped with the reading and worked together to build learners' vocabulary. Other than the few vocabulary words I was concerned about, this test was very easy. I wrote in my reflections that, *"Throughout this programme I have struggled to maintain a consistent progression of text difficulty. If I could start again, knowing what I know now, I would select all my texts at the start of the programme and sequence them to go from easy to difficult."* As the end of the programme for this year drew closer, I became more perceptive to the lessons that emerged from each session, compared to when the programme started. In my reflections I wrote, *"… I know that in future I will be better equipped to assist learners with reading."*

Week 12

The Plan

To end off the intervention programme for 2023, I planned a folktale titled, 'Anansi and Snake'. I selected this tale because I thought that the learners would relate to it. I planned to use a series of images to make a story board displaying the story of Anansi (the spider) and Snake.

The Execution

During the icebreaker I informed learners that Week 12 was, *"… sadly the last of our intervention sessions for the year."* Learners sat facing one another as done in the previous sessions. I then pasted the images for the storyboard on my chalkboard and asked learners *"What do you think today's story is about?"* Learners are familiar with folktales because they studied 10 throughout the year. When learners gave their predictions, they gave the titles of folktales they did in the English classroom. I received answers like, *"Why Monkey Fears Leopard"* and *"The Horned Animals and the Hyena."* I explained to learners that the story would be about a naughty and mischievous spider who tricked a snake. I did not give learners the story at first. I completed the reading as slowly and expressively as possible. Learners enjoyed the story and had a hearty laugh at the end. I wanted them to listen carefully to the story and use the images on

the board to visualise the events and understand what took place. I then gave learners copies of the story and asked each learner to read a portion of a page.

As a post-reading activity, I felt it was important to revisit learners' feelings about reading and, *"… do a final metaphor drawing showing how they feel now…".* I asked them to make a final drawing showing how they feel about our 'reading group' and the work we have done. While learners completed their drawings, I collected them and did not share them with anyone at that moment - later on I shared the drawings with my critical friend because I felt she should know how the interventions have impacted learners and her feedback and analysis were very important to my reading programme. The images from this session are shared and analysed in Chapter 5.

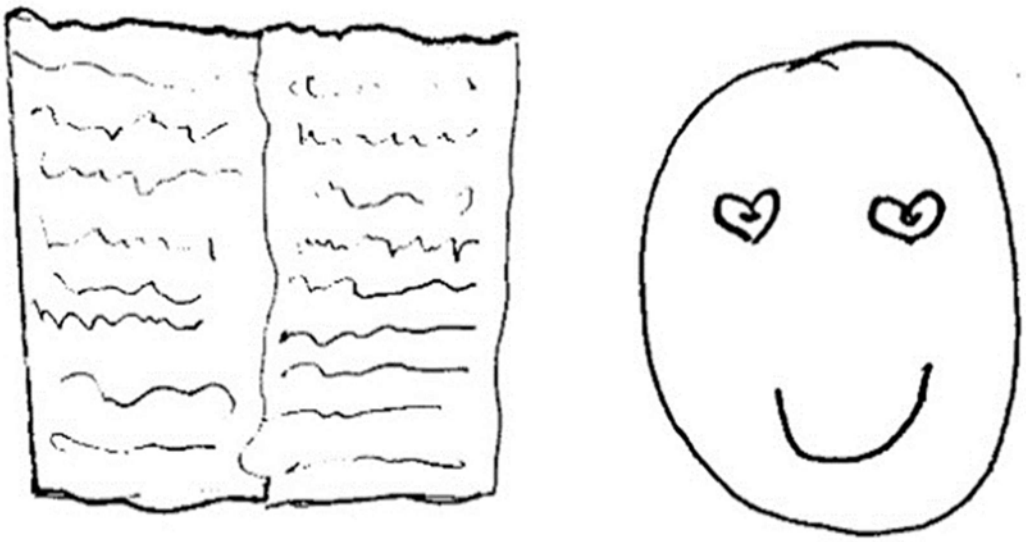


Figure 16: ***Heart Eyes for Books***

This image depicts a book and beside it a smiley face with hearts for eyes. This learner is viewing reading with a fresh, positive perspective.

Critical Friend Feedback

In her observation schedule, my critical friend described the final session for the year as, *"… light and appropriate for the closing of these interventions."* She noted that folktales are a familiar text type for learners and that they were comfortable with the text. I asked my critical friend to reflect on our relationship throughout this programme by taking her attention off the reading activities and looking at how we worked as a team. She constructed a metaphor drawing in response to my request, and this drawing, titled 'Birds of a Feather Flock Together'.

In Retrospect

Now that I have reached the conclusion of these intervention sessions, there is one thought that stands out. This intervention was not easy when I tried to stick to a rigid set of rules. The approach I used is probably not what is seen in the typical classroom or during typical reading interventions. I did what I felt was right for my learners. When something did not work, I tried something new. I have come to see that helping learners does not have to 'look right' to be right. The most important thing is to be perceptive to the needs of the learners. I drew a final metaphor drawing to sum up my journey.

My final metaphor drawing is titled 'The Road is Long'. This drawing is a visual depiction of the lessons I learnt during the intervention programme, and it is thoroughly analysed in Chapter 5. I learnt that ultimately the road to being a better teacher and being able to assist learners in the best way possible is tricky. It is not a straight road that can be laid out from theories and pre-packaged intervention programmes. It is a journey that each teacher must venture on their own and build it up to what it needs to be for their environment and their learners.

4.3. Conclusion

Chapter 4 provided a comprehensive account of the unfolding events during each week of the 12-week reading intervention programme. It presented a candid and detailed exploration of the intervention programme, laying bare the successes, challenges, and the evolving dynamics within the classroom. The weekly narrative unfolds with transparency, presenting my plans, session executions, feedback from my critical friend, personal reflections, and even the creative expressions of the participants. The insights gained from this chapter set the stage for a deeper exploration of patterns, themes, and meaningful conclusions in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 5

Data Analysis

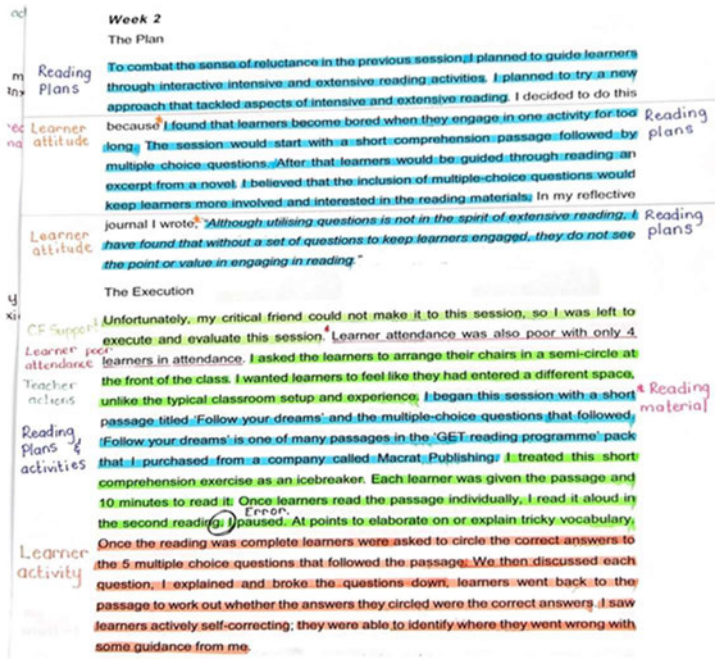
From Raw Data to Rich Insights

5.1. Introduction

Chapter 5 delves into applying thematic analysis to the data presented in Chapter 4. Through systematic coding, initial observations evolve into distinct themes and sub-themes. This chapter aims to elucidate underlying patterns within the dataset and harness these patterns to unearth gems of insight. The exploration of these patterns serves as the compass guiding the formulation of meaningful conclusions, adding depth and significance to the research findings.

5.2. Thematic analysis

I began my thematic analysis by familiarising myself with the data generated. To make the coding process more manageable, I assigned a different coloured highlighter to each code I identified. As I made observations, I wrote notes in the margins of each page.



Week 2

The Plan

Reading Plans

To combat the sense of reluctance in the previous session, I planned to guide learners through interactive intensive and extensive reading activities. I planned to try a new approach that tackled aspects of intensive and extensive reading. I decided to do this because I found that learners become bored when they engage in one activity for too long. The session would start with a short comprehension passage followed by multiple choice questions. After that learners would be guided through reading an excerpt from a novel. I believed that the inclusion of multiple-choice questions would keep learners more involved and interested in the reading materials. In my reflective journal I wrote: "*Although utilising questions is not in the spirit of extensive reading, I have found that without a set of questions to keep learners engaged, they do not see the point or value in engaging in reading.*"

Learner attitude

Reading plans

Learner attitude

Reading plans

The Execution

Unfortunately, my critical friend could not make it to this session, so I was left to execute and evaluate this session. Learner attendance was also poor with only 4 learners in attendance. I asked the learners to arrange their chairs in a semi-circle at the front of the class. I wanted learners to feel like they had entered a different space, unlike the typical classroom setup and experience. I began this session with a short passage titled 'Follow your dreams' and the multiple-choice questions that followed. 'Follow your dreams' is one of many passages in the 'GET reading programme' pack that I purchased from a company called Macrat Publishing. I treated this short comprehension exercise as an icebreaker. Each learner was given the passage and 10 minutes to read it. Once learners read the passage individually, I read it aloud in the second reading. I paused, At points to elaborate on or explain tricky vocabulary. Once the reading was complete learners were asked to circle the correct answers to the 5 multiple choice questions that followed the passage. We then discussed each question. I explained and broke the questions down, learners went back to the passage to work out whether the answers they circled were the correct answers. I saw learners actively self-correcting; they were able to identify where they went wrong with some guidance from me.

Learner poor attendance

Teacher actions

Reading material

Reading Plans & activities

Learner activity

Figure 17: *Coding*

The notes that I made in the margins became my initial codes. Once all the data had been coded, I wrote the codes down as a list and grouped them according to their similarities. The figures below display the initial groupings.

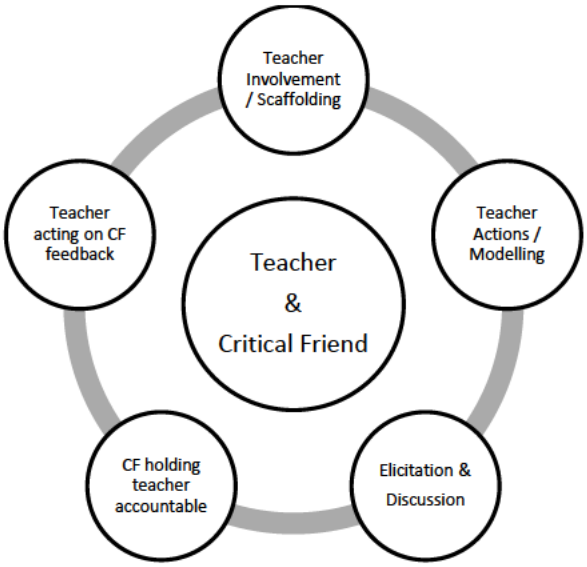


Figure 18: ***Group 1***

The first group of codes centred around my critical friend and I me.

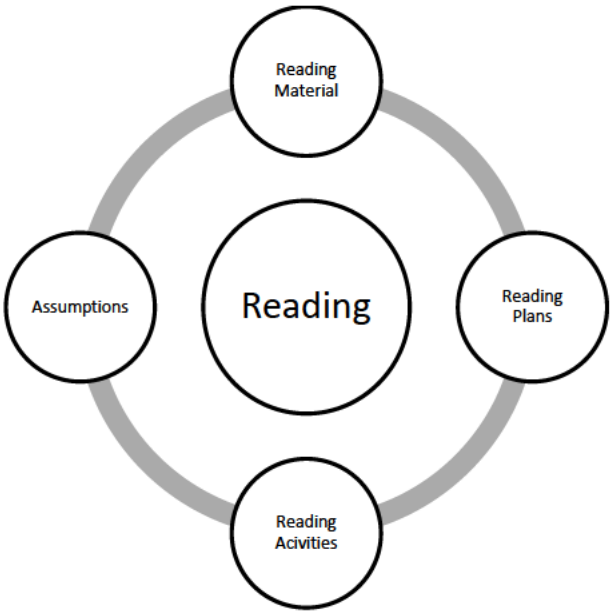


Figure 19: ***Group 2***

The next group pertains to reading. This group included the choice of reading materials, the activities planned and how I justified these materials and plans.

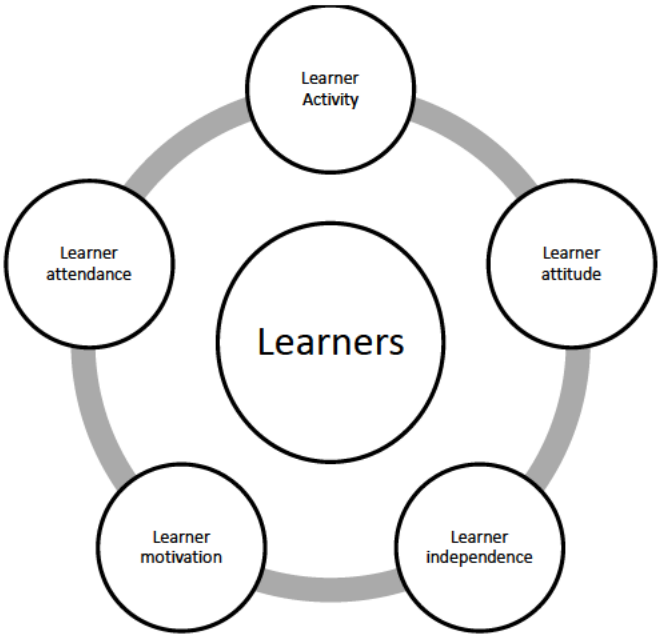


Figure 20: *Group 3*

The final group of codes concentrated on learners and how they view reading. I focussed on learners' attitudes towards reading and what motivated them to engage in reading.

The next step was to re-evaluate my initial themes based on the similarities between the bubbles in each mind map. For example, the mind map surrounding 'teacher and critical friend' presents 'teacher involvement', 'teacher scaffolding,' 'teacher actions' 'teacher modelling.' These sub-themes can all be collapsed to form one major theme, 'teacher involvement'. At the end of this process, I found that the codes could be grouped according to 3 major themes: teacher activity, reading material, and learner activity.

5.3. Reading Material

There were moments when my actions jeopardised the implementation of the reading intervention programme. At times I displayed a lack of careful consideration, thorough analysis, or prudent thinking in decision-making processes. I made some hasty and impulsive choices without taking into account the needs of the learners. I was sometimes guided by assumptions instead of the facts and the circumstances. At times, I made choices without providing sound justification for them. In these instances, my reading intervention sessions suffered. There were instances wherein I chose reading materials without considering the reading abilities of the learners or the relevance of the content in learners' lives. This impacted the intervention programme negatively. During the planning stage of Week 1, I wrote:

> *… learners will be allowed to select the article which interests them, and then they will be given time to read it. After they have read it once, I will ask them to read it again, highlighting any words they do not know. I will use these words to create a vocabulary list in a later session.*

Since this was the planning stage, I should have been able to explain the rationale behind choosing news articles as reading materials. I also provided no elaboration on the selected tasks which followed the reading. During the execution I tried to justify my choice in the words,

> *I invited the learners to look at each article and choose one that best interests them to read. Each learner selected an article and returned to their seat. I asked participants to read their articles slowly and enjoy them because they chose a story they liked.*

The fact is, I had chosen the twenty articles that learners made their selections from. Although they chose the article that best interested them, their choices were ultimately curated by me. If I had reflected more deeply and addressed these unanswered questions, the outcome below would have been different.

> *I now realise that these texts were simply too complex… I need to plan more carefully how I will scaffold learners.*

Perhaps because of her experience, my critical friend was very perceptive in that she quickly identified the issue with my reading material selection, and she did not hesitate to point it out as indicated in her observation.

> *I think that learners complied but did not necessarily understand the articles. The materials do not accommodate learners with minimal English language abilities… [they] would have been excellent for learners with better reading competency. News topics… [are] used in comprehension texts for exams, so the effort to expose them to the useful vocabulary is noble, however… does not meet the needs of the learners.*

There were instances where my justification for choosing particular reading materials was misguided. I started well during the planning stage of Week 2. My justification for including a short comprehension passage was valid as indicated in my journal.

> *The session started with a short comprehension passage followed by multiple choice questions. After that, learners were guided through reading an excerpt from a novel. I believed that the inclusion of multiple-choice questions would keep learners more involved and interested in the reading materials.*

However, my decision to include 'The Merchant of Venice' during this session was questionable. I attempted to explain the reading materials and activities I had selected in the words:

> *I chose the novel 'The Merchant of Venice'. It is read by grade 9 learners and is readily available in the school.*

On deeper reflection, I realised that the first issue with this is that the text is suited to grade 9 learners. The grade 8 learners who attended this reading intervention programme, do not read at an appropriate grade level, which means choosing a text that is meant for grade 9 learners was nonsensical. The second issue is that choosing a text based on its convenience is hardly a sound basis for a reading intervention programme. The school may have limited resources but choosing texts that will dishearten struggling readers should not have been an option. The outcome of my poor decision-making culminated in a very quiet classroom as my reflection indicates:

> *I asked each learner to read 5 lines from the novel. "Their voices were low, and the reading was slow. The pauses were in all the wrong places, and it was clear that the learners did not understand the story." It was very quiet in my class, and I felt uncomfortable. I know that if learners cannot understand what they read, they will not enjoy reading.*

I reflected candidly on the assumptions I had made regarding the material I selected.

> *I selected a very simple text that learners can comprehend on their own." When I think about this statement now, I realise that I struggle to relate with the difficulties learners face. Since I am long past struggles with reading proficiency in my own life, I have lost sight of the fact that at some point in the learning process everyone struggles. Just because a task seems easy to me does not mean it is easy for struggling learners.*

Concerns were raised by my critical friend regarding my text choices. She believed that learners may have complied with my requests during the session but did not necessarily comprehend the articles. She noted that the materials were not suitable for learners with minimal English language abilities, stating that they would be more appropriate for those with better reading competency. Additionally, she pointed out that while using news topics as reading materials is beneficial for exposing learners to useful vocabulary, it may not meet the specific needs of the students.

The metaphor drawings produced by the learners reiterate their fear of reading, and I did not make it any easier. As can be seen from the sample of drawings below, the metaphor drawings learners produced reveal negative perceptions of reading. Reading seems to spark feelings of fear, distress, and confusion. The maze metaphor drawing reveals learners' sense of disorientation when it comes to reading. The maze also implies that learners need some direction to help them navigate their reading difficulties. In all cases, learners drew pictures that expressed negative attitudes towards reading. The drawings learners produced all depict either sadness, confusion, distress, or fear, as can be seen from the sample below.

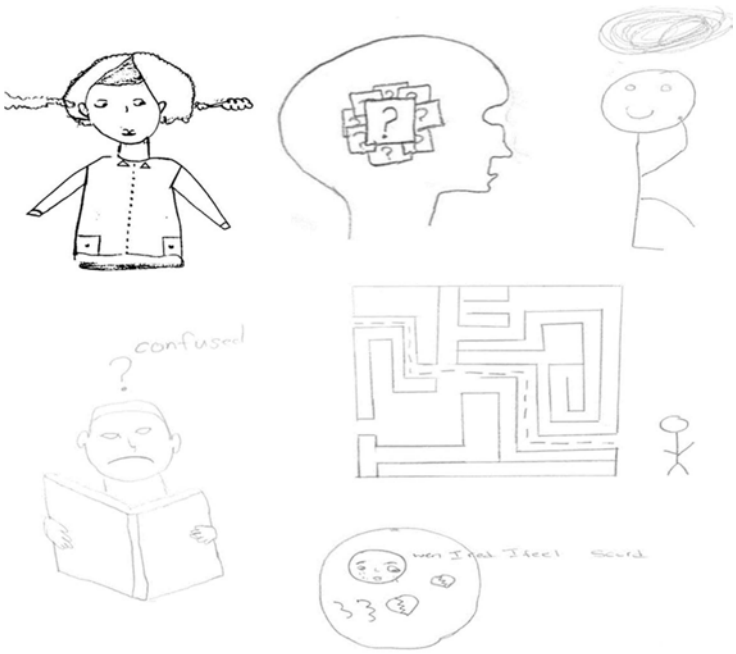


Figure 21: ***When I Read, I Feel Sad***

Figure 22: ***When I Read, I Feel Stressed***

I realised I needed to be more mindful of the learners' feelings and capabilities. My metaphor drawing 'Lost in A Wasteland' also depicted my feelings of despair and insecurity, and I realised that I had to rethink my reading intervention strategies. I crafted a metaphor drawing to express my own sense of confusion.

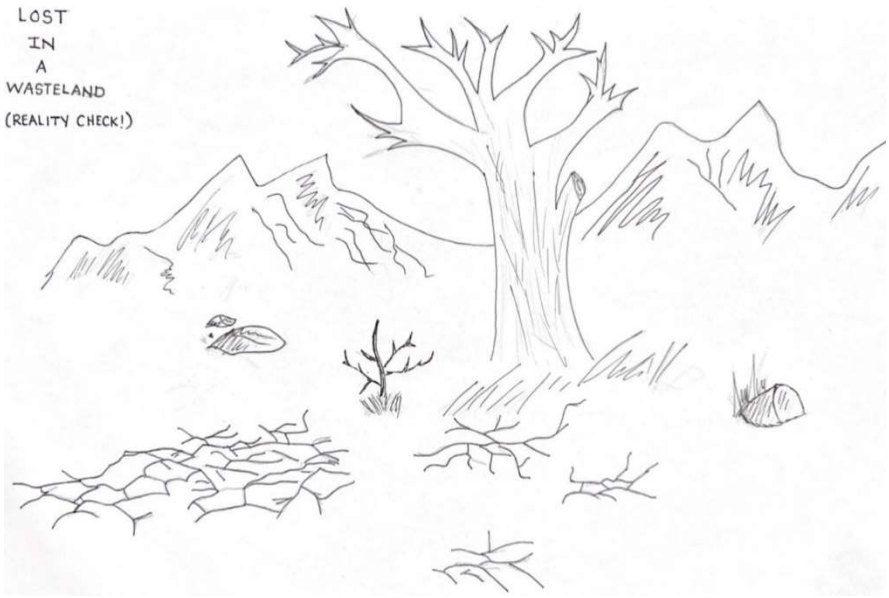


Figure 23: ***Lost in a Wasteland***

My metaphor drawing, ‘Lost in a Wasteland,’ symbolises a sense of being overwhelmed, experiencing despair, and navigating through a challenging and desolate landscape. The dry desert elements in the drawing signify feelings of isolation, confusion, and a lack of direction. The wasteland metaphor drawing also represents my perceived failure of the reading interventions. At this point, the intervention programme felt like a barren and difficult terrain that needed careful navigation. I experienced a shift from initial optimism to a feeling of being lost and unsure, prompting the need to reassess and rethink my reading intervention strategy in response to concerns raised and the challenges faced during the sessions.

My metaphor drawing, ‘Lost in a Wasteland,’ symbolises a sense of being overwhelmed, experiencing despair, and navigating through a challenging and desolate landscape. The dry desert elements in the drawing signify feelings of isolation, confusion, and a lack of direction. The wasteland metaphor drawing also represents my perceived failure of the reading interventions. At this point, the intervention programme felt like a barren and difficult terrain that needed careful navigation. I experienced a shift from initial optimism to a feeling of being lost and unsure, prompting the need to reassess and rethink my reading intervention strategy in response to concerns raised and the challenges faced during the sessions.

5.3.2. "I will not allow myself to be overwhelmed with endless reading materials

To see the reading programme through, I had to be very careful and thoughtful when planning activities and reading materials for learners. When I started holding myself accountable for my choices, I saw an improvement in my implementation of the reading intervention programme. In my journal I wrote:

> *I have decided that going forwards, I will not allow myself to be overwhelmed with endless reading materials. I will stick to simple readings with simple questions. I will not discourage learners by choosing materials that are too difficult.*

The evolution of the reading intervention programme came when I adapted my strategies, considered text difficulty, and planned engaging activities based on reflections. I 'got to know' my learners and started to see their strengths and weaknesses, and what I could do in response, to meet their needs. I did not know it at the time, but I had learnt to engage in responsive pedagogy by adapting my strategies to meet the needs of the learners (Caingcoy, 2023). Responsive pedagogy is a learner centred approach that strives to create a trustful, caring, classroom environment, acknowledging that students learn differently. Many of my actions during the 12-week intervention programme resonate with the responsive pedagogy's principle of tailoring instruction to diverse learning needs (Finn, 2023). I learnt from "Wasteland" of Week 2 and empowered myself. I acknowledged that the texts I had chosen previously were too lengthy and complex. I revisited the idea of using news articles with a fresh outlook and a solid plan.

> *I plan to adapt and paraphrase a news article on fast fashion. I knew that teenagers are very interested in trendy clothing, and I can spin the activities to make the text relevant to them. "Learners will be guided through the reading. I will ask pre-reading questions and allow them to make predictions about the text. I will read the text first and provide explanations, then I will divide the text among learners, so they read aloud. As a post-reading activity, I will spark a discussion relating the article to our lives.'' I proposed some questions that I would ask as a post-reading activity.*

The execution seemed to run smoothly. Instead of guessing and assuming, I made decisions with a clear vision of what I hoped to accomplish. I had set myself up for success during this session and it paid off, which is evident in the following:

> *The text might have been too difficult for learners to manage on their own. I feel that the guidance I provided made a big difference. I enjoyed the discussion at the end of the reading. I could see that the article was made, 'real' to learners.*

This aligns with Sociocultural Theory's notion of scaffolding, where a more knowledgeable person assists the learner, gradually withdrawing support as the learner becomes more competent. This highlights the importance of guidance, participation, and relevance in teaching, which are consistent with the principles of scaffolding (Peppler, Davis-Soylu & Dahn, 2021). There is an overlap between the principles of responsive pedagogy and the Sociocultural Theory. Responsive pedagogy involves providing support and scaffolding for learners. Both emphasise the role of social interactions, the importance of a supportive environment, and the significance of a knowledgeable other in facilitating learning and cognitive development (Dahliana, 2019).

I came to a turning point in the reading intervention programme. I attribute this to the integration of an arts-based approach, aligning with the changing nature of education. I incorporate arts-based approaches consistently throughout the reading activities, enhancing engagement and making reading tasks exciting (Emilda, 2020). I introduced arts and crafts to the reading intervention programme. I had a clear objective of using arts and crafts to capture the attention of the learners. I knew that the activities would have to work with the contents of the reading material, so I was careful when sourcing materials. From this point, moving forwards, I focused on sourcing simple reading materials that I could relate to a creative activity.

According to Cremin (2022) creativity is important in the context of teaching reading. Reading should develop competence, confidence, and creativity in learners. Dry didactic approaches do not accomplish these goals. Innovative teaching methods, such as arts-based teaching, prevent monotony while reaching the needs of different learning styles. There is a growing dialogue on using arts-based pedagogy in qualitative research. It emphasises the value of creative ways of knowing and meaning-making through the senses (Campbell & Prinsloo-Marcus, 2020). Arts-based

teaching has a positive impact on learner engagement, pride in learning, self-esteem and social skills. It fosters a tolerant classroom environment that promotes the inclusion of learners facing challenges with reading (Ghritchenko & Nesterenko, 2016).

> *I sourced some reading materials that lend themselves to different art and crafting activities. This week I will be giving learners materials to make their own bracelets as a pre-reading activity. The text I have selected for this session is a short story called 'The Bracelet'.*

In the end, my critical friend was pleased with the reading material and especially the activities set out before and after reading. She noted how excited learners were toe gage in beadwork which seamlessly fit with reading. She felt that the activities worked together to spark motivation and interest that resulted in better reading engagement. In my own reflective journal, I wrote:

> *Based on the feedback from learners and my critical friend, I was proud of what I achieved in this session. I had come a long way from when I started the programme.*

I decided to put a pause on arts and crafts because I did not want to lose focus on the main point of this programme. I knew learners were experiencing challenges with the group project they had to do for English. Learners struggle with group work due to various factors, including individual differences, communication challenges, and unequal participation (Mannix & Neale, 2005). Studies highlight the importance of fostering effective group dynamics, clear roles, and communication skills to address challenges in collaborative projects. Teachers play a vital role in facilitating group work, providing guidance, and implementing strategies to enhance the overall experience for learners (Westberg & Jason, 2004). Integrative teaching involves connecting different subjects and skills to create a more holistic learning experience for students. Integrated approaches focus on real-world applications, encouraging students to see the interconnectedness of knowledge across various disciplines. The story becomes a tool for not only enhancing language skills but also addressing a broader social situation that spans across multiple subjects—and that is group work (Russell & Zembylas, 2007). Teaching across the curriculum aims to promote a more interconnected and meaningful learning experience for students. The decision to incorporate a story with a relatable protagonist transcends the boundaries of a

traditional English curriculum. The themes and experiences explored in the literature have relevance to other subjects and aspects of the learners' lives. This cross-curricular relevance enriches the educational experience by demonstrating the interconnectedness of different disciplines (Fisher & Williams, 2012). Scaffolding involves building on learners' prior knowledge. By selecting a story with a protagonist that learners could resonate with. I leveraged their existing experiences and knowledge to create a bridge between what they already know and the reading content (Puntambekar, 2022). I maximised on this and sourced a story with a protagonist that learners could resonate with. In her observations, my critical friend noted that my choice of text was topical. She wrote:

> *"Learners were asked pre-reading questions that resulted in a conversation.... Listening carefully and asking learners follow-up questions makes learners share more and open up about their experiences." I had been working on building a relationship with learners… I had made progress in that regard.*

My emphasis on creating a supportive learning environment, incorporating engaging activities and adapting strategies aligns with responsive pedagogy. I built positive relationships and an inclusive community where learners felt safe and comfortable to share and engage with reading. Teachers play a significant role in influencing learner motivation by leading interactive communication (Kumi-Yeboah & Amponsah, 2023). I used my experiences over the week to educate myself about the learners present in my classroom. This gave me a deeper understanding of communication styles and learning preferences. There is also an emphasis placed on language and the need for teachers to communicate in ways that align with non-dominant cultural norms (Miriam et al., 2023). In this way, I unwittingly engaged in responsive pedagogy by conceding my traditional role as a teacher in favour of a more flexible definition of 'teacher'.

> *I sourced a story called 'Bookworm Babies.' The content of the story related to the reading programme. The story relates to our own reading programme. The story is about children who love reading so much that they decided to start their own reading group.*

The benefit of selecting topical reading materials is undeniable. In my reflection after the session, I wrote:

> *I felt that the reading went well. Learners made an effort to read clearly, and their pace has improved. During week 2 of this reading programme, I described learners' reading as 'low' 'slow' and the pauses were 'in the wrong places. In week 10 their reading pace has improved, and their reading is mostly clear with some inconsistencies.*

At this point, I had developed some skills. When I elaborated on my choice of text, my words below deceptively indicate that perhaps I did not put much thought into my selection.

> *I planned 'Golly Grue's New Hat' as the text for Week 11. The text was not too complicated, so I planned for learners to attempt the post-reading activities independently.*

I put thought into my selection, and this is evident as the statement above reveals 2 things. Firstly, I took into consideration the difficulty level of the text - unlike during the earlier sessions. Secondly, I had a plan before making my selection final. I was now selecting texts based on how well they would work with my planned activities. For instance, during Week 9, my critical friend wrote:

> *A few MCQ's could have been beneficial just to check-in with learners and make sure they understood what they have read.*

I adjusted my thinking and planned to find a text that lent itself to a creative pre-reading activity and was manageable for learners so they could respond to post-reading activities. In my reflective journal, I acknowledged that I previously struggled to maintain a consistent progression of text difficulty. I expressed that,

> *If I could start again, knowing what I know now, I would select all my texts at the start of the programme and sequence them to go from easy to difficult.*

It is evident from my reflections that I identified areas for improvement in the reading intervention programme. Acknowledging the impact of text complexity and considering learners' needs are crucial steps. My approach to the reading intervention programme evolved over time. In the end, I demonstrated growth in planning and execution from initial challenges to a more thoughtful approach. I established a balance between simplicity in reading materials and engaging activities. I also recognised the importance of connecting texts to learners' experiences for better engagement.

5.4. Teacher Activity

5.4.1. "I don't think learners can cope with this amount of independence"

In my literature review, I discussed the Sociocultural Theory and concepts that relate to it. The Sociocultural perspective stresses the significance of social interaction in the learning process, particularly the importance of dialogue between learners and significant others, such as teachers, peers, and parents (Verenkina, 2008). In this section, two concepts of the Sociocultural Theory are brought to the fore: ZPD and MKO. The ZPD refers to a learner's potential level of development determined by what they can do under guidance and with collaboration from an MKO. These two concepts highlight my duty, as a teacher and MKO, to create reading experiences that push learners beyond their independent capabilities by providing them additional support. While it is constructive to give learners opportunities to complete difficult tasks, it is equally important to work with learners, making sure they have enough background knowledge and ensuring that no one is left behind (Hennig & Kirova, 2012). At times, particularly during the early stages of the reading intervention programme, I gave learners tasks and provided minimal support.

During the very first reading intervention session I held with the learners, I should have provided infinite support and scaffolding for learners as they began their journey towards greater independence. This is not what happened, as is evident in my execution:

> *I observed their reading without interrupting. After 20 minutes, I asked the learners to stop reading. I requested they reread the article, underlining any words they did not know.*

If I look back at how I started the session, there was no pre-reading activity. While learners crafted metaphor drawings, these drawings had no direct relation to the reading activities of the day. There was no pre-reading discussion or learner predictions about the text. If I consider what I could have done to scaffold learners, it only highlights the impracticality of giving learners different readings. Each learner had their own article, discussing different content with different vocabulary demands. It would have been a real challenge to craft a pre-reading activity that reached the needs of each learner and each reading. Thus, I did not provide

learners with sufficient background knowledge before they began their reading. During the execution stage, I observed learners and did not intervene at any point. This comes back to the impracticality of the plan. I could not read each article with every learner, intervening where they got stuck, checking for understanding and highlighting vocabulary words. For this reason, I did *nothing.* I also could not create a universal set of questions regarding the content of each article, so instead I asked each learner to share what their article was about. In my lesson summary I noted,

> *Verbal responses were very poor. Learners answered in as few words as possible or not at all. There was a lot of eliciting from me.*

The fact that there was elicitation from me might masquerade as 'scaffolding' but, it was actually the result of insufficient scaffolding. Learners did not understand what they read, and as a result, they could not answer the question I had posed. This prompting me to ask more questions. My critical friend observed the lack of support given by me and noted in her feedback that the scaffolding in the session was not sufficient.

Scaffolding is a proactive and well-planned educational strategy that aims to support students as they learn new concepts and skills. This process should involve the careful design and implementation of instructional activities, resources, and guidance to facilitate learners' development. Scaffolding should be aligned with clear learning objectives. It is vital to have clear objectives of what learners need to achieve, so that the scaffolding activities are purposeful and directly contribute to the desired learning outcomes. Scaffolding should take various forms, including modelling, questioning, providing prompts, offering hints, and offering feedback (Gabillon & Ailincai, 2016). A well-planned scaffolding approach incorporates a variety of these techniques to cater to different learning styles and preferences. During this stage of my reading intervention programme, I had not grasped these concepts yet. Scaffolding is proactive, not reactive and by the time I had realised learners were confused, it was too late to go back. My critical friend offered me feedback in response to what she observed.

> *She commented on my actions during the session and found that the scaffolding in this session was not sufficient. She recommended I take a more involved role "to set learners up before they read on their own." She also wrote, "At this stage,*

> *I don't think learners can cope with this amount of independence… need more involvement until they can manage… on their own." Her final recommendation was that I "have a step-by-step plan for guiding learners through the reading."*

In my reflections, I concurred with my critical friends' feedback. The poor choice of reading material, the impractical plan, and the lack of structured activities left learners confused, and me frustrated. My desperate attempt to salvage the session by asking numerous follow-up questions showed that I realised where I had gone wrong and was flailing. In the following session, I began a slow progression towards 'getting it right'. On one hand, we shared a successful reading of the short comprehension passage, 'Follow Your Dreams', but on the other hand, I made a mistake by including 'The Merchant of Venice' as an extensive reading activity. Since my focus here is on instances where learners were not provided sufficient scaffolding, I will focus on my engagement during the reading of 'The Merchant of Venice'. My reflection on the execution of this part of the session is scant, as is evident in what follows.

> *This novel was meant to be enjoyed by learners and not tested with questions in any way. I gave some background about the main characters and allowed each learner to read 5 lines aloud. No questions followed; however, I did stop learners periodically to check-in and elaborate as I did not want any learners to be left behind.*

Aside from this text being too complex for learners of this calibre, there was no extensive groundwork laid before reading. There was no introduction to the geographical and historical setting of the tale, there was no discussion of the themes and lessons that this story would teach. I allowed each learner to read 5 lines and did not ask any questions after the reading was complete.

Pre-reading activities are vital because they provide an opportunity to tap into learners' existing knowledge related to the story's background. Activating prior knowledge helps create connections and provides a foundation upon which new information can be built, aligning with the scaffolding approach. (Wright, 2012). The absence of scaffolding hampers their ability to connect prior knowledge to new information, hindering the learning process. (Peppler, Davis-Soylu & Dahn, 2021).

> *“Their voices were low, and the reading was slow. The pauses were in all the wrong places, and it was clear that the learners did not understand the story.”* It was very quiet in my class, and I felt uncomfortable. I know that if learners cannot understand what they read, they will not enjoy reading.

Although extensive reading is meant to instil reading for enjoyment, my execution was wrong. Reading 5 lines of a novel that learners did not understand does not constitute extensive reading. Using the phrase, ‘extensive reading’ immediately gave me the impression that there can be no testing or questioning after the reading, and so I used this as an excuse to justify my lack of structured post-reading activities. Ultimately, learners were not guided through this reading and the results left us all in distress. Insufficient scaffolding in education has clear consequences that impact students' ability to understand and engage with new concepts. When support structures are lacking, students struggle, leading to reduced participation, increased confusion, and frustration.

When I introduced arts and crafts to the reading intervention programme, the session was largely successful and well-scaffolded, some instances stuck out as oversights. I believe that the introduction of crafting was facilitated well, and the crafting activity related well with the text. However, the text was not just about the bracelets. During the pre-reading activity, I asked learners about their prior knowledge related to World War 2. I wrote in my diary,

> *They had already learnt about it in history, so they had the background knowledge necessary to understand the short story.*

It was an oversight to assume that learners had sufficient knowledge to understand the setting of the story. Although most learners in the group said they had the background knowledge of World War 2, this does not necessarily mean the whole group recalled it well. The confirmation from the group should not have been used as a cop-out, but rather as a bonus. Learners may have needed more background information to have a fuller vision of the story. While drawing on prior knowledge is beneficial, I might not have provided sufficient guidance on key concepts related to the short story "The Bracelet." A more structured introduction to the historical context could have supported better comprehension. Other than this oversight, this session was well received by the learners and my critical friend.

I continued with the arts-based teaching methods. When learners read the story, ‘The Most Beautiful Garden’ they also painted and made flower collages. While the session was enjoyable and contributed to a positive atmosphere, there were opportunities for me to provide clearer connections between pre-reading activities and the text, offer more explicit instructions during creative tasks, and incorporate periodic comprehension checks to ensure learners were actively engaged and understood the material.

> *I then asked each learner to read 4 lines of the story so that the reading was equally shared amongst them. Each learner followed carefully because they did not know what sequence they would be called in to read. I suspect they were so attentive for fear that they would look silly if they were called to read and were lost. I asked one post-reading question, “What is the main message of this story?” Learners shared various responses.*

The issues concerning support and scaffolding during this session were not apparent to me. They were illuminated by the feedback my critical friend provided. She noted that during the reading; I did not interrupt learners to check their understanding periodically. While the text may have seemed easy, she believes the absence of comprehension checks could have resulted in learners getting lost or being too shy to ask for assistance. My critical friend's observation suggests an overemphasis on enjoyment and participation, possibly at the expense of monitoring and supporting learners' understanding. Balancing enjoyment with periodic checks for comprehension could have made more effective reading sessions. Incorporating occasional pauses to ensure comprehension would have been beneficial. I wrote,

> *In my reflections, I revealed an assumption that “I selected a very simple text that learners can comprehend on their own.” When I think about this statement now, I realise that I struggle to relate with the difficulties learners face.*

In these reflections, I acknowledge my subjectivity and how my assumptions shaped my actions. I believed that the text would be accessible to everyone without interference from me. Later on, during my reflections, I noted,

> *One thing I could not account for in this session was the lack of engagement between peers. I wondered whether this lack of engagement was a direct result of my low involvement.*

Unlike previous sessions where peers would assist each other with reading errors, this session experienced minimal peer involvement. While decreased reliance on peers can be a positive sign of improved individual reading skills, it also raises the question of whether learners were adequately supported in understanding the text.

Across these weeks, pre-reading craft activities were used, but the level of vocabulary instruction and content-related scaffolding varied. During the reading process, learners often read independently, without explicit guidance on comprehension strategies. Post-reading activities, including multiple-choice questions, sequencing, and metaphor drawings, were conducted with varying degrees of learner independence.

5.4.2. "You were supportive without stifling learners' independent reading"

Scaffolding is crucial for addressing the diverse needs of learners. By employing various strategies, such as vocabulary introduction, collaborative reading, and creative activities, I acknowledged and addressed the different needs of learners within the group. My reflective practices indicate a keen awareness of the learners' responses to various strategies. This adaptability is a form of instructional scaffolding, ensuring that the teaching approach aligns with the evolving needs of the learners.

I planned a combination of intensive and extensive reading activities, and I assigned different texts and different activities to intensive and extensive reading. So, while I provided insufficient support to learners during their extensive reading, I also provided sufficient and effective support and scaffolding for learners during the intensive reading task. I utilised a short comprehension passage with multiple-choice questions, providing a structured activity to guide learners through understanding the text. I incorporated multiple-choice questions to keep learners engaged and motivated during the reading process. This approach recognises the need for variety and scaffolds learners through different aspects of reading.

> *I treated this short comprehension exercise as an icebreaker. Each learner was given the passage and 10 minutes to read it. Once learners read the passage individually, I read it aloud during the second reading. I paused at points to elaborate on or explain tricky vocabulary. Once the reading was complete learners were asked to circle the correct answers to the 5 multiple choice questions that followed the passage. We then discussed each question, I explained and broke the questions down, learners went back to the passage to work out whether the answers they circled were the correct answers. I saw learners actively self-correcting; they were able to identify where they went wrong with some guidance from me.*

Actively discussing each question and helping learners self-correct demonstrates my direct involvement in the learning process. By encouraging learners to go back to the passage for self-correction, I am promoting an active approach to understanding the text.

Although my extensive reading material and tasks were not well suited to the needs of the learners, I executed intensive reading with sufficient involvement to guide learners without doing the work for them. I demonstrated an attempt to scaffold learners through diverse reading activities, active involvement in comprehension exercises, and ongoing support during intensive reading. My reflective practices and adaptability indicate a commitment to refining strategies based on the learners' experiences.

During week 3 learners crafted metaphor drawings as an icebreaker. By actively participating in the icebreaker, I created a positive and engaging atmosphere, allowing learners to share their drawings and thoughts openly. My role in facilitating the discussion about the drawings demonstrated support for learners to express their feelings about reading.

Collaborative teaching aligns with the responsive pedagogy and peer-to-peer learning. It fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility for the learning process. This approach is embodied in my reading intervention programme through a supportive class environment (Caingcoy, 2023).

During week 1, I selected various news articles for learners to read, and this did not work well. During week 3, I revisited news articles, but this time I was able to rectify

my previous mistakes. This demonstrates an adaptive scaffolding approach based on my previous experiences. I acknowledged the need for adjustment and reflected on the previous sessions. I decided to simplify the reading materials and focus on intensive reading to prevent overwhelming learners. I made a conscious effort to select simpler and more topical texts, addressing the issue of complexity from previous sessions. I actively engaged in the planning process, making decisions to overcome challenges and improve the intervention programme. One of the reasons why this session was a success is because the ‘support’ and ‘scaffolding’ started long before I entered the classroom. The ‘support’ and ‘scaffolding’ started during the planning stage.

> *I planned to adapt and paraphrase a news article on fast fashion. I knew that teenagers are very interested in trendy clothing, and I could spin the activities to make the text relevant to them. I wrote, “Learners will be guided through the reading. I will ask pre-reading questions and allow them to make predictions about the text. I will read the text first and provide explanations, then I will divide the text among learners, so they read aloud. As a post-reading activity, I will spark a discussion relating the article to our lives.’’*

During the pre-reading, I was an active part of the questioning and discussions. The pre-reading questions helped me provide learners with a background and context for the reading material. Learners actively participated in answering pre-reading questions related to their favourite clothing shops, indicating interest and engagement. I asked relevant pre-reading questions about learners' favourite clothing shops, connecting the upcoming text to their interests and creating a scaffold for understanding. By engaging learners in a discussion about their preferences and opinions on fashion-related topics, I was able to make the content relevant to learners. This created a background for learners to connect their personal experiences to the reading material.

According to Finn (2023) the goal is to accommodate differences in students’ learning preferences and personalities. Real-life situations and authentic texts stimulate curiosity. After the pre-reading activity, I read aloud, asked questions, and divided the text among learners for collaborative reading – this is a guided reading approach. Reading the title, asking questions, and elaborating on key concepts displays my direct

involvement in guiding learners through the reading process. Once the reading was complete, I initiated a post-reading discussion with relevant questions, sparking thoughtful responses and discussion among learners. Engaging with authentic texts played a pivotal role in the language learner's journey, significantly altering their connection between reading and real life. The texts, sourced from newspapers and real-world articles, vividly illustrated everyday vocabulary and expressions used in genuine situations (Smith et al., 2016).

> *I then gave learners the passage and allowed learners 5 minutes for them to scan over the texts. I then split the reading among the 5 learners and let them each read their paragraph. At the end of the text, I asked one question, "Knowing what you know now, would you shop from Shein?"*

My reflections after the session coincide with the observations that my critical friend made during the session. We both emphasised the positive impact of guidance and engagement strategies. In her observations, my critical friend acknowledged improvements in the session particularly the relevance of the reading material, the collaborative reading approach and the success of the post-reading discussion.

Responsive pedagogy employs situated, interactive, and collaborative teaching practices. Collaborative teaching involves explicit collaborative learning methods, like those implemented in my reading intervention programme. Sociocultural Theory posits that learning occurs through social collaboration, whereby individuals engage in joint activities and shared experiences (Mannion, Fenwick & Lynch, 2013). Collaborative teaching methods aligned with Sociocultural Theory advocate for an interactive and participatory approach where both learners and teachers actively contribute to the reading process. This approach challenges traditional hierarchical models of education and promotes a more egalitarian distribution of roles within the educational setting (Peppler, Davis-Soylu & Dahn, 2021).

> *You reverted back to the news articles, but you did it better than the previous news article session. Learners were all given the same article this time, and it was easy to understand. You created a good background before the reading and learners listening to the text first seemed to work well.*

She also made positive notes on my line of questioning, as can be seen below.

> *This session had a structure. Pre-reading questions gave earners a good background. The reading was done collaboratively. The post-reading question drummed up a lot of discussion. Learners put thought into their responses.*

In my reflections, I corroborated my critical friends' sentiments. I acknowledged that I had supported learners well. I could see the difference that my active participation and involvement made in the reading intervention programme. I wrote:

> *The text might have been too difficult for learners to manage on their own. I feel that the guidance I provided made a big difference. I enjoyed the discussion at the end of the reading. I could see that the article was made, 'real' to learners.*

In this session, I demonstrated notable improvements in terms of simplifying materials, engaging learners effectively, and fostering a positive learning environment. The incorporation of thoughtful pre-reading questions and a guided reading approach contributed to the success of the session. The feedback from my critical friend provided valuable insights and recommendations for further enhancement of the reading intervention programme.

I was inspired and planned to maximise the arts-based approach, incorporating arts and crafts into the icebreaker to engage learners. An arts-infused teaching approach is a strategy identified to meet the developmental needs of early adolescents (Moren, Guthrie & Strickland, 2023). In arts-infused activities, learners tend to be more focussed, and they tend to be more expressive in their reading. Arts-based teaching methods enrich the learning experience by allowing learners to connect their learning to the real world. Arts-infused activities enhance engagement, meaning-making, and critical thinking across subjects (Lorimer, 2011).

The crafting activity in week 4 served as a scaffold for connecting the pre-reading activity to the upcoming text. The crafting activity served as a pre-reading exercise, allowing learners to create their own bracelets. This hands-on experience provided a scaffold for understanding and connecting with the short story. By actively participating in the crafting activity, I engaged learners in a fun and creative process, fostering a positive and enthusiastic atmosphere. Once the pre-reading activity was complete, the reading began. I reflected:

> *I began the reading and read the first page. I then asked a learner to take over. After reading the page, the next learner read and so on. While learners read very slowly, they remained engaged and did not quit.*

I played the role of a facilitator during the reading. I encouraged learners to take turns reading aloud. This involvement led to a collaborative reading experience. At the end of the session, I asked 2 post-reading questions, the first question was *"What makes your bracelet special?"* The second question was, "What is your most and least favourite part of the story?" These post-reading questions focussed on personalising the story, allowing learners to express their feelings about their bracelets and share their favourite part of the story. It was a way to spark a discussion about the story without making learners feel threatened by a list of questions.

My critical friend recognised my plan to guide and scaffold learners during bracelet-making. She believed that it would help me establish a positive relationship with the learners. In my own reflections, I expressed excitement and motivation about the session. I highlighted not only my involvement in supporting and scaffolding learners as they participate in reading activities, but also how invested I am in the success of the intervention programme. My reflections indicated a commitment to improving and innovating in the intervention programme.

In the next session, I planned a creative pre-reading activity where learners painted flowers, cut them out, and created collages. This activity served as a scaffold for making predictions about the upcoming text, 'The Most Beautiful Garden.' I was not just a spectator, I participated in the painting alongside learners. I played an active role in the creative process and fostered a positive and collaborative atmosphere. I adjusted the seating arrangement, which also helped learners work together. I used the learners' flower collages as a foundation for predicting the content of the text. The collages supplemented a pre-reading discussion which scaffolded learners' understanding and engagement with the story. I encouraged learners to share their thoughts and predictions about the story which connected the pre-reading activity to the text. I tried to ensure equal participation during the reading by assigning each learner specific lines to read. I asked one post-reading question which focussed on the main message of the story. This encouraged learners to reflect on the content of the story and make interpretations of the text. Facilitating a discussion based on the

learners' responses demonstrated my involvement in guiding the learners to derive meaning from the text.

In my reflections, I acknowledged the increased learner engagement during interventions. I felt that the background provided during pre-reading was a success because learners were able to make predictions about the text. My critical friend had observed how I created excitement before the reading began. While I provided sufficient support to learners, she made one key observation,

> *She noted that during the reading I did not interrupt learners to check whether they understood the story periodically. She noted that although the text seems easy, I should not take it for granted because "Learners may be left behind but are too shy to ask for assistance."*

My critical friend recognised my plan to guide and scaffold learners during bracelet-making. She believed that it would help me establish a positive relationship with the learners. In my own reflections, I expressed excitement and motivation about the session. I highlighted not only my involvement in supporting and scaffolding learners as they participate in reading activities, but also how invested I am in the success of the intervention programme. My reflections indicated a commitment to improving and innovating in the intervention programme.

In the next session, I planned a creative pre-reading activity where learners painted flowers, cut them out, and created collages. This activity served as a scaffold for making predictions about the upcoming text, 'The Most Beautiful Garden.' I was not just a spectator, I participated in the painting alongside learners. I played an active role in the creative process and fostered a positive and collaborative atmosphere. I adjusted the seating arrangement, which also helped learners work together. I used the learners' flower collages as a foundation for predicting the content of the text. The collages supplemented a pre-reading discussion which scaffolded learners' understanding and engagement with the story. I encouraged learners to share their thoughts and predictions about the story which connected the pre-reading activity to the text. I tried to ensure equal participation during the reading by assigning each learner specific lines to read. I asked one post-reading question which focussed on the main message of the story. This encouraged learners to reflect on the content of the story and make interpretations of the text. Facilitating a discussion based on the

learners' responses demonstrated my involvement in guiding the learners to derive meaning from the text.

In my reflections, I acknowledged the increased learner engagement during interventions. I felt that the background provided during pre-reading was a success because learners were able to make predictions about the text. My critical friend had observed how I created excitement before the reading began. While I provided sufficient support to learners, she made one key observation,

She noted that during the reading; I did not interrupt learners to check whether they understood the story periodically. She noted that although the text seems easy, I should not take it for granted because “Learners may be left behind but are too shy to ask for assistance.”

Teachers who embrace responsive pedagogy understand the importance of creating an inclusive classroom environment that welcomes students of all backgrounds, abilities, and identities, and providing necessary accommodations to support diverse learners. Students in a classroom often have diverse learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds. Making assumptions about the readability of a text overlooks the varied needs of learners. In alignment with Sociocultural Theory, teachers should select reading materials that are within the learners’ ZPD. This means selecting texts that are neither too easy nor too difficult. Texts within this zone provide an optimal level of challenge, fostering cognitive development and independent learning. My critical friends’ comment about learners’ unwillingness to seek assistance when they are confused is also telling (Ragoonaden & Mueller, 2017). Communication style plays a crucial role in influencing students' willingness to participate. Characteristics such as being supportive, open-minded, creative, warm, and friendly contribute to a positive classroom environment. Since this particular scenario occurred during the early stages of the intervention programme, I had not developed a rapport with learners, and this created an invisible yet tangible boundary between us (Rychly & Graves, 2012).

I attempted to address this concern by reading the text to learners aloud before allowing them to read it individually. I incorporated multiple-choice questions related to the text, providing a structured way for learners to engage with the content and assess their comprehension. Instead of simply providing answers, I actively engaged with learners during the assessment process. Collaboratively discussing questions,

referring back to the text, and allowing learners to self-assess and make corrections demonstrated ongoing support and guidance. My critical friend observed the supportive role I had played. She made positive comments about the comprehension skills I was instilling.

> *She found that I took a more active role in the session, "You were supportive without stifling learners' independent reading and discovery." In my previous session she commented that I need to ensure I focus on instilling comprehension skills. This session she noted that, "You have instilled skills for learners to answer and decode comprehension questions. They can apply this knowledge in future if you continue to reinforce it."*

While I received this positive feedback from my critical friend, I expressed anxiety in my reflections after the session. I displayed self-awareness when I considered how my teaching style might be too laid-back. I was afraid that I should have been more 'rigid' with more strictly outlined plans. This indicated a willingness to adapt and refine the intervention programme based on ongoing thoughts and feedback. Ultimately, I made the decision to continue my arts-based teaching methods and responsive approach. I felt that when I started the programme and had strict plans and complex texts, nobody wanted to be there.

The links between being an adaptable and flexible educator, Sociocultural Theory, and responsive pedagogy lie in the recognition of the interactive and evolving nature of the learning process. Responsive pedagogy prioritises meeting the needs of learners. An adaptable educator embraces a student-centred approach, adjusting instructional methods based on ongoing assessment, feedback, and individual progress (Hennig & Kirova, 2012). An adaptable educator recognises the importance of creating a dynamic and collaborative learning environment that fosters peer interaction, joint problem-solving, and shared understanding. My engagement in self-reflections links with responsive pedagogy in that adaptable educator's design and redesign instructional activities based on the feedback received, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement and responsiveness to the evolving needs of the learning environment (Miriam et al., 2013).

I asked learners to complete metaphor drawings before introducing the story 'Pole Bean Pursuit'. I allowed learners to listen to the story first before they attempted

independent reading. Once learners completed the reading, I worked with them as they answered the multiple-choice questions.

> *I read and explained the first question. I asked learners to find the relevant passage in the text. We then read the question and all answers again. We referred back to the passage and then each of us chose a letter. I assisted learners with each question in this way.*

The session focused on comprehension skills. I guided learners through a step-by-step process. This included reading the questions, locating relevant passages, and selecting answers collaboratively. The emphasis on skimming and scanning contributed to the development of essential reading skills.

My critical friend observed that learners were applying comprehension skills without explicit instruction, indicating the effectiveness of the teacher's guidance over multiple sessions. Learners were given the freedom to make mistakes, self-correct, and assist one another. She also made observations about my behaviour and the way I instructed learners.

> *Learners were guided while still having room to make mistakes. Allowing them to make mistakes and self-correct is good because they will be more perceptive and evaluate their own responses in future.*

She implies that I have progressively allowed learners to take ownership of their comprehension tasks and now they are beginning to apply these skills without instruction from me. The observation from my critical friend suggests that I successfully implemented a gradual release of responsibility, allowing learners to apply comprehension skills without constant guidance. Although I had received positive feedback, I clung to anxieties about my approach to the intervention programme. In my journal, I expressed the following:

> *I went between worrying about "doing it right" and feeling satisfaction for trying to do something at all. Although this study prompted me to take an active role in addressing this issue, at times it stifled me too. I kept associating research with something complex and I grapple with the idea that research does not have to be complicated to be good. "This study has taught me that teaching and learning should always be practical."*

I created a metaphor drawing titled ‘Bigger Is Not Always Better’ which is presented later in this chapter to share my thoughts on being practical instead of theoretical. I planned another crafty pre-reading activity related to the story, ‘The Boy and the Rainbow.’ Learners painted rainbows which prompted a debate about the colours of the rainbow and facilitated interaction and discussion. I asked background questions to activate prior knowledge and prepare learners for the reading.

I first asked, “When do we usually see a rainbow?” Hands shot up and the first learner to respond said, “When it is hot, and it rains.” I asked learners if anyone disagreed with this answer, but they all agreed so I continued with my questions. I asked, “What do you think today's story will be about?” I received answers like, “That Bible story with the animals!” and “A rainbow.”

By encouraging learners to express their agreement or disagreement, they are also encouraged to engage in critical thinking and discussion. Reading requires the reader to respond to the text. The teacher’s duty is to respond to the readers attempt to make sense of the text. Teachers are encouraged to model responses to the text, such as expressing opinions or asking questions, to promote comprehension and engage students actively. It encourages participants to think deeply about their attitudes and beliefs, evaluating aspects that need to change (Patteson et al., 2010).

> *After completing a page, another learner picked up the reading without instruction from me. Once again, peers assisted one another, and I was able to take on the role of an observer/facilitator. When one learner could not understand the words ‘melon’ an ‘mango’ another code-switched to isiZulu and translated for her.*

I took on the role of a facilitator during this session because learners were able to take initiative and supported peer-assisted learning. Allowing peers to correct errors made by others empowered learners and promoted a supportive peer-learning community. My critical friend observed increased learner interaction and assistance, noting that learners were actively helping each other without explicit instructions.

My critical friend observed that in this session, learners interacted and assisted one another more than in the previous session and “… were very active and assisted one another without being told to.”

My critical friend also noted that, “Learners were eager to paint, and they argued over the colours of the rainbow which was comical. When the reading took place, they corrected one other's errors as they went along. I noticed that learners were also translating some words for one another.” She commented on my involvement and noted that learners were able to work together while I had an outside role.

This session showcased my efforts to provide support, guidance, and involvement through a well-designed pre-reading activity. Learners actively participated and assisted each other during the reading, demonstrating increased independence and collaboration. My critical friend's feedback highlighted the positive aspects of peer interaction while suggesting a thoughtful improvement in post-reading activities. The Sociocultural Theory stresses the impact of social contexts, feedback from teachers, and peers on students' beliefs, motivation, and learning experiences (Gabillon & Ailincai, 2016). Collaborative activities where more capable learners work with those in need of assistance take many forms: small-group collaborations, learning circles, and peer mentoring. Proponents of responsive pedagogy value collaboration and peer-to-peer learning, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility for the learning process (Wright, 2012).

During week 11, I carefully instructed and guided learners during the pre-reading activity, ensuring that they created yellow hats matching the description of the ones in the story. By providing step-by-step guidance, I ensured that learners' hats reflected the details mentioned in the text. The pre-reading activity incorporated vocabulary learning. Learners wrote and defined words related to the story on their hats. This strategy aimed to familiarise learners with key terms beforehand, promoting better understanding during the reading. The hat-making activity was aligned with the theme of the story, "Golly Grue's New Hat," connecting the pre-reading exercise directly to the content of the text.

I gave each learner a copy of the story, and each learner read a portion of a page. As learners read, I asked them to underline the vocabulary words on their hats. I directed learners to check the definitions of these words on their hats if they could not understand the words. The learners then engaged in 2 post-reading activities. First, I allowed them to work together to answer 3 multiple-choice questions.

Thereafter, they were given 4 events from the story, and they needed to sequence the events in chronological order.

By instructing learners to refer to the definitions on their hats if they encountered unfamiliar words, I facilitated the immediate application of newly acquired vocabulary during the reading. Learners engaged in two post-reading activities, including answering multiple-choice questions and sequencing events. Allowing them to work together on decoding questions fostered collaborative learning and peer support. My critical friend observed that the teacher demonstrated a balance between guiding learners and allowing them to make mistakes independently. This approach encourages learners to take ownership of their learning while still receiving necessary support. In my own reflections, I acknowledged my personal growth and improved readiness to assist learners in the future.

During the final intervention session, I used a storyboard with images to introduce the folktale ‘Anansi and Snake’. This helped learners make predictions about the text while visualising the events before the reading. I encouraged learners to interact by asking them to predict the story based on the images. This tapped into their prior knowledge of folktales. I read the story slowly and expressively to enhance comprehension by allowing learners to absorb the narrative more effectively. Post-reading, learners engaged in a metaphor drawing activity, expressing their feelings about the reading group and the work done. This provided an opportunity for learners to reflect on their progress and to express their emotions visually.

My critical friend's metaphor drawing ‘Birds of a Feather Flock Together’ demonstrated a collaborative and supportive relationship between her and me. The metaphor emphasised the mutual sharing of insights and roles in supporting each other. She highlighted the importance of ongoing collaboration and informal communication in the teaching and intervention process.

Figure 24: ***Birds of a Feather Flock Together***

When birds fly in a V formation, it makes their flight easier. The birds at the front of the formation do not save as much energy during the flight as the birds at the back. For this reason, the bird in the front of the formation switches places and allows another bird to take the lead when it gets tired. This drawing depicts my critical friend's perspective on our roles as a team during these interventions. Aside from her observation schedule, she would sporadically come to me with a thought during the school day. This kind of feedback was difficult to track, but it was a great help to me.

Throughout this programme, I made an effort to strike a balance between giving learners opportunities for independent learning while also guiding and assisting learners. I observed and responded to the dynamics of each session, adjusting the approach based on learner engagement. The integration of enjoyable activities, like crafts and creative tasks, serves as supportive elements that motivate learners. This motivational scaffolding contributes to sustained engagement, fostering a positive attitude towards reading.

5.4.3. Candid pedagogy: resistance and resilience

My candid reflections acted as a guiding force, painting a vibrant picture of successes, challenges, and transformative moments in the teaching journey. Expressing triumphs resulted in high motivation. Celebrating wins became an integral part of the narrative,

counterbalancing moments of doubt with tangible evidence of progress and success. Before week 1 of the intervention programme, I composed a sketch which depicts my optimistic outlook and hopefulness for what I could achieve during the intervention programme. At the essence of my optimism was the belief that learners struggle with reading because nobody has actually done anything to assist them. By that logic, I was convinced that anything I did would improve their comprehension.

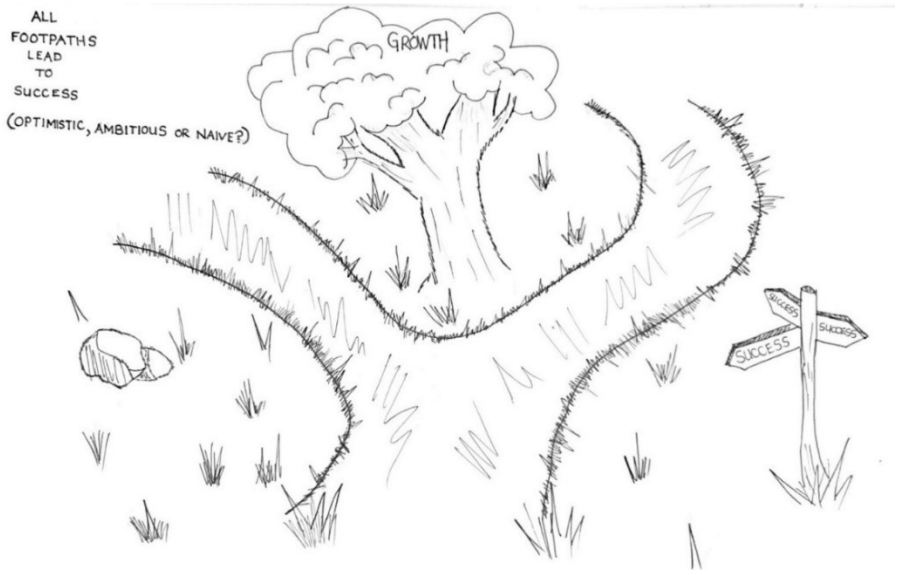


Figure 25: ***Optimistic, Ambitious or Naïve?***

I assumed that with all the research that has already been conducted surrounding reading; the road was already paved. I thought I would stumble upon a magical approach to use as a blueprint for my intervention programme. This thinking was naive. I did not anticipate the challenges I faced later.

The text on the top-left side of the drawing reads, “All footpaths lead to success,” highlighting my sense of confidence. However, this state of self-assurance was short-lived. Although I did experience teaching highs, neither a state of self-assurance nor doubt remained constant throughout the 12-week programme. I stumbled down a jagged path of thoughts, reflections, worries, and wins that sustained me and helped me to adapt instead of giving up. The reason why I do not describe these reflections

as a cycle, or a zigzag, is that those words suggest a form of order or uniformity and that is not an accurate representation of my reflections and feelings during each week of the programme. I did not start the programme at a low and continue in a constant upward trajectory. There were irregular, abrupt, and sharp shifts. Depending on my actions and on how they were received by all my participants, my nerves fluctuated. It is my openness that prompted me to push through rough winds of resistance and become flexible and resilient.

Admissions of uncertainty and struggles underscored my commitment to flexibility and adaptability. This honest acknowledgement of what worked and what did not work allowed me to make continuous adjustments, fostering a teaching approach that responded dynamically to the evolving needs of the learners. Responsive pedagogy promotes educators being adaptable and striving to create an inclusive learning environment that accommodates needs, fostering a sense of belonging for all students. Adaptable educators adjust classroom management strategies to promote a positive and inclusive atmosphere, responding to the social dynamics and interpersonal interactions within the learning community (Finn, 2023). These changes occur as a result of continuous feedback and reflection. An adaptable educator seeks feedback from students, peers, and self-reflection, using this information to make informed adjustments to teaching strategies. I was able to embrace the uncertainty as an opportunity for growth through self-reflection and responsiveness to feedback from learners and my critical friend (Samuels, 2018).

After executing the week 2 intervention session without my critical friend's presence, I expressed concerns about the lack of external feedback and the impact that the poor attendance would have on my ability to evaluate the session effectively.

> *My critical friend was unable to attend this session. The absence of my critical friend coupled with the poor learner attendance alarmed me. I expressed these thoughts in my reflection-after-session.*

I was afraid that without the observations from my critical friend, I would have many blind spots and would not be able to make significant observations on my own. In my reflection after the intervention session, I came to a turning point. My reflections would no longer be guided by questions that limit my expression.

As I sat and reflected, I realised that the best way to capture my feelings of distress would be to sketch a metaphor drawing. The drawing ‘Lost in a Wasteland’ contrasts sharply with the drawing I sketched before the interventions commenced (Optimistic, Ambitious or Naïve?). It depicts the reversal of my optimism and a loss of confidence.

I went beyond the traditional reflections and illustrated a sense of being lost in a wasteland, adding depth to my report on the emotional impact the session had. The first challenge I opened up about was the change in seating arrangement and how it backfired, causing learners to recoil. I was candid about the limitations of the strategies I had implemented, and my reflections were heartfelt. I wrote,

> *The change in their seating arrangement had backfired, instead of making them feel it ease, it alarmed them. I was disheartened and it seemed like everything was wrong from the start.*

I earnestly shared overwhelming feelings of fear that the reading interventions were failing and that participants were backing out. This vulnerability reflects the toll that these struggles took. Later, I shared my challenges with my critical friend and showed her my drawing. ‘Sink or Swim’ is the title of the drawing she created in response to my metaphor drawing.

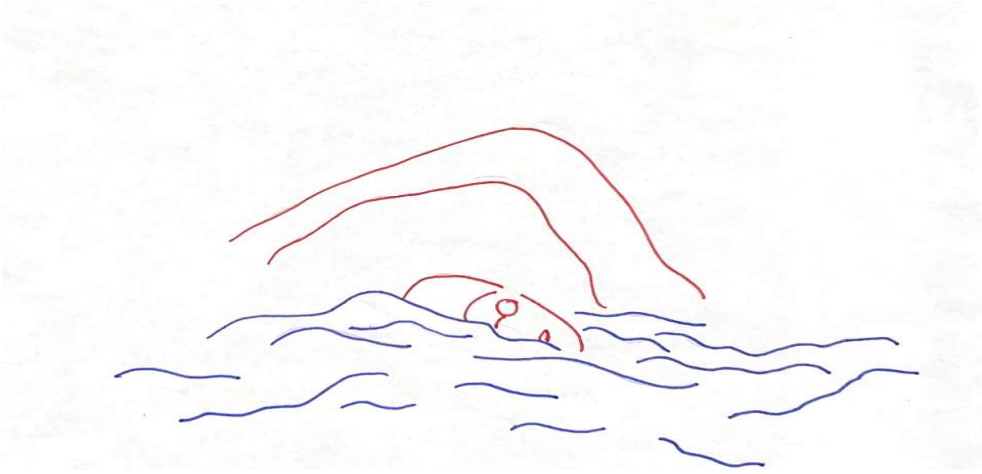


Figure 26: *Sink or Swim*

This drawing illustrates the figure of a swimmer in the water, doing a swimming stroke. The metaphor implies that, like a swimmer in deep water, I was presented with a critical choice — either to sink under the weight of challenges or to swim through them resiliently. The phrase "sink or swim" encapsulates the essence of resilience,

suggesting that in the face of difficulties, I would either find a way to stay afloat and navigate through the challenges or succumb to the overwhelming pressure. Her drawing highlights the necessity of resilience in the teaching profession. Just as a swimmer must push through the water, I had to navigate the difficulties and self-doubt associated with the intervention programme. She hints that facing challenges head-on and persevering through feelings of inadequacy is a crucial aspect of professional growth. By choosing to 'swim' - to confront and overcome challenges—I exhibited resilience, determination, and the capacity to adapt, which are essential qualities for success in education.

During week 7's planning stage, I expressed the desire to focus more on comprehension skills. This statement seems unsuspecting, but it is underpinned by anxiety and confusion. Throughout this intervention programme, I was plagued by the idea that I had to follow a specific kind of procedure for comprehension to take place. This procedure had to follow a specific line of questioning that would test learners, decoding, skimming, and scanning. It felt good for that moment, and it pleased my critical friend, but I saw an issue beneath the surface. As teachers, we are used to engaging in reading in a specific way in class, and that is the 'specific procedure' I referred to previously. Teachers want to see pre-reading activities that activate prior knowledge, reading activities that help with elaboration and post-reading questions that test comprehension. My critical friend and I were satisfied with this, but I saw the negative impact it had on learners.

In my reflections, I noted that the session "felt flat". There was little excitement and not much to spark enthusiasm among the learners. The text was just right. It did not seem too easy or overly difficult. The steps that were followed to comprehend the text were valuable for learners. However, without the sparkle of fun icebreakers and refreshments, learners seemed less interested in comparison to the days when we craft.

Traditional teaching approaches involve a hierarchical structure with clear distinctions between the authoritative role of the teacher and the passive role of the learner. Incorporating arts-based teaching methods, responsive pedagogy, and Sociocultural Theory blurs these boundaries (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007). The arts, with their emphasis on creativity, invite a more egalitarian and collaborative environment,

challenging traditional classroom power dynamics (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Conventional teaching tends to be teacher-centred, focusing on the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the students. Responsive pedagogy and Sociocultural Theory promote interactive learning communities. By incorporating arts-based methods, collaborative exploration, dialogue, and shared experiences, challenging the traditional notion of passive learning are encouraged (Sawyer, 2006). Traditional teaching often revolves around a fixed curriculum and standardised assessments, limiting flexibility and individualised learning experiences. Responsive pedagogy allows for flexible and varied assessment methods. Arts-based teaching methods offer alternative ways for students to demonstrate their understanding, challenging the rigidity of traditional assessment practices (Gholson, Shute & Rahimi, 2018). Responsive pedagogy prioritises the needs and interests of individual students. Arts-based methods provide a platform for diverse modes of expression and understanding, fostering a student-centred learning environment that challenges the one-size-fits-all approach of traditional education (Anderson & Herr, 2020).

My openness about the session feeling "flat" and lacking excitement demonstrates a keen awareness of the dynamic nature of teaching and the need for engaging elements. This self-awareness is a crucial component of resilience, as it allowed me to identify potential areas for improvement. My reflections touch on feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy, emphasising the struggle between worrying about "doing it right" and finding satisfaction in taking an active role.

I also reflected on the feedback my critical friend provided, “… raises feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy. I have come into this research with very limited knowledge of remediating reading.” I went between worrying about “doing it right” and feeling satisfaction at trying to do something at all.

This candid reflection showcases the emotional journey and self-discovery I underwent in the process. The admission of feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy, especially in the face of limited knowledge on remediating reading, showcases vulnerability. My metaphor drawing, ‘Bigger Is Not Always Better’ is an illustration depicting an illuminated lightbulb opposite a dull lightbulb on either side of a scale.

Traditional teaching approaches involve a hierarchical structure with clear distinctions between the authoritative role of the teacher and the passive role of the learner.

Incorporating arts-based teaching methods, responsive pedagogy, and Sociocultural Theory blurs these boundaries (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007). The arts, with their emphasis on creativity, invite a more egalitarian and collaborative environment, challenging traditional classroom power dynamics (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Conventional teaching tends to be teacher-centred, focusing on the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the students. Responsive pedagogy and Sociocultural Theory promote interactive learning communities. By incorporating arts-based methods, collaborative exploration, dialogue, and shared experiences, challenging the traditional notion of passive learning are encouraged (Sawyer, 2006). Traditional teaching often revolves around a fixed curriculum and standardised assessments, limiting flexibility and individualised learning experiences. Responsive pedagogy allows for flexible and varied assessment methods. Arts-based teaching methods offer alternative ways for students to demonstrate their understanding, challenging the rigidity of traditional assessment practices (Gholson, Shute & Rahimi, 2018). Responsive pedagogy prioritises the needs and interests of individual students. Arts-based methods provide a platform for diverse modes of expression and understanding, fostering a student-centred learning environment that challenges the one-size-fits-all approach of traditional education (Anderson & Herr, 2020).

My openness about the session feeling "flat" and lacking excitement demonstrates a keen awareness of the dynamic nature of teaching and the need for engaging elements. This self-awareness is a crucial component of resilience, as it allowed me to identify potential areas for improvement. My reflections touch on feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy, emphasising the struggle between worrying about "doing it right" and finding satisfaction in taking an active role.

I also reflected on the feedback my critical friend provided, “… raises feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy. I have come into this research with very limited knowledge of remediating reading.” I went between worrying about “doing it right” and feeling satisfaction at trying to do something at all.

This candid reflection showcases the emotional journey and self-discovery I underwent in the process. The admission of feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy, especially in the face of limited knowledge on remediating reading, showcases

vulnerability. My metaphor drawing, ‘Bigger Is Not Always Better’ is an illustration depicting an illuminated lightbulb opposite a dull lightbulb on either side of a scale.

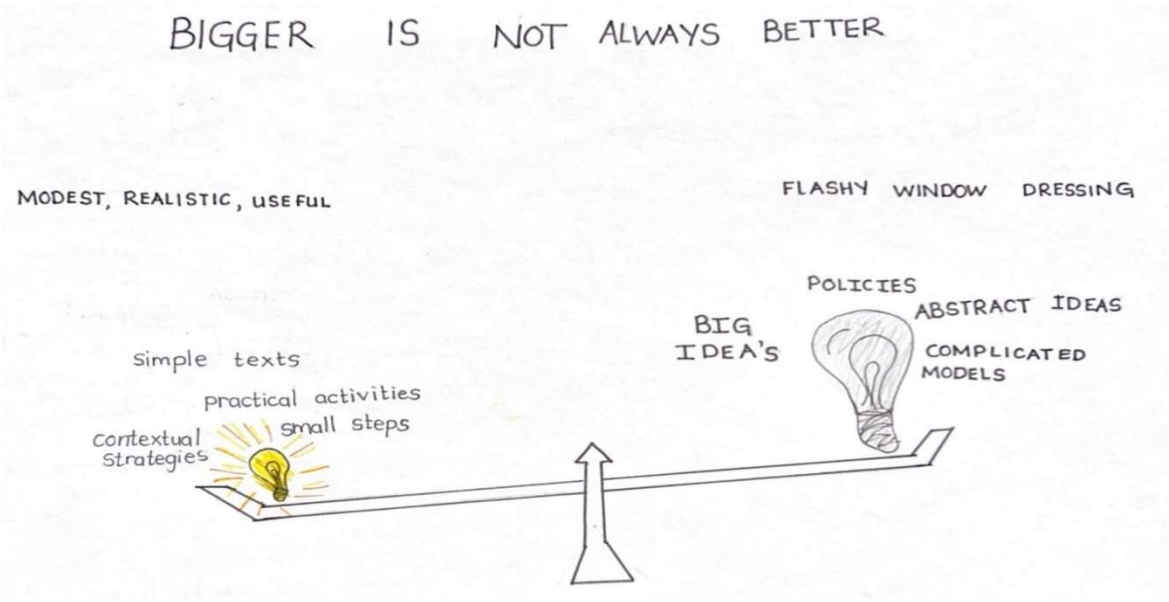


Figure 27: ***Bigger Is Not Always Better***

In my metaphor drawing, I depicted an image of a scale being weighed down by lightbulbs. Although the lightbulb on the left appears smaller, it is illuminated and, since it is denser than the dull bulb on the right, it is weighing down the scale. This image reveals my belief that, in some cases, small and simple steps are more powerful than complex theories. It shows the practical nature of implementing a reading programme. Polices and theories look good on paper, and they make governments and researchers feel like they have done something important, but in reality, these things are not always feasible.

The illuminated small lightbulb symbolises the practical and impactful nature of small, simple steps in teaching, contrasting with the dull, larger lightbulb representing the complexity of theories that might not translate well into practical success. This represents my belief that, in some cases, small and simple steps are better than complex theories. This tangible depiction of my teaching philosophy reveals my resilience in embracing practical approaches, as opposed to complex methodologies.

It captures the essence of my realisation that complexity and grandeur are not prerequisites for effective teaching and learning.

In practice, I embraced responsive pedagogy, favouring practical methods over detached theoretical constructs. By focusing on students' immediate needs and interests, I challenged abstract educational theories. I prioritised real-world classroom settings, acknowledging the diverse backgrounds and realities of students often overlooked by some theories in my planning and decision-making. This approach highlights the importance of aligning educational practices with the lived experiences of learners (Rogoff, 2014).

I expressed concerns about my critical friend and I becoming too comfortable with a set procedure. I was questioning the effectiveness of established routines because I was seeking continuous improvement. I did not want to become complacent in my teaching approach. My journal states:

> *I worry that my critical friend and I were both getting comfortable with a 'procedure' that entailed: icebreaker, pre-reading, reading and post-reading. It seemed like any time I strayed from this expected code, we both noted that 'something' was missing. This was not my only concern… I worry that making a ritual of asking questions after reading, will reinforce the idea that reading is only useful when there is a test afterwards.*

I was concerned that ritualising questions after reading might reinforce the idea that reading is only useful when it is tested. This concern reflects my mindfulness about the potential impact of teaching methods on learners' perceptions. It showcases my resilience in critically evaluating and adjusting my approach to align with the broader goals of fostering a love for reading.

Expressions of insecurity highlighted the vulnerability inherent in addressing reading deficits. The reflections conveyed a brave recognition of the learning challenges and, importantly, a dedication to overcoming them. Balancing the enjoyment of learning, grappling with patience, and embracing imperfection became integral themes, underscoring a resilient teaching journey that values growth over immediate perfection. Collaborative efforts with my critical friend were a consistent thread, exemplifying the strength derived from empathy and teamwork. This reflective journey not only impacted my personal and professional growth but visibly transformed

learners' attitudes towards reading. Candid self-reflection had a profound influence on the success of the intervention programme.

Th first time I integrated crafts as an icebreaker that related with the content of the reading. This session marked a significant teaching high for me. I expressed excitement about the session and highlighted the learners' energetic and enthusiastic participation. I recognised the progress made in the programme and expressed eagerness about new ideas and directions. This reflective stance and positive outlook indicate a continuous commitment to improvement and innovation in the intervention programme.

I was concerned that ritualising questions after reading might reinforce the idea that reading is only useful when it is tested. This concern reflects my mindfulness about the potential impact of teaching methods on learners' perceptions. It showcases my resilience in critically evaluating and adjusting my approach to align with the broader goals of fostering a love for reading.

Expressions of insecurity highlighted the vulnerability inherent in addressing reading deficits. The reflections conveyed a brave recognition of the learning challenges and, importantly, a dedication to overcoming them. Balancing the enjoyment of learning, grappling with patience, and embracing imperfection became integral themes, underscoring a resilient teaching journey that values growth over immediate perfection. Collaborative efforts with my critical friend were a consistent thread, exemplifying the strength derived from empathy and teamwork. This reflective journey not only impacted my personal and professional growth but visibly transformed learners' attitudes towards reading. Candid self-reflection had a profound influence on the success of the intervention programme.

The first time I integrated crafts as an icebreaker that related with the content of the reading. This session marked a significant teaching high for me. I expressed excitement about the session and highlighted the learners' energetic and enthusiastic participation. I recognised the progress made in the programme and expressed eagerness about new ideas and directions. This reflective stance and positive outlook indicate a continuous commitment to improvement and innovation in the intervention programme.

In my reflective journal, I candidly wrote about the internal debate I experienced about focusing on intensive reading as opposed to extensive reading, and whether the laid-back style is the best approach. I was teetering between placing focus on intensive reading and extensive reading and wrote,

> *Using pre-reading and post-reading activities has been fruitful but does that mean I am repeatedly engaging in intensive reading. Is it possible to engage in intensive reading for enjoyment? I started to feel that I was too laid back, and I was not sure if this was a positive thing. Should I have been more rigid, or has this laid-back style been the best approach. All I know is, when I started this programme and had strictly outlined plans and complex texts, nobody wanted to be there, and the attendance was proof of that.*

I shared my anxieties about the programme and the study, questioning its usefulness without a standardised test to evaluate reading improvements. In my planning, I acknowledged that while arts and crafts are exciting, they cannot replace the main purpose of the programme, which is reading. I had doubts about the inclusion of crafty pre-reading activities at times.

I worried about whether I should have included art in the reading session. “Narrative studies allow participants to make meaning from experiences. Using the arts-based approach as part of the reading, it creates an experience which allows learners to make meaning during the reading (Beattie, 2009).

By engaging in an arts-based approach I acted in alignment with the Sociocultural Theory that supports artefact-oriented learning where arts and crafts served as the tools that mediated learners’ understanding in the context of the reading intervention programme (Peppler, Davis-Soylu & Dahn, 2021). I used the arts and crafts as semiotic tools that serve not only as static products but as active processes that facilitate meaning making. These ideas align with Papert’s (1980) conception of an artefact as an ‘object-to-think-with’.

Although week 12 was the final session, it was special in that it allowed me to look back and consider the ‘bigger picture’ of what I learnt and achieved during the intervention programme. I was able to identify the resistance I had endured and the resilience I had displayed. My critical friend and I both produced metaphor drawings.

Hers depicted the supportive relationship we shared and mine summarised my journey through the 12-week programme.

My critical friend's metaphor drawing is titled 'Birds of a Feather Flock Together'. The drawing, illustrating a V formation of birds, represents the teamwork and energy-saving dynamics between my critical friend and me. She was able to see the value of the feedback she provided me; I needed her to give me a boost when the journey became too much for me. In my reflection, I wrote,

> *This intervention was not easy when I tried to stick to a rigid set of rules. The approach I used is probably not what is seen in the typical classroom or during typical reading interventions. I did what I felt was right for my learners. When something did not work, I tried something new. I have come to see that helping learners does not have to 'look right' to be right. The most important thing is to be perceptive to the needs of the learners.*

In my retrospective reflection, I emphasised that the intervention was not easy when following rigid rules. This acknowledgement shows my resilience in adapting my approach based on the needs of the learners. The realisation that helping learners does not have to conform to conventional standards reflects my commitment to student-centred teaching.

My final metaphor drawing, 'The Road is Long' is an illustration of a map that depicts my idea of how a teacher might go about developing their own reading intervention programme. Instead of providing theories on reading instruction, my map advises about being resilient, with landmarks such as, "forge your own path", "run your own race", "manage setbacks", "don't rush the process" and "choose a new direction". The treasure chest marked by an 'X' and a captioned "the experience".

Figure 28: ***The Road is Long***

This suggests that the treasure in this reading intervention has been the journey and experience in itself. This drawing acknowledges the complexity and unpredictability of the path to becoming a better teacher and supporting learners effectively. It illustrates my resilience in navigating the challenges of professional growth and symbolises my recognition of the ongoing journey towards becoming a better teacher. The acknowledgement that the road is not straight but requires individual adaptation and growth is indicative of a reflective and growth-oriented mindset.

Over the 12-week reading intervention programme, expressing triumphs provided pivotal moments of affirmation. This positive reinforcement not only fortified my resilience, but also served as a powerful motivator for learners, creating a shared sense of achievement and fostering a more positive attitude towards reading. The admissions of challenges and innermost thoughts shaped a pedagogical approach that embraced vulnerability, celebrated victories, and ultimately highlighted the importance of reflective practice in the realm of teaching.

5.5. Learner Activity

5.5.1. Munching on motivation: Finding the sweet spot

Learners driven by extrinsic motivation to participate in activities with the aim of either avoiding penalties or gaining rewards. This orientation heavily relies on external factors, indicating that these learners lack intrinsic motivation. Rather than being inherently interested in learning, they engage in educational pursuits primarily due to external incentives or the fear of consequences (Wigfield, Gladstone & Turci, 2016). Without the presence of rewards or the threat of punishment, extrinsically motivated learners are unlikely to demonstrate enthusiasm for reading or acquiring new knowledge. During week 4 I introduced ‘snacks and socialising’ as well as ‘arts and crafts’ to the intervention programme. My reflective journal captured:

> *I asked my 8 participants to arrange their chairs in two columns of 4, facing one another. I put out some paper plates and cups and distributed refreshments. I gave learners 10 minutes to socialise and eat while I organised the crafting activity. I then handed out string, scissors, and beads. Learners were asked to make their own special bracelets. They were very excited to engage in this fun and creative activity.*

Figure 29: ***Snacks and Socialising***

Providing learners with refreshments during our reading intervention sessions seemed to inspire learners to attend these sessions. The attendance improved significantly after the introduction of ‘snacks and socialising’. This was a deliberate strategy to build rapport and generate enthusiasm. Learners were excited about the snacks and enjoyed socialising, creating a positive and relaxed atmosphere. My critical friend observed the positive impact that these fun activities had on the reading intervention programme. She noted that learners were excited and enjoyed the reading. She felt that allowing learners to socialise and craft I am making the idea of reading fun. It really broke the ice.

> *By doing this you are creating a lot of excitement and joy around this project. The reading seamlessly fit with the fun beadwork. The activities planned worked together so well that they sparked motivation and interest that resulted in better engagement in the reading, and better comprehension of the text.*

The crafting activity of making bracelets served as a pre-reading activity. Learners were not only engaged in a fun and creative activity, but they were also motivated by the opportunity to create something tangible. This extrinsic motivation likely contributed to their overall excitement at the session. Arts-based teaching introduces variety and novelty into the classroom. This departure from traditional instructional methods can capture students' interest and curiosity, making the learning experience more enjoyable and dynamic.

I found myself reflecting on the notable success of the previous intervention session. I intended to persist in creating engaging pre-reading activities aligned with the text content. Learners produced flower collages that linked with the content of the reading. The flower collage activity involved painting, cutting, and pasting, providing learners with a hands-on and creative experience. The pre-reading activity prompted learners to make predictions about the upcoming text. The extrinsic motivation here lies in the connection between the enjoyable craft and the anticipation of the reading material. My critical friend noted my success in creating excitement around the reading.

Figure 30: ***Painting, Cutting, Pasting***

Learners began by painting the flower templates. They waited for them to dry before carefully cutting the flowers out and pasting them close together on card paper. In my diary I wrote:

> *Learners made predictions about the text because you built suspense and anticipation during the pre-reading activity. Learners are enjoying these sessions because they are not just about reading, they have a practical aspect that makes reading come alive.*

Arts-based methods were employed during the pre-reading activity in Week 8, which involved learners drawing their dream diary covers. Refreshments were served, contributing to the overall enjoyment of the session.

My critical friend made observations about the effect that the icebreaker and pre-reading activity had on the session as a whole. In my reflections after the week 8 session, I noted that incorporating extrinsic motivators such as refreshments, crafts, and fun activities has been successful in creating an engaging and enjoyable learning environment. These elements not only break the ice but also serve as effective tools to enhance learner motivation and participation in the reading sessions. As a result, I decided to give ‘snacks and socialising’ as well as ‘arts and crafts’ a permanent place in the reading intervention programme. The decision I had made during week 8 prompted me to a plan another exciting session for week 9.

I followed a similar procedure to previous sessions by beginning with ‘snacks and socialising’ as an icebreaker. The desks were arranged to face one another. Learners enjoyed refreshments while I began to prepare the pre-reading activity. I handed out paint, paintbrushes and templates of the rainbow. When the pre-reading activity began, learners were asked to paint the rainbows in front of them using the correct colours. While the painting took place, learners enjoyed a debate about whether purple is in the rainbow.

Learners were able to make predictions about the text as a result of these pre-reading activities. They were at ease helping one another with their work. Whenever I incorporated these exciting elements, learners consistently had improved engagement during the reading intervention sessions.

During the next session engaged in a crafting activity related to the story "Bookworm Babies." They created worms with googly eyes emerging from a book template using coloured paper. The crafting activity was not overly time-consuming and was relevant to the reading programme. Learners exhibited high motivation, and various factors could have contributed to this enthusiasm, as my reflection indicates:

> *Learners arranged their desks in two columns, and they enjoyed their refreshments while I organised the pre-reading activity. I handed learners templates of a book and a variety of colour paper. I also gave each learner a pair of googly eyes. “Learners were asked to cut different size circles with the colour card. They then posted the edge of each circle to another in the form of a worm. They stuck the googly eyes on the worm they had created. They pasted the worms to look like they were emerging from the book template they were given.”*

The crafting activity involving the creation of bookworms and the connection to the story "Bookworm Babies" added creative and exciting elements to the session. The positive association with these elements could have contributed to increased participation and interest.

Learners also engaged in a pre-reading activity where they made yellow hats related to the story "Golly Grue’s New Hat." The hats were designed to match the description of the hats in the story, incorporating a creative element. My critical friend noted that

the pre-reading activity was a "crafting activity that incorporated vocabulary words" and was well-received by learners.

My critical friend was pleased with the pre-reading activity, which she described as a crafting activity that incorporated vocabulary words and linked to the reading portion of the session. She noted that learners enjoyed the vocabulary and hat-making activities.

> *… she described as a crafting activity that incorporated vocabulary words and linked to the reading portion of the session. She noted that learners enjoyed the vocabulary and hat-making activities.*

Throughout the weeks, the practice of allowing learners to socialise and enjoy refreshments before the reading sessions appears to have become an extrinsic motivator. It creates a positive and relaxed environment that contributes to increased enthusiasm for the programme. The use of arts and crafts as consistent pre-reading activities is a deliberate strategy to extrinsically motivate learners. These activities are enjoyable, and creative, and serve as effective icebreakers, making learners more receptive to the reading activities that follow.

5.5.2. From disdain to endurance: How they changed perspectives

The relationship between motivation and reading proficiency is crucial, as positive attitudes towards reading and strong reading habits contribute to intellectual and academic progress. As per Mudzielwana (2014), a prevalent perspective among parents is that reading is primarily for school-related tasks. This implies that parents predominantly motivate their children to read solely for academic purposes. Consequently, students fail to connect reading with leisure or pleasure, as it is perceived as an activity tied to academic performance. Below, I described the way in which I assisted learners in producing metaphor drawings.

> *I started with an icebreaker where learners could draw a sketch depicting their thoughts on one of the following topics: A – Where do you read the most? B – How does reading in class and at school make you feel? Learners were given blank pages and pencils and there was excitement, I sensed their energy*

towards this task. Learners spent 15 minutes on their drawings. "One by one learners came to the front of the class".

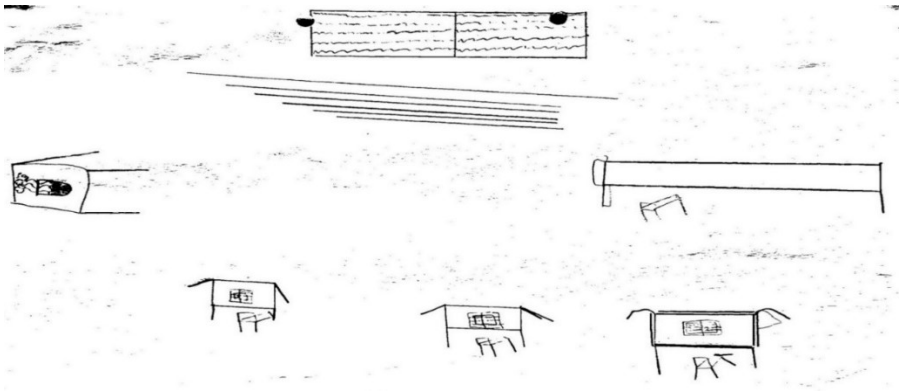


Figure 31: *I Read the Most at School*

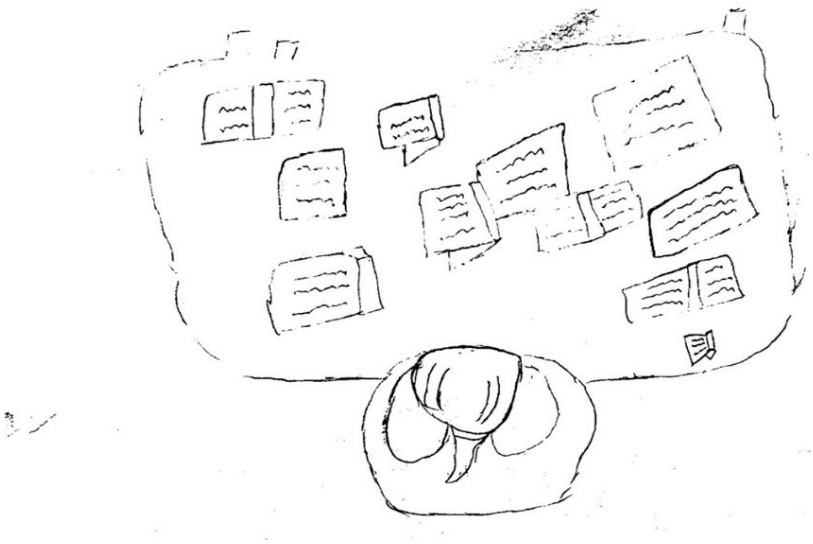


Figure 32: *I Read the Most at My Desk*

This learner's drawing depicts her at her desk, with an array of readings before her. All of these pages are scattered on her desk depicting that she feels overwhelmed by the amount of reading that she needs to do. She could have, for instance, set her drawing under a tree or on the sofa. Her decision to make the setting at a desk shows that she associates her reading with work whether it be at school or studying at home.

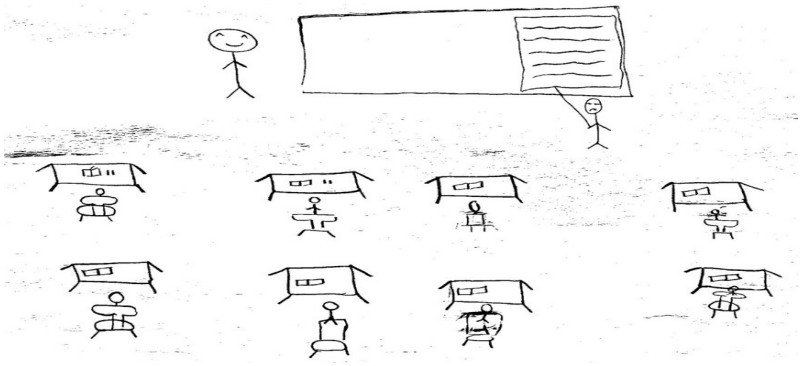


Figure 33: ***I Read the Most in The Classroom***

The setting of the metaphor drawing above is in a classroom with the teacher directing learners and delivering curriculum content. Learners seem far removed from their reading material. This learner's drawing depicts their relationship with reading. They read when it is required of them by the teacher in the classroom.

'I Read the Most at School' is an illustration that a learner drew in response to prompt A. The image depicts a classroom setting with a chalkboard or whiteboard in the front of the class, a teacher's desk in the corner, and a row of learners' desks with open books on them. This drawing portrays a traditional classroom, complete with a teacher at the helm, delivering curriculum content. This visual narrative underscores the learner's perception of reading as a directed, obligatory activity within the academic sphere.

'I Read the Most at My Desk', gives a bird's-eye view of a table with multiple pages and books open and scattered across the desk. A learner sits at the edge of the desk looking down but touching nothing. This aerial view provides a sense that the learner is overwhelmed. The cluttered desk adorned with numerous pages and open books creates the impression that the learner engages with a range of reading material. The

scattered arrangement of these materials conveys a sense of disorder and is emblematic of the challenges the learner perceives in managing the extensive reading requirements.

The learner's deliberate choice to place the figure at a desk, an environment traditionally associated with academic work, rather than alternative settings like under a tree or on a sofa, is a deliberate and telling choice. It signifies a conscious association between the act of reading and a formal, task-oriented setting. This emphasises the learner's perception of reading as an intellectual pursuit tied to the demands of scholarly endeavours. The learner, depicted sitting at the edge of the desk and observing the scattered readings without direct interaction, suggests a contemplative stance. This posture could mean a moment of reflection, indicating the learner's awareness of the challenges posed by the academic reading workload. The absence of active engagement with the materials reinforces the notion that, for this learner, reading is not merely a leisurely activity but a task to be approached with seriousness.

The figure titled ‘I Read the Most in The Classroom’, consistently aligns with the thematic elements seen in Figures 31 and 32. It depicts a strong association between the act of reading and academic settings. The illustration depicts a classroom scene with a central focus on the teacher, a whiteboard or chalkboard displaying educational content, and neatly arranged rows of learners' desks. The portrayal of learners sitting in orderly rows with open books in front of them, yet not actively engaged in writing or touching the books, communicates a sense of passivity in their reading experience. The absence of direct interaction with the reading material suggests that, in this academic setting, reading is perceived as a response to teacher-directed requirements rather than an active, participatory engagement. The learners seem detached from their reading materials, emphasising a mode of reading dictated by the educational context.

This visual suggests that learners act in compliance with the teacher's requests, reinforcing the notion that their reading occurs primarily in response to classroom directives. It encapsulates the learners' relationship with reading as one embedded within the teacher-directed academic environment. Figures 31, 32 and 33 follow the

same narrative where learners perceive reading as associated with academic settings, aligning their experiences with the structured demands of formal education.

Challenges persist, with struggling readers often facing negative attitudes towards reading, these are further exacerbated by the perception of being unmotivated or disinterested. In attempting to instil positive attitudes towards reading I encountered reluctance and negativity among learners. Recognising these challenges and fostering a positive reading culture was the cornerstone of this intervention programme. As a result, I saw learners' perceptions of reading change from disdain in week 1 to endurance by week 12.

I requested that learners formulate metaphor drawings to gauge learners' perspectives on reading at different points in the intervention programme. This was a more effective way for learners to express their attitudes than verbal communication. The visual depictions revealed much about learners' gradual shifts in attitude over the 12 weeks of the programme. Week 1 marks the first set of metaphorical drawings that learners produced. I asked learners, "How does reading make you feel?"

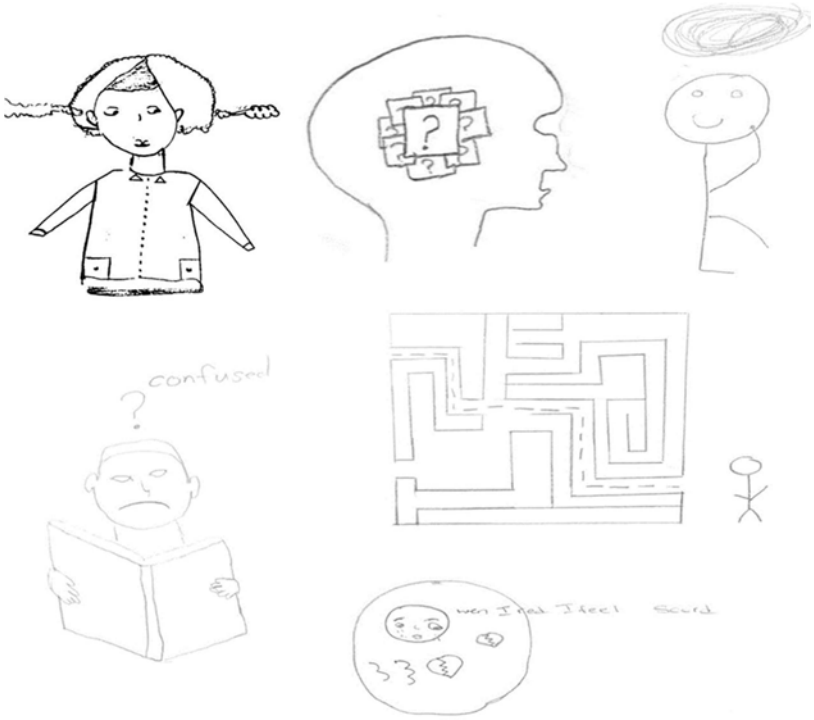


Figure 34: ***When I Read, I Feel Sad***

“When I Read, I Feel Sad’, has a collection of metaphor drawings produced by learners. The metaphorical drawings created by learners offer profound insights into their negative perceptions of reading, portraying an array of emotions, such as fear, distress, and confusion.

The top-left illustration depicts a student in a school uniform, seemingly engrossed in reading to the point where steam emanates from their ears, suggesting intense effort or struggle. This signifies intense effort and hints at the potential frustration or strain associated with the act of reading. The portrayal communicates a perception of reading as an arduous task that demands significant mental and emotional energy. The top-middle image, featuring a silhouette filled with question marks, indicates that this learner is overwhelmed with inquiries while engaged in reading. This representation suggests that reading prompts a flood of questions, showing a sense of confusion or lack of clarity. A stick figure in a contemplative stance, surrounded by chaotic scribbles, vividly communicates the internal turmoil this learner experiences during reading activities.

Moving to the bottom-left, a learner is depicted reading with a notably long and frowning face, accompanied by a floating question mark and the word 'confused.' Adjacent to this, broken hearts accompany a sad face, and the text 'wen I red I feel scard' conveys the learner's association of reading with fear. Above this, the maze illustration presents a powerful indicator of the learners' sense of disorientation when confronted with the act of reading. The maze, in essence, suggests that these learners are grappling with a need for direction, emphasising the perceived complexity and challenges inherent in navigating their reading difficulties.

Figure 35: ***When I Read, I Feel Stressed***

‘When I Read, I Feel Stressed’ displays a collection of 4 metaphor drawings produced by learners who responded to prompt A. The top-left drawing portrays a figure caught in a rainstorm under a cloud, conveying a sense of distress associated with reading. In the top-right, squiggles around a figure's head symbolise confusion or distress, highlighting the mental strain during reading. The bottom-left stick figure crying suggests emotional turmoil linked to the act of reading. Lastly, the bottom-right drawing depicts a learner outdoors with storm clouds and lightning, evoking fear and intimidation.

During week 12 as a concluding activity after the reading sessions, I found it essential to revisit how learners perceived reading. I asked them to create one last metaphorical drawing, expressing their current feelings towards our 'reading group' and the activities we undertook.

Figure 36: ***Uphill Battle***

‘Uphill Battle,’ portrays a stick figure ascending a flight of stairs, with a speech bubble exclaiming, "Hard work!" This drawing reflects the learner's recognition that enhancing their reading skills is a challenging endeavour. Despite the acknowledgement of the demanding nature of the task, the figure is depicted with a smile, not a frown, suggesting a positive attitude. The symbolism of the stick figure climbing stairs denotes a journey or progression, likely representing the learner's efforts in advancing their reading abilities. The learner acknowledges the challenges but approaches them with a positive mindset. This shows that despite the challenges, there was a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment throughout the intervention programme. The contrast between this positive depiction and the previously mentioned negative perspectives is stark. While previous drawings illustrated feelings of overwhelm, detachment, and passivity in an academic setting, the current image conveys a more personal and positive connection with reading.

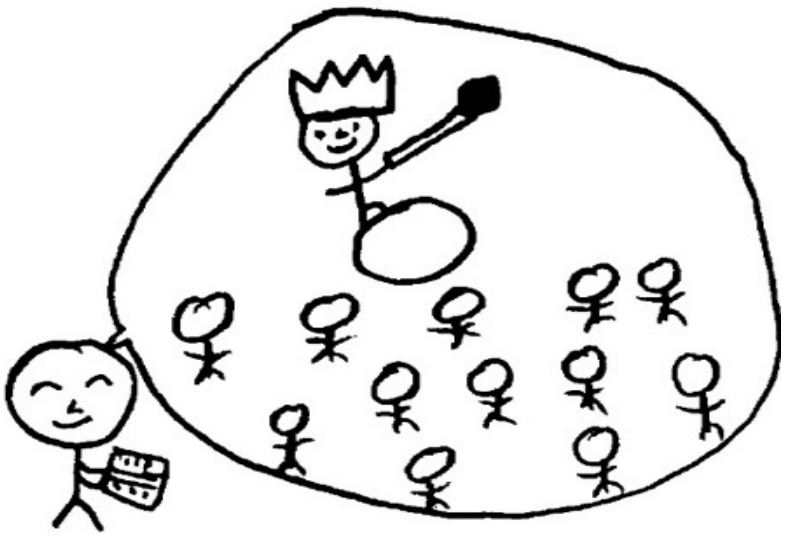


Figure 37: ***A Fictional Universe***

‘A Fictional Universe,’ offers a glimpse into the attitude of a learner characterised as having the 'best reading' skills within the group. The drawing is a representation of her sense of delight when engaging with written material, portraying a positive and enjoyable association with the act of reading. The depiction of a fictional universe shows that for this learner reading extends beyond a mere task or academic exercise. Instead, it represents a journey into a world of imagination and creativity. The metaphor suggests that reading is a gateway to alternate realms, where stories come alive, and imagination knows no bounds.

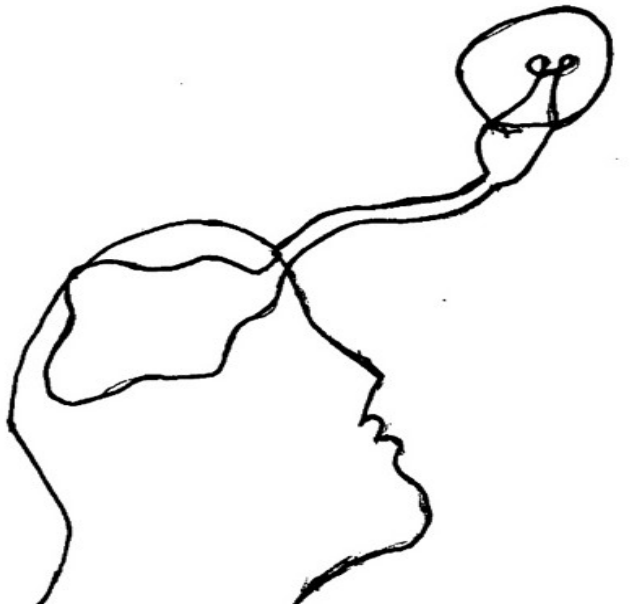


Figure 38: ***Lightbulb Moment***

‘Lightbulb Moment,’ captures a realisation or breakthrough in the learner's reading journey. The metaphor suggests that the learner is experiencing a moment of clarity or understanding and a newfound comprehension of texts. The use of the term "lightbulb moment" signifies a sudden understanding. In the context of reading, this could mean that the learner has acquired specific skills that have enhanced their ability to comprehend texts more effectively. It might represent the moment when a challenging concept clicked, leading to a deeper understanding of the material. In this context, the lightbulb might symbolise the learner's growing awareness and enlightenment in relation to reading.

The metaphorical drawings created by the learners provided valuable insights into their evolving perspectives. In the early weeks, drawings reflected negative emotions associated with reading, highlighting the struggles learners encountered. As the intervention continued, later drawings revealed a significant change. ‘Uphill Battle,’ depicted a learner recognising the effort needed to enhance reading skills while maintaining a positive attitude, showcasing resilience and determination. ‘A Fictional Universe,’ portrayed a learner's joy in reading, linking it with imagination and the pleasure derived from stories, indicating a positive emotional connection. The learners' journey from initial negative emotions to the positive perspectives seen in Figures 36, 37 and 38 underlines the impact of the intervention programme.

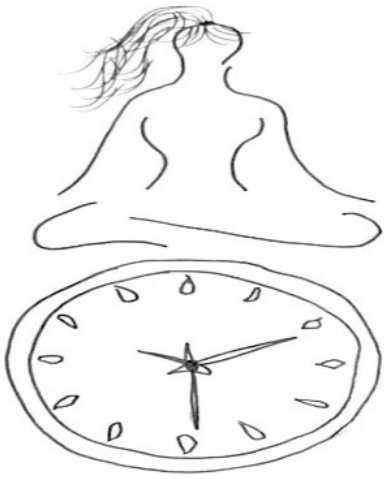


Figure 39: ***Good Things Come to Those Who Wait***

In this visual narrative, the female figure, portrayed in a meditative stance with crossed legs, symbolises my role during the intervention. Positioned above the clock, she reflects deep contemplation and patience, mirroring my own experiences throughout the programme. The analogue clock beneath the levitating figure emphasises the theme of time and patience. This metaphorical drawing is a manifestation of my personal growth and evolving understanding during the intervention. As the figure meditates, it captures the essence of my journey, particularly the need for patience—a virtue crucial in navigating the complexities of a reading intervention programme. The metaphor extends beyond the visual representation; it reflects the internal processes I underwent. Learning to be patient with myself became imperative, especially when faced with the challenges of decision-making within the programme. The clock symbolises the temporal aspect of improvement, highlighting that progress takes time, and there are no shortcuts in the delicate process of assisting learners with reading difficulties. This metaphorical drawing encapsulates the realisation that addressing reading difficulties is not a swift or linear process. I was able to share frustrations encountered and acknowledge that not everything goes according to plan. In the end, my drawing symbolises the understanding that improvement, both in my pedagogical approach and in supporting learners, necessitates continuous reflection, thoughtful choices, and, above all, patience.

5.6. Conclusion

The drawings presented in this chapter collectively reveal learners' negative attitudes towards reading, portraying it as a challenging and emotionally distressing activity. The details in each drawing highlight the multifaceted nature of the learners' struggles, emphasising the need to address both technical and emotional aspects of their reading experiences urgently. Throughout the intervention programme, learners demonstrated a notable shift from initially negative attitudes towards reading to a more positive outlook. The challenges faced by learners were effectively addressed through a programme that prioritised engaging activities, adaptability, and a supportive learning environment. These elements played a significant role in fostering a positive and participative attitude among learners by the conclusion of the programme.

The systematic coding process described in this chapter has allowed for the transformation of initial observations into defined themes and sub-themes. The primary objective of this chapter has been to elucidate underlying patterns embedded in the dataset and leverage these patterns to unveil valuable insights. The process of thematic analysis not only organises the data but also serves as a tool for interpretation, facilitating the extraction of meanings from the dataset. The identified themes provided valuable insights into my assumptions, revealing how they influenced teacher activities and learner engagement. Additionally, a deeper understanding emerged regarding the learners' attitudes towards reading, as reflected in the patterns within the data. Exploration of these themes highlighted successful strategies and illuminated areas where challenges were encountered during the reading intervention programme. The insights gleaned from this analysis are instrumental in shaping the conclusions presented in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 6

Disembarking

Concluding the Journey with Insights

6.1. Introduction

As I disembark from the journey explored in this thesis, Chapter 6 provides a comprehensive conclusion to the 12-week reading intervention programme surrounding grade 8 English second language learners in a rural South African school. Building on the thematic analysis in Chapter 5, this chapter uncovers findings related to the success of strategic measures, such as incorporating extrinsic motivators and arts-based activities. This study has witnessed a transformative journey and the shifts in learners' attitudes towards reading.

Within the lens of Sociocultural Theory, Chapter 6 draws connections between the study's outcomes and the importance of social interactions, cultural context, and collaborative learning in shaping learners' language skills. While acknowledging the study's limitations, it navigates towards potential paths for further research. As the chapter concludes, it encapsulates the essence of the research journey, echoing the resilience, adaptability, and collaborative learning that have defined this exploration into enhancing literacy experiences among grade 8 learners.

6.2. Findings

6.2.1. Research Question 1

What are the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home Language in a rural South African school?

This study presented a transformative journey in the reading experiences and attitudes of grade 8 English second language learners in a rural South African school over a 12-week intervention programme. In the early stages, learners exhibited a perception of reading tied to academic settings, viewing it as a directed and obligatory task within the structured demands of formal education. Metaphor drawings from Week 1 depicted negative emotions, such as fear, distress, and confusion associated with reading, emphasising the challenges faced by learners. In Week 3, learners produced metaphor drawings depicting where they read the most and how reading made them feel. The visual narratives consistently aligned with the theme of associating reading with academic environments, reinforcing a passive and compliance-driven approach to reading. The intervention programme highlighted the challenge of negative attitudes towards reading and focussed on fostering a positive reading culture.

Over the subsequent weeks, a noticeable shift occurred in learners' perspectives. Metaphor drawings from Week 12 showcased a positive transformation in their attitudes. The drawings depicted learners recognising the effort required for reading improvement, finding enjoyment in engaging with written texts, and experiencing moments of clarity and understanding in their reading journey. These shifts are the result of a reading intervention programme that used dynamic teaching strategies like arts-based methods and responsive pedagogy. The programme embraced a flexible educational approach, responding to changes and challenges as they arose.

The metaphorical drawings served as a powerful tool to gauge learners' evolving perspectives on reading. The contrast between the negative depictions in Week 1 and the positive representations in Week 12 revealed the programme's impact. Learners transitioned from initial disdain and reluctance towards reading in Week 1 to a state of endurance and positive engagement by Week 12. The success of the intervention programme was attributed to its emphasis on engaging activities, adaptability, and the creation of a supportive learning environment, all of which collectively contributed to fostering a positive and participative attitude among learners.

6.2.2. Research Question 2

What measures can I implement in response to the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school?

The data analysis reveals a clear correlation between the implementation of extrinsic motivators and the positive impact on the reading experiences of grade 8 English second language learners in a rural South African school. The focus on extrinsic motivation, particularly through engaging pre-reading activities and the incorporation of ‘snacks and socialising’, played a pivotal role in transforming learners' attitudes towards reading.

The introduction of 'snacks and socialising' in week 4 and the crafting activity contributed to heightened enthusiasm for the remainder of the reading session. In this case, the extrinsic motivators were key in sparking learners' interest and motivating them to engage in reading with enthusiasm. The intentional use of these incentives effectively broke the ice and created excitement around the reading material. The positive impact of these activities was evident in the observations of my critical friend, highlighting the success of combining fun and creative elements with reading.

In the weeks that followed, the trend of incorporating extrinsic motivators through varied pre-reading activities continued. The flower collages in Week 5, dream diary covers in Week 8, and rainbow painting in Week 9 all demonstrated a link between the engaging activities and increased motivation for reading. Learners were not only excited about the craft but also exhibited improved engagement and anticipation for the reading material. The decision to make 'snacks and socialising' and 'arts and crafts' a permanent part of the reading intervention programme further solidified their role as effective extrinsic motivators. The data analysis strongly suggests that the deliberate inclusion of such extrinsic motivators has been successful in creating an enjoyable and interactive learning environment, contributing to the positive transformation of learners' reading experiences throughout the intervention programme.

The data analysis also highlights the importance of thoughtful planning and careful consideration of reading materials. The initial stages of the programme revealed instances of poor decision-making, where assumptions and lack of consideration for learners' abilities and interests resulted in ineffective reading sessions. Week 2

highlighted the negative impact of overlooking text appropriateness, emphasising the consequences of choices made without due diligence. However, a positive shift occurred in Week 4 with a commitment to simplicity in materials and the incorporation of arts and crafts as pre-reading activities, leading to improved engagement and comprehension.

The intervention program's evolution reflects a refined selection process, considering both text difficulty and planned activities. By Week 11, a growing awareness emerged regarding the importance of understanding learners' needs and the effective combination of appropriate materials with engaging activities. The strategic inclusion of arts and crafts as pre-reading activities proved successful in capturing learners' attention and fostering a positive learning environment. Overall, the refined planning and execution demonstrate growth and an improved understanding of effective strategies for reading intervention in this context.

Measures to enhance learners' reading abilities necessitate careful consideration of materials, balancing simplicity with engagement, and connecting texts to learners' experiences. The successful incorporation of arts and crafts as pre-reading activities showcases a strategic approach to capturing learners' attention and fostering a positive learning environment. The program's evolution highlights the importance of adapting strategies based on ongoing reflections meet learners' diverse needs effectively.

Prioritising ample support, guidance, and scaffolding is crucial to addressing the diverse needs of learners. My ability to balance independent learning with structured guidance, respond to feedback, and foster collaborative environments can serve as a model for educators seeking to enhance reading experiences in their own contexts. The success of the programme hinged on continuous reflection, adaptation, and a commitment to carefully considering learners' comprehension levels and background knowledge.

6.2.3. Research Question 3

What were my experiences of implementing an extra-curricular reading programme for Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school?

The implementation of this reading intervention programme has been marked by a mix of frustration, successes, challenges, and transformative moments. Initially fuelled by a sense of optimism depicted in the figure titled, ‘Optimistic, Ambitious or Naïve?’, where I believed any effort would improve learners' comprehension, the journey unfolded as a series of irregular and abrupt shifts rather than a predictable cycle.

Week 2 became a turning point when the absence of my critical friend and poor learner attendance triggered uncertainty and a loss of confidence. In response, I resorted to metaphor drawings, illustrating my emotional state and the challenges I faced. The 'Sink or Swim' drawing encapsulated the essence of resilience, emphasising the critical choice to either succumb to challenges or navigate them resiliently.

A recurring theme was the tension between adhering to established procedures and the need for continuous improvement. Concerns arose about becoming too comfortable with a set procedure and the potential reinforcement of the idea that reading is only valuable when tested. This reflected a commitment to dynamic teaching approaches, with an emphasis on engaging elements that went beyond routine procedures. It was a critical moment that shaped my perspective and affected my teaching approaches.

Week 4 marked a significant teaching high with the integration of crafts as an icebreaker, showcasing the program's progress and fostering energetic participation. The reflection on week 6 delved into the internal debate about intensive and extensive reading, highlighting anxieties about the program's usefulness without standardised tests. This demonstrated a continuous commitment to improvement and innovation.

Week 12 provided an opportunity for retrospective reflection. Metaphor drawings, such as 'Birds of a Feather Flock Together,' visually depicted the teamwork and energy-saving dynamics with my critical friend. The drawing 'The Road is Long' shows my journey, emphasising resilience, individual adaptation, and the recognition of the ongoing path to becoming a better teacher.

I adopted a supportive approach to scaffolding learners. Notable strengths include effectively implementing intensive reading activities in Week 2, incorporating relevant pre-reading questions, and facilitating post-reading discussions. My commitment to guidance, participation, and relevance, as seen in Week 3 and Week 4, contributed to a well-structured approach that addressed the complexities of the reading materials. The positive trends continued in subsequent weeks because I actively responded to negative feedback from my critical friend. Having a critical friend has been instrumental in implementing the reading intervention programme. She was able to provide constructive feedback, challenge my ideas, and offer support in a thoughtful manner. Her insights were beneficial because they illuminated aspects that I overlooked and identified weaknesses in my plans. Her presence benefited my professional growth because she exposed me to alternative viewpoints, scrutinised my ideas, and encouraged better decision-making and problem-solving during the reading intervention programme.

In conclusion, the candid reflections that I engaged in throughout the 12-week intervention programme fostered resilience and adaptability. Triumphs served as affirmations, motivating both myself and learners, while admissions of challenges shaped a pedagogical approach that celebrated victories and embraced reflective practice. The transformative journey not only impacted personal and professional growth but also positively influenced learners' attitudes towards reading. I believe that this intervention programme was the start of my heightened awareness of my teaching practices and the realisation that being an effective teacher is an ongoing process.

6.3. Implications of the study

The implications of this research are far-reaching, encompassing various aspects of literacy education. Pedagogically, the findings stress the importance of employing dynamic teaching strategies, such as incorporating extrinsic motivators and arts-based activities, to cultivate positive attitudes towards reading among learners. Educators can use these insights to design interventions that not only engage students but also foster a supportive learning environment. Moreover, the study underscores the significance of scaffolding learners, providing adequate support, guidance, and collaborative opportunities to address their diverse needs effectively.

In terms of curriculum development, the research suggests the value of meticulously planning and selecting reading materials that are both suitable and captivating for learners. Educators are encouraged to consider factors such as students' comprehension levels, interests, and background knowledge when crafting reading curricula. Additionally, the integration of arts and crafts as pre-reading activities demonstrates the potential for incorporating creative elements into the curriculum to enhance learning experiences and promote literacy skills.

From a professional development perspective, the findings emphasizes the continuous reflection, adaptation, and growth necessary for educators. It underscores the role of critical friends or colleagues in providing constructive feedback and support, which can significantly contribute to teacher development and the improvement of instructional practices. Collaborative teaching approaches and interdisciplinary studies are also encouraged to enhance educators' teaching skills and knowledge base, particularly in the domain of reading intervention.

On the research front, this study identifies avenues for further exploration, such as investigating the sustained impact of reading intervention programmes over time and assessing the effectiveness of different strategies across diverse settings. Future research endeavours could delve into the role of parental involvement in supporting reading initiatives and explore interdisciplinary approaches to reading intervention involving professionals from psychology, linguistics, and related fields.

6.4. Theoretical implications

The implementation of the reading intervention programme for Grade 8 English second language learners in a rural South African school aligns closely with key concepts of sociocultural theory, particularly in terms of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), social interaction, cultural tools and artifacts, cultural context, and mediation.

Throughout the intervention programme, there was evidence of the programme effectively targeting the learners' ZPD. The gradual shift from negative perceptions of reading to more positive attitudes over the 12-week period suggests that the intervention provided appropriate levels of support and scaffolding, facilitating

cognitive growth within the learners' ZPD. However, there were instances where the programme did not seem to align well with the ZPD concept. For example, in the early stages of the programme, the lack of engagement and negative attitudes towards reading indicated that the programme may not have adequately addressed the learners' ZPD, resulting in dissonance between the instructional level and the learners' current abilities.

Social interaction played a crucial role in the intervention programme, particularly through the incorporation of engaging pre-reading activities such as arts and crafts and 'snacks and socialising'. These activities fostered collaboration among learners, allowing them to share ideas, support each other, and engage with the reading material in a meaningful way. This emphasis on social interaction aligns with sociocultural theory, which underscores the importance of social context in cognitive development. However, there were instances where social interaction did not seem to be as effective. For example, in Week 2, the absence of the critical friend and poor learner attendance triggered uncertainty and a loss of confidence, highlighting the challenges that can arise when social support is lacking.

The use of cultural tools and artifacts, such as metaphor drawings, shaped the learning experiences in the intervention programme. These drawings provided valuable insights into learners' perceptions and experiences, allowing the educator to tailor the programme to meet their needs effectively. By leveraging cultural tools and artifacts, the intervention programme created a culturally responsive learning environment that supported cognitive development. However, there were instances where cultural tools and artifacts did not seem to align well with the learners' cultural context. For example, in Week 6, there was internal debate about intensive and extensive reading, highlighting potential cultural differences in pedagogical approaches.

The rural South African school setting and the specific cultural context of the learners influenced the design and implementation of the intervention programme. The emphasis on extrinsic motivators such as crafts and social activities reflected an understanding of the cultural context and the importance of incorporating culturally relevant elements into the learning process. By considering the cultural context, the intervention programme created an inclusive and supportive learning environment that resonated with the learners' experiences.

Mediation played a critical role in the intervention programme, particularly through the presence of the critical friend who provided feedback and support throughout the programme. The critical friend served as a mediator between the educator and the learners, offering insights, challenging assumptions, and facilitating reflective practice. This mediation helped to scaffold the learning process, providing the necessary support and guidance for both the educator and the learners. However, there were instances where mediation did not seem to be as effective. For example, in Week 11, there was a growing awareness of the importance of understanding learners' needs and the effective combination of appropriate materials with engaging activities, indicating that mediation may not have been as effective in earlier stages of the programme.

6.5. Limitations of the study

This research took place in one school, with one teacher-researcher and one critical friend. It was limited to a small number of grade 8 learners who fit the criteria for the study. As a result of the small-scale design, the research was also bound by context. The rural context of the school and the lack of library resources posed a challenge during this study.

While the study unfolded over the course of 24 months, the intervention programme was time-bound, lasting only 12 weeks. This timeframe was determined by a combination of factors, including the need to obtain ethical clearance and approvals during the initial phase and the constraints imposed by the school's academic calendar during the implementation phase. This time period may not have been adequate for learners to reap the benefits of the interventions or for the researcher to assess the strategies' effectiveness. If learners had made reading gains as a result of the interventions, it would have been helpful to understand whether these gains could be sustained over time so that struggling readers may catch up completely with their non-struggling peers. Because this study was time and context-bound, the results interpreted should acknowledge that the study was conducted in one school. Any improvements made may have been influenced by the instructional context within the school at the time when the data was gathered.

Another limitation to note is that these interventions made use of instructional-level materials, which were two to four grades below the actual grade level of the learners. Given the small-scale nature of the study, it was not possible to examine the effects of the intervention strategies on both instructional-level reading performance and actual grade-level reading performance.

Furthermore, while learners' voices were captured through their drawings and responses to prompts, their individual experiences and perspectives were not fully personalised or explored in the classroom setting. A more comprehensive understanding of learners' reading experiences could have been achieved through deeper engagement with their responses. Despite references to learner involvement in certain activities, a more thorough presentation of their contributions is warranted. Additionally, regarding the interpretation of participant-produced drawings, it would have been advantageous to incorporate more direct insights from the learners themselves.

6.6. Further study

In the limitations section (6.3.), the small-scale nature of this study is acknowledged. Future investigations could delve into the sustained impact of reading intervention programmes over an extended period, assessing lasting positive changes in learners' attitudes and engagement beyond the immediate intervention period. Contextual constraints in the current study emphasise the importance of exploring diverse influences, including socio-economic conditions, community involvement, and school resources, in order to understand how these factors may affect the effectiveness of reading intervention programmes.

Furthermore, there is potential for comparative studies across multiple schools or regions to analyse the effectiveness of reading interventions in various settings, identifying context-specific strategies and best practices. Exploring the use of grade-level materials in reading interventions may provide insights into whether this approach yields more significant improvements in learners' reading performance compared to instructional-level materials.

To address the inadequate support for teachers in reading remediation, a future study could focus on teacher professional development, enhancing their ability to assist learners with reading deficits. This approach may evaluate how improved teaching skills, strategies, and knowledge impact the overall success of reading interventions. Additionally, a cross-disciplinary study involving professionals from psychology, linguistics, and related fields could explore interdisciplinary approaches to reading intervention, providing a comprehensive understanding of cognitive and emotional aspects related to reading.

Teacher collaboration is another avenue for exploration, investigating the benefits and drawbacks of collaborative teaching approaches in the implementation of reading intervention programmes. Assessing how collaborative efforts contribute to a holistic and effective learning experience could be a valuable aspect of such a study.

Finally, addressing the impact of poor parental involvement highlighted in the literature review, future studies could examine the role of parental engagement in supporting reading initiatives. Investigating how involving parents in the reading process at home contributes to improved reading experiences and outcomes for learners would provide valuable insights.

6.7. Conclusion

My journey through implementing an extra-curricular reading programme for grade 8 English second language learners has been marked by optimism, challenges, and deep reflections. This study, rooted in the Sociocultural Theory, emphasised the importance of social interactions, cultural context, and collaborative learning. Through the lens of this theory, I discovered that learners, regardless of their diverse linguistic backgrounds, can thrive when nurtured and scaffolded in a supportive environment. The metaphor drawings, reflective journals, and critical friend engagements have provided a multifaceted view of the reading experiences and challenges faced by grade 8 learners, allowing me to tailor interventions with a nuanced understanding.

The heart of this research lies not just in the interventions implemented but in the collaborative and transparent process that unfolded. The metaphor drawings were poignant expressions, capturing the highs and lows, the optimism, and the moments

of feeling submerged, emphasising that this journey is not just about teaching but a shared experience of growth. As I look back at the inception of this study, the optimism depicted in my first metaphor drawing titled 'Optimistic, Ambitious, or Naïve?' serves as a reminder of the humility required in educational endeavours. I thought the road was paved, but it turned out to be a journey of discovery, resilience, and continuous improvement. The 'Sink or Swim' metaphor drawing echoes the challenges faced, urging me to dig deep, push past inadequacies, and navigate the complexities of implementing a reading intervention programme.

In addressing the research questions and objectives, this study not only sheds light on the reading experiences of grade 8 learners but offers tangible measures and reflections that extend beyond a mere intervention programme. It speaks to the essence of teaching as a transformative and self-reflective practice, acknowledging that success is not about miracles but about the continuous adaptation and dedication to learners' needs.

In conclusion, this autoethnographic self-study is not a comprehensive a roadmap for remediating reading; it is a testament to the resilience of educators, the potential for growth in learners, and the enduring power of literature to shape lives. As I step back from this journey, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to make a meaningful impact, one page, one drawing, and one reflective moment at a time. I hope my contribution illuminates the path towards a deeper profound understanding of reading, teaching, and the collaborative spirit that fuels educational progress.

References

Abtahi, Y., Graven, M., & Lerman, S. (2017). Conceptualising the more knowledgeable other within a multi-directional ZPD. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, *96*, 275-287.

Adams, T. E., & Herrmann, A. F. (2020). Expanding our autoethnographic future. *Journal of Autoethnography*, *1*(1), 1-8.

Adams, T. E., & Manning, J. (2015). Autoethnography and family research. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *7*(4), 350-366.

Adams, T. E., Jones, S. H., Jones, S. L. H., & Ellis, C. (2014). Autoethnography: Oxford University Press.

Ahmadi, M. R. (2017). The impact of motivation on reading comprehension. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, *2*(1), 1-7.

Akkaya, N., & Demirel, M. V. (2012). Teacher candidates' use of questioning skills in during-reading and post-reading strategies. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *46*, 4301-4305.

Akyeampong, K., Lussier, K., Pryor, J., & Westbrook, J. (2013). Improving teaching and learning of basic maths and reading in Africa: Does teacher preparation count?. *International journal of educational development*, *33*(3), 272-282.

Al Aghar, T., Demirci, H. C., Houjeir, R., McMinn, M., & Ali Saif Alzaabi, K. (2023). Investigating Arabic teachers' perceptions of extensive reading practices in higher education. *Cogent Education*, *10*(1), 2162701.

Al Otaiba, S., & Fuchs, D. (2006). Who are the young children for whom best practices in reading are ineffective? An experimental and longitudinal study. *Journal of Learning disabilities*, *39*(5), 414-431.

Ala, M. J., & Derequito, C. (2022). Intensive Reading and Task-Based Approaches: A Relevant Viewpoint in Improving Students' Reading and Writing Proficiency. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, *9*(09), 7219-7229.

Alhojailan, M. I. (2012). Thematic analysis: A critical review of its process and evaluation. *West east journal of social sciences*, *1*(1), 39-47.

Alhojailan, M. I. (2012). Thematic analysis: A critical review of its process and evaluation. *West east journal of social sciences*, *1*(1), 39-47.

Al-Jawi, F. D. (2010). Teaching the receptive skills. *Retrieved June 17*, 2017.

Allahyar, N., & Nazari, D. A. (2012). Potentiality of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory in exploring the role of teacher perceptions, expectations and interaction strategies. *Journal of Working Papers in Language Pedagogy*.

Allen, D. C., Adams, T. E., & Jones, S. (2015). Learning autoethnography: A review of autoethnography: Understanding qualitative research. *Learning*, *2*, 2-2015.

Altrichter, H., Feldman, A., Posch, P. S., & Somekh, B. B. (2008): Teachers investigate their work; An introduction to action research across the professions.

Alvermann, D. E., & Mallozzi, C. A. (2010). Interpretive research. *Handbook of reading disability research*, 488-498.

Ameri, M. (2020). Criticism of the Sociocultural Theory. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal) Volume*, *3*, 1530-1540.

Amerian, M., & Mehri, E. (2014). Scaffolding in Sociocultural Theory: Definition, steps, features, conditions, tools, and effective considerations. *Scientific Journal of Review*, *3*(7), 756-765.

American Psychological Association. (2001). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Anandari, C. L., & Iswandari, Y. A. (2019). Extensive reading in Indonesian schools: A successful story. *Teflin Journal*, *30*(2), 137-152.

Anderson, G. L., & Herr, K. (1999). The new paradigm wars: Is there room for rigorous practitioner knowledge in schools and universities? Educational researcher, 28(5), 12-40.

Anderson, K. J., & Minke, K. M. (2007). Parent involvement in education: Toward an understanding of parents' decision making. *The Journal of educational research*, *100*(5), 311-323.

Anderson, L., & Glass-Coffin, B. (2013). I learn by going. *Handbook of autoethnography*, 57-83.

Anderson, N. C. (2013). *Effective doctoral education: Interpreting factors and outcomes of success through a new framework, autoethnography, and quantitative study of passion* (Doctoral dissertation, North Dakota State University).

Andrés, I. C. (2020). Enhancing Reading Comprehension through an Intensive Reading Approach. *HOW*, *27*(1), 69-82.

Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of emerging trends in educational research and policy studies*, *5*(2), 272-281.

Applegate, A. J., & Applegate, M. D. (2010). A study of thoughtful literacy and the motivation to read. *The Reading Teacher*, *64*(4), 226-234.

Arievitch, I. M., & Haenen, J. P. (2005). Connecting Sociocultural Theory and educational practice: Galperin's approach. *Educational psychologist*, *40*(3), 155-165.

Asraf, R.M., & Ahmad, I. S. (2003). Promoting English language development and the reading habit among students in rural schools through the Guided Extensive Reading program.

Aziz, I. N. (2020). Implementation of SQ3R Method in Improving the Students' Basic Reading Skill. *EDUCATIO: Journal of Education*, *5*(1), 97-106.

Bakken, A. S., & Lund, R. E. (2018). Why should learners of English read? Norwegian English teachers' notions of EFL reading. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *70*, 78-87.

Baskerville, D., & Goldblatt, H. (2009). Learning to be a critical friend: From professional indifference through challenge to unguarded conversations. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *39*(2), 205-221.

Beattie, M. (2009). *Narrative, Arts-Based Pedagogy: Connecting the Personal, Professional and Scholarly. The Quest for Meaning* (pp. 29–71). Brill.

Behroozizad, S., Nambiar, R. M., & Amir, Z. (2014). Sociocultural Theory as an approach to aid EFL learners. *Reading*, *14*(2), 217-226.

Bell, J. S. (2002). Narrative inquiry: More than just telling stories. *TESOL quarterly*, *36*(2), 207-213.

Bell, T. (2001). Extensive reading: Speed and comprehension. *The reading matrix*, *1*(1).

Benner, A. D., Boyle, A. E., & Sadler, S. (2016). Parental involvement and adolescents' educational success: The roles of prior achievement and socioeconomic status. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, *45*, 1053-1064.

Berninger, V. W., Abbott, R. D., Jones, J., Wolf, B. J., Gould, L., Anderson-Youngstrom, M., ... & Apel, K. (2006). Early development of language by hand:

Composing, reading, listening, and speaking connections; three letter-writing modes; and fast mapping in spelling. *Developmental neuropsychology*, *29*(1), 61-92.

Bertram, C., & Christiansen, I. (2014). Understanding research. *An introduction to reading research. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers*.

Biakolo, M. O. (2007). The teaching of reading in Botswana government primary schools. *Marang: Journal of Language and Literature*, *17*(1), 13-28.

Bieler, P., Bister, M. D., Hauer, J., Klausner, M., Niewöhner, J., Schmid, C., & von Peter, S. (2021). Distributing reflexivity through co-laborative ethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *50*(1), 77-98.

Black, A. L. (2020). Remembering and representing the wonder: Using arts-based reflection to connect pre-service early childhood teachers to significant childhoodnature encounters and their professional role. *Research handbook on childhoodnature: Assemblages of childhood and nature research*, 777-798.

Blanton, W. E., Wood, K. D., & Moorman, G. B. (1990). The role of purpose in reading instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, *43*(7), 486-493.

Böhmer, B., & Wills, G. (2023). COVID-19 and inequality in reading outcomes in South Africa: PIRLS 2016 and 2021.

Bold, C. (2011). *Using narrative in research*. Sage.

Bos, C., Mather, N., Dickson, S., Podhajski, B., & Chard, D. (2001). Perceptions and knowledge of preservice and inservice educators about early reading instruction. *Annals of dyslexia*, *51*(1), 97-120.

Boulhrir, T. (2017). Twenty-first century instructional classroom practices and reading motivation: Probing the effectiveness of interventional reading programs. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, *5*(3), 57-66.

Bowyer-Crane, C., Snowling, M. J., Duff, F. J., Fieldsend, E., Carroll, J. M., Miles, J., ... & Hulme, C. (2008). Improving early language and literacy skills: Differential effects of an oral language versus a phonology with reading intervention. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *49*(4), 422-432.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). *Thematic analysis*. American Psychological Association.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). *Thematic analysis*. American Psychological Association.

Braunger, J., & Lewis, J. P. (1997). Building a knowledge base in reading.

Breznitz, Z. (1997). Reading rate acceleration: Developmental aspects. *The Journal of genetic psychology*, *158*(4), 427-441.

Breznitz, Z., & Berman, L. (2003). The underlying factors of word reading rate. *Educational Psychology Review*, *15*(3), 247-265.

Brookfield, S. D. (2000). The concept of critically reflective practice. *Handbook of adult and continuing education*, *2*, 33-49.

Bruce, B. C., & Wasser, J. D. (1996). An inquiry model for literacy across the curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum studies*, *28*(3), 281-300.

Bruner, J. (1991). The narrative construction of reality. *Critical inquiry*, *18*(1), 1-21.

Bunyakarte, T. J. (2010). Learning in the social constructivist perspective.

Caingcoy, M. (2023). Culturally responsive pedagogy: A systematic overview.

Calhoon, M. B. (2005). Effects of a peer-mediated phonological skill and reading comprehension programmeon reading skill acquisition for middle school students with reading disabilities. *Journal of learning disabilities*, *38*(5), 424-433.

Campbell, B., & Prinsloo-Marcus, L. (2020). Negotiating language transitioning alongside academic literacy in higher education. Italian Studies in Southern Africa/Studi d'Italianistica nell'Africa Australe, 33(2).

Cantrell, S. C., Rintamaa, M., Anderman, E. M., & Anderman, L. H. (2018). Rural adolescents' reading motivation, achievement and behavior across transition to high school. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *111*(4), 417-428.

Carnie, T. (2023, April 20). *Penguins survived multiple crises – but can Africa's doughty 'climate refugees' ride the latest storms?* Daily Maverick. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-04-20-penguins-survived-multiple-crises-but-can-africas-doughty-climate-refugees-ride-the-latest-storms/

Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as method.* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Chansa-Kabali, T., Serpell, R., & Lyytinen, H. (2014). Contextual analysis of home environment factors influencing the acquisition of early reading skills in Zambian families. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, *24*(5), 410-419.

Charmaz, K., & Mitchell, R.G. (1997). The myth of silent authorship: Self, substance, and style in ethnographic writing. In R. Hertz (Ed.), Reflexivity and voice (pp. 193-215). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Chio, K. U. (2009). Reading and second language acquisition. *HKBU Papers in Applied Language Studies*, *13*, 153-174.

Cho, K. S. (2018). Does Sustained Silent Reading Result in a Long-Term Reading Habit?. *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching*, *3*(1), 1-5.

Chua, S. P. (2008). The effects of the sustained silent reading programmeon cultivating students' habits and attitudes in reading books for leisure. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, *81*(4), 180-184.

Ciğerci, F. M., & Yıldırım, M. (2023). From Freytag pyramid story structure to digital storytelling: Adventures of pre-service teachers as story writers and digital story tellers. *Education and Information Technologies*, 1-24.

Cirocki, A., & Widodo, H. P. (2019). Reflective practice in English language teaching in Indonesia: Shared practices from two teacher educators. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, *7*(3 (Special Issue)), 15-35.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2004). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. John Wiley & Sons.

Clandinin, J., Cave, M. T., & Cave, A. (2011). Narrative reflective practice in medical education for residents: composing shifting identities. *Advances in medical education and practice*, *2*, 1.

Clark, C., & Teravainen, A. (2017). Celebrating Reading for Enjoyment: Findings from Our Annual Literacy Survey 2016. National Literacy Trust Research Report. *National Literacy Trust*.

Cloke, P., Cooke, P., Cursons, J., Milbourne, P., & Widdowfield, R. (2000). Ethics, reflexivity and research: Encounters with homeless people. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, *3*(2), 133-154.

Coltheart, M., & Prior, M. R. (2007). *Learning to read in Australia*. Canberra: Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.

Combrinck, C., Van Staden, S., & Roux, K. (2014). Developing early readers: Patterns in introducing critical reading skills and strategies to South African children. *Reading & Writing-Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa*, *5*(1), 1-9.

Combrinck, C., Van Staden, S., & Roux, K. (2014). Developing early readers: Patterns in introducing critical reading skills and strategies to South African children. *Reading & Writing-Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa*, *5*(1), 1-9.

Connor, C. M., Morrison, F. J., & Katch, L. E. (2004). Beyond the reading wars: Exploring the effect of child-instruction interactions on growth in early reading. *Scientific studies of reading*, *8*(4), 305-336.

Cremin, T. (2022). *Teaching english creatively*. Taylor & Francis.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study.

Cunliffe, A. L. (2003). Reflexive inquiry in organizational research: Questions and possibilities. *Human relations*, *56*(8), 983-1003.

Dahliana, S. (2019). STUDENTS'MOTIVATION AND RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM. Englisia: Journal of Language, Education, and Humanities, 6(2), 75–87.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. John Wiley & Sons.

Davis, A. (2013). To read or not to read: Decoding synthetic phonics. *Impact*, *2013*(20), 1-38.

Dawkins, S., Ritz, M. E., & Louden, W. (2009). Learning by doing: preservice teachers as reading tutors. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *34*(2), 40-49.

Day, R. R. (2015). Extending extensive reading.

DBE (Deparrment of Basic Education) (2022). Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM). https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202209/46879gon2468.pdf

DBE(a) (Department of Basic Education) (2011). English Home Language Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Intermediate Phase 4-6. https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/CD/National%20Curriculum%20Statements

%20and%20Vocational/CAPS%20IP%20%20HOME%20ENGLISH%20GR%204-6%20%20WEB.pdf?ver=2015-01-27-160412-720

DBE(b) (Department of Basic Education) (2011). English Home Language Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Senior Phase 7-9.

DBE(c) (Department of Basic Education) (2011). English Home Language Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Further Education and Training Grades 10-12. https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/archive-files/caps_fet_home_english_gr_10-12_web_5478.pdf

DBE(d) (Department of Basic Education) (2020). National Revised Annual Teaching Plans Grade 8 Home Language. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://kfmulaudzi.files.wordpress.com/2020/06/2020_national-revised-atps-grade-8-home-language.pdf

De Naeghel, J., Valcke, M., De Meyer, I., Warlop, N., Van Braak, J., & Van Keer, H. (2014). The role of teacher behavior in adolescents' intrinsic reading motivation. *Reading and Writing*, *27*(9), 1547-1565.

Denton, C. A., Fletcher, J. M., Anthony, J. L., & Francis, D. J. (2006). An evaluation of intensive intervention for students with persistent reading difficulties. *Journal of learning disabilities*, *39*(5), 447-466.

Department of Basic Education. (2023). PIRLS 2021: South African Preliminary Highlights Report. Department of Basic Education: Pretoria.

Department of Basic Education. (2023). *PIRLS 2021: South African Preliminary Highlights Report*. Department of Basic Education: Pretoria.

Department of Education (DoE). (2008). *National Reading Strategy.* Pretoria: DoE.

Dewitz, P., Jones, J., & Leahy, S. (2009). Comprehension strategy instruction in core reading programs. *Reading research quarterly*, *44*(2), 102-126.

Dinkelman, T. (1999). Critical reflection in a social studies methods semester. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *27*(3), 329-357.

Dorasamy, N., Reddy, K., & Naidoo, U. (2014). Reading literacy in primary schools in South Africa: educator perspectives on factors affecting reading literacy and strategies for improvement. *International journal of educational sciences (Delhi)(Print)*.

Du Preez, J. (2008). Locating the researcher in the research: Personal narrative and reflective practice. *Reflective Practice*, *9*(4), 509-519.

Duma, N. (2023, April 08). *Thabo Bester, Nandipha Magudumana arrested in Tanzania, found with multiple passports.* News24. https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/thabo-bester-nandipha-magudumana-arrested-in-tanzania-found-with-multiple-passports-20230408

Dunn, M. (2010). Response to Intervention and Reading Difficulties: A Conceptual Model that Includes Reading Recovery. *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal*, *8*(1), 21-40.

Echeverria, N., Hemmerechts, K., & Kavadias, D. (2019). The legacy of country-level experience of armed conflict on emancipative value preferences: A global cross-national study. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, *60*(5), 342-370.

Ediger, M. (2002). Reading for Enjoyment and Pleasure.

Edwards, J. (2021). Ethical autoethnography: Is it possible?. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *20*, 1609406921995306.

Ekaningrum, V. C., & Prabandari, C. S. (2015). Students perception on pre-reading activities in basic reading II class of the English language education study programmeof Sanata Dharma University. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, *18*(2), 133-140.

Elley, W. B., & Mangubhai, F. (1983). The impact of reading on second language learning. *Reading research quarterly*, 53-67.

Ellis, C. (2007). Telling secrets, revealing lives: Relational ethics in research with intimate others. *Qualitative inquiry*, *13*(1), 3-29.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: an overview. *Historical social research/Historische sozialforschung*, 273-290.

Emilda, H. (2020, November). Innovative Learning to Enhance Effective English Learning. In International Conference on the Teaching English and Literature (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 234-241).

Engward, H., & Davis, G. (2015). Being reflexive in qualitative grounded theory: discussion and application of a model of reflexivity. *Journal of advanced nursing*, *71*(7), 1530-1538.

Enighe, J. M., & Afangideh, M. E. (2018). Developing reading skills in beginning readers in Nigerian primary schools towards the millennium development goals. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *9*(6), 1160-1167.

Erekson, J. A. (2010). Prosody and interpretation. *Reading Horizons: A journal of literacy and language arts*, *50*(2), 3.

Eshiet, O. I. (2014). *Synthetic phonics as a tool for improving the reading skills of Nigerian pupils* (Doctoral dissertation, Newcastle University).

Evans, J. & Serrano, N. (2023, April 21). *Eskom blocks Free State town from using solar power to reduce load shedding.* Daily Maverick. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-04-21-eskom-wins-solar-case-against-free-state-town/#:~:text=%E2%80%9C%E2%80%8B%E2%80%8BThis%20means%20Rural,load%20shedding%2C%E2%80%9D%20said%20Bosch.

Fahey, K. M. (2011). Still learning about leading: A leadership critical friends group. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, *6*(1), 1-35.

Fahmi, A. The Effect of Art Strategy on the Enhancement of Reading Comprehension of the Eighth Grade Students. *e-Journal of ELTS (English Language Teaching Society)*, *5*(2).

Farrell, T. (2001). Critical friendships: Colleagues helping each other develop. *ELT journal*, *55*(4), 368-374.

Farrell, T. (2013). *Reflective practice in ESL teacher development groups: From practices to principles*. Springer.

Farrell, T. S. (2013). Critical incident analysis through narrative reflective practice: A case study. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, *1*(1), 79-89.

Fielding-Barnsley, R., & Purdie, N. (2005). Teachers' attitude to and knowledge of metalinguistics in the process of learning to read. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *33*(1), 65-76.

Finlay, L. (2008). Reflecting on 'Reflective practice'.

Finley, S. (2011). Critical arts-based inquiry. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*, 435-450.

Finn, K. (2023). Pre-service teachers applying culturally-responsive critical pedagogy. *Waikato Journal of Education*, *28*(1).

Fisher, D., & Ivey, G. (2005). Literacy and language as learning in content-area classes: A departure from “Every teacher a teacher of reading”. *Action in Teacher Education*, *27*(2), 3-11.

Fisher, D., & Ivey, G. (2006). Evaluating the interventions for struggling adolescent readers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *50*(3), 180-189.

Fisher, R., & Williams, M. (2012). Unlocking Creativity: A Teacher's Guide to Creativity Across the Curriculum. Routledge.

Fook, J. (1999). Reflexivity as method. *Annual Review of Health Social Science*, *9*(1), 11-20.

Foorman, B. R., & Moats, L. C. (2004). Conditions for sustaining research-based practices in early reading instruction. *Remedial and Special Education*, *25*(1), 51-60.

Fraser, C. A. (1999). Lexical processing strategy use and vocabulary learning through reading. *Studies in second language acquisition*, *21*(2), 225-241.

Frey, N., & Fisher, D. (2010). Reading and the brain: What early childhood educators need to know. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *38*(2), 103-110.

Gabillon, Z., & Ailincai, R. (2016). The role of artefacts and gestures in CLIL lessons. TESOLANZ journal, 24, 26-37.

Gala, A. (2023, May 02). *The Problem with Shein: a Noble Contributor to the Fast Fashion Epidemic.* The Teen Mag.https://www.theteenmagazine.com/the-problem-with-shein-a-noble-contributor-to-the-fast-fashion-epidemic#:~:text=The%20problem%20with%20Shein%20lies,labour%20practices%2C%20and%20environmental%20responsibility.

Gholson, M., Shute, V., & Rahimi, S. (2018). Artful Thinking in the Era of Assessment: The Promise of Arts Education. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, *27*(2), 159–174.

Ghritchenko, I., & Nesterenko, I. (2016). Innovative approaches to teaching English language to artists. Advanced Education, 106-110.

Gnawali, L. (2008). Teacher development through reflective practice. *Journal of Education and Research*, *1*(1), 69-71.

Godde, E., Bosse, M. L., & Bailly, G. (2020). A review of reading prosody acquisition and development. *Reading and Writing*, *33*(2), 399-426.

Goodman, Y. M., & Goodman, K. S. (2014). Vygotsky in a whole language perspective. In *Making sense of learners making sense of written language* (pp. 98-114). Routledge.

Gordon, C., & Lu, Y. L. (2021, March). “I Hate to Read-Or Do I?” Low-Achievers and Their Reading. In *IASL Annual Conference Proceedings*.

Green, C. (2020). Extensive reading and viewing as input for academic vocabulary: A large-scale vocabulary profile coverage study of students’ reading and writing across multiple secondary school subjects. *Lingua*, *239*, 102838.

Greenbank, P. (2003). The role of values in educational research: The case for reflexivity. *British educational research journal*, *29*(6), 791-801.

Guillemin, M., & Drew, S. (2010). Questions of process in participant-generated visual methodologies. *Visual studies*, *25*(2), 175-188.

Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and “ethically important moments” in research. *Qualitative inquiry*, *10*(2), 261-280.

Guo, Y. (2020, March). Application of sustained silent reading in different stages of English learning. In *International Conference on Modern Educational Technology and Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ICMETIE 2020)* (pp. 275-278). Atlantis Press.

Gustafsson, M., & Taylor, S. (2023). Explaining Improved Learning Outcomes in South African Primary Schools. In *Tracking Changes in South African Reading Literacy Achievement* (pp. 36-65). Brill.

Guthrie, J. T., & Coddington, C. S. (2009). Reading motivation. In *Handbook of motivation at school* (pp. 517-540). Routledge.

Handal, G. (1999). Consultation using critical friends. *New directions for teaching and learning*, *1999*(79), 59-70.

Harji, M. B., Balakrishnan, K., & Letchumanan, K. (2016). SPIRE Project: Parental Involvement in Young Children's ESL Reading Development. *English Language Teaching*, *9*(12), 1-15.

Harris, D. N., & Sass, T. R. (2011). Teacher training, teacher quality and student achievement. *Journal of public economics*, *95*(7-8), 798-812.

Hausheer, R., Hansen, A., & Doumas, D. M. (2011). Improving reading fluency and comprehension among elementary students: Evaluation of a school remedial reading program. *Journal of School Counseling*, *9*(9), n9.

Hecht, S. A., Burgess, S. R., Torgesen, J. K., Wagner, R. K., & Rashotte, C. A. (2000). Explaining social class differences in growth of reading skills from beginning kindergarten through fourth-grade: The role of phonological awareness, rate of access, and print knowledge. *Reading and writing*, *12*(1), 99-128.

Hemmerechts, K., Agirdag, O., & Kavadias, D. (2017). The relationship between parental literacy involvement, socio-economic status and reading literacy. *Educational Review*, *69*(1), 85-101.

Hennig, K., & Kirova, A. (2012). The role of cultural artefacts in play as tools to mediate learning in an intercultural preschool programme. Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 13(3), 226-241.

Heugh, K. (2002). The case against bilingual and multilingual education in South Africa: laying bare the myths: Many languages in education: issues of implementation. *Perspectives in education*, *20*(1), 171-196.

Hidayanti, N. (2018). *Teaching Reading Comprehension by Using Story Mapping Technnique on Narrative Text at The First Semester Of The Second Grade At Smp N 11 Bandar Lampung 2016/2017 Academic Year* (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Raden Intan Lampung).

Hodges, T. S., Feng, L., Kuo, L. J., & McTigue, E. (2016). Discovering the literacy gap: A systematic review of reading and writing theories in research. *Cogent Education*, *3*(1), 1228284.

Holt, N. L. (2003). Representation, legitimation, and autoethnography: An autoethnographic writing story. *International journal of qualitative methods*, *2*(1), 18-28.

Horst, M., Cobb, T., & Meara, P. (1998). Beyond a clockwork orange: Acquiring second language vocabulary through reading.

Howe, C., & Mercer, N. (2012). Children's social development, peer interaction and classroom learning. In *The Cambridge primary review research surveys* (pp. 190-214). Routledge.

Howie, S. J., Van Staden, S., Tshele, M., Dowse, C., & Zimmerman, L. (2012). *PIRLS 2011: South African children's reading literacy achievement report*. Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA).

Howie, S., Scherman, V., & Venter, E. (2008). The gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students in science achievement in South African secondary schools. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, *14*(1), 29-46.

https://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=5xCztldu-Kw%3d&tabid=573&portalid=0&mid=1569

Huber, J., Caine, V., Huber, M., & Steeves, P. (2013). Narrative inquiry as pedagogy in education: The extraordinary potential of living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories of experience. *Review of research in education*, *37*(1), 212-242.

Hudson, R. F., Lane, H. B., & Pullen, P. C. (2005). Reading fluency assessment and instruction: What, why, and how?. *The Reading Teacher*, *58*(8), 702-714.

Ingersoll, R. M., & Strong, M. (2011). The impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research. *Review of educational research*, *81*(2), 201–233.

International Reading Association. (2000). Making a difference means making it different: Honoring children's rights to excellent reading instruction. *Michigan reading journal*, *32*(2), 3.

Iwahori, Y. (2008). Developing reading fluency: A study of extensive reading in EFL.

Jalongo, M. R., Isenberg, J. P., & Gerbracht, G. (1995). *Teachers' Stories: From Personal Narrative to Professional Insight. The Jossey-Bass Education Series*. Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94104..

Jamshidifarsani, H., Garbaya, S., Lim, T., Blazevic, P., & Ritchie, J. M. (2019). Technology-based reading intervention programs for elementary grades: An analytical review. *Computers & Education*, *128*, 427-451.

Jannah, M. (2018). The Effect of Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review (SQ3R). *International research journal of engineering, IT & scientific research*, *4*(1), 1-11.

Johnson, K. E., & Golombek, P. R. (2002). *Teachers' narrative inquiry as professional development*. Cambridge University Press.

Joshi, R.M., Binks, E., Hougen, M., Dahlgren, M. E., Ocker-Dean, E., & Smith, D. L. (2009). Why elementary teachers might be inadequately prepared to teach reading. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *42*(5), 392-402.

Juel, C., & Minden-Cupp, C. (2000). Learning to read words: Linguistic units and instructional strategies. *Reading research quarterly*, *35*(4), 458-492.

K5learning. (n.d.). *Golly Grue's New Hat.* chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.k5learning.com/worksheets/reading-comprehension/grade-2-story-golly-grues-new-hat.pdf

Kanika, G. (2014). *Bookworm Babies.* chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://freekidsbooks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Bookworm-Babies-FKB-Kids-Stories.pdf

Kearney, K. S., & Hyle, A. E. (2004). Drawing out emotions: The use of participant-produced drawings in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative research*, *4*(3), 361-382.

Kearney, K. S., & Hyle, A. E. (2004). Drawing out emotions: The use of participant-produced drawings in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative research*, *4*(3), 361-382.

Kim, D., & Hall, J. K. (2002). The role of an interactive book reading programmein the development of second language pragmatic competence. *The modern language journal*, *86*(3), 332-348.

Kirchner, E., & Mostert, M. L. (2017). Aspects of the reading motivation and reading activity of Namibian primary school readers. *Cogent Education*, *4*(1), 1411036.

Klemenčič, E., Mirazchiyski, P. V., & Sandoval-Hernández, A. (2014). Parental involvement in school activities and student reading achievement-Theoretical perspectives and PIRLS 2011 findings. *Solsko Polje*, *25*(3/4), 117-130.

Krashen, S. D. (1993). The case for free voluntary reading. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *50*(1), 72-82.

Krashen, S. D. (2003). Explorations in language acquisition and use.

Krashen, S. D. (2004). *The power of reading: Insights from the research: Insights from the research*. ABC-CLIO.

Kriel, H. (2023, April 16). *With 2,000 rhinos up for sale but few takers, it's time for an urgent rethink.* Daily Maverick. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-04-16-with-2000-rhinos-up-for-sale-but-few-takers-its-time-for-an-urgent-rethink/

Kumar, A. G., & BB, A. M. (2017). A critique on the role of the teacher through Vygotskian perspective.

Kumi-Yeboah, A., & Amponsah, S. (2023). An exploratory study of instructors' perceptions on inclusion of culturally responsive pedagogy in online education. British Journal of Educational Technology, 54(4), 878-897.

Kush, J. C., Watkins, M. W., & Brookhart, S. M. (2005). The temporal-interactive influence of reading achievement and reading attitude. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, *11*(1), 29-44.

Kuzle, A. (2021). Drawing out emotions in primary grade geometry: An analysis of participant-produced drawings of Grade 3–6 students. *LUMAT: International Journal on Math, Science and Technology Education*, *9*(1), 844-872.

LaBerge, D., & Samuels, S. J. (1974). Toward a theory of automatic information processing in reading. *Cognitive psychology*, *6*(2), 293-323.

LaBoskey, V. K. (2004). The methodology of self-study and its theoretical underpinnings. In *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices* (pp. 817-869). Springer, Dordrecht.

Lambe, L. (2018). Teaching reading comprehension in EFL classroom: A glance at some approaches and activities. *Journal of English Language and Literature Teaching*, *2*(02).

Lantolf, J. P. (1994). Sociocultural Theory and second language learning: Introduction to the special issue. *The modern language journal*, *78*(4), 418-420.

Lantolf, J. P. (2006). Sociocultural Theory and L2: State of the art. *Studies in second language acquisition*, *28*(1), 67-109.

Lantolf, J. P. (Ed.). (2000). *Sociocultural Theory and second language learning* (Vol. 78, No. 4). Oxford university press.

Lantolf, J. P., & Xi, J. (2019). Let's not get tied into knots: a response to Newman,(2018)—Vygotsky, Wittgenstein and Sociocultural Theory. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *49*(3), 387-393.

Lantolf, J. P., Poehner, M. E., & Thorne, S. L. (2020). Sociocultural Theory and L2 development. In *Theories in second language acquisition* (pp. 223-247). Routledge.

Le Cordeur, M. (2012). Teaching reading across the curriculum in secondary school.

Le Roux, C. S. (2017). Exploring rigour in autoethnographic research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *20*(2), 195-207.

Lee, V. (2011). Becoming the reading mentors our adolescents deserve: Developing a successful sustained silent reading program. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *55*(3), 209-218.

Leil, A. K. A., Share, D. L., & Ibrahim, R. (2014). How does speed and accuracy in reading relate to reading comprehension in Arabic? *Psicológica*, *35*(2), 251-276.

Li, F. (2023, May 06). *The Ultimate Guide to Jumpstarting Your Fitness Journey Even If You're Not Athletic.* The Teen Mag. https://www.theteenmagazine.com/the-ultimate-guide-to-jumpstarting-your-fitness-journey-even-if-you-re-not-athletic

Loh, J. K. K. (2009). Teacher modeling: Its impact on an extensive reading program.

Lorimer, M. R. (2011). Arts-Infused Learning in Middle Level Classrooms. Journal for Learning through the Arts, 7(1), n1.

Lyon, G. R. (2003). Reading disabilities: Why do some children have difficulty learning to read? What can be done about it. *Perspectives*, *29*(2), 17-19.

Maako, K. (2023, February 24). *Lynn Forbes shares photo of AKA's open casket: My heart is shattered into millions of pieces.* News24. https://www.news24.com/life/arts-and-entertainment/celebrities/lynn-forbes-shares-photo-of-akas-open-casket-my-heart-is-shattered-into-millions-of-pieces-20230224

Mackenzie, C., McDowell, C., & Pittaway, E. (2007). Beyond 'do no harm': The challenge of constructing ethical relationships in refugee research. *Journal of Refugee studies*, *20*(2), 299-319.

MacPhail, A., Tannehill, D., & Ataman, R. (2021). The role of the critical friend in supporting and enhancing professional learning and development. *Professional Development in Education*, 1-14.

Maebana, M. E., Molotja, T. W., & Themane, M. J. (2022). An investigation into the Challenges experienced by Foundation Phase teachers in the implementation of the National Reading Strategy: A case of five primary schools, Limpopo Province, South Africa. *Technium Soc. Sci. J.*, *30*, 99.

Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *All Ireland Journal of Higher Education*, *9*(3).

Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *All Ireland Journal of Higher Education*, *9*(3).

Mahn, H. (1999). Vygotsky's methodological contribution to Sociocultural Theory. *Remedial and Special education*, *20*(6), 341-350.

Malatesha Joshi, R., Binks, E., Hougen, M., Dahlgren, M. E., Ocker-Dean, E., & Smith, D. L. (2009). Why elementary teachers might be inadequately prepared to teach reading. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *42*(5), 392-402.

Mannay, D. (2015). *Visual, narrative and creative research methods: Application, reflection and ethics*. Routledge.

Mannion, G., Fenwick, A., & Lynch, J. (2013). Place-responsive pedagogy: Learning from teachers' experiences of excursions in nature. *Environmental Education Research*, *19*(6), 792–809.

Mannix, E., & Neale, M. A. (2005). What differences make a difference? The promise and reality of diverse teams in organizations. Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 6 (2), 31–55.

Marginson, S., & Dang, T. K. A. (2017). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory in the context of globalization. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, *37*(1), 116-129.

Masoudi, G. (2017). The Effect of Vocabulary Self-Selection Strategy and Input Enhancement Strategy on the Vocabulary Knowledge of Iranian EFL Learners. *English Language Teaching*, *10*(8), 32-42.

Mathabane, M. (1986). *Kaffir boy: The true story of a black youth's coming of age in apartheid South Africa* (Vol. 86). New York: Macmillan.

Maton, K. (2003). Reflexivity, relationism, & research: Pierre Bourdieu and the epistemic conditions of social scientific knowledge. *Space and culture*, *6*(1), 52-65.

May, S., & Wright, N. (2007). Secondary literacy across the curriculum: Challenges and possibilities. *Language and Education*, *21*(5), 370-376.

Mazzetti, A. S. (2020). Using participant-produced drawings as an alternative to photographs in ethnographic research. In *Ethics and Integrity in Visual Research Methods*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

McCabe, S., & Foster, C. (2006). The role and function of narrative in tourist interaction. *Journal of tourism and cultural change*, *4*(3), 194-215.

McCallum, R. S., Krohn, K. R., Skinner, C. H., Hilton-Prillhart, A., Hopkins, M., Waller, S., & Polite, F. (2011). Improving reading comprehension of at-risk high-school students: The ART of reading program. *Psychology in the Schools*, *48*(1), 78-86.

McCormick, M. P., Weissman, A. K., Weiland, C., Hsueh, J., Sachs, J., & Snow, C. (2020). Time well spent: Home learning activities and gains in children's academic skills in the prekindergarten year. *Developmental psychology*, *56*(4), 710.

McLeod, S. A. (2014). Lev vygotsky.

Meier, T. (2003). " Why can't she remember that?" The importance of storybook reading in multilingual, multicultural classrooms. *The Reading Teacher*, *57*(3), 242-252.

Melani, M., & Syafitri, L. (2020, February). Investigating students' need in developing integrated model of intensive and extensive reading instruction at english education study programmeof Islamic State Institute of Bukittinggi. In *Journal of Physics: Conference Series* (Vol. 1471, No. 1, p. 012028). IOP Publishing.

Melekoglu, M. A., & Wilkerson, K. L. (2013). Motivation to Read: How Does It Change for Struggling Readers with and without Disabilities?. *International Journal of Instruction*, *6*(1), 77-88.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.

Miftah, M. Z. (2013). Implementation of intensive-extensive reading strategy to improve reading comprehension. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, *3*(1), 21-30.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2018). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Sage publications.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2018). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Sage publications.

Miriam, M., Gottlieb, J., Svarovsky, G., & Hite, R. (2023). The Intersection of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Engineering Design in Secondary STEM. The Journal of Pre-College Engineering Education Research.

Miyata, K., & Miyata, C. (2006). *The Reading Edge: Using Phonics Strategically to Teach Reading*. Pembroke Publishers Limited.

Mo, Y., & Troia, G. A. (2017). Similarities and differences in constructs represented by US States' middle school writing tests and the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress writing assessment. *Assessing Writing*, *33*, 48-67.

Moats, L. (2009). Still wanted: Teachers with knowledge of language. *Journal of learning disabilities*, *42*(5), 387-391.

Mohd Asraf, R., & Ahmad, I. S. (2003). Promoting English language development and the reading habit among students in rural schools through the guided extensive reading program.

Mojapelo, S. M. (2023). Whopping low reading literacies in South Africa. *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science*, *89*(1), 1-14.

Molotja, T. W., & Themane, M. (2018). Enhancing learners' reading habits through reading bags at secondary schools. *Reading & Writing-Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa*, *9*(1), 1-9.

Moreno, R., Guthrie, K. H., & Strickland, K. (2023). Incorporating Arts-Based Pedagogy: Moving Beyond Traditional Approaches to Teaching Qualitative Research. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry*, *p. 11*.

Motjuwadi, S. (2021). *Silent Reading: A Case of Sustained Silent Reading in a Western Cape Grade 5 Classroom* (Master's thesis, Faculty of Humanities).

Motshekga, A. 2011. Statement on the release of the Annual National Assessment Results for 2011 by Mrs Angie Motshekga Minister of Basic Education, Union Buildings, June 28 2011. http://www.info.gov.za/speech/DynamicAction?pageid=461&sid=19525&tid=36106.

Mudzielwana, N. P. (2014). The role of parents in developing reading skills of their children in the Foundation Phase. *Journal of Social Sciences*, *41*(2), 253-264.

Mullis, I. V., Kennedy, A. M., Martin, M. O., & Sainsbury, M. (2004). *PIRLS 2006 Assessment Framework and Specifications: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study*. TIMSS & PIRLS, International Study Center, Lynch School of Education, Manressa House, Boston College, 140 Commonwealth Street, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467.

Naidoo, U., Reddy, K., & Dorasamy, N. (2014). Reading literacy in primary schools in South Africa: Educator perspectives on factors affecting reading literacy and strategies for improvement. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, *7*(1), 155-167.

Nassimbeni, M., & Desmond, S. (2011). Assessing the impact of provision of books on reading, teaching and learning behaviour in twenty disadvantaged primary schools in South Africa. *Proving value in challenging times*.

Nation, P. (2004). Vocabulary learning and intensive reading. *English Australia Journal*, *21*(2), 20-29.

National Reading Panel (US), National Institute of Child Health, & Human Development (US). (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications*

for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health.

National Reading Panel (US), National Institute of Child Health, & Human Development (US). (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups*. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health.

Neisi, L., Hajijalili, M., & Namaziandost, E. (2019). The impact of using inverted classrooms on promoting extensive versus intensive reading comprehension among Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *9*(12), 1513-1523.

Newman, S. (2018). Vygotsky, Wittgenstein, and Sociocultural Theory. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *48*(3), 350-368.

Newman, S., & Latifi, A. (2021). Vygotsky, education, and teacher education. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *47*(1), 4-17.

Ngugi, M. N., & Mberia, H. K. (2014). The influence of the Internet surfing on the reading culture of secondary school teachers: A case study of newspaper readership in Kigumo Sub County, Kenya. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *4*(11), 96.

Ngussa, B. M., & Mjema, N. (2017). Factors influencing mastery of 3Rs among learners of primary schools in Ilala District, Tanzania. *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *1*(2), 12-26.

Ní Chróinín, D., Fletcher, T., & O'Sullivan, M. (2018). Pedagogical principles of learning to teach meaningful physical education. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, *23*(2), 117-133.

Nishizawa, H., Yoshioka, T., & Fukada, M. (2010). The impact of a 4-year extensive reading program. In *JALT2009 conference Proceedings* (pp. 632-640).

Nnebue, C. C. (2010). Informed consent in research. *Afrimedic Journal*, *1*(1), 5-10.

Norton, B., & McKinney, C. (2011). An identity approach to second language acquisition. In *Alternative approaches to second language acquisition* (pp. 85-106). Routledge.

Nurfaidah, S. (2018). Vygotsky's legacy on teaching and learning writing as social process. *LANGKAWI: Journal of the Association for Arabic and English*, *4*(2), 149-156.

O'brien, D. G., & Stewart, R. A. (1990). Preservice teachers' perspectives on why every teacher is not a teacher of reading: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of reading behavior*, *22*(2), 101-129.

Okebukola, F., Owolabi, T., & Onafowokan, B. O. (2013). An assessment of the reading motivation skills of Nigerian primary school teachers: Implications for language and science education. *Reading & Writing-Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa*, *4*(1), 1-12.

Olson, M. (1997). Narrative epistemology in practice.

Olteanu, C. (2017). Reflection-for-action and the choice or design of examples in the teaching of mathematics. *Mathematics Education Research Journal*, *29*(3), 349-367.

Omuna, M. O., Onchera, P. O., & Kurgatt, C. K. (2016). Availability and use of instructional resources for teaching and learning of English reading skills in secondary schools in Teso North Sub County, Kenya.

O'Regan, T., Robinson, L., Newton-Hughes, A., & Strudwick, R. (2019). A review of visual ethnography: Radiography viewed through a different lens. *Radiography*, *25*, S9-S13.

Otieno, O. D., & Hesbon, A. (2021). Parental involvement and reading culture among secondary school students case of international schools. *European Journal of Education Studies*, *8*(6).

Ovens, A., & Fletcher, T. (2014). Doing self-study: The art of turning inquiry on yourself. In *Self-study in physical education teacher education* (pp. 3-14). Springer, Cham.

Owusu-Acheaw, M., & Larson, A. G. (2014). Reading habits among students and its effect on academic performance: A study of students of Koforidua Polytechnic. *Library philosophy and practice*, 0_1.

Papert, S. (1980). " Mindstorms" Children. Computers and powerful ideas.

Park, A. Y. (2020). A comparison of the impact of extensive and intensive reading approaches on the reading attitudes of secondary EFL learners. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, *10*(2), 337-358.

Park, A. Y., Isaacs, T., & Woodfield, H. (2018). A comparison of the effects of extensive and intensive reading approaches on the vocabulary development of Korean secondary EFL learners. *Applied Linguistics Review*, *9*(1), 113-134.

Pathan, H., Memon, R. A., Memon, S., Khoso, A. R., & Bux, I. (2018). A critical review of Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory in second language acquisition. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, *8*(4), 232.

Pathan, S., Prabhu, K. G., & Siddalingaswamy, P. C. (2018). Techniques and algorithms for computer aided diagnosis of pigmented skin lesions—A review. *Biomedical Signal Processing and Control*, *39*, 237-262.

Patteson, A., Restoule, J., Margolin, I., & de Leon, C. (2010). Arts-based teaching and learning as an alternative approach for Aboriginal learners and their teachers. Canadian Council on Learning: Ottawa, CA, USA.

Paulson, E. J. (2006). Self-selected reading for enjoyment as a college developmental reading approach. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, *36*(2), 51-58.

Peel, K. L. (2020). A beginner's guide to applied educational research using thematic analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, *25*(1), 2.

Peel, K. L. (2020). A beginner's guide to applied educational research using thematic analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, *25*(1), 2.

Pentassuglia, M. (2017). "The Art (ist) is present": Arts-based research perspective in educational research. *Cogent Education*, *4*(1), 1301011.

Peppler, K., Davis-Soylu, H. J., & Dahn, M. (2023). Artifact-oriented learning: A theoretical review of the impact of the arts on learning. Arts Education Policy Review, 124(1), 61-77.

Pigada, M., & Schmitt, N. (2006). Vocabulary acquisition from extensive reading: A case study. *Reading in a foreign language*, *18*(1), 1-28.

Pitcher, S. M., Albright, L. K., DeLaney, C. J., Walker, N. T., Seunarinesingh, K., Mogge, S., ... & Dunston, P. J. (2007). Assessing adolescents' motivation to read. *Journal of adolescent & adult literacy*, *50*(5), 378-396.

Placier, P., Pinnegar, S., Hamilton, M. L., & Guilfoyle, K. (2005). Exploring the concept of dialogue in the self-study of teaching practices. *Making a difference in teacher education through self-study: Studies of personal, professional and programmerenewal*, 51-64.

Pongweni, T. (2023, April 23). *Fighting the filth – meet the people leading the charge against river pollution in South Africa.* Daily Maverick.

https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-04-23-fighting-the-filth-meet-the-people-leading-the-charge-against-river-pollution-in-south-africa/

Poulos, C. N. (2021). Coming home to narrative autoethnography: Encounters with Bochner and Ellis. In *Advances in autoethnography and narrative inquiry* (pp. 27-34). Routledge.

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*, *33*(1), 169-196.

Pulido, D. (2009). How involved are American L2 learners of Spanish in lexical input processing tasks during reading?. *Studies in second language Acquisition*, *31*(1), 31-58.

Puntambekar, S. (2022). Distributed scaffolding: Scaffolding students in classroom environments. Educational Psychology Review, 34 (1), 451-472.

Purwanti, E., & Hatmanto, E. D. (2019). Understanding EFL Teachers' Beliefs about Lesson Study and Their Knowledge Development Viewed from Social Cultural Theory of Vygotsky. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, *2*(2), 50-61.

Putri, E. M., Sutarsyah, C., & Suparman, U. (2018). Improving students'reading ability through ask, read and tell (art) in cooperative learning. *U-JET*, *7*(3).

Ragan, S. L. (2000). "The critical life": An exercise in applying inapplicable critical standards. *Communication Education*, *49*(3), 229-232.

Ragoonaden, K., & Mueller, L. (2017). Culturally responsive pedagogy: Indigenizing curriculum. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, *47*(2), 22–46.

Rasinski, T. V. (2012). Why reading fluency should be hot!. *The Reading Teacher*, *65*(8), 516-522.

Rautenbach, E., Olifant, T., & Cekiso, M. (2019). Teachers' perceptions of Grades 8–10 English First Additional Language learners' reading habits, attitudes and motivation. *Reading & Writing-Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa*, *10*(1), 1-11.

Redden, S. M. (2017). Metaphor analysis. *The international encyclopedia of communication research methods*, 1-9.

Reeves, C., Heugh, K., Prinsloo, C. H., Macdonald, C., Netshitangani, T., Alidou, H., ... & Herbst, D. (2008). Evaluation of literacy teaching in primary schools of Limpopo province.

Renandya, W. A., & Jacobs, G. M. (2002). Extensive reading: Why aren't we all doing it. *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*, *8*, 295-302.

Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Lockhart, C. (1994). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. Cambridge university press.

Richardson, L. (2000). Evaluating ethnography. *Qualitative inquiry*, *6*(2), 253-255.

Riessman, C. K. (2002). Illness narratives: Positioned identities.

Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *11*(1), 25-41.

Rodrigo, V., Krashen, S., & Gribbons, B. (2004). The effectiveness of two comprehensible-input approaches to foreign language instruction at the intermediate level. *System*, *32*(1), 53-60.

Rogoff, B. (2014). Learning by observing and pitching in to family and community endeavors: An orientation. *Human development*, *57*(2-3), pp. 69–81.

Rose, J. (2006). *Independent review of the teaching of early reading*. Department for Education and Skills.

Russell, J., & Zembylas, M. (2007). Arts integration in the curriculum: A review of research and implications for teaching and learning. International Handbook of Research in Arts Education (pp. 287–312).

Russell, T., & Schuck, S. (2004). How critical are critical friends and how critical should they be. In *The fifth international conference on self-study of teacher education practices. Journey of Hope: Risking self-study in a diverse world, Herstmonceux, United Kingdom*.

Rychly, L., & Graves, E. (2012). Teacher characteristics for culturally responsive pedagogy. Multicultural Perspectives, 14(1), 44-49.

Sadiku, L. M. (2015). The importance of four skills reading, speaking, writing, listening in a lesson hour. *European Journal of Language and Literature*, *1*(1), 29-31.

Samuels, A. J. (2018). Exploring Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Teachers' Perspectives on Fostering Equitable and Inclusive Classrooms. Srate Journal, 27(1), 22-30.

Sanacore, J., & Palumbo, A. (2010). Middle school students need more opportunities to read across the curriculum. *The Clearing House*, *83*(5), 180-185.

Sapp, L. L. (2012). *Reading Horizons Phonics Programmeand Success for All Foundations the Reading Edge Program: the Effect on Reading Achievement Levels of Struggling Middle School Readers*. Baker University.

Saricoban, A. (2002). Reading strategies of successful readers through the three phase approach. *The Reading Matrix*, *2*(3).

Saro, J.M., Gomez, R.T., Capio, A.O., Apat, J.Q., & Maglinate, F.L. (2022). Impact of Family Structure and Parental Involvement in Low Socioeconomic Areas on Reading and Writing Development of Grade 3 Students from San Rafael Elementary. *Psych Educ*.

Sawyer, R. K. (2006). Educating for innovation. *Thinking skills and creativity*, *1*(1), 41–48.

Schmitt, N. (2008). Instructed second language vocabulary learning. *Language teaching research*, *12*(3), 329-363.

Schnorr, R. F. (2011). Intensive reading instruction for learners with developmental disabilities. *The Reading Teacher*, *65*(1), 35-45.

Schön, D. A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions*. Jossey-Bass.

School Governing Bodies (n.d.). *School Governing Bodies*. Education and Training Unit (ETU). https://www.etu.org.za/toolbox/docs/government/sgb.html#:~:text=Section%2021%20Schools%20are%20allocated,activities%20the%20learners%20can%20take.

Schwandt, T. A. (2007). The sage dictionary of qualitative inquiry (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Scott, S., & Palincsar, A. (2013). Sociocultural Theory.

Semu, J. (n.d.). *Jabu's Diary.* Nal'iBali. https://nalibali.org/story-library/multilingual-stories/jabus-diary

Sgqolana, T. (2023, April 20). *Municipality owes Eskom more than R1bn, say those seeking to dissolve it.* Daily Maverick. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-04-20-mgijima-municipality-owes-eskom-r1bn-say-those-seeking-to-dissolve-it/

Shabani, K. (2016). Applications of Vygotsky's Sociocultural approach for teachers' professional development. *Cogent education*, *3*(1), 1252177.

Shabani, K. (2016). Applications of Vygotsky's Sociocultural approach for teachers' professional development. *Cogent education*, *3*(1), 1252177.

Shaikh, U. U., Karim, S., & Asif, Z. (2017, July). Re-Thinking Vygotsky: Applying Social Constructivism to Asynchronous Online Courses utilizing the Power of Crowdsourcing. In *PACIS* (p. 233).

Shank, G. (2005). Qualitative research: A personal skills approach. Alexandria.

Silalahi, R. M. (2019). Understanding Vygotsky's zone of proximal development for learning. *Polyglot: Jurnal Ilmiah*, *15*(2), 169-186.

Singh, P. (2012). *Foundation Phase educators' knowledge and attitudes towards implementation of the national reading strategy* (Doctoral dissertation).

Slavin, R. E. (2009). A randomized evaluation of the Success for All middle school reading program. *Middle grades research: Exemplary studies linking theory to practice*, 21.

Slavin, R., Chamberlain, A., Daniels, C., & Madden, N. A. (2009). The Reading Edge: a randomized evaluation of a middle school cooperative reading program. *Effective Education*, *1*(1), 13-26.

Smith, J. K., Smith, L. F., Gilmore, A., & Jameson, M. (2012). Students' self-perception of reading ability, enjoyment of reading and reading achievement. *Learning and individual differences*, *22*(2), 202-206.

Smith, K., Gamlem, S. M., Sandal, A. K., & Engelsen, K. S. (2016). Educating for the future: A conceptual framework of responsive pedagogy. Cogent Education, 3(1), 1227021.

South Africa, Department of Basic Education. 2010. Education for all. 2009 country report: South Africa. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education. http://www.info.gov.za/

Spencer, E. J., Schuele, C. M., Guillot, K. M., & Lee, M. W. (2008). Phonemic awareness skill of speech-language pathologists and other educators.

Spooner, A. L., Baddeley, A. D., & Gathercole, S. E. (2004). Can reading accuracy and comprehension be separated in the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability?. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *74*(2), 187-204.

Spry, T. (2001). Performing autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative inquiry*, *7*(6), 706-732.

Sreena, S., & Ilankumaran, M. (2018). Developing productive skills through receptive skills–a cognitive approach. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, *7*(4.36), 669-673.

Stoffelsma, L. (2019). English vocabulary exposure in South African township schools: Pitfalls and opportunities. *Reading & Writing-Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa*, *10*(1), 1-10.

Swaffield, S. & Jones, J. (2005). *Critical Friendship.* Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/networks/lfl/about/inform/PDFs/InForm_3.pdf

Sweet, A. P., & Guthrie, J. T. (1996). How children's motivations relate to literacy development and instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, *49*(8), 660.

Symon, G., & Cassell, C. (Eds.). (2012). *Qualitative organizational research: core methods and current challenges*. Sage.

Tarshaei, G., & Karbalaei, A. (2015). The effect of three phase approach on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*, *4*(2), 362.

Taylor, J., Erbeli, F., Hart, S. A., & Johnson, W. (2020). Early classroom reading gains moderate shared environmental influences on reading comprehension in adolescence. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *61*(6), 689-698

Taylor, P. C., & Medina, M. (2011). Educational research paradigms: From positivism to pluralism. *College Research Journal*, *1*(1), 1-16.

Tennant, L. (n.d.). *Teacher's Resource Pack: GET Reading Programme.* Macrat Publishing.

Ternenge, T. S., & Agipu, O. L. (2019). Availability and utilization of school library resources in selected secondary schools in Makurdi Metropolis. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, *2542*.

Thanh, N. C., & Thanh, T. T. (2015). The interconnection between interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods in education. *American journal of educational science*, *1*(2), 24-27.

Thiel, T. (1999). Reflections on critical incidents. *Prospect*, *14*(1), 44-52.

Thorne, S. L. (2005). Epistemology, politics, and ethics in Sociocultural Theory. *The Modern Language Journal*, *89*(3), 393-409.

Tidwell, D., Heston, M., & Fitzgerald, L. (Eds.). (2009). *Research methods for the self-study of practice* (Vol. 9). Springer Science & Business Media.

Topping, K., & Wolfendale, S. (Eds.). (2017). *Parental involvement in children's reading*. Routledge.

Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative inquiry*, *16*(10), 837-851.

Tracy, S. J., & Redden, S. M. (2015). Markers, metaphors, and meaning: Drawings as a visual and creative qualitative research methodology in organizations. In *Handbook of qualitative organizational research* (pp. 238-248). Routledge.

Tripp, D. (1994). Teachers’ lives, critical incidents, and professional practice. *Qualitative Studies in education*, *7*(1), 65-76.

Tuğrul Mart, Ç. (2015). Combining extensive and intensive reading to reinforce language learning. *Journal Of Educational and Instructional Studies*, *5*(4).

Turuk, M. C. (2008). The relevance and implications of Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory in the second language classroom. *Arecls*, *5*(1), 244-262.

Twinkl. (n.d.). *The Boy and The Rainbow.* chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.masefield.bolton.sch.uk/assets/Virtual-School/t-e-2552786e-the-boy-and-the-rainbow-year-2-differentiated-reading-comprehension-activity-higher-ability.pdf

Uchida, Y. (1945). *The Bracelet.* Weebly. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://professorarce.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/9/0/13906478/the_bracelet_yoshiko_uchida.pdf

Ujiie, J., & Krashen, S. D. (1996). Comic book reading, reading enjoyment, and pleasure reading among middle class and Chapter I middle school students. *Reading Improvement*, *33*, 51-54.

Vaismoradi, M., Jones, J., Turunen, H., & Snelgrove, S. (2016). Theme development in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis.

Van Der Stuyf, R. R. (2002). Scaffolding as a teaching strategy. *Adolescent learning and development*, *52*(3), 5-18.

Van Laren, L., Pithouse-Morgan, K., Muthukrishna, N., Naicker, I., Singh, L., Chisanga, T., ... & Meyiwa, T. (2014). 'Walking our talk': exploring supervision of postgraduate self-study research through metaphor drawing. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *28*(2), 639-659.

Van Maanen, J. (1988). Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

van Staden, S., & Combrinck, C. (2023). Looking Back, Looking Forward: The Future of Reading for South African Children. In *Tracking Changes in South African Reading Literacy Achievement* (pp. 185-205). Brill.

Van Staden, S., & Roux, K. (2022). South Africa. In K.A. Reynolds, E. Wry, I.V.S. Mullis & M. von Davier, *PIRLS 2021 Encyclopedia*. https://pirls2021.org/south-africa

Van Staden, S., Roux, K., Tshele, M. (2023). *PIRLS 2021: South African Children's Literacy Achievement*. Centre for Evaluation and Assessment.

Vanassche, E., & Kelchtermans, G. (2015). The state of the art in self-study of teacher education practices: A systematic literature review. *Journal of curriculum studies*, *47*(4), 508-528.

Varasunun, P., Sujiva, S., & Wongwanich, S. (2013). Application of the Critical Friends Concept for Evaluation Capacity Building in Test Construction of Elementary School Teachers. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, *34*(2), 350-357.

Veenendaal, N. J., Groen, M. A., & Verhoeven, L. (2015). What oral text reading fluency can reveal about reading comprehension. *Journal of Research in Reading*, *38*(3), 213-225.

Verbeek, D. C. (2010). *Teaching reading for meaning: a case study of the initial teaching of reading in a mainstream South African school* (Doctoral dissertation).

Verenikina, I. (2008). Scaffolding and learning: Its role in nurturing new learners.

Vernon-Feagans, L., Gallagher, K., Ginsberg, M. C., Amendum, S., Kainz, K., Rose, J., & Burchinal, M. (2010). A diagnostic teaching intervention for classroom teachers: Helping struggling readers in early elementary school. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, *25*(4), 183-193.

Visser, W. (2010). Schön: Design as a reflective practice. *Collection*, (2), 21-25.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1979). The development of higher forms of attention in childhood. *Soviet Psychology*, *18*(1), 67-115.

Vygotsky, L. S., & Cole, M. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard university press.

Wangui, K. M. (2012). Influence of learning environment on reading comprehension among young learners in Kikuyu division. *Curriculum Journals, 17 (1), 73*, *88*.

Waring, R. (2011). Extensive reading in English teaching. *Innovation and creativity in ELT methodology*, 1-14.

Weebly. (n.d.). *Finding Neisha's Courage.* https://munfordbennett.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/4/3/12431647/sol6reading11.pdf

Weebly. (n.d.). *Pole Bean Pursuit.* https://munfordbennett.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/4/3/12431647/sol6reading11.pdf

Wellons, Q. D. (2022). Improving Reading Comprehension: An Investigation of Two Intervention Procedures and the Social Validity of the" Ask-Read-Tell" Reading Strategy.

Wertsch, J. V. (1991). A Sociocultural approach to socially shared cognition.

Westberg, J., & Jason, H. (2004). Fostering learning in small groups: A practical guide. Springer Publishing Company.

Westbrook, J., Shah, N., Durrani, N., Tikly, C., Khan, W., & Dunne, M. (2009). Becoming a teacher: Transitions from training to the classroom in the NWFP, Pakistan. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *29*(4), 437-444.

White, C. J., & Van Dyk, H. (2019). Theory and practice of the quintile ranking of schools in South Africa: A financial management perspective. *South African Journal of Education*, *39*(Supplement 1), s1-19.

Wigfield, A., Gladstone, J. R., & Turci, L. (2016). Beyond cognition: Reading motivation and reading comprehension. *Child development perspectives*, *10*(3), 190-195.

Williams, A. (2021). *Influencing the Reading Comprehension Skills of Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grade Students Living in Rural Alaska* (Doctoral dissertation, Alaska Pacific University).

Wong, W. (2001). Modality and attention to meaning and form in the input. *Studies in second language acquisition*, *23*(3), 345-368.

Wright, S. (2012). Arts education as a collective experience. Children, meaning-making and the arts, 194–225.

Xu, W., & Zammit, K. (2020). Applying thematic analysis to education: A hybrid approach to interpreting data in practitioner research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*, 1609406920918810.

Xu, W., & Zammit, K. (2020). Applying thematic analysis to education: A hybrid approach to interpreting data in practitioner research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*, 1609406920918810.

Xue, Y., & Meisels, S. J. (2004). Early literacy instruction and learning in kindergarten: Evidence from the early childhood longitudinal study—kindergarten class of 1998–1999. *American educational research journal*, *41*(1), 191-229.

Yalçınkaya, F., Muluk, N. B., & Şahin, S. (2009). Effects of listening ability on speaking, writing and reading skills of children who were suspected of auditory processing difficulty. *International journal of pediatric otorhinolaryngology*, *73*(8), 1137-1142.

Yeigh, T. (2008). Quality teaching and professional learning: uncritical reflections of a critical friend. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education (Online)*, *33*(2), 1-15.

Yıldırım, Ö. (2008). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and dynamic assessment in language learning.

Zajic, J. O., & Maksimovic, J. (2020). Contemporary teachers' action research-basis for the development of reflective practice in education. *Research in Pedagogy*, *10*(2), 354-366.

Zimmerman, L. (2014). Lessons learnt: Observation of Grade 4 reading comprehension teaching in South African schools across the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2006 achievement spectrum. *Reading & Writing-Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa*, *5*(1), 1-9.

Annexures

Annexure 1: Gatekeeper Request Letter

GATEKEEPER PERMISSION LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

KAYLEY PANDOHE
P.O. BOX [redacted]
[redacted]@stu.ukzn.ac.za

[redacted] (PRINCIPAL)
[redacted] SCHOOL
[redacted]

Dear [redacted]

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, Kayley Pandohe, a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, enrolled for a Master of Education Degree request permission to conduct research at your school. My research topic is:

An exploration of reading interventions for Grade 8 learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school.

The objectives of this study are:

To implement an interventions programme in response to reading challenges faced by Grade 8 English Home Language learners in a rural South African school

In conducting the research, I will request to speak to selected Grade 8 learners who fit the criteria for my study

I wish to bring to your attention that the identity of the participants and school will be protected, learner participation will be voluntary, there is no financial benefit towards the participants as a result of their participation in this study.

Should you have any concerns or queries about this study please feel free to contact my supervisors: DETAILS.

OR

School of Education University of KwaZulu-Natal Edgewood Campus Tel no. 031 260 3613 Email: Pillaya3@ukzn.ac.za Research Office HSSREC University of KwaZulu-Natal Westville Campus Tel: +27 31 260 8350 Fax: +27 31 260 3093 Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

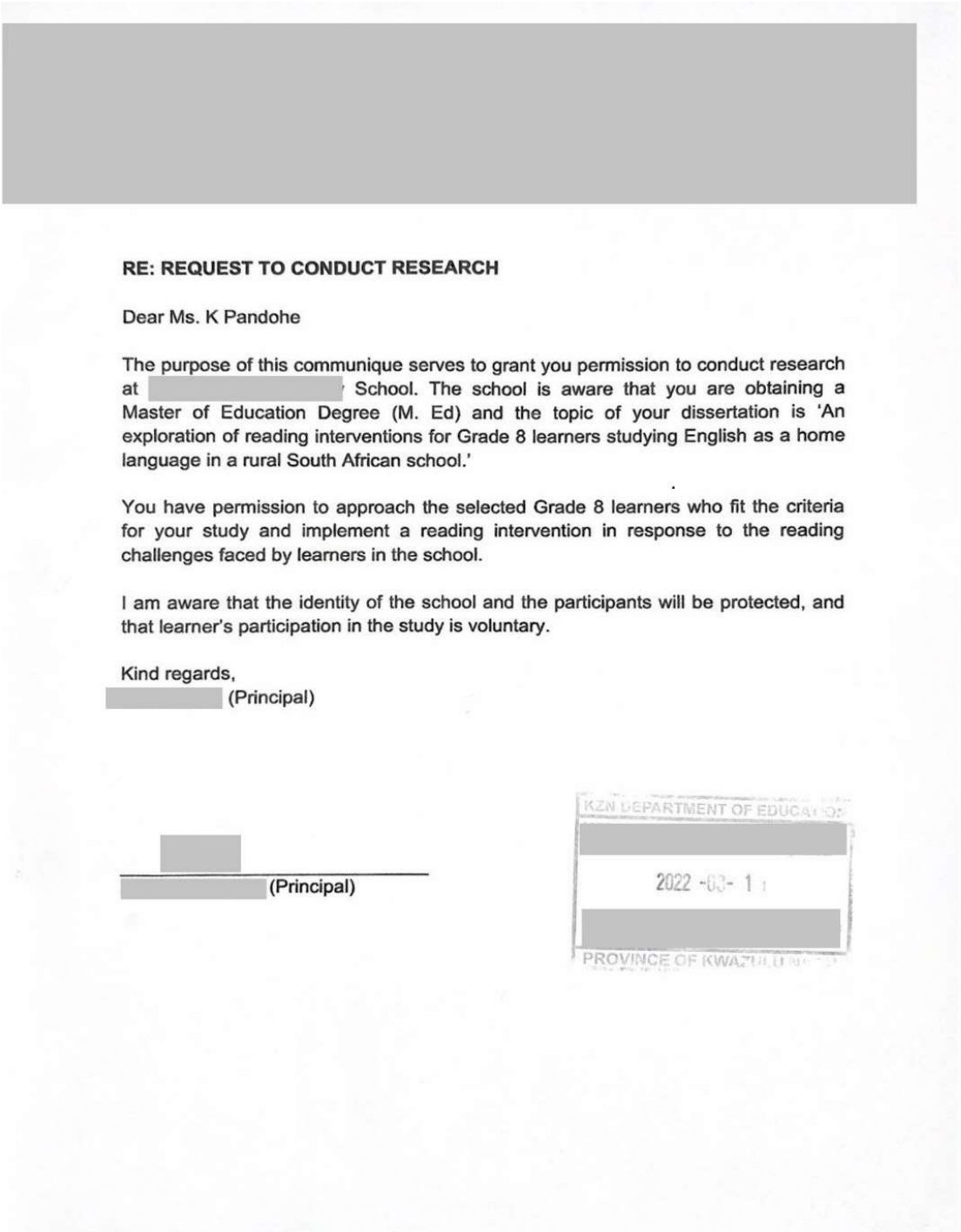
I hope my request will be considered.

Yours Sincerely

K. Pandohe (Educator)

[redacted] 25 JULY 2022

Annexure 2: Gatekeeper's Letter



RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Ms. K Pandohe

The purpose of this communique serves to grant you permission to conduct research at [redacted] School. The school is aware that you are obtaining a Master of Education Degree (M. Ed) and the topic of your dissertation is 'An exploration of reading interventions for Grade 8 learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school.'

You have permission to approach the selected Grade 8 learners who fit the criteria for your study and implement a reading intervention in response to the reading challenges faced by learners in the school.

I am aware that the identity of the school and the participants will be protected, and that learner's participation in the study is voluntary.

Kind regards,
[redacted] (Principal)

[redacted]
[redacted] (Principal)

KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
[redacted]
2022 -03- 1
[redacted]
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Annexure 3: Critical Friend Consent Form

Critical Friend Consent and Information Form

Dear Colleague,

I am Ms Kayley Pandohe from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Education. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Education program. My supervisors are Dr Bridget Campbell and Ms Khanyi Mbambo – please find their contact information on page 2.

You are invited to consider participating in a study titled 'Reading Interventions for Grade 8 Learners Studying English as a Home Language in a Rural South African School.' The aims of the study are to:

1. To determine the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school.

2. To implement measures in response to the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school.

3. To reflect on my experiences of the measures that I implemented in response to the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school

CRITICAL FRIEND ACTIVITIES:

The study expects to enrol approximately 10 participants from the same school. Your role in the study, should you consent to participate, will require you to attend the reading program after school on the day/s agreed upon and observe the activities that the teacher and learners engage in. You will be provided with an Observation Schedule which you will be required to respond to/comment on. You will provide critique after observing the work done. You will also encourage discussion and reflection in order to improve the quality and implementation of the reading program. Should you consent to participate, your role will require you to maintain the anonymity of all learners participating in the study.

YOUR RIGHTS:

- Participation in the study is voluntary.
- You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time.
- You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn/ destroyed.
- You have the right to refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you.
- A summary report and explanation of the results will be made available to you when the study is completed.
- Your anonymity will be protected, and pseudonyms will be used.
- No photographs of you or the learners will be published in the thesis.
- The data you provide will be securely stored and destroyed/deleted after five years.

1

In the event of any concerns or questions you may contact the researcher at 217007888@stu.ukzn.ac.za or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

FURTHER INFORMATION:

If you have further queries, you may contact my supervisors:

NAME	TELEPHONE NO.	EMAIL	DEPARTMENT / INSTITUTION	QUALIFICATIONS
3.1 Bridget Campbell	031-2603468	Campbell@ukzn.ac.za	English Education	PhD
3.2 Khanyi Mbambo	031-2603449	MbamboK@ukzn.ac.za	English Education	M.Ed

CONSENT

I..... (Full names & surname of critical friend)

have been informed about the study entitled 'Reading Interventions for Grade 8 Learners Studying English as a Home Language in a Rural South African School' by Ms Kayley Pandohe.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study which will require me to attend the reading program after school on the day/s agreed upon. I will need to provide responses to the prompts in the Observation Schedule. I will be responsible for critiquing the teachers work pertaining to the reading program while encouraging reflection and discussion to improve the implementation of the program. I will be responsible for upholding the confidentiality of the research and the anonymity of the participants.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have been answered to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at 217007888@stu.ukzn.ac.za.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in this research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time.

Name & Surname of Critical Friend	**Signature of Critical Friend**	**Date**

4

Annexure 4: Learner Consent Form

Learner Informed Consent and Information Form

Dear Learners,

I am Ms Kayley Pandohe from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Education. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Education program. My supervisors are Dr Bridget Campbell and Ms Khanyi Mbambo – please find their contact information on page 2.

You are invited to consider participating in a study titled 'Reading Interventions for Grade 8 Learners Studying English as a Home Language in a Rural South African School.' The aims of the study are to:

1. To determine the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school.

2. To implement measures in response to the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school.

3. To reflect on my experiences of the measures that I implemented in response to the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school

LEARNER ACTIVITIES:

The study expects to enrol approximately 10 participants from the same school. Your role in the study, should you consent to participate, will require you to attend the reading program after school on the day/s agreed upon by you and your teacher (Ms Pandohe) and participate in the activities set out during each session. During the program you will be required to visually depict how you feel about your reading proficiency and how this affects your attitudes towards reading. Throughout the course of the intervention program, you will be required to engage in intensive and extensive reading activities. Intensive reading will involve pre-reading, during-reading and, post-reading activities. Extensive reading will involve you reading material that you find interesting and enjoyable.

YOUR RIGHTS:

- Participation in the study is voluntary.
- You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time. The intervention is to assist your reading proficiency and it is in no way related to what we do in class. The programme is not for assessment but to capacitate you.
- You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn/ destroyed.
- You have the right to refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you.
- When the study has been completed, I will inform you of the findings.
- Your anonymity will be protected, and pseudonyms will be used.
- The data you provide will be securely stored and destroyed/deleted after five years.

1

In the event of any concerns or questions you may contact the researcher at 217007888@stu.ukzn.ac.za or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

FURTHER INFORMATION:

If you have further queries, you may contact my supervisors:

NAME	TELEPHONE NO.	EMAIL	DEPARTMENT / INSTITUTION	QUALIFICATIONS
3.1 Bridget Campbell	031-2603468	Campbell@ukzn.ac.za	English Education	PhD
3.2 Khanyi Mbambo	031-2603449	MbamboK@ukzn.ac.za	English Education	M.Ed

CONSENT

I..... (Full names & surname of participant)

have been informed about the study entitled 'Reading Interventions for Grade 8 Learners Studying English as a Home Language in a Rural South African School' by Ms Kayley Pandohe.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study which will require me to attend the reading program after school on the day/s agreed upon by me and my teacher (Ms Pandohe) and participate in the activities set out during each session. During the program I will be required to visually depict how I feel about my reading proficiency and how this affects my attitude towards reading. I am aware that I will be required to engage in intensive and extensive reading activities. Intensive reading will involve pre-reading, during-reading and, post-reading activities. Extensive reading will involve me reading material that I find interesting and enjoyable. I am aware that the intervention is to capacitate me to read so as to enhance my academic capabilities. I am aware that the intervention is not for assessment and will not have any impact on the results that I attain in the English classroom.

I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have been answered to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to and that it is unrelated to what is taught or to my results inn my English lessons.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at 217007888@stu.ukzn.ac.za.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

3

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

I hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in this research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time.

Name & Surname of Participant	**Signature of Participant**	**Date**

Annexure 5: Parental Consent Form

Parental Consent Form

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am Ms Kayley Pandohe from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Education. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Education program. My supervisors are Dr Bridget Campbell and Ms Khanyi Mbambo – please find their contact information on page 2.

Your child is invited to consider participating in a study titled 'Reading Interventions for Grade 8 Learners Studying English as a Home Language in a Rural South African School.' The aims of the study are to:

1. To determine the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school.

2. To implement measures in response to the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school.

3. To reflect on my experiences of the measures that I implemented in response to the reading experiences of Grade 8 English second language learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school

LEARNER ACTIVITIES:

The study expects to enrol approximately 10 participants from the same school. Your child's role in the study, should you consent to their participation, will require them to attend the reading program after school on the day/s agreed upon and participate in the activities set out during each session. Your child will be asked to visually depict how they feel about their reading proficiency and how this affects their attitudes towards reading. Your child will be asked to engage in intensive and extensive reading activities. Intensive reading will involve pre-reading, during-reading and, post-reading activities. Extensive reading will involve your child reading material that they find interesting and enjoyable.

LEARNER RIGHTS:

- Your child's participation in the study is voluntary.
- Your child may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time.
- Your child has the right to ask that any data they have supplied to that point be withdrawn/ destroyed.
- Your child has the right to refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of them.
- No photographs of your child will be published in the thesis.
- A summary report and explanation of the results will be made available to you and your child when the study is completed.

1

- Your child's anonymity will be protected, and pseudonyms will be used.
- The data your child provides will be securely stored and destroyed/deleted after five years.
- The reading project is to assist your child to upgrade his/her reading skills and the intervention is outside of the English lessons. There is not assessment and your child's results will not be affected in any way.

In the event of any concerns or questions you may contact the researcher at 217007888@stu.ukzn.ac.za or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

FURTHER INFORMATION:

If you have further queries, you may contact my supervisors:

NAME	TELEPHONE NO.	EMAIL	DEPARTMENT / INSTITUTION	QUALIFICATIONS
3.1 Bridget Campbell	031-2603468	Campbell@ukzn.ac.za	English Education	PhD
3.2 Khanyi Mbambo	031-2603449	MbamboK@ukzn.ac.za	English Education	M.Ed

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

CONSENT

I..... and ……
(Full names & surnames of parents/guardians) have been informed about the study entitled 'Reading Interventions for Grade 8 Learners Studying English as a Home Language in a Rural South African School' by Ms Kayley Pandohe.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study which will require my child to attend the reading program after school on the day/s agreed upon and participate in the activities set out during each session. My child will be asked to visually depict how they feel about their reading proficiency and how this affects their attitudes towards reading. I am aware that my child will be asked to engage in intensive and extensive reading activities. Intensive reading will involve pre-reading, during-reading and, post-reading activities. Extensive reading will involve my child reading material that they find interesting and enjoyable.

I declare that my child's participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits to which they are entitled.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at 217007888@stu.ukzn.ac.za.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to my child participating in this research project. I understand that my child is at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time.

Name & Surname of Parent/Guardian	**Signature of Parent/Guardian**	**Date**
Name & Surname of Parent/Guardian	**Signature of Parent/Guardian**	**Date**

Annexure 6: Ethical Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

08 March 2023

Kayley Pandohe (217007888)
School Of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear K Pandohe,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005264/2023
Project title: Reading interventions for grade 8 learners studying English as a home language in a rural South African school
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 07 February 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

This approval is valid until 08 March 2024.
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Annexure 7: Critical Friend Observation Schedule

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA GENERATION

Critical Friend Observation

1. What reading activities did learners engage in? Do you believe these activities are beneficial to learners or not?

2. Comment on the teacher's execution of activities during the intervention session?

3. Did learners respond well to the activities that were set out? Did they engage actively in the activities?

4. Comment on any progress that the learners have made:

5. Were there any critical incidents that stand out?

6. What could the teacher have done differently/better during the intervention session?

7. What can the teacher do to improve future intervention sessions?

8. Is there any positive feedback to report on? What has been working? Is there anything the teacher is doing particularly well?

9. Any other comments or suggestions:

Annexure 8: Reflective Journal

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA GENERATION

Reflective Journal: After the intervention session

1. What reading activities did learners engage in?

2. Did learners engage actively in these activities? Explain.

3. Do you think learners benefited from these activities? If so, in what ways?

4. Were there any critical incidents that stand out?

5. What could you have done differently/better during the intervention session?

6. What can you do to improve future intervention sessions?

7. Any other comments related to my thoughts on the session:

Reflective Journal: After critical friend feedback

1. Were there issues related to the activities you selected for learners to engage in? If so, what were they and what can you do to address these problems going forward?

2. Were there any issues related to the teacher's execution of activities during the session? If so, what were they and how can they be addressed going forward?

3. Were there any issues related to the learners' execution of the activities during the session? If so, what were they and how can they be addressed going forward?

5. Were there any critical incidents identified? How will you address this going forward?

6. Am I addressing the reading difficulties that learners are encountering? If I am missing the mark, what can I do to make my interventions more focussed?

7. What has my critical friend suggested I can improve on for future lessons?

8. Is there any positive feedback to report on? What has been working? Is there anything I am doing particularly well?

8. Any other comments related to my critical friend's feedback:

Reflective Journal: During the planning of intervention sessions

1. What reading concerns do I hope to address during this intervention session?

2. What reading activities will learners engage in?

3. How do the goals for this session align with the activities set out?

4. Have I carefully selected the reading material for this session?

5. In what ways did I address the concerns raised by my critical friend in her previous feedback?

6. What have I planned to do differently in this session compared to the previous one, in order to make an improvement?

7. Other comments:
