

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO STUDENTS' READING
ATTITUDES AND HABITS USING A CHILDREN'S
LITERATURE INTERVENTION PROGRAMME**

by

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Thesis

Submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree

Magister Technologiae

in

Education

in the

The Faculty of Education and Social Sciences

at the

CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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January 2010

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis submitted for the degree of Magister Technologiae in Education at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, is my own work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher education. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated or acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

Philip Thraves

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincerest gratitude and appreciation for the interest, support and assistance of the following people:-

- Staff in management at CPUT, especially for granting me study leave;
- At CPUT, two groups at Mowbray campus must be mentioned:
 - Colleagues, thanks for the discussions and input
 - Students, for participation and invaluable feedback. All comments are taken into consideration as courses are designed and re-curriculated. Without you, there wouldn't have been this project;
- Family “back home” in Stilfontein, Tony and Hyla Thraves;
- Friends in Cape Town, especially Beth MacLagan, Sigi Howes and Sandy Johnson. Sandy's office space was much valued and used;
- Sharon Panyiotou and Pippa Campbell, who always went well above the call of duty. CPUT at Mowbray is spoilt with fabulous librarians. Their help and interest never went unappreciated. Thanks to all in the library;
- Barbara Lehman of Ohio State University, for providing me with a full copy of her doctoral thesis;
- Corrie Uys at CPUT for her enthusiasm and help with the Statistical analysis;
- Insightful and incisive comments, wisdom and a sterling commitment from Rajendra Chetty, Head of Research, Faculty of Education, at CPUT ; and
- Finally, the person who was “better than all the rest”, Anne Hill, who inspired, provoked, coddled, bullied, and was “always there”, an excellent supervisor, academic, mentor, and trusted friend, the person without whom this thesis would never have taken the shape it did. To a wonderful synergy – this work seems a logical extension of our teaching together.

Thank you all.

ABSTRACT

This study traces the effects of a children's literature intervention on first year B Ed students' reading habits and attitudes.

A review of relevant literature includes concepts of literacy, with specific reference to family literacy, adolescent literacy and critical literacy; effective literacy practices; reading, reader response and theoretical perspectives of literature, including children's literature, and its application in the classroom; motivation and reader-identity.

A variety of quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather data over a period of eighteen months. The data captured attitudes to reading and traced changes in attitudes, habits and motivation resulting from an intervention that required students to engage in reading a range of children's literature texts.

Findings showed movement from apathy to engagement at the lowest levels of change and from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation at successive levels of change. Most significantly, the intervention caused discontinuous (permanent) change in students' constructions of themselves as readers.

Key words: critical literacy; adolescent literacy; reader response; children's literature; extrinsic / intrinsic motivation; discontinuous change; reader identity.

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ACRONYMS

B Ed	Bachelor of Education
FET	Further Education and Training
FP	Foundation Phase
GET	General Education and Training
ITC	Information and communication technology
ISP	Intermediate and Senior Phase
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
SLA11RE	English Home language specific didactics; course B Ed 1.
YA	Young adult

Chapter 1 : INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

I teach in a university that offers teacher education programmes for those intending to practise in the general education and training (GET) phase. GET includes these phases: Foundation Phase (Reception year to grade 3), Intermediate Phase (grades 4-6), and Senior Phase (Grades 7 – 9).

Over the past years I have insisted that students read children's literature. The effect has been interesting in that students have often reported that their attitude to reading in general had changed through this exposure. I became interested in determining whether this was a valid perception and decided to embark on researching the phenomenon.

This chapter gives an overview of the structure of the research project including its context, rationale and scope.

1.1 Context of the research

The university in which I teach supplies most of the newly qualified primary school teachers for the Western Cape province; therefore the work of the faculty has an impact on the quality of literacy instruction in the province. Poor results in the cross-national progress in reading literacy test (PIRLS 2006) has pointed to a need to improve reading instruction in the province and the country, an aspect of which is the need to improve teachers' own reading process and help them to become aware of and practice critical literacy.

I was thus interested in examining the reading habits and attitudes of first year Bachelor of Education, Intermediate and Senior Phase (B Ed ISP) students at Mowbray campus registered for English Home Language Specific Didactics (SLA11RE) course in 2007. I wanted to establish whether exposure to children's literature caused beneficial changes in attitudes and habits over the year.

1.2 Rationale

In the light of anecdotal evidence pointing to beneficial effects of reading children's literature for the didactics course, I decided to include children's literature English literature course curriculum. As part of the curriculum design, a pilot course in children's literature was designed and taught in 2004. No formal research, however, had been undertaken to investigate the effects of this course in order to improve its design and delivery. I took this opportunity to fill the gap in research and to examine the curriculum in light of:

- the needs of the primary schools (both learners and educators);
- the low levels of literacy, particularly in reading, of entry-level tertiary students at the institution:
- the structure and delivery of the course in children's literature:
- research in reading, literacy and literature : and
- research in teaching of good reading practice for schooling..

1.3 The scope of the project

In this study I wished to examine first-year B Ed ISP students' attitudes to reading, and their reading, initially, of children's literature, moving to reading works of literature aimed at young adults.

It seems to be common knowledge that a high proportion of students in South Africa do not or cannot read, but to my knowledge an empirical study of education students' reading habits and attitudes to reading for pleasure had not yet been undertaken in a South African education faculty when I started my project. This study examines attitudes to reading and personal reading histories.

I was also interested in whether cycles of non-reading, poor reading and reluctant reading could be broken, and a new, permanent attitude [discontinuous change] towards reading be formed.

Not a great amount of research has been undertaken about teachers and personal reading. I was interested to see whether an exposure to children's literature, including young adult literature, changes classroom approaches and strategies for teaching English.

The Department of Education in South Africa is concerned at the low level of literacy rates in the country: Grade 6 learners are very often at Grade 3 level (PIRLS, Western Cape systemic test.). We can infer that some first year students are not reading at Grade 12 level (Smetherham, 2009). Therefore, newly-qualified teachers would not be likely to model good reading practice in their classrooms unless there had been a carefully planned and monitored intervention programme in their preparation for teaching.

Barber & Mourshed (2007:12) indicate the following:

Studies that take into account all of the available evidence on teacher effectiveness suggest that students placed with high-performing teachers will progress three times as fast as those placed with low performing teachers... The negative impact of low performing teachers is severe, particularly during the earlier years of schooling. At the primary level, students that are placed with low-performing teachers for several years in a row suffer an educational loss which is largely irreversible.

Students at university who are nurtured and challenged to become high performing teachers will break the cycle of low performance, and could well create a positive change. This was one of the reasons for an intense and informed exposure to children's literature.

1.3.1 Literature Review

I explored the following themes in the literature available to me:

- reader-response theory and reading motivation, including choice of reading material:
- reader identity: gender differences and psychological underpinnings:
- the relationship between cognitive and affective domains, and reading, including bibliotherapeutic approaches to reading:

- the evolving nature of literacy, critical literacy, and ways in which critical literacy can be mastered in the classroom:
- literary theory, and the [evolving] conceptualization of children's literature
- relationship between teachers' reading levels and learners' literacy levels; and
- the impact of reading fiction on language competences of learners.

I also tried to establish links to the South African context (PIRLS , 2006), CPUT students' experiences in teaching, and links between literacy and literature.

1.3.2 Themes framing the study

When the extensive literature review and the research data were carefully considered and coded, the following strands emerged, which framed the study and were focused on:

From the research data:

- Children's and adolescents' reading and literacy;
- Students' reading and literacy; and
- Gender differences.

From the literature review:

- Motivation theory;
- Teaching using reader response practice; and
- Choice of reading material.

1.4 Structure of the research project

This research project evolved in an iterative and dynamic process of theorising themes that emerged in the data.

The research question was ‘Does an intervention programme using children’s literature change first year B Ed students’ habits attitudes towards reading?’ In order to ascertain answers to the research question and inform the research project, the following were salient issues:

1.4.1 Qualitative and Quantitative measurement of data

Data gathered was both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data is important, as it is descriptive in nature, thus various themes and ideas can emerge and challenge / extend researchers’ own ideas and interests. Quantitative data is important to achieve objectivity in evaluating findings. Statistically, data is able to be scrutinised and analysed (by SPSS in this case) and inferences can be validated by the evidence. Results can be compared with those gleaned from other similar studies.

1.4.2 Action research

Action research enables the research to be dynamic, and stresses a positive relationship between researcher(s), subject(s), and subject matter. As the action research highlighted the idea of reflective thinking and teaching, the discipline of noticing became important. The dynamic nature of this research project meant that the ensuing curriculum impact study had an immediate relevance to the students’ personal and professional development.

1.4.3 Discourse analysis

There was a range in discourse of the students’ work, in terms of written responses (reflections in journals) and oral responses (discussions). There was also, in some instances, a separation of content (what was said) and delivery (how content was said); this gave a greater insight into the subject.

1.4.4 Time frame

There was a longitudinal aspect to the study. Four different time spans were given, where the general picture of those students assessed, was gained.

Time	Cohort	What was measured	How data was measured	Type of data
February 2007	B Ed 1 ISP 2007	Pre-test attitudes and habits re reading	Written questionnaire	Quant.
March – October 2007	B Ed 1 ISP 2007	Responses to Children’s literature and reading of texts	Oral interviews Journal entries Written assignments	Qual.
October 2007	B Ed 1 ISP 2007	Post-test attitudes and habits re reading	Written questionnaire	Quant.
April 2008	B Ed 2 ISP 2008	Concept of discontinuous change – review of B Ed 1, 2007, intervention programme	Oral focus group interviews	Qual.

This longitudinal perspective tested the efficacy of the intervention programme and the impact of the course on the curriculum. The research project tapped not only into literary theory and reading, but also into literacy levels. In summary, the project evolved as literature was reviewed, as the course was designed and assessed, and in light of students’ needs, both professionally and personally.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured as follows. The content of each chapter is mapped in its introduction.

Section	Title	Pages
Chapter 1	Introduction	1 - 7
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Chapter 3	Research Methodology	51 - 71
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Chapter 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The scope of the literature reviewed in this chapter encompasses the following areas in which literacy, literature and teaching are connected:

- 2.1 The context of the study
- 2.2 Concepts of literacy
- 2.3 Effective literacy practices
- 2.4 Reading, reader response and the classroom
- 2.5 Practitioners in the primary classroom
- 2.6 Motivation theory and reading motivation
- 2.7 Choice of reading materials
- 2.8 ‘Teachers as mentors’: the South African challenge
- 2.9 Conclusion.

2.1 Contextualising the study

The two *Progress in International Reading Literacy* (PIRLS) studies (2001 2006) are of particular relevance to this study :

- PIRLS 2001 draws attention to gender issues in reading
- PIRLS 2006 reveals the low levels of reading literacy in South Africa compared with other participating countries.

The aim of this study is to address the problem of low reading motivation and inadequate reading practices among teacher education students.

2.1.1 The PIRLS Report 2006

The PIRLS 2006 Report asserts the following, after placing South Africa lowest on a ranking scale that included 42 participating countries:

- South African teachers read less often in their spare time compared to those in the highest achieving countries in PIRLS 2006; and.
- Teaching of more complex reading skills¹ is introduced at a much later stage for South African learners than internationally where these are initiated much earlier. (Howie, et al, 2007:xx)

In more strongly performing countries teaching reading seems to have moved from a position that encourages a fundamental, basic literacy to that which should encourage a more active critical literacy.² This appears not to have been the case in South Africa where low levels of teachers' literacy could be contributing to low levels of learners' performance.

Research suggests that teachers who willingly read promote good reading (Boggs & Golden, 2007; Topping, 2006), and so the challenge for teacher educators is to work with low levels of reading ability and willingness to read in order to create a community of students who become, initially, adequate readers, and then good readers, finally even a community of willing readers. Because of their synergy, they are likely to be able to be critical and independent when they no longer rely on the intervention of an extrinsic reason for reading.

The PIRLS (2006) report indicates that good reading requires skills which move beyond a basic encoding and decoding of text towards higher order skills. Concepts of higher order skills implied in the PIRLS rubric are similar to those advocated by Kelley & Clausen-Grace (2007):

Good readers...predict, ask questions, make connections, visualise and summarise.

¹ Higher-level skills are neatly summarised by Kelly & Grace, 2007: "Good readers – predict, ask questions, make connections, visualise and summarise." These factors lead to engagement with text, a condition of critical literacy and thus of effective reading.

² A fundamental, basic literacy is that literacy which focuses on decoding and encoding text only, without considering its meaning, style, and impact on the individual reading the text, and on the intended reader of that text.

Mastery of such skills appears to lead to reading practice evaluated as ‘good’ because they promote an engagement with text, which can lead to an orientation to critical literacy. Conversely, a lack of these skills can reinforce poor reading practice. Lack of reading practice means that more complex skills required for effective reading for meaning are undeveloped. Thus, basic literacy understood as the ability to decode and encode words is not enough. Something “more” is demanded to move learners from being passive to active readers. It is this process which makes a good reader: opening up the world of the text and responding to this world can make for a more engaged and motivated reader.

Hall (2009:290) indicates that what counts as a valued reading identity in the classroom is likely to be based on teachers’ understandings of what it means to be a good reader. Good reading teachers model and give practice in concomitant skills associated with good readers, such as decoding, as well as more critical skills such as understanding how to apply comprehension strategies, making inferences and selecting evidence. Teachers’ own reading identities are therefore significant in developing readers in the classroom.

In this study the concept *literacy* embraces *critical literacy*; which dispels the idea that functional or basic literacy is all that is needed for reading to be successful or long-lasting. Furthermore, literacy is seen as a “particularly key area of learning ... because it is a key part of our capacity to increase our capacity” – literacy is an enabler of learning across the curriculum. (Freebody in Louden, et. al. 2005:176)

2.1.2 The PIRLS Report 2001

In PIRLS 2001, “the fourth-grade girls in all of the 30plus [sic] participating countries scored higher in reading literacy than fourth-grade boys by a statistically significant amount” (McFann, 2004:20). This picture is reinforced by PIRLS 2006. It is appropriate therefore to consider these gender differences in reading literacy, when considering the reading curriculum.

2.2 Understandings of Literacy

Three recurring themes, important for teachers working in a critical paradigm to be aware of, emerge in current literacy discourse. These are

- Critical literacy;
- Family literacy (which encompasses emergent literacy); and
- Adolescent literacy.

The synergy between social, cognitive and affective dimensions of reading is made explicit in these types of literacy. In the following paragraphs I elaborate on the characteristics and role of each type of literacy in developing the reader.

2.2.1 Critical Literacy

McLaughlin & DeVogd (2004:14), writing about critical literacy, extend their description of the reading process:

Critical literacy views readers as active participants in the reading process and invites them to move beyond passively accepting the text's message to question, examine or dispute the power relations that exist between readers and authors. It focuses on issues of power and promotes reflection, transformation, and action.

The Delors Report [UNESCO (1996)] addresses literacy and education. The Commission suggests that education throughout life is based upon four pillars: font change again here

- learning to know;
- learning to do;
- learning to live together; and
- learning to be.

The report implies that the teacher (of reading) needs to be aware of these pillars, and to extend his/her concept of literacy to embrace these more completely. One way these aims can be achieved is through the teacher enabling learners to

develop forms of critical literacy through being active participants in the learning process, rather than passive spectators.

There is a link between achieving critical literacy and the four pillars of the Delors report:

- readers are active participants as they engage with the text (“learning to do”);
- readers move beyond passivity as they think about the text in relation to life (“learning to know”);
- learners examine or dispute power relations that exist between readers and authors (“learning to live together”); and
- learners, ultimately, become reflective, transformative and active – they are able to move beyond their immediate experience – as Freire (1978) suggests (“learning to be”).

Reading moves beyond being functional, and requires the teacher of reading to be aware of critical literacy and reading. Consequently teachers of reading in a critical reading paradigm should be readers (Boggs and Golden, 2007; Howie, 2006; McFann, 2006; and Topping, 2006). Modelling is seen to be vital; absence of good modelling can lead to floundering; it appears that novices need models to be successful (Fisher, Frey & Lapp, 2009:2-3).

Theorizing does not practically change anything, unless the insights of theory are applied and can be seen to cause a difference in the classroom (Fisher, et al, 2009). In the texts reviewed in this chapter, it emerges that a critical literacy approach is a holistic experience encompassing social, affective, cognitive and aesthetic responses. Consequently, I surveyed some of the work of practitioners who draw their practice from insights gained from literary and literacy theorists and social scientists. Practice can change attitudes to reading, foster reading motivation, ensure a positive self-concept and hopefully, change non-literate environments to literate ones.

Literacy is an evolving and developing concept in discourses of teaching and learning. Descriptions of literacy derived from a critical paradigm embrace life issues in a way which go beyond mere decoding and encoding of a piece of work. The focus moves from being able to perform the processes of reading, to a greater understanding and awareness of the relationships between reading, feeling and making meaning from texts with an emphasis on engagement.

In practising critical literacy, it is important to have discussions with others about the different meanings a text might have and teach the potentially critically-literate learner how to think flexibly about text and meaning making. Thus critical literacy goes beyond the process of reading. Reading is no longer a solitary but a social act. According to Vygotsky (1978), knowledge is socially constructed. Achievement of critical literacy is similar to the way knowledge is socially constructed and thus needs to focus on social interaction. Discussion and reflection in social settings can develop and create critical literacy.

2.2.2 Family and emergent literacy

In *family literacy*, the whole family is involved in ensuring that literacy is achievable in the family environment. Family literacy is important, for the family can support and encourage the beginner reader and model good practice. Where a family is unable to provide this form of literacy, the school can and must do so (Louden et al. 2005:197). Hence, the definition of ‘family’ needs to move from that of a narrower ‘nuclear family’ towards a broader social notion of family that includes the classroom and the school.

Social interaction implies that teacher-education students should take part in an intense interactive reading programme, for it is through experience and modelling that this awareness will develop. It is important that teacher education students who are often in a mentorship role, learn from the part the family plays in encouraging and sustaining forms of literacy that approximate critical interactive and social responses to text and an awareness of the reading process.(full stop) As family literacy is valued and parental involvement is re-defined, teachers can

enable parents to redefine their home-based strengths in the context of the child's need to progress in school (Whitmore & Norton-Meier 2008:460).

A respect for and interest in the family can enable the school to play an integral part in supporting family literacy.

In *emergent literacy* (Vukelich & Christie, 2009:1-15) as its name implies, the younger reader is becoming literate. The child comes to school with a notion of functional literacy – logos, signs, labels, the child's name can be “read”. More, however, that goes beyond functional literacy is needed so that the child can make progress academically.

Generally, the child is emerging as a person who is able to at first, hesitantly, and then, more confidently, read. This confidence is, at first, cognitively-driven but as the reader is exposed to literary texts, the affective domain becomes an important part of the process. It is important that both domains are used by the school in moving the quality of literacy with the learners, so that there is an extension of emergent and, later, basic literacy.

2.2.3 Adolescent literacy

Knowledge of developmental crises of adolescence and knowledge of current reading material produced for adolescents, including comparatively new genres such as the graphic novel, can show a sensitivity to the demands of adolescent literacy (Schwartz & Rubenstein-Avila 2006:40-49).

In a resolution that takes cognizance of the distinct developmental, social and psychological needs of adolescents, the International Reading Association (IRA) (1999) suggests seven principals which aim to ensure that adolescents become lifelong and motivated readers:

- Access to a wide variety of reading material that they can and want to read;
- Instruction that builds both the skill and the desire to read increasingly complex materials;
- Assessment that shows them their strengths as well as their needs, and that guides their teachers to design instruction that will best help them grow as readers;
- Qualified teachers who model and provide explicit instruction in reading comprehension, critical reading, and studying strategies across the curriculum;
- Reading specialists who assist individual students having difficulty learning how to read;
- Qualified teachers who understand the complexities of individual adolescent readers, respect their differences, and respond to their unique characteristics; and
- Homes, communities and a nation that will not only support their efforts to achieve advanced levels of literacy, but also provide the resources necessary for them to succeed.

These principles can be applied in the primary school because of the presence of adolescents in the Intermediate phase. Learners in Western Cape schools are often 3 years older than age norms [WCED's Education Management Information System division (EMIS), retrieved online].

2.3 Practising effective literacy

This section discusses effective and critical literacy.

Section 2.3.1, Effective Literacy, gives an introduction to this concept, and examines what makes for effective literacy.

Section 2.3.2 examines the concept of critical literacy, suggesting qualities in a critically literate person. and ways in which an adult can facilitate critical literacy.

Section 2.3.3 looks at conditions needed for literacy learning. Thereafter, Cambourne's conditions for learning literacy are discussed.

Section 2.3.4 looks at the concept of Natural learning.

Section 2.3.5 concludes with a reflection on the affective domain in an attempt to put findings in context.

2.3.1 Effective literacy

2.3.1.1 Introduction

Basic, functional literacy sets the foundation for the reader. However, literacy cannot be seen in isolation from political and social paradigms. Freire (1983) was critical of an education that made people feel like victims, thus helpless and having no control over their lives. He suggested that people could transform their lives through a process of thought and action:

Because language and reality are dynamically interwoven, the understanding attained by the critical reading of a text implies perceiving the relationship between text and context. Freire suggests that instead of passively accepting the information presented, readers should not only read and understand the word, but "read the world" and understand the text's purpose to avoid being manipulated by it (Freire, 1970). "Reading the world" enables critically aware readers to comprehend beyond the literal level and think about the function and production of texts. (McLaughlin & De Voogd, 2004: 19-20)

2.3.1.2 What makes for effective literacy?

Luke and Freebody (1990:5) propose that effective literacy draws on a repertoire of practices that allows learners, as they engage in reading and writing activities, to:

- Break the code of written texts by recognising and using fundamental features and architecture, including alphabet, sounds in words, spelling, and structural conventions and patterns;
- Participate in understanding and composing meaningful written, visual and spoken texts, taking into account each text's interior meaning systems in relation to their available knowledge and their experiences of other cultural discourses, texts, and meaning systems;
- Use texts functionally by traversing and negotiating the labour and social functions around them – that is, by knowing about and acting on the different cultural and social functions that various texts perform inside and outside school, and understanding that these functions shape the way texts are structured, their tone, their degree of formality, and their sequence of components; and
- Critically analyse and transform texts by acting on knowledge that texts are not ideologically natural or neutral – that they represent various points of view while silencing others and influencing people's ideas – and that their designs and discourses can be critiqued and redesigned in novel and hybrid ways.

Thus, this expansion of the processes required for an achievement of literacy is important for teachers to bear in mind. Literacy has moved from being an isolated topic for educators to consider; literacy is often seen as indistinguishable from education. This is evident in the Delors report (1996), which addresses literacy and education.

2.3.2 Towards an effective critical literacy

Effective literacy does not necessarily embrace the whole person explicitly. Critical literacy however, embraces both reader and response to text in a conscious manner.

2.3.2.1 The critically literate reader

Texts are decoded, interpreted, used, and reacted to by the reader. In emergent/family literacy this is done as part of a discussion of text; in adolescent literacy, the processes become more overt, and in critical literacy, four roles are consciously borne in mind – the process becomes most overt:

The “roles” of the reader [original punctuation], in summary, in a postmodern, text based culture are seen as posited as follows:

- Code breaker (coding competence);
- Meaning maker (semantic competence);
- Text user (pragmatic competence); and
- Text critic (critical competence) (Luke and Freebody, 1990:1)

The language of Luke and Freebody’s definition foregrounds the agency of the reader.

2.3.2.2 Facilitating a critically literate learner

In considering how best to move towards a critically literate learner, it is important that there be a strong and informed teaching process that leads to critical literacy.

McLaughlin & DeVogd (2004:119-144) suggest ways in which the teacher can help the student to become critically literate, with this process:

- Engaging students’ thinking;
- Guiding students’ thinking;
- Extending students’ thinking; and
- Reflection on the process.

In the classroom, the teacher guides students through this process – the community of readers becomes more informed as texts are selected, literary criteria are introduced, relevance in texts is explored and students' responses to texts are discussed. As students reflect on the process, they become metacognitively aware of their reading processes, which would enable them to be more effective teachers of reading.

2.3.3 Conditions for literacy learning

Cambourne (1995, 1999, 2001) proposes a workable manner in which an educator can create conditions that are conducive to literacy learning. (See 2.3. 4.) These conditions, because they involve so many different aspects of the persona, must be known and then applied by all those involved in the teaching of literacy. Thus family literacy and adolescent literacy, while they are seen as distinct forms of literacy, all fulfil part of the conditions of critical literacy.

2.3.4.1 Cambourne's conditions for learning literacy

Cambourne (1995:185-187) suggests eight conditions which are necessary for learning to take place. Central to these conditions is engagement, discussed in greater depth at the end of this section.

a. Immersion and demonstration

Immersion means that learners are exposed to a wide variety of texts. Coupled with this are a number of demonstrations (from the teacher) that show how texts are constructed and used. These elements are the very basic conditions Cambourne (1995) postulates; they initiate engagement from the learners.

b. Expectations, responsibility, employment, approximations, response

These other five conditions are not sufficient on their own for learning literacy. They can increase the possibility of engagement, and when they do, they are

considered to make conditions optimal. Cambourne (1995: 187) lists and explains them as follows:

Table 2.1 Cambourne's conditions for optimal engagement with text for learning

Expectations	Powerful coercers of learners' behaviour. "We achieve what we expect to achieve; we fail if we expect to fail"; we are more likely to engage with demonstrations of those whom we regard as significant and who hold high expectations of us.
Responsibility	Learners need to make their own decisions about when, how, and what "bits" to learn in any learning task. Learners who lose the ability to make decisions are disempowered.
Employment	Learners need time and opportunity to use, employ and practise their developing control in functional, realistic, and nonartificial ways.
Approximations	Learners must be free to approximate the desired model – "mistakes" are essential for learning to occur.
Response	Learners must receive feedback from exchanges with more knowledgeable others. Response must be relevant, appropriate, timely, readily available, and nonthreatening, with no strings attached.

c. Engagement

A key word in Cambourne's (1995, 1999, 2001) findings is engagement. A solid engagement with the text at hand, and with other people, is very important in "sharing" the knowledge of literacy. Cambourne elaborates on his emphasis on engagement, listing as some of the reasons seemingly normal students fail. These are:

- [Students] are exposed to highly effective demonstrations, but their *engagement* with them is at best very shallow, at worst nonexistent.
- They don't *engage* (or they *engage* at very shallow levels) because they don't expect to read or write effectively. (2001: 784)

Of all Cambourne's propositions, engagement is the condition I would emphasise, for this can lead to an important factor in reading – intrinsic motivation. Perry (1992) suggests ways in which facilitators can ensure a thorough engagement with texts; the inclusion of the affective domain is one way in which educators can

“create” this engagement with a text (Barrett, 1985 in Perry, 1992). It seems, then, that engagement with text and a real context are paramount for critical literacy to begin to emerge.

A powerful way in which engagement can be achieved is to insist on an active reading of a text. But before that can be done, we need to look at understandings in critical literary theory, discussed below in section 2.4.

2.3.4.2 Natural learning

Cambourne (1995, 2002) tackles the teaching and acquisition of literacy, by looking at “natural learning”³ (1995: 184; 2002: 758-9) after analysing the traditional (and typical) paradigm he had been exposed to as a student, and then a teacher.

Cambourne (1999, 2002) builds on the concepts of teaching and acquisition of literacy and argues for a change in pedagogy, where the learner is constructed as engaged, mindful and responsible. Creating a meaningful context for literacy learning (1999: 127) is vital, for it gives a purpose to the learning, and creates an environment conducive to learning, “making the learning activities associated with reading ... much like the reading, writing, learning and problem-solving behaviours that highly literate adults would demonstrate in the world outside school” (1999:127).

Cambourne comments on his findings [see section 2.3.4.1]:

We discovered when these principles are consciously applied, teachers begin to employ a pro-learning, pro-reading, pro-writing discourse, which in turn sets in motion certain processes and personal relationships that are conducive to learning literacy. We also learned that if teachers consciously tried to maximize the degree to which they implemented expectations,

³ Put in his words, natural learning is contextualized (2002: 758). Other qualities that accompany natural learning would be learning that is explicit, systematic and mindful. Again, the scope of literacy and literacy learning has been expanded. He elaborates on these qualities in his article: “Explicit and Systematic teaching of reading – A new slogan?” (October, 1999)

responsibility, employment, approximations, and response, the probability of increasing the depth of learner engagement with the demonstrations they gave was dramatically increased. (1995: 188)

Again, learning and literacy converge (Delors in UNESCO, 1996).

2.3.5 The affective domain

Cambourne's conditions for literacy learning cannot be seen in a vacuum. Reading fiction mobilises the affective domain. Fiction as a vehicle involves cognitive and non-cognitive (affective) psychological processes. Harding (1962) referred extensively to the affective domain, as did Rosenblatt (1965), at a time when the significance of the affective domain was unrecognized. The teacher of reading needs to be aware of affective processes, and to extend his/her concept of literacy to embrace these more completely.

Definitions of literacy and thus the demands needed for teaching literacy successfully have changed over the years. The affective domain -- once seldom, mentioned -- is seen as being as important as the cognitive domain, which in the "early years" of reading research was once almost exclusively emphasized (Harding, 1962; Becca, 2001; Britton, 1976; Barrett, 1968 in Perry, 1992; Rosenblatt, 1995.) The emphasis on the affective domain embraces the whole individual, leading to a "whole-person" involvement in reading. Thus reading, and by extension, literacy, has become more total, more active. Gone are the days where recitations of text or 'perfect' reading performances constitute good or ideal literacy practices.

The educator should start making learners able to become critically literate, using tools of adolescent and family literacy, as well as creating the conditions Cambourne advocates for effective literacy.

2.4 Reading, reader response, and the classroom

Bruner (1966:72) makes the case for education as a knowledge-getting process:

To instruct someone... is not a matter of getting him to commit results to mind. Rather, it is to teach him to participate in the process that makes possible the establishment of knowledge. We teach a subject not to produce little living libraries on that subject, but rather to get a student to think mathematically for himself, to consider matters as an historian does, to take part in the process of knowledge-getting. Knowing is a process not a product.

The word ‘process’ here deserves scrutiny – it is an underlying principle of the children’s literature course being researched. ‘Process’ suggests a series of actions that ultimately brings about the result, which is a reflective and regenerative engagement in knowledge-getting. Applying this to reading and teaching of children’s literature, it is important for facilitators and readers to show an awareness of the following:

a. The variety of texts in terms of genres of writing, the time and society that led to the text being produced, the age the text is aimed at:

A clear appreciation of the scope of children’s literature, the literary theories that underpin a study of the texts concerned, the approaches from critical literary theorists and readers’ cultural and developmental contexts are useful elements to consider. Instructors at primary, secondary and tertiary levels are likely to discuss texts and responses to the texts more knowingly if they have applied reader response theory to practice.

b. Teaching in a school situation, and how practitioners have used and distilled the information in the classroom:

Discussion with children, peers, and other teachers are all part of the process of highlighting response to the text and reader response, therefore it is important to enter into a literary / reading discussion with knowledge, sensitivity, and confidence.

c. Two other elements have informed the children's literature intervention:

i. Modelling: As instructors modelled approaches and practice to the first year students, they obtained knowledge about reader-response and text. In turn, B Ed 1 students could model their processes with greater confidence and skill to children in the classroom.

ii. Metacognition: For knowledge to be consciously transmitted, metacognition is import. As university students become conscious of their metacognitive processes, so can they help children to become confident, metacognitive thinkers. (This is discussed in more depth in section 2.5.)

2.4.1 Towards a more informed reading of a text.

In extrapolating three continuums from my own practice, MacDaniel's (2006) positioning of Rosenblatt's (1978) theory and Protherough's (1983) application of theory to practice, this section moves from academic underpinnings of approaches to literature, to pedagogical implications and finally, to practical responses in the classroom.

Critical literacy demands that readers go beyond merely decoding a text – readers must be active, engaged and questioning. The way a text is approached and dealt with depends on both the theoretical underpinnings of teachers' mediation, and the schools of literary criticism followed by teachers, both of which construct ways readers may respond. Therefore it is important to be aware of ways in which (literary) texts can be approached. A response to fiction which can be justified theoretically and metacognitively could be seen as the beginning of critical literary practice.

2.4.1.1 Academic underpinnings: types and readings of text

Three continuums are mentioned in this section:

- My own (2.4.1.1)
- MacDaniel (2.4.3.1)
- Protherough (2.4.3.1)

I have drawn on the theories of Britton (1975; also in Wilkinson, 1975:177-181) and Rosenblatt (1978) in distinguishing between two major types and models of reading of texts.

These theoretical positions can be seen to mirror each other when placed on a continuum:

Transactional texts (Britton)	←-----→	Poetic texts (Britton)
Efferent reading (Rosenblatt)	←-----→	Aesthetic reading (Rosenblatt)

Figure 2.1 Convergence of Britton's perspective on text and Rosenblatt's perspective of reading

The focus of transactional texts (Britton, 1975) is on function and purpose extrinsic to the text itself, for example information texts that transmit knowledge, propaganda for the purpose of changing behaviour and attitudes, or regulatory texts that provide codes of conduct. When the extrinsic purposes of texts are dominant and demand involvement of the cognitive over the affective response, that is, texts are read primarily for facts and knowledge, an efferent reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) is demanded. In such a reading, the reader is a spectator; the purpose of the text, extrinsic.

2.4.1.2 The writing of, and response to, fiction texts

Poetic texts are texts, for example, “fiction”, which draw the reader into the text affectively. In this type of reading, the reader is a participant, the purpose of the

text, intrinsic. The reading of such texts is undertaken for pleasure; reading becomes aesthetic. There is an affective engagement with such texts.

The writer makes use of figures of speech, often mastering the world of metaphor. This stylistic device is aesthetic in nature and typical of fiction texts. Aesthetic devices bring affective and cognitive responses together. Feelings therefore, are important, as the reader responds to such texts both affectively and cognitively. The reader, in responding in this way, becomes an active participant in the reading process, rather than a passive “spectator” (Britton in Wilkinson, 1975). Intrinsic texts have the potential to engage the reader wholly – Rosenblatt (1978) suggests that such texts lead to aesthetic reading.

Hughes (1994, in Fox 1995:3-18), examines the power of the story. He moves from an examination of style, in particular the use of metaphor in fiction, which would create an aesthetic reading. He goes further, like Harding (1962) and McAdams (1993) in looking at the world of literature in terms of its effect on the ‘psyche’, asserting that there is both an objective imagination and a subjective one at play:

The character of great works is exactly this: that in them the full presence of the inner world combines with and is reconciled to the full presence of the outer world. And in them we see that the laws of these two worlds are not contradictory at all; they are one all-inclusive system; they are laws that somehow we find it all but impossible to keep, laws that only the greatest artists are able to restate.... The inner world, separated from the outer world, is a place of demons. The outer world, separated from the inner world, is a place of meaningless objects and machines. The faculty that makes the human being out of these two worlds is called divine.... More essentially, it is imagination which embraces both outer and inner worlds in a creative spirit.⁴

Poetic texts, texts which benefit from aesthetic reading, have the power to change people and engage readers. (McIntyre, 2004). Engagement with texts increases

⁴ Hughes talks about two worlds which constantly collide, the inner world (‘subjective’) and the outer world (‘objective’.) Imagination, he maintains, is a faculty that embraces both worlds simultaneously. In his essay, he maintains that myth, story, provokes imagination. Literature is ideal to hold these two worlds together – in its power in terms of content, theme and style.

skill in reading and acquisition of literacy. Engagement with texts can lead to an acquisition of intrinsic motivation. (Cambourne, 1995, 2002.) These aspects are discussed in more detail in section 2.8.

2.4.1.3 Aesthetic and non-aesthetic readings of texts

Rosenblatt (1978, 1995) writes about efferent and aesthetic stances in describing her theory (called transactional theory) of responding to texts.⁵ Efferent is derived from the Latin “effere” and means “to carry away”; aesthetic reading involves reading for pleasure and appreciation of the author’s work. Different texts require different forms of reading. One text can also elicit many different types of reading, too; when we read efferently, we read for information; when we read for pleasure, we adopt an aesthetic stance. Sometimes types of reading and texts are confused – if a poetic text is given an efferent reading, then the purpose of, or intention behind, such a text can be obscured. Rosenblatt (1978:23) warns against mixing modes, such as asking what facts (an efferent function) can be learnt from Poem X (an aesthetic text), because “the reader performs very different activities during aesthetic and non-aesthetic readings.” Rosenblatt (1978:25) summarises her findings as follows: “[T]he focus on responding to non-aesthetic texts is what will remain as the residue after the reading” whereas in responding to aesthetic texts, “the reader’s attention is centred directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text.”

The important distinction between aesthetic and efferent reading appears to reside in the reading process – in aesthetic reading the text becomes (in Rosenblatt’s words) a “poem”. The interaction between reader and text is crucial to Rosenblatt’s theory. McDaniels (2006) points out that Rosenblatt’s theory of

⁵ Rosenblatt’s transactional theory involves the response of the reader to a text. Although the word “transaction” is common to both, the meaning is not. In short, Britton’s refers to the type of text; Rosenblatt refers to the process, the interaction with the text.

literature is transactional⁶ because both the reader's response and the dynamic potential of the text are important. The dynamism of the text, activated by the reader, is sometimes forgotten by those who are only concerned with Rosenblatt's focus on the reader.

What happens while we read is a question that is central to an understanding of Rosenblatt. Rosenblatt (1978) argues the case for a reader-response approach to text to be foregrounded because of what the reader's response does to the text as the catalyst that precipitates the engaged relationship between reader and text. Harding (1962) proposes that texts which cause the affective domain, rather than just the cognitive domain, to be involved are texts which involve the psyche of the reader. Involvement with text, identification with characters, plot, and moral dilemmas is crucial. Perry (1992) in an aptly titled *Into Books* foregrounds the affective domain and sees an affective involvement as a way of capturing and engaging the reader in the text.

Bleich (1975, 1978). He argues that to make a response objective (citing weaknesses of Leavisite and New criticism) can alienate the reader from his/her Self. He argues that a response to literature must be personalized and heartfelt. This response could later be analysed and evaluated as attempt is made to move from subjectivity towards a more informed 'objectivity'.

Pike (2003) takes a Vygotsyan approach to the social construction of knowledge and applies this to his view of effective reading. Like Rosenblatt (1978), he writes about aesthetic reading. Similar to Bleich (1975), he encourages a personal response⁷, but he indicates that "more" is needed. Readers should respond personally, and share responses socially. In sharing these responses socially, and considering others' responses, the reader can consider why he/she has responded

⁶ The term 'transactional' as used by Rosenblatt describes dynamic interaction of reader and text in living the text. In Britton's theory it is used to describe a type of text in terms of its purpose, namely, its use to transact the world's work.

⁷ It appears that Pike's (2003) 'personal' response is akin to Bleich's (1975,1978) 'subjective' response.

to the text. The act of considering ‘why’ is metacognitive, so that both an aesthetic reading and critical literacy are being achieved.

2.4.2 Application – the school

Because a focus of this project is on classroom practice, it is pertinent to see how findings of the academy are translated into the school environment. Translation into the school environment appears to be a three-tiered process:

- affective responses to the text (engagement)
- cognitive and metacognitive responses (critical consciousness)
- theorizing to enable application to practice

Theorizing remains purely academic, and does not practically change anything unless insights are applied. Practical work can change attitudes to reading, can foster reading motivation, can ensure a positive self-concept and can, hopefully, change non-literate environments to literate ones.

2.4.2.1 Choosing and reading texts

McDaniel (2006:31) proposes that texts are best seen along a continuum, as they are rarely purely transactional or purely poetic. Protherough (1983:2-7) suggests that reading of texts moves along a continuum and further suggests that the functions of texts can be divided as follows:

- Personal [stories that give pleasure and develop understanding]
- Curricular [texts which aid in the things external to the book itself]
- Literary [assumption that literary and critical values are acquired]

Students should be exposed to all these types of texts as all three extend the reading experience. Literary texts in particular extend the aesthetic, social and moral understanding of students’ experiences as readers. Corcoran (1987), Perry (1992) and Protherough (1983) advocate ways in which literary texts can be

mediated in the classroom. All three practitioners draw on reader-response theorists to suggest possible practices to encourage the reader to be a dynamic part of this reading “event”.

Vandergrift (1990:2) links literary criticism and research:

Any discussion of literary works requires some degree of distancing, abstraction, labelling, and generalization, or, in other words, theorizing, even if that theoretical activity is implicit and subconscious (sic). As literary theory is more consciously and precisely developed and general principles established, individual texts may be viewed as manifestations of an abstract structure which should in turn aid the analysis or interpretation – the criticism – of unique works of art. [my emphases]

It is useful to bear this in mind – as literary works are spoken about, there is an emerging awareness of criticism – it is not always conscious, and literary criticism is undertaken and refined as texts are discussed. So, the teacher can aid in this process – discussion should be encouraged; teachers can mediate this process and direct discussion accordingly.

2.4.2.2 Responding to literature

Benton (1993) acknowledges the earlier work of Harding (1962) and Rosenblatt (1978, 1985) whose work explores “psychological and affective aspects of literary experience.” Rosenblatt, who first wrote in 1938, and Harding both wrote at a time where New Criticism (in America) and Leavisite “practical criticism” (in the U.K.) were the major modes of literary criticism. Thus, by examining the effect of literature on the psyche and foregrounding feeling, their views challenged the establishment, and extended the notion of literature, focusing on the reader’s response(s) to the work.

The mode of response made by the reader of a novel ... is that of imaginative or empathic insight into other living things, mainly other people. But this would give only imaginative *sharing* of the participants’ experience. At least equally important is the ... reader’s evaluation of the participants and what they do and suffer... But there is a third aspect of the process: the reader knows that the characters of the novel are not real people but only *personae* created by the author for the purpose of

communication. ... The more sophisticated reader knows that he is in social communication of a special sort with the author, and he bears in mind that the represented participants are only part of a convention by which the author discusses, and proposes an evaluation of, possible human experience. (Harding, 1962:147)

Both the affective and cognitive domains are needed in responding to the “poem” (Rosenblatt, 1978) and Harding (1962) refers to the “sophisticated reader”, suggesting a function that is aesthetic and critical, too. It isn’t impossible to make learners at school aware of, and comfortable in, these forms of literary criticism.

Benton (1993) looks at how children in primary school respond to literature and suggests how to encourage responses:

[R]eader-response monitoring procedures are generally devised in the knowledge that the medium is the message. *The ways readers are asked to present their responses are fundamental influences upon those responses*; they range from undirected invitations to free association or ‘say what comes into your mind as you read’, through various ‘prompts’ or guideline questions to consider, to the explicit questionnaire. Oral, written, or graphic responses and whether the readers are recording individually or in groups all provide further dimensions to the means of monitoring and collecting response data. (Benton, 1993:10-11; my emphasis)

There is an emphasis on the teacher shaping conditions that facilitate the readers’ responses – and no formulaic responses are prescribed. In terms of pedagogy, this starts to encourage an autonomy and understanding in the learner.

Strategies encouraging responses – in all forms - to texts can and should be put into place in order to ensure that a response, and one which can be explained, is given. Responses can be individual or group responses and should be shared – there is no correct or perfect response - and a community of readers can start at an early age. As children talk about texts, their feelings towards the text and aspects of the text, they start to question and think more deeply about themselves, each other, and the text, thus becoming more critically literate. Children experience a range of responses to and with the text. An aspect of critical literacy and literary criticism is to read beyond the text and to challenge socially constructed ideals – to liberate one’s self:

[T]he reality is that each person has a range of identities beyond gender, such as teacher, parent friend or athlete, that are formed through interaction with texts and our social world (our relationships with others). We often merely accept – without question – roles we see constructed in texts and in other events. But people who are critically aware challenge the socially constructed roles so that neither themselves or others are unjustly limited. When exploring identities, readers who are critically aware read beyond the text and examine influences that shape our sense of self. (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004:90)

Further, Lehman (1986) points out, critical acclaim (by adults) and popularity of the works (by the child readers) seldom seem to be “seen” through the same lens; hence it is important to give child readers a voice, encouraging their voice, and actively listening to what they say. Collecting responses in a non-judgmental way (Benton, 1993; Lehman, 1986; Perry, 1992; Protherough, 1983) is a good way to hear children’s voices and begin a reader-response approach to the literary works.

2.4.3 Reading texts – moving from functional literacy to critical literacy

Blake (1995:5) criticizes the limitations of traditional elementary (primary) teacher education programmes: He claims that “(w)hile university researchers cannot agree on a model of teaching literature, the training for literature prospective elementary school teachers receive in college and university is totally that of teaching reading. Such education is unrelated to reading and responding to literature.”

The area of critical literacy seems to merge these two strands: teaching of reading (functional literacy) and responding to literature (which can lead to critical literacy). Cai (2008: 213) sums up Louise Rosenblatt (1978, 1995) thus: “Rosenblatt’s theory is a theory of *reading*. It explores how readers read, interpret, evaluate, and criticize literature.” [my emphasis]. It must be emphasized that these processes are higher-ordered reading skills, and have moved beyond the requirements of functional literacy skills.

In a discussion on multicultural literature, Cai (2008) cites Rosenblatt (1978, 1995), seeing her as theorizing about reading: reading and literary responses are

seen as one and the same; critical literacy embraces the responses to literature. Thus the understanding of reading has changed from a mere decoding of words to an operation which requires understanding, reflecting and responding, a movement towards critical literacy. As ideas of literacy have changed from functional to critical, and the processes of reading have become more interactive, so the approaches to literature need to move from essentially text-based to reader-based. There is thus a focus on two strands: interaction and contextualization: the process has become extended; the process of reading has become more “active” emphasizing understanding and response, moving away from behaviouristic reading as being primarily decoding words in a text and New Criticism’s textual analysis, to emphasizing the reader’s understanding and response.

2.5 In the classroom

In this section, I look at theoretical perspectives and move towards an application in the classroom, where I examine the applied perspectives.

2.5.1 Theoretical perspectives

Perry (1992), Vandergrift (1990), Benton (1993) and Blake (1995) apply reader response theories to the elementary school in particular. These practitioners do not draw on findings from literary theory solely. In encouraging an affective response to texts, the reader becomes involved, engaged (to use the wording of Cambourne, 1999) in a number of ways:

- in the world of the text;
- in the world of him/herself ; and
- in the worlds of other readers of the text.

This involvement can lead to a deep emotional response and can sometimes result in profound change.

Some contemporary writers and therapists/psychiatrists such as Chinen (1987, 1989) and McAdams (1993) introduce a transpersonal theory of psychology as

they examine how modern, contemporary and traditional stories affect the psyche. Fiction ceases to be “purely” fiction; stories are seen to be living organisms, capable of transforming lives. McIntyre (2004) examines the role of books in “healing”. Bibliotherapy is seen as a vibrant force: facilitators must be aware of the impact of fiction. Peseschkian (1987), who pioneered Narrative Therapy in Persia (Iran) looks at stories which Jung would term as being part of the collective unconscious. He does this by looking at a link between body – mind – soul – spirit dimensions. Using stories as parables, he looks at the paradoxes in life. A clean, neatly-reasoned truth is seldom postulated – readers of (or listeners to) the stories are encouraged to embrace many facets of life and “experience” differing conditions and different “truths” as “meaning” is made.

“Meanings” are not given by the story. Readers make meaning depending on psychological needs and their states of being. That there is seldom, if ever, only one valid meaning to a story (Catford, 1991; Chinen, 1987, 1989; Kant, 1993; McAdams, 1993; Peseschkian, 1987) and that there are many valid ways of seeing everyday representations (Fletcher, 2004) supports Bleich’s (1975, 1978) view that subjective responses are valid. This is echoed by Corcoran & Evans (1987), Perry (1992) and Protherough (1993) as these writers look at narrative and responses to narrative, in the school setting, suggesting different ways of mediating texts with children, and ways in which children can respond to texts.

A transpersonal, spiritual, side is similarly considered in the realm of cognitive psychology. Gardner (1983) added to his theory of multiple intelligences by suggesting an added dimension of intelligence, existential intelligence (Fleetham, 2006). This dimension broadens the idea of a psychological intelligence that can be seen in conjunction with his intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of intelligence. All these dimensions should be considered as a text is responded to; texts have the power to move a person beyond a cognitive and affective response towards a holistic experience, which encompasses moral development (McCulloch & Mathieson, 1995). The complexity of these processes is beyond the scope of this dissertation; the salient point is to indicate the potential power of poetic text, especially fiction, which can engage readers in affective experience and interaction.

2.5.2 The classroom: practice and praxis

Aspects covered in this section are

- Facilitating learners' responses to text (2.5.2.1); and
- Collaboration: teachers, learners and text (2.5.2.2)

2.5.2.1 Causing learners to respond to a text

Vandergrift (1990:20-1) proposes three worlds at work: the literary world, the author's world and the child reader's world, with the adult being an important intermediary in the world of children's literature. This model is useful, both for its separation of the various "worlds" of literature and for its insistence on the adult as mediator.

With students this model can be used so that learners can make conscious responses to literature. Lehman (1986:17) summarises the role of the adult in acting as an intermediary:

To accomplish the task of transactional criticism for children's literature, since the critic is usually an adult, requires the critic to be grounded in an understanding of childhood and child development.

One way to evoke responses to texts is to mobilize the affective domain rather than solely the cognitive. In so doing, the reader is responding subjectively to the text, "in the moment" (Bleich, 1978). Allowing subjective responses to be foregrounded and articulated makes the reader become aware of one of the processes in reading, that of response to the text. Responding to text, sharing responses with others, creates a community of readers and thus reading can now have a greater purpose, as it has become a social activity and knowledge has been mutually constructed and shared.

Using a variety of questions (Barrett in Perry, 1992) and talking about texts are ways in which texts can be mediated. Listening to, giving and discussing

responses to text are ways, also, in which knowledge can be socially constructed (Vygotsky, 1962). Thus it is important for students to help learners to respond both cognitively and affectively to texts, leading to a greater awareness of text, self and others.

2.5.2.2 Collaboration, transaction and beyond

Teachers have to have first-, not second-, hand knowledge, about children's literature because their affective engagement with the text (Perry 1992) leads to an awareness of the interconnectedness of the world of the text and the world of the reader.⁸ Teachers collaborate with readers in creating an experience of the text.

It is important for teachers to have appropriate questioning skills as part of their armoury to transact awareness of the interconnectedness of the worlds of text and readers. On the cognitive level, teachers' knowledge of how to ask questions increases readers' reflection and metacognitive awareness.

A connection with the text can lead to an identification with the characters and plot, taking the reading experience beyond interpersonal experience of the text in a community of readers to an intrapersonal experience of the text - this could be the beginning of a bibliotherapeutic intervention (McIntyre 2004). Bearing in mind Vandergrift's insistence that adults must mediate between the three worlds she suggests, it is important that students recognize that children might need guidance in responding to text. This involves asking pertinent questions that get children to identify with characters and respond to situations as shown in the text. The text should, if need be, be mediated with "scaffolding" questions that cause an identification with the text on affective and cognitive levels. Good questions will create a disequilibrium (Piaget, in Santrock 1997) so that change can occur.

⁸ In a remarkable book (applying theory, teaching practice and information from the social sciences) on multiculturalism and reading, Denise Ann Finazzo supports much of her work by referring to psychologists such as Piaget (cognitive), Erikson (socio-cultural) and Kohlberg (moral). A knowledge of psychology is very important as the adult (teacher ?) mediates the text for the learner.

Students can scaffold for children on various levels because they draw on life experience beyond the developmental stage of the children. They (the students) can draw on prior experience as they respond to texts, children cannot. It is important for the children to grapple with the world of the text. To do this they may need mediation. By getting into the text and the world of the child the student is able to become an effective mediator.

Thus, an approach to children's literature should be collaborative as well as individual. This collaborative stance is argued by Pike (2003:71), in an examination of Rosenblatt's transactional theory, as he advocates the aesthetic readings of texts in the classroom:

[A]s teachers cannot easily predict what readers will respond to, a wide range of texts should be experienced so that they encounter sufficient variety to ensure the possibility of positive reactions to some works. Experiencing human diversity and variety through an eclectic range of texts as well as readers provides the conditions for aesthetic reading to thrive. *A social transaction between readers is required, after a personal transaction with a text, if a developed aesthetic experience is to be achieved.* [my emphasis]

According to Pike (2003), learners move from reacting to texts, to transaction with texts. At this point, the reader has reached an aesthetic experience of literary texts.

Both students and children become more effective readers through recording their responses to the reading experience. This is often best done through writing thoughts in a journal during and after the reading process (Boggs & Golden, 2007; Blake, 1995). Reactions and thoughts are useful to record, as the reading process is made more conscious, and both critical literacy and a greater awareness of affect can emerge. Responses, feelings and thoughts committed to writing create an awareness of the literary process. Combined with awareness of subjective responses (Bleich, 1977, 1987), isolating reactions to elements of literary processes makes for a reflective reader, who is able to be immersed and engaged in the reading, thus making for a successful, literate reader. (Cambourne, 2001).

In writing, the reader has to isolate responses, give reasons for these and be able to refer to the process later. ‘Journalling’ is advocated by both Ciesielski (2001) and Young (2000) as a way of motivating first-year university students; Becca (2001) uses this type of writing to move learners from a level of extrinsic, to intrinsic, motivation. It appears to work because students are reacting to texts, and stating what these reactions are and why. In many ways, their work is “owned” by the students, no longer “forced” on them by figures of authority.

Texts which are best to use are poetic, (Britton, in Wilkinson 1975) or aesthetic texts (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1995). Such texts can engage readers, and thus move our students towards an intrinsic level of motivation, or internal locus of control, through the reader’s experience of the “poem” – the transaction between the reader and the (poetic) text. Students therefore begin to *want* to read. It is part of the literary process to interrogate the text, and be aware of the literary nature of the text. In addition, the process of the reading transaction is constantly borne in mind. A desire to read means that reading will be modelled and a good reading teacher models reading. Both the motivation and the reading processes (showing higher ordered skills) are hallmarks of a good reader. A good reading teacher models these skills, and children emulate them.

Lehman (1986:17) argues thus

Therefore, if literature is an experience and reading a transaction, literary criticism must consider the reader’s response, as well as the text... “[T]ransactional criticism” combines an awareness of aesthetic response (arising from “aesthetic” reading) with confirmation from the text of what caused that response (derived from “efferent reading,...). Thus, the integrity of the text is not betrayed but is used to substantiate the aesthetic experience.

The (sometimes, distinct and apart) fields of literacy and literature converge. The next section considers this merging in some detail.

2.5.3 Children's Literature in the university curriculum

2.5.3.1 An overview

Egoff (1969) and Huck (1979) argue that children's literature needs to be rigorously examined. At their time of writing, children's literature was seen to be an interesting secondary study, not really treated with any kind of rigour or vigour. The academy treated "adult" works as more worthy; educationists and institutions training teachers seemed to treat the area of children's literature in a similar vein. Sutherland (1981) treats the topic more seriously, but, although handled comprehensively, her treatment is in places rather cursory and prescriptive. Children's literature is "read" in a limited way, the "right" way, and there are various prohibitions that have to be applied. Thus, children are exposed to children's literature through the adult lens; room is not given for the reader to react to the text – that is a focus of Lehman's (1986) dissertation.

May (1993:7) makes a case for an academic study of children's literature:

Readers] need to begin to look at children's literature as *literature*. Today there are courses at certain universities that look at the literary aspect of children's stories. The professors of these courses maintain that although children's literature has, by the very uniqueness of its intended audience, some stylistic and aesthetic differences from literature as a whole, it has commonalities by all literature that affect reader response. [original emphasis]

Hunt (1994) and Lurie (2003) make a strong case for a rigorous study of children's literature, being aware of general literary theory, context both of the author, text and reader. Finazzo (1997) applies developmental psychological insights as she examines the need for greater awareness and tolerance of others, as she analyses multi-cultural literacy. No longer is children's literature seen as something which is peripheral, these authors argue for a multi-disciplinary, academic approach to this discipline.

2.5.3.2 A possible approach to children's literature

It is through talking to others about text that literature becomes “alive”. It is also evident that responding to texts creates a greater awareness of an enhanced literacy process. Talking about texts, ensuing discussions, questioning and answering of these questions lift the texts from being one-dimensional; active reading leads to a form of critical literacy. I would argue, it is very important to model a reader response approach throughout a children's literature course, using examples of Vandergrift's questioning (1990), a variety of questions which follow the taxonomy proposed by Barrett (1975 in Perry, 1992) and by talking about texts and responses knowledge is socially constructed and texts are mediated (Vygotsky, 1962). We must not stop at a reader response level; we need to look at the “text”, too. So, teaching (at tertiary and primary levels), by considering text and reader, should become transactional (Rosenblatt, 1978).

Once this transactional criticism has become part of the reading process then there can be a move towards evaluation of texts. Coupled with the reflective process, evaluation is a logical and natural consequence. Though recognizing that this consequence is important, it is beyond the focus of the current project that is concerned with trying to establish whether an affective response to children's literature causes a “shift” in students' attitude at all.

Achieving critical literacy and responding to texts cannot be motivated extrinsically: students must want to model good reading habits, and be in a position to react with insight, understanding and (first-hand) knowledge. Teacher-education students must read texts willingly.

May (1995: 11) lists a number of ways in which a viable programme in children's literature can be effective. She concludes her list thus:

...Teachers ... are mentors. Teachers must be trained to teach critical analysis. They must be familiar with children's and young adult literature. They must know how critical theory is used to interpret books and films.

In order to help teacher education students to become mentors, critics and mediators, it is important to insist on moving students towards an intrinsic level of motivation. To do so we need to consider motivation in general and reading motivation in particular.

2.6 Motivation

In this section, the movement from intrinsic to extrinsic motivation is described. This implies the move from competition to collaboration and cooperation. Competition is understood as competing with other learners against perceived standards of ideal performance, and collaboration as creating shared experiences.

2.6.1 Towards transformation from extrinsic to intrinsic

The PIRLS transnational reports (2001, 2006) present evidence that reading is at a low ebb internationally and particularly in South Africa where the lowest achievement was measured. Young people do not read with ease; therefore they don't attempt to read. Covington (1997: 167-8) indicts the school system, asserting that failure is reinforced when motivation relies on competition and when there is solely an adherence to extrinsic motivation. The learning environment needs to be transformed from one of competition, directed by external factors, to that of cooperation and support, where internal motivation is stressed.

[The] focus on *how* [to read] has led to real advances in our understanding of reading development and effective reading instruction. But it has at the same time produced as regrettable neglect of an equally important set of research questions and instructional focus: the *why* of reading (Fink & Samuels, 2008: xiii [original emphasis]).

It is apparent through this brief discussion that the demands that are made on the teacher of literacy and reading are more than what is required for functional literacy, for example, decoding. The teacher has to be well-informed about the context of the text and the personality of the reader and be able to transmit information about the world and the subject matter itself to a learner or group of

learners. Being one-dimensional and static is no longer possible. The teacher must be able to engage critically, discursively and with empathy with the field of the text. This versatility implies that “[t]he literacy teacher for a new age is a remarkable individual – highly-skilled, adaptive, responsive, and just” (Roskos, Risko, & Vukelich in Carr, 2003).

2.6.2 Towards intrinsic motivation

It does appear that in a community where reading is actively discussed, an unthreatening extrinsic motivation emerges. It is extrinsic, because the motivation, while often positive and unobtrusive, comes from outside agencies. However, a key to sustained reading lies in intrinsic motivation: young people who are “hooked” on literature.

Guthrie & Wigfield (1999:200-1) emphasise, too, the cognitive processes that influence text comprehension. Both cognitive and motivational processes are involved when comprehending texts. Cognitive processes lead towards a greater understanding of text; motivational processes make the reader *want* to read the text.

Some of the motivational factors postulated by the authors encompass the affective domain, too. The authors suggest that it is productive to bear in mind this question: “What motivational processes influence what cognitive processes in what ways during text comprehension?” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999:203) This question supports the argument that reading is a multi-dimensional process, an interpretation of reading that links with reader-response theorists and Vygotskian theory that asserts that knowledge is socially constructed.

Guthrie & Wigfield’s (1999) ideas about reading motivation appear to derive from generic research on motivation. In contrast, Covington (1998: 135), referring to motivation in learning, asserts:

The kinds of goals we must foster in schools are intrinsic in nature, that is, involving the desire to become more effective as a person or to

perform actions for their own sake... [B]ecause intrinsic reasons are their own reward, the psychic payoffs for learning are not limited to a few individuals, but are open to all... [W]hen the individual is intrinsically motivated, learning becomes the means to an end, not an isolated event whose only purpose is to get the right answer or to please the teacher. Where education is concerned, things go better when intrinsic motives predominate.

Covington (1998) refers to three intrinsic goals which lead to task engagement and creativity, and form intrinsic motivation. Although Covington refers largely to more easily measurable classroom subjects and behaviour, I feel very strongly that these assertions are valid for reading too:

“We must identify these intrinsic goals and systematically reinforce them: *mastery* – becoming the best one can be; *helping others* ... and, lastly, *the satisfaction of curiosity*. Such goals promote *motivational equity*... These sources of equity are denied students when excellence is defined competitively” (Covington, 1998:139).

In many ways this is what a community of readers should be like – the absence of competitiveness goes a long way to ensuring that there is a low affective filter. Thus, any forms of reading anxiety (brought upon by external factors) are consciously removed, allowing for a positive reading experience.

Covington (1998:169) examines thinking in detail and proposes a knowledge hierarchy which moves from content knowledge to procedural knowledge, to metacognitive knowledge. In addition, he refers specifically to the skill and practice of thinking; these ideas can be extrapolated to reading motivation.

In the classroom, learners show content knowledge as they talk about the content or plot, of a book. They show procedural knowledge as they reflect on aspects of style/characterization/theme – they look at how the book is constructed. Finally, learners show metacognitive knowledge as they share feelings and are able to reflect on their own reading practices. In doing so, it appears that both affective and cognitive domains are engaged.

2.6.3 Motivating learners to master reading

Williams et al (2008: 135) state that “motivating children to read on their own has been less of a priority than improving reading achievement in recent years, but many teachers are still asking, ‘How do I get my students to want to read?’” Maintaining independence in reading is important, and Williams et al (2008), citing Jensen (1998) emphasise that extrinsic rewards can both reduce intrinsic motivation and cheapen the love and value of reading. They suggest eight principles which can foster positive reading behaviour and a sense of autonomy as they lead to intrinsic motivation. These are listed below, in the order Williams suggests:

1. *Choice and control* – a facilitator should allow learners to make choices of books; in doing so, they are empowered. (Williams et al, 2008; Lehman, 1986)
2. *Social interaction*. Williams et al (2008) refer to researchers who have found that social interactions lead to engagement with reading. Corcoran (1987), Edmunds (2006), Finazzo (1996), Protherough (1983), Perry (1992), Vandegrift (1990) make similar claims about social interaction. And both Jones et al. (2003) and Strauss (2005) suggest that a controlled social interaction can encourage boys to read better. Leiguarda (2008: 46) suggests that if teenagers “are to grow connections in their brain, they need to be able to interact actively [with the language]. Because of this, interactive hands-on approaches work particularly well with teens, who are usually too tired to pay attention in class.” Vygotsky (1962) suggests that knowledge is socially constructed. Social interaction around reading can thus lead to a social construction of the knowledge of reading.
3. *Novelty*. We pay attention to the unusual; a fresh approach immediately gets attention. (Williams et al, 2008). Capturing and maintaining attention leads to engagement, central in literacy acquisition (Cambourne, 1995).

4. *Feedback/Response*. Children need feedback on how they are doing; giving time to allow children to respond to texts and to one another, and allowing for a space for the facilitator to respond to the children can be stimulating motivators.
5. *Attainable Success*. Covington (1998) asserts that success at a task at hand serves as a motivator; Graves et al (2007) state: “Research has repeatedly verified that if children are going to be motivated and engaged in school and learn from their schoolwork, they need to succeed at the vast majority of tasks they undertake.”
6. *Interest*. Williams et al (2008:136) assert: “Introductions should capture children’s interest and gently push them toward making reading a lifelong habit.” Perry (1992) gives many ideas of how this can be done – the title of his book, *Into books and beyond* attests to this.
7. *Real World Experiences / Relevancy*. Children should be given access to relevant texts, if they find reading difficult. Finazzo (1996), linking an awareness and understanding of child development and multi-culturalism as texts are chosen for children, concurs with this point. The adults make the initial, well-informed choices; children make final choices of texts. Texts which reflect the real world, or which are relevant (and fantasy can reflect a real world) are the best texts to choose.
8. *Positive Learning Atmosphere*. Williams et al (2008) concur with Graves et al (2007:67) who stress that the classroom climate should be a “thoughtful atmosphere in which values and ideas are respected – values and ideas in texts, one’s own values and ideas, and other people’s values and ideas.”

From the previous discussion, it is clear that researchers agree that intrinsic motivation is the best form of motivation, and part of this intrinsic motivation hinges on an affective engagement with text. In terms of encouraging reading, teachers and teachers in training need to be acquainted with gender differences

that influence the choice of reading materials; reading motivation and reading ability.

2.7 Choice of reading materials

The teacher can encourage intrinsic motivation to master reading through providing the reader with access to a choice of materials:

- A full range of literary text genres: fiction, non-fiction
- Texts that are sensitive to gender differences

2.7.1 Reading materials

There are two major types of printed texts available for the classroom:

- a. Texts which have been produced for developing specific skills in the classroom:

Often these texts are limited in affective content – the purpose is mostly cognitive. Such texts, often basal readers, are useful in earlier grades in creating phonemic awareness and mastery of basic reading skills. Conversation, reading and writing are three aspects of literacy that should be extended by reading. Good teachers can use their own professional resources to practice these aspects when using basal readers, (Evers, Lang & Smith, 2009:461). The teacher has to be proactive in using material that does not tend to engage readers holistically to produce holistic participation. Readers' motivation to engage thus depends on the instructor; it is not intrinsic to the text.

- b. Literary texts:

These texts mobilize the affective domain and lend themselves to motivation, to a wanting to read. Choice of vibrant texts is therefore very important.

It is important that the books chosen by educators are books which learners can relate to and identify with (Finnazzo, 1997:145-9, Gray, 2009:473). This is strongly echoed by Koss & Teale (2009). Not only should books be visible that mirror the adolescent “frame of mind”, but also reflect the 21st century perspectives, among which are different voices and narrators, the ability to deal with non-linear order, conflicting information and unreliable narrators (Koss & Teale, 2009:570). We must be aware that new literature for adolescents is reflective of the changing nature of literacy in the 21st century, and very up-to-date:

Also, as society continues to change with technological advances, adolescent literacy and the texts teens come into contact with are changing... Adolescents have to learn to make sense of all the available information... They need to learn to be critics and creators of meanings for themselves... By bringing YA literature into the classroom, ... opportunities are provided to help students navigate these new forms. (Koss & Teale, 2009:570-1)

Lapp & Fisher (2009:557-560) identified many different types of texts appropriate for their (teenage) students, rather than assigning a whole-class novel to the class. This provided the engagement, thinking and conversations the teachers wanted.

Texts which are pertinent and literary have the edge in creating this engagement. If teachers have a classroom where they can have meaningful discussion of texts, and a modelling of effective critical literacy, it appears that this can increase motivation to want to read.

2.7.2 Gender differences

We cannot escape from the fact that gender plays a role in reading and writing. McFann (2004: 3) refers to Michael Smith and Jeffrey Wilhelm (*Reading don't fix no Chevys: Literacy in the lives of young men*. Heinemann, 2002) who state that boys differ from girls in the choices they make of reading material:

- Boys are more inclined to read informational texts, magazines, and newspaper articles;
- Boys are more inclined to read graphic novels and comic books;

- Boys tend to resist reading stories about girls, whereas girls do not tend to resist reading stories about boys;
- Boys like to read about hobbies, sports, and things they might do or be interested in doing;
- Boys like to collect things and tend to like to collect series of books;
- Boys read less fiction than girls; and
- Boys tend to enjoy escapism and humour, and some boys are passionate about science fiction or fantasy.

McFann (2004: 7) continues by looking at ways boys can be encouraged to read. Haupt & Clark (2003: 19-21) state that boys and girls read differently, because they learn and see things differently. Later Haupt and Clark (2003:22) refer to the “Potter phenomenon” wherein they state that books, no matter how difficult or complicated, will be read by boys if they are motivated; the authors also state that J K Rowling has shown “that books don’t have to be simplified play-by-play sports dramas, novels full of potty humour, or “plots in hyper-drive.” Haupt and Clark (2003: 21) state that “[i]f boys have no male role models or strong women to introduce them to relevant and exciting books, they may not pick up another novel other than those required for high school English. McFann (2004: 4) reiterates that males are needed as role models for reading.

These findings about gender differences tend to reflect the global picture as shown by the PIRLS 2001 study. Asselin (2003:53) suggests that “a closer examination of the issues around boys and reading reveals how schools have constructed gender divisions around reading, and how teachers can begin to reconstruct new possibilities.” Later she argues that teachers need to proactively provide a greater range of reading materials, postulating that mere book-based learning and fiction do not lead to scholars being fully literate, a the view shared by Norton-Meier (1985:609) and Fishwick (2004), who devotes a book to looking at the internet and popular media.

Potential teachers need to be aware of the gender divisions, and like Haupt and Clarke, (2003) to learn to embrace behaving in a ‘sexist’ manner to encourage

reading. With extension of reading materials from a narrow definition of literary texts, teachers have to embrace diversity in selection of materials to foster a more completely literate generation.

Boys generally show apathy towards literacy and recently the word “aliterate” has been coined, to encompass this. There is a great challenge to actively change boys’ aliteracy to effective literacy. This section ends with this challenge:

[A]lteracy in boys is a legacy of aliterate habits among the adults in their worlds. Boys will not be readers if their parents or guardians tell them to read but are not themselves models of active reading. Boys will not be readers if the adult men around them are not readers. (Zambo, & Brozo, 2009:4)

2.8 “Teachers as mentors”: the challenge for South Africa

In two critically significant reports on literacy in South Africa, the importance of teachers as mentors in reading is mentioned, namely the PIRLS (2006) and Limpopo (2008) studies.

2.8.1 PIRLS 2006

It is important therefore, that teachers model effective and pleasurable reading. It is essential that potential teachers can model good practice. And a first-hand experience of children’s literature and young adult literature as part of their teacher training can start to provide a scaffold which is needed.

Howie et al (2008: 57) in a summary of their PIRLS (2006) report concluded the following, after South Africa had been placed lowest on the reading ranking scale:

South African teachers read less often in their spare time compared to those in the highest achieving countries in PIRLS 2006.

Taken together, the different strands in the literature reviewed in this chapter suggest that if a course in children’s literature is constructed which adheres to the suggestions contained above (academic rigour included), and requires extensive

reading, focusing on response and the affective domain, it could get students reading. Students who are active readers display evidence of being critically literate and have a wide range of texts at their disposal. If they read more in their spare time, and are seen as mentors of pupils, it could go a long way in making reading more “viable” and start making inroads into South Africa’s poor levels of literacy. A thorough knowledge of some of the motivational principles, together with being aware of gender differences and tailor-making a programme with these in mind, and providing relevant reading materials, could well assist in helping learners to be intrinsically motivated, more willing to read, question and talk about their reading.

2.8.2 The Limpopo Report - July 2006 – March 2008

Some of the recommendations from the Limpopo report (Reeves et al, 2009) are convergent with the principles distilled in this literature review from international research literature. Limpopo province, like the rest of South Africa, had achieved poor literacy levels. Reeves et al’s (2009) recommendations suggest ways literacy can be presented and taught effectively in primary schools. These points echo the body of this literature review, and should be borne in mind by educators in both primary and tertiary institutions:

- Create literacy-enriched school and classroom learning environments.

This involves making print materials accessible and displaying such in the school. (Reeves, et. al. 2008:253)

- Ensure that every learner is provided with optimal opportunities to engage in a variety of grade-appropriate and cognitively demanding reading activities and writing tasks in class.

Teachers need to provide such opportunities, and foster an interest in books. A text-based approach to literacy gives practice in and strengthens reading skills. Giving extensive opportunities to read extensive text at their reading level is vital (Reeves, et. al 2008:257)

- Improve the quality of literacy instruction; intensify and expand in-service training and support

Teachers need the support, and monitoring. Although the Limpopo system focuses on in-service monitoring and support, the university / teacher training institutions need to ensure that pre-service training takes this into account, too.

- Foster home learning environments which support early literacy and family-based or out-of-school literacy opportunities.

The 2006 PIRLS study shows a positive relationship between Grade 4 learners' reading proficiency and parental engagement of children in pre-school literacy activities. It is quite telling that the family system and school system must work together (Reeves, et. al, 2008:261). Family literacy can make the acquisition of, and practice in, critical literacy easier. Sharing literature can be a powerful element of family literacy.

2.9 Conclusion

In essence, it emerges from the readings reviewed in this chapter that literacy should be active and effective, becoming a type of critical literacy. It should involve both school and family; an engagement from all stake-holders is needed. With this approach, South African learners at school should become more literate and teachers should be more confident in both modelling reading and applying reading strategies that they can replicate in the classroom. In so doing, South Africa could well see an improvement in the next PIRLS study, and claim to being more literate than at present. The challenge in teacher education is to ensure that students are equipped with both knowledge (theory) and skills (practice) to become life-long readers.

Chapter 3 : METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter Preview

In this chapter, the research design and methodology are covered in detail. The aim of the research is introduced in 3.1; the research design and approaches considered are covered in 3.2. Section 3.3 covers site selection and sampling. Section 3.4 looks at data gathering, while 3.5 examines the data collection plan both generally and then specifically; 3.6 looks at Validation, considering both Validity and Reliability, and the dual role as lecturer – researcher in this project. Section 3.7 examines Ethics in more detail, and 3.8 concludes this section.

3.1 Aim of the research

This research project investigates whether an intervention programme comprising a range of children's literature texts and 'taught' through, largely, reader-response methods has an effect on students' reading habits and attitudes, thus increasing their levels of engagement with text, motivation to read and practice in critical literacy.

Observation of students' responses to English courses offered in the B Ed programme suggested that an introduction to children's literature had benefited students training to become teachers. The English Specific Didactics course, the "English Home Language Method" course pre-2000, had consisted of a study of a children's novel. However, in the process of developing a theoretical framework, a more rigorous course in children's literature was envisioned and planned.

In the light of the theoretical framework and associated readings, the course was redesigned in 2007. This research looks at the effects of the new design on students' attitudes and habits as readers.

3.2 Research design

3.2.1 Introduction

This study is an impact study, involving action research, where a course in children's literature is linked to practice in the university, its application in the school curriculum, and to first year students' reading in general.

First-year Intermediate/Senior Phase students in 2007 took part in the study; the bulk of the data was collected from the 2007 first year students. However, because of the nature of the study and wanting to assess whether the effects of the intervention were lasting, there is a longitudinal aspect to the project. Those in the population who had progressed to second-year (B Ed 2, 2008) were asked for feedback about the course in children's literature. This was done through semi-structured interviews in 2008. This data is also supplied and analysed.

3.2.2 Approach to the project

No single approach is best for a curriculum impact study, using action research: a variety of data from a variety of sources should be collected. Action research is never static: "Answers and questions will change, as will focus, perspective and the living form of the individual who is formulating them [T]he best way of communicating in order to improve educational practices is to contact the reality." (McNiff, 188:42)

I used a number of different ways of gathering data in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the students, their responses to the intervention programme and the project's impact on the curriculum. This investigation therefore lends itself to a multi-modal approach and can have a far-reaching impact on both learning and teaching:

[A]n educational case study is an empirical enquiry that is conducted ... in such a way that sufficient data are collected for the researcher to be able to:

- (a) explore significant features of the case;

- (b) create plausible interpretations of what is found;
 - (c) test for the trustworthiness of these interpretations;
 - (d) construct a worthwhile argument or story;
 - (e) relate the argument or story to any relevant research in literature;
 - (f) convey convincingly to an audience this argument or story; and
 - (g) provide an audit trail by which other researchers may validate or challenge the findings, or construct alternative arguments
- (Swann & Pratt, 2003:117).

In order to enhance the reliability and validity of the investigation, I used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection. Reliability is enhanced by using a multi-modal approach, and validity and enhanced by quantitative analysis (McNiff, 1988).

3.3 Site selection and sampling

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:379) state that a “clear definition of the criteria for site selection is essential”.

3.3.1 Site

I selected my place of work as the site because this is where the phenomenon occurred and data was available.

The site was limited to the Mowbray Campus of the CPUT Education Faculty (the other two campuses in Bellville and Wellington do not offer GET subjects English First Language and English First Language Specific Didactics), because it is the campus which has a majority of English-speaking students. Because it is my place of work, I was able to access staff members involved in the intermediate (ISP) phase programme, the targeted student population.

3.3.2 Sample

The research subjects were drawn from a cohort of B Ed 1 ISP students, studying in the Education Faculty at the Mowbray Campus of CPUT in 2007 and 2008.

My criteria were simple. The population targeted comprised students that were:

- in the First Year;
- studying English as home language and English home language didactics;
- studying in the Education Faculty;
- studying at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology; and
- studying to be Intermediate/Senior Phase teachers

The Mowbray campus was the ideal campus on which to work because the sample fulfilled all the above criteria.

B Ed 1 ISP students, 2007:

The whole cohort of students was given questionnaires to complete:

N = 44 (rate of return: 67,7%) handed in the pre-test questionnaire, and

N = 33 (rate of return: 63,6%) handed in the post-test questionnaire.

All students were exposed to small group conferences (using interview techniques) during the course; all students were exposed to an exit interview.

These were undertaken and observed by two lecturers based in the English department.

B Ed 2 ISP students, 2008:

In the second-year course, 24 of the students were participants in 45-minute focus group interviews where they reflected on their exposure to children's literature in their first year. These were students who responded to an open invitation to participate in the focus group interviews.

3.4 Data collection: theory

Questionnaires and focus group interviews were used. The data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.

Questionnaires that ask specific questions about aspects of the classroom, curriculum or teaching method are a quick and simple way of obtaining broad and rich information from pupils (Hopkins, 2002:117).

Questionnaires formed a large part of this research in determining both trends in responses to reading (quantitative) and opinions (qualitative) at the beginning and end of the year.

Interviews are one of the most frequently used instruments of gathering data using the qualitative approach (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:289). Hopkins (2002:81-130) points out that semi-structured interviews (focus groups) reveal data not available in questionnaires, namely, non-verbal cues. These cues are significant in identifying growth in traits such as confidence and motivation. I opted for focus group interviews because they allow the opportunity to observe a large amount of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, in the minimum amount of time; they are most “cost effective”. Babbie and Mouton (2001:292) assert that it is an advantage of a focus group to “observe the interaction within the group.”

Kitwood, 1977 (in Cohen & Manion, 1994:208-211) suggests ways in which qualitative data can be handled: these methods, “categorization of content” and “tracing a theme”, were largely used to analyse the questionnaires. Forming the categories is a qualitative process, while classifying the data is quantitative. Tracing the themes is qualitative.

Keeping a journal, reflecting individually on works read, and sharing such insights are all part of a reader-response paradigm (Becca, 2001). Document analysis of students’ journals was used. Journals were used to track the development of students’ awareness as they became more focussed on their responses to the reading process (Mason 2002:132-133). The journals were not formally analysed, but students could use them in the conferencing/interview sessions. The journals became a useful record for the students, and encouraged an added engagement with the course. Furthermore, the journals enhanced the validity of the qualitative analysis.

Table 3.1. Instruments

Instrument Used	Type of response	When instrument was used
Questionnaires	Individual; written	Pre-test questionnaire Post-test questionnaire
Documentary Review	Students' Journals Students' Course Evaluations	During intervention phase and exit interview
Interviews	Focus group, semi-structured & individual orals	During intervention phase and post-test, in both 2007 and 2008

3.4.1 Data collection plan

This diagram best illustrates a six phase approach to my study. Phases 1 – 5 consist of the data collection and intervention; phase 6 concerns the scoring of the data and comparison of the pre- and post- test questionnaires.

Where is 'conferencing' in this plan?

Phase 1	[February 2007]
PRE-TEST – Instrument 1 : Reading habits and attitudes questionnaire	
Phase 2	[March – September 2007]
INTERVENTION: Exposure to Children’s Literature (Class time, assignments, reading. Evidence: students’ journals and small group conferencing)	
Phase 3	[October – November 2007]
POST-TEST- Instrument 2 : Reading habits and attitudes questionnaire	
Phase 4	[October -- November 2007]
CONFERENCING / EXIT INTERVIEW – which completes the requirement for Triangulation	
Phase 5	[Ongoing: November 2007 – April 2008]
ANALYSIS – initial then comparative Scoring and other Measurements of quantitative data; coding of qualitative data	
Phase 6	[January – April 2008]
Semi-structured Interviews – B Ed 2 ISP students , 2008 - Triangulation	

Figure 3.1: Research Plan

3.4.2 Data collection: process and analysis

This section gives a description of the data collection processes and analysis. The study is an impact study; it is an example of action research – my own practice is being reflected on. There is a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data and interpretive analysis. The quantitative elements are for statistical analysis from which inferences can be made, and qualitative elements to add perspectives and to “flesh out” data.

Data were obtained throughout the year. Questionnaires were administered at the beginning of the course to try to get a clear pre-test picture of the students concerning their reading habits and exposure to reading, from childhood to

present. A questionnaire (unexpected) was administered at the end of the year (after the intervention programme), again, to get a picture of the students' attitudes towards reading.

During the intervention phase, I used both individual and focus group interviews. Students were asked about responses to their reading and the course. Field notes and observations, rather than audiotapes were made during the interviews by the researcher and a colleague. This partnership was to ascertain both validity and reliability. The advantage of this note-taking process was that non-verbal cues could be noted, and because the tape recorder was absent, students could be more spontaneous. Reactions and comments recorded by the researcher and collegial assistant were discussed for verification. To ensure consistency, only data obtained by these two interviewers, were analysed.

Students were asked to keep an annotated reading journal. Students were questioned on their journals in the small group conferences, using their comments to explore issues further. Becca (2001) points out the importance of journalling to keep students focussed, motivated and aware of their developing process, thus journals were used to increase the credibility of the data.

Interviews and observations were continued after the intervention phase. A written post-test questionnaire was given. These data were collected both in written and in oral form.

Two interviews after the intervention programme were undertaken: the exit interview, conducted at the end of 2007, and an unstructured, random interview conducted early in 2008, to see whether change reported in the initial responses was sustained over time and therefore discontinuous. Accordingly, a limited longitudinal study was undertaken. Thus, assertions and analyses were made from more than one perspective (see schedule below) in terms of data obtained and the time span in collecting the data.

About six months after the exposure to children's literature, students who had progressed to B Ed 2 in 2008 were asked about the B Ed 1 children's literature intervention as a way of seeing whether the intervention had a sense of durability. I found the observation that interviews are effective in eliciting interaction (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:292) to be useful as far as the dynamic of group interviews was concerned, as the interaction between members of the focus groups elicited much discussion and added stimulation. Students tended to energise and be energised by the members of the group, which led to spontaneous authentic responses.

The whole population, approximately 65 students (pre-test), were given the questionnaires. Students were expected to participate, but there was no coercion or penalty for non-return. There was a return rate of 67, 7% (N= 44 pre-test) and 63, 6 % (N = 33 post-test) respectively.

Hopkins (2002:138-9) indicates that there are four stages of classroom research. This research project was grounded in classroom research. The following two stages are most applicable to this project. These will be dealt with separately and in more detail:

- 1 Data collection – hypotheses and categories are generated (3.4.3)
- 2 Validation (3.5)

Because I wanted to ascertain whether an intervention programme in children's literature affected the B Ed 1 ISP students (2007 cohort), it was important to get an overall impression of students' attitudes and habits pre- and post- the intervention.

Hence, these two questionnaires provide a beginning point and ending point for an analysis. In the intervention programme, there was an exposure to children's literature and a modelling of reader-response approaches. The intervention programme consisted of lecturer led input into children's literature and reader response. Students read children's literature independently; two novels written for children were discussed in class time, and analysed according to style, genre, plot,

characterisation, and response. Students were also expected to keep a detailed record of their children's literature reading through journals and record keeping.

3.4.3 Data collection: record of intervention and analysis

3.4.3.1 Phase 1: Pre-test questionnaires: February 2007

In phase 1, data reflecting reading histories and attitudes (see Appendix B), with a view to establishing attitudes of this group to reading through the life span (thus far) of the students, was collected. To ensure authenticity of results, students were not told of the post-test that would be administered later, which completed phase three of the project in 2007.

Questionnaire 1 (Appendix B) was given to students at the beginning of the year. Student number, rather than names, assured anonymity. These were used to ascertain gender and age of student, where the student had omitted these criteria.

I allowed for both longer and shorter answers, and the responses to these questions were added to orally. Data was written up and presented in a more vibrant, interactive way, "drawing on ... personal strengths and professional commitments to ... practice and wider audiences..." (Dadds & Hart, 2001:173). Because I worked closely with a colleague, data analysis was discussed to ensure that there was a consensus, particularly as coding and data analysis can be one-sided. There was a discussion based on the findings of the questionnaires and after each semi-structured interview.

3.4.3.2 Phase 2: Intervention: February – September 2007

Students were expected to read widely in the field of children's literature in both the English First Language course and the English Didactics course (See Appendix D).

In keeping with a reader-response approach, students were expected to

- keep a journal of the books they had read, in terms of genre, plot, characterisation and style;
- discuss responses to the book with the class and model a “community of readers” approach; and
- discuss, in small groups, the works they had read with the lecturers (researcher and scribe).

An overall engagement with text was modelled and encouraged. Among other things, elements of text, mythology and fiction were examined. Students were exposed to Barrett’s (1968 in Perry, 1992) model of the affective domain of literature and were expected to apply this knowledge to either *Charlotte’s Web* (White, 1952) or *Tuck Everlasting* (Babbitt, 1975).

Students therefore read children’s literature texts throughout the year, using a reader-response approach that foregrounded the affective domain. One of the aims was for students to be engaged with the text(s), and by formulating appropriate questions, try to get children to engage with the text(s). This was done in the English Specific Didactics course, through discussion and a written assignment in an attempt to refine students’ observation and questioning skills, as they became more confident in engaging both themselves and others in a text, through modelling of good questioning skills.

3.4.3.3 Phase 3: Questionnaire (Post-Test): October - November 2007

A second questionnaire (Appendix C) was given to students to complete at the end of the year. Researchers used data gleaned from the “old” questionnaire (Appendix B) for reference and I tracked and analysed any changes in reading habits and attitudes. Because there was no testing for individual correlation, the analysis was worked on percentage scores of the sample rather than raw scores.

Questionnaire 2 omitted these questions:

5. As a child, did your parents/ parent-figures/ baby-sitters ever read to you? Did you ever read stories as a child?
6. As a teenager, did you read? Why? Why not?

Questions in questionnaire 2 were modified as follows:

11. Please list a maximum of five children's books you have read during this year that you have enjoyed / would recommend to others, and why.
12. Has reading children's / young adult literature changed:
 - 12.1 your attitude to children's literature? Why? / Why not?
 - 12.2 your attitude to reading? Why? / Why not?
 - 12.3 your reading habits? If you have answered "Yes", indicate how.

In questionnaire 2, questions, including question 11 as modified above, regarding fiction, book analysis and literature, with a special focus on children's literature had been left in, because exposure to literary theory, educational psychology, pedagogy and teaching practice might have refined the students' initial responses.,

Because current attitudes and habits might have changed through exposure to the English and Didactics courses, the addition of Items 11 and 12 in the questionnaire would provide empirical evidence for findings on shifting attitudes. These items were the critical elements of the post-test questionnaire and were analysed quantitatively by means of the SPSS statistical analysis tool to establish whether change had in fact happened.

3.4.3.4 Phase 4: Conferencing / Exit Interview (October – November 2007)

Data collection was concluded with semi-structured focus group interviews that allowed for flexibility in gathering verbal data. Observation yielding non-verbal data was also important (Glick, 2002). Verbal and non-verbal data also enriched the validity of the study. Just under two-thirds of the first-year class, 44 students

in total, were interviewed. Students met two lecturers in 5 different groups of 6, 8, 8, 10 and 12 respectively.

Hopkins (2002:81-130) outlines a number of approaches to observing people in terms of which he proposes that both verbal and non-verbal cues are important, specifically mentioning confidence levels, honesty and feeling communicated by respondents. We designed an observation schedule, allowing for data which cannot be gleaned from a questionnaire, to look at a confidence rating. In the semi-structured interviews one of the lecturers gave primary attention to content of students' responses and the other primarily observed both verbal and non-verbal cues. These you cannot get from a questionnaire. Notes were recorded by a scribe, and the general findings were discussed immediately after the interview. This observation schedule was used throughout the year, and comments are made about students' confidence and motivation [figure 3.2].

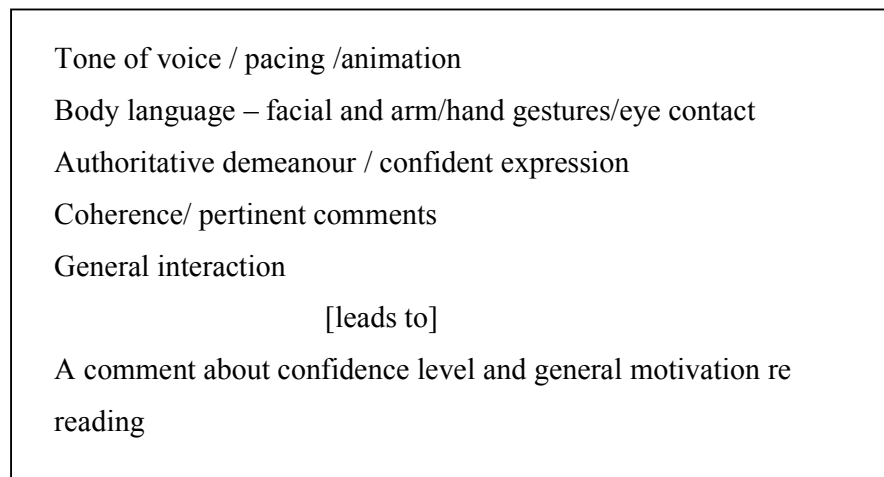


Figure 3.2: Observation schedule – non-verbal data

In groups, students met for conferencing / small group interviews. The questions in the interview schedule were used as prompts to elicit students' feelings and opinions. Responses to reading and literature were gathered, allowing for students to "talk" to the questionnaires.

Examples of prompts, moving from those intended to elicit specific comments to those requiring more general comments about reading and children's literature were as follows:

- 1 Tell me about ----- (a choice of books in the journal)
- 2 Why do you think children's literature consists of fantasy elements?
- 3 In ----- (a choice of books in the journal) which character did you most admire and why?
- 4 In----- (a choice of books in the journal) which character did you most (any negative reaction) and why?
- 5 In----- (a choice of books in the journal) which book would you say is most suited to (a choice of grade) and why?
- 6 Which (a choice of books in the journal) would you say has (choice of common themes) as its focus?
- 7 Compare and contrast (a choice of books in the journal) in terms of authors' intent and style of writing.
- 8 Which book on the list did you find the "best" and why?
- 9 How did you find reading children's literature, and why?
- 10 Why do you think there is such an emphasis on children's literature?
- 11 Did you find this course relevant and useful? Why?
- 12 Make a comment about reading and teaching reading based on your experiences this year.

3.4.3.5 Phase 5 – follow-up: focus group interviews

Three focus group interviews of voluntary respondents [N= 20] from the BEd 2 2008 cohort, who had been research subjects in 2007, took place.

Questions that framed the follow-up focus group interviews were:

- Has the children's literature course been useful to students in their teaching?
- Have students kept on reading?

The purpose of questions was to establish if the course had been use for practice and whether its impact on students' reading habits had been sustained.

This phase was intended to check whether the exposure to children's literature did, in fact, yield a form of discontinuous⁹ change.

About 4 months had elapsed since the intervention and exit interviews in 2007. Students who had passed the course were in B Ed 2. (Interestingly, of the returned post-test questionnaires, only 2 students who were negative or ambivalent about the English course had progressed into B Ed 2.) It was very useful to ask for reflections about the intervention in hindsight, both as a way of assessing the scope, range and effectiveness of the intervention, and as a form of triangulation.

The interview took place in an office, towards the end of March, after assessments for other courses. It was voluntary, although students were encouraged to "have their say". 24 students volunteered and were part of smaller "focus groups" (in groups of 4 – 6). They were asked to reflect on the children's literature programme from a second-year perspective on the course. The format of the open-ended interview followed a pattern suggested in Keerfoot & Winburg (1997:71).

In line with action research, there was a constant reflection, evaluation and re-planning for future action regarding both the course content and methodology, following Keerfoot & Winburg, 1997:54. The questions asked were purposely open-ended. The interviews were not audiotaped; however field notes of both content and observation were kept. Open-ended questions allow for spontaneity and often questions would be asked as follows:

- Tell me about your experience of the B Ed 1 children's literature programme.
- From a 2nd year perspective, tell me about the 1st year programme.

⁹ Discontinuous change, a term borrowed from psychology discourse, means a form of permanent change in which former habits are erased.

- Has the programme been worthwhile for you as future teachers? Why / Why not?
- Do you still read children's literature? Why? / Why not?
- How would you change the course? Explain your answer.

3.4.3.6 Phase 6 - Analysis of the data

Data was analysed as follows:

Table 3.2: Data gathering and analysis - Overview

Time line	Instruments	Data processes	Analysis of data
Phase 1 Aim: to get an insight into students' reading habits and behaviour	Questionnaire Written journals	Administered by researcher. Nature of research explained – student permission obtained Student responses (N=44)	Questionnaires coded for themes Students divided into reading types –this was used to ascertain any “movement” Qualitative data analysed by SPSS
Phase 2 Intervention Programme – informal gathering of information	Intervention plan: students have input into Children's literature Students read a minimum of 12 children's books Focus group interviews Journalling	Students keep records in Journals Students talk to one another about their reading and response Conferencing about reading and children's literature. Notes taken by researchers.	Notes coded and categorised.
Phase 3	Post-test questionnaire	Voluntary questionnaires administered by researcher (N = 33)	Questionnaires: qualitative data coded and analysed quantitative data analysed by SPSS
Phases 4 & 5 Exit interviews; Conferencing; Document review	Semi-structured and informal interviews and observations based on both the course and reflection from Post test questionnaire; N = 44	Students report back (in groups) to lecturers; lecturers review journals Students form focus groups and are interviewed by researchers. One listens to content; the other observes non-verbal cues and take notes	Coded and categorised Changes in confidence and specific awareness of literary elements reflected in questionnaires quantified and translated into graphic form
Phase 6 Interviews with B Ed 2 ISP students in 2009	Voluntary focus group interviews / conferences N = 20; notes	Field notes taken from the open-ended interview questions and conferencing responses	Data coded and analysed by researcher to establish longitudinal effects of the intervention

The data was analysed, largely, through coding responses into various fields. Because I wanted to test whether, in fact, the intervention had caused a shift in perspective and a change in reading habits, the pre- and post- test questionnaires were compared using the item covering the number of books voluntarily read a year. It seemed that if students had shifted a category, their reading habits would have changed. Likewise, motivation moves from being totally extrinsic to less extrinsic, or more intrinsic.

The data were reduced to a common percentage for ease of comparison, and inferences made. This aspect of the questionnaire lent itself to quantitative analysis.

The impact on the curriculum was measured by this item:

- 12. Has reading children's / young adult literature changed
 - 12.1 your attitude to children's literature? Why? / Why not?
 - 12.2 your attitude to reading? Why? / Why not?
 - 12.3 your reading habits? If you have answered "Yes", indicate how

The questionnaires were initially separated into "Yes" and "No" responses. Any ambivalent comments were noted and worked with. The response to this item was seen in context of the entire questionnaire. SPSS was the programme used to measure the quantitative data.

Subsequent interviews, both in 2007 and in 2008, were likewise analysed, and an overall picture gained from that particular sample was created.

3.5 Validation

3.5.1 Reliability and Validity

Reliability is the extent to which an instrument is consistent in measuring what is required (Mulder, 1982:209) and validity refers to the extent the instrument

measures what it intends to measure (Mulder, 1982:215). Although the questionnaire looked at attitudes to reading, reading habits and asked questions about children and children's literature, the questionnaires did contain two questions which were statistically (using quantitative statistics) analysed. In each case (N = 44; N = 33). SPSS provided an objective statistical and graphical analysis, providing a clear picture and a possibility for a comparison between the two questionnaires. There is a consistency in an interpretive analysis based on the critical framework outlined in Chapter 2.

Upon greater analysis of the qualitative data I was able to discern general attitudes, both positive and negative, as well as any ambiguity shown in answers by the students. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis, I believe, made the instruments valid and reliable.

Validity and reliability were ensured, further, by the following:

- The sample size was significant
- All clean data was subjected to consistent analysis
- Spoiled data were excluded from the findings, but taken account of in a separate analysis because these data were integral to the picture gained through specific phases of data collection.

3.5.2 Position of the lecturer / researcher

One aspect of the research project which bears special scrutiny is my position as lecturer-researcher. There is a very real possibility that the role as evaluator could skew results, as students do not wish to put themselves in a poor light. I did not want this dual role to impact on the reliability of the data.

Tied in with this is the position of anonymity – the questionnaires included space for a student number and gender and age of student, initially for cross-checking purposes. Even then, forms were not guaranteed to be completely anonymous – as other factors, such as handwriting, could reveal the students' identities.

Anticipating this, there was a meeting with the first year students explaining that this was a research project, and that marks for assessment purposes would not be influenced by the pre- or post- test questionnaires. No names were required on the questionnaires.

Students were assured of confidentiality, too (Appendix A). The problems were resolved by building up trust and rapport, and by a positive approach in the intervention process.

Questionnaires 1 and 2 (Appendices B and C) contained a wide range of questions, but a number of questions called for self-reported data. There are several problems with self-reported data, such as withholding information, exaggeration and social desirability. However, triangulating responses of students helped to eliminate the tendency towards self-report bias (Cohen et al., 2000).

I picked up examples in the question which asked students to list 5 children's books they had read, where titles of books were invented (or reinvented), vague or fanciful. In some cases there was a misunderstanding of terminology. Because I make a point of reading children's literature, I was able to judge these responses accordingly.

These spoilt data were not excluded, as the responses formed part of the analysis. Because of the nature of the responses, these data were used in establishing some patterns in the response. They were not excluded but viewed as an integral part of this study because they provided insights into the actual state of students' reading histories.

A positive aspect of this dual role is that curriculum development and (re)design can be dynamic – it can take into account research ideas and apply these to future groups of students. Thus the “authority” of the lecturer need not be at variance to the impartiality of the lecturer.

3.6 Ethics

Cohen et al (2000:50) state that the essence of ethics within research is for researchers to balance the importance of the information with the rights of those being interviewed.

This was attempted by obtaining the students' informed consent (Appendix A); and by ensuring confidentiality.

The pre-test questionnaire was administered by me in a period during which the research project was outlined, permission was obtained from students, and the non-credit bearing and voluntary nature of completing the pre-test and post-test questionnaires was emphasised.

Not referred to directly, but part of creating an atmosphere of trust was not forcing students to return questionnaires, although all the students took part in the conferences / interviews in 2007.

3.7 Conclusion

I found that the research project became vibrant. There was a continuous and varied approach to both data gathering and the analysis. The knowledge gained in these processes was used to strengthen and shape the curriculum, as well as to sharpen my practice.

As a practitioner, I became more reflective, and as a result, many facets of my research and teaching were honed as I began to adapt my practice in the light of reading widely in the field and interacting with students.

This project relied on a large amount of data gathering, using a variety of instruments and approaches in order to get a picture of students' attitudes towards reading and children's literature at different stages in the project. Data interpretation is reported in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 : FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The research project covered

- student response to reading and literacy;
- reading and literature;
- reading and gender;
- reading and motivation; and
- students' responses to children's literature.

It must be stressed that the findings represent students' views about aspects of reading. It is interesting that the overall picture of these students' perceptions supports research done by the International Reading Association researchers (1999 – 2007), shown in their position papers, particularly on adolescent literacy, excellent reading teachers, young adolescent's learning and teacher preparation.¹⁰

Three broad aspects emerge from test findings:

- 4.1 Children's and adolescents' reading and literacy
- 4.2 Students' reading and literacy
- 4.3 Gender differences

After test findings are presented and discussed there is a

- 4.4 Discussion of the interview findings
- 4.5 Conclusion

¹⁰ This range of issues was accessed at www.reading.org (the website of the International Reading Association) at various times throughout the project.

4.1 Children's and adolescent reading and literacy

This section examines two aspects

- what students report about children's and adolescent's reading habits:

Many comments students made were based on their own experiences - their reading habits and attitudes and habits as children and as teenagers. This was tested in the pre-test questionnaire; and

- what students consider makes for a good book for children:

This was tested in a pre-test questionnaire, and again in a post-test questionnaire. This question was also addressed orally.

4.1.1 Children's and adolescents' reading habits and attitudes

It was important to allow students to reflect on their experiences of child and adolescent reading and so add an element of truth and authenticity to the study. In keeping with the IRA findings, adolescents generally do not read, and reading in childhood is tailing off. (Fink & Samuels, 2008; Fisher, Frey & Lapp, 2009; Zambo & Brozo, 2009) Many students reported directly or indirectly that they had read little, or not at all, as children and adolescents (Table 4.1). Student responses are interesting, because an understanding of patterns in child and then adolescent literacy is important in order to provide appropriate scaffolding and intervention for both students and learners in the classroom.

Table 4.1: Findings: Do children and teenagers read?

RESPONSES FROM STUDENTS (N = 44; %)	Children's Reading (Family and Emergent Literacy)	Teenage Reading (Adolescent Literacy)
Yes	10 (22.7 %)	4 (9.1%)
Yes, but...	7 (15.9 %)	4 (9.1%)
No	20 (45.5%)	30 (68.2%)
Undecided	4 (9.1%)	5 (11.4%)
Unanswered	3 (6.8%)	1 (2.3%)

Similarly of interest is the reason given by students for children (Table 4.2) and then teenagers (Table 4.3) not reading.

Table 4.2: Findings: Reasons given for children not reading:

Ranking	Categories	Raw scores (N=50)	Percentage
1	Technology – Computers, Mix-it, TV	12 (+ 3)	30%
2	Boredom – they'd rather do something else	9 (+ 2)	22%
3	Lack of competence / confidence	7 (+ 2)	18%
4	Physical alternatives – like games	6 (+ 1)	14%
5	Peer pressure emerges	5	10%
6	Other	3	6%

Table 4.3: Findings : Reasons given for teenagers not reading

Ranking	Categories	Raw scores (N=70)	Percentage
1	Technology – Computers, Mix-it, TV	18 (+ 4)	31.4%
2	Peer pressure emerges	17 (+ 3)	28.6%
3	Boredom – they'd rather do something else	14 (+ 2)	22.9%
4	Lack of competence / confidence	11 (+ 4)	20%
5	Physical alternatives – like sport	11 (+ 2)	18.6%
6	Other	5	0.8%

The boom in technology and thus the acquisition and use of new technologies is seen as the biggest factor in declining reading habits for both children and teenagers.

Children are seen as “non-” or “reluctant” readers because of boredom and lack of confidence. It appears that the reluctance to read stems from internal, rather than purely external sources.

As far as adolescents are concerned, peer pressure is the second-biggest reason. Reading is often perceived as “uncool” and in some cases is actively avoided. (For children, peer pressure is alluded to as a factor, but is not seen as the most important issue.) Boredom is alluded to as the third “top” reason for not reading.

Graphically, to make comparisons:

Table 4.4: Comparison of children’s and teenagers’ top three reasons for not reading

Reasons	Children	Teenagers
1	New technologies	New technologies
2	Boredom	Peer Pressure
3	Lack of confidence	Boredom

According to Erikson (in Santrock, 1999:378), adolescents are at the stage of identity vs role diffusion (or, in later terminology, role confusion). As they begin to form an autonomous identity, conflict with parents and parental figures is very common; peers become more important, and adolescents are more susceptible to peer pressure. Therefore it is not surprising that peer pressure is foregrounded as a reason for non-reading. Reading is more actively seen as “non-cool” (60% of respondents) and fashion, image and brand-names are mentioned (30% of the respondents). Children in the Intermediate Phase would be seen to be at a critical point where they either master a task, or not. Erikson (1968) sums this stage as “Industry vs Inferiority”.

Thus, spontaneous commonsense comments made by students are in line with Erikson’s psychological insights, adding validity to the findings.

4.2 What makes a good children’s book?

The categories that emerged in the students’ responses in the pre- and post-test questionnaires to the question of what made a book ‘good’ for child and adolescent readers were:

- literary elements;
- style;
- genre; and
- other general comments, for example, references to culture.

Table 4.5: “What makes a good children’s book?” – Pre- and Post- test findings: content of comments

Content of comments	PRE-TEST (N = 44)	POST-TEST (N=56)
Literary Comments	23	49
Stylistic Comments	17	45
Genre - Comments	09	37
General Comments	12	16 (9 comments about culture)

Table 4.6: “What makes a good children’s book?” – Pre- and Post- test findings: quality of responses

Quality of responses	PRE-TEST (N = 44)	POST-TEST (N=56)
Confidence/Academic Rating 1 (very low)	28Ewhat does this mean?	0
Confidence/Academic Rating 2 (below par)	21	12
Confidence/Academic Rating 3 (on par, to just above)	5	34
Confidence/Academic Rating 4 (above to well above par)	0	10

The qualities of responses to the question “What makes a good children’s book?” were graded. Verbal clues (body language, tone, fluency) are easier to measure, but the written responses were analysed in terms of

- content (knowledge, understanding, and actual reading, of children’s literature);
- thought processes;
- application to children/young adults and the school; and

- literary elements (such as style, intention of author, comments on plot and plot structure, characters and characterization, setting, theme).

Comments on culture showed an awareness of the potential of children's literature, in not shying away from society. As the year progressed, comments on such aspects were more common place, less "forced" and therefore more thoughtful, and showed that students had processed reading, lectures and general discussion to take ownership of this topic.

Table 4.7: Comparison of Pre- and Post-tests: raw scores converted to percentages

CATEGORY	PRE –TEST SCORES (N = 44)	POST-TEST SCORES (N = 56)
Literary	52.3	87.5
Style	38.6	80.4
Genre	20.5	66.1
General	27.3	28.6 (16.1 % comments on culture)
CONFIDENCE LEVEL	42.6	68.8

To make inferences, this graph which shows the pre-test and post-test scores, indicates the change in students' ability to engage with children's literature.

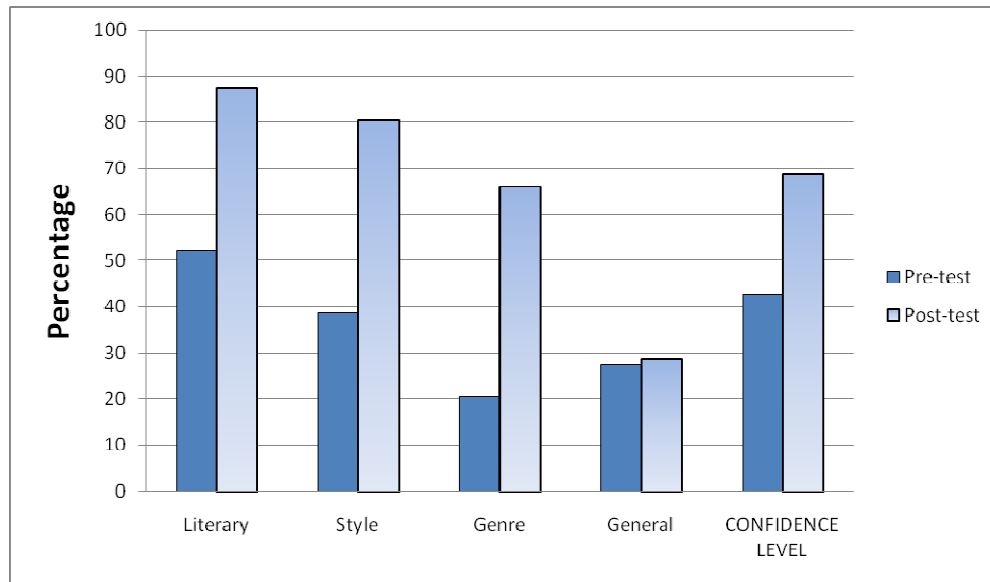


Figure 4.1: Comparison of pre- and post- test pictures

Students were able, after the course, to discuss children’s literature with greater confidence and with greater focus, as can be seen by the percentage increase in the specific categories. From interviews, it was evident that students had moved from appearing not confident (hesitant speech, mumbled speech, little eye contact, little enthusiasm) in initial interviews (when the required work was not undertaken or the students were uncertain in discussing the topic), to appearing more confident (speech far less hesitant, clear speech, much eye contact, more enthusiasm – shown by added hand gestures, facial and verbal clues – smiling, nodding, vocal agreement or disagreement, variety in pace and tone of voice) at the end of the course, when there was some mastery shown.

After reading and much class discussion, students were able to talk with a measure of confidence about the books – and were able to focus on aspects of style, genre and literary elements (like plot, characterization, theme) with confidence. Also, general comments were more focused and pertinent, when compared to pre-test comments. An example: “Children’s books are simple and easy”, a vague comment and clutching a bit at straws becomes a measured comment about vocabulary and style, and a general comment is more focused, too: “The choice of words are more simple and the characters are often children

who other children can identify with. Sequels are sometimes used which makes people want to read, for example, *Harry Potter*, *Artemis Fowl*.” (sic)

Apart from precision of answers, the construction of the sentences is better, both stylistically and grammatically. Although this is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it appears that greater competence with reading affects the writing, too.

4.3 Student’s reading and literacy

4.3.1 The pre-test picture

Table 4.8: Students’ reading pre-test: raw scores

Category	No. of books read	Total	No. M	No. F
A	16 or more per year	2	1	1
B	12 – 15 per year	4	0	4
C	9 – 11 per year	5	3	2
D	6 – 8 per year	10	3	7
E	1 – 5 per year	16	6	10
F	0 per year	7	3	4
	Total respondents	44	16	28

Students were grouped according to the type of motivation they had as readers:

A and B: those with medium to high intrinsic motivation

C and D: those students with a low to medium level of intrinsic motivation;
those who needed some extrinsic motivation

E and F: those students whose reading was determined entirely or largely by external factors; those students who showed no or very little intrinsic motivation.

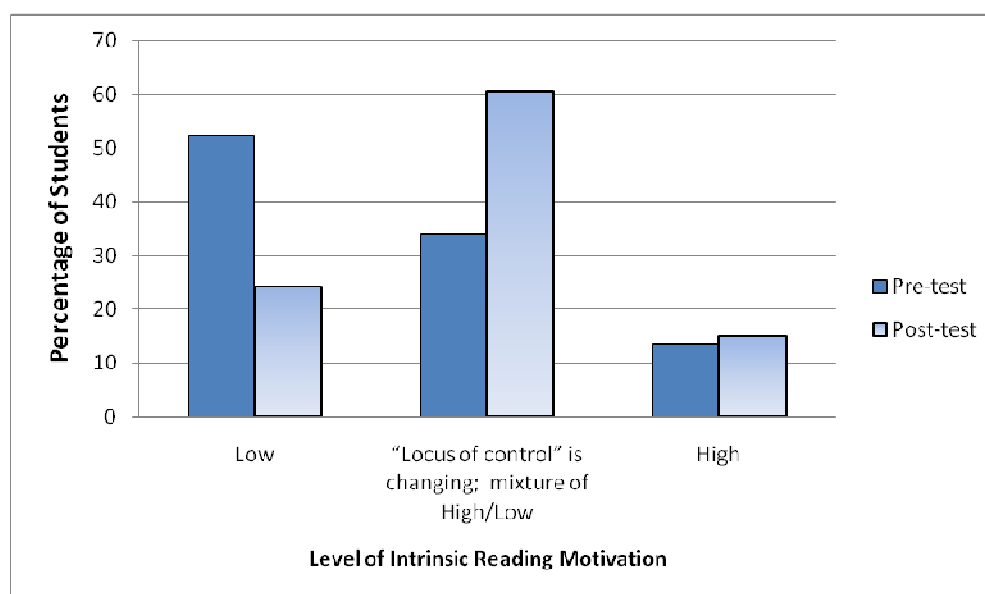


Figure 4.2: Students' reading motivation pre-test and post-test

From the graph, it is clear that the students were not keen readers at this stage – the beginning of the intervention.

4.3.2 General analysis of the Post-test questionnaire

The Post-test questionnaire was used to see what effect, if any, an exposure to children's literature has on reading. As part of the requirement of triangulation, the interviews undertaken by other lecturers, and the interviews I had taken part in and observed, were scrutinised. It appears that the written data is congruent with the verbal data.

4.3.2.1 Reading and reading habits

There had been a definite change from low to high/low in reading habits and attitudes among the students who were not intrinsically motivated. Almost no movement from high/low to high intrinsic motivation had occurred; this finding is in itself interesting, for it implies that an intrinsic motivation to read needs more than a half-year intervention programme. The obvious movement in the low category does suggest that a half-year intervention programme, where children's

literature has been read, thought about and spoken about, has the potential to change students' reading habits and attitudes.

4.3.2.2 The efficacy of the intervention programme

Although 15.15% of the students reported that the exposure to children's literature had not been of use, and a further 15.15% were ambivalent about the course, the majority of students (69,7%) reported unambiguously that the intervention had benefited them, and reported changes in their reading habits and attitudes (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Summary of Post test picture

Reader Type		No. of books	No. R	No. R		Total R	No. M	No. F
			YES	NO	Amb ¹¹		Males	Females
Excellent	A	16 + per year	2	0		2	0 ¹²	2
Positive	B	12 – 15 per year	3	0		3	0	3
Willing	C	9 – 11 per year	9	0	1	10	3	7
Trying	D	6 – 8 per year	8	1	1	10	5	5
Reluctant	E	1 – 5 per year	1	3	2	6	3	3
Non-Reader	F	0 per year	0	2	0	2	1	1
Total Response			23	6	4	33	12	21

4.3.2.3 Responses to the post-test questionnaire

- When the pre-test and post-test pictures are compared, the greatest change in reading habits was in categories C to F, initially weaker intrinsic motivation than in categories A and B (strong intrinsic motivation). The

¹¹ Much ambivalence was shown here, where comments made and potential practice do not seem to correlate.

¹² The male student shown on the pre-test questionnaire dropped out of his studies in August, hence no males in Category A

majority of students are either “trying” or “reluctant” readers, the modal category being “C”: the willing reader. This represents a change from the pre-test picture, where the modal category was “E”: the reluctant reader.

- It is also interesting that, with a few exceptions, those who found the course beneficial are in Categories A – D. There are still a few “non-readers” but most of the pre-test “non readers” seem to have shifted up a category. Those whose comments on the questionnaire were ambivalent were in Category E (mode score: the reluctant reader), D or C. All the “Non-readers” answered “No” to whether they found the course beneficial. Changing reading habits is not an easy achievement, and it does appear that the Non-readers (who refuse to budge from their stance) require more intervention.

4.3.2.4 An overview of the findings

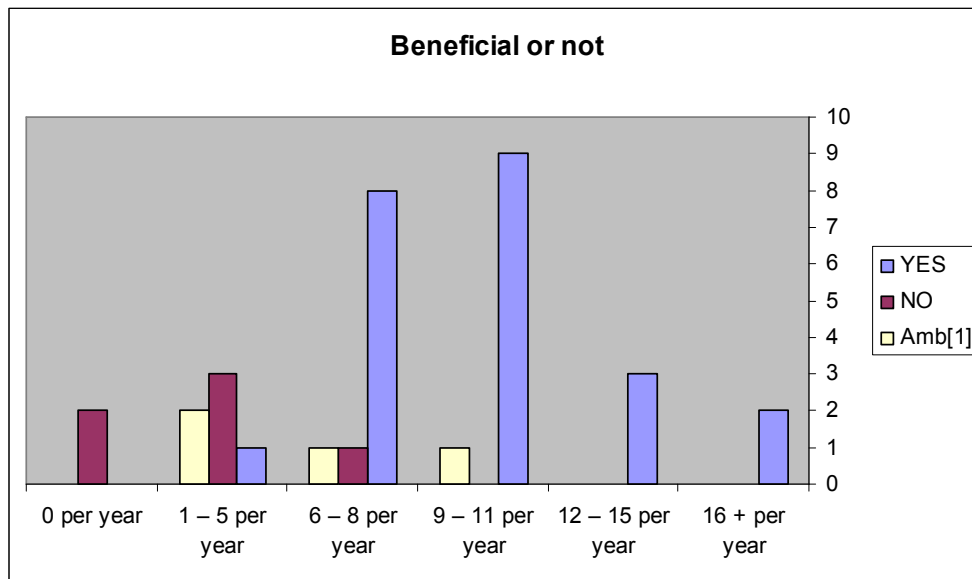


Figure 4.3: Responses : Was the course beneficial?

Figure 4.3 shows, visually, the responses of the students to the question about the value of the course. On the X axis is a report of the number of books the student reported he/she would be likely to have read in the following year, divided into the 6 suggested categories.

General:

- On the whole, in the post-test, students are more positive about reading. It certainly appears that an intervention that “forces” easier reading has made students more receptive and responsive to reading in general.
- Also, there is a decrease in both categories E and F, the Reluctant and Non-reader respectively. This seems to suggest that the exposure to literature has changed reading habits for the better.
- An equally big jump has been in the number of students (all female in Categories A and B) who have moved to being “Willing”, “Positive” and “Excellent” readers – this is a very encouraging sign, and (from interviews) much of this is attributable to the intervention, the course in children’s literature, and the students’ responses to such a course.
- Perhaps the most encouraging change (not reflected on the graphs) has been in the energy of the students, who are more “energetic” and committed to the reading processes. The graphs show a clear reduction of both the “Non Reader” and the “Reluctant” reader. This encourages belief in the likely impact of the intervention on students’ classroom practice, because learners often model themselves on teachers. Thus teachers who read with energy and commitment, and know the texts available, are likely to be good reading role models.

4.4 Gender differences

Much research has been undertaken on gender differences and reading/literacy. Although a focus on this area is beyond the scope of this research project, I was interested in the picture that emerged. The tables, converted to percentage for easier comparison, are represented graphically:

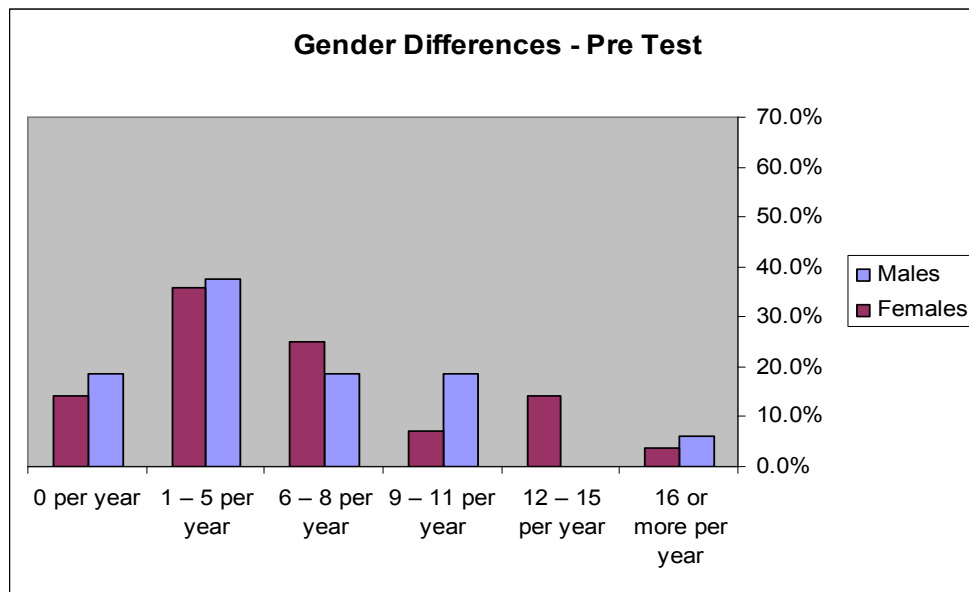


Figure 4.4: Gender differences - Pre-test

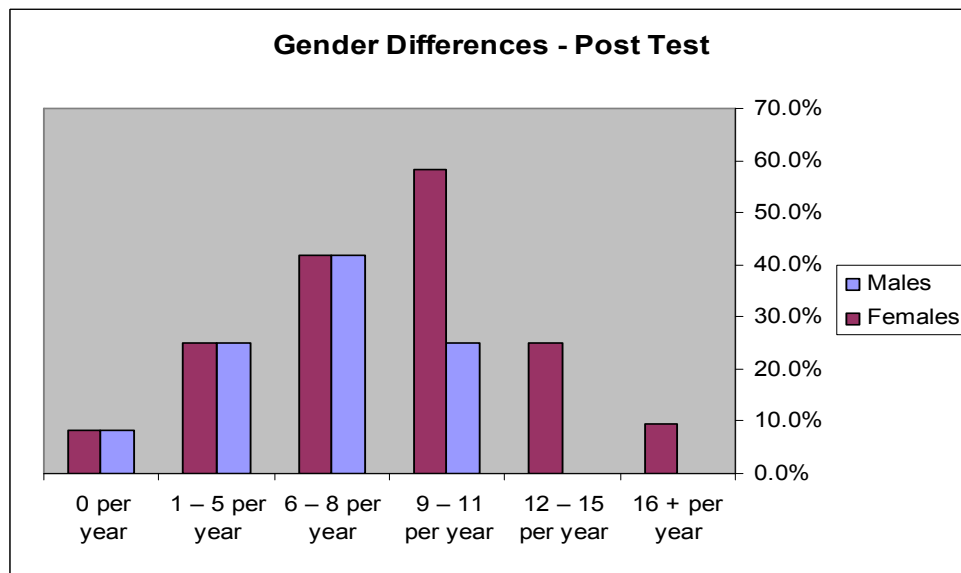


Figure 4.5: Gender differences - Post test

4.4.1 Analysis and comments with specific reference to gender (See Figures 4.4 and 4.5):

- Although male students do not view themselves as “excellent” or “positive” readers (see the post-test picture) there seems to have been a

significant “shift” along the X-axis with the modal (male) reader being a “trying” reader.

- There is a great shift in the modal responses (for both males and females). In the Pre-test picture the mode reader is the Reluctant reader (1 – 5 books per year); this has shifted in both genders – the mode reader (male) is the Trying reader (6 – 8 books a year) and there is a marked change with the female students, where nearly 60% would be Willing readers, reading 9 – 11 books a year.

Although both genders have shifted in terms of reading attitudes and habits, it is still clear that there are rather marked gender differences, in that the males read far less (in terms of books, and in terms of passion) than the females.

4.5 Interviews and journals

Qualitative data from focus group and exit interviews and journals supported quantitative findings from the post-test. A summary follows in 4.4.1 and 4.4.2.

4.5.1 Discussion of interview findings

Four important changes emerged in the analysis of the interviews:

- It does appear that the reading of children’s literature has changed students’ perceptions about reading. Even those who report negatively about the course are able to talk about children’s literature with some knowledge - very few comments are made with no references to texts.
- For many students, there has been a shift in reading competence and enjoyment: 17 of the 23 report positively on the impact this reading has made; 6 claim that the course, while interesting and useful, has not changed their reading habits, because they have always enjoyed reading. Some students did seem to report an increase in the number of books they would read, in all likelihood, in the future. This shift is backed up by verbal comments, in the exit interview.

- Students were able to talk more clearly and critically about their reading – they were starting to show a move towards critical literacy.
- There was a greater overall confidence, in both reading and talking about the reading.

4.5.2 Discussion of journals

The journals were useful in developing the students' metacognition as they tracked their progress as readers.

The following emerged:

- The journals served as an important engagement tool as students recorded and shared their responses with each other, spoke about the books they had recorded with learners and were able to make recommendation to child readers from their records. This was empowering and motivating for students.
- They developed confidence and accuracy in their writing and ability to personalise interpretations of literature and were therefore enabled to become more metacognitively aware.
- They were able to speak confidently, authoritatively and accurately about text, literary elements and their own responses to and experiences of the text.

Qualitative data showed that students had moved from being passive readers, easily bored, to being active readers, emotionally and metacognitively engaged with literary text. By being part of a community of readers sharing experiences, knowledge and motivation, students started embracing some principles of critical literacy.

4.6 Conclusion

It does appear that the children's literature intervention course has produced changes in reading habits, awareness and confidence. The process appears to have created a reader who is becoming more independent and able to discuss the reading with more confidence and insight, starting to become more critically literate as a result.

Chapter 5 : INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This section interprets the qualitative and quantitative findings presented in Chapter 4. As in Chapter 4, three themes are discussed.

- What students say about children's and adolescents' reading and literacy;
- What students say about their own reading and literacy
- Gender differences

5.1 Children's and adolescents' reading and literacy

Findings from students' reporting on their perceptions and experiences of child and adolescent reading showed that an expectation of resistance to reading by children, on the whole, is becoming more widespread.

5.1.1 Child and adolescent developmental crises (Erikson)

During the pre-adolescent phase, children's will to master skills should peak as their developmental task is mastery. The crisis they experience is industry versus inferiority, which can affect both self-esteem and self worth, either positively or negatively (Erikson in Santrock 1999:328). During the adolescent phase, the crisis is identity versus role-diffusion. This means that peer pressure becomes more significant than mastery during adolescence. Identity depends on how children have resolved the crisis of the previous stage. Therefore, their identity as readers / non-readers becomes "confirmed" as they become adolescents. PIRLS 2006 shows that grade 6 children's literacy in South Africa is at a low ebb and students' feedback from the pre-test shows this.

5.1.2 Implications for teaching, learning and reading

Although the reasons for not reading / reading with reluctance are differently ordered in the case of children and teenagers, there are common strands. Students made comments on their direct and indirect experiences. From these I extrapolated salient reasons why students do not read (Table 5.1):

Table 5.1: Common reasons for not reading - alphabetical list

Boredom – they'd rather do something else
Lack of competence / confidence
Peer pressure emerges
Physical alternatives – like sport
Technology – Computers, Mix-it, TV

- The challenge for the teacher is to choose reading material that will engage pupils, and reflect their interests. Students are able to relate to children's literature both as if they were the intended audience (children) and as adults. By reading a variety of works aimed at children, and being made aware of, first-hand, what is available, steps can be taken when students are teachers to show that reading is not passive, boring and predictable.
- Reading is seldom practised to the point where pupils become immersed in the texts – reading is seldom viewed as positive and pleasurable.
- If reading is perceived to be 'uncool' by peers, peer pressure could impede mastery and motivation to read. Thus negative extrinsic motivation (peers) is more significant than positive extrinsic motivation (teachers and parents). There is thus a two-fold challenge for teachers: firstly to change the quality of extrinsic motivation by creating a community of readers where reading is valued by all participants, and secondly through independent mastery and habits to change extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. This is most likely to be achieved through using materials that engage the interests and feelings of readers.
- 21st Century advances in technology mean that pupils at schools are becoming familiar with new digital literacies (Dressman, McCarthy &

Prior, 2009: 345-347). Teachers need to be aware that the concept of literacies is constantly widening, and so, too, is the idea of communication (Moje 2009:348-362).

5.2 Students' reading and literacy

5.2.1 The pre-test picture – February 2007

- The majority of the students did not read for pleasure and did not see any importance in reading. Much of this reflects patterns of their childhood and adolescent literacy experiences.
- Pre-test answers and comments were, in terms of grammar and spelling, poor; students' writing fell short of secondary exit level standards. I infer that much of this can be attributed to a general lack of reading.
- In terms of content, often ideas were unfocused and muddled. A general inability that students faced in listing five books they had read as children / teenagers seemed to indicate, in addition to poor reading, that students were not aware readers, actively involved with the reading process, or engaged with the books they had read.
- No constant practice in reading texts that required deep engagement or texts from different genres meant that basic skills had seldom been extended so that literacy could become fully functional. Therefore, critical literacy was not able to be achieved. A negative attitude about reading had been generated and reiterated into tertiary level.
- Reading for pleasure was largely a foreign concept or had slipped down the students' scale of priorities.
- Motivation (or lack of motivation) is an issue that needs examining. Very few of the students were intrinsically motivated to read – most were driven by extrinsic forces. Therefore, the motivation at the beginning of the Intervention Phase was extrinsic in nature, “loosening” as students read more children's literature.

5.2.2 The Intervention phase – February to October 2007

- Bearing in mind the pre-test picture, the Intervention phase was modified from the original course design in terms of teaching style and input. This phase required students to read a range of books (mostly fictional novels) aimed at children and young people. This facilitated an experience of mastery because the texts were accessible and encouraged an attitude of reading for pleasure.
- There was an extrinsic form of motivation in that reading of books had to be proven, in terms of journals and speaking about the books. This was done throughout the course, and all students had to show evidence of this during an “exit interview”. It was found that
 - oa. Journals provided a focus as students had to think about the content of the book and then move to comments on aspects of the work discussed.
 - ob. This led to students becoming active readers – engaged and thoughtful, leading to a practice of critical literacy, using a reader response approach.
 - oc. Talking about the books to one another and to the researchers seemed to empower the students. Students’ comments could be positive or negative, but were always supported by reference to themselves, the intended audience, the writer’s style, concerns and worldview, and to general themes portrayed in the novel(s). Using this approach where the students’ voices were encouraged appeared, also, to shift motivation from being almost totally extrinsic to the beginning of intrinsic motivation.
 - od. Students seemed, on the whole, able to cope with more challenging reading in time – the reading of children’s literature gave them the confidence to do so.

5.2.3 The post-test picture – with reference to the questionnaires and exit interviews – November 2007:

Perhaps the most significant finding was that students' reading habits and attitudes had changed. The intervention programme had been an intense 6 month course, which had demanded student involvement and engagement, and although monitored by teaching staff, the bulk of the work had come from students.

One of the reasons for the above finding was that students had moved from being functionally literate, reading with a limited amount of awareness, and being solitary and passive readers to becoming critically literate, making sense of the world *of* the text and the world *shown in* the text (my emphases), being aware readers sensitive to nuances and relationships between characters in text (the effect of journaling), to being a community of active readers (being part of the focus groups, and exit interviews).

5.3 Gender differences

The pre- and post tests were congruent with the IRA (1999) findings that females read more than males. However, it should not be inferred that all females read. There were females in all the categories of reading rates from non-reader (category F) to excellent reader (category A).

5.4 Conclusion

These findings of significance emerge from this research study, which have an impact on educational philosophy, course design, and teaching style:

- 5.4.1. It is possible to break the chain of non-performing (reading) identity through an appropriate level of challenge. There should be no compromise in expectations of students with regard to meeting the level of challenge
- 5.4.2. In terms of teaching/intervention style, the tightly structured, extrinsically motivated approach that was initially applied, proved effective in precipitating change and making students more task-centred.

- 5.4.3. The discovery that reading could provide both cognitive and emotional satisfaction led students to engage each other in reading processes. This social engagement in turn manifested in intrinsic motivation to continue reading children's literature independently, demonstrated particularly in the 2008 interviews.

Chapter 6 : RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this chapter includes:

- 6.1 Recommendations – some guiding principles
- 6.2 A way forward – content and delivery – a specific application
- 6.3 Review of the research process

6.1 Guiding principles for recommendations

Using the data obtained from the research project and informed by insights from the literature review (chapter 2), guiding principles embrace themes drawn from the data analysis and the literature review.

6.1.1 Themes emerging from the data analysis:

- Children’s and adolescents’ reading and literacy;
- Students’ reading and literacy; and
- Gender differences

A cycle of non-reading is perpetuated in children, adolescents and students through boredom, lack of relevance and inappropriate levels of challenge.

To break this cycle effectively, and to enable discontinuous change, the following principles that underlie the proposed intervention should guide programme design:

- Practice in reading can lead to mastery of skills, and consequently develop an ability to cope with the demands, ultimately, of critical literacy;
- Reading progressively more difficult texts is possible once easier texts have been read;
- Reading is not just a cognitive process. A reader-response approach to texts, stressing engagement with the material is important;

- Fiction texts best allow for an affective response – an engagement. To be involved with the text, in terms of plot, content, and style – thinking about the texts from all angles inculcates an appreciation of the literariness of texts too; and
- Because males are most “at risk” regarding reading, and because male students do have an impact at schools, male students need especially to be targeted. Trends identified in reading research indicate that it is not a myth to assert that males tend to be poorer readers. It is possible to break this cycle and stop the self-fulfilling prophecy.

6.1.2 Themes highlighted from the literature review:

- Motivation theory;
- Teaching using reader response practice; and
- Choice of reading material

This section indicates principles that underpin a possible methodology and approach.

Motivation is important. Initially the non-reader needs a heavy extrinsic form of motivation; reading is seen as “non-cool”, and some of the self-proclaimed avid non-readers are popular and “cool”. Extrinsic motivation must be provided by lecturers – those in a position of authority.

However, for reading habits to change, motivation should become intrinsic. As time goes on, students might enjoy reading for the sake of reading, and the extrinsic motivation can become less rigid.

Vygotsky’s idea (1978) that knowledge is socially constructed; Cambourne’s practice (1995, 2002) which emphasises engagement, Perry’s views (1992) about books and “how to get into” them all support the power of a community of readers (Zambo, 2009).

Talking about reading can change perceptions about reading and alter negative perceptions and stereotypes (Strommen and Fowles: 2004; Pike: 2003, Kelley and Clausen-Grace: 2007).

Therefore creating a community of readers means that peers start to provide extrinsic motivation, too; consequently, the type of extrinsic motivation which rests on authority alone is lessened. Intrinsic motivation causes the desired discontinuous change (Covington, 1998).

By using reader response insights, the curriculum designer recognises the agency and affective engagement of the reader in constructing the meaning of the text, which moves the readers' motivation from extrinsic to intrinsic.

6.2 A way forward: context, content and delivery

This section examines the impact of the curriculum study, and makes suggestions for a curriculum model for children's literature in teacher education in the university sector. It is an application based on the findings of the research project (chapters 4 and 5), and 6.1 above.

6.2.1 Context

In order to make informed suggestions about the curriculum and the way in which the university is able to mediate a course in children's literature, both site and student profile need to be considered

6.2.2 Curriculum framework – philosophy

This intervention finds a place in a critical literacy paradigm. Attainment of critical literacy involves "ownership" of a text and an ability to interrogate that text, relating it to self, others, and the world. There is a sense of total engagement, and the ability to react to a text personally, emotively, and critically, cognitively. The text can be considered from these points, and there is an awareness of the

reading process, examining both the writer and the audience, both for whom the text is aimed and for those who choose such texts.

In most educational transactions, there are three roles: learner, teacher and examiner. In describing a reading transaction in this thesis, the terms are replaced as follows: reader, facilitator, assessor. This is done so as not to limit the process or see the reading experience as identical those in most school paradigms. In this critical paradigm, stressing autonomy and the achievement of critical literacy, these roles are played as follows:

- *Reader* This is the person who has engaged with the text. [This “engagement” is key, and it is important that the facilitator causes the engagement to become conscious (when the text is spoken about) and unconscious in the actual reading-response process.]
- *Facilitator* This is the person who causes the reader to begin to read actively and talk about the emotional responses to reading, and encourages the reading of the text.
- *Assessor* This is the person who (often, independently) assesses that the reading has been completed and can be spoken about with confidence and authority. Engagement with the text, the world of the text and an awareness of worlds beyond the text are all, in part, attainment of critical literacy and use of reading and reader-response strategies. The assessor sees whether there has been an involvement with, engagement in, and interrogation of, the texts, as literacy and reading theory become merged.

6.2.3 The Curriculum Framework – content

6.2.3.1 Informing the curriculum

The curriculum needs to have three components:

- *Practical*: A wide range of directed reading, where students read children's literature, as opposed to reading about it. This gives students opportunity in rehearsing the demands required for practising critical literacy and reader-response methodology.
Included here would be awareness both of different *genres* of writing, and works aimed at one or both of the *genders*. The issue of *relevance* needs to be considered too. In South Africa we need to embrace *diversity* and should encourage reading of books which do this, for example, books that embrace multiculturalism. There needs to be sensitivity to *language levels* and language per se.
- *Theoretical*: In proposing a curriculum that is educationally viable and relevant, the following aspects need to be considered:
 - oa. the South African context with regard to literacy levels and achievement – eg. As shown in the PIRLS and Limpopo reports;
 - ob. understanding of different literacies;
 - oc. learning and development theories,
 - od. psychological verisimilitude in capturing authentic experience of children and young adults.

Both theory and practice need to address issues in South African education and address issues of personal growth.

- *Reflective*: Merging of theory and practice (praxis) is something educators should strive for. This paradigm demands an ability to reflect on academic, personal and professional levels. Children's literature allows for this three-tiered reflection, and should be mediated accordingly.

To do this with focus, we need to look at these elements of curriculum design:

- *Materials* – poems, songs, short stories including myths and legends, novels – different genres of fiction, including classics and South African material, and digital text delivered through the medium of ICT. Students should become aware of what is available for children.
- *Sequence* – move from “shorter”, easier pieces of writing, to the more complex young adult writing.
- *Pace* – move in the year with direction – mini-deadlines, regular assessment meetings. The course is an intensive course, but manageable. In the beginning (heavier extrinsic motivation) lecturers ensure that momentum in the introduction of reading material is sustained.
- *Assessment* – as part of the course, creating a community of readers who think about, talk about, and write about children’s literature is vital. Lecturers need to be as committed to the course as the students, and be prepared to act as facilitators as concerns personal, academic and professional development.

6.2.3.2 Applying the curriculum

It is recommended that students are told of the scope of the course, and the requirements. The ultimate goal is a reading of 30 children’s books – of variety and range. Four of these books will be formally “taught” in class, as key note lectures place the work in context, highlight themes and issues. Reading is compulsory; if it is not done, the course will not be passed. Extrinsic motivation is used, with the intention that motivation will become more intrinsic as the course progresses.

Each student is a member of a group based on his/her reading level, ascertained by a simple question (Appendix E). The aim is to raise students up a level, and to ensure that the Positive and Excellent readers do not drop a level. This “streaming” is based on Vygotskian principles that suggest the most beneficial mobilisation of the zone of proximal development occurs when the actual level of

the learner is challenged. Too high or too low an aim would not cause learning of a positive nature.

6.2.4 Appropriate assessment and evaluation

6.2.4.1 Why assess?

Assessment is very important, for it helps to answer the question of the two parties, playing two roles: how do you know you've succeeded as a student/reader or teacher/ lecturer?

The student is both learner and reader – the question leads to self-evaluation and lecturer assessment; the lecturer is both subject “expert” as information is gathered and shared, but is also a teacher, as various educational strategies are employed. Assessment here also comes from two angles – the self-evaluation of the lecturer, and student evaluation of the course, in terms of content (including methodology) and relevance.

Reflective thinking strengthens the self and gives a sense of autonomy; moreover it should lead to reflective learning and teaching. Reflective thought is dynamic. Dynamic assessment means that change is not only possible, it is an imperative. Therefore, the curriculum is always under review. Data gathered as a result of evaluation or assessment processes should be discussed by lecturers offering the course, and aspects changed where appropriate.

6.2.4.2 Constant evaluation

The process should allow for constant reflection and there should be an ongoing interaction between facilitator and students. As this is a suggested process, derived from initial research and reading, it needs to be rigorously tested and refined once in operation This should be an ongoing research project, linking practice and theory to teacher training and the curriculum.

6.2.4.3 How to assess? / What kinds of assessment are appropriate?

University and school courses are subject to continuous evaluation. The emphasis is on both the process and the finished product. In keeping with continuous evaluation that tries to merge formative and summative evaluation principles, are the following considerations:

- Varied assessment tasks – demanded by the course: for example, essays, projects, case studies;
- Reflections on reading children’s literature texts and an awareness of aspects of child psychology, literary theory and teaching methodology;
- Various modes of assessment – group and individual work; written and oral presentations; formal and informal conferencing; prepared and unprepared work; and
- A mid-course evaluation and a final, integrated assessment where both product (the demands of the course) and process (including student development) are both seen as important.

Finally, in order for the assessment to be fair, varied and dynamic, the lecturer-as-facilitator needs to be involved in the course as regards content, delivery and student needs, showing an integration of theory and practice. Moreover, there needs to be a willingness to reflect about this, and show evidence of dynamic change, being prepared to alter aspects of the course where necessary.

An aspect that could emerge is this: should a course in children’s literature be a stand-alone course or integrated with other courses in literary studies and/or child development?

There needs to be a dialogue between other language and psychology departments as the course in children’s literature is conceptualised, developed, delivered and assessed.

6.2.4.4 The Curriculum Framework – Evaluation and assessment

In the final phase, *evaluation*, the examiner can move the reader from the affective domain to the cognitive domain, with questions that require, eventually, analytic skill. Readers should be able, after practice, to separate affective and cognitive thinking, for example: ‘Although I like the book and want to read more, it is not a good work because....’

There are four key elements of evaluation and assessment that constitute a matrix:

- the text under discussion;
- the reader;
- the facilitator (who has, through the year, encouraged the reader and activated the zone of proximal development (z.p.d); and
- the examiner who, through evaluation of this process and the student’s engagement, helps to consolidate the learning.

Therefore, examination is not seen as a marking of (static) work produced by the student: it is engaging, interactive, and dynamic. The facilitator might be wearing the cap of an examiner, but it must be emphasised that the examiner is still facilitatory as the impact of children’s literature is unpacked during the course of evaluation.

Thus, knowledge continues to be socially constructed as ideas are shared: an ideal examination should be a learning experience. Borrowing from second language theorists, the “affective filter” is lowered, thus ensuring a continued, positive, approach to children’s literature and to examinations.

6.2.5 Implementation of the framework

I. Initial phase

[Starting reading: individual activity]

Reader begins to read a text

II. The during and after reading phase

[Towards “active reading”: collaboration and consolidation]

The reader is taken through these stages of response and collaboration:

1. Reader reacts to book – internal, affective domain emphasised
2. Reader talks about the book – both personally and impersonally; both general and specific
3. Reader talks about his/her reaction – starts to analyse feelings – response articulated – moving towards cognitive domain

The collaborative process:

[A] The facilitator asks more probing questions

[B] The reader unpacks his/her feelings, defends his/her ideas, becomes more aware – ultimately the reader begins to explain and defend reactions to the text.

This collaboration leads to consolidation and integration of the reading process. In other words, the reader moves to critical reading and becomes metacognitively aware of the reading process.

III. Final Phase

[Assessment and evaluation]

The examiner ascertains that the reader

- has engaged in active reading;
- can communicate with accuracy and confidence about the texts read;
- is able to talk about texts on all levels; and
- can start to evaluate texts.

The reader is able to begin evaluating independently, or with suitable stimulus from the facilitator at successive levels of critical competence.

Level one: Reader needs support of others, and facilitator to evaluate texts and responses.

Level two: Reader can begin to evaluate; needs questioning from facilitator or examiner to make evaluations more solid.

Level three: Reader begins to make a measured, thoughtful and independent comment or evaluation.

Each level can be awarded a scale of 1 (very negative), 2 (negative), 3 (neutral), 4 (positive), 5 (very positive)

The emphasis during phase two is on the activity that takes place as a result of the reading. It is the questioning, the thinking about the questions, the talking, which determines the “level” of active reading, and shows that the text has been engaged with in a critically literate way.

6.3 Reflections: the research project considered

6.3.1 Lessons learnt from the research

I have gained valuable insight into the reading (literature/literacy) processes and have become aware that encouraging good reading practice involves total involvement of the facilitator (parent, teacher, peer) in terms of asking questions about the work of literature being read, other related works of literature, moral and

social issues raised by the work(s), the style of writing, the reaction to the work(s) concerned, the actual reading process. It is this armoury and variety of questioning that can facilitate change in habits and attitudes, and sensitivity to the processes involved with response to a text.

Active reading processes can cause affective, behavioural and cognitive shifts in the reader – reading is a holistic activity which cannot be separated from personal growth. The latter point is one of the lasting lessons drawn from interviews and encouraging students to talk about reading. Kelly & Clausen-Grace (2007) suggest ways in which learners can become independent and effective learners; they propose a metacognitive teaching framework¹³. Metacognitive processes serve to make more aware learners. Students who are “made” to reflect on their processes can become teachers who encourage their learners to become more aware of, and responsible for, their learning. This also means that motivation has become more internal. This educational cycle can be applied to tertiary level, too.

6.3.2 A need for further research

In terms of

- its human element (motivation, attitude, age and psychological “profile” of the subjects);
- its academic nature (the course in Children’s Literature is a part of the B Ed Curriculum); and
- its time span (the project allowed for data gathering in 2007 and 2008 only)

there must be caution before labelling the intervention as an unqualified success.

¹³ Essentially, five elements are proposed. The book (from cover to end) examines in detail and suggests how teachers can create a classroom climate to ensure that good readers... make connections, visualize, predict, summarise and ask questions. These five aspects of the reading process can make for independent readers. Students must be exposed to this theoretically and practically.

It is beyond the scope and resources of this project to make assertions based on permanent, discontinuous change, although the intervention course did appear to have been successful in this. An extension of the current project and topics for further research are suggested in the paragraphs that follow.

6.3.2.1 Extension of current research project

A longitudinal study to establish whether discontinuous change had taken place would enhance the impact and validity of this project. Students, on the whole, did seem to “move” in terms of their reading habits. The intervention programme changed most students’ reading attitudes and habits as it was designed to. However, there is no way of assessing whether this provided an impetus for discontinuous change. The permanence of change in reading habits should be re-tested again, at the end of the whole B Ed programme, and after a few years of teaching. This intervention, hopefully, will have been more than an academic “quick fix”, but there is no real measurement of its lasting effect without undertaking further longitudinal analysis.

6.3.2.2 Further research topics

My focus on this study was to determine whether an intervention using children’s literature has an impact on first-year B Ed students’ levels of literacy and reading. However, other aspects of literacy, reading, and children’s literature emerged. This study raises some questions for further research, among which are:

- The psychological responses to literature in both the area of bibliotherapy and in motivation for reading: what happens when we read?
- Teachers and reading: do teachers who read willingly and well make more effective teachers of reading?
- What makes a piece of literature “worth” studying – do we need to change our ideas of what makes a good “set” book?

- Motivation: how do lecturing staff at Universities motivate students; how does this differ from the way teachers or parents motivate learners/children?
- How can educationists further define and encourage good, positive, literacy practices?
- The links between good literary practice and critical literacy: should literature and literacy be treated as mutually exclusive?

6.4 Conclusion

This study tries to show the impact of an intervention using children's literature has on B Ed 1 Students. The study also refers to the PIRLS (2006) report, and suggests ways in which critical literacy can be achieved. It is not enough to respond cognitively to texts, and to learn about children's literature: it appears that once a text is responded to on all levels (affectively primarily) then students become more "active" as readers. Consequently students respond to texts and are able to achieve a modicum of critical literacy. Students who are exposed first-hand to this methodology can model this approach as teachers – they can become effective practitioners. And by example can start to move pupils towards a critical literacy. Hopefully this will help to improve literacy levels in South African schools.

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Appendices

Forms used / referred to in the study

Appendix A:	Ethics – Consent form Referred to in Chapter 3
Appendix B:	Pre-test questionnaire Referred to in Chapters 3 and 5
Appendix C:	Post-test questionnaire Referred to in Chapters 3 and 5
Appendix D:	Reading List, 2007 Referred to in Chapter 3
Appendix E:	Prototype – suggested form that could be used Referred to in Chapter 6

APPENDIX A : Consent form for research project

CPUT Faculty of Education : Mowbray

Attitudes to reading and Personal reading history : a pilot project

Dear B Ed 1 Student

Your attitudes to reading and personal reading habits are of great interest to us. Information we obtain from you will be used to (hopefully) improve on the courses we offer to you, from the English department.

Although it is a course requirement that you take part in the study, please note the following:

1. All responses are anonymous. Responses will be kept confidential – your names will NEVER be revealed in any way whatsoever.
2. The student number is used for tracking purposes only – i.e. to check that questionnaires have been handed in, and to track any changes.
3. Responses will not ever affect your marks for any course.
4. Responses and data will be used to complete a study on reading and children's literature.
5. THIS IS NOT A TEST.

Please sign that you have read this, and that you give the researcher(s) permission to use the data you have provided, acknowledging that your names will not be revealed and thus assuring confidentiality.

STUDENT NAME and NUMBER

B Ed 1, ISP, 2007

Staff Coordinator: Philip Thraves

HOD (GET Phase): Anne Hill

HOD (Research): Prof Rajendra Chetty

APPENDIX B:

QUESTIONNAIRE 1' PERSONAL READING HISTORY and ATTITUDES

PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE *STUDENT NUMBER* _____ *M/F*

1. When last did you read a novel / drama / collection of short stories for fun or relaxation?
 - A in the past two years
 - B last year
 - C during the last six months
 - D hardly ever
 - E never

2. How many books (fiction) do you VOLUNTARILY read a year? (Do not include books you have to read – set books for a course) Tick the block which is most typical of your reading patterns:
 - A over one book a month: 16 books or more
 - B one book a month to just over one a month: about 12 - 15
 - C nearly one book 9 – 11 books
 - D about 1 book, or just over 1 book every 2 months: 6 – 8 books
 - E 1 – 5 books a year
 - F 0 books; I never read voluntarily.

3. Do you read VOLUNTARILY nowadays? Why / why not? If so, what sorts of texts?

4. Do you read because you HAVE TO? Why / why not? If so, what sorts of texts?

5. As a child, did your parents/ parent-figures/ baby-sitters ever read to you? Did you ever read stories as a child?

6. As a teenager, did you read? Why? Why not?

7.
 - 7.1 Why DO some people read fiction?
 - 7.2 Why DON'T some people read fiction?

8. Do you think children / teenagers read willingly nowadays? Why / why not? Please answer both parts of this question.
 - 8.1 Children (ages 8 – 12)
 - 8.2 Teenagers (ages 13 – 17)

9. What do you think makes a good book?

10. What makes a good book for children (if different from 10)?

11. Please list (max) of five children's books you have read, and the age you were when you read them.
(Please note: not books that were read to you, but books you read.)

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE 2 PERSONAL READING HISTORY and ATTITUDES

POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE *STUDENT NUMBER* _____ *M/F*

1. When last did you read a novel / drama / collection of short stories for fun or relaxation?
 - A in the past two years
 - B last year
 - C during the last six months
 - D hardly ever
 - E never
2. How many books (fiction) do you VOLUNTARILY read a year? (Do not include books you have to read – set books for a course) Tick the block which is most typical of your reading patterns:
 - A over one book a month: 16 books or more
 - B one book a month to just over one a month: about 12 - 15
 - C nearly one book 9 – 11 books
 - D about 1 book, or just over 1 book every 2 months: 6 – 8 books
 - E 1 – 5 books a year
 - F 0 books; I never read willingly.
3. Do you read VOLUNTARILY nowadays? Why / why not? What sorts of texts?
4. Do you read VOLUNTARILY nowadays? Why / why not? What sorts of texts?
 - 5.1 Why DO some people read fiction?
 - 5.2 Why DON'T some people read fiction?
6. What are your views about reading novels, short stories or drama – pieces of fiction?
7. Why, do you think, do people read fiction? (Why do you do, if you do; why do others read fiction, if you don't read fiction / seldom read)
8. Do you think children / teenagers read willingly nowadays? Why / why not? Please answer both parts of this question.
 - 8.1 Children (ages 8 – 12)
 - 8.2 Teenagers (ages 13 – 17)
9. What do you think makes a good book?
10. What makes a good book for children (if different from 9)?
11. Please list a maximum of five children's books you have read, have enjoyed / would recommend to others, and why.
12. Has reading children's / young adult literature changed
 - 12.1 your attitude to children's literature? Why? / Why not?
 - 12.2 your attitude to reading? Why? / Why not?
 - 12.3 your reading habits? If you have answered "Yes", indicate how

CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
Faculty of Education and Social Sciences (Mowbray Campus)
B Ed 1 ISP / FP / ENGLISH / **CHILDREN'S LITERATURE**

READING LIST

- (1) 10 books chosen from this list must be made.
- (2) You have until the middle of October to read a range of 15 works of fiction aimed at children / young adults.

SECTION A: EARLY and VERY EARLY READING

All phases – FP and ISP: Read 5 – 8 picture books aimed at / suitable for younger children. This counts as one choice. Illustrators are as important as the authors, so record (where applicable) both. You should include 1- 2 South African early books. such as:

SECTION B: Books for younger readers

ISP students, read at least one, but aim for two:

Joan Aiken:	<i>Gobolino the Witch's Cat</i>
Michael Bond	<i>Any Paddington Bear book</i>
Enid Blyton	<i>The enchanted wood, The magic faraway tree, Folk of the faraway tree</i> <i>The wishing chair, The adventures of the wishing chair, Wishing chair stories</i>
Eric Carle	<i>The hungry caterpillar</i>
Raold Dahl:	<i>The Twits; The giraffe, the Pelly, and me; George's marvellous medicine</i> <i>The magic finger</i>
Julie Edwards:	<i>The last of the really great Whangdoodles</i>
Rudyard Kipling:	<i>Just So.... Stories</i>
Phillip Pullman:	<i>I was a rat; The firework-maker's daughter; The scarecrow and his servant</i>
Lynne Reid Banks	<i>Harry the Poisonous Centipede</i>
Barbara Sleigh:	<i>Carbonel</i> trilogy ¹⁴
P L Travers:	<i>Any Mary Poppins book</i> (The film is NOT the book)
Various:	<i>Any book which is a collection of myths/legends</i>

¹⁴ *Carbonel, The kingdom of Carbonel, Carbonel and Calidor*

SECTION C: Children's Literature: Ages 8 -12

Foundation Phase and ISP students Read two of these books/authors, except for ISP, who must read 2 books from this list and *Charlotte's Web* and *Tuck Everlasting*.

Natalie Babbitt	<i>Tuck everlasting</i>
Sheila Burnford	<i>The incredible journey</i>
Judy Blume	<i>Are you there, God? It's me Margaret; Flubber; Forever; Superfudge; Then again, maybe I won't</i>
Andrew Clements:	<i>Frindle; The janitor's son; The Landry News; A week in the woods</i>
Gillian Cross	<i>The demon headmaster series</i>
Sharon Creech	<i>Walk two moons</i>
Richmal Crompton	<i>Any William book</i>
Morris Gleitzman	<i>Sticky beak; Two weeks with the queen; Water wings;</i>
Raold Dahl:	<i>Boy; Charlie and the chocolate factory; Charlie and the glass elevator; James and the giant peach; Matilda; The BFG</i>
Franklin W Dixon:	<i>Any Hardy Boys (cannot have with Nancy Drew)</i>
Carolyn Keene:	<i>Any Nancy Drew book (cannot have with Hardy Boys)</i>
Madeleine l'Engle	<i>A wrinkle in time quintet</i> ¹⁵
Ursula le Guin	<i>The Earthsea trilogy</i> ¹⁶
C S Lewis	<i>Any Narnia book</i> ¹⁷
Katherine Paterson	<i>The bridge to Terebithia; Jacob I have loved</i>
Willard Pryce	<i>Any book</i>
Arthur Ransome	<i>Any book</i>
Frank/Hilda Richards	<i>Any Billy/Bessie Bunter book</i>
Rick Riordon	<i>Any Percy Jackson book</i> ¹⁸
Lynne Reid Banks	<i>The Indian in the cupboard quintet</i> ¹⁹
Dodi Smith	<i>The 101 dalmations</i>
Lemony Snicket	<i>Any book in the A Series of Unfortunate Events series</i>
Cynthia Voigt:	<i>Dacey's Song; Homecoming; Izzy, Willy – Nill; The runner A solitary blue</i>
Robert Westall	<i>Gulf; The kingdom by the sea; The machine gunners; The scarecrows; The Wind Eye</i>
J K Rowling	<i>Any of the first four Harry Potter books</i> ²⁰
Ian Serallier	<i>The silver sword</i>
E B White	<i>Charlotte's web</i>
Jaqueline Wilson	<i>Dustbin kid; any Tracey Beaker book</i>

¹⁵ *A wrinkle in time, The wind in the door, A swift and tilting planet, Many waters, An acceptable time*

¹⁶ *The wizard of Earthsea, The tombs of Atuan, The farthest shore*

¹⁷ *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe; Prince Caspian; The Silver Chair; The Magician's nephew; The Voyage of the Dawn Treader; A Horse and his boy; The last battle*

¹⁸ *Percy Jackson and the lightning thief, Percy Jackson and the sea of monsters*

¹⁹ *The Indian in the cupboard, The key to the Indian, The mystery of the cupboard, The return of the Indian, The secret of the Indian*

²⁰ *Harry Potter and... The Philosopher's Stone; Chamber of Secrets; Prisoner of Azkaban; Goblet of fire*

SECTION D “Classics”

All students must read at least one of these:

Louisa May Allcott	<i>Little women</i> (and “sequels”)
F L Baum	<i>The wizard of Oz</i> (and “sequels”)
Frances Hodgson Burnett	<i>The secret garden</i> <i>Little Lord Fauntleroy</i>
Lewis Carroll	<i>Alice’s adventures in Wonderland</i> <i>Alice through the looking glass</i>
Charles Dickens	<i>A Christmas Carol</i>
Antoine de Saint Exupéry	<i>The little prince</i>
Kenneth Graham	<i>The wind in the willows</i>
Tom Hughes	<i>Tom Brown’s schooldays</i>
John Kingsley	<i>The Waterbabies</i>
A A Milne	<i>The house at Pooh Corner</i> <i>Now we are six</i>
Anne Montgomery	<i>Anne of Green Gables</i> (and “sequels”)
Mary Norton	<i>The Borrowers</i> (and “sequels”)
Beatrix Potter	any four books
Robert L Stevenson	<i>Kidnapped</i> <i>Treasure Island</i>
Oscar Wilde	<i>The happy prince and other tales</i>

SECTION E: Young adult reading/Teenage Books.

ISP students: aim at reading at least two of these books / authors. F.P students, one:

Aidan Chambers:	<i>Dance on my Grave; Postcards from no man’s land; The Toll Bridge</i>
Margaret Craven	<i>I heard the owl call my name</i>
Anne Frank	<i>The diary of Anne Frank</i>
Paul Gallico	<i>The Snowgoose</i>
Mark Haddon	<i>The curious incident of the dog in the night-time</i>
Antony Horowitz	Any <i>Alex Rider</i> book
E. L. Konigsburg:	<i>The outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place</i>
Philip Pullman:	<i>His Dark Materials</i> trilogy ²¹ <i>Sally Lockhart</i> quartet ²²
Lynne Reid Banks:	<i>The L-shaped room</i>
J J Tolkien	<i>The Hobbit</i>
Paul Zindel:	<i>The Pigman; The Pigman’s legacy</i>

²¹ *The golden compass / Northern Lights* (UK title), *The subtle knife*, *The amber spyglass*

²² *The ruby in the smoke*, *The shadow in the north*, *The tiger in the well*, *The tin princess*

SECTION F : South African writing.

Both Foundation phase and ISP students: Try sourcing one South African book from another library as well. Read two South African books, at least one from the list below – most of these are available in the library on the Mowbray campus..

Lesley Beake	<i>A cageful of butterflies; Jakey; Song of Be; The Strollers</i>
Diane Case	<i>92 Queens Road; Love David</i>
Dianne Hofmeyer	<i>Boikie, you better believe it; Fish notes and star songs; A red kite in a blue sky; A sudden summer; When whales go free</i>
Beverley Naidoo	<i>Journey to Jo'burg; No turning back; Nothing but the truth; The other side of truth</i> <i>A web of lies</i>
John van de Ruyt:	<i>Spud</i>
Peter Slingsby:	<i>The cave; Flood Sunday; The joining; Leopard Boy</i>
Lutz van Dijk	<i>Stronger than the storm</i>
Michael Williams:	<i>Crocodile burning; Virgin twins;</i> <i>The genuine half-moon kid; hijack city;</i> <i>Into the valley; The secret song;</i> <i>Who killed Jimmy Valentine?</i>

SECTION G : Viewing

All students should include at least 2, at most 3, films (aimed at children) on their lists. Do NOT be tempted to pass the film off as a book. Watch a film aimed at young viewers / one aimed at older viewers. If you wish to include a third, watch a film “classic” such as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Mary Poppins* (1964) or *The Lion King* (1998)

A final word. If going to local libraries does not satisfy your curiosity about other books to read....you might wish to surf the net to find suggestions:

To find reading lists:

<http://www.monroe.lib.in.us/childrens/booklists.html>

To find book lists:

http://www.spl.org/default.asp?pageID=audience_children_categorybrowser

<http://www.dawcl.com/introduction.html>

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscresources/summerreading/recsummerreading....>

<http://www.bookspot.com/readinglists/childrens.htm>

<http://www.reading.org/resources/tools/choices.html>

<http://www.carolhurst.com/>

<http://childhoodreading.com/>

Enjoy your journey into the world of child / children’s literature. This list doesn’t pretend to be complete, but should start you on this reading journey. Have fun!

Philip Thraves

May 2007

CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT – Research and Grouping

Name and Group _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Year: 2008

How many books (fiction) do you VOLUNTARILY read a year? (Do not include books you have to read – set books for a course) Tick the block which is most typical of your reading patterns:

- A over one book a month: 16 books or more
- B one book a month to just over one a month: about 12 - 15
- C nearly one book 9 – 11 books
- D about 1 book, or just over 1 book every 2 months: 6 – 8 books
- E 1 – 5 books a year
- F 0 books; I never read voluntarily.

