



THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GRADE 3 LEARNERS' HIGHER ORDER READING SKILLS ON A  
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE-BASED READING PROGRAMME

by

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THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT  
OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTERS IN EDUCATION  
in the  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SUPERVISOR: ANNE HILL

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OCTOBER 2010

## DECLARATION

I, Chamellé René de Silva, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that this thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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Signed

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Date

## ABSTRACT

The Western Cape Education Department's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2006-2016 refers to the 2002 assessment (WCED, 2006) of Grade 3 learners. This study found that only 36% of learners were achieving the reading and numeracy outcomes expected of a Grade 3 learner. The vast majority of learners were underperforming two to three years below expectation (WCED Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2006-2016).

South African learners' performance in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS 2006) assessment reinforces the need for reading instruction practices aimed at addressing the difficulties in language and reading in both the Foundation and Intermediate Phases.

It was against this background that I wanted to investigate the value and impact of a children's literature - based reading programme, as the importance of independent and critical reading at the primary level cannot be over estimated.

PIRLS, (2006) highlights the areas of low achievement of South African learners by referring to the twelve reading skills and strategies identified by current research as central to the learning of reading. South Africa lags behind in introducing these critical skills. I argue for the inclusion of an alternative reading programme to the phonics only approach currently and predominantly used in Foundation Phase.

Social constructivists see as crucial, both the context in which learning occurs and the social context that learners bring to their learning environment. This theoretical framework, as well as the Reader Response theory of Rosenblatt (1982) underpins this study. Relevant cognitive theories and their underpinnings in reading motivation and achievement are reviewed. The literature review is an in-depth study of recent and current reading research. The main aspects covered by the literature are literacy skills, language acquisition and its related skills.

The study is lodged in a qualitative paradigm and embedded in action research. The analysis is framed in constructivist grounded theory. The quantitative data collected support the qualitative data and enhance the validity of the findings that indicate that the study of literature is effective in developing higher order thinking skills identified by Bloom (1956) and present in the PIRLS (2006) test methodology.

Data generated include a survey, a word recognition test, a supplementary comprehension test and response journals. Internal validity is obtained through triangulation of the data. The pre-test survey reveals a positive attitude towards recreational and academic reading. In the post test the attitude towards academic reading shows significant negativity and positivity towards recreational reading. The qualitative data generated by the response journals are analysed using the constant comparative method.

Theories that inform the analysis of this data are Bourdieu's theory of habitus, Kohlberg's theory of moral development and Bloom's taxonomy of thinking skills. Conclusions from this study reveal correlations between academic achievement and a positive reading attitude that underscore the importance of early introduction of higher order reading skills.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all the children who influenced my life.

**Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.** William Butler Yeats

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank:

- Anne Hill, my supervisor, for her consistent, calm and nurturing support. For her careful and meticulous edits to the drafts of this thesis and the criticism that enabled me to clarify my writing. You have been flexible, and insightful. Your thoughtful questions challenged me. Thank you also for the many personal resources that you made available to me.
- Professor Rajendra Chetty, I valued your intelligence and your perspectives on critical theory, which awakened in me the awareness of critical literacy. Thank you for your motivational speeches which ignited in me the will to complete this thesis.
- Overwhelming gratitude goes to my husband Tony de Silva, who, encouraged and motivated me on this journey and whose support and confidence allowed me to achieve goals I never thought I could.
- To my daughters Bonita and Roxanne, for their loving support and cheerful encouragement during the times that I needed it most.
- This research could not have been accomplished without my “other children, the respondents.” Thank you for your generosity and energy and eagerness to complete your reading journals during our shared reading sessions.
- To my peers, the masters’ students of 2009 and 2010, thank you for the memories and the support sessions.
- Sole Deo Gloria

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## **CLARIFICATION OF TERMS**

### **Progress in international reading literacy study (PIRLS)**

PIRLS is an international comparative reading assessment carried out every 5 years. Conducted at the fourth Grade, this world-wide assessment and research project is designed to measure trends in children's reading literacy achievement and collect information about policy and practices related to learning to read and reading instruction.

### **Reader-response (literary) theory**

Also known as transactional theory is a theory of epistemology, focusing on how readers make knowledge when reading a text. A text can be of any genre – short story, novel, poem, etc. Reader-response theory advocates a reader-oriented approach to responding to text, marking a shift from a text-centered to a reader-oriented focus on reading. In this theory, readers respond to the text by creating their own meaning to what they are reading.

### **Response journals**

Journals promote opportunities to support growth in responses. Through responding in journals, students take time to think about what they have read. Dialogue journals are response journals whereby the teacher responds to the reader's writing.

### **Transaction**

The concept of transaction emphasizes the reader's relationship with, and continuing awareness of, the text. Karolides (1992:21-32) states that it denotes the special relationship between the reader and the text during the reading process.

### **Literature-based reading programme**

The teacher uses authentic children's literature as basis for teaching learners' reading skills, concepts, and strategies.

## KEYWORDS

Children's literature

Children's literature-based reading

Reader response theory

Transactional theory

Response journals

Literacy

Reading attitude

Reading motivation

Higher order reading skills

Critical reading skills



**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Background and origin to the study**

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2006-2016 refers to the 2002 assessment (WCED, 2006) of Grade 3 learners. This study found that only 36% of learners were achieving the reading and numeracy outcomes expected of Grade 3 and that the vast majority of learners were underperforming two to three years below expectation (WCED Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2006-2016).

South African learners' performance in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS 2006) assessment reinforces the need for reading instruction practices aimed at addressing the difficulties in language and reading in both the Foundation and Intermediate Phases. The kinds of difficulties that are experienced are primarily with processes of comprehension, especially interpreting and integrating ideas and information. Learners who are not competent readers are likely to struggle with these higher order reading skills, which are necessary for the transition from learning to read, to reading to learn in the Intermediate Phase.

It is against this background that I wish to investigate the value of a children's literature - based reading programme, as the importance of independent reading and critical reading at primary level cannot be over estimated. Critical reading is a highly reflective skill, and demands judgment about how a text is constructed and argued. Children who read authentic children's literature, with well constructed and engaging plots, themes and characterisation will construct appropriate and sometimes personal meaning from texts. This will allow the reader to reflect critically on what is read.

Real literature is critical to successfully developing students' abilities to construct meaning (Cooper, 1993:19). This study is also concerned with finding ways to introduce literature-based reading practices in the Foundation Phase classroom, using authentic children's literature. There is a perceived fundamental divide between teachers who focus primarily on the decoding of words and those who focus primarily upon reading as an act of meaning-communication.

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These two perspectives are often thought of as competing paradigms. This does not rule out an understanding of both, or a rapprochement between them in practice.

In the real world of a literate society and an education system preparing children to participate in it, the stark differences outlined above are masked. My findings and conclusions will attempt to show that this perceived divide can be narrowed, and argue for adopting and practising a more balanced approach in reading as an instructional practice.

All agree that children need to acquire the ability to recognise words fluently and to use this ability to facilitate and enrich their everyday lives. Temple et al. (2005), write that fluency is the ability to read a string of words effortlessly and with meaningful connotations; it frees the reader from word identification problems that hinder oral and silent reading. As fluency improves comprehension improves. Fluency therefore, becomes important in the language of learning and teaching (LOLT).

### **1.2 Context of the study**

The educational transformation in South Africa in the early 1990s came to overhaul the old apartheid education system. It was preceded by decades of two different kinds of divisive education systems. Historically, it can be discerned that education is not a neutral act; it is always political. According to Postman (1970:244-52) literacy is often associated with radical political goals to do with demands for democratic rights and power. Literacy does have the potential for both oppression and liberation (Hannon, 2000). South Africa's educational history seems to be underpinned by this Freirian dichotomy.

South Africa comes from a past in which apartheid education was used as a tool to divide society as it constructed certain forms of identity among learners. Under apartheid education, schools were divided according to race, and education enhanced the divisions in society. These divisions reinforced the inequalities of a divided society. Many people deemed the curriculum irrelevant and mono-cultural since it served to strengthen the citizenship of one race over others (Msila, 2007). Apple (1990: 1) points out that education was never a neutral enterprise. Furthermore, he avers that, by the very nature of the institution, the educator was involved (whether consciously or not) in a political act.

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Shor (1987: 13) supports this when he states that education is grossly influenced by economics, by community life and literacy, by commercial mass culture and by political action outside the classroom. It is a critical commonplace that classrooms cannot be divorced from the society in which they are situated. Schools have a role of either enhancing or challenging socialisation into inequality. School is a dependant sector of society that can reproduce alienated consciousness. It is also an arena of contention where critical educators can challenge inequality through a critical curriculum in a democratic learning process (Shor 1987: 14).

It is this history of South African education that necessitated the introduction of Curriculum 2005, sometimes referred to as outcomes based education (OBE). Its formulation involved cooperation among various stakeholders. The OBE system has introduced new learning styles implying change from passive, rote learning to creative learning and problem solving through active participation in the learning process.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) provided the structure for the new curriculum in South Africa. The NQF was intended to prevent learners from being trapped in any one learning situation by facilitating movement between different areas and levels of education and training. The introduction of OBE in 1997 was a move towards changing the past system. The RNCS was a means of revising the original OBE curriculum.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) informs a system that seeks to introduce egalitarian pedagogy in South African schools. The goals of this system are to create a new South African identity that encompasses critical consciousness, to transform South African society, to promote democracy and to magnify learner involvement in education.

This system is based on the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, which provides the basis for curriculum transformation in South Africa. Education and the curriculum have a crucial role to play in realising the aims of developing the full potential of learners as citizens of a democratic South Africa (DoE 2002: 1).

Literacy has become an essential part of modern western society. Illiterates in a Western dominant society are therefore to a large extent victims of a social milieu where literacy is necessary in order for people to cope effectively with social order. Some people would even regard literacy as a basic human right (Csapo, 1995:202).

### 1.3 Context of the research site

The research site has been in existence for eight years. It is well-resourced, and the school is managed as a charitable non-profit organisation. Its mission is to provide opportunities for poor children in order to break the cycle of poverty through a holistic educational model in line with the approaches of Covey (2004) and Resnick (1998). The majority of the respondents in this study are taught to read and learn in a language that differs from their vernacular. Due to the linguistically diverse nature of the sample, the range and stages of cognitive language skills vary. English is the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) at the research site.

It is also assumed that learners enrolled at the research site are able to read, understand and speak this common language. This assumption in the case of the research site is a false one, as the LOLT is the second language for most of the learners. The school is responsible for most of the literate actions and interactions in languages, such as Afrikaans, IsiXhosa and English which is spoken by the respondents'.

The majority of educators at the research site were trained at higher institutions before the present era of curriculum reform. A minority carry with them archaic methodologies and have not yet fully embraced new approaches to teaching.

Although this learning centre is expected to align with and meet the minimum requirements as set out in the NCS, it also aims to be innovative by expanding intelligence in following areas:

- Mental Intelligence: ability to analyse, reason, think abstractly, use language, visualise and comprehend.
- Physical Intelligence: nutrition, physical education, health.
- Emotional Intelligence: self-knowledge, self awareness, social sensitivity, empathy and ability to communicate successfully with others.
- Spiritual Intelligence: acquiring true principles to maintain high moral authority (Covey, 2004).

All the learners' in this study live in poor, marginalized townships on the periphery of Cape Town. The parents very often also lack the language skills and proficiency of the language in which their children are schooled. Many parents are unemployed, and those who do have jobs,

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tend to work long hours and have little time for, or interest in reading. Most families can ill afford the luxury of buying quality children's books and view this engagement with literature as something that should happen at school. Having said this, the respondents at this research site have unique opportunities.

The pedagogical model favoured by the school is based on a holistic approach to teaching and learning that develops the whole child, prepares learners for society, and promotes social change. Classroom practice is grounded in the nine principles of learning developed by Resnick (1998:89 -118).

The principles of learning are:

- Organizing for effort
- Accountable talk
- Clear expectations
- Fair and credible evaluations
- Socializing intelligence
- Recognition of accomplishment
- Self management of learning
- Academic rigor in a thinking curriculum
- Learning apprenticeship

These principles are designed to help educators analyse the quality of instruction and opportunities for learning that they offer to students. Resnick's (1998) approach resonates with the paradigm of higher order thinking based on Bloom's taxonomy (1956). An important principle, "academic rigor" [sic], calls for commitment to a knowledge core which is seen as the only way to develop thinking skills. Resnick, (1998:89-118) contends that endorsing the constructivist argument that children have to be active learners in order for learning to take hold, does not free us from the obligation to offer a very solid, academically rigorous curriculum with important facts and ideas in it that children have to know. It strongly advocates an application of a "constructivist theory of instruction" (Resnick 1983).

The term "thinking curriculum" was coined by Resnick (1983), and focuses on the need to engage students in an active process of constructing knowledge by linking intellectually

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stimulating content to real-world contexts. Furthermore, theorists have posited that this model of learning must be applied to students as early as possible. Higher order thinking skills should be fostered in students before they reach secondary school (Hill & Russell, 1999).

The NCS holds the same view as the International Reading Association (IRA) which states that:

There is no single method or single combination of methods that can successfully teach all children to read. Therefore teachers must have a strong knowledge of multiple methods for teaching reading and a strong knowledge of the children in their care so they can create the appropriate balance of methods needed for the children they teach (Rog, 2000).

Balanced reading instruction usually means a combination of whole language and phonics approaches (Kelly, 1997). To narrow the perceived rift between phonics and meaning-based approaches, the balanced reading approach has been celebrated for offering an alternative to the extremes of pure phonics or whole language; for providing an effective combination of instructional approaches; and for accommodating various learning styles. (Pressley, 1998; Weaver, 1998; Kelly, 1997; Atterman, 1997).

Honig (1996) similarly defines a balanced approach as "one which combines the language and literature-rich activities associated with whole language with explicit teaching of the skills needed to decode words for all children." Strickland (1998:6-10) maintains that skills and meaning should never be separated and that intensive skills instruction should be based on identified need. In addition teachers need to be fully aware of instructional objectives for the grade they are teaching, a grade below and a grade above. Pressley (1998: 129) argues for a balanced approach to reading instruction that combines the strengths of whole language with a skills emphasis approach.

He supports his argument for balance by stressing the similarities that exist between the two approaches. Routman (1996), while declaring "it would be irresponsible and inexcusable not to teach phonics" (Routman, 1996:91), has also stated that phonics should only be taught as an aid to the "ongoing process of getting meaning from a text or producing a text, and only as needed" (Routman, 1996:339).

### **1.4 Research focus**

The focus of this research is an exploration of the effects of current reading practices in the Foundation Phase, more specifically Grade 3, at an independent school for learners from lower socio-economic suburbs in Cape Town.

### **1.5 Problem statement**

The purpose of this research is to study the impact of a children's literature-based reading intervention programme on reading motivation, academic achievement and the acquisition of higher order reading skills in Grade 3. Furthermore it wants to establish whether there is a relationship between higher order reading skills and academic achievement using both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

### **1.6 The approach to the study**

The intention of this study is to investigate the impact of a literature-based reading programme on reading motivation and academic achievement. Both interest in and research on children's literature grew during the literature-based curriculum movement that took place in countries such as Australia, Britain and the United States during the 1980s and 1990s. More and more children's books were being published, and they became available to teachers and students in elementary classrooms (Allington & Guice, 1997).

The research community responded with renewed interest in examining children's literature, how children respond to the books they read and hear, and how children's literature is used in the classroom. As this research proliferated, so too did increasingly sophisticated methodologies, more complicated theoretical arguments, and more complex questions (Galda & Cullinan, 1991:529-535).

My interest was aroused in exploring integrating children's literature in my own classroom practice, as a support to increase learners' expressive language and literacy abilities. The learners that I teach are second language speakers. Despite their fluency and word recognition ability, they very often tell me, "We don't have the words" when they are expected to write a

book report or essay. By integrating a literature-based approach to teaching reading, I hope to “give them the words.”

### **1.7 Objectives of the research**

In this study I want to explore the value of a children’s literature-based reading programme in my own context. This will be achieved through a study of whether this reading programme can impact on children’s higher order reading and thinking skills. The aim is that this reading programme should augment, rather than replace the current phonics/basal programme or be included as a supplementary reading programme to enhance literacy levels of learners. I intend to find out whether this reading approach could result in an increase in literacy skills, which includes how readers respond to text and construct meaning, as well as create opportunities to express themselves collaboratively in discussion groups or communities of readers (Karolidis, 1992).

The primary research objectives can be divided into the following sub-objectives:

- 1.7.1 To explore the impact of the literature-based approach on literacy skills, more specifically higher order reading skills.
- 1.7.2 To explore learners’ abilities to transact with authentic text.
- 1.7.3 To explore learners’ responses: text to self, text to text and text to world.
- 1.7.4 To investigate the relationship between reading and academic achievement.
- 1.7.5 To make recommendations that educators integrate reader response theory as a suitable base for instructional focus on reading.

### **1.8 Research questions**

What effects does a children’s literature-based reading programme have on reading achievement and motivation of Grade 3 learners?

The sub questions are:

Is there a correlation between reading attitude, reading motivation and reading proficiency?

Does a positive reading attitude impact on academic achievement?



### 1.9 Overview of the dissertation: A summary

The previous dispensation (before 1994) consisted of a tri-cameral parliament with each having its own education department (Whites, Coloureds and Indians). Bantu Education for black South Africans had been a means of restricting the development of the learner by distorting school knowledge to ensure control over the intellect of the learners and teachers, and propagating state propaganda (Kallaway, 1988). In the past, South African education reflected the fragmented society in which it was based.

It was compartmentalised along racial and cultural lines. After the 1994 democratic general elections, the new government restructured the education system. The provision for access to equal education is stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996. The governance of the present South African education system is divided into national, provincial, and local school levels (Mothata, Lemmer, Mda, & Pretorius, 2000).

Research by Schlebusch and Thobedi (2004:35-48) highlighted the poor reading methodologies before 1994. The respondents mention that “when learners have to read out of the textbooks and chalkboard, it becomes easy for me to check mistakes and pronunciation. The learners read individually or in groups. Instances where pronunciation of words becomes bad, I delay reading for a while and clarify the meaning of that specific word”. Traditional teaching strategies in the languages hamper the learners’ cognition and as a result lead to underachievement. Skills and meaning need to dovetail in order for cognitive development to take place. Strickland (1998:6-10) undergirds this notion and refers to intensive skills instruction that must be based on identified need. Van der Merwe & Van Niekerk, (1994) point out that ineffectiveness and deficiencies frame these traditional teaching methods due to insufficient use of advanced strategies for teaching and learning by the educators. This leads to lower cognitive abilities. The only books that all the learners had in their possession were writing books for class-work and tests.

The skills-based phonics reading programme at the research site is still firmly entrenched in the inherited programmes of the past. Basal reading programmes have long been part of the reading approach in South Africa and have become a crutch in mainstream teaching. It has many well-documented shortcomings (Goodman, Shannon, Freeman & Murphy, 1988). It is for these reasons that I have sought to explore the impact of a children’s literature-based reading

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programme within a South African context. The literature-based approach could be one of the “multiple methods” of which teachers should have knowledge. I also wanted to experience firsthand how transactional theory (Rosenblatt,1978/1995) embedded within a social-constructivist notion of reading in classrooms, reaches beyond the realm of reader response, encompasses cultural and social issues, and is thoroughly grounded in the classroom.

Current reforms in the South African Education system have led to the introduction of the new curriculum that aims at improving the quality of education. The new curriculum recognises that “education is the tool for developing the person to his or her full potential” (DoE, 1997:3). It also recognises that “teachers are the frontline troops of change, and progress depends on their own education, motivation and freedom to innovate” (Beeby, 1986).

The National Reading Strategy (DoE, 2008) states that teachers should use a range of methods. The findings in this study have significance on this call which is to improve the reading competence of learners and to address the crisis of reading. This literature – based intervention reading programme as a method of instruction is aligned with the learner-centred and constructivist approach of OBE. The outcomes of using this approach in the intervention programme of this study, is indicative of how Grade 3 learners can become engaged, reflective and responsive readers.

Findings by other researchers that have emerged concerning third Grade learners’ reading achievement and attitude that show a positive growth in decoding ability and attitude using literature-based reading in class (Graves & Hansen, 1983). In this study a high correlation between positive reading attitude and academic achievement was also evident in the findings. These findings are significant for literature-based programmes to form part of a more balanced and integrated approach to teaching reading.

### 1.10 Thesis outline

- **Chapter One** presents the origin and background to the study, the context of study and the research site. It describes the research focus, problem statement, approach to the study, objectives of the research as well as the research questions.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

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- **Chapter Two** reviews the literature and explores the pedagogical implications of the development of literacy skills and language learning; emergent literacy; critical literacy; learning outcomes in languages; and how these salient features form the foundations for reading acquisition. Furthermore the review clarifies two reading approaches and a psycholinguistic model of reading. It also focuses on relevant cognitive theories and how they inform our understanding of reading motivation and reading achievement.
- **Chapter Three** presents the research questions, approach, design and research methodologies. Sampling is outlined and the intervention programme is explained. It also describes the instruments used to generate the data. It discusses the preferred research philosophy in relation to other philosophies and expounds the research strategy.
- **Chapter Four** presents the findings of the study.
- **Chapter Five** discusses the research findings and draws out some of their implications for the teaching of a literature-based reading programme. Each insight is further reviewed in relation to theories reviewed in Chapter 2.
- **Chapter Six** reflects on conclusions and proposes recommendations that have emerged from the research.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**2.1 Introduction**

In this literature review I explore the pedagogical implications of the following themes:

- the development of literacy skills and language learning;
- emergent literacy;
- critical literacy;
- learning outcomes in languages; and
- how these salient features form the foundations for reading acquisition.

Furthermore the review will clarify two reading approaches and a psycholinguistic model of reading. The literature review will also focus on relevant cognitive theories and how they inform our understanding of reading motivation and reading achievement.

**2.2 Theoretical framework**

This study is lodged in a qualitative paradigm; the approach is embedded in action research, and an interpretivist/constructivist analytical framework. Quantitative elements have been inserted to enhance the validity of qualitative findings. In the broader context of research theory in the social sciences, there are two major philosophical traditions, positivist and interpretivist. Interpretivist philosophy, where the constructivist paradigm fits, takes a different view of reality from the positivist position. The central tenet of interpretivism is that people are constantly involved in interpreting their ever-changing world; researchers who are interpretivists believe that the social world is constructed by people and is therefore different from the world of nature (Williamson, 2002).

The interpretivist view therefore claims that reality does not live outside the individual. In contrast to this view, the positivist paradigm provides an objective reality against which researchers can compare their claims and ascertain truth, and relies heavily on experimental and manipulative methods (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:105-107). According to Schwandt (1994:18) interpretivist

research is fundamentally concerned to understand human meanings and definitions of respective contexts.

### 2.3 Literacy skills

The word 'literacy' encompasses children's growth in reading, writing, as well as oral language (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). The focus of reading skills is on aspects of literacy acquisition that are related to awareness and knowledge of print. Literacy refers to the interrelatedness of language operations: speaking, listening, reading, writing, and viewing. Knowledge is actively constructed in the process of performing these operations, according to Kafai and Resnick (1996:1). They also state that learning occurs through reflection and interaction, which leads to engaged learning. Children who feel engaged in the learning process are motivated learners. Motivation springs from many sources: the belief that an activity is challenging but not beyond the child's ability; that the task will be enjoyable, if not downright fun; and that it has some real meaning (Miller, 2007:23).

The engagement perspective highlights the importance of motivation in learning to read and underscores the social basis of classroom learning (Guthrie & Alverman, cited in Wilkinson & Silliman, 2000). Classroom activities should be designed to motivate students for reading and writing and to provide them with opportunities to use oral language for meaningful communicative purposes (Wilkinson & Silliman, 2000). Guthrie & Alverman (1999) defined two essential features of the engagement perspective:

- Classrooms are social, providing opportunities for students to learn particular content and contributing to their motivation to learn.
- Social interaction influences reading strategies.

Engagement strategies encourage students and teachers to use their imagination to question, investigate, and interpret particular text events in order to enhance and deepen meaning making with fiction and nonfiction (Gove & Long-Wies, 2003/2004). According to Gove and Long-Weis (2003/2004), by using the following three engagement strategies, teachers can help guide students (at every level of comprehension) to significantly reflect upon, and connect more profoundly with, anything that can be read and interpreted:

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- Ask open-ended questions: listen to, honour, and respond to students; and encourage students to read between the lines of the text.
- Invite students to investigate and find out about explicit or implicit text information to dig a little deeper into the text's meaning.
- Encourage students to pose and solve problems about important text events.

Social constructivism is based on the premise that people create meaning through their interactions with each other and the objects in the environment. Social learning therefore precedes development. Social constructivists see as crucial, both the context in which learning occurs and the social context that learners bring to their learning environment (Gredler: 1997). According to Cambourne (2004: 104) learning is socially constructed. For learning to be effective, learners should engage with text, express a purpose for learning and actively participate in the learning process. In Grades 1 to 3 learners should be taught how to master reading and should be able to read fluently. Grade 3 therefore is a crucial point of transition from decoding to reading to learn.

It is in Grade 4 that learning to read changes to reading to learn (Shaywitz, 2003). In Grade 4, which is the beginning of the Intermediate Phase (South Africa NCS, 2002), the reading tasks of "reading to learn" focus on learners' ability to consolidate and extend their literacy skills, and build their confidence and fluency in using oral language. Skills other than fluency, identified by the National Institute of Literacy as important for reading to learn, include comprehension, spelling and writing and vocabulary.

Comprehension is a complex process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text (Pardo, 2004). Skilled reading involves fluent word recognition (Pressley, 2000). To become competent and independent readers, teachers should teach decoding skills, help students to build fluency, build active background knowledge, teach vocabulary, motivate students, and engage them in personal responses to text (Prado, 2004).

Literacy is communication, it is the ability to make and share meaning, through reading, writing, listening and speaking. Literacy skills as set out in the NCS (2002: 6) refer to listening, speaking, reading and viewing, writing, thinking and reasoning, and knowledge of sounds, words and

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grammar. Heath (1984) says that to be literate one must go beyond simply getting the main ideas from text. Her approach to literacy is multimodal and includes oral, gestural, and visual, as well as written modes of language that make meaning across multiple learning contexts.

Cross-curricular work forms an important part of learning activities when reading to learn. These activities include:

- Working with a wider range of text genres
- Working with a wider range of texts than in the Foundation Phase.
- Using more complex language
- Engaging with longer and more complex and content of texts
- Introducing learners to oral and written literature, and to important social and environmental issues.

The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) states that all texts carry values, which may be positive (for example, democratic) or negative (for example, sexist or racist).

These values are not always obvious. Learners need to become conscious and critical of the values present in the texts they read and view and in the texts they create themselves. Becoming conscious of values in texts is inherent in literary analysis. Materials for reading instruction should encourage children to discover the values and functions of written language appropriate for a wide range of purposes (Allen, 1994).

When they analyse and, where necessary, challenge the values present in oral, visual and written texts, learners will:

- learn how texts take a particular view of people and events;
- develop the critical skills to examine and, if necessary, resist these views and the values associated with them; and
- become conscious of how they express values in the texts they create themselves - for example: tolerance, empathy, respect, pleasure, humour, playfulness, displeasure, and anger (NCS, 2002: 6-7)

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Acquiring these skills are developmental processes that take place over time. It is during this transition from the Foundation Phase to the Intermediate Phase that reading at the required level often does not take place in a manner that enables the learner to achieve academically. Children must develop critical reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills because these skills are required for success in any discipline (Jacobs, 2006).

It is necessary for a Grade 3 learner to become proficient in critical reading skills by the end of Grade 3 in order to read to learn. Mullis et al. (in PIRLS, 2006: 36) define reading literacy as:

...the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. Young readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment.

Cunningham, (2000) sees literacy as dynamic, evolving, and reflective of the continual changes in our society. Literacy has, for instance, expanded to include literacy in information and communication technologies and critical literacy (Cunningham, 2000; Harste, 1994; Leu, 2002; Moll, 1994; Paris, Lipson & Wixson, 1994; Yopp & Singer, 1994). In an era of rapid technological advancement, we need to develop robust forms of media literacy, computer literacy, and multimedia literacies, thus cultivating "multiple literacies" in the restructuring of education. If education is to be relevant to the problems and challenges of contemporary life it must expand the concept of literacy and develop new curricula and pedagogies. (Heertum, 2006). This necessitates promoting more sophisticated abilities in traditional reading and writing, as well as the capabilities needed to include this new multi-literacy pedagogy in our teaching. In preparation for the intermediate phase, literacy skills include responding to text, spoken text, functional writing, creative writing and investigation which includes research related tasks. (NCS, 2002: 32).

As reading and writing are both language processes, one can assume relationships between them. In fact there are few areas in educational research where such broad consensus has been found as the relationship between reading and writing (Flood & Lapp, 1991). Literacy instruction needs to explicitly present the relationship between reading and writing (Goodman & Goodman, 1983; Shanahan, 1988). Since the skills underlying reading and writing knowledge and processes are similar, the combination of reading and writing instruction is essential in literacy development. The constructive processes that develop meaning are apparent through the



reading and writing connection. "In reading, meaning is built from texts and in composing, meaning is built for text" (Nelson, 1998: 279).

Literacy practices are inclusive of values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships. They include:

... people's awareness of literacy, constructions of literacy, the discourses of literacy, and how people talk about and make sense of literacy. These are processes internal to the individual; at the same time, these practices are the social processes which connect people to one another (Barton & Hamilton, 2000:9).

The literacy strategy is imbedded in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS DoE, 2002) which supports a communicative and whole-language approach to language teaching.

### **2.4 Language learning**

Learning language and interacting socially is not to master rules, but to make connections with other people and to make sense of experiences (Wells, 1986). Wiseman (1992:4) states that reading, along with speaking, listening and writing, is considered to be a language and meaning-making process. Language processes have common sounds, sentence arrangements, vocabularies, and meanings. Language and reading instruction are meaningful when learners have a certain amount of control over the process. Children's proficiency in oral language affects their reading and writing development. The interrelatedness of language processes suggests that reading, writing, listening, and speaking are mutually supportive. Genishi (1988: 16-23) is of the view that as with other aspects of development, language acquisition is not predictable.

According to Ellis (1990), there is growing evidence, therefore, that all language learning is the result of active processes of knowledge construction by the learner in which they rely on and make use of interplay of conceptual and linguistic cues to meaning. Consequently, language input has to account for the need for meaningful communication. Environmental and affective factors play a prominent role in facilitating or impeding learning processes, thus making language acquisition unpredictable as stated by Genishi (1988). Individuals vary greatly in the ways they learn a second language. The more academically sophisticated the student's native language knowledge and abilities, the easier it will be for that student to learn a second language (Skehan, 1989).

Children learn much from each other, but adults are the main conversationalists, questioners, listeners, responders, and sustainers of language development and growth in the child-care centre or classroom. The role of adults is significant in the child's development of language. Genishi (1998) suggests that they can help sustain natural language development by providing environments full of language development opportunities; understand that every child's language or dialect is worthy of respect as a valid system for communication; treat children as if they are conversationalists, even if they are not yet talking; and encourage interaction among children as children come to understand written language. Children learn language by actively constructing meaning (Vgotsky 1962; Lindfors 1987), the seeds of literacy lie in the social construction of meaning around print, that is, the talk—"scaffolding," explaining, clarifying—between the reader and child listener as they look at, point to, and label objects, and discuss print and its meaning.

### **2.4.1 Oracy**

Children in the primary grades can keep developing oral abilities and skills by consulting with each other, raising questions, and providing information in varied situations. Barnes (1975/1992:31) extended oracy by pushing teachers to view talk as an integral part of any curriculum, suggesting that "oral language must enter into the curriculum in two ways: 1) as the communication system of classroom and school; and 2) as a means of learning". Halliday (1993:112) argued for a classroom model that asks children to "learn language, learn through language, and learn about language." This oral language strategy to support students' literacy learning is "exploratory talk" (Sharpe, 1998:77).

### **2.4.2 Exploratory talk**

Exploratory talk involves students talking for learning and thinking and includes predicting outcomes or hypothesizing, clarifying ideas, and offering or challenging suggestions (Sharpe, 1998). This form of talk is closely linked with the role of thinking in learning. Exploratory talk can be used as a tool to inquire about the text and to comprehend the story. This perspective is grounded in the views of Almasi, O'Flahavan & Arya (2001:102) who consider discussions to be socio-cultural and dialogic events in which participants seek to improve knowledge and understanding via the shared emergent culture.

### 2.4.3 Oral language

Oral language is delivered by talking and received by listening. Exploratory talk is one form of oral language that is specific to academic contexts and it is a critical tool in helping students to reason and comprehend new concepts encountered in their learning as it enables thinking and learning to occur (Sharpe, 1998 & Walkerdine, 1982, in Sharpe, 1998). Schleppegrell (2004) argues that developing the kind of knowledge valued by education requires students to learn new ways to use language and that schools need to be able to educate students in the ways of language that are valued in the school context. Every area of the curriculum is enhanced through language, so that classrooms full of active learners are hardly ever silent. A curriculum that provides a variety of oral experience of literature expands the linguistic experiences that expand the learners' world through language (Dyson, 2000; Johnson, 2000; Flippo, 2001; Rosenblatt, 1994).

### 2.4.4 Literacy

According to Harste, Woodward & Burke (1984) it is assumed that (a) when children arrive at school they already know a great deal about language and literacy; (b) engagement in a child's literacy development has to start early (Morgan & Goldstein, 2004; Rutter & Mawhood, 1991); and (c) there is significant variability in the amount of early shared language and literacy development occurring for children in different home settings (Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Sénéchal, 2006). With regard to this last point, there is recurring evidence that children from homes of higher socioeconomic status (SES) are advantaged in later reading achievement tests (Raz & Bryant, 1990; Wasik & Bond, 2001; White, 1982) and are more successful at making the transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn"; therefore "reading" cannot be separated from language learning and literacy in general.

Juxtaposed to this position are children raised in poverty, who are faced daily with overwhelming challenges that affluent children never have to confront. Their brains have adapted to suboptimal conditions in ways that undermine good school performance. These are the views of Jensen (2005) who further asserts that combined with these risk factors such as emotional and social challenges, acute and chronic stressors, cognitive lags, health and safety issues present a challenge to academic success.

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Evidence suggests that poverty adversely alters the trajectory of the developing reading brain. Going hand in hand with language acquisition, reading is one of the most important factors affecting the development of a child's brain. Reading skills are not hardwired into the human brain; every sub-skill of reading, including (but not limited to) phonological awareness, fluency, vocabulary, phonics, and comprehension, must be explicitly taught (Noble, Wolmetz, Ochs, Farah, & McCandliss, 2006).

Cunningham (in Condy, 2006) views literacy as synonymous with education and mentions three commonalities:

- the ability to engage in reading and writing;
- contextualisation of language within the broad demands of the society; and
- the striving for a minimal level of practical proficiency in reading, writing and listening.

Reading acquisition has been a major area of difficulty for children with poor language skills in English, regardless of the cause of the poor language skills. Language is a thought-and-knowledge process and reading achievement becomes a cyclical growing process or cyclical dilemma for those without language skill (Cassidy, 1988). As children are actively involved in using language for real purposes and functions, they develop an understanding of its potential. This encourages hypothesizing, predicting and risk-taking; students are actively involved in the learning process and develop important self-regulating strategies (Fountas & Hannigan, 1989:17).

It has also been hypothesized that enhancing children's early language development enhances children's later reading development (Hay, 2007:400-409). Language is considered vital to the development of children's social skills, cognitive abilities, and academic outcomes (Bishop, 1997; Rutter & Mawhood, 1991; Verhoeven & van Balkom, 2004). The evidence is that language difficulties and learning difficulties have a significant negative impact on children's education (Lerner & Kline, 2006; Silver & Hagin, 2002; Turkington & Harris 2006). In their review of children's acquisition of reading, Whitehurst and Lonigan (1988) propose a developmental continuum between young children's language skills and their later reading and comprehension skills. In particular, children's early language development is considered to be a developmental precursor and a good predictor of children's early reading development (Teale & Sulzby, 1986), as well as their meta-linguistic awareness, alphabet, and book concepts (Saada-Robert, 2004).

For educators, the increase in cultural and linguistically diverse learners in the class presents significant challenges. Strategies to monitor thinking, language, and reading skills also known as meta-cognition, will improve comprehension, during and after reading a text (Babbs & Moe, 1983). Meta-cognition might broadly be defined as “self reflection” and “thinking about one’s own thinking” (Costa & Kallick, 2000).

Emergent literacy and critical literacy are two kinds of literacies that will be discussed to illustrate their importance in reading acquisition in particular and more specifically their relationship to higher order thinking skills.

### **2.5 Emergent literacy**

Emergent literacy can be defined as the precursory knowledge about reading and writing that children acquire prior to conventional literacy instruction and that they bring to the task of learning to read. For most children, the bulk of this knowledge is acquired within the preschool years, prior to formal schooling (Dickinson & McCabe, 2001; Watkins & Bunce, 1996) This view is also held by researchers such as Stahl & Miller, (1989: 87-116), Teale & Sulzby, (1987); and van Kleeck, (1990), who agree that emergent literacy begins during the period before children receive formal reading instruction, encompasses learning about reading, writing and print prior to schooling (Sulzby & Teale, 1991), is acquired through informal as well as adult-directed home and school activities, and facilitates acquisition of specific knowledge of reading.

The term emergent symbolizes the view that literacy is a continuum that begins at birth and continues throughout life (Hall: 1987). “Certainly, it is widely accepted that children have learned much that is important about literacy before formal reading instruction begins” (Bishop & Leonard, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998:400-409). Emergent literacy differs from conventional literacy as it examines the range of settings and experiences that support literacy, the role of the child's contributions (i.e., individual construction), and the relation between individual literacy outcomes and the diverse experiences that precede those outcomes.

Emergent literacy provides a foundation for higher-level literacy skills. Preschool children who are experiencing difficulties in emergent literacy development are at an increased risk of entering elementary school without an adequate literacy foundation. Unfortunately, children who start off

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slowly in literacy development rarely catch up with their peers (Juel, 1988), indicating the considerable difficulty of ameliorating literacy difficulties once they occur. The challenge for educators thus is to develop effective emergent literacy interventions to reduce this reading failure spiral.

"Research consistently demonstrates that the more children know about language and literacy before they begin formal schooling, the better equipped they are to succeed in reading," note Burns, Griffin, and Snow (1999: 8). A large vocabulary has been associated with literacy development across a variety of studies for children speaking different languages and learning to read in a variety of instructional settings (Anderson & Freebody, 1981).

According to Anderson and Nagy (1992) and Beck and McKeown, (1991), vocabulary acquisition involves prodigious amounts of information. Average school-age children add at least 1,000 root words to their reading vocabularies every year and the total number of words learned per year may be two or three times that (Anglin, 1993). Wide reading is the largest single source of vocabulary growth, and encouraging wide reading is one important component of a comprehensive approach to vocabulary development (Graves, 2000). Wide reading, also known as extensive reading, means learners read at their own pace. It can be done both in the students' own time when and where the student chooses, or inside the classroom when part or all of a classroom period is set aside for silent, self-selected reading (Day & Bamford 1998).

In summary, the emergent literacy paradigm is supported by the following principles (Crawford, 1995; Heath, 1983; Holdaway, 1979; Morrow, 1993; Teale & Sulzby, 1986; Watson, Layton, Pierce, & Abraham, 1994):

- Reading, writing, and oral language are interrelated. They are all integral parts of literacy learning.
- Literacy learning is a dynamic, ongoing process that begins at birth or very early in life.
- Children's literacy learning is characterized by a general sequence of developmental stages.
- Children are viewed as engaged learners who change and develop over time.
- Literacy learning is optimized through active and meaningful engagement with written language rather than direct explicit teaching of reading skills.

- The family and community are central to this process. They provide the experiences that facilitate emergent literacy.
- Print-related literacy develops naturally through encounters with literacy artifacts (for example, storybooks, and signs).
- The emphasis is on child-centeredness rather than teacher-directed instruction.
- Children interact with print through functional activities (e.g., reading recipes, reading signs, reading logos, looking at menus, reading food containers) and use print for a variety of purposes (e.g., entertainment, information gathering, organization, and problem solving).

Children's literature is a necessity in beginning reading instruction, because it contributes to language development, amuses the senses, allows response and emotion, and exposes children to thoughts and ideas (Jalango, 1988).

### 2.6 Critical literacy

Critical literacy is an ambiguous term. Green (2001) highlights a dichotomous view: to some researchers it means higher order thinking skills, including the ability to analyze and synthesize what one has read and communicate its meaning to others; some argue that unless we take a stance where we go beyond mere analysis, synthesis and transformation - we are not critically literate. There is a call for social and political criticism. If our students are to be critically literate, in the words of Freire (1970:61-65) they must be able to read the words and the world.

This means that he encourages a broader view of reading that goes "beyond reading the word". Freire proposes a system in which students become more socially aware through critique of multiple forms of injustice. This awareness cannot be achieved if students are not given the opportunity to explore and construct knowledge. Freire adds a component of social and political activism to his definition of critical literacy (1970:53). Gee's (2001) conception of critical literacy, also includes a personal component, namely how the information influences the reader.

It is clear that critical literacy indicates a level of literacy that involves reading between and beyond the lines of print. With changing conceptions of literacy, the onus is on the educator to help students to become critically literate. What then is the potential application of critical literacy in the classroom for the child reader in Grade 3? How can these skills be employed so that the

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reader looks beyond the text? Looking beyond the text refers to dimensions of hidden agendas and power groups and their relationships.

“Critical literacy views readers as active participants in the reading process and invites them to move beyond passively accepting the text’s message to question, examine, or dispute the power relations that exist between readers and authors” (McLaughlin & De Voogd, 2004:14). According to McDaniel (2006: 5) critical literacy transcends conventional notions of reading and has at its core a focus on power- who has it? How is it being used in hidden or invisible ways?

Cervetti et al. (2001) state that when readers take this stance, they develop a critical consciousness, fostering a search for justice and equity by reading the meaning behind the text. Conducting lessons that foster critical literacy requires that teachers explicitly confront their own beliefs and assumptions about the role of activities, discourse and power within the classrooms. Tobin (2000) further suggests that teachers must also be prepared to provide space for students to express the complex ways in which we respond to texts, even in the Foundation Phase.

Educational theorists from a range of academic paradigms however, have expressed concern regarding students’ abilities to think critically about issues (Ennis, 1997; Freire, 1982; Giroux, 1988; Langer & Applebee, 1978; Marzano, 1991). Traditionally, schools have taught reading and writing in a top-down fashion in that teachers act as experts and impart knowledge to students. This transmission model of education has been critiqued, because it forces students to take passive roles as consumers (often uncritical ones) of information (Freire, 1970).

There appears to be a relationship in research literature between learning and critical thinking. Mason (2008: 1) proposes that students should be encouraged to ask critical questions if they are to learn and think. Ennis (1996) defends a conception of critical thinking as based primarily in particular skills, such as observing, inferring, generalizing, reasoning, and evaluating. He further maintains that skills associated with critical thinking can be learned independently of specific disciplines and can be transferred from one domain to another.

Critical thinking is broadly seen as the kind of logical thinking that helps us to analyze and make sense of, or interpret, all forms of situations or information so that the conclusions we draw from our interpretations are sound. It is pervasive and is seen as vital to any developed life since it



entails “reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe and do” (Ennis, 1987:10).

Shannon (1995: 83) offers a concise, understandable explanation:

Critical perspectives push the definition of literacy beyond traditional decoding or encoding of words in order to reproduce the meaning of text or society until it becomes a means for understanding one’s own history and culture, to recognize connections between one’s life, and the social structure, to believe that change in one’s life, and the lives of others and society are possible as well as desirable, and to act on this new knowledge in order to foster equal and just participation in all the decisions that affect and control our lives. Critical literacy in the classroom is seen by Kretovics (1985:51) as providing students not merely with functional skills, but with the conceptual tools necessary to critique and engage society along with its inequalities and injustices. Furthermore, critical literacy can stress the need for students to develop a collective vision of what it might be like to live in the best of all societies and how such a vision might be made practical.

### **2.7 Learning Outcomes in Languages**

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2002) for home and first additional languages prescribes six learning outcomes. All six of the languages learning outcomes are interdependent, as one cannot function without the others. (NCS, 2002:5). This list of learning outcomes is central in teaching and assessment.

#### *Learning Outcome 1: Listening*

The learner will be able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations.

#### *Learning Outcome 2: Speaking*

The learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in spoken language in a wide range of situations.

#### *Learning Outcome 3: Reading and Viewing*

The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts.

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### *Learning Outcome 4: Writing*

The learner will be able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes

### *Learning Outcome 5: Thinking and Reasoning*

The learner will be able to use language to think and reason, as well as to access, process and use information for learning.

### *Learning Outcome 6: Language Structure and Use*

The learner will know and be able to use the sounds, words and grammar of the language to create and interpret texts.

According to the NCS (2002), in the Foundation Phase the reading tasks focus on a “balanced approach” to literacy development. It is balanced because it begins with children’s emergent literacy, it involves them in reading real books and writing for genuine purposes, and it gives attention to phonics. These are the processes learners need to know and do in order to learn to read and write successfully. In reading, this means moving away from the ‘reading readiness approach’ to a general readiness to learn. Smith (1986) asserts that a ‘reading readiness approach’ holds the view that children are not ready to start learning to read and write until they are able to perform sub-skills such as auditory discrimination and visual discrimination, and have developed their fine and large motor skills to a certain level. Much of the research on the reading readiness approach focused on the relationships between physical, cognitive, perceptual and linguistic factors associated with early reading achievement.

The desired outcome of the National Reading Strategy (DoE 2008) is that all learners must be able to read basic texts by the end of Grade 3. After that, learners will develop reading and comprehension skills according to the requirements of each Grade level. Gee (1996) makes the point that if reading is defined as the ability to read that children can acquire by 3rd Grade, it follows that this performance objective is a rather static process based on mastery of decoding and rote word recognition in which students gain input from text without engaging in critical stances. The introduction of higher order reading skill development stipulated in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 2002) at this phase indicates that the problem of underdeveloped meaning-making competencies, namely comprehension, lies with the implementation of the curriculum, a finding which has consequences for policy development and teacher development initiatives.

### 2.8 Whole language approach

According to Goodman (1976) language is language only when it is whole. Effective language programmes therefore are built on the belief that children should learn to read and write in the same natural way they learn to speak. Here Goodman draws on the work of Vygotsky (1978:118): "... in the same way as children learn to speak, they should be able to read and write." Vygotsky believes therefore that written language develops as speech does, in the context of its use. Learners therefore need to be immersed in language for literacy learning to be easy. This in essence is the view of whole language. Goodman further describes whole language as holistic and dynamic.

Vygotsky's approach has been described as a "top-down" approach (Goodman, 1976): "Students begin with a whole text and experience its fullest meaning". Goodman described reading as a selective process involving use of one's language cueing systems - the semantic, syntactic and phonographemic - calling this process a "psycholinguistic guessing game" (Goodman, 1976). "...The goal of reading is constructing meaning in response to text. It requires interactive use of grapho-phonetic, syntactic, and semantic cues to construct meaning" (Goodman, 1981).

Goodman's psycho-linguistic model places a strong focus on functional oral language experiences and read-alouds as a means of encouraging learners to make sensible predictions in constructing the meaning of text. A read aloud is a planned oral reading of a book or print excerpt, usually related to a theme or topic of study. The read aloud can be used to engage the student listener while developing background knowledge, increasing comprehension skills, and fostering critical thinking. A read aloud can be used to model the use of reading strategies that aid in comprehension (Duke, 2001).

Constructivist learning theory is based on the idea that children learn by connecting new knowledge to previously learned knowledge. Scaffolding is a Vygotskian metaphor for teacher support of a learner through dialogue, questioning, conversation, and nonverbal modeling, in which the learner attempts literacy tasks that could not be done without that assistance (Roehler & Cantlon, 1997). If children cannot connect new knowledge to old knowledge in a meaningful way, they may with difficulty memorize it (rote learning), but they will not have a real understanding of what they are learning.

Whole-language supporters believe that, in order for students to read effectively, they must be exposed to literature in ways that relate to their lives (Church, 1994; Dahl & Scharer, 2000). The whole language approach to phonics grew out of Chomsky's (1975) conception of linguistic development. Chomsky believed that humans have a natural language capacity and are built to communicate through words. Whole language is not a systemized approach, but rather a philosophy that assumes that reading and general language competencies are acquired through integrated use instead of through learning separate, finite skills, such as word attack, comprehension, and vocabulary. The whole language approach relies heavily on the use of literature and trade books, rather than basal readers, and usually involves integrated thematic studies and students' extended use of writing.

### **2.9 Cognitive theories**

Reading is defined in many ways by different reading theorists as being a cognitive process, which underpins reconstruction and interpretation of meanings behind printed symbols. Cognitive factors include reader interest, motivation and the use of schema (Bransford & McCarrell, 1974).

Readers and writers become readers and writers by reading and writing. This process is exactly the same process that children go through in acquiring language. The reader's schema are the basic categories of knowledge stored in the mind.

Schema form the basis on which the reader and writer construct meaning. Constructing meaning is the ultimate goal of literature instruction (Cooper, 1993: 22).

The theories of Piaget (1970) and Vygotsky (1978) are instrumental in understanding the developmental processes that children experience in learning. There are developmental stages in a child's reading acquisition (Mason, 1980) and developmental stages in a child's writing growth (Sulzby, Barnhart, & Hieshima, 1989). Challenge, readiness, and social interaction are central to the theories of both Piaget and Vygotsky. However the two perspectives differ on the role of language in cognitive development, the relative value of free exploration versus more structured and guided activities, the relative interaction with peers versus adults, and the influence of culture.

Further differences according to Solso (1995) who explored the view of Piaget, (1970) are that development proceeds from the individual to the social world, and he also maintains that development precedes learning. Vygotsky (1978) posits that development begins at the social level and moves towards individual internalization. For Vygotsky, (1978) learning precedes development. Vygotsky's perspective is that social interaction aids the acquisition of cognitive skills and growth. Spoken language therefore influences written language and reading. Vygotsky (1978:57) states:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals.

A second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the idea that the potential for cognitive development is limited to a certain time span which he calls the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). Furthermore, full development during the ZPD depends upon full social interaction. The range of skill that can be developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained alone.

### **2.10 Aesthetic and other dimensions in reading**

The Transactional model of Rosenblatt, (1986) takes into account the dynamic nature of language and both aesthetic and cognitive aspects of reading. She sees the reader and the text as two aspects of a total dynamic situation. Meaning, therefore does not reside in the text or in the reader. It is only when the reader transacts with the text that meaning happens, which suggests a "reciprocal, mutually defining relationship" between the reader and the literary text (Rosenblatt, 1986: 122).

How the child reader responds to literature has an influence on how researchers and practitioners approach the interaction of children with literature. Louise Rosenblatt has been particularly influential in clarifying this view. Rosenblatt speaks about when a person is immersed in reading literature he or she is engaged in aesthetic reading (Rosenblatt, 1993).

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Aesthetic reading according to Rosenblatt (1993: 24) focuses on “what we are seeing and feeling and thinking, on what is aroused within us by the sound of the words, and by what they point to in the human and natural world.”

According to her the reader brings his/her own experiences and feelings to the text, therefore the literary experience can be very personal. From a cognitivist and socio-cultural perspective, reading comprehension is extracting and constructing meaning from text. It entails three elements: the reader, the text and the activity. These elements are highly interactive and situated within a broad socio-cultural context that affects them and the nature of their interactions (Sweet & Snow, 2003). Many works on comprehension underline the active involvement of the reader in creating meaning from text (Pressley 2000; Pressley & Afflerback, 1995).

For example, Irwin (1986) categorizes five main types of interacting reading processes, from bottom-up micro-processes – such as decoding – to integration, macro-processes, elaboration and meta-cognition. Langer (1990) characterizes literary reading as “envisionment building” and proposes that readers approach reading by "being out and stepping into" a text, then "being in and moving through." This activity is sometimes interrupted by "stepping out and rethinking" what one already knows. Finally, readers have the opportunity to "step out and objectify" the experience of reading.

Shaped by private and social contexts, one's interpretations are never stagnant and result from the simultaneous interaction of many reading stances. Rosenblatt (1991) distinguishes two basic approaches to a text, to be situated on a continuum: an aesthetic one, defined as primarily "private", and an efferent one, defined as "public." In adopting this latter reading stance, readers are concerned with gathering information to use in some manner in the real world – with knowledge, facts, and eventually the products of reading.

Shine and Roser (1999) have investigated children's spontaneous responses during the reading of fiction books (fantasy and realism), information, and poetry books. Nine children participated in a small-group situation in which the adult refrained from directing the conversation. In response to the information books, children adopted an information stance, sharing their knowledge about the topic and associating texts with their own lives. With fantasy fiction books,

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children were more engaged; they tried to interpret the characters' emotions and understand the whole story line.

Literary theorists view literature reading essentially as an act of rereading, analysis and discourse production – a discourse which asks the readers to elaborate and rigorously support their thoughts (Cornis-Pope, 2000; Daunay, 1999). Such a view leads students to adopt a predominantly efferent stance in literature classes.

At the other extreme of the continuum, an aesthetic stance accords “more attention to the penumbra of private feelings, attitudes, sensations and ideas” (Rosenblatt, 1994: 184). As such, reading literature is considered as a virtual lived - through experience, a transactional process, a unique and momentary event occurring between a reader, a text and a context. Rosenblatt, in considering these different reading stances, argues that “we do not have the cognitive, the referential, the factual, the analytic, the abstract on the one side and the affective, the emotive, the sensuous, on the other. Instead, both aspects of meaning – which might be termed the public and the private – are always present in our transactions”.

According to Rosenblatt, the aesthetic stance, as opposed to the efferent or more functional one, is the most effective way to read fiction and poetry and “the notion that children must ‘understand’ the text cognitively, efferently, before it can be responded to aesthetically is a rationalization that must be rejected” (Rosenblatt, 1982: 273). There is typically, however, a reluctance on the part of secondary teachers to consider this ‘private’ or aesthetic side of interpretation. Too often, it is treated as an optional portion of the lesson to be quickly and informally discussed at the end of class. Indeed, primary educators know that young readers participating in literature circles appear to feel more comfortable expressing personal and tentative thoughts (McMahon, 1992; Goatley et al. 1995; Alvermann et al. 1996).

Rosenblatt posits that the relationship between readers and text is a dynamic, ever-changing transaction (Clark 1984:58-70, Meichenbaum 1985: 407-426). Gambrell (1999:10) states that “when children read, they activate their capacity for imagination, for creative and critical thinking, for empathy”. World-making, childhood events, children’s perceptions of the world, children’s dreams and fantasies can become part of the literacy environment made and shaped for and with children through the use of literature and the uses to which literature is put in the context of learning (Barrs & Cork:2001).

Meek (2001:20) further underpins this notion of “world-making” and talks about competent authors “making worlds for children to enter and explore, where they meet the deep matters of meaning making; being and becoming, love and loss, doubt and despair, psychological realities presented as people and events”.

Rosenblatt (1938/1983:290-291) concludes: “When there is active participation in literature - the reader living through, reflecting on, and criticizing his [sic] own responses to text - there will be many kinds of benefits. We can call this growth in ability to share discriminatingly in the possibilities of language as it is used in literature”.

But this means also the development of the imagination: the ability to escape from the limitations of time, place and environment, the capacity to envisage alternatives in ways of life and in moral and social choices, sensitivity to thought and feeling and needs of other personalities. Children’s writing was also found to be more creative, meaningful and natural when a literature - based programme was followed (Rosenblatt, 1995).

When considering the meaning that any individual attributes to a text, it is important to note that the text is not interpreted alone, but in terms of the context in which it is read. According to Rosenblatt (1995: 175) literature should be personally experienced because it “may result in increased social sensitivity”, encouraging individuals to become more empathetic toward others and to develop a greater sense of responsibility for their own behaviours”. This increased ability to imagine the human implications of any situation is just as important for the individual in his broader political and social relationships (Rosenblatt, 1995).

Many political blunders or social injustices seem to be the result not so much of maliciousness or conscious cruelty as of the inability of citizens to translate into human terms the laws or political platforms they support. A democratic society, whose institutions and political and economic procedures are constantly being developed and remoulded, needs citizens with the imagination to see what political doctrines mean for human beings (Rosenblatt 1995:176).

From the early days of the development of theory and research on response, studies have focused on (a) text, or how various texts affect response; (b) readers, or how experiences and attitudes situated in readers affect response; and (c) the context in which response is generated.



These ways of discussing literature and response remain with us today (Galda, Ash, & Cullinan, 2000).

In responding to texts at the level of activity, students learn to go beyond the usual pedagogical focus on inferring characters' acts or dialogue (what is the character doing or saying), beliefs (what do characters believe about each other), and goals and motivations (what is the character trying to accomplish and why) to interpret and contextualize characters' actions or dialogue as involving various social practices within activities (Beach, 2000).

These social practices include:

(a) defining/constructing identities, (b) including/excluding/positioning others, (c) building relationships, (d) influencing others' actions or beliefs, (e) representing/serving institutions/systems, (f) establishing group allegiances/stances, (g) coping with conflicts/differences, (h) engaging in shared rituals, or (i) constructing / sharing knowledge.

By inferring these social practices, students are interpreting how characters' actions or dialogue function or serve as social agendas (Mosenthal, 1998) designed to fulfil the objects or motives driving activity systems.

As Gee (2000) noted, people (and characters) are recognized as having certain agendas or being certain kinds of persons through their uses of language or discourses. Stephens (1992) suggested that even in the elementary grades, readers should be taught how to assume an interrogative stance toward the texts they read.

### **2.10.1 Schema theory**

Schema theory, first developed by Piaget (1926) and later expanded by Anderson (in Anderson & Pearson, 1984: 225-291), is based on the assumption that individuals develop a cognitive structure of knowledge in their minds. They construct meaning by drawing from various schemas and by building connections between them; that is, they use schema to make inferences. Since prior knowledge is essential for the comprehension of new information, teachers either need to help students build the prerequisite structures of knowledge, or remind them of what they already know before introducing new material. Schemas grow and change as new information is acquired.

Multiple schemas are involved in processing text information, each of which waxes and wanes as needed to help the reader maintain a coherent representation (Van Den Broek et al. 1999). Learners feel internal conflict if they are trying to assimilate schema which contradict their previous suppositions. Teachers need to understand and be sympathetic to this tension. Bensoussan (1998) is of the view that schemas are known to play an important role in reading comprehension. Comprehension is seen as the interaction between top-down processing from activated schemas and bottom-up processing from concepts expressed by the text. If readers activate an inappropriate schema, they may miss the meaning of text.

Children's literature is a powerful tool for teaching thinking. Because texts are never completely explicit, the reader must rely on pre-existing schemas to provide plausible interpretations. The richer the schema is for a given topic the better a reader will understand the topic (Bransford, 1979). Somers and Worthington (1979: 69-72) noted that "...literature offers children more opportunities than any other area of the curriculum to consider ideas, values, and ethical questions."

Due to the complexity of comprehension the reader may encounter difficulties based on the influence of oral language development; prior knowledge effects; the interactions among strategy development; motivation; and self-regulation (Van Den Broek & Kremer, 2000).

Schema theory and the research further support this powerful premise that the construction of meaning is an individual and personal matter (Anderson, 1984). It is through this experience that you create lifelong readers as children discover the joys of reading. The value of reading aloud to children as part of the classroom programme has also been verified (McCormick 1977:139-143). Not only does it help to motivate students, but it also provides a basis for expanding oral language and prior knowledge. When teachers read a story to the class, they are modelling reading; they share the thought processes the children have gone through in formulating the meaning of a text.

### **2.10.2 Higher order reading skills**

Research (McGinley & Tierney, 1989:243-269) has shown that engaging learners in the greater variety of experiences provided when reading and writing instruction are combined leads to a

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higher level of thinking than when either process is taught alone. Since thinking is a critical part of meaning construction, students will become better thinkers if they are taught in classrooms where meaning is actively constructed through reading and writing. Teachers can be most effective in helping students to become better readers, writers, and thinkers when they weave integrated reading and writing activities into their literacy instruction.

The topic of teaching students to think while reading - critical reading - should be central to any discussion of thinking skills, in part because the reading of textbooks plays such a prominent role in the content fields. Critical reading has been defined as learning to evaluate, draw inferences and arrive at conclusions based on the evidence (Zintz & Maggart, 1984). Thinking cannot be divorced from content; in fact, thinking is a way of learning content (Raths et al. 1967).

Applebee, Langer and Mullis (1978) suggest that reading instruction needs to emphasize thinking skills and strategies that provide the foundation for higher-level interpretive and reasoning abilities. Bloom's (1956) taxonomy provides six levels of higher order thinking skills, namely knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, and refers to the cognitive domain. The affective domain includes learners' attitudes to reading. Bloom posits that the last three levels in the cognitive domain comprise higher order skills and that the first three are lower order skills. This hierarchy of levels represents successively more complex thought processes.

Developing these skills in learners' thinking will impact on how learners read and make connections with the text. "Students can learn to comprehend at higher levels - to efficiently and independently use comprehension strategies such as predicting, questioning, mental imagining, and summarizing" (Block et al. 2002:13). A well considered reading programme will contain objectives from both domains, although the emphasis accorded to each level will differ dependent on the educational principles guiding the construction of the programme (Pumfrey, 1991: 332).

A deep approach to reading is an approach where the reader uses higher-order cognitive skills such as the ability to analyze, synthesize, solve problems, and think meta-cognitively in order to negotiate meanings with the author and to construct new meaning from the text. The deep reader focuses on the author's message, on the ideas she is trying to convey, the line of argument, and the structure of the argument.

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The reader makes connections to already known concepts and principles and uses this understanding for problem solving in new contexts (Biggs, 1999).

The hierarchy of the different levels of Bloom's (1956) taxonomy can be diagrammatically represented. The lowest three levels are: knowledge, comprehension, and application. The highest three levels are: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

The taxonomy is hierarchical; [in that] each level is subsumed by the higher levels. In other words, a student functioning at the "application" level has also mastered the material at the "knowledge" and "comprehension levels (Pohl, 2000:12).

As a cognitive model this taxonomy is not without its weaknesses because the very structure, moving from the simplest level of knowledge to the most cognitively demanding is not supported universally by research. Anderson and Kratwohl (2001) take into account a broader range of factors that impact on teaching and learning in their revision of this taxonomy.

**Table 2.1 Comparison of Bloom's and Anderson & Kratwohl's taxonomies**

<b>Bloom's Taxonomy (1956)</b>	<b>Anderson &amp; Kratwohl's Taxonomy (2001)</b>
Evaluation	Creating
Synthesis	Evaluating
Analysis	Analysing
Application	Applying
Comprehension	Understanding
Knowledge	Remembering

The six levels of Anderson and Kratwohl (2001:179) are: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create. Table 2.1 compares the old version with the new version. They have made some apparently minor but actually significant modifications, to come up with the new version. Note the new top category, which is about being able to create new knowledge within the domain, and the move from nouns to verbs. According to Pohl (2000), this new taxonomy reflects a more active form of thinking and is perhaps more accurate. Bloom's Taxonomy can be

used across grade levels and content areas. By using Bloom's Taxonomy in the classroom, teachers can assess students on multiple learning outcomes. Within each level of the taxonomy, there are various tasks that move students through the thought process to levels of higher thinking.

### **2.10.3 Reading approaches**

#### **2.10.3.1 Literature-based reading approach**

Investigating the value of children's literature-based reading programmes in primary schools may contribute meaningfully towards finding useful strategies for the enhancement of literacy. Eldredge and Butterfield's (1986) experimental investigation found that children in a literature-based programme made significant gains in achievement and attitude toward reading compared to children in traditional reading programmes. According to Lipson and Wixson (2003:130) reading achievement refers to readers who are "knowledgeable, strategic, and motivated" to understand meaning from a variety of texts. Cooper (1993:16) states that real literature is motivating, captivating, and engaging. It provides learners with a natural base for developing and expanding their language structures. Children's literature is viewed by many researchers and teachers as the best material for reading instruction (Cullinan, 1989; Huck, 1977; 363-371).

According to Sawyer (1987:33-39) there are two types of structure: narrative and expository in literature. In order for learners to construct meaning, they do need to know the difference. Mitchel (2003) notes that excellent children's literature is marked by appealing content and clear writing; the characters are often children, people familiar to children, or animals. The settings are places well known to children or places children would love to go. The themes speak to children and their concerns. Children's literature embraces a wide range of genres, including picture books, poetry, realistic fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, biography, informational books, and traditional stories such as myths, fables and fairytales.

One should not omit the following criteria, although subjective, to complete this definition of literary quality, namely the author's passion, interest, intention, authenticity; literary merit; the

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quality of the illustrations and the effectiveness with which they interact with the text; and the richness of the themes. Chandler and Baghban (1986) found those 3rd graders who read children's literature improved in making greater gains on standardized [sic] reading achievement tests, and their pre-test and post-test reading achievement scores were higher than those reading only basal readers.

Children's writing in a literature-based programme was more meaningful and natural and they developed flexibility in reading diverse text structures, which furthermore indicates an expanded context for solving problems and thinking critically. Children who read only basal readers did not show these significant improvements, as demonstrated by pre-test and post-test reading achievement scores: "Books chosen by children can be catalysts for children at any age in their language as well as cognitive and social / moral development, as they become immersed in language through reading and responding to what they read" (Applebee, 1978: 92-99).

Applebee (1978) also found that children's sense of story grows as they mature. Literature can provide rich experiences through which children consistently broaden their conceptual frameworks. Good literature presents compelling themes, engaging plots, fully developed characters, and realistic conflicts. "The benefits of reading thus go far beyond the reading itself. It piques children's interest, eliciting interaction and involvement of their feelings, raising questions that they seek to answer, and causing them to care about what happens and why it happens" (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

However Holland (1990) questions this theory of literature-based programmes and calls it "just another program" as this approach according to him "lacks a solid theoretical base". Freeman (1989:13-15) elaborates on this danger by comparing the underlying assumptions of "literature-based" teaching with teaching "literature." She argues that beneath the surface, "literature-based programmes are really not very different from the basal programmes that we have been objecting to for some time". Holland and Freeman's assertions, however, are contradicted by research that supports the statement that literature - based reading programmes are effective (McWhiter, 1990; Reutzel & Cooter, 1990; Tunnel & Jacobs, 1989).

The view that literature is a valuable resource, providing both a model for language and a stimulus for oral and written activities, is supported by a well-developed field of research. It shows that books can support and promote cognitive development as literature provides

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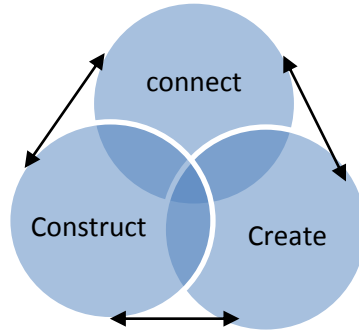
aesthetic experiences and develops mental strategies to aid recall. Learners should be encouraged to respond to literature as this increases critical thinking. Applebee, Langer and Mullis (1978) support this assertion and suggest that reading instruction needs to emphasize thinking skills and strategies that will form the foundation for higher level interpretive and reasoning skills. Critical reading demands that readers evaluate the text they are reading.

“The notion that each literary work is connected to other works is central to the critical perspective” (Cairney, 1990: 478-485). This usually involves mapping what is represented in the text against our own experience and knowledge (Wallace, 1996). Meek (1988:38) criticizes those reading experts who are "casual about texts" when describing the reading process. She writes about the private lessons readers give themselves as they interact with texts and states that "if we want to see what lessons have been learned from the texts children read, we have to look for them in what they write.”

The Literary Transaction Process of Goforth and Spillman (1994: 48-51) has been shaped by social-constructivist theories of learning and the reader-response theories. When individuals read, view, or listen to literature, they reflect on ideas, images and associations evoked by the text to construct meanings evoked by a “transaction” with the text. They react to their interpretations or understandings gained from the transaction to create responses to the selection. This process proposes three components which allows for this literary transaction process to be fluid and recursive.

Each component of the Literary Transaction Process - connect, construct, and create - can be used alone. One component does not necessarily precede another, except that individuals usually connect their personal knowledge with the text early in the process.

The shaded portion of Figure 2.1 represents the actual transaction between the reader and the text and reflects the dynamic nature of the nonlinear recursive process. Goforth and Spillman (1994: 49) also contend that this process encourages optional roles and responsibilities for teachers and learners and must remain fluid.



**Figure 2.1: Literacy Transaction Model (Goforth & Spillman, 1994: 48-51)**

In a synthesis of research, Flowers and Roos (1994) concluded that literature-based reading programmes are most effective when the programme is introduced at the earliest Grades.

### **2.10.3.2 Basal reading approach**

Basal readers are written with the sole purpose of controlling the complexity of vocabulary, in the belief that “language is a bunch of words” and “learning to read is learning words” (Goodman, 1996:81). A basal reading programme is a set of commercially prepared and sequenced materials for providing reading instruction in elementary and middle schools (Ruetzel & Cooter, 1992:57). A hallmark of basal reader stories is the carefully controlled vocabulary and level of text difficulty. According to Pearson (1974: 155-192), “Controlled vocabulary creates artificial and unpredictable text, whereas authentic texts control their own vocabulary...” Even uncommon words can be predictable in a given context. Durkin (1981) asserts that the result of controlled vocabulary and language is stilted language and unnatural style.

By intentionally controlling vocabulary, authentic syntax and literary elements that create good literature are sacrificed. The basal reading approach which focuses on drills and frills to the exclusion of reading and discussion of good literature can be criticized for its detrimental effects on reading and literacy development (Fisher, 1978).

Basal readers are sequenced from grade to grade, thus providing for continuous instruction throughout primary grades. Reading skills are gradually introduced, practiced, and reviewed through the plan provided in the scope and sequence of the basal reading scheme (Ruetzel & Cooter, 1992:70). Winograd (1989) mentions that basal readers have been condemned for their lack of literary worth; furthermore they have been indicted for failing to deal with real-life



concerns and values, a major shortcoming being that reading is contrived rather than authentic. Teachers who use supplementary texts and literature can encourage conversations about social issues that may not be covered in the typically sterile required reading curriculum of schools (Morrel, 2000).

Another criticism of the basal approach is that it is associated with over-emphasis on correctness to the detriment of thinking and comprehension when answering questions (Durkin, 1981). Proponents of basal readers list several advantages to this approach: basal readers are easy and accessible, the system provides multiple copies of one story, and it reduces the pressure on the teacher to produce reading lessons. Finally, it is not simply the use, but the total reliance on the basal reader that is questionable (Wiseman, 1992:46). To ensure language development, reading from a reading series is far from sufficient (Frost, 1967: 17).

### **2.10.3.3 Shared reading as an instructional approach**

Holdaway (1997) developed a procedure known as “shared book experience”. Shared reading provides very strong support for learners. It allows for the modeling of real reading and accounts for the ways in which “natural readers” have learned to read by being read to, reading along with an adult and ultimately reading on their own. “Shared reading is a good way to immerse students in literature without worrying about the reading level of the story...” Cooper (1993:51). Young emerging readers, linguistically and culturally different readers, and reluctant readers feel more success through shared reading than when they struggle to read the text by themselves (Trachtenburg & Ferruggia, 1989; Wicklund, 1989).

The shared reading strategy involved three parts: read aloud, read along and read alone. This strategy is very flexible and can be used for learners who need stronger scaffolding to help them construct meaning (Cooper 1993:304-305). Routman (1991:33) defines shared reading as any rewarding reading situation in which a learner or group of learners see the text, observes an expert (usually the teacher) reading it with fluency and expression, and is invited to read along. The learner is in the role of receiving support, and the teacher-expert accepts and encourages all efforts and approximations the learner (the novice) makes. Each reading situation is a relaxed, social one, with emphasis on enjoyment and appreciation of the stories, songs, rhymes, chants, raps and poems. This approach allows learners to hear fluent oral reading, while being introduced to and discussing literature they would not otherwise be able to read independently.

Allen (2002) believes that shared reading texts need to have certain characteristics: they should invite personal connections, should “create intense emotional experiences for the reader, and should expand the world of the reader.” Reading aloud has many advantages in addition to modeling fluent reading: It builds background knowledge, exposes students to a wide variety of genres, makes reading pleasurable, motivates students to read independently, guides students in choosing books, develops higher-level thinking skills, improves listening skills, connects books to students lives, teaches elements of literature, leads students in meaningful discussions, teaches students effective strategies, and ideally will help lead students to lifelong love of reading (Trelease, 2001).

The literature is carefully chosen for its high quality of language and illustrations and often includes rereading of favourite stories and poems. Following shared reading, students have opportunities to reread the literature independently (Routman, 1991: 33). Shared storybook reading is viewed as particularly powerful because it provides an interactive context that is contextualized, authentic, meaningful, interesting, and motivating to the preschool child (Watkins & Bunce, 1996).

### **2.10.3.4 Motivation and achievement**

The value teachers place on motivation is supported by a robust research literature that documents the link between motivation and achievement (Elley, 1992; Gambrell & Morrow, in press; Guthrie, Schafer, Wang, & Afflerbach, 1993; Purves & Beach, 1972; Walberg & Tsai, 1985; Wixson & Lipson, 1991). The results of these studies clearly indicate the need to increase our understanding of how children acquire the motivation to develop into active, engaged readers. It is generally acknowledged that reading motivation plays a critical role in learning. It often makes the difference between learning that is superficial and learning that is deep and internalized. Because of the powerful influence that motivation plays in literacy learning, it is relevant to understand the relationship between motivation and achievement. Students’ motivation to learn and their belief that they can improve are the foundation on which achievement is built (Ames, 1992; Jacob, 1999).

Primary school years are of considerable consequence for shaping subsequent reading motivation and achievement (Allington: 1994, Purcell- Gates, McIntyre, & Freppon: 1995, Turner:

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1992). Supporting and nurturing reading motivation and achievement is crucial to improving academic achievement in children who find learning to read difficult (Allington: 1986. Applebee: 1978, Marzano: 1991). Dornyei (2001) is of the opinion that motivation to read rests on internal and intrinsic factors, and is also related to learning strategies and the need for achievement. Reading motivation is therefore congruent with the learner's needs and interests. Reading achievement is also associated with academic achievement.

Past and present reading research has shown the importance of reading motivation, for example the importance of reading motivation is supported by Guthrie's (1997) finding that cognitive development depends greatly on a child's motivation to read. In other words, if children do not have the desire or the drive to learn or to read, then they will not fully develop their ability. Also, children's reading motivation is important because it has been linked to their ability to become successful readers. The more children are motivated to read, the more time they will spend reading (Wigfield, 1997:59-63). Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) found that highly motivated students read three times as much outside of school than their less motivated peers. In turn, the more a child reads, the better the reader he or she will become, making motivation extremely important (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006).

According to Gambrell (1996: 14), "The central and most important goal of reading instruction is to foster the love of reading". To be an effective reader, one must not only have the skill to read, but also the desire to read. Teachers are crucial agents in promoting motivation in students and helping each of them to develop into lifelong readers who read for pleasure and information. They are decision makers when creating literacy activities in the classroom and these decisions impact students' reading motivation (Gambrell 1996). The context of the literary act and the culture of the classroom influence engaged reading. This state of deep involvement and personal commitment is alternatively called engagement (Alvermann & Guthrie, 1996).

Engagement occurs when students and teachers use interpretive tools to select, connect, and organize information in the text to construct meaningful interpretations. There are motivational, cognitive and meta-cognitive components in engaged reading. Classroom cultures that provide for student interaction and teacher modelling of cognitive processes promote the notion of reading as a transactional process where meaning occurs as a reader's expectations and experiences are in transaction with the text and the context of the literacy act – notions espoused by reader-response theorists (Bleich, 1978; Iser, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1938/1976, 1978).

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As such, reading is viewed as an interpretive process rather than as an endeavour used to extract meaning (Langer, 1992; Pressley, et al. 1992). The interpretive process refers to reading between the lines. The interpretive stage is more difficult than the literal stage, but it is truly a step toward applying the wealth of knowledge and information that literature has to offer to your own life. "Interpretation opens a space of conflict and variation, negotiated differently by every reader" (Cornis-Pope, 1992).

Involvement in reading, however, may offer an emotional engagement that goes beyond that of other subjects, and it is to children's literature research that one must turn in order to find an elaboration of these ideas (Appleyard, 1991). Benton and Fox (1985) say that stories "provide the possibility of educating the feelings and can offer their readers potential growth points for the development of a more subtle awareness of human behaviour" (Benton & Fox, 1985:15).

Involvement in books allows children to experience through imagination, other worlds and other roles, and this involvement contributes to their personal and social development as well as to their reading abilities. Perhaps even more than for other school subjects, attitude to reading has a central importance, alongside acquisition of reading skills.

Motivation does not simply appear within a child, but it is rather a result of an interaction between the child and his or her literacy environment, including the school environment (Turner & Paris, 1995). When individuals are highly motivated and the experiences they are having are meaningful and purposeful for them, they learn more readily (Holdaway, 1979).

Reading is one of the most important predictors of academic achievement (Taraban, Rynearson, & Kerr, 2000). Reading should not exclusively be regarded as an ability required in primary school, but rather as knowledge, skills and attitudes which develop in an ongoing manner throughout life. Central to the understanding of reading as knowledge, skills and attitudes is the idea that successful participants are active, motivated and self regulated learners who understand and use literacy for a variety of purposes (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1994, Pressley, Borkowski, & Scheinder, 1987, 1989).

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However, the development of positive reading attitudes is often overlooked and cannot be separated from motivation. Children with positive reading attitudes tend to be willing to read, enjoy reading, become proficient, and become lifelong readers. On the other hand, children with poor attitudes toward reading may only read when they have to read, tend to avoid reading, and may even refuse to read altogether. A child's attitude toward reading may have a profound impact upon his or her overall academic progress (Joseph, 2004).

### 2.10.3.5 Review of emergent theories

Two theories have emerged to inform the qualitative data in this study:

### 2.10.3.6 Kohlberg's theory of moral development

Moral, as well as social development is related to intellectual development. Piaget (1932) and Kohlberg (1981) ( in Woolfolk,1993) see the growth of moral reasoning as developing in stages of cognitive growth. Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) modified and expanded upon Piaget's work to form a theory that explained the development of moral reasoning. Piaget described a two-stage process of moral development, while Kohlberg's theory of moral development outlined six stages within three different levels. Kohlberg extended Piaget's theory, proposing that moral development is a continual process that occurs throughout the lifespan. Moral development relates to decision making by children.

A summary of Kohlberg's theory of stages of moral development (1981) follows:

#### Level 1. Preconventional Morality

- Stage 1 - Obedience and Punishment
  - o The earliest stage of moral development is especially common in young children, but adults are capable of expressing this type of reasoning. At this stage, children see rules as fixed and absolute. Obeying the rules is important because it is a means to avoid punishment.
- Stage 2 - Individualism and Exchange
  - o At level 1 of this stage of moral development, children account for individual points of view and judge actions based on how they serve individual needs.

#### Level 2. Conventional Morality.

- Stage 3 - Interpersonal Relationships
  - o Often referred to as the "good boy-good girl" orientation, this stage of moral development is focused on living up to social expectations and roles. There is an

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emphasis on conformity, being "nice," and consideration of how choices influence relationships.

- Stage 4 - Maintaining Social Order
  - o At this stage of moral development, people begin to consider society as a whole when making judgments. The focus is on maintaining law and order by following the rules, doing one's duty, and respecting authority.

### Level 3. Post conventional Morality

- Stage 5 - Social Contract and Individual Rights
  - o At this stage, people begin to account for the differing values, opinions, and beliefs of other people. Rules of law are important for maintaining a society, but members of the society should agree upon these standards.
- Stage 6 - Universal Principles
  - o Kohlberg's final level of moral reasoning is based upon universal ethical principles and abstract reasoning. At this stage, people follow these internalised principles of justice, even if they conflict with laws and rules.

According to Woolfolk, (1993) Kohlberg's ideas of moral development are based on the premise that at birth, all humans are void of morals, ethics, and honesty. He identified the family as the first source of values and moral development for an individual. He believed that as one's intelligence and ability to interact with others matures, so does one's patterns of moral behavior.

Glazer (1991:217) states that moral, as well as social, development are related to intellectual development. She further states that children have internalized the standards of their parents; they also learn values from the people who are central to their lives.

Glazer concludes that literature, in its exploration of actions and motivations for actions, presents a panorama of value systems. Frye (1964:140) writes that literature exposes for readers the basic wants and needs of other people, the problems they have, the values and attitudes which underlie their decision making. Chambers (1983:28) purports that "children are forming attitudes, finding points of reference, building concepts, forming images to think with, all

of which interact to form a basis for decision-making judgment, for understanding, for sympathy with the human condition.”

### **2.10.3.7 Bourdieu’s theory of habitus**

The term ‘habitus’ refers to a set of acquired patterns of thought, behavior, and taste, which is said by Bourdieu (1990) to constitute the link between social structures and social practice (or social action). Bourdieu and Passeron (1979:14) argue that, above and beyond economic factors, “cultural habits and...dispositions” inherited from the family are fundamentally important to school success.

The concept offers a possible basis for a cultural approach to structural inequality and permits a focus on agency. Bourdieu (1990) sees structure and agency as complementary forces - structure influences human behaviour, and humans are capable of changing the social structures they inhabit. According to some critics it is also notoriously elusive. An illuminating exposition of [habitus] will be found in Jenkins's review of Pierre Bourdieu (1992). Jenkins (1992: 74) also offers this definition of habitus as a set of dispositions which generate practices and perceptions.

For Bourdieu, habitus refers to socially acquired, embodied systems of durable dispositions, tendencies and inclinations, which he calls ‘the embodied history of being in social life’. These are manifested in outlooks, opinions and mannerisms. We are not normally consciously aware of habitus but we may become aware of it through conscious reflection or finding ourselves in an alien environment. Habitus is defined by Bourdieu as “the generative principle of responses more or less well adapted to the demands of a certain field, is the product of individual history, but also, through the formative experiences of earliest infancy, of the whole collective history of family and class” (Bourdieu, 1990: 91).

Habitus is a concept that seeks to explain the dispositions that influence individuals to become who they are, and yet also includes the conditions of existence (Bourdieu, 1990) which individuals’ everyday activities display in their relations to society. Habitus explains how the body is present in the social world as well as social world being present in the body (Reay, 2004). While dispositions make up a person’s habitus (Bourdieu, 1998), a habitus is also formed by an individual’s history. As Nash (1999) argues, habitus discloses the traces of its origins in practice.



Habitus encompasses how people act in a way that is reflective of social structures and their process of socialisation, which is in turn reproduced by their actions. Bourdieu (1990:56) contrasts habitus with consciously formulated intentions.

He characterizes habitus as “embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history... spontaneity without consciousness or will.” Practical sense, Bourdieu (1990:69) writes, is “social necessity turned into nature, converted into motor schemes and body automatism” without agents being fully aware of what they are doing or how they do it. Habitus, Bourdieu (1990:73) writes, is acquired by practical mimesis based on identification, not by conscious effort to imitate something explicitly taken as a model per se. Similarly, the reproduction of habitus takes place “below the level of consciousness” without memory or reflexive, articulated knowledge.

This concept of habitus helps to explain how children respond to literature and how it is revealed in their discourse. Bourdieu (1990) posits that habitus is that which embodies past experiences and internalised socialisation; it is so ingrained in individuals that it becomes part of the unconscious (Bourdieu, 1977; 1990). It provides resources for thinking and acting in particular ways.

It may be added that children’s experience, ethnicity and development cannot be divorced from their specific historical and cultural milieu. Finazzo, (1997: 12) argues that all areas of child development can be addressed within the realm of children’s literature that is multicultural. It expands individuals’ knowledge about themselves and others, geography and natural history, and environmental, social, and historical changes.

### **2.11 Conclusion**

This literature review encapsulates the rationale for sound reading strategies backed by recent and current research, especially in the area of reading acquisition. The literature review also clarifies how theories of language learning explain the acquisition of language and the related linguistic skills required to become motivated and proficient readers. Cognitive theories inform our understanding of the developmental processes that children experience in learning. This review also tried to bring greater clarity concerning the concept of literature-based reading instruction. It is pointed out, that from a theoretical point of view advocates of literature-based

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reading instruction draw upon the whole language philosophy, psycholinguistics, and cognitive psychology. Chapter 3 will outline the methodology, approach and data collection of this study.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

**3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research questions, approach, design and research methodologies adopted in this study. It will discuss the preferred research philosophy in relation to other philosophies and expound the research strategy. It also describes the instruments used to generate the data. Sampling is outlined and the intervention programme is explained.

**3.2 Research question**

The question driving this study is:

What effects does a children's literature- based reading programme have on the higher order reading achievement and motivation of Grade 3 learners?

In addition, the study seeks to answer the following sub-questions:

3.2.1 Is there a correlation between reading attitude, reading motivation and reading proficiency?

3.2.2 Does a positive reading attitude impact on academic achievement?

**3.3 Research approach**

This study is lodged in a qualitative paradigm, and the approach is embedded in action research. The study was guided by the assumptions of interpretivist /constructivist grounded theory, and used qualitative research techniques. The quantitative data was to support the qualitative paradigm and to enhance the validity of the conclusions.

Interpretivists contend that only through the subjective interpretation of and intervention in reality can that reality be fully understood.

The study of phenomena in their natural environment is fundamental to the interpretivist philosophy, together with the acknowledgement that scientists cannot avoid affecting those phenomena they study. They admit that there may be many interpretations of reality, but maintain that these interpretations are in themselves a part of the scientific knowledge they are pursuing. Interpretivism has a tradition that is no less glorious than that of positivism nor is it less rigorous.

The interpretivist paradigm underpins the approach I have chosen, as this would lead me towards understanding what motivates a learner to become an independent and motivated reader and so acquire critical reading skills. Interpretivism concentrates on the individual, and assumes that all people are different; it focuses on human emotion and motivation, which makes this a suitable approach to find answers to the research questions.

### **3.3.1 Action research**

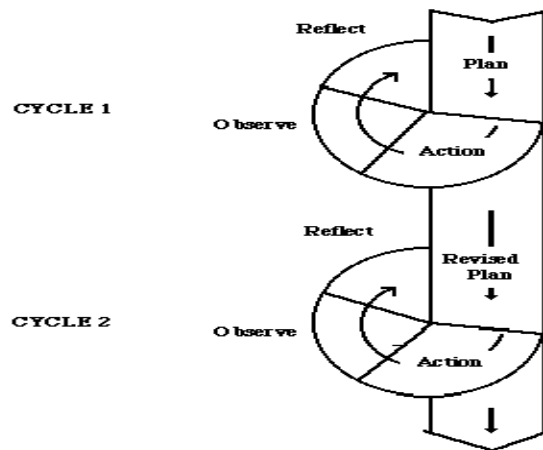
According to Oosthuizen (2002:159) action research is an interpretivist method, the key feature of which is a reflective, spiraling approach to finding solutions. (Kemmis & Wilkinson 1998: 21). Action research is underpinned by a democratic principle, action research can be said therefore to constitute a paradigm in its own right (Kemmis & Henry, 1984). Action research promotes a mindset necessary to instill the framework to maintain a democracy, with a belief that freedom and a less oppressed world is the norm. It promotes “the investigation of reality in order to get a better understanding of the problems and their root causes” (Park, 1993: 3).

Critically literate people are able to “challenge the traditional power structure, allowing communities, employees, and organization helpers to bring change to the structures they are affiliated to” (Park, 1993:3). The underlying feature of action research is reflection. As in all interpretivist research, the focus is on meanings and viewpoints. The salient points of action research are that it is both a process of change (action) and a process of learning through reflection (research) (Webb, 1990). This paradigm is ideally suited to evaluate classroom or teaching practice in order to effect change. Due to action research’s reflective nature, methods are meant to provide a more comprehensive awareness of the problems and/or situations being studied.

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Reflective practice operates under the belief there is no best method or perfect process. The practice is designed to realign past performance according to whatever the performance indicators dictate is good or bad. Practitioners engaging in these more open, reflective ways are inventing methodology as they go along (Newman, 2000).

Action research specifically refers to a disciplined enquiry done by a teacher with the intent that the research will serve to inform and change his or her practices in the future. Ferrance (2000) states implicitly that the term action research is the idea that teachers will begin a cycle of posing questions, gathering data, reflecting, and deciding on a course of action. When these decisions begin to change the school environment, a different set of circumstances appears with different problems posed, which require a new look. It is about how we can change our instruction to impact students.



**Figure 3.1: Action Research Protocol after Kemmis (cited in Hopkins, 1985)**

Figure 3.1 displays the iterative nature of action research (AR) along with the major steps of planning, action, observation and reflection before revising the plan. Elliott (in Kemmis & McTaggart, 1990: 122b) considers the need for communication between all participants to be of paramount importance: Since action research looks at a problem from the point of view of those involved it can only be validated in unconstrained dialogue with them. Since action research involves unconstrained dialogue between "researcher" (whether he be an outsider or teacher/researcher) and the participants, there must be free information flow between them.

**3.3.2 The debate about quantitative and qualitative research**

This section will start by reflecting on the debate about quantitative and qualitative research since it gives an idea of my own position and how my position was shaped. Current educational research supports the orientations to enquiry which have been classified as scientific versus humanistic, quantitative versus qualitative, and positivist versus interpretative. The following section attempts to capture the essence of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research orientations.

**3.3.3 Qualitative or post - positivist research**

Interpretivist orientations to research assume that reality exists only within the context of a mental framework or construct, therefore social reality is not an independent reality, but is socially constructed and can have multiple meanings. The reality of meanings is found in the interpretation that is influenced subjectively by the values and purposes of the researcher. Researchers are not interested in the abstraction or approximation of a single observable reality, but in the presentation of value-based, multiple, holistic, competing, often conflicting realities of multiple stakeholders and participants (Lincoln, 1990).

This type of research makes very little use of numerical data or statistics, but relies heavily on verbal data and subjective analysis. Qualitative research uses interviews, cases and personal documents to produce interpretive knowledge and uncover how people's understanding of their own realities influences their actions and intentions. The focus is on sharing and developing understanding, rather than on discovering universal laws of human interaction as in the case of positivist research (Vermeulen, 1998).

**3.3.4 Quantitative or positivist research**

Quantitative or positivist research is an inquiry that is grounded on the assumption that features of the social environment constitute an objective reality that is relatively constant across time and settings (Gall, 1996). Reality is seen as existing "out there" and science is regarded as the only means to discover the true nature of reality so that it can be predicted and controlled. Only observable and measurable data is taken into account in positivist research. Mouton and Marais (1990) also describe the quantitative approach as more highly formalised and explicitly

controlled with a range that is exactly defined and which, in terms of the methods used, is relatively close to physical sciences.

### **3.3.5 Grounded theory method as a research methodology**

Strauss and Corbin (1998) define the grounded theory approach as a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon.

The primary objective of grounded theory, then, is to expand upon an explanation of a phenomenon by identifying the key elements of that phenomenon, and then categorizing the relationships of those elements to the context and process of the experiment. In other words, the goal is to go from the general to the specific without losing sight of what makes the subject of a study unique.

For Glaser and Strauss (1967; Glaser 1978; Strauss 1987), the defining components of grounded theory practice include the constant comparative method. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) stated that a grounded theory method of research consists of systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analyzing data to build theoretical frameworks that explain the collected data.

The rich data collected from the respondents in this research has led me to employing a grounded theory approach. The use of a constructivist paradigm, and particularly constructivist grounded theory, was the appropriate approach for grounding the findings of response journals in the real life engagement of the context of the respondents.

As "the use of grounded theory method provides a flexible and iterative process for dealing with multiple and conflicting meanings, interpretations and constructions that emanate from the individual's real world engagement with information" (Charmaz, 2003:69), in seeking the respondents' meanings, we must go further than surface meanings or presumed meanings.

A constructivist approach necessitates a relationship with respondents in which they can cast their stories in their terms" (Charmaz, 2003:525). "The grounded theorist's analysis tells a story about people, social processes, and situations. The researcher composes the story; it does not

simply unfold before the eyes of an objective viewer. The story reflects the viewer as well as the viewed” (Charmaz, 2000:15).

Table 3.2 illuminates the correlation between this study and the traits of an interpretivist paradigm.

**Table 3.2: Correlation between the study and interpretivist traits**

Interpretivist	This Study
1. The interpretivist paradigm claims that reality does not live outside the individual.	Each learner’s brings their own experience to bear on finding the meaning of the text.
2. Research in this paradigm focuses on observing the participant in action.	57 learners were observed as they interacted with texts during the literature - based reading intervention.
3. Attempts to understand how humans make sense of their surroundings	Aim of this study was to investigate how readers develop their skills by responding to text.
4. I need to see and understand the world as it is at the core of this paradigm	The aim was to trace literacy development in the 57 learners through their interaction with text and in the groups in the library.

The purpose of this research was to design, implement and evaluate an intervention strategy that would seek to trace the effects of a literature – based reading programme on Grade 3 learners’ achievement and motivation to read. This intervention programme would seek to pursue finding answers to questions such as:

- How well are our learners performing in literacy, especially in reading?
- How can we improve the current levels of performance?
- What progress can we observe (gain)?
- What changes can we make in curriculum, instruction, assessment, or the organization of the learning environment that are likely to improve literacy learning in general and more specifically higher order reading skills in our setting?

Benchmarks to establish attainment of reading levels should include the ability to read literary text or informational text, as well as the of use simple strategies to determine meaning and increase vocabulary for reading. Progress and gain could be measured in terms of achievement



towards independent reading levels. Reading gains were also observed during the data collection process. Respondents became more engaged in reading activities, reading was voluntary and for their own reading pleasure. An increase in expressive language and confidence to participate in group discussions were observed.

### **3.4 Research design**

The research design is an action-research design based on a children's literature-based reading intervention programme in English. Reasons for selecting these instruments are discussed in 3.4.3 below. The Burt Word Recognition Test (1974) measured the pre- and post test abilities of learners' grade reading levels. Results obtained from of the supplementary comprehension test (PIRLS 2006) provided the quantitative component, these were analysed to lend support to observations of gains participants' higher order reading achievement through qualitative analysis of children's responses to literature.

Raw scores were converted to percentiles, the percentile rankings of the respondents were then compared to the PIRLS (2006) benchmark results. Response journals provided the qualitative data; these written and verbal responses were analyzed using a grounded theory approach. The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Mckenna & Kear 1990) generated both quantitative and qualitative data of learners' attitude towards reading for recreational and academic purposes. An analysis was framed to explain how attitude impacts on academic achievement.

#### **3.4.1 Research participants**

The participants were all Grade 3 learners at the research site, a cohort of 57 learners in two classes and were representative of diversity in terms of gender, language grouping, age and reading ability, as well as socio-economic background. The sample was non-exclusionary and was a form of convenience sampling. Both classes were included in this study as the response journals of a larger study would provide richer data and enhance the validity of this study. The richness of the data supported the validity of the findings and conclusions.

The respondents were already placed in ability groups in the current skills-based reading and phonics programme followed by their class teachers. The assumption was that teachers could

cope more adequately with children from diverse backgrounds if they were grouped according to their abilities (Weaver, 1990:40-43).

### 3.4.2 Children's literature selection

Selected genres of children's literature were included in the children's literature-based reading intervention programme:

- Fantasy: *Where The Wild Things Are* (Maurice Sendak, 1963).
- Fantasy: *The Magic Paint Brush* (Julia Donaldson, 2003).
- Folk tale: *The Spoiled Child* (1994, World folk tales).
- Fairy tale: *The Three Little Pigs* (Jon Scieszka, 1989).
- Modern fantasy: *The Tunnel* (Anthony Browne, 1989).
- High Fantasy: *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* (C. S. Lewis, 1950).
- Folk tale: *The Genie* (translated Lang, A (1898 (From Arabian Nights)).
- Traditional: *The Best Thing In The World-* (Unknown, from Dolche list).
- Fantasy: *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory* ( Roald Dahl, 1964).

"Literature also contributes to the academic growth of children. It builds their linguistic knowledge enabling them to communicate more effectively with others" (Cramer, 2004). Various genres were included in the literature selection, such as retelling of traditional folk tales, fairy tales, high fantasies and modern fantasy. The selected genres included mainly folklore and fantasy. Folk literature is very popular and much enjoyed by children (Freeman & Lehman, 2001:84). These genres provide engaging reading material for students. Folk tales are short stories that can be read quickly. This brief format is ideal for learners who lack proficiency in English to tackle more complex reading. At a deeper level folklore contains references to a society's values: what they laugh at; what they scorn, fear, or desire; and how they see themselves (Young & Ferguson, 1995:491). Fantasy stories echo literary patterns (Blatt, 1993:181-192). Fantasy explains universal truths through metaphors; it is serious with profound issues of good and evil, mortality and immortality, compassion and revenge inherent in stories. Fantasy is also humorous, poking fun at our eccentricities and revealing human nature from a different point of view. It often depicts moral and ethical dimensions in characters and actions (Hillman, 1994:176-177). It is around the third grade (ages 8-10) that they have the lexical

flexibility to start appreciating humour, fantasy, vivid settings, and dynamic characters. Interesting topics are essential components of stories for readers of this age group. Topics and subject matter can extend beyond a child's range of knowledge, sentences can be longer and more complex, composite story elements - sub-plots and secondary characters - can be introduced, and themes can be more sophisticated (Johnson, 2003).

### 3.4.3 Instruments

The following instruments were employed for data collection in this research to ensure data triangulation. These varied data sources provided opportunities for convergence and triangulation regarding assertions and the development of categories (Goetz & LeCompte 1984, Miles & Huberman, 1994). The approach to data collection was therefore qualitative with the quantitative component to support the validity of the data.

To gain a holistic sense of the primary data and in order to triangulate, I also collected supplementary data from a comprehension test adapted from PIRLS 2006. The primary data comprised the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS), The Burt Word Recognition Test and the Response Journals of the respondents. Complementary to these, I also video-taped some of the learner responses and discussions, which were transcribed and analysed.

### 3.4.4 Reading intervention programme

The learners were exposed to a literature-based reading programme once a week for five months. Each session was 25 minutes long. The literature used was written in English. The approach was a shared reading approach; this approach provided an opportunity to develop concepts and scaffolding for further independent reading and related language activities. The intervention of this children's literature-based reading programme followed the following protocols:

#### **Step1: Introduce the story**

- Discuss the book cover's title and illustration.
- Invite predictions about the story.
- Point out and explain the author and illustrator.

### **Step 2: Read the story**

- Be dramatic, showing obvious delight in both the storyline and the language.
- If appropriate and convenient, pause and invite predictions.
- Ask brief questions to measure comprehension and spur curiosity.

### **Step 3: Conclude the reading period**

- Allow time and space for spontaneous reaction and comments.
- Ask about parts the children enjoyed most or least.
- Ask questions about the story line, for example why certain events took place.
- Ask questions relating the story to the children, for example, have they experienced something similar, or how would they have handled things differently than the story's characters.

### **Step 4: Conduct additional after-reading activities**

- Ask the children to retell the story in their own words.
- If appropriate, focus on repetitive elements, such as a phrase, chant or chorus, and ask children to chime in as you re-read that element in the story.
- Point to the words in the text to demonstrate the conventions of print.
- Respondents write in their journals, focusing on the personal meaning that the text evokes.

Due to the nature of literature-based teaching, other approaches like paired reading, engaged reading (see 2.3) and independent reading were also utilised in this intervention as instructional approaches. Independent reading is also called voluntary reading and involves personal choice, and reading widely from a variety of sources (Krashen, 1993), while paired reading refers to a strategy in which students read aloud to each other. When using partners, more fluent readers can be paired with less fluent readers, or children who read at the same level can be paired to reread a story they have already read (Topping, 1995). I also explored respondents' interactions

in the reading activities and observed engagement of respondents during the literature discussions following the shared reading activities.

I observed specifically interactions eliciting or suppressing engaged reading. I explored learners' understanding of how the context of the learning situation influenced their patterns of action and interaction during engaged reading and their personal responses to the shared story as well as to the other respondents' comments. I also demonstrated reading strategies with the shared text. The class read the text together and discussed ideas and textual features, engaging in a high level of interaction with me.

### **3.4.5 The Burt word recognition test**

I used The Burt Word Recognition Test to determine the reading baselines of each of the three ability groups before and after the shared reading intervention literature-based reading programme.

The Burt Word Reading Test (1974), a measure of single word recognition, has a long history. It is widely used, has been revised and standardised, and is generally considered to be culturally neutral.

The Test Card consists of 110 words printed in decreasing size of type and graded in approximate order of difficulty.

It is an individually administered test, which provides a measurement of an individual child's word recognition skills.

The Burt Word Recognition test of course identifies one part of the reading process as word recognition comprises only one aspect of the many skills required to be an effective meaning-seeking reader (Rivalland, 1992).

The reading process is a complex one and the Burt Word Recognition Test is not an indicator of reading age, but is used in conjunction with other information. However, it allows teachers to assess a child's reading achievement to aid decisions about appropriate teaching and reading materials and instructional groupings. In addition, the Burt Word Reading Test can prove useful

as an indicator of possible reading problems beyond surface word recognition because word recognition ability can be regarded as an indirect indicator of degrees of control over other complementary skills involved in the reading process.

The version that I have employed is known as the UCT Word Recognition Test. It is similar to the original Burt test in all aspects of the test itself. The norms however are based on median scores that apply to the South African context. While doubts may be expressed over the utility of reading single words in isolation, it remains a robust test especially when used as part of a battery of reading tests. Interpreting the results obtained with this test provided a reliable measure of relative reading gain over time.

It also provided a reliable baseline of Grade and reading age levels of the word recognition ability of the respondents. It is for this reason that I decided to employ this test to measure pre and post reading ability. Note that the maximum reading age possible on the Burt is about 13 years. I employed this test to assess the learners' Grade levels before and after the children's literature – based reading intervention programme. The results of this test measured the reading gain of the learners over the 5 month intervention period.

### **3.4.6 Supplementary comprehension test (Adapted from PIRLS 2006)**

A supplementary comprehension test (PIRLS 2006) was administered after the intervention programme. This post test was included because I wished to obtain an objective perspective on whether respondents' higher order thinking skills could be discerned in their discourse.

PIRLS (2006) reported that more advanced reading skills did not receive emphasis early enough, and that the majority of the 12 reading strategies were only introduced after Grade 4. The performances of learners to whom the more advanced skills were introduced in Grade 1 were substantially better than for learners to whom the strategies were introduced only in Grade 4 or later. The comprehension test (The Upside Down Mice, Dahl, 1981) is based on the aspects of reading literacy which were assessed in PIRLS (2006) namely:

- Purposes for reading
- Processes of comprehension

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This forms the basis for the written test of reading comprehension. In literary reading, the reader engages with the text to become involved in imagined events, settings, actions, consequences, characters, atmosphere, feelings and ideas. The main genre of literary texts when reading for literary experience in PIRLS (2006) assessments is narrative fiction.

Two types of reading at Foundation level account for most of the reading in and out of school: reading for literary experience and reading to use and acquire information.

Narrative fiction is used to assess learners' ability to read for literary experience.

'Process of comprehension' refers to how learners construct meaning of text, make inferences, interpret and integrate ideas and information, and examine and evaluate text, these skills are higher order skills. For the purposes of this research study I focused on narrative fiction to assess the learners' ability to read for literary experience. Rhodes (1978) found a significant positive relationship between children's use of effective reading strategies and the predictability of the stories they read.

"Comprehension has come to be viewed as the essence of reading" (Durkin, 1993: 207).

The selected text, *The Upside Down Mice* (Dahl, 1981) was used to assess comprehension and higher order thinking skills of learners as well as writing skills. This quirky tale in which an old man rids his house of mice by means of a complicated trick which involves sticking all the furniture to the ceiling, focused on literary experience. This was a written test, with fourteen questions, seven multiple choice and seven open response questions. The responses of the respondents were analysed according to the processes of comprehension set out in PIRLS (2006) and used to grade the learners' levels of comprehension as well as levels of reading and interpretation of the text.

The scores achieved individually were intended to indicate the respondents' mastery of comprehension skills and to give an insight into which strategies had been mastered. The learners' comprehension and journal entry responses after the intervention of the reading programme were intended to show the impact of the reading programme on the development of children's higher order reading and comprehension skills, although the research could not exclude the impact of normal teaching on the acquisition of these skills.

The quantified data measured the learners' growth and achievement in various areas of reading comprehension, responding to literature in writing and vocabulary extension. The data were analysed to trace the impact of the intervention and considered the following categories:

- Age of learners
- Gender
- Home and additional languages of learners ( Afrikaans, English and IsiXhosa)
- Grade levels at time of testing ( Ability groups Pre and Post )
  - Reading above Grade level
  - Reading at Grade level
  - Reading below Grade level

### **3.4.7 The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS)**

The survey that I decided to administer is known as The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) and was developed by McKenna and Kear (1990). Defining reading attitudes is a complex process and a number of different models have been proposed in the attempt to explain the relationship between reading attitudes and reading performance. The McKenna model (1994) was developed based on the view that attitudes are mainly affective and that attitudes and beliefs are causally related. McKenna and Kear's instrument (The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, ERAS) was designed to measure the affective aspects of children's reading attitudes in two dimensions: their attitudes towards recreational reading and their attitudes towards school-based academic reading (McKenna & Kear, 1990).

This normed instrument was specifically designed to measure the attitude of primary school learners towards reading. Lipson and Wixson (2003:130) acknowledge that "the student's attitude toward reading is a central factor affecting reading performance." These conclusions are based on a long history of research in which attitude and achievement have been consistently linked (Walberg & Tsai 1985:159-167).

Two attitudinal constructs of reading, namely, (a) attitude towards recreational reading, and (b) attitude towards academic reading, were measured, using a pictorial format because of its natural appeal for children. A set of items was selected based on empirically documented reliability and validity (Mckenna & Kear 1990).



This survey was administered before the intervention programme. A follow-up survey or comparative survey was again administered after the intervention. These profiles were compared to ascertain if growth in the two constructs was noticeable.

The ERAS is a 4 point Likert scale test that aims to establish a consistent, appropriate expectation on the part of the learners. Each item begins “How do you feel...?” The survey provides quantitative estimates of two important constructs of children’s attitudes toward reading (Mckenna & Kear, 1990).

My reason for including this survey is that it was used to make initial conjecture about the reading attitudes of the learners who were reading below grade level before the intervention programme. This survey also provided a convenient group profile and it was a means of monitoring the attitudinal impact of the shared reading programme.

### **3.4.8 Response journals**

Qualitative data was collected from the journal entries of the respondents. The learners’ responses provided the narrative and qualitative data on their literacy progress. Writing is a critical component of any reading programme. They wrote and reflected on their reading, connecting themselves personally with the texts, which enhances comprehension and interpretive skills. They also wrote and reflected on their use of reading strategies, thus enhancing their critical thinking and meta-cognitive skills. The data that was collected focused on the learners’ responses to the notions of aesthetic reading, efferent reading and ‘meaning making’.

The aim of these response journals was to gain insight into how the child reader responds to and interprets literature. “When readers read literature, their personal memories, feelings, and thought associations may be evoked by the text”. This perspective on reading is also known as reader response theory (Rosenblatt 1938, 1978). Martinez and Roser (1991: 652) refer to classrooms where responses to literature thrive. These classrooms seem to be characterized by teachers’ valuing of responses as the crux of literacy growth.

Valuing of responses in the classroom is evident when teachers (a) provide opportunities for response, (b) provide response models, and (c) receive children’s responses (in all their

diversity). Permitting students to read fiction and poetry aesthetically enhances the goal of providing children with pleasurable experiences with literature (DeGross & Galda 1992).

Using quality children's literature is fundamental in the process of individual response and creative interpretation (Meek 2001). Martin and Leather (1994:39) support this view when they state that books become something different for each reader and children respond to different literature in different ways. The context encourages children to verbalize their various interpretations while valuing the insights and understanding that peers offer (King 2001: 35).

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

As I have been working with young children, I ensured that parents or guardians' permission was obtained in writing for observing and interviewing the learners. Parents were given information about this research project by letter. I explained the possible benefits that this reading intervention programme could have on the reading achievement and reading motivation of their children.

Parents could make informed decisions about allowing their children to participate in the research project. In conducting the research I gave consideration to protecting the identities of the participants in test results, surveys and reports on the group selected as well as the school principal and teachers. I also ensured that information with regard to the research findings was given to the research participants, both learners and teachers as well as parents, in a way that was appropriate for their level of understanding. Signed consent was obtained by the school principal of the research site.

### **3.6 Delimitations and limitations**

This study is limited to one research site and includes only the Grade 3 learners. It was designed to reflect on current reading teaching practice at the research site. A delimitation of this research was not including a larger group of Grade 3 learners from other research sites.

A further limitation is the possible impact of teaching strategies, combined with the learning styles of the learners on their achievement. If reading is the result of a transaction occurring

between readers, and text and teacher, then on a methodological plane, this will signify that the teacher-researcher was embedded in the situation.

I was learning from and with my learners. If so, in my position as the researcher I cannot pretend to be totally neutral and objective but rather must try to have a singular perspective, that is, that of a teacher-researcher who spent five months with her research participants. While such a viewpoint may provide a rich understanding of the data in context, it also presents some risks, such as, among others, a halo effect.

The halo effect is defined by Thorndike (1920: 469-477) as "a problem that arises in data collection when there is carry-over from one judgment to another." He further expanded that it is "...an extension of an overall impression of a person (or one particular outstanding trait) to influence the total judgment of that person". I have sought to overcome this possible bias by triangulation of the data collection processes.

I would however like to point out that the statistical significance in one project might not have any or enough generalisable significance to have important implications for educational practice due to the size of the sample. A large-scale study is needed to justify changes to educational practice. This does not rule out that the instrument, the Burt word recognition test employed in this study, does have value to determine individual or group baseline assessments of learners' Grade levels or reading age levels. It could also be used as a diagnostic tool to collect data in order to make decisions about reading instruction or intervention programmes. It is encouraging, however that there was a positive shift in reading ability, which led to an increase in vocabulary.

### **3.7 Data analysis of this study**

Data collected from the instruments were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Bell (1993) argues that data collected by means of questionnaires, interviews, diaries or any other method mean very little until they are captured, recorded, analysed and interpreted. The quantitative data was analysed by means of a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), basic statistics and graphs. This was done using graphs, t-tests, chi square tests and the Pearson Correlation. The qualitative data was analyzed using the constant comparative method. Emerging themes were linked to the theoretical framework and presented in the literature review.

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

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From the above discussion it is evident that both quantitative and qualitative approaches were useful for the purpose of this study. These results will be documented in Chapter 4.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**PRESENTATION OF THE DATA**

**4.1 Introduction**

The findings presented in this chapter respond to the question driving the study:

What effects does a children's literature-based reading programme have on the reading achievement of higher order reading skills and motivation of Grade 3 learners? The quantitative data will seek to answer the question on reading motivation and the qualitative data aims to determine the levels of reading achievement and focus on the transaction with text and higher order reading skills.

In the first section of this chapter I present the results from the quantitative and qualitative research separately. In the second section on analysis, I synthesise the findings from the different data sets. These are: The Burt Word Recognition Test, The Supplementary Comprehension Test, The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and The Response Journals.

**4.1.1 Profile of respondents**

The average chronological age of the sample at the end of intervention was 9 years and 5 months. The sample consisted of 35 female and 23 male respondents, 58 in total. The composition of the sample with regard to home language and gender was as follows: IsiXhosa was spoken by the majority of the respondents, namely, 21 females and 10 males. A minority in the sample, namely, 4 females and 2 males, spoke Afrikaans. English as mother-tongue was spoken by 10 females and 11 males.

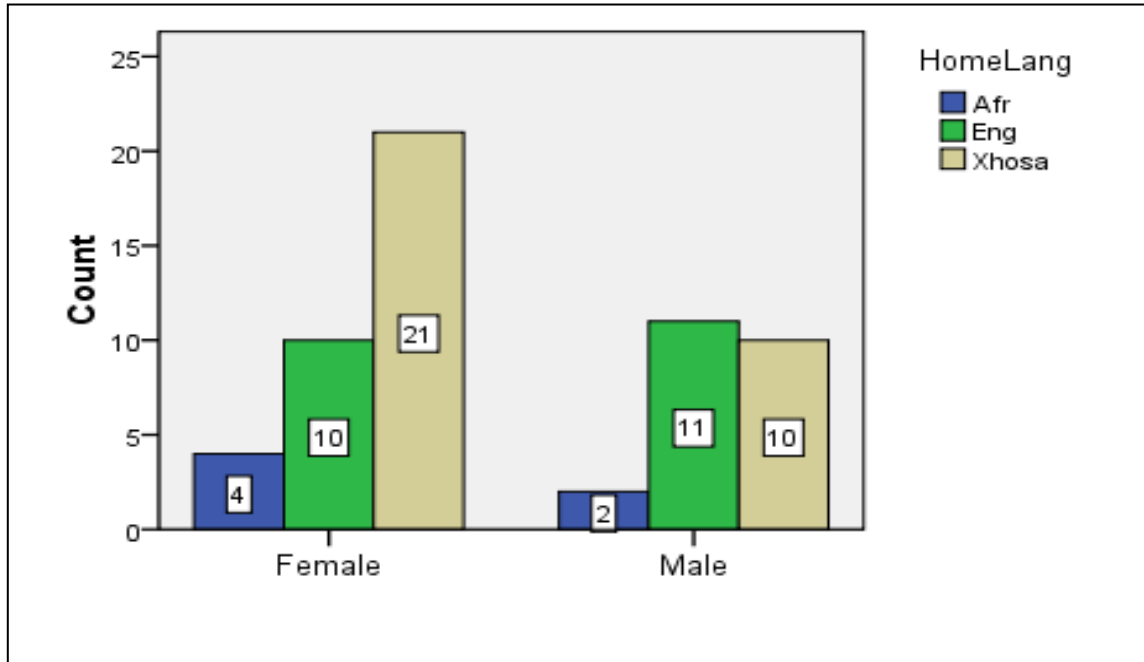


Figure 4.1: Respondents' home language profile

#### 4.1.2 Findings: sources of data

The Burt Word Recognition Test (1974) measured the respondents' word recognition ability, as well as acquired vocabulary. The Supplementary Comprehension Test (PIRLS 2006) assessed purposes for reading and processes of comprehension. The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Mckenna & Kear 1990) was used to measure attitudes and motivation towards reading. The data collected from the respondents' response journals was produced by the Shared Reading Intervention Programme which was based on selected genres of children's literature.

#### 4.2 Presentation of quantitative data

As each data set is presented the answer to relevant elements of the research question will be discussed.

##### 4.2.1 The Burt word recognition test

This test was conducted in English. Using the raw scores of the Burt pre-test, respondents were divided into 3 reading ability levels according to Grade level norms. These levels were

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

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categorised as above Grade level, at Grade level and below Grade level. The pre-test was administered to 57 respondents.

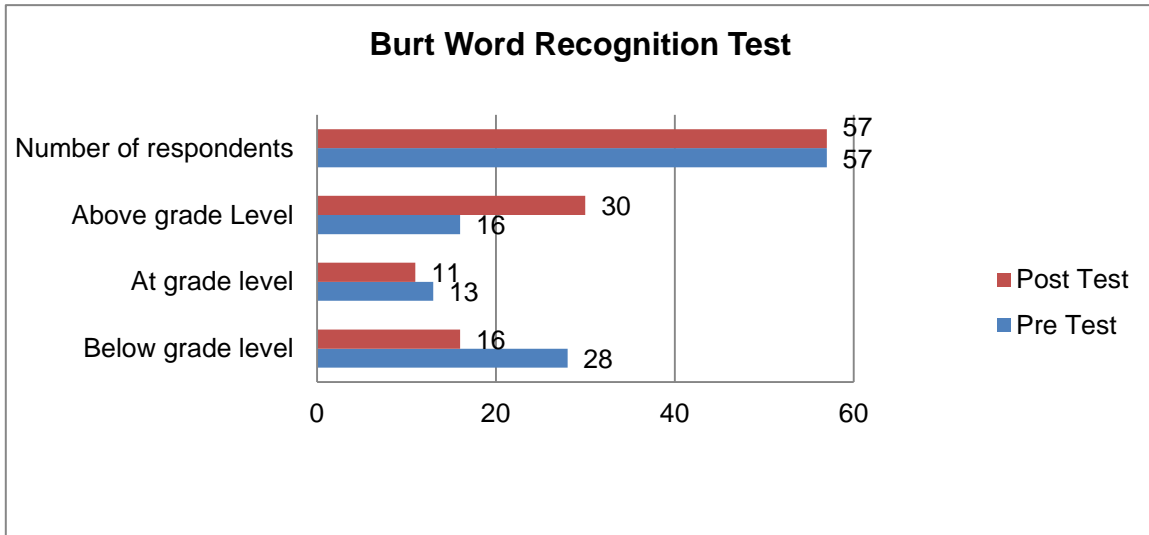
The raw scores in the pre-test revealed that 28(49%) respondents were decoding below Grade level, 13 (22.8%) respondents were at Grade level and 16(28%) were above Grade level. The raw scores in the post-test revealed that 16 (28%) were below Grade level, 11 (19.2%) were at Grade level and 30 (52.6%) were above Grade level.

Analysis of the results of the Burt pre-test according to home language indicated that the IsiXhosa speaking respondents outnumbered Afrikaans and English respondents in scoring above Grade level. These scores were as follows; 34% of IsiXhosa speakers, 12% of English speakers and 5% of Afrikaans speakers were decoding above Grade level in the post-test.

The results for the pre-test show no significant differences between the genders. In the post-test females outnumber the males by showing growth in their above Grade level scores.

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Progression from below Grade level to above Grade level from the pre-test to the post-test is statistically significant. (P-value is less than 0.001) This is also the case for the progression from below Grade level to at Grade level as is shown in Figure 4.2. The pre-test revealed that 28 respondents were decoding below Grade level, the post test showed a significant improvement.



**Figure 4.2: Progression between pre test and post test**

Figure 4.2 displays the proportionate increase of the word recognition ability of respondents between the pre test and post test. Significant improvement in two of the three categories was evident. The progression from reading below Grade level to above Grade level is evident, as well as from below Grade level to at Grade level. The proportion of respondents that were at Grade level remained more or less consistent. In the pre-test, 49, 1% were below Grade level, 22% at Grade level and 28% above Grade level. The post-test indicates a significant improvement: below Grade level decreased to 28%, at Grade level to 19, 2% and those decoding above Grade level increased to 52, 6%.

### 4.2.2 Supplementary comprehension test (PIRLS 2006)

Before the intervention programme was implemented, discussions held with class teachers, as well as documentary evidence of the Annual National Assessments, (DoE , 2009) results for Grade 3 Literacy at the research site revealed that respondents were experiencing difficulties in writing paragraphs and connected sentences, and also demonstrated their difficulty in the understanding of higher order questions and writing appropriate answers. The questions that



## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

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learners were expected to answer in the Annual National Assessments, (DoE, 2009) cannot be compared to or seen as an equivalent of PIRLS (2006) assessment in terms of assessing higher order skills, as the Annual National Assessments (2009) were cognitively less demanding (see 5.1.2).

PIRLS (2006) was more rigorous as passages were written specifically to elicit the full range of comprehension processes. Consideration was also given to the nature and level of linguistic features; and density of information. In the Annual National Assessments (DoE, 2009) reading passages were unauthentic and tested mainly lower level skills. Competencies and skills included; response to visual cues, ability to use correct tense, infer the morale of a story in a given text, deduce meaning of unfamiliar words used in a given text.

The main form of literary texts when reading for literary experience in PIRLS (2006) assessments is narrative fiction. The Upside Down Mice (Dahl, 1981) was used to assess comprehension and higher order thinking skills of learners, as well as writing skills. This comprehension test was aimed in PIRLS (2006) at learners who had completed four years of formal schooling.

The four comprehension processes specified in the PIRLS framework include:

- Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information
- Make straightforward inferences
- Interpret and integrate ideas and information
- Examine and evaluate content, language, and textual elements

After the 5 months of exposure to the intervention reading programme, the supplementary comprehension test drawn from the PIRLS (2006) question bank was administered to the respondents who were about to complete their 3rd year of formal schooling. There were fourteen questions that were scored out of seventeen marks. The main reason for using this test as a post test was to measure the respondents' abilities to respond to higher order skills after exposure to the intervention programme. It is significant to note that the raw scores indicate that 43 of the 58 respondents' achieved scores between the 50th and 100th percentile. Thus, 74,1 % of respondents' achieved within this range. The raw scores indicate a standard deviation of 2.886, a median of 9, a mean score of 9.14 and a standard error of .379. (Refer to appendix I).

Figure 4.3 graphically presents the raw scores achieved by the respondents in the supplementary test which was a post test.

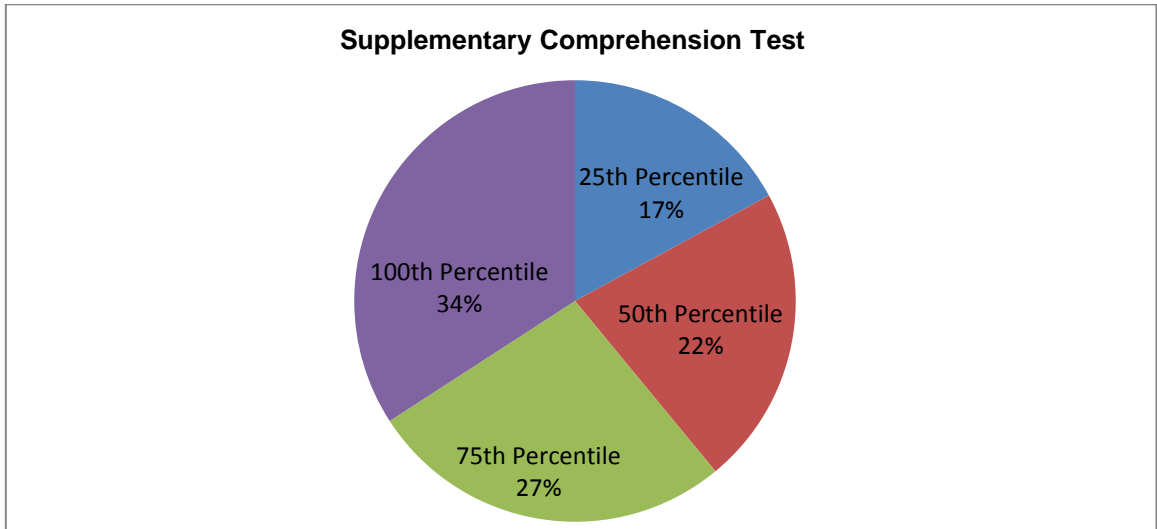


Figure 4.3: Results of respondents percentile ranking on the supplementary comprehension test.

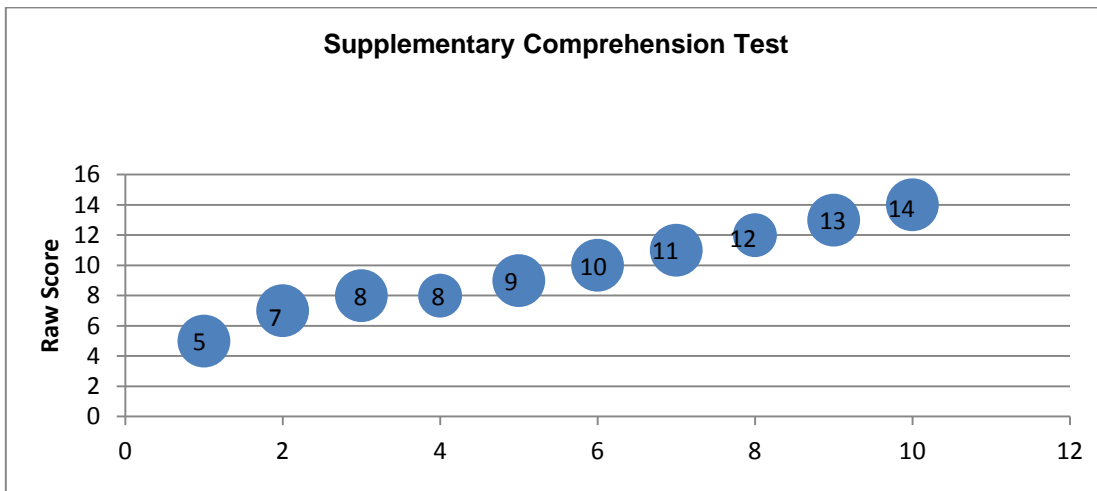


Figure 4.4: Results of the supplementary comprehension test (Adapted from PIRLS 2006).

(The size of the bubbles relate to the number of respondents)

Figure 4.4 graphically displays the scores of the respondents for the supplementary test. Fourteen was the highest score that was achieved out of a possible seventeen marks. Five was the lowest score which was achieved by six of the respondents.' (Refer to appendix I).

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

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The four comprehension processes specified in the PIRLS (2006) are tabled below:

**Table 4.1:**

<b>Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information</b>	<b>Make straightforward inferences</b>	<b>Interpret and integrate ideas and information</b>	<b>Examine and evaluate content, language, and textual elements</b>
57 % achieved	68 % achieved	56 % achieved	44 % achieved
49% under achieved	36% under achieved	45% under achieved	9% under achieved

Table 4.1 explains the performance of the respondents' and to what extent they have acquired and applied the skills expected in PIRLS (2006). It gives a breakdown of the various higher order questions. The language proficiency of the respondents' was measured by their ability to demonstrate satisfactory and appropriate interpretation and comprehension of the text. 57% could retrieve explicitly stated information, 68% could make straightforward inferences, and 56% of respondents' were successful in interpreting and integrating ideas and information. The last process of examining and evaluating content, language and textual elements saw 44% of respondents' able to give satisfactory responses. The benchmark descriptor "achieved" has reference to answers that were marked as correct, and the descriptor "under achieved" those answers that were only partially correct or incorrect. The respondents' results for Annual National Assessments (DoE, 2009) discussed in 4.2.2 became a precursor for administering the PIRLS (2006) supplementary comprehension test. The more rigorous and cognitive demands of PIRLS (2006) prompted me to employ this test as a supplementary test to gauge the ability of the respondents to answer higher order comprehension questions after the intervention programme.

### **4.2.3 The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS)**

A pre- and post-intervention survey on the recreational and academic reading attitudes of the respondents was appropriate to answer the main element of the research question, namely: "What effects does a children's literature-based reading programme have on reading achievement and motivation of Grade 3 learners?"

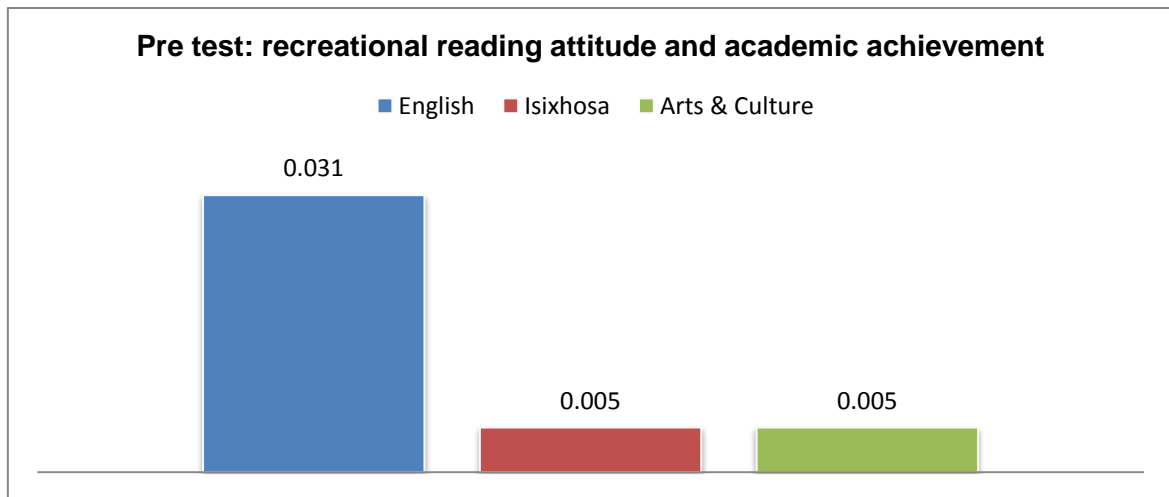
## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Beginning and ending scores were totalled, and means and standard deviations were calculated and compared. (Refer to appendix J). The correlated means t-test was used to compare the mean scores of the respondents' on the ERAS measure employed as a pre-test and a post-test in order to gain insight into possible changes in attitude and motivation towards recreational reading and academic reading (McKenna & Kear 1990).

In analysing the scores of the ERAS in appendix J, the descriptive statistics, pair 1 and 2 indicate, no difference between the pre-test and the post-test for recreational reading. A high level of positive attitudes and motivation towards recreational reading is evident from the scores in both tests.

In pair 3 of the descriptive statistics, the pre-test in June shows a more positive attitude towards academic reading than in the post-test. The post test indicates a change in this initial attitude and reflects a negative change in attitudes and motivation towards academic reading. It appears that there is a statistically significant difference in the scores for academic reading between the pre-test and the post-test. (P-value less than 0.05). (Refer to appendix J).

### 4.2.4 Correlations between academic achievement and reading attitude



**Figure 4.5**

Figure 4.5 shows that the pre-test correlations were found to be positive and statistically significant between recreational reading and the learning areas English ( $r = 0.322$ ,  $p = 0.031$ ), IsiXhosa ( $r = 0.526$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ) and Arts and Culture ( $r = 0.409$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ).

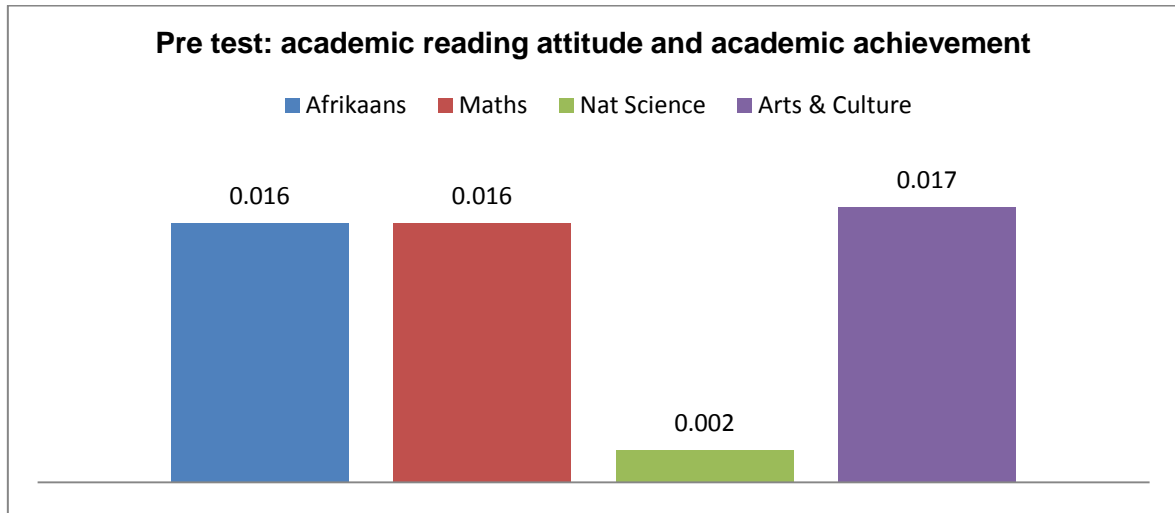


Figure 4.6

Figure 4.6 shows academic reading attitude reflecting a positive relationship with learning areas like Afrikaans ( $r = 0.559$ ,  $p = 0.016$ ), Mathematics ( $r = 0.356$ ,  $p = 0.016$ ), Natural Science ( $r = 0.442$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ) and Arts and Culture ( $r = 0.355$ ,  $p = 0.017$ ).

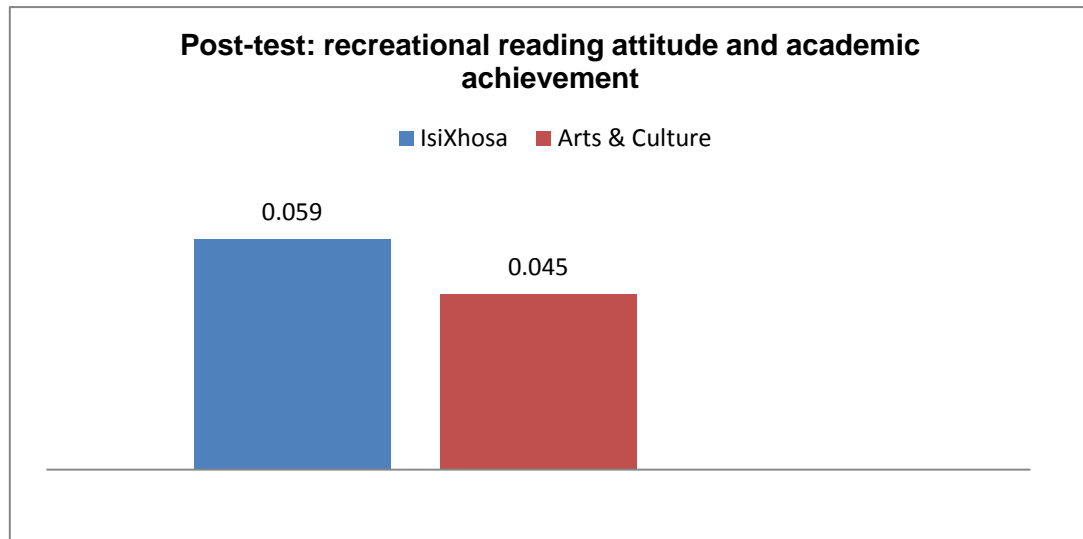


Figure 4.7

In the post-test recreational reading attitude correlated only with Arts and Culture ( $r = 0.267$ ,  $p = 0.045$ ) and isiXhosa ( $r = 0.332$ ,  $p = 0.059$  (significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ )).

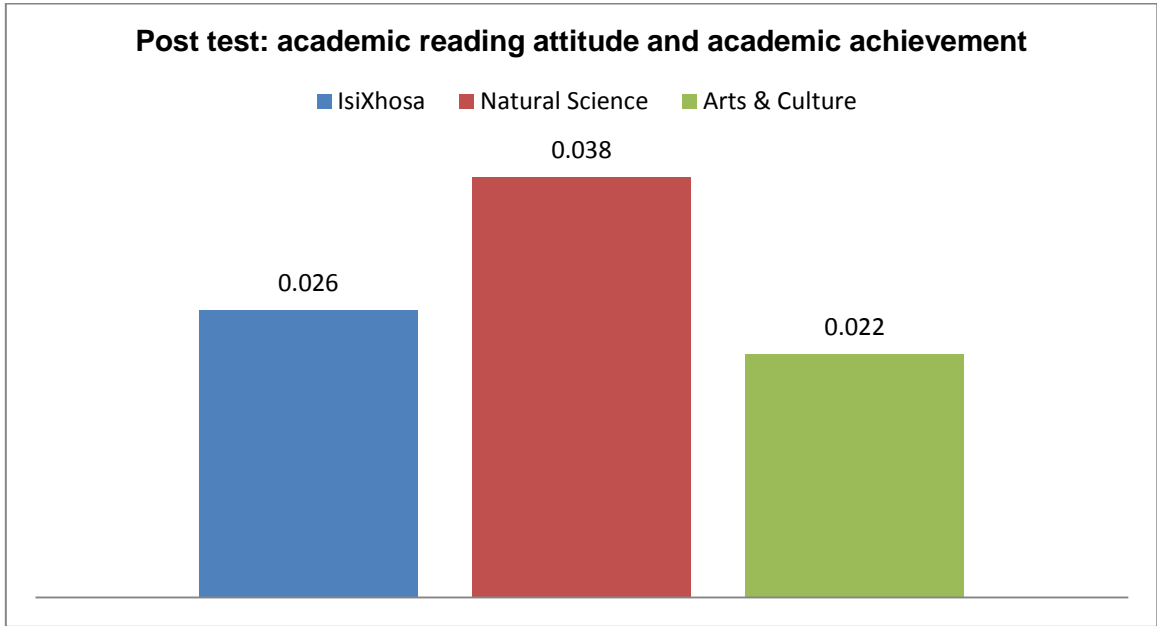


Figure 4.8

In Figure 4.8 academic reading attitude indicate correlations with IsiXhosa ( $r = 0.386$ ,  $p = 0.026$ ), Natural Science ( $r = 0.276$ ,  $p = 0.038$ ) and Arts and Culture ( $r = 0.304$ ,  $p = 0.022$ ).

The Pearson Correlation technique was used to find if a possible relationship existed between the respondents' academic performance in all Learning Areas at the end of Grade 3 and their reading attitude as measured in the ERAS.

The above figures display the statistical correlation between positive recreational and positive academic reading attitudes and high academic achievement in certain Learning Areas. This correlation produced a numerical indication of the degree of the relationship between the ERAS and academic achievement.

The post test results of the survey show a negative attitude towards reading for academic purposes and the correlation with academic achievement (P-value 0.05).

### 4.3 Presentation of qualitative data

In this section, I present a summary of my analysis and interpretations of the respondents' responses to the selected children's literature.

### 4.3.1 The response journals

Interventions of shared reading sessions with Grade 3 learners took place on a weekly basis over a period of 5 months. Learners received an introduction to the intervention sessions. The aim was to explain the reasons for the intervention to them. Enlarged copies of the first 5 pages of the story were pasted on the wall. Learners read the first 5 pages of the story on their own as they moved in small groups from page to page.

This was followed by a discussion of what they understood and of their predictions for the rest of the story. The reason for this was twofold, first to observe their interaction with the text, and to gain an informal understanding of their level of independent reading and ability to discuss and make meaning of the text. Then I read the complete story to the group. The respondents wrote their responses in their journals after the shared reading and literature discussion.

It was necessary to guide the participants' responses through prompts, as English was not their mother tongue.

In this intervention programme, students had ample opportunity to practice their writing skills using their journals. In the response journals the participants were encouraged to make personal connections with the narratives and react to characters and events.

*Where The Wild Things Are* (Sendak, 1963) was the first story of the shared reading sessions, the aim of the discussion was to determine their level of comprehension in terms of the PIRLS (2006) criteria. The rest of the selected intervention sessions followed the shared reading protocols as set out in Chapter 3.

During the process of organizing, classifying and analysing the data of the respondents' response journals, various unexpected themes emerged from the learners' responses. Open-ended responses were then analysed using the constant comparative method.

Themes that emerged from the response journals were themes of philosophy, Habitus, morality and ethics, religion, strong societal mores, socio-cultural models, emotional responses and adult authority.

### 4.3.2 Data collected from response journals

In this data set I give a general summary of each genre and quote a number of relevant responses for each.

**Week 1: Text: *Where the wild things are* by Maurice Sendak, (1963).**

#### Summary of responses

Responses to Sendak's (1963) story reflected the culture of the respondents' communities. The mother was seen as the one to meet out punishment if the child was disobedient. In the class discussion or exploratory talk all respondents held the view that the child should unquestioningly obey adult instructions, or run the risk of being punished for being disobedient. The mother was also seen as the nurturer and carer and the "good mother" figure was evident. Children accepted adult authority. The main character was in conflict with his mother and his own anger. Respondents supported the mother's punishment of her son.

Question: Do you think it was the right thing for Max to be sent to bed without food?

Respondent 1: Yes, he always did not listen and she sent him to bed without food.

Respondent 2: Yes, she said to Max, you will go to bed without food.

Respondent 3: Yes, you are not going to get your supper.

Question: Why do you like this character?

Respondent 4: She made food for Max, so he could smell it. She takes care of her son.

Respondent 5: She is a beautiful woman and wants her child to like other children.

Respondent 6: She was beautiful like a queen. She is always happy.



## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

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**Week 2: Text: *The Magic Paint Brush* by Julia Donaldson, (2003).**

### Summary of responses

In analysing the responses, it was evident that respondents of this age group related in a very real sense to stories from the fantasy genre. Many responses focused on themes of kindness, gentleness, happiness, poverty, greed and wealth represented by the characters in this story. Everyone expressed enthusiasm for the idea of having the power to create magical things if they had a magic paint brush.

Their understanding of the storyline was evident and they had a clear understanding of the main elements in the story. The greed of the emperor was seen as a negative character trait. Giving to the poor was seen as the right thing to do. Those who wanted a magic brush expressed the wish to have something magical and special for themselves.

Question: What did you think about the characters in the story?

Respondent: 7: She is smart and beautiful and kind and gentle. He is jealous and evil.

Respondent: 8: The emperor was greedy for gold. He was greedy for money.

Respondent: 9: Shen is important, because she painted things for poor people.

Question: Why did you like the story?

Respondent: 10: The brush can make anything be real. If she paints a picture, it comes to life.

Respondent: 11: It is about magic and I like magic stories, because one day you can have a magic key or a magic brush and you can be lucky.

**Week 3: Text: *The Spoiled Child in World folk tales* edited by A. Stern (1994).**

### Summary of responses

Responses centred on strong societal values, as well as adult authority and being subservient to elders. Discussions focused on the deeper meaning of the text. The theme and story line had

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

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many features of which a number of respondents' who had a similar cultural background could relate to. Those that have close ties with families in rural villages mentioned the cultural similarities. They expressed surprise at the way in which the main character displayed the negative qualities of being lazy. Laziness was not acceptable in the communities that they found themselves in, and disrespect to the in-laws and elders in the community.

This story helped the respondents see the consequence of disobedience. This relates to stage 1: Obedience and punishment in Kohlberg's (1981) theory of stages of moral development. In the recorded discussion respondents referred to the biblical aphorism derived from II Thessalonians 3:10, "He who does not work, neither shall he eat." The majority of respondents were familiar with this verse as it was often used in the home. Respondents had strong feelings about obeying God's word. Learners were introduced to setting in the context of the narrative being read as well as literary elements like sequencing and prediction.

Question: What did you like about the story?

Respondent: 12: I liked it when Galinka started to work and then she was given something to eat.

Respondent: 13: When the father said, if you don't clean the house, you will not eat or get bread.

Respondent: 14: I like it when you must work for your bread.

Respondent: 15: I liked the part when Galinka rolled up her sleeves and worked.

Question: What did you not like about the story?

Respondent: 16: I did not like it when she did not want to clean or light the fire.

Respondent: 17: I did not like it when she was lazy.

**Week 4: *The Three Little Pigs* by J.Scieszka, (1989). (retold by Margot Zemach).**

### Summary of responses

The analyses revealed an understanding of the literary elements, story structure, setting, problem and solution. Respondents picked up on nuances in the story and differences in character traits and were able to retell the story from a different character's perspective. In the

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

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exploratory talk, respondents alluded to the importance of making good choices and the consequences of poor choices.

There was a strong sense of “right and wrong and justice”; “punishment” of the wolf by the pigs was deserved. The status of the mother as a single parent who was poor and was forced to send them out into the world was mentioned by a few respondents. This justification was acceptable, as a reason why the mother had to send her sons out into the world to seek their fortunes.

Question: Which character would you like to be, and why?

Respondent: 18: The third pig, who was clever, and could protect himself.

Respondent: 19: The third pig, he was independent and can do things on his own.

Respondent: 20: The wolf, because he is strong.

### **Week 5: *The Lion, The Witch, And The Wardrobe* C.S. Lewis, (1950).**

#### Summary of responses

The responses centred on themes of magic, fantasy and imagination. Many respondents referred to togetherness of family, feeling safe and being free to explore and having the right to remain in a magical place like Narnia as well as experiences of power and escape from limits of time and place. They had strong views on Edmund’s betrayal of his siblings. Forgiveness was the right thing to do. “If God is able to forgive us, then we should do likewise”. The majority of respondents were prepared to forgive Edmund for his lies and betrayal, because they felt that the bond of family was important no matter the transgression. Issues of morality and ethics were fore-grounded when they questioned Edward’s betrayal and the White Witch’s motives. These responses were also interspersed with philosophical diversions.

Task: Pretend that you are Edmund. Write a letter to your siblings and ask them to forgive you for what you have done.

Respondent: 20: I am sorry for what I have done. Lying was not the right thing to do.

Respondent: 21: I am so sorry; I was selfish and should be more respectful.

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

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Respondent: 22: I am very sorry for lying to you and betraying you. I know now that I was only thinking of myself. I hope that you forgive me.

### **Week 6: *The Tunnel* Anthony Browne, (1989).**

#### Summary of responses

In the group discussion fear was juxtaposed to bravery. That we do everything for family even if our own life is at risk was central to the response. Responses about exploring unsafe places in the neighbourhoods were talked about. Safe places like parks and places to explore did not exist for the respondents. Belonging and love were strong emotional responses that were foregrounded. There was sadness about the fact that “playing outside was not safe.” “Maybe only in storybooks and movies,” said one respondent. Responses were of a philosophical nature, as they commented on these perplexities.

Respondent: 23: I liked it when Rose saved her brother.

Respondent: 24: When she was brave to enter the tunnel.

Respondent: 25: When her tears turned him into a human again.

Respondent: 26: This story was too scary for girls.

### **Week 7: *The Genie* (Folktale from Arabian Nights) A. Stern (Ed) (1994).**

#### Summary of responses

Themes of good and evil were highlighted by the respondents. The fact that the fisherman was old and poor also resonated with them, and sympathy was felt for his plight. The majority of respondents could relate a story about a grandparent who was still trying to provide for the family, but was struggling to do so. When he tricked the genie, he got the punishment that he deserved for threatening to kill the old man.

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

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Respondent: 27: Not all genies are evil; there are good ones who make your wishes come true.

Respondent: 28: I am glad that the old man tricked the genie, because he needs to feed his family.

Respondent: 29: If you do bad things to others, bad things will happen to you.

### **Week 8: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* Roald Dahl, (1964).**

#### Summary of responses

Many aspects of Charlie's life reflected those of the respondents. There was mention of poverty, unemployed parents, living with the extended family in a small house and a shortage of regular meals and lack money for luxury items. The respondents discussed these observations after listening to the first chapter. As the story progressed, the discussion focused on his virtuous nature and his respectful behaviour towards others. They felt that if you compared Charlie to the other four contestants, he was by far the most deserving winner. The respondents all focused on the importance of family. When Charlie won the competition, Mr. Wonka expected him to give up his family. Charlie turned down the offer. In the end Charlie was instrumental in reuniting Mr. Wonka with his father, which received acknowledgement by the respondents.

Respondent: 30: I wish that Charlie finds a golden ticket.

Respondent: 31: Then his family will not be poor anymore.

Respondent: 32: If you show respect to others, good things can happen to you.

Respondent: 33: I will not leave my family for money.

Respondent: 34: Charlie made the right choice, because family is important.

### **Week 9: *The best thing in the World* (This passage contains all of the 220 Dolch Basic Sight Words).**

#### Summary of responses

The discussion centred on having material things versus what are priorities. There was agreement that one should prioritise what is most important. Responses that emerged were based on human values such as kindness ; having a family, especially a mother; acceptance of others; a good education; sharing what you have; material things, like sleeping in my own bed;

food to eat every day and water. Elements of fantasy and the magical were frequently mentioned.

Respondent: 34: The best thing for me is to care for my family and be kind to people.

Respondent: 35: When people are sick, our job is to help them.

Respondent: 36: The best thing in the world for me is friendship and love.

Respondent: 37: The best thing for me is to be a princess and meet Father Christmas.

### **4.3.3 Writing samples from the response journals:**

Although the principal focus of the response journals was to assess the respondents' meaning making when engaged with authentic narrative text, an added advantage was that it provided samples of their writing. These journals show substantial improvement over time in how the respondents' writing skills were developed, the elaboration of topics and their thinking about it. Sentence construction and the use of new vocabulary reflected functional use of written language and increased writing proficiency of the respondents. The expressive language became more descriptive.

## **4.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter the findings of the research data were presented. Findings from each of the instruments provided corroborative support for answers to the research questions. Chapter 5 will discuss each insight in relation to the theories reviewed in Chapter 2.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSIONS OF THE RESULTS AND FINDINGS

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this section I discuss and interpret conclusions of the research findings and draw out some of their implications for the teaching of a literature-based reading programme. Discussions on findings of the quantitative data support findings of the qualitative data. Each insight will be further reviewed in relation to theories reviewed in Chapter 2.

In the first section of chapter 5 I discuss the findings from the quantitative and qualitative research separately. In the second section I reflect on the findings from the different data sets. These are: The Burt Word Recognition Test, The Supplementary Comprehension Test, The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and The Response Journals.

#### 5.1.1 Quantitative data

##### 5.1.1.1 The Burt word recognition test

###### Discussion

The Burt Word Recognition test is a measure of a child's word recognition skills. This measurement of course identifies one part of the reading process, as word recognition comprises only one aspect of the many skills required to be an effective meaning-seeking reader. Large vocabularies promote comprehension. (Rivalland, 1992). Figures 4.2 & 4.3 indicate the levels of word recognition of respondents in this study

A large vocabulary has been associated with literacy development across a variety of studies (Anderson & Freebody, 1981). The connection between a rich and varied vocabulary and school achievement has long been recognized. Vocabulary knowledge is closely connected and critical to the comprehension and understanding of text (Stahl, Hare, Sinatra, & Gregory, 1991).

In this study there is evidence to show vocabulary growth after the intervention programme (Figure 4.3). This evidence also supports the assumptions of Rivalland, 1992 and Anderson and

Freebody, (1981) that competent readers have large vocabularies, and that extensive or wide reading is necessary to achieve vocabulary growth. There is a high correlation between large vocabularies and comprehension and it seems that vocabulary knowledge provides the background information that the reader can use to help in is the largest single source of vocabulary growth (Graves, 2000). The respondents, who achieved high scores using this instrument, also achieved similarly high scores in the supplementary PIRLS (2006) comprehension test.

The quality of writing in the response journals of respondents who had high scores in the supplementary PIRLS (2006) comprehension test was noticeable. The exploratory talk of respondents with high scores was more coherent and reflective. Their expressive abilities were more connected and interpretive, than those who were below grade level with lower scores.

The findings in the Burt Word Recognition Test clearly highlight that the progression from below Grade level to above Grade level between the pre-test to the post-test is statistically significant. (P-value is less than 0.001). (Figure 4.3) It is encouraging, however that there was a positive shift in decoding ability of the majority of the respondents, thus reflecting an increase in vocabulary.

#### **5.1.1.2 Supplementary comprehension test (Adapted from PIRLS 2006)**

*The Upside Down Mice* (Dahl, (1981) was used to assess comprehension and higher order reading skills of learners as well as writing skills. Three aspects of learners' reading literacy are focused on in PIRLS (2006): purposes for reading; processes of comprehension; and reading behaviors' and attitudes. The written assessment used the purposes for reading and the processes of comprehension as the foundation (chapter 4.2.3). Within each of these two purposes, four processes of comprehension are identified (Mullis et al. 2006). The learner is required to: focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information; make straightforward inferences; interpret and integrate ideas and information; and examine and evaluate content, language, and textual elements.

This comprehension test was aimed in PIRLS (2006) at learners who had completed four years of formal schooling. This was only a post test. My reason for the inclusion of this test was to measure the respondents' comprehension processes and purposes for reading. The selected



comprehension test also met the requirements of quality children's literature. The Annual National Assessments (Grade 3 literacy- English) (DOE, 2009) was written by the respondents' and is a systemic evaluation of literacy skills.

In terms of benchmarking this assessment with PIRLS (2006) it was evident that the Annual National Assessments (DoE, 2009) measured mainly lower order thinking skills. Which, according to the taxonomies of Bloom's (1956) and Kratwohl and Anderson (2001) are testing mainly the first two levels of skills. (Remembering and Understanding). A minute segment of the questions tested application of knowledge, which is the third level of the cognitive taxonomy (figure 2.1). This assessment did not appear to be cognitively challenging, and the comprehension test was selected from a basal reader and lacked the authentic elements of quality children's literature. Reading comprehension is based on several sorts of linguistic skills, as well as on language independent (meta) cognitive skills. Models of reading comprehension basically distinguish between so-called lower order and higher order skills needed for successful reading. (Just & Carpenter, 1992; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Perfetti, 1985, 1999; Stanovich, 1991; Walczyk, 1995).

In this study the positive results achieved in the Supplementary Comprehension Test by respondents with three years of formal schooling is an indication that the majority of respondents had developed above-grade norm higher order thinking and reading skills as well as writing skills, and therefore were able to understand the comprehension processes as specified in the PIRLS Framework (chapter 4.2.3).

Respondents in this study performed with significantly higher relative performance in reading for literary purposes. It is noteworthy that after an intervention programme of only five months, these results were achieved by the respondents. As presented in Diagram 4. 1 more than half of the respondents were able to answer the questions appropriately in the first three categories, and have developed the necessary cognitive strategies to interpret and demonstrate their ability to process higher order thinking skills. The last category which refers to evaluation of content, language and textual elements indicate that less than half of respondents were able to achieve a satisfactory score.

These results are a further indication and confirmation of the efficacy of a literature-based reading programme on the reading achievement of Grade 3 learners.

Interestingly, in comparison, a rural study of teacher knowledge (Taylor 2008:28-29) revealed that the average score on the Language test for 23 teachers was 55%. The test involved a comprehension exercise based on the same short essay by Dahl's (1981) *The Upside Down Mice*. Only one teacher scored higher than 75%. Of the 23 teachers, 12 scored less than 50%, with the lowest score being 21, 7%.

Table 5.1 was extrapolated to compare the results of respondents' achievement in the Supplementary Test with PIRLS (2006).

**Table 5.1: Performance outcomes of South Africa's learners in PIRLS (2006)**

Percentage of learners at or above the given international benchmark score of:	Mark (benchmark / competence)	Learner outcomes				
		All countries %	South Africa %	Afrikaans* %	English* %	African languages* %
	400 (low/basic)	94	22	55	52	4-14
	475 (intermediate)	76	13	35	36	0-13
	555 (high competent)	41	6	17	18	0
	625 (advanced/fully competent)	7	2	5	5	0

*Source: Various tables and textual information from the PIRLS report in: Howie S, Venter E, Van Staden S, Zimmerman L, Long C, Sherman V & Archer E (2007) Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2006 summary report: South African children's reading literacy achievement. Pretoria: University of Pretoria. Note:\* For South Africa's Grade 5 learners with Afrikaans, English or an African language as home language. Ranges of figures reflect the spread across the nine remaining official languages, with Sesotho- and Setswana-speaking learners performing at the top of the range.*

The performance of the respondents in this study can be placed in the benchmark competence for all countries between the intermediate and high competency range (Table 5.1). When comparing the high correlation of certain Learning Areas to positive scores in attitudes towards reading as observed in the Elementary reading attitude survey (ERAS) to high scores achieved by the respondents in the PIRLS (2006) Supplementary Comprehension Test the following

conclusions can be drawn: that acquisition of the skills required in PIRLS for processes of comprehension and reading for literary purposes are transferred to other Learning Areas where similar skills are required and that a positive attitude to reading underpin this achievement.

Figures 4.5; 6; 7 & 8 graphically point out this statistically significant finding of correlations between the construct of attitude and reading achievement in Learning Areas such as Arts and Culture, English, isiXhosa, Afrikaans, Natural Science and Mathematics at primary level.

South African learners are falling behind internationally. The country achieved the lowest score on the 2006 (PIRLS), which evaluated the performance of Grade 4 learners from 40 countries. Furthermore, South Africa's results were based on the performance of Grade 5 learners. Table 5.1 reveals just how far below international benchmarks the majority of the country's learners performed. Only 22% of learners from South Africa achieved the low benchmark, compared to 94% of learners from all countries.

Figure 4.4 illustrates graphically the percentile ranking of the respondents of this study. It is significant to note that the raw scores indicate that 43 of the 58 respondents achieved scores between the 50th and 100th percentile. Thus, 74, 1 % of respondents achieved within this range. These results confirm, and I have interpreted it to mean that if learners are exposed to sound instructional reading methodologies, such as a literature-based programme and authentic text that the likely result is increased reading levels. It is noteworthy that 17% of the respondents fell below the 50th percentile and would form part of those who could only score on the low/basic benchmark competence.

This group below the 50th percentile might need more time to improve their reading skills. (Table 5.1) It can be safely posited that the earlier introduction of higher order reading skills contributed to this achievement of progressing to the range above the 50th percentile. This finding has an important significance for this study. The most crucial being that, the introduction of advanced reading skills should already begin in Grade 1, bearing in mind the competency levels, cognitive ability and language usage of all readers.

The results pertaining to gender showed no significant difference between the genders in this study, which is not consistent however with PIRLS or IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) reading literacy studies that show that the largest

differences between girls and boys typically were found in the narrative domain (Wagemaker 1996).

### **5.1.1.3 Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS)**

Reading attitude is a complex theoretical construct. It is defined in various ways, for example, “a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation” (Alexander & Filler, 1976:1) or “state of mind, accompanied by feelings and emotions, that make reading more or less probable” (Smith, 1990:215).

Studies have consistently found that attitudes toward reading begin and continue to decline in the intermediate grades (McKenna & Kear, 1995; Sperling & Head, 2002). The teaching of reading has two main goals: instil in students the necessary skills to read effectively and to develop a sense of enjoyment toward reading (Sainsbury, 2004).

The results of this study underscore the attitude towards both recreational and academic reading of Grade 3 learners. The survey comprised 20 items in the form of questions that always began “How do you feel...?” For example, “How do you feel when you get a book as a present?” Responses were graded according to a four-point Likert scale which varied from "Very happy" (3 points) to "Sad" (0 point).

The literature of Benton and Fox (1985: 15) alludes to the notion that attitude to reading has a central importance in reading development, alongside acquisition of reading skills. The results of the survey gave me an understanding of the participants' feelings towards reading. McKenna, Kear, & Ellsworth (1995) examined the relationship between attitudes toward reading using the ERAS and teacher ratings of students' ability to read in a sample of first through sixth graders. Understanding the role of attitudes in developing readers is important for two principal reasons.

First, attitude may affect the level of ability ultimately attained by a given student through its influence on such factors as engagement and practice. Second, even for the fluent reader, poor attitude may occasion a choice not to read when other options exist, a condition now generally known as aliteracy (McKenna, Kear, & Elsworth, 1995: 934).

These researchers found that academic, recreational, and total attitude scores correlated significantly with teachers' ratings of reading ability. In my own research my findings indicate that there was an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards recreational reading. Respondents with high scores also attained comparatively high correlational scores in the other Learning Area assessments. An example in this study is the Learning Areas of Arts and Culture, English, isiXhosa, Afrikaans, Natural Science and Mathematics that show a high correlation with a positive reading attitude.

In Arts and Culture the curriculum is dominated by the analytical skill of reflection. Ennis (1987:10) sees this reflective skill as an important component of critical literacy. A plausible explanation is that skills required in the Learning outcomes of these Learning Areas are matched to the skills used by good readers and that they are able to transfer these skills.

This “match” between higher order thinking skills according to Bloom’s Taxonomy (1956), such as analysis, synthesis and especially evaluation from the learners emerged in the data that were analysed. It supports the assertion that links these skills to academic achievement. Similar correlations were seen in the Learning Areas of English Home Language, Afrikaans Home Language, isiXhosa Home Language, Natural Science and Mathematics taught in the Foundation Phase (Figures 4.5,6;7 & 8).

In this study the scores reflected in Appendix J revealed some negativity in the respondents’ attitude towards academic reading in the post- test. This negative attitude could be attributed to the academic pressures and outcomes expected of the learners towards the latter half of the academic year in preparation for the Intermediate Phase. Anderson, et al. (1985) state that reading attitude tends to diminish as children progress through the grades and is related to the level of reading competency. In this study the respondents who showed a positive attitude towards reading and had high scores in the word recognition test and scored comparatively high scores in the supplementary test also achieved academically overall. Children’s reading attitude and reading performance are important predictors of their school success (Madden, Slavin et al. 1993).

Another possible conclusion with regard to negativity could be that learners feel more pressure to perform and compete with peers when they read for academic purposes. During my observations of the respondents I have noticed that if informational text is not visually pleasing,

they are reluctant to browse or read such books. Today's informational books host a variety of formats, striking designs and innovative use of graphics (Freeman & Lehman, 2001:66). Learners' are more motivated to read informational text if the text has a literary element and if the illustrations and images are vivid and attractive. When assessing and measuring learners' proficiency or competencies in a Learning Area emphasis is often placed mostly on remembering and not on the other important skills such as understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating (Anderson & Kratwohl, 2001). The development of these skills, according to the revised taxonomy of Anderson & Kratwohl (2001), impact on learning and teaching.

The above section presented an overview of the quantitative data generated by the selected instruments and supported the findings of the qualitative data.

## **5.2 Qualitative data**

### **5.2.1 Results of the response journals**

Reader-response theory served as the framework used to analyse the journals. The rich data collected from the respondents in their journals led me to employ a grounded theory approach. The use of the constructivist paradigm, and particularly constructivist grounded theory, was the appropriate approach for grounding the findings of response journals in the real life engagement of the context of the respondents.

The use of grounded theory method provides a flexible and iterative process for dealing with multiple and conflicting meanings, interpretations and constructions that emanate from the individual's real world engagement with information. Researchers seek to analyse how research participants construct their lives (Charmaz, 2003: 69). "In seeking respondent's meanings, we must go further than surface meanings or presumed meanings. A constructivist approach necessitates a relationship with respondents in which they can cast their stories in their terms" (Charmaz, 2003: 525).

In understanding the analysis of the response journals it is necessary to define what constitutes a response. Purves and Beach (1972: 178) explain that "responses consist of cognition, perception, and some emotional or attitudinal reaction; it involves predispositions; it changes

during the course of reading; and it might result in modification of concepts, attitudes or feelings.”

In analysing the written responses of the respondents in my study it was clear that their lived experiences and social contexts were reflected in their responses. All the learners enjoyed listening to the selected children’s literature and contributed to the discussions in an animated manner. This showed that the social context was a highly salient factor in the children’s responses to literature. Analysing children’s verbal responses qualitatively, captured the richness and complexity of the children’s work.

The majority of the respondents had a very clear understanding of the literary elements such as the characters and their importance in the story, the setting, plot and events. After writing their responses to the first story in their journals, and based on my observations, and the written responses in their journals, I could scaffold the prompts for each of the successive stories that followed.

This allowed for reflection and the necessary adaptation to the programme. The response prompts were open-ended prompts that helped to move the respondents from initial retellings of stories and summaries to more analytical responses and greater emotional involvements. Martinez and Roser (2002) are of the view that response prompts move readers from writing in their journals to discussing their responses, fostering richer classroom discussion.

Much of the data collected through the response journals revealed the respondents’ assumptions about the world. Responses from the respondents’ journals reflected similar growing-up experiences, or at least what they would have liked to experience, for example, childlike innocence, lazy summer days of playing on the beach and eating ice-cream. Sleeping late and watching television and the latest videos were mentioned in the journals as they reflected on the story of *The Best Thing in the World* (Unknown) (Refer to appendix G). Other themes that emerged also conveyed more serious concerns for the respondents such as family and basic human needs.

The respondents wrote and reflected on their reading, thus enhancing their comprehension and interpretive skills and connecting themselves personally with the texts. In their writing and reflections they used new reading strategies, thus enhancing their critical thinking and meta-cognitive skills.

Readers also draw on their own experiences as persons acquiring social practices constituting identities and competence in lived worlds to interpret characters' own development as participants in text worlds (Athanases, 1998; Kamberelis & Scott, 1992). Younger readers do the same. McGinley and Kamberelis (1996) documented how third- and fourth grade readers use the books they read to better understand their own lived worlds. Their study shows how children use reading and writing as "vehicles for personal, social, and political exploration."

One third-grade boy in my study used *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990) to think about his own home community as plagued by the same kinds of social problems depicted in the novel. This unusual novel magically weaves contemporary issues of homelessness, racial prejudice, and illiteracy into a complicated story rich in characters and details... and hope" (Abbot, 1991:33). The respondent lives in an informal settlement and relates his own "homelessness" to the main character. Like the main character *Maniac Magee*, he is an orphaned boy. He is being raised by family members, after the death of his mother, who was a single parent. For her, he said, there was no hope because she was not literate and could not get a proper job. For him, the education that he is privileged to receive will allow him to be literate and have hope for a better life, so that he will not have to depend on others.

In this study the respondents raised issues of safety in their neighbourhoods after listening to *The Tunnel* (Browne, 1989) (Refer to appendix G). The respondents were acutely aware of playing in unsafe areas and exploring places like tunnels, and highlighted the dangers. They also expressed sadness that going out to play is not always safe and that they experienced anxiety when unsavoury people tried to scare them. This is an example of literature that depicts realities of their own lived worlds of living in extreme poverty and of conditions that are not child friendly.

Children's literature encourages individuals to become more empathetic toward others and to develop a greater sense of responsibility for their own behaviours. As is evident in their responses and class discussions it was clear that the home discourse of learners were reflected in their understanding of the characters in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Lewis, 1950) (Refer to appendix G). The transgression of Edward's betrayal of his siblings was viewed in a serious light. The discussion was animated, when one respondent raised the notion of forgiveness, because he is "your family" and if "God can forgive us, we can do the same."



Gee (1999: 74) notes that “cultural models are not just based on our experiences in the world, they ‘project’ onto the world, where we ‘stand’ that is socially positioned, certain view points about what is right and wrong, and what can or cannot be done to solve the problems in the world.”

In their responses to the story of *The Spoiled Child* (1994, World folk tales), the respondents’ socio-cultural identities were highlighted as they reflected on the behaviour of the main character from this perspective. This perspective is in line with the stage 5 of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, namely, social contract and individual rights, that rules in society are maintained by individuals (chapter 2.2.3.6).

Hade (1997: 233) asserted that “Reading is inherently social and is dominated by culture.” Luke and Freebody (1997: 185) explained that “Reading is a social practice using written text as a means for the construction and reconstruction of statements, messages, and meanings,” and it is “tied up in the politics and power relations of everyday life in literate cultures.” These social practices are brought forward in the story of *The Spoiled Child* (1994, World folk tales) (Refer to appendix G). The father-in-law withholds food from the new daughter-in-law, because she does not contribute to the household. This display of power is an everyday practice in certain cultures. The respondents agreed that this needed to be done and for them it was the norm.

*The Spoiled Child*, (1994, World folk tales) (Refer to appendix G) reveals as much about Galinka's parents as it does about their spoiled daughter. A family thrives when all members actively contribute and cooperate with each other. This was also the view that most of the respondents held. The respondents’ related that all members in the family must contribute to the household whenever they can. If they are unemployed, other members will support them till such time that they can make a contribution. If you are unwilling, you can find yourself ostracised and not a member of the family.

Researchers have also explored how readers’ expectations for characters’ actions influence their responses. Readers have expectations for how people ought to behave, expectations that are shaped by the cultures in which they live and work. These expectations hold true for characters’ behaviours, as well, as many readers treat characters as people regardless of the fact that they exist only in the literary transaction (Mellor & Patterson, 2000).

In the story of *The Genie*, (Lang, 1984) the Genie threatens to kill the old man, but is tricked back into the brass bottle. Responses of the respondents reflected stage 6 of Kohlberg's moral development in which they have an understanding of the principles of justice (Woolfolk, 1993). It appears then if the moral reasoning of this age cohort is well developed (chapter 2.2.3.6).

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The aim of this research overall was to engage the child reader in all aspects of children's literature, and through the reading intervention programme, ignite their thought processes and responses and guide them to critical enquiry and higher order thinking. During the children's literature-based reading intervention programme I tried to understand the internal dynamic of the classroom activity in all its complexity, according to a particular teaching approach, which was a shared reading approach, and within a natural classroom environment. Allowing the respondents to engage in open dialogue within the framework of the shared reading activity, confirmed most that children have the capacity for complex thinking at an earlier age than we credit them for.

The findings reveal that;

- Prodigious amounts of vocabulary support fluency and comprehension.
- A strong relationship exists between reading motivation and academic achievement.
- The early introduction of literary reading skills has a significant impact on higher order reading ability.
- The respondents' transaction with text reflected their personal meaning making, their cultural and family habitus as well as their levels of moral reasoning.

Chapter 6 will reflect on the findings and make recommendations for implementing reading approaches based on the findings of this study.

### CHAPTER SIX

#### REFLECTION ON CONCLUSIONS; RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter will reflect on conclusions that have emerged from the research of the Grade 3 literature-based reading programme and, in the light of the reflection, propose recommendations for implementing literature based development of higher order reading skills.

##### 6.2 Framing reflections

Findings that emerged concerning 3rd Grade learners' reading achievement and attitude at the site of this study agree with the findings of past reader response theorists and current research on attitude and motivation towards reading.

While the debate continues about South African learners' poor literacy and reading skills, much can be done to reverse this situation. A positive shift towards a more innovative instructional approach or methodology very often requires only enthusiasm by the educator and the willingness to embrace it. The Balanced Approach as proposed by the WCED (2004) has leanings towards including children's literature, when mention is made of 'real books.'

The current curriculum, (NCS,2002) in South Africa demands that teachers use constructivist methods of teaching and learning, which means that when using this learner-centered approach it stimulates higher levels of thinking, encourages articulation of thinking, helps students remember, allows students to make connections and see different perspectives, as well as promoting deeper understanding.

Selecting appropriate literature allows children to interpret and understand and make connections with the text and connect their own life experiences to the text. Consequently, constructivist activities in the classroom that focus on speaking and listening promote not only constructivist thought but also important connections between teacher and students. Problem-solving, higher-order thinking skills and deep understanding are emphasized (Honebein, 1996: 17-24). Social engagement is an integral component of constructivist-based instruction. It is this

deeper level of understanding that must be promoted via a change in teaching strategies (Tovani, 2004).

From a constructivist perspective where the learner is perceived as meaning-maker, teacher-centered, text-centered and skills-oriented approaches to literature instruction are replaced by more learner-centered approaches where processes of understanding are emphasized. The learner-centeredness of a constructivist classroom is clearly apparent in a reader response approach to literature. These literary discursive practices promote constructivist thought. Another quality of a constructivist class is its interactive nature, which allows the learner to construct meaning drawing on their own “lived –worlds” to connect with text.

That a chasm exists between the intended curriculum and the implemented curriculum must be acknowledged. It is a well – known phenomenon in educational literature and research that there is usually a significant discrepancy between the intended, and implemented and attained curriculum. The implementation is influenced by the beliefs, attitudes, training and experiences of teachers who are ultimately responsible for defining and delivering the curriculum at classroom level (Hargreaves, 1989; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977).

In using this literature-based approach, whether to augment or replace the basal approach, the literature or reading teacher can implement appropriate strategies that will give learners an opportunity to react personally, reflect and respond to literature. The benefits for integrating and using the reader-response literary theories as a suitable base for instructional focus on reading is valuable, because the strategies are compatible with Piagetian and social constructivist theories of learning and development as outlined in my literature review. Goforth (1998:43) highlights the value of Transactional Theory, which also forms the framework for the intervention reading programme in this study. (Figure 2.2)

### **6.3 Proposed recommendations**

Proposed recommendations include: A literature–based approach to teaching reading in Grade 3; and a reader response as a methodological approach. It expounds the relationship of learner, educator and school.

### 6.3.1 Recommendations

This study has shown that it is possible for innovative teachers to develop children's literacy abilities through the implementation of a literature based approach in reading in Grade 3; and the understanding and use of reader response as a methodological approach. It acknowledges the roles of the learner, the educator and the school in the attainment of literacy.

Following this study and the success that was experienced with the implementation of the literature-based reading intervention programme, this study has shown that the early introduction of higher order reading skills impact positively on improving the literacy development of learners. I would like to recommend the implementation of a literature-based approach to reading; that includes the application of reader response theory to classroom pedagogy, so that learners become responsive readers. The educator, the school and the reading curriculum all contribute collectively to the learners' attainment of literacy. The school needs to ensure that quality children's literature is included in the reading programme, and that it is accessible in the school library or class library.

### 6.3.2 A literature-based approach to teaching reading in Grade 3

Based on the success of the literature-based reading intervention programme in this study, I would further recommend the integration of a literature based instructional reading model towards the end of the Foundation Phase, that is, in Grade 3, when the learners are able to decode and encode. Adapting current practice to include a greater variety of quality children's literature during the reading hour will have many benefits for extension and development of literacy skills.

The benefits of introducing and implementing the Literary Transaction Process (Goforth, 1998:42-53) (Figure 2.1) which underpinned the intervention reading programme in this study are far reaching for learners, enabling them to acquire the skills needed to become independent, confident lifelong readers, whose reading skills will allow them to participate in society and the academic world.

### 6.3.3 Reader response as a methodological approach

The outcomes of using the reader response approach in the intervention programme of this study, is indicative of how grade 3 learners can become engaged, reflective and responsive readers. An interesting observation during the reading sessions was that all learners were engaged and contributed to the lively discussions and exploratory talks. Responses were never judged as correct or incorrect, but rather what was more acceptable or appropriate. Learners felt free to express their thoughts and share ideas with others in the group. In the response journals, they expressed themselves freely and were only limited in terms of their own writing ability and language proficiency.

Response journals strive to communicate a reader's interpretation of text and the processes that contribute to thinking. Meta-cognitive knowledge is achieved when learners can identify the strategies that were employed in their reading.

The insights gained from the learners' responses provided me with knowledge with regard to lacunae in learners' processing so that appropriate instructional decisions could be made. The response journals become a tangible tool to communicate understanding and improve awareness of strategies and aid comprehension. At the same time it becomes a useful assessment tool that gives teachers additional insight into how learners reflect and value their own knowledge.

Readers create an understanding based upon an interaction between their own background knowledge and the text. The reader-response approach to understanding text emphasizes the role of the reader's experiences, values independent interpretations and consequently accepts innovative purposes for reading literature (Many & Wiseman, 1992). This approach values equally the diversity and uniqueness of what each child has to say about a book.

I am of the view that through an inclusive approach that acknowledges the academically diverse abilities of learners in the group, individual learners needing support can receive it through the use of this approach. This view encourages a teacher to accept the reader as active and important. Reader-response puts the reader more in control of the outcome of reading. This approach is therefore aligned with a constructivist learner-centred approach. The teacher is thus discouraged from controlling outcomes, thoughts and emotions (Cullinan, 1989). Power is a key

issue in a constructivist classroom. Power is not wielded by a constructivist teacher, and control is not imposed on students (Sheridan, 1993).

### 6.3.4 The learner

The third Grade was the focus in this study, because it is a pivotal year for learners in terms of their reading achievement and attitude development. According to Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks, and Perencevich (2004:301), the type of literacy experiences that children have in the classroom strongly influence their motivation for reading. "...the kinds of experiences children have in classrooms strongly influence their motivation for reading and other subjects. Some experiences and educational practices can enhance children's motivation, and others may undermine it." The findings in this study also support this notion.

The primary school years are fundamental in promoting reading motivation. Classroom practices therefore should be constantly reviewed to include strategies to motivate and enhance the reading experience of the learners. This constant review of classroom practice can also counteract what is commonly known as the fourth-grade slump, which refers to those learners who struggle to handle the complex demands of literacy skills and abilities needed for reading at higher levels of complexity (Chall, 1983, 1996). Chall, Jacobs, and Baldwin, (1990) followed 30 children — about 10 each from grades 2, 4, and 6, for two years. The reading measures were scores on the six subtests of the experimental version of the Diagnostic Assessments of Reading (DAR) (Roswell & Chall, 1992) that consist of word recognition, word analysis, oral reading, word meaning, reading comprehension, and spelling.

The most significant finding of the study for reading was that low-income children in grades 2 and 3 achieved as well as children in the normative population on all six subtests. However, as predicted by the theoretical model of reading used for the study, some of the students' scores started to decelerate around grade 4. This "fourth-grade slump," reported often by teachers of disadvantaged children, started in grade 4 on some tests and later on other tests.

The low-income children in Chall's (1983,1996) study — in grades 4 through 7 — had greatest difficulty defining more abstract, academic, literary, and less common words as compared with a normative population on the word meaning test. In grade 4, the children were about a year behind grade norms. By grade 7, they were more than two years behind norms. Next to

decelerate were their scores on word recognition and spelling. Oral reading and silent reading comprehension began to decelerate later in grades 6 and 7. I am aware that similar trends currently exist at the research site which serves learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Cementing foundational literacy skills will counteract this slump and allow the learners to meet the cognitive demands of literacy in the Intermediate Phase.

### 6.3.5 The educator

Educators play a crucial role in motivating learners to read. One cannot but support Gambrel's (1996) view, that teachers are the decision makers when creating literacy activities in the classroom and these decisions impact students' reading motivation. Often it is the educator or the librarians who choose texts or literature that they think are suitable. Delgado-Gaitan (1990) states that it is counterproductive for teachers, parents or librarians to make judgments about children's leisure reading- this is an area which they should 'own' and be empowered to make their own choices and decisions.

Research shows that learners are more motivated to read when selecting their own materials, thereby given the power of choice. For educators, this framework has important practical implications: by stressing how readers matter in literary analysis, children as recipients of literature should be given particular consideration. This focus on children should be placed within well-developed theories and institutional arrangements about children and childhood in formal education.

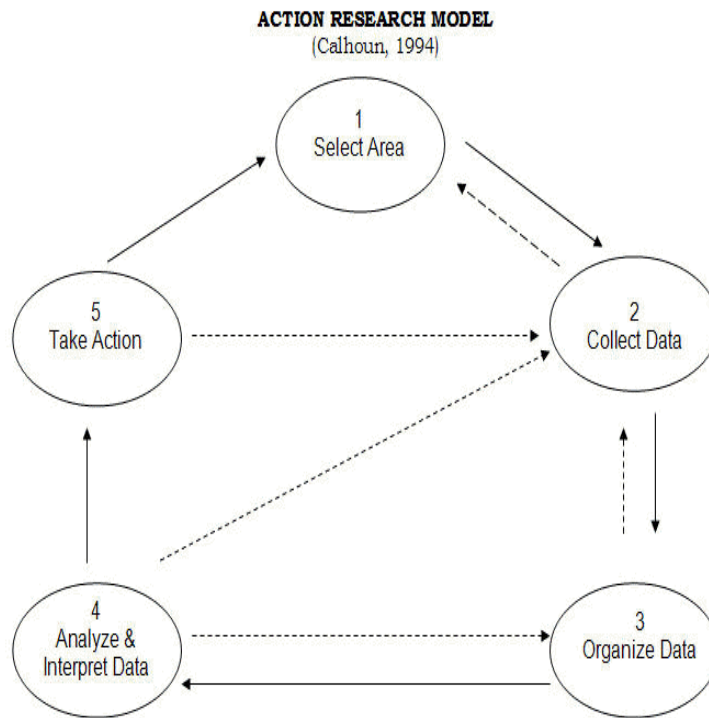
For example, expectations in relation to how children respond to literature should be understood in the context of how children's development is defined in the psychological theories that are dominant in educational practice and teacher training. In conclusion, unless teachers themselves are engaged readers, it will be impossible for them to authentically model engaged reading for their learners.

Educators should be made aware of the relevance of current research and how it can contribute towards professional development. Those engaging in action research aim "...to take action and effect positive educational change in the specific school environment that was studied...with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school



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environment (and on educational practices in general), and improving student outcomes and the lives of those involved” (Mills, 2000:5-6).



**Figure 6.1**

Figure 6.1 illustrates a view of the action research process. It can become the focus of an individual educator or group of educators who are seeking ways to improve their classroom practice. It also involves teachers as participants in their own educational process, and helps them to develop a critical and reflective eye for their own instructional practices along with those of their peers (Lederman & Niess, 1997). My own research has highlighted this vacuum that exists at the research site, which is the disinclination of some educators to engage more rigorously in reflective practice through action research.

A potential project should be judged not only by its methodological rigour but also by its capacity to generate improvements in classroom practices, enhance curricula, enrich teacher preparation, and produce more informative assessments of reading comprehension and skills. Action research offers participants’ a flexible approach to classroom improvement through actions and reflections. Lederman and Niess (1997) emphasize that action research is the most direct route

to facilitating teachers' development into reflective practitioners, and that it helps them to become lifelong learners of pedagogy.

Closer to my own research, the reading-outcomes benefits that accrue from improved instruction in word reading will be limited if children do not also have access to improved instruction in vocabulary, oral language production, writing, text analysis, and other high-level operations that contribute to comprehension. An educational research programme must address widespread doubts concerning the quality, relevance, and usability of educational programmes.

Good instruction is the most powerful means of promoting the development of proficient comprehenders and preventing reading comprehension problems. A good teacher makes use of practices that employ his or her knowledge about the complex and fluid interrelationships among readers, texts, purposeful activities, and contexts to advance students' thoughtful, competent, and motivated reading.

### **6.3.6 The school**

Schools as vehicles of educational change should identify areas of development within the school curriculum and act on them to improve learning outcomes. Fullan (2001:268), states that school leaders are the gatekeepers of change and must create collaborative working environments which are important for effective learning. This study calls for innovative teachers and supportive school leaders, who will encourage the teacher to engage in action research in the classroom. This will allow for effective learning programmes that should be reviewed regularly to measure their success in terms of relevance to promoting literacy.

### **6.4 Concluding reflections**

While the literature-based reading intervention programme proved effective, it is recommended that it augment rather than replace regular skills-based reading instruction, especially in Grades 1-2. A balanced approach is necessary. Basic reading skills and strategies are necessary for successful participation. When learners are able to decode and encode independently, a literature-based instructional reading programme can be implemented and attained successfully. "It may also be that the essential nature of the importance of literature in literacy learning cannot be measured fully" (Galda & Cullinan 1994:533).

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It is imperative that teachers make available quality fiction and informational literature for their students. The criteria for good children's literature varies, but Bishop (1992: 49) suggests that it should be "... well written, tell a good story, have strong characterization, and offer a worthwhile theme or themes children could be expected to understand." All literature shared in the classroom should meet these criteria.

A richer, more meaningful literary experience can be gained when good literature with a variety of content is read, written about, and discussed. Lukens (1982:178) writes "literature, at its best gives both pleasure and understanding." She suggests that the process of exploring a work of literature gives the reader an opportunity to consider the human condition on his/her own terms in cooperation with an author.

Jacobs and Tunnell (1996:15) provide a basis on which to evaluate what is generally a subjective value judgment, stating that style and language, together with character and plot must be analysed, with books of "lasting value" being multifaceted and "recreate the very texture of life." Popular fiction should not be ignored, as many readers of popular fiction continue their reading development at a higher rate than those who do not read this type of literature (Leonhardt, 1996: 1).

Further, Traw (1993: 1) notes that sub literature readers were the most prolific readers in a study he conducted, and comments that sub literature has the potential to act as a "bridge" to higher quality reading. Krashen (1993:62) refers to research that supports the assertion that the greater the exposure to books, the greater the amount of reading that will result.

I cannot conclude this chapter without reiterating that motivating and inspiring children to read requires four components:

- Role modelling: Children need enthusiastic reading role models, both at school and at home.
- Time: Children need independent reading time during the school day, as well as encouragement to read at home.
- Choices: Children need the opportunity to choose their own books to read and support and guidance in book selection.

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- Access to books: Children need access to a wide range of reading material matched to their interests and reading ability.

Although this research was limited in terms of scale and sample size, there is sufficient evidence to posit a clear relationship between literature-based reading, academic success, motivation to read and the development of higher-order reading and writing skills. Future research should use multiple schools, grades and larger sample sizes to extend the generalisability of the conclusions.

This action research study has practical implications for the reading practices at this research site. Implementing this programme in the rest of the Foundation Phase can now be supported by the findings of positive correlations found between literature-based reading, higher order reading skills and reading attitude and motivation.

The development of competent, thoughtful and committed readers is "within the inspirational power of teachers" (Mason, Herman & Au, 1991:729).

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**APPENDICES**

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A**

**Letter of permission to parents of participants**

June 2009

Dear Parents/Guardian

I am currently studying for my Master's Degree in Education. One of the requirements of the course is to conduct a research study.

I have selected to do my research in Children's Literature, more specifically the motivation and comprehension in reading.

I would like to include your child in my Children's Literature Reading Programme.

I aim to gather information on comprehension and other reading skills and from the reading journal that your child will keep for the duration of this intervention. I am hoping to trace your child's progress in reading in this research study for the next 5 months.

Participation in the research is voluntary and all information will be treated with confidentiality.

Kind Regards

Chamellé de Silva

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the re-ply slip and return it in a sealed envelope (provided).

I.....hereby grant permission/do not grant permission for my

child.....in Grade 3.....to participate in the research study.

Signed.....

Date.....

**APPENDICES**

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**Appendix B**

Burt word recognition test (1974) Revised

to is up he at	for sun of  or	my one	big some his an	went boys hat girl water	just day wet pot things
no told love now sad	nurse quickly village scramble	carry	journey terror return twisted shelves	beware explorer known projecting tongue	serious domineer obtain belief luncheon
emergency events steadiness nourishment fringe	formulate scarcely universal commenced overwhelmed		circumstances destiny labourers exhausted	trudging refrigerator melodrama encyclopaedia apprehend	motionless ultimate atmosphere reputation binocular
economy theory humanity philosopher contemptuous	autobiography excessively champagne terminology perambulating		efficiency unique perpetual mercenary glycerine	influential atrocious fatigue exorbitant physician	microscopical contagion renown hypocritical fallacious
phlegmatic melancholy palpable eccentricity	alienate poignancy ingratiating subtlety constitutionally				

**APPENDICES**

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**Appendix C**

**REVISED NORMS FOR BURT (RE-ARRANGED)**

**WORD READING TEST**

Score		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Reading Age		5.3	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.7
Score	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Reading Age	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.10	5.11	5.11	6.0	6.1	6.1	6.2
Score	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Reading Age	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.9
Score	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Reading Age	6.9	6.10	6.11	7.0	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.5
Score	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
Reading Age	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.9	7.10	7.11	8.0	8.1	8.2	8.3
Score	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
Reading Age	8.4	8.5	8.6	8.7	8.8	8.9	8.10	9.0	9.1	9.2
Score	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
Reading Age	9.3	9.4	9.6	9.7	9.8	9.9	9.10	10.0	10.1	10.2
Score	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
Reading Age	10.3	10.4	10.6	10.7	10.9	10.10	10.11	11.0	11.1	11.3
Score	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
Reading Age	11.4	11.5	11.6	11.7	11.9	11.10	11.11	12.0	12.1	12.3
Score	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
Reading Age	12.4	12.5	12.6	12.7	12.9	12.10	12.11	13.0	13.1	13.3
Score	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110
Reading Age	13.4	13.6	13.6	13.7	13.9	13.10	13.11	14.0	14.1	14.3

**APPENDICES**

Appendix D  
**Tentative norms for UCT word reading and spelling test**  
 TENTATIVE NORMS FOR U.C.T. READING AND SPELLING TESTS  
 BASED ON MEDIAN SCORES OBTAINED IN  
 "COLOURED" SCHOOLS DURING 1985

GRADE LEVEL	TEST		GRADED READING		GEGRADEERDE LEES		ENGLISH SPELLING		AFRIKAANS SPELLING		GRADE LEVEL
	AGE		BOYS	GIRLS	SEUNS	DOGTERS	BOYS	GIRLS	SEUNS	DOGTERS	
1	6.0 - 6.5	2	6-7	6-7	1-2	3-4	8-9	5-6	2-3	4-5	1
	6.6 - 6.11	3	8-13	9-17	3-5	5-8	10-13	7-14	4-7	6-7	
	7.0 - 7.5	4	14-22	18-29	6-10	9-10	14-17	15-21	8-13	8-14	
2	7.6 - 7.11	2	23-31	30-39	11-16	19-27	18-22	22-28	14-17	15-21	2
	8.0 - 8.5	4	32-40	40-47	17-26	28-35	23-29	29-34	18-25	22-29	
3	8.6 - 8.11	2	41-48	48-54	27-33	36-42	30-35	35-40	26-30	30-35	3
	9.0 - 9.5	4	49-55	55-62	34-39	43-49	36-41	41-46	31-33	36-39	
4	9.6 - 9.11	2	57-61	63-68	40-44	50-53	42-46	47-51	34-35	40-41	4
	10.0 - 10.5	4	62-64	69-72	45-49	54-56	47-50	52-55	36-39	42-43	
5	10.6 -	2	65-66	73-74	50-52	57-59	51-53	56-59	40-42	44-45	5
	10.11 -		67-68	75-76	53-55	60-61	54-55	60-63	43-44	46-47	
	11.0 - 11.5	4									
6	11.6 -	2	69-70	77	56-58	62-63	56-57	64-66	45-46	48-49	6
	11.11 -		71-72	78	59-61	64	58-59	67-68	47-49	50-51	
	12.0 - 12.5	4									
7	12.6 -	2	73-74	79-80	62-63	65-66	60-61	69-70	50-51	52-54	7
	12.11 -		75-76	81-84	64	67	62-63	71-72	52-53	55-56	
	13.0 - 13.5	4									
8	13.6 -	2	77-78	85-87	65-66	68-70	64	73	54-55	57-59	8
	13.11 -		79-83	88-90	67-68	71-73	65	74-75	56-57	60-63	
	14.0 - 14.5	4									
9	14.6 -	2	84-89	91-93	69-70	74-76	66	76	58-59	64-67	9
	14.11 -	2	90-99	94-99	71-74	77-79	87-69	77-79	60-64	68-74	
	15.0 -										
10		16	100 <sup>+</sup>	100 <sup>+</sup>	75 <sup>+</sup>	80 <sup>+</sup>	70 <sup>+</sup>	80 <sup>+</sup>	65 <sup>+</sup>	75 <sup>+</sup>	10

















# APPENDICES

## Appendix E Elementary reading attitude survey

### Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

















School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

1.	How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?				
2.	How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?				
3.	How do you feel about reading for fun at home?				
4.	How do you feel about getting a book for a present?				

## APPENDICES

Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

5.	How do you feel about spending free time reading a book?				
6.	How do you feel about starting a new book?				
7.	How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?				
8.	How do you feel about reading instead of playing?				

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Survey designed by Dennis J. Kear, Wichita State University



## APPENDICES

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Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

















9.	How do you feel about going to a bookstore?				
10.	How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?				
11.	How do you feel when a teacher asks you questions about what you read?				
12.	How do you feel about reading workbook pages and worksheets?				

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## APPENDICES

















Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

13.	How do you feel about reading in school?			
				
14.	How do you feel about reading your school books?			
				
15.	How do you feel about learning from a book?			
				
16.	How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?			
				

## APPENDICES

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Please circle the picture that describes how you feel when you read a book.

17.	How do you feel about stories you read in reading class?				
18.	How do you feel when you read out loud in class?				
19.	How do you feel about using a dictionary?				
20.	How do you feel about taking a reading test?				

APPENDICES

Appendix F

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Scoring Sheet

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_
Teacher \_\_\_\_\_
Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Administration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Scoring Guide

- 4 points Happiest Garfield
3 points Slightly smiling Garfield
2 points Mildly upset Garfield
1 point Very upset Garfield

Recreational reading

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Academic reading

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Raw Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Raw Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Full scale raw score . . . . . (Recreational + Academic): \_\_\_\_\_

Percentile ranks: . . . . . Recreational.....
. . . . . Academic.....
. . . . . Full scale.....

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix Technical Aspects of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

#### The norming project

To create norms for the interpretation of scores, a large-scale study was conducted in late January 1989, at which time the survey was administered to 18,138 students in Grades 1–6. A number of steps were taken to achieve a sample that was sufficiently stratified (i.e., reflective of the American population) to allow confident generalizations. Children were drawn from 95 school districts in 38 U.S. states. The number of girls exceeded by only 5 the number of boys. Ethnic distribution of the sample was also close to that of the U.S. population (*Statistical abstract of the United States*, 1989). The proportion of blacks (9.5%) was within 3% of the national proportion, while the proportion of Hispanics (6.2%) was within 2%.

Percentile ranks at each grade for both subscales and the full scale are presented in Table 1. These data can be used to compare individual students' scores with the national sample and they can be interpreted like achievement-test percentile ranks.

**Table 1**  
**Mid-year percentile ranks by grade and scale**

Raw Scr	Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3			Grade 4			Grade 5			Grade 6				
	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot		
80		99			99			99			99			99			99			99
79		95			96			98			99			99			99			99
78		93			95			97			98			99			99			99
77		92			94			97			98			99			99			99
76		90			93			96			97			98			98			99
75		88			92			95			96			98			98			99
74		86			90			94			95			97			97			99
73		84			88			92			94			97			97			98
72		82			86			91			93			96			96			98
71		80			84			89			91			95			95			97
70		78			82			86			89			94			94			96
69		75			79			84			88			92			92			95
68		72			77			81			86			91			91			93
67		69			74			79			83			89			89			92
66		66			71			76			80			87			87			90
65		62			69			73			78			84			84			88
64		59			66			70			75			82			82			86
63		55			63			67			72			79			79			84
62		52			60			64			69			76			76			82
61		49			57			61			66			73			73			79
60		46			54			58			62			70			70			76
59		43			51			55			59			67			67			73
58		40			47			51			56			64			64			69
57		37			45			48			53			61			61			66
56		34			41			44			48			57			57			62
55		31			38			41			45			53			53			58
54		28			35			38			41			50			50			55

Measuring Attitude Toward Reading

**APPENDICES**

**Table 1  
Mid-year percentile ranks by grade and scale (continued)**

Raw Scr	Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3			Grade 4			Grade 5			Grade 6		
	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot	Rec	Aca	Tot
53			25			32			34			38			46			52
52			22			29			31			35			42			48
51			20			26			28			32			39			44
50			18			23			25			28			36			40
49			15			20			23			26			33			37
48			13			18			20			23			29			33
47			12			15			17			20			26			30
46			10			13			15			18			23			27
45			8			11			13			16			20			25
44			7			9			11			13			17			22
43			6			8			9			12			15			20
42			5			7			8			10			13			17
41			5			6			7			9			12			15
40	99	99	4	99	99	5	99	99	6	99	99	7	99	99	10	99	99	13
39	92	91	3	94	94	4	96	97	6	97	98	6	98	99	9	99	99	12
38	89	88	3	92	92	3	94	95	4	95	97	5	96	98	8	97	99	10
37	86	85	2	88	89	2	90	93	3	92	95	4	94	98	7	95	99	8
36	81	79	2	84	85	2	87	91	2	88	93	3	91	96	6	92	98	7
35	77	75	1	79	81	1	81	88	2	84	90	3	87	95	4	88	97	6
34	72	69	1	74	78	1	75	83	2	78	87	2	82	93	4	83	95	5
33	65	63	1	68	73	1	69	79	1	72	83	2	77	90	3	79	93	4
32	58	58	1	62	67	1	63	74	1	66	79	1	71	86	3	74	91	3
31	52	53	1	56	62	1	57	69	0	60	75	1	65	82	2	69	87	2
30	44	49	1	50	57	0	51	63	0	54	70	1	59	77	1	63	82	2
29	38	44	0	44	51	0	45	58	0	47	64	1	53	71	1	58	78	1
28	32	39	0	37	46	0	38	52	0	41	58	1	48	66	1	51	73	1
27	26	34	0	31	41	0	33	47	0	35	52	1	42	60	1	46	67	1
26	21	30	0	25	37	0	26	41	0	29	46	0	36	54	0	39	60	1
25	17	25	0	20	32	0	21	36	0	23	40	0	30	49	0	34	54	0
24	12	21	0	15	27	0	17	31	0	19	35	0	25	42	0	29	49	0
23	9	18	0	11	23	0	13	26	0	14	29	0	20	37	0	24	42	0
22	7	14	0	8	18	0	9	22	0	11	25	0	16	31	0	19	36	0
21	5	11	0	6	15	0	6	18	0	9	20	0	13	26	0	15	30	0
20	4	9	0	4	11	0	5	14	0	6	16	0	10	21	0	12	24	0
19	2	7		2	8		3	11		5	13		7	17		10	20	
18	2	5		2	6		2	8		3	9		6	13		5	18	
17	1	4		1	5		1	5		2	7		4	9		6	11	
16	1	3		1	3		1	4		2	5		3	6		4	8	
15	0	2		0	2		0	3		1	3		2	4		3	6	
14	0	2		0	1		0	1		1	2		1	2		1	3	
13	0	1		0	1		0	1		0	1		1	2		1	2	
12	0	1		0	0		0	0		0	1		0	1		0	1	
11	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	
10	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	

McKenna & Kear

**Appendix**  
**Technical Aspects of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (continued)**

**Reliability**

Cronbach's alpha, a statistic developed primarily to measure the internal consistency of attitude scales (Cronbach, 1951), was calculated at each grade level for both subscales and for the composite score. These coefficients ranged from .74 to .89 and are presented in Table 2.

It is interesting that with only two exceptions, coefficients were .80 or higher. These were for the recreational subscale at Grades 1 and 2. It is possible that the stability of young children's attitudes toward leisure reading grows with their decoding ability and familiarity with reading as a pastime.

**Table 2**  
**Descriptive statistics and internal consistency measures**

Grade	N	Recreational Subscale				Academic Subscale				Full Scale (Total)			
		M	SD	S.M	Alpha <sup>a</sup>	M	SD	S.M	Alpha	M	SD	S.M	Alpha
1	2,518	31.0	5.7	2.9	.74	30.1	6.8	3.0	.81	61.0	11.4	4.1	.87
2	2,974	30.3	5.7	2.7	.78	28.8	6.7	2.9	.81	59.1	11.4	3.9	.88
3	3,151	30.0	5.6	2.5	.80	27.8	6.4	2.8	.81	57.8	10.9	3.8	.88
4	3,679	29.5	5.8	2.4	.83	26.9	6.3	2.6	.83	56.5	11.0	3.6	.89
5	3,374	28.5	6.1	2.3	.86	25.6	6.0	2.5	.82	54.1	10.8	3.6	.89
6	2,442	27.9	6.2	2.2	.87	24.7	5.8	2.5	.81	52.5	10.6	3.5	.89
All	18,138	29.5	5.9	2.5	.82	27.3	6.6	2.7	.83	56.8	11.3	3.7	.89

<sup>a</sup> Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951).

**Validity**

Evidence of construct validity was gathered by several means. For the recreational subscale, students in the national norming group were asked (a) whether a public library was available to them and (b) whether they currently had a library card. Those to whom libraries were available were separated into two groups (those with and without cards) and their recreational scores were compared. Cardholders had significantly higher ( $p < .001$ ) recreational scores ( $M = 30.0$ ) than noncardholders ( $M = 28.9$ ), evidence of the subscale's validity in that scores varied predictably with an outside criterion.

A second test compared students who presently had books checked out from their school library versus students who did not. The comparison was limited to children whose teachers reported not requiring them to check out books. The means of the two groups varied significantly ( $p < .001$ ), and children with books checked out scored higher ( $M = 29.2$ ) than those who had no books checked out ( $M = 27.3$ ).

A further test of the recreational subscale compared students who reported watching an average of less than 1 hour of television per night with students who reported watching more than 2 hours per night. The recreational mean for the low televiewing group (31.5) significantly exceeded ( $p < .001$ ) the mean of the heavy televiewing group (28.6). Thus, the amount of television watched varied inversely with children's attitudes toward recreational reading.

The validity of the academic subscale was tested by examining the relationship of scores to reading ability. Teachers categorized norm-group children as having low, average, or high overall reading ability. Mean subscale scores of the high-ability readers ( $M = 27.7$ ) significantly exceeded the mean of

**Appendix**  
**Technical Aspects of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (continued)**

low-ability readers ( $M = 27.0$ ,  $p < .001$ ), evidence that scores were reflective of how the students truly felt about reading for academic purposes.

The relationship between the subscales was also investigated. It was hypothesized that children's attitudes toward recreational and academic reading would be moderately but not highly correlated. Facility with reading is likely to affect these two areas similarly, resulting in similar attitude scores. Nevertheless, it is easy to imagine children prone to read for pleasure but disenchanted with assigned reading and children academically engaged but without interest in reading outside of school. The inter-subscale correlation coefficient was .64, which meant that just 41% of the variance in one set of scores could be accounted for by the other. It is reasonable to suggest that the two subscales, while related, also reflect dissimilar factors—a desired outcome.

To tell more precisely whether the traits measured by the survey corresponded to the two subscales, factor analyses were conducted. Both used the unweighted least squares method of extraction and a varimax rotation. The first analysis permitted factors to be identified liberally (using a limit equal to the smallest eigenvalue greater than 1). Three factors were identified. Of the 10 items comprising the academic subscale, 9 loaded predominantly on a single factor while the 10th (item 13) loaded nearly equally on all three factors. A second factor was dominated by 7 items of the recreational subscale, while 3 of the recreational items (6, 9, and 10) loaded principally on a third factor. These items did, however, load more heavily on the second (recreational) factor than on the first (academic). A second analysis constrained the identification of factors to two. This time, with one exception, all items loaded cleanly on factors associated with the two subscales. The exception was item 13, which could have been interpreted as a recreational item and thus apparently involved a slight ambiguity. Taken together, the factor analyses produced evidence extremely supportive of the claim that the survey's two subscales reflect discrete aspects of reading attitude.



**Appendix G**

**Background summaries of selected children's literature**

- Where The Wild Things Are (Maurice Sendak, 1963).

**Background to story:**

This is the story of Max, a little boy who takes an imaginary journey to a land of "Wild Things". The plot of the book is based on the fantasy (and real) consequences of a little boy's mischief. One night Max dresses up in his wolf suit and does all kinds of things he shouldn't, like chasing the dog with a fork. His mother scolds him and calls him a "wild thing!" Max is so mad he shouts back, "I'll eat you up!" His mother sends him to bed without any supper. As Max's imagination unfolds, his bedroom is transformed into an entirely new world.

When he sails to the land of the Wild Things, they quickly make him their ruler. The Wild Things are tamed under Max's fearless leadership and enjoy a "wild rumpus" planned by Max. The story's themes include good and evil, anger and love, time, dreaming and imagination. Ultimately Max leaves the land of the Wild Things, despite their loving protests, to return home where he finds his dinner waiting for him.

- The Magic Paint Brush (Julia Donaldson, 2003).

**Background to the story:**

This is a Chinese Folktale, with her magic paint brush; Shen can paint steaming pots full of fish and oysters to feed the hungry people in her village. When the evil emperor commands Shen to paint gold for him, she is determined to keep her promise to paint only for the poor.

The vibrant verse brings fresh life to a traditional tale of how a little girl's integrity can withstand the corruption of power and greed.

## APPENDICES

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- The Spoiled Child (World folk tales, 1994)

### **Background to the story:**

The Eastern European folktale, "The Spoiled Child," is about a spoiled rotten daughter named Galinka, whose parents pampered her all during childhood and never let her do a thing for herself. Galinka was used to being waited on hand and foot. Her parents catered to her every need, and this spoiled daughter became lazier with each passing day.

When Galinka reached a marriageable age, none of the young men in her village wanted to marry her, for no hardworking young man would take on a spoiled, lazy wife like Galinka. One day a family from another village arrived, and the son liked Galinka very much. The mother was willing to give her daughter away in marriage, but first she told the young man's parents how delicately they should treat Galinka. They should never make her sweep the house or yard, and she wasn't used to carrying heavy water from the well. She told them to put a soft pillow under her head at night, for Galinka was used to sleeping on something soft and comfortable. She made them promise not to shout at Galinka; she was not used to being treated harshly.

The bridegroom's father told the mother not to worry, for no harsh words were ever spoken in their house. So Galinka and her bridegroom got into the cart with his parents and travelled back to the village where the family lived.

Galinka was happy, thinking the mother-in-law would treat her like her own mother had, preparing wonderful meals, making her comfortable, waiting on her, and never making her lift a finger to help out. The father-in-law kept his promise. No harsh words were ever spoken, but Galinka soon learned a harsh lesson about life.

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- The Three Little Pigs (Jon Scieszka, 1989).

### **Background to the story:**

The three little pigs are sent out into the world by their mother at a young age to go and seek their fortunes. They are hounded by a nasty wolf and the third pig outsmarts the wolf. The story ends with a surprise twist.

- The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (C. S. Lewis, 1950).

### **Background to the story:**

Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy Pevensie are four siblings sent to live in the country with the eccentric Professor Kirke during World War II. The children explore the house on a rainy day and Lucy, the youngest, finds an enormous wardrobe. Lucy steps inside and finds herself in a strange, snowy wood. Lucy encounters the Faun Tumnus, who is surprised to meet a human girl. Edmund follows Lucy and finds himself in Narnia as well. He does not see Lucy, and instead meets the White Witch that Tumnus told Lucy about. The White Witch introduces herself to Edmund as the Queen of Narnia. The Witch feeds Edmund enchanted Turkish Delight, which gives Edmund an insatiable desire for the chocolate. The Witch uses Edmund's greed and gluttony to convince Edmund to bring back his siblings to meet her. All Edmund can think about is his desire for the Turkish delight, and the promise by the witch to sit on the throne. He lies and betrays his siblings...

- The Tunnel ( Anthony Browne, 1989).

### **Background to the story:**

The story is about a brother and sister who don't get on because of their differences. One day out playing, the boy explores a tunnel and the girl has to follow. On the other side is a scary wood, where trees conceal wolves and other creepy things. At one point the girl finds her brother in a clearing, turned to stone. She hugs him and her tears bring him back to life. Back home, they are closer than before.

- The Genie (Translated A, Lang, Arabian Nights, 1898)

### **Background to the story:**

When a genie threatens to kill the poor fisherman who has rescued him from a brass bottle in the Arabian Sea, the fisherman tells him three interconnected stories in the hope of saving himself. This story-within-a-story begins when a poor fisherman catches a brass bottle. Opening it, a genie that has been imprisoned for 3000 years is released and angrily expands to a great size, announcing that he will kill his rescuer. The fisherman tells him a story of a man who kills the doctor who healed him of a disease because the monarch found the cure humiliating, and another story in which a prince kills his faithful dog. The genie is not moved by the tales and demonstrates his great power by making himself even larger. The clever man then asks if he can make himself tiny, and the foolish genie is soon back in the bottle and cast into the sea. "The rising of the moon; the setting of the sun; the teller is tired; the story is done." The illustrator's effective use of shape creates a sense of mystery and magic in this original tale that incorporates motifs from the "Arabian Nights," folktales, fables, and biblical accounts. Readers will take satisfaction in seeing the poor fisherman outwit evil in this complex and creative story cycle.

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- Charlie And The Chocolate Factory ( Road Dahl, 1964)

### **Background to the story:**

Mr. Willy Wonka, the eccentric owner of the greatest chocolate factory in the world, has decided to open the doors of his factory to five lucky children and their parents. In order to choose who will enter the factory, Mr. Wonka devises a plan to hide five golden tickets beneath the wrappers of his famous chocolate bars. The search for the five golden tickets is fast and furious.

Charlie Bucket, the unsuspecting hero of the book, defies all odds in claiming the fifth and final ticket. A poor but virtuous boy, Charlie lives in a tiny house with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bucket, and all four of his grandparents. His grandparents share the only bed in the house, located in the only bedroom, and Charlie and his parents sleep on mattresses on the floor. Charlie gets three sparse meals a day, which is hardly enough to nourish a growing boy; As a result, he is almost sickly thin.

- The Best Thing In The World- Unknown( from Dolche list).

### **Background to the story:**

There were four brothers who lived in a far away land. Their father was an old king. One day he said, "I will not live long now. Today you must start out into the world. In a year, bring back the best thing you have found. The one who can pick the best thing shall be the new king."

The other brothers had many beautiful things. "And what did you bring?" said the king to the last brother. "This is too funny!" said the other brothers. "He has nothing!"

But the king was kind to the last brother. "What did you bring me?" the king asked again.

"I bring only the friendship of your people," said the last the brother. "That is the best thing!" cried his father. "You shall be the new king."

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**Appendix H**

**Burt word recognition pre and post grade levels test**

**Burt pre- test (Grade Level \* Home Language Crosstab)**

Count

	HomeLang			Total
	Afr	Eng	isiXhosa	
BURTPreGrLev Above	1	4	11	16
el At	1	6	6	13
Below	4	10	14	28
Total	6	20	31	57

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.542 <sup>a</sup>	4	.637
Likelihood Ratio	2.537	4	.638
N of Valid Cases	57		

a. 4 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.37.

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**Burt post test (Grade Level \* Home Language)**

**Crosstab**

Count

	HomeLang			Total
	Afr	Eng	Xhosa	
BURTPostGrLevel Above	3	7	20	30
At	1	7	3	11
Below	2	7	8	17
Total	6	21	31	58

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.349 <sup>a</sup>	4	.175
Likelihood Ratio	6.363	4	.174
N of Valid Cases	58		

a. 4 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.14.

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**Burt Pre test (Grade Level \* Gender)**

**Crosstab**

Count

	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
BURTPreGrLev Above	9	7	16
el At	9	4	13
Below	16	12	28
Total	34	23	57

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.646 <sup>a</sup>	2	.724
Likelihood Ratio	.661	2	.718
N of Valid Cases	57		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.25.



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**Burt post test (Grade Level \* Gender)**

**Crosstab**

Count

	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
BURTPostGrLevel Above	19	11	30
At	7	4	11
Below	9	8	17
Total	35	23	58

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.551 <sup>a</sup>	2	.759
Likelihood Ratio	.546	2	.761
N of Valid Cases	58		

a. 1 cells (16.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.36.

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**Burt Pre Grade Level \* BURT Post Grade Level Cross tabulation**  
Count

		BURTPostGrLevel			Total
		Post-Below	Post-At	Post-Above	
BURTPreGrLevel	Pre-Below	14	7	7	28
	Pre-At	2	4	7	13
	Pre-Above	0	0	16	16
Total		16	11	30	57

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**Appendix I**

**T-test: Descriptives and percentiles for supplementary comprehension test  
Case Processing Summary**

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
ComprehensionSuppNov09_17	58	100.0%	0	.0%	58	100.0%

**Descriptives**

		Statistic	Std. Error
ComprehensionSuppNov09_17	Mean	9.14	.379
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound 8.38	
		Upper Bound 9.90	
	5% Trimmed Mean	9.23	
	Median	9.00	
	Variance	8.332	
	Std. Deviation	2.886	
	Minimum	1	
	Maximum	14	
	Range	13	
	Interquartile Range	4	
	Skewness	-.401	.314
	Kurtosis	-.076	.618

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**Percentiles**

		Percentiles						
		5	10	25	50	75	90	95
Weighted Average(Definition 1)	ComprehensionSuppNov09_17	3.95	5.00	7.00	9.00	11.00	13.00	14.00
Tukey's Hinges	ComprehensionSuppNov09_17			7.00	9.00	11.00		

**Supplementary Comprehension Test Nov 09\_17**

ComprehensionSuppNov09\_17 Stem-and-Leaf Plot

Frequency    Stem & Leaf

```

1.00    0 . 1
1.00    0 . 3
4.00    0 . 4555
10.00   0 . 6666777777
17.00   0 . 88888888999999999
12.00   1 . 0011111111111
10.00   1 . 2222223333
3.00    1 . 444
    
```

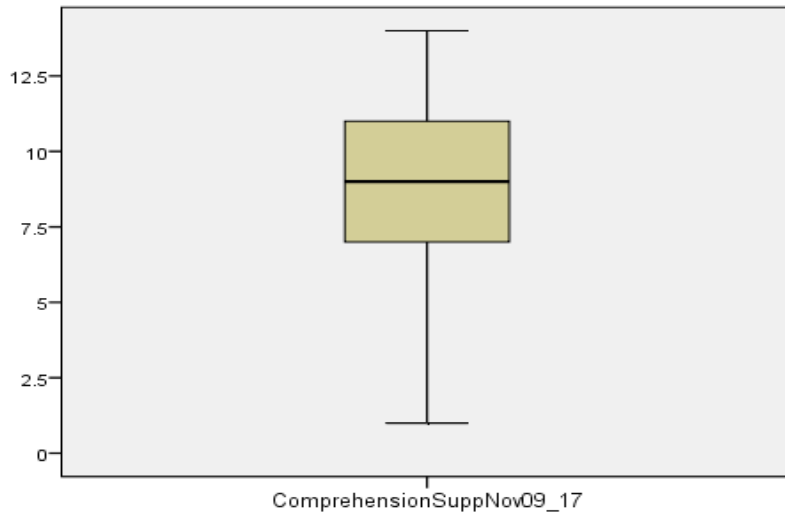
Stem width:    10

Each leaf:    1 case(s)

**Descriptives for supplementary comprehension test**

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[DataSet1] K:\Research\Research PostGraduate\MTech\CPUT\ChamelleDeSilva\SPSSdata.sav



	Raw Score	Number of pupils
25th Percentile	7	15
50th Percentile	9	14
75th Percentile	11	14
100th Percentile	14	15
		58

Percentile	Raw Score	Number of Pupils
10th	5	6
20th	7	6
30th	8	6
40th	8	5
50th	9	6
60th	10	6
70th	11	6
80th	12	5
90th	13	6
100th	14	6
		58

<b>Descriptive</b>	<b>Test</b>	<b>Descriptive</b>
<b>Statistics:</b>		<b>Statistics:</b>
T		T

### Paired Samples Statistics

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**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
ComprehensionSuppNov09_17	58	1	14	9.14	.379	2.886	8.332
Valid N (listwise)	58						

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**Appendix J**

**Pearson correlation between reading attitude and academic achievement**

	Eng	Afr	Xhosa	Maths	NatS cie	Econ Scie	Tec h	Arts&am p;Cult	LifeOrie nt	Histor y	Geograph y	
RecPRJun09	Pearson Correlation	.322*	.353	.526**	.195	.287	.009	.133	.409**	.141	.173	.141
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	.151	.005	.199	.056	.953	.383	.005	.355	.255	.355
	N	45	18	27	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
ACAPRJ un09	Pearson Correlation	.219	.559*	.280	.356*	.442**	.182	.024	.355*	.292	.198	.177
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.149	.016	.157	.016	.002	.232	.877	.017	.051	.193	.244
	N	45	18	27	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
RecPRNov09	Pearson Correlation	.161	.175	.332	.125	.209	-.113	.082	.267*	.084	.185	.122
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.230	.403	.059	.352	.118	.402	.546	.045	.533	.167	.368
	N	57	25	33	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57
ACAPRNov09	Pearson Correlation	.228	.078	.386*	.167	.276*	-.061	.147	.304*	.134	.157	.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.088	.712	.026	.213	.038	.655	.276	.022	.319	.242	.714
	N	57	25	33	57	57	57	57	57	57	57	57
CANov09	Pearson Correlation	-.176	.003	.130	-.206	-.071	-.165	-.040	-.205	-.151	.035	.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.187	.988	.472	.121	.599	.216	.764	.123	.258	.793	.911
	N	58	26	33	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58

# APPENDICES

## Appendix K Reading activities of Grade 3 learners





APPENDICES

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