



Cape Peninsula
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**The role of the teacher in developing reading comprehension skills in Grade 9
English Home Language learners.**

by

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ABSTRACT

The high number of poor performing learners in reading comprehension in South African schools is a concerning factor which calls for studies to mitigate this problem. Comprehension is considered a critical part of the reading process. Learners continue to struggle with reading comprehension and teachers continue to neglect it in their teaching (Klapwijk, 2015:1). President Cyril Ramaphosa, in his state of the nation address (SONA) in June 2019, acknowledged the dire need for teaching and learning of reading comprehension. This study was conducted to investigate and establish the role played by teachers in the teaching of reading comprehension skills to Grade 9 English Home Language learners. The study utilised the schema theory (Scott, 2001), the sociocultural theory of learning, and the Zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Four data sets were used, namely: document analysis Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and Annual Revised Teaching Plans (R-ATPs), questionnaires for learners, Interviews with teachers of English, and lesson observations. From the data collected and analysed, themes and patterns were established regarding the learners' experiences of the learning reading comprehension, and teachers indicated how they taught reading comprehension skills. The findings of the study indicated out that there is very little guidance in the CAPS document of how teachers have to approach teaching of explicit reading comprehension skills. It also emerged that instead of teaching reading comprehension skills, teachers test learners' answering skills. The findings point to the fact that teachers need re-training and assistance on how to explicitly teach reading comprehension to learners. The study contributes by providing guidance to Grade 9 English Home Language teachers on how they can approach the teaching of reading comprehension skills. Additionally, recommendations for policy formulation have been provided in order to equip in-service teachers and those who are still in training with the necessary skills and knowledge to teach reading comprehension.

Keywords: reading comprehension, English Home Language, Zone of Proximal Development, CAPS, R-ATP

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GLOSSARY

Acronyms/Abbreviations	Definition
ARTPs	Annual Revised Teaching Plans
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EHL	English Home Language
FAL	First Additional Language
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
MKO	More Knowledge Other
NRS	National Reading Strategy
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SONA	State of the Nation Address
TVETs	Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The focus of this study is on the role of the teacher in the development of the reading comprehension skills of Grade 9 learners. The learners who participated in this study were from two secondary schools in the Western Cape, South Africa and all were enrolled for English Home Language. The study focuses on Grade 9s as this grade is positioned at the end of the General Education and Training (GET) band, after which, learners move on to the Further Education and Training (FET) band. The Department of Education is exploring the possibility that after Grade 9, learners might choose to exit the mainstream school to study at Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges (TVETs) (South African News Agency, 2019). Therefore, it is imperative to ensure that they are fully equipped in Grade 9 to read with understanding.

1.2 Background of the study

The South African Government acknowledges the dire need for reading to be prioritised in schools (State of the Nation Address June 2019). In his State of the Nation Address (SONA), in June 2019, President Cyril Ramaphosa acknowledged that “early reading is the basic foundation that determines a child’s educational progress, through school, through higher education and into the workplace”. Comprehension skills are vital for learners to acquire in order to be able to understand all subjects across the curriculum. If one is unable to comprehend the material taught, then one is unable to learn (Krugel & Fourie 2014). Khaiyali, (2014:1) posits that “reading comprehension instruction is considered one of the major challenges that English Language teachers and students encounter”. This assertion indicates the need for researching how teachers develop learners’ reading comprehension skills, especially in Grade 9, which is a very important grade in the learners’ academic development. A systematic and explicit way of teaching reading comprehension skills could aid learning. According to Nurie (2017:109), “reading is central to learning and the ultimate goal of teaching reading is reading comprehension, a critical proficiency that has a considerable effect on the entire life of the learner”. Therefore it is imperative to teach reading comprehension skills to learners.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) conducts annual systemic tests in Languages and Mathematics to establish the level of numeracy and literacy of schools to render the support required. South Africa also participates in the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (The Centre for Global Education Monitoring Assessment, 2015). According to Beck and Condy (2017), the results of provincial, national and international tests that were written by South African learners, (grades 3, 6, and 9) in 2014,

indicated that half of the learners could not read, comprehend, or respond to basic comprehension questions. Literacy levels in South Africa are at a critically low level. Learners struggle to read with understanding (Krugel & Fourie, 2014). Many learners studying English Home Language and English First Additional Language struggle to paraphrase their responses and fail to interpret or give an opinion when the questions require them to do so (Cekiso & Madikiza, 2014). This calls for an urgent intervention to remedy the prevailing situation.

In South African schools, many learners whose first language is not English attend schools where English Home Language is taught. According to Dippenaar, Badroodien, Mashiyi and Matthews (2019), most learners in contemporary South Africa are taught or learn through a second language, namely English. Learners whose home language is not English encounter a myriad of mounting challenges when instructed in English at Home Language level. Hence the need for teaching comprehension skills to assist these learners.

Learning in a second language also brings other challenges, as learning a language also entails directly or indirectly learning the culture of that language. According to the national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement (2011:38), the notional time for English Home Language is five hours per week. For some of these learners, their contact with the language is in the classroom only (five periods of 55 minutes per week). Outside of the English class, other languages are used. These learners also live in communities where English is not the language of communication. According to Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2005:37), such learners barely master English as a language of learning and teaching. They are linguistically poorly equipped and struggle to master English at home language level. These circumstances present a challenge. Language teachers are challenged to identify innovative ways to teach learners to understand, read and use the LoLT proficiently.

Rule and Land (2017:1) contend that teaching practices must be reviewed. Reading with understanding was neglected during the apartheid education system in favour of reading aloud and reading fluently. (Allington, 2014:16) argues that emphasising oral reading speed results in “students who can read aloud faster and more accurately but whose silent reading comprehension has not improved”. Allington (2014:16) further argues that the development of oratory reading skills is easy for poorly trained teachers as compared to “reading with authentic cognitive engagement”, which requires learners to paraphrase what they have read. Reading should be seen as the “accumulation of information” and not merely “oratorical reading”.

The study does not focus on factors such as poverty, low literacy levels of parents, poor resourced schools or poorly qualified teachers. Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:3) list these factors as contributing to the poor performance of learners in reading comprehension. Moats (199) cited by Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:3) posit that:

Classroom teaching for reading instruction must be the central focus and should be considered the critical factor in preventing reading problems.

This implies that teachers of English must make the teaching of reading comprehension a priority in the planning for lessons as it might curb the poor reading comprehension by learners.

In this study, reference to home language does not refer to the learners' mother tongue but to the level of proficiency at which the language is taught such as the subject English Home Language. The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (South Africa Department of Education, 2011:8) states that Home Language and First Additional Language refer to "the levels of proficiency at which the language is offered and not the native (Home) or acquired language as an additional language". This study will identify key skills that teachers can focus on to assist the learners to cope with reading comprehension in English. These skills will benefit also their learning in other subjects across the curriculum.

1.3 Problem statement

Research shows that South Africa performed very poorly in international and national literacy tests over the last decades (Rule & Land, 2017:1). This may be indicative of underlying problems with reading comprehension. Klapwijk (2015) argues that "the ability to read is the cornerstone of everyday modern life". According to Van Wyk (2001:126), reading comprehension forms the pillar of the learning process. Attempting to learn without comprehension is a futile exercise. The results of the 2011 Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) are indicative of the difficulty South African learners have with comprehension skills. According to Zimmerman and Smit, (2014)), "teachers in the majority of schools may not understand how to develop learners' reading comprehension and may not even understand that comprehension involves much more than retrieval". This calls for a study to address the teachers' challenges. The performance of learners across the curriculum is hampered by their inability to comprehend and respond to the material examined.

1.4 Research questions

1.4.1 Main research question

The main research question for this study is:

What is the role of the teacher in developing comprehension skills in Grade 9 English Home Language learning?

1.4.2 Research sub questions

The sub-questions to be considered are:

- What reading comprehension skills do the teachers teach to Grade 9 English Home Language learners?
- What comprehension strategies do the teachers implement when teaching Grade 9 English Home Language?
- What teaching strategies do teachers implement when teaching Grade 9 English Home Language comprehension skills?
- How do the Grade 9 English Home Language learners experience the teaching of reading comprehension skills?

1.5 Aims and objectives of the study

The main aim of this study is to establish and understand the role played by teachers in developing Grade 9 learners' reading comprehension skills in English Home Language. The study will establish what reading comprehension skills are taught to Grade 9 English Home Language learners and the teaching strategies that Grade 9 teachers implement when teaching reading comprehension. The study will identify further the strategies implemented by teachers when teaching reading comprehension skills and determine how learners experience the teaching of reading comprehension. Finally, the study makes recommendations to policymakers regarding the teaching of reading comprehension and possible areas for future research..

1.6 Researcher's position

The researcher was an observer and did not participate in lessons during the process of observation in order to avoid influencing the dynamics of the setting. The written interviews were done online. According to Maree (2016:91) during observation "the researcher gets into the situation but focuses on his or her role as an observer in the situation". The researcher remains uninvolved and does not influence the outcomes of the observed activities. The role of the researcher is to observe the patterns, behaviours, values and beliefs of the participants.

1.7 Research methodology

Chapter 3 presents an in-depth discussion of the research methodology and the theoretical framework utilised to answer the research question by focusing on the role played by the teacher in the development of reading comprehension skills in grade 9 English Home language learners. The discussion focuses on site selection, participant selection, data collection methods, and data analysis. The section also discusses the trustworthiness of the findings and the ethical considerations.

1.8 Findings

The findings of the study are discussed in detail in chapter 4 of the study. It was established that there is a need to teach teachers how to teach reading comprehension skills to learners explicitly as well as re-training of teachers already in service on how to teach reading comprehension skills (see Chapter 4 for an in-depth discussion).

1.9 Contribution of the study

It is hoped that the research will provide guidelines to the teachers in the two schools on how to teach reading comprehension. The results will be shared with the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) to be used as a resource for the continuous development of teachers of English Home Language in the General Education and Training school phase in all schools across the province.

The researcher also hopes that the study will bring awareness to teachers that most of them do not explicitly teach reading comprehension skills to learners but test learners' abilities to respond to questions. Teachers may begin to reflect on their teaching methods and review the way they teach listening comprehension skills to learners. It is envisaged that the institutions that train teachers will instruct teachers in training on how to teach reading comprehension skills to learners.

1.10 Chapter division of the study

The research study is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

This chapter introduces the research topic, the background, the research problem, and the research questions. The goals and objectives of the study are discussed, and the chapter also outlines the chapter divisions of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In Chapter 2, a detailed review of relevant reading comprehension literature is done. The study is premised on Scott's, (2001) Schema Theory in teaching reading comprehension, Vygotsky's (1978) Theory of Sociocultural Learning and the Zone of Proximal Development (1978).

Chapter 3: Research methodology

Chapter 3 presents the research design, research methodology, and details of the four data collection methods that were used in the study. The chapter further provides the data analysis methods that were employed and explains how the trustworthiness and reliability of the findings were ensured.

Chapter 4: Presentation of data, findings, discussions, and analysis

In this chapter, the findings obtained from the four data collection methods are presented. The data were analysed manually, and themes were established and analysed using the theoretical framework and linked to the findings of the literature reviewed.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

In this chapter, conclusions are drawn from the research findings. The chapter offers recommendations for teaching reading comprehension skills, for policy formulation, and for further research.

1.11 Conclusion

This research study is aimed at establishing the role played by teachers in developing the reading comprehension skills of Grade 9 English Home Language learners. The research was guided by the main research question and research sub-questions. The findings of the study pointed to the fact that there is a need for teachers in service and those in training, to be trained on how to teach comprehension skills explicitly.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of current literature on teaching and learning of reading comprehension in the senior phase at Grade 9 English Home Language level. The first section of the chapter defines reading comprehension and discusses the importance and the relevance of reading comprehension. The chapter also explores various definitions of reading comprehension and its role in learning. Additionally, related key concepts are explained within this section. The second section reviews reading comprehension in the South African context. The third section of the review examines the role of the language teachers in South African schools. The chapter concludes by looking at two theories that are utilised in the teaching of reading comprehension, the Schema Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning, which are used as the theoretical framework and the lens of the study.

2.2 What is reading comprehension in the senior phase?

Reading and comprehension are interrelated. It is difficult to separate one from the other. Current research provides a myriad of definitions regarding reading comprehension. This section explores a number of those definitions to establish an understanding of what reading comprehension is. The definitions provided are not exhaustive but suffice in illuminating the concept for the purposes of this study.

The Rand Reading Study Group (Snow, 2002:11) defines reading comprehension as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language". Snow (2002) states that reading comprehension comprises three stages which involve questions in pre-reading during reading and post-reading. Firstly, the reader must ask questions about what to expect from the text. Secondly, during the reading process, the reader identifies the main ideas and the purpose of the text. The reader must ask questions to further "organise" what they are learning.

Reading is multifaceted and complex. The purpose of reading is for comprehension. Goodman and Goodman, (2009:92) argue that "the study of reading is the study of reading comprehension." Comprehension is a process of reading and not a product of reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996:156). Reading is a strategic process wherein cues from the passage are used in conjunction with the reader's prior knowledge to predict, monitor the predictions and deduce meaning from the text. Block and Duffy (2008:29) argue that comprehension is a "fluid process of predicting, monitoring and constructing meaning from

the text". Comprehension is a result of interaction between the reader and context (Edwards & Turner, 2009:63). Comprehension involves decoding, comprehending, responding and metalinguistic or metacognitive knowledge.

Therefore it is imperative for learners to be able to use their prior knowledge, integrate it with the texts that they read and process the information for comprehension. Teachers should ensure that the selected reading material is within the learners' scope of understanding and experience. This helps learners to tap into the knowledge that they have and integrate it with newly acquired knowledge to make meaning of what they are reading.

2.2.1 The learning and teaching of reading comprehension

One critical element in the reading process is comprehension. According to Klapwijk (2015:1), "comprehension is a critical part of the reading process, yet learners continue to struggle with it and teachers continue to neglect it in their teaching". This comment indicates the need for further research on reading comprehension to assist learners. This research is prompted and motivated by such studies which highlight the challenges that the teaching and learning of reading comprehension present. Dreyer and Nel (2003) postulate that reading with comprehension is difficult for some learners. It is important for teachers to know which comprehension skills to teach to learners in order to help the learners to read with understanding. One of the skills considered as the most critical skills in learning is reading. According to Grabe (1991:375) "reading is considered as the most important skill in academic contexts". Klapwijk (2015) corroborates Grabe's (1991) assertion that reading comprehension is critically important by stating that "reading is probably one of the most important linguistic skills that need to be developed in young children". This study will attempt to establish how teachers can assist in developing learners' competence in reading.

Even though there are clear indications that teaching reading strategies explicitly is beneficial to learners, most teachers do not do so (Klapwijk & Van der Walt, 2011:27). This is a concern that needs to be addressed. (Liang & Dole, 2006:742) claim that "if any formal comprehension instruction exists in schools, and where comprehension is taught, teachers generally claim that they are still not sure how to teach comprehension and are often not aware of existing comprehension instructional frameworks for teaching". There is a need for teachers to be professionally developed in the implementation of teaching comprehension skills. According to Pretorius (2000), "the high failure rate at matric (Grade 12) level is partly ascribed to the lack of reading comprehension, which is associated with the use of ineffective and inefficient reading strategies". Intervening at lower grades may be beneficial to learners.

Krugel and Fourie (2014:1) argue that there is a direct correlation between the language of instruction and how learners perform. They further claim that many teachers of English in South Africa do not have the basic language skills to be effective teachers of English. This assertion implies that the teachers' pedagogical knowledge might influence the learners' performance. This suggests that, with suitable training of teachers, there is a likelihood of improved achievement by learners. According to the National Reading Panel (2000: 3), comprehension can be improved by "teaching students strategically when they encounter barriers to comprehension when reading". It is envisaged that the results of this study can be utilised by practising teachers and those still in training to teach reading comprehension skills to learners.

According to (Zimmerman, 2014) there are many publications regarding learners' poor literacy performance, but very little literature has been published to explain the way teaching and learning unfold in the classroom, and the subsequent influence on either academic success or failure. The findings by Zimmerman (2014) call for more research on the teachers' approaches and their pedagogical knowledge in teaching reading comprehension skills to Grade 9 learners.

Cekiso and Madikiza (2014) argue that for teachers to change their way of teaching, there must be evidence which clearly illustrates that the explicit teaching of strategies in reading comprehension yields positive results. According to Cekiso and Madikiza (2014:1), "educators' knowledge about the reading strategies used by their learners is important for planning relevant lessons and also for making informed decisions about whether to teach reading strategies explicitly or implicitly". This study investigates whether the teachers use explicit or implicit methods to teach reading comprehension in Grade 9 English Home Language classrooms. The study also explores teachers' practices in the classroom to ascertain the reasons for learners' apparent lack of reading comprehension skills.

2.2.2 The importance and relevance of reading comprehension

It is expected of all learners to be able to read with understanding to benefit from the education offered in schools. Reading comprehension remains an integral part of learning across the curriculum. To access any written information, students or individuals must be able to read with understanding (Bharuthram, 2012). It remains imperative that learners are taught reading strategies and to read with understanding. Bharuthram (2014:204) posits that "reading is the essence of all formal education". There is no doubt that the inability to read with comprehension hampers one's progress in learning.

Ria and Ilma, (2017) make a bold assertion that one's ability to read enhances one's life as it gives one a broader understanding of everything. This emphasises the importance of reading comprehension. There are several positive things that are associated with the ability to read such as enriching one's mind, by providing a sense of values and ideas. The ability to read is a fundamental necessity for full participation in one's society and economy. This undoubtedly places reading comprehension as one of the critical and fundamental pillars of teaching and learning.

According to Bharuthram (2012:206), reading comprehension enables learners to analyse, critique, evaluate and synthesise information from a variety of sources. To access information, learners should be able to read with understanding. Grabe, (1991:389) argues that "reading is the essence of all forms of education". Naidoo and Reddy, (2012:556) argue that reading makes one able to meet "the economic, social, cultural, digital and political demands of a rapid globalization era". The comment indicates how critical reading comprehension is. Reading enhances the lives of the readers as it presents them with a greater understanding on everything (Ria & Ilma; 2017:101).

Reading is a linguistic skill that must be developed in learners to enable them to succeed at school. (Nel, Dreyer and Klopper, 2006:95) boldly state that "reading is a skill upon which every success in every academic area is based". There is a link between one's reading ability and academic performance. Learners must read with understanding in order to be able to obtain information and respond to questions. Bharuthram (2012:205) concurs with Nel et al (2006) that poor reading skills lead to poor academic performance. Poor performance is a result of a lack of reading with understanding. Pretorius, (2000) argues that "reading constitutes the very process whereby learning occurs". He further argues that reading is a critical factor in the learning process as an enabler for one to access information independently and to be able to construct meaning and acquire new knowledge.

Scott (2010) argues that, regardless of the ability of the learners, reading remains the cornerstone of instruction. It is the foundation for future progress in all facets of life. According to Lekota (2014). reading comprehension can reduce low literacy levels since reading is key to the learning process. Reading competence is of crucial importance to children for their success in school. The higher the learners progress in their grades, the more advanced the reading that will be required of them. If they have poor reading skills, it means that they will struggle with reading material across the curriculum.

Balfour (2002) posits that when learners struggle to read well, it interferes with their progress and self-esteem. He further argues that such learners find it difficult to adhere to instructions

and to respond appropriately to examination questions which leads to poor performance. An inability to read may condemn a learner to failure.

It is critical to note that reading comprehension must be emphasised across the curriculum. According to Rutzler (2020), “Reading comprehension is crucial for basic survival in the education system and the requirement to comprehend what you read is omnipresent in every student’s life from Math class to History”. Undoubtedly, one can conclude that reading comprehension remains central in the teaching and learning process.

2.2.3 The development of reading comprehension skills

The development of reading comprehension skills is not a linear process but rather a much more multi-faceted process. Reading comprehension development depends on several factors related to the reader, the text, and the act of comprehension (Snow, 2002). The interaction of these three elements makes reading possible.

Teaching reading comprehension poses several challenges to teachers which lead to the demotivation of learners and hampering the learners’ progress in reading. Klapwijk and Van der Walt (2011:3) state that:

while ample attention is paid to the professional development of teachers for teaching reading in South Africa, little attention is paid to the professional development of comprehension instruction. As a result, it seems little, if any, formal comprehension instruction exists in schools, and teachers claim that they are not aware of existing comprehension instructional frameworks for teaching.

According to Duke, Pearson, Strachan, and Billman (2011), there are ten essential elements in fostering the development of reading comprehension.

These elements are:

(i) *Building disciplinary and world knowledge*

It is important for learners to be exposed to a wide pool of different literature to read to broaden their knowledge of the world. Cervetti, Pearson, Bravo, and Barber (2006) argue that even though it stands to reason that exposure to a wide variety of texts results in more world knowledge, “many approaches take on the goal of building knowledge directly by situating knowledge-building goals alongside reading comprehension or literacy goals”. According to Hirsch (2003), “when someone comprehends a text, background knowledge is typically integrated with the literal word meanings of the text to a coherent model of the whole situation implied by the text”.

(ii) *Providing exposure to a volume and range of texts*

Taboada and Guthrie (2004:87) postulate that comprehension strategies cannot be taught in isolation. Learners must be exposed to rich content. Furthermore, learners who comprehend better generally read more than their struggling counterparts. The success in developing reading comprehension is related to the learners interacting with texts both in and outside of the classroom. Neuman (1999) claims that children's early literacy is boosted by engagement with texts at child-care centres. Hoffman, Sailors and Duffy, (2004) state that it is not only about increasing the volume of the books that learners are exposed to, but the quality and range of books as well. A wide range of books will ensure that learners are exposed to various genres. The books must be well written and should not be too easy or too difficult. The texts must challenge learners to think.

(iii) *Providing motivating texts and contexts for reading*

According to Brophy (2013), "motivation is highly correlated with learning in general and reading comprehension in particular". Ainley (2006), argues that motivated reading behavior stems from expectations of success by learners. Such learners, even when faced with difficulty in reading will persist because of self-efficacy. Texts that involve learners' interests contribute to motivation. Reading activities that allow learners to engage in reading for authentic purposes are motivating. Teachers should give tasks that stimulate the interest of learners to read. Duke, Pearson, Strachan, and Billman (2011:61) state that the varying levels of interest by learners in reading comprehension are caused by their interest or lack of it. Learners' background knowledge and their ability to link what they know with the new knowledge could be the other factors.

(iv) *Teaching strategies for comprehension*

Duke and Pearson (2009), argue that, to develop learners as strategic readers, teachers must teach them "why, how, and when to apply certain strategies". Some teachers may prefer to teach one strategy at a time while others may use multiple strategies simultaneously. Teaching students to read strategically increases their comprehension.

(v) *Teaching text structures*

Reading comprehension is derived from a variety of genres. It is imperative that learners are aware of the types of texts that they are dealing with. According to Gestern, Fuchs, Williams and Baker (2001), "direct instruction around the structures commonly found in different

genres also benefits students, especially those students who may struggle with reading comprehension.”

(vi) *Engaging students in discussion*

According to Langer (2001), “effective teachers of reading comprehension tend to employ classroom discussion to help readers work together to make meaning from the texts they encounter”. Comprehension is an active process of making meaning. The different methods of discussion may vary in their degree of effectiveness, but learners must be given the opportunity to engage each other in reading comprehension. According to Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessey and Alexander (2009), teachers who utilise higher order questioning when learners hold discussions, encourage greater rates of active participation by learners.

(vii) *Building vocabulary and language knowledge*

The building of vocabulary and language knowledge plays an important role in the development of reading comprehension. Hirsch (2003:16) argues that “vocabulary knowledge correlates strongly with reading (and oral) comprehension”. The high-performing learners are said to know twice as many words as the low-performing ones. This is at the first grade at school and the gap keeps growing as they proceed to higher grades. By the time they reach the twelfth grade, high performing learners know approximately four times as many words as the low performing learner (Hirsch, 2003). It is imperative to help learners acquire vocabulary and language knowledge. Hirsch (2003) states that “vocabulary experts agree that adequate reading comprehension depends on a person already knowing between 90 and 95% of the words in a text”. Building vocabulary is critical in learners’ ability to succeed in reading comprehension.

(viii) *Integrating reading and writing*

Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000) argue that the same cognitive processes that happen occur in writing occur during reading. Hence, the two mutually reinforce one another. The implication of this observation could be that integrating reading and writing could be more effective in reading comprehension. Parodi (2007) argues that “children’s writing abilities have been shown to predict later reading comprehension”. Combining the instruction of the two domains reading and writing can promote reading comprehension in learners. Through talking and writing, learners can present content that is comprehensive (Parodi, 2007).

(ix) *Observing and assessing*

There are various ways to understand a text. Different learners bring different strengths and weaknesses. Some learners may possess relevant prior knowledge related to the text which may compensate for “poor clarifying and fix-up strategies”. There should be different ways of instructing and assessing learners depending on their comprehension strengths and weaknesses.

(x) *Differentiation of instruction*

Learners’ strengths and weaknesses are as varied as there are individuals in a class. It is important that differentiated strategies are employed. The whole class instruction may not be helpful as the learners will have different challenges. Connor, Morrison, Fishman, Ponitz, Glasney, Underwood, Piasta, Crowe and Schatschneider, (2009). suggest that “much comprehension instruction be conducted in small groups or individually based on students’ needs”. It is possible to teach learners in the same group but to give them different texts according to their level of reading comprehension competence. The complexity of comprehension processes and variation in the readers means that differentiation should be a priority (Duke et al., 2011:82).

When learners have been exposed to some or all of the ten elements discussed above, there are high chance that they will succeed in reading comprehension. They will be able to apply the strategies that they have been taught.

2.2.4 Teaching strategies and methods of teaching reading comprehension in the senior phase.

Teachers are critical role players in helping learners to develop reading comprehension skills, in particular the complex cognitive tasks (Duke, Pearson, Strachan & Billman 2011:51). According to the National Reading Panel (Snow, 2002:3), “the idea behind explicit instruction of text comprehension is that comprehension can be improved by teaching students to use specific cognitive strategies or to reason strategically when they encounter barriers to comprehension when reading”. Reading comprehension skills and strategies must be taught explicitly to learners (Bouazid & Le Roux, 2011). According to Klapwijk and Du Toit (2009: 80), teaching strategies must be done directly and intensively to enable learners to independently use the strategies. There are various strategies that can be employed in teaching reading comprehension. It is not possible to utilise all strategies, but one must select those that are appropriate for the groups or individuals taught.

A strategy is “a conscious procedure carried out with the purpose of solving a problem”, (Bouzaid & Le Roux, 2010:44). Brown (2007:119) defines strategies as the “specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned design for controlling and manipulating certain information”. Pani (2004) posits that reading strategies as “the mental operations involved when readers approach a text effectively to make sense of what they read.” Good readers apply strategies more effectively than poor readers. Brown (2007:306) further indicates that “reading comprehension is a matter of developing appropriate, efficient, comprehensive strategies”. Brown further indicates that meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies are best suited for reading comprehension. According to Duke and Cartwright (2021:532) “there is an extensive body of scientific research showing that teaching comprehension strategies improves reading, even in young students, in students with learning disabilities, and in whole class formats”. Duke and Cartwright’s comment points to the importance of teachers purposefully teaching comprehension strategies to learners to improve learners’ reading comprehension skills.

Teachers can utilise several methods to teach the various strategies. According to Khaiyali (2017:62), strategies are grouped into three phases: Before Reading (establishing meaning-making), During Reading (maintaining meaning-making processes) and After Reading (consolidating meaning-making). However, Klapwijk (2015:4) posits that it “does not imply that the meaning process consists of a set of sequential before, during and after steps”. The phases are meant to provide structure and assistance to teachers who are not yet well acquainted with the steps of teaching reading comprehension.

2.2.4.1 Reading comprehension strategies

There are many factors that may influence the reading comprehension of learners. Learners’ prior knowledge may interfere with their interpretation and understanding of a text. Al-Issa, (2006) contends that readers bring knowledge, emotions, and culture into a text. Whatever is read is then understood within the context of the learner’s prior knowledge which may not be relevant necessarily.

According to the Rand Reading Study Group (Snow, 2002:5), teachers often assume that learners learn to comprehend merely by reading or writing tests. However, the assumption is false as most of the learners do not actually understand what they read. Since reading is a complex exercise, teaching children to comprehend is a challenge.

Reading comprehension is defined as “understanding the text that is read or the process of constructing meaning from a text” (Snow, 2002:5). Fahriany, (2014) points out that comprehension, is to make sense of a text. It is a process of using a reader’s existing prior

knowledge (schemata) to interpret texts to construct meaning. According to Cain and Oakhill (2007):

text comprehension in reading implies multicomponent skills, from basic skills involving low-level word reading processes such as phonological awareness, decoding and written recognition through to higher-order comprehension process that relate to the construction of coherence and specifically involve the making of inferences and, more generally, background knowledge about text to be read.

Cekiso and Madikiza (2014), state that there are three classifications of reading strategies, namely, pre-reading strategies, during-reading strategies, and post-reading strategies. This is similar to research by Ria and Ilma (2017) who refer to the instructional reading technique called *Know-Want-Learn (KWL)*.

This study will focus on reading comprehension skills namely skimming and scanning, prediction, inferring word meanings, and summarising (CAPS 2011:26-29). According to Israel and Duffy (2014), a teacher may narrow down strategies and skills to benefit the class.

1. The pre-reading phase

Klapwijk (2015:5) argues that pre-reading activities are a necessity, especially in South African schools, as most of the learners come from print-poor environments. According to Al-Isa (2006), pre-reading strategies activate the learner's knowledge about a topic and anticipation of what the reading comprehension is about. The pre-reading phase is a critical period for building background knowledge. Saricoban (2002) posits that the pre-reading stage builds a bridge between the reading passage and the learner's prior knowledge and interest. Khaiyali (2014:62) identifies two purposes of the pre-reading phase: increasing students' interest in reading and providing some facilitating strategic goals.

(i) Determining the Purpose

It is important for learners to know the purpose of reading comprehension. When learners are taught to think consciously about the purpose of what they are reading, it aids in their understanding of the text, Klapwijk (2015:3) states that "by determining the purpose before reading learners' thinking is channeled in a specific and focused manner". Teachers can use guiding questions to help learners determine the purpose of reading the text. Some questions that teachers can use as suggested by Khaiyali, (2017), are:

- Can you think why you are going to read this text?

- Can you identify the purpose/s for reading this text?
- What are the most important and what are the less important purposes?

There is a need for teachers to train the learners on how to ask questions concerning the text to be read. (Khaiyali, 2014:63). The purpose of reading comprehension can be for enjoyment, information, or academic purposes. If learners understand these purposes, it could help them to focus on specific information in the reading comprehension exercise. According to Klapwijk (2015), pre-reading questions help learners to focus on determining whether their expectations are met by the text.

(ii) Activating Prior Knowledge

Erten and Razi (2009) state that “when readers bring relevant background knowledge to the reading process, they can allocate more attentional space for textual analysis and interpretation.” This suggests that learners’ prior knowledge assists them to connect with the new textual evidence and making up meaning. Activating learners’ prior knowledge is to help them build meaning about what they are about to read. Khaiyali (2014) suggests that teachers should use information relevant to what learners have read to prepare them to understand the text. When using this strategy, much information should be gathered about the topic under discussion.

Klapwijk (2015:5) advocates for translanguaging at this stage. It would allow learners from all backgrounds to participate freely without any language barriers. Teachers should ask learners questions that will help them to think about important ideas that can help them understand what they are reading. Adler (2004) states that cooperative learning through small groups or pairs helps learners understand better. Khaiyali (2014) affirms the idea of teachers giving learners an opportunity to engage in groups or pairs and recommends the use of short videos, pictures, or any aids to assist with the activation of prior knowledge.

(iii) Predicting

Predicting is an important component in reading comprehension. Lubliner (2001) argues that “predictions help learners set a purpose for reading and anticipate what they will read.” Harvey and Goudvis (2007) refer to predicting as “the students’ abilities to make thoughtful guesses of what they are reading”. The process of predicting is supported by prior knowledge. Teachers can use various ways to teach learners the strategy to predict.

A title of a reading comprehension text can be used to make predictions of what the passage is about. Keywords in a text can be used to guide the predicting activity. Khaiyali (2014:63)

suggests that pictures in the story or the cover of a story also can help guide learners in predicting the subject of the reading comprehension. Klapwijk (2015: 6) points out that teachers can also “create a Prediction Guides instead of asking learners to make predictions”. These can be True or False statements that learners may use in the During Reading Phase. They can confirm whether they were correct in their predictions. It aids to sustain learners’ interest throughout the reading. According to Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2007:79) knowledge of the text type can serve as a guide to predicting what the reading comprehension is about.

Lubliner (2001) asserts that predictions assist learners to set a purpose for reading and to anticipate what they will read.

2. The during reading phase

AD-Heisat, Mohammed, Sharmella and Issa (2009) state that the during-reading phase assists learners to cope with the “greyer areas of the text such as identifying the main areas of the text.” At this phase of reading comprehension, both the teacher and the learner are active participants in the reading activity (Klapwijk, 2015:6). Learners monitor their own understanding and teachers monitor the learners’ reading. Teachers teach learners to ask themselves if they understand what they are reading. Klapwijk (2015:6) posits that in the “during reading phase, “parents and teachers get an opportunity to study their learners carefully and learn more about their behaviour and problems”. Learners who find that they do not comprehend what they are reading can use the “fix-it” strategy (Klapwijk, 2015:6). The “fix-it” strategy entails learners slowing down their reading, looking back, re-reading or asking for the teacher’s help. According to Klapwijk (2015:6) good readers can tell that they no longer understand and can stop and apply the “fix-it” strategy while poor readers continue reading without understanding. The teacher’s intervention is very critical to ensure that learners understand what they are reading. Skimming, scanning, finding specific words and identifying phrases in a reading comprehension are some of the skills that can be taught.

(i) Scanning

According to the Manual for Teaching English Across the Curriculum (2014:27) “scanning is a reading technique that is used to find specific information quickly”. The process of scanning involves finding and recognising information in chunks in a passage. Before reading a passage in detail, one needs to scan to get a general perspective of what the passage might be about. Day (1993) argues that scanning is vital for learners as it helps them to access

details in a text. Scanning entails moving the eyes quickly across the text in search of key words or phrases to formulate ideas about a passage.

Teachers can train learners to identify the main points. It is important to teach learners how to focus on key words in a text which enables them to identify themes in the passage. Information unrelated to what one is scanning for should be ignored. In teaching scanning, the teacher should be able to model and give guided practice to the learners until they are able to implement the strategies independently.

(ii) *Skimming*

According to the Manual for Teaching English Across the Curriculum: Book 2 (2014:27) “skimming is a reading strategy to quickly gather information”. One does not read every word but attempts to locate important information. The reading speed during skimming is fast. It is three or four times faster than the regular reading speed (Manual for Teaching Across the Curriculum, 2014:27). Skimming enables the learner to have an idea of what the writer’s intention is. According to Brown (2007:13), “skimming is the process of rapid coverage of reading matter to determine its gist or main idea. Skimming entails locating specific facts and details. It enables one to get a general overview of what one will be reading. According to the Centre for Cognitive Development (1995), learners can focus on the title and subheadings, illustrations and their captions, check the different fonts used, reading the first and the last paragraph and reading the first sentences of each paragraph to have an idea of what the passage is about.

Surveying before reading in detail is an important strategy to enhance reading comprehension. According to Day (1993), skimming is necessary to access information without reading the text in detail.

The Centre for Cognitive Development (1995:3) identifies the elements one should focus on when skimming:

- The title and subheadings;
- The font that has been used, written either in bold, italics or capitals; and
- The introductory paragraph and concluding paragraph as authors often summarise the ideas in these paragraphs.

Teaching learners, the skimming technique can help enhance their understanding as they will have an idea of the content before they fully engage a text.

3. The post-reading phase

Ad-Heisat et al., (2009) argues that the post reading phase activities enhance readers' deep understanding of the content read. Learners can build further connections and expand their knowledge of the subject. In the post reading phase learners draw conclusions. (Cekiso, 2007).

(i) *Summarising*

Guthrie, Wigfield and Perencevich (2004) refer to summarising as "forming an abstract representation of text after reading it all". According to Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornill and Joshni (2007), the strategy of summarising refers to the "reader's dismissal of unnecessary information, selection of topic sentences and maintenance of the sequence of events". Summarising is an important skill that teachers need to teach explicitly to Grade 9 learners. According to the Oxford Dictionary, (1989) to summarise, means "to express the most important points of the argument in a short and clear form". The learner must determine what the main idea of the text is. Learners need to be able to paraphrase the main ideas chronologically in point form or in a précis form. Modelling by the teacher may be helpful to learners to master this skill. Summarising helps learners to focus on material that is important and to discard what is not needed.

Learners can be taught clearly the difference between summarising and retelling what they read. Teachers can teach learners the skill of deleting redundant material, replacing a list of items with a single word, composing of a word replacing individual parts of an action, selection of topic sentences and inventing a topic sentence if one is not available" (Duke & Pearson 2002:221). The selection of a text that learners can relate to is critical (Guthrie 2004). Guiding questions can be used to help learners extract the required information from texts.

Teachers should provide clear instructions to learners. Adler (2004) provides three examples of instructions that teachers can use in directing the summary activity:

- Identify and generate main ideas;
- Connect the main or central ideas; and
- Eliminate unnecessary information.

According to Israel and Duffy (2014:39) understanding the meanings of words is critical for reading comprehension. Teachers should expose learners to various texts to enable them to

acquire more vocabulary from varied sources. One can conclude that the larger the vocabulary one acquires, the better the chances of reading with comprehension.

2.3 The teaching of English in South African secondary schools

English remains predominantly the language of choice for teaching and learning in South African schools. Teaching of English is critical as it is mandatory for every learner to pass the subject. According to the National Research and Development (NRCCRD), (2000) most schools choose not to use learners' home language as the LoLT but to use English instead. The dominance of English as the LoLT in schools, indicates a myriad of factors such as "parental preference, tradition and capacity".

The English language is associated with:

- Economic growth;
- It is a global language;
- It is useful for future studies, as tertiary education tends to be offered in English; and
- It is a common language in the working environment.

Some learners who are not English home language speakers, choose to access their education through English as a medium of instruction as the language is associated with prestige and power. However, there are arguments that the use of English as LoLT by black learners is often problematic and may limit the learners' educational possibilities (Nomlomo & Vuzo, 2014). Learners are unable to fully express themselves because of the limitations with the language.

2.3.1 Learning through a second language

Globally, an estimated 700 million children must learn through English as medium of instruction, even though it is not their mother tongue (Crystal: 1997). This presents a hurdle to many learners which may curtail their academic progress. English plays an important role in most South African schools as it is the LoLT across the curriculum. According to the Department of Basic Education Annual School Survey (2007:13), 65% of learners in the school system use English as a medium of learning. That alone puts English at a position of power and authority as a subject of influence.

According to Masitsa (2004) and Neeta and Klu (2013), the medium of instruction forms the basis of all learning. This implies that if learners struggle with the LoLT, they are bound to

struggle with their work. Learners are likely to struggle with interpreting reading comprehension tests if they do not understand what they are reading.

Firstly, it is difficult for most learners to paraphrase work when required to do so. Secondly, learners find it difficult to interpret sentences or give an opinion when required. According to Beck and Condy (2017:1), participation in classes is limited by the lack of reading comprehension across the curriculum. Krugel and Fourie (2014:224) argue that English second language learners might experience problems when attempting to process reading material as they have a restricted reading vocabulary and a limited understanding of English grammar. This assertion indicates the challenges that learning through a second language poses to learners. This study will attempt to explore ways in which teachers can assist learners to master reading comprehension skills and to read with understanding.

Schools comprise a diverse population of learners from various language backgrounds and foreign descent. The presence of foreign students further complicates the already complex situations in schools. In some of the multilingual schools, students are taught through “code mixing and code-switching practices in the spoken communication but expected to read and write in English” (Heugh, 2013). Therefore it is imperative for teachers to improve their pedagogical knowledge to be able to respond to the various challenges encountered by learners in developing adequate reading comprehension skills. When reading comprehension skills in the LoLT are taught explicitly to learners, their performance might improve in all subjects across the curriculum.

2.3.2 Current teaching practices of reading comprehension in South African schools

A lack of explicit teaching of reading comprehension skills in schools may lead to poor performance by learners in understanding reading comprehension. According to Balfour (1999), poor teaching of reading comprehension skills results in poor performance by learners. De Wet (2002) and Janks (2014) corroborate Balfour’s assertion and state that some English teachers might not have the necessary language skills for effective teaching and learning, and in particular teaching reading comprehension skills. In a survey of pre-service language teachers, Nel et al. (2006: 50) state that teacher trainees have “limited knowledge and skills with regard to the principles relevant to reading comprehension”. The poor comprehension levels exhibited by both English Home Language and First Additional Language learners suggest that teachers might not be developing learners’ basic reading skills (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). This could be because teachers need guidance on how to teach these skills effectively.

Very little in-depth research within the South African context has been provided to explain the challenges that teachers face in teaching reading literacy in high schools (Pretorius & Machet, 2004). Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) indicate that there has not been enough research conducted on reading comprehension in South African secondary schools as most of the published literature focuses on primary schools

Continuous support for teachers remains pivotal in the effective teaching of reading comprehension. Janks (2014) points out that even though attempts to upgrade teachers' skills have been made, they remain aspirational rather than practical and do not always achieve the desired effects.

2.3.3 Teaching pedagogies

According to Yilmaz (2011: 204), teachers should possess both "subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical-content knowledge and skills to be able to effectively accomplish their subject's goals". Teacher development and support may equip teachers with the skills necessary to teach reading comprehension. According to Hood (2018), teacher knowledge is, "knowing what to teach and how to teach it". It is imperative for teachers to use their knowledge of teaching, pedagogy, in a way that suits the needs of their learners and has a bearing on their day-to-day teaching practice.

Khayiali (2014), suggests three instructional phases that teachers can use in teaching reading comprehension. These are pre-reading activities, during-reading activities and post reading activities. The three phases are meant to complement each other and assist learners to completely understand what they are be reading. Teachers are expected initially to prepare learners for what they will be reading by activating their prior knowledge. The during-reading phase is meant to clarify the text and equip learners with tools to respond to the text. The post-reading phase helps students to "make use of the knowledge they learned from the text they read and practise text comprehension strategies" (Khayiali, 2014:65).

It can be concluded that there is a need to identify specific reading comprehension skills as well as a specific plan that secondary school teachers can follow in order to effectively teach reading comprehension. Therefore it is imperative to conduct this study and establish a plan of action for teachers to equip learners with reading comprehension skills.

This study will focus on reading comprehension skills namely skimming and scanning, prediction, inferring word meanings, and summarising (CAPS, 2011:26-29). According to Israel and Duffy (2014:39), a teacher may narrow down strategies and skills to benefit the

learners.. These are basic reading skills that can help learners to understand what they are reading. These skills form the foundation of reading.

2.3.4 The importance of reading comprehension across the curriculum in the senior phase

The low literacy levels of South African learners are documented in the PIRLS report, the ANAs and the systemic tests conducted by the South African government which indicate that reading comprehension *per se* poses a challenge. Reading comprehension is critical in the education of learners across the curriculum, because most of the information that the learners need to acquire is printed and they have to read to access the information.

When learners reading comprehension skills are not adequately developed, it may lead to failure as they will read without understanding. Teaching reading comprehension across the curriculum can help alleviate the high failure rate because of poor reading comprehension skills. Pretorius (2000) posits that it is only through reading that learners acquire information. Horning, (2007) advocates for the teaching of reading comprehension across the curriculum to achieve instructional goals, and for learners to be able to synthesize, analyse and evaluate what they read. Van der Walt and Ruiters, (2012) argue that every teacher should be a language teacher. This means that in all of the subjects taught across the curriculum, teachers will have to teach reading comprehension. Content classrooms remain ideal for students to develop reading comprehension (Peterson, 2007).

By implementing the National Reading Strategy (NRS) (2008), the DBE attempted to promote the idea of life-long readers and life-long learners. This supports the idea of teaching reading comprehension across the curriculum. According to Bharuthram (2012: 212), there has been a call by researchers to have reading strategies taught in all content-areas. The learners' ability to read with understanding may help them to comprehend reading material across the curriculum. What stifles academic progress amongst some learners is the fact that they read without understanding.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study utilised the Schema Theory by Scott (2001) and Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Theory of Learning (1978) to explain how teachers can develop learners' reading comprehension skills. Various aspects of the two theories are discussed below.

2.4.1 The Schema Theory in teaching reading comprehension.

According to Scott (2001:1), the Schema Theory is a description of the process by which the reader's background knowledge combines with the information from a text to create understanding. The term schema describes how people process, organise, and store information in their minds. The interactive process that occurs during the reading of a text activates the schemata in an individual.

Schemata are divided into two main parts namely content schemata (background knowledge of the world) and formal schemata (background knowledge of the rhetorical structure). According to Al-Issa (2006:42), content schemata refer to familiarity with the subject matter of the text. Through the interactive process with the text, readers develop a cogent interpretation of the text. Schemata are crucial to comprehension. According to Brown (2007), it is to be understood that a text does not by itself carry a meaning but instead the reader provides more information which helps develop a cogent interpretation of the text and interpret what is written.

Al-Issa (2006:44) identifies three implications of background knowledge to the teacher in content schemata. First, in selecting texts for use by learners, teachers should consider the learners' background knowledge and their familiarity with reading materials. According to Al-Issa (2006:41), learners are likely to do well with a reading comprehension if there is familiarity with the topic of the text, since understanding of a text depends on how much related schema readers possess while reading. It is important for teachers to take this into account whenever texts are selected for learners to read. The more familiar the topic, the better it will be understood by learners. Therefore, it implies that if reader's cultural schema is different from the one presented by the text, the reader may fail to grasp the meaning of the text. The second implication is that if a reader fails to actively use his/her background knowledge an important part of the reading process will not take place. Teachers should try and choose relevant content for learners when possible. It is important to provide background regarding the text and the purpose of the activity. Learners must be able to see why they have to read a particular text.

The third important aspect is that teachers must develop problem-solving and interpretive skills in learners. If learners do not have the relevant schemata but their problem-solving skills have been adequately developed, they may be able to interpret the available information and establish the meaning of the text.

When one reads, understanding occurs because one draws data from both the message and the internal schemata until the two sets are harmonised as one message or schema.

Fahriany (2014) argues that the reading process involves genre identification, and recognition of formal structure and topic, which activate schemata and allows readers to comprehend. It is possible however, that a reader may not have all the necessary schemata to comprehend every text that he/she comes into contact with. Fahriany (2014:8) points out that schema is not “rigidly applied” but allows space for variation and creative interpretation as it only presents a “skeleton” for interpretation. The different background that each learner brings to class constitutes a hidden curriculum (Fahriany, 2014:19).

There are several ways by which relevant schemata can be constructed. Carrell (1988) lists lectures, visual aids, demonstrations, real-life experiences, discussion, role play, discussion of key concepts and key concept association activities as useful activities to develop schemata. Pre-reading activities should enable one to construct and simultaneously activate background knowledge.

2.4.2 Vygotsky’s Theory of Socio-cultural Learning.

Vygotsky’s Theory of Sociocultural Learning can be utilised by teachers when teaching reading comprehension. Three important aspects of this theory are the role of social context, language, and mediation. The Theory of Socio-cultural Learning indicates the importance of social interaction as fundamental to cognitive development. Learning cannot be separated from its social context. Teachers can utilise what learners already know to negotiate new meaning (Leach, 2015). In the interaction process between the teacher and the learner, negotiated meaning is reached. The teacher and learners interact in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which is the critical space where a child cannot quite understand something on his/her own, but has the potential to do so “through proximal interaction with another person” (Donald, Lazarus & Moolla, 2015:79). Proximal interactions refer to close face-to-face social interactions (Donald et al., 2015:79). The importance of the ZPD illustrates that learning is a collaborative achievement and not an isolated individual’s effort.

The ZPD represents the gap between what a learner can achieve with assistance and what a learner cannot attain on his/her own. Interaction promotes development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Mediation is the process through which the child “appropriates or takes possession of the cognitive tools that make the construction of knowledge possible” (Donald et al., 2015:79). The ZPD acts as a critical space where the learner and teacher interact to construct knowledge. Teachers already have the knowledge and mediate the process. This enables the learner to gain skills through interaction and to develop towards individual functionality.

The teacher plays an important role in the learner's reading comprehension of texts. The teacher is referred to as the MKO (Leach, 2015). According to Leach (2015:53), the MKO has a "more advanced understanding or is more skilled than the learner". In teaching comprehension, the teacher as the MKO helps a learner to reach a stage where he/she can perform a task without assistance. A teacher can model what he/she expects a learner to do until the learner is able to perform the task on his/her own. Social context is also of importance as it allows a learner to operate in an environment where he/she does not feel threatened. A learner must feel comfortable in his/her social context with peers of the same age. Other learners can act also as the MKO. During the interaction between the learner and the MKO, meaning is negotiated.

The application of the Schema Theory and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning may enhance the teaching of reading comprehension. From the reviewed literature, it can be deduced that the teacher's knowledge of the learners' background and the use of pre-reading activities can guide learners through the reading process. Pre-reading activities, during-reading activities and post-reading activities should be utilised to enable learners to have a complete understanding of the text (Saricoban, 2002:149).

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the literature consulted provided several definitions of *reading comprehension* and an understanding of some important steps that can be undertaken to teach reading comprehension skills successfully. The chapter also explored the importance and relevance of reading comprehension in general and specifically at the senior phase.

According to the National Reading Panel (2000:3):

The idea behind explicit instruction of text comprehension is that comprehension can be improved by teaching students to use specific cognitive strategies or to reason strategically when they encounter barriers to comprehension when reading.

The theoretical framework that is used in this study is informed by the Schema Theory by Scott (2001) and Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-cultural Theory and the Zone of Proximal Development. Reading comprehension results from "an interaction among the reader, the strategies the reader employs, the material being read, and the context in which reading takes place" (Edwards & Turner, 2006:631).

In the next chapter the research design, the research methodology, and the ethical framework used in the study will be discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explain the research design, methodology and the research paradigm that are utilised in this study. The research addresses the question of the role that is played by teachers in developing reading comprehension skills in Grade 9 English Home Language learners. This chapter provides detail of the various methods that were employed in the data collection process. The chapter further justifies the reasons for the utilisation of the selected methods. Additionally, of the trustworthiness and the ethical framework are discussed.

An interpretive paradigm is used in this study. The interpretive paradigm as described by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) refers to social constructivism: whereby meaning is socially constructed and formulated in contexts. There is no universal truth as the meaning or reality of experience is individual (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The settings and the individuals inhabiting their specific social contexts were considered. The researcher interpreted the experiences of participants in their contexts.

The research design of this study is qualitative. Maree (2016) states that qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting where interaction occurs. The researcher interacted with learners and teachers to obtain first-hand information about their teaching and learning experiences.

The nature of this qualitative research is exploratory. Maree (2016:55) points out that the objective of exploratory research is to identify “key issues and key variables to gain greater understanding of a phenomenon of a group of people or a social setting.” The study explored how teachers teach reading comprehension to Grade 9 English Home Language learners. This study is a case study design as the research focused on the Grade 9 group and Grade 9 teachers of English Home Language at two secondary schools. A case study refers to “an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon set within its real-world context” (Maree, 2016).

The chapter is divided into sections detailing the various steps followed in the data collection:

- 3.2 Research approach,
- 3.2.1 Research design

- 3.2.2 Research paradigm
- 3.2.3 Research questions
- 3.3 Research methodology and methods,
- 3.3.1 The research site
- 3.3.2 Research participant selection
- 3.4 Data collection methods,
- 3.5 Data analysis,
- 3.6 Limitations,
- 3.7 Validity (Trustworthiness),
- 3.8 The ethical framework, and
- 3.9 Conclusion.

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach in this study is qualitative. The choice of a qualitative research approach is suitable for this study as the researcher had to observe the teaching and learning process to gain an understanding of how teachers approach the teaching of reading comprehension skills to Grade 9 learners. Qualitative research designs rely mostly on linguistic rather than numerical data.

3.2.1 Research Design

According to Maree (2016:72) a research design is a “plan or strategy that moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of participants, the data-gathering methods to be used and the data-analysis to be done”. In this study, a phenomenological research design is utilised. The focus of Phenomenological studies focus on the “meaning that certain lived experiences hold for participants (Maree 2016:77) In this study, the researcher focused on teachers’ experience of teaching reading comprehension skills to Grade 9 English Home Language learners. The study focused also on learners’ experience of the teaching and learning of the reading comprehension skills.

Data were obtained through the responses to questionnaires and observations. This qualitative study answered questions by examining specific social settings and the individuals who inhabited those settings. The research required the researcher to attend

classes, listen, and observe the teaching and learning processes related to reading comprehension skills.

3.2.2 Research Paradigm

An interpretive research paradigm was used in this research as, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), meaning is socially constructed and formulated in contexts. Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting where interaction occurs. The research seeks answers to how teachers can help develop learners' reading comprehension skills. The researcher observed and listened to learners and teachers in class to obtain first-hand information about their teaching and learning experiences. The researcher also completed the class observation protocol tool during the lesson observations. Furthermore, Maree (2016: 55) posits that "the objective of exploratory research is to identify key issues and key variables and to gain greater understanding of a phenomenon, a group of people or social setting".

3.2.3 Research questions

The research question and the sub-questions that are utilised in this study are as follows.

Guiding research question

What is the role of the teacher in developing comprehension skills in Grade 9 English Home Language learning?

Research sub-questions:

- What reading comprehension skills do teachers teach to Grade 9 English Home Language learners?
- What comprehension teaching strategies do the teachers implement when in teaching Grade 9?
- What teaching strategies do teachers implement when teaching Grade 9 comprehension skills in English Home Language?
- How do the Grade 9 learners experience the teaching of reading comprehension skills?

3.3 Research methodology and methods

In this section, the researcher describes the methods that were used in the research process pertaining to the role that is played by teachers in the development of reading comprehension skills of Grade 9 learners in English Home Language learning. Additionally, the section describes the methodology utilised.

3.3.1 The research site

This research was conducted in two public schools in the Metro Central District of Cape Town in the Western Cape. The proximity of the schools to the researcher's own school was a factor in their selection for the study. English Home Language is offered in both schools to learners whose first language is not English. Most of the learners in the two schools come from the Cape Flats which is an area of mostly underprivileged communities. Only a few learners come from the periphery of the city and elsewhere. There is a small percentage of foreign learners in both schools. Both schools have good infrastructure and are well-staffed.

The two selected schools are classified as quintile five since they are former model C schools. They are located also in the affluent suburbs of Cape Town. Quintile classification is based on the level of poverty of the community surrounding the school. South African schools are classified into five quintiles. Quintiles one, two and three are no-fee-paying schools in the poorer areas while quintiles four and five are fee-paying schools. Ironically, these learners are not actually from quintiles four and five.

In this research, the two selected schools are referred to as School 1 and School 2 to protect the identity of the schools and the participants. In School 1, the researcher could observe only one Grade 9 class twice as the other teacher was taken ill due to COVID-19. In School 2, two classes taught by two different teachers were observed twice each. The two teachers in School 2 are referred to as Teacher A and Teacher B.

3.3.2 Research participant selection

In School 1, the initial plan had been to observe two Grade 9 classes but eventually one class was observed. The second class could not participate as the teacher was ill due to exposure to COVID-19 and went into isolation. Only 32 learners and one teacher participated in the study in school 1. In School 2, two classes of Grade 9 learners were observed. Each class was visited twice for observation. The two classes comprised 35 and 32 learners respectively.

The researcher visited School 1 first and invited the participating teachers to discuss the consent forms. The procedure was explained to the teachers, and they were informed that they were not obliged to participate in the study. They were free to discontinue their participation at any time if there were any reasons not to participate. At a later stage two of the teachers decided not to participate. There were only three teachers left who were willing to continue with the study. Learners also were briefed about the research, and they gave consent.

3.3.3 Curriculum and policy documents selection

The researcher analysed the DBE's CAPS document and English subject guidelines for English Home Language for Grade 9; in particular the strategies suggested on how to teach reading comprehension skills. The teachers' lesson plans for the specific lessons were studied to see if the teachers followed what was indicated in their lesson plans. By studying the documents, the researcher attempted to establish whether there are clear instructions in the documents for teachers to teach comprehension skills explicitly. The teachers' plans were scrutinised to see if the plans indicated the steps that were to be followed during the lesson.

3.3.4 Positionality of the researcher

The researcher was an observer and did not participate in lessons during the process of observation to avoid influencing the dynamics of the setting. Maree (2016: 90) posits that "observation is used to enable the researcher to gain a deeper insight into and understanding of the phenomenon being observed". During the observation, the researcher should guard against his/her own biases and find to mitigate them. The initial plan had been to conduct the interviews in person, but because of COVID-19 protocols required minimised contact. Consequently, the interview questions were sent to teachers electronically to complete. After completion of the interview questions, they returned their responses via e-mail.

3.3.5 The role of the researcher

Sutton and Austin (2015:236) posit that:

The role of a researcher in qualitative research is to attempt to access the thoughts and feelings of study participants.

The statement implies that the researcher must understand the data collected and be able to accurately report on data gathered before reaching conclusions. It is the duty of the

researcher to safeguard the data collected and to keep it safe. The researcher has to protect the anonymity of participants and adhere to the ethics guiding the research.

It is the responsibility of the researcher to collect data, analyse and manage the data. The interpretation of the data, transcription and checking all remain the duty of the researcher. Data synthesis, planning and writing the report are all the roles played by the researcher.

In this study, the researcher explained to the participants their rights and that they could withdraw at any time during the research for any reason. The participants were assured of the confidentiality and adherence to the strict ethical code of the CPUT in conducting the research strictly.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

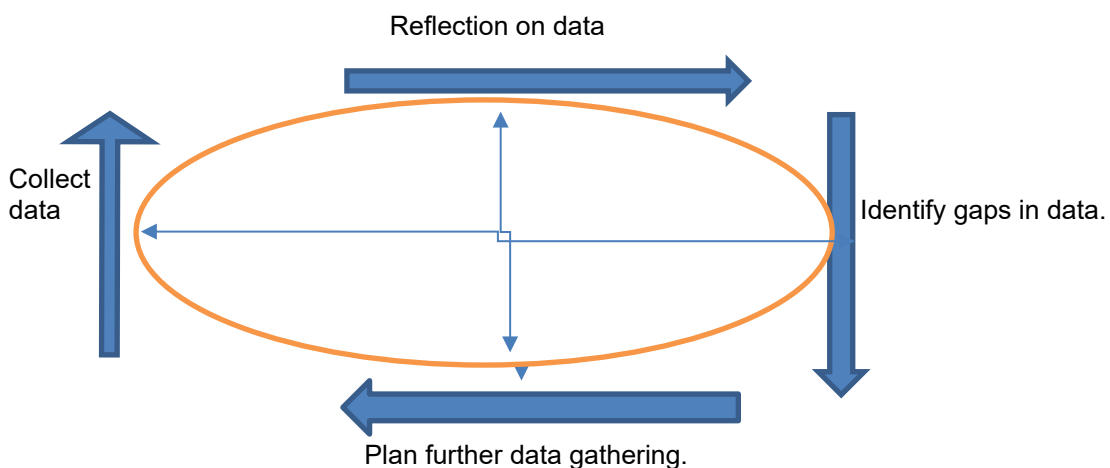


Figure 3.1: The cyclical and iterative process of data collection, reflection and analysis (Maree 2016: 87).

Maree (2016:87) postulates that “most qualitative studies do not treat data collection and data analysis as two separate processes”. The two processes are seen as ongoing and cyclical. In this study, as illustrated by Figure 3.1 above, the data collected were followed by the reflection when the researcher reflected on the data to ensure the data responded to the main research question and sub-questions. There was no need for further data gathering as the responses addressed the issues that the questions raised.

3.4.1. Data set 1: Document analysis.

The CAPS and the R-ATPs were analysed to establish which guidelines are provided for the teaching of reading comprehension at Grade 9 English Home Language level. The CAPS

document is the main document which is made available to every educator by the national DBE. The R-ATP was introduced to help teachers to teach the essential elements of the syllabus as schools recover from the effects of COVID-19. The R-ATP document came into effect in 2021 and is set to end in 2023. The two documents are used in combination to teach.

3.4.2. Data set 2: Questionnaires for learners.

Each learner received a questionnaire to complete about his/her experiences of learning reading comprehension and other questions regarding the teaching and learning of English Home language. The questionnaires were given to the teachers who then distributed them to the learners. Most learners indicated that they would not be able to access the questionnaire electronically. The researcher gave the learners a week to complete the questionnaire.

3.4.3. Data set 3: Interviews with teachers of English.

Semi-structured individual interview questions were given to teachers to respond to the set questions. The initial plan was to interview each teacher about their teaching experiences of teaching reading comprehension skills to Grade 9 English Home Language learners. The schools were, however, very strict about contact time spent during the COVID-19 restrictions. Therefore, the face-to-face interviews were conducted only to clarify the completion of the consent form and to explain to the teachers the purpose of the study. It was also an opportunity for the researcher to address and allay any fears that the participants might have had.

3.4.4. Data set 4: Observations of teachers.

Data was collected through observations when teachers conducted their English lessons. The researcher observed specifically two comprehension lessons to see how teachers teach reading comprehension skills to learners. Pedagogies that teachers utilise in the teaching of reading comprehension were observed as well. The researcher attempted to establish which specific comprehension strategies were used by the teachers during the lessons and whether the strategies were taught explicitly. The researcher observed whether any of the Schema Theory principles were implemented in the lessons and whether the teachers used ZPD to help learners master the reading comprehension skills. The class observation protocol tool was completed also during the lesson observations.

3.5 Data analysis

The process of data analysis involved reading through all the collected raw data. The purpose was to gain an understanding of the responses by participants. In the analysis of qualitative data, the researcher needs to understand and make sense of the data that is collected in order to be able to answer the research question. According to Maree (2016:109), if the results are not conclusive, it is “advisable and necessary to go back to the original field notes to verify conclusions or to the participants to collect additional data and to verify it, or to solicit feedback from participants consulted in the research”. It is vital not to reach conclusions before fully examining the data presented.

The study followed the model of Braun and Clarke (2006) which provides a six-phase guide on how to conduct a thematic analysis, as illustrated by the table below.

Table 3.1: Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006)

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, and collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, and gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes:	Ensuring the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), and generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, and generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, and compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

There are three important elements in qualitative data analysis that are connected. The three elements are noticing, collecting and reflecting. The analysis process is not linear but cyclic

which enables the researcher to realise if there are any shortcomings with the data collected as the process is repeated. The diagram below illustrates the process in data analysis.

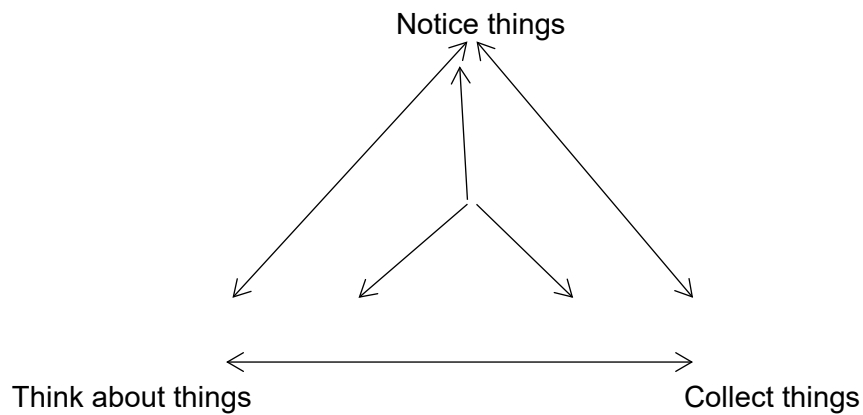


Figure 3.2: The data-analysis process

In this study, the researcher had to compile the responses drawn from the questionnaires completed by the 99 learners and the three teachers. The analysis was done question by question, comparing the different responses to the same question and tabulated. The responses were coded. According to Maree (2016:116), coding is “marking the segments of data with symbols, descriptive words or unique identifying names”. The observational checklists and field notes taken during the observations were also analysed. Themes were established from the data.

The researcher collated the information from the interviews with the teachers and identified patterns that emerged from the responses. The responses were further analysed to derive common themes. The two documents that were analysed were the CAPS and the R-ATPs. The researcher observed how reading comprehension was presented and if there were clear guidelines of how teachers should teach reading comprehension skills to learners. The analysis established the frequency of the requirements by the CAPS document and R-ATP of when to teach reading comprehension.

In qualitative data analysis, there are various ways that can be used to analyse data such as the Atlas.TI computer processing programmes or manual analysis. The researcher must have an understanding of the tool to analyse data. In this study, data was analysed manually. The researcher was not ready to use any software as an inexperienced researcher. The use of the Atlas TI would have taken an excessive amount of time as the researcher would have had to learn how to use the programme. It would have been overwhelming to try to learn

coding and use of computer programmes to analyse data. Additionally, manual coding is recommended for small scale analysis (Saldana, 2013).

3.6 Limitations

During the research process, there were a number of challenges that the researcher encountered which were beyond his control. The advent of COVID-19 brought with it a number of limitations as the research could not be carried out as envisaged due to COVID-19 protocols that had to be strictly adhered to.

Just before the commencement of data collection some participants who had agreed to take part in the study withdrew. This had a significant impact on the data gathering schedule and meant that the researcher had to re-negotiate days and times with those who remained. It was difficult to obtain completed structured interview questions as the teachers did not want to sit for interviews. The teachers claimed that the rotational teaching system kept them occupied and that they could not afford to sit and answer questions orally. This deprived the researcher of an opportunity to ask probing questions and clarify responses, which could have allowed for more detail and richer responses.

It is possible that some of the questions did not yield comprehensive answers as there was no interaction between the researcher and the learners during the completion of the questionnaires. Some of the answers given may not have been responding to the question asked due to the misunderstanding of the question.

The results of the study are not exhaustive. The pool of the teachers who were involved is small and the results may not be generalised to a wider population. The research was carried out in only two schools in the Metro Central District of the Western Cape and that too could be a limitation. The researcher interacted with the participants thrice. The first meeting was when the researcher explained the process to the participants. The second and third time were during lesson observations. Only three teachers and 99 learners were involved in the study. There is a need for a wider pool of participants to give a full picture of what happens in the teaching of reading comprehension in schools.

3.7 Validity (Trustworthiness)

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) postulate that the use of triangulation in research is vital to ascertain data trustworthiness. To further support this view, Koonin, (2014:256) states that “validity is all about determining whether the research measures what it is supposed to

measure, that is focusing on the extent to which the instrument that has been chosen actually reflects the authenticity of the constructs that are being measured.” In this study, triangulation was applied to validate the results of the study.

Triangulation “involves the use of multiple and different methods, investigators, sources and theories to obtain corroborating evidence” (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). In triangulation, the chances of bias are reduced as it depends on data that is gathered from different individuals and through the use of various methods. The study used semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, participant observations and the observation instrument to collect data. The utilisation of different informants enhances the quality of the data collected.

An independent researcher co-analysed and coded the raw data to further ensure trustworthiness. To further ensure that the analysed data reflected what the participants said, transcripts were provided to the participants to review whether the reported information was accurate. The double-checking of transcripts was done to ensure that the study was accurate, trustworthy and credible.

3.8 Ethical aspects

According to Thomas (2011), ethics refer to the principles regarding the choice between what is right and what is wrong. The researcher had to ensure that the study was conducted with these principles in mind. The Ethics research code of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology requires a strict adherence to its policies of protection of data obtained during research and the non-disclosure of participants. This study involved participants and it was important to ensure that the researcher kept the identities anonymous and that the collected data was stored away from the public. The researcher applied to the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology for ethical clearance to conduct the study. The university granted the clearance and emphasised the importance of observing the code of ethics (see Appendix B, page 89).

Ethical clearance and permission were obtained from the Western Cape Education Department to conduct the research at the two selected schools (see Appendix C, page 90). The researcher had to seek permission from the principals of the two selected schools in the Metro Central Education District. The principals of the two schools agreed to allow the researcher to conduct the study in the schools.

A meeting was set up with the teachers who were going to be involved in the study. The researcher explained to the teachers the purpose of the study and allowed those who had

questions to get clarity over what was going to happen. The teachers were given the informed consent forms to complete, and which were collected at a later date (see Appendix A, page 88). The purpose and the procedure of the study were explained to the concerned teachers to enable them to reach informed decisions about participating in the study. Participants were advised about their right to withdraw at any time.

3.9 Conclusion

Chapter 3 outlined the research design and methodology. The study utilised a qualitative approach which is appropriate for case studies when the experiences of the participants are taken into account. Four data collection methods were used: (i) document analysis, (ii) questionnaires for learners, (iii) interviews with Grade 9 teachers of English Home Language, and (iv) observation of lessons. The data collected were analysed as explained in section 3.5: Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2.

The methods that were used in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected were explained. Additionally, the ethics to be adhered to strictly, as required by the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, were explained. Chapter 4 will focus on data presentation, findings, discussions, and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA, FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data and findings that were collected and analysed as four data sets. These four data sets were document analysis, questionnaires for learners, interviews with teachers and lesson observations as discussed in Chapter 3. The main research question investigated in this study is: What is the role of the teacher in developing comprehension skills in Grade 9 English Home Language learning? The sub-questions that were considered are:

- What reading comprehension skills do teachers teach to Grade 9 English Home Language learners?
- What comprehension teaching strategies do the teachers implement when teaching Grade 9?
- What teaching strategies do teachers implement when teaching Grade 9 reading comprehension skills in English Home Language?
- How do the Grade 9 learners experience the teaching of reading comprehension skills?

The four data sets include a document analysis of the CAPS document for English Home Language Senior Phase Grades 7 to 9 and the R-ATP 2021-2023 Grade 9-English HL T1-4 which are prescribed to teachers who teach English Home Language at the Senior Phase. The second data set consists of the responses received from 99 learners who completed a questionnaire on the learners' experiences of the learning and teaching of reading comprehension in their classes. The third data set consists of the responses received from the three participating teachers as recorded during individual interviews. Finally, the fourth data set consists of the classroom observation protocol which focused on the presentations of six lessons by the three teacher participants-two lessons per teacher.

The collated responses were analysed, and categories were identified and thematically grouped. The researcher used the Schema Theory (Scott, 2001) and Socio-cultural Theory of Learning (Vygotsky, 1978) as well as the ZPD to interpret the data. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Theory of Sociocultural Learning emphasises the importance of social interaction in the creation of knowledge. In the process of learning, the teacher also can utilise the ZPD where one who is more knowledgeable helps the learner in that proximal space in the creation of knowledge. The ZPD is "that critical space where learners cannot quite understand something on their own, but has the potential to do so through a proximal

interaction with another person” (Donald et al., 2015:79) (see Chapter 2). The Schema Theory emphasises the importance of learners’ background knowledge which is combined with the new text in order to create an understanding of the text that is being read. (Scott, 2001:1) (see Chapter 2). During the observations of the lessons and the analysis of the data presented, the researcher wanted to establish whether there was any utilisation of the learners’ background knowledge and if the learners could relate with the passages selected. The researcher also observed if the teachers used Vygotsky’s ZPD where learners are guided from the point of not knowing to that point where they are able to do the work without much assistance.

4.2 Data sets

4.2.1 Data set 1: Document analysis

Two official documents which are available to Grade 9 English Home Language teachers were analysed in this study. These are the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for Grade 9 English as Home Language and the Revised Annual Teaching Plan (R-ATP) 2021 to 2023 for Grade 9 English Home language T1-4. These documents are provided to all teachers by the DBE and are accessible online on the WCED website.

The CAPS document is the main official policy document provided by the DBE which is used by teachers to guide their teaching and is provided for all grades, from Grade 1 to 12. For the purpose of this study, only the Grade 9 CAPS and R-ATP document were studied. The CAPS document describes the content that needs to be taught in the Grade 9 English Home Language classroom.

The R-ATP document is a supplementary document that is used currently by teachers for the adapted curriculum from 2021 to 2023. The R-ATP provides guidance on the major components of the syllabus that have to be taught to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2.1.1 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)

Table 4.1: References in the senior phase CAPS document to reading comprehension

Extracts from CAPS Document.	Page number
reading comprehension/ intensive reading texts 250-300 words	Page 17
reading comprehension • For close and critical reading of the text (reading comprehension) • To understand the text comprehensively - text features – titles, illustrations, graphs, charts, diagrams, headings, subheadings, numbering, captions, headlines, format, e.g. newspaper columns, etc.	Page 28

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To demonstrate independent reading (reading widely for pleasure, information and learning) • Critical language awareness (being aware of the denotation and connotation of words and that it carries hidden meanings and messages, e.g. stereotypes, the speaker's prejudices and intentions) 	
<p>reading comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For close and critical reading of the text (reading comprehension) • To understand the text comprehensively - text features – titles, illustrations, graphs, charts, diagrams, headings, subheadings, numbering, captions, headlines, format, e.g. newspaper columns, etc. • To demonstrate independent reading (reading widely for pleasure, information and learning) • Critical language awareness (being aware of the denotation and connotation of words and that it carries hidden meanings and messages, e.g. stereotypes, the speaker's prejudices and intentions) 	Page 28
<p>reading comprehension/intensive reading texts 450-500 words</p>	Page 34
<p>reading comprehension/intensive reading texts 150-200 words 200-250 words 250-300 words</p> <p>The length of texts for extended reading is not prescribed as this depends on the type of text, the complexity of the language and the reading level of the learners.</p>	Page 48
<p>reading comprehension and reading strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skimming and Scanning • Intensive reading • Visualization • Inferring meaning and conclusions • Fact and opinion • meaning of words 	Page 58
<p>Reading comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary • Literature: - Novel/short stories/folklore - drama/film study - Poems 	Page 74
<p>Reading comprehension: interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skimming and scanning • intensive reading • making predictions • Inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words and images by word attack practices • facts and opinion • view point of role players • implied meaning 	Page 83
<p>reading comprehension: (text from text prescribed literature)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skimming, scanning, visualization • Intensive reading • making inference • meaning of words • View point of writer • Fact and opinion • Implied meaning <p>write</p>	Page 89
<p>reading comprehension: (text from text book)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skimming, scanning, visualization • Intensive reading • making inference • meaning of words • View point of writer • Fact and opinion • Implied meaning <p>write</p>	Page 93
<p>reading comprehension: e.g. dialogue)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose, target group and context • Explain theme/message • make inferences • Give own opinion • Direct and implied meaning • Socio-political and cultural background of text and author 	Page 94
<p>Reading comprehension</p>	Page 95
<p>Reading comprehension: (text from prescribed literature)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skimming, scanning, visualization • Intensive reading • making inference • meaning of words • View point of writer • Fact and opinion • Implied meaning 	Page 99
<p>reading comprehension (strategies) (use visual and written texts) strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skimming for main ideas • Scanning for supporting details • making predictions • Inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words and images • The effect of selections and omissions on meaning • The effect of figurative and rhetorical devices • Impact of visual techniques 	Page 109
<p>reading comprehension: (text from text prescribed literature)</p>	Page 112

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skimming, scanning, visualization • Intensive reading • making inference • meaning of words • View point of writer • Fact and opinion • Implied meaning <p>transactional</p>	
<p>reading comprehension: (text from text prescribed literature)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skimming, scanning, visualization • Intensive reading • making inference • meaning of words • View point of writer • Fact and opinion • Implied meaning <p>long</p>	Page 114
<p>reading comprehension: (text from text prescribed literature)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skimming, scanning, visualization • Intensive reading • making inference • meaning of words • View point of writer • Fact and opinion • Implied meaning 	Page 116
<p>In formal assessment, use memoranda, rubrics, checklists and rating scales as well as other appropriate assessment tools to observe, assess and record learners' levels of understanding and skill. Choose an assessment tool that is most appropriate for the type of activity. For example, a rubric is more suitable than a memorandum for a creative writing piece. A memorandum is better suited to a spelling test or a reading comprehension activity</p>	Page 119
<p>40 Paper 2: Written Reading comprehension (10) Language in context (15) Summary (10 marks converted into 5 marks)</p> <p>30</p>	Page 126

The CAPS document for Grade 9 English Home Language mentions reading comprehension as items to be taught in Term 1 during weeks 7 to 8 (page 99). In Term 3, reading comprehension is covered in weeks 3 to 4 (page 109), and weeks 9 and 10 (page 112). In Term 4, the reading comprehension is set for weeks 1 and 2 (page 114) and weeks 5 and 6 (page 116). The information is provided as a year plan.

The document does not provide clearly defined methods of how teachers should teach reading comprehension. On page 17 of the CAPS document, there is merely mention of reading comprehension and the length of the excerpt indicated as between 250 and 300 words. No further guidance is provided. The teacher has to decide how this should be selected and implemented. The document does not seem to provide much help when it comes to the learning and teaching of reading comprehension. On page 96 of the CAPS document in Term 1, a list of strategies such as skimming, scanning, intensive reading, summarising, visualising, inferring meaning, and concluding are provided as strategies to be taught in reading comprehension. Apart from the list, no guidance is provided on how this should be implemented or where more information could be found.

As pointed out in Chapter 2, item 2.2.4, the explicit teaching of reading comprehension is critical to learners' understanding. According to the National Reading Panel (2000:39), it is only through the explicit teaching of reading comprehension skills that learners can improve their reading comprehension. Improvement in reading comprehension is likely to be achieved

when learners are taught to use “specific cognitive strategies or to reason strategically when they encounter barriers to comprehension when reading” (National Reading Panel, 2000:39). The CAPS document does not indicate the explicit teaching of reading skills or provide any guidance on how this should be achieved.

In a study carried out by (De Lange, Winberg & Dippenaar, 2020), which focused on the Intermediate Phase (grades 4 to 6), they concluded that “CAPS does not provide adequate guidance for improving reading comprehension, and the prescribed programme of assessment is not supported by research literature on reading comprehension”. This observation implies that even at the Intermediate Phase, there is a lack of teaching reading comprehension skills explicitly, as is seen in the Senior Phase CAPS document.

In the CAPS document for the Senior Phase, as illustrated in the table above, there is a list of reading strategies listed under pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading activities. On page 109 of the CAPS document, the list of reading comprehension strategies includes the following strategies: skimming for main ideas, scanning for supporting details, making predictions, inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words and images, the effect of selections and omissions on meaning, the effect of figurative and rhetorical devices, and impact the impact of visual techniques. However, no specific instructions are provided on how teachers should implement this as no provision is made for the explicit teaching of these strategies (see Chapter 2). If teachers are not sure how to teach the listed strategies, it is likely that the learners will not be able to learn how to use these strategies effectively. Whereas the National Reading Panel (2000) emphasises the importance of explicit teaching of reading strategies, the CAPS document does not mention the explicit teaching of these skills.

The observation that the CAPS document merely mentions reading comprehension twenty times in the Senior Phase section is concerning as there is little guidance on how to teach this important activity. This is similar to the section on the Intermediate Phase as evidenced by the study of De Lange et. al, (2020: 5) which, concludes that “minimal attention is given to the teaching of comprehension, or its assessment, in the CAPS document itself”. The explicit teaching of reading comprehension is important to equip learners with the skills of reading with comprehension, in their home language, and also across the curriculum, as reading comprehension skills influence the understanding of content in all subjects (Baruthram, 2007). It is implied that teachers know how to implement the document, and this assumption is investigated in this study.

4.2.1.2 Revised Annual Teaching Plan (R-ATP)

The second document that was analysed is the Revised Annual Teaching Plan (R-ATP) 2021 to 2023 (Grade 9 English HL T1-4). This document was introduced by the DBE at the beginning of 2021. The document guides the implementation of a recovery plan to recover the learning and teaching time that was lost when schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the 2021 Revised Curriculum Senior Phase (2021:1), the DBE posits that:

COVID -19 has created an unprecedented disruption to education systems across the world. One of the consequences thereof was the reduced time in teaching and learning resulting in substantial learning losses across subjects and grades. In order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on learning and teaching, the Department of Basic Education adopted a multi-year curriculum approach. The recovery curriculum is designed to accommodate the negative impact of COVID -19 and is therefore an interim deviation from the original curriculum and a transitional arrangement until the policy amendment processes are completed.

The R-ATP plan is meant to emphasise important aspects and skills that learners have to learn. The R-ATP document will remain in force until the end of 2023. The researcher analysed how the R-ATP document deals with the learning and teaching of reading comprehension.

The following table indicates the details of the R-ATP regarding English Home Language and in particular, reading comprehension.

Table 4.2: References in the ATP document to reading comprehension

Number	Item and description in ATP	Page reference
1.	Reading comprehension: Reading process: • Pre-reading (Introduce text) • During reading (features of text) • Post-reading (answer questions, compare, contrast, evaluate) Reading Strategies • Skimming, scanning, visualization • Intensive reading • Making inference • Meaning of words • View point of writer • Fact and opinion • Implied meaning	Page 4
2.	Reading Comprehension activities	Page 6
3.	Reading Comprehension activities	Page 11
4.	Reading Comprehension activities	Page 16
5.	Reading Comprehension activities	Page 20

The R-ATP offers very little guidance regarding the specific teaching of reading comprehension. Similar to the CAPS document, the document is skeletal regarding information on how and when teachers should teach reading comprehension. Similar to the CAPS document on page 4 of the R-ATP, there is mention of the three phases in the reading process; pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading, and a list of strategies. It is a list with no specific instructions of how these should be taught or how often. Teachers are left to decide how to deal with the information.

The other four mentions of reading comprehension are not complemented by specific activities but left open ended for the teachers to decide which activities to use in their lessons. In Term 1, only two activities are listed that pertain to reading comprehension and one activity in each of the other three terms of the academic school year. In the CAPS document, the information regarding reading comprehension is vague and not as precise as in the R-ATP which suggests specific weeks for the teaching of the reading comprehension. The CAPS document provides an annual plan. The R-ATP breaks down the work into specific weeks within the four terms.

From the analysis of the CAPS and R-ATP documents, one may conclude that there is inadequate information regarding the explicit teaching of reading comprehension. Very little guidance is provided to teachers on how to teach reading comprehension skills to learners effectively. The lack of this critical information makes the teaching of reading comprehension a difficult task for most teachers. Instead of teaching reading comprehension, most teachers might end up merely testing learners' ability to respond to comprehension texts. There might be a need for teachers to be upskilled or trained on how to teach reading comprehension.

There could be an assumption that learners transitioning from the Intermediate Phase to the Senior Phase have already acquired the necessary reading comprehension skills. Hence, little emphasis is placed on the explicit teaching of these skills in the Senior Phase.

The document analysis addressed the first research sub-question: What reading comprehension skills in the English Home Language do teachers teach to Grade 9 English Home Language learners?

From the information gathered in the document analysis, one may conclude that ideally, all the listed strategies in the CAPS document and R-ATP document should be taught explicitly to equip learners with the necessary reading comprehension skills. Explicit teaching of reading comprehension skills could be a challenge to most teachers since no guidance is given on how it should be executed. Another question that needs answering is whether

teachers were trained on how to teach reading comprehension skills explicitly during their years of training. As seen in Chapter 2, Nel et al. (2006:51) state that teachers are critical role players in developing reading comprehension skills, particularly when making sense of complex cognitive tasks. Therefore, it is imperative for teachers to be able to teach reading comprehension skills explicitly.

4.2.2 Data set 2: Questionnaires for learners

A questionnaire was distributed to learners to determine their experiences of the learning and teaching of reading comprehension. In total, 99 learners from three different classes and three different teachers (one class from each teacher) in Grade 9 at both Schools 1 and School 2 were invited to participate in the study. At school 1, there was only one class of 32 learners who participated. At school 2, there were two Grade 9 classes of 35 and 32 learners respectively who participated. Each learner received a questionnaire to complete on his/her experience of the learning and teaching of reading comprehension. The questionnaires were printed hard copies that were given to the teachers who then distributed them to the learners during class time, as most learners indicated that they would not be able to access the questionnaire electronically. The researcher returned after a week to collect the completed questionnaires. All 99 questionnaires which were distributed to the learners were returned as the teachers gave learners the opportunity to complete the questionnaires in class.

The questionnaire for learners comprised of ten questions.

The responses from all the learners were transcribed verbatim to capture the exact ideas that the learners wanted to put across and no learners' errors were corrected as seen in Table 4.3 below. The responses of the learners from question one to question three were grouped into nine categories. These categories indicated the language or languages that the learners use at home, the language they use to speak to friends in the English class and the language they use with friends during break. The first category indicates learners who use IsiXhosa only, followed by those who use English and Swahili. The third category indicates learners who speak English only, and the fourth category those who speak both isiXhosa and Afrikaans. The fifth category indicates learners who speak IsiXhosa, and English followed by those who speak Afrikaans only. The seventh category indicates learners who speak English and Afrikaans, and the eighth category is for learners who speak IsiXhosa and Portuguese. The ninth category indicates learners who speak three languages namely English, Afrikaans, and IsiXhosa. All 99 learners responded to the first two questions as indicated in Table 4.3 below.

Question 1: *What language do you use at home?*

Question 2: *What language do you use in class to talk to your friends in the English clas*

Table 4.3 Responses from learners to Questions 1 and 2

Questions	Classes	IsiXhosa only	English & Swahili	English only	IsiXhosa & Afrikaans	IsiXhosa & English	Afrikaans only	English & Afrikaans	IsiXhosa & Portuguese	English, Afrikaans & IsiXhosa	Totals
1.	A	13	1	1	1	11	1	3	1	0	99
	B	18	0	4	0	12	0	3	0	0	
	C	13	0	1	0	9	0	7	0	0	
		(44)	(1)	(6)	(1)	(32)	(1)	(13)	(1)	(0)	
2.	A	13	0	4	0	14	0	1	0	0	99
	B	3	0	21	0	10	0	1	0	0	
	C	3	0	16	0	10	0	0	0	3	
		(19)	(0)	(41)	(0)	(34)	(0)	(2)	(0)	(3)	

From the data collected for question one, 44 respondents out of a possible 99 indicated that they used isiXhosa to communicate when they were at home which translates to 44.4% of the 99 learners. Only one learner pointed out that he/she used English and Swahili when at home. Six learners said that they used English only and only one learner used isiXhosa and Afrikaans for communication. In the sixth category, 32 learners indicated that they use both isiXhosa and English to communicate at home. One respondent said that he/she used Afrikaans only. Thirteen learners indicated that they used English and Afrikaans. Only one learner used isiXhosa and Portuguese. From the responses one may conclude that since the majority of the learners did not use English outside the classroom, they were bound to be challenged in their reading comprehension. It could be to their advantage if these learners were to be exposed more to the explicit teaching of reading comprehension skills to help them with their own reading comprehension.

Question two sought to determine what language the learners used when they spoke to their friends during their English lessons. The learners' responses showed that; 19 used isiXhosa, 41 used English only, 34 used English and isiXhosa, two used English and Afrikaans and three used English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. It was clear that less than half of the learners, which translates to 41,4%, used English only during the English lessons. The remainder of the learners either used English and another language or used only another language and not English.

In question three the participants were asked what language they speak to their friends during breaks (Table 4.4). Out of a possible 99 learners, 39 respondents indicated that they

used isiXhosa, 21 used English only, 35 used both English and IsiXhosa, and four used English and Afrikaans.

Question 3: What language do you speak to your friends during breaks?

Table 4.4 Responses from learners to Question 3

	Classes	Xhosa only	English only	Xhosa & English	English & Afrikaans	Total
3	A	13	4	14	1	(99)
	B	5	16	11	3	
	C	21	1	10	0	
		(39)	(21)	(35)	(4)	

The information gathered from the first three questions, indicated that learners seldom use English to communicate. This is because they either used code switching or languages other than English. The use of English appears to be restricted to the English lessons. The limited use of English by learners in class or outside of the classroom might have an impact on their reading comprehension as there is very little opportunity for using and developing the language effectively or developing their vocabulary in English. As discussed in Chapter 2, Hirsch, (2003:16) posits that “vocabulary knowledge correlates strongly with reading (and oral) comprehension”.

In question four (see Table 4.5) the respondents were asked to indicate when they started using English in any context in their lives.

Question 4: How old were you when you started to speak English in any place?

Table 4.5 Responses from learners to Question 4

	Classes	Not sure	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years	7 years	8 years	9 years	10 years	11 years	12 years	13 Years
4	A	0	3	2	6	5	8	6	4	0	2	2	0	0	0
	B	1	2	5	4	5	11	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
	C	1	1	1	5	1	7	0	1	2	3	3	1	0	1
		(2)	(6)	(8)	(15)	(11)	(26)	(10)	(5)	(2)	(5)	(5)	(3)	(0)	(1)

Only two learners, indicated that they were not sure when they started speaking English. In addition, only six learners indicated that they started using English at the age of two; followed by 15 at the age of three; 11 at the age of four; 26 at the age of five; 10 at the age of six; five at the age of seven; two at the age of eight, five at the age of nine; five at the age of ten; three at the age of 11, and finally one at the age of 13.

The data indicates that 80 learners started using some form of English below the age of eight, as indicated in the table above, which translates to 80.8%. The Schema Theory emphasises the utilisation of prior knowledge in reading comprehension. If teachers could help learners and activate prior knowledge, it would help them to link the knowledge that they already have with the new knowledge to construct meaning. The Schema Theory is explained in Chapter 2.

For question five, all 99 learners indicated that their teachers use English only during the English class time. There is no perceived code-switching by the teachers.

Question 5: Does your English teacher speak only English in class? Or does he/she use more than one language in class?

Table 4.6 Responses from learners to Question 5

5	Classes	English only	Use more than one language in the class
	A	32	0
	B	35	0
	C	32	0
		(99)	(0)

The sixth question required the learners to indicate if they were able to read their prescribed texts. All 99 of them indicated that they were able to read the texts.

Question 6: Can you read your English prescribed books?

Table 4.7 Responses from learners to Question 6

	Classes	Yes
6.	A	32
	B	35
	C	32
		(99)

In response to question seven, 79 learners indicated that they were able to read with understanding. One respondent indicated that he/she did not understand but 18 respondents stated that they sometimes understood what they were reading.

Question 7: Do you understand what you read?

Table 4.8 Responses from learners to Question 7

	Classes	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
7.	A	24	0	8	32

	B	27	0	8	35
	C	28	1	3	32
		(99)	(1)	(19)	(99)

For question eight, 85 respondents stated that they read books other than their prescribed set works. There were 12 learners who said that they only read prescribed texts and two learners stated that at times they read other books.

Question 8: Do you read any English book other than your prescribed books?

Table 4.9 Responses from learners to Question 8

	Classes	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
8.	A	27	5	0	
	B	31	2	2	
	C	27	5	0	
		(85)	(12)	(2)	(99)

From the responses of the learners, it can be deduced that most of them were exposed to the use of English at an early age of one year up to 13 years. Learners stated that they felt that they could read their texts with understanding. Those who did not read widely could find learning of English difficult due to the lack of exposure to the language. Interaction among learners is also critical as shown by the Theory of Sociocultural Learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Bella, 2008), where information exchange is necessary for the learners to learn from one another.

From the data gathered from the learners, 85 out of the 99 learners read English books other than their prescribed books, which could imply that if that prior knowledge were to be activated during reading comprehension tasks, these learners would be more likely to comprehend the texts that they read. The Schema Theory (Scott, 2001) (see Chapter 2) states that activated prior knowledge that learners possess combines with the text being read to produce new meaning. Pre-reading activities could be used to help learners to construct meaning by simultaneously activating background knowledge.

4.2.2.1 Coding of the collated data

The responses of the 99 learners from three different classes highlighted a number of common themes. The different colour codes were used to identify responses that were related. Five open codes were established from the responses of the learners. The first level coding was open coding. Williams and Moser (2019) state that “in open coding, the researcher is identifying distinct concepts and themes for categorisation”. The open codes

that were established from the various responses of learners were: explaining, use of examples, repetition, questioning, and summarising.

The next step was the axial coding. The open coded segments were then grouped thematically. According to Braun and Clarke (2012:57), “thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organising and offering insight into patterns of meanings (themes) across a data set”. The two codes “explaining” and “use of examples” were combined to derive the theme of explication. In this process of explication, the teachers explained what they were teaching and used examples within the learners’ experience to help them understand what they were reading. The teachers utilised the zone of approximation based on Vygotsky’s ZPD (1978) when the MKO, in this case the teacher, assists the learners from a position of not knowing to a position of knowing.

Question 9: Can you tell how your teacher teaches you in class to understand what you read?

Table 4.10 Responses from learners to Question 9

Question	Responses	Action by teacher
9:	<p>Class A</p> <p>1. Yes. He often tells us/teaches us/me how to read (a book/newspaper) in order to understand it.</p> <p>2. I sometimes don't understand what my teacher teaches in class because he doesn't speak loudly enough for me to hear him.</p> <p>3. He explains for me so I could understand what I am reading.</p> <p>4. He teaches nice and he makes you understand what his teaching, and also he makes examples for us to understand.</p> <p>5. he will give us an opportunity to read after were done reading he will read the question or text again and explain further</p> <p>6. He explains what we read 3 time or 2 times if you don't understand.</p> <p>7. I can understand all my teachers when speaking English, just the projection some of the time is not well.</p> <p>8. He gives us more information about a bout a passage and explain on what we don't understand for us to understand and gives activities to verify our understanding.</p> <p>9. Revise the work</p> <p>10. He gives out paper and tells us to read. He does not really explain but when he does, he does not use more than two examples and just gives homework. Sometimes I do not really hear what he says because he has a soft voice and wears a mask.</p> <p>11. He teaches very well in class, like now, the comprehension lesson teaches me how to read with understanding and a few tips on how to approach an examination.</p> <p>12. He teaches well and I do understand him Sometime I wish he could make the lessons more interesting because most of the time, I get sleepy during the lesson.</p> <p>13. By summarising it in a better way we are able to understand.</p>	<p>Explains</p> <p>Makes use of examples</p> <p>Re-reads</p> <p>Repetition</p> <p>Gives background information</p> <p>Activities</p> <p>Summarising</p>
	<p>14. Our teacher doesn't really teaches us how to understand what we are reading. But we know we need to read the reading piece more than once to understand.</p> <p>15. Yes, he goes through it with us.</p> <p>16. Yes.</p> <p>17. Yes.</p> <p>18. Yes, I can; he usually makes examples to make us understand better.</p> <p>19. With new topics, our teacher explains it until I/we understand and may test us with a few activities to see if we understand what we read.</p> <p>20. Yes, but not always.</p> <p>21. He ask us questions when we are reading but only when we are doing a oral.</p> <p>22. If he writes notes on the board, I'll understand but if he speaks and explains something using his word, I will understand a few.</p>	<p>Repetition</p> <p>Makes use of examples</p> <p>Makes use of questions</p>

<p>23. My teacher teaches very nice, because he always makes sure we understand.</p> <p>24. He tells us to read more books and we must always try to understand what we were reading about.</p> <p>25. At the beginning, the lesson very slow but after talking to our teacher, he made a lot of changes. I can now hear and understand everything he says.</p> <p>26. No. Sometimes I fail to understand certain words especially in poetry.</p> <p>27. Yes.</p> <p>29. Yes because makes you repeat massive words underline and circle main key words.</p> <p>30. Teacher asks to repeat words or test us on what we have learnt.</p> <p>32. Our teacher tells us to circle and underline some words that are new to us. After underlining and circling then explains what the words then writes down example on the board.</p> <p>Class B,</p> <p>1. My teacher teaches us in class and explains what we wrote.</p> <p>2. He is a great teacher and his teaching techniques are by far the best so yes, I understand what I read.</p> <p>3. Yes.</p> <p>4. No response</p> <p>5. Yes I can.</p> <p>6. Yes I can tell my teacher teaches well and makes me understand what I read.</p> <p>7. He explains the book clearly.</p> <p>8. He teaches and repeats it again if you don't understand something.</p> <p>9. He actually teaches in a sense of manner where everybody can and has to understand for instance he uses examples.</p> <p>10. Yes.</p> <p>11. Makes an example, let us repeat it until we get it.</p> <p>12. My teacher repeats what he/she said to those who did not understand and explains over and over until everybody understands what they read.</p> <p>13. Yes.</p> <p>14. Yes, our teacher tells us to close our eyes and to repeat work he also explains thoroughly by using examples.</p> <p>15. Yes.</p> <p>16. My teacher teaches me to understand what I read by giving examples and explaining the story and also he gives us meaning of words.</p> <p>17. Yes.</p> <p>18. Yes.</p> <p>19. He repaid himself and askes questions to the class and we have to answer.</p> <p>20. Yes.</p> <p>21. He repeats what he said more than once.</p> <p>22. He repeats what he has said so that we understand.</p> <p>23. He repeats what he teaches us to understand.</p> <p>24. By explaining slowly for me to understand.</p> <p>25. My teacher makes us repeat what he has taught over and over.</p> <p>26. She explains what I've read in a proper way and then I got it.</p> <p>27. Yes</p> <p>28. Yes.</p> <p>29. Yes.</p> <p>30. Yes.</p> <p>31. By explaining what is meant in the peace we are reading and reading it over again.</p> <p>32. Yes I can tell.</p> <p>33. Yes.</p> <p>34. Yes,</p> <p>35. Yes.</p> <p>Class C</p> <p>1. He gives us examples to understands better</p> <p>2. My teacher makes me feel comfortable when I read and when my teacher teaches the whole class keeps quiet and only talks when they are told to be.</p> <p>3. He reads a sentence and explains what it means.</p> <p>4. My teacher teaches me in class to understand what I read by explaining the words I don't understand</p> <p>5. Yes, he teaches perfectly for you to understand what is being taught.</p> <p>6. Yes.</p> <p>7. My teacher teaches goods it's just sometimes I loose focus because it's tiring then I get bored and want to sleep.</p> <p>8. He teaches us than gives us questions to see if we understand if not he explains it to the whole class.</p> <p>9. He teaches us to first find out the main idea of what we are reading.</p> <p>10. Yes.</p> <p>11. Our teacher gives us visual examples to make us understand.</p> <p>12. He explains all the work he teaches to make sure that we all understand the work.</p> <p>13. Yes.</p> <p>14. We do a lot of exercises on the book like summaries on the chapter to tell if we understand the book so far.</p> <p>15. By giving us examples of the word when we don't understand certain words or hints to what the word might mean.</p> <p>16. Yes.</p>	<p>Repetition Underlining and circling key words 32 Explains, Examples</p> <p>Explains</p> <p>Repetition</p> <p>35</p> <p>Summarising</p>
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	<p>17. Yes. 18. They read us something and then make sure that we understand it. 19. Yes, I am a fast learner and I learn by summarising and listening. 20. Yes. 21. He keeps on repeating the same thing till we understand and then he asks questions to see if we really understood. 22. Yes. 23. After he reads something he explains. 24. Not quite really but he/she tries by either repeating or making us do notes. 25. They haven't but every paragraph I speak to myself about what is happening. 26. The teacher explains and makes sure you understand. 27. By asking us question about what we just read and read it again if we don't understand. 28. Sometimes but not all the time 29. My teacher explains the book to us and then he makes us understand the words even if we don't, he helps us. 30. Sometimes I do not understand his teaching like in terms of his voice it's too slow and without being rude I find his voice so tired. 31. Yes my teacher tries his best for everyone to understand but sometimes it can be a tool bit boring and blabbering can lead to confusion. 32. Yes.</p>	<p>Asking questions</p> <p>32</p> <p>TOTAL 32+35+32=99</p>
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Question 10: How do you know that you understand what you read?

Table 4.11 Responses from learners to Question 10

<p>10</p>	<p>Class A</p> <p>1. When I go over and revise I feel like I know everything. 2. By knowing what's happening on the story /other things that I read 3. I write out sometimes, I feel the words in my mind and imagine what they are talking about. 4. By analysis the conclusion and by looking a the titel of the stories or folktales. 5. When I get an idea of what's happening in a certain passage or prescribed. When I can identify what's happening in the passage. 6. I am able to answer questions about what I read. 7. I get to know if what is taught in a class I understand it, when I get home. I ask myself questions and try activities and check if they are correct. 8. I look at the words or comprehension then I remember that our teacher has taught us this or sometime I read it myself for me to understand. 9. I will keep on saying and thinking about every time. 10. I read over and over. I also break the words out that I don't understand. 11. I understand what I read because I practice the language and words that are confusing to get a better understanding, as well as I enjoy the language which gives me on advantage 12. I know I understand because it repeats in my head 13. I understand my reading because I always refer to what the English teacher taught us. 14. while reading , I make sure that I'm simplifying the sentence in my head and if I do not understand I research the I find hard to understand. 15. it stays in my brain. 16. I go over my work at home and if I don't understand I ask her. 17. how I know that I understand what I read is that when my teacher asks me about what we did I will still know what we did. 18. When I visualise in my brain. 19. When I am able to explain it to someone else, sometimes. 20. Because I can tell by the way I understand and answer questions. 21. I understand because I can read. 22. Well, I focus on the book and I read the sentences or the book more than once. 23. I read the story 2 or 3 times. 24. I usually imagine that the story is happening in front of me and I also understand the words in the story. 25. The teacher explains then gives us an activity to do in class to see if we understood. Most of the time, I get them right so that's how I know I understand. 26. I know because I read with understanding, try to get what's going on in this certain book or novel. 27. By having imagination of what I'm reading what I'm enquired to read more than once. 28. When I can think or imagine what it means what it means or the way the structure is. 29. I know it by being intrested and wanting to learn more. 30. When it is stuck in my head and when someone asks me about it and I answer and give the information I know.</p>	<p>When able to recount what has been read When able to answer questions</p> <p>When able to recall the information</p> <p>Retention mentally</p> <p>Form mental pictures visualising.</p> <p>Able to read</p> <p>Ability to respond correctly to questions</p> <p>Mental pictures</p> <p>Retention mentally and recall</p> <p>32</p>
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<p>31. By imaginating or having an idea about it.</p> <p>32. I write out sometimes, feel the words in my mind and imagine what they are talking about.</p> <p>Class B</p> <p>1. I read the book and if I find hard words, I ask a friend or a teacher.</p> <p>2. I understand what I read because at the end of reading lots say a certain paragraph know where the story line is headed, the next reason being it I was asked about a certain book or review I can substantiate any question that come after.</p> <p>3. I understand the way I read it.</p> <p>4. But picturing what I'm reading</p> <p>5. I know that I can understand what I read, because when someone asks me about the book I read, I can explain to them and I can answer question about the books I read.</p> <p>6. I understand when I break up the reading and I will use the method of understanding how to answer a comprehension or cartoon worksheet.</p> <p>7. I understand what's going on in the book.</p> <p>8. The more you read, the more you will be able to understand what you read and you need to take your time so you can understand what you read. I'm asked about the question about the back I can answer them without any difficulty.</p> <p>9. I do not know how I know but I'm sure that I know.</p> <p>10. I know that I know</p> <p>11. My answers substantiate the text I am reading.</p> <p>12. I know that I understand what I read because I can picture what I read happening in my mind.</p> <p>13. If I could recall what is being said or written in my own words.</p> <p>14. I know that I understand what I read because I can picture the scenario and I can give my own examples where possible.</p> <p>15. I understand what I read by putting in my own words.</p> <p>16. When I get what's happening or going on.</p> <p>17. If I can summarise a whole book to a paragraph.</p> <p>18. I know what is happening when I'm reading.</p> <p>19. I picture it in my mind.</p> <p>20. I picture something that is on my mind.</p> <p>21. I can tell someone else about it without looking at it.</p> <p>22. After I've read I ask someone to explain what I've read to me.</p> <p>23. I translate it to isiXhosa in order to understand what I read.</p> <p>24. I know by own understanding.</p> <p>25. When I start to picture what is happening in the text.</p> <p>26. It's because I know what I read, and I understand the meaning of the words that I read.</p> <p>27. I look up the words I don't know the meaning of.</p> <p>28. When I can explain it to someone else.</p> <p>29. It sinks in, I can remember I can answer questions when asked about it.</p> <p>30. I picture in my brain.</p> <p>31. When I can fully summarise the piece I am reading.</p> <p>32. I know that I understand</p> <p>33. When I can say what's happening in the story.</p> <p>34. I can picture it in my mind.</p> <p>35. By explaining it to myself over again.</p> <p>Class C</p> <p>1. Because I am able to answer given questions.</p> <p>2. By repeating the same word three times and if I still don't understand. I go and ask the teacher and he helps me.</p> <p>3. I make sure everyone there is a word that I don't understand it underline it and look for the meaning, I also have read the book.</p> <p>4. To know the meaning of the words in the story.</p> <p>5. Many ways.</p> <p>6. Because I understand what I read and I wouldn't read what I don't understand.</p> <p>7. When you can answer that question, just the way it has to be answered.</p> <p>8. By practising it at home</p> <p>9. I am able to put what I have read in my own words</p> <p>10. Because I can translate English into my own language so I can understand what the meaning is.</p> <p>11. By reading and practising difficult English words.</p> <p>12. The words I read are common to me, so I know the meaning and I understand what I'm reading.</p> <p>13. At the end of the day, I will be able to summarise it.</p> <p>14. I do a closed book summary of what I understood then proceed on.</p> <p>15. By answering the question correctly.</p> <p>16. When I can summarise the book/novel into my own words.</p> <p>17. Because I do not have any difficulty reading what is given to me in English.</p> <p>18. That's how I feel</p> <p>19. I do because I always get good marks and I always give the right answers.</p> <p>20. I am able to explain it to myself or other individuals.</p> <p>21. When I'm interested in what I'm reading.</p> <p>22. I know most of the words and understand what is written.</p> <p>23. Because I know English.</p> <p>24. By being able to tell what was happening in the book.</p>	<p>When able to respond to questions</p> <p>Ability to explain</p> <p>Responses to questions</p> <p>Mental pictures</p> <p>If one can recall what one has learnt</p> <p>Visualise mentally</p> <p>Summarise</p> <p>Explain/ retell/recall</p> <p>Answering questions</p> <p>Summarising</p> <p>Translate into mother tongue</p> <p>When able to answer</p> <p>EXplain</p>
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	25. After I read a book I tell a person about what is about. 26. After I read a book I tell a person about what is about. 27. By being able to answer the questions 28. By knowing how to answer the question and by know what's going on with reading. 29. I know if someone or my teacher asks me explain and I do that shows that I understood what I read. 30. I know what I read because of the words coming out of me and if I don't, I will have to repeat it. 31. By being able to explain summarise the book to someone. 32. I picture it in my mind, and usually questions about the text gets easier.	
		32+35+32=99

Question 9: Can you tell how your teacher teaches you in class to understand what you read?

The researcher read through the responses by learners. All the responses in the affirmative were put together and the same was done with the responses that were in the negative. The researcher was looking for the Yes and No responses to question nine. The collated responses for question nine are summarised in Table 4.12 below. A total of 74 learners out of a possible 99 responded in the affirmative that they understood how their teacher taught them the reading comprehension. Table 4.12 presents the summarised themes from the **Yes** responses.

Table 4.12 Summarised themes (positive responses) from learners to Question 9

<p>Yes responses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gives everybody a chance to read aloud the text 2. Gives tips on how to approach the comprehension in the exam 3. Summarises at the end 4. Gives examples and activities until he is satisfied that we have understood 5. He asks questions during the reading process 6. Tells us to read more books 7. Takes us slowly through the comprehension in the lesson 8. Makes us repeat until we get it right 9. He also repeats until all have understood 10. He encourages us to close our eyes and use our imagination 11. Tells us to underline, circle and write in our own words what we will have read 12. Give examples, meanings of words in the questions 13. Asks us to highlight important information 14. Teacher does not move away from the topic until all have understood 15. Gives us questions to see if we have understood what will have been taught 16. Gives visual examples 17. Asks probing questions to focus us on what will have been taught 18. Gives exercises and summaries of what we will have read
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The researcher read through the responses by learners. All the responses in the negative for question nine were collated in Table 4.13 below. Out of a possible 99 responses, 25 respondents indicated that they did not understand how their teachers taught them reading comprehension. Some of the responses indicated that the learners had not understood the question correctly. Table 4.13 summarises the general themes that were derived from the various negative responses from question nine.

Table 4.13: Summarised themes (negative responses) from learners to Question 9

No responses

1. Our teacher is not audible, poor voice projection causing many not to understand what he says
2. Teacher does not teach us how to read with understanding
3. Can only understand when notes are written on the board
4. I do not understand especially poetry as it is challenging
5. Sometimes I do not understand his teaching like in terms of his voice it's too slow and without being rude I find his voice so tired.

The above responses were given by learners to question nine regarding their experiences of how their teachers teach them to understand what they will be reading. The majority of the responses as indicated above pointed out that learners felt that they know how their teachers go about teaching them. Some of the responses indicated that the teacher gave each learner a chance to read aloud. This enables the teachers to correct the learners as they read. If a teacher gives examples that learners are familiar with, it enhances understanding. The responses to question nine, address the research sub-question: How do the Grade 9 learners experience the teaching of reading comprehension skills?

The question generated a mixed response from learners. Some learners indicated that their teachers do not explicitly teach them how to understand reading comprehension. Learners cited inaudibility of their teacher, a slow way of speaking and a tired voice in teaching the subject as something that hinders their understanding. They could not tell what reading skills were taught. However, other learners were able to tell how their teachers teach them to read comprehension passages with understanding.

The following quotes are examples of the mixed responses of how learners viewed their teachers' way of teaching reading comprehension skills:

4. Sometimes I do not understand his teaching like in terms of his voice it's too slow and without being rude I find his voice so tired.
14. Our teacher doesn't really **teaches** us how to understand what we are reading. But we know we need to read the reading piece more than once to understand.

The Schema Theory (Scott, 2001) advocates the activation of the schemata prior to teaching reading comprehension. Activating schemata helps learners to use their prior knowledge with the new information to establish meaning during the reading comprehension lessons. Activating the zone of proximal interaction is critical at this stage. Donald et al. (2015:79) posit that proximal interaction enables a more knowledgeable other to give guidance to one who does not quite understand. A teacher in this instance is regarded as the more knowledgeable person to guide the learner to a point of understanding.

Learners mentioned that their teachers repeat information until understood. They summarised and used question-and-answer sessions to help learners to understand what they were reading. Some of the teachers gave background information of the texts. This enabled learners to understand the context of the reading comprehension and to use that information to establish the meaning of the text. The next question focused on learners' ability to read with understanding (Table 4.14).

Question 10: How do you know that you understand what you read?

Table 4.14 Summarised themes from learners to Question 10

1. When we can respond to questions without struggling
2. When I can give meanings to words in the story
3. When I can summarise what I will have read
4. When I can translate what I will have read into my own language
5. When I can explain to someone else without any difficulty
6. The marks that I get reflect my level of understanding
7. If I can form a mental picture of what I will have read, then I know I will have understood.
8. When I can recall what I will have learnt then I know I will have understood

For question ten, the learners had to indicate how they knew that they understood what they read. Most of the learners indicated that when they were able to respond to questions, it served as an indication that they understood what they read. For some, the ability to explain the meaning of words used in the story showed that they had understood. The ability to summarise a passage was cited also as an indicator that the text was understood. Summarising entails identifying and highlighting major points in a passage. Some of the learners' responses, listed above, indicated that the marks attained after responding to questions measured their understanding. If they obtained high marks, it was interpreted by them as having a good understanding of the reading comprehension. Forming mental pictures was seen also as a sign of their understanding. Learners indicated that the ability to visualise what they read, meant that they had mastered the information. Generally, most learners were positive that they could tell if they had understood or not understood the reading comprehension tasks.

According to Duke and Pearson (2009) (see Chapter 2), it is critical for learners to be able to differentiate between recalling and summarising. Teachers should be able to impart the skill of identifying points that are relevant and deleting all other material that is of no importance. Learners indicated that they should be able to summarise what they had read, and be able to explain the text, and be able to respond to questions without any difficulty, which would imply that they understood the text.

The Schema Theory emphasises the utilisation of prior knowledge in order to help learners make meaning of a new text. Teachers enhance the learners' understanding by activating prior knowledge before embarking on new texts. Repetition as a form of reinforcing and emphasising important concepts was used. Homework was used as an extension of the learning process by the three teachers as they gave learners homework to consolidate what they had done in class. During remediation, repetition was used to reinforce points of importance. Teachers used leading questions and probing questions during the lessons. This was done to lead and guide learners to expected answers. Learners were instructed to summarise the reading comprehension texts that they read to assess whether they had mastered the work.

The second research sub-question was: How do Grade 9 learners experience the teaching of reading comprehension skills? From the responses of the learners, not much teaching of reading comprehension skills was done. The analysis indicates that more emphasis was placed on testing learners' ability to respond to comprehension questions instead of teaching them reading comprehension skills. One of the reasons could be that, since the CAPS and R-ATP documents do not state exactly how to teach reading comprehension skills, teachers are teaching what they think is appropriate for the learners to know. Summarising is one skill that was taught by all three teachers. Balfour (1999) posits that some English teachers might not have the necessary language skills for the effective teaching of reading comprehension skills.

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this study, allowing learners to discuss in pairs or groups is critical in their development of reading comprehension skills. Adler (2004) states that cooperative learning through small groups or pairs helps learners understand better. (see Chapter 2).

The data reveals that there was a limited opportunity for learners to engage with one another. It was noted that the teachers did not utilise the learner-to-learner discussions. The Theory of Sociocultural Learning (Vygotsky, 1978) advocates for social interaction as a fundamental aspect of cognitive development. There is a need for teachers to be guided in these methods of teaching reading comprehension skills.

4.2.3 Data set 3: Interviews with teachers of English

The planned face-to-face interviews could not be conducted due to COVID-19 restrictions. Alternatively, semi-structured individual interview questions were distributed to teachers who could respond to the set questions as a questionnaire. The questionnaire focused on

teachers' experiences of teaching reading comprehension skills to Grade 9 English Home Language learners. As explained in Chapter 3, the initial plan had been to have face-to-face interviews with five teachers from the two selected schools. The two schools were selected because of their close proximity to the researcher's own school. The two schools also have the same demographics of learner population.

The schools were very strict about contact time spent during the COVID-19 restrictions. A meeting was held with three teachers in School 1 and two teachers in School 2 to clarify the completion of the consent form and to explain the purpose of the study. It was also an opportunity for the researcher to address and allay any fears that the participants might have had. Two teachers in School 1, however, eventually decided not to take part in the study. In total, only three teachers took part in the study. The teachers who participated answered the questionnaire electronically and emailed their responses to the researcher. This was done to adhere to COVID-19 regulations.

The table below indicates the responses from the three participants.

Table 4.15: Teacher interviews (Transcripts)

	Questions	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3
1.	How many years have you been teaching English Home Language?	1 year	2 years	4 years
2	How many years have you been teaching Grade 9?	2 years	2 years	4 years
3.	How do you assess the learners' comprehension skills before you start teaching them reading comprehension?	Generally, I would complete an informal activity/assessment to test their abilities of understanding and analysing information. This is in order to test their analysing skills and comprehending skills. This allows me to test at which level my learners thinking abilities are, whether it is a higher, middle or a lower order thinking learner. Hence, before I begin the teaching, I assess the learner to get an understanding of where their thinking level is, according to blooms taxonomy. Prior to the activity/informal assessment, I would also discuss and acquire prior knowledge from learners on how they answer questions and importantly understanding what is being read and the message from the text. Basically, how they approach a text and answers, whether it be a listening or reading	Typically, I assess their comprehension ability by doing a comprehension exercise alongside them. This is done through verbal interaction and questioning of learners from the text being used. Thereafter, they are given their own comprehension to complete to test their ability. Occasionally, I will simply give them the comprehension to do independently, and after I will work through the answers with them.	Get learners to verbally answer what they understand about what they have read.

		comprehension.		
4.	How do you assess their comprehension after you have taught them how to understand a text/book?	As mentioned, I assess learners prior to teaching to assess their order of thinking. It helps me understand where a learner is cognitively as comprehension is something they should have been taught prior to grade 9. Therefore, I firstly assess, understand my learners' level – thereafter, I go over the answers and have a discussion to where they went wrong and the keywords in the question or text that they should have looked out for.	By providing written questions that are designed to test their understanding after each chapter of a novel/book/text, or a discussion focusing on questions that test if they have comprehended the text.	Learners are given exam-styled questions.
5.	Describe how you teach reading comprehension	I always encourage my learners to read the questions first, this allows them to understand what information they require from the text; but also, by reading the questions, they would partially gauge an understanding of the text. In addition, I emphasise highlighting “key words” in both questions and text. As each question and text always has a main idea, I encourage them to highlight what they believe is a main point/idea, so when answering a question or reading a text they can retain the important sections. Furthermore, I encourage using highlighters as a may be an approach that assist visual learners but also not to waste time (if there is a time limit).	I will use two comprehension sources. The first is used as a lesson whereby we do the activity together as a class. Whilst doing so, I provide a set of verbal questions that may extend/build onto the questions already on the activity/worksheet. They focus on the various aspects of language comprehension. Learners read primarily and I assist with words that they may not understand. If they do not understand a word, I task them to look it up or provide them with the meaning; they make annotations. They answer the questions that I read out/formulate, and we discuss the answer as a whole. Lastly, they will then practice the same method of answering questions that we practiced in order to complete the second comprehension activity in class (if there is time) or at home.	At GET level, I will go through an article with learners and explain to them key factors.
6.	What specific strategies or techniques do you teach the learners to use to help them comprehend what they read?	Highlighting main ideas is one of my most used techniques I use as mentioned above. In certain cases, we will do skimming and scanning as well.	Scaffolding knowledge especially language. Focusing on Antonyms, Synonyms, Connotations and Denotations. I find it useful to relate content to their own lives. I encourage them to do most of the reading.	Repetition is a good tool to remind learners what key factors they need to look for when reading.
7.	Which aspects in teaching comprehension in English First language do you find challenging?	Many learners do not speak English at home and their vocabulary in terms of English is limited. Therefore, they struggle understanding certain words which is often a major barrier as this allows them to not answer questions or not make meaning.	The rules of English are a challenge and having learners getting learners to read frequently in their own time. They do not expose themselves to new vocabulary which hinders their understanding of certain texts. Reading would help but at times learners do not dedicate time to practice. Thus, language and understanding vocabulary can be challenging, not to mention the rules of English which they are unable to remember	Learners can verbally answer correctly, but struggle to write that same answer effectively.
8.	Do you find the CAPS document helpful regarding comprehension instructions?	I do find it helpful in certain cases as it provides you with structure and resources, but I do find teachers do need to use other resources in addition to CAPS.	Not particularly. CAPS provides a good guide for teaching comprehension but the class context is not always the same.	No as the CAPS document does not effectively highlight how learners must answer paper 1 questions.

9.	Do you in your lessons strictly adhere to the CAPS guidelines? Or how do you adapt or change it to fit your purpose for the learners' levels of comprehension?	I do believe my lessons adhere to CAPS guidelines; however, I do adapt it according to my specific learner needs.	I try to follow CAPS strictly, however, there are situations where I have to adapt if a learners' level is not up to par. This means that there is more work to be done on both ends. Assessments are not vastly adapted but the adaptation happens in class as prep work.	It is hard to cater to different learners' comprehension when half of the class does not understand.
10.	In your opinion, what is the most effective way of teaching reading comprehension skills to English First Language learners?	Highlighting main ideas – questions and text Checking the mark allocation to understand your required writing length or points Understanding the “who, what, where, when, why and how” of the text where applicable Reading questions, highlight main ideas. Read text, highlight main ideas. Read through text again with highlighted points and answer questions.	It is important to make the content more relatable to learners. For example, choose texts that talk about things they know, their communities, or things that interest them. If there is a connection and desire to learn, it becomes easier. It also helps to demonstrate how to answer questions. Barret's Taxonomy proves a useful tool.	It's always effective to ensure that learners are able to summarise what they have read as this will determine if learners understand.
11.	In your opinion, what specific comprehension strategies/techniques are important and therefore must be taught to Grade 9 learners?	I believe all the points I mentioned above is of importance and has been effective in my teaching practices thus far.	Predicting Visualising Discussions Summarising Close Reading I also use Barret's Taxonomy	Learners often do not understand the meaning of certain words in a sentence, therefore it is important to teach learners to identify the meaning of surrounding words - as it could help with their comprehension.
12.	If you perhaps know about teaching pedagogies or theories, which of those specifically would you say that you apply in your teaching comprehension?	In terms of teaching pedagogies/theories or approaches I would say I focus on a constructivist approach in terms of teaching comprehension. The reason I think this is important is because learners need to construct knowledge and “make meaning” of what they are reading. Learners need to take the information from the text and questions and “construct” their interpretation of what is being stated. We can also speak about Bloom's Taxonomy. Although certain questions are lower, middle and higher order- I believe one can identify a higher order learner by even asking a lower order question. We can also speak about Blossom's taxonomy. Although certain questions are lower, middle and higher order – I believe once can identify a higher order learner by even asking a lower order question.	Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. This has proven to be very effective with all learners. Those who excel and those who need more assistance.	Translanguaging is an effective method that can work in a controlled environment.

Data set 3 focused on the responses from teachers to the 12 questions in the questionnaire. Each question focused on a different aspect of the teachers' experiences in Grade 9 English

Home Language teaching. The highlighted parts in Table 4.14 above indicate some related information from the three different teachers' responses to the questions. In this discussion, the pronoun "he" will be used to refer to all participants for the sake of anonymity.

The responses to question 1 indicate that the first respondent has been teaching English Home Language for a year followed by respondent 2, for two years and respondent 3 for four years. As indicated by the responses of the three interviewees, two teachers have been teaching Grade 9s for two years and only one interviewee has been teaching for four years. The three teachers are regarded as novice teachers.

For question three, the first teacher indicated that he gave his class informal activities first before they responded to the set comprehension. This afforded him an opportunity to measure the level of comprehension by his class. The teacher was able to place the learners according to their abilities. He used Blooms Taxonomy to design the questions that he asked the learners.

The second respondent worked through a passage with the learners. It was during this interaction that the teacher asked guiding and probing questions to direct the thoughts of the learners to what they would be reading. As seen in Chapter 2, Vygotsky (1978) states that the ZPD represents the gap between what a learner can achieve with assistance and what a learner cannot attain on his/her own. When the teacher interacts with learners, she helps them to clarify what they may not have understood. The teacher is the MKO and helps the learners to understand and comprehend the text (Leach; 2015).

The teacher then gave learners a comprehension passage which they had to attempt individually. The answers were discussed then and learners were able to learn from one another. As discussed in Chapter 2, Vygotsky's Theory of Sociocultural Learning promotes learning from one another and enhances understanding. According to Vygotsky (1978), the text, the activity, and the reader are three pivotal components that interact during the reading process. Teachers need to choose texts that are relevant and within the experience of the readers as advocated by the Schema Theory (Scott 2001) as seen in Chapter 2. Steiner and Mahn (1996: 191) posit that "sociocultural approaches emphasize interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge". Furthermore, it is stated that when a novice internalises the effects of working together, that novice acquires useful strategies and crucial knowledge (Steiner and Mahn: 1996: 192). The third teacher indicated that he asked learners to verbally respond to questions and indicate what they would have understood when reading.

The responses for question four on how the teachers assessed learners' comprehension varied. The teachers used a discussion forum where learners were engaged to give their opinions. Another method used was to provide written questions which were designed to test their understanding, and there was the use of exam styled questions. The three different teachers applied three different approaches in assessing the learners' comprehension.

Responses to question five indicate that the teachers' approach to teaching reading comprehension varied. The first teacher instructed learners to read the questions before attempting to answer as the teacher claimed that that helped with focused reading. Learners were encouraged to highlight key words as they read. The second teacher used two reading passages with the first used as a preparatory passage while he guided learners by asking probing questions to direct them. The third teacher read with the learners while explaining key words in the passage. At the end, the learners were given questions to respond to.

For specific strategies, the first teacher indicated that he used skimming and scanning and encouraged learners to highlight important aspects as they read. The second teacher mentioned scaffolding, teaching connotations, and teaching denotations. The teacher indicated that he related content to the learners' experiences and encouraged them to read on their own. The third teacher stated that repetition was essential in teaching reading comprehension.

Each teacher had specific strategies which worked in a specific context. From the information provided by the teachers one can infer that explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies were neither clearly understood nor effectively implemented.

There were various challenges mentioned by the three respondents in response to question six. The first teacher alluded to limited vocabulary as most of the learners enrolled for English Home Language were not first language speakers. He concluded that it was a barrier to reading comprehension for his class. The second respondent highlighted the rules of the language as problematic for the learners to understand. Another challenge mentioned was the lack of exposure to the English reading material by learners. The vocabulary of learners was very limited and that hindered the learners' levels of comprehension. The third teacher indicated that the learners were able to use the language orally but found it difficult to express themselves through writing.

The first teacher indicated that the CAPS document was useful to him as it gave him structure and suggested resources to be used. The other two teachers did not find the CAPS document particularly helpful. The second teacher indicated that it did not give guidance on how learners had to respond to comprehension questions. Similarly, the third teacher

commented that there were no guidelines for learners to respond to comprehension questions.

The first teacher believed that he adhered to the CAPS guidelines but did not mention how his lessons were adapted in order to suit his class. The second teacher indicated that he tried to follow the CAPS document strictly. At times lessons were adapted to suit the cognitive levels of the learners. This teacher pointed out that during his lesson preparation, he considered how to adapt the work to suit his learners. There was however, no specific method that was mentioned regarding how the lessons were adapted. The third interviewee's response was that catering for multiple intelligences in a class when half of the learners did not understand was a difficult task to ask of teachers. By implication, the teacher did not implement any differentiated teaching.

The first teacher stated that he told the learners to highlight the main ideas and note the mark allocation which helped to guide the learners about the required detail in their responses. Rereading a text was another aspect that the teacher emphasised. The teacher indicated that, firstly, the learners had to be able to relate to the content. Texts that were selected for the reading comprehension had to be within the experience of the learners to enhance their comprehension. The teacher also demonstrated to the learners how to answer questions using Barret's Taxonomy (1976). The third teacher posited that it was important for learners to summarise what they read. According to the teacher, the ability to summarise what one has read is a demonstration of one's level of understanding.

According to the Schema Theory (Scott, 2001) (see Chapter 2) background knowledge is pivotal in helping one to combine prior knowledge with information from the text to create understanding. It is important for teachers to choose reading material that learners could relate to as it activates the schema in learners as indicated in Chapter 2. Fahriany (2014:8) posits that the schema is not "rigidly applied", but allows space for variation. (see Chapter 2).

The first teacher indicated that highlighting main points and re-reading were the two most important techniques that needed to be taught to Grade 9 learners. The second respondent mentioned predicting, visualising, discussions, summarising and close reading as the most important strategies and techniques to be taught to Grade 9 English Home Language learners. The third respondent highlighted that it was important to teach learners to deduce the meanings of words within context.

The first teacher indicated that he used a constructivist approach in teaching reading comprehension. The reason for doing so was because learners had to construct the

knowledge and make meaning of what they read. The respondent stated that questions also helped the teacher to establish the level at which the learners were. The second teacher stated that he utilised the ZDP to assist learners from a position of not knowing to a position of knowing. The third teacher mentioned “translanguaging” as an effective approach.

The three teachers’ responses indicated that the various classes that they taught had a wide range of challenges. Some challenges were specific to certain classes and other challenges universal. Teachers pointed out that English is a second language to all learners which posed challenges when doing reading comprehension and responding to questions. The learners spent limited time communicating in English which led to a limited vocabulary.

The limited vocabulary made it difficult for the learners to read with understanding. Therefore, the limited time that the learners spend practising the use of English seemed to stifle the learners’ progress in mastering the language.

From the teachers’ comments, it was apparent that each viewed the CAPS document differently. To some teachers, the CAPS document was a helpful document but to others it was not very helpful as it fell short of their expectations in giving guidance to teachers on how to teach reading comprehension. The third teacher pointed out that when it came to answering questions by learners, there were no guidelines to assist the learners to respond to questions. The third teacher’s observations concurred with the findings of a study done by De Lange, Winberg and Dippenaar (2020:9) which posits that “the CAPS document does not explicitly state the principles that underpin its guidelines and requirements for teaching or assessing reading comprehension”.

The three teachers had differing views about what they considered the most effective method to teach reading comprehension skills to English Home Language learners. The second teacher stated that it was important to use texts within learners’ experiences. This is supported by Scott (2001:1) in the Schema Theory when the importance of a reader’s knowledge to combine with new information to create understanding is emphasised. The demonstration by the teacher of how to read and interpret questions to learners was anchored in Vygotsky’s (1978) ZPD when the teacher assists a learner who is unable to understand on his/her own but is able to do an activity with the aid of one with more knowledge.

The three teachers had a variety of techniques that they considered to be the most important techniques to teach to Grade 9 learners. It can be deduced that teachers approach teaching

reading comprehension from many angles. This may be because the CAPS document has no specific steps to assist teachers to teach reading comprehension skills explicitly.

The three teachers had a different understanding of what they considered to be pedagogy in teaching English Home Language to Grade 9 learners. Each teacher's understanding influenced their approach to teaching reading comprehension skills. The first teacher used a constructivist approach as he stated that it was important for learners to be actively involved in learning to construct knowledge and meaning. The second teacher utilised the ZPD to bring learners to a level of understanding. The third teacher used translanguaging to reach out to all of the learners.

It was evident from the various answers presented by the three teachers, that they viewed teaching of reading comprehension differently. Some of the responses by the teachers pointed to a possibility that they were not trained how to teach reading comprehension skills explicitly as advocated by the National Reading Panel (2000) (see Chapter 2) It was likely that if they were guided, they would have utilised that ability to teach reading comprehension skills.

The teachers' responses did not explain how they adapted their lessons to suit the needs of their learners. One teacher was very clear that it was difficult to do differentiated teaching in class when most of the learners were struggling already with the language.

4.2.4 Data set 4: Observations of teachers

Data was collected through classroom observations when teachers conducted their English lessons. The researcher observed specifically two comprehension lessons from each of the three teachers indicated as Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 3. Pedagogies that teachers utilised in the teaching of reading comprehension were observed as well. The researcher attempted to establish which specific comprehension strategies were used by the teachers during the lessons and whether the strategies were taught explicitly. During the observation, the researcher completed the class observation protocol tool.

The observation schedule is discussed in the tables below.

4.2.4.1 Class observation protocol

Table 4.16 Teacher 1- Lesson 1

Periods of observation (45 minutes)	Lesson 1- Teacher 1
What to observe	Observations

How is the topic introduced to learners?	Teacher asked learners what they understood by comprehension.
How does the teacher involve learners' prior knowledge?	Asked the learners to mention anything that they knew about the Black Panther
How does the teacher teach comprehension skills to the class?	No mention of any comprehension skills
What strategies/techniques/skills does the teacher teach the learners to use for comprehension? Skimming and scanning Inferring meaning Deducing meaning Questioning Answering questions on the text Drawing conclusions Synthesising/writing a summary	Skimming and scanning were addressed first for general information and reading the questions for focused reading. The other skills were not explicitly mentioned but could be implied.
Do the learners understand what the teacher is instructing them to do?	Most, about three quarters of learners understood but a few seemed unsure of what to do even after the teacher had explained
Do the techniques help them to understand the text/books they read in class? What pedagogies are used by the teacher?	To an extent the techniques assisted the learners to respond to the given text appropriately. Learner centred as as the teacher encouraged participation by learners.
What kind of feedback is given to the learners?	Verbal/oral feedback. The teacher explained to the learners how they could have responded and immediately corrects them. When work has been marked, some comments are made in the scripts giving feedback about what the learners will have done.
What is their reason for the feedback?	Remediation
How does the teacher assess their comprehension in class?	Asks questions relating to what they have read.

Table 4.17: Teacher 1- Lesson 2

Periods of observation (45 minutes)	Lesson 2 Teacher 1
What to observe	Observations
How is the topic introduced to learners?	Teacher recapped the previous lesson and alluded to the comprehension skills that were taught.
How does the teacher involve learners' prior knowledge?	Asked the learners to state which skills were covered in the previous lesson.
How does the teacher teach comprehension skills to the class?	Explicitly. He mentioned the specific skills skimming and scanning that had been covered and introduced
Learners are encouraged to form certain expectations about the text Which skills does the teacher teach? Skimming and scanning Inferring meaning Deducing meaning Questioning Answering questions on the text Drawing conclusions Synthesising/writing a summary	Inferring meaning Deducing meaning and Drawing conclusions
Do the learners understand what the teacher is instructing them to do?	From the engagement, many learners did not seem to understand as it was back and forth as the teacher tried to get all learners to understand what he was teaching them.
Do the techniques help them to understand the text/books they read in class?	The techniques help some of the learners as they were able to execute the instructions given by the teacher.

What pedagogies are used by the teacher?	Learner centred pedagogies
What kind of feedback is given to the learners?	Teacher gave verbal feedback to the learners
What is their reason for the feedback?	The feedback is or the learners to correct To help learners rectify their errors
How does the teacher assess their comprehension in class?	An exercise was given to the learners and then marking as a class.

In Lesson 1, Teacher 1 introduced the lesson through a question for learners to state whether they understood what comprehension meant. The learners explained that it was about understanding.

The title of the comprehension that was used for the lesson was *“Why the Black Panther is so important to the Black Community”*. The comprehension worksheet was handed to individual learners. Most of the learners were aware who the Black Panther was and what he was famous for. The teacher did not tell explicitly the learners from the onset which comprehension skills he was going to focus on. He instructed the learners to have a quick glance at what the passage was about and later mentioned to learners that what they did was scanning and skimming.

Since most of the learners knew who the Black Panther was, they had expectations to see if what they knew was what the passage was about. The learners took turns and read the passage aloud in class and learners were asked to respond to questions. Towards the end of the lesson, a discussion of the learners’ answers was held. The teacher corrected the learners when they gave incorrect answers. The rest of the comprehension questions were to be done as homework.

The Schema Theory (Scott, 2001) (Chapter 2) emphasises the importance of activating readers’ prior knowledge before embarking on a reading comprehension activity as indicated in Chapter 3. Activating prior knowledge is done to help the reader to be able to utilise the knowledge that they already have and combine it with the new information from the text. The new information from the reading text combined with prior knowledge helps the reader to make meaning of the new text. Teacher 1 in Lesson 1 introduced the lesson by first asking the learners what they understood comprehension to mean.

The interaction between the teacher and the learners and among the learners is in line with Vygotsky’s Theory of Sociocultural Learning, where learners learn from each other and from the exchange of information with the teacher. The teacher also used the ZPD to help the learners who were not confident about their answers.

During the second observation of Teacher 1, the teacher began the lesson by referring to the reading comprehension skills that were taught in the previous lesson, namely, skimming and scanning. The teacher explicitly told the learners that the lesson was building on the skills of taught previously and would focus on inference skill, deducing meaning, and drawing conclusions. Learners were asked if they found skimming and scanning of any help when working on reading comprehension. The responses were not very clear. There were doubts among some of the learners whether they had benefitted by learning about skimming and scanning. The learners were tasked with reading the comprehension text. The teacher modelled how to make inferences and deduce meaning using the passage. The task continued very slowly as the teacher tried to accommodate each learner. At the end, the learners were tasked to complete an exercise and report back in the following lesson. The teacher interacted with learners throughout the lesson to get them to understand what he aimed to achieve by teaching them reading comprehension skills.

The second lesson by Teacher 1 had a similar approach to the first lesson observed. In the second lesson, the teacher built on the previous skills that had been taught to learners. The lesson went on to assess the learners' ability to respond to questions. Most language teachers assumed that they were teaching reading comprehension without realising that they were testing learners instead of equipping them with reading skills. Towards the end of the lesson, there was a discussion of the answers that the learners had written. The teacher corrected the learners when they gave incorrect answers. The rest of the comprehension questions were to be done as homework.

Table 4.18: Teacher 2: Lesson 1

Periods of observation (45 minutes)	Lesson 1 Teacher 2
What to observe	Observations
1 How is the topic introduced to learners?	Teacher told the learners that they were going to focus on the comprehension; and went ahead to read out the comprehension.
2 .How does the teacher involve learners' prior knowledge?	One learner was asked to read the last two paragraphs.
3. How does the teacher teach comprehension skills to the class?	There was no explicit reference to any of the comprehension skills.
4. What strategies/techniques/skills does the teacher teach the learners to use for comprehension?	The learners were told to read the questions of the comprehension passage so as to get an idea of what the passage was about.
5. Which skills does the teacher teach? Learners are encouraged to form certain expectations about the text Skimming and scanning Inferring meaning Deducing meaning Questioning	Inference skill. Asked learners to try and substitute words in context and see if the meaning did not change.

<p>Answering questions on the text Drawing conclusions Synthesising/writing a summary</p> <p>6. Do the learners understand what the teacher is instructing them to do?</p> <p>7. Do the techniques help them to understand the text/books they read in class?</p>	<p>More than half of the class of 35 learners executed the instructions well whilst a few did not seem to grasp what was required of them.</p> <p>Judging from the learners' responses, it would seem that the techniques are helping the learners to read with understanding.</p>
<p>8. What pedagogies are used by the teacher? What kind of feedback is given to the learners?</p>	<p>Mostly teacher centred</p>
<p>9. What kind of feedback is given to the learners?</p>	<p>Oral feedback and through the marked work.</p>
<p>10. What is their reason for the feedback?</p>	<p>To inform learners about their errors and how they can improve. Feedback is remedial.</p>
<p>11. How does the teacher assess their comprehension in class?</p>	<p>Learners are given questions to respond to.</p>

Table 4.19: Teacher 2: Lesson 2

Periods of observation	Lesson 2 Teacher 2
What to observe	Observations
<p>1. How is the topic introduced to learners?</p> <p>2. How does the teacher involve learners' prior knowledge?</p> <p>3. How does the teacher teach comprehension skills to the class?</p> <p>4. What strategies/techniques/skills does the teacher teach the learners to use for comprehension?</p> <p>5. Which skills does the teacher teach?</p> <p>Learners are encouraged to form certain expectations about the text Skimming and scanning Inferring meaning Deducing meaning Questioning Answering questions on the text Drawing conclusions Synthesising/writing a summary</p> <p>6. Do the learners understand what the teacher is instructing them to do?</p> <p>7. Do the techniques help them to understand the text/books they read in class?</p> <p>8. What pedagogies are used by the teacher?</p> <p>9. What kind of feedback is given to the learners?</p> <p>10. What is their reason for the feedback?</p> <p>11. How does the teacher assess their comprehension in class?</p>	<p>Teacher wrote the title of the reading comprehension on the board.</p> <p>Learners were asked to name any comprehension skills that they had covered before.</p> <p>Learners were asked to explain any of the comprehension skills and how they enhance their understanding when reading.</p> <p>Reading the title of the passage and making guesses of what it would be about. Learners were also encouraged to look at the images associated with the title.</p> <p>Skimming and scanning Inference skill. Asked learners to try and substitute words in context and see if the meaning did not change.</p> <p>From the level of participation and responses, one can conclude that the learners understood the teacher's instructions. Learner centred lesson. There was teacher and learner exchange of information.</p> <p>Learner centred Oral feedback as well as marked work. It is to help the learners to correct what they may not have done correctly. To inform learners about their errors and how they can improve. Feedback is remedial. Learners were initially limited to responding to only the first two paragraphs to gauge their level of understanding. Learners were given questions to respond to.</p>

Two lessons were observed for Teacher 2 which focuses on reading comprehension. The reading comprehension passage was “From Teacher Man” by Frank McCourt. The teacher did not explicitly mention any of the comprehension skills that the class was going to focus on. The teacher continued to read the first two paragraphs of the reading comprehension aloud while the learners followed in their own worksheets. Three learners were assigned then to read two paragraphs each.

After reading, the learners were asked to identify words that were unfamiliar in the passage and to find their meanings using the contexts and by substituting the words with synonyms. This was to help the learners to be able to use their inference skills. The exercise yielded mixed results. There were learners who were able to infer the possible meanings of the identified words. Other learners struggled to make sense of what was happening. The teacher explained to the learners that they were using the *inference skill* to determine the meaning of the words that they had identified. At the end of the lesson, learners were instructed to answer the questions in their workbooks for discussion in the following lesson. Teacher 2’s second observed lesson was based on a passage titled “*Three dystopian novels that mirror modern society*”. The teacher asked learners to make guesses as to what the passage was about by referring to the title.

Most learners did not understand what the word ‘dystopian’ meant. Teacher 2 had to explain. The teacher asked the learners to refer to the reading comprehension skills that had been covered in the previous lesson. The learners were able to use the inference skills to give meaning to the words in context. The learners answered the comprehension questions. The answers were discussed in class. Corrections were done during the feed-back session. The lesson was due to continue during the next lesson the following day.

Table 4.20: Teacher 3: Lesson 1

Periods of observation (45 minutes)	Lesson 1 Teacher 3
What to observe	Observations
1.How is the topic introduced to learners?	The learners were asked to state any comprehension skills that they know.
2.How does the teacher involve learners’ prior knowledge?	By asking them to tell them what they know about comprehension.
3.How does the teacher teach comprehension skills to the class?	Implicitly. Did not mention the skills to the learners.
4.What strategies/techniques/skills does the teacher teach the learners to use for comprehension?	Predicting pre-reading, Reading questions –to give an idea about what the passage is about and Post-reading-check if learners’ assumptions have been met.

5.Which skills does the teacher teach? Learners are encouraged to form certain expectations about the text Skimming and scanning Inferring meaning Deducing meaning Questioning Answering questions on the text Drawing conclusions Synthesising/writing a summary	Questioning. Answering questions on the text. Drawing conclusions
6.Do the learners understand what the teacher is instructing them to do?	Yes they do. They managed to execute the instructions as given.
7.Do the techniques help them to understand the text/books they read in class?	Not completely but helps equip them to be able to read for meaning
8.What pedagogies are used by the teacher?	Mostly teacher centred.
9.What kind of feedback is given to the learners?	Oral feedback as well as comments in books.
10.What is their reason for the feedback?	It is meant for learners to rectify the errors that they have made
11.How does the teacher assess their comprehension in class?	Teacher asks questions to see if they understood

Table 4.21: Teacher 3: Lesson 2

Periods of observation	Lesson 2 Teacher 3
What to observe	Observations
1.How is the topic introduced to learners?	The teacher started by asking learners to define comprehension.
2.How does the teacher involve learners' prior knowledge?	Learners had to reflect on the previous lessons and the strategies that were used in the lesson.
3.How does the teacher teach comprehension skills to the class?	The teacher explicitly mentioned to learners that he wanted them to focus on deducing meaning and summarising.
4. What strategies/techniques/skills does the teacher teach the learners to use for comprehension?	Reading and establishing the meaning through the use of words in contexts.
5. Which skills does the teacher teach? Learners are encouraged to form certain expectations about the text Skimming and scanning Inferring meaning Deducing meaning Questioning Answering questions on the text Drawing conclusions Synthesising/writing a summary	Deducing meaning and summarising.
6. Do the learners understand what the teacher is instructing them to do?	The learners did. More than half of the learners managed reading and summarising the passage.
7. Do the techniques help them to understand the text/books they read in class?	It is assumed that the skills acquired would be transferred and used when they use textbooks.
8. What pedagogies are used by the teacher?	Learner centred approach. Teacher introduced the lesson and had a brief discussion and let the learners work through the work. Teacher walked around monitoring progress
9. What kind of feedback is given to the learners?	Oral
10. What is their reason for the feedback?	So that learners could correct their errors
11. How does the teacher assess their comprehension in class?	Learners are given questions to respond to.

Teacher 3 began the lesson by asking the learners to state comprehension skills that they knew. The teacher wanted the learners to use their prior knowledge as advocated by the Schema Theory (see Chapter 2). Most of the learners were not aware of any comprehension skills. The teacher did not explicitly mention any specific skills that the lesson was going to focus on which could have helped the learners to focus on what they were going to do.

The teacher continued distributing a comprehension passage about Nando's. Learners took turns to read the passage. During the reading process, the teacher would stop the learners and question them about words that were used or parts of the comprehension to test the learners' understanding of what they were reading. The intervention by a more knowledgeable person helps the learners in the 'proximal zone' to a point of understanding (Vygotsky, 1978) (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.2).

After reading was done, the teacher instructed the learners to answer the first five questions of the reading comprehension. The responses to the questions were then discussed. In that process, the teacher corrected learners if they answered incorrectly. At the end of the lesson, the remaining questions were assigned as homework.

Teacher 3 asked learners to explain what the word comprehension meant. Almost all learners understood what comprehension meant. The teacher told the learners that the focus of the lesson was going to be on deducing meaning and summarising. Learners took turns to read the comprehension to the end. There was interaction between the teacher and learners and learner-to-learner interaction. Vygotsky's Theory of Sociocultural Learning (1978) posits that interaction promotes learning amongst the learners as discussed in Chapter 2. The teacher encouraged active learner-to-learner interaction. The teacher did a demonstration of what was expected of the learners by answering the comprehension questions by using textual evidence. The learners responded to the questions and then the answers were discussed in class.

Instead of teaching the learners the reading comprehension skills, the teacher tested the learners' understanding of the passage. At the end, feedback was given to learners by highlighting areas which they needed to improve on.

The observation results indicated that teaching reading comprehension skills is not an easy task for most teachers. The lessons started as being aimed at imparting reading comprehension skills but instead ended with testing learners' understanding of the comprehension. The explicit teaching of comprehension is seen as a waste of time. The skill

of activating prior knowledge amongst learners before starting on new work is barely adhered to. The Schema Theory emphasises the importance of activating prior knowledge in reading comprehension.

The lesson observations revealed that there was awareness by teachers that learners needed to be taught reading comprehension skills to improve their reading comprehension. Teachers do not always state explicitly to learners that they are going to teach specific learning skills. This could help learners to focus during the lesson as they would know the purpose of the lesson. It was observed also that what started as lessons to teach learners reading comprehension skills ended as with testing learners' answering comprehension questions. Most learners are unaware of reading comprehension skills which could be because they are not taught explicitly. This questions whether teachers are taught during teacher training how to teach reading comprehension skills to their classes.

The third research sub-question was: What reading comprehension strategies do teachers implement when teaching reading comprehension skills?

The findings of Data set 3 and 4 respond to the question of what strategies that are implemented by teachers when teaching reading comprehension skills.

As discussed above in the presentation of Data sets 3 and 4, the findings from the three teachers indicated that individual teachers had certain preferences for strategies that they implemented in their lessons to meet the needs of the unique compositions of their different classes. The terms "strategies" and "skills" are at times used interchangeably. Aflerbach, Pearson, and Paris (2008:365) state that a strategy is a "systematic plan, consciously adapted and monitored to improve one's performance in learning". Strategies are closely associated with a conscious and systematic plan. Furthermore, Afterbach et al. (2008:365) define skill as "an acquired ability to perform well". Therefore, it is a term that is associated with proficiency.

Some of the strategies that teachers said they used in teaching reading comprehension skills were skimming, scanning, deducing meaning, drawing conclusions, inference, reading of the title of a passage, answering questions, and drawing conclusions. During the observation, it was noted that the teachers initially started with an intention of teaching reading comprehension skills but ended with testing learners' ability to respond to comprehension questions. This observation could imply that there is a lack of skills on the part of the teachers. An observation by Sailors (2008:653) is that "teachers are taught basic skills of reading instruction and sent out to teach with the understanding that, in time, they will learn

all that they need to know to support comprehension. This is simply not true". Sailors' claim might explain the struggle by teachers to explicitly teach reading comprehension skills.

There were some 'strategies' not listed in the CAPS document that the teachers utilised in order to help learners comprehend what they were reading. The learners worked through passages with the teachers who demonstrated how to respond to questions. One other strategy mentioned was that learners had to first read the questions before reading the passage as that would help direct their focus on specific information while reading. In the three different classes observed, at the end of each lesson, the learners were given tasks to work through and give feedback on.

The main research question is: What is the role of the teacher in developing comprehension skills in Grade 9 English Home Language learning?

Rutzer (2020) makes a profound claim that "reading comprehension is crucial for basic survival in the education system and the requirement to comprehend what you read is omnipresent in every student's life from Math class to History". This claim points to the importance of reading comprehension in education as it acts as a vehicle to understanding. Undoubtedly, teachers play an important role in ensuring that learners are able to read with understanding by applying appropriate reading comprehension strategies.

It is critical for teachers to know the relevant strategies to use in order to develop learners' reading comprehension skills at different levels. Learners in a class model their learning habits based on what is presented by the teacher. The teacher assumes the role of an expert and is considered to be the MKO. Learners are likely to take and apply what the teacher presents to them. If the teacher of English is not well-equipped with pedagogical knowledge of how to teach the reading comprehension skills, it is likely to hinder the development of reading skills amongst learners. Moats (2009:14) argues that "without instruction and practice, teachers are unlikely to develop the questioning techniques and discussion strategies..." The neglect of explicit teaching of reading skills by teachers culminates from the fact that "very little attention is given to the professional development of comprehension instruction" Klapwijk and Van der Walt (2011:3). It is perhaps one area that still needs to be researched in order to assist teachers of English Home language to be effective in teaching reading comprehension skills and strategies.

There are numerous ways teachers can aid learners to be conversant with reading comprehension skills and strategies. Teachers can help learners by exposing them to a wide range of literature texts. The engagement with a variety of texts exposes the learners to

different genres and helps them to appreciate different types of texts. The texts must be of good quality and challenge the learners' thinking. Learners must be provided with motivating texts and contexts for reading. As discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3 of this study, Brophy (2013) posits that "motivation is highly correlated with learning in general and reading comprehension in particular". It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that they select texts that are motivating to learners and that are contextually within the experiences of the learners. Teachers can be able to choose appropriate texts for the learners only if they have background knowledge of the learners. Al-Issa (2006:44) states that in selecting texts to be used by learners, it is critical for teachers to consider the learners' background knowledge. If learners are familiar with a text, comprehension is aided. The Schema Theory (Scott, 2001) emphasises the importance of activating background knowledge prior to reading a new text. One's background knowledge combines with the information from a new text and aids in comprehending the text.

When learners are taught comprehension strategies explicitly and told the reasons for doing so, learners are given a purpose for participating in the activity. It might be also a motivating factor as there will be a clear reason for engaging in the exercise. According to the National Reading Panel (Snow, 2002:3), the explicit teaching of strategies empowers learners to use specific cognitive strategies and to reason strategically when encountering barriers to reading comprehension. McNamara (2007) buttresses the point that "explicitly teaching and modelling comprehension strategies can improve the comprehension abilities of readers. Furthermore, Klapwijk and Du Toit (2009:80) posit that the teaching of strategies must be done directly and intensively. This will enable learners to use the strategies independently. Teachers are key role players in developing learners' reading comprehension skills. According to Klapwijk (2015:4), "teachers are pivotal in developing strong literacy skills in their learners, yet to do so they themselves need to be skilled readers". Teachers of English must be taught how to teach these strategies explicitly and effectively. According to De Lange et al., (2019) and Nel et al., (2006) pre-service teacher-training courses do not adequately prepare trainees with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach and assess reading comprehension. This study makes suggestions and recommendations on how teachers can assist learners with the development of reading comprehension skills.

4.3 Conclusion

The aim of this Chapter was to discuss the findings of the main research question and its sub-questions. After analysis of the four data sets, a number of observations were made. Data set one which focused on the CAPS and R-ATP documents, revealed that these documents provide very little information regarding the explicit teaching of reading

comprehension. In the CAPS document for Grade 9 learners, the document refers to reading comprehension 20 times without detailing the approach that teachers have to implement. A study conducted by De Lange, Winberg and Dippenaar (2020:1) concluded that the CAPS document does not provide adequate guidance for improving reading comprehension.

Learners' responses indicated that they have different challenges with reading comprehension with some able to follow what they are taught while others have some difficulties. Teachers' responses indicated that they have different ways of approaching teaching reading comprehension skills and what they view as the most important skills that need to be taught to Grade 9 learners. Their view of the usefulness of the CAPS and R-ATP documents also varies. There are some who consider it to be a helpful document while others do not see much guidance from the document in teaching reading comprehension skills. In class observations, the teachers had various ways of teaching the reading comprehension, but all of the teachers ended their lessons by testing the learners' ability to respond to questions.

During the teaching observations, the researcher found that at times teachers do adhere to the Schema Theory that advocates for the integration of prior knowledge with new knowledge in order to interpret what they are reading. The Schema Theory (Scott, 2001) helps in guiding the teaching of reading comprehension and its implications. Every reader has a different schema. The different schemata of readers need activation in order to facilitate the comprehension of new texts read. The more familiar the reader is with the text, the higher the chances of comprehending that text. When selecting passages for reading comprehension, teachers should select passages that are within learners' own experiences. That would help to activate the schema in the reader which can be used in meaning making. According to Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) "activation of knowledge structures is vital to the reader because he or she can make predictions about what is going on in a text" as advocated for in the Schema Theory (see Chapter 2 Section 2.2.4 for a detailed discussion). For most teachers, pre-reading activities are seen as a waste of learning and teaching time. Most of the time, pre-reading activities are not emphasised even though such activities are important in activating one's schema. Saricoban (2002:150) posits that pre-reading activities are critical in building a bridge between the reading passage and the learner's prior knowledge and interest. From the lesson observation, one can conclude that pre-reading activities are not given much prominence and may be considered a waste of time.

There was not much interaction amongst learners as teachers did most of the talking. According to Vygotsky (1978), "any human activity happens within a social context". The Theory of Sociocultural Learning calls for interactive learning among learners. When learners

interact, they learn from each other. Teachers may use group work when learners could take turns in reading and discussing. This would promote the activation and use of prior knowledge in order to make meaning of what they are reading.

Teachers utilised the zone of proximity effectively when they helped learners during the lessons from a point of not knowing to that point of knowing, and learners could do the work independently and confidently. Vygotsky (1978) argues that when a more experienced person assists one who is less experienced, the latter gains confidence (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.2).

A detailed discussion and analysis of the chapter were presented. In Chapter 5, the findings and implications will be discussed, and recommendations will be offered as well as the conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This research study examined the reading comprehension skills taught by teachers at Grade 9 English Home Language level. The main focus was on the role that is played by the teacher in the development of reading comprehension skills among the Grade 9 English Home Language learners. The research study aimed to establish which reading comprehension skills teachers focused on and also observe if reading comprehension skills are taught explicitly to learners. This chapter will discuss further the findings of the study, its implications, and recommendations, followed by a conclusion.

The main research question investigated by this study is: What is the role of the teacher in developing comprehension skills in Grade 9 English Home Language learning? The sub-questions that were considered are:

- What reading comprehension skills do teachers teach to Grade 9 English Home Language learners?
- What comprehension teaching strategies do the teachers implement when teaching Grade 9?
- What teaching strategies do teachers implement when teaching Grade 9 comprehension skills in English Home Language?
- How do the Grade 9 learners experience the teaching of reading comprehension skills?

The detailed responses to the questions are discussed in Chapter 4.

5.2 Overview of the study

This section will discuss the layout of the study and provide a summary of each chapter. In Chapter 1, the research problem and background were introduced. The main research question and the sub-research questions are stated in 5.1 above. The literature that was consulted in Chapter 1 focuses on reading comprehension, and in particular reading comprehension at Grade 9 English Home Language level. Ria and Ilma (2017:101) posit that one's ability to read enhances one's life as it gives one a broader understanding of everything (see Chapter 2). According to Baruthram (2012:1), reading comprehension remains an integral part of learning across the curriculum. Therefore, it is important that learners are taught reading strategies as well as reading with understanding. The study aimed to discover what role the teachers play in developing the reading comprehension skills

of Grade 9 English Home Language learners. It sought to establish which reading comprehension skills are taught and observed how teachers taught reading comprehension skills. The South African government reveals the low literacy levels of South African learners through the PIRLS report, and systemic tests that were conducted. The literature consulted for Chapter 1 indicated that there is a need for reading comprehension to be taught across the curriculum and, in particular, in content subjects (Baruthram, 2007). Some learners who are learning English Home Language are not English Home language speakers. This emphasises the point that reading comprehension skills need to be taught explicitly to help learners to succeed in the study of English Home Language.

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature on teaching and learning of reading comprehension skills in the senior phase at Grade 9 English Home Language level. The literature highlighted the need for teaching of reading comprehension as reading determines the success of learners. It is imperative that learners are taught reading comprehension skills to increase their chances of succeeding across the curriculum. Ria and Ilma (2017:101) postulate that one's ability to read enhances one's life as it gives one a broader understanding of everything. Teachers play an important role in the development of reading skills. The National Reading Panel (2000:3) states that "the idea behind explicit instruction of text comprehension is that comprehension can be improved by teaching students to use specific cognitive strategies or to reason strategically when they encounter barriers to comprehension when reading".

Chapter 2 delves into the conceptual framework, which is primarily rooted in two theoretical pillars: Scott's (2001) Schema Theory and Vygotsky's (1978) Theory of Sociocultural Learning. This discussion also encompasses Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

The Schema Theory emphasises the importance of learners' background knowledge. It is important that before engaging reading comprehension, the learners' background knowledge is taken into consideration. Each reader possesses a different schema. Erten and Razi, (2009) (see Chapter 2), posit that "when readers bring relevant background knowledge to the reading process, they can allocate more attentional space for textual analysis and interpretation". An individual's ability to understand a text improves when the individual is more familiar with the text. It is important for teachers to select texts that are within the learners' experiences. Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory argues that learning occurs during social interactions. According to Vygotsky (1978) Sociocultural theory foregrounds what the learner brings to a learning situation to create new meaning maker and to solve problems. There is interdependence between cultural contexts and human activities.

The ZPD is important in assisting learners from a point of not knowing to a point of knowing. The teacher as the MKO assists a learner in the zone of proximity to create new knowledge.

Teachers can help learners to understand by guiding discussions and asking leading questions.

In Chapter 3, an outline of the research design is provided. The chapter explains the methodology and the research paradigm. The study used a qualitative research approach. The chapter includes the data collection methods that were used and the steps for data analysis.

Chapter 4 presents and analyse the data that were collected from the fieldwork and from documents. The four different data sets are unpacked and analysed to establish the various themes namely: the document analysis, the questionnaire for learners, the interviews with teachers of English, and lesson observations were unpacked and analysed to establish the various themes presented. These responses answered the research question and the research sub-questions.

Chapter 5 provides an overview of the entire study. It focuses on what each chapter presents and links the findings of Chapter 4 to the research questions. Additionally, the chapter discusses the implications of the findings and makes recommendations.

5.3 Summary of research findings

The findings were in response to the main question and the research sub-questions. The main question is: **What is the role of the teacher in developing reading comprehension skills in grade 9 English Home Language learning?**

According to the National Reading Panel (2000:39), explicit teaching of reading comprehension skills is essential, and teachers are important role players in learners' development of reading comprehension skills. The explicit teaching of reading comprehension skills is considered a positive factor in getting learners to read with understanding. From the findings of the study, teachers rarely teach the comprehension skills explicitly. When teachers mentioned to the learners that they were going to teach specific skills, there was a positive response from learners as they understood what they were to engage in. Teachers should use specific cognitive strategies or teach the learners to reason strategically in order for them to be able to manage barriers to comprehension when they are reading (National Reading Panel, 2000:39).

Insufficient research has been conducted regarding teaching reading comprehension skills in secondary schools as most of the published literature focuses on primary schools (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). The observations made when teachers delivered lessons indicated that lessons that begin with teaching reading comprehension skills become lessons that merely test learners' ability to respond to reading comprehension questions.

5.3.1 The CAPS and R-ATP documents – shortcomings

The CAPS document is the main tool that is available to guide teachers. In the analysis of the CAPS document, the findings indicated that there is very little guidance provided for teachers to teach reading comprehension skills to Grade 9 English Home Language learners. This may explain why teachers' approaches to teaching reading comprehension skills are so diverse. Teachers may not be aware of how to approach the teaching of reading comprehension skills explicitly as it is not explained in the CAPS document. As discussed in Chapter 4, De Lange et al. (2020:1) postulate that there is not much information to guide teachers on how to improve reading comprehension. The CAPS document does not mention any explicit teaching of reading comprehension skills. The CAPS document lists the strategies or skills that teachers are expected to teach but without explaining how to do so. The assumption could be that teachers know which reading comprehension skills to teach. The National Reading Panel (2000), (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1), advocates for the explicit teaching of reading comprehension skills which teachers lack.

The R-ATP document was introduced by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in 2020. It is meant to guide teachers during the recovery period after the COVID-19 interruption. The implementation of the R-ATP stretches from 2020 to 2023. The R-ATP refers to reading comprehension but does not give specific directions to teach reading comprehension skills. Similar to the CAPS document, the R-ATP lacks detail of what needs to be done by teachers. Teachers must know which skills to teach (see Chapter 2 Section 2.2.4 for a detailed discussion).

5.3.2 How do Grade 9 learners experience the teaching of reading comprehension skills?

The Schema Theory by Scott (2001) (see Chapter 2 Section 2.4.1), states that when learners are familiar with a text, it is easier for them to understand. This may imply that texts selected for reading should be within the learners' experience or there should be some familiarity with the text. Activating prior knowledge and engaging in pre-activities before reading a text assists learners to use their prior knowledge to combine with the new knowledge to establish meaning. As argued by Klapwijk (2015:5) (see Chapter 2), pre-reading activities are a necessity especially in South African schools as most of the learners come from print-poor environments. Teachers play a critical role in learners' development and mastery of reading comprehension skills as they decide on appropriate texts and approaches that enhance learners' reading comprehension skills.

Learners indicated that there were generally five strategies that the teachers used when teaching reading comprehension. Teachers used repetition, examples, summarising, questions and explanations to help learners comprehend reading comprehension texts. The

three teachers used different approaches to teach reading comprehension skills. It was noted that in almost all of the six lessons observed, lessons intended to teach reading comprehension skills became lessons that merely tested learners' ability to answer comprehension questions. This may be due to the lack of training on teaching reading comprehension skills as teachers focus on assessing learners' understanding.

5.3.3 What reading comprehension teaching strategies do teachers implement when teaching Grade 9 English Home Language?

The teaching of reading comprehension strategies and /skills is not a lineal process, but it is multi-pronged. Every teacher decides what is best for his/her classes and the approaches vary. Some teachers may prefer teaching one strategy at a time or a combination of strategies. According to Duke and Pearson (2009) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3) in order to develop strategic learners, teachers have to teach the "why, how, and when to apply certain strategies". The teacher plays a critical role as the MKO in the learning process. Therefore, teachers with poor reading comprehension skills, are unlikely to be competent in teaching reading comprehension skills. During the lessons, not all of the teachers indicated to learners which comprehension skills they were going to learn in those specific lessons. In some instances, the teachers taught the skills implicitly. It is encouraged that comprehension skills be taught explicitly. As presented in Chapter 2, Klapwijk and Du Toit (2009:80) posit that strategies must be taught directly and intensively to the learners. This enables learners to use strategies independently.

It was observed also that some lessons on reading comprehension skills ended up as lessons testing learners' abilities to respond to comprehension questions. This finding may be ascribed to the lack of training of English Home Language teachers on how to teach reading comprehension skills.

In the CAPS document, strategies or skills that have to be taught to Grade 9 learners are listed as skimming, scanning, intensive reading, summarising, visualising, inferring meaning and concluding. The listed skills were not taught in a particular order in the different classes.

5.3.4 The role of the teacher in developing reading comprehension skills

As discussed in Chapter 4, teachers play an important role in the development of learners reading comprehension skills. Teachers facilitate the learning process, and they need to be "effective reading teachers, to know about reading and how to teach it, and be skilled readers who are familiar with different genres of text" (Pretorius & Klapwijk 2016:4). This could imply that a teacher's perception about reading is transferred to the learners. A teacher who is not a keen reader will not be able to teach learners reading comprehension skills effectively.

Teachers need to provide guidance and teach the strategies explicitly. The activation of the reader's prior knowledge is key in making meaning. Khaiyali (2014:62) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.4.1) posits that there are two important purposes of pre-reading activities. These are meant to increase learners' interest and to provide facilitating strategic goals. It is the responsibility of the teacher to involve learners in these aspects. It is vital for learners to know why they are reading a specific comprehension text. Teachers have to be able to teach learners to think consciously about the purpose of reading specific texts.

5.4 What guidelines can be generated to enhance the teaching of reading comprehension skills to Grade 9 English Home Language learners?

The study focused on determining the role played by teachers in the development of reading comprehension skills of Grade 9 English Home Language learners.

5.4.1 Implications of the study

The results of the study indicate that there is a need for further research to be done at a larger scale to determine the extent of the lack of teaching reading comprehension skills to Grade 9 English Home Language learners. It could be implied also that there is inadequate preparation of teachers to teach reading comprehension skills explicitly. The poor reading comprehension of learners may be ascribed to the way they are exposed to reading comprehension skills where more testing of answering questions is done and little teaching of explicit reading comprehension skills.

5.4.2 Recommendations for teaching reading comprehension skills to Grade 9 English Home Language learners.

Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:3) postulate that the poor comprehension levels in both the English Home Language and First Additional Language learners suggests that teachers are not effectively developing learners' basic reading skills that support comprehension. The following are some suggestions that could be considered in order to improve the teaching of reading comprehension skills to Grade 9 learners at English Home Language level.

Teachers, as critical role players in the development of reading comprehension skills should be well trained in how to teach reading skills. In Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3, Klapwijk and Van der Walt (2011:3) posit that a lot has been done to develop how to teach reading in South Africa, but not much has been done in the professional development of comprehension instruction. Teachers indicate that they are not aware of any instructional frameworks for teaching reading comprehension. This position may explain why there is a challenge in the teaching of reading comprehension skills. As stated in 5.3.3, some teachers do not teach reading comprehension skills but instead test the learners' ability to respond to questions.

Teachers ask questions at the end of reading comprehension lessons instead of teaching strategies or skills.

According to Borg (2003) quoted in Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016), the perceptions that teachers hold about reading and their own reading practices may contribute to learners' low literacy levels. Teachers should have pedagogic knowledge of how to teach reading comprehension. It is imperative for teachers to be skilled.

- (i) It is recommended that institutions of higher learning prioritise the training of student teachers to teach reading comprehension skills explicitly;
- (ii) It is recommended that teachers of Grade 9 English Home Language learners should teach reading comprehension skills explicitly and explain the reasons for learning particular skills;
- (iii) It is recommended that teachers of Grade 9 English Home Language learners expose the learners to a variety of texts and help them to build good vocabulary skills to aid comprehension.
- (iv) It is recommended that the teachers teach reading skills progressively and not move to the next skill before learners have mastered the initial ones. There should be scaffolding of skills;
- (v) It is recommended that English Home Language teachers should do a diagnostic test of reading skills before they teach learners in order to fully understand what skills the learners require; and
- (vi) It is recommended that teachers understand the background of their learners and select texts that are within the experiences of the learners.

5.4.3 Recommendation for policy formulation and/or development

- (i) It is recommended that the DBE design compulsory in-service training course to help seasoned teachers with new methods of teaching and to help boost the confidence of newly-qualified teachers;
- (ii) It is recommended that the DBE allocate more tuition time for the teaching of reading comprehension skills to learners. Reading comprehension appears 20 times in the CAPS document with not much detail on how to teach the reading comprehension skills explicitly. More detail about teaching reading comprehension could be added.
- (ii) It is recommended that the CAPS document be made precise on how to teach explicitly the various reading comprehension skills and the assessment thereof.

De Lang et al. (2020:1) (see Chapter 4) allude to the inadequacy of the CAPS document in equipping teachers with assessment and teaching skills.

5.4.4 Recommendations for further research

The research focused on the role played by teachers in the development of Grade 9 English Home Language learners. The results indicated that there is a need for teacher development in teaching reading comprehension. The results of this research were confined to two schools with 99 participating learners and three teachers which constitutes a small sample. The research indicated that it is important to activate background knowledge before reading, and that teachers should teach reading comprehension skills explicitly. The results may not be representative of all schools as contexts differ. It is imperative that research of this kind be done at a larger scale to see if the same results would be obtained.

5.5 Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that teachers in general do not teach reading comprehension skills explicitly as advocated for by the National Reading Panel (2000). There is a need for training teachers in how to teach reading comprehension skills. The CAPS document, which is the main document to inform teaching and to give guidance to teachers, falls short. The document does not specify how teachers should teach reading comprehension skills, and it does not clearly specify how to assess reading comprehension skills, as shown by the study carried out by De Lange et al. (2020).

It is hoped that the study will alert education authorities and teacher trainers of the need to equip teachers with skills to teach reading comprehension. The study also hopes that the DBE will consider the provision of more detail on the CAPS document on how teachers should teach reading comprehension skills and that more time could be allocated for tuition time.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CPUT CONSENT FORM

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

APPENDIX A. CPUT CONSENT FORM.

Faculty of Education
Ethics informed consent form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Category of Participants (tick as appropriate):

Principals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lecturers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>(Specify)</i>									

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Mandlenkosi Sibanda from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The findings of this study will contribute towards (tick as appropriate):

An undergraduate project	<input type="checkbox"/>	A conference paper	<input type="checkbox"/>
An Honours project	<input type="checkbox"/>	A published journal article	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Masters/doctoral thesis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A published report	<input type="checkbox"/>

Selection criteria

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because (give reason why candidate has been chosen):

You have been selected as a possible participant in this study as you are currently teaching English Home Language to Grade 9 learners. Your expertise in the subject will be invaluable. The study is focusing on the teaching of reading comprehension to Grade 9s.

The information below gives details about the study to help you decide whether you would want to participate

Title of the research:

The role of the teacher in developing reading comprehension skills in Grade 9 English Home Language learners.

A brief explanation of what the research involves:

The research seeks to establish how reading comprehension is taught in schools.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study you will be asked to do the following things: (The researcher must complete this section below. For example: Each research participant will be interviewed by the researcher or his/her assistants or collaborators [provide names of interviewers]. Briefly explain how many interviews, the duration of the interviews, place, date, etc.)

There will be an interview with each participating teacher to try and work out a possible schedule for the 2 observations that will be conducted. The researcher will sit in classes

during the teaching and learning period. Ten learners per class that will be visited will be asked to complete a questionnaire as a way of gathering information pertaining to the study.

Potential risks, discomforts or inconveniences
(Researcher please briefly describe any foreseeable risks, discomforts or inconveniences likely to affect research participants)

The research may be a little intrusive as it will seek to find out how reading comprehension is taught in the classroom. The participants may find it uncomfortable for the researcher to sit and observe the way they teach. The researcher will not participate during the lesson.

You are invited to contact the researchers should you have any questions about the research before or during the study. You will be free to withdraw your participation at any time without having to give a reason.

Kindly complete the table below before participating in the research.

Statement	Tick the appropriate column	
	Yes	No
1. I understand the purpose of the research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I understand what the research requires of me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I volunteer to take part in the research.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I know that I can withdraw at any time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I understand that there will not be any form of discrimination against me as a result of my participation or non-participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please sign the consent form. You will be given a copy of this form on request.

	Date
--	------

Researchers		
No.	Name	Surname
1		
2		
3		

Contact person:	
Contact number:	Email:

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CPUT



Private Bag X8, Wellington, 7654
Jan van Riebeeck Street, Wellington, 7654
Tel: +27 21 864 5200

P.O. Box 652, Cape Town, 8000
Highbury Road, Mowbray
Tel: +27 21 680 1500

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

On the 26th of August 2020 the Chairperson of the Education Ethics Committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology granted ethics approval EFEC 1-8/2020 to M Sibanda for research activities related to a research project at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Title:	The role of the teacher in developing reading comprehension skills in English Grade 9 Home Language learners.
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Comments:

Permission is granted to conduct research within the Faculty of Education only. Research activities are restricted to those details in the research project.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Livingston".

Date: 26/8/2020

Dr Candice Livingston

Research coordinator (Wellington) and Chair of the Education Faculty Ethics committee

Faculty of Education

APPENDIX C: WCED PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za

Tel: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20200921-8184

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mr Mandlenkosi Sibanda
105 Costa Do Sol
25 Prinsloo Street
Parow Valley
7500

Dear Mr Mandlenkosi Sibanda

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION TO GRADE 9 ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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 **13 April 2021 till 25 June 2021**.
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.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

Directorate: Research

DATE: 22 September 2020

APPENDIX D: PARENT CONSENT FORM

Parent Consent Form

Please kindly complete the slip below indicating your willingness to allow your child in Grade 9 to participate in the research study titled: The role of the teacher in developing reading comprehension skills in Grade 9 English Home Language learners.

I, _____ the parent of _____

Permission for questionnaire

I agree that my child can complete the questionnaire for this study. **YES/NO**

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- The name of my child and that of her/his school will remain anonymous
- The child has a right to withdraw at any stage of the research and does not have to explain
- The data collected will be kept confidentially.

Sign _____ Date _____

APPENDIX E: LEARNER CONSENT FORM

z

Research Title: The role of the teacher in developing reading comprehension skills in Grade 9 English Home Language learners.

Name of Participant:

I, _____ willingly agree to take part in the study above. I am also aware that I can withdraw from the study at any time without providing reasons.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

I understand that my participation will remain confidential YES/NO

I understand that my identity will remain anonymous. YES/NO

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX F. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS.

Questions for teachers.

1. How many years have you been teaching English Home Language?
2. How many years have you been teaching Grade 9?
3. How do you assess the learners' comprehension before you start teaching them comprehension?
4. How do you assess their comprehension after you have taught them how to understand a text/book?
5. Describe how you teach reading comprehension.
6. What specific strategies or techniques do you teach the learners to use to help them comprehend what they read?
7. Which aspects in teaching comprehension in English First language do find challenging?
8. Do you find the CAPS document helpful with regard to comprehension instructions?
9. Do you in your lessons strictly adhere to the CAPS guidelines? Or how do you adapt or change it to fit your purpose for the learners' levels of comprehension?
10. In your opinion, what is the most effective way of teaching reading comprehension skills to English First Language learners?
11. In your opinion, what specific comprehension strategies/techniques are important and therefore must be taught to Grade 9 learners?
There are a number of techniques that I use such as:
12. If you perhaps know about teaching pedagogies or theories, which of those specifically would you say that you apply in your teaching comprehension?

APPENDIX G: LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions for learners

1. What language do you speak at home?
2. What language do you use in class to talk to your friends in the English class?
3. What language do you speak to your friends during breaks?
4. 4. How old were you/when you started to speak in English at any place
5. Does your English teacher speak only English in class or does he/she use more than one language in the class?
6. Can you read your English prescribed books?
7. Do you understand what you read?
8. Do you read any English books other than your prescribed books?
9. Can you tell how your teacher teachers you in class to understand what you read?
10. How do you know that you understand what you read?

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

School 1	Date	Time	Teacher
	23/04/2021	09h00-09h45	1
	23/04/2021	10h00-10h45	2
School 2	30/04/2021	12h00-12h45	3

APPENDIX I: LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

School	Teacher	Date	Lesson	Time
1	1	05/05/2021	1	09h05-10h00
1	2	05/05/2021	1	11h40-12h35
School				
2	3	13/05/2021	1	08h10-09h05
School	Teacher	Date	Lesson	Time
1	1	02/06/2021	2	11h40-12h35
1	2	02/06/2021	2	12h35-13h30
School	Teacher	Date	Lesson	Time
2	3	10/06/2021	2	10h55-11h45