

FACTORS AFFECTING GRADE 8 LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN READING IN ENGLISH AT A CAPE FLATS SECONDARY SCHOOL

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**A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Magister
Educationist in the Department of Education, University of the Western Cape.**



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KEYWORDS

Reading instructions

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Strategies

Literacy

Literacy practices

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Curriculum

Materials design

Teacher education



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ABSTRACT

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In this mini-thesis, I explored the factors that affect grade 8 learners' performance in reading in English. The study focused on reading as it was revealed by National Education Department and Western Cape Education Department that literacy and numeracy levels in schools in the Western Cape were poor. In addition, in March 1997, OBE was initiated in South Africa to develop a better educational system for all learners in schools and was perceived as a major step from the previous system (Botha, 2002). The system of OBE introduced the continuous assessment policies, which was a challenge for teachers already in the educational system.

The study highlighted the theories of reading with particular emphasis on the evaluation of teaching of reading and assessment in the English classroom, learners' home reading background and the influence of social practices and multiliteracies on learners' reading proficiency. According to Alderson (2000) reading is perceived as a process of meaning-making with identification of different levels of meaning and understanding in and from text including reading skills. To elicit the factors that affect reading four variables were focused on during the study. The variables included reader, task, text and Social Practices and Multiliteracies variables, which interplayed in reading during tasks.

In order to gather data the following data capturing methods were employed, firstly I highlighted the classroom observations to unpack the realities in classrooms for both the teacher and the learners. Then secondly I focused on the learners' questionnaire to determine what happened during reading lessons and learners' home reading practices. And thirdly I presented the teacher's interview to highlight the reading strategies that she employed in class. Lastly I discussed the document analysis of grade 8 examination papers and classroom activities with a checklist.

I discovered that the system of OBE put demands on teachers that they are not properly trained to do. Despite the fact that training was provided, it was too short and not clearly focused on interactive reading skills. When we consider the importance of multiliteracies, the teacher clearly draws on the learner's home background by doing activities that make them feel that they are important. This teacher has the ability to successfully incorporate multimodal teaching methods in her class. The teacher also set time aside everyday to assess and mark the learners books, she then clarified issues that learners' might encounter in the course of the reading lesson.

However, there are some factors that could be addressed to improve reading abilities. The overcrowding and ghettoized condition of the class, did not promote morale within this environment. With the inception of OBE in-service training was provided, it was too short and not clearly focused on interactive reading skills. A further factor is learners' use of Afrikaans during interactions with the teacher and each other, except for one learner who spoke English during the lesson.

In conclusion, the evidence showed that the factors hat affect reading and therefore outcomes in education.

DEDICATION

This mini-thesis is dedicated to my parents, the late Thomas Titus and Mina Titus.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It would have been impossible to complete this thesis without the assistance of the following people:

- 1. Firstly I would like to honour my supervisor, Dr. C. Kerfoot, who like a mother unselfishly invested numerous hours in guiding me to complete this mini-thesis.**
- 2. Secondly I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the teacher and learners who availed themselves for this study.**
- 3. Thirdly I would like to thank my family and friends, who diligently supported me on this journey.**
- 4. Fourthly to my husband and children you were my stars through many dark nights.**
- 5. Finally and most importantly, I acknowledge and give praise to God for sustaining me, for studying is the highest form of worship.**



DECLARATION

I declare that FACTORS AFFECTING GRADE 8 LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN READING IN ENGLISH AT A CAPE FLATS SECONDARY SCHOOL, is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university and that the sources quoted or used have been indicated and acknowledge by complete references.

Christa Titus-Petersen

Signature

Date.....



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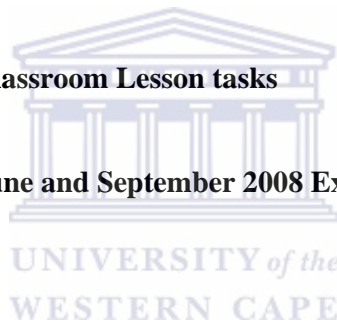
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. OBE - Outcomes Based Education
2. PIRLS –Progress in International Reading Literacy Studies
3. L2-Second Language
4. NCS -National Curriculum Statements
5. FAL- First Additional Language
6. NDoE –National Department of Education
7. L1- First Language
8. NLS-New Literacy Studies
9. NLG-New London Group
10. SES- Social Economic Status
11. OHP- overhead projectors
12. EFL-English Foreign Language
13. ESL- English Second Language



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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and rationale

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that affect learners' performances in English Additional Language reading in a grade 8 classroom. Recent international benchmark testing has shown that South African learners are achieving extremely low levels of literacy which compare unfavourably with other developing contexts (Alidou, Boly, Brock-Utne et al. 2006). In the PIRLS 2007 study, for example, 80% of South Africa's Grade 4 and Grade 5 learners had not attained the most basic reading level as against only 6% internationally who did not reach this level (Howie, Venter, van Staden, et al., 2007). South African schools also experienced an exceedingly high dropout rate of 50% between Grade 10 and Grade 12 in the years 2005 to 2007 (Pauw and Mncube, 2007).

Since 2002, teachers at the school where I teach have had a number of learners enrolled in grade eight who are struggling to read and write adequately. This was confirmed by the literacy and numeracy test conducted by the University of South Wales, Australia, in 2004 and 2005. Some of the learners received certificates, but the summary of the results were not released by South African education officials. It was widely suspected that this was because they were alarmingly low. Subsequently, numerous projects were initiated by the English Subject Advisor, the School Psychologist and teachers at this school. However very few of these projects were successful as theoretical issues were not considered. As a concerned teacher, I decided to study to obtain this degree to better understand the factors that affect reading and assessment in the English First Additional Language (FAL) class. I hope, therefore, to throw some light on factors both inside and outside the classroom which contribute to this state of affairs and to offer some suggestions for bringing about change.

Developments in South African education post-1994

Outcomes Based Education was initiated in South Africa in March 1997 to advance the educational system, to build the economy and to help eliminate the shortage of skilled workers. It was perceived as a major step forward from the previous system (Botha, 2002). The policy called for radical changes in the content and process of education, particularly in

the area of assessment. According to Le Grange and Beets (2005) two main transitions took place in South Africa's assessment policy after the first democratic elections in 1994. Firstly, new continuous assessment policies were introduced together with the interim school syllabus documents. Secondly, a complete set of criterion-based assessment policies followed, in line with the new OBE frameworks (Lessing & De Witt, 2001). As stated by the National Department of Education (2001: 4), OBE was intended to be developmental, in that 'it encompasses both what learners learn and are able to do at the end of the learning process', emphasises high expectations of what all learners can achieve; is learner-centred; shapes the learning process itself through clearly specifying outcomes, and is an activity-based approach to education designed to promote problem-solving and critical thinking. These latter qualities were felt to be critical to South Africa's success.

OBE has been used in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the USA and has both strengths and weaknesses. The potential positives of an OBE system are that it is learner-based and that the teachers act as facilitators of knowledge in the class so that the teacher and the learners co-operate to obtain specific outcomes or goals in a learning cycle. The ultimate goal for learners is to become critical thinkers, capable and able citizens of South Africa. However, as shown by the PIRLS report (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy & Fay, 2007), the quality of reading and numeracy achieved under OBE is poor. There are many intersecting factors behind this, many of which have more to do with policy implementation than the policy itself. For example, in the South African context an over-emphasis on record-keeping has led many teachers to feel that OBE may stifle crucial reasoning skills (The Educational Journal, 2007; see also Jansen & Christie, 1999). Moreover, the principles of OBE as reflected in Department of Education (1996: 7) do not tell us much about the quality of education or about what learners actually learn in the classroom which means that inexperienced teachers so as do not gain much from the OBE system.

A key factor in the success of OBE is the quality of assessment which it guides both learners and teachers in all phases of learning (Van Aswegen and Dreyer, 2004). According to Bernhardt (2003), the most significant concern for the teaching of reading is the training of teachers to guarantee that they have the expertise to assess learners' progression in class.

Assessment in OBE

This is a critical issue in South Africa as most teachers in under-resourced schools have not had the necessary training to cope with these demands. Alderson (2005: 269) sees assessment as ‘a process of describing. Judgement comes later, when we are trying to interpret what it is we have described or observed or elicited’. When teachers are carrying out assessment, they should thus be able to highlight and explain their teaching to the learners and then to elicit from learners what they have grasped from the lesson and how they are going to use the knowledge and skills (Angelo and Cross, 1993; Hub and Freed, 2000). Teachers have to find the most appropriate forms of assessment for a particular task and draw up their own assessment instruments in order to decide whether outcomes have been reached or not (Baker, 1994).

Implementation of assessment

According to the National Department of Education (2001: 17), language assessment should incorporate reading, writing, listening and speaking as well as knowledge of grammar. The language and literacy learning curriculum should achieve the following learning outcomes:

- to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations.
- to communicate confidently and effectively in spoken language in wide range of situations.
- to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, culturally and emotional values in texts.
- to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes.
- to use language to think and reason, and access process and use information for learning.
- to know and be able to use the sounds, vocabulary and grammar of an additional language.

Despite attempts to simplify problematic aspects of the early OBE policy, the Revised National Curriculum Statements (NCS) (Department of Education, 2002) does not appear to have enabled these outcomes to be achieved to any greater extent. As indicated by Ecclestone's (2002) study, teacher performance with assessment practices such as self-and peer assessment and portfolios has been disappointing. Part of the reason for this may be that teachers are likely to assess learners in the manner in which they were assessed or in the same way as everyone at their school or department (Cunningham, 1998). Also how learners are assessed is rarely discussed and it is therefore tricky to defend. The effect of such factors is that many teachers perceive assessment as 'a mystic process that is used as a form of control' (The Educational Journal, 2007: 1-2) and consequently the tendency is towards a narrow interpretation of outcomes-based education which may support a behaviourist assessment process (Killen, 2003, cited in Le Grange and Beets, 2005).

Assessing reading appropriately, given the low levels of literacy in the country's schools, is of great importance. In order to achieve this, teachers have to ensure that they know what reading entails. According to Alderson (2005:13-14), 'reading involves perceiving the written form of language, either visually or kinaesthetically (using Braille). When we are reading, we are clearly engaged in a great deal of mental activity, some of it automatic, some of it conscious'. He distinguishes between reading as a **process** which is the exchange between a reader and a passage and the **product** of reading which is the outcome of the process of reading. He also discusses a number of variables that influence reading such as reader's knowledge, text knowledge and linguistic knowledge. Of importance in assessing second language (L2) reading is the extent to which reading is a language or a reading problem (Alderson, 1984).

Alderson (2005) acknowledges that reading is not a solitary incident that is uninfluenced by the individual's circumstances. The New Literacy Studies (NLS) (Street, 1985; Hill and Parry, 1994, Pahl & Rowsell, 2005) have drawn attention to reading as a sociocultural practice and influenced by literacy traditions: '...texts are social in origin, intimately related to other texts, and reading is context-bound and socially embedded' (Hill and Parry, 1994, as cited in Alderson, 2005:25).

1.2 Statement of the problem

As discussed above, in the South African educational system at present, reading is a major issue. High schools such as the one in which I conducted my study carry the burden of inadequate preparation in primary schools as a large proportion of learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Moreover, lack of adequate training or education means that teachers are unsure about the use of assessment tools for reading. In the school in which I teach, during a District Office programme, teachers were unanimous in stating that they had not been prepared during their pre-service teacher training to teach reading to learners. Although the Department of Education's initiatives on in-service training are slowly filtering down to the high schools, training is generally short (one week) and insufficient to address the vast new arenas of knowledge needed to create readers for the 21st century.

Background on Ravensmead

Ravensmead is a low-income suburb was previously called Tiervlei, but the name of the suburb was changed in 1972 in accordance with apartheid policies to distinguish it from the white area also called Tiervlei. As reported by De Vries (2008), Ravensmead is part of Cape Town's northern suburbs near Bellville in Cape Town. An industrial area lies to the south east, while on its northern border is Tygerberg Hospital. According to Census 96, about 17,418 people resided in Ravensmead in 1996 (City of Cape Town, 1996, citing Statistics South Africa, 1996). The Census also stated that the employment rate was about 10,839 or 62%. However, the majority of the residents were earning less than R5000 (about \$600) a month. There is no evidence to suggest that anything has changed in the past decade, except that overcrowding and unemployment have increased. One of the major problems in the suburb is housing and this was highlighted in the national media twice in 2005, when backyard dwellers in the area protested when victims of a fire in Joe Slovo informal settlement were allowed to occupy the hostels for Tygerberg Hospital and later when they took up residence in the premises of a closed school (Cape Argus, 2005).

This is a predominantly coloured community which is plagued by social ills such as alcoholism, smoking (Monday Paper, 2005), high tuberculosis infection rate (Metcalf, Bradshaw and Stindt, 1989; Beyers, Gie, Zietsman et al., 1996), crime (South African Police

Service, 2001-2006) and unemployment. The community, however, is close-knitted and is known to stand together to tackle all problems head-on. The community policing forum and various other community organisations, for instance, Ravensmead service centre, Rawel community centre, and others play a major role in alleviating social evils.

From an education infrastructural perspective, Ravensmead is reasonably well-provided for: in 2009 there were 5 primary schools and 2 high schools and the library was well-equipped for the needs of children and adults (Die Burger, 2008). My study therefore explores reading and reading practices at the intersection between the educational institution and the broader community.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The main aim of this study is to explore the factors that affect learners' performances in English Additional Language reading in grade 8 in a Ravensmead high school. In order to investigate these factors, I will seek answers to the following questions:

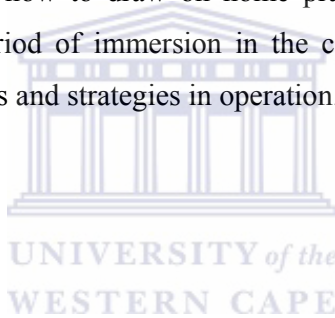
1. What were learners' past in experiences reading?
2. What are learners' current experiences of reading and reading assessment at home and in the classroom?
3. What are the teacher's understandings of reading assessment?
4. What is the relationship between the teacher's understanding and the English Additional Language curriculum?
5. What kind of reading practices do learning materials promote?
6. What kind of assessment practices do learning materials promote?

1.4 Significance of the study in reading

It is hoped that the findings of the study will contribute to inform and improve L2 reading teaching and assessment in under-resourced high schools by highlighting some of the factors that affect students' performance. The outcome of the research may assist policy makers in teacher training, teachers who would like to understand more about reading practices, and learners who may want to advance their reading skills through assessment.

1.5 Delimitation of the study

The research project is limited to an analysis of reading assessment in one Grade 8 class in 2008. Considering the limitations of a mini-thesis, several aspects of assessment in reading were omitted from this project. For example, it would have been helpful to investigate the uses of Afrikaans by the learners in the English classroom in order to assess its effect, if any, on reading processes and practices. Also the relationship between the materials that learners actually read at home and those used in the classroom could be more closely interrogated in order to provide insights as to how to draw on home practices in ways that interest and motivate learners. A longer period of immersion in the classroom might have revealed a greater range of reading practices and strategies in operation.



1.6 Structure of the study

Chapter Two focuses on the Literature Review. This chapter will discuss different theories of reading, as well as issues in the assessment of reading such as reader variables, text variables and linguistic variables. The study will also consider social practices approaches to literacies and multiliteracies.

Chapter Three presents the research design and methodology. Chapter 4 presents and analyses my data from four different sources while Chapter 5 summarises the main conclusions and offers a set of recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the history of South African education post- 1994 was discussed with an emphasis on factors that affect reading in the English Additional Language class in grade 8, such as assessment in reading and home reading background. This chapter will review the theories of reading with particular emphasis on assessment and the role of task, reader and linguistic variables. It also considers recent developments in social practices approaches to literacy and multiliteracies.

According to Alderson (2000) reading is perceived as a process of meaning-making with identification of different levels of meaning and understanding in and from text. Alderson, Clapman and Wall (1995) state that there are many different constructs involved in reading (skimming, scanning, etc.) and that these constructs are different from each other. More recently, sociocultural perspectives on literacy as a social practice (Street, 1985) have emphasised identity as central to reading, as literacy learners bring their identities into the making of meaning: as they learn to read, their cultural experiences go before them (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). Any consideration of the development of reading skills thus has to take into account both cognitive and sociocultural aspects.

2.2 A brief overview of reading theories

The audio-lingual theory of reading

The psychological study of mental processes has shaped ideas on the teaching of reading from the 1960s to the present. Early proponents were behaviourists who perceived reading as a passive activity with decoding as the reader's aim (Lado, 1964). In second language learning, reading was perceived as subordinate to oral language skills development: mastering sound-symbol relationship and oral dialogues were considered to be the first step in developing reading proficiency (Carrell, 1988).

However, later audio-linguists acknowledged the importance of background knowledge and culture-specific knowledge in reading, but ‘persisted in their methodological and instructional focus on decoding, or bottom-up processing’ (Carrell, Devine and Eskey, 1988:2). This process relates to the manner in which readers select information in an automatic manner from text (Gough, 1972; Grabe and Stoller, 2002). In the radical view of bottom-up processes, readers internalise the information in text through processing letter by letter, word by word and sentence by sentence (Grabe and Stoller, 2002). This focus on lower level skills had limited success. As a result, the audio-lingual approach lost its appeal for teachers: the realisation that oral proficiency did not automatically produce reading competency. Therefore researchers started to look at different approaches to the teaching of reading (Carrell, 1988).

Psychological theories: Reading as psychological ‘guessing game’

An alternative theory of reading was proposed in the late 1970s by Goodman, who called reading a ‘psycholinguistic guessing game’ where readers guess or predict the text’s meaning with little textual information and the use of existing knowledge (Goodman, 1982). For him, reading is not just a process of picking up information letter by letter and word by word, but a selective process driven by prior knowledge (Goodman, 1973). This relates to schema theory as proposed by Carrell (1983a) and Carrell, Devine, and Eskey (1988) who perceive prior knowledge (schemata) as important in the interpretation of a text. Schemata are defined as ‘networks of information stored in the brain which acts as filters for incoming information’ (Alderson, 2000:17). Therefore the implication is that any text, whether it is spoken or written, will lack meaning for the reader if s/he is unable to draw on such networks to make sense of it.

One of the first theorists to use the term ‘schema’ was Head (1926), who suggested that cognitive processing was affected by prior knowledge or events. According to Rumelhart (1980:34), schemata were perceived as the ‘building blocks for cognition’ assisting learners ‘interpret the printed words, recover information from memory, organise goals and sub-goals, distribute resources, and guide the flow of the processing system’. Therefore Goodman’s model was basically a ‘concept-driven, top-down pattern’ in which ‘high-level processes interact with, and direct the flow of information through lower-level processes’ (Stanovich, 1980: 34). This model played a major role in the formation of the ‘top-down’ model of

reading which highlighted prior knowledge and emphasised the use of higher level skills to predict meaning through context (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983). According to Urquhart and Weir (1998), top-down models begin with the biggest part, which would be the entire text. In reality, a top-down model means that readers deduce text information from a set of expectations and test some of the information from the text to accept or reject these expectations (Smith, 1971; Goodman,1982; Grabe and Stoller, 2002).

Carrell (1983b) differentiates networks of prior knowledge into ‘formal’ and ‘content’ schemata. Formal schemata relate to prior knowledge of the formal organisational structures of different types of text while content schemata relates to the topic of a text.

The classic studies on content schemata are by Rumelhart (1980, 1985) and Brandsford and his associates (1984) which show clearly that readers need knowledge of the content of the passage to be able to understand it. Such knowledge needs to be activated by the reader or the text, if it is to be used in accurate understanding. More recently, formal schemata have increasingly been recognised as important in facilitating reading. Knowledge of text genre or text type helps readers to understand the writer’s purpose and the logical structure of the text. Knowing how text is organised – what sort of information to expect in what place – as well as knowing how information is signalled enables faster processing.

The value of schema theory is that it attempts to explain how new information is integrated with the old. However, it does not explain completely how new information is handled. Critics of schema theory point out that it de-emphasised lower level skills and does not lead to explicit definitions of comprehension processes. Carver (1992a), for example, is critical of many schema-theory-based studies for failing to measure general reading ability, the time allowed to read, the ‘rauding’ rate of the individual and the relative difficulty of material, since reading speed is known to be an important indicator of reading comprehension. Carver argues that schema theory in fact does not apply to normal reading (rauding) but to study reading and memorising. He claims therefore that that schema- theory variables apply only when materials are relatively difficult. Other critics such as Stanovich (1980) have suggested that if learners only used top-down approaches to reading, they would be left with a limited understanding of the text. Consequently, Grabe and Stoller (2002) argue that proponents of strongly top-down models have used them to highlight ideas for reading instruction without developing strong reading skills in learners, as good readers do not guess the words that will

follow in a the text and they use context to a lesser extent than weaker ones. They also point out that reading development and reading abilities differ from one language to another .

To address the limitations of both top-down and bottom-up processes, theorists like Rumelhart and Ortony (1977) and Stanovich (1980) proposed interactive models of reading.

Reading as an interactive process

Interactive reading models perceive the comprehension of text as a process that merges the reader's background knowledge (top-down) and the text itself (bottom-up): each part in the reading process can cooperate with the others at once (Grabe and Stoller, 2002; Rumelhart, 1977; Stanovich, 1980). This includes 'assembling textual meaning from the nominal units to the biggest, [and] changing pre-existing background knowledge and current predictions on the basis of information in the text' (Carrell, 1988:101).

This model suggests that 'readers develop efficient reading processes in which 'less automatic processes interact regularly, automatic processes operate relatively independently, and reading difficulties lead to increased interaction and compensation, even among processes that would otherwise be more automatic' (Grabe and Stoller, 2002:35).

Based on this understanding, Stanovich (1980: 35) then developed an interactive compensatory model where 'a pattern is synthesised based on information provided simultaneously from several sources'. He asserts that 'compensatory' means that if a learner has a shortcoming in a particular skill or area of knowledge such as orthographic knowledge, this can be assisted by stronger skills in another area.

Early interactive theorists emphasised fast, efficient word recognition while acknowledging prior knowledge, predicting and inferencing as important in text comprehension. However, according to Grabe and Stoller (2002), such approaches led to a 'self-contradictory model' because 'the key processing aspects of bottom-up approaches which efficiently coordinate automatic processing in working memory such as automatic word recognition are incompatible with strong top-down controls on reading comprehension' (Grabe & Stoller, 2002:39). Therefore researchers such as Cunningham, and Stanovich (1990) changed the interactive model into 'modified interactive model' in which is primarily bottom-up driven with respect to automatic processing, for example, word recognition which may require

interaction with phonological, orthographic, morphological and semantic information. However, interactive processing is expected for higher-level processing and ‘not-yet-automated lower-level processing’ (Grabe, 2008: 90).

Interactive models in second and foreign language reading

According to Bernhardt (2003) the fact that learners are second language speakers of English indicates that these learners are distinct from first language speakers, therefore the reading procedure will be distinctive because of ‘the nature of information stored in memory’ (Bernhardt, 2003:112). For Koda (2005), three elements contribute significantly to successful second language reading comprehension: L1 reading, L2 proficiency, and L2 decoding. However, there are also several other factors involved. These include reading mode (scanning, skimming, comprehending or learning) which varies according to purpose (Carver, 2000) and affects the nature and degree of L2 linguistic knowledge needed to understand a text (Koda, 2005). Taillefer (1996) showed that the more difficult the task, the greater the importance of L2 proficiency.

As Bernhardt (2005: 138) points out, existing models of L2 reading do not capture ‘the interactivity and simultaneity’ of all these factors of reading. Accordingly, building on Stanovich (1980), she suggests a three-dimensional compensatory model based on the concept of ‘compensatory processing’. She argues that the second language reading process is a ‘juggling’ cognitive process and tries to model ‘how knowledge sources assist or take over for other knowledge sources that are inadequate or non-existent’ in an interactive way (Bernhardt, 2005: 140). An example of these compensatory processes is that the higher the literacy level in the L1, the more it is available to compensate for inadequate second language processes. It is therefore important to investigate which L1 skills and strategies might be a positive support for L2 reading and how they can be reinforced through direct instruction.

A further issue in reading is the extent of vocabulary knowledge. Measures of readers’ vocabulary knowledge ‘routinely correlate highly with measures of reading comprehension’ and are often the best predictor of text comprehension (Alderson, 2000: 35). To struggle with reading because of unknown words will obviously affect comprehension and take the pleasure out of reading. Research by Laufer (1989) and Liu and Nation (1985) shows that readers need to know 95% of the words in text to gain adequate comprehension and to be able to guess unknown words.

2.3 Assessment in second language reading

Some scholars like Grabe (2000) believe that, although our understanding of reading has advanced considerably over the past 15 years, this has not affected the assessment of reading. Alderson (2000) suggests that the relationship between reading research and research into assessment should be two-way, not one-way. One of the main issues in second language reading research is whether second language reading is a reading or a language problem? One consensus of the research is that second language readers need to pass a language 'threshold' before their first language reading skills can be engaged (Alderson, 2000: 112). It also fairly consistently shows that this threshold interacts with background knowledge and text, so less linguistic proficiency is needed.

Given the kinds of developments outlined above, a key issue for FAL assessment is whether L2 reading tests measure language ability or reading ability, or reading ability rather than 'intelligence or any other construct which might be implicated in taking a reading test' (Alderson, 2000: 112). The next section addresses the variables to be considered when developing assessment tasks for L2 reading. It will also study the influences between reader and text variables in the process of reading (Alderson, 2000).

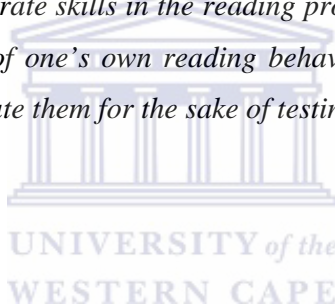
Variables

A variable can be defined as a trait that differs from individual to individual, context to context, and is flexible. Variables can be divided into two key groups, independent and dependent variables. The independent variable's role in research is that it might "cause" the outcomes while the dependent variable is the measurable item used to identify the influence the independent variable has on it (Mackey and Gass, 2005). According to Alderson (2000), who studied the manner in which readers influence the reading process and product, those variables which affect the reading process include 'reader's knowledge, motivation, strategies, characteristics, sex [sic], age, personality and physical characteristics' (Alderson, 2000: 33).

Reader skills and abilities

Readers require both skills and abilities to become good readers. That which divides competent readers from incompetent readers is not so much the presence of schemata or even their appropriate use, but the presence of a cognitive ability, identified as ‘Schematic Concept Formation’ (Alderson, 2000: 48). Here Perkins (1987) highlights a close bond between L2 readers’ ability in discovering the familiar features which compose a single explicit pattern, or several patterns in a series of, stimuli and the capacity to grasp text and especially the story structure of a text. Alderson (1990b: 436) concludes:

Answering a test question is likely to involve a variety of interrelated skills, rather than one skill only. Even if there are separate skills in the reading process which one could identify by a rational process of analysis of one’s own reading behaviour, it appears to be extremely difficult if not impossible to isolate them for the sake of testing or research.



Reader variables in reading

Research has identified the following variables that affect the individual reader:

Reader purpose in reading: a likely reason for differences between readers and reading is that readers read texts for diverse reasons. Therefore readers might require different skills for these diverse functions of product, process and recall. Carver (1984) indicates that altering the aim for conventional reading (what he calls ‘rauding’), may not change a reader’s reading level.

Real world versus test taking: according to Alderson (2005), when readers complete a reading test, it may not be for the reader’s personal motivation but only at the request of the researchers. Even if tests attempt to imitate real-world tasks, this difference in motives may have an effect on how generalisable conclusions can be from one study to another study.

Reader motivation/interest: poor readers are not motivated to read in either the L1 or the L2 (Cooper, 1984). A division is drawn among ‘extrinsic (motivation from external factors) and intrinsic (self-determined motivation) motivation’ (Alderson, 2005:53) where ‘intrinsic’ is perceived as better.

Reader's affect also plays a role as one of the reasons why informal assessments might result in enhanced results since many learners have negative emotions during testing. **Other stable reader characteristics:** personality is one the stable variable. Other variables that may or may not be stable are: 'sex [sic], social class, occupation, intelligence, physical and cognitive aspects: the speed at which readers can recognise words or sentences, their processing capacity in both short- and medium- to long- term memory, their eye movement and fixations, and their reading speed and cognitive strategies' (Alderson, 2005: 56).

Learners' beliefs about language learning (Rasekh and Valisadeh, 2004) and **learners' preferences:** Bada and Okan (2000) suggested that many teachers know they have to notice 'learners' preferences', however, Barkhuisen (1998) found that FAL teachers in South Africa are amazed when they discover their learners' different identities. In most cases, learners' points of view are not considered during language tasks. This may be because learners, especially beginners, have insufficient knowledge to make an active contribution to the tasks. Nevertheless, studies done by Block (1994, 1996) assert that learners know what is happening in the classes and teachers should consider setting tasks that take into account learners' preferences.

Social Economic Status (SES): whether a learner comes from a sub-economic or middle income home and whether the learner attends a disadvantaged school will influence the learner's reading ability in the Additional Language (Pretorius and Ribbens, 2005). However, SES is perceived as a marker variable not a causal variable of attainment in school. It interplays with other variables to create a specific outcome (Lonigan, 1994). **Storybook reading in the home:** storybook reading is perceived as a key aspect in whether a learner becomes a proficient reader or not and whether s/he completes school successfully later (Heath, 1983; Wells, 1986; Neuman, 1999). Those whose parents read to them when they were younger become better readers as opposed to those learners whose parents did not read to them (Pretorius and Ribbens, 2005). Apart from reader-related variables, there are a range of text variables to be considered.

Text variables in reading

Text variables play a role in easy and difficulty reading. These have been studied from a variety of disciplines such as education, linguistics, sociology, psychology, and journalism. The factors range from aspects of text, text type, typography, layout, the relationship between verbal and non-verbal text, and the medium in which the text is presented. It is commonly assumed that text topic and content are interrelated and that text content will affect how readers process text. Variables identified in research appear below:

Text type and genre: specific topics are related to particular kinds of text, which is constructed in defined if variable ways.

Literary and non-literary texts: it is sometimes understood that literary texts are more difficult to understand than non- literary texts, due to the multi-faceted understanding they carry and the level of language they display (Alderson, 2005).

Text organisation: text organisation refers to how the paragraphs are interlinked in a text and how the links between ideas are indicated (Swales, 1990). It has been shown by various researchers that diverse forms of organisation may change the results of a test.

Traditional linguistic variables: a number of researchers (Schlesinger, 1968; Berman, 1984; Williams & Dallas, 1984) have looked at the influence of language usage on readers. Berman (1984) highlights some of the linguistic variables that create difficulties in text processing for L2 readers. As suggested by Berman ‘these included the opacity and heaviness of the constituent structure of sentences which makes it difficult for readers to parse sentences – to recognise the basic constituents of subject – verb – object, noun – verb-noun relations, and so on’ (Berman, 1984, cited in Alderson, 2005: 69).

Text readability: particularly in the field of education, researchers have conducted studies to establish what allows readers to read a text. A number of variables influence text complexity such as title, syntactical density, structure, logic, words and ability to read the text. A suggestion by Alderson (2005) is to try to manage a difficult text, particularly for weaker readers.

Typographical features: previous studies into reading placed emphasis on how readers’ turned print into sound. Subsequently in top-down models the importance of print was played down. Recent studies have indicated how perceptual features such as layout or font change

readers' abilities to understand a text (Alderson, 2005: 74). There are still gaps in research on how these variables will influence reading in the L2.

Verbal and non-verbal information: print that mainly consists of words that are printed very small may appear denser to readers, making texts more complex to deal with. Research in this area has focused on the relationship between verbal and non-verbal information, especially in the last decade with the increasing focus on multiliteracies (see below).

The medium of text presentation: in modern learning environments knowledge is conveyed with the use of overhead projectors (OHP) and televisions, or other media. More studies need to be conducted to assess how readers apply knowledge via OHP slides and other media. Considering the emergence of the World Wide Web, the internet and the use of computers for testing purposes, there is a need to know much more about this.

Difficulty level of the testing method: it is imperative to consider that English as an L2 is more challenging than the L1 and that test results will be better in the L1 than in the L2 (Shohamy, 1984). Thus the results of studies show that method of testing and the languages employed can change the test results.

Testing methods and proficiency levels: according to Shohamy (1984) an issue to consider is whether the methods of testing as well as a difference in proficiency levels would have an impact on readers' test outcomes. She showed that struggling readers are more pressured by the method of testing and print than able readers.

Characteristics of the input: Input signifies the information that test-takers must analyze and answer. Bachman and Palmer (1996) highlight the importance of clarity and accessibility of test input. They also highlight the structure of the expected response as equivalent in significance to the structure of the input. The response might be verbal or in print. The writing may vary in that it might be in the reader's L1 or L2 and the expected answer may be one word or full sentences. According to Alderson (1991), scales that determined a reader's ability to read must consider the user of the test. He also suggested that to arrive at performance descriptions of all stages, these should include both test guidelines and real test content. Urquhart (1992) suggests the following sections of the draft band scales which consist of text, task and reader aspects:

(1) Text factors: Text type: expository, argumentative, etc. Discourse: comparison/contrast; cause/effect, etc. Text: accessibility – signaling, transparent vs. opaque, length.

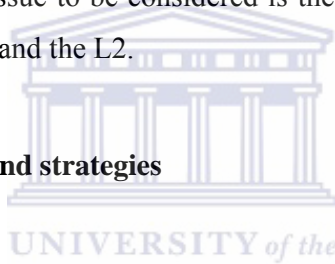
(2) *Task factors: Complexity: narrow/ wide; shallow/ deep. Paraphrasing: simple matching/paraphrasing.*

(3) *Reader factors: Flexibility: matching performance to task independence: choosing dominant or submissive role; holist or serialist' (Urquhart, 1992 as cited in Alderson, 2005: 285).*

Thus text variables are important if the reading materials are difficult to grasp or unfamiliar and have a crucial role when materials are conceptually more difficult or new to struggling readers (Salager-Meyer, 1991).

From the above array of variables, the complexity of the task facing teachers appears immense especially when they are expected to create assessment tasks with little or no appropriate training. A further issue to be considered is the relationship between knowledge and skills or strategies in the L1 and the L2.

2.4 Transfer of reading skills and strategies



A major issue in EFL and ESL reading debates is whether the transfer of L1 linguistic strategies and information is positive or negative (Grabe and Stoller, 2002). 'Transfer' implies that L2 readers might use their L1 information and reading encounters to assist them with L2 assignments. In the process of reading, transfer can occur of phonological knowledge, topical knowledge, general background knowledge, problem-solving strategies and inferencing skills (Grabe and Stoller, 2003: 52) or key reading objectives and metacognitive information, such as skills, assumptions, motivation and approaches (Koda, 2005).

The central concern to Bernhardt (2005: 138, emphasis in original) is '*how much can transfer, under what conditions and in which contexts*'. To better grasp the idea of 'transfer' as stated above, it is imperative to highlight the idea of reading 'skills' and reading 'strategies' with deeper insight. Numerous researchers still use the phrases 'skills' and 'strategies' interchangeably (O'Malley and Cohen, 1990; Urquhart and Weir, 1998).

According to Urquhart and Weir (1998:88), however, a reading **skill** is a ‘cognitive ability which a person is able to use when interacting with written texts’. The unconscious application of skills happens once readers have attained levels of automaticity (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Paris, Wasik and Turner, 1991; Alexander and Jetton, 2000). Reading **strategies**, on the other hand, are perceived as conscious, purposeful means to solve difficulties encountered in the process of reading (Urquhart and Weir, 1998). Consciousness is thus the major distinguishing factor between strategies and other processes (Cohen, 1998). To distinguish skills from strategies is to perceive skills as text-oriented and strategies as reader-oriented (Urquhart and Weir, 1998). In recent approaches to L2 reading, key goals are to make unconscious processes conscious, to develop appropriate strategies, and to encourage the reader to reflect on his/her reading skills and strategies.

2.5 Developing reading skills and strategies: implications for testing

Testing will highlight ‘whether reading is a unitary activity or whether it is made up of separate components, for example, expeditious types of reading as in search reading, skimming for specifics, and careful reading at the global and local levels, and thus it will tell us about the relative contribution of the posited skills and strategies to the overall picture of a student’s reading ability’ (Urquhart and Weir, 1998: 271). However, most researchers are not in agreement on the taxonomy of skills involved nor the ones which are the most important (Williams and Moran, 1989). The taxonomy developed by Munby (1978) played a major role in the field and comprised skills such as skimming, scanning, and identifying markers in discourse. A later taxonomy was introduced by Grabe and Stoller (1991, 2002) which highlighted metacognitive knowledge and skills monitoring. Any classroom assessment portfolio would need to take account of all such elements.

2.6 Testing in the Second Language classroom: purposes and kinds of assessment

The term ‘assessment’ may be employed both as an overall expression to include all means of testing and assessment, and as a term to highlight ‘alternative assessment’ (Clapham, 2000). ‘Alternative assessment’ is a term used in relation to informal or classroom assessment, such as learner portfolios. These methods may be longer and more complex for teachers to employ than ‘paper-and-pencil’ tests, but alternative assessment may have more advantages for learners (Clapham, 2000).

Continuous assessment and summative assessment

The two cultures of assessment of learning are summative and formative. Summative assessment tasks in reading appraises the outcomes of learning and what was achieved at the end of a block of teaching while formative assessment appraises the process of learning and supplies ongoing information about learning development in order to aid future learning.

Summative assessment thus has the attributes of assessing learners to establish the outcome of the teaching and learning event, including results at the end of the term or the end of the year examination. The results thus conclude the learning and no emphasis is placed on assessed activities in future. A link is made between summative assessment and norm-referenced assessment reflecting on the quality and quantity of skills acquired in contrast to fellow learners in the class or grade. The purpose of norm-referenced assessment is to compare learner's results with the rest of the class' learners to determine the level of their performances. To conclude, Le Grange & Reddy (1998) state that summative assessment is the traditional, formal manner of assessment, and it consists of formal tests at a specific time. Thus summative assessment requires a look back on completed activities for assessment (Wilmot, 2003).

Formative assessment, by contrast, is an assessment is how much can be transferred. This assessment is completed daily with activities on a continuous basis, for a set amount of time, to assess a learner's progression for the specific time frame (Wilmot, 2003). Formative assessment can be used to evaluate the performances of both the teachers and the learners and to assist them to focus on outcomes that must still be acquired. Thus, the purpose of formative assessment is to highlight the individual performances of learners (Le Grange and Reddy, 1998). Criterion-referenced assessment is similar to formative assessment, as it is intended to establish what a learner understands according to predetermined criteria (Le Grange and Reddy, 1998).

Validity

Validity ensures that a study's results are trustworthy. There are different forms of validity such as content, face, construct, criterion-related, and predictive validity. However, in this study the focus will mostly be on internal and external validity, although other types of validity will be discussed. The issue of validity also affects class tests for if learners are able to estimate how proficient they are, the tests they are given must adhere to validity and reliability guidelines (Clapham, 2000).

If a test has content validity then it has been shown to test what it sets out to test. Content validity can be compared to face validity, which means it looks like a valid test to those who use it. Construct validity is perceived as more complicated in comparison to the other categories of validity, as it defines how well a test or scale measures up to its claims. Criterion-related validity concerns the degree of effectiveness with which performance on a test or procedure predicts performance in a real-life situation.

A study that can be generalised to the population at large has high external validity. It is imperative to realise that a requirement of external validity is the presence of internal validity. If confounding variables within the study itself have been eliminated, the study is considered to have internal validity. The important issue is to minimise risks to internal validity. There are numerous means to contaminate internal validity, which may be participant personality, participant withdrawal, participant inattentiveness and approach, participant maturity, methods of data collection and instruments and tests results (adapted from Mackey and Gass, 2005; Hughes, 2003).

2.7 Outcomes-based Education (OBE) in South Africa

Outcomes-based education or the OBE paradigm (the philosophy on which South Africa's 'Curriculum 2005' was based) emphasises the outcomes of the educational process. This system of education was introduced in South Africa in the course of the last decade to uplift

the quality of education and to produce a more skilled workforce (Botha, 2002). To ensure that OBE outcomes are attained, the important issues to consider are the following: curriculum, teaching and assessment (Spady, 1994). The OBE paradigm perceives assessment as the critical element in the whole process. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS)(2002) indicates specifically the outcomes and assessment standards for reading for every grade group, in the home languages, first additional and second additional languages. The entire paradigm is supposed to have the means to detect learners who have reading problems. However, the effective application of assessment standards needs teachers to have substantial levels of information and capabilities with regard to reading and reading development (Pretorius and Ribbins, 2005).

One of the most important results of the Chisholm report of the Curriculum 2005 review committee (13 May 2000), was ‘that there are some major problems with the implementation process of the new curriculum in South Africa, of which the inadequate training of teachers to teach in an outcomes-based manner and the lack of financial resources to train these teachers efficiently and effectively are probably the most important’ (Chisholm, 2000:12 in Botha, 2002). A 2001 audit by the Department of Education indicated that nearly 58 000 of the 350 000 teachers (17%) in South Africa are not well educated (Sukhraj, Mkhize & Govender, 2004).

According to Le Grange and Beets (2005) transformation in South African education policies (plus assessment policies) post-1994 pushed teachers into a new sphere, for which they were not properly trained. Regarding recent assessment policies, Vandeyar and Killen (2003: 119) found that teachers’ responses vary: “a few teachers embraced the changes enthusiastically, many reluctantly accepted the changes, and most resisted”. It thus seems that methods of assessment may influence teaching in the classrooms (Cheng, 1997, Wall, 1996; 1997). The realisation of OBE in South Africa put a lot of strain on teachers to streamline instruction, prepare remedial classes, assess learners and keep sufficient records (Botha, 2002). If skilled reading is perceived as an interactive, meaning making process that is fast, precise, planned and inspiring (Grabe, 1991; Alderson, 2000) and if, then, a substantial number of FAL learners struggle and teachers do not have the knowledge or time to assist them, it is no surprise that literacy levels are a concern.

Before I move on to describe how I investigated my questions, I will discuss two recent developments in understanding reading: social practices approaches and multimodality.

2.8 Social practices approaches to literacies

The main aim of social practices as an approach to literacy is to link the classroom teaching practices with social practices beyond the school. This approach sees literacy as part of our lives and impossible to separate from the social contexts in which it is consumed or produced (Street, 1994; Gee, 1996; Barton & Hamilton, 1998). According to Brice Heath (1993) literacy events and practices reflect the different ways in which societies employ speech. She describes literacy events as ‘any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and or comprehension of print plays a role’ (Heath, 1993:386). These events are embedded in larger patterns of practices which are created by individuals, communities, and nations for particular domains. “Domains” may be any place that literacy takes place, for example, educational institutions, religious institutions and homes. The literacy practice of homework is an example of the link between school and the home. Key themes within what has come to be known as the New Literacy Studies (NLS) are therefore context, identity and practice. Street distinguished this more ideological understanding from the prevailing ‘autonomous model’ of literacy which sees it as a neutral technology with predictable and invariable results (Street, 1993, as cited in Pahl & Rowsell, 2005:13).

Home-school ties

The NLS sees a learner’s home as an important part of his or her background, incorporating values, language, socialisation, technical abilities and dreams. ‘Language is used to construct an identity for ourselves within a speech community’ (Pahl and Rowsell, 2005:5). Dinah Volk (1997) asserts that learners combine literacy practices from their background, educational background, popular culture, religious background and community groupings. So daily, people blend new popular cultures and practices with ancient social practices and traditions. In order to enhance reading development, educational systems need to pick up on such developments to embrace what learners bring into the classrooms. Wenger (1988)

suggests that people can be part of numerous groupings in their homes, during the school day, and in their free time. Further, Luke and Luke (2000) highlight the co-dependent link between these local spheres and more global spheres of 'flows of knowledge' (explained as the ways in which knowledge makes its way into different communities from one context to the next).

Implications for testing in the second language

Assessing reading from the perspective of the NLS has various challenges. For example, it may be difficult to set a reading test 'because of its declared intention of representing many different kinds of text' (Hill & Perry, 1994:22) which in the real world would be read for different purposes in different contexts. The NLS has drawn attention to the danger of such decontextualised texts transplanted from their original context into another artificial 'school' one. In the sphere of reading tests, 'the textual tradition' is perceived as 'autonomous' so any extract, short or long, must be 'advanced as if it was an individual piece of significance' (Hill & Perry, 1994:23). Yet texts and the interpretation of texts are deeply influenced by context so it would be important to assess the kinds of skills and strategies that most closely approximate the 'natural' ways of approaching each text.

2.9 Multimodality and Multiliteracies as frameworks for language and literacy teaching

Cope and Kalantzis (2000) describe **multiliteracies** as a word chosen by the **New London Group**, consisting of 10 academics, from the UK, the US and Australia, to capture the rapid changes in literacy practices that have accompanied globalisation and the rise of technology-based communication. Literacy has in the past focused mainly on language but with the introduction of more visual texts and new technologies into school and home literacies, learners now encounter a multiplicity of literacies embedded in multimodal texts. These literacies are produced and designed within diverse communication channels and mass media and characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity (*Cope & Kalantzis, 2000*).

In their discussions of the kinds of practices needed for the 21st century, the New London Group saw teachers and students as being 'active participants in social change, who can also be active designers of social futures.' (NLG, 1996: 60). Following in the footsteps of the NLS, they stress that being active participants in 'social change' means that questions around values, identity and power must be considered as part of multiliteracies.

The New London Group (1996) developed a theory which includes six elements of design in the meaning-making process. These elements of design recognise many different kinds of literacy which stand alone and also combine into multimodal texts. These texts are expressed through the visual medium, through different media and in different social contexts. The six design elements are: **Linguistic Meaning** - language in cultural contexts; **Visual Meaning** - seeing and viewing; **Audio Meaning** - hearing and sound; **Gestural Meaning** – movement; and **Spatial Meaning** - space and place.

Multimodality is thus 'a way of making meaning that allows for different modes. For example: model-making as a form of communication' (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005:156). In the class, multimodal practices can induct learners into local and global literacies. As more and more parts of our lives are dominated by technologies, learners need to be equipped with the language and literacy tools to use and interpret multimodal texts.

Adopting a Multiliteracies framework

Cope and Kalantzis (2000: 240) suggest a framework made up of four key components. **Situated Practice** which would 'forge new language pedagogy, grounded on real-life experiences. Students use their prior knowledge, from home, from school, from communities and from culture, to contribute to their language'. **Overt Instruction** which would ensure explicit scaffolding into the principles and practices of each domain. **Critical Framing** which encourages learners to interrogate contexts and purposes, 'adding breath to our perspective on our identities and social contexts' (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000:247), and finally, **Transformed Practice** which enables the reader to engage in new ways with print and other environments.

It therefore becomes crucial for teachers to be able to accommodate multimodal and often multilingual multiliteracies (Selber, 2004, Unsworth, 2004).

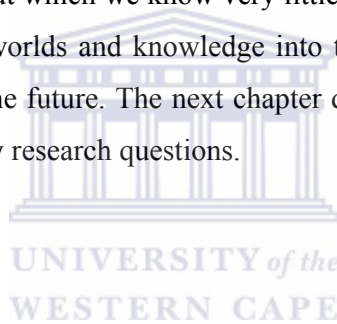
Implications of multimodal literacies for the testing of L2 reading

Teachers could consider adapting these theories in the following ways: 'as a framework for language teaching; to think about race and language; to incorporate multimodality into literacy teaching and learning; to diversify and blur gender lines' (Pahl & Roswell, 2005: 94).

Examples of such reading tasks include using the internet for getting information about and analysing global flows of work; using current interests for online communication with virtual communities; reading of multiple literacy texts from intercultural historical perspectives. Testing then will need to become far more varied and principled as learners engage with an increasing number and variety of multimodal texts. The need for adequate theoretical and practical training has never been greater.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed historical and current development in understandings of reading. We, as teachers need to acknowledge that most learners have an interest in technologies and access to global knowledge about which we know very little. If we create a space for learners and allow them to bring their worlds and knowledge into the classrooms, we have a better chance of equipping them for the future. The next chapter describes the research design and methodology used to explore my research questions.



CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the emphasis was on theories of reading and assessment in reading, while also considering the influence of multiliteracies in changing ways of thinking about reading assessment. In this chapter the research methodology will be examined, by discussing the classroom observations, the learners' questionnaires, a teacher's interview and a document analysis of teaching materials. In order to identify the factors that affects the reading practices and assessment strategies of learners in one secondary school in the Western Cape.

The study was conducted at the school where I am currently teaching as it provided an easier manner of obtaining data, given that teachers cannot get paid study leave for Masters' Studies. Babbie and Mouton (2007:294) refer to accessibility as one of the biggest advantages. For the purpose of the studies, I did classroom observations, a teacher's interview, and questionnaires with the grade eight learners and lastly a document analysis of the June and September 2008 examination question papers as well as classroom task lessons. The use of qualitative research informs the study as it enables the researcher to gain insight into the experiences and perspectives of participants. The research setting, the subject selection and the research tools will be discussed.

3.2 Site and subject selection

To protect the privacy and the anonymity of the teachers and the learners' names were allocated to the school, the teacher and the class. The name of the school is Meadow High School.

The high school is over forty years old and its motto and mission means that "we mould". There are currently thirty-one teachers and about 980 learners at the school. The teachers strive to develop learners holistically and to build values in line with the South African constitution to uphold democracy and citizenship, as well as build strong communities through partnership with parents and school. The ultimate goal is to mould critical thinkers

who uphold democracy and play an active part as citizen into the world (<http://www.floridass.wcape.school.za/history/history/htm>).

The school building is over forty years old and consists of six blocks. The administrative block is part of the A- block, which is a double storey building. The administration section is divided into the secretary's office, the principal's and deputy-principal's office as well as the staff room and a small kitchen. The ground floor is divided into the administrative section, four classrooms and the boys' toilet, at the end of the passage. The first floor housed the library (converted into a conference/study centre) and teachers' toilets. The B-block is also a double storey building and consisted of the computer laboratories and a mind-set class. and four classrooms. The teacher's class where most of the data was collected is between the computer laboratories and the mind-set class. And it is like moving between a first world and a third world environment, such is the differences between the conditions of the classes. The rest of the school consisted of four single storey blocks, where the C-block consists of a small hall (three classes where the two connecting walls were taken out) and two classes and the girls' toilets. Next is the D-block which consists of the Consumer Studies class and five other classrooms (two of those classrooms were the needle work and typing classrooms, until 2001). The last block in the section consists of five classrooms, two of which housed the new state of the art science laboratories (a million rand was spent on the setting up of the classrooms). In 2008 the whole school was painted yellow and royal blue, through a collaboration of Western Cape Education Department and Department of Public Works. The school is unsafe as the fence is broken in places.

Profile of the learners

The grade eight class that was selected will be called grade eight O5. For anonymity, a fictitious name was allocated. The main reasons for selecting a grade eight class were the following: Firstly, it is the learners' first year at high school, which is an unknown environment for the learners. Secondly, every year since 2004 at Meadow high school, the grade eights write a numeracy and literacy test, which divides the learners in groups of weak, average and excellent readers. Finally, for some time there has been a national concern with literacy levels of grade six learners (Pirls Report, 2006).

There were forty –five learners in the class of which twenty were boys and twenty –five were girls. Most of the learners resided in Ravensmead (about thirty four out of forty-five). Seven lived in Delft, three lived in Parow and one in Belhar, all these areas are not far from Ravensmead. The ages of the learners ranged from fourteen and sixteen. Of the twenty-five girls, seventeen were fourteen, five were fifteen and three were sixteen. Of the twenty boys, thirteen were fourteen, five were fifteen and two sixteen. However there was a problem of absenteeism in the class and on some days, 10 learners were absent.

Most of the parents were doing blue collar jobs, except for one who was a nurse. About half of the class came from single parent households, while the other half lived with two parents, who are married. Most of the mothers were working (about twenty five), while twenty mothers were housewives. Nineteen fathers that were present, were employed, however three were unemployed and two had passed on at the time of the study.

Profile of the teacher

The teacher was an unmarried woman in her late forties. She obtained a diploma in music from the University of the Western Cape and a Teaching diploma. She also did a BA degree up to her second year of study. She only taught music for three years and then started teaching English which she has done for the past twenty-five years. She was a hard-working teacher with a lot of patience and always treated the learners in her classes with respect and dignity. According to our discussion, she was not specifically trained to teach reading and she claimed to be teaching in the manner that she was taught at school. However since the inception of OBE she had been trying to incorporate some of the new teaching methods into her teaching during English FAL lessons.

3.3 Research Design

The study used a qualitative design in order to obtain a holistic understanding of the classroom and of participants' worlds. The data was collected using four different tools: classroom observations, questionnaires, a teacher's interview, and lastly a document analysis of the June and September 2008 examination papers as well as the class tasks.

I started the process of data collection by consulting sources in the library and then summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of each data collection method mentioned. Next I arranged an appropriate time to do the field notes in grade eight 05. We arranged that I would spend one period per day observing when the teacher taught the mentioned class. To observe the teaching of L2 reading and describe strategies used in the classroom. The purpose of the field notes was to identify some of the factors which might affect L2 reading in the English FAL class. I then made notes as it was the easiest way to do the observations in this manner. For the data analysis I neatly transcribed the observations, and then grouped it into categories or groups according to similar patterns. The coding of the observations allowed insight into the events that I observed and analysed into groupings, such as pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading and multiliteracies.

Secondly I progressed to compile set of questions for the questionnaires, which I forwarded to my supervisor for an expert opinion. She suggested that I refined it, bearing in mind my research questions and literature review. It was then neatly categorised into two subthemes of Reading Background and Reading during the Lessons (See appendix E). Closed and open questions were used to establish the learners reading background, attitude to reading and reading strategies taught and applied in class. Also to elicit whether learners use reading strategies and which ones are they using in class during reading lessons. For the analysis of the questionnaires, it was checked whether it was completed properly. It was then sorted into similar response groups and quantified. Assumptions were made based upon the results, which were broken down into two sections: Reading during Lessons and Reading Background. The quantified responses were analysed for patterns and then summarised. The summarised responses were also compared for similarities and differences in the other data captured from observations, teacher's interview and document analysis.

Thirdly I arranged with the teacher a time and a place to do a semi-structured interview. We arranged to do it in the teacher's class, as it was towards the end of the academic year and there were no learners at the school. A process of external moderation by departmental officials is done during this time, so teachers' scramble to computerise marks, update portfolios and do administrative tasks. The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to ascertain from the teacher her views about the usage of reading strategies and reading materials as well as on assessment and the reading attitude of the learners. The interview was transcribed, analysed and then comparatively analysed for similarities and differences

between the responses in the questionnaires, observations, document analysis and the teacher's interview.

Fourthly I analysed classroom lesson tasks as well as question papers with a checklist, to identify the reading strategies used. The results was summarized and compared with the teacher's interview, observations and learners' questionnaires, to draw conclusions on the results. Finally through the comparison of interpretation and analysis of observations, questionnaires and interviews I established why learners struggle to read in the L2 and to ascertain if strategies used in class and learners' reading background play a role.

3.4 Data collection methods and instruments

The data collection for the study occurred over a time-frame of seven months from the 15th of May 2008 to the 5th of December 2008. To ensure triangulation of the data, a mixture of tools were employed to enhance validity. According to Chaudron (2003) and Mason & Bramble (1989) the idea of triangulation promotes a more balanced perception of a study. In the section that follows the research tools will be discussed.

3.5 Classroom observation and related procedures

According to Wragg (1994:7) in the twentieth century educational research came strongly under the influence of the nineteenth French philosopher Comte (in Wragg, 1994), who argued that the human thought proceeded through three stages: the theological, the metaphysical and finally the positive or 'scientific'. There was a strong belief that systematic observation and analysis could to social behaviour being predicted, as relationships between one event and another became clear. In the nineteen twenties and nineteen thirties there was a great deal of interest in 'attentiveness' in research on learning and teaching observers would sit in front of the class. Withall (1949) drew up a seven category system consisting of three 'learner – centred' (reassuring, accepting questioning) and three 'teacher – centred' (directing, reproving, and justifying their own actions) categories and one new 'neutral' (administration) category. Lying at the heart of the quantitative approach is a belief that the effectiveness of teachers can be improved if a body of knowledge is established which shows that they should do more of some things and less of others.

In qualitative research both Terre Blanche & Durrheim (2006:134) and Babbi and Mouton (2007:293) suggest that simple or complete observations, is when the researcher does not engage in the classroom, except to observe the process in class. Terre Blanche & Durrheim (2006:134) refer to participant observation as closely related to ethnographic work in anthropology which entails the study of cultures. Observations can be structured or less structured and can put a researcher in a difficult position as s/he has to assume two roles at the same time. Also participant observation can be time-consuming, so the researcher needs to delimit the study before it starts.

The main aim for doing classroom observations was to observe the strategies that the teacher used to teach reading and whether there were any obstacles that affected the teaching and assessment of reading in the classroom. I spent two months doing classroom observations in grade 8 O5 class. And at first I only observed without taking notes, to acclimatise the teacher and the learners to my presence in the class. I then did observations for 10 lessons, while taking extensive notes (see Appendix: D). The notes were taken in English, because it was an English FAL class. According to Wragg (1994:2) if a written method is used an immediate and fresh account will be available. Time will be used economically and the report will be available for discussion immediately after the lesson. The full picture of events will be available to the observer at the time of the observation. A transcript enables really detailed analysis at leisure. It allows analysis by several people not necessarily in the same place, as texts can be distributed easily.

Alternatively the use of transcripts can lead to the loss of important visual and sound cues such as tone of voice, volume of noise, emphasis, high cost in time and money to have lessons transcribed. It might be difficult to select a focus if numerous transcripts are collected. They also state that note taking (both empirical and interpretations), also called field notes, are crucial and can be a time-consuming process (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 2006). It will be difficult to select a focus if numerous transcripts are collected. To gain a better understanding of the factors that affect learning in the reading class, I subsequently did a questionnaire with the learners and an interview with the teacher.

3.6 Questionnaires

These are used in research to measure the response of participants in order to answer the research question. Losh (2001) states that a well-written questionnaire creates a speedy survey interview, that is pleasant to administer. The advantages of questionnaires are that they are a good means of collecting specific sort of data quickly and fairly cheaply. A number of important issues need to be considered before a questionnaire can be selected: Questionnaires can be set in a manner that requests respondents to list, category, ranking, scale, quantity or grid questions. Large groups of respondents can answer the questionnaire at the same time, in the same place. The data collection is completed in a short time frame. Open-ended questions seem to give respondents the freedom to answer questions in their own thoughts. The uses of matrix questions allow the researcher to ask several questions that have the same set of answer categories as it uses space efficiently. The questions may be faster to complete and may increase the comparability. Answers can be reviewed. A solution to misreading questions might be to make all statements short and clear.

The disadvantages that must be considered when conducting questionnaires are there may be contamination through talking, copying or asking questions. Questionnaires for children take more time to compile and more intensive piloting. Free-response questions are difficult to ask, to answer and to analyse. They are also time-consuming and so may encourage researchers to structure items to fit the response of the matrix format when another type of response may be more acceptable. It may encourage respondents to answer the questions in a response – set manner, (agreeing with most of the statements). They may misread some of the questions. The order of questionnaire items may affect responses and affect the answers submitted. Those with less education appear to be more influenced by question order.

After completing the field notes, I administer the questionnaires to grade 8. 05 class. I arranged with the teacher that I was going to distribute a questionnaire to the learners. Consequently the questionnaires were distributed to all the learners present in the class. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine whether learners use reading strategies and which ones are they using in class during reading. I also focused on the learners' home reading practices and how they spent their leisure time. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, reading during lessons and reading at home, because the main research question is to identify factors that affect the reading process in the FAL class. The 10 questions on

reading during lessons were divided into 8 closed questions and two free response questions. The 10 questions on home reading background were also divided into 9 closed and 1 free-response questions.

Out of 45 learners, only 35 learners were present to complete the questionnaire on the appointed. All the learners who were present in the class received, completed and handed back the questionnaires during the period. The teacher played a central role in the handing out and taking in of the questionnaires. She also cleared all the queries and help learners clarifying questions that were not clear. The questionnaire was set in English, but the learners asked their questions in Afrikaans. However the teacher responded in English to clarify questions. The teacher interpreted the questions very well and did not give answers while clarifying questions. The language used in the questionnaire was understandable and the setting was up to standard. I feel confident that the learners were not disadvantaged by the composition and compilation of the questionnaire.



3.7 Interview

An interview is an instrument of qualitative research for collecting data. Cohen and Manion define it as follows: “a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information and focused on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation” (1980:241). In relation to qualitative research, Kvale (1996) defines interviews as “attempts to understand the world from the subject’s point of view, to unfold the meaning of people’s experiences, to uncover their lived world, prior to scientific explanations’ (Kvale, 1996:1). Qualitative interviews are described in terms of everyday interaction as ‘conversation with a purpose’ (Burgess, 1984b:102) or ‘professional conversation’ (Kvale, 1996:5). According to Gay (1981) interviews provide a researcher with in-depth data, contrary to questionnaires which provide superficial data.

There are different types of interviews divided by their degree of explicitness and structure, that is, from very open interviews to very structure. Open interviews give the interviewee broad freedom to talk and can result in unexpected information Semi-open interviews use

predetermined questions which allow elaboration within limits whereas structured interviews do not allow elaboration.

Different writers have discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using interviews in research and the key advantages and disadvantages of using interviews as follows:

Advantages

1. When properly used, interviews can produce an in-depth data not possible with questionnaires. It is appropriate for asking questions that cannot be effectively structured and answered in a multiple choice format (Gay, 1981:166).
2. Sewell (1998) points out the advantages of this method, saying that interviews may feel more relaxed and candid because they can describe what is important to them in their own words, rather than being restricted by preset categories.
3. A further advantage of interviewing according to Sewell (1998) is its flexibility. It enables interviewers to explore interesting or unexpected ideas or themes raised by participants, to ask for more details and to make sure that interviewees are interpreting questions the way they were intended.
4. Semi-structured interviews 'explore in-depth information and allow elaboration within limits' (Cohen & Manion, 1980:167).
5. According to Gay it is flexible, so that the interviewer can adapt the situation to each subject (Gay, 1981:166).
6. Most accurate and honest responses can be obtained since the interviewer can explain and clarify questions (Gay, 1981:166).
7. 'It is possible to develop specific skills such as listening that will improve your performance and proper reflection' (Richards, 2003:54).
8. A semi-structured interview enables a kind of disclosure as well as 'a degree of power and control over the course of the interviews' (Nunan, 2003:150).

Disadvantages

1. Using qualitative interviewing may be more 'reactive to personalities, moods and interpersonal dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewee than methods such as surveys' (Sewell, 1998).
2. A potential disadvantage is raised by Gay (1981) who points out that the researcher generally chooses only a few subjects to be interviewed, so the samples involved are small.
3. It is expensive and time consuming.
4. It generally involves small samples.
5. The response given by a subject may be biased and affected by his/her reaction to the interviewer.
6. An interview requires a level of skill usually beyond that of a beginning researcher.
7. The respondent is restricted by the interviewer to a specific time and place of interview.



I conducted an interview with the teacher to establish her point of view on the usage of teaching of reading strategies, as well as views on assessment and the reading attitude of the learners. I did not interview any learners as I felt that the questionnaire and observations provided sufficient data to the research questions. It was a struggle due to the time of the year (towards the end of the academic year a process of external moderation by departmental officials has to be completed) to agree on a set date to be set and keep the appointment for the interview. We eventually set a date on the 05 of December 2008 after 12h00 in the teacher's class, as there were no learners as the learners already completed their examination. I decided to take notes so as to gather as much information as possible.

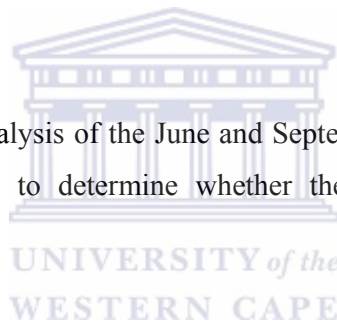
The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to ascertain the teacher's views on the usage of reading strategies and reading materials as well as on assessment and the reading attitudes of the learners. I also wanted to get an idea of the teacher's views of good and weak readers and the influence of assessment on reading competencies. The interview was

conducted in English for it was the language that we engaged in as members of the English subject team.

I designed a set of questions, bearing in mind the questionnaire and observed lessons, addressing issues that I would like clarification on such as how the teacher prepared reading lessons and why. I included questions that would explain the teacher's theoretical background that informs her teaching of reading in the English FAL class. Due to work related pressure, the interviewee did not have a lot of time to explain and discuss some of the questions. I assume that she thought I was aware of her point of view in these issues and the responses were short and not direct. If I had an opportunity to redo this section of the data capturing I would have recorded the interview, as the use of notes led to the loss of important visual and sound cues such as tone of voice, silences and emotions.

3.8 Document Analysis

The next step was document analysis of the June and September 2008 examination question paper and classroom activities to determine whether the documents support classroom practices.



The checklist for the document analysis was produced by highlighting issues from the literature review of the study (chapter 2). The checklist included factors on reader, task, text and issues relating to Social Practices and Multiliteracies. Firstly under the reader factors I included items focused on learner's reading background, motivation to read, personality and flexibility of activities. Secondly the text factors focused on issues relating to genre and suitability of text and paragraph development. Thirdly the task factors focused on issues related to interactive reading skills and complexity of the text. Fourthly the Social Practices and Multiliteracies factors focused on social and cultural ideas in the text, technologies, combination of graphics and text, and global literacies in the text.

The checklist was created using guidelines from Nuttal (1996), Alderson (2005) and Pahl and Rowsell (2006). That informed the literature review of this study. The following checklist was applied on both the June and September 2008 examination question papers and the classroom lesson tasks:

Checklist for document analysis

1. Reader Factors

1. Do the activities activate the learners' background knowledge?
2. Do the activities motivate learners to read?
3. Do the activities consider the personality of the learners?
4. Do the activities display flexibility in matching performances?
5. Do the activities pay attention to length and allow time for reading?

2. Text Factors

1. To what extent does genre have a role in the activities?
2. To what extent is the text suitable for the learners?
3. To what extent do the activities give enough development to paragraph cohesion?
4. To what extent does the language of the activities accommodate the learners?
5. To what extent is the text suitably presented for reading?

3. Task Factors

1. To what extent do the activities develop skimming, scanning and paragraph analysis and critical reading skills?
2. To what extent are pre-reading skills developed by the activities?
3. To what extent are while- reading skills developed by the activities?
4. To what extent are post-reading skills developed by the activities?
5. To what extent is the activities too dense (difficult to understand) to the reader?

4. Social Practices and Multiliteracies

1. To what extent do the activities carry social practices and cultural ideas to the reader?
2. To what extent do the activities consider the reader?
3. To what extent are digital technologies such as emails taught and tested in the activities?
4. To what extent do the activities combine graphics and text?
5. To what extent do the activities carry global literacies?

3.9 Validity of the data

As stated by Terre Blanche & Durrheim (1996) validity in qualitative research has to do with trustworthiness. Therefore to ensure validity in the findings of the study, triangulation through four methods was used. Cohen and Manion (1989) suggest that multiple data sources amplify the validity of research results as several methods of data collection can complement each other's weaknesses.

The data may have been affected as the data was collected. As I am familiar with the school and I may see things differently, than an incoming researcher that are unfamiliar to the setting. The fact that I am a female teacher in my late 30's may have helped to get the learners accustomed to my presence. Also because I did not teach the learners and I was in their class watching them after explaining my purpose for being in the class. The completion of the questionnaire also created a feeling of being part of something very important, because some of the learners who were absent regularly came to me after the completion of the questionnaire to enquire if they are going to be penalized for not completing the questionnaire. I once more assured them that being absent during the completion of the questionnaires was not going to affect their grade 8 results in any manner. At a later stage the responses to the questionnaires were reported to the grade 8 class and discussed with the learners to ensure that it was interpreted properly. They once more got excited when the topics of multiliteracies were discussed, SMS and MMS.

I perceive the questionnaires as valid as I spend 2 months observing lessons and the learners were used to my presence to such an extent that once I was a little bit late and I found the learners telling each other not to sit in the place allocated for me. I must also add that after about three weeks the behaviour the learners, especially the boys became calmer and more disciplined. Only once on the 19th of May 2008 the teacher remarked that the class was artificial with me in the class. My presence in the class was non-participatory and the learners accepted me as part of their class.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

According to Babbie and Mouton (2007:293) researchers also have to bear in mind the ethical issues of confidentiality and transparency in the research. They stress that researchers must be careful to respect the privacy of the participants.

One of the most basic ethical rules is to ensure that participation should be voluntary and a social researcher must be sensitive. No respondents can be forced, threatened or paid to participate in a study. Sometimes one has to measure the degree of relative threat versus the significance and validity of the research project. Research must not hurt participants in the course of the research project, must respect the privacy of subjects and maintain confidentiality (Babbie, 2007). A key reason why researchers need to ask for permission is due to the fact that they request of the participants time and energy.

Social research can rarely justify as with other professionals such as doctors and lawyers that to enquire for information is in the best interest of the participant. Therefore social researchers have been careful of delicate emotional dangers as they might discover abnormal actions and attitudes. The results of participants' actions may compel them to deal with personal character traits that come to the fore. The participant may experience individual distress. It becomes very important for the social researcher to explain to the participant the meaning of informed consent, which compels them to be aware of the dangers involved in participating in a particular study.

Another cause of concern to participants may be in the analysis and reporting of data.

In this area the researcher has to display sensitivity so that the information does not inflict harm on the participant. Two important factors must be considered which are anonymity and confidentiality. Babbie (2007) defines anonymity as when neither the researcher nor the readers of the research can identify a given response with a given respondent, and confidentiality as when the researcher can identify a given person's responses but essentially promises not to do so publicly.

The responsibility of the social researchers also entails managing their own personality as researchers. They have a responsibility to engage in debriefing sessions with interviewed

participants. This would enable them to highlight any difficulties that participants may experience due to the research, to address these difficulties.

To initiate the research project I first gained permission from the Western Cape Education department to conduct research at Meadow High School in Ravensmead. Data collection for my study at Meadow High School started with a meeting with the principal and senior management team of the school. They gave me permission to conduct my research at the school and I set up a meeting with the Grade Eight teacher. I explain my research to the teacher and explain that her participation is voluntary and she then signed the permission form and handed it back to me (Appendix A). The teacher introduced me to the class and I explained my research to the class, and they seemed really interested in my being there. They responded that they are now very important learners at the school. I however explained to them that their participation is voluntary and that I will not reveal their identity to anyone. I gave each learner a permission letter for their parents to complete (See Appendix B, which they had to return to me. The letter was in English as I was to do observation in an English FAL class; however I explain to the learners that the letter was available in Afrikaans, should the parents requested it. Some of the learners (about 10 learners) were absent a lot and that may be the reason that I only received 35 permission slip back. It is not perceived as a problem, because those that completed the permission slip are the learners that participated in the study.

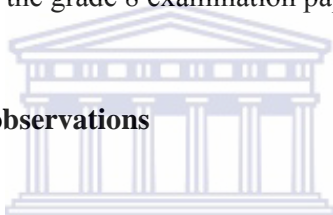
3.11 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the research methods and site and subject selection for this study. In the next chapter I will focus on the data analysis of each method in de

CHAPTER FOUR PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the data capturing methods were discussed. This chapter focuses on the presentation of data from classroom observations, questionnaires, teacher's interview, and document analysis. Firstly I will highlight the classroom observations to unpack the realities in classrooms for both the teacher and the learners. Then secondly I will focus on the learners' questionnaires to determine what happened during reading lessons and also learners' home reading practices. And thirdly I will present the teacher's interview to highlight her understanding of the reading strategies that she employed in class. Lastly I will discuss the document analysis of the grade 8 examination papers and classroom activities.



4.2 Presentation of classroom observations

In this research-of reading the name of the school and respondents are anonymous for reasons of safety and confidentiality. In this research, the purpose of the classroom observations was to observe classroom processes in reading skills development and to identify some of the factors that affected the teaching and learning of reading.

Presentation of the reading lessons

I will present extracts from two reading lessons to highlight the teacher's approach to the three phases of reading: Pre-reading, While-reading and Post-reading. The poetry lesson, 'So I am told' (I am fourteen years old) by Alexei Perry, continued over four periods, where the learners did pair work, individual work and read together with the teacher. The lesson started on the fifteen of May and ended on the eighteen of May 2008. The next reading lesson was started and concluded on the twentieth of May 2008. It was a short story from 'The Goalkeepers Revenge and other Stories' by Bill Naughton. The name of the selected short story was 'Maggie's First Read'.

4.2.1 Reading lesson on the 15-18th of May 2008


Reading

task

So I am told (I'm a fourteen year old)

I'm a fourteen-year-old girl, with messy tangled hair,
Sparkles and funny clothes, who feels lonely sometimes.
I do not ask to be understood because I can't even understand myself.
I ask to be accepted.
I ask to be accepted as I am.
I do not want to be told what potential I have, or what my future holds.
I do not want to be told that I'm going nowhere in life because I skipped
a math test.
I question my existence, my meaning.
I question what the "Real World" is, and why I'm not there.
I feel happy with no shoes on.
I feel lonesome in a crowded room.
Sometimes my heart bleeds and I cry.
Laughter echoes in my mind.
I am told to be different.
To be myself.
But then I am told what to wear and how to act.
I like to write and rumours hurt.
I don't know how to dance, but I try anyway.
Please don't try to understand me, nor judge me too quickly.
My name doesn't matter.
My heart is open.

Alexei Perry



WESTERN CAPE
15 May 2008

RAP MY POEM!!

My name Dunwayne . . .
 And I like campfire.
 My brother is a painter
 My sister is a Kung-fu master
 I live in a hilly
 Where the people are crazy
 When we have a party there's a lot of
 So if you want to please come and
not my party

1

Poetry

16 Mei 2002

So I am told
(I'm a fourteen year old)

* list of vocabulary

moss-coloured

sparkles

accepted

potential

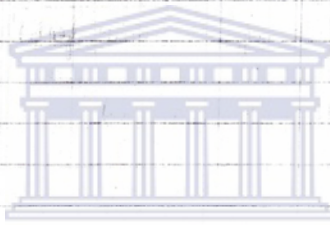
existence

lonesome

echoes

murders

judge



Describe down seven
things that fourteen
year old like to do [7]

To answer these
questions:

1. How does the poet (writer) describe a fourteen year old in line 1 and 2.
2. Why does the speaker not expect people not to understand him
3. What does he mean when he asks people to accept him

Pre-reading

The following is a summary of the pre-reading activities that the teacher used to introduce a poetry lesson on the poem 'So I am told' (I am fourteen years old) by Alexei Perry.

On Friday the 15th of May 2008, the teacher started the lesson by recapping the poetry lesson from the past Friday. Learners had to complete an eight line poem/rap about themselves, as a pre-reading activity to introduce the poem, 'So I am told'. The teacher introduced the poem with a pre-reading activity. She read the first few lines and then the class read with her in a chorus. Next the learners had to complete another pre-reading activity, by copying a vocabulary list from the blackboard. However the importance of the vocabulary list as a pre-reading activity was not exploited.

The learners interacted well with the teacher during the reading of the poem and during the writing down of the questions. The mood in the class was jovial to robust. One of the questions that were based on the poem was a pre-reading question: Learners had to write down seven things that fourteen years olds like to do. This led to a lively discussion and the learners answered that they listened to music, participated in sport, and watched sport and MIXIT.

While some of the learners were writing down the questions, the teacher interacted with others individually by asking them to rap their personal poems (pre-reading activity). This erupted into beat boxing sessions, while the indicated individual rapped his or her their poem. The interaction during the pre-reading session was lively.

While-reading

For the while-reading activity, the learners had to write down 10 questions relating to the poem and answer the questions. The teacher gave a short discussion after reading the poem with the learners. The teacher walked in the aisles assisting the learners, confirming the questions that the learners had completed. Learners were not instructed to engage in silent reading, but they had to scan for answers in the text. No direct instructions were given to the learners on how to answer the questions; however the teacher assisted the learners' individually while they were completing the activity.

During the while-reading session the teacher read the first question and started to answer it herself. The next questions were answered in a chorus by the learners. The teacher stopped to revert to a pre-reading activity by explaining the meaning of a word in the text. She used learner-appropriate examples skilfully.

Post-reading

The teacher did some recapping at the end of the lesson and marked the learners' books. She also spent time with individual learners to ensure they understood the day's lesson and to clarify any queries they might have had. This individual marking session might be seen as a type of post-reading activity, as the teacher recapped with learners one-on-one.

Considerable time was spent on individuals and learners asked questions without feeling threatened. Little or no formal post-reading occurred as the learners answered the questions in a chorus and thus it might be that they just followed the group.

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4.2.2 Reading lesson on the 20th of May 2008

Reading text

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MAGGIE'S FIRST READER

THE best housewife in Clegg Row was Maggie Gregory. Always a right good smell of steak-and-kidney pie or hotpot around the door of a dinner-time. And three days a week at tea-time you got that old-fashioned whiff of home-baked bread as you went by.

'I wouldn't let a bought loaf cross my doorstep,' Maggie used to declare. As for the Gregory family eating fish and chips or a factory pie, Maggie wouldn't hear of it. She had the best-stocked kitchen in the neighbourhood, the only absent implement being the can-opener.

There were five lively and well-fed youngsters at school, and Harry, the husband, was a nice, easy-going chap, a glass-blower at Yorrock's. Yet folk going off to work before seven in the morning would see Gregory's doorstep glistening alone in the row. Moreover, it was realized that no other housewife stood a chance with Maggie over the wash-tub.

Her clothes-lines were the curse of early-morning coal-men, for she would have them weighted with washing before the children were off to school.

'It's queer, you know,' Mrs Baines would say of her behind her back. 'I never did see a Cath'lic family so fussy and hardworking. Funny thing, she goes off to Mass every Sunday with the prayer-book in her hand, but she can't read a word.' The new rector, Father O'Flaherty, discovered this when showing Maggie a book of raffle tickets, and he was shocked. 'A fine respectable wife and mother like yourself, ma'am,' he said, 'that can't understand the written word no more than some misfortunate heathen! Tell me, why is that?'

'I were only eight,' said Maggie, 'when me ma died. I hadn't been much to school at the time, an' being the only girl, I had to get stuck into the housework. Not,' she added, 'as I regret it, when I see some of them as have been educated.'

'But this will never do, woman,' said the priest. 'You attend Holy Mass—but how can you follow the responses?'

'The what, Father?'

'Responses. *Dominus vobiscum.*'

'*Et cum spiritu tuo,*' chanted Maggie. 'But I don't know what it means rightly.'

'You don't have to,' he said crossly. 'But read you must, a woman like you.'

Just as he was leaving, the twelve-year-old son came in from school.

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Introduction

On Tuesday, the 20th of May 2008 during the eighth period, I observed the following lesson: it was a reading lesson where a short story from 'The Goalkeeper's Revenge and other stories' was read. The story dealt with was 'Maggie's First Reader' (pp.112-118). At the beginning of the lesson a problem occurred due to the shortage of books, but it was speedily resolved by the teacher and the girls, who preferred to share so that the boys could have a book each for the reading lesson.

Pre-reading activity

The teacher introduced the lesson with a pre-reading question and answer session. She asked the learners to name the first book they had ever read. At that moment excitement broke out in the class, as everyone wanted to answer the question at the same time. Most of the learners related that the first book they had read was in Afrikaans, as it is their mother-tongue.

Next the teacher started to describe the first book that she had read in a charismatic and energetic manner. It was clear that the learners enjoyed listening to the teacher. She told the learners that the first book she read was in Grade 1 and that it was an Afrikaans book about a brother and a sister and their adventures. I observed that the teacher was a good story-teller and used her voice to enliven the story.

While-reading activity

For a while-reading activity, the teacher asked a girl to read the first paragraph. The girl read very well. As the first paragraph mentioned food (steak-and-kidney pie and home-baked bread), the teacher used the break between the first and second paragraph to explore some ideas on food.

This activity reverted back to a pre-reading activity, as the teacher asked the learners to name their favourite food. Once more the learners got excited and the class broke into a lively discussion, while everyone shouted their favourite food. To make it personal the teacher asked the learners what they had for lunch during interval. The learners answered in a chorus as in the previous instances. Some said they had chips, others said they ate bread or pies – it was not possible to distinguish individuals as the learners talked at once.

The teacher indicated to another girl to read the second paragraph. The girl read well, but struggled to pronounce a word like ‘implement’ (Appendix: D, p 112 line 10). The girl started to read more softly and then complained that the boys were making a noise.

Eventually the teacher started to read from the beginning of the story and everyone followed the story quietly. But on page 112 in the second line where the narrator mentions steak-and-kidney pie, the whole class responded ‘mmmmmmmmmm’, reflective of the manner in which the teacher’s reading made the story come alive. After reading page 112, the teacher stopped and did a while-reading activity, where she asked the learners a question and they had to scan for an answer: ‘How many people were living in the house?’ and the class responded in a chorus that ‘seven people are living in the house.’

The teacher then read pages 113 -114 in a lively manner. While she was reading, some of the learners started to read with her. After reading page 114 line 8-9, the teacher stopped to enquire whether the learners knew the meaning of the word ‘fortnight’. Without waiting for a response, she explained the meaning as well that of the word ‘ignorance’.

The teacher continued to read, but stopped from time to time to check whether learners were following or paying attention. She then used scanning as a while-reading activity, by asking questions which the learners had to answer. She also stopped to explain the meaning of words. Another activity followed after the teacher explained the word ‘library’. She then asked the class when last they had gone to the library and for which purpose. A boy responded that he had been at the library the previous day to complete a Life Orientation task.

The teacher continued her reading and once more some of the learners read with her in a chorus. After reading another page, the teacher did a while-reading activity by asking the learners a question, where they used scanning to answer the question in a chorus.

She read until just before the last paragraph of the story (page 119) and then instructed the learners to all read with her. The learners gladly obliged and they all read together until the end of the story.

Post-reading activity

No formal post-reading activity was done, except for a remark by the teacher that ‘that Maggie, the lady in the story would write a book’. No discussion followed, except for the final remarks. Lastly the learners were instructed to take out their activity books as the teacher was going to mark them.

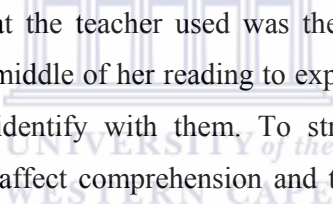
4.2.3 Comments

The teacher had a dominant and leading role in the classroom, although she was not a dictator, or unfriendly towards the learners. She spoke and read a lot as is confirmed by the classroom observations, her interview and the learners' questionnaires. However she also allowed the learners to speak and interact with her continually during lessons.

It however appeared that the pre-reading and the while-reading activities were mixed during the lessons. Very little emphasis was put on the explanation of reading skills or on checking to see if learners were using these skills.

4.2.4 Summary of the Reading Lesson

Pre- reading activity



Another pre-reading activity that the teacher used was the explanation of the meaning of words. She stopped right in the middle of her reading to explain the meaning of the words in a manner that learners could identify with them. To struggle with reading because of unknown words will obviously affect comprehension and take the pleasure out of reading. Research by Laufer (1989) and Liu and Nation (1985) shows that readers need to know 95% of the words in text to gain adequate comprehension and to be able to guess unknown words.

While-reading activities

The teacher's while-reading activities consisted of a number of questions that she asked learners. She followed a plan of reading a page and then at the end of a particular page, she stopped and asked the learners a question. They then had to scan for the answer on that page that she had read. Learners normally answered these questions in a chorus and not individually. She would also stop and check if learners were not paying attention and then ask them a question to get them to focus. Amazingly this activity got nearly all the learners with their noses in the book. She therefore used those variables which affect the reading process, for example 'reader's knowledge, motivation, strategies, characteristics, sex, age, personality' (Alderson, 2000: 33) to create a reader-friendly environment.

Post-reading activities

No post-reading was explored, except for one remark that the teacher made in conclusion to the lesson. The learners' ideas on the remark were not discussed. The rest of the time was spent on marking books and clarification.

The teacher's weaknesses

The teacher did most of the reading herself and gave only two girls the opportunity to read in the observed lessons. However after they had read, she reread their sections again, which might have undermined their efforts to read in future. She asked questions without indicating to individuals to answer. The learners mostly responded to questions in a chorus, which created a lot of noise in the class, and this created disciplinary problems. Also in allowing learners to read in a chorus the teacher may not have noticed cognitive aspects: the speed at which readers' were able to recognize words or sentences, their processing capacity, their reading speed and so on (Alderson, 2005). The chorusing took up time, as she then had to ensure calm again in order to continue with the lesson.

The mixing of the pre-reading and while-reading and little emphasis on post-reading is not conducive to the development of interactive reading strategies. Moreover, the teacher rarely summarized the answers to activities for the whole class, so this might be seen as a missed opportunity to deal with common difficulties that learners may have experienced. The lesson on the surface appeared unstructured, as the biggest part of the period was spent reading and at the end of the lesson, the learners were requested to take out their books so that they could be marked.

The structure of the lesson leant more towards a reader who is able to read fluently, as it was done at a certain pace and under the assumption that learners had the same level of reading proficiency. In addition, the interruption (question and answer sessions, explanation of words) after each page could be perceived as a distraction because weaker readers may have lost interest (some of the boys talked and others lay with their heads on the desks). The lack

of resources (too few textbooks) in addition to overcrowding (45 learners and only 35 desks in the class) also hampered the effective teaching of interactive reading strategies.

There is a clear gender disparity in the class as the majority of the boys were sitting at the one side of the class, while the girls sat on the other side. With the exception of only a few boys, most were restless and disruptive and the class was strongly divided along gender lines. With the exception of one girl and boy that sit together, the boys sat on the far side and the girls nearer to the door/ entrance. The girls appeared more disciplined and focused during lessons, together with a group of three boys that sat in front at the teacher's table. Reorganising the seating may have been more productive.

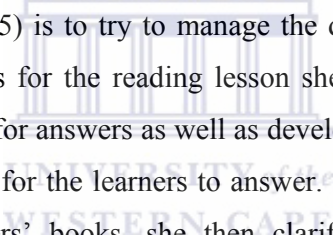
The teacher's overall strengths

The teacher's personality was a major strength in her classes as she was friendly, motherly and positive with all the learners. She was able to use her personality to draw in learners with diverse characteristics and anxiety levels to respond and participate in the lesson (Alderson, 2005). These characteristics allowed the interactions to be open and learners responded freely and could ask any question without rebuff. While doing observations in her class, I did not hear her raise her voice once to the learners, even if they were loud and rowdy. She used incentives such as on the 15th of May, she offered a five rand coin (which she showed to the learners) to get their attention and as a reward to complete activities. She also promised a bubblegum to the first learner who completed the noun word game on the 21st of May. It was amazing to see learners scurry around to be first, to get the bubblegum. It was a useful approach of encouraging the learners. She also had a beautiful voice and spoke in a well-rounded manner; since she initially trained to be a music teacher. According to her ex-learners she was an exceptional music teacher. She was therefore able to use her voice in the class as a means of discipline.

The teacher also planned her time to talk to nearly each and every learner, every period she walked in the aisles and looked at their books, to question whether they understood or not. She really gave her all in every class that I have observed, with the result that in the afternoons she was dog tired, and sometimes complained about the eight periods a day the school follows. She had an infectious laugh and often used humour to discipline or get the

learners' attention. It did not work with everyone, but she had a close relationship with most of the learners in the class.

She had the ability to pull the learners with her and kept most of them interested during the lessons; she employed strategies such as reading in a chorus and praising learners about the condition of their books. Here she demonstrated an ability to notice learners' preference (Bada and Okan, 2000) which served as good way to get and keep learners interested in the reading lessons. Her ability to draw learners into the reading lesson was an advantage that would definitely aid the reading process.. Clearly she was able to select texts and set activities that learners liked and enjoyed. She also seemed to consider the text readability which includes text complexity, for instance, title, syntactical density, structure, logic, words, and learners' ability to read the text.



A suggestion by Alderson (2005) is to try to manage the difficulty of text, particularly for weaker readers. In the questions for the reading lesson she applied different reading skills such as skimming and scanning for answers as well as developing some critical reading skills by setting appropriate questions for the learners to answer. She also set time aside everyday to assess and mark the learners' books, she then clarified issues that learners' might encounter in the course of the reading lesson. This would have assisted her to become aware of the difficulties that affected the learners' reading abilities and therefore set appropriate tasks to strengthen their shortcomings. So she would be able to give a reasonably accurate reflection of learners' abilities during assessment.

When we consider the importance of social practices perspectives and multiliteracies, it is evident that the teacher tried to draws on the learners' home background by doing activities that make them feel their knowledge and experience was important. This surely helped to create lively discussions and interactions that were fruitful in terms of building reading skills. Bringing cultural events such as rap into the classroom coupled with allowing learners to beat box on the desk created a classroom that learners wanted to be in and encouraged them to cooperate with the teacher. This manner of teaching reading

was refreshing and created a sense of excitement that is wanting in a lot of reading classes.

4.2.5 Analysis of the understandings of this teacher's practices

Teacher's pre-reading practices

All of her lessons started with a recapping of the previous lesson, which is part of pre-reading. During the lessons the teacher used pre-reading extensively and at the level of the learners. According to Alderson (2005), a reader's content schema must be activated in order to understand the passage. This the teacher did well.

Although the teacher spent some time doing pre-reading, she could have used some time explaining the purpose of pre-reading, so that learners could gain a better understanding of interactive reading processes and thus strengthen their reading skills. The teacher might also have considered using only one or two good genre-based textbooks, rather than an eclectic collection of photocopied tasks. This would have saved time and created continuity by allowing a clear focus on specific purposes and the structural and linguistic features of each genre (Alderson, 2005). It would also have assisted the teacher to structure her lessons and manage her time more effectively and create a more even spread between pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities. A teacher's guide would also help to plan the lessons better, clarifying the distinctions between pre-reading and while-reading activities during lessons.

Teacher's while-reading practices

She did while-reading activities well, for example, asking learners questions relating to the text, while she was reading, to keep their attention. However, she seemed to mix the pre-reading and while-reading activities. She would also have benefited from a wider range of possible tasks.

Teacher's post-reading practices

The teacher did some recapping at times, and spent time to do post-reading exercises with individual learners. An interesting occurrence was that the learners read and answered questions in chorus. Overall, however, few or no formal post-reading tasks were given. This seemed to result from a lack of formal training on the nature and importance of carefully-structured post-reading tasks.

Multiliteracies

The teacher employed a limited range of multiliteracies such as rapping (lesson on the 16th of May) and allowing learners to beatbox during the lesson, something that is frowned upon by many teachers. She introduced a noun word game (21st of May) which learners did in earnest and with interest. The activities that were presented were all relevant to the learners and their spheres of interest. For example, learners had to ask for more pocket money in a friendly letter, while on holiday. They consequently had to complete 5 diary entries about events during their holiday. However, the lack of access to technologies of any kind meant that the range of multimodal texts and tasks was limited to printed images and texts or physical representations of audio or spatial meaning.

What the teacher's weaknesses?

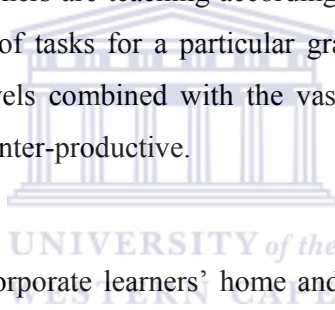
It was disheartening to see how the educational system was hampering the progress of such an excellent teacher. The condition of the class did not do well for the morale of any person, for it lacked all the basic resources to ensure a well-balanced class, such as reasonable class numbers, enough desks in the class, clean graffiti-free walls, windows and blackboard, intercom and electricity, door and door handles (stolen for their aluminium content).

A second major factor is that the system of OBE as implemented in 2008 put demands on teachers for which they were not properly trained. Despite the fact that some training was provided, it was too short and not clearly focused on interactive reading skills (see below). It was clear from my observations that the teacher put a lot of effort into her teaching, but it also became obvious that she lacked training in the teaching of interactive skills. Her mixing of pre-reading and while-reading skills caused learners to detour from the lesson at times and created an opportunity for those who were less interested to display disruptive behaviour. Also the lack of post-reading activities did not allow learners to tie down the lesson neatly, to focus on particular linguistic problems, or to test their acquired skills orally in the class. Moreover, the teacher rarely summarised the answers to activities for the whole class, so this might be seen as a missed opportunity to deal with common difficulties that learners may have experienced.

The nature and duration of training offered to in-service teachers is clearly inadequate. In July 2006, all teachers at high schools in the Western Cape attended a two week induction

workshop on teaching OBE in the English Languages class. To the disappointment of all the teachers that attended, it was perceived as a waste of time. The two weeks were spent reciting the Assessment Standards for English. Little or no theory was provided to put OBE in perspective for Languages teachers. Consequently, this teacher declared that she was not going to attend any workshops in future, as teachers learnt very little and none of their concerns were heeded.

A further constraint is the lack of clear guidelines from the National Government and the lack of comprehensive textbooks along with teacher's guides. To add more responsibility to teachers' workload, they also have to ensure and in most cases also compile learners' portfolios as very few learners show enough responsibility to look after and compile portfolios on their own. This robs teachers of valuable time to teach. The main purpose of the portfolios is to determine if teachers are teaching according to OBE principles and that they are completing the set amount of tasks for a particular grade and learning area. However, class sizes and low literacy levels combined with the vast amount of record-keeping that accompany this task make it counter-productive.



The teacher did her best to incorporate learners' home and out-of-school practices into the lessons. She also mixed a range of modes in her teaching. However when learners did use multiliteracies they were perceived as entertainment and their importance as an educational tool was not exploited by the teacher. Her attempt to 'forge a new language pedagogy, grounded on the real-life experiences of students' (Cope et al. 2000: 240) was admirable but would have benefited from a much deeper understanding of the relationship between the different modes, in other words, the kinds of meanings carried by each and the relationships between them.

What contributed to teacher's strengths?

While she spoke frequently in class, as is confirmed by the classroom observations and the learners' questionnaires, she also encouraged the learners to speak and interact with her frequently. She was able to use her voice effectively. Her diligence and ability to interest and involve learners were excellent.

Overall despite her lack of well-developed interactive activities, her teaching could be seen as reflecting a model where each part in the reading process cooperates with the others (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Rumelhart, 1997; Stanovich, 1980).

4.3 Presentation of learners' questionnaires

The purpose of the learners' questionnaires was to establish the learners' reading backgrounds, attitudes to reading, and the reading strategies taught and applied in class. The responses were categorised into two sub-themes of Reading Background and Reading during Lessons. The questionnaire that I used in this study is presented on the next two pages.

4.3.1 Questionnaire

Read each question and circle the most appropriate answer for you. Remember there is no right or wrong answers.



Reading background

Section 1

1. How often do you read at home?

Everyday	Once a week	Once in two weeks	Once a month	never
----------	-------------	-------------------	--------------	-------

2. Where do you get these books to read at home?

school	friends	family	library	nowhere
--------	---------	--------	---------	---------

3. Did your parents read to you when you were smaller?

Everyday	Once a week	Once in two weeks	Once a month	never
----------	-------------	-------------------	--------------	-------

4. How many times have you received books as a gift from your family?

Every year	Every six months	Every month	Every week	never
------------	------------------	-------------	------------	-------

5. Why do you at times read to your family members at home?

enjoyment	relaxation	information	Religious reasons	Do not read.
-----------	------------	-------------	-------------------	--------------

6. Why do you read at home?

enjoyment	relaxation	information	Religious reasons	Do not read.
-----------	------------	-------------	-------------------	--------------

7. Do you go to the computer lab and use the internet?

Everyday	Once a week	Once in two weeks	Once a month	never
----------	-------------	-------------------	--------------	-------

8. Which type of reading materials do you like to read at home?

Bible	SMS	Mixit	Son	Voice	Tygerburger	MMS
newspaper	textbooks	posters	pamphlets	Prescribed books	magazines	none

9. Which type of reading materials do your parents read?

Bible	SMS	Mixit	Son	Voice	Tygerburger	MMS
newspaper	textbooks	posters	pamphlets	Prescribed books	magazines	none

10. How do you prefer to spend your leisure/free time?

.....

.....

.....

Reading during lessons

Section 2

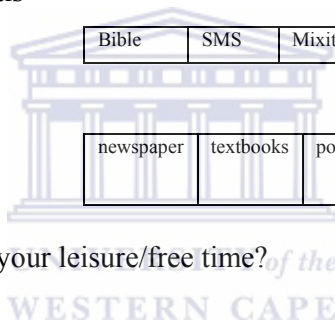
1. When does your teacher read in class?

Every day	Every weeks	Every two weeks	Every month	seldom
-----------	-------------	-----------------	-------------	--------

2. Do you get a chance to read in class?

Every day	Every weeks	Every two weeks	Every month	seldom
-----------	-------------	-----------------	-------------	--------

3. Does your teacher guide you on



how to read to get an answer?

always	regularly	sometimes	seldom	never
--------	-----------	-----------	--------	-------

4. Are you confident when you have to do a task for marks?

always	regularly	sometimes	seldom	never
--------	-----------	-----------	--------	-------

5. Do you struggle to find answers during reading activities?

always	regularly	sometimes	seldom	never
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6. Do you get nervous when you have to read in class?

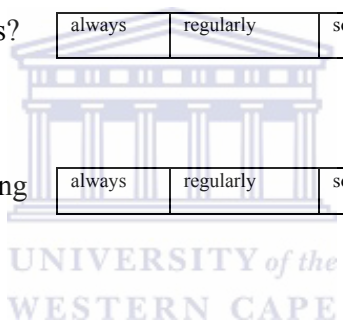
always	regularly	sometimes	seldom	never
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7. Do you use skimming (read quickly) during reading activities?

always	regularly	sometimes	seldom	never
--------	-----------	-----------	--------	-------

8. Do you use scanning (read to look for an answer) during reading activities?

always	regularly	sometimes	seldom	never
--------	-----------	-----------	--------	-------



9. What do you like about the reading textbook?

.....

.....

.....

10. What do you dislike about the reading textbooks?

.....

.....

4.3.2 Summary of responses on Reading Background (Section 1)

All learners read at home, except for one respondent (2.9%) who did not answer the question. They got hold of books to read from sources in the community such as the library. Most of their parents read to them when they were smaller. However two learners' (5.7%) parents never read to them and one learner (2.9%) did not answer the question. They had generally received books for presents except for two learners (5.7%) who did not answer the question. The learners read to their families and themselves for enjoyment. Interestingly very few learners regularly used the computer laboratory, but it probably had to do with access, as only the Computer Application Technology (CAT) learners (grades 10 – 12) had free access..

Ravensmead is well known for having a lot of churches and church attendance makes it impossible for the school to have parent-teacher meetings on a Wednesday night. Most learners (80%) indicated the Bible as reading material. Multiliteracies such as SMS', MIXIT and MMS' were very popular for both parents and learners. The daily Son and Voice are sensationalist newspapers that were read by parents and learners.



4.3.2 Summary of responses on Reading during Lessons (Section 2)

Questions one to three of this section focused on reading in the classroom. It is clear that the teacher did read to the class quite often while the learners did very little reading on their own in the class. They were always guided when they had to read for answers; however a small percentage (5.7%) of the learners felt that they were never guided. It may be that these learners never listened or they were busy playing or might have been absent a lot during lessons.

Questions four to six of the questionnaire focused on reading assessment in the classroom. Learners reported that they felt confident when they had to do a task for assessment and they rarely struggled to answer questions (85.7%). They were however nervous to read individually in class (68.7%).

Questions seven and eight focused on reading skills and strategies. Most of the learners said they used skimming during reading activities. The 11.4% of the learners who claimed to never use skimming were probably part of the group of playful boys in the class or they may have misinterpreted the question. 2.9% did not answer the question. Most learners said they used scanning during reading activities (91.4%). An explanation may again be that those who did not were part of the playful group or they misunderstood the question. The teacher in her interview explained that she focused on teaching skimming and scanning to learners.

Lastly, questions nine and ten focused on the textbooks. Learners generally liked the textbooks, and found nothing wrong with them. Interestingly 5.7% felt that the textbooks were difficult to read and 5.7% did not answer the question. It appears that there is a group of less than 10% of the class who either misunderstood or did not answer several questions.

4.3.3 Comments on learners' questionnaires

What were learners past experiences of reading?

The findings revealed that most of the respondents had positive past experiences of reading as their reading was supported at home by parents. However, most of the learner and their parents were reading the Bible (80% of respondents) and the Daily Sun (80% of respondents) only. Teachers in South Africa today do not really focus on using the sources that promote religion, because exclusivity is prohibited by law. They also do not use the Daily Sun as a source to design classroom activities, due to its status as a sensationalist newspaper. This poses a challenge for the advice of Pahl and Rowsell (2005) who stress the importance of home and school ties; once learners in this class reach a certain level, there are a few appropriate home literacies to draw on.

According to the questionnaires, the learners also spent a lot of their time employing multimodal social practices. Multimodality is 'a way of making meaning that allows for different modes' (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005:156). The findings revealed that about 50% of the respondents spent their time sending text messages (SMS) and on MIXIT (a chat line that is very affordable for teens). In the teaching of literacy practices the role of technology is central to peoples' lives. It shapes the application of written text, images and aural modes. Given learners' intense interest in digital technologies, it would seem essential to consider different reading modalities in the classroom (Selber, 2004; Unsworth, 2004). Nevertheless,

learners' responses suggest that overall they had positive current experiences of reading assessment in the classroom.

The findings suggest a gap (lack of communication) between the school and the community structures such as the local library and parents. By reaching out to build stronger ties, the school will be able to tap into a resource that will have positive outcomes in terms of learners reading practices at home and at school.

4.4 Presentation of teacher's interview

The transcript of the interview can be found in Appendix E. A brief summary of answers to each question follows.

1. How do you plan a reading lesson?

The teacher explained that she starts a reading lesson with at least two pre-reading activities; one is reading part of the text herself. She then continues to a while-reading activity and lastly answering of questions.

2. What do you think of Outcomes-Based Education?

She seems to support OBE, but feels that it is failing due to a shortage of resources and parental support.

3. Why do learners of English FAL at secondary schools struggle to achieve assessment goals for reading?

The teacher associated fluency in reading with mastering the alphabet and associating letters and sounds.

4. Do you think there is a relationship between learners' reading strategies in English FAL and their assessment results?

The teacher did not see a direct link between learners' reading skills and learners' assessment results and she also suggested that the idea of group work created dependency on the stronger learners.

5. Which reading strategies do you use and where did you learn these strategies?

The teacher claimed to highlight skimming and scanning as reading strategies that she taught in class, and she indicated that she got these strategies from textbooks.

6. Do you think of a particular reading strategy when you prepare lessons?

She perceived skimming of passages for main ideas as important in preparation for teaching reading strategies during lessons.

7. Do you consider assessment when you plan your lessons?

She saw assessment as an important determiner in reaching assessment goals.

8. Which types of reading strategies are taught during your lessons in reading?

The teacher focused on listening, vocabulary, skimming paragraphs and scanning whole texts as core reading strategies during reading lessons.

9. Why are you teaching those particular reading strategies to the learners?

She believed that the drilling of content assisted in grasping the meaning, which suggests a top-down approach to reading, but with a behaviourist twist.

10. How do you think reading should be taught?

The teacher suggested that reading should be taught in the interactive approach, as she mentioned a process of concepts, words and then meaning-making.

11. Do you think teachers are properly trained to teach and assess reading in the English FAL class?

She acknowledged that teachers who are teaching English FAL are not adequately trained to assist learners at different levels of reading abilities.

12. Do you think that the learners' home background influences their reading in class?

She strongly agreed that learners' home reading practices play a major role in their reading abilities and that parental reading and story-telling neglected by most parents.

13. What is the main difference between a good, average and poor reader according to your experience in the English reading class?

The teacher based her categorisation of learners' reading ability on talent and love for reading for good readers, while she suggested that average and weaker readers needed more visual stimuli to understand a text. She asserted that the main difference between average and poor readers is that average readers struggle to read, but they are able to read independently with the aid of sounding out of words while poor readers struggle with word identification and that they are dependent on pictures to support their understanding.

14. Do you think that being a good reader influence learner's assessment?

She agreed that good reading skills play a pivotal role assessment, as the learners able to apply critical reading skills to assessment tasks while the opposite is to be assumed for average and weak readers. They would not have the ability to read critically and they would therefore struggle during assessment tasks.

15. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make?

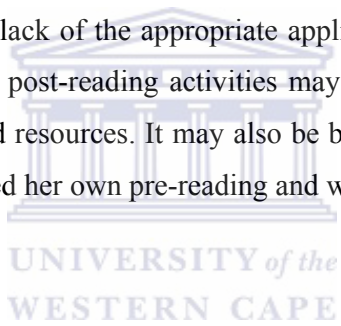
Lastly, the teacher suggested that the teaching of reading needed collaboration between the school and the parents, coupled with diverse availability of reading matter. She hinted at the use of an interactive approach to reading, by merging background knowledge with the learning areas.

4.4.1 Comments

It is clear from the interview that the teacher loved teaching and that she was not overly negative or despondent, but hopeful for the future.

I observed that the teacher did apply a form of interactive approach during reading lessons; pre-reading activities were done exceptionally well, although the format and nature of the tasks did not vary much. Her response suggested a combination of letter- symbol and skimming and scanning to teach reading in the classroom. In some instances she reverted to a top-down model, which in reality means that readers deduce text information from a set of expectations and test some of the information from the text to accept or reject these

expectations (Smith, 1971; Goodman, 1982; Grabe and Stoller, 2002). She would start a lesson by reading the text and then do a pre-reading activity (Observations-Appendix C & Teacher's Interview-Appendix E). However, these activities were of limited range and while drawing on learners' prior knowledge, did not lead them to predict the content of the text. Then she would give the learners questions to complete on the text and then personally assess these answers to ensure that the learners answered these questions correctly. Interestingly despite such practices, she strongly associated good reading ability with sound-symbol accomplishment, which indicates a bottom-up or even audio-lingual theory of reading. Carrell (1988) suggests that in early second language learning theories, reading was perceived as subordinate to oral language skills development: mastering sound-symbol relationship and oral dialogues were considered as the first steps in development of reading proficiency. These kinds of approaches would have been current if the teacher was trained. But, unfortunately she was not well trained in order to integrate newer approaches coherently into her everyday practice. The lack of the appropriate application of interactive approaches as evident in while-reading and post-reading activities may be as a result of a lack of both theoretical background and good resources. It may also be because the teacher did not really use textbooks, but rather designed her own pre-reading and while-reading activities.



4.5 Presentation of document analysis

The purpose of the checklist was to examine previous class lesson tasks and tests to look at the reading strategies developed and assessed. The checklist included reader, task, and text factors as well as insights from Social Practices approaches and the Multiliteracies framework as discussed in chapter 2. Firstly, under the reader factors, items focused on learners' reading background, motivation to read, personality and flexibility. Secondly, the text factors focused on issues such as genre, suitability of text and paragraph development. Thirdly the task factors focused on issues such as interactive reading skills and complexity of the text. Fourthly, the Social Practices and Multiliteracies factors focused on social and cultural ideas in the text, technologies, combinations of graphics and text, and global literacies in the text.

The following checklist was applied to both the June and September 2008 examination question papers and also to the classroom lesson tasks of the lessons of 16th and the 20th of May 2008.

4.5.1 Document analysis of June and September 2008 exam question papers






Extracts from these question papers are presented on the following pages. Full tasks can be found in Appendix F and G.

- INSTRUCTIONS: a. Answer ALL questions.
b. Read carefully.
c. Please, write neatly and legibly.

Question 1.

Study the information below and answer the questions that follow.

Find your face shape

		
<p>OVAL To add width (not length) to your face, try one of these ideas: CUT layers or a fringe at eye level. TRY a side parting. AVOID cutting short layers at the crown of your head.</p>	<p>ROUND/HEART To add more length to your circular face, try one of these ideas: CUT long, face-framing layers. TRY wearing a centre parting. AVOID haircuts above ear level.</p>	<p>SQUARE To round out your jaw and hairline, try one of these ideas: CUT a forehead-sweeping fringe. TRY wearing a deep side parting. AVOID blunt cuts. Ask your stylist to use a</p>

[15]

1. 1. How many face shapes are displayed in the information chart? (2)
1. 2. i) Is an oval face long or wide? (1)
ii) Quote from the passage to prove your answer. (1)
1. 3. What should be avoided if you have an oval face? (1)
1. 4. Find another word for *round* from the passage? (1)
1. 5. Write down the advice given to people with round or heart shaped faces that does not ask for a hair cut. (2)
1. 6. Which two face shapes can wear a side parting? (2)
1. 7. Which two face shapes can get away with wearing a fringe? (3)
1. 8. What does a stylist do? (2)

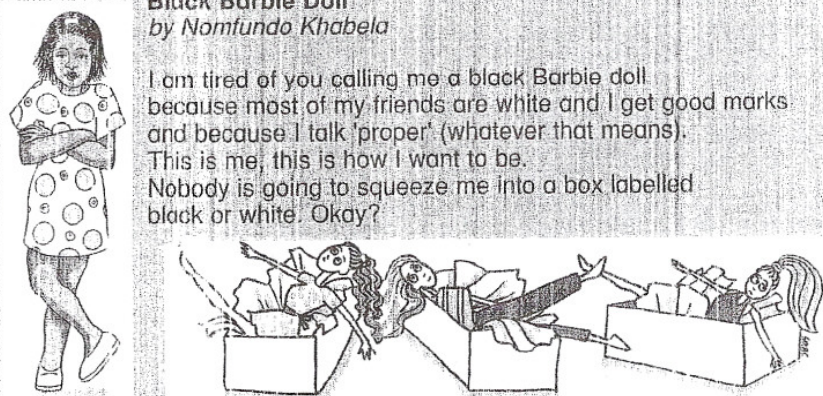
Question 2.

Rewrite the passage, punctuating it appropriately.

every monday morning innes and his best friend john meet at the beach they always take along the following towels picnic basket and a beach ball

(10)

Question 3.



Black Barbie Doll
by Nomfundo Khabela

I am tired of you calling me a black Barbie doll because most of my friends are white and I get good marks and because I talk 'proper' (whatever that means). This is me, this is how I want to be. Nobody is going to squeeze me into a box labelled black or white. Okay?

- 3. i) What is a "Barbie doll"? (1)
- 3. ii) Why is Nomfundo called a *black Barbie doll*? (2)
- 3. iii) According to Nomfundo, why do people call her a Barbie doll? (2)
- 3. iv) What does it mean to talk "proper"? (1)
- 3. v) State whether the following statement is TRUE or FALSE and quote from the poem to prove your answer.
Nomfundo likes who she is. (1)
- 3. vi) What does Nomfundo mean when she says:
"Nobody is going to squeeze me into a box"? (2)
- 3. vii) What is the emotion present in the last word of the poem? (1)

[10]

WESTERN CAPE

Question 4. *Correct the word in brackets.

- 4.1 Ten times five (be) fifty.
- 4.2 To little sugar (make) the cake tasteless.
- 4.3 There (be) many choices to make in life.

[3]

Meadow High School
English First Additional Language
September 2008
Marks : 50
Time : 1 hour
Grade 8
LO3, 4, 5, 6

Instructions

1. This paper consists of section A and B.
2. All sections must be answered.
3. Number your answers carefully.
4. Write neatly and legibly.

Section 1

Question 1 : Comprehension

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Grace Black reports on an ambitious recycling campaign for a cleaner environment.

An initiative to collect discarded plastic bottles got underway in Gauteng last month at the start of World-Environment Week.

The programme will run for three years, during which South Africa hopes to set an example to the world by collecting 5 000 tons of plastic bottles by February 2002.

Iqbal Hirji, managing director of the South African Polyester Recyclers (SAPR) said at the start of World Environment Week that over 1,2 billion polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles are produced and sold in South Africa each year, the majority of which are not recycled. It takes thousands of years for one of these bottles to biodegrade. Billions of plastic bottles end up in landfill sites or litter the landscape in South Africa.

Special containers for the collection of the plastic bottles have been placed at selected schools in Gauteng. The project will roll out to other schools during the year.

Hirji says the benefits to schools is threefold: it will help clean up the environment, educate children on the importance of recycling, and raise funds for schools.

"We need to create an awareness amongst children that they have a moral responsibility to recycle," Hirji says.

For every kilogram of plastic bottles collected, participating schools will receive R1.

Hirji says the collected PET products - fizzy drink bottles, mineral water and cooking oil bottles, cleaning aids and cosmetics containers - will be converted into polyester fibre.

This fibre can be exported for the production of material, which can be used to make clothing, carpets, stuffing for pillows, duvets and even soft toys. X-ray and camera film can also be collected for recycling, as this can be converted into fibre to make grey carpets.

Gauteng has been targeted as the primary collection region because over 60 percent of the PET produced in the country is used in that province. It is hoped that over 20 000 tons of discarded PET products will be collected annually.

The project has received the backing of Coca-Cola and the Plastic Federation of South Africa.

Hirji said a pilot project for people to collect the discarded bottles and receive money in return has been started in Krugersdorp. Apart from creating jobs, the project was contributing to the cleaning-up of the environment.

A part of the initiative is to educate communities on the value of recycling.

In addition to the collection containers at schools, containers will also be placed at churches, on beaches and in national parks.

From the *Teacher*, July 2001

- 1.1 When was the recycling program started? (1)
- 1.2 How will South Africa be able to set an example to other countries? (2)
- 1.3 How long does it take one bottle to biodegrade? (1)
- 1.4 State whether the following is **TRUE** or **FALSE** and **QUOTE** from the passage to prove your answer.
- 1.4.1 "Most PET bottles are recycled." (2)
- 1.4.2 "All Gauteng schools have received special containers for PET bottles." (2)
- 1.5 In your **own words**, name the three benefits of this project. (3)
- 1.6 If a school collects 400 kg of plastic bottles, how much money will the school make? (1)
- 1.7 Name three kinds of products that are sold in PET bottles. (3)
- 1.8 What else can be recycled according to this article? (1)
- 1.9 The article mentions the organizations that support this project. Who are they? (2)
- 1.10 What do the organizations want to teach the communities? (1)
- 1.11 Name one other place where containers will also be placed. (1)

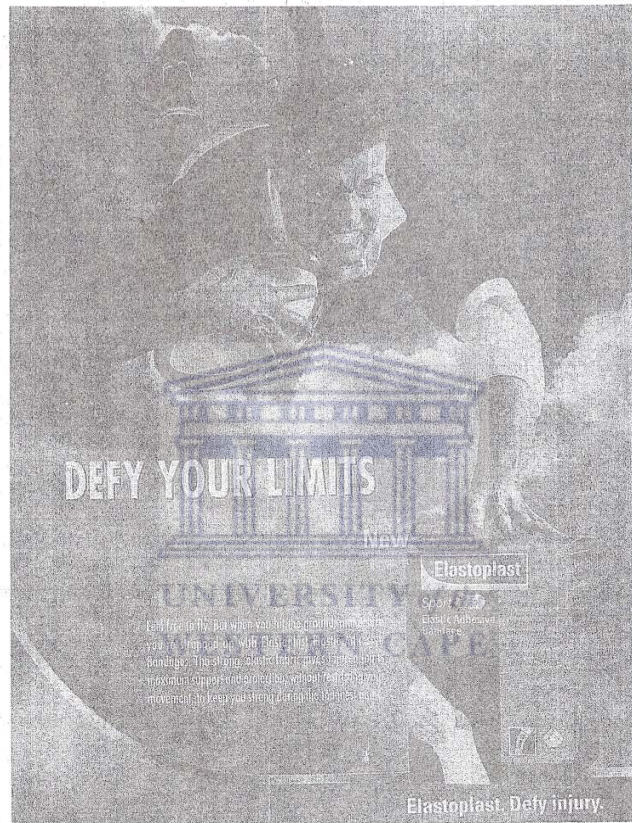
WESTERN CAPE

/20/

SECTION B : Language in Context

Question 2

Look at the advertisement below and answer the questions that follow.



- 2.1 What product is this advertisement trying to sell? (1)
- 2.2 What sport is the man in the picture playing? (1)
- 2.3 Where is this man? (1)
- 2.4 What do you as the reader of the advertisement, imagine because of what the man in the picture is doing and where he is? (1)
- 2.5 Based on the picture, who do you think the target audience is of this advertisement? (2)
- 2.6 What does the picture tell you of what Elastoplast can do? (1)

QUESTION 3

- 3.1 Complete the following paragraph by writing the verb in the correct tense. Write only the correct word next to the correct number.

People (3.1.1 dump) rubbish everyday. Up to 70 percent of what we (3.1.2 throw) away can be recycled.
Last year environmentalists (3.1.3 ask) the public to provide their own cloth bags when shopping and not plastic ones. At about that time big supermarkets (3.1.4 sell) large, sturdy plastic bags that could be re-used.
In the future I (3.1.5 try) to reduce the amount of water I (3.1.6 use) every day. (6)

- 3.2 Complete the following sentences by filling in the missing preposition.

- 3.2.1 The countryside was littered Plastic bags.
3.2.2 Have you been guilty dumping litter?
3.2.3 Can we rely you not to do that again.
3.2.4 Everybody should work together Re-use and recycle. (5)

- 3.3 Rewrite the following sentence in the Reported Speech.

"We need to create an awareness amongst children that they have a moral responsibility to recycle,"Hirji says. (3)

- 3.4 Choose the correct word from the two options underlined. Write down only the number and the correct word.

- 3.4.1 Plastic is the (more/most) use product of our time, but even for our climate it is very difficult to get rid of.
3.4.2 As passengers were waiting for (their/there) taxi, they could (throw/ through) their rubbish into the bins.
3.4.3 We should use energy saving bulbs to (save/safe) power. (4)

- 3.5 Rewrite the following passage correcting the 5 errors in it. Underline the corrections you have made.

hirji said a pilot project for people to collect the discarded bottles and recieve money in return has been started in krugersdorp. Coca Colas backing of the project will mean a lot. (5)

/30/

1. Do the question papers promote reader factors?

Some reader factors are considered, while others are neglected or omitted. The factors that are considered include motivation to read, for some learners especially from a gender perspective. The question papers do not consider all learners in their choice of topics. For example June 2008 exam, the text is suitable, but more so for girls than boys as it clearly focuses more on female issues, with questions 1, 3 and 5: the questions focus on face shapes in question 1, Black Barbie in question 2, and prizes of female clothes in question 5.

Nevertheless, the paper does accommodate most learners as a variety of questions are asked in different ways, for example, different type of questions in question 1 such as when, where, how, true and false, own words and name. Of note is the fact that the question papers did not expect learners to write paragraphs, but mostly short sentences, a word or a phrase were required.

The question papers allocated enough time for learners to read and complete it as texts were short and undemanding. None of the question papers focused on the activation of background knowledge. No pre-reading activities were used; while-reading activities began from questions 1-5. Question 2 consisted of mostly 'what' questions, that is, the regurgitation of facts; this requires only the extraction of facts from the text and no real critical reading skills. In question 3 learners had to rewrite a paragraph, fill in missing words, choose the correct word and correct errors. So the question papers required of the learners to apply mostly skimming and scanning skills at a word-level and neglected skills such as critical reading and cohesion.

2. Do the question papers promote textual factors?

In the June question paper there was no emphasis on genre, while the September paper used a mixed genre (newspaper article on recycling using elements of an information genre) and a persuasive genre, an advertisement on rugby. However, the actual genres were not actively promoted or focused on. The June and September question papers both focused on issues that

some learners might be interested in. However, the format of the question papers did not lend itself to paragraph analysis or demonstration of understanding of cohesion as the answers required were mostly one sentence, one word or one phrase answers. The language was easy and no challenge to advanced learners. The text was well-presented and neatly printed in black and white.

In the September question paper there was minimal focus on testing paragraph analysis, critical reading or cohesion skills for the questions were mostly one sentence or one word for 1 mark. But question 1.5 was 3 marks for 3 sentences, without, however, any emphasis on paragraph development or cohesion. The language was at the level of a grade 8 FAL learner; however, in question 1 there were some difficult words for example polyethylene terephthalate which could have been explained in a word box, in order to assist the reading process.



3. Do the question papers promote task factors?

The question papers mainly promoted skimming and scanning skills and to a lesser extent critical reading skills. No real focus was put upon paragraph analysis. In considering whether the question papers developed interactive reading skills, it is clear that mainly while-reading skills were emphasised. No pre-reading and post-reading skills were addressed by either question paper. None of the activities were challenging to the readers either cognitively or linguistically and they seemed easy to complete.

Some minimal critical reading skills were assessed with a minor focus on paragraph analysis in question 1, where learners had to read a 30 line comprehension. Question 2 was an advertisement so learners had to use their critical reading skills, skimming and scanning for answers. However, the questions asked were very few. For question 3 mainly skimming and scanning skills were developed and to a lesser extent critical reading skills as the question basically required learners to fill in the correct form of the verb, selecting the most correct answer and to correct errors. These questions all required one word answers.

4. Do the question papers promote Social Practices and Multiliteracies?

As is discussed above, it is clear that mainly while-reading skills of decontextualised texts were emphasised. Both question papers attempted to include a combination of graphics and text, but no questions related to the different ways in which each creates meaning. No pre-reading and post-reading skills were addressed by either question paper. The question topics would appeal to some readers but not others. Only the September paper promoted global literacies in a minor way, through the information genre, while the June Question paper only had one question which hinted at global issues. In a small manner it did hint at social practices and multiliteracies in question 3 (black Barbie), but not enough information was given to clearly highlight the importance of the issue at hand. The themes of both rugby and recycling are perceived as important in the societies that the learners come from so these issues both carried social and cultural ideas.

Overall the question papers were still traditional in design and, although the curriculum calls for interactive and multimodal literacies, these were not assessed. This lack of guidance in the exam papers probably had a washback influence on the teacher's practice.

4.5.2 Analysis of the classroom lesson tasks using the checklist

The checklist (see chapter 3) was applied to the class activities of the 16th and the 20th of May 2008.

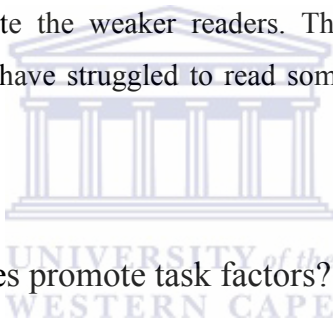
1. Do the classroom activities promote reader factors?

Both activities had the reader in mind as they aimed to draw the best out of the learners in terms of creating a love for reading. The activities were specifically designed to access the schemata of the learners. The theme for the group of lessons on reading and poetry was teenagers, so the eight line poem/rap that learners had to complete about themselves was personal and linked well with the poem. The lesson of the 20th of May was also introduced by

exploring the title of the short story and then learners had to name the first book they have read. The choice of texts spoke right to the heart of teenagers as the poem addresses the insecurities that teenagers experience and thus most of the learners identified with it.

2. Do the classroom activities promote textual factors?

Only some factors were looked at. It is clear that genre was not promoted in either of the lessons' activities: with both activities there was no emphasis on the identification and exploration of genre. In fact it was not even mentioned at any stage of the lesson. Paragraph analysis and development that foster reading were not adhered to. Although the activity of the 20th lent itself to development of paragraph analysis and cohesion tasks, it is not a focus during these activities. In addition, not all the learners' capabilities were considered, as the text leaned more to accommodate the weaker readers. The poem was printed on a dark background and learners might have struggled to read some of the text. More attention to clarity would have helped.



3. Do the classroom activities promote task factors?

A good emphasis on pre-reading and while-reading skills was present in the activities, but no post-reading skills were developed. In addition the activities overemphasised skimming and scanning and neglected paragraph analysis and critical reading skills.

4. Do the classroom activities promote Social Practices and Multiliteracies?

There was an attempt to bring learners' background and home practices into the classroom; however too little attention was placed upon learners' social practices and multiliteracies in the activities. Both texts highlighted social and cultural ideas, in the lesson of the 19th the growth process of teenagers and in the lesson of the 20th the idea of books and food which are central to human existence were discussed. The lack of resources was visible in the arguments for textbooks on the 20th of May (see appendix C). The teacher had no training to introduce Social Practices and Multiliteracies. She however was open and did explore the use

of rap in her classroom; however this was not explained or fully exploited as a tool to promote reading performances of learners.

4.6 Analysis of strengths and gaps from the triangulation of the observations, teacher's interview and learners' questionnaires

Strengths

The teacher did attempt to teach reading in an interactive manner and there was some emphasis on skimming and scanning, which is correlated in all the data capturing methods. It was clear from the observations that the teacher put a lot of effort into her teaching, but it also became obvious that she lacked training in her application of the teaching of interactive skills and strategies, and was able to provide little or no emphasis on paragraph analysis and critical reading skills.

Clearly the teacher was able to select texts and set activities that learners liked and enjoyed. She seemed to consider text readability which includes text complexity, for instance, title, syntactical density, structure, logic, words and ability to read the text.

In the questions for the reading lesson she applied different reading skills such as skimming and scanning for answers. The teacher also set time aside everyday to assess and mark the learners books, she then clarified issues that learners' might encounter in the course of the reading lesson. This helped her to become aware of the difficulties that affected the learners' reading abilities and so to set appropriate tasks to strengthen their shortcomings. When we consider the importance of social practices, the teacher clearly drew on the learner's home background by doing activities that made them feel that they are important. This teacher has the potential to successfully incorporate multimodal teaching methods in her class, given appropriate support.

Gaps

The overcrowding and ghettoized condition of the class did not promote morale within this environment, although the teacher tried her best with a considerable degree of success. However, there are some factors such as specific genre focus, paragraph analysis and critical

reading skills that could be addressed to improve reading abilities. Despite the fact that in-service training was provided, it was too short and not clearly focused on interactive reading skills. As a result, teachers such as this one graft an inadequate understanding of interactive reading onto their existing beliefs and theories of reading. This helps to explain the mismatch between what the teacher said in her interview on her teaching of reading (which relates to bottom-up processes), while my observations and learners' questionnaires indicate that she is using something approximating an interactive approach. A further factor is learners' use of Afrikaans during interactions with the teacher and each other, except for one learner who spoke English during the lesson. However, when learners had to answer questions relating to the activities, they responded in English. The extent to which this might influence the transfer of interactive reading skills as well as development of the L2 transfer needs further

investigation.

4.7 Conclusion



In this chapter I focused on the analysis of the classroom observations, learners' questionnaires and teacher's interview. I also used a checklist to analyse the classroom activities and June and September examination from 2008. The data was analysed and the findings used to identify factors that affect the reading performances of learners in English FAL. In the next chapter I will provide a conclusion of the most important findings and suggest improvements to improve reading strategies for teachers so that learners can enhance their reading performances.

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore factors that affected reading and assessment in a Grade 8 English FAL class. In the previous chapter, data from four data gathering methods were discussed and analysed. The analyzed research gave me an in-depth look at the application of reading strategies and skills in the class as well as some insight into reading practices outside the classroom. Next I will summarise these findings in order to answer my research questions and then suggest a set of recommendations to improve reading practices.

5.2 Summary of the findings obtained from different data sources

The analysis of the observations revealed that the teacher attempted to the best of her knowledge to apply an interactive approach; however, it seemed that she lacked the theoretical knowledge to apply it effectively. In the course of her reading lessons she tended to overemphasise pre-reading and underemphasise while-reading and post-reading activities. Well-designed tasks for while- and post-reading are difficult to devise without a solid theoretical framework. During the pre-reading sessions most of the learners were interested in the topics that were discussed and this led to lively and interactive discussions. These activities focused on activating learners' background knowledge (schemata) and appeared to be successful. Therefore the teacher's application of the pre-reading processes might well foster an interest in reading due to her lively and creative presentation of the lesson and the learners' response to it. However her application of interactive approaches might not aid learners' reading performances directly due to relative lack of while- and post-reading activities which engage directly with the content, purpose and linguistic features of the text.

Furthermore the absence of well-designed textbooks on reading strategies to use as a guide clearly hampered teaching and learning during reading lessons. For example, the lessons on one topic continued for about three days which created opportunities for some learners to display disruptive behaviour. The teacher also tried in a limited way to employ multiliteracies

such as rapping. However its potential as a framework for multimodal reading development was not developed effectively, again due to lack of training.

The results of the home reading section of the questionnaires showed that most learners had a positive reading background and did read at home, but they mostly read the bible and a sensationalist local newspaper. They furthermore spent considerable time using multiliteracies such as SMS, MMS and MIXIT. However, the nature of these reading practices might be seen by some teachers as unsuitable for fostering interactive reading processes and creative ways would have to be found to integrate them successfully into the engagement with more elaborated 'school-type' texts.

The section on reading during lessons showed that a lot of reading occurred during the lessons, but the teacher did most of the reading, while a few learners, mostly girls, got opportunities to read. Learners did use skimming and scanning, but little paragraph analysis or critical reading skills were employed effectively during activities.

From the analysis of the question papers and the textbooks it appears that some of the topics might interest girls more than boys. In the question papers, there were no pre-reading activities to activate the learners' background knowledge or enable them to form a sense of the purpose and content of the text. Also little attention was paid to paragraph analysis, cohesion or critical reading skills. The question papers mostly required the learners to skim and scan for answers: these are useful strategies but although useful, need to be supplemented by focused work on text organisation and linguistic features.

The lack of resources and class size also hindered the reading process. As the condition of the classroom, shortage of desks and textbooks were critical factors that hampered positive learning experiences and crippled reading performances.

5.3 Summary of the answers to the main questions in the study

What were learners' past experiences of reading?

From the responses to the questionnaires I deduce there was a positive reading culture among the learners and their parents. Most of the learners said that their parents read to them when they were smaller. However the materials read at home were mostly the Bible and The Daily Sun (Die Son). It is only possible through further research to assert whether the type of reading material read at home influenced learner reading performances in the English FAL class. Regarding the learners home reading practices, the teacher in her interview seemed to disagree with the learners about their reading practices in the sense that she said that parents were not much involved in their children's reading at home. In addition, learners claimed that they liked to read, yet they spent their leisure time pursuing other activities such as watching television and texting messages on their phones. Most of the learners' home reading and conversations occurred in their mother tongue -Afrikaans.

Moreover, very few of the learners used technologies such as computers and the assumption is that access may be a problem, because the computer room at school is mostly available for other grades doing Computer Application Technology (CAT). According to the questionnaire learners also spent a lot of time using multimodalities such as SMS, MMS and MIXIT, which all require reading. However more research is needed to explore the effect of these multiliteracies on learners' reading performances.

What are learners' current experiences of reading and reading assessment in the classroom?

According to the observations, questionnaires and teacher's interview, the learners did get opportunities to read. During classroom observations they enjoyed reading and responding in a chorus in the class. The learners were interested in reading as the teacher's enthusiasm for reading influenced them and created an excitement during reading lessons that was tangible. As regards consideration of learner factors, Bada and Okan (2000) suggested that many teachers know they have to notice "learners' preference", however, learners' points of view were not considered during language tasks. The notion might have been that learners did not

know enough to make an active contribution to the tasks. However, studies done by Block (1994, 1996) assert that learners know what is happening in the classes and teachers should consider setting tasks bearing in mind learners' preferences. Barkhuizen (1998) found that ESL teachers in South Africa were amazed when they discovered their learners' different identities.

As regards task factors, the transfer of interactive reading skills did not appear to be effective in the lessons due to the approach used in the classroom. Reading in the classroom consisted of mostly skimming and scanning skills and paid lesser attention to developing other interactive reading skills such as critical reading skills, paragraph analysis and cohesion. In most instances the critical reading skills were superficial. Learners' books were marked nearly everyday and the teacher spent time talking to individuals, but lesser emphasis was put on post-reading consolidation for the whole class. This might have affected the learners' reading performances as they copied the teacher's reading practices in their own reading practices.

In the questionnaires the learners replied that they were assisted during assessment in the classroom, so their reading and assessment experiences were mostly positive, as was confirmed during classroom observations. This was as a result of the teacher's positive attitude and effort during reading lessons. Affect (emotional interaction) also plays a role and this might be one of the reasons why informal assessments might result in enhanced results due to the emotions of the reader during testing. The learners were confident during assessment of tasks and said they did not struggle to answer questions during assessment. They said in the questionnaire that they mostly applied skimming and scanning skills during reading activities and these were the skills that the teacher focused on as confirmed by the classroom observations and teacher's interview. Despite learners' confidence during reading assessment, they were nervous to read individually in the class. From the classroom observations it was obvious that the teacher preferred to asked girls to read rather than boys and there was little emphasis on individual reading. This might have created confidence but, would also explain the nervousness of learners' during individual reading sessions.

What are the teacher's understandings of reading assessment?

According to the teacher's interview, she did not see a direct link between learners' reading skills and learners' assessment results and suggested that the idea of group work creates dependency on the stronger learners. However, during observations, learners mostly responded in a group and the teacher only twice indicated to learners to read. She saw assessment as an important determiner in reaching assessment goals. She agreed that good reading skills play a pivotal role assessment, as the learner is able to apply critical reading skills to assessment tasks. During classroom observations the teacher taught some interactive reading strategies but these did not appear to be grounded in a thorough theoretical understanding. There was often a mismatch between the teacher's practice and her theories such as the effect of group work on learners' assessment results. Also her view that good reading ability is linked during sound-symbol accomplishment indicated an Audio-Lingual Theory of reading, while she was in essence teaching a form of interactive strategies. This might be indicative of a lack of theoretical background and good resources. It may also be because the teacher did not really use textbooks, but rather designed her own pre-reading and while-reading activities. The development of materials for class activities are complex tasks in the second language classroom and requires theoretical knowledge. The teacher's approach to reading assessment might have influenced the learners' reading performances due to the difference between her theory and practice.

What is the relationship between the teacher's understanding and the English Additional language curriculum?

The overall aim of the English Additional Language curriculum was for learners to be able to read, write, speak, listen and use grammar properly: these are the learning outcomes that must be obtained at the end of the academic year. The curriculum is learner-centred and focuses on outcomes at the end of the learning process. It is an activity-based approach to education with the intention to promote problem-solving and critical thinking. The assessment outcomes predict that the end of the learning process the learners should be holistically developed as skilled readers, writers, listeners, communicators and critical thinkers.

In her interview the teacher said that she believes in OBE, but admitted that it has major shortcomings. She interpreted and applied the curriculum to the best of her knowledge: she

attempted to employ the outcomes of the curriculum in her lessons, but did not explicitly explain to the learners the outcome of each lesson. The teacher tried her best to accomplish the goals for the curriculum with her limited theoretical knowledge, lack of resources and overcrowded classroom.

What kind of reading practices do learning materials promote?

The classroom lesson tasks as explained by the teacher and observed in the classes promoted interactive reading strategies, with an over-emphasis on pre-reading, some while-reading activities and a lesser emphasis on text-based post-reading. The teacher however did an individualized pre-reading with learners' during the observations. With the aid of a checklist the following issues were discovered: that these pre-reading activities activated background knowledge of learners and were well designed. The selected tasks and topics adhered to learners' interests and tasks and topics were well-suited for the learners.

However, it is clear that genre purpose, structure and key features were not promoted in the activities and that paragraph analysis and development that foster reading were not addressed. Not all the learners' capabilities were considered, as the texts leaned more to accommodate the weaker readers. There was an attempt to bring learners' background and home practices into the classroom with focus on social practices and multiliteracies.

What kind of assessment practices do materials promote?

Summary of the question papers

None of the question papers focused on the activation of background knowledge.

The language was easy and no challenge to advanced readers. The factors that were considered were motivation to read, for some learners more than others. The format of the question paper did not lend itself to paragraph analysis or cohesion as the answers were mostly one sentence, one word or one phrase answers. The question papers mainly promoted limited skimming and scanning skills and to a lesser extent critical reading skills. No real focus was put upon paragraph analysis. It is clear that mainly while-reading skills were emphasised. No pre-reading and post-reading skills were addressed by either question papers.

Assessment practices in the classroom

The teacher said in her interview that assessment was an important part of the lesson, however little emphasis was given to assessment in the classroom. During the observations the teacher mentioned at the beginning of the lessons the purpose of the lesson, however little or no emphasis was put upon explicitly explaining the purpose of assessment and the outcomes to be reached. Once during the observations the teacher summarized the activity with a statement. However assessment in the class appeared to be informal and individualized. It took the form of marking the books and a chat to show learners how to answer questions properly.

What factors affect learners' performances in English Additional Language reading in grade 8?

Overall, a wide range of reader, text, task and structural factors interplay to affect reading in grade 8. I observed that resources played a major role in hampering the reading process, as classes that are overcrowded, and the condition of the classroom and access to books clearly affected the morale of learners and the teacher.

The teachers and their role in the class are of utmost importance as the transfer of reading skills and strategies into the L2 is their responsibility. The teaching of interactive reading skills in this class had shortcomings such as the mixing of pre-reading and while-reading and the absence of post-reading skills. The teacher could also have considered that learners have different levels of reading proficiencies (different levels of reading fluency). Moreover, her application of interactive approaches might not have aided learners' reading performances directly due to the under-emphasis of while-reading and post-reading activities; these facilitate reading to get the general idea of the text (while-reading) and evaluation of the text (post-reading). Learners did use skimming and scanning, but little paragraph analytical or critical reading.

Little or no reading homework might also be a factor that affected learners reading in the classroom. Despite their confidence during reading assessment, they were nervous to read individually in the class. The nature of the reading tasks set played a major role here.

As regards home reading practices, learners mostly preferred other activities to reading at home. However those that read focused on the Bible and the Daily Sun (Die Son). These reading materials might be perceived as unsuitable and not used by the teachers as teaching materials. They furthermore spent considerable time using multiliteracies such as SMS, MMS and MIXIT. However, these practices were not explicitly explained and used as reading materials. The educational system needs to pick up on this development to embrace what learners bring into the classrooms (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). The relationship between home and school is a co-dependent one. A merger occurs due to various events, languages and social background and all these factors interplay in the relationship. Researchers such as Scribner and Cole, 1981; Hamilton, 1989; Heath, 1993; Street, 1984; Barton and Hamilton, 1998 highlight the co-dependence between the home and the school environment. It therefore became obvious that there was a mismatch between learning in schools and at home.

The checklist revealed that the question papers did not promote interactive reading. For example, there were no pre-reading activities to activate the learners' background knowledge. In addition, they mostly required the answering of simple factual questions. Furthermore the absence of well-designed textbooks to use as a guide clearly hampered teaching and learning during reading lessons.



5.4 Recommendations for developing reading skills

A good textbook with a teacher's guide would help to plan the lessons better so that the entire interactive sequence slots into one period. The teacher might consider using only one textbook, which would save time and create continuity. Also a good teacher's guide would explain the purpose of post-reading activities, and aid with time management and the structuring of the lessons. A teacher's guide would also help to plan the lessons much better, such as clear distinction between pre-reading and while –reading activities during lessons. A well-designed course in the teaching of reading and assessment would surely aid the teaching of reading in the class. Inadequate training of teachers to teach in an outcomes-based manner and the lack of financial resources to train these teachers efficiently and effectively is one of the key factors in the current literacy rates in schools (Chisholm, 2000).

If the NDoE would change the syllabus it would be helpful to clarify assessment and outcomes, state the curriculum and recommend the textbooks to be used. Other strategies that would help include: a programme of induction for teacher at schools to ensure they are aware of how to teach interactive reading skills; a focus on tertiary institutions to incorporate the teaching of interactive reading skills to students who are going to become language teachers, as we transfer the manner in which we were taught to our learners.

For Shohamy (1984) an issue to consider is whether the methods of testing and print layout as well as a difference in competence levels would have an impact on readers' test outcomes. She showed that struggling readers are more pressured by the method of testing and print than able readers. As learners bring diverse ways of communication to the classroom, teachers need to implement innovative methods of teaching reading. Teaching would be enhanced if teachers incorporated multimodality and multiliteracies into literacy teaching and learning. This would help overcome gender disparities and promote the reading of multiple literacy texts from intercultural historical viewpoints (Pahl & Roswell, 2005). The question papers and observations in this study revealed the presence of strong gender divisions; it is therefore obvious that a shift to multimodality would be advantageous to learners and teachers and its incorporation into lessons or consideration during lesson might play a role to enhance learners' reading proficiency and lower instances of gender division.

5.5 Significance of the study

The study has explored some of the factors that affect learners reading performances in grade 8. I hope that this research may inform the teaching of reading in grade 8, for example, the retraining of teachers and training of student teachers regarding interactive multimodal reading skills. It may also offer insights into learners' experiences and the kinds of literacies that could be included in learning materials to increase learner interest, motivation and success.

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Addendum A: Consent from teacher

Informed consent form (teacher)

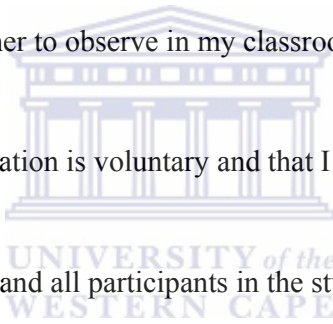
Title of the research project:

Researcher:

Contact email:

As a teacher inSecondary School, I hereby acknowledge the following:

1. The researcher has explained to me the purpose of this study. She also explained to me that all information received as part of the study will be used for research purposes only.
2. I have given permission for her to observe in my classroom and if necessary to use or audio- and video recordings.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any stage.
4. I understand that the school and all participants in the study will remain anonymous.



Signed:

Date:

Place:

Addendum B: Consent from parents

Informed consent form (parents)

Title of the research project:

Researcher:

Contact details:

Dear Parent

I have requested permission to observe the Grade 8 learners at Meadow High school as part of my research on Exploring reading at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. Your written permission on this form is required for me to do this research.

Goal of the study

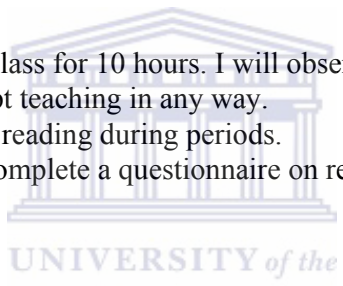
My study aims to investigate why learners struggle to read in the classroom and outside it.

Research methods

I will be present in your child's class for 10 hours. I will observe the class and make one video recording. I will not disrupt teaching in any way.

I will also record some learners' reading during periods.

Learners will also be asked to complete a questionnaire on reading, as well as some interviews.



It is voluntary and anonymous

Your child does not have to participate. There will be no penalties against your child for not participating. Learners only have to answer the questions they want to answer and they may stop at any time. The purpose of the research will be explained to learners and they will be able to ask questions.

Your child's privacy will be protected. No names will be recorded or attached to the research report.

A copy of the final research report will be given to the school.

Thank you,

Please sign and give this form to your child to bring back to the school. Thank you for your help.

-----I, (name) do / do not (please circle one) give permission for my child to participate in the study.

Parent's signature:

Child's name:

Date:

Vorm vir ingeligte toestemming (ouers)

Titel van die navorsingsprojek:

Navorsers:

Kontakbesonderhede:

Beste Ouer

Ek het aansoek gedoen om toestemming om die Graad 8-leerders van Meadow Sekondêre Skool waar te neem as deel van my navorsing oor Lees aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland in Suid-Afrika. Ek het u skriftelike toestemming op hierdie vorm nodig om hierdie navorsing te kan doen.

Doel van die studie

My oogmerke met die studie is om vas te stel hoe leerders verskillende tale binne en buite die klaskamer gebruik.

Navorsingsmetodes

Ek sal vir 10 ure in u kind se klaskamer teenwoordig wees. Ek sal die klas waarneem en een video-opname maak. Ek sal op geen manier die onderrig onderbreek nie.

Ek sal ook sommige leerders se spraak gedurende speelye opneem.

Ek kan ook onderhoude met 'n paar leerders voer om hul beskouinge oor taalgebruik vas te stel.

Dit is vrywillig en naamloos

U kind hoef nie deel te neem nie. Daar sal geen straf wees as u kind nie deelneem nie.

Leerders hoef net die vrae te beantwoord wat hulle wil beantwoord en hulle kan op enige stadium stop. Die doel van die navorsing sal aan die leerders verduidelik word en hulle sal vrae kan vra.

U kind se privaatheid sal beskerm word. Geen name sal aangeteken of by die navorsingsverslag aangeheg word nie.

'n Afskrif van die finale navorsingsverslag sal aan die skool verskaf word.

Dankie.

Teken asseblief hierdie vorm en gee dit aan u kind om terug te bring na die skool toe. Dankie vir u hulp.

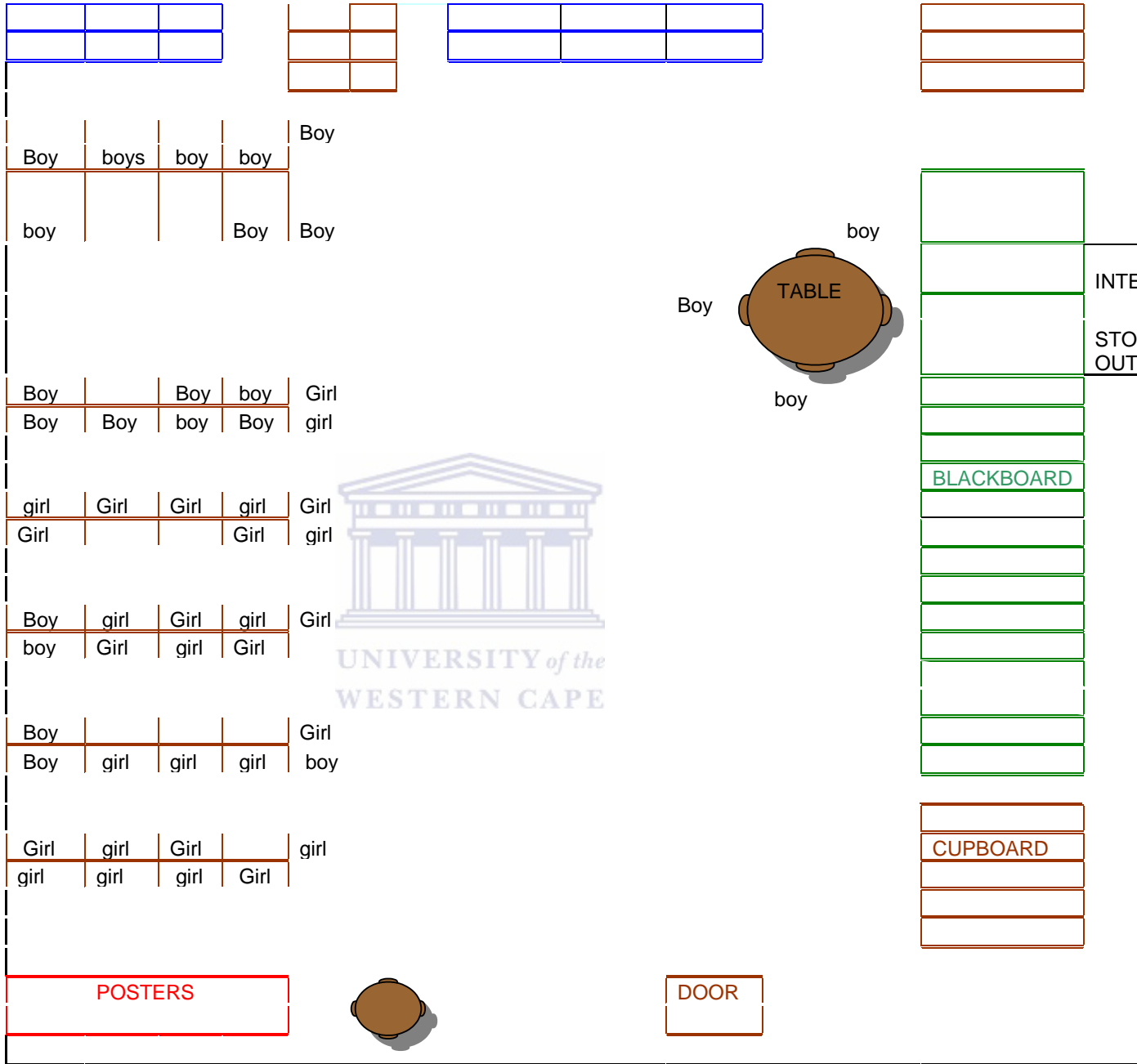
Ek, (naam) gee toestemming / gee nie toestemming
(omsirkel een) dat my kind aan die opname mag deelneem (nie).

Ouer se handtekening:

Kind se naam:

Datum:

Addendum C: Classroom observations



Addendum D: Detailed analysis of learners' questionnaires

Summary of Questionnaire

Section 1

Reading Background

Question 1

The respondents replied that about 42.9% read every day, while 45.7 read once a week. About 2.9% of the respondents read once in two weeks. And 5.7% read once a month, while 0% replies that they never read. Only one respondent did not answer this question.

Question 2

About 11.4% of the respondents reply that they get the books at school and 17.1% got their books from friends and 17.1% got books from family members. While 42.9% of the respondents got their books from their local library, while 2.9% got their books from a religious institution such as a church or a mosque. And 8.6% got their books from others such as neighbours.

Question 3

About 48.6% replied that their parents read to them everyday and 31.4% claimed that their parents read to them once a week. While 5.7% responded that their parents read to them once in two weeks and 2.9% replied their parents read to them once a month. And 5.7% replied that their parents never read to them. About 2.9% of the respondents did not answer this question.

Question 4

About 28.6% of the respondents have received a book as a present every year and 2.9 received a book every six months. While 17.1 received a book every month and 8.6% got a book every week. And 34.3% never received a book as a present. About 5.7% of the respondents did not answer this question.

Question 5

About 54.3% of the respondents read to their family members for enjoyment and 25.7% read to family members for relaxation. While 25.7% read to family members for information and 25.7% read for religious reasons. And 2.9% replied that they do not read to family members. About 5.7% of the respondents did not answer this question.

Question 6

About 48.6% of the respondents read for enjoyment and 20% read for relaxation. While 48.6 read for information and 20% read for religious reasons. And 0% replied that they did not read.

Question 7

About 8.6% of the respondents replied that they go to the computer lab every day and use the internet and 31.4% go once a week. While 11.4% go once in two weeks and 28.6% go once a month. About 14.3% never go to the lab. About 5.7% of the respondents did not answer this question.

Question 8

The following table is a summary of the type of reading materials that the respondents prefer to read.

Reading Materials	Percentages
Bible	80%
SMS	45.7%
MIXIT	57%
Son	74.3%
Voice	45.7%
Tygerburger	37%
MMS	14.3%
Newspapers	54.2%
Textbooks	20%
Posters	20%
Prescribed Books	8.6%
Pamphlets	5.7%
Magazines	45.7%
None	5.7%
Other	0%

Question 9

The following table is a summary of the type of reading materials that the respondents' parents prefer to read.

Reading Materials	Percentages
Bible	80%
SMS	48.6%
MIXIT	8.6%

Son	80%
Voice	65.7%
Tygerburger	57%
MMS	20%
Newspapers	71.4%
Textbooks	11.4%
Posters	14.3%
Prescribed Books	11.4%
Pamphlets	11.4%
Magazines	48.6%
None	0%
Other	0%
No Answer	2.9%

Question 10

The following table is a summary of the type of leisure activities that learners prefer:

Reading Materials	Percentages
MIXIT	20%
Watch TV.	45.7%
Read	45.7%
Listening to music	8.6%
Playing with friends & brothers	17.1%
Playing soccer/netball/rugby/athletics	28.6%
Playing computer games	5.7%
Walking around and having fun	20%
Internet	2.9%
Do homework	11.4%
Library	5.7%
Shopping	2.9%
Ride bicycle	2.9%
Sleeping	2.9%
Other things	5.7%

Section 2

Reading during lessons

Question 1

About 68.5% of the learners responded that the teacher reads to them everyday. About 22.8% of the learners responded that the teacher reads to them every week and 2.9% of them responded every two weeks, 2.9% of them responded every month and 2.9% of them responded seldom.

Question 2

About 14.3% of the learners responded that they get a chance to read everyday in class. While 11.4% of them responded that they get a chance to read every week in class. About 25.7% of them responded that they get a chance to read every 2 weeks in class. About 5.7 of the learners responded that they read only once a month, while 42.9% of the learners seldom get a chance to read in class.

Question 3

About 51.4% of the learners responded that their teacher always guide them on how to read for answers. While 17.1% of the learners responded that the teacher regularly guides them to answers. About 25.7% of them responded that the teacher sometimes guides them. However 5.7% of the learners responded that they are never guided on how to read for answers.

Question 4

About 40% of the learners are always confident when they have to do a task for marks. While 8.6% of the learners are regularly confident and 42.9% are sometimes confident. About 5.1% are seldom and 2.9% are never confident when doing tasks for marks.

Question 5

About 5.7% of the learners always struggle to find answers during reading activities. And 8.6% regularly struggle to find answers during reading activities. While 65.7% of the learners sometimes struggle to find answers during reading activities. About 8.6% seldom struggle and 11.4% never struggle to find answers during reading activities.

Question 6

About 20% of the learners are always nervous when they have to read in the class. While 5.7% are regularly nervous to read in the class. About 42.9% are sometimes nervous to read in the class. However about 2.9% are seldom and 28.6% are never nervous to read in the class.

Question 7

About 25.7% of the learners responded that they always use skimming during reading activities. About 14.3% of the learners responded that they regularly use skimming. While 40% responded that they sometimes use skimming. About 5.7% of them seldom use and 11.4

responded that they never use skimming during reading activities. About 2.9% did not respond to the question.

Question 8

About 25.7% of the learners always use scanning during reading activities. About 20% of the learners responded that they regularly use scanning during reading activities. About 42.9% of them sometimes use scanning, while 2.9% seldom and 8.6% never use scanning during reading activities.

Question 9

About 34.3% of the learners thought that the textbooks were interesting and 17.1 found it easy to read. While 17.1% found it nice and 8.6% responded that it was fun. About 5.7% liked to learn the meaning of new words, 2.9 respectively liked the poetry, colorfulness and that the text is well explained. About 2.9% of the respondents did not answer the question.

Question 10

About 25.7 responded that there was nothing wrong/difficult about the textbooks. About 2.9% responded that they can't always see the words. While 34.3% responded that the textbooks have difficult texts/words and 2.9% struggle to read the texts Also 17.1% responded that the names in the textbooks are difficult to pronounce. About 5.7% responded that the textbooks are black and white and 2.9% responded that the stories are too long. About 5.7% responded that the textbooks are hard to read and 5.7% did not respond at all.

Analysis of Questionnaire

During reading lessons

Questions one to three of the questionnaire focused on reading in the classroom. And it is clear that the teacher does read to the class quite a lot. The learners do very little reading on their own in the class. They are always guided when they have to read for answers, however 5.7% of the learners felt that they are never guided. It may be that these learners never listen or they are busy with playing during lessons as the observations confirmed.

And questions four to six of the questionnaire focused on reading assessment in the classroom Learners are confident when they have to do a task for assessment and they rarely struggle to answer questions during assessment. They are nervous to read in class.

While questions seven and eight focused on reading skills. Most of the learners used skimming during reading activities. The 11.4% of the learners who claimed to never use skimming are probably part of the playful boys in the class or they may have misinterpreted the question. As well as the 2.9% did not answer the question. The learners use scanning during reading activities, except for 8.6% who never used scanning. An explanation may be that these learners are part of the playful group or they misunderstood the question. As the teacher in her interview explained she focuses on teaching skimming and scanning to learners.

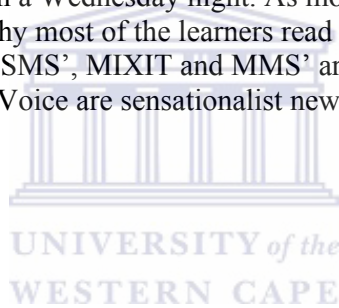
Lastly questions nine and ten focused on the textbooks. They generally liked the textbooks, and found nothing wrong with the textbooks. Interestingly 5.7% felt that the textbooks are difficult to read and 5.7% did not answer the question. It appears that there is group of less than 10% of the class who either misunderstood or did not answer the questions.

Reading background

The learners read at home, except for one (2.9%) respondent who did not answer the question. They get hold of books to read from sources in the community such as the library. Their parents read to them when they were smaller. However two learners (5.7%) parents never read to them and one learner (2.9%) did not answer the question.

They received books for presents except for two learners (5.7%) who did not answer the question. The learners read to their families and themselves for enjoyment. Interestingly very few learners regularly used the computer lab, but it probably has to do with access as only the Computer Application Technology (CAT) learners (grades 10 – 12) have free access. The room has about 30 computers.

Ravensmead is well known for having a lot of churches and it is impossible for the school to have parent –teacher meetings on a Wednesday night. As most of the community members are going to church. So that is why most of the learners read indicate the Bible as reading material. Multiliteracies such as SMS', MIXIT and MMS' are very popular for both parents and learners. The daily Son and Voice are sensationalist newspapers that are consumed by people in the community.



Appendix E: Teacher's Interview

Teacher's Interview

Questions

1. Do you think of a particular reading strategy when you prepare lessons?

She perceived skimming of passages for main ideas as important in preparation for

2. How do you plan a reading lesson?

The teacher explained that she starts a reading lesson with at least two pre-reading and activity; one is reading part of the text herself. She then continues to a while-reading activity lastly answering of questions.

3. What do you think of Outcomes- Based Education?

She seems to support OBE, but feels that it is failing due to shortage of resources and parental support.

4. Why do learners of English FAL at Secondary schools struggle to achieve assessment goals for reading?

The teacher associated fluency in reading with mastering the alphabet and associating letters and sounds.

5. Do you think there is a relationship between learners' reading strategies in English FAL and their assessment results?

The teacher did not see a direct link between learners' reading skills and learners' assessment results and she also suggested that the idea of group work created dependency on the stronger learners.

6. Which reading strategies do you use and where did you learn these strategies?

The teacher claimed to highlight skimming and scanning as reading strategies that she taught in class, and she indicated that she got these strategies from textbooks.

7. Do you consider assessment when you plan your lessons?

She saw assessment as an important determiner in reaching assessment goals.

8. Which types of reading strategies are taught during your lessons in reading?

The teacher focused on listening, vocabulary, skimming paragraphs and scanning whole taught in class, and she indicated that she got these strategies from textbooks.

9. Why are you teaching those particular reading strategies to the learners?

She believed that the drilling of content assist to grasp content of text, which suggests a top-down approach to reading, but with a behaviourist twist.

10. How do you think reading should be taught?

The teacher suggested that reading should be taught in the interactive approach, as she mentioned a process of concepts, words and then meaning-making.

11. Do you think teachers are properly trained to teach and assess reading in the English FAL class?

She acknowledged that teachers who are teaching English FAL are not adequately trained to assist learners at different levels of reading abilities.

12. Do you think that the learners home background influence their reading in class?

She strongly agreed that learners' home reading practices play a major role in their reading abilities and that parental reading and story-telling neglected by most parents.

13. What is the main difference between a good, average and poor reader according to your experience in the English reading class?

The teacher based her categorisation of learners reading ability on talent and love for reading for good readers, while she suggested that average and weaker readers needed more visual stimuli to understand a text. She asserted that the main difference between average and poor readers is that average readers struggle to read, but they are able to read independently with the aid of sounding out of

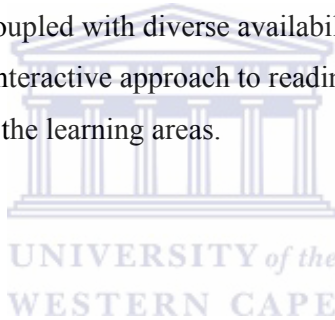
words while poor readers struggle with word identification and that they are dependent on pictures to support their understanding, during reading activities.

14. Do you think that being a good reader influence learner's assessment?

She agreed that good reading skills play a pivotal role assessment, as the learners able to apply critical reading skills to assessment tasks. While the opposite is to be assumed for average and weak readers. They would not have the ability to read critically and they would therefore struggle during assessment tasks

15. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make?

Lastly the teacher suggests that the teaching of reading needed collaboration between the school and the parents, coupled with diverse availability of reading matter. She hinted at the use of the interactive approach to reading, by merging background knowledge with the learning areas.



Addendum F: Classroom lesson tasks



MAGGIE'S FIRST READER

THE best housewife in Clegg Row was Maggie Gregory. Always a right good smell of steak-and-kidney pie or hot-pot around the door at a dinner-time. And three days a week at tea-time you got that old-fashioned whiff of home-baked bread as you went by.

'I wouldn't let a bough: loaf cross my doorstep,' Maggie used to declare. As for the Gregory family eating fish and chips or a factory pie, Maggie wouldn't hear of it. She had the best-stocked kitchen in the neighbourhood, the only absent implement being the car-opener.

There were five lively and well-fed youngsters at school, and Harry, the husband, was a nice, easy-going chap, a glass-blower at Yorrock's. Yet folk going off to work before seven in the morning would see Gregory's doorstep glistening alone in the row. Moreover, it was realized that

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MAGGIE'S FIRST READER

no other housewife stood a chance with Maggie over the wash-tub.

Her clothes-lines were the curse of early-morning coal-men, for she would have them weighted with washing before the children were off to school.

'It's queer, you know,' Mrs Baird would say of her behind her back. 'I never did see a Cath'lic family so fussy and hardworking. Funny thing, she goes off to Mass every Sunday with the prayer-book in her hand, but she can't read a word.'

The new rector, Father O'Flaherty, discovered this when showing Maggie a book of raffle tickets, and he was shocked. 'A fine respectable wife and mother like yourself, ma'am,' he said, 'that can't understand the written word no more than some unfortunate heathen! Tell me, why is that?'

'I wero only eight,' said Maggie, 'when me ma died. I hadn't been much to school at the time, an' being the only girl, I had to get stuck into the housework. Not,' she added, 'as I regret it, when I see some of them as have been educated.'

'But this will never do, woman,' said the priest. 'You attend Holy Mass - but how can you follow the responses?'

'The what, Father?'

'Responses, *Dominus vobiscum*.'

'*Et cum spiritu tuo*,' chanted Maggie. 'But I don't know what it means rightly.'

'You don't have to,' he said crossly. 'But read you must, a woman like you.'

Just as he was leaving, the twelve-year-old son came in from school.

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PUNCTUATION

Punctuation marks make the written text easier to read and understand.
Without punctuation, writing would not make sense.

A. CAPITAL LETTERS

1. Sentences always **start** with capital letters.
2. **Proper Nouns** and **Proper Adjectives** need capital letters.
3. The main words in **titles** of books, films or plays are written in capital letters.
4. The first word in **direct speech** is capitalised.

We bought popcorn during intermission.

We visited **M**exico.
We participated in the **M**exican wave.

Lord of the Flies

The teacher asked, "Is anyone absent today?"

B. FULL STOPS (.)

1. A full stop indicates the **end** of a sentence.
2. Full stops are found after certain **abbreviations**. (see pgs 58-59)

Remember to lock the door.

Prof. abbr. e.g.
(With modern usage full stops are often omitted.) 💡

C. COMMAS (,) (cause us to pause) 💡

1. We use commas to separate words or phrases in a **list**.
2. Commas indicate where one phrase or clause **ends** and another **begins**.
3. **Additional information**, that could have been inserted in brackets or between dashes, may be separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma or commas.
4. We place commas before and after words such as **however** and **nevertheless**.
5. **Introductory words** or phrases are separated from the rest of the sentence with a comma.
6. Avoid using a comma between **two main clauses**. This is referred to as the **comma splice error**. Rather use a full stop, semi-colon or a conjunction.

We bought books, pens, pencils and erasers for the new school year.

(Note, there is no comma before **and** or **or**.) 💡

Andre Agassi won his tennis match, to the delight of the spectators.

She obtained an excellent result, a full house of seven distinctions!

Mr Jenkins, the Principal, addressed the pupils and parents.

She was, however, late for the appointment and this caused her to miss the interview.

Once again, I was ignored by the panel of judges.

A Census was taken, the government needed statistics. ✗ (comma splice error) 💡

A Census was taken. The government needed statistics. ✓

D. SEMI-COLONS (;)

1. The semi-colon is a **long pause** that **balances** two equally important, related or parallel ideas.
2. It also indicates **opposite ideas** (antithesis).
3. It joins **two main clauses** where there is no conjunction.
4. A semi-colon may often be replaced by a **full stop** or by the conjunctions **and**, **but**, **so**, **for** and **although**.

She went by train; she would rather have flown.

In summer she swims; in winter she skates.

She worked hard for the examinations; she had nothing to fear.

She worked hard for the examinations **so** she had nothing to fear.

NOUNS

A noun is a naming word.

- Every person, place or thing is identified with a name, without which we would not be able to communicate or understand one another.
- There are four types of nouns: **Common Nouns, Proper Nouns, Collective Nouns and Abstract Nouns.**

1. COMMON NOUNS

Common Nouns are names given to ordinary objects.

- Common nouns are usually identified by **the, a** or **an** preceding them:
the sea, **a** fly, **an** orange.
- They follow possessive adjectives:
his book, **her** handbag, **its** tail.
- They do not begin with capital letters unless they start a sentence:
Books are found in libraries.
- They are usually the first words taught in any language:
table, chair, book.
- There are sets of common nouns:
fruits - apricots, bananas, cherries.
- There are phrases that contain two common nouns:
the **roof** of a **house**, the **hair** of the **girl**.
- There are common nouns that partner one another:
horse and **carriage**, **fish** and **chips**.
- Common nouns reflect what people are:
doctor, teacher.
- A noun has **gender** and is either **masculine** (prince), **feminine** (princess), **common** (teacher) or **neuter** (book). (see pg 24) 💡
- Two nouns together, are known as **compound nouns**:
hand + bag = **handbag** book + shelf = **bookshelf**

2. PROPER NOUNS

a. **Proper Nouns always begin with CAPITAL LETTERS.**

b. **Proper Nouns are the names given to:**

- **Persons** - **S**haun, **P**rofessor **J**ones
- **Places** - **L**ondon, **U**niversity of **C**alifornia
- **Days** - **T**uesday, **N**ew **Y**ear, **E**aster, **H**uman **R**ights **D**ay
- **Months** - **J**anuary, **D**ecember

c. **Ideologies and educational subjects** are written with capital letters in order to accord them respect - **A**nthropology, **P**hilosophy, **H**istory, **E**nglish.

d. **Titles of books, films, songs and plays** are Proper Nouns and always begin with Capital Letters - **O**ne **M**ore **R**iver by Lynne Reid.

- Note that in **titles** such as **R**oll of **T**hunder, **H**ear my **C**ry, only the first letter of each noun is capitalised.

e. **If a common noun forms part of the name, the first letter of both nouns must be capitalised:**

- **S**aunders **S**treet, the **D**anube **R**iver.

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives qualify or describe Nouns and Pronouns. They add interest and colour to sentences by describing or giving more information.

The adjective may come before a noun:

clever, diligent
The **adjective** boy won the prize.

The adjective may follow a linking verb (is, am, are, was, were):

clever, diligent
The boy is **adjective**.

We may form adjectives from nouns:

noun adjective
The boy is an **athlete**. He is an **athletic** boy.

abstract noun adjective
She won the competition for her **beauty**. The **beautiful** girl won the competition.

noun adjective
Paris has an interesting **history**. It is an **historical** place.

THERE ARE SEVERAL KINDS OF ADJECTIVES:

- 1. DESCRIPTIVE ADJECTIVES OR ADJECTIVES OF QUALITY** (what kind?)
These are the most commonly used adjectives.
The **loyal/intelligent/creative/motivated** child...
- 2. PROPER ADJECTIVES**
These are proper nouns used as adjectives.
The **Cape Town/Eastern Cape** beaches are scattered with shells.
The **August** winds are good for flying kites.
- 3. ADJECTIVES OF QUANTITY/NUMBER** (how many?)
two/many/several/few/some/most children...
each/every/neither child...
- 4. ADJECTIVES OF ORDER** (position)
He came **first/second/last** in the race.
- 5. DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVES** (which one?)
This/that book...
These/those books....
- 6. POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES** (belonging to)
My/his/her/our/their/your/its computer...
- 7. INTERROGATIVE ADJECTIVES** (which one?)
Which/what/whose lesson....?
- 8. COMPOUND ADJECTIVES**
Adjectives joined by hyphens are called compound adjectives.
a **well-deserved** result a **feather-light** cake a **half-ripe** avocado pear

TRANSACTIONAL WRITING

Transactional writing has a practical, communicative purpose, as opposed to writing that is purely creative.

Transactional writing includes Letters, Reports, Diary Entries, Dialogues, Reviews and Minutes of Meetings.

- Each of these has its own **format** and follows a specific set of **rules**.
- A portion of the **marks** is allocated for correct format and procedure.

1. FRIENDLY OR INFORMAL LETTERS

The informal letter provides you with the vehicle to inform, invite, congratulate or offer condolences.

- The tone is **conversational, friendly, informal** and above all, **sincere**.
- **Contractions** e.g. *I'm* and *we've* are permitted as they enhance the naturalness of the situation.

FEATURES OF THE INFORMAL LETTER:

- The **sender's address** is written in the middle right-hand side of the page and is followed by the date.
- No punctuation is used for the address.
- The **address of the recipient** is not written on the letter; it is written on the envelope.
- The **salutation or greeting** is written on the line immediately below the date, next to the margin.
- Leave a line between the salutation and the introductory paragraph.
- The **introductory paragraph** is short and states the reason for the letter.
Do not begin with "How are you?" or "I am fine." or "I am writing to tell you ..."
- The **middle/body of letter** consists of at least two paragraphs and expands on the reason for the letter.
- The **conclusion** is usually short and rounds off the letter.
- Remember to leave a line between each paragraph.
- The **ending** may take several forms depending on your relationship with the recipient.
Your surname is unnecessary if you are writing to family or close friends.
- Do not leave a line before **signing**.

FRIENDLY LETTER

5 Woodmead Mews
26 Young Road
Saxonwold
Johannesburg
2196
South Africa (if writing to someone in a different country)
31 January 2004

Dear Mom and Dad/Grandma and Grandpa/John/Mr Jones (**Salutation**)

xxxxxx

Introduction - The first paragraph is short and states the reason for the letter.

xxxxxx

Middle/Body of Letter - Expands on the reason for the letter - consists of at least two paragraphs.

xxxxxx

Conclusion - The final paragraph is usually short and rounds off the letter.

xxxxxx

Ending:

Your granddaughter/neighbour/student/loving daughter/niece (your relationship to the recipient)

7. DIARY EXTRACT

A diary is a personal record of your experiences, thoughts and emotions.

- A diary may be given a specific name as e.g. 'Kitty' in The Diary of Anne Frank.

- Write the **day** and **date** at the top of the entry.

- Write in the **first person** (I, me, my, mine).

- Write in the **present tense** in order to capture the moment.

Write in the **past tense** to relate events that have already happened.

- **Short paragraphs** with simple sentences are often effective.

- **Emotive language** is often used to express opinions and feelings.

- Depending on the nature of the diary, **informal/colloquial language** may be used.

- Discriminate use of **direct questions** and expressions of **aspirations/intentions** are often powerful.

- Occasional use of **punctuation** adds conviction e.g. question marks and exclamation marks.

(Remember that overuse kills!) 💡

- You may wish to use **diagrams**, **sketches** and **cartoons** to add a personal touch and visual appeal.



The power of a diary is in its sincerity. 💡

Analysis of classroom activities on the 19th and the 20th of May 2008

Reader Factors

Question 1

Do the activities activate the learners' background knowledge?

Yes, the activities are specifically design to access the schemata of the learners. The theme for the group of lessons on reading and poetry is teenagers. So the eight line poem/rap, that learners have to complete about themselves is personal and links well with the poem. And the lesson of the 20th of May is also introduced by exploring the title of the short story and then learners had to name the first book they have read.

Question 2

Do the activities motivate learners to read?

Yes, learners can relate to the texts which create interest and therefore motivation to read. The texts deal with issues that teenagers like surely aid the reading process.

Question 3

Do the activities consider the personality of the learners?

Yes, it speaks right to the centre of teenagers as the poem addresses the insecurities that teenagers experience and thus most of the learners identified with it. The story also highlights the importance of reading, and although it is about a married woman, the central theme reading is an interest to the learners.

Question 4

Do the activities display flexibility in matching performances?

Yes, as the activities focus a lot on communication/reading before it was completed in the learners' books. In addition, most of the questions relate to ideas that teenagers are familiar with.

Question 5

Do the activities pay attention to length and allow time for reading?

Yes, ample time is availed for both activities for reading and answering the questions.

Text Factors

Question 1

To what extent does genre have a role in the activities?

With both activities there is no emphasis on the identification and exploration of genre. In fact it is not even mentioned at any stage of the lesson.

Question 2

To what extent is the text suitable for the learners?

The texts for both activities are suitable as its focus is on teenagers and reading respectively. The language of both activities is standard and the texts do not contain a lot of difficult words. With both activities wordlists are provided, one written list and an oral list to ensure learners grasp the meaning of words that are unfamiliar.

Question 3

To what extent do the activities give enough development to paragraph and cohesion?

Little focus is on paragraph development and cohesion of texts in both activities. Although the activity of the 20th lends itself to development to paragraph and cohesion, it is not a focus during these activities.

Question 4

To what extent does the language of the activities accommodate the learners?

The language is standard and in both activities the sentences are simple and most of the words used familiar to learners. They are accommodated as there is no need to struggle, also the words that they are unfamiliar with was clarified with wordlists.

Question 5

To what extent is the text suitably presented to the reader?

The text (poem) is photocopied in black and white. It is a bit dark and learners might struggle to read some of the text, due to the background, which is dark and the manner in which the poem was copied. For the other activity learners read the short story from the textbook, which they were provided with and they had to return at the end of the lesson.

Task Factors

Question 1

To what extent does the activities developing skimming, scanning and paragraph analysis and critical reading skills?

The activities mainly developed skimming and scanning and to a lesser extent critical reading skills. It is in the manner in which the questions are set and during the reading lesson the teacher ask oral questions, where learners basically skim read for answers

Question 2

To what extend are the pre-reading skills develop by the activities?

Both activities actively focused on the development of pre-reading skills. The pre-reading is fun and learners want to engage in it as it activates schemata and create interest.



Question 3

To what extend are while- reading skills develop by the activities?

A lot of emphasis is placed on while-reading in activities, however the main reading skills that are developed are skimming and scanning skills.

Question 4

To what extent are post-reading skills developed by the activities?

Little or no emphasis is put on post-reading skills in the activities.

Question 5

To what extent is the activities complex to the reader?

Both activities are not really a challenge to the learners; however weaker learners who struggle to read might need more time to complete the activities. Stronger readers will not experience any difficulty in completing the activities.

Social Practices and Multiliteracies

Question 1

To what extent do the activities carry social and cultural ideas to the reader?

Both texts highlight social and cultural ideas, in the lesson of the 19th the growth process of teenagers and in the lesson of the 20th the idea of books and food are central to human existence.

Question 2

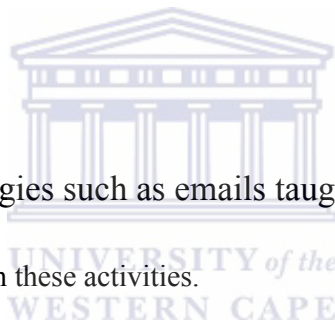
To what extent do the activities consider the readers?

Both texts promote ideas that teenagers would be interested in, such as being a teenager and in the other text food and Maggie's first read go to the centre of teenagers, for they either are experiencing it currently or they had been through it.

Question 3

To what extent are technologies such as emails taught and tested in the activities?

Very little technology is tested in these activities.



Question 4

To what extent do the activities combine graphics and text?

Both activities have little to no graphics, the activity of the 19th has a few pictures of teenagers with the poem, but the short story has a small picture of a woman that appear very consumed by books with pots, pans and plates surrounding her in the picture, and then mostly text.

To what extent do the activities carry global literacies?

The activity of the 19th is introduced with a rap and beat boxing session. The other activity does promote global literacies as learners explained that their first book was in Afrikaans their mother tongue.

Addendum H: Detailed Analysis of June and September 2008 Examination

Question papers

June 2008 question paper

Reader Factors

Question 1

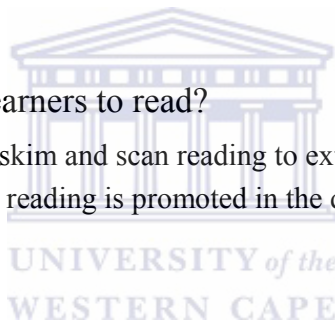
Do the activities activate the learners' background knowledge?

No pre-reading activities are used in the question paper as it goes straight into introducing while-reading activities from question 1-5. In the question paper learners have to answer questions on 5 unrelated topics from face shapes to clothes being advertised.

Question 2

Do the activities motivate learners to read?

Some reading is done which are skim and scan reading to extract correct answers. Beside those activities very little reading is promoted in the question paper.



Question 3

Do the activities consider the personality of the learners?

The question paper does not promote a central theme, and it bring across multifocal ideas such as face shapes in question 1, Black Barbie in question 2 and prizes of articles in question 5. These three questions leans more towards the females in the class, as it might be perceived as typical girls' issues. None of the questions promote ideas that boys might be interested in, which might mean that boys will get weaker marks in the question paper.

Question 4

Do the activities display flexibility in matching performances?

It seems as if the question paper has a variety of questions such as Question 1 is a comprehension, Question 2 requested that learners focus on Language and usage as it is a punctuation activity. Question 3 is also a comprehension, while questions 4 and 5 asked learners to correct a word and to choose the most correct word from a provided wordlist.

Both stronger and weaker learners would be able to answer the set questions, however the paper favour more the weaker learner.

Question 5

Do the activities pay attention to length and allow time for reading?

Yes, the question paper is 50 marks and must be completed in an hour, which provide learners with about one minute for one mark and 10 minutes for reading the extracts. As the extracts are not long, it is sufficient time to complete the question paper.

Text Factors

Question 1

To what extent does genre have a role in the activities?

Genre is not evident in the question paper because of a variety of topics that are in the question paper, with no central theme to unify the issues.

Question 2

To what extent is the text suitable for the learners?

The text is suitable, but more so for the girls than the boys for it clearly focus more on female issues such as in question 1, 3 and 5 respectively. The questions focus on face shapes in question 1, Black Barbie in question 2 and prizes of female clothes in question 5.

Question 3

To what extent do the activities give enough development to paragraph and cohesion?

Little as the question papers does not expect learners to write paragraphs as mostly short sentences and one word or a phrase are required to complete the paper.

Question 4

To what extent does the language of the activities accommodate the learners?

The language of the question paper is accommodating to most FAL learners, however it has little challenge for an advance learner, who would be able to answer the paper easily and score good marks.

Question 5

To what extent is the text suitably presented to the reader?

Yes, it is well-presented with pictures with questions 1, 3 and 5. The question paper is printed in black and white, as it is an accepted practice for most schools. The question paper is not too dense and it is copied neatly.

Task Factors

Question 1

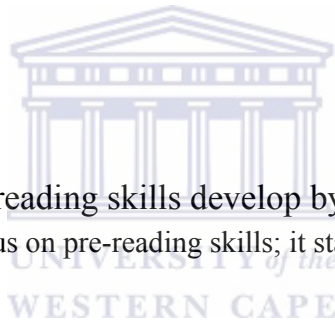
To what extent does the activities developing skimming, scanning and paragraph analysis and critical reading skills?

The question paper develops skimming, scanning, critical reading skills and paragraph analysis, because learners have to answer comprehension type questions and fill in the missing words. However the main activity is skimming and scanning for answers, the other skills are superficially tested.

Question 2

To what extent are the pre-reading skills develop by the activities?

The question paper does not focus on pre-reading skills; it starts with while-reading questions.



Question 3

To what extent are while- reading skills develop by the activities?

The main focus of the questions in the question paper is the testing of while-reading skills.

Question 4

To what extent are post-reading skills developed by the activities?

None, there is no evidence of the promotion of post-reading skills in any of the questions in the question paper.

Question 5

To what extent is the activities complex to the reader?

To a minor extent, because the questions in the question paper is elementary.

Social Practices and Multiliteracies

Question 1

To what extent do the activities carry social and cultural ideas to the reader?

In a small manner it does hint to social practices and multiliteracies in question 3 (black Barbie), but not enough information is given to clearly highlight the importance of the issue at hand.

Question 2

To what extent do the activities consider the readers?

It does consider the female learners more than the male learners, because the question paper clearly highlights female interest.

Question 3

To what extent are technologies such as emails taught and tested in the activities?

No, this question paper only focuses on testing comprehension and language and usage.

Question 4

To what extent do the activities combine graphics and text?

It does combine and neatly layout the text and the graphics in questions 1, 3 and 5.

Question 5

To what extent do the activities carry global literacies?

Only in a minor way in question 2, the rest of the questions do not focus on global literacies in any way.



September 2008 question paper

Reader Factors

Question 1

Do the activities activate the learners' background knowledge?

No, the question paper does not start with a pre-reading activity because; the question paper goes straight into introducing while-reading activities in questions 1-3.

Question 2

Do the activities motivate learners to read?

Yes, learners have to read the comprehension in question 1 and answer relating questions, as well the rest of the questions. Most of the reading is concentrated in question 1, while question 2-3 only focus on skim and scan reading to extract correct answers.

Question 3

Do the activities consider the personality of the learners?

The question paper deals with a topic that learners are familiar with as the school also have a recycling project that all learners participate in. In question 2 a popular theme in the community and South Africa is the focus of the advertisement, rugby. And question 3 once focuses on the idea of recycling. It may be that learners are not that interested in recycling as a theme, however they may be convinced through the question paper to start recycling.

Question 4

Do the activities display flexibility in matching performances?

Yes, it does as the question paper gives different type of questions in the question 1, such as when, where, how, true or false, own words and name. In question 2 it is mostly what questions and in question 3 learners have to rewrite a paragraph, fill in missing words, choose the correct word and correct errors. These questions accommodate both good and weak learners.

Question 5

Do the activities pay attention to length and allow time for reading?

Yes, an hour would allow learners ten minutes to read and a minute to spend for 1 mark.

The question paper is 50 marks and must be completed in an hour. The main reading consists of reading the comprehension (question 1), while question 2 test analytical skills and the reading of the questions. And question 3 consists of a combination of short paragraphs and sentences, which must be read to write mainly one word answers.

Text Factors

Question 1

To what extent does genre have a role in the activities?

Yes, the question paper has a particular genre, as its main focus is recycling, but it is not actively exploited or focused on in the question paper.

Question 2

To what extent is the text suitable for the learners?

The text is suitable as recycling is a topic that all learners must have encountered in their learning areas (Technology, Arts and Culture and Social Sciences). Also the learners are well aware of the school's recycling projects that classes participate in.

Question 3

To what extent do the activities give enough development to paragraph and cohesion?

In the question paper there is minimal focus on testing these skills for the questions are mostly one sentence or one word for 1 mark. But question 1.5 is 3 marks for 3 sentences, but no emphasis is put on paragraph development and cohesion as most of the answers only requires 1 word or one sentence.

Question 4

To what extent does the language of the activities accommodate the learners?

The language is at the level of a grade 8 FAL learner, however in question 1 there are some difficult words for example: polyethylene terephthalate which could have been explained in a word box, in order to assist the reading process. As for questions 2 and 3 the level of language is standard and easy to manage for both good and weak readers. The language of the question paper is accommodating to most FAL learners.

Question 5

To what extent is the text suitably presented to the reader?

The text is well presented and neatly printed in black and white. The lay-out is not too dense; however there is only one picture in the question paper, an advertisement in question 2.

Task Factors

Question 1

To what extent does the activities developing skimming, scanning and paragraph analysis and critical reading skills?

It does develop mainly skimming and scanning skills as well as critical reading skills with a minor focus on paragraph analysis in question 1, where learners have to read a 30 lined comprehension. Question 2 is an advertisement so learners have to use their critical reading skills, skimming and scanning for answers. For question 3 mainly skimming and scanning skills are developed and to a lesser extend critical reading skills. as the question basicly require learners to filling in the correct form of the verb, selecting the most correct answer and to correct errors. These questions all require one word answers.

Question 2

To what extend are the pre-reading skills develop by the activities?

The question paper does not focus on pre-reading skills in any of its three questions and all three questions start with while-reading questions.

Question 3

To what extend are while- reading skills develop by the activities?

The main focus of the questions in the question paper is the testing of while-reading skills.

Question 4

To what extent are post-reading skills developed by the activities?

None, there is no evidence of the promotion of post-reading skills in any of the questions in the question paper.

Question 5

To what extent is the activities complex to the reader?

To a minor extent, because the questions in the question paper is elementary , because learners have to relay , select, complete mostly one word or one sentence answers. However there are a number of difficult words to pronounce in the comprehension, this might let weaker readers to think that the text is more difficult to read than it really is.

Social Practices and Multiliteracies

Question 1

To what extent do the activities carry social and cultural ideas to the reader?

The theme of both rugby and recycling are perceived as important in the societies that the learners come from. So both carry social and cultural ideas, for rugby is a major entertainment and sport and recycling is a means of earning money for a lot of families.

Question 2

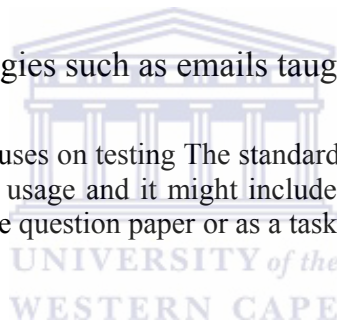
To what extent do the activities consider the readers?

It does consider the learners, even if it only creates awareness.

Question 3

To what extent are technologies such as emails taught and tested in the activities?

No, this question paper only focuses on testing. The standard format for a grade eight paper is a comprehension, language and usage and it might include a summary. The testing of such technologies is done in a separate question paper or as a task in the class.



Question 4

To what extent do the activities combine graphics and text?

The question paper has little graphics and contains mostly text, except for question 2, which is an advertisement.

Question 5

To what extent do the activities carry global literacies?

Both rugby and recycling are global literacies as both are issues that has huge international following and importance.