Grade 3 learners' experiences of developing comprehension skills during an Intervention Programme

By

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A full dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Education

Presented to the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

May 2021

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DECLARATION

I Vuyokazi Fatyela, hereby declare that an investigation into Grade 3 learners experiences of developing comprehension skills during an Intervention programme is my own work and that it has not been submitted for any degree in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

Developing the comprehension skills of children in primary schools is a challenge that many countries face. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (2016) (PIRLS) shows that South Africa is ranked last of fifty countries when it comes to literacy. At primary level learners are expected to comprehend what they read so that they can analyse, critique, evaluate and synthesize information. When learners lack this ability to read for meaning, it retards their academic performance. In this study, the use of various instructional strategies to teach reading comprehension contributed to the development of the learners' reading comprehension skills. A ten-week Intervention Programme (IP) was conducted. The first and last weeks were used to complete pre- and post-comprehension tests with the five Grade 3 learners. The results of the pre-tests determined the content to be included in the eight-week IP. Nine comprehension strategies were taught to develop the four comprehension skills used together with the PIRLS four comprehension skills: focus on retrieving explicitly stated information, making straight forward inferences, interpret and integrate ideas and information and finally evaluate and examine content, language and textual elements, to answer the following three research questions: What were the learners' comprehension challenges during the IP? How did the IP encourage social, cognitive and language development of the Grade 3 learners? And finally: What were the learners' post-test results after explicit teaching of the comprehension skills? The conceptual frameworks underpinning this study are a synthesis of various pedagogical priorities: Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, Cambourne's (2004) social constructivism, Bloom's Taxonomy (2001) of cognitive domain and Wenger's (2005) social theory of leaning, provided the necessary background information on significant issues related to this research project. A qualitative approach, using a case study design, within an interpretivist paradigm was followed with data obtained from semi-structured interviews, participant observations, pre and post–tests results from the IP and document analysis were inductively analysed. Evidence from the study showed significant improvement in all four of the comprehension type questions for all five learners. It is recommended that the National Department of Education and Higher Education Institutions work together in developing large research projects into the conditions of reading in Foundation Phase classrooms in township schools and how teachers are prepared to teach reading for meaning. In addition, workshops should be

conducted to teach reading for meaning skills and research, track and support teachers while they transfer this academic knowledge to their classrooms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God be the glory for the strength he gave me to complete this thesis in difficult times and for blessing me with so many wonderful people I wish to acknowledge below.

To my admired supervisors: Professor Janet Condy, Dr Lawrence Meda and Dr Heather Phillips. I can honestly say that, without Professor Janet Condy's generous support and patience, this thesis would not have materialised. Thank you for your kindness, wisdom, and guidance you were never too busy to check my work and even listen to my personal problems. Being your student taught me to be a better teacher who supports and motivates my learners to do better in their studies. Your quick constructive comments in each submission have helped me develop significantly and I have fallen in love with research. Ndithi maz'enethole kuwe Njingalwazi Condy, ndibone apha kuwe ukuba ngenene 'umntu ngumntu ngabantu' ndibamba ngazo zozibini.

To my Co-Supervisor, Dr Lawrence Meda, I would like to thank you for your insightful and critical comments, important advice, positive conclusions and constant professional guidance.

My deepest thanks to Dr Heather Phillips for her support, kindness, thoughtful opinions and important advice during our many discussions of the study.

A special thanks to Dr Matthew Curr who offered his exceptional editing skills and to Mr Chris Dumas for assisting me to professionally format my thesis.

I would like to thank the principal for supporting me, the five learners who took part, their parents for allowing them to participate and the two teachers who were willing to answer questions during the interviews. The Faculty of Education of CPUT and WCED for granting me permission to conduct this research.

I am humbled to acknowledge family and friends. To my mother Mamfene, I sincerely appreciate and thank you for your prayers, constant support, motivation and sacrifices made to help me reach this milestone. For looking after my children while I was busy

with this study. The support and motivation I got from my husband Mr Stokwe thank you Mqwathi for understanding and supporting me during the sleepless nights. To all my academic friends' thank you for your guidance, motivation, moral and unselfish support.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	Annual National Assessments
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CoP	Community of Practice
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DBST	District Based Support Teams
NDoBE	Department of Basic Education
FAL	First Additional Language
FP	Foundation Phase
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HL	Home Language
IP	Intervention Programme
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
NDoBE	National Department of Basic Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SBST	School Based Support Teams
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
WBG	World Bank Group
WCED	Western Cape Department of Education
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Developing the comprehension skills of children in primary schools is a challenge that many countries face. South Africa is not an exception. Primary school learners in South Africa have particularly low literacy and comprehension skills. Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2016) shows that South Africa is ranked at the bottom of countries when it comes to literacy. Many learners struggle to read for understanding: there is a dearth of scholarship that focus on children's development of comprehension skills using explicit instructional strategies. A lack of knowledge in this area is what this thesis seeks to address. This chapter discusses the background of the study. It outlines the research context, the approach to the study, the purpose and goals of the study and research questions. Key terms are clarified, and the significance, limitations and assumptions are verified.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The present study was developed out of a concern raised around comprehension skills in South African schools. The researcher was motivated by her own background as a Grade 3 teacher: she came to realise that comprehension is one of the most challenging literacy and educational issues experienced by second language learners in the South African education system. The researcher's experience of teaching comprehension endorses the findings of Van der Berg, Spaull, Wills, Gustafsson and Kotze (2016) who state that 58% of South African learners do not learn to read for understanding in any language by the end of Grade 4. Learners do not make sense of what they read and this disability constrains performance in annual reading assessments.

For the past six years of teaching, the researcher has found it challenging to teach comprehension to her learners. They are seldom able to understand the concepts being asked of them in their texts and are unable to write their answers in English. The researcher agrees with Mrs Motshekga, the Minister of Basic Education, who states that teachers in South Africa are often unable to equip learners with the skills and knowledge needed for them to become active participants in the classroom

(Department of Basic Education (NDoBE), 2019). The researcher completed her Honours and then went straight into her Masters study. She could see that the higher-order thinking skills that she learnt about in her Honours class were extremely important skills for her to learn more about. Her learners needed these skills to succeed in school and to do well in their curriculum and assessments.

These literacy issues motivated the researcher to explore how she could develop higher-order comprehension skills in her Grade 3 class teaching of first and second language in an urban township school where the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is different from learners' mother tongue.

Table 1.1 indicates the Western Cape Systemic results for three Grade 3 classes in the township school where the researcher taught. At the end of 2019, the researcher left this school. The poor 2014 - 2016 results stimulated her to conduct this study in this school, in an attempt to address these comprehension challenges. The literacy skills indicated here include: reading and viewing; and thinking and reasoning. The results from 2017-2019 showed some improvement. The researcher had more knowledge about the pedagogy of teaching comprehension skills in both first and second language and she shared this knowledge with the other two Grade 3 teachers.

Table: 1.1 Western Cape Systemic results of the three Grade 3 classes in a township school

Western Cape Systemic Test results						
Components tested	**Pass% 2014**	**Pass% 2015**	**Pass% 2016**	**Pass% 2017**	**Pass% 2018**	**Pass% 2019**
Reading and viewing	18.5	43.8	25.5	47.8	51.9	56.9
Thinking and reasoning	16.0	41.6	21.6	43.3	50.2	53.7

Recently, the researcher has contacted the principal who shared with her the latest 2019 Western Cape Department of Education (WCED) Systemic Test results. He stated that the general areas of weakness for these three Grade 3 classes in this school include: difficulty in understanding the meaning of the words in context; reading with comprehension was a challenge for most learners; and most learners struggled to provide synonyms from the text.

1.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) (2019:95) highlights that international and local assessments suggest the quality of learning is a challenge in the South African school system. A weak foundation in the early grades of learning literacy causes difficulties in the later grades. The target for the National Development Plan (NDP) (2011) is 90% of all Grade 3 learners to achieve 50% or more in national literacy assessments. Stats SA (2019) state that it is important to plan to achieve this target by ensuring that all learners in South Africa acquire the knowledge and skills needed through education to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality in this developing country. The World Bank Group (WBG) (2018) states that developing countries and low-income countries are facing low learning levels. This mainly affects learners from poor households who are far more likely to struggle to acquire basic literacy skills.

The NDP (2011) document claims that many South African learners struggle to gain quality education at the expected level often because learners lack adequate nutrition which retards learners' cognitive development. The president of South Africa, Mr Ramaphosa, states that there is a need to invest more in education, training, re-skilling people and introducing new skills to learners so that they are able to cope with challenges of the future (Stats SA, 2019). This discussion highlights the poor schooling outcomes and low skills levels.

Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) state that low performance of South African learners in literacy assessments is well known and recognised in reports on the Annual National Assessments (ANAs), in international reports based on the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 2010) and in the South African results of the PIRLS of 2006, 2011 and 2016. Taylor, Van der Burg and Mabogoane (2013) claim that every international and national assessment indicates that the majority of South African primary school children do not acquire the basic comprehension skills of the grade they are in or of the previous grade. Regardless of continued government investment in the education system, South African education still produces learners who perform poorly in international and national assessments (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016).

Provincial assessments

Recently the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) issued a document called Western Cape Reading Strategy 2020 – 2025 that clearly points out the challenges that the WCED faces regarding the Systemic Evaluation tests. This document demonstrates that learners in the Western Cape have low levels in language skills. Their language abilities are below the required expectations to learn with understanding and develop effectively. WCED (2019) highlights that they invested considerable resources into improving reading in this province. Yet, in the 2019 Systemic Evaluation results the Minister of Education in the Western Cape, Debbie Schafer, reported that Grade 3 results indicate that learners performed poorly in reading comprehension; with the average score of 44.9% which is a decrease of 0.9% from the 2018 results of 45.8% in literacy (WCED, 2020). This department believes, however, that these results are better and higher by 14.5% than the 2011 Systemic Evaluation results. These results suggest that in Quintile 2 schools where that research was conducted, the language pass rate for Grade 3 has increased since 2011. WCED (2019) states that this statistic demonstrates that the province has expended more effort into closing the inequality gap in education by improving the quintile 1-3 results. The province agrees that they still need to improve the literacy results in this province. Debbie Schafer says that all results are compared to the 2011 baseline results and that the pass rate is based on the 50% mark (WCED, 2020).

National assessment

When analyzing the 2013 ANAs, Spaull (2015) finds that learners are unable to perform basic literacy skills because they do not understand what they are being asked, even when they are responding in their home language. Even Van der Berg et al. (2016) concur that since implementation of the ANAs in 2011, the results affirm low performance in literacy. Learners lacked comprehension skills in the Foundation Phase (FP).

International assessments

Looking at international assessments of children's literacy skills, Spaull and Pretorius (2016) argue that literacy skills in South Africa are low since learners struggle with comprehension by the end of Grade 3. Howie, Combrinck, Roux, Tshele, Mokoena and Palane (2017) in the PIRLS literacy Grade 4 study, find that South Africa is the lowest

performing country out of 50 countries. They highlight that approximately 78% of our Grade 4 learners do not reach the international benchmarks. For that reason they struggle with basic reading skills by the end of Grade 4. Comparing this factor against learners tested internationally, only 4% struggle with basic reading by the end of Grade 4.

Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) state that low literacy in South Africa may be caused by two major factors and many sub-factors including:

1. Socio-economic issues: from high levels of poverty, and parents who are illiterate and non-readers which results in them not motivating their children to read;
2. Schooling issues: which results in poor governance in many schools; poorly resourced schools, reading materials that are unavailable or inappropriate in the language of disadvantaged learners; poorly qualified teachers which leads to print-poor classrooms; short time on tasks; poor lesson planning; unsuccessful reading and comprehension instructional practices and the complex issue of the LoLT in classrooms.

Emerging from these two broad major factors, the following four issues, which directly shaped this study, are discussed in more detail.

The role of Home Language (HL)

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) guarantees that South African children have a right to receive education in their Home Language or language of their choice. Many learners in South Africa, however, receive their education in English as their First Additional Language and LoLT. As a result, HL learners in South Africa are facing a language barrier in an English or Afrikaans classroom (Kotze, Van der Westhuizen & Bardard, 2017). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and National Department of Basic Education (NDoBE) (2011) policy on LoLT sets out that Home Language (HL) should be the language of teaching in Grade 1 and 2. English, as the First Additional Language (FAL), should be introduced orally in Grade 3 and in Grade 4 where FAL becomes the language of teaching and learning. Moyo (2018) believes that introducing English in Grade 3 is late since Grade 4 learners are expected to face many more language issues. All their teaching is conducted in

English for the first time. They have nine subjects as opposed to the four in Grade 3. Many subjects introduce learners to different genres as opposed to the fictional genre which is dominant in the previous grades. Sentences are longer and employ more complex grammatical structures.

The role of Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in reading

Learners with African HL continue to be disadvantaged. They struggle to perform to the best of their ability and reach their full potential using the LoLT as it is not their HL (Van der Berg et al., 2016). LoLT may be the reason why they lack reading for meaning. They do not understand the LoLT. They struggle with comprehension skills as a result (Kotze et al., 2017).

The focus of instructional attention related to reading

Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) postulate that explicitly teaching and modelling comprehension strategies improve comprehension skills of learners as it is demonstrated by more knowledgeable people. Beck and Condy (2017) assert that deliberate instruction of higher-order comprehension skills is important when teaching comprehension strategies. In South African primary school classrooms, higher-order thinking and comprehension instruction do not receive adequate attention; as is the case with the other language skills. The PIRLS results show us that basic reading skills are not being properly developed. Klapwijk (2015) concurs that little explicit strategy instruction takes place in South African classrooms, caused by a lack of proper teacher training in comprehension instruction. Teachers are unsure of the value of strategy instruction and think that strategy instruction is too time-consuming, and difficult to learn and teach. Pretorius (2015) holds that in both HL and FAL, South African learners struggle to decode the texts they read. Teachers spend more time on teaching decoding skills rather than on developing higher order comprehension skills. Meaning and comprehension remain neglected as the poor reading comprehension results indicate.

While teachers are expected to provide learners with the skills and knowledge needed, they struggle to teach those necessary comprehension skills to learners. Yen and Halili (2015) affirm that most teachers are unsure of how to teach higher order thinking skills

because they themselves lack pedagogical knowledge to teach these skills. Felix, Condy and Chigona (2018) highlight that there are four types of teachers:

- New teachers with no content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge;
- New teachers with some content but less experience in adapting pedagogical knowledge;
- First-time subject teachers with no content and pedagogical knowledge; and
- Experienced teachers with content but lacking in pedagogical knowledge.

All these types of teachers may prevent learners from gaining the comprehension skills and knowledge needed, as they may not have been taught in their undergraduate training how to teach reading and comprehension skills. Teacher training institutions should focus on producing teachers who are able to teach comprehension skills effectively and meaningfully (Pretorius et al., 2016). Moopelwa and Condy (2019) suggest that all Higher Education Institutions (HEI) should teach reading comprehension instruction explicitly in all teachers' courses from primary to high schools.

Teacher reading perceptions and practices

Another contributory factor to the low literacy levels in South Africa, according to Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016), is teacher awareness and knowledge practices of reading and teaching comprehension skills. What the teacher knows and what s/he considers is right and fundamental in developing literacy skills in the language classroom, reflect learner performance. Mrs Motshekga suggests that learners should look up to their teachers and see them as dynamic, constant learners too (NDoBE, 2019). The National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) report of 2013 suggests that there are three areas of knowledge that pinpoint difficulties for many teachers in South Africa: content knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge and curriculum knowledge.

1.4 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in a primary school in one of the township areas of the Western Cape. This school was selected because the site was convenient for the researcher. At the time of conducting this study, she taught at the school, so time and freedom of movement were convenient for her (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Five

Grade 3 participants were purposively selected; based on their willingness to participate in this research project and the fact that they struggled with understanding comprehension skills. As Table 1.1 indicates, the majority of learners in this school demonstrated poor comprehension skills. The school has a weak culture of reading and no functional library; only a few old books. Not every learner has a book to read at home and school due to the vandalism at the school. Spaull (2015) reports that fewer than 50% of South African learners have access to more than 10 books at home, compared to international statistics that indicate approximately 78% of learners have access to books at home. This statistic has a long-term negative impact on learners reading and comprehension skills.

Many learners in this school have young single mothers and their parents are not married. Some children live with their grandparents due to the deaths of their parents, parents working in other towns or grandparents having no one to look after them. The majority of the learners in this school do not live far from the school.

1.5 THE APPROACH TO THE STUDY

This qualitative case study deployed three methods of data collection. Before any data were collected, a one-on-one meeting was arranged with each of the parents/guardians of the five selected learners participating. During the meetings, the researcher provided a detailed explanation as to why their children were selected, the importance of the research and what the researcher intended to do with the collected data. She explained to them that their children's names would remain anonymous and that they could withdraw from the study any time they wished to without any consequences. The researcher explained the programme to the parents/guardians that the Intervention Programme (IP) would take ten weeks, three times a week for 30 minutes. Permission was granted by the school principal, the WCED and the university where the researcher was studying. She explained to the parents and guardians that an IP is when a teacher supports the needs of identified learners. The policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (2014) document states that teachers, parents and guardians should make sure that learners have access to appropriate IP's.

Interviews were conducted with the two selected Grade 3 teachers. The procedures for data collection were explained to them at the start of each interview. Their interviews

were conducted during break-time on the school premises and were tape recorded. Both interviews were conducted in isiXhosa because participants felt more comfortable being able to express themselves in their home language.

Classroom observations of the five learners were conducted during the IP, where the researcher focused on these learners' understanding of the comprehension skills. She observed their cognitive and social development. The researcher was engaged in the activities conducted by the learners. In this way she was a participant observer. Observations were not video-recorded but written on observation schedules immediately after each lesson.

Pre-tests were conducted at the beginning of the IP, where the researcher used the first week of the IP for pre-testing. The same post-tests were conducted after the eight-week IP of teaching the comprehension skills using the nine comprehension strategies. In both the pre- and post-tests, learners completed them on their own without the help of the researcher.

1.6 THE PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of five Grade 3 learners developing comprehension skills during a ten-week IP. This research project investigated the achievements and challenges experienced by second language learners when learning and participating in a variety of comprehension skills.

The goals were to teach, develop and to understand the five learners' reactions to the nine higher-order comprehension strategies.

1.7 THE RESEARCH TITLE

Grade 3 learners' experiences of developing comprehension skills during an Intervention Programme.

1.8 THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

There are three research questions in this study with sub-questions.

Research Question 1

What were the learners' comprehension challenges during the IP?

Sub-question

What were the learners' pre-test results of the comprehension passages?

What were the learners' challenges when engaging with the four comprehension skills?

Research Question 2

How did the IP, focussing on comprehension, encourage the social, cognitive and language development of the Grade 3 learners?

Sub-questions

1. How did the IP, focussing on comprehension, encourage the social development of the Grade 3 learners?
2. How did the IP, focussing on comprehension skills, encourage the cognitive development of the Grade 3 learners?
3. How did the IP, focussing on comprehension skills, encourage the language development of the Grade 3 learners?

Research Question 3

Why did learners perform the way they did in post-test results after explicit teaching of comprehension skills?

Sub-questions

1. What were the learners' post-test results of the comprehension passages?
2. What are the differences between each learners' pre and post-test results?

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

1.9.1. Intervention Programme

Thompson, Vaughn, Prater and Cirino (2006) define IP as a process where learners are identified as learners at risk for experiencing academic challenges and then provided with an appropriate intervention programme which focuses on building the academic skills in order to reduce the risk. Nondala (2015) describes IP as one that

modifies and prevents reading delays from occurring. Nondala states that IP's support learners with learning difficulties. An IP is where teachers assist their learners to develop. An IP allows a teacher to track learner progress. This process is beneficial to learners if the programme is structured around the correct level and pace of the learner, and if the teacher focuses her teaching and learning on developing these skills using a variety of pedagogies.

1.9.2. Pre and post-tests

Ivanitskaya, DuFord, Craig and Casey (2008) describe pre and post-tests as a measure of learning outcomes and skills before and after the teaching session takes place as well as evaluating the teaching methods. Lanning and Mallek (2017) state that pre-tests take place in order to open the IP. They assess the learners' current information and knowledge of literacy skills before teaching begins. The results of pre-tests are used to modify the outcomes of learning and to assess the teaching methods adopted during the teaching sessions (Brooks, 2013). Lanning et al. (2017) state that post-tests suggest how much the learners have learned during the teaching sessions.

1.9.3. PIRLS comprehension skills

Mullis, Martin and Sainsbury (2016) state that readers create meaning in different ways: the PIRLS literacy assessments test four comprehensively constructed skills of comprehension which are:

- focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information;
- make straightforward inferences;
- interpret and integrate ideas and information; and
- evaluate and evaluate content and textual elements.

These four comprehension skills are the metacognitive skills and strategies that allow readers to examine their understanding and adjust their approach to answering comprehension skills (Mullis et al., 2016). They are used as a foundation for developing the comprehension questions.

1.9.4. Bloom's Taxonomy

Abduljabbar and Omar (2015) hold that Bloom's Taxonomy is a structure that is based on educational purposes that classify the level of learning and understanding. Hess,

Jones, Carlock and Walkup (2009) claim that Blooms Taxonomy categorises the ordering of cognitive skills that are needed by the brain to answer questions: it is a thinking process that is required to answer questions. This Taxonomy consists of six levels to develop learners to a higher-level of cognition, starting at the simplest level. According to Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) the six levels of thinking begin with the simplest cognitive functions and moves to the more complex and challenging types of thinking. The six levels move from remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating new knowledge.

1.9.5. Social learning

Kendal, Boogert, Rendell, Laland, Webster and Jones (2018) describe social learning as a learning that is facilitated by observations of interactions with another individual. They state that social learning is essentially indiscriminate: so that it is important for one to be selective of what, when and whom they copy. LaRoche (2015) believes that learners should be allowed to and encouraged to copy and interact because their thinking skills develop and they construct ways of being together. Social learning in the classroom benefits learners as they interact, help and push each other to improve their work (Freedman, 2010).

1.9.6. Behaviour modification charts

Zhou and Brown (2015) describe behaviour modification charts as a plan that a teacher can use to modify the behaviour of a learner or develop cognitive thinking skills. Behaviour modification charts promote learners' ability and independence, encouraging learners to focus on appropriate learning goals and effective social interactions. Behaviour modification charts can help teachers to manage the classroom, to cater for individual differences and the developmental needs of each learner.

1.9.7. Critical thinking

Yen and Halili (2015) believe that developing learners' higher-order thinking skills will create critical thinking learners who can easily respond to real-world difficulties. They state that critical thinking skills do not function naturally; these skills need to be developed so that learners can achieve their highest thinking abilities. Hence, using a variety of teaching strategies play an important role in developing critical thinking

learners who can analyze, interpret, reason, synthesize, evaluate and create new knowledge (Shukla & Dungsungnoen, 2016).

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The researcher believes that the primary significance of this study provides an understanding and awareness of teaching the four comprehension skills proposed by the PIRLS document (2016) by using a variety of comprehension strategies to build critical thinking amongst all learners in our schools. This research study is significant to different stakeholders such as: teachers across all grades, especially Foundation Phase and language teachers because they will benefit from using these strategies, and Higher Education Institutions that train primary and high school teachers, as well as the WCED and the NDoBE.

This study has five other issues of significance for our education system today. First, the researcher believes that this study contributes towards improving the higher-order thinking skills of our learners, which directly improve their comprehension scores in our provincial and national literacy assessments. Second, teachers could begin reflecting on their own teaching strategies, and develop individual or group education plans to improve the literacy levels of their struggling learners. Third, the study could assist the WCED and NDoBE with a literacy training of the various comprehension strategies for the District Based Support Teams (DBSTs) and School Based Support Teams (SBSTs) who offer training and professional development to teachers. Fourth, the study provides Higher Education Institutions, especially teacher training faculties, with a variety of different pedagogic approaches to teach higher order thinking skills in (HL, FAL and content subjects), since these comprehension strategies can be used across all grades and subjects. Finally, these strategies encourage learners to participate while both teachers and learners enjoy their teaching and learning.

1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this study there have been certain basic limitations of a qualitative study such as collecting data from one Grade 3 class in one school. The reflections were taken from the views of both five learners and two teachers participating in the study and were naturally personal. Due to time limitations, the IP was conducted after school hours for 30 minutes three days a week. The researcher was limited to interviewing the parents

and guardians when they were available; these dates and times kept changing, which was challenging for the researcher as she was a full time educator.

1.12 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

It was assumed that the two interviewed teachers knew about the higher-order comprehension skills, and that they knew how to teach these comprehension skills. The researcher assumed that their responses to the interview questions would be honest. She further assumed that the five research participants would give honest responses and freely participate in the research.

1.13 ORGANISATION OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1: This introductory chapter orientated and formulated the importance and background of the study. It outlines the research context, the approach to the study, the purpose and goals of the study and research questions. Main terms were clarified; significance, limitations and assumptions were verified.

Chapter 2: This chapter outlines the conceptual framework and literature review. It focuses on national and international literature as it searches the experiences of developing comprehension and higher-order thinking skills. The study is guided by the theories of cognitive development by Vygotsky (1978), Cambourne's social constructivist theory (2004), social theory of learning by Wenger (2005) and Bloom's Taxonomy as described by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001).

Chapter 3: This chapter presents the research approach, design, and paradigm used in the study in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the study. It provides in-depth steps of data collection, site selection and sample. It highlights the data analysis processes and reports on ethical considerations, trustworthiness, reliability and validity.

Chapter 4: This chapter provides the findings obtained from the seven one-on-one interviews, observations and pre- and post-tests conducted during a ten-week IP. The results of this study are interpreted with references to insights gained from the literature review and the conceptual framework. The findings presented in this chapter respond to the three main research questions driving this study.

Chapter 5: This chapter draws conclusions from the research and offers recommendations for practice, policy and future research.

CHAPTER 2
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conceptual framework which guided this study and reviews literature on issues related to comprehension skills. The chapter draws up on international and national literature to describe learners' experiences of developing comprehension skills during an Intervention Programme.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework underpinning this study are a synthesis of various pedagogical priorities: Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, Cambourne's (2004) social constructivism, Bloom's Taxonomy (2001) of cognitive domain and Wenger's (2005) social theory of leaning. The synthesis of these theories provides the necessary background information on critical relations between all these concepts. Stephens (2016) believes that a significant way for improving the cognitive and social development of learners is to promote positive social interaction amongst them. For this reason the researcher decided to guide her study using a judicious selection of these four theories. The researcher chose these theories because she interacted with the five learners during an IP to develop their cognitive and social skills while undertaking the nine comprehension strategies.

Table: 2.1 The four theories referred to in this thesis

Main theorist	Theory
2.2.1 Vygotsky (1978)	2.2.1 Theory of social constructivism • Social interaction • Cognitive development • Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) • Scaffolding
2.2.2 Cambourne (2004)	2.2.2 Theory of social constructivism Development of intellectual unrest • Transformation • Discussion/reflection • Application • Evaluation
2.2.3 Bloom's Taxonomy (2001)	2.2.3 Theory of cognitive domain • Remembering • Understanding • Applying • Analyzing • Evaluating • Creating
2.2.4 Wenger's (2005)	2.2.4 Social theory of learning • learning as doing (practice); • learning as belonging (community); • learning as becoming (identity); and • learning as experience (meaning). • Community of Practice

2.2.1. Vygotsky's Theory of Social Constructivism

In this research study, the teacher modeled social constructivist behaviour supported by Vygotsky's theory. This was accomplished by continually supporting her learners throughout the IP, keeping in mind that Vygotsky (1978) believed that children learn through interaction with the help of a teacher or more knowledgeable peers.

Social constructivists view learning as a social process (Doyla, 2010). Meaningful learning occurs when one is engaged in social activities. According to Vygotsky (1978), social interaction plays a fundamental role in the cognitive development of a child. He further states that important learning by children takes place through social interactions with the help of a skillful teacher. He purports that knowledge is created when there is

such social interaction between the teacher and the learner. Vygotsky believes that this knowledge should be scaffolded and modeled.

Vygotsky (1978) holds that scaffolding is another strategy for developing the sound intellectual knowledge and skills of learners. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976:98) explain scaffolding as the help that is provided during a structured interaction. The South African Curriculum for English First Additional Language for the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) (NDoBE, 2011:13) suggests that when teaching First Additional Language (FAL) teachers should adopt a text-based approach. This approach requires considerable modeling, support and scaffolding. It enables learners to become competent, confident and critical readers. Through critical interaction, learners develop the abilities to view, analyse and evaluate texts when these abilities are scaffolded within the ZPD.

Doyla (2010) states that the (ZPD) is an area of exploration for which learners are cognitively prepared but that, for them to be able to work independently, they require help and social interactions. Vygotsky (1978) states that cognitive development stems from social interactions and guided learning within the ZPD, as learners construct knowledge. Dorn, French and Jones (1998) define the ZPD as the level of developing learners where they learn to read with the support of a more knowledgeable person. A higher level of understanding occurs as a result of such support.

Scaffolding within the ZPD was particularly appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to provide support and assistance in performing and completing of tasks. During the IP, the researcher provided help and assistance to her five learners to develop deeper understanding of the nine comprehension strategies and four comprehension skills they were engaging with. This assistance and guidance provided to the five learners resulted in cognitive growth and development in their comprehension skills; as seen in the post-test results on page 32. The five learners were, at first, given a range of tasks to perform with the help and guidance of a teacher because they were not able to complete the work without the assistance of the teacher. These learners could finish tasks given to them or understand those tasks through the support from the teacher. This assistance helped these five learners to move

independently. These tasks were modeled and explained to learners. This is similar to Vygotsky's scaffolding within the (ZPD).

2.2.2. Cambourne's Theory of Social Constructivism

This study aimed to develop the Grade 3 learners' comprehension skills during an IP. One of the frameworks used by the researcher was Cambourne's social constructivist theory. Cambourne (2004:26) explains social constructivism as a set of assumptions about learners and the learning process. Rushton, Eitelgeorge and Zickafoose (2003) state that through the development of interaction, reflection and action, learners create and construct their own personal understandings of the environment. Cambourne (2004) argues that knowledge and meaning are socially constructed through the processes of negotiation, evaluation and transformation. This process is related to Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism and the use of a ZPD. Knowledge and meaning cannot therefore be separated from the social environment.

Cambourne's theory of intellectual unrest is relevant to this study.

According to Cambourne (2004:36) intellectual unrest is an important state which learners must experience if they are to engage deeply with demonstrations and if they are to draw from background experiences to assist their learning. Cambourne (2001) explains demonstrations as essential to learning: they show exact actions of talking, reading and writing. He further states that he uses intellectual unrest in the classroom because it proposes both intellectual and pragmatic goals. It is important for teachers to employ structures and processes that create constant opportunities for the development of intellectual unrest. This study employed the following structures and processes to create and solve intellectual unrest during the IP:

- Transformation;
- Discussion/reflection;
- Application; and
- Evaluation.

2.2.2.1. Transformation

Cambourne (2004) states that transformation occurs when learners modify their own knowledge and skills. He further states that learning without transformation is low and

temporary. Transformation happens when there is an exchange of knowledge and skills to interchange meaning. Blease and Condy (2014) state that teachers should create a classroom with moral beliefs that support and encourage deep engagement with multiple demonstrations of skills.

2.2.2.2. Discussions/reflections

Cambourne (2004) describes discussions/reflections as language processes that highlight identical purposes for the learners to explore, transact and clarify meaning. These processes are different only in so far as discussions take place with the group of people while reflection occurs with self. Reflection creates further opportunities for clarifications, extension and refocusing (Cambourne, 2004).

2.2.2.3. Application

Application is the classroom structure that is created by the teacher to allow learners to apply the skills and understanding they have developed (Cambourne, 2004). Transformation, discussion and reflection depend on the application to happen: learners need to apply the skills taught by the teacher. If learners struggle to apply prior knowledge and skills to a new knowledge, there cannot be discussions in the classroom. To be able to solve problems, it is essential to apply skills and knowledge.

2.2.2.4. Evaluation

Learners evaluate their own performance as they discuss, reflect, transform and apply knowledge and skills (Cambourne, 2004). Blease and Condy (2014) state that learners need to transform the knowledge, reflect and discuss developments, and apply new knowledge and skills so that they can evaluate it. They state that it is difficult to separate these issues because these four steps have to be followed. Since this research project was based in a South African school, which used the current CAPS document (NDoBE, 2011), the researcher linked the above four processes to create and solve intellectual unrest among the five learners, as proposed by Cambourne; with the reading and comprehension skills set out in the CAPS document.

During the IP, the researcher demonstrated reading and comprehension skills to the learners as expected by the CAPS document (NDoBE, 2011). She used the reading processes proposed by English First Additional Language curriculum (Grades 4-6:10-

11): pre-reading, during reading and post reading stages, and comprehension skills proposed by English First Additional Language curriculum (Grades R-3:16-18): literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential, evaluation and appreciation. Table 2.2 describes the reading skills conducted before, during and after each lesson during the IP and Table 2.3 give details of the comprehension skills from the CAPS document.

2.2.3. Bloom's Theory of Cognitive Domain

Forehand (2011:2) describes Bloom's taxonomy as: "… a multi-tiered model of classifying thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity". The lowest three levels are: remembering, understanding and applying, while the highest three levels are: analyzing, evaluating and creating as displayed in Figure 2.1.

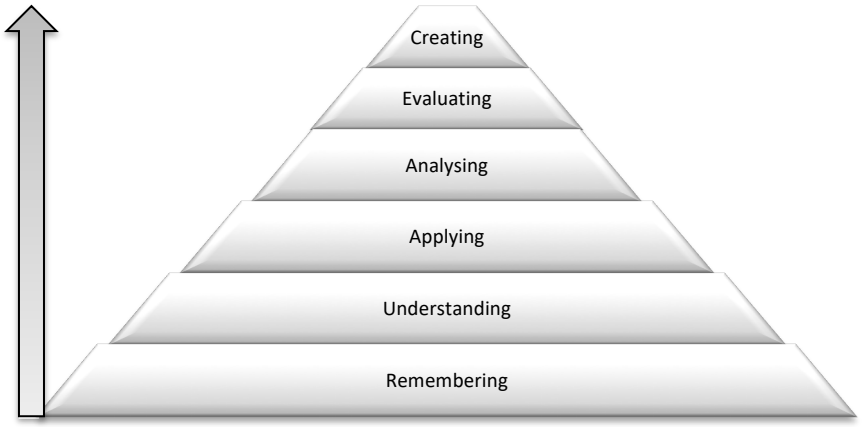

Figure 2.1 Bloom's Taxonomy (2001)

Bloom's Taxonomy was used in this study as a pedagogical tool to improve the cognitive skills of the five selected learners during the eight weeks of the IP. The researcher attempted to move her learners from the lower-order levels of Bloom's Taxonomy for thinking skills to the higher-order thinking skills. She built upon, and extended, their knowledge; she assisted them to remember facts from the stories. She helped them understand by constructing new knowledge from texts and encouraged the learners to transfer this new knowledge to their own communities by applying and implementing what was learnt in the texts. She role modeled analyzing skills by breaking texts into smaller parts and created opportunities for the learners to evaluate texts by offering opinions about the texts. By doing Readers Theater the learners created new texts and knowledge that reflected their backgrounds.

Forehand (2011) states that Bloom's Taxonomy provides English teachers with a new outlook on assessment and enables them to create assignments and projects that require learners to operate at more complex levels of thinking. The IP intended to create critical thinkers, not learners who recalled information straight from the text. By doing so, the researcher ordered her oral and written questions for the nine comprehension strategies from simple to complex. The activities were structured using a revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy for verbs (Krathwohl & Anderson, 2010) that start from simple to more challenging thinking.

Since the aim of this research project was to develop and extend learners' literacy cognitive levels, the revised Blooms Taxonomy (Krathwohl & Anderson, 2010) and the PIRLS comprehension cognitive levels were incorporated throughout the IP. Table 2.2 is an attempt by the researcher to synchronize and intersect the two models experienced in her research project. The revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy has six cognitive levels which were merged with the four levels of the PIRLS comprehension cognitive levels. The researcher believed that the Apply and Analyse cognitive levels of Bloom's revised taxonomy resembled the PIRLS Interpret and integrate ideas and information level. Similarly, the revised Blooms Taxonomy's Evaluate and Create were similar to the PIRLS Evaluate and examine content, language and textual elements.

Table 2.2 The intersectionality of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy to the PIRLS literacy comprehension cognitive levels

Revised Blooms Taxonomy cognitive levels	PIRLS literacy comprehension cognitive levels	Blooms taxonomy reading task verb	PIRLS reading tasks verb
Remember	Retrieve explicitly stated information	recognizing recalling	identifying looking searching finding
Understand	Make straight forward inferences	interpreting exemplifying classifying summarizing inferring comparing explaining	inferring concluding describing
Apply	Interpret and integrate ideas and information	executing implementing differentiating organizing attributing	considering comparing constructing inferring interpreting
Analyse			
Evaluate	Evaluate and examine content, language and textual element	checking critiquing generating planning producing	judging evaluating judging describing determining
Create			

The intersectionality of the two cognitive levels is significant because it helped the researcher to probe questions that would require learners to operate at more complex levels of thinking. These kinds of questions assisted the researcher to develop activities that learners found engaging and stimulating at the same time. The English First Additional Language curriculum for the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) (NNDoBE: 2011) suggests that assessments should provide a variety of cognitive levels. By using both PIRLS and Blooms Taxonomy cognitive levels, the researcher provided activities with a range of cognitive levels.

2.2.4. Social theory of learning

Wenger (2005) explains social learning as learning that is created when there is social participation. He posits that a social theory of learning integrates the components necessary to describe social participation as a process of learning and of knowing while

referring to a familiar experience. To highlight the integration of components, Kapucu (2018: 589) postulates that participants involve themselves in a community (learning as belonging) to engage in certain activities (learning as doing), as a result of establishing their identity (learning as becoming) to interpret the world around themselves (learning as experience) as shown in Figure 2.2.This study used Wenger's (2004) theory of Community of Practice (CoP), as can be seen in Figure 2.2, which is a group of people who want to achieve a common objective by sharing ideas and ways to solve problems.

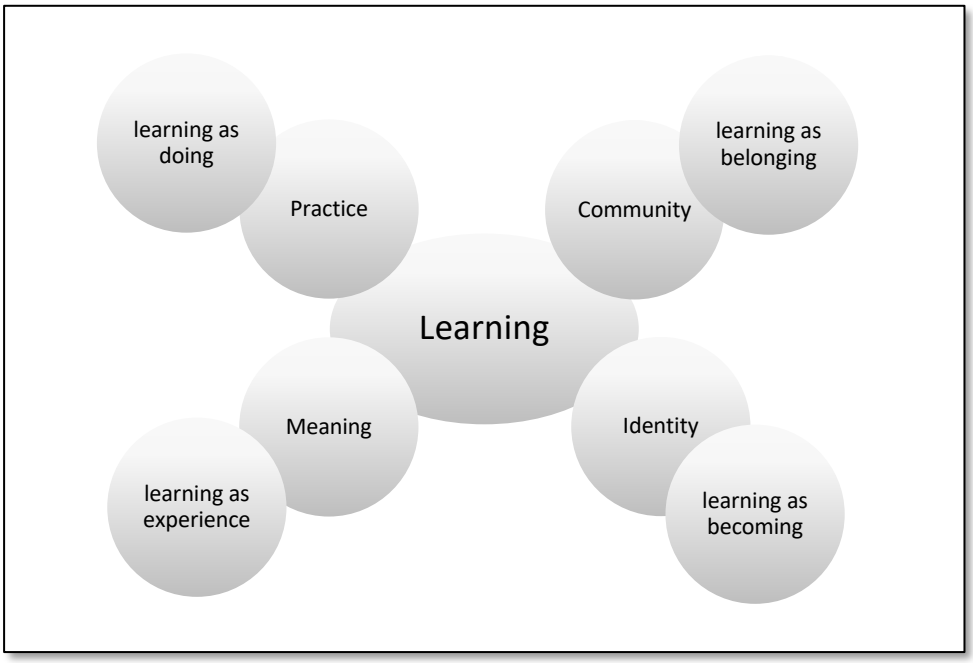

Figure 2.2 Components of a Social Theory of Learning (Wenger, 2005: 5)

The current study used the classroom as a community of practice and Wenger's components of social theory of learning which helped the researcher to combine both knowledge and practice at the same time. Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner (2015) states that community of practice is a useful approach to knowing and learning: members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other and share information. They build relations that enable them to learn from each other, and learn to care about their standing with each other (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner 2015).

Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner (2015: 5) states that the CoP is relevant to education because its outlook affects educational practices in terms of three dimensions:

- "Internally: How to organize educational experiences that ground school learning in practice through participation in communities around subject matter?"
- "Externally: How to connect the experiences of learners to actual practice through exterior forms of participation in broader communities beyond the walls of the school?"
- "Over the lifetime of learners: How to serve the lifelong learning needs of learners by organizing communities of practice focused on topics of continuing interest to learners beyond the initial schooling period?"

One of the stated aims of the WCED is that learners should enter school to learn and leave to serve the community and country. This has given the five learners in the current study an opportunity to learn by connecting with their peers. Activities that were created for this study were helpful in developing sound relations between the five learners which enhanced their peer interactions. Kapacu (2018) states that appropriate strategies should be used to promote collaborative activities within the classroom. During the IP, the researcher used different comprehension strategies to encourage peer interaction amongst the five learners. The researcher created activities that would encourage the five learners to participate in group discussions and role playing. These activities made them interact and learn from one another. These activities promoted social transformation among these five learners who were involved in this study. Keeping them in a small group gave them the opportunity to learn from the experiences of their peers as they were sharing their opinions during activities.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.3.1. Introduction

In order to contextualize the study, this section begins with a brief description of comprehension, the CAPS document and the Language policy and then discusses the serious challenge of poor comprehension faced by South African education. Table 2.3 highlights the eight conditions for learning in a constructivist classroom. The nine comprehension strategies that formed an integral part of the Intervention Programme are briefly discussed.

Table 2.3 A description of the conditions for learning and the comprehension strategies used in the current research project

Themes	Sub-themes
2.3.2 Description of comprehension	
2.3.3 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document and the Language Policy	
2.3.4 Comprehension challenges in South Africa	
2.3.5 Conditions of learning in a constructivist classroom	2.3.5.1 Immersion 2.3.5.2 Demonstration 2.3.5.3 Engagement 2.3.5.4 Expectations 2.3.5.5 Responsibility 2.3.5.6 Employment 2.3.5.7 Approximation 2.3.5.8 Response
2.3.6 The nine comprehension strategies used in the IP	2.3.6.1 Anticipation guides 2.3.6.2 Vocabulary magic square 2.3.6.3 Vocabulary matching 2.3.6.4 Feature matrix 2.3.6.5 Think aloud 2.3.6.6 My turn, Your turn 2.3.6.7 Reader's theatre 2.3.6.8 Cloze 2.3.6.9 Higher-order thinking Comprehension

2.3.2. A brief description of comprehension

Piper, Schroeder and Trudell (2015), and Pipper, Zuilkowski and Mugenda (2014) state that comprehension is the product of a learner's decoding and listening comprehension skills. It requires a learner to demonstrate understanding of the concept, to read by answering questions and interpreting the content. Pipper et al. (2014) explain that readers build ideas by combining the information in the text with what they already know. In this case, a learner reads the text and infuses his or her understanding with prior knowledge about the subject. Hudson (2007) concurs that comprehension includes the ability to use prior knowledge to derive meaning from what is read. Comprehension is not limited to decoding the words on the page but understanding the meaning of words (Uccelli, Barr, Dobbs, Galloway, Meneses & Sanchez, 2015). They continue discussing that comprehension is about understanding the syntactic and speech constructions in which words are rooted.

2.3.3. CAPS document and the language policy

Language is a tool used by people to communicate. CAPS document (NDoBE, 2011:8), highlights that "learning to use language effectively enables learners to acquire knowledge, to express their identity, feelings and ideas, to interact with others and to manage their world". In addition, it states that language provides learners with a richly rooted set of ideas to make the world better and clearer than it is already is. Nomlomo (2010) believes that language assists in communication during classroom interaction and it allows learners to find information through thinking and reasoning. Tshotsho (2013:41) states that the South African language policy has two goals: to encourage the teaching of African Languages at all levels of education and parents' right to choose which language to be used as a medium of instruction.

2.3.3.1. Home language

The CAPS (2011:8) (Grades R – 3) document states that: "Home Language is the language first acquired by learners". In practice, however, many schools do not offer the Home Languages of some registered learners. According to the CAPS (2011) document, language learning in the Foundation Phase emphasizes the learning of mother tongue language in the first three grades of schooling. Tshotsho (2013) states that the National Education Policy agrees that learners should start serious learning in their own home language and that the second language should be introduced at Grade 4 level. He continues that when learners are taught in their own language for a longer period of time, most cognitive demanding skills are taught as they benefit from the support of their mother tongue. This could help them acquire the necessary language and cognitive skills because it will be easy for them to change to the second language. CAPS document (NDoBE, 2011) (Grades 4-6), explains that in South Africa many learners use additional language as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in Grade 4. By the end of Grade 3 they should have reached the necessary level of skills in English as the second language. The curriculum offers skills shown in Table 2.4 in the Foundation Phase Home Language.

Table: 2.4 Skills in the Home Language curriculum CAPS (Grades R-3) (2011:8)

Listening and speaking	Thinking and Reasoning and Language Structure and Use are integrated into all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)
Reading and phonics	
Writing and handwriting	

The CAPS (2011) document states that for Grades R-3, the Language knowledge, concepts and skills are integrated into all other subjects because language is used across the curriculum in oral work, reading and writing. It states that for the teaching of language skills in other subjects, themes and topics can be selected to provide the contexts. The CAPS document highlights that Language skills reflect basic interpersonal communication skills that are required in social situations and the cognitive academic skills that are necessary for learning across the curriculum.

2.3.3.2. First Additional Language (FAL)

According to the CAPS (Grades 4-6) (2011) document, FAL is used for communication and the medium of learning and teaching in education. The Department provides strong support in learning FAL and believes that by the end of Grade 9, learners should be able to use both Home and First Additional Language effectively and with confidence. The NDoBE believes in developing learners' skills to understand and speak FAL in the first few years of schooling. In Grades 2 and 3 the oral foundations are built on previous literacy skills acquired in their Home Language.

2.3.4. Comprehension challenges faced by learners in South Africa

According to Van der Berg et al. (2016) South African learners struggle to master comprehension skills in the Foundation Phase: this may be caused by the lack of reading. The reading culture amongst second language learners in South Africa is low and consequently constrains their ability to comprehend texts. Van der Berg et al. (2016) agree that many learners are not reading sufficiently. Their findings indicate that if the time spent on reading at home and school is limited, it retards the progress and effectiveness of learning comprehension skills. In order to improve the comprehension skills of learners, Mullis et al. (2011) postulate that it is important for teachers and parents to work hand-in-hand in order to motivate learners to develop a habit of reading at a young age. South African learners are encouraged to read for knowledge and enjoyment, producing better results in comprehension tests.

Foundation Phase is where the love for reading and understanding of literature should start (Sanoto & Van der Walt, 2017). As learners will be young and fascinated to read different story books and take part in language comprehension puzzles, it is easy for them to understand a written text. A view that a reading culture needs to be instilled

and supported while learners are in their early stage of education supports the NDoBE (2010) mandate that every child must be able to read for meaning by the end of Grade 3. Spaull, Van Der Burg, Will, Gustafsson, and Kotze (2016) concur that after learners have spent three years in the Foundation Phase, it is expected that they are able to read for meaning. Although the NDoBE mandates teachers to ensure that learners are adequately taught to read and comprehend in their early years, the situation on the ground is different. Van Der Berg et al. (2016) argue that approximately 60% of South African learners do not learn to read for meaning in any language. This shows that South Africa learners do not do well in comprehension questions because they struggle to read with understanding.

Reading with meaning plays an important role in self-realization, helping learners learn about themselves and their potential (Mullis et al., 2011). Reading makes learners more knowledgeable. Spaull et al. (2016) postulate that reading makes learners well informed; not just about school subjects but about the world and their everyday lives. Mullis et al. (2011) state that when reading, learners encounter new words, phrases and idioms that will improve: vocabulary and language skills; learning about patterns and connections; and increase thinking skills and creativity. Bharuthram (2012) claims that at primary level learners are expected to comprehend what they read so that they can analyse, critique, evaluate and synthesize information. When learners lack the ability to analyze, critique and evaluate in comprehension, it retards their academic performance.

It is important that learners learn to read for meaning because reading comprehension is a large part of the curriculum. Reading comprehension is the most important skill for understanding a written text (Paton-Ash & Wilmot, 2015). Van der Berg et al. (2016) claim that when learners fail to read with meaning, it is highly unlikely that they will ever be able to achieve strong cognitive skills at higher grades. Ssentanda (2014) concurs that if learners are struggling with reading skills in Grade 3, they will struggle with other disciplines for the rest of their lives. This indicates that a weak foundation in reading weakens all further attempts to learn in any subject that requires reading. Spaull (2016) argues that learners with reading difficulties cannot manage the text loads of the curriculum in order to work and learn independently.

The majority of primary school learners in South Africa struggle with other subjects in the curriculum because they are being taught in a second language. Van der Berg et al. (2016) state that a common everyday difficulty with most learners learning to read African languages is that they are obliged to switch into a second language when they are still not literate in their home language. This requirement weakens comprehension skills because learners are still struggling to master their home language. According to Kotze et al. (2017) second language learners who were not taught in their mother tongue in their early years of education face challenges to master their second language.

2.3.5. Conditions for Learning in a constructivist classroom

Nondalana (2015) explains the purpose of 'intervention programmes' as the act of improving a barrier. She states that interventions are used for small groups of learners who need intense support to achieve their full potential. Interventions are regarded as a component of teaching and learning which involves face-to-face interactions which take place between the one who has less knowledge (learners) and the more knowledgeable ones (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 2006:72). Dozier (2008) concurs that engaging with learners and teachers in an intervention program is a constructive and different manner of developing learners' literacy skills. In Cambourne's theory of learning (2004) he outlines different kinds of interactive processes that teachers can use to facilitate learners' understanding. This current research used an IP to develop learners' comprehension skills in order to facilitate and extend their understandings of literacy concepts. The researcher followed Cambourne's (2004) eight Conditions of Learning. When applied correctly, they provide a creative learning environment for learners to develop their knowledge and develop as independent problem solvers. He suggests that to create an interactive and self-motivated experience between the learner and the content, these eight Conditions of Learning assist teachers:

- Immersion
- Demonstration
- Engagement
- Expectations
- Responsibility
- Employment
- Approximation

- Response

2.3.5.1. Immersion

Rushton, Eitelgeorge and Zickafoose (2003) believe that all learners need to first be immersed into a culture, knowledge and curriculum in order to make sense of their own learning style, behaviours and content. Rushton, Juola-Rushton and Larkin (2010) state that for learners to be immersed, teachers should create active learning environments that help build communities and contexts. They explain that an integrated curriculum is critical in allowing for individual differences and for unique skills that enter classes; this will allow learners to be fully immersed in the learning process.

2.3.5.2. Demonstrations

Rushton et al. (2003) describe the second condition as: teachers should provide exciting and stimulating demonstrations to assist learners in experiencing outcomes that are wanted by them and the teacher. Rushton et al. (2010) concur that in this condition, teachers act as facilitators, investigators, caregivers and listeners while providing related demonstrations to the learners.

2.3.5.3. Engagement

Rushton et al. (2010) state that for language development to take place, learners need to be active participants in discussions, talking and sharing ideas and skills. They further state that teachers need to provide opportunities to allow both independent and shared discussions.

2.3.5.4. Expectations

If teachers want to be successful in developing learners' interests and aspirations, their beliefs and expectations in learner's abilities are important (Rushton et al., 2010). Teachers should provide time for both class and group discussions, sharing and thinking aloud.

2.3.5.5. Responsibility

Rushton et al. (2010) state that it is the teacher's responsibility to model and immerse learners in their learning by providing opportunities for individual differences. These responsibilities include decision-making and engagement. It is the teachers' responsibility to build information that is presented in the context of their real life

situations; new information that will build on prior knowledge. The learner is guided in how to connect new information with real life situations. Activities and learning environments are organized for both low and high order thinking skills. Learners' meaning should be personal first, and then modified to fit more figurative understanding. They are motivated to take responsibility and make their own decisions.

2.3.5.6. Employment

Rushton et al. (2010) state that this condition highlights that as learners explore language, they need to be provided with time and opportunities to do so in both social and individual settings. They further state that meaning is understood within the context that it is provided in, exposure to as many sides of real-life situations are important for the learner to interpret and make meaning as well as to develop their understandings of the world.

2.3.5.7. Approximation

This condition of learning, (Rushton et al., 2010) explains that teachers encourage learners to take risks and make predictions in learning new skills, concepts and knowledge. This can be done when teachers provide materials that are age appropriate and the content is presented using a variety of interesting strategies.

2.3.5.8. Response

Rushton et al. (2010) state that interactions between the learner, teacher and more knowledgeable peers help the learners to adjust, modify, and extend their learning. This implies that responses from the teachers and peers be provided without judgment, and they must be given time to modify and adapt their learning.

These eight Conditions of Learning, as described by Cambourne (2004) and Rushton et al. (2010) are important aspects of learning processes as learners become engaged in demonstrations and this increases their learning process. Teachers are considered powerful influences in these conditions making learners see their own learning process as something they can achieve certain outcomes from. Rushton et al. (2010) state that in a social constructivist classroom the role of the teacher is to act as a facilitator or guide to create meaningful opportunities so that learners can explore, think over, and actively engage in their learning. That is why Guthrie, Perencevich, Wigfield, Taboada,

Humenick and Barbosa (2006) propose that for teachers to develop learners' long-term interest in reading for meaning, they should increase intrinsic motivation for reading. According to Guthrie et al. (2006:232) reading and reading comprehension for learners can be promoted by the instructional practices such as:

- Providing content goals for reading;
- Supporting learner independence;
- Providing interesting texts;
- Facilitating social interactions related to reading;
- Maintaining warm relations between teachers and learners; and
- Using hands-on activities to stimulate interest.

Each of these will be discussed in more detail.

2.3.5.8.1. Providing content goals for reading

This instructional practice increases learner interest and motivation to read. Learners focus on gaining deep understanding and building knowledge rather that receiving rewards (Guthrie et al., 2006).

2.3.5.8.2. Supporting learner independence

Guthrie et al. (2006) state that supporting learners' independence includes letting learners choose the text they want to read; the type of activity they want to complete with text they chose or letting them choose their own partners to work with. The current study motivated the five learners by letting them choose their own theme during the IP. This motivation increased their intrinsic reading motivation since they were able to select different partners to work with. Van Nuland, Taris, Boekaerts and Martens (2012) state that social contexts build a sense of understanding, security and connection to learners resulting in intrinsic motivation.

2.3.5.8.3. Providing interesting texts

Interest and motivation increase the ability of learners to read with understanding when the topic, text and activity is rated as interesting; when the format of the text or activity is attractive to learners and when materials and activities used are relevant and propose knowledge development (Guthrie et al., 2006).

2.3.5.8.4. Facilitating social interactions related to reading

Guthrie et al. (2006) posit that, to develop learners' motivation and achievement in reading activities, social goals and cooperative learning should be used.

2.3.5.8.5. Maintaining warm relations between teachers and learners

Essential motivation for academic activities is associated with teacher's involvement in the activity. This involvement gives the perception that the teachers understand learners and care about their progress of understanding (Guthrie et al. 2006).

2.3.5.8.6. Using hands-on activities to stimulate interest

The nine comprehension strategies created by the researcher provided hands-on activities that motivated these learners' interest. Guthrie et al. (2006) state that teachers should provide hands-on activities that are exciting to learners and these activities must be in the form of social interaction. That was the reason for creating these nine comprehension strategies that are hands-on activities with social interaction.

These motivational practices for reading comprehension have been observed and practised during the IP. Guthrie, Wigfield, Barbosa, Perencevich, Taboada, Davis, Scafiddi, and Tonks (2004) state that learners who are involved in reading are intrinsically motivated, they build knowledge, they use cognitive strategies and interact socially to learn from the text. Therrien (2004) agrees that for struggling learners to be able to demonstrate improvement and be able to transfer skills to new situation, motivation is essential as they require repeated opportunities with effective instructions.

2.3.6. The nine comprehension strategies used in the IP

For a person to be considered a good reader, that person should have a comprehension of what they are reading. On the other hand, reading a text well does not mean one understands the text read. That is why reading texts are often likely to be challenging: and to overcome these challenges one can use appropriate strategies (Ciuffetelli, 2018). Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) state that reading strategies have an impact on the learners' reading comprehension ability. More recently, Sonmez and Sulak (2018) state that using various strategies to teach reading comprehension contributes to the development of the learners' reading comprehension skills. Cambourne's (2004) theory of social constructivism supports teachers to design

classroom environments and activities that encourages learners' ability to learn. This study researched how a teacher supported her five learners using nine different comprehension strategies throughout the IP. Sari and Sari (2019) state that to gain good understanding in reading a text, teachers have to provide learners with some interesting strategies to improve their learners' comprehension. They argue that different and interesting strategies can be used to make the learning atmosphere become enjoyable and increase their motivation. Sonmez and Sulak (2018) agree that reading comprehension strategies are the cognitive tools that can improve the learners' academic performance where comprehension is a challenge. The following is a description of the nine comprehension strategies that were used to develop the comprehension skills of five Grade 3 learners.

2.3.6.1. Anticipation guides

Meirafone, Amir and Fitrawati (2014) and Sari and Sari (2019) state that Anticipation guides were first introduced by Herber in 1978. Herber (1978) indicated that Anticipation guides use a series of statements to involve learners in making predictions: and in order to do this learners may depend on prior knowledge. This indication is in line with Cramer (2004) who defines Anticipation guides as a strategy that assists learners to use their existing knowledge to make predictions. Forget (2004) agrees with Herber (1978) that Anticipation guides strategy is a list of statements related to the text. The average number of statements may range from six to twelve. For each statement, learners review Anticipation guides by indicating whether they Agree or Disagree with the statement. Most of the statements must be true or false but few must be written to be debated, discussed or argued. More recently, Adams, Pegg and Case (2015) state that Anticipation guide is a reading comprehension strategy that is designed to scaffold text understanding with the learners. Furthermore, they draw out misunderstandings and start debates. Sari and Sari (2019) state that Anticipation guides can be used to observe the learners interest in reading with understanding. Adams et al. (2015) concur that Anticipation guides support learners in developing skills in justifying their answers and supporting ideas with evidence from the text or real-life situations.

Adams et al. (2015) state that there are advantages of using Anticipation guides such as promoting discussion and working in a group. They state that the Anticipation guide strategy activates prior knowledge and experiences; it encourages learners to make

personal connections with texts so that they can incorporate new knowledge with prior knowledge. Sari and Sari (2019:52) concur that “learners tend to integrate the new information they have received with their prior knowledge to form modified beliefs”. This strategy promotes decoding skills and reinforces the text understanding (Adams et al., 2015). Antoni (2017) agrees that the Anticipation guides strategy helps learners in comprehending a text. The Anticipation guide strategy “takes practice to implement it successfully, but it is an extraordinary tool that allows learners to think beyond, read, write, and discuss content in a meaningful way” (Adams et al., 2015:504).

2.3.6.2. Vocabulary magic square

Ma’rifah (2014) suggest that vocabulary can be learned using the Magic square strategy. Vacca and Vacca (2005: 287) state: Magic square strategy is an activity sheet and has two columns, one for content area terms and one for definitions or other distinguishing statements such as characteristics or examples. The learners are asked to match terms with definitions. In doing so, they must take into account the letters signalling the terms and the numbers signalling the definitions. The learners then put the number of a definition in the proper space (denoted by the letter of the term) in the magic square answer box. If their matchups are correct, they will form a magic square. That is, the numerical total will be the same for each row across and each column down the answer box. This total forms the puzzle’s magic number. Learners need to add up the rows and columns to check if they’re coming up with the same number each time. If not, they should go back to the terms and definitions to re-evaluate their answers.

Ma’rifah (2014) proposes that English vocabulary can be learned using this strategy, where learners are asked to read each word written in the left column one-by-one. After reading each word, they can find the meaning of each word in the right-hand column. They continue by stating that the important aspect to be learned in the Magic square strategy is the meanings of the words. It is seen as a strategy of reinforcing, checking and testing knowledge of words(Ma’rifah, 2014). It is an activity that learners can do on their own because it is a self-correcting activity: if the numbers do not add up to the same number, then there is a mistake somewhere and learners need to go back and find out what they have done wrong and correct it. Allen (2006) concurs that the Magic square measures the first understanding of word meaning and concepts.

2.3.6.3. Vocabulary matching

Nam (2010) states that effective strategies to teach vocabulary can assist learners' proficiency in the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Nam (2010) states that vocabulary matching activities can be designed by teachers so that learners develop new vocabulary and understand different vocabulary features.

2.3.6.4. Feature matrix

To provide learners with the correct content and facts about the theme that learners are busy with, the strategy of feature matrix can be used in the classroom. In this strategy, the teacher begins with making different informational texts available to the learners (Calo, 2011), as these will help the learners to become familiar with the concepts of the content (Maloch & Horsey, 2013). The purpose of the Feature matrix is to compare different features of classification by finding their similarities and differences in the text.

2.3.6.5. Think-aloud

Sonmez and Sulak (2018:169) describe the Think-aloud as a strategy where a teacher says and role models their thinking when reading aloud. Learners listen quietly, focus on understanding their teachers' thought processes and they can be asked questions while the teacher is reading and thinking aloud. In this way, they learn strategies of reporting their thoughts and how the comprehension occurs through Think-aloud strategy. The main purpose of this strategy is to support learners to obtain the ability to independently think-aloud. Think-aloud strategy is used as an instructional approach because it helps readers to understand more easily when reading (Sudiati, Hanapi & Bugis, 2018). McKeown and Gentilucci (2007) concur that Think-aloud is a transactional method; it joins the process of teachers and learners to work together in constructing the understanding of a text as they interact with it. Sonmez and Sulak (2018:169) state that to implement the Think-aloud strategy there are steps to be followed by the teacher and the learner. The steps are shown in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Steps to be followed by teachers and learners when engaging in Think-aloud strategy (Sonmez & Sulak, 2018:169)

Teachers' Thinking-aloud	Learners' Thinking-aloud
1. Make predictions. (Show how to develop hypotheses.)	1. Learners develop suggestions by making predictions about the text.
2. Describe the picture you're forming in your head from the information. (Show how to develop images during reading.)	2. Learners create intellectual images from the information that has been read.
3. Share similarities and comparisons. (Show how to link prior knowledge with new information in text.)	3. Learners establish links between prior and new information through similarities and comparisons.
4. Verbalize a confusing point. (Show how you observe your on-going comprehension.)	4. Learners observe their comprehension by making explanations at contradictory points.
5. Demonstrate fix-up strategies. (Show how you correct your lagging comprehension.)	5. Learners arrange their comprehension by showing strategies.

Sudiate et al. (2019) assert that the Think-aloud strategy is used to model comprehension processes such as making predictions, creating images, linking information in text with prior knowledge, monitoring comprehension, and solving problems with word recognition and understanding. Learners' thoughts, when doing the Think-aloud strategy, consists of commenting on the text, questioning the text, including the learner's prior knowledge, making inferences and predictions. These comprehension processes reveal the challenges and strengths of the learners' ability to comprehend which allows the teacher to be able to assess their learners' needs in order to plan more effective instructions.

The Think-aloud comprehension strategy should be modelled to learners in order to share the development of their thinking strategies and to make their thoughts noticeable (Sonmez & Sulak, 2018). Learners are able to focus their thinking better when they participate in the Think-aloud strategy while it is being role-modelled by the teacher. This is done when the teacher voices her own thoughts aloud, to draw attention to the important points for those struggling with comprehension. For learners to be able to comprehend, both teachers' and the learner's think-aloud processes help to develop and improve individual comprehension skills.

Sudiate et al. (2019) state that in order to create understanding of the text, learners should voice their thoughts while reading when they are doing the think-aloud strategy.

This strategy helps learners learn how to learn, and they develop into reflective, metacognitive and independent learners.

2.3.6.6. My turn, Your turn

My turn, Your turn strategy is one of the important social skills to master because it takes place in our everyday lives whenever we communicate. Nomlomo (2010:51) states that My turn, Your turn strategy is a pedagogical approach and is essential in teaching and learning in any subject as it encourages classroom interaction. According to Robson and Mastrangelo (2018) to teach My turn, Your turn one could use visual clues to reinforce language. Modelling this strategy is regarded as a suitable and effective way because learners tend to look at what teachers do. Calo (2011) concurs that it is important to model this kind of strategy to better understand and share your thinking with the learners. In addition it is to show learners how to create meaning that can be modelled and be demonstrated during My turn, Your turn. The teacher will begin with stating the phrase: My turn and when she is ready to invite learners to share their views she states: Your Turn. Nomlomo (2010:52) postulates that My turn, Your turn strategy during teaching and learning should go beyond verbal communication to include interactive and learner-centred approaches that will develop learners' critical thinking, questioning and practical skills. Nomlomo (2010:51) states that in a classroom interaction My turn, Your turn is initiated by the teacher through asking questions or giving instructions. Learners receive turns by responding to the teachers' questions or instructions. She states that the kind of responses given by learners determines the kind and quality of questions asked by the teacher and this is considered as important in My turn, Your turn strategy. Van Eerde, Hajer and Prenger (2008:34) agree that to facilitate effective communication in the classroom, it is vital that learners are provided with a challenging, comprehensible and scaffolding input and meaningful feedback.

Appleton and Harrison (2001:2) state that My turn, Your turn strategy is more concerned with pedagogical content knowledge which incorporates four interrelated components such as:

- knowledge of learners;
- knowledge of environmental contexts;
- knowledge of pedagogy; and
- knowledge of subject matter.

2.3.6.7. Reader's theatre

Teaching reading to learners incorporates various strategies and skills. Qannubi, Gabarre and Mirza (2018) state that to model repeated reading, Reader's Theatre can be used as a fun and exciting strategy in a classroom. Reader's Theatre is regarded as a play or a performance of a written text which delivers meaning to the audience if repeated and supported in reading (Young & Rasinski, 2009). Kariuki and Rhymer (2012) agree that re-reading the scripts improves fluency; meaning that it is their understanding of the text they are re-reading and rehearsing during the Readers Theatre strategy. This is in line with Sikandar, Abdullah and Raj (2018) who state that by including Reader's Theatre in learning literacy skills arouses an interest in reading for meaning and improves learners' comprehension and reading fluency. Qannubi, Gabarre and Mirza (2018) concur that the repetition of reading when practicing Reader's Theatre advances the reading fluency which brings self-confidence.

Sikandar et al. (2018) state that to attract today's learners to reading in the classroom, Reader's Theatre can reliably be deployed because it increases learners' involvement, confidence and social values as they communicate with each other in the classroom. In addition, when doing Reader's Theatre learners interpret correct emotions and add their thoughts to understand the character's background and emotions. This is done so that the audience can visualize the story they are watching (Sikandar et al., 2018). Kariuki and Rhymer (2012) claim that Reader's Theatre is exclusively based on the voices and facial expressions of the actors instead of the movement. Kabilan and Kamaruddin (2010) contend that this strategy is regarded as a reading engagement that is active, analytical, socially discussed and interpreted through both verbal and non-verbal means of the text. Sikandar et al. (2018) state that in order for learners to read a text effectively they must consider the plot, setting, characters motives and relationship. These aspects build a deeper understanding of the text and will results in learners improving their comprehension.

Young and Rasinski (2009) add that repeated and supported reading improves accuracy, word recognition and reading performance, as Reader's Theatre is seen as an engaging and motivational activity for learners. Spangler (2009) concurs that reading for meaning in a play occurs during the intersection with the text and while performing it.

2.3.6.8. Cloze

Sadeghi (2014) states that the Cloze strategy was first introduced by Taylor in 1953 and is regarded as one of the oldest strategies to measure reading ability. Brown (2013:1) concurs that the Cloze strategy first appeared in 1953 proposed by Taylor to estimate the readability of textbooks for school learners. Ereke and Okonkwo (2016) state that the word Cloze is taken from the Gestalt psychology of closure. They continue that the Cloze strategy describes the learning of individuals to complete a pattern once they have understood its complete importance and relevance. Mackey and Gass (2012) concur that Cloze strategies are a type of fill-in-the-blank space with every six or seven words in the passage.

This strategy has since been used for different purposes such a testing language proficiency and reading comprehension in English Second Language. Sadeghi (2014) states that this strategy can be used in different formats such as measuring the complexity of a comprehension, reading for meaning proficiency and as a pedagogical tool. Nam (2010) postulates that the Cloze strategy is more appropriate at the beginning and intermediate levels of schooling.

Adeniyi and Adebayo Lawal (2012) state that to measure proficiency in English Second Language classrooms one can use the Cloze strategy as it is reliable and enhances readers' understanding of texts. Mackey and Gass (2012) state that reading for meaning proficiency is one of the important factors in English Second Language. Ereke and Okonkwo (2016) concur that the Cloze strategy can be used to test language grammar needed in skills of thinking, understanding, speaking, reading, writing and vocabulary. Ereke and Okonkwo (2016) state that the Cloze strategy measures language skills which consist of language knowledge, textual knowledge and knowledge of the world. He further states that this knowledge, which includes vocabulary, grammar, sentence construction, test structure and cohesion and the reader's background knowledge determine language efficiency to the learners. Mackey and Gass (2012) confirm that learners' prior experiences or background knowledge are exploited to fill in the missing parts in the Cloze test. Ereke and Okonkwo (2016) indicate that this strategy is an informal instrument; it is a text completion strategy, which is used to determine learners' instructional reading level. The Cloze strategy encourages vocabulary improvement of the English Second Language.

2.3.6.9. Higher-order thinking comprehension

Thamrin (2019:2) states that higher-order thinking comprehension is a strategy that increases thinking skills, while Thomas and Thone (2009:1) states that this strategy helps learners to understand their own higher order thinking strengths and challenges. Shukla and Dungsungnoen (2016) state that this strategy is an important strategy where learners can analyse, interpret, reason, synthesize, evaluate and create their own meaning and understanding. They continue saying that this teaching strategy increases meta-cognition as this skill is needed in problem solving, as well as comparing, evaluating, justifying and making inferences. Table 2.6 reflects on the past fifteen years, where different researchers in the literacy field summarize definitions of higher-order thinking (Shukla & Dungsungnoen, 2016:22).

Table 2.6 Definitions of higher-order thinking comprehension from different authors (taken from Shukla & Dungsungnoen, 2016:22)

Source	Year	Definition
King F.J., Goodson L., & Rohani F.	1998	Higher-order thinking comprehension includes critical, logical, reflective, meta-cognition, and creative thinking. It is activated when individuals encounter unfamiliar problems, uncertainties, questions or dilemmas.
Krathwohl D.R & Anderson L.W	2010	Higher-order thinking comprehension is the processes of analysing, evaluating and creating.
Lopez J. & Whittington M.	2001	Higher-order thinking comprehension occurs when a person takes new information and information stored in memory and interrelates and or re-arranges and extends this information to achieve a purpose or to find possible answers in perplexing situations.
Weiss E.	2003	Critical, systematic and creative thinking are the strategies for higher-order thinking comprehension
Rajendran N.	2008	The expanded use of the mind to meet new challenges.
Thomas, A. & Thone, G.	2009	Higher-order thinking comprehension takes thinking to higher levels than just restating the facts.
Kruger, K.	2013	Higher-order thinking comprehension involves “concept formation, critical thinking, creativity/ brainstorming, problem solving, mental representation, rule use, reasoning and logical thinking.”

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presents a framework synthesised from four theories which guided this study. Key theorists such as Vygotsky (1978), Cambourne (2004), Bloom’s Taxonomy (2001) and Wenger’s (2005) provided the necessary background information on

significant issues related to this research project. The literature review consisted of a description of comprehension, how the South African CAPS document describes comprehension, and comprehension challenges experienced in South Africa. Further literature described the conditions of learning in a constructivist classroom, and finally the nine comprehension strategies used in the IP.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research approach, design and paradigm. The site selection, sampling and data collection techniques, data analysis method, trustworthiness and ethical considerations are discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Methodology may be described as the collection of techniques and methods that are used to investigate a topic and find answers to a research question (Lambert, 2012:101). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that every researcher follows a different method to collect, present and analyse data for a study. More recently McMillan and Schumacher (2015) describe the research approach as a strategy of how the sites, sampling and data collection are selected to ensure trustworthy results of the research.

The three key focus questions posed in this study are:

1. What were the learners' comprehension challenges during the Intervention Programme (IP)?
2. How did the IP, focusing on comprehension, encourage the social, cognitive and language development of the Grade 3 learners?
3. What were the learners' post-test results after explicit teaching of comprehension skills?

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Okeke and van Wyk (2017) describe a research paradigm as comprising assumptions, suggestions, thinking and a set of basic beliefs that guide the researcher. Pham (2018) considers the positive, interpretivist and critical inquiry paradigm as the foundation of the research. For this research study the researcher used an interpretivist paradigm as it reflected that what was real, which depended on how people see, understand and interpret the issues (Lambert, 2012). Lambert continues by clarifying that people perceive reality by interacting with complex social and physical environments. In this study, the researcher interacted with her five learners during the ten-week data collection process. The

Intervention Programme encouraged social, emotional and cognitive interactions amongst these learners while they constantly worked in group and pair activities developing more critical thinking skills. It was intriguing for the researcher to observe, understand, interpret and describe these natural occurring group and social interactions (Sampson & Condy, 2015:57). Duff (2014) agrees that the interpretivist approach intends to be social-constructivist in nature, paying attention to the different ways in which learning is mediated. The research was conducted in the natural setting of social actors (Babbie & Mouton, 2006), since this study was conducted in a classroom setting, particularly to explore experiences of developing comprehension skills during the IP.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

A qualitative approach was adopted because the researcher wanted to collect rich textual data from the participants. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2017) define qualitative research as a "description, explanation, reporting, creation of important ideas, theory generation and testing". Hancock and Algozzine (2011) argue that in qualitative research, the aim is to understand what is under investigation, mainly from the participants', not the researcher's viewpoint. Using a qualitative approach allowed the participants in this study to express their views about their experiences of developing higher-order comprehension and thinking skills. As the participants expressed their views during the IP, the researcher was able to interpret what she saw, and understand their experiences and interactions.

A qualitative approach, using a case study design, within an interpretivist paradigm was purposefully devised for this project and deployed consistently for the gathering and interpretation of both visual and textual data.This study selected an interpretive case study method because it is set within a qualitative study. Thanh and Thanh (2015) agree that interpretivists are likely to approve or consider qualitative methods using a case study.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Efron and Ravid (2013), case study researchers aim to understand and select a particular phenomenon such as a process or concept and make it the focus of the study.The case study design was suitable for this study because it allowed the researcher to develop learners' comprehension skills while this phenomenon was under investigation.

By using a case study design, the researcher intended to gain more understanding of the phenomenon and its complexity, connected with interactive processes that appear in single and social contexts (Cronin, 2014). Duff (2014:1) defines a case study design as a study that deliberately provides an in-depth understanding of "individual's experiences, issues, insights, developmental pathways, or performance within a particular linguistic, social, or educational context". Grima-Farrell (2017: 72) concurs by describing the case study design as an "exploration of an in-depth data-collection that is not determined by the number of research participants involved."

The researcher applied the interpretive case study design to this study to conduct an in-depth investigation of five Grade 3 learners' experiences of developing higher-order comprehension and thinking skills. Duff (2014) believes that a qualitative case study in both first and second language literacy is interpretive. This study sought to understand these five learners' opinions and views of the research questions as individuals and within a community of practice (CoP) (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Duff (2014) believes that interpretivist approach intends to be social-constructivist in nature, paying attention to the different ways in which learning is mediated. This is applicable to this study as the researcher interacted with her five learners during the IP.

In support of the researcher's choice of case study design, Vygotsky's conceptual framework, underpinning this study, proposes that the researcher closely observed the learners move through the ZPD to their zone of ability and independence (Moopelwa & Condy, 2019:3), by means of guided practice and role-modelling. During this period, the researcher identified advantages and disadvantages of using a case-study design (Yin, 2009) which is discussed in more detail later. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2017) state that a case study has many advantages that make it attractive to educational researchers. The following paragraph discusses the advantages experienced while using a case study research method as highlighted by different researchers.

3.4.1. Advantages of using a case study design

Yin (2009) defines case study design as an in-depth study from various perspectives of a phenomenon within its real life context. A case study design was justified because it interprets participants' own cognitive and social experiences. This allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the case under investigation. This case study interpreted the participants own cognitive and social learning experiences and is written in a way that the researcher is able to combine different collection methods such as document reviews, interviews and observations, as well as the different teaching strategies to enhance the learners cognitive and social skills (Yin, 2009). Miles (2015) states that a case study design is often associated with interpretivist perception. It allows the researcher to retain a holistic view of real-life events, such as individual life cycles, small group behaviour, organisational and decision-making processes and school performance (Yin, 2009).

3.4.2. Disadvantages of using a case study design

Yin (2009) believes that in a case study design the results may not be simplified as it is not easily open to cross-checking; they may be selective, biased and personal. The case study demanded the application of more theoretical knowledge than practical knowledge to explain the study as it was difficult to stay unbiased towards verifying the data collected (Flyvbjerg, 2006). It was difficult to generalise from just one single situation and the researcher had to support her argument referring to all five cases since it mainly dealt with one's interpretation of the topic and understanding of the development of the cognitive and social learnings of the five cases. Yin states that case studies are often criticized for lack of rigour and are often considered too long, difficult to conduct and producing a large amount of documentation.

3.5 SITE SELECTION

This section describes the demographics of the area, school and the classrooms where the research was conducted in 2018. The researcher taught in a Grade 3 classroom in a public school which will be referred to as School X. The researcher chose five learners in her own class to conduct this research. The school is situated in a township called Nyanga which is 26 km from Cape Town Central Business District and is close to the Cape Town International Airport. This school is situated next to a taxi and bus terminus. This township is known as one of the oldest black townships in Cape Town and is one of the poorest areas (Chigwata,

O'Donovan & Powell, 2017). This area is considered one of the forgotten settlements because it remains a low socio-economic area. This community has ten primary schools and two high schools. There is one clinic only, one library and a community hall. The library is approximately 500 meters away from the school where the research was conducted. The majority of learners in this school come from this area where there is drug abuse, high unemployment rates, teenage pregnancy, teenage parents and parents with low literacy levels. The five learners that were selected for participation in this study come from this low socio-economic area.

School X lies within Circuit 4 in the Metro South District and is a quintile two school in a township of Nyanga in the Western Cape. Sampson and Condy (2015:63) state that the poverty rankings are determined nationally according to the poverty of the community surrounding the school. Schools in quintile 1, 2 and 3 have been declared no-fee schools, while schools in quintiles 4 and 5 are fee-paying. James (2001) argues that the no-fee policy exempts some schools from charging fees. These schools are predominantly situated in low socio-economic areas. In this school parents are not required to pay school fees. Learners receive free books and food; they have a feeding scheme from the department. Learners have food three times a day every day. Jomaa, McDonnell and Probart state (2011) state that the purpose of the school feeding programme is to relieve short-term hunger, improve nutrition and facilitate understanding of the learners. Jomaa et al. (2011) believe that school feeding programmes improve learners' smooth progress through school by reducing absenteeism and dropout rate. Table 3.1 explains the kind of food these learners receive from the school and the times of the feeding scheme.

Table: 3.1 Feeding-scheme menu

Times	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
07:30 – 08:00	Porridge	Porridge	Porridge	Porridge	Porridge
10:30 – 11:00	Rice, butternut and pilchard	Samp and soya mince	Rice, cabbage and pilchard	Samp and beans	Rice and soya mince
12:30 – 12:45	Fruit – apple or orange		Fruit – apple or orange	Milk	

Table 3.1 highlights the food support the learners in this school receive from the WCED because it is a quintile two school. Even though learners in this school get food three times every day, this does not mean that learners in this school are doing well in comprehension and reading. Jomaa et al. (2011) state that school feeding schemes have an impact on academic development. It appears that feeding schemes improve results in arithmetic tests but have little effect on reading with understanding. This anomaly may be caused by the purpose of arithmetic tests which aim to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses, not to develop reading with understanding (Cohen et al., 2017).

The school has Grades R to 7. There are three classes per grade from Grades R to 3 with a teacher learner ratio of 1:35. There are two classes per grade from Grades 4 to 7 with a teacher learner ratio of 1:45. The LoLT from Grades R to 3 is IsiXhosa. From Grades 4 to 7 the LoLT is English. The school has twenty-two teachers and four non-teaching staff. There are no security personnel next to the entrance gate of the school but the caretakers operate the gates. In 2018, at the time of this research project, there were 718 registered learners.

The school was first established in 1956 only offering Grade 4 – 6 classes. Since then, School X has 19 built classrooms and three mobile classrooms. One built classroom is a computer laboratory that has not been working for some years due to burglaries in the school and insufficient security. One other classroom is used to store old and new books. There is a two-bedroom caretakers' house inside the premises of the school where the caretaker lives with his wife and six children. Three of his children attend this school. There is a separate kitchen built next to the caretaker's house which is used to cook for the children in the school. The school is fenced all around with one access point with a gate.

There are three classrooms for Grade 3 and they are categorized as Grades 3A, 3B and 3C. In 2018, Grades 3A had 34 learners, 3B had 36 learners and 3C had 35 learners. The Grade 3A and Grade 3C class teachers are referred to as Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 respectively. The class teacher of Grade 3B was the researcher. In each classroom, learners were seated in ability groups as required by the WCED. In each classroom there are bright and colourful posters pasted on the wall. There is a reading corner with isiXhosa and English story books. Learners are not allowed to take the books without the permission of the teachers in case

they damage them, by writing on them, tearing them or playing with them. Text books are kept in cabinets in the classrooms and used when necessary.

3.6 SAMPLE

The sample for this study consists of twelve participants: five Grade 3 learners, five parents and two Grade 3 teachers. This number is consistent with a qualitative research which is small enough for the researcher to engage and interact with the participants intensively and thoroughly when collecting the data (Creswell, 2012). The five learner participants were selected using purposive sampling. According to Fraenkel et al. 2012 with purposive sampling, researchers do not study whoever is available, but rather use their judgment to select a sample that they believe will provide the data needed. The researcher chose purposive sampling because it allowed her to select people with the information that was needed to conduct this study. Five Grade 3 learners who were facing severe comprehension challenges were selected to participate in the IP. Only five learners were preferred because the researcher intended to interact extensively with them. According to the baseline tests, they were the worst performing learners in the classroom. They struggled to: read for meaning, answer higher order thinking questions, explain, or justify their choices and to give their own opinions. Creswell (2012) argues that a small sample is ideal for a qualitative study since it allows the researcher to mix and socialise with participants fully.

Five parents/guardians and two Grade 3 teachers were selected to gain in-depth information during the interviews. The five parents/guardians were selected because they were the parents or guardians of the chosen learners. The researcher intended to find out more about their learner's comprehension challenges outside the classroom. That information could be provided by the learner's parents/guardians only.

It was important to have Grade 3 teachers in this study since they were teaching comprehension skills in their classes and were able to provide information about the comprehension challenges they face with their learners from the teacher's perspective.

3.6.1. Description of participants

As mentioned in Section 3.5, the five Grade 3 learners were purposively selected because it allowed the researcher to investigate the experiences of developing comprehension skills of these learners.The names of the five learners are not revealed due to the ethics of conducting research ethics. The researcher refers to them as L1, L2, L3, L4 and L5. Table 3.2 provides the demographic details of the five Grade 3 learners.

Table: 3.2 The demographic details of the five Grade 3 learners

Learners	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Age	10 years	10 years	9 years	9 years	11 years
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Home language	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa
Grade repeated	Grade 1	Grade 3	Not repeated	Not repeated	Grade 1
Grade R attended	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year started Grade R	2014	2014	2015	2015	2014

Table 3.2 highlights possible factors that may have had an impact on the low comprehension skills of these five learners. It reveals the ages of these five learners. They all had to be nine years old when doing Grade 3. Only two learners, however, were nine years, L3 and L4. L1 and L2 were ten years old and L5 was eleven years old. L1, L2 and L5 had repeated one grade. The table shows their gender; there were three boys and two girls. They all spoke isiXhosa as their home language. All these learners attended Grade R in School X, L1, L2 and L5 attended this Grade in 2014 as L3 and L4 attended it in 2015. Table 3.3 displays the demographic details of parents and guardians. This information increases understanding of the family culture of reading surrounding these participants. The five parents/guardians of the five learners in the research study were asked to participate in individual interviews.

Table: 3.3 Demographic details of the five parents/guardians involved in this study

Details	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Age	45 years	27 years	26 years	30 years	26 years
Employment status	Self employed	employed	employed	Employed	unemployed
Type of employment	Sell food for taxi drivers	Cashier	Cleaner	Cashier	unemployed
Highest Grade passed	Standard 7	Grade 11	Grade 12	Grade 11	Grade 11
Number of children	Seven	Three	Two	Three	Four
Relationship	Grandmother	Mother	Mother	Aunt	Mother

Table 3.3 highlights the demographic details of parents/guardians. It shows that they all have low socio-economic status as evidenced by their level of education and type of employment. Not only were these parents living in a low socio-economic environment, but their parents had not achieved well at school. Only P3 had reached Grade 12; this may explain the lack of a literacy culture in their homes.

Table 3.4 sets out details about the two Grade 3 teachers who were part of the data collection process. They will be referred to as T1 and T2 to maintain anonymity.

Table: 3.4 Demographic details of the two teachers involved in this study

Teachers	T1	T2
Age	48 years	54 years
Gender	Female	Female
Home language	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa
Other languages spoken at home	None	English and Afrikaans
Highest qualifications	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE)
Collage / University obtained	North-West University	Cape Collage
Teaching experience	Seven years	33 years
Number of years teaching Grade 3	Seven years	20 years

Table 3.4 demonstrates the profile of the two teachers involved in this study. The information displayed in this table highlights their highest qualifications obtained and the number of years teaching the same grade. This indicates that these two teachers had many years of teaching experience, and that they would have known how to teach comprehension skills. Both teachers attended many workshops organised by the WCED, especially workshops to prepare them for the annual WCED Systemic Tests that are usually written during the last term.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, participant observations and documentary reviews. Each instrument is discussed in detail separately.

3.7.1. Semi-structured interviews

Efron and Ravid (2013: 98) state that "semi-structured interviews are open-ended questions which allow the researcher to ask additional questions not specifically planned in advance". Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe more questions connected to the participants' answers and reactions. The researcher believed that this process helped the person being interviewed to elaborate more and to think more about the questions asked. The use of semi-structured interviews in this study allowed the researcher to explore interviewees' attitudes, opinions and feelings (Lambert, 2012). Bertram and Christiansen (2014:82) state that interviews are valuable as they allow the researcher to find out what the people being interviewed know, value and think.

In this study, the two teachers (Appendix 1), and five parents/guardians (Appendix 2) were interviewed using semi-structured interviews and the five learners (Appendix 3) were interviewed using one focus-group interview. Some of the interviews were conducted during the week inside the school premises and some at their homes during weekends. The interviews lasted about 45 to 60 minutes per interview and were conducted in a language in which the participants were comfortable to use, which was IsiXhosa. The researcher intended to conduct at least one interview per day. The interview schedule for teachers, parents/guardians and the five learners appears in Tables 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7.

Table: 3.5 Interview schedule for the teachers

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
Date of the interview	03 May 2018	02 May 2018
Interview time	10:00 – 11:00	10:00 – 11:00
Day of the interview	Thursday	Wednesday
Place of the interview	School X in Grade 3A classroom	School X in Grade 3C classroom
Language used	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa

Both teachers were interviewed separately and on separate days using the same interview schedule. Both interviews took between 45 – 60 minutes.

Table: 3.6 Interview schedule for parents/guardians

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Date of the interview	30 April 2018	12 May 2018	04 May 2018	11 May 2018	07 May 2018
Day of the interview	Monday	Saturday	Friday	Friday	Monday
Interview time	14:00 – 14:45	09:00 – 09:45	17:00 – 18:00	18:15 – 19:00	14:00 – 14:45
Place of the interview	School Xin Grade 3B classroom	At home	At home	At home	School Xin Grade 3B classroom
Language used	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa

All five parents/guardians were interviewed on separate dates, times and venues since this was convenient to them and the researcher. Creswell (2012) indicates that when conducting an interview, it may happen that individual participants are so far from the venue that are not able to be present for the interview scheduled.

Table: 3.7 Interview schedule for the five learners

	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Date of the interview	11. 06. 2018	11. 06. 2018	11. 06. 2018	11. 06. 2018	11. 06. 2018
Day of the interview	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday	Monday
Interview time	10:00 – 11:30	10:00 – 11:30	10:00 – 11:30	10:00 – 11:30	10:00 – 11:30
Place of the interview	School X in Grade 3B classroom	School X in Grade 3B classroom	School X in Grade 3B classroom	School X in Grade 3B classroom	School X in Grade 3B classroom
Language used	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa

The focus group interview was used to collect shared understanding and to assess the views of the five selected learners (Creswell, 2012). The focus group interview was advantageous for this study since the five learners produced similar information that was needed by the researcher. They cooperated well with each other, and the researcher (Creswell, 2012). The participants were interviewed in isiXhosa since they felt comfortable to participate freely using their home language.

3.7.1.1. Advantages of semi-structured interviews

Fraenkel et al. (2012) suggest that data collection methods such as interviews are conducted and completed for each participant using the same questions and topics. All twelve participants that were interviewed employed the same topic on literacy, yet from different perspectives which helped investigate their in-depth views on this topic. The open-ended questions were an advantage for this study because it allowed the researcher to probe and pose follow-up clarifying questions to the participants. These probing questions allowed participants to construct decisions in response to the questions asked (Creswell, 2012).

It was valuable to use a qualitative interview schedule which permitted participants to express their personal views. They described the theme and topic as they perceived and understood it (Yin, 2011). This process was beneficial in that it revealed to the researcher many important points that she had not previously considered.

3.7.1.2. Disadvantages of Semi-structured interviews

One of the disadvantages of conducting interviews was remaining neutral. The researcher had to ensure that participants' words did not express her own preferences (Yin, 2011). It was important for the researcher to maintain a good relation with parents during the interviews. They were especially concerned to hear that their children were part of an extra school literacy programme as they did not believe their children needed it (Creswell, 2012).

Another disadvantage was that the interviews were conducted in isiXhosa and had to be translated into English. This was a time-consuming but necessary process.

3.7.2. Participant observation

Participant observation includes the researcher taking part in the event which is being observed (Lambert 2012). Creswell (2012) confirms that the role of the participant observer is to observe holistically and learn about the situation; to become deeply involved and immersed in the activities. Creswell (2012) emphasises that participant observation requires the researcher to seek permission from parents and guardians to participate in the activities, and to observe their children; as can be seen in Appendix 10. The aim of using participant observation was to observe how well the five learner understood their comprehension skills, cognitive and social development.

As a participant observer, the researcher observed the five Grade 3 learners during the ten-week IP. During this time, the researcher become a participant observer, with the aim of (i) immersing herself in the activities with which the five learners were occupied. (Cohen et al., 2017) and (ii) recording the rich data she was observing. This data collection tool (Appendix 4) was preferred because it gave the researcher a true and accurate view of what was actually happening, rather than relying on inferences.

Participant observation is a flexible approach to data collection that obliges the researcher to shift focus if it helps the research (Robson, 2011).In this research project, it was sometimes difficult for the researcher to record all the information while participating in an activity. The researcher made the time to complete her observation schedule immediately

after each lesson since the observations were not video-taped. There was not always enough time to observe all five learners together.

By using participant observation, the researcher intended to observe the situation while the five participants were in action (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). She wanted to explore the issues she encountered when conducting the pre-tests. By means of this process of observing the learners responding to the pre-test passages and questions, the researcher was able to understand the strengths and weaknesses of her five learners better.

Observations were conducted during the IP which happened after school from 14:00 – 14:30 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays for the ten weeks of the IP. Table 3.8 sets out the details of the observation schedule.

Table: 3.8 Details of the observation schedule for each week for ten weeks

Week	Date	Time	What was being observed?		
1	10.04.2018 - 12.04.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Reading and answering behaviours	Level of enjoyment	Understanding of the instructions
2	17.04.2018– 19.04.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Participation/engagement in oral and written work.	Understanding of comprehension skills.	Social engagement
3	24.04.2018- 26.04.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Participation/engagement in oral and written work.	Understanding of comprehension skills.	Level of activity verbal and written.
4	01.05.2018- 03.05.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Participation/engagement in oral and written work.	Understanding of comprehension skills.	Social engagement
5	08.05.2018- 10.05.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Participation/engagement in oral and written work.	Understanding of comprehension skills.	Level of activity verbal and written.
6	15.05.2018- 17.05.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Participation/engagement in oral and written work.	Understanding of comprehension skills.	Social engagement
7	22.05.2018- 24.05.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Participation/engagement in oral and written work.	Understanding of comprehension skills.	Social engagement
8	29.05.2018- 31.05.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Participation/engagement in oral and written work.	Understanding of comprehension skills.	Social engagement
9	05.06.2018- 07.06.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Participation/engagement in oral and written work.	Understanding of comprehension skills.	Level of activity verbal and written.
10	12.06.2018- 14.06.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Reading and answering behaviours	Level of enjoyment	Understanding of the instructions

Table 3.8 highlights the observations that were made during the ten weeks of the IP. Each week gives details of what was observed in each activity that took place. During this time, the researcher was closely monitoring each learner.

3.7.2.1. Advantages of being a participant observer

The researcher found it insightful to be a participant observer. She chose to be a participant observer in the activities of this group study and was constantly observing the learners and recording information about their learning habits and general progress. This process of regular and systematic participant observation allowed the researcher to understand and learn more about how well they understood a written text. The process provided vital information about their personalities, backgrounds, and socio-cognitive development (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The researcher was able to collect more valuable information which was gleaned from the interviews.

3.7.2.2. Disadvantages of being a participant observer

One of the disadvantages that the researcher faced was the fact that she struggled to record every piece of important information she gained from the observations while taking a role in an activity (Cohen et al., 2007). This was sometimes done quickly with incomplete key words that were written during the participant observations. It was difficult to write a description and re-construct what was being observed in some activities.

3.7.3. Intervention Programme (IP) schedule

Before the IP could begin, the researcher and her supervisor planned a draft schedule to guide her over the ten weeks. This plan included dates, times and content of what strategies to teach, as described in Table 3.9.

Table: 3.9 Details of the IP schedule for each week for ten weeks including the various strategies used

Week	Date	Time	Schedule for learners		
1	10.04.2018 - 12.04.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Pre-tests and selection of themes		
2	17.04.2018– 19.04.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Vocabulary matching	Cloze	Anticipation Guide
3	24.04.2018- 26.04.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Think aloud	Feature matrix	Higher order questions 1,2,3,4
4	01.05.2018- 03.05.2018	14:00 – 14:30	My turn Your turn	Readers theatre	Vocabulary magic square
5	08.05.2018- 10.05.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Vocabulary matching	Cloze	Anticipation Guide
6	15.05.2018- 17.05.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Think aloud	Feature matrix	Higher order questions 1,2,3,4
7	22.05.2018- 24.05.2018	14:00 – 14:30	My turn Your turn	Readers theatre	Vocabulary magic square
8	29.05.2018- 31.05.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Vocabulary magic square	cloze	Anticipation Guide
9	05.06.2018- 07.06.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Think aloud	Feature matrix	Higher order questions 1,2,3,4
10	12.06.2018- 14.06.2018	14:00 – 14:30	Post-tests		

Table 3.9 provides a detailed plan of the IP which shows that each comprehension strategy was repeated with different texts during this period. This is the same as recapping higher-order thinking skills; a teaching approach promoted by the NDoBE. The reason for reinforcing strategies was to allow the students to become familiar with them, moving them from being dependent to independent learners (Vygotsky, 1978). The researcher had to consolidate the nine comprehension strategies. These strategies provided different cognitive levels; another teaching approach encouraged by the CAPS document to use different cognitive level to assess learners.

3.7.3.1. Pre-tests

Before the IP began, the researcher conducted pre-tests with her five learners. The purpose of conducting these pre-tests was to identify the strengths and challenges of learners in reading the texts and answering the four comprehension skills questions

proposed by the PIRLS study. By doing so, she was able to identify how many questions the learners answered according to the four comprehension skills. From the results of the pre-tests, the researcher managed to plan and conduct an IP over 8 weeks. During this time of the IP, the researcher used a variety of comprehension strategies, as seen in Table 3.9 to teach and scaffold the necessary comprehension skills. The researcher and the five learners together negotiated and identified a theme that all the learners' enjoyed working with. The texts reflected this theme. During each lesson, the researcher focused on motivating her learners by using behavior modification charts. This study was motivated by a social constructivist approach which as well highlights the role of intrinsic motivation (Duncan et al., 2011). This approach allowed learners (i) to be engaged in completing a behaviour modification chart at the end of each lesson where they were encouraged (ii) to reflect on and to clearly explain what they had learnt in each lesson. By doing so, these learners learnt new skills and knowledge as they became creative and self-confident as well.

3.7.3.2. Post-tests

After eight weeks of teaching, the same nine comprehension strategies, post-tests and questions were conducted. The results are compared and analysed in Chapter 4.

3.7.4. Documentary Review

Creswell (2011) maintains that documents contain public and private information which the researcher obtain from participants. In this study, the researcher used the books that were written by the five Grade 3 learners as her documents as well as the pre- and post-test results. They helped the researcher find important information that enabled her to assess and analyse the fundamental phenomena in her study (Creswell, 2011).

3.7.4.1. Advantages of using documentary analysis

These kinds of documents gave the researcher an advantage because they provided language and words written by the participants (Creswell, 2011). This process helped the researcher to present and analyse her data, as written in the books listed in Chapter 4. It was easy to locate and obtain these books since the names of the learners were written on the outside of the books. Learners used the same books for the ten-week period of the IP.

3.7.4.2. Disadvantages of using document instrument

One of the disadvantages the researcher found by using books as a way of collecting document data, was that some of the written work was incomplete and incorrect for the content asked (Creswell, 2011). Poor hand writing and weak grammar made it difficult to read and understand. Another disadvantage was the language used to write; they were supposed to write and answer in English, but they sometimes wrote in isiXhosa.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data were inductively analysed by the researcher using content, visual and data analysis. The numerical scores from the pre and post-tests were converted into quantitative data to provide visual representations using 2013 Microsoft Excel programme. These numerical graphs were then analysed to provide qualitative meaning to the values (Antieno, 2009). By combining both visual and textual approaches more in-depth connections between the sets of data were obtained (Yin, 2011). The researcher used the method of summarizing many words into a few categories (Cohen et al., 2017). This is known as breaking down many words into fewer units before any analysis of data begins. These units were based on theories, experience and previous knowledge (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The researcher noticed that in qualitative data analysis the research problems, theories and methods were linked together to categorize the data (Bryman & Burgess, 2002). Themes were developed which were linked to the literature review and relevant theories (Creswell, 2012).

The researcher collected her qualitative data using seven semi-structured and a focus group interviews, five participant observations and five documentary reviews. Organisation of data is important in qualitative research because of the large amount of information collected during a study (Creswell, 2012). Voice recorders were used to record the interviews. Observation sheet schedules were used to identify how the learners responded to the different comprehension questions. Five exercise books as documents were used to collect data.

All this information gathered from the participants was converted into words in a computer and translated from isiXhosa to English, and finally transcribed by the

researcher. Then the researcher sent the printed transcribed copies of the interviews to the twelve participants for them (i) to read and check that the transcription and translations were correct, and (ii) to check that the interpretations were fair and representative of their opinions. Creswell (2012) talks about member checking as the process where the researcher asks participants to check the accuracy of the interpretations made by the researcher.

The researcher then read and re-read through all the data that was written on papers and organised the information into meaningful units or sections. As she was reading the data several times, she developed a deeper understanding of the information provided by participants (Creswell, 2012). She then organised the information into specific codes related to the three Research Questions guiding this study. By reviewing those specific codes, the researcher recognized patterns and similarities marked in different colours (Creswell, 2012). She collapsed them into themes to make them smaller units which were related to the three Research Questions and were discussed in-depth in Chapter 2 and presented in Chapter 4.

To organize her data into meaningful units the researcher inductively analyzed her data for Research Questions 1 and 3. These two research questions used data from the pre- and post-test results. The results were quantitatively presented by using graphs in Microsoft Excel Programme and qualitatively interpreted. To make sense of this data, the researcher divided the results into graphs and colour coded them.

To answer both Research Questions 1 and 3, the data were mainly focused on the PIRLS four levels of comprehension skills, and were colour coded as follows.

Table: 3.10 Colour coding of data for Research Questions 1 and 3

PIRLS four comprehension levels	Colour coding
Focus on retrieving explicitly stated information	Yellow
Make straight forward inferences	Red
Interpret and integrate ideas and information	Green
Evaluate and examine content, language and textual elements	Blue

For Research Question 2, the researcher deductively analysed her data according to the theories such as: Social development (linked to Wenger's theory) [Table 3.11],

Cognitive development (linked to Blooms Taxonomy [Table 3.12]) and Language development (according to the English First Additional Language Curriculum in the CAPS document, Grades R -3 [NNDoBE], 2011).

Table: 3.11 Colour coding of data for social development

Wenger's social theory	Colour Coding
Learning as doing (Practice)	Purple
Learning as belonging (Community)	Dark red
Learning as becoming (Identity)	Orange
Learning as experience (Meaning)	Dark blue

Table: 3.12 Colour coding of data for cognitive development

Blooms Taxonomy	Colour coding
Understanding	Green
Applying	Red
Analysing	Blue
Evaluating	Orange
Creating	Purple
Remembering	Brown

3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Throughout the process of data collection and analysis, the researcher ensured that the findings and interpretation of the results were accurate and truthful (Creswell, 2012). Trustworthiness of interpreting the findings was the most important element of the study (Creswell, 2012). Lincoln and Guba (1985) define trustworthiness in as a vital part of a qualitative research since it includes the concepts of reliability, validity and triangulation. They state that there is no validity without reliability. The evidence and illustrations of validity in this study were appropriate to create a reliable study.

During the course of this qualitative study the researcher decided to use an interpretive approach. She did not permit personal issues, issues of bias or power shape her interpretation. The researcher, who was the class teacher as well, was thoughtful and respectful towards her participants. She used language that avoided "demeaning attitudes, biased assumptions, and awkward constructions that suggested bias because of gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, disability or age" (Creswell, 2012: 277). All this was attained by spending time studying examples of

appropriate language construction before and during the research study. For example, the researcher chose to be specific on describing individual participants as described in Tables 3.2 – 3.4. Participation of the participants was acknowledge as the researcher used impersonal terms such as participant or Ls 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 instead of identifying them as subjects in the study. Unbiased adjectives were used such as teachers, parents/guardians and learners' instead of labeling them as boys or girls (Creswell, 2012). From there, the researcher was able to decide how these language constructions were inclusive and sensitive for the study (Creswell, 2012). She avoided bias by selecting two teachers as part of the sample that were different in terms of age and work experience, learners that were different in gender. The five learners and the researcher maintained good relations during the data collection as they were willing to participate and felt free to participate in their own language which was IsiXhosa.

3.9.1. Validity

In this study, the researcher ensured that the interpretations and theories shared a common meaning with the participants and the researcher. This indicated validating findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Creswell (2012) states that validating findings means that the researcher determines the accuracy or credibility of the findings through strategies such as member checking or triangulation. Validity in this study was attained by following the processes of checking that all the data was correct, auditing, member-checking and triangulation were ensured (Creswell, 2012). Auditing was attained by the researcher, and her supervisors, revising the written research data, presented in Chapter 4, to check discriminatory language and accuracy of the interpretations. While member-checking was attained by sending the translated and transcribed scripts back to the interviewees for them to check that the content was authentic and truly reflected what was said in the interview. In the process of validation, the study used various forms of data collection which ensured triangulation.

3.9.2. Triangulation

The data collection instruments such as interviews, observations and the documentary reviews were used to achieve data triangulation. Lambert (2012:37) describes triangulation as the process that uses more than one method to improve or develop data. The researcher corroborated her evidence from different participants such as parents/ guardians, teachers and learners. This corroboration motivated the

researcher. She developed her findings from different sources of information and individuals. She ensured that the study was accurate and credible (Creswell, 2012). The responses of interviews corresponded to those of the observations and pre- and post-tests (documentary analysis). Cohen et al., (2007) suggest that using multi-methods needs to be considered when checking triangulation of data. This required the researcher to employ methodological triangulation of time, space and theory. Time triangulation was attained as the researcher was consistent in collecting her data, using the same observation schedules and pre- and post-tests with the same group of learners over the ten-week data collection period. Space triangulation was achieved by using learners from the same culture. Methodological triangulation was achieved by drawing from four theorists to analyse the data; Vygotsky's (1978) theory of cognitive development, Cambourne's (2004) social constructivist theory, Wenger's (2005) theory of social learning, and Bloom's Taxonomy (2001) of cognitive development.

3.9.3. Reliability

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) define reliability as a theory or a practical measure that measures accuracy, consistency and stability of the study. Reliability was achieved in this study in that the researcher consistently using the same observation schedule through the eight-week IP. The same interview schedule, with the same questions and probing questions for the two teachers, and the same interview schedule with the same questions and probing questions for the parents and guardians were used. The pre- and post-tests were reliable as the researcher had to take precaution that in both tests she measured the same ideas and concepts. Both pre- and post-tests were conducted under similar conditions, in terms of questioning and answering, time allowed for writing and in a setting where there were no distractions (Nxumalo, 2016).

To ensure the reliability of the test scripts, the scripts were marked twice to double check the errors. The supervisor independently checked the marking of the scripts. This process was the same for the pre-tests and the post-tests. Hughes and Huby (2004) suggests that the test items should be clear. The researcher and her supervisor tested the question items before the testing began. They checked for clarity of words in sentences, that the instructions were clear with the correct font size for Grade 3 learners.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Cohen et al. (2007) state that ethical considerations concern values for conducting a research study. Ethics are about what is right or wrong and what is good or bad in the purposes of the research content, methods and outcomes. Ethical issues are prioritized when the study involves people or participants that are children (Fontana & Frey, 1994). In this study, the researcher carefully considered the ethical issues since it involved Grade 3 learners. Kvale (1996) suggest that ethical considerations should be a continuous process throughout the research study. The researcher took great care throughout her study to act in an ethical manner.

Once the researcher's proposal was accepted, she applied for ethical clearance from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) prior to the commencement of data collection and can be seen in Appendix 5. The researcher was granted permission from the Western Cape Department of Education (WCED) as can be seen in Appendix 6. Permission from the principal of the school was requested as in the signed form, Appendix 7, from the teachers in Appendix 8 and the learners' parents/guardians as seen in Appendix 9.

Before the researcher started collecting the data, she explained to the participants what the research was all about and what was going to be done with the information (Bell, 2010). She explained to the participants why they were all selected to participate in the study, why they were to be interviewed and observed during the IP. This was done in writing (Bell, 2010) in letters sent to their parents/guardians. Since the learners were all in Grade 3, it was deemed professional and ethical to send a letter of permission to the learners' parents/guardians to ask for permission to conduct the study with their children (Appendix 10). The researcher made sure that she explained the purpose of the study to the participants so that they were able to decide whether to participate or not. Participation in the study was purely voluntary and participants were told that they were at liberty to withdraw from the study any time if they were uncomfortable with any aspect of the process. Goddar and Melville (1996) suggest that participants should be respected as individuals and protected from emotional and physical harm. The participants should not be identifiable to anyone reading the research study:

confidentiality, trust and privacy were maintained. All participants and the school were given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 3 discussed how the study was conducted. It introduced the research approach, the research design and explored the research paradigm as well as the research questions. The researcher discussed the site selection, sample, data collection methods, data analysis, trustworthiness and the ethical considerations for this study. This study used interviews, observation and document analysis to find answers to the three research questions driving this study. Chapter 4 presents the analysis and the discussion the findings and discussions.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings obtained from seven, one-on-one interviews, observations and pre- and post-tests conducted during a ten-week IP. This study was guided by (i) theories of cognitive development formulated by Vygotsky (1978), (ii) Cambourne's social constructivist theory (2004), (iii) the social theory of learning by Wenger (2005) and (iv) Bloom's Taxonomy (2001). The findings presented in this chapter respond to the three main research questions driving this study. The research title is: **"**Grade 3 learners' experiences of developing comprehension skills during an IP".

Table: 4.1 The three main research questions with their corresponding sub-questions

Research question	Sub-questions
4.2 Research Question 1 What were the learners' comprehension challenges during the IP?	4.2.1 What were the learners' pre-test results of the comprehension passages? 4.2.2 What were the learners' challenges when engaging with the four comprehension skills?
4.3 Research Question 2 How did the IP, focussing on comprehension, encourage the social, cognitive and language development of the Grade 3 learners?	4.3.1 How did the IP, focussing on comprehension, encourage the social development of the Grade 3 learners? 4.3.2 How did the IP, focussing on comprehension skills, encourage the cognitive development of the Grade 3 learners? 4.3.3 How did the IP, focussing on comprehension skills, encourage the language development of the Grade 3 learners?
4.4 Research Question 3 What were the learners' post-test results after explicit teaching of comprehension skills?	4.4.1 What were the learners' post-test results of the comprehension passages? 4.4.2 What are the differences between each learners' pre and post-test results?

After inductively analysing the data collected for this research study, sub-questions emerged. All of these sub-questions are discussed in greater detail, providing evidence and discussions from international, national literature and relevant theories.

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What were the learners' comprehension challenges during the IP?

Sub-question

4.2.1. What were the learners' pre-test results of the comprehension passages?

In order to discuss the challenges facing learners, it is important first, to deliberate upon the results of the pre-tests. This will be followed by the challenges learners experienced with the four comprehension skills during the IP. Evidence of the findings are presented, juxtaposing the results of the pre-tests, interviews and observations.

The comprehension pre-tests assessed the five Grade 3 learners' understanding of the four comprehension skills (Mullis & Martin, 2013:21-24):

- focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information;
- make straightforward inferences;
- interpret and integrate ideas and information; and
- evaluate and examine content, language and textual elements.

Palane and Howie (2016: 22) state that:

> *… the Home Language curriculum for the Foundation Phase makes more complex cognitive demands. It further requires instruction in reading comprehension that provides the learners with the opportunity to engage in a range of levels of thinking and questioning across the lower and higher order comprehension skills. This includes the cognitive levels of literal comprehension, reorganisation, inferential, evaluation and appreciation.*

The English First Additional Language curriculum for the CAPS Intermediate Phase Grade (4-6) (NDoBE:2011), however, emphasizes (i) the process of moving from lower order (retrieval of information or cognitive levels 1 and 2) to (ii) higher order (making inferences, integrating information and evaluating text or cognitive levels 3, 4 and 5)

and (iii) questioning as it is observed in the PIRLS assessments as well. Since the researcher was a Grade 3 teacher and preparing her learners for Grade 4, she chose to be guided by the definition of the English First Additional Language curriculum for the Intermediate Phase. The CAPS document clearly states that learners should be exposed to a range of cognitive levels to be able to achieve critical learning. Cognitive level 1: Literal. These questions deal with information explicitly stated in the text only. Cognitive level 2: Reorganisation. These questions require analysis, synthesis or organisation of information explicitly stated in the text. These two levels are regarded as the low order thinking skills. Cognitive level 3: Inference. These questions require learners to be engaged with information explicitly stated in the text in terms of their personal experiences. Cognitive level 4: Evaluation. These questions deal with judgements regarding value and worth, reality, facts, opinions and reasoning. Cognitive level 5: Appreciation. These questions are intended to assess the psychological and aesthetic impact of the text (NDoBE: 2011, Grades 4-6).

The comprehension tests and the IP were all conducted in English, although the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) at this school is isiXhosa. This decision was taken based on the fact that the researcher was preparing the Grade 3 learners for the transition to Grade 4.The main reason for using these tests as a pre-test (and post-test) was to measure the abilities of the five learners to respond to the low to higher-order reading skills before participating in the IP. This diagnostic information was then used to plan the IP. The pre-test scores of the four comprehension questions are presented in Figure 4.1.

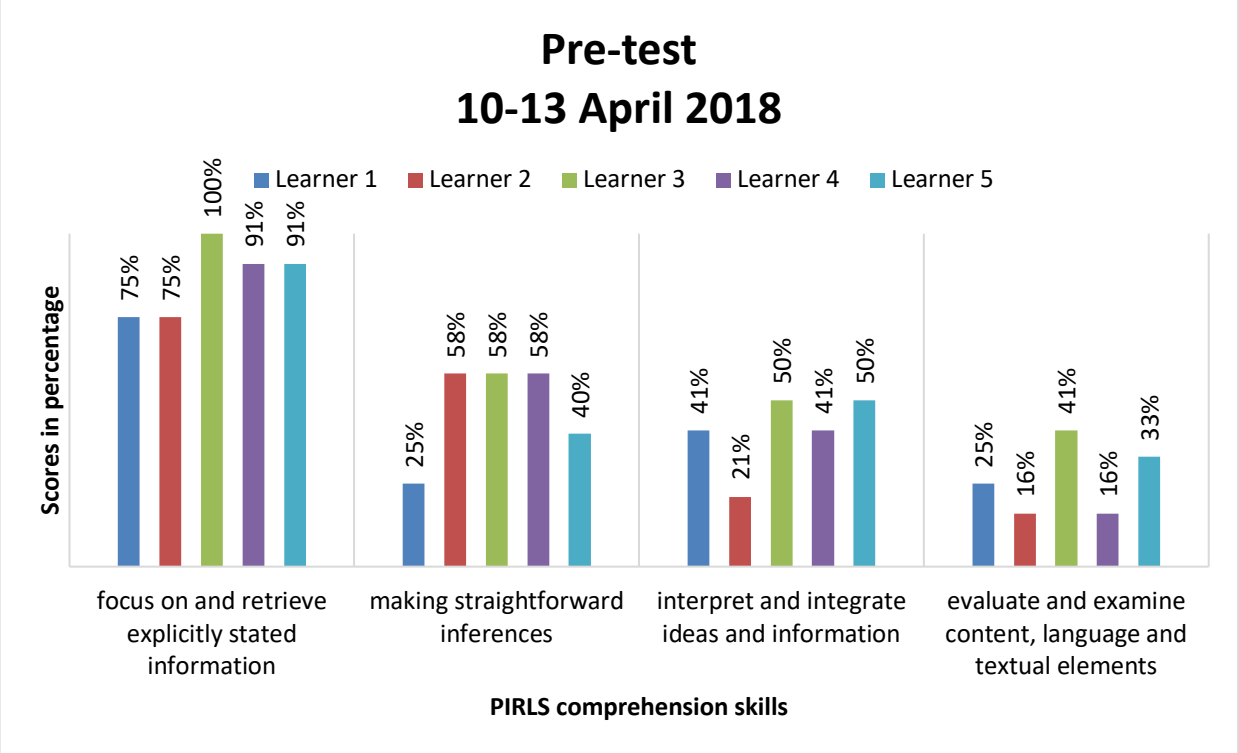

Figure 4.1 Pre-test scores of the five Grade 3 learners

Figure 4.1 reveals that all five learners could focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information with a good amount of understanding (75% - 100%).Three out of five learners were successful in making straightforward inferences with 58% understanding. Learner 1 achieved 25% and Learner 5 achieved 40% understanding on making straightforward inferences. All five learners struggled with the two highest-ordered cognitive thinking skills which are: interpret and integrate ideas and information (21% - 50%); and evaluate and examine content, language and textual element (16% - 41%).

As can be seen from Figure 4.1, the more the questions demanded critical thinking, the more the students struggled to answer correctly. The CAPS document (2011) states that learners should be given many opportunities to engage in a range of levels of thinking and questioning to help them develop both lower and higher order comprehension skills. Mullis, Martin and Sainbury (2016) state that the PIRLS four comprehension processes are the metacognitive processes and strategies that allow readers to examine their understanding and adjust their approach.

Summary

The pre-test results indicate that all five learners showed a sound understanding of the lowest comprehension skill as they received above 75%. This may be due to the fact that this type of question required learners to retrieve answers directly from the text read and it does not require critical thinking. The pre-tests showed that for the two high order questions which include inferences and integrating information, learners were challenged in answering these types of questions since they all received below 60%. The highest cognitive skill, evaluating and examining the content, language and textual elements, demanded the most critical thinking. Here the scores were between 16% and 41%, indicating that this skill was the most difficult for these Grade 3 learners.

Sub-question

4.2.2. What were the learners' challenges when engaging with the four comprehension skills?

In order to focus on the learners' challenges during the comprehension skills development, the oral discussions during the IP were conducted in isiXhosa and translated into English. For ease of understanding, their grammar structure has been corrected. However, the grammatical structure in the learner's written work was not adjusted, maintaining authenticity. The following four comprehension skills are presented to explain and give meaning to answering this sub-question.

4.2.2.1. Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information

Howie et al. (2016) in the PIRLS document, point out that South African learners perform better on the lower order than the higher order processes. Forty-nine percent of South African Grade 5 learners who wrote the 2016 PIRLS test could read to locate and retrieve explicitly stated information. Nomlomo (2010) states that questions that require low order thinking do not encourage learners to think or express their views; instead they encourage them to memorise or retrieve certain facts. As indicated in Figure 4.1, all five learners scored from 75% to 100% on the pre-test for the lower order questions. After inductively analysing the results, two themes that indicated the learners' challenges in this skill emerged:

a. inability to understand vocabulary in their second language; and

b. identify information that is relevant to the specific goal of reading.

c. A lack of vocabulary understanding in their second language

Moyo (2018) states that understanding vocabulary is crucial for understanding a text and is a required factor in learning to read. Moyo concurs with Van Der Burg (2018) who states that learners cannot develop an understanding of a text without knowing the meaning of most words in the text and that the meaning of words is critical to the reading process. Both authors imply that reading with understanding and vocabulary knowledge are interconnected. Learners with limited word knowledge often have limited reading ability: their chances of gaining more vocabulary are less because of their poor understanding of vocabulary. The more words learners understand, the easier it becomes for them to read with understanding (Moyo, 2018).

To show that the learners in this current study faced challenges in understanding some of the English vocabulary,(English) as the language of the text and the questions (which were asked in their second language) their responses from the pre-test are provided below.

Teacher	What did Rabbit use to dig?
L1	The Rabbit have a new house
L2	Part of my home
L4	Dig mole
L5	Rabbit was digging a new house

This indicates that learners (L1, 2, 4 and 5) did not understand the meaning of the word dig.

As seen in the learners' answers, Nxumalo (2016) implies that learners with poor vocabulary struggle to read texts with understanding which leads to poor academic performance.

L3 obtained the correct answer:

L3	Rabbit use to dig with his own front feet and his long claws

This is an example of a lowest-order thinking skill question, yet these four isiXhosa speaking learners could not answer correctly since they did not have prior knowledge of the English word – dig. Moyo (2018) highlights that before learners read written words, they should have learned the words in the story book so that they have enough background knowledge of vocabulary.

This lack of understanding of vocabulary in their second language is confirmed by Teachers1 and 2 who were interviewed and stated:

> ***T1***
> *My learners know most of the high frequency words used in English, I never taught them, but they struggle to understand most of the low frequency words used and I teach them as English is not their First Language. But I usually advise my learners to use dictionary to look for the meaning of words and do some spelling games at home. Also what we do in my class is that after we have read any story we take out words that are difficult to them and try to explain their meanings.*

This highlights that the process of learning vocabulary can take place incidentally outside the classroom or explicitly inside the classroom.

> ***T2****:*
> *Our learners are not like they do not know anything or they are blank, it's just that they struggle to understand the English words. During my teaching once I explain or translate the difficult words in the story in isiXhosa they then show that they understand the text or the question.*

From the interview conducted with Parent 3 she highlighted that:

> ***P3****:*
> *My son is able to speak English but what I find strange is that when I do spelling with him, he struggles to spell correctly. He is able to read words but when I ask the meaning of some words he struggles with the meanings.*

This shows that for these isiXhosa learners to have English vocabulary knowledge they should be able to recognise words and have knowledge of those words to be able to understand a text. A lack of exposure in second language from school and home has

an impact on learners understanding (Kotze, Westhuizen & Bernard: 2017). As one learns a language one also learns new words. Moyo (2018) believes that learning vocabulary cannot be isolated from learning a language, while Nxumalo (2016) indicates that there is a reciprocal relationship between reading, vocabulary and academic performance.

a. Identifying information that is relevant to the specific goal of reading

When readers focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information they use many ways to locate and understand content that is relevant to the question that has been asked. Mullis et al. (2016) state that in order to identify information that is relevant one should focus on words, phrases and sentence level in order to construct meaning. Successful retrieval, Mullis et al. (2016) emphasizes, can be achieved when learners are able to recognize the relevance of the information or ideas in relation to the information required. The WCED Systemic Test (2018) diagnoses that for learners to be able to retrieve information from the text they should use sight words, phonics, contextual and structural analysis and decoding skills to make meaning. Although there were a few challenges in the learners' responses to this comprehension type, they still could not identify information that was relevant to the specific goal of reading.

Teacher	What season is it?
L1	Season is sun
L2	Season is sun and shining
L3	The season is Autumn
L4	It is hot
L5	Autumn

In the text it was written '… it was a beautiful autumn day.' Learners1, 2 and 4, were unable to identify that the season in the text was Autumn. Although these three learners in this comprehension type scored between 75% - 91%, they could not identify the relevant information in this text. This could be caused by the fact that they did not read the questions carefully or follow the instructions to find the right information.

This was confirmed by both T1 and T2 who stated that:

> ***T1**:*
> *during Reading and Viewing learners need to read and be able to identify relevant information asked by the question from that same text. This skill does not even ask them to think critical it just needs them to be able to identify the important information to be used to answer the question correctly, but some of our learner's struggle to answer this type of question even though it is the easiest type of question and I do not know what might be causing that even in isiXhosa, I think maybe they cannot read.*

> ***T2**:*
> *mmhhh… To be honest our learners do not want to read because this type of question requires them to look for answers in the text but they still get wrong answers. Their memory is very short, because they first read the text but when they have to answer the given questions they cannot remember what they read.*

Although this type of question is regarded as the easiest one, some learners were still facing challenges in answering it correctly.

4.2.2.2. Making straightforward inference

Silva and Cain (2015) state that inferences include going beyond the explicitly stated detail in the text. Seiyod (2009, cited in Nxumalo, 2016) states that inference is when predictions are made by the reader about what is not clearly stated in the text. It includes integrating information between different sentences, information within the text and general knowledge to fill in the details that are implicit. Palane and Howie (2016) highlight that inference is at cognitive level 3 and is stated as such in the English First Additional Language curriculum. This comprehension type question is regarded as a higher-order thinking skill. This cognitive level requires learners to use their own personal experiences to answer inferential questions.

As indicated in Figure 4.1 the make straightforward inference responses by the five learners received marks of between 25% and 58%. This shows less of an understanding of the skills required of these learners; an ability to integrate general knowledge with implicitly stated details. The example below highlights this lack of understanding:

Teacher Why do you think a goat is a strange visitor to the school?

L1 Because it was hungry

L2 Because stranger are not allowed in school

L3 Because is all was a goat

L4 Because they did not know that the goat was there

L5 Because the goat is wrong

The information that was required by the question was not explicitly stated in the text. It was expected that these five learners could have used what was written, and linked this information to their own personal experiences of goats and school, to make an inference. Silva and Cain (2015) state that most of the information we glean from reading emerges from what is implied rather than stated directly.

Teacher 1's response was thought-provoking:

> *T1*
> *To be honest I myself do not know what an inference is. I will have to go and learn about it then I will get back to you....*

The teachers' response to the interview question highlighted that even teachers struggle to model or to teach this skill as they do not know what it involves. Teachers should model the comprehension skills for learners and provide them with many opportunities to practise and apply the skills, in order for the learners to use them on their own or in assessment situations.

4.2.2.3. Interpret and integrate ideas and information

After analysing the PIRLS (2011) results Combrinck, Van Staden and Roux (2014) found that South African learners had difficulty with higher-order comprehension skills, and stated that the Grade 4 learners were unable to integrate ideas and information. More recently, Howie et al. (2016) reported that only 7% of Grade 5 learners could make connections between events, and were able to integrate ideas to interpret the text. The researcher observed that her five learners experienced low self-esteem when attempting to express themselves not only in English but also in isiXhosa. This could

be caused by the fact that these learners were unable to explain or summarise what they had read and what had been read to them. This is confirmed by T2 who stated:

> *The children we teach today, they struggle to explain in their own words, what they read or what is being read to them. They are so lazy to think out of the box and to express their views. They easily forget what they read so they do not have a memory.*

To show this inability to interpret and integrate ideas, evidence is provided by the three learners' incorrect responses to the teacher's question:

Teacher	Does the dog like playing with balls? What makes you say that?	
	L1	Yes, because the dog is good for the ball
	L2	Yes, because the dog is happy
	L5	Yes, because the dog had different colour balls

Pardo and Plourde (2011) posit that if learners encounter difficulties in combining the meaning of one word into a clear sentence or have no strategies to assist them in understanding the text on their own, they lose interest. The learners end up saying or writing anything that is an immediate response which they have not thought about. This can be seen in the responses of L's 1, 2 and 5. Their answers do not explicitly explain why the dog liked playing with balls. However, L's 3 and 4 provided appropriate answers to the teachers' question. This indicates that these two learners were able to add information to the text to provide explanations to why dogs liked playing with balls.

L3	Yes, because dogs love chasing balls
L4	Yes, because a dog likes to play with a ball

A possible problem to Ls' 1, 2 and 5's incorrect answers may be that these learners were not familiar with dogs playing with balls. This could be either a cultural issue or a lack of social background knowledge. In an interview, T1 confirmed the cultural differences between the texts and the learner's background by stating that:

Our learners struggle to make sense and to connect what they read in the story with the real life.

The researcher observed that the five learners struggled to refer to their background knowledge and connect it with specific texts. Vygotsky (1978: 36) believes that background knowledge is important and states that “children think by recalling something from the past”. Pardo (2004: 273) expands on this issue by stating that “… for learners to become competent and independent, teachers should … build background knowledge, teach vocabulary meaning, motivate learners and engage them in personal responses to the text”. More recently, McKinney (2017:7) explains that “… to develop understanding one should relate the text to what is already known”. Understanding contextual factors from home and school has an interactive consequence on learner development of higher-order cognition (Palane & Howie, 2016). This implies that the background knowledge learners bring to texts is an important aspect in their cognitive understanding.

4.2.2.4. Evaluate and examine content, language and textual elements

Four of the five learners experienced difficulties evaluating and examining content, language and textual elements as showed in Figure 4.1.De Silva (2010) asserts that this skill includes the ability to analyse and synthesize what one has read and communicate its meaning to others. Mullis and Martin (2013) confirm that when evaluating and examining a text, one should not focus on constructing meaning but to critically examine the text itself. This critical thinking seems to have been difficult for these Grade 3 learners. This is confirmed by the way in which four learners responded to the pre-test written below. The comprehension passage title was ‘I’ am going to a wedding’

(Grade 2 passage):

Teacher	What was the best part of this story?
L1	The best part of the story is Bongi was very silly
L2	The doctor asked Bongi what happened to you
L4	When doctor put injection to Bongi
L5	Bongi was very silly

L3 offered the correct answer showing he understood the author’s message:

L3	The best part of the story was Dumi got married.

Learners 1, 2, 4 and 5 provided incorrect answers showing that they were unable to assess what could have been the **best** part of this particular story. This indicates that these learners lacked the ability to identify the author's message, summarise the text and link to their real lives.

To confirm that our learners lack the skill of being able to critique a written text, T1 mentioned in her interview:

> *Today's education does not allow our learners to be critical thinkers. At Grade 3 level when analysing the text our learners struggle to find the author's message, summarize the text and to blend what they read in the story with their real life. Even the tests FAT (Formal Assessment Task) that we receive from the Department are not critical enough to make our learners to think beyond what they are reading.*

Ntshuntshe (2011) states that to critique a text, one should provide an understanding of the text, what the text intends to do with the community, and how social affairs relate to the text. When reading the text of the Rabbit and Mole with her five Grade 3 learners, the researcher observed that four learners struggled to connect the text to what was happening in their community. They were unable to use their mental imagining of the text and relate the content to their lives. For example, in this text about bullying, which is a community and social ill, the learners responded to the question asked:

Teacher	Was this a happy or sad story – can you explain?
L1	Was happy
L2	The story is very good, I am very happy for the story
L4	Yes, because I love this story
L5	Yes, I love the story

L's 1, 2, 4 and 5 did not connect the moral of the story to their own lives. However, Learner 3 answered correctly by stating: "No, because if anyone bulling me I will be sad". Here Learner 3 was able to show that he understood the text, and how the content of the text (bullying) would make him feel.

Summary

This section highlights the range of challenges experienced by the five learners when engaging with the four comprehension skills during their assessment in the pre-test. The findings emphasised that four of the five learners experienced challenges because they experienced did not fully understand the vocabulary in their second language. For a learner to read with understanding, there must be knowledge of vocabulary. As a result, they struggled to find key words and relevant information in the text. It was only L3 who could answer the higher-order thinking comprehension questions and could provide appropriate feedback.

Four of the five learners experienced particular challenges in the three higher-order comprehension questions because these Grade 3 learners did not have the following knowledge and skills. They found it difficult to integrate their general knowledge with the information from the texts. They could not link the information in the text with their own personal experiences. There was a lack of social and community background knowledge. They could not identify the author's message, summarise the text and link to their real lives. They were unable to use their mental imaginings of the texts. These results correlate with the WCED Systemic Results of 2017 where the Grade 3 isiXhosa Home Language results were 47.9%.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 2

How did the IP focussing on comprehension encourage the social, cognitive and language development of the Grade 3 learners?

The NDoBE aims to produce literate, independent and multi-skilled learners, by promoting interactive and learner centred teaching approaches (Nomlomo: 2010). It was for this reason that the researcher developed an IP, consisting of nine comprehension strategies: Readers theatre, My Turn Your Turn, Vocabulary matching, Anticipation guides, Cloze procedure, Think aloud, Feature matrix, Magic square and Higher-order questions. These strategies were specifically designed to develop the social interactions between the learners, the cognitive critical understanding of both lower and higher-order comprehension skills, and to develop language skills of the five learners involved in this research study. These learners were active participants through reading, writing, discussing and role playing the various texts of fiction and

non-fiction texts. Stephens (2016) states that positive social interaction among learners is the key to social, cognitive and language development.

Sub-question

4.3.1. How did the IP focussing on comprehension encourage the social development of the Grade 3 learners?

Wenger (2011) regards social development as an important social event which interacts between social skills and personal experiences. More recently, Kapucu (2018) posits that learning is an on-going social action that happens through interactions with other individuals. To encourage the social development of the five learners, the teacher used the various reading strategies (Shared Reading skills, Group Guided Reading skills, paired and independent reading skills) as set out in the CAPS (NDoBE, 2011:12-15) document. In this way the researcher was the more knowledgeable other. The researcher designed the IP to develop her learners' social interaction skills within a Community of Practice (CoP), as described by Wenger (2004).

To analyse the findings deductively, the researcher used Wenger's (2004) theory of CoP as explained in Chapter 2. It is a group of people who want to achieve a common objective by sharing ideas and ways to solve problems.
Wenger's social theory of learning uses the following four components: learning as -

4.3.1.1 doing (practice);
4.3.1.2 belonging (community);
4.3.1.3 becoming (identity); and
4.3.1.4 experience (meaning).

These four components of the social theory of learning highlight the development of learning based on the level of social participation. They are highlighted in this research project because the five participants were involved in a community. Social theory helped to shed light on how they interpreted the world around them.

4.3.1.1. Learning as doing (practice)

Wenger (2009: 211) defines 'learning as doing' as a way of taking part in the CoP by sharing social perspectives that can sustain the engagement while in the practice. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (2011:5) aims to produce learners who are able to identify and solve problems, and make decisions using critical and creative thinking while participating in a group. The following verbatim quotations from the five learners outline how they engaged socially within their CoP while they were involved and completing the comprehension strategies.

> ***L1**:*
> *My partner and I we got everything correctly when we were doing Magic Square. We tried to translate the meanings into isiXhosa that's why we got everything correctly. (Week six)*
>
> ***L2**:*
> *I loved Readers' Theatre because it made us friends even though when we started this IP we were not friends we were just classmates. During break times and after school we would role play any story we learnt in class for other learners so we became close. (Week nine)*
>
> ***L3**:*
> *When we were acting the story of 'The Lion and the Mouse' we were all excited we all participated because we all knew this story so it was wonderful to finally role play it. (Week four)*
>
> ***L4**:*
> *At first I was shy but now I am able speak because my friends and I we have been practicing even after school so they helped me to feel free. (Week five)*
>
> ***L5**:*
> *Today's lesson was fun we all enjoyed it because we were all taking part in the discussion about the types of animals that are in the cat and horse family. (Week eight)*

The narratives from these direct quotations indicate that these five learners acquired new knowledge while they were socially participating in the comprehension activities.

They were all engaged in 'learning as doing', in a variety of forms such as: translating for each other so they could understand the text, making friends, participating in role playing in their own time during breaks and after school. They were participating in discussions and attempting to solve the literacy problems. They were constructing new knowledge and beginning to enjoy their learning (… we became close …, … we were excited…). Consalvo, Schallert and Elias (2015) explain 'learning as doing' as a form of knowledge, methods, resources, stories and information which members share and develop together. Smith, Hayes and Shea (2017) state that participants in CoPs generate knowledge: they practise interacting, sharing information, experiences, understanding and help one another solve literacy problems.

4.3.1.2. Learning as belonging (community)

Wenger (2009: 211) defines 'learning as belonging in a community' as an important skill: social structures are discussed in the community. The South African CAPS document (2011:5) aims to produce learners who are able to work effectively as individuals and with others as members of a team. The data presented below show how the CAPS documents aims were being developed when these five learners were doing Readers' Theatre in their community that made them feel they 'belonged' in this community.

> ***L1****:*
> *I was happy when my teacher told us to read our lines in pairs. L4 helped me because she knew the story of The Lion and the Mouse better than me. (Week four)*
>
> ***L1****:*
> *Today I was able to explain in English because my friends and I have been practicing to speak English after school and I feel good that I am able to take part in the group. (Week seven)*
>
> ***L2****:*
> *When we started acting I was not enjoying it but at the end I felt in love with it, because my friends helped me to become better in memorising my lines. (Week four)*
>
> ***L2****:*
> *Today during Anticipation Guide I was not sure whether to agree or disagree I did not*

understand L5 explained the statement to me and I gave the correct answer. (Week five)

***L2**:*
My group mates and I we communicate well with respect because my teacher always say we are all here to learn so there is no right or wrong answer we should all respect what the other person says. (Week six)

***L3**:*
I get on well with the other four learners. But I still have to get used to them as they are not my friends. (Week two)

***L3**:*
Today L2 was my partner and we worked very well because we were the first to finish and we managed to get what was so magic about the Magic Square activity. (Week three)

***L3**:*
I am always looking forward to these lessons because the activities are very nice and interesting I learn a lot from others. (Week seven)

***L3**:*
I enjoyed working with the other four learners. They make me laugh with their comments when we were comparing the wild and domestic animals in the Feature Matrix activity. (Week eight)

***L4**:*
I feel happy when I am with these four learners I always look forward for Mondays and Wednesday after school. (Week six)

***L5**:*
I work well when I work with L1 because I think we understand each other. We sit in the same group in class and we stay in the same street as well. Sometimes after school we show our parents what we did in this class. (Week four)

Wenger (2004: 15) defines 'learning as belonging in a community' as a group of people with a common role to achieve. These five learners learnt to: help each other, practised

English together, memorised their lines together, explained difficult concepts to each other, communicated with respect, laughed together, understood each other and showed their parents what work they were doing at school. This new learning was taken into the community by the learners, living in the same streets and showing their parents what they had done at school. By doing this, they developed socially and their level of comprehension understanding developed as is evident in post-test scores on page 69.

4.3.1.3. Learning as becoming (identity)

Wenger (2009: 211) argues that 'learning as becoming' occurs when one acquires new knowledge at the same time as we get the sense of who we are and our identities change. These direct quotations show how the five learners' identity changed and how they managed to acquire new knowledge while they were doing the comprehension activities.

> ***L1****:*
> *Today my acting skills were better than before I feel happy because my group mates showed me how I should role play the character of the Farmer in the story. This character needed a strong person like L3 but I managed to play it with the help of my friends I was not sure if I was going to be able to act. (Week nine)*

> ***L2****:*
> *At first I felt nervous and embarrassed to speak because I had to speak English in front of my classmates. They seemed like they knew what they had to say and I did not understand what we were supposed to say and do but as we were discussing I managed to learn to speak with confidence. (Week two)*

> ***L2****:*
> *At home I asked my mom to speak English with me because I wanted to participate during group discussions. (Week three)*

> ***L2****:*
> *I enjoy all these activities because I learn new things that I did not know before and now I am able to speak with the confidence because we have been practicing. (Week seven)*

***L3**:*

Through the story plays with my group I have learned to listen to others, be kind to them and respect their views. (Week nine)

***L4**:*

Working with these four learners has changed my confidence. I am now able to disagree with someone else's answer as my teacher told us that as long we have a reason to disagree. (Week nine)

L5

At first I was so shy to take part in the group I was not participating I thought my friends will judge me, but now I am also give my own views and suggestions in the group. (Week five)

The above direct quotations highlight how these five learners' identities changed over the period of eight weeks during the IP. These five learners became aware of developing their identities within this CoP, knowing their challenges "I was not sure if I was going to be able to act" as well as being comfortable to improve their abilities and learning new skills such as "… listening to others, being kind, respecting others points of view, not being shy and speaking with confidence" while participating in this CoP. Smith et al. (2017: 213) state that "Learning transforms who we are and what we can do. It is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but a process of becoming – to become a certain person".

4.3.1.4. Learning as experience (meaning)

Wenger (2009: 211) states that 'learning as experience' is a way of talking about our changing ability individually and in a group, to experience our life and the world as meaningful. The current CAPS document (2011:4) equips learners who are meaningful participants in public and train their intellectual abilities with the knowledge, skills and values essential for their self-achievement. The following data represent how these five learners made meaning by drawing upon their own experiences of the world.

***L1**:*

Today we worked together as team even though it was my first time to role play a story. The support I received from my group made me love acting. (Week five)

***L1**:*

In my group today I was the first to pick the disagree/agree card. I was able to explain my choice and they all agreed with me. I knew the answer because we have learned about farm animals in Life Skills. This has made me feel good. (Week eight)

***L2**:*

Today's lesson in Anticipation Guide was fun and easy because we talked about the animals that we all knew and we have been doing this activity so now it became so easy. (Week eight)

***L3**:*

I feel good about working with the rest of the group because we share ideas and they always ask me to explain to them so that's make me feel excited about these lessons. (Week five)

***L3**:*

L1 and me, we didn't understand some of the meanings when we were doing the Vocabulary Matching. He suggested that we try to translate the meaning into isiXhosa so that we would understand and it worked because we were the only ones who got everything correct at the end. (Week six)

***L4**:*

Today I was shy and scared because I thought you were going to ask us to read and I can't read like the other children - they read well. (Week two)

***L5**:*

Through these activities I managed to know that there are different kinds of animals like animals from sea, wild, farm and domestic animals. Not that I didn't know about these animals but now I can categorise all the animals. (Week nine)

These five learners drew upon their prior knowledge to solve the literacy problems in their IP. Smith et al. (2017) state that meaning is a way of talking about our ability to experience the world as meaningful. These learners were directly engaged in the activities, conversations and reflections and made new meaning of what they were learning about. Various statements show their individual and group attempts to understand their lives and the world as meaningful: "… worked together as a team …. the support I received … made me love acting, … I was able to explain my choice and they all agreed with me, … the lesson was fun and easy because we talked … so now

it became so easy, we share ideas … make me feel excited about these lessons, … but now I can categorise all the animals"..

Summary

The data presented show the social development of the five learners throughout the duration of the IP. The data from the oral reflections of the learners have been deductively analysed using both the CoP Framework and Wenger's (2005:5) four components of the Social Theory of Learning. This framework was appropriate, as the IP promoted group work, participation and connections between learners to share ideas and learn from each other. This was relevant as these five learners acquired new knowledge while they were socially participating and being fully engaged in 'learning as doing'. They were able to work as individuals and with others as members of a team while they were 'learning as belonging'. These learners became aware of developing their identities since they were able to identify their strengths and challenges while they were involved in the IP. The next theme discusses the cognitive development of the five learners using the six levels of Blooms Taxonomy theory.

Sub-question

4.3.2. How did the IP focusing on developing comprehension skills encourage the cognitive development of the Grade 3 learners?

This part of the study refers to the six domains of cognitive development using Bloom's Taxonomy. Forehand (2011) understands Blooms Taxonomy as a model of categorising thinking according to six cognitive levels. The lowest three levels are remembering, understanding and applying. The highest three levels are analysing, evaluating and creating. This study used these six domains to appraise the cognitive levels of the five learners when they were involved in the IP.

Each week the IP introduced the five learners to different comprehension strategies. One may have expected that the learners developed from lower-order thinking to higher-order thinking throughout the duration of the IP. However, this was not the case. It was the nature of the comprehension strategies that demanded different levels of thinking as described by Blooms Taxonomy. This is explained in Chapter 2 on page 20.

Bloom's Taxonomy relies upon the following cognitive levels and in this study they have been linked to particular comprehension strategies used throughout the IP. As can be seen from Table 4.1 the five learners' cognitive development did not systematically and incrementally progress during the IP. The different activities encouraged both a lower- or higher-order and more complex thinking skill. The different activities challenged the learners' different creative and critical thinking skills. There were no activities that encouraged "rote and uncritical learning of given truth (NDoBE, 2011:4).

Table: 4.2 Cognitive levels, cognitive skills and comprehension strategies during the IP

Cognitive level	Cognitive skill	Comprehension Strategy	Week during which this strategy was completed
Level 1	Remembering	Anticipation Guide	Week four
Level 2	Understanding	Feature Matrix	Week two
Level 3	Applying	Reader's Theatre	Week nine
Level 4	Analysing	Think Aloud	Week seven
Level 5	Evaluating	Anticipation Guide	Week eight
Level 6	Creating	Think Aloud	Week seven

4.3.2.1. Cognitive level 1 (Remembering)

Anderson and Krathwohl (2001: 67) state that "remembering is about retrieving, recognising and recalling relevant knowledge from short-term memory to long-term memory". The following data shows how these five learners performed in this cognitive level 1 while they were verbally engaged in completing an Anticipation Guide activity (the text is shown in Appendix 11 title: 'We go deep-sea diving') during Week eight. The students read the passage and then verbally discussed their opinions of each sentence by providing evidence of whether they agreed or disagreed. These were the learners' responses to this one statement:

Teacher: Dogs guard our houses.

L2: Agree, because it says so in the text.

L4: Agree, because when we were reading the text it says pets like dogs guard our houses.

The responses from L's 2 and 4 show that these two learners used their short-term memory to answer this question. They remembered that this phrase was written in the text that 'dogs guard our houses'. In their responses, they used phrases such as: ... "in the text it says". This indicates that these learners were remembering facts from the text. Nayef, Yaacob and Ismail (2013) claim that remembering is the ability of learners to recall or remember what was learned.

4.3.2.2. Cognitive level 2 (Understanding)

Anderson and Krathwohl (2001: 67) state that understanding means to "construct meaning from oral, written graphic messages through interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarising, inferring, comparing and explaining". Table 4.3 shows how these five learners understood the farm animals by comparing, explaining and matching similar features of the various animals when they were doing the Feature Matrix in Week two (the text is shown in Appendix 12 title: Farm animals). The teacher's instruction was for the learners to "Compare the following farm animals in the text."

Table: 4.3 The five learners' responses to the Feature Matrix

Farm animals	Chicken	Cow	Pig
What do they eat?			
L1 answered	samp	grass	food
L2 answered	maize	grass	dirty food
L3 answered	worms and corn	grass	left overs
L4 answered	samp	grass	food
L5 answered	maize	grass	dirty food
What can they produce from their bodies?			
L1 answered	eggs	meat	meat
L2 answered	eggs	milk	meat
L3 answered	eggs and meat	meat and milk	meat
L4 answered	eggs	milk	meat
L5 answered	eggs	milk	meat
What are their features? How do they look?			
L1 answered	chicken is small	cow is big	pig is pink
L2 answered	chicken is like a bird	cow have four legs	pig have a big nose
L3 answered	they have feathers	they have four legs and horns	they have big ears and their skin is smooth
L4 answered	they have two legs and wings	their skin is brown	pink
L5 answered	is small	is big and it walks slow	it have big nose

These five learners were able to compare what these animals ate, produced from their bodies and explained their features. This shows that these learners understood that these farm animals were a help to humans as they produced food for them. Nayef et al. (2013) state that understanding is the ability to explain ideas or concepts. They were able to classify the different kinds of food they ate even though they were all farm animals. All five learners explained this information by remembering the information from the text and by using both their short- and long-term memory of the text and of the visuals. They remembered the information they read in the text, exploited their prior knowledge and wrote their own words to summarise what was written in the text.

Table 4.4 shows the words the five learners used to compare to the words in the text. Tarlinton (2003) explains that understanding is the ability to grasp the meaning of information by interpreting and translating what has been learned.

Table: 4.4 The learners used their own words to describe the animal characteristics

Learner	Word/s used in the text	The learners' words in the written response
Learner 1	Chickens eat worms, insects, seeds, fruit and vegetables.	samp
Learner 2		maize and vegetables
Learner 3		worms and corns
Learner 4		samp and worms
Learner 5		maize

Table 4.4 indicates that four of the five learners interpreted the information in the text by recalling their prior background knowledge of what chickens eat. It was written in the text that chickens eat worms, insects, seeds, fruit and vegetables but Ls 1, and 5 stated that chickens eat samp and maize. Ls 2, 3 and 4 said chickens eat worms and vegetables which were the exact words used in the text and they added corns, maize and samp using their prior knowledge.

4.3.2.3. Cognitive level 3 (Applying)

Nayef et al. (2013) postulates that applying is the ability to be able to use the information in a different context from the one that was learned. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001: 67) state that applying means to "… carry out or use a procedure through performing or implementing". The reflections below, which happened in Week nine, highlight how these five learners transferred and adapted the information learned in the text to a different context where they implemented it by role playing in the Reader's Theatre (Appendix 13 is the original text used for the Reader's Theatre title: The lizard and tortoise.

> ***L1****:*
> *In the play I played the role of the farmer and I had to be cruel just like he is in the story I had to change my voice to be strong just like he does when he was talking to the lizard and tortoise.*

***L2**:*

I played the role of a lizard and I was the main character so I had to talk a lot more than others. I did not only use the exact words in the text I add my words to show my own understanding of the story and so that the story can make sense.

***L3**:*

I didn't have the talking role I was the cave and tree, I had to make sure that everyone follow the rules we created. I had to make sure everything look real.

***L4**:*

I played the role of a tortoise. When we were reading the story my teacher told us we must learn what kind of a character we are playing and act like them. I had to make sure that everyone watching would feel sorry for me just like I felt sorry for tortoise.

***L5**:*

I played the role of other animals and it was not difficult. I just had to change from this animal to another by show how they behave.

These five learners dew upon their prior lived knowledge of the story to make the Role Play sound as authentic as possible. As the results indicate, they understood the content as well as the emotions linked to the story and they knew how to play the different characters. Nayef et al. (2013) contend that the learning outcomes of application involve a higher level of understanding of what was learned. These five participants' blended and integrated the information gained while reading the text to make a more meaningful performance.

4.3.2.4. Cognitive level 4 (Analysing)

Anderson and Krathwohl (2001: 67) state that to analyse is to "break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant and irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, find coherence and deconstruct (e.g., for bias or point of view)". Nayef et al. (2013) state that analysing is the ability to break learned information into parts to understand taught information. The following data show how the five learners analysed a picture and the title by predicting what the text was going to be about when they were doing the Think Aloud strategy in Week seven (the text is shown in Appendix 14 title: We go on a boat).

Teacher asked: "I wonder what this story is about" Look at the picture and the title then write what you think the story is about.

***L1**:*
I think the sharks that are swimming next to the boat will jump to the boat because it is open. The children will all run inside the boat and they will never want to go on a boat again.

***L2**:*
I think the children are going to Robben Island to see dolphins and sea seals. They all look excited because it is their first time to go to Robben Island.

***L3**:*
I think the school children are going on a trip to Robben Island, because I see Table Mountain behind the boat.

***L4**:*
I think the boat will hit a rock and sink before they arrive at Robben Island. The dolphins will come and save them and they are wearing life jackets they will not sink until life saver come to save them.

***L5**:*
I think the children are going on a school trip to see sea animals. They look happy and excited because it is their first time to go on a boat.

The five learners tried to find out how the title and the picture related to the story by predicting using the clues given by the teacher. Their predictions showed coherence as they talked about ... Robben Island, ...school trip, ... sea animals, ... boat. They focused on interpreting what was happening in the picture and linked that with the title. Roozkhoon and Samani (2013) state that prediction activities can provide prior knowledge for readers in order to assist them in building the understanding of a text. This implies that activating what learners know helps them to make predictions about what will happen or what will come next in a text.

4.3.2.5. Cognitive level 5 (Evaluating)

Anderson and Krathwohl (2001: 67) state that evaluating is all about "making judgements based on criteria and standards through checking critiquing". Nayef et al. (2013) define evaluation as the ability to justify an opinion or decision. The five learners showed this cognitive level 5 skill of evaluating when they were justifying during the Anticipation Guide strategy in Week eight. The following data highlight how the five learners' explained their opinions on the statement given by the teacher.

Teacher: Sea animals should be kept in an Aquarium.

***L1**:*
Disagree, because they also need to be with their families in the ocean.

***L2**:*
Disagree, because they need to be free when they are in the aquarium they are not free they are always in the glass.

***L3**:*
Agree, so that we can be able to see them and learn about them.

***L4**:*
Agree, because we need to know how they look because we won't be able to go to sea and look at them.

***L5**:*
Disagree, because in the ocean they can eat whatever they want to eat but at the Aquarium they eat what they are given.

The data above indicate that all five learners were able to justify their answers as they all explained and gave well thought through reasons as to why they agreed or disagreed with the statement queried by the teacher. This specifies one of the highest cognitive levels as they were able to critique the statement using their thoughts, critical thinking and background knowledge; they were able to provide their own opinions. Nxumalo (2016) states that the level of understanding in this cognitive level is measured by the learners' ability to translate meaning of a text to their own experiences. Adams, Pegg and Case (2015) state that Anticipation Guides support

learners in developing skills in justifying findings and supporting ideas with evidence. This shows that when these five learners responded to this activity they made decisions based on in-depth reflection since they thought critically before they gave the correct answers and constructed the argument by giving their own opinions.

4.3.2.6. Cognitive level 6 (Creating)

Anderson and Krathwohl (2001: 67) define creating as "a combination of elements to form a coherent whole, reorganizing elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, construct, produce for a specific purpose". Nayef et al. (2013) state that creating is the ability to create new ideas and information using what was previously learned. This cognitive level will be analysed using the Think Aloud strategy in Week seven (the text is shown in Appendix 15 title: We go on a boat). This analysis shows how these five learners created new ideas and information using what was learned in the text.

Teacher reading the text: Tim feels sick. Poor Tim! He is seasick but he will feel fine when we are on land again.

Think aloud: I think sea makes people sick. Have you ever been sick? Is itnice to be sick? Why?

> ***L1****: Yes I have been sick when I was doing Grade 1. I even slept in hospital. It is not nice because I was in pains I had headache and I had to repeat Grade 1 because I was in hospital for a long time.*

> ***L3****: I have never been sick before but my mother has been feeling sick since last month she was taken by the ambulance two times and I can see she is in pain.*

Think aloud: I think people feel sick when they travel by boat. Have you ever felt sick traveling by any transport?

> ***L5****: A bus is always making me feel sick. I vomit when I travel with my mother by the bus to the Eastern Cape.*

Teacher reading the text: On the way we see a whale floating past. We see some dolphins playing together. We hope that we don't see a shark.

Think aloud: I wonder who you play together with. Can you tell us who do you play well with and why?

> ***L2****: I play well with Migcobo and Mthuthuzeli because they do not laugh or make fun of me to other learners and they don't bully me like Siphamandla.*
>
> ***L4****: I play well with Mbali because she is my friend since Grade R when we started here at school. We play together and share lunch if I do have or she not carrying her lunch.*

These five learners were able to create new information integrating the ideas from the text with their own experiences. They managed to verbalize their own thoughts because they were thinking aloud. Wilson and Smetana (2011) state that when learners use the Think Aloud strategy, they share their thinking progressions: they create questions and responses to ensure a higher level of understanding of the text. This indicates that these learners were able to create mental images of the information in the text and integrate it into their own lived experiences.

Summary

This theme of Animals and the reading strategies helped the five learners to articulate and deepen their understanding of the texts at the same time as encouraging them to think creatively and critically. The examples shown are indications of the way the teacher mediated and scaffolded the comprehension strategies to probe and explore the six levels of cognitive development. The comprehension strategies helped the five learners to develop their memory. They were able to remember relevant information in the text, their understanding of the text. They applied their prior knowledge to the text and analysed as they predicted. While doing the comprehension strategies, they were able to evaluate because they were able to justify their opinions and decisions. They created new ideas and information using what was previously learned in the previous texts. The following theme explains the language development of the five learners while they were involved in the IP.

Sub-question

4.3.3. How did the IP focusing on comprehension encourage the language development of the Grade 3 learners?

The English First Additional Language Curriculum in the CAPS document (NDoBE, 2011) (Grades 1 -3) states that language is a tool that needs to be understood and communicated. It is a cultural and imaginative means normally shared among people to make better sense of the world they live in. This section uses the language skill Listening and Speaking in the First Additional Language Curriculum (Grades 1 -3) to analyse the language development of the five learners.

4.3.3.1. Listening and Speaking

English First Additional Language Curriculum (Grades R-3) states that Listening and Speaking' are essential skills for learning in all subjects taught in the Foundation Phase. English Home language (Grade R-3) (2011) corroborates that learners develop their listening and speaking in language and in other subjects as well. Through effective Listening and Speaking, learners collect and create information, construct knowledge, solve problems, and express ideas and opinions (NDoBE, 2011:9). Critical listening skills enable learners to recognise values in the texts and to challenge biased and manipulative language (NDoBE, 2011:9). The CAPS document (NDoBE, 2011) English First Additional Language curriculum (Grades R-3) states that Listening and Speaking skills are used to interact and negotiate meaning by discussing and using short oral presentations (NDoBE, 2011:9). Elamin, Ahmed and Osman (2018) explain that speaking is a language skill that is developed in the early years of life. This skill is produced by listening to older people. Learners begin to practise speaking with sounds, letters, words and finally sentences.

The following data highlight how the listening and speaking skills of the five learners developed week-by-week while they were doing the nine comprehension strategies during the IP. This data used the My Turn Your Turn strategy to show how these learners Listening and Speaking skills developed in Week three, six and nine (the text is shown in Appendix 16 title: " How dogs and people became friends", Appendix 17 title: "Armah goes to market" and Appendix 18 title: "How Zebras got their stripes".

Table: 4.5 The learners' predictions to texts in Weeks three, six and nine

Weeks	Teacher	Learners
	My Turn (prediction)	Your Turn
3	I predict that animals will not survive the bad and cold weather	L1: I predict that they stay home L2: I predict that they die because there was a heavy rains L3: I predict that all the animals will die because it was very cold only the dogs will survive and stay with people in their homes L4: I predict that the people will build the animals houses L5: I predict that they get sick
6	I predict that Armah will sell the cow for less price as he and his mother are poor	L1: I predict that the cow will be sold, Armah and his mother will never be poor again they will be rich L2: I predict that the cow will die because in the picture the cow thin, maybe it will die before he sell it L3: I predict that Armah will sell the cow for less price as he is not a good farmer and they are poor so they need money to buy food L4: I predict that some people will rob Armah because he is not a good farmer L5: I predict that he lost the cow because he is not a good farmer
9	I predict that Zebra got her stripes from the baboon as he was making the fire next to the waterhole	L1: I predict that baboon helped the zebra to get the stripes because they wanted zebra to look beautiful L2: I predict that maybe the baboon will burn he zebra and the zebra will turn black in the stripes she burned in L3: I predict that they will fight over the fire and the zebra will end up burning into black and white stripes L4: I think the baboon was jealous of the zebra's colour and decided to burn him L5: I predict that the zebra will burn hard and get to the waterhole when she comes back she will be black and white

Discussion of Table 4.5

In Week three, the learners' responses to the My Turn Your Turn strategy showed that the five learners had listened to the text and responded appropriately quoting from what was read in the text and providing their own predictions and opinions. Elamin et al. (2018) state that speaking is a productive skill which cannot be learned separately from listening. These five learners' responses indicated that for them to be able to respond to the prediction, they were listening to the paragraph read by the teacher. Only L2 and L3 created new information during their predictions by providing their own reasons.

They expressed effectively that they were listening to the text being read, as they created their own information with content taken from their own real-life situations. Gilakjnai and Ahmadi (2011) agree that listening comprehension is an active development that focus on forming meaning from what is said and associate what is heard with existing knowledge. They state that in learning process listening plays an essential role as it contains an active development of constructing meaning from oral message. To understand and get meaning of what you are hearing one must pay attention by listening.

In Week six, the sentence before the prediction stated that Armah was not a good farmer. It is interesting to note that L3, 4 and 5 listened to that sentence being read by the teacher and brought that content into their predictions. At the same time, they elaborated by solving the problem by creating more information saying: L3 – '… will sell the cow for less price', L4 – '… people will rob Armah', and L5 – '… Armah will lose the cow'. This indicates that their speaking ability was developing as they were able to elaborate and include more information from their thinking abilities.

By the responses from all five learners in Week nine, it is evident that they all listened to the paragraph which was read by the teacher. L1 and L2 remembered information from the paragraph to solve the problem of how Zebra got his stripes. L's 3 and 4 provided new information stating: '… they will fight' (L3) '… the baboon was jealous of Zebra's colour' (L4). L5 used the information in the paragraph to summarise and suggested a solution to the problem '…when she comes back she will be black and white'.

From these examples, there is evidence that the five learners Listening and Speaking skills developed by differing degrees, during the IP. L3 was the one learner who developed the most: he listened to the predictions and in all three weeks, and he constructed and contributed additional information. L4 and L5 developed more confidence over the weeks by providing more detailed information. Although L1 and L2 developed the least, their responses showed that they listened to the story by providing their own opinions of the predictions each week. For all five learners, there is evidence that in Week nine their use of grammatical complexity increased and improved. By this week they were speaking more than they did in Week three and it showed that they

listened to the teacher's predictions and remembered them, and used them to answer the question posed to them by the teacher. In this week they were providing more constructive information as their prediction.

Summary

This theme revealed Listening and Speaking are the most essential language skills across the curriculum as one cannot speak without listening to what is being said. These learners' second language, English, developed week-by-week as they learnt to listen to the texts being read and discussed in English. They responded by speaking in English in full sentences, they were able to willingly provide their own opinions and explain their answers. During this IP both these learners' Listening and Speaking skills developed.

4.4 RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What were the learners' post-test results of the comprehension passages?

This part of the research study presents the findings collected from the post-tests conducted in Week ten of the IP. The researcher used the same post-tests used in the pre-test in an attempt to keep the variables as similar as possible. The post-test scores of the four comprehension questions are presented in Figure 4.4.

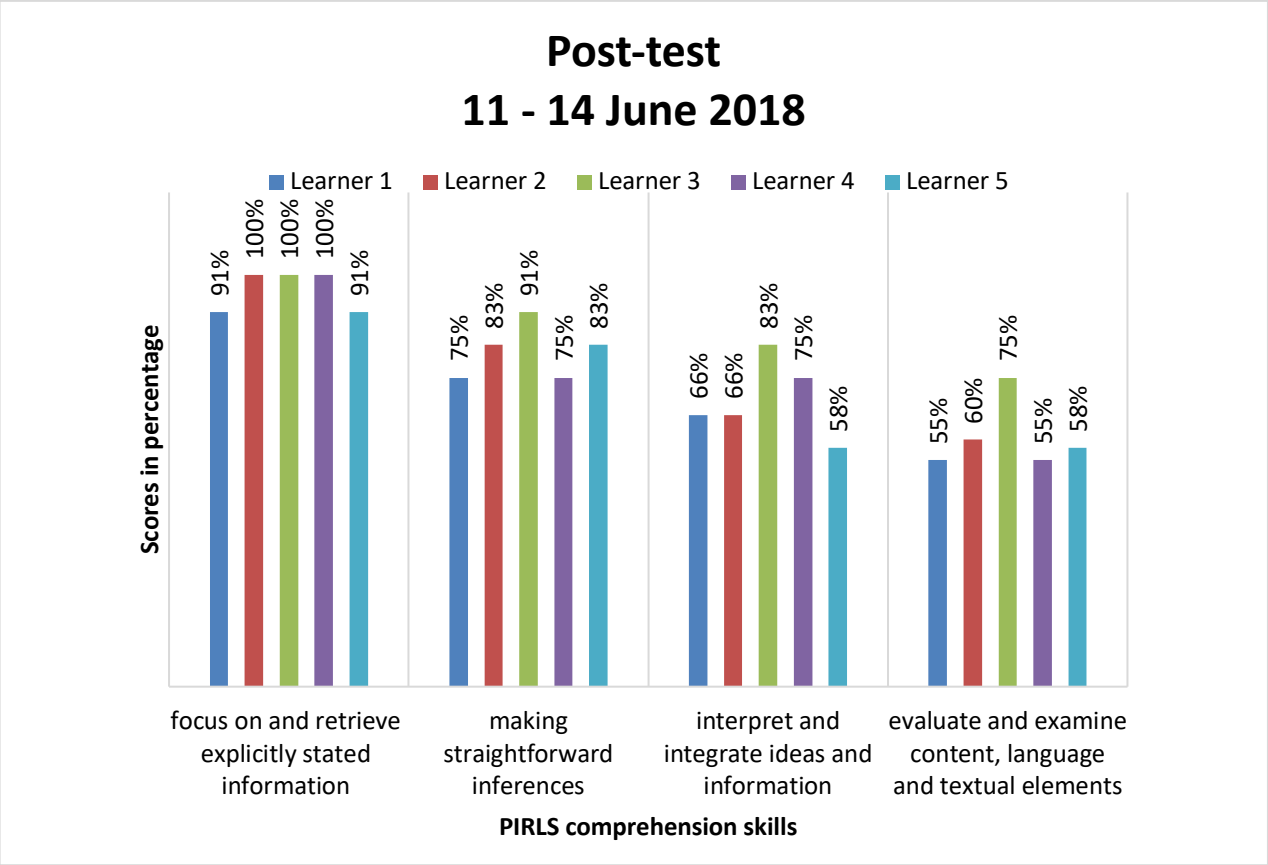

Figure 4.2 Post-test scores of the five Grade 3 learners

By the end of the IP, the understandings of the four comprehension skills showed an improvement. After eight weeks of participation in the IP and the nine comprehension strategies the five learners showed an improvement in their post-test scores when compared to the scores shown in the pre-tests. This means that the IP produced positive effects on the understandings of the four comprehension skills.

Figure 4.2 reveals that all five learners could focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information with a good amount of understanding of (91% - 100%). Comparing these results with the pre-test results shows a slight difference as before all five learners in the pre-test could understand this skill with the percentages between (75% - 100%). In the post-tests for making straightforward inferences, all five learners succeeded in improving their understanding and percentages were (75% - 91%). All five learners showed a substantial improvement with the two highest-ordered cognitive thinking skills. For the post-tests for interpret and integrate ideas and information the learners scored between (58% - 83%). The evaluate and examine content, language and textual element post-test scores were between (55% - 75%) whereas in pre-test the lowest score was 16% and the highest score was 41%.

Summary of the post-test discussion

These post-tests revealed the importance of the IP in developing the learners' understanding of the four comprehension skills using mediation and scaffolding in the Zone of Proximal Development while concurrently developing the cognitive, social and language skills. The ZPD is the area of exploration for which learners are cognitively prepared, but for them to be able to work independently they require help and social interaction (Dolya, 2010).

The results show that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results. However, although these results are pleasing these five learners need to continue with these activities and learn to transfer these skills to other subject areas in order to succeed in their overall education development.

Sub-question

4.4.1. What are the differences between each learners' pre and post-test results?

Figure 4.5 indicates how much each of the five learners improved when they were being tested after the eight week IP. The following Figures 4.6 - 4.10 show the pre-test results, the post-test results and the improvement of each learner for each of the four comprehension skills.

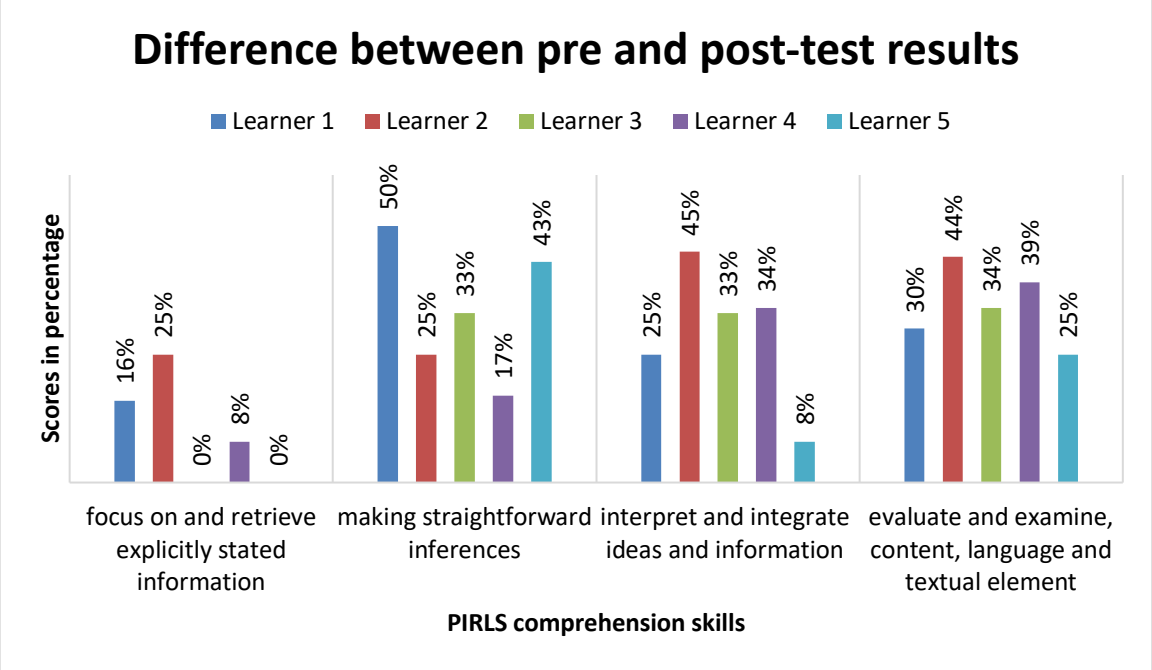

Figure 4.3 Difference between pre and post-test results of the five Grade 3 learners.

Each learner will be discussed separately.

4.4.1.1. A discussion of Learner 1's pre- and post-test results

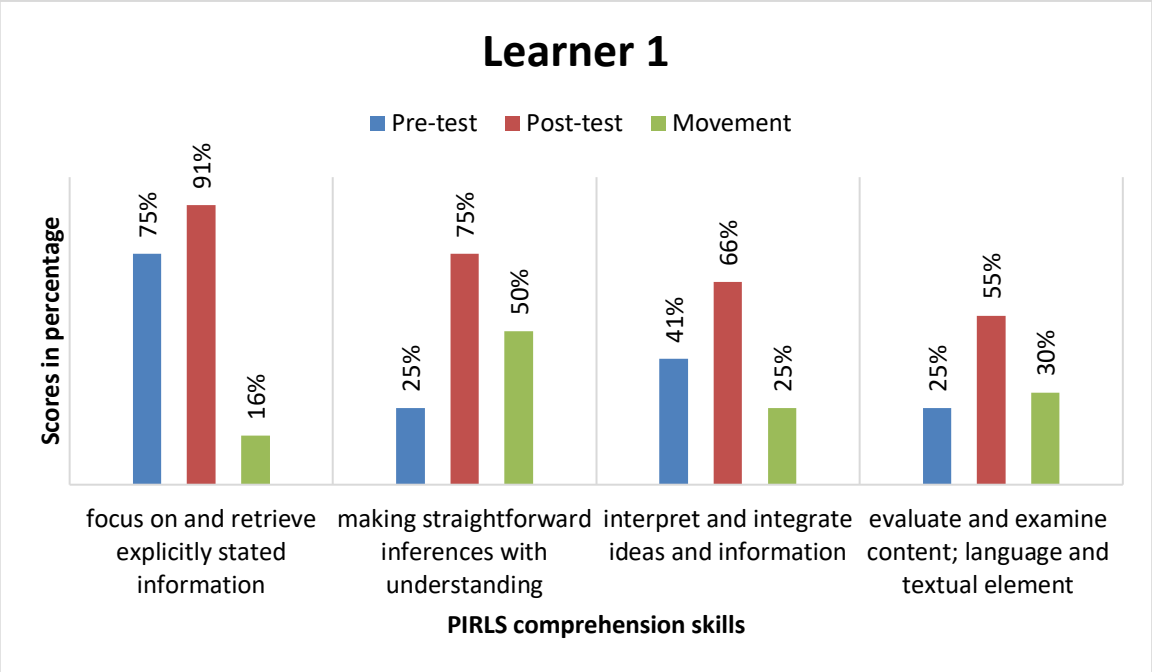

Figure 4.4 Learner 1's results

For Learner 1, there was not much of an improvement in the skill focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information. A possible reason for this could be that the pre-test results showed that Learner 1began the IP with a strong base in this particular skill, receiving 75%, and showing a slight improvement of 16% in the post-test results. The greatest improvement in the post-test was for the comprehension skill of making straightforward inferences with understanding which improved by 50%. This was remarkable, especially as he received the lowest marks for this comprehension skill in the pre-test. For the two highest cognitive skills, Learner1 improved by 25% in the interpreting and integrating ideas and information comprehension skill. This indicates that he began to understand how to interpret and integrate ideas and information with a fair amount of confidence. The last skill that required critical thinking evaluate and examine content; language and textual element, he showed a moderate improvement of 30%. This modest improvement could have been as a result of Learner 1's change in identity in Week eight when he narrated in his reflection that:

… he was now able to explain his choices.

His confidence in speaking English, as a comfortable member of the group, had improved so that he was now able to think and share his critical thoughts. This is confirmed by the way Learner 1 responded in the post-tests. Table 4.6 compares Learner 1's pre and post-test answers. Since this was a written exercise, the exact responses have been provided.

Table: 4.6 Learner 1's written pre-test and post-test responses

Grade 2 passage (Appendix 19)	**Title of the passage: Playing in the leaves**	
Comprehension skills	**Pre-test answers**	**Post-test answers**
Question: **What season is it?**		
Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information	Season is sun	The season is Autumn
Question: **What colours do you think the leaves are?**		
Making straightforward inferences with understanding	The leaves are autumn	The leaves are brown
Question: **What does your garden look like in Autumn?**		
Interpreting and integrating ideas and information	Is nase	The garden is orange and brown
Question: **Do you agree that Autumn is the best season and why?**		
Evaluate and examine content; language and textual element	Yes because in nace	Yes, because is my best season

Learner 1's pre-test answers indicated that this learner struggled to answer all four comprehension questions because all the answers were incorrect with the wrong spelling as well. The post-test answers of the same questions showed an improvement: the learner's answers indicated that she could understand the questions at all cognitive levels and could understand what she read. This indicated a cognitive growth since she was answering in full sentences with explanations. This learner used her prior and background knowledge to answer effectively.

4.4.1.2. A discussion of Learner 2's pre- and post-test results

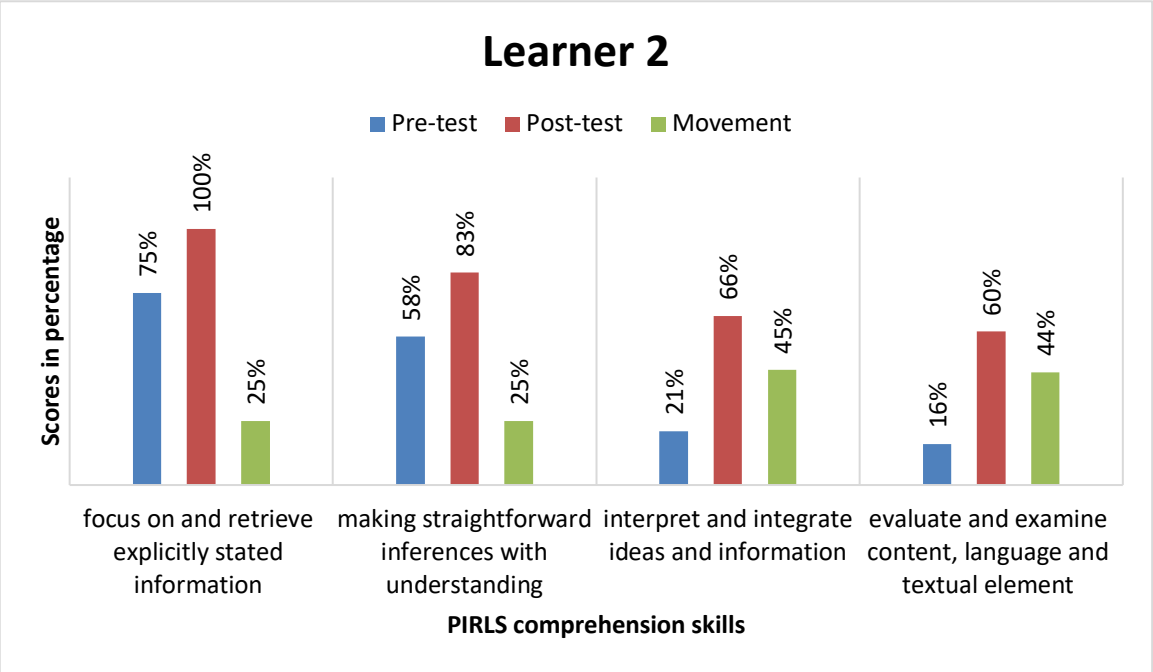

Figure 4.5 Learner 2's results

Learner 2's post-test results showed that she improved in all four comprehension skills. This improvement indicated that she was now able to understand both lower and higher order thinking questions. The most noticeable improvements were in the higher-order thinking skills (*interpret and integrate ideas and information as well as evaluate and examine content, language and textual element*). This learner showed signs of interest in learning as she mentioned in her reflections that she was: "… practicing to role play every story she read she even asked her mother to speak in English with her at home". This indicates that she was committed to improving her comprehension skills understanding and that through this process, she gained self-confidence when participating in the group. This improvement is shown in Table 4.7 by the way she answered the post-test questions compared with the pre-test answers. The written responses are the exact responses from Learner 2.

Table: 4.7 Learner 2's written pre- and post-test responses

Grade 3 passage (Appendix 20)	**Title of the passage: The donkey and the little dog**	
Comprehension skills	**Pre-test answer**	**Post-test answer**
Question: **What kind of pet did the man have?**		
Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information	The kind of pet did the man have is dog	The kind of the pet man is dog
Question: **What is the difference between a pet and a wild animal?**		
Making straightforward inferences with understanding	The difference between a pet and wild animal they donkey is big are dog was small	The pet is not eat the people and wild animals is dangerous
Question**: If you were the donkey, how would you feel? Why would you feel this way?**		
Interpreting and integrating ideas and information	I'm feel sad and angry because I'm big me I not are small and I'm not are dog	I feel sad because I'm not pet of man
Question: **Would you agree that the man treated the donkey unfairly and why?**		
Evaluate and examine content; language and textual element	Yes because a men are not are trat are dog	Yes, because is not are pet

Table 4.7 indicates a general cognitive growth when comparing the pre and post-test results. The pre-test answers indicated that although this learner experienced a language barrier, she struggled to construct meaningful sentences. Her post-test answers indicated how this learner's sentence construction improved and how she thought more logically before she answered the questions. This implies that her self-confidence in answering the comprehension skills developed throughout the IP.

4.4.1.3. A discussion of Learner 3's pre- and post-test results

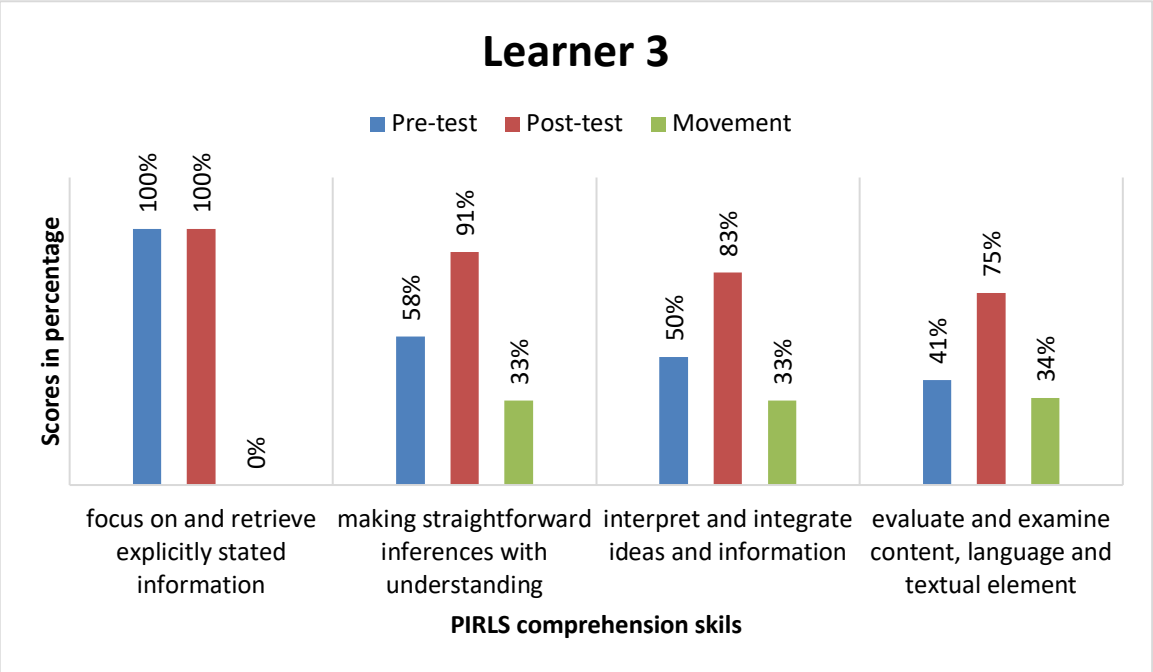

Figure 4.6 Learner 3's results

Although Learner 3 began this IP with strong pre-test results, the post-test results revealed noticeable improvements in his understanding of these higher-order thinking skills. These results, the pre- and post-tests, demonstrated that he received the highest marks in all the comprehension skills of the four learners. In his reflections, he said that: "… his group mates ask him to explain to them so that's making him feel excited about these lessons". While he was assisting his classmates he was learning and benefiting from these experiences. This is confirmed in Table 4.8 which are the results he wrote in the pre- and post-tests.

Table: 4.8 Learner 3's written pre- and post-test responses

Grade 3 passage (Appendix 21)	**Title of the passage: A strange visitor to the school**	
Comprehension skills	**Pre-test answer**	**Post-test answer**
Question: **Who said her lunch was stolen?**		
Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information	Is Bongi said my lunch was stolen	Its Bongi
Question: **Why do you think a goat is a strange visitor to the school?**		
Making straightforward inferences with understanding	Because is all was a goat	Because goats do not stay in school
Question: **Have you ever felt unsafe at school? How did it make you feel?**		
Interpreting and integrating ideas and information	No because are was tsaying in my home	Yes, sad
Question: **Do you agree that it was good of everyone to help fix the school fence? Why do you think so?**		
Evaluate and examine content; language and textual element	Yes day will be goat inside	Yes, because the goat will not get in the school

Table 4.8 highlights how this learner's critical thinking skills, when writing the answers after eight weeks of participating in the IP, evidenced an improvement, despite the language differences. In this example, it is clear that Learner 3 could understand three of the pre-test comprehension skill questions (not the literal question) by answering them in such a way that the teacher could understand what he was trying to write. The post-tests highlight that Learner 3 could comprehend in all four levels of questions, and his writing skills were more understandable.

4.4.1.4. A discussion of Learner 4's pre- and post-test results

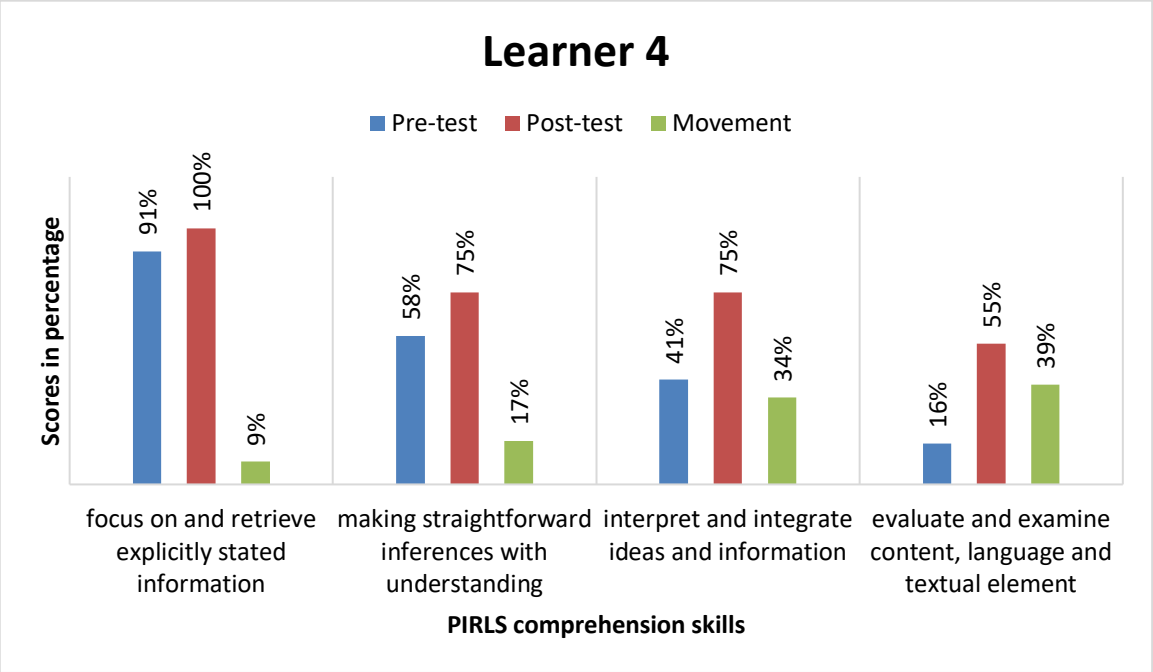

Figure 4.7 Learner 4's results

Learner 4's results indicate that she showed a consistent improvement in the higher-order thinking skills over the eight weeks of the IP. Learner 4's cognitive skills improved week-by-week as she was interacting with the nine comprehension skills. By Week seven she began to evaluate her own responses and became more confident in justifying her answers. This indicates that she was achieving the highest levels of cognition as can be seen in Table 4.9 comparing the written pre- and post-test answers.

Table: 4.9 Learner 4's written pre- and post-test responses

Grade 1 passage (Appendix 22)	**Title of the passage: Rabbit and Mole**	
Comprehension skills	**Pre-test answer**	**Post-test answer**
Question: **What did Rabbit use to dig?**		
Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information	Rabbit dig leg and long claws	He used his strong front feet
Question: **What does snooze mean?**		
Making straightforward inferences with understanding	drink	It means sleep
Question: **Has anyone tried to bully you? How did it make you feel?**		
Interpreting and integrating ideas and information'	No, it makes me happy	Yes, it makes me feel sad
Question: **Was this a happy or a sad story - can you explain?**		
Evaluate and examine content; language and textual element	It was a happy story. because rabbit was happy when he was digging	It was a sad story because rabbit is bullying mole

Table 4.9 shows that by the end of the IP, Learner 4's answers were not only correct but more to the point and correct. This example demonstrates that during the IP Learner 4's language and both her higher and lower-order comprehension thinking skills improved. In the post-test answers Learner 4 was able to provide reasons for her answers.

4.4.1.5. A discussion of Learner 5's pre- and post-test results

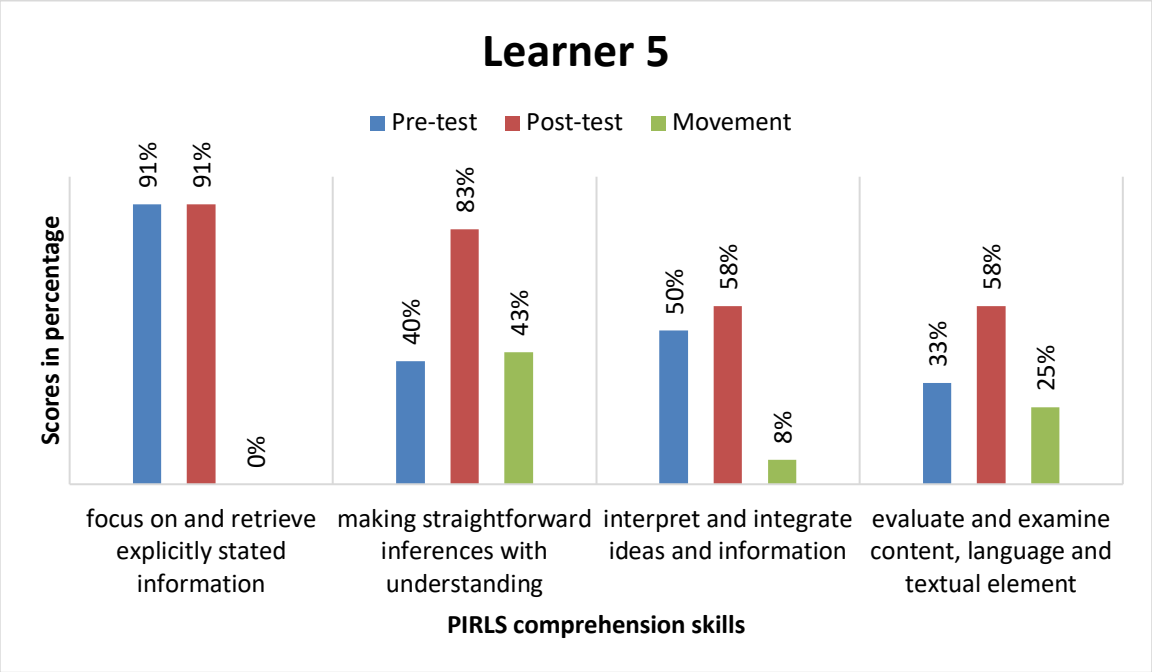

Figure 4.8 Learner 5's results

Learner 5 showed a noticeable improvement in the second comprehension skill where he was *making straightforward inferences* with understanding. In Week five he reflected that:

> *he was able to give suggestions and share ideas to the group*

The confidence that developed from "giving suggestions" and "sharing ideas with the group" helped him to develop his higher order thinking skills which have become evident in his written responses from his pre- and post-test questions in Table 4.10.

Table: 4.10 Learner 5's written pre-test and post-test responses

Grade 3 passage (Appendix 23)	**Title of the passage: The new bike**	
Comprehension skills	**Pre-test answer**	**Post-test answer**
Question: **How did Thabo's new bike look?**		
Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information	It was bright and shiny red	Thabo's new bike was red
Question: **What is meant by the word 'litter'?**		
Making straightforward inferences with understanding	The word litter means bright	It means things that you don't put in the bin
Question**: Have you ever borrowed something from someone and broken it? How did you feel?**		
Interpreting and integrating ideas and information	No, not happy	Yes, I felt sad because I pay it back
Question: **What can you learn from the story?**		
Evaluate and examine content; language and textual element	That you can borrow things but don't broke them	That you can borrow things but don't broke them

Table 4.10 shows that for the pre- and post-test answers, Learner 5 could focus on and retrieve answers from the text as well as evaluate and examine content. Her answers suggested that by the end of the IP her language usage improved and she was confident to justify her answers correctly.

Vygotsky (1978) postulates that the social involvement as an important factor for individual development in activities that requires problem-solving. It was for this reason that the IP was developed with the small group of five learners. The post-test results indicate the individual development of these five learners as the participated in this IP. Vygotsky further states that inter-mental (social) activity is normally mediated through language and can promote intra-mental (individual) intellectual development.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter was to answer the three main research questions and their sub-questions by presenting the analysed data. Significant findings have been made on the

qualitative data which emerged from the observations, interviews and reflections of the five learners during the ten week IP. The first and last week were used to conduct the pre- and post-tests and the actual teaching took place in the middle eight weeks.

To answer the first research question two sub-questions were answered. The results of the first sub-question indicated that these five learners lacked an understanding of the four comprehension skills. The second sub-question presented and discussed the learners' challenges within the four comprehension skills: focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information; making straightforward inferences; interpret and integrate ideas and information; and evaluate and examine content, language and textual elements.

To answer the second research question, three sub-questions were discussed. The first sub-question in this research question, discussed the social development of the learners using the four components of Wenger's community of practice: learning as doing (practice); learning as belonging (community); learning as becoming (identity); and learning as experience (meaning). The second sub-question deliberated on the cognitive development of the learners throughout the IP by looking at the six levels of Blooms Taxonomy which are: remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating. The final sub-question focussed on the language development of the learners, particularly in Listening and Speaking.

The final research question analysed the post-test results. The first sub-question presented the five learners post-test results, being mindful of keeping the variables similar to the pre-test conditions. All five learners showed a significant improvement in all four comprehension questions. It was unexpectedly pleasing to see the range of such upward movements in each learners' results. The last sub-question showed each learner's differences in the results of the pre and post-test results. Chapter 5 discusses further findings, conclusions are drawn and recommendations are offered.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study examined how five Grade 3 learners responded to a ten-week IP for developing their comprehension skills. This last section of the research project reports on that examination and formulates guidelines for improving literacy and comprehension of texts at Grade 3 level in a destitute peri-urban area of Cape Town, which still suffers the aftereffects of apartheid. The results of this study were presented and discussed in Chapter 4, while this chapter discusses significant issues, themes and possible solutions derived from the findings. This chapter concludes with tentative recommendations and an overview of the whole study.

5.2 DISCUSSION

In Chapter 4, the findings were presented and discussed. The four major topics that emerged from the study include: a transition between Grade 3 and 4, the lack of teacher training in the teaching of comprehension, the importance of visual learning and the importance of learners having fun while learning. The research is based upon an amalgam of: the conceptual frameworks of Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, Cambourne's (2004) social constructivism, the cognitive levels in Bloom's Taxonomy (2001) and Wenger's (2005) social theory of learning. This amalgam allowed for a structured and closely monitored intervention and enabled the five learners to acquire comprehension skills in a successful, rigorous way.

5.2.1. The transition between Grade 3 and 4

Sibanda (2017) considers the transition from the Foundation Phase (Grade 3) to the Intermediate Phase (Grade 4) as a critical moment of transition which can either empower learners and ensure their smooth progress through subsequent grades, or confuse them and stultify their entire education.If this transition is badly managed and proves too difficult for them, they feel the effects years later. Sibanda (2020) states that the transition from Grade 3 to Grade 4 causes reading challenges in South Africa. Spaull (2016) believes that in the FP learners learn to read but in the IP they are meant to read to learn in order to access the curriculum and move towards further grades. Sibanda (2020) states that some learners' reading is satisfactory from Grade 1 to

Grade 3, but when starting Grade4 they start to struggle to read in 4. This is called a fourth-grade slump. Fourth-grade slump is referred to when learners fall behind in reading due to the transition from learning to reading in the FP and reading to learn in the IP (Spaull, 2016). The fourth grade slump is known and well documented as a worrying decline in learners' academic performance in Grade 4, especially in reading (Sibanda, 2017).

The CAPS (NDoBE, 2011) document states that learners should be taught in their Home Language in the FP and switch to FAL in Grade 4. Spaull (2016) explains the reasoning behind this approach was that learners find it easier to become literate in their FAL if first they are well-educated in their home language. Sibanda (2017) believes that the transition from using HL in the FP to using FAL as LoLT in Grade 4 sets learners up for failure. The transitional challenges are more noticeable within FAL speaking contexts. Sibanda states that the language shift is made difficult by the transition in reading, as learners in Grade 4 read to learn and this is more cognitively challenging.

5.2.2. Lack of teacher training in the teaching of comprehension

Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) explain that teachers are not effectively developing learners' basic reading skills because they themselves need to be skilled in the teaching of reading skills. Tylor (2016) suggests that this lack of reading skills may be caused by the fact that the majority of teachers in South Africa were trained in English as their second language: their teacher training institutions were not focusing on teaching pedagogical approaches for reading. Hoa and Mai (2016) add by stating teachers teach using different teachers' qualifications, different teaching methods and lack specialised knowledge of content. These may be some of the contributing factors that teacher training institutions are graduating students who have little knowledge of how to teach reading and how to teach comprehension skills.

Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) believe that teachers are most important in developing strong literacy skills in their learners. The NDoBE has tried many interventions focusing on providing teachers with strategies on how to become more effective in teaching reading skills that support comprehension. Klapwijk (2015) posits that teachers neglect teaching comprehension because they are not able to teach this concept: they

themselves were not taught this concept during their teacher training years. Teachers find teaching comprehension difficult and time- consuming. Klapwijk (2015) highlights that teacher training faculties do not include courses on how to teach comprehension skills from FP to high schools. Teacher training institutions do not integrate comprehension teaching into their curriculum. Teachers end up disliking comprehension teaching (Klapwijk, 2015). Taylor (2014) states that teacher training courses spend approximately 6% on literacy development and instruction. This amount is not enough to develop student teachers into teachers who know how to teach literacy. Sailor (2008) concurs that in the faculties of education across the country teachers are taught basic skills of teaching reading and sent out to teach with the understanding that they will learn to teach these comprehension skills in the field.

5.2.3. The importance of visual learning

Teachers are considered to be the main means of assisting learners to develop and improve their comprehension by using various techniques and approaches. Macwan (2015) states that language teachers are trying new innovations in their teaching of language to make language more effective and interesting. Teachers use different kinds of visual aids to make teaching and learning effective in their classrooms because visual aids help learners to learn language in different ways. Macwan (2015) posits that visual aids allow learners to use more than one sense at the same time, as one picture can stimulate more senses. Visual aids create excitement and interest in lessons. Macwan adds that the use of visual aids provides learners with different opportunities as learners learn differently; some learn better by watching, listening and touching.

Mansourzadeh (2014) states that visual aids are teaching aids that are routinely used in the classroom to encourage learners learning progress. Shabiralyani, Hasan, Hamad and Iqbal (2015) describe visual aids as the physical tools, objects, images or devices that can be used to make learning more real, more active and interesting by stimulating and supporting learning processes. They add that visual aids make a lesson or concept taught, clearer and easier to understand by using pictures, charts, videos, slides, real objects and maps.

Visual aids are considered one pedagogical approach that can be used in the classroom. They improve remembering of information and increase understanding of

unfamiliar concepts (Mansourzadeh, 2014). Shabiralyani et al. (2014) state that visual aids stimulate the interest of learners and help teachers to explain difficult concepts.

In the 21st century, teaching has been transformed through the availability of technology in our schools. Language teachers integrate different visual aids along with the text books to teach language more effectively (Macwan, 2015). Macwan states that visual aids such as electronic boards, overhead transparency, multimedia projector, and computer, audio and video equipment have decreased the load that language teachers face in teaching language. Hromek and Roffey (2009) postulate that this growing interest in the use of visual aids provides new opportunities for developing skills, attitudes and values that build flexibility and maintain well-being.

5.2.4. Having fun while learning

Lucardie (2014) states that having fun while learning is a natural and important part of the learning development for learners. Barrett (2005) concurs that learning can be fun even when it is hard and challenging. Bruckman (1999) posits that learners learn well and better while creating things when they are having fun. He believes that constructing activities is more fun and educational than learning by merely being told. He suggests that teachers should make learning contextually relevantand fun by creating open-ended tasks as these activities will engage the learners, and promote creativity.This will create a safe and fun learning environment where social connectedness and meaningful participation are likely to occur (Hromek & Roffey, 2009). They believe that having fun while learning is important to the social and cognitive development of learners and motivates them. Having fun while learning provides opportunities for better language development, hypothesis testing, problem solving and the formation of thought constructs.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined how five Grade 3 learners a ten-week IP designed to develop comprehension skills. The following section outlines the proposed recommendations.

5.3.1. Recommendations for **teaching** comprehension skills to Grade 3 learners

Zimmerman and Smit (2014) state that South African learners are not capable of comprehending simple texts but more importantly, it is the teachers who do not take full advantage of developing learners' comprehension skills. Therefore the following recommendations are suggested to improve the teaching of comprehension skills.

a. It is recommended that FP teachers are made aware of how to teach comprehension skills according to Bloom's Taxonomy and the PIRLS four levels of comprehension skills. These higher-order thinking skills need to become the central focus of each lesson;
b. It is recommended that all FP teachers teach comprehension skills across the subject areas including all language teaching, Mathematics and Life Skills. This can be achieved by the teacher constantly asking higher-order questions and inviting the learners to ask questions. The teacher guides the learners to understand the texts, explicitly links the meaning of the text to their environments and then extends this knowledge to the world;
c. It is recommended that FP teachers use a variety of different teaching strategies such as: Readers Theatre, Anticipation Guide, Feature Matrix, Vocabulary activities, Think Aloud, My Turn Your Turn, Cloze activities and higher-order thinking questions;
d. It is recommended that teachers use teaching aids such as colourful pictures, charts, videos, slides and real objects as they are fun and motivating to develop comprehension skills in all subjects;
e. Directed intervention programmes for high risk learners are recommended. Teachers need to be taught how to conduct informal pre-tests, analyse the data, develop and teach towards this specific programme, and finally conduct post-tests which would be the same as the pre-tests;
f. It is strongly recommended that all HEI's training teachers should prioritise the teaching of reading, comprehension skills and higher-order thinking skills from FP, IP and SP;
g. It is recommended that after four years in HEI all newly qualified teachers should be confident to teach reading, comprehension skills and higher-order thinking skills.

5.3.2. Recommendations for **policy development**

Zimmerman and Smit (2014) state that in the absence of strong pedagogical content knowledge and understanding of reading comprehension, teachers may carelessly follow the recommendations of the curriculum without even knowing what they need. Therefore, the following recommendations are made towards the development of policy in the teaching of reading and comprehension skills.

a. It is recommended that policy developers should consider increasing the amount of time spent on teaching reading in the FP and IP in the curriculum;
b. It is recommended that the National Department of Education (NDoE) consider reducing the class sizes, specifically in township schools;
c. It is recommended that language medium of instruction policy and its practice are necessary and should be looked at;
d. It is recommended that the NDoE and HEI's work closer together, to develop new policies that will specifically address. the teaching of comprehension skills and the teaching of reading for meaning in the FP, IP and High school phases. This will help newly qualified teachers to be more confident in their teaching of reading abilities as soon as they begin their teaching careers;
e. It is recommended that the NDoE and HEI's develop policy which provides teachers with pedagogic content knowledge
f. It is recommended that the NDoE re-consider policy for language instruction. It is suggested that all learners, specifically in township schools, learn in their HL

5.3.3. Recommendations for **further research**

Zimmerman (2014) highlights that although there is a plethora of publications about the poor literacy rates in South Africa, there are a few published studies that explain the classroom life that leads to this literacy crisis. Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) confirm this by stating that there is little research into why teachers experience challenges in the teaching of reading literacy. Therefore the following recommendations may contribute to further research into the teaching of comprehension skills in FP classrooms:

a. It is recommended that the NDoE and HEI's work together on developing large research projects into the: conditions of reading in FP classrooms in township schools, how teachers are teaching reading for meaning, conduct workshops to teach these reading for meaning skills, track and support the teachers while they transfer this academic knowledge to their classrooms;
b. It is recommended that more Honours, Masters and Doctoral students in all HEI's conduct smaller qualitative research projects into the teaching of comprehension skills.
c. It is recommended that Teachers' Unions, such as National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA), South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) and South African Onderwysunie (SAOU) conduct professional development workshops in the teaching of comprehension skills which are researched. Teacher Unions should have professional development programmes and develop posts for Research, where the researchers track teachers' transfer of the content knowledge to their classrooms.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The CAPS (NDoBE, 2011) Grades 1 – 3 document sets out the content to be taught in the Foundation Phase and expects all FP teachers to know how to deploy a variety of pedagogical approaches to teach the content. In practice, however, teaching to the CAPS document is complicated by many factors. Some HEI's do not teach teachers to explicitly teach comprehension skills. Teaching and learning language issues are extensive and complex. There are many different teacher qualifications, large classes, differing levels of learners, a lack of time, and a lack of appropriate reading resources. There is no manual or guide to assist teachers through all of these complexities. This research project examined how one teacher taught a group of five Grade 3 learners in an attempt to fill this gap.

The five learners were able to achieve better results because the researcher and her supervisor spent many hours carefully preparing the IP which was underpinned by a strict conceptual background. After the research proposal had been accepted and all the ethical consent forms were signed and dated, the researcher and supervisor met regularly to plan the IP. For that term, they met every Friday afternoon for three to four hours, where the researcher reflected on the previous week's teaching and learning,

followed by lengthy discussions. The supervisor took time to explain and show the researcher the new activities and how to teach them for the next week, integrating the activities with the theme of “animals”. Over the weekend, the researcher would prepare the activity sheets and share them with her supervisor, to check for accuracy and appropriateness. This preparation took considerable time yet proved invaluable to the success of this research project.

The research process included conducting pre-tests with each learner, the eight-week IP as a group, and the individual post-tests. This process has shown to be an effective learning support programme for teaching learners that needed extra assistance. In this case the learners needed to learn and read with more criticality. This learning support programme is simple to develop and follow. The results were better than the researcher expected.

There were a few limitations. Firstly although five parents and two Grade 3 teachers were interviewed during this research project, the focus of the findings was on the learners development. Secondly, the reading passages and questions used for the the purpose of the intervention were developed only for this research project with no established validity and reliability.

Three main conclusions can be drawn from this unique research project.

First, the findings indicate that after this IP, the five learners improved their critical thinking abilities. These significant results, as can be seen in Chapter 4, may be attributed to the research process which was used for this research project. It was pleasing to note how the learners were able to answer the explicitly stated information more easily than making straightforward inferences, interpreting and integrating ideas and information, and evaluative questions. At the end of the IP, the evidence indicated that all five learners were able to think more critically. Some were achieving higher levels of critical thinking than others.

Second, by amalgamating elements of Vygotsky’s (1978) and Cambourne’s (2004) theories of social constructivism, Bloom’s Taxonomy (2001) and Wenger’s (2005) theory a sound and workable platform was created. The researcher moved the five

learners from a low-order to a higher-order of critical thinking. All the activities that were used with the learners encouraged social integration, sharing opinions and working constructively together. By doing this, the students challenged each other's cognitive development, so that over the eight-week period, the learners grew in confidence, and were able to transform their own zones of abilities and independent thinking to higher levels of application.

Third, the activities and pedagogical approaches used during this research project were simple yet exciting to use. There are currently no governmental curricular documents guiding teachers with the pedagogy of how to teach comprehension skills. However, many of these activities and pedagogical approaches are described in detail in books, academic journals and discussed at conferences. The actual strategies can be used at any level, subject or language, from FP to tertiary level, with appropriate texts. They should form part of the compulsory teacher training courses at all HEIs.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE QUESTIONS

Educators interview questions

1. What is your understanding of comprehension skills?
2. What are the challenges that you face when teaching comprehension skills in your classroom?
3. How do you overcome those challenges?
4. Do you teach the four comprehension skills proposed by PIRLS and how do you teach each of them, how are your learners understand each skill?
    - focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information;
    - make straightforward inferences;
    - interpret and integrate ideas and information; and
    - evaluate and examine content, language and textual elements.
5. Do you know what CAPS expect teachers to do, with regards of teaching comprehension skills?
6. Do you always follow the subject guidelines? Why or Why not?
7. Do you think CAPS, teacher training or Universities has prepared teachers and learners in teaching and learning of comprehension skills?
8. How do you find comprehension skills helpful in developing literacy?
9. Is reading being done in your classroom and how often is it being done? Do you think it's helpful?
10. When teaching Reading do you teach vocabulary understanding?
11. How to you see that reading is effective or not with this big number of learners in your classroom?
12. What are your views about the levels of comprehension in your classroom?
13. How can they be improved?
14. Do you think CAPS allows our learners to be critical thinkers?

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE QUESTIONS

Parents/guardians interview questions

1. Do you think your children should be taught English? Why or why not?
2. Have your child ever speaks or read any language book at home?
3. What do you think of his/her English when writing or reading?
4. What kind of problems does your child encounter in when reading a book?
5. Why does your child need reading for in their lives?
6. Do you encourage him/her to read at home? How often does he read?
7. What do you think of your child's reading? Does s/he understand what s/he reads?
8. Do you think it's important for parents to help their children with homework especially with reading? Why?
9. Are you a reader how often do you read?

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE QUESTIONS

Learners interview questions

Week two

1. What do you think of the 3 comprehension activities that we did this week?
2. Which activity did you enjoyed the most and why?
3. How did you work with you group mates?
4. How did you felt when you were participating in the group work?

Week three

1. Did you enjoy working with you partner in today's activities?
2. How often do you read English books?
3. Do you speak English at home or school with your friends and family?
4. Do you think English should be taught in school.

Week four

1. Which activity did you enjoyed the most today and why?
2. What are these activities teaches you.
3. Did you supported each other during the activities and why did you support each other?
4. Do you enjoy working with partners?

Week five

1. Are these activities we doing help you to be able to think before you give answers and able to read for meaning?
2. Do you think it's good to work in partners how is that helping you?
3. Do you think we should do these activities in class as well and why?

Week six

1. Do you enjoy working with the other four learners?
2. How are they helping you during the activities?
3. Do you think during classes its fine to work in groups and why?

Weeks seven

1. Ever since we started this IP do you think you are developing and how are you developing?

2. What do you think of this IP do you enjoy doing these activities and why?

Week eight

1. Did you enjoy today's lessons and why?
2. How are you growing in each lesson?
1. Which comprehension strategy do you enjoyed the most and why?
2. What have you learnt about yourself in these eight weeks of doing these activities?
3. Do you think these activities are helpful and are you learning anything from them?

APPENDIX 4: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Questions	Yes	No	Comment
Are the learners reading and answering questions correctly?			
Do they understand the instructions?			
Is the learners' participation behaviour good?			
Are the learners participating freely in both oral and written work?			
Are the learners enjoying the comprehension strategies?			
Do they understand the comprehension skills?			
Are the learners socially interacting well?			
Are the learners reading for meaning?			
Are the learners developing every week?			
Is their vocabulary increase every week?			
Is the confidence growing every week?			

APPENDIX 5: ETHICAL CLEARANCES FROM CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

For office use only	
Date submitted	**6 Feb 2018**
Meeting date	**n/a**
Approval	**P/Y√/N**
Ethical Clearance number	**EFEC 4-2/2018**

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

This certificate is issued by the Education Faculty Ethics Committee (EFEC) at Cape Peninsula University of Technology to the applicant/s whose details appear below.

1. Applicant and project details (Applicant to complete this section of the certificate and submit with application as a Word document)

Name(s) of applicant(s):	**Vuyokazi Fatyela**	
Project/study Title:	Challenges experienced by second language learners when learning comprehension skills in Grade 3 in a township school in the Western Cape.	
Is this a staff research project, i.e. not for degree purposes?	No	
If for degree purposes the degree is indicated:	MEd	
If for degree purposes, the proposal has been approved by the FRC	Yes	
Funding sources:	URF	

2. Remarks by Education Faculty Ethics Committee:

This Master's research project is granted ethical clearance valid until 5 February 2018

Approved: √	**Referred back:**	**Approved subject to adaptations :**
Chairperson Name: Chiwimbiso Kwenda **Chairperson Signature:** 		**Date: 17 February 2018**
Approval Certificate/Reference: EFEC 4-2/2018		

EFEC Form V3_updated 2016

APPENDIX 6: CONSENT FROM WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Directorate: Research

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Luzuko Park
Philippi East
7785

Dear Ms Vuyokazi Fatyela

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS WHEN LEARNING COMPREHENSION SKILLS IN GRADE 3 IN A TOWNSHIP SCHOOL IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **10 April 2018 till 28 September 2019**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

    The Director: Research Services
    Western Cape Education Department
    Private Bag X9114
    CAPE TOWN
    8000

We wish you success in your research.

APPENDIX 7: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Principal consent letter

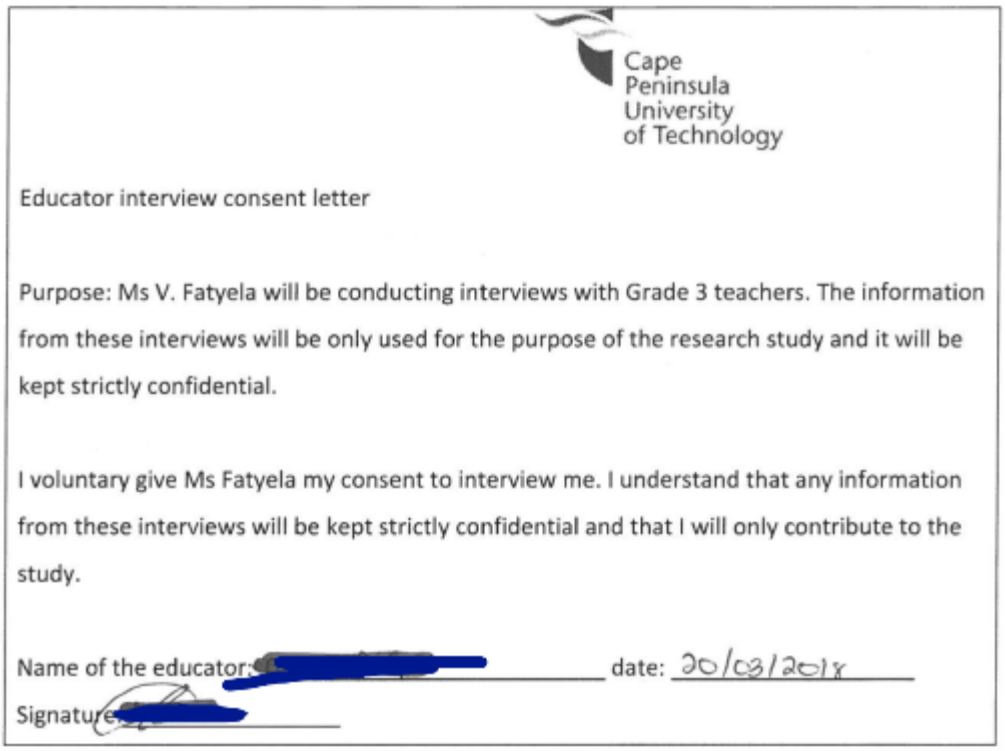
I am currently studying Master's Degree in Education at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). I am doing a research on "Grade 3 learners' experiences of developing comprehension skills during an IP". I would like to work with five of my learners in the class when I'm collecting the data during the Intervention Programme. Where I will be assisting them to improve their comprehension skills.

Ms Fatyela has explained to me the purpose of the study and she has also explained to me that all information received as part of the study will be used for research purpose only. I voluntary give Ms Fatyela my consent to conduct the research in the school and I understand that any information from the data collection will be kept strictly confidential.

Signature: [redacted]

Date: 20.03.2018

APPENDIX 8: EDUCATOR'S CONSENT LETTER



Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Educator interview consent letter

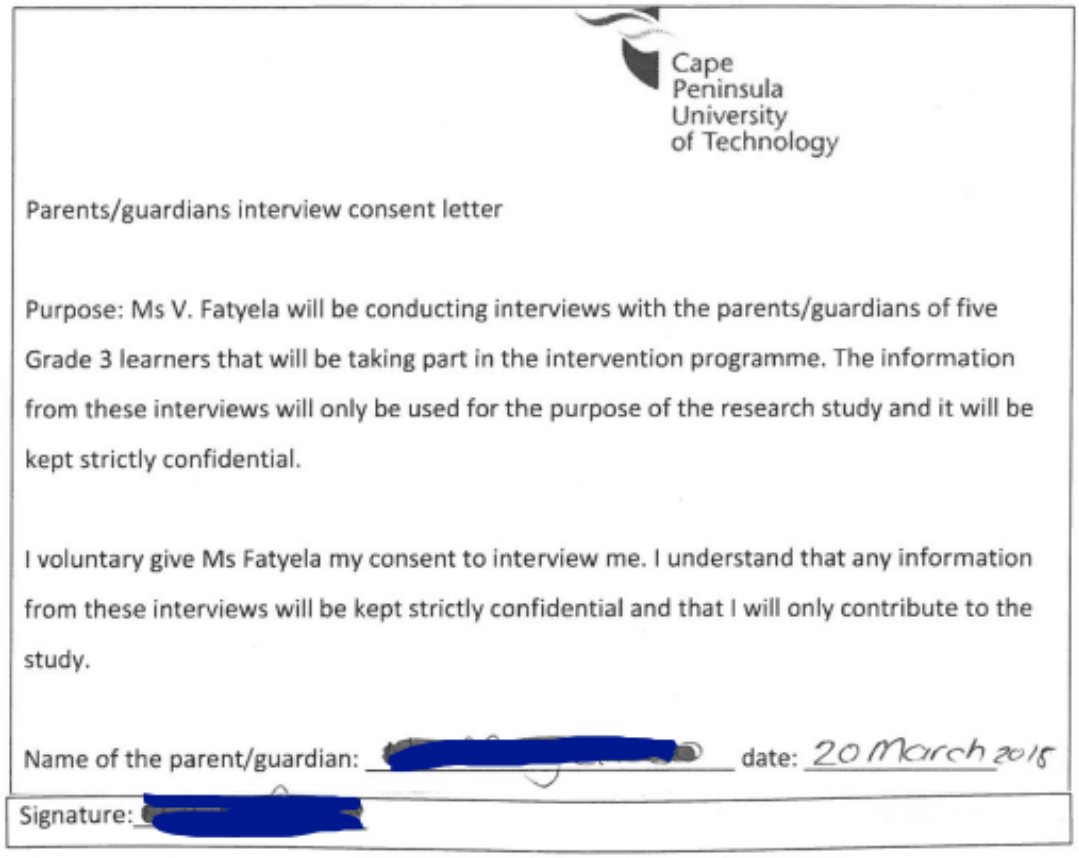
Purpose: Ms V. Fatyela will be conducting interviews with Grade 3 teachers. The information from these interviews will be only used for the purpose of the research study and it will be kept strictly confidential.

I voluntary give Ms Fatyela my consent to interview me. I understand that any information from these interviews will be kept strictly confidential and that I will only contribute to the study.

Name of the educator: [redacted] date: 20/03/2018

Signature: [redacted]

APPENDIX 9: PARENTS/GUARDIANS CONSENT LETTER



Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Parents/guardians interview consent letter

Purpose: Ms V. Fatyela will be conducting interviews with the parents/guardians of five Grade 3 learners that will be taking part in the intervention programme. The information from these interviews will only be used for the purpose of the research study and it will be kept strictly confidential.

I voluntary give Ms Fatyela my consent to interview me. I understand that any information from these interviews will be kept strictly confidential and that I will only contribute to the study.

Name of the parent/guardian: [redacted] date: 20 March 2018

Signature: [redacted]

APPENDIX 10: PARENTAL CONSENT LETTER

Parents/guardians permission letter

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

March 2018

Dear parents/guardians

I am currently studying Master's Degree in Education at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). I am doing a research on "Grade 3 learners' experiences of developing comprehension skills during an IP". I would like to work with your child when I am collecting the data during the intervention programme. Where I will be assisting him/her to improve their comprehension skills.

I will also be observing the five Grade 3 learners during the intervention programme. The information from these observations will only be used for the purpose of the research study and it will be kept strictly confidential.

I voluntary give Ms Fatyela my consent to observe my child. I understand that any information from these observations will be kept strictly confidential and that I will only contribute to the study.

Participation in the research is voluntary and all the information obtained will be treated confidential.

Vuyokazi Fatyela

.....

Please complete the form and return it back

I, [redacted] hereby give permission/ ~~do not give~~ permission for my child [redacted] in Grade 3B to participate in the research study.

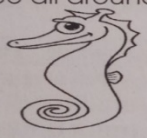
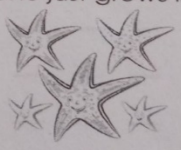
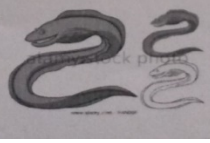
Signature: [redacted]

Date: 20 March 2018

APPENDIX 11: WE GO DEEP-SEA DIVING - ANTICIPATION GUIDE

We go deep-sea diving

Last weekend Jabu and his friends went diving. They went under the sea. They wore flippers on their feet to help them swim strongly. theyalso wore goggles so that they could see under the water. They saw hundreds of different fish swimming in and out of the seaweed.

Sea horses They can change their colour to protect themselves. Their eyes move separately so they can see all around them. 	**Octopus** They can also change colour. They are soft and can squeeze through small spaces. They have eight long arms that help them swim very fast. 
Clown fish They are quite small, but they are easy to see. They are orange or red with big white stripes all over their bodies. 	**Starfish** They have five arms. If one arm breaks off, another one just grows in its space. 
Sea snakes They look like stripey snakes swimming in the sea. 	**Jellyfish** They look like big blobs of jelly floating around. 

APPENDIX 12: FARM ANIMALS

Read about farm animals

Pigs

Pigs like to roll around in mud; they do this to cool off because they don't sweat. Pigs communicate with each other using more than 20 different noises. Pigs are omnivores they both eat plants and meat. They can run 11 miles per hour.

Cows

Cows have different pattern of spots. Male cows have horn. They learn and react to the names they are given by people. They eat grass. Cows have a memory of about three years. They can sense a storm coming and will lie down.

Goats

Goats do not have teeth on their upper jaw. They have to a hard palate helps them grind their food. They eat many different species of plants. Goats are great swimmers.

Chickens

Chickens have over 200 distinct noises they can make for communicating. The living time of a chicken in about 10 to 15 years. The male is larger and more brightly colored than female. The female is usually ready to lay her first eggs when she around six months old. Chickens eat worms, insert, seeds, fruit and vegetables.

The tortoise and the lizard

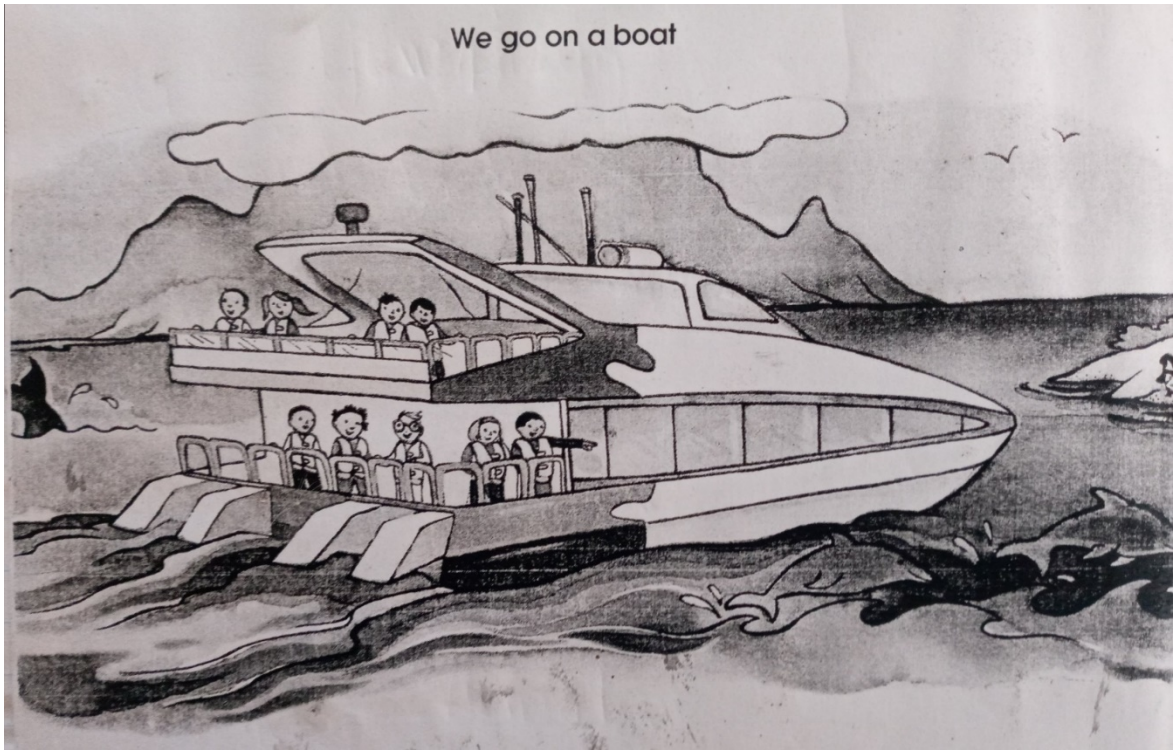
Once upon a time there was a famine in the land of the animals. One day, the lizard was passing by a farm when he saw the farmer approach a rock. The lizard hid and watched as the farmer rolled the rock away to reveal the entrance into a cave. The farmer went inside and came out a few minutes later with a handful of yams and rolled the rock back into its place. The lizard waited for the farmers to leave then he too rolled away the rock and went into the cave. Inside the cave were several stacks of yams. The lizard took out a yam, and rolled the rock back into its place. Every day, the lizard would return to the cave to take a yam and would go home to eat the yam.

One day the lizard was carrying his yam home, he came across the tortoise who asked him where he gotten his yam. He offered to tell him on the condition that the tortoise tells no one. The tortoise promised to keep the secret, so the lizard told the tortoise to meet him the following morning and he would take him to the secret cave. Early the next morning, before the very first cock crow, the lizard and tortoise went to the secret cave. When they were there, the lizard rolled the rock away to reveal the entrance to the cave. The tortoise could not believe his eyes for there were more yams in there than even he could eat, because the tortoise was a very greedy fellow.

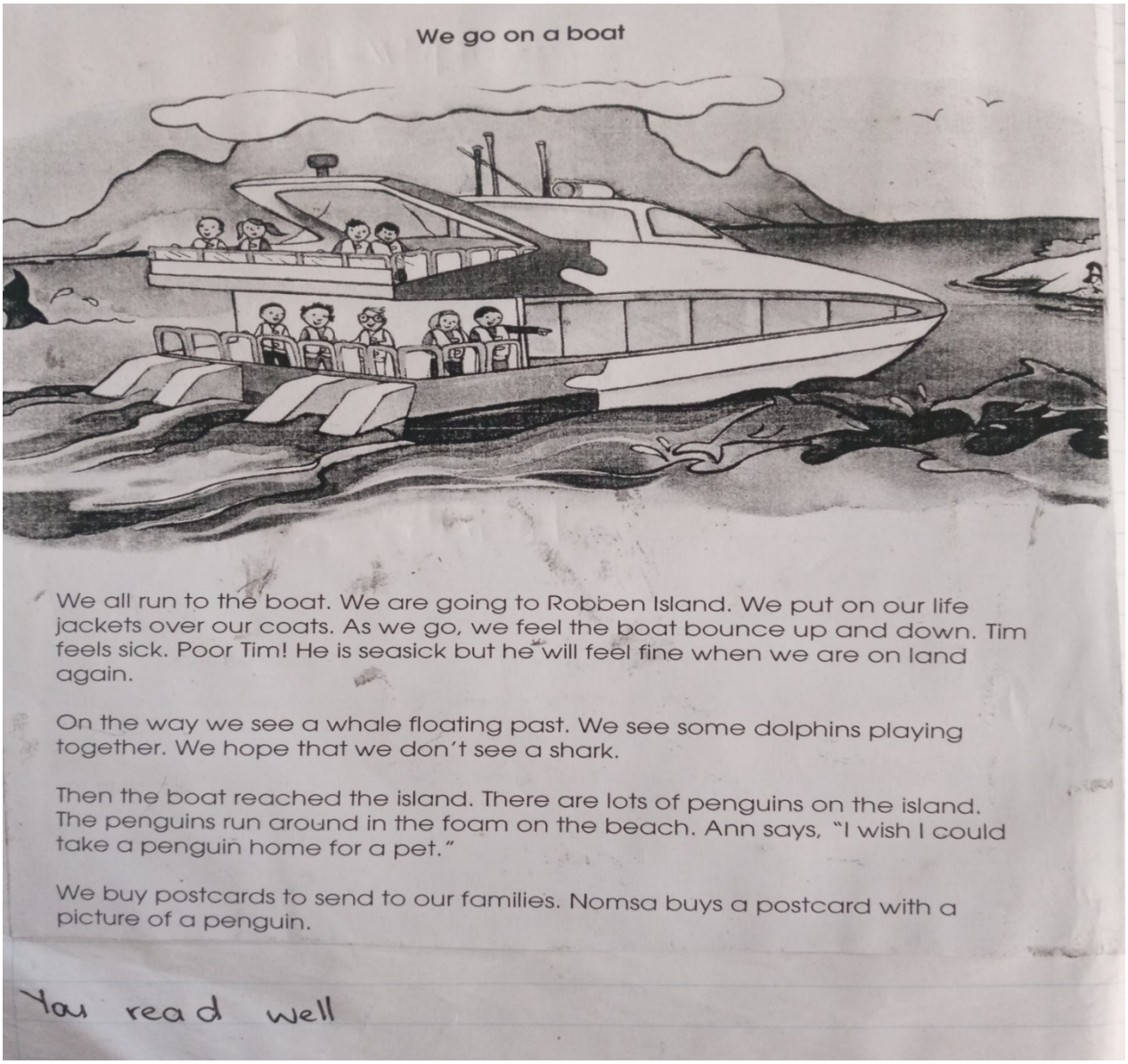
The lizard picked a yam and started on his way home but the tortoise was not done yet. He was going to carry as many yams as he could and maybe even more. Very soon, the farmer came and found the tortoise who was still busy collecting yams. By this time, the lizard was home, had eaten his yams and was taking a nap. The farmer grabbed the tortoise and asked him how he came to the cave. The tortoise confessed that the lizard had brought him there, so the farmer took tortoise to the lizard's house. There they found lizard lying on his back. The farmer asked the lizard if it was him who brought tortoise to his cave. The lizard was shocked and said it was not possible as he had been feeling unwell and lying on his back all day. The farmer grabbed the tortoise and threw him against the wall and the tortoise lay on the floor with a

broken shell. The tortoise cried out to the insects of the forest who helped him pickup and glue the pieces of his shell together. And that was how the tortoise ended up with a broken shell.

APPENDIX 14: WE GO ON A BOAT (PICTURE)



APPENDIX 15: WE GO ON A BOAT



We go on a boat

We all run to the boat. We are going to Robben Island. We put on our life jackets over our coats. As we go, we feel the boat bounce up and down. Tim feels sick. Poor Tim! He is seasick but he will feel fine when we are on land again.

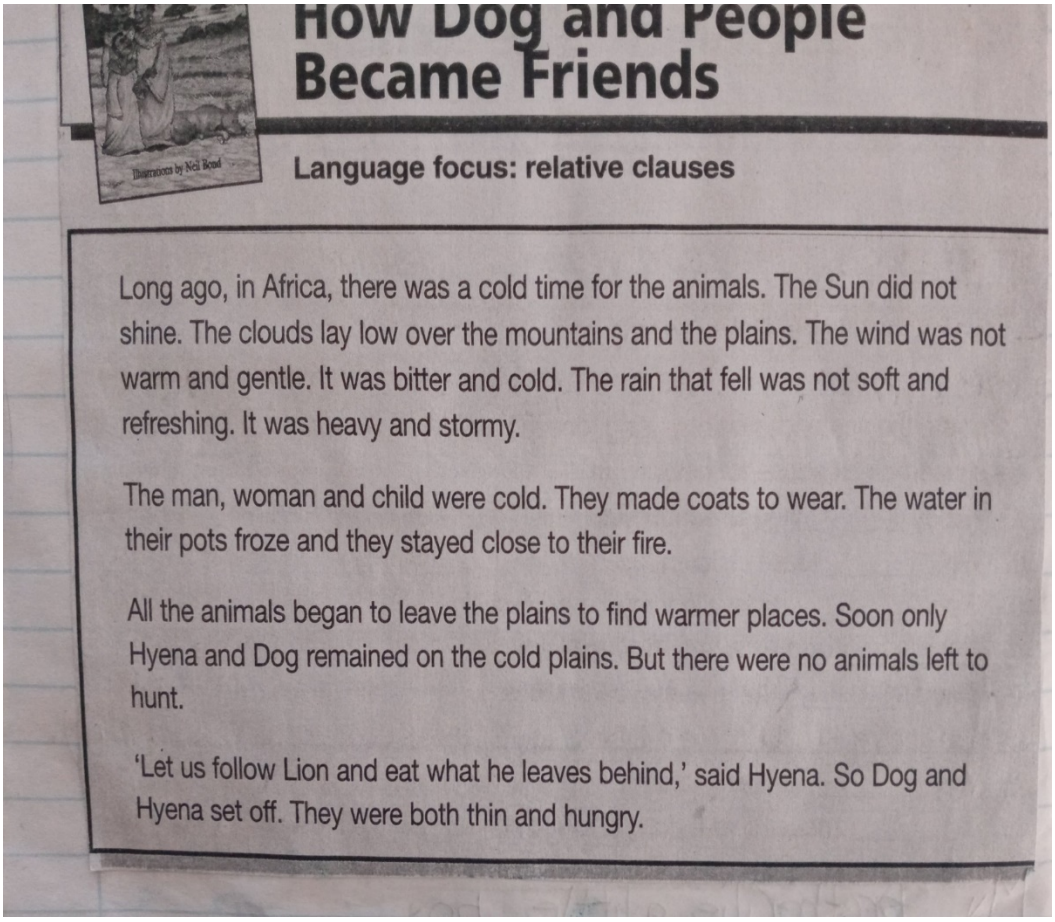
On the way we see a whale floating past. We see some dolphins playing together. We hope that we don't see a shark.

Then the boat reached the island. There are lots of penguins on the island. The penguins run around in the foam on the beach. Ann says, "I wish I could take a penguin home for a pet."

We buy postcards to send to our families. Nomsa buys a postcard with a picture of a penguin.

You read well

APPENDIX 16: HOW DOG AND PEOPLE BECAME FRIENDS



How Dog and People Became Friends

Language focus: relative clauses

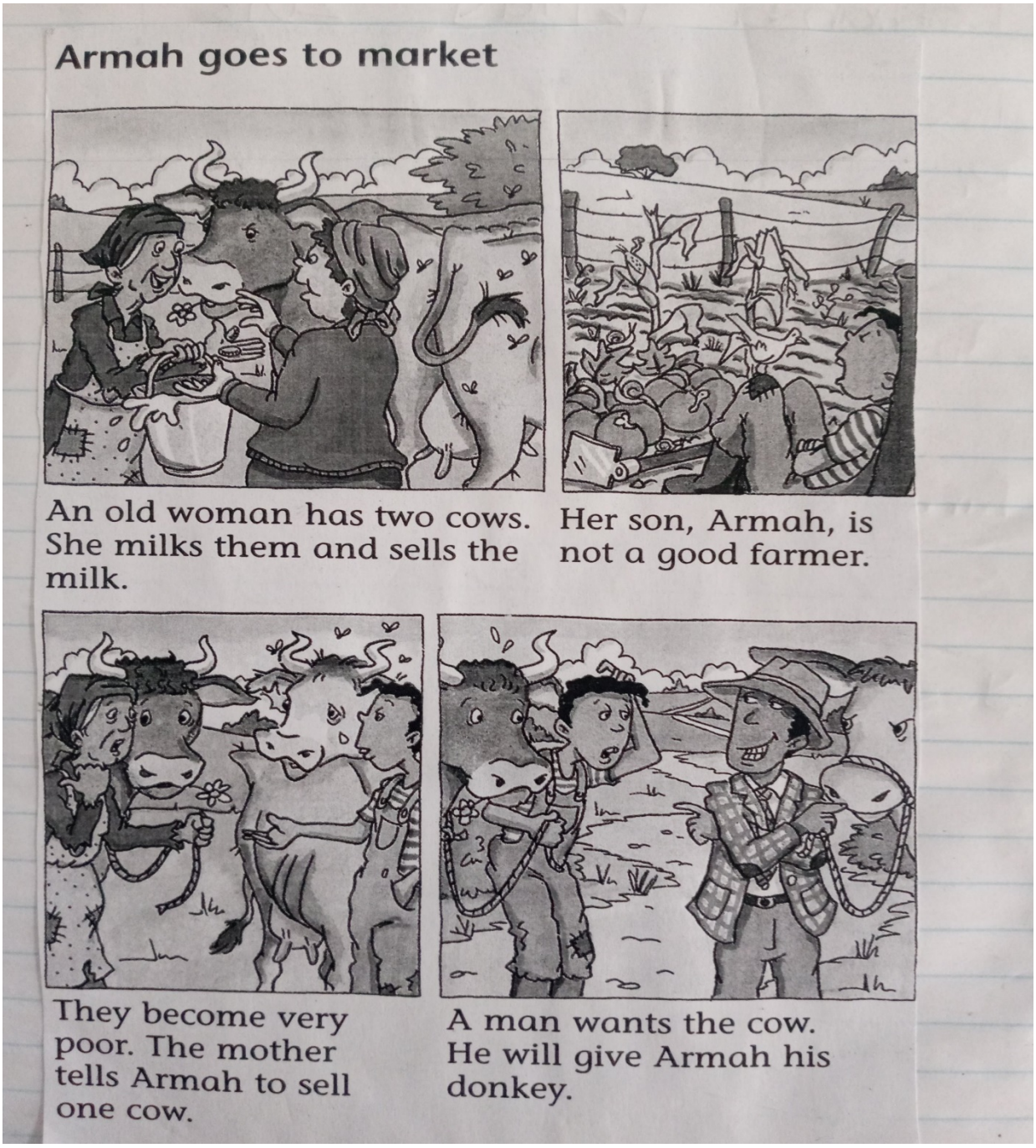
Long ago, in Africa, there was a cold time for the animals. The Sun did not shine. The clouds lay low over the mountains and the plains. The wind was not warm and gentle. It was bitter and cold. The rain that fell was not soft and refreshing. It was heavy and stormy.

The man, woman and child were cold. They made coats to wear. The water in their pots froze and they stayed close to their fire.

All the animals began to leave the plains to find warmer places. Soon only Hyena and Dog remained on the cold plains. But there were no animals left to hunt.

'Let us follow Lion and eat what he leaves behind,' said Hyena. So Dog and Hyena set off. They were both thin and hungry.

APPENDIX 17: ARMAH GOES TO MARKET



Another man gives Armah his little goat for the donkey.

Another man gives Armah his goose for the little goat.

The mother is angry because Armah did not sell the cow for money.

The goose lays many eggs. This makes the mother very happy.

How Zebras Got Their Stripes

This story happened a long time ago in Africa. One day, Baboon, who was very fierce, decided to leave the jungle tree where he lived. He wanted to live next to the river. He was so mean that he told all the other animals that the land belonged to him. Baboon stated he was the only one allowed to drink from the river. The animals were upset. They were sad because they needed water to survive. But all of them were afraid of Baboon. He had a big head with thick eyebrows and long teeth. He showed his teeth every chance he got to scare the other animals. They didn't know what to do. Zebra was young and brave. He was fearless and handsome in his pure white coat. In the old days, zebras had all white coats. Zebra said to the other animals, "I am not afraid of Baboon. I will tell him we are going to drink from the river." The next day, Zebra met with Baboon, but Baboon refused to talk to Zebra. So Zebra challenged Baboon to a fight. Baboon laughed. It had been a long time since he had lost a fight. They agreed that the loser of the fight would have to leave the jungle and river. He would have to live on the barren hill. The empty hill was not a place anyone wanted to live. They would meet the next morning in Baboon's yard next to the river.

The next day, Zebra came to Baboon's yard. Baboon had built a bonfire. Zebra's white coat glowed in the sun. It looked like Zebra was lit from inside his body. All the animals came to watch the fight. They knew that it would be difficult to beat Baboon. Baboon and Zebra were both strong and used all of their skills. They knew what they were good at. Zebra used his powerful legs to run at Baboon. But Baboon was very swift. He used his quickness to jump out of Zebra's way. Before Zebra could stop, he was suddenly close to the bonfire. He was so close that the heat from the fire began to burn him. Zebra turned around and kicked Baboon over the river and onto the empty hill. He wasn't injured, but his pride was hurt. He knew he had lost. The animals could drink from the river. Zebra won, but he was left with marks. The fire had burned long black stripes on his white coat. From that day on, all zebras had black stripes and were proud of them. They were a symbol that Zebra had fought and won to keep water free for all animals.

Grade 2

Playing in the leaves

It was a beautiful Autumn day and the sun was shining. The leaves had fallen off the trees. Jane, Billy and Max love Autumn. They like jumping into the pile of leaves. Jane likes the pretty colours. Billy likes to make big piles with the leaves. making piles can lot of fun. When the piles get big, he jump into them. Max just likes to hide in the leaves. Sometimes they wish that Autumn would last the whole year long.

Questions:

1. Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information

What season is it?

2. Making straightforward inferences with understanding

What colours do you think the leaves are?

3. Interpreting and integrating ideas and information

What does your garden look like in Autumn?

4. Evaluate and examine content; language and textual element

Do you agree that Autumn is the best season and why?

APPENDIX 20: THE DONKEY AND THE LITTLE DOG

Grade 3

The donkey and the little dog

A man had a little dog, and he was very fond of it. He would pat its head, and take it on his knee, and talk to it. Then he would give it little bits of food from his own plate.

A donkey looked in at the window and saw the man and the dog.

"Why does he not make a pet of me?" said the donkey.

"It is not fair. I work hard, and the dog only wags his tail, and barks, and jumps on his master's knee. It is not fair."

Then the donkey ran into the room. It brayed as loudly as it could, it wagged its tail so hard that it knocked over a jar on the table. Then it tried to jump on its master's knee.

The master thought the donkey was mad, and he shouted, "Help! Help!" Men came running in with sticks, and they beat the donkey till it ran out of the house, and they drove it back to the field.

"I only did what the dog does," said the donkey, "and yet they make a pet of the dog, and they beat me with sticks. It is not fair. "

Questions:

1. Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information

What kind of pet did the man have?

2. Making straightforward inferences with understanding

What is the difference between a pet and a wild animal?

3. Interpreting and integrating ideas and information

If you were the donkey, how would you feel? Why would you feel this way?

4. Evaluate and examine content; language and textual element

Would you agree that the man treated the donkey unfairly and why?

APPENDIX 21: A STRANGE VISITOR TO THE SCHOOL

Grade 3

A strange visitor to the school

The children were very busy working in class today. While they were reading and writing in our books, Bongi said her lunch was stolen, but they did not see anyone come into the classroom.

Then Sam said his book was torn although they never saw anyone touch his book.

Later they saw that their teacher's bunch of flowers was gone and they wondered what happened to it.

Then they saw who did it. A big goat came into the school, because the fence was broken. He was hungry so he started eating everything he found.

Luckily Ben, the dog chased him away. He ran after him on the road. Afterwards we all helped to fix the school fence.

Questions:

1. Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information

Who said her lunch was stolen?

2. Making straightforward inferences with understanding

Why do you think a goat is a strange visitor to the school?

3. Interpreting and integrating ideas and information

Have you ever felt unsafe at school? How did it make you feel?

4. Evaluate and examine content; language and textual element

Do you agree that it was good of everyone to help fix the school fence? Why do you think so?

APPENDIX 22: RABBIT AND MOLE

Grade 1

Rabbit and Mole

Rabbit was digging a new house with his strong front feet and long claws. At lunchtime he ate a carrot and had a snooze. While he was sleeping Mole poked him on the shoulder. 'Excuse me', Mole said. 'You are about to dig through part of my home. Please dig somewhere else.'

Questions:

1. Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information

What did Rabbit use to dig?

2. Making straightforward inferences with understanding

What does snooze mean?

3. Interpreting and integrating ideas and information

Has anyone tried to bully you? How did it make you feel?

4. Evaluate and examine content; language and textual element

Was this a happy or sad story – can you explain?

APPENDIX 23: THE NEW BIKE

Grade 3

The new bike

Chad's brother Thabo got a new bike for his tenth birthday. It was a bright and shiny red bike. Chad wished he had such a nice bike. One Saturday Chad asked Thabo if he could borrow the bike.

He wanted to go for a ride with Ann. Thabo said he should take good care of his bike.

Chad and Ann rode through the green bushes, under the tall trees, past the deep river and over the wooden bridge. The countryside was beautiful and green.

After they crossed the bridge they saw a lot of litter and broken bottles. Suddenly it became harder and harder for Chad to pedal. He looked down and saw that the back tyre was flat.

There were lots of broken bottles and glass on the ground. Poor Chad had to push the bike home and ask Thabo to help him fix the puncture.

Questions:

1. Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information

How did Thabo's new bike look?

2. Making straightforward inferences with understanding

What is meant by the word 'litter'?

3. Interpreting and integrating ideas and information

Have you borrowed something from someone and broke it? How did you feel?

4. Evaluate and examine content; language and textual element

What can you learn from the story?