

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO ENGLISH HOME  
LANGUAGE TEACHERS' USE OF THE ENGLISH  
HOME LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK IN GRADE 11**

**By**



**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN LANGAUGE AND LITERACY IN THE  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE,  
SOUTH AFRICA**

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**December 2019**

## DECLARATION

I declare that “An Investigation into English Home Language Teachers Use of the English Home Language Textbook in Grade 11” is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other University, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Mark Frank

December 2019

Signed.....



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

## ABSTRACT

The study investigates how English Home language teachers use the English Home language textbook in the grade 11 classroom. It aspires to generate an understanding of the strong relationship between the teacher, textbook and the learner thereby illustrating how a recognition of the various ways the textbook can be used. By addressing methodological issues and text relevancy as a tool for learner connection, the research appraises the use of text relevancy in the grade 11 classroom.

In upholding a constructivist view of teaching the research postulates that the use of textbook material that holds a connection to learners' lives can help increase the proficiency of the learners in the classroom and bring a deeper motivation for increase learner participation.

The investigation uses a qualitative methodology to study and describe the dynamics of using the textbook. The research captured teaching methods that are already known. However, the research in this thesis also added some new dimensions that many teachers might not know of or might not be using in their classroom. These teaching methods revealed the extent to which effective teachers will go to make a difference for their learners. The teaching methods harnessed the ability from the learner to recreate, imagine and empower their understanding of the world they live in with an understanding of current topics that surfaces in a teenager's life.

The findings indicate that the textbook is still relevant and can be used in some creative ways of teaching. The study also affirms that it is possible to develop your own textbook, which can add a greater connection between the teacher and the learner.

## KEYWORDS

English Home Language

Innovation

Literacy

Textbook

Textbook Relevancy

Creativity

Figurative Language

Curriculum

Teachernaire



## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Jesus of Nazareth, who put me back together. This thesis is also dedicated to my precious Mother, Lorraine Frank who instilled in me the enduring values of long suffering and patience.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

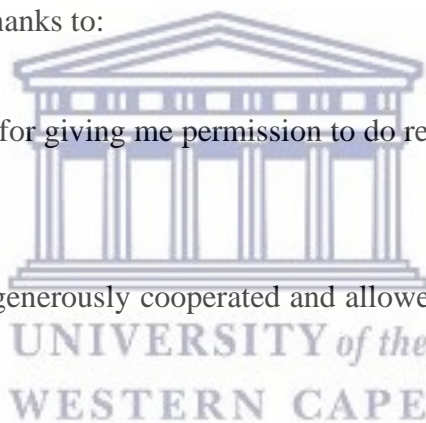
Over the years, I have read and studied certain characteristics of individuals that added a dimension to my own life. I studied Leonardo da Vinci, Bobby Fischer, Sebastian Coe, Machiavelli, Michelangelo, John Keats etc. I would like to add my doctoral supervisor Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam to the above-mentioned list as a man to also be read and studied. I wish to convey my deepest gratitude to my supervisor. I am greatly indebted for his inspiring tutelage, guidance, compassion, patience and his unremitting care and support. In my own life I have come to witness a great deal of intellectual beauty from his ideas and feedback. Working with Professor Sivakumar has provided a wonderful and memorable opportunity to grow up both personally and professionally. His caring nature and passionate involvement acted both as an impetus and synergy for me to complete my study.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. Introduction: A Point of Departure/Concern

Books, the lifeblood of an education system.

John Samuel (1993: 9)

My study seeks to explore the phenomenon of how grade 11 English Home language teachers use the textbook. The focus of this study is to gain a better understanding into teacher practice in the classroom. In addition to the focus of the investigation, my study will also gather teachers' perception(s) of the textbook. In light of exploring the textbook phenomenon, the study is informed by four main theoretical views/positions, namely, the education as liberation view (Freire, 1968), Vygotsky's theory (Vygotsky, 1978), Dewey's theory (Dewey, 1938). Bruner's Theory (Bruner, 1961). In summary, the study proposes to:

1. Explore the different teaching methods when using the English Home language textbook.
2. Analyse the factors that influence the practice of using the English Home language textbook in and out of the classroom.
3. Assess the compatibility of relevant material content as related to learners' lives.
4. Assess the teachers' attitude towards the English Home language textbook.
5. Propose a framework for developing good content to help teachers and grade 11 learners appreciate the textbook.

In light of the above stated summary, I anticipated that the knowledge generated from this investigation would afford/yield some new insights and so inform English Home language classroom teaching practice. The research employed a qualitative methodology to illustrate the phenomenon under examination. Participants of this study included a purposefully selected group consisting of 12 grade 11 English Home language teachers with different years of experience. This chapter begins with an overview of the context and background that frames the study.

As a prelude to this study (February 18, 2018) prior to my starting my data collection, I asked a general question on Facebook in terms of the textbook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/568754536797843/>) in order to have an awareness of the nature of textbook thinking. Looking over some comments it might be unthinkable that our practice of using the English Home language textbook might abruptly die away completely or teachers might no longer (need to) take an interest in the textbook. Based on the above-mentioned point, I considered it both as a point of concern/departure.

As mentioned early the study hopes to provide a richer, more far-reaching conception of the grade 11 English Home language textbook. In essence, I believe that the English Home language textbook's orientation must change in the context of South Africa because I believe some material in English Home language textbooks appear to be outdated and hardly speak directly to learners in grade 11. In light of the above stated point, the study set out to illuminate the nature of textbook practice in the Grade 11 English Home language classroom. In addition, the study also enhances the relevance of textbook practice in terms of English language education and through interviews, observations and document analysis demonstrate how it might be acted upon via the scope, stimuli and synergy in pedagogical practice.

According to Carter & Goddard (2016: 7), the core of all good research is the ability to stand back from what is known and see it afresh. I wish to affirm that this study is a call for teachers and learners not to neglect the textbook. In a similar vein, this study is also a call for English Home language teachers to be creative enough to light up any text in the textbook while using it in the classroom. In doing this, teachers can continue to grab the attention of the learners. It is hoped that this affirmation will inspire teachers to continuously develop their skill as teachers and be attentive to the learners' needs in the classroom.

Having explained the purpose and the dynamics of this study, I intend to address the issue of the textbook, which I refer to as a tool of the mind in the next segment.

## **1.1 Textbooks: Tools of the mind**

“The textbook is, in fact, the heart of the school and without the ubiquitous text there would be no schools, at least as we know them.”

(Ian Westbury, cited in Oakes & Saunders, 2004)

Given the significant role that textbooks play in many countries of the developing world, I believe it should have just as much value in a South African context. Since the existing knowledge base is limited on teachers’ actual use of the textbook in South Africa, I feel the discussion here will/should highlight some important issues. I believe that some English Home language teachers use the textbook as a tool to ease their work. Oftentimes, teachers might use the textbook more as a curriculum rather than a tool. However, we should be reminded that classrooms are far too complex to be generalized by using one tool. The textbook is one particular tool, which I believe many teachers use as a filler to keep learners busy. Furthermore, where textbooks are used some teachers often reduce them to a few pages here and there. Nevertheless, I believe that the English Home language textbook can be adapted in many ways to reflect a teachers’ innovation with individual texts. In addition, I believe that textbook adaptation is a process of overcoming problems in using ready-made textbooks and this will allow the textbook to assist the teacher in meeting the learners’ specific work-related needs when the teacher effectively understands the climate of the classroom.

### **1.1.1 Why is it Important to be Competent in Textbook Practice**

In light of the previous segment, I believe in conjunction with Garinger (2002) that textbooks are one of the most effective and readily available ways that provide ready-made activities. McGrath (2002) asserts that textbooks can set the direction, content and they can propose ways in which the lesson is to be taught. In retrospect, the textbook, which at one time was the heart of the classroom, is now, I believe, almost a forgotten educational tool in some classrooms.

I hope that through this study some negative aspects that exist may /can be reversed. I see the above-mentioned point as an important task. Furthermore, I believe that nearly everyone now accepts the premise that teachers make a difference in the lives of their students for good or for bad.

I believe that being competent in textbook practice will help English Home language teachers avoid some misconceptions of the textbook especially the most common one, which I feel is the one where teachers and learners believe that the textbook is a boring book. I believe that the textbook is a bridge between the teacher and the learner for creativity and innovation. Marshalls (2016: 79) highlights the fact that teachers should engage the emotions of learners so that teachers can grab student attention vigorously in the classroom. In summary, teachers should be competent and aspire to reach the level where they notice that the best lessons are those in which the textbook may do something interesting. By this I mean that learners use their language to inform, amuse, entertain persuade and move each other with their critical assumptions and discussions and good textbooks and competent teachers make this possible. In light of the above -mentioned point, I would like to state that some teachers believe that text use may seem to be a dull topic but for me this is another misconception. In addition, I believe there should not be a wall created between the teacher and the learner because in the end it is what the learners do to enhance their skills.

Having given a brief review on why teachers should be competent in using the textbook, in the next segment, I will position the elements of literacy in this study.

## **1.2 Positioning Literacy in South Africa**

At the outset I wish to discuss the educational dimension of literacy that necessitate my conducting this study. I hope that this discussion will act as an awareness-building exercise and a point of concern as well as departure for language education. Therefore, in keeping with the contextual characteristics of this study, I affirm that the deliberations and descriptions to be presented here are intended to factor in voice, agency, position and constructive conceptualizations of teacher education in the English Home language classroom.

South Africa's literacy levels continue to remain low and this is a great concern. A survey found that six out of ten South Africans older than 16 years lived in households without a single book present (Mail and Guardian, 20 May 2018).

The irony here is that the learners in the survey should have had the textbook, which they should have received from their high school and it should have been a good resource for them to read. Despite this irony, there is an initiative in place which is to increase access to books which aims to create 1000 school libraries by 2019.

This in return will inevitably lead to learners needing skilled teachers to scaffold their encounters with books and especially textbooks. Further to the above stated point the issue of initial teacher training (which I believe is arguably the most critical strategy for addressing the literacy crisis), we need innovative teachers who see a solution in a problem. Despite the negative glare, I do feel that the low literacy levels in South Africa can improve if learners read effectively with comprehension. Elijah Mhlanga of the Basic Education Department states, “one of the glaring problems was that South Africa is not a reading nation” (Educational Journal, May 2019: 3).

Further to the above-mentioned quotation, an international study on measuring literacy levels released on 5 December 2017 placed South Africa last out of 50 countries globally (Educational Journal, May 2019: 3). Despite the weak literacy levels in South Africa, I believe that the literacy levels can improve if innovative pedagogical presentations are implemented in the classroom. Furthermore, reading stimulating texts that offer learners a hunger for engagement with the teacher and other learners in the classroom can be a starting/triggering point on the road to recovery. According to Darling-Hammond (1995: 1-16) an understanding of learners and learning is the most neglected aspect of teacher preparation.

Literacy is the core skill that can and should be taught and modelled in every lesson (Beere, 2014). Taking every opportunity to improve the communication skills of learners is paramount in the 21st century. I further believe that a wide variety of lessons and methods of teaching (using the textbook/texts should be explored as students come in diverse packages with different learning panaches and requirements. However, all learning resources can never be effective unless directed by a reliable English language educator as a main input component in the learning process (Korthagen, 2004). In light of the above stated view and given the longitudinal and the extensive nature of teacher education, it is important that I reinforce other dimensions of the social context. Such a position can help us understand the creative power of teachers in a given framework. Furthermore, the centrality of language to both the creation of individual consciousness and to the shaping of society informs this investigation.

Over the years, the determination of schooling quality as reflected in students' educational performance is the topic of a wide empirical literature (Hanushek 1999; Hoxby 2000b; Gundlach, Wößmann & Gmelin, 2001).

However, the theoretical literature on textbook practice in the classroom lags considerably behind this empirical development especially in terms of the South African context. A previous study in 1994 by a student of University of Cape Town (UCT) dealt with the English Home language textbook. However, his focus was on textbook evaluation. Also, in 2013 the Western Cape Education Department asked the Australian Research Committee to investigate the quality of textbooks in South Africa, which also dealt with textbook evaluation, particularly dealing with content material. As Harste and Burke (1977) suggest teachers make decisions about classroom instruction in light of theoretical beliefs they hold about teaching and learning. This scope of understanding provides a dynamic flow in individuals' creative ability to use the English Home language textbook.

In an effort to improve the educational practice of teaching of language, I attempted to look at what creative techniques language teachers use to help improve learners' language proficiency especially in terms of the use of the textbook. In an ever-changing context the use of some new or old teaching methods in textbook practice in high school can generate the potential to improve learners' performance. This study proposes to describe the methods of good textbook practice. By the same token, it will also illustrate the negative aspects of textbook usage. The theoretical framework undergirding this study is effective teacher research and it is motivated from a constructivist stance.

The research will build on teaching methods that are already known but the study has added new dimensions that many teachers might not know of or might not be using in their classroom with regard to the textbook.

Mann (2005) postulated that the valuable English language teacher needs to be aware of the teaching methods and techniques needed for successful teaching such as presentation techniques, the different types of practice and how to evaluate students' learning. Good creative ways of using the textbook has the ability to bring about the essential improvement of learner achievement. This is in keeping with the South African Education comprehensive programme, which is referred to as Action Plan 2014: Towards the Realization of Schooling 2025.

Having positioned and conceptualized literacy in a South African context, I wish to discuss some aspects of the Western Cape Province because all the teachers interviewed are from the Western Cape. I hope that this discussion may/can help signify the conditions that teachers find themselves in and how their practice can help the process of teaching.

### **1.3 Contemporary Hermeneutics: The Western Cape**

The Western Cape achieved the best matric results in 2009 but dropped to third position in 2018. In 2011 and 2015, it received the highest matric pass rate (Business Insider 7 May, South Africa 2019). I have mentioned the above stated points to signpost and underscore the need for improvement in schools in the Western Cape.

After 1994 there was the sudden inflow of African-language-speaking learners into schools that had previously been open only to people classified as white or coloured in the Western Cape and the rest of South Africa. With this influx of learners, the climate of classrooms changed instantly and this change forced teachers to adapt their teaching style and be innovative without realizing that the South African context at that particular time called for innovation. In the Western Cape there was a shift from Afrikaans to English as a first Language in schooling (Farmer, 2008: 12). Furthermore, English appears to be the language of choice for the younger generation in the Western Cape based on music and movies etc.

In light of the above stated point, I believe that this outcome of change is an advantage for the English Home language teachers and teachers should recognize it accordingly. However, it is often not viewed by the teacher in this light. I believe in the Western Cape many learners are unable to achieve their academic potential for a few reasons. They may range from:

- The declining quality in school infrastructure
- Social ills such as poverty and crime
- Weak school management and leadership
- Teachers who refuse to be innovative
- Teachers who have become complacent and are too mechanical
- Poor teaching skills in the face of difficulties (De Villiers, 1997)



Taking into consideration the above stated points, I believe many learners in the Western Cape often wonder what value studying language can serve e.g. studying Shakespeare or grammar, reading a text for comprehension, doing poetry etc. With this type of thought pattern, paper One and paper Two of the English Language in high school often is not taken that seriously especially if there is no intention on the learners' part to study further at university.

Often teachers still use the question and answer method. In addition to this, the teacher is still considered “the all-knowing master” and learners come to school to listen to what the teacher has to teach them. It is commonplace that if this type of method is the overall pattern of a teacher's actions through the year, then it will develop a state of boredom in the learner and the effect can be a loss in the classroom in terms of academic improvement. It is also prevalent that teaching is typically focused on correctness and convention (knowledge of standard and norms of grammar, spelling, usage, and mechanics), and involves instruction in at least one privileged type of writing, usually an essay (Kern, 2000:2). Further to the above stated points is the fact that the quality training of language teachers is unfortunately not foregrounded as there are more serious issues within the complexity of teacher education that need to be addressed (Chetty, 2012). In the Western Cape this causes a vacuum for teacher innovation and I believe can result in the production of a ‘lukewarm’ teacher. Therefore, I believe many language teachers are trained to act and function like robots because teachers are pressured to cover the syllabus, do the grammar in two semesters (quarters), move on to the next chapter, and test at predetermined intervals how successful their instruction has been (Kramersch, 2009: 202).

I am aware that heavy workloads are placed on teachers. Against such a disempowering backdrop, Mashau (2000) asserts that schools have a responsibility to promote effective learning by creating a conducive and supportive learning environment within which learners feel appreciated, curriculum and teaching strategies complement learners' educational readiness. In light of the above voiced point, teachers should also understand the uniqueness of every learner. In addition, I believe that today it is vital that our teaching strategies (textbook practice) complement the world of the learner. This will capture the learner as Johnson (2011) rightly states that it is that ‘we grab our learners by their brains.’

#### **1.4 Background to the Study**

It has been apparent for some time that the knowledge of English has become essential in more and more fields of life, and it has become increasingly important for working in different parts of the world. English in most of South African schools hold a high-level status. There is a lot of research on what makes schools successful in reaching their goals. However, much of the research is based on schools in developed countries (Jansen & Blank, 2014: 7). The context of developed countries differs from the context of teaching and learning in South Africa in terms of culture and constraints. Vygotsky's (1997, originally published 1921–1923) conceptualisation of pedagogy continues to provide a useful reminder to the Educational community in South Africa in that we need to be mindful of the socio-historic conditions allowing for the production of new knowledge and new practices.

In light of new practices, the age-old textbook will always tag along. Since textbooks have a central position in the educational system of almost any country, an investigation into how teachers use the textbook is the focus of this study. Furthermore, one of the most salient factors for the students' accomplishment in the English Home language classroom I believe is the textbook. However, too often I believe the textbook will be shelved and not understood and appreciated by teachers and learners in South Africa. In the South African context, the question of choosing a textbook for high school learners is often a taboo subject. South Africa has devoted a lot to education because new expectations, perspectives and demands have been mounting rapidly in the 21st century as knowledge and globalization engulf almost all aspects of our daily lives (Blizer, 2009). This is pertinent to the fact that any educational system must always reappraise the quality of their textbooks because “the most important purpose of teaching is to raise pupils' achievement” (Beere, 2014). A good balanced textbook will help dynamize the process and I believe a creative teacher is well placed to demonstrate the value of the textbook.

As a teacher who taught in Europe, Asia and many South African schools, I have held many textbooks in my hand. In my opinion some were good and some were bad. My curiosity to find out what captures a learners' interest in the classroom has been a constant endeavour of mine that has inspired me to continue my search. This hypothesis/premise is an offshoot element of my former research that dealt with the educational materials in the classroom.

Previously, I discovered that learners do have a number of barriers in the English Home language classroom. One component that saddened me was the fact that a high level of reading material that teachers presented did not relate to learners' lives and in many aspects they found the level of content orientation very boring. As Johnson (2011: 185) states that even "struggling readers will blossom if you give them material that is so interesting that they cannot resist reading it." Therefore, based on my own educational pursuit, my study is an attempt to critically and comprehensively examine the English Home language textbook scenario in South Africa in relation to public schools.

Built into the above-mentioned paradigm is a research exploration in the present educational situation. At the same time, I also highlight future trends in textbook development in South Africa. I believe that this study is also a precursor for Grade 12 since Grade 11 is so closely connected to the final year of school. Therefore, at this time, it is important that I factor in the fact that of the 828,020 candidates who wrote the National Senior Certificate exam in 2016, 162,374 qualified for university, 179,619 for diploma study, and 100,486 for certificate study ([www.sowetanlive.co.za/news](http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news)). In reality, only 26% of Grade 12 learners passed with the basic requirement to enter university – one percentage more than 2015. In the end, if teachers are very creative in their classroom in Grade 11, it can serve as a binding force to enrich the platform of teaching in Grade 12. Furthermore, the impact of not only the transition in South Africa, but also of the fluidity of the wider global backdrop on both language and education are acknowledged as crucial influences on all spheres of private as well as public life. In the context of education, my proposed study endeavours to locate and define those elements, which comprise and inform the practices of educational publishing.

Another inevitable backdrop of this study is the reality that many of South African schools have become multicultural. It has also become common practice that many learners' home language is not English. As the growth of a multicultural classroom increases so too does the necessity for effective and engaging educational materials that prepare students of all ages for proficiency in the teaching of English Home Language. Integrated skills textbooks need to consider the fact that "there are clear differences between oral language and written language" (Freeman & Freeman, 2004: 23).

In order to meet the very specific needs of high school learners, several factors must be taken into account when preparing educational materials. One aspect of this study will highlight the materials textbook publishers used. In conjunction with this, teachers are accountable for good practice in the classroom and more importantly this good practice must be shared. In the next segment, I deal with the rationale of the study.

### **1.5 Rationale and Motivation: Purpose and Value**

The rationale for this study emanates from my own experience in teaching English. Maxwell (2013: 24) notes the importance of potential experience as a source of motivation. For me teaching involves a constant inquiry of one's own work, the experiences of other teachers and the search for new means to improve teaching. Given that textbook practice in the classroom is an essential component in any language program, this study has been conducted to analyse and draw as much from teachers' experience with the textbook (individual texts) in the classroom. Lebrun, Lenoir, Laforest, Larose, Roy, Spallanzani, & Pearson (2002: 71) highlight an important gap in the spectrum of teachers and the textbook. They wrote:

Neither textbooks' classroom use..., their impact on practices, nor the effects of their use on school learning, are really known.... [The] literature is deafening in its silence on classroom methods of the use of textbooks....

I believe that the study will fill this gap in literature, as it will explore in a South African context the creative flow of how teachers use the English Home language textbook.

I believe that there is a huge gap in the South African context in terms of teachers and the practice of the textbook. Zeichner and Liston (1996: 5) argue that 'the voices and insights of teachers' should be acknowledged by the educational establishment so as to enhance and enrich the knowledge base in areas of educational innovation.

In view of the point mentioned above, studies of teachers' textbook practice in the classroom can contribute to a wider process of reflection and discussion. Therefore, I anticipate that this study can yield new insights and thus inform the South African education department. In light of the above stated point, effective textbook analysis will harness the capacity/ability of the teacher to understand the process of textbook implementation and therefore empower teachers in their understanding of how to effect textbook synchronization in their educational realm.

Oates (2010), one of the world's foremost experts on the school curriculum has strongly emphasized the role of high-quality textbooks in realising the aims of national curricula and supporting effective teaching with textbooks. Despite the progresses in teaching methodologies, developing new technologies and facilities to enhance learning effectiveness, textbooks still have a very crucial role and effect in the process of language teaching and learning context. It can therefore be used as a great tool for learner advancement. I will now list the reasons for this investigation.

### **1.5.1 First Rationale: Offering Strategies in Using the Textbook in a Creative Way**

This study will assist high school teachers in order to help them have effective textbook practice. I hope that teachers would look at the English Home language textbook anew. Many teachers are not properly prepared to deal with the English Home language textbook in relation to content. More importantly, they are not adequately trained in the effective practice of the English Home language textbook. I believe that many teachers do not have the skill to weave the benefits out of the English Home language textbook.

The rationale implies that if learners are to benefit fully from the investment in the textbook, then teachers need to be helped to use the resource in more constructive ways. This is also in keeping with the purpose of the Western Cape Education Plan Language Development Plan 2015 – 2019 that is meant to support quality language teaching and learning.

### **1.5.2 Second Rationale: Insights of Teachers Should be acknowledged**

As I mentioned earlier Zeicher & Liston (1996: 5) argue that ‘the voices and insights of teachers’ should be acknowledged by the educational establishment for enriching the knowledge base in areas of educational innovation. In light of this, I would like to assist English teachers (present, new and teachers that are long in the system of English language teaching).

Notwithstanding what I have stated above, I draw on my own professional experience understanding my own difficulties in dealing with the English Home language textbook. In addition, to this the wealth of knowledge invested in South African English Home language, high school teachers offer a plethora of wisdom to be absorbed and appreciated. I will also therefore find out the views of the teachers concerning the quality and the use of textbooks in the classroom. As Barber and Morshed (2007) declare, the quality of a country’s education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.

If the future of any society can be identified, it will then be contingent on the teachers who help form and foster the citizens of tomorrow. Sometimes their influence is equal to that of the parents and sometimes it even surpasses it. In addition, the study of classroom practice in relation to the textbook is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly, in shaping policy and practice, thereby it has the purpose to subvert attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions that foster chaos and uselessness (Postman & Weingartner, 1969: 14).

### **1.5.3 Third Rationale: Changing the Way Learners and Teachers Think About the Textbook**

The third rationale for this study is to bring about an understanding that the English Home language textbook can offer benefits in academic performance. This will be of great relevance to teachers and learners. After teaching English in many high schools in South Africa, I have often heard from learners that the English textbook is boring. This attitude can thwart their progress and allow the textbook to be a hindrance instead of a benefit. By the same token, I have also observed from many teachers that the textbook does not play a key role in the classroom.

### **1.5.4 Fourth Rationale: To Determine Content Relevancy**

Textbooks have for some time been considered a critical challenge within the South African education system. The Textbook Development Institute (2009: iii) notes that:

Concern about the quality and effectiveness of the textbooks used by educational institutions is the most neglected and underrated factor impacting on the quality of Education in South Africa. Teachers are often blamed for the poor Standard of Education in the country. Little attention is however given to the poor standard or quality of the resources particularly textbooks which teachers are required to work with.

As the study progresses, the element of textbook selection will also surface and if it is of high quality. By this I mean if it meets the education systems of the countries that top the international league tables (top educational countries). Oates (2010) argues that there should be coherence between the National Curriculum, the content of textbooks, and the approach to teaching in schools.

The textbooks provide the detailed knowledge implicit in the national curriculum programmes of study, which, by their very nature, are succinct and broad descriptions of the content that needs to be taught.

### **1.5.5 Fifth Rationale: Indirect Appraisal of the Textbook**

The educational output of the textbook industry is in danger because financial gain seems to be the driving force and not the principles of Language Acquisition (Litz, 2005, Sheldon, 1998). The intended investigation will indirectly also highlight the quality of the textbook, which will serve as a window in understanding the textbook competency in terms of learner textbook connection.

### **1.5.6 Sixth Rationale: Upholding the Need for Professional Development and Training**

This investigation into textbook practice can help existing teachers and play a role in professional development, which is an on-going need to maximize teacher ability in the classroom.

### **1.5.7 Additional Creative Elements of the Research**

This research is important because the English Home language textbook can also be the most neglected part of an English lesson. Often in order to prepare their learners for effective examination practice, teachers leave the textbook aside and bombard learners with worksheets and question papers. Therefore, in the spirit of inquiry I believe that this study can propel teachers to use the English Home language textbook in a more consistent manner depending on the quality of the textbook.

This study, which harnesses textbook efficiency, is important in updating the officials of the Western Cape Education Department, Principals, Teachers, Parents and the University landscape of academic readers because it could serve as a platform to set off the process for better teacher development. In the next segment I discuss the aims of the study.

## **1.6 Aims of the Research**

The study aims to investigate the perception and the use of the English Home language textbook. It aspires to generate an understanding of the relationship between the teacher, learner and the textbook. In light of the above stated points, the study aims to attain the following research objectives:

### **1.6.1 First Aim: A better understanding of the Phenomenon**

This research aims to gain a better understanding into ‘teacher practice’ in the classroom. I aim to profile and activate multiple ways to think about textbook practice. I would like to learn what teachers do with the textbook (individual text) in the classroom as they employ their own teaching method. The study’s primary goals are

- to expand a teachers’ knowledge base and repertoire of teaching English in a South African context.
- to provide practical methods of teaching;
- to engender a passion and love for English language teaching.

### **1.6.2 Second Aim: Examining Issues in Textbook Practice**

In addition, the study also examines issues that can affect Grade 11 textbook usage in and out of the classroom. Textbooks support both teachers and pupils – they free teachers up to concentrate on refining pedagogy and developing engaging, effective learning.

### **1.6.3 Third Aim: The Textbook’s Level of Inspiration for Teachers and Learners**

Earlier I alluded to the fact that this study will harness the capacity to reveal whether the current textbook those schools currently use are an inspiration and if it is a core resource by schools as stipulated by the Department of Education. Therefore, this study could serve as a trigger for future research and publication of textbooks in the arena of teaching English Home language.

### **1.6.4 Fourth Aim: Updating the Western Cape Education Department**

The research in literacy development in Grade 11 is important in order update the officials of the Western Cape Education Department, Principals, Teachers and Parents because it could serve as a platform to spark the process of teacher development. Preventive knowledge can therefore be used as a basis of knowledge when designing creative programmes for learners. Therefore, by having a set of principles that counteract the declining of students’ performance in English, it is possible to form a support structure for struggling learners by maximizing the flexibility of a text and using it to the learners’ advantage. In order to encourage students to enjoy school and participate in and out of the class, teachers need to be creative and innovative.



Sometimes, educators develop a new program, a new teaching method, or a new strategy to accomplish the difficult goals in the spectrum of language education. This study therefore builds on informed (innovative) ways to help learners improve their performance in English.

I believe that the 21st century challenge in education calls for a new mind-set: an open-minded approach to rethinking in terms of formal and informal learning, the definition of learning and the necessity of helping students develop character traits, values and virtues they need to become fully functional citizens (Rshaid, 2014: 71).

My research will attempt a fine-tuning of language skills that can contribute to effective learning, expression and communication in and out of the classroom. This fine-tuning will signpost a reflection of the communicative model in Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) e.g. an enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning and an attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom. The above-mentioned point is in direct reference to a teachers' skill in the classroom. In the next segment, I wish to share a brief notion on skilfulness.

### **1.7 Teacher Skilfulness: An Important Component in this Investigation**

Skill is understanding something completely and transforming that knowledge into creations of wonder and excellence.

Maxwell, Graves & Addington (2005: 36)

It is also the intended aim of this inquiry to harness the creative exploits of teachers that are skilful. Skill in action is a wonderful thing to behold and more importantly to record so that the acumen of that practice can be passed on. My study therefore holds a moral conviction, as there are many teachers that will be born in future generations. I intend to probe the skilful teacher. In principle, the better teacher tries new methods, invents new ways of illustrating ideas, and tries several approaches (Shipley, 1967: 16). The better teacher understands the culture of interactivity and frames her/his lessons around participation with learners. To make learning personal, a teacher can link their lesson to their hobbies, sports, art, music (Marshall, 2016: 73).

Having discussed the aims of the study, I will now discuss the research problem in the next segment.

## **1.8 Contextualizing the Problem**

A research problem is a general issue within a theoretical or practical situation that requires a solution (Fox & Bayat, 2007). There are a number of factors that contribute to making the English Home language textbook a significant object of study.

### **1.8.1 Problem One: A Vacuum of Knowledge**

As a teacher, I have discovered that textbooks are not often spoken about in a formal capacity but often by general conversation and more than likely the conversation only entails a minimal number of teachers. There exists a vacuum of knowledge about how South African teachers' use the English Home language textbook. There is also a considerable paucity of understanding as to how South African English teachers feel about the textbook they are using in the classroom.

### **1.8.2 Problem Two: Lack of Communication**

I consider the lack of communication between the Department of Education and teachers in the classroom with regard to textbook usage and analysis is a cause for concern. As a teacher I am familiar with the common approach where we meet together for our first big meeting and at that meeting textbooks are displayed which can be used in the classroom.

Often teachers will then order textbooks that appear on the Department of Education's list. There is a problem with understanding and logic of the entire process of textbook practice and development.

### **1.8.3 Problem Three: Low Teacher Effort in Terms of Textbook Practice**

Inevitably, teaching should multiply the scope and stimulation needed by learners. However, the vast majority of our schools are simply not producing the outcomes that are their chief objective (Bloch, 2009). Low teacher effort is often considered one of the most serious problems in South African schooling (McKinsey Report, 2007).

Research is needed to help educators appreciate and understand their influence on South African students' achievement by being innovative in the classroom.

Teachers can make a positive difference in students' lives despite the numerous factors that operate far beyond their control. Adequate understanding of textbook usage can help teachers' better learner performance.

#### **1.8.4 Further Problematic Features of the South African Education System**

South Africa has about 12.5 million learners in more or less 25,000 institutions and almost 450,000 teachers are employed (Cassiem, 2015: 65). With this figure in mind one can easily imagine what ripple effect good research can have on the teaching process.

Over the years a series of reports on literacy development particularly (as released) from the Annual National Assessment (ANA) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2006) indicated that many learners in South Africa who come from disadvantaged and under resourced schools have low literacy proficiency, which is influenced by children's social reality (Comber & Hill, 2000). Furthermore, 2011 Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshega released the results of the literacy test of Grade 1-6 pupils. The result was that many people in the room burst out laughing as if thousands of South Africans were content with the situation (Weekend Argus, 2 July 2011).

The above-mentioned prospect creates a barrier that can exist between the learner and the textbook. Therefore, this study has the potential to bridge the gap between the learner and the textbook that could create a closer bond of knowledge. In a broader sense Cassiem (2015: 71-72) states, "we cannot with and within an economic Paradigm try to tackle a crisis in education. We need a new paradigm—a new conceptual framework."

It is hoped that the contribution in this inquiry will help contribute to a new conceptual framework. In order to do this, I will now present the research questions.

## 1.9 Research Questions

In order to achieve the research objectives listed in the segment of number 4 of this chapter, my study will raise and attempt to answer the following research questions:

The main research questions (MRQs) are:

- How do English Home language teachers use the English Home language textbook in and out of the classroom?
- What are English language teachers' perceptions about the current English Home language textbook?

The subsidiary research questions are (SRQs):

- How do teachers use textbooks in planning and making decisions about instruction in the classroom?
- What learning barriers do teachers face concerning the English Home language textbook?
- How do teachers view other English Home language materials like the X-kit in South Africa?
- What are the possible factors that contribute to better textbook practice?

I propose to discuss these RQs in greater detail in Chapter 4 of my study.

Having presented the research questions: MRQs and SRQs, I will now highlight the key elements of the research methodology signposting the intended research design that I propose to use in this study.

## 1.10 Research Approach

The study uses a qualitative research design, where multiple data collection methods (triangulation) to collect qualitative data through teacher interviews, observation of teachers and analysis of discourse. According to Gay, Mill and Airasian (2009), triangulation is useful when a researcher wants to obtain a more complete picture of what is being studied, as well as to cross-check information.

Gay et al. (2009) stresses that the strength of qualitative data research lies in collecting data in many ways, rather than just relying on one method. Qualitative research involves watching and asking, and aims to describe events and persons in detail without the use of any numerical data. My study is situated within an interpretivist research paradigm with its emphasis on the deep interpretive meanings. Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004: 20) describe interpretivist research as looking for frames that shape meaning within social contexts.

Having discussed the research methodology of the study, I will now present the definition of terms in this study.

### **1.11 The Assumptions of the Researcher**

Based on the researcher's experience and background as a teacher and academic, four primary assumptions were made regarding this study. First, many teachers do not use the textbook in the senior phase (grade 10-12) because many teachers are preoccupied with the setwork books, which often consist of a drama and a novel book. This assumption is based on the premise that to cover the drama book and Novel including using the textbook on a regular basis is too much and will drain the English teacher. Second, the textbook is often used as a filler to ease the burden of a teacher and keep learners busy in the classroom. This assumption is guided by the fact that the textbook consists of four genres so there is always something in the textbook that you can give the learners to do in the classroom. Third, many textbooks are used without a teachers' guide and teachers are not very confident in their own responses (answers). This assumption is built on the fact that when teachers use the X-kit they are confident because all the answers are at the back of the book. Fourth, using the textbook a lot is not the overarching aim of the teacher. This assumption is based on the premise that there are many other resources that teachers can find on the internet for their classroom.

### **1.12 The Positioning of the Researcher**

At the time of conducting this study, I have been teaching for twenty years. Therefore, I bring to the inquiry process practical experience having both knowledge and understanding of the classroom context. In the context of this study, I acknowledge that the same experiences that are so valuable in providing insight could indirectly also serve as a liability, biasing one's judgment regarding research design and the interpretation of the findings. However, I view classroom activities and events as a social space where interaction occurs and with my position as an insider in the context of the study, both as a student and a teacher.

Furthermore, I believe that I am well placed than other scholars (outsiders) to handle the dynamics and fall-outs of textbook practice. In light of the above stated point, I see subjectivity as a pre-requisite for participation and interpretation of knowledge. In addition to my assumptions stated in the previous segment and theoretical orientation being made explicit at the outset of the study, I have remained committed to engaging in the ongoing critical self-reflection by way of dialoguing with academic professionals.

Moreover, to strengthen the credibility of my research I have put in place various safeguards such as triangulation of data sources, triangulation of methods and reliability checks with professional colleagues.

### **1.13 Definitions of Terms**

In this segment, I will define some of the terms that will often be used in the study. I am doing this in order to pre-empt misconception and therefore allow a collective understanding of the terms. Furthermore, terms defined here carry the same meaning throughout the study.

**Textbooks** are a printed and bound artefact for each year or course of study (Encyclopaedia of Education, 2008b).

**Social Constructivism** emphasizes the social nature of an individual's learning. The social world of a learner includes the people that directly affect that person, including teachers, friends, students, administrators, and participants in all forms of activity (Dougimas 1998).

**Qualitative research** is a research method that delves into a particular situation in order to better understand a phenomenon within its natural context and the perspectives of the participants involved (Creswell, 2009).

**Creativity** is the ability to produce something new through imaginative skill, whether a new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic object or form. The term generally refers to a richness of ideas and originality of thinking (Webster Dictionary).

**Teaching** refers to the study of methods and activities a teacher would use in the classroom.

**Methodology** refers to a particular technique that a teacher would use in the field of research.

**Motivation** refers to the process that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviours to establish something better.

**Paradigm** refers to a cluster of beliefs which influences the manner in which members of a particular discipline of study, in case how research should be conducted and results reported or interpreted (Jesson, Matheson & Lacey, 2011). Each paradigm has its own data collection methods and specific interpretation (Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2012).

Having giving some of the terms that could render some confusion, I will now reflect on the ethics imprinted in this study.

#### **1.14 Ethical Reflections**

Ethics are guidelines or sets of principles that we use for good professional practice which serve to advise and steer researchers as they conduct their work (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 64). According to research, ethical considerations play an important role when conducting research (Polanski, 2004). In accordance with the principle of justice, participants must be treated with fairness and equity throughout all stages of the research process (Wassenaar, 2012). Furthermore, ethics are often thought of as an even more pressing concern to qualitative researchers (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018: 1). Based on the above made statement, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of the Western Cape prior to the commencement of data collection. It was important for me to have informed written consent from the participants to guarantee their agreement to participate in this study and to protect themselves. I sought permission to video record interviews and I ensured confidentiality with password protected files. There were certain participants that were not comfortable with video recordings and under the ethical umbrella as a researcher, I adhered to their conditions. Therefore, confidentiality was preserved by using pseudonyms. I made a full disclosure to the participants of my intentions and the rationale behind this study. It was procedural that I get ethical clearance from the Western Cape Education Department, which gave me permission to conduct research in high schools. I followed the correct ethical standard for this study and the contributors were allowed to scrutinize the transcriptions and make any changes they felt were necessary before final submission of this thesis. In summary, I have advocated the following:

- The study did not cause any physical harm, social, mental or emotional harm to participants or to any other member of the teaching community.

- The participation in this study was based on the participants' free and voluntarily consent, expressed by completing, signing and returning the consent forms before the commencement of the study.
- The participants were guaranteed the right to withdraw from study at any stage without any consequence.
- Participants were given the right to anonymity, their identity and/or any key detail likely to unveil their anonymity will not appear in any circumstance.
- Participants were to be treated with dignity, equality and respect. Their objectives, choices, beliefs and views were to be considered objectively and respect was granted at all times.
- The study did not compromise the participants' and their institutions' good names and reputations.

### **1.15 Chapter Outline**

I present the study in seven chapters as shown below:

#### **Chapter 1**

Chapter one serves as an introduction to the present study. It first gives an overview of the study, which acts as a basis for an awareness-building platform and as a point of departure/concern for the English Home language textbook. This chapter provides the background and rationale for the study. It then discusses the aim and scope of the study, rationale and purpose. It also formulates and foregrounds the research questions for the study and reflects on the ethical dimensions of this study. Finally, it presents the organization of the chapters.

#### **Chapter 2**

This chapter situates the study in the context of previous research and scholarly material pertaining to the topic. It presents a critical synthesis of empirical literature according to relevant themes. It further highlights the theoretical underpinnings, which are relevant to this study with reference to their affiliable and affirmative qualities that support my' institutions and value systems. It highlights the world of social constructivism and conceptualizes the curriculum in relation the educational system of South Africa. This chapter also highlights the teaching landscape of English teaching.



### **Chapter 3**

The third chapter presents a literature review of issues and insights into textbook orientation. It examines various models of textbook evaluation and emphasizes the positives and negatives of using the textbook.

### **Chapter 4**

This chapter situates the study within a particular methodological tradition. It provides a rationale for the approach selected and describes the research setting and sample. It also describes data collection and analysis methods. It revisits the context of educational research. It encompasses the research questions, discusses and mentions the reasons for using interviewing, observation and document analysis for this study. It explains how data was collected and outlines the research variables, while it also focuses on the procedures that provide for triangulation.

### **Chapter 5**

This chapter organises and reports the study's main findings including the presentation of qualitative narrative data. The chapter first identifies a formulation for the basis for data analysis and attempts a description and analysis of the data gathered with reference to the research questions raised by the study.



### **Chapter 6**

This chapter synthesizes and discusses the results in light of the study's research questions, literature review, and conceptual framework in light of the findings. At the end of the chapter, I mention the difference between the teachers.

### **Chapter 7**

This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations with reference to the research questions and findings. This chapter discusses the limitations of the study along with implications for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW: KEY THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

#### PART 1

##### 2. Introduction: Theoretical Underpinnings

All I am armed with is research.

Mike Wallace

The review of literature in this chapter involves the identification, location and analysis of material related to the research problem. This chapter exhibits how the present study advances, refines or revises what is already known in the field of English language teaching/education. The purpose of this study is to foster a critical awareness of the English Home language textbook and to contribute to this continuing process of enquiry. I aim to explore with 12 teachers their perceptions of the English Home language textbook and observing them as they use the textbook in the classroom.

In 2014 when I first embarked on the research that underpins this study, I harboured an idea, more like a fantasy that I could map a coherent landscape of teaching methods for English high school teachers in South Africa, zooming in on specific techniques and making informed assertions about teaching in a South African context. Although that was a bold idea I soon gained an overview of the contextual factors in South Africa. As a result, I realized that teaching in South Africa is not easy. It became clear to me that the establishment of schooling is one of the most colossal and ever-present undertakings in South Africa. Schools in South Africa account for a substantial proportion of public and private expenditure and are vital instruments of social and economic policy aimed at promoting individual achievement and national wealth. Bernstein (2015: 1) notes that one of the greatest challenges facing the South African education system is the production of sufficient qualified, competent teachers, who can provide quality teaching for all school subjects and phases.

In this investigation, the theoretical framework undergirding this study is effective teacher research. The framework for this study is based on practical concerns and can be described as a rainbow of theories and perspectives that will be revealed in this review.

I draw on Hattie's (2012) theory of visible learning for teachers to enhance (reshape) the above concept. Hattie claims that in order to change the focus in education towards learning and impact, teachers need to develop different ways of thinking (Gates, 2016: 236). Furthermore, adding to the above I also draw on the idea of Borg (2009: 163-171) when he posits the belief that it is important to know what language teachers do and what cognition-beliefs, knowledge, thoughts – underpin their behaviour, because there is a direct relationship between cognition and practice in language teaching. This is in keeping with recent research that states that high quality teaching is now widely acknowledged to be the most important school-level factor influencing student achievement (Bera, 2014: 5). In keeping with the scope of this study and the belief that some factors (teaching strategies) can improve learners' ability to improve their academic achievements the importance of teacher research becomes increasingly relevant. Adding to this Rowe (2003: 15) states that the quality of teaching and learning provision are by far the most salient influences on students' cognitive, affective, and behavioural outcomes of schooling – regardless of their gender or backgrounds.

One of the key aims of this investigation is to find some innovative pedagogical methods to increase the way teachers use the English Home language textbook with the underlying focus in a South African context addressing the different platforms of literary texts among high school learners that the English Home language textbook offers. The engagement between teacher, learner and text results in a pattern of interaction that can help the teaching process and enhance (brighten up) learning that can improve academic output in South African schools. Twenty years ago, Long and Robinson (1998: 18) described 'a growing sense that something was wrong, recognition that traditional synthetic syllabi and teaching procedures were not working as they were supposed to'. Ellis (2003: 207) further stressed that there remained a continuous 'sense of failure of traditional approaches' to language teaching. Swan (2012: 101) however is of the opinion that there is no evidence that traditional methods of teaching language have failed.

The engagement that is investigated in this study falls in line with the South African Education comprehensive programme, which is referred to as Action Plan 2014: Towards the Realization of Schooling 2025. Since I am investigating the use of a teaching strategy in the classroom while using the English Home language textbook, I require a framework that will facilitate the achievement of the main objective of this study, which is to see how teachers think about the textbook and how they use it in the classroom. In keeping with my belief, I have to deal effectively and comprehensively with research in English language education. I have to utilize all tools available and therefore multiple perspectives will be employed in an attempt to address the research problem.

Having presented some of the underpinnings of the theoretical framework I will now present a review of relevant literature. Therefore, this review will encompass the use of figurative language especially by using a number of metaphors. The practice of using metaphors has extended across many fields and places like Canada (e.g. Munby & Russell, 1990); China (e.g. Zhao, Coombs, & Zhou, 2010); Ireland (e.g. Leavy, McSorley, & Boté, 2007); Israel (e.g. Ben-Peretz, Mendelson, & Kron, 2003); Spain and Germany (e.g. Martínez, Sauleda, & Huber, 2001); and the United States (e.g. Bullough & Stokes, 1994; Sumsion, 2002) and other countries. Based on the common nature and setting of figurative writing and particularly the metaphor in academic writing I will also employ it in this review.

In a later segment, I will present the lenses through which I view my research as well as the general orientations, which will reveal the theories embedded in this study. But first I will position my objective in stating why I deem it fit to use figurative language and especially metaphors in this review. According to Carter, Goddard, Reah Sanger & Bowring (1997: 83), metaphors allow producers of texts to make connections in a few words, which would take lines of writing, or long stretches of speech, to make in a more literal way. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) ground-breaking work *Metaphors We Live By* showed a very clear and powerful way that metaphors are part and parcel of everyday language and thought (Kovecses, 2015: ix).

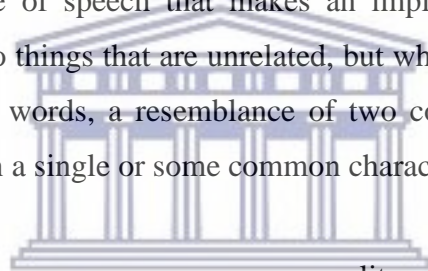
## **2.1 Positioning: Figurative Language for Added Clarity in this Review**

I hope that the following discussion will act as an awareness-builder that will show the potential of the use of figurative language in this review. According to Ortony (1975), figurative language is necessary in the field of education. He observes that:

The great pedagogic value of figurative language uses of language is to be found in their potential to transfer learning and understanding from what is known to what is less well known and to do so in a very vivid manner. To appreciate these facts may be to make better use of them and to better understand them, (figurative language) like metaphors are necessary as a communicative device because they allow the transfer of coherent chunks of characteristics—Perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and experiential—from a vehicle which is known to a topic which is less so (Ortony, 1975: 53)

Based on the above-mentioned quotation, I will employ the use of metaphors, which fits in the ambit of my research to bring added clarity to this study. In stating the use of the metaphor, I would like to offer a definition of a metaphor:

A Metaphor is a figure of speech that makes an implicit, implied, or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated, but which share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics.



[www.literarydevices.net/metaphor.com](http://www.literarydevices.net/metaphor.com)

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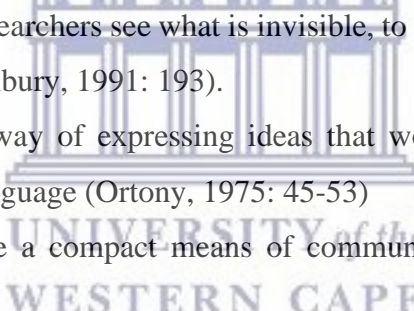
Based on the above definition a metaphor is a comparison using figurative or descriptive language. I believe in accordance with (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) that “new metaphors have the power to create a new reality.” Furthermore, I also believe that past metaphors have the power to stimulate a new discussion. In this review, I employ the use of figurative language because they are filled with value-loaded knowledge. I deem it fit to use value-loaded language in order to redimentionalize some of the concepts in this review, which in return can bring added clarity to the theories discussed in this study.

Although I deem it necessary to use figurative language, “there is a notion that common sense traditional teaching often present metaphors as an anomaly, an unusual or deviant way of using language, a minority interest or something you do in a literature class” (Goatly, 1997: 1). I am inclined to distance myself from this view on the bases that so much has already been covered about some of the theories embedded in this study. Therefore, to not attempt to capture the

essence of the theories in a new (fresh) or old way would be a fallacy (injustice) to research in English Language teaching (education).

Based on my stance I therefore employ a number of metaphors throughout this study, including the review in the hope that it would “furnish conceptually rich, image-evoking conceptualizations” (Gibbs, 1994: 133). Like Aristotle, I believe that “a metaphor when used appropriately could act conceptually to produce new understanding” (Cameron, 2003: 13).

Notwithstanding this, I would also like to give additional reinforcements for using metaphors. I adopt a number of dimensions through the prism of figurative language in order to highlight the qualities of metaphors and the impact it can have for researchers in the educational arena. Since “metaphors and mental processes are basic to language and cognition, then a clearer understanding of its working is relevant” (Goatly, 1997) in this study. Therefore, for researchers it can help in the following ways:

- 
- Metaphors can help researchers see what is invisible, to describe what otherwise would be indiscernible (Thornbury, 1991: 193).
  - Metaphors provide a way of expressing ideas that would be extremely difficult to convey using literal language (Ortony, 1975: 45-53)
  - Metaphors can provide a compact means of communication (Fainsilber & Ortony, 1989: 181-184).
  - Metaphors fundamentally affect our way of conceptualizing the world and reality whether we are aware of this phenomenon or not (Saban, 2006: 299).
  - Metaphors may help capture the vividness of our phenomenological experience (Ortony, 1975: 45-53).

The above list does have the potential for speakers to “convey richer, more detailed, more vivid images of our subjective experience than can be expressed by literal language” (Gibbs, 1994: 125). Since language and metaphor are closely involved with each other this segment has given some insight into why I decided to use figurative language (metaphors) in this review.

A metaphor used in academic writing is not only an interesting and worthwhile endeavour for educational researchers, but we should also consider it as a vital obligation for writers as it has the capacity to enhance (brighten up) an old concept.

Saldana (2015: 72) confirms this when he declares, “metaphors and similes can enhance your readers’ understanding by making the local and particular more generalizable, or at least comprehensible.”

Having stated my intention to use figurative language in this review, I will now locate the frontier behind us as a theoretical base using metaphors, as I navigate through a number of issues and concepts. At this stage, before I start the next segment I would like to factor in the fact that I am aware that there can be limitations in the conceptual framework. A theoretical framework can reveal and/or conceal meaning and understanding (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016: 129). Therefore, I am cognizant of the fact that while my framework can provide a meaningful way of seeing, thinking and understanding the issues in English language teaching, no theoretical or conceptual framework provides one perfect or complete explanation of what is being studied (Anfara & Mertz, 2015: 229; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016: 129).

### **2.1.1 Locating: The Frontier Behind Us**

In this study, I sought to understand how the experiences of L2 teachers tell a story about the role of the English Home language textbook in their social setting. This is a hermeneutically contextualised study and is relevant to English language teachers in South Africa for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, in order to understand the deep-rooted issues, it was necessary for me to complete a critical review of the current literature. In doing the above, I will recalibrate past theories (knowledge) and formulate it in the hope that I can operationalize past knowledge in a fresh way for the new millennium. I refer to the above as deconstructing and reconstructing knowledge.

This research pivots on literature in the use of the constructivist domain and attempts to reveal an understanding of the effect of the constructivist paradigm within a South African context. In addition, this inquiry anchors the belief that constructivist education appeals to children’s interests, engages them in experimentation with phenomena of the physical world, and fosters cooperation between teacher and child and among children (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987/1990). I also view English language teaching as an on-going development aimed at promoting English language development in and out of the classroom. The route of realization in this literature review follows a course through the various areas of inquiry, taking up issues, which are crucial in defining both the dangers and the value of English language teaching.

Furthermore, I look at the conviction of English teachers when using individual texts as presented in the textbook. In doing this, I will be able to generate themes for data analysis. I also make brief mention of the methodological considerations for the study, which acts as a cushion in this review.

In principle, all areas of research experience changes in the paradigms stimulating their work (Kuhn, 1970: 7). Some of the knowledge that I reveal in this review can be considered on a 'surface level' and then there is knowledge that can pique the mind because it is hardly mentioned or it was never mentioned enough under the domain of English language teaching. As Booth (1988: 297) states "that to say something that he can't find at least in seven sources" for me can almost be considered new. Throughout this review, I will attempt to point out some important gaps and omissions in some particular sections with regard to the literature. Furthermore, I will identify and discuss relevant contested issues. In keeping with the array of the 'broad banded' nature of knowledge, my overarching beliefs, together with their educational implications inform this paradigm lodged in this inquiry. My investigation will therefore attempt to understand social phenomena from a context-specific perspective.

Notwithstanding the afore-mentioned points, this inquiry weaves itself within the context of an ecosystem and is 'value-bound rather than value-free' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through the contours of an ecosystem, the conceptual framework is revealed and guides this investigation. Since ecology is all about interconnection and unending change, the conceptual framework is built from theoretical stances, bodies of literature, personal experiences and philosophical orientation (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Maxwell, 2005).

Adding to this, the theoretical framework is the blueprint for the 'house' that has been built. It is evident that I can see the outside structure of the house but I also know that there is a structure below the house that I cannot see and it is underground. This metaphor encapsulates the inner framings of the structure of the house. Therefore, I am not only bringing my own spectrum of past knowledge but I am also bringing a portion of knowledge that others might not see. This is in keeping with the viewpoint of Sivasubramaniam (2011: 53) who views language as a creative instrument of meaning which "has the power to create meaning anew and afresh" each time that someone uses it.



In conjunction with the above view, Torraco (2005: 356) also states, “the integrative literature review is a form of research that reviews, critiques and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated.” Lysaght (2011: 572) further expresses it eloquently when he states, “a researcher’s choice reflects important personal beliefs and understandings about the nature of knowledge, how it exists in relation to the observer, and the possible roles to be adopted, and tools to be employed consequently, by the researcher in his/her work.”

Another feature of this literature review is that it is like the work of a Gardener. A gardener beautifies a garden and gets the soil in shape to the best of his ability because of the other variables. The thoughts of Norton (1985: 35-36) are relevant at this stage when the view of a gardener is expressed in the following way:

A gardener has a small plot of land and looks after the different needs of the plants. He tries to provide nourishment all year round. He takes an interest in the growth of the different plants. Also, the gardener realizes it’s not up to him. He can’t provide the sunshine. So a lot of things are beyond the gardener’s work.

In light of the above stated quotation, the literature grows and harmonizes the other elements of the study. Some of the challenges of teaching and textbook practice intrigue this literature review, and looking at these issues up close tempers curiosity. This can lead to all sorts of detours of research and learning, interviewing, experimenting and observation. Primarily, the expectation of a garden always seems to engender hope. The theoretical view presented in this chapter provides an anchor for the literature review as well as the methods and analysis for the study.

To conduct this selected literature review, I used multiple information sources, including books, articles, digital dissertations, professional journals, internet resources, abstracts, monographs and Western Cape Education Department’s (WCED) PowerPoint presentations.

Based on a constructivist stance on language in the context of this investigation, I deemed it necessary to explore the constructivist doctrine. In doing this I will look at the perspectives that are relevant to this study with reference to affinitive and affiliable qualities that support my value systems. By doing this, I lay down the foundational principles that will highlight the

constructivist paradigm as one theory that underpins this study and furthermore, it will help the readership of this study to make sense of what this study has to say about the theoretical orientations.

The constructivist theory is wide-ranging and therefore gives a good framework for this study. I will therefore start the next segment with an overview of the theories that are embedded in this investigation because I believe that the outline of this investigation shapes the research process. However, before I do this I would like to reinforce my position by stating why there is a need for this study.

### **2.1.2 The Need for Competency in Textbook Practice for English Home Language Teachers**

In this segment, I reinforce the ‘why’ of this research. I shall try to crystallize the theme of the two chapters that encompass the literature review. I shall do this by separating out two basic points:

- 1. The primary purpose of this study is to enable teachers to become competent (develop different teaching skills) in the use of the English Home language textbook.**

In doing this, teachers can empower themselves, gain understanding, reflect on practice and learn to better articulate what they are doing in the classroom. This in return can lead to a new level of professionalism because it can spill over into other levels of teaching English when dealing with other literature books (texts) as part of the syllabus.

- 2. Benefiting the Educational Community in South Africa**

I believe that this study falls in the realm of educational research and will benefit English teachers in the educational community in South Africa. I would also stress that educational research is even more relevant in the context of South Africa because since 2012 the senior phase in high school has implemented the ‘new’ curriculum and assessment policy statement. Furthermore, I agree with Cassiem (2015: 13) when he states, ‘a teacher who stops learning is unfit to teach.’ The textbook comprises a number of different texts e.g. comprehensions, poems, advertisements, grammar exercises etc. I deem it important that teachers have knowledge of dealing with all types of texts presented in the textbook.

By this, I mean using it effectively in the classroom and using it in a stimulating way to increase learners' appetite for learning. Having stated why educational research is important as a characteristic of this study and having shown certain benefits of this study for English teachers (which do have the capacity to benefit learners). In the research and methodology chapter, I will revisit the issue of educational research and provide additional clarity for this contextual study. I would like to end this segment with a quotation by Szent-Gyorgyi (1986) which can help reinforce my own level of thinking for this study:

Discovery (Research) consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought.

I will now move on to the theoretical coverage, which is pivotal to this study. Here I employ the metaphor of a roof that covers a certain structure even though there are different sections under the entire roof. Then I move on and demonstrate the river of constructivism.

## **2.2 Theoretical Covering: Under One Roof**

At a theoretical level, this investigation is significantly guided by an orientation towards four theoretical perspectives, which align themselves in one way or the other. I will address them in the following order: Vygotsky's thoughts, John Dewey's Earlier View, the elements of Jerome Bruner and the thoughts of Paulo Freire. The pillar of this orientation is my overriding belief that constructivism is not a unified theory but is an amalgam of different perspectives (Bruning et al., 2004; Moshman, 1982; Phillips, 1995). According to Simpson (2002: 347-354) the orientation of constructivism is an epistemology or philosophical explanation about the nature of learning.

Sternberg and Williams (2010: 410) equate constructivist teaching with student-centered teaching, and described constructivism as bringing "an increased awareness of the roll of individual differences" and "a renewed emphasis in learning on the role of student motivation." I now proceed to give a broad overview of the issues and insights in constructivism. There is light in each facet of life and there is darkness. This awareness brings further understanding of constructivism as well as it concerns and comprehensions that I will discuss in the next segment.

### **2.3 Concerns and Comprehensions in Constructivism: The Light and the Darkness**

The following segment expands on the theoretical stance that I propose in this study. Constructivism is an innovative strategy in which students construct their knowledge themselves through interaction with each other based on previous experiences (Sharma, 2014). Constructivism is a theory, a metaphor of how knowledge is acquired and developed advocating the idea that knowledge needs to be actively constructed by the learner (Skinner, 2010: 155). The Constructivist theory is extensive and gives room for creativity and inventiveness, which are the backbones of Educational research.

In principal, knowledge is co-constructed and not a question of in-put and output relationship. Like a river constructivism flows through the thick maze of education to serve the different levels of teaching. In the next section, I will focus on constructivism and employ the metaphor of a river.

#### **2.3.1 The River of Constructivism: The Emerging Current**

Constructivism ‘is a position which has been frequently adopted ever since people began to ponder epistemology’ (Hein, 1991). I am using the metaphor of a river to demonstrate the natural flow of constructivism over the years and to show how it branched out didactically. In doing this it can enrich our understanding of the many faces of constructivism. If I align myself with constructivist theory, it implies that I am following in the footsteps of Dewey and Vygotsky. In adopting, a constructivist view in this study implies that I am also running counter to Platonic views of epistemology. For many researchers such as Sivasubramaniam (2004: 425) knowledge is not “out there,” independent of the knower. Hence, I would like to reaffirm that the knowledge in this study “will be a value-laden and value-added construct” (ibid). In using the ‘river’ metaphor our understanding of the many faces of constructivism can be understood in its different context.

I hope that the discussion on constructivism will help illumine the connection of the vast array of constructivism in light of theorist views. Like a river, the width and depth will increase downstream ([www.markedbyteachers.com/gcse/geography](http://www.markedbyteachers.com/gcse/geography)). This characteristic is in keeping with this study as I represent the different faces of constructivism, which leads me to end with the widest component in education, which is social constructivism.

Therefore, I deepen the course of constructivism and invoke the theoretical premise embedded in this investigation. At this juncture, I would like to show the rapid growth of the form of the word 'constructivism' and its associations as this would reflect the starting flow of the river.

Michael Mahoney studied the use of construct-based terms during the period 1974-2002. In his investigation, he concluded that current trends indicated that constructivism was increasing in its influence on society. He also concluded that constructivism was "increasing with accelerating frequency in books and articles in psychology" (Mahoney, 2003: 1). According to Jeffrey, White & Harbaugh (2010: 20), constructivism is fundamentally an active and interactive view of learning. It suggests encouragement of the learning process through optimal challenge and adaptation to differences.

A general search of the word 'constructivism' reaches a staggering 4 330 000 results. This should be compared against Mahoney research when he indicated in 1974 that there were fewer than 1,000 instances of the 'use' of the word "construct" in titles and abstracts of psychological articles. The above example is just a small window to indicate the emergence of constructivism. This revelation provides a valuable contribution for this study to steer it in the right direction by indicating that constructivism in schools is a valued inquiry. Furthermore, in 2002, the above-mentioned word appeared 4000 times. In 2017, the word appeared 158 000 000 results through a Google search done January 2018.

An important prelude to this study is the fact that "constructivist teaching strategies have been shown to be effective at different levels of schooling" (Pelech & Pieper, 2010: 17). Constructivism's profound and unique recognition to human learning make the traditional teaching thought change thoroughly, generating a deep effect on teaching practice. As a researcher, I feel that studying the constructivism theory in a school setting produces amounts of rich research fruits. Therefore, I believe that the constructivist model has an important guiding effect for South African education reform, which has been underway for some time now. This study therefore probes into the implication of constructivist teaching theory in the South African classrooms revealing a kaleidoscope of teaching methods. In sum and spirit, the rainbow of constructivism has already turned into a hot 'seller', which activates many new thoughts and views for this investigation. Furthermore, I should critique and absorb them reasonably in order to find the framework to help learners in South Africa.

In this first segment, I have tried to present a view indicating why constructivism is important and why the elements of constructivism should be investigated. In addition to this, it will be useful for me to look at its proponents in order to understand the substance of constructivism in a broader context and its positioning principles.

### **2.3.2 Constructivism: Positioning Principles**

In the spectrum of education, some proponents of constructivism have offered many definitions (Fosnot & Dolk, 1996; Gabler & Schroeder, 2003; Henson, 2004; Schwandt, 2003; von Glaserfeld, 2005). Despite the various definitions, they all adhere to some basic characteristics. Pelech and Pieper (2010: 8) list them in this order:

- People of all ages do not discover knowledge; rather, they construct it or make it.
- People create knowledge by relating or connecting it to their previous knowledge.
- Learning involves active restructuring of how one thinks.
- People use personal experiences and social interaction to create knowledge.
- Cognitive growth is stimulated when people are confronted with practical, contextual problems or personal problems that present situations that require a new way to think.

From the above list, I believe that constructivism views knowledge as a subjective process that is shaped and structured by one's experiences. In keeping with this concept, a teacher in a constructivist setting will view himself/herself as a teacher who manages the learning environment and acts as a guide, facilitator or even coach. In keeping with this social dimension, the theoretical framework in this inquiry embraces the fact that learning always builds upon knowledge that a student already knows. Adding to this is the fact that this prior knowledge is referred to as a schema. Therefore, one of the main theoretical principles behind the constructivist model is that all learning sifts through pre-existing schemata.

In keeping with this format, constructivists suggest that learning is more effective when a learner is actively engaged in the learning process compared to when a learner attempts to receive knowledge passively. The learners do things through facilitation from the teacher (Prahallada, 2013). The principles laid out above underscore the need that we have to think differently in the classroom. To understand this social dimension in the classroom I will look at the thoughts of Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky in the next segment.

### **2.3.3 Constructivism: A Reflection of Vygotsky's Thoughts**

The theories of Vygotsky are central to any serious discussion of children's (teenagers) learning (Daniels, 2001). My critical lens maintains that knowledge is largely dependent upon the interaction between the subject and the object. The basic point of constructivism is the fact that learning is an active process (Gravett, 2005: 19). Vygotsky believed that knowledge and thought are constructed through social interaction with family, friends, teachers and peers (Bates, 2016: 16). Vygotsky's theory forms a cornerstone of the constructivist movement (Schunk, 2008: 235). Vygotsky may have been influenced by the work of the philosopher John Dewey (Solomon, 2009: 65). Crotty (1998: 8-9) defines constructivism notion of truth this way, "truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world."

Researcher reflexivity is important in constructivism because the researcher plays an important role in constructing meaning within a given context. A constructivist teacher, thus, creates a context for learning in which students can become engaged in interesting activities that encourage and facilitates learning (Vygotsky, 1978). As I mentioned before in the constructivist context, the English Home language teacher is a learning facilitator and a diagnostician (Prahallada, 2013). In essence, constructivist practice nurtures critical thinking, and generates motivated and autonomous learners. The purpose of this study and the research questions presented in chapter 1 guide me to situate this inquiry within an epistemology of constructivism and the theoretical perspective of interactionism. This study therefore explores the reality of a particular social and cultural context. Later, in this chapter, I will further unpack its characteristics as well as review it. Having briefly laid out the basic tenants of Vygotsky's thoughts I will present a brief overview of John Dewey's earlier view.

### **2.3.4 Constructivism: John Dewey's Earlier View**

John Dewey's basic belief was that traditional education was too concerned with the delivery of pre-ordained knowledge and not focused enough on the learner's actual learning experiences (Bates, 2016: 6). Dewey viewed the individual as the centre of the learning process (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 6). Constructivist teaching methods reflect constructivist learning theory. In education, many of the activities recommended by constructivist are quite similar to those advocated by Dewey (1938).

Dewey and Piaget were very influential in the development of informal education. Dewey's idea of influential education suggests that education must engage with enlarge experience and the exploration of thinking and reflection is associated with the role of educators. The theory of Dewey thus encompasses a broader movement of progressive education, along with Piaget. Dewey promoted the idea of learning by doing and experimenting rather than it being a passive experience (Bates, 2016)

This study thrives off the concept of experimentation in the classroom as a way to point to good teaching practice. Therefore, I wish to lean towards what Dewey argues when he states that teachers should look at learning as a cycle of experience where lessons are planned and executed based on observation, reflection from their own, their learners' previous experiences, and interest (Woods, 2008). The application of Dewey's theory in practice is very dependent upon the political position of the country at the time, since this undoubtedly will influence educational policy and its intentions (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 13). This view allows me to also locate this inquiry into the theoretical perspective of Dewey. Furthermore, the ongoing importance of the influence of Dewey (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 11) is also evident in the work of Paulo Freire (1996).

Freire called for a learner centred education and the philosopher Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' that links with Dewey's terms of 'habits' (Dewey, 1938: 18). Having laid down the elements of Dewey's theory I will now present the elements of Jerome Bruner's theory.

### **2.3.5 Constructivism: The Views of Jerome Bruner**

The works of Vygotsky (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 106; Stierer & Maybin, 1994: xi) inspired Bruner. Jerome Bruner (1961: 21-32) stated that the purpose of education is not to impart knowledge, but instead to facilitate a child's thinking and problem solving skills which can then be transferred to a range of situations. Bruner, like Vygotsky, emphasised the social nature of learning, citing that other people should help a child develop skills through the process of scaffolding. Bruner's ideas stressed a more human approach to learning, where interest, motivation and culture were at the fore (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 103). In principal, Bruner's idea about 'child-centred' approach to teaching underlies the value of constructing a relationship between teacher and pupil (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 106).



Furthermore, Bruner's deep-seated notions were that teachers should reflect on how they engage with their learners (Moore, 2000: 25). Bruner's theory on constructivism encompasses the idea of learning as an active process wherein those learning are able to form new ideas based on what their current knowledge is as well as their past knowledge. In this context, this study can find a theoretical stance concerning the interaction in the classroom as teaching takes place. This view calls for a pedagogical mode with an element in skill performance (Bruner 1996: 57). Today we need to teach our learners the concept of skills, which is an element of democracy. Adding to this level of democracy no learner should feel oppressed. This leads me to the principal thoughts of Paulo Freire, which I will discuss in the next segment.

### **2.3.6 Constructivism for the Oppressed: The Thoughts of Paulo Freire**

Paulo Freire's educational theories were developed while he worked with underprivileged workers in north-eastern Brazil to develop their literacy (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 128). He has been called "the greatest living educator, a master and a teacher" (Taylor, 1993: 1). Although Freire's critical pedagogy (1970) originated in the Brazilian context, he claimed that it was conceived significant widely in the Third World as a 'utopian' pedagogy (Freire, 1985: 57).

The ideas of Freire were later adapted in North America, Latin America and many parts of Europe. Worldwide educational programme innovations in literacy, English as a second language (ESL), peace education, health education, teenage school discipline, youth centres, adult education and community development were guided by Freire's ideas (Wallerstein & Bernstein, 1988, Macedo & Freire, 1998; Aronowita, 1993). Therefore, in the context of South Africa the ideas of Freire are worth considering for reforming secondary education and steering the English Home language teacher against what he referred to as the 'banking concept' of education. The principles laid out by Freire became a sanctified scripture for Western academics in the 1980s (Canagarajah, 1999: 20). In keeping with this theoretical stance, I anchor this inquiry in the educational theory of Paulo Freire.

Having focused on some theoretical aspects that underlie constructivism, I wish to state the three objectives of this chapter: firstly, explain constructivism and its many 'faces'. Secondly, discuss the insights and issues in the curriculum and textbook practice and thirdly, discuss textbook practice and learner improvement.

In order to sustain the primacy of the four theoretical perspectives in this first part of this literature review I will further examine the underpinnings of constructivism and its impact on the classroom as well as offer a critique of the four views. In doing this I intend to exploit the flexibility of the theory and forge ahead with my research

#### **2.4 The World of Constructivism: Old Forms Navigating the Contemporary**

A number of scholars have stated that constructivism dates back to the time of Socrates. Socrates suggested that teachers and learners should talk with each other, interpret, and construct the hidden knowledge by asking questions (Hilav, 1990, cited in Erdem, 2001). In this investigation my examination of the literature and experience allow me to see constructivist inquiry as a means to open up the hidden concepts/principles in the classroom and ‘thereby extending the possibilities to create opportunities’ (Lincoln & Guba, 2013: 9) for what Westwood called ‘navigating the contemporary’ (Lincoln & Guba, 2011). As I search the literature, I understand that constructivism is a learning theory that postulates that learners actively construct knowledge and make meaning based on their experiences individually or socially. Constructivism is hardly a new school of thought (Brown, 2007).

The key word that I discovered in constructivism is the word ‘active’ and this active role that the learner takes in constructivist learning sharply contrast with one in which learning is seen as a passive transmission of information from one individual to another (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, Duffy and Cunningham, 1996: 170-199).

The “constructivist stance maintains that learning is a process of constructing meaning; it is how people make sense of their experience” (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999: 260). Hence, meaning making is interpretive and dependent on the learner’s experiences and understanding (Jonassen, 1992). In addition, Gruber and Voneche (1977) suggest that the term constructivism most probably derives from Piaget’s constructivist views (1967), as well as from Bruner’s (1996) constructivist description of discovery learning. For the same reason, Perkins (1992) points out that constructivism has multiple roots in psychology and philosophy of this century.

## **2.5 The Many Reflections of Constructivism: The Rainbow Effect**

Constructivism "has become de rigueur in educational circles and ... stems from a long and respected tradition in cognitive psychology, especially the writings of Dewey, Vygotsky, and Piaget" (Danielson, 1996: 23). According to Tobin & Tippins (1993: 3-21), constructivism is a way of thinking about knowing, a referent for building models of teaching, learning and curriculum. It thus functions as a philosophy of learning as well as a philosophy of teaching. In order to point out the evolving nature of constructivism I will discuss the different types of constructivism. Ernest (1995: 459) also points out "there are as many varieties of constructivism as there are researchers". Dougimas (1998) outlined seven "faces"/reflections of constructivism based on "points of view perspectives" defined by individual writings. They range from cognitive constructivism, radical constructivism, cultural constructivism, critical constructivism, constructionism and social constructivism. I now propose to focus on the six faces of constructivism.

### **2.5.1 Cognitive Constructivism: New Understandings**

Cognitive constructivism is the root of all other shades of constructivism credited to Piaget. This perspective focuses on internal, individual constructions of knowledge (Cobb, 1994, Moshman, 1982). Students may be said to author their own knowledge, advancing their cognitive structures by revising and creating new understandings out of existing ones (Applefield, Huber, & Moallem, 2000: 7).

### **2.5.2 Radical Constructivism: Viability**

Through this perspective, the focus is still on the individual learner as a constructor. However, the learner's constructions do not necessarily reflect knowledge of the real world. Knowledge does not represent or correspond to external reality but is viable (von Glaserfeld, 1996: 3-7). The radical constructivist has relinquished "metaphysical realism" finally, and finds himself in full agreement with Piaget (1937: 311), who says, "Intelligence organizes the world by organizing itself."

### **2.5.3 Cultural Constructivism: Competing Ecologies**

Cultural constructivism moves beyond the immediate social environment of a learning situation are the wider context of cultural influences, including custom, religion, biology, tools and language. For example, the format of books can affect learning, by promoting views about the organisation, accessibility and status of the information they contain.

Coburn (1993: 51-69) writes of the world of subject matter and the internal mental world of the student as competing conceptual "ecologies", an image which invokes pictures of competing constructs, adaptation and survival-of-the-fittest. Dougimas (1998) states that this is a somewhat more complex picture than radical constructivism. It highlights the need to consider both contexts fully, that of the student and that of the knowledge to be learned. Furthermore, Dougimas considers this more complex than radical constructivism.

#### **2.5.4 Critical Constructivism: Focusing on Reform**

Critical constructivism looks at constructivism within a social and cultural environment. Taylor (1996) describes critical constructivism as a social epistemology that addresses the socio-cultural context of knowledge construction and serves as a referent for cultural reform. Critical constructivism confirms the relativism of radical constructivism, and identifies the learner as being suspended in semiotic systems similar to those earlier identified in social and cultural constructivism. Taylor (1996: 151-173) further states that teachers need to work collegially toward reconstructing the education culture together rather than heroically on their own. I will now move on to discuss the form of constructivism that anchors this study.

#### **2.5.5 Social Constructivism: Grounding this Investigation Based on the Process of Interaction**

This study positions itself within a constructivist stance and particularly social constructivism. Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of social interaction and cooperative learning in constructions both cognitive and emotional images of reality (Brown, 2007: 12).

The concept of dialectical constructivism or social constructivism challenges the scientific realist assumption of post-positivism that reality can be reduced to its component parts (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008: 8).

The champion of social constructivism is Vygotsky and this constructivist epistemology conceptualizes learning as a process of constructing personal meanings in social contexts (Vygotsky, 1978).

As has been indicated earlier that social constructivist theory was derived from one of the major learning theories, constructivism. The theory that Vygotsky pioneered carries the label 'sociocultural theory' or alternatively 'cultural-historical theory' (Wertsch, 1985: 30). Social constructivism emphasizes the social nature of an individual's learning.

The social world of a learner includes the people that directly affect that person, including teachers, friends, students, administrators, and participants in all forms of activity (Dougimas, 1998). Social constructivism is a direct reflection of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). In principal, social constructivism views the origin of knowledge construction as being the social intersection of people, interactions that involve sharing, comparing and debating among learners and mentors (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989: 32-42; Rogoff, 1990, Schunk, 2008). Social constructivist models further emphasize the importance of social interactions in the acquisition of skills and knowledge (Schunk, 2008: 236).

In light of the above-mentioned issues, the social setting of learning assumes center stage. In this contextual process, learners both refine their own meanings and help others find meaning. Vygotsky' sociocultural theory puts emphasis on the supportive guidance of mentors as they aid other learners to achieve successively more complex skill, understanding, and ultimately independent competence. The fundamental ideas presented above are further grounded by Bonk & Cunningham presentation of social constructivism. Inevitably, the proponents of the social constructivist view of learning consider learning a social activity rather than an egocentric task (Steffe & Gale, 1995). The principles laid out by Bonk & Cunningham (1998: 22-50) include:

- Teachers should allow learners to have ownership.
- Create a classroom ethos where there is joint responsibility for learning.
- Learning environment should reflect real world complexities.
- Use activities with multiple solutions to promote student to student and teacher to student dialogue and articulation of ideas.
- Build a broad community of audiences beyond the instructor.

Understanding the social aspect of the classroom can cement a teachers' level of teaching and enhance their capacity in their relationship with learners and the way they learn. At this stage, I would like to reinforce my position by stating that in this chapter I have explored both the theoretical underpinnings (main theories that I am using) and the different faces of constructivism.

I have emphasized the importance of social constructivism in relation to this investigation. Despite the generic nature of the discussion so far in this chapter, the significance of the four theorists that underpin this study and social constructivism have been recognized.

In the next segment, I will look at the philosophy of the sociocultural theory and the activity theory. In essence, the activity theory as first proposed by Vygotsky and developed further by Leont'ev conceptualizes human cognition in relationship to human physically and socially motivated activities (Swain, Kinnear & Steinman, 2011: 96). Having positioned this study within a social constructivist stance, I will now move on to the philosophy of the sociocultural theory.

#### **2.5.5.1 The Philosophy of the Sociocultural Theory: Mediating the World to Others**

This study draws on sociocultural theory, including elements of the activity theory and widely used elements of language pedagogy that can surface in interesting new ways when the English Home language textbook is activated. The focus is on a set of affordances offered by English Home language teachers on the assumption that dynamic collaboration with teacher and student can contribute to the development of learner aptitude and advancement through a set of activities. Furthermore, the educational concerns and social matters encompassing this study in the context of South Africa views language learning as an interactive and social alignment harnessing the elements of various activities. A sociocultural examination of literacy shifts our attention from decontextualized texts, skills and individuals to literacy events, literacy practices and literacy performances (Kucer, 2009: 210). Activity brings interaction and this leads to further possibilities of learning. In the next segment, I will unpack the nuances of the activity theory.

#### **2.6 Activity Theory: The Edge of Possibility**

One of the most interesting contemporary applications of Vygotsky's ideas is the version of the 'activity theory' by Cole and Engestrom (Palmer, 2001: 36). Cole and Engestrom's version of the activity theory posits the activity system as the basic unit of analysis of individual and collective behaviour (Palmer, 2000: 36; Cole & Engestrom, 1996). On a broad a scale, Vygotsky concerned himself throughout his work with the relationship between individual's mind and socially organized ways of knowing and acting (Swain, Kinnear & Steinman, 2011: 94).

Engestrom & Reijo Miettinen (1999: 1) described activity theory as a ‘well-kept secret’. Kuutti (1996: 25) describes activity theory as a ‘philosophical and cross-disciplinary framework for studying different kinds of human practices as development processes, with both individual and social levels interlinked at the same time’. The concept of activity foreshadows thinking, doing, and of Hedegaard, Chaiklin & Jensen (1999: 19), I will refer to it as principles of social practices that are believed to provide conditions for psychological development using the appropriate tools that help interpret human behaviour in the classroom. Hence, human beings are active agents who use their involvement with activity to construct their environment in ways unique to their sociocultural histories (Leontiev, 1981).

An important code of the activity theory is the fact that an investigation can afford an analysis that would lead to the development of material and representative theoretic tools necessary to enact positive interventions. Furthermore, the essence of the activity theory is to take a situation and transform it in an effort to create something qualitatively new (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006: 210, Engestrom, 1999b). Activity theory in this study also refers to the classroom or learning activities teachers cultivate as part of their teaching repertoires (Swain, Kinnear & Steinman, 2011: 94).

### **2.6.1 Activity Theory: A Larger Base of Performance**

The rendering of the English word ‘activity’ is synonymous with a weak translation. The Russian term refers to something much larger. According to Ryle (1999: 413), “the concept of activity is poorly rendered by the English word; in activity theory the implication is of high-level, motivated thinking, doing and being of an individual in a given social context”. In the Russian sense, education is an activity and adds a level of definitiveness to this study as it fulfils its domain in the entire continuum of the social cultural theory.

### **2.6.2 The Continuum of the Social Process: Essential Elements**

In keeping with the broader scope of this study, I believe that social constructivism can help me come to terms with learning not as a cognitive activity only, but also as a social process, whereby learners acquire knowledge through interaction with their environment and other human beings (Nieman & Monyai, 2006: 125). Vygotsky’s ideas and the research that continues to emanate from them will prove useful in appreciating the relevance of the theory in the classroom.

It was Vygotsky's notion that an individual's mental action "can only be understood by going outside the individual and examining the social and cultural processes from which it derives" (Ardichvili, 2001: 35). According to Vygotsky, meanings are first passed socially and then adopted individually (Fosnot, 2005).

The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky describes learning as a social process and the origination of human intelligence in society or culture (Aubrey & Riley, 2016). The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky believed everything is learnt on two levels (<http://www.ceebl.manchester.ac.uk>) and therefore within this constructivist paradigm, learners are seen as autonomous, active agents where learner interaction and dialogues are central to the learning processes (Vygotsky, 1978). This now leads me to the value of mediating during this process.

## **2.7 Mediation: Facilitating the Process of Learning**

Mediation is a central concept in sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Appel & Lantolf, 1994: 437-452; Hall, 1995: 206-232; Kramsch, 1993; Moll, 1994; Toohey, 2000; Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992) because it provides a means of studying social processes involved in situated language learning and use. Through mediation, the social and individual are brought together in a dialectic unity encompassing something that comes between the world and us and acts in a shaping, planning or directing manner (Swain, Kinnear & Steinman, 2011: 2). Similarly, human contact with the world is indirect and is mediated by signs (tools) (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008: 7).

According to Vygotsky, humans do not act directly on the physical world without the intermediary of tools. Whether symbolic or signs, tools according to Vygotsky are artefacts created by humans under specific cultural (culture specific) and historical conditions, and as such they carry with them the characteristics of the culture in question (Lantolf, 2000: 1-26). Furthermore, these tools can be used as aids in solving problems that cannot be solved in the same way in their absence. Along similar lines researchers suggest that students who have been given this kind of education are more productive in the real world, they are not overwhelmed by difficulties and they contribute to the values that determine life (Moallem, 2001; Savas, 2007 & Terhart, 2003).



In the confines of this study and the structure of English Home language teaching in South Africa the word mediator or facilitate becomes an important concept and merits further discussion. Also in principle, mediation/facilitation is more about how you teach than what you teach (Pettigrew & Akhurst, 1999). While mediating learning the educator should be sensitive to the diverse needs of the learners, adapt the his/her teaching strategies to learners' needs and shortcomings, use the medium of teaching effectively and create a learner-friendly environment and classroom climate (Nieman & Monyai, 2006: 1).

According to Bates (2016: 67), it is about making the process of learning easier for people. Therefore, in order for good facilitation to take place the teacher needs to adhere to some basic principles:

- Start by setting the mood and the climate for the teaching session
- Find out what others are expecting from the session. Get full agreement on what learning outcomes will be (Nieman & Monyai, 2006: 3).
- Have a range of learning resources available (exercises, tasks etc.).
- Act as a flexible resource to be utilized by learners.
- Become a learner participant (Nieman & Monyai, 2006: 3).
- Find out what your learners gained from the session.
- Do not be afraid to share your own feeling.
- Be receptive to criticism and never be afraid to recognise and accept your own limitations.

(Bates, 2016: 67)

If we blend all of the above points, the measure of awareness that emerges will allow teachers to be genuine and honest with their learners, as well as giving the learners the opportunity to express their feelings about lessons. This will promote a stream of positive thought that could inspire teachers to believe in their learners' potential. The implication of mediation in this study allows me to examine the process of mediation across a mode continuum in the English home language classroom. The data, which I will discuss in my data analyses chapter, can then provide a way of focusing on the building of linguistic bridges between learner language and the target register.

Describing these bridges in linguistic terms can contribute to an understanding of what might constitute effective interaction in such a context and allow for a deeper satisfaction between teacher and student in terms of knowledge production and understanding in the classroom. Mediating is important and builds the ground for another important contribution of sociocultural theory, which is the idea that the potential for cognitive development is limited to a "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). Despite the popularity of the concept of the ZPD, some have viewed it as an unfinished concept (Swain, Kinnear & Steinman, and 2011: 2). Having touched on the ZPD, in the next segment I will further expand on this concept.

## **2.8 Deeper Reflections: Down Playing or Uplifting the Zone of Proximal Development**

Many concepts of individuals became famous after their death. This is also the case with Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. In the earlier part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Chaiklin (2003: 43) noted that the paucity of specific references to the ZPD in Vygotsky's writings. Similarly, Van der Veer and Valsiner (2003) also downplayed the importance of the ZPD in Vygotsky's work. However, four years later Del Rio and Alvarez (2007: 276-306) emphasized that the reading of Vygotsky's writing indicates that the ZPD was still a strong concept. It is important to this investigation, because the observation of teachers will inform us if South African English Home language teachers hold this concept in high esteem or if they should get in the zone. According to the ZPD concept, psychological development depends upon outside social forces as much upon inner resources (Palmer, 2001: 35).

### **2.8.1 Getting in the Zone: Fortitude in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

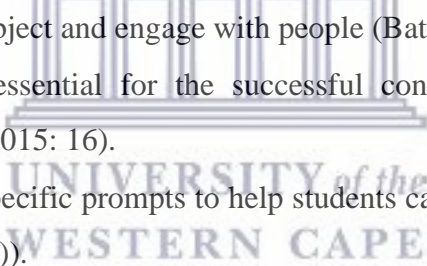
The zone of proximal development is viewed as a metaphor that describes the variance between what a person can achieve alone, without any guidance, and what the same person can accomplish with support from someone else (Lantolf, 2000; Stierer & Maybin, 1994: 96). Vygotsky believed that children could co-construct their learning and their eventual development with the assistance of an 'expert' and appropriate mediating artefacts (Swain, Kinnear & Steinman, 2011: 2).

This "zone" is the area of exploration for which the student is cognitively prepared, but requires help and social interaction to develop (Briner, 1999). Vygotsky defined the ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978: 86).

Overall, the ZPD represents the amount of learning possible by a student given the proper instructional conditions (Puntambekar & Hubscher, 2005). A teacher or more experienced peer is able to provide the learner with "scaffolding" to support the students' evolving understanding of knowledge domains or development of complex skills (<http://www.ceebl.manchester.ac.uk>). Collaborative learning, discourse, modelling, and scaffolding are strategies for supporting the intellectual knowledge and skills of learners and facilitating intentional learning.

For English Home language teachers, "the crucial question is how can child's ZPD be identified and utilized effectively so that new information can be absorbed and then located within the ZPD" (Reid & Green, 2009: 6). Within the ZPD, it is likely that a teacher will co-construct the development of new knowledge in interaction with the learner (Dillion & Maguire, 2011: 166). I wish to reiterate that the application of the ZPD refers to the nature of assistance the child will receive from a 'capable peer' (Scott, 2008).

Some principles underpinning scaffolding are:

- 
- Build interest in the subject and engage with people (Bates, 2016: 16).
  - It is temporary, but essential for the successful construction of the building of knowledge (Gibbons, 2015: 16).
  - Provide cue cards of specific prompts to help students carry out the strategy (singer & Donlan, 1982: 166-186).
  - Break the given task into smaller sub-task (Dermody, 1988).
  - Use the most knowledgeable others (MKO) to support people (Bates, 2016; Palincsar, 1987).
  - Anticipate student mistakes (Brady, 1990).

Scaffolds are bridges that help to connect the learner with the task (Reid & Green, 2009: 6). Vygotsky was confident that teachers to help learners safely take risks could use scaffolding. In doing this, they could reach a higher level of understanding in the subject area than would be possible by the learners' efforts alone. Ultimately, the ZPD endeavours to illustrate the difference between what a child of a certain "mental age" can do without help and what the same child can achieve with the benefit of adult assistance (Moore, 2000: 16).

This is in keeping with what Bruner stated when he mentions that “it refers to the steps taken to reduce the degrees of freedom in carrying out some task so that the child can concentrate on the difficult skill he/she is in the process of acquiring” (Bruner, 1978: 19).

## **2.9 Constructivist Techniques: Reasons for Rising Popularity**

For a teacher that is not committed to a constructivist approach it can be difficult to understand the reasoning or applying a constructivist framework to their teaching. This would be because it can be difficult to apply a theoretical or practical justification for the procedure if you are set in your ways as a teacher. Papert’s (1993: webpage) position is rather compelling at this stage: “the goal is to teach in such a way as to produce the most learning for the least teaching”. The above principle accentuates that great gain in problem solving, creative and critical thinking and learning may occur when education becomes learner centered, active, authentic, collaborative, and personal but inevitability advancement always comes with a cost. Constructivist teaching methods will invigorate the classroom (Maor, 1999: 45-51, Murphy, 1997, Boudourides, 1990: 37, Dougiamas, 1998, Hanley, 1994, Brooks and Brooks, 1993). However, we have seen a rise and popularity in constructivist teaching (Tobias & Duffy, 2009, 128). The following reasons suggest why a constructivist approach can be useful in the classroom:

- A Constructivist approach encourages teachers to value and build upon all students’ existing knowledge, even if that knowledge seems different from the formal curriculum.
- A constructivist approach suggests when students are recognized as possessing important knowledge, they are more likely to feel motivated, connected and confident. This positions them to engage in successful learning.
- A constructivist approach does not assume that there is one normal way to learn or that accommodations need to be made for students who can’t keep up. Instead, the assumption from the outset is that each student learns in his or her own way. Therefore, instruction must be sufficiently open ended to support all backgrounds and learning styles. Thus, constructivist teachers often use project-based and hands-on approaches, allowing students to work at their own pace, to draw on their prior knowledge and to make meaning on their own terms as they learn.
- A constructivist approach supports equitable and fair treatment of all students. Because instruction must build upon what students know, it must also begin with and remain centered on students.

- A constructivist approach supports collaborative learning—students working with and learning from one another—and the development of a strong learning community.

(Tobias & Duffy, 2009: 128; Jonassen, 1994: 34-37)

I believe that there is sufficient merit in the heeding of a constructivist mind-set in the classroom and to test the waters of its environment. An overarching key is the fact that in the spirit of constructivism, a constructivist teacher would recognize that learners need to encounter the same concept in a variety of ways. Also to develop situations with varying goals and expectations in order for the learner to become competent in the generation of, and transfer of constructed and contextual knowledge (Cennamo, Abell & Chung 1996, Reeves, 1998, O'Donnell 1997, Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1994). As I have looked at the possible reasons to invoke a constructivist stance in the classroom. I will now set out to look at both sides in terms of promoting and commenting on the various theorists.

### **2.10 The View in the Colosseum: Looking at Both Sides**

Many educators such as Bailey and Pransky (2005) agree with Vygotsky (1978) about the importance of culture in construction of knowledge, yet Bailey and Pransky (2005: 19-26) emphasize that pedagogical theory such as constructivism does not consider the deep impact of culture on learning and knowledge.

As I mentioned early according to researchers, over the past 20-30 years, constructivism has received attention in educational settings concerning policy formation (Mackinnon & Scarff-Seatter, 1997; Richardson, 1997; Teets & Starnes, 1996). There are also some constructivist theorists that call it a “more natural, relevant productive and empowering framework” for instructing learners and higher education students (Cannella & Reiff, 1994: 27-38). It is also no surprise that controversy about the constructivist paradigm is nothing new (Tobias & Duffy, 2009).

Since I have now laid down an overview of the many ‘faces’ of constructivism, this study will also look at the negative aspects of the theory. This is a point of departure within constructivism. Just like a battery, that has a negative and a positive lead, any theory carries with it the same type of leads.

As a researcher, I therefore wish to offer a critique on Vygotsky's theory of constructivism. By doing this I believe that I can add value to the observation of lessons and participants that will be part of the interviews.

### **2.10.1 Vygotsky's theory: A View from the Other Side**

The review of the literature reveals some over-arching critiques on constructivism. At this stage, I need to factor in the reactions to constructivism that researchers voiced:

- Fox (2001: 29) observed that in its emphasis on learners' active participation, it is often seen that constructivism "too easily dismisses the roles of passive perception, memorization and all the mechanical learning methods in traditional didactic lecturing."
- Biggs (1998: 738-728) and Jin & Cortazzi (1998: 739-761) suggested that constructivism does not always guarantee teaching effectiveness in large classes.
- Davis & Sumara, (2002: 410) proposed that the "fragmented and incoherent character of the literature on constructivism is a problem." They added that this lack of literature "contributed to a misunderstanding of the major tenets of the theory."
- Wolfe & McMullen (1996: 25-28) state that a misconception is the fact that constructivist theory is a theory of learning and not a theory of teaching.
- Gordon (2009: 737-746) says the fact that teachers have an "anything goes" attitude towards learning represents a problem.
- One of the main problems in constructivism is the notion of the ZPD, which many have misgivings about even though the general idea holds a degree of fascination (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 53). The danger expressed within the context of the ZPD is the fact that the adult may either go beyond, or indeed, undervalue the child's potential (Wood, 1998).
- There is also some disquiet about the notion of the dependence on adults, or peers, in the solving of problems (Rogoff, 1990).

The above-mentioned points underlie some key concepts. As a researcher, I accept the value of criticism as it adds a further layer of importance and creates an awareness so that the observations and interviews of this investigation are carried out with a rigour as if to answer the criticism or bring an awareness of potential pitfalls.

In sum and spirit, the constructivist learning theory has given the teacher a pair of 'new eyes'. I will now apply this new pair of eyes and look again at another theorist.

### **2.10.2 Dewey's Theory: Retaining an Air of Controversy**

Despite its persistent popularity Dewey's educational theory has also been the target of much critical scrutiny. The arching criticisms are:

- Dewey had a modernist (romantic) faith in human reason and democratic community (Irwin, 2012).
- His pragmatism theory which focused on active learning, learner centred, learning by doing and catering for individual interest have been transformed by some critics into: playing rather than learning, lacking focus, poor levels of literacy and numeracy and overall 'exaggerated subjectivizing' (Geiger, 1958: 2).
- It is doubtful that Dewey's idea of learners taking part in the common good of society is truly possible in an increasingly commercial, market-driven, and unfair world (Apple & Teitelbaum, 2001).
- From an educator's point of view, responding to individual learner experiences and incidences through reflexive practice in the 'messiness' and diversity of the classroom environment would be a challenging task (Elkjaer, 2009).

The above critiques serve as an awareness builder, which can allow a teacher to improve his/her, method of teaching. In the next segment, I will deal with the practical limitations of Bruner.

### **2.10.3 Looking Over Bruner: Practical Limitations**

Bruner's work evolved over a long period. Just like Freire, Bruner offered a critique of his own work (Bruner, 1996: xii). His criticism ranges from:

- It was doubtful that his curriculum design and his ideas on socially, culturally and creatively acquired learning are truly practical for teachers in busy classrooms (Aubrey & Riley, 2016:107).

- His ideas on discovery learning have also been criticised, insofar as children may misconstrue meaning, which may in turn be unobserved by teachers (Aubrey & Riley, 2016:107).
- The idea of culturalism ‘is in principle interpretive fraught with ambiguity, sensitive to occasion (Illeris, 2009).

The above critiques open up the debate and show the complexity of some classrooms, which have over 40 learners in a classroom.

#### **2.10.4 Reviewing Freire: Rethinking What He Thought**

There is no doubt that Freire has left a significant mark on our thinking about progressive practice. Freire has reviewed his own work (Pedagogy of Hope, 2004) revisited and revised his seminal Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1996) to ‘rethink and address and defend some of the criticism.

Criticism range from:

- Some of his views caused anger because many were put off by Paulo Freire’s language and his appeal to mystical concerns (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 134).
- He tends to argue in “an either/or” way. We are either with the oppressed or against them. This may be an interesting starting point for teaching, but taken too literally, it can make for rather simplistic (political) analysis (<http://infed.org/mobi/paulo-freire-dialogue-praxis-and-education>).
- There has also been the position about the relevance of his revolutionary stance and whether his notions on education can be transferred to other less chaotic regions of the world (Moore, 2000: 154).
- There is a tendency in Freire to overturn everyday situations so that they become pedagogical. Paulo Freire’s approach was largely constructed around structured educational situations. While his initial point of reference might be non-formal, the educational encounters he explores remain formal (Torres 1993: 127)
- The practice of Freirian education can involve smuggling in all sorts of ideas and values under the guise of problem-posing (Taylor 1993: 148).



- There are problems regarding Freire’s model of literacy. While it may be taken as a challenge to the political projects of northern states, his analysis remains rooted in assumptions about cognitive development and the relation of literacy to rationality that are suspect (Street 1983: 14).

Having looked at the criticism of constructivism and educational theories, I now consider the constructivist classroom in order to understand the how and why of relating theory into practice. In the next segment, I will direct my attention to the theory of Postman & Weingartner. They state that “School, after all is the one institution in our society that is inflicted on everybody, and what happens in school makes a difference—for good or ill (Postman & Weingartner, 1969: xiii). With this in mind, I will reflect on the classroom position in education in the next section.

### **2.11 The Classroom: Shaping Your Thoughts or Destroying It**

The proverb of "iron sharpening iron" is indeed true for learners in a variety of guided situations. This maxim implies that to sharpen something usually means to make it better or more efficient.

Hence, the natural reaction of pondering over an intricate problem or situation with others can bring on a deeper level of reasoning and new perspectives. In turn, this creates greater motivation for staying focused on the task (Rodrigues, 2000: 1, Dede, 1995: 42-52 Boudourides, 1998: 37, Petraglia, 1998: 53-65). While writing this section I am reminded of a line in the movie ‘Lord of the Rings’. The line “One ring to rule them all, one ring to find them,” demonstrates the significant opportunity that teachers have when they meet up with their learners. In the classroom, great learning can take place. In the words of some scholars like John Gardner, Marshall McLuhan, John Holt, Carl Rogers and Paul Goodman the “human situation is improvable through intelligent innovation “(Postman & Weingartner, 1969: xiii). In a number of educational settings learning can be a “mimetic” activity, a process that involves students repeating, or miming, newly presented information (Jackson, 1986). In my context when I was at high school the traditional classroom, the teacher took ‘centre stage’. Therefore, in order to understand the constructivist paradigm in a larger vacuum I will like to offer some differences between the traditional classroom and the constructivist classroom. Such an understanding can show the differences in teaching methods.

### **2.11.1 The Common/Traditional Classroom**

The term common/traditional classroom will be important to my study as I propose to address it in the successive chapters in order to be able to offer a distinction between the different classrooms that I will observe. The traditional class entails some of the following:

- The emphasis is more on the basic skills.
- The system of learning is rote memorization and repetition.
- There is a strict adherence to a fixed curriculum.
- Teachers seek the correct answer to validate student learning.
- Students primarily work alone.
- Teachers rely heavily on the textbook.

(Brooks & Brooks, 1993: 17)

The fact that there is a strict adherence to a fixed curriculum at times fosters an attitude in some teachers who are desperate to finish the curriculum whether the learners understand or not. As a way of pointing out a deviation in a different classroom, I will now unpack the nature of a constructivist classroom.

### **2.11.2 The Constructivist Classroom**

The constructivist classroom encapsulates the journey to becoming a facilitator of thinking. This process requires creativity but more importantly “a deep understanding of the content to be taught. Making students think changes students from passive learners to engaged learners...” (Halstead, 2011: 22). The constructivist classroom entails some of the following:

- The system of learning is interactive and there is exchange between students and teacher.
- The pursuit of student questions is highly valued.
- Teachers seek student points of views in order to understand students’ present conceptions for use in subsequent lessons.
- Students often work in groups.
- Activities rely heavily on primary sources of data and manipulative materials.

(Brooks & Brooks, 1993:7)

The Constructivist teacher poses questions and problems, and then guides students to help them find their own answers. Teachers use many techniques in the teaching process to achieve its intended purpose. By doing this, theory can either be enhanced or limited depending on the social context. In the next segment, I will look at dimensions of the English Home language classroom.

## **2.12 The English Home Language Classroom: Spreading Vygotsky's Theory or Limiting it**

As an English teacher, I often wrestled with the issues of low achievement and interest levels among learners. In 2014, I realised that unless educators change certain 'traditions' in the classroom nothing was going to alter the trajectory of many of the learners find themselves on. It is important to remember that every day millions of South African learners enter school wanting to learn, hoping to be stimulated, engaged and treated well.

They want a sense of meaning. As teachers, we can help learners construct new understanding of their world. Therefore, teachers must begin to make paradigm shifts and encourage teaching practices that allow learners in South Africa to "think and rethink, demonstrate and exhibit" (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

Teachers should find a way to do the following:

- employ effective strategies to develop resilient learners (innovative ways of teaching)
- change their classroom practice to suit learner needs
- involve learners in decisions regarding their education
- show a genuine interest in learners

Teachers must do something different to keep the flame burning in the classroom. According to Brooks & Brooks (1993), in constructivist classrooms, curriculum is generally a process of digging deeper and deeper into big ideas, rather than presenting a breadth of coverage. According to Vygotsky, for the curriculum to be developmentally appropriate, the teacher must plan activities that encompass not only what children are capable of doing on their own but what they can learn with the help of others (Karpov & Haywood, 1998: 27-36).

Central to this approach is a view of literacy as the understanding and communication of meaning (Goodman & Goodman, 1990). Good applications of this approach include:

- The teacher asking challenging questions so the child will build and refine their own understanding and thought processes (Muijs & Reynolds, 2001).
- Compels the teacher to be accurate to demonstrate how questions are asked and how feedback is given (Urquhart, 2000).
- Both comprehension and expression are built and developed collaboratively by students and teaching takes place through functional, relevant, meaningful language use.
- In the classroom emphasizes the creation of authentic social contexts in which children use, try out, and manipulate language as they make sense and create meaning.
- Interaction is the fulcrum of this approach in the classroom and brings forth a sensitive teacher ((Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 56).

In support of the above points, Moore (2000: 19) suggests that there are four major implications for applying Vygotsky's theories in the classroom:

- The importance of not waiting to teach something until the child is deemed able to 'absorb' it (this can apply to the use of reading-schemes in primary schools just as much as to the development of scientific concepts with older students).
- An opposition to the use and typically limited or misleading results of diagnostic tests that forbid any help being given to students by other students or by their teacher.
- An emphasis on the development of independent processes of learning rather than the memorising and regurgitating of facts or 'knowledge'.
- the importance of perceiving learning, in all phases of schooling, from a genuinely cross-curricular perspective.

The above-mentioned concepts and principles suggest a kind of teaching that creates (Bruner 1986) a 'forum' in the classroom, through which both participants, students and teachers can have their say in the classroom. Ultimately, classrooms become settings in which teachers "invite students to search for understanding, appreciate uncertainty, and inquire responsibly (Brooks & Brooks, 1993: 6).

According to Noddings (1990: 12), “the constructivist classroom recognizes the power of the environment to press for adaptation, the temporality of knowledge, and the existence of multiple selves behaving in consonance with the rules of various subcultures.” Through this process, meanings are ‘recreated’ through processes of negotiation.

### **2.13 The English Constructivist Teacher: Facilitation for Progress**

If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.

Ignacio Estrada

Another facet of the constructivist approach is that often teachers allow learners to create caring relationships with other students and the teacher in the classroom (Noddings, 2005). Teachers also make sure that there is appropriate support and mediation to help learners become proficient (Freeman & Freeman, 2008; Fu, 2009). Therefore, teachers often mediate an inquiry stance to develop mediated thinking (Short & Haste, 1996). The teacher’s role in a constructivist classroom is to prompt and facilitate discussion.

The concept of the importance of discussion I will bring out in another chapter. In keeping with constructivist principles, the teacher’s focus should be on guiding students by asking questions that will lead them to develop their own conclusions on the subject. Constructivist teaching techniques that guide students to find information for themselves rather than presenting that information explicitly have provided a favoured instructional technique among educational researchers for several decades (Sweller, 2004: 9-31).

David Jonassen (1991: 28-33) identified three major roles for facilitators to support students in constructivist learning environments (1) Modelling (2) Coaching (3) Scaffolding. Certain principles are evident in a constructivist teachers’ classroom (PowerPoint, Social Studies: 4244). They are:

- It is imperative that teachers seek and value students’ points of view.
- Teachers create activities that challenge students’ suppositions.
- Teachers teach topics of relevancy.
- Teachers teach and build lessons around big ideas of interest.

It is important that the teacher must enter the classroom with the belief and realization that all students have different backgrounds. The teacher must also meet the learners at their current level. In sum and spirit, Jonassen (1991: 11-12) notes that many educators have applied constructivism to the development of learning environments. Based on the practices of teachers he has noticed the following:

- Teachers must create real-world environments that employ the context in which learning is relevant.
- Teachers must focus on realistic approaches to solving real-world problems.
- the instructor (teacher) is a coach and analyser of the strategies used to solve these problems
- Teachers must stress conceptual interrelatedness, providing multiple representations or perspectives on the content.
- Teachers must allow instructional goals and objectives to be negotiated and not imposed.
- Teachers' evaluation should serve as a self-analysis tool.
- Teachers should provide tools and environments that help learners interpret the multiple perspectives of the world.
- Teachers should allow learning to be internally controlled and mediated by the learner.

Ultimately, the constructivist learning theory affords learners the opportunity to take advantage of many resources e.g. culture, gender, ethnicity and language proficiency at their disposal as they co-construct knowledge (Patterson, Baldwin, Araujo, Shearer & Stewart, 2010: 154). The teacher often consults with children about what will happen in the classroom and engages them in consensus building and making classroom rules. Thus, constructivist programs may be said to be democratic in nature and this fits within the democratic model of South Africa. Some past studies reveal the flexibility of the constructivist model in a democratic context. Principles laid down by Honebein (1996: 11) reveal an element of teacher preparation. In the classroom, the teacher should:

1. Provide experience with the knowledge construction process.
2. Provide experience in and appreciation for multiple perspectives.
3. Embed learning in realistic and relevant contexts.

4. Encourage ownership and voice in the learning process.
5. Embed learning in social experience.
6. Encourage the use of multiple modes of representation.
7. Encourage self-awareness in the knowledge construction process.

It appears that there is a great onus on the constructivist teacher before they enter into the classroom. Experimentation for the constructivist teacher is important because there is always diversity in the South African classroom. The following principles present teachers as intermediaries/mediators of students and environments. According to Brooks & Brooks (1993: 103-118) constructivist teachers:

- Encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative.
- Use raw data and primary sources, along with manipulative, interactive, and physical materials.
- When framing tasks, use cognitive terminology such as “classify,” “analyze,” “predict,” and “create.”
- Allow student responses to drive lessons, shift instructional strategies, and alter content.
- Inquire about students’ understandings of the concepts before sharing [your] own understandings of those concepts.
- Encourage students to engage in dialogue, both with the teacher and with one another.
- Encourage student inquiry by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and encouraging students to ask questions of each other.
- Seek elaboration of students’ initial responses.
- Engage students in experiences that might engender contradictions to their initial hypotheses and then encourage discussion.
- Allow wait time after posing questions.
- Provide time for students to construct relationships and create metaphors.
- Nurture students’ natural curiosity through frequent use of the learning cycle model.

The above descriptors have also been enhanced by other researchers and theoreticians like Kohn (1991: 497-506), Elkind (1994) & Arlin (1985). Further studies provide further impetus for constructivist teaching. I will deliberate on this in the next segment. I deem it necessary to further understand the contextual background.

## 2.14 Moving Back to Front: Literacy Studies of Value

Being a researcher requires inspiration and constant dedication. Therefore, my probe into certain studies in language education gives me the impetus to move forward. As a researcher, I propel myself back into history to appreciate certain studies of value. I am mentioning these studies because they provide a good bird's eye view of constructivism and offer an in-depth view of constructivism. The Constructivist paradigm is not new as I have stated earlier. It is a product of earlier progressive educators who believed that 'interest' is key to children's learning (Dewey, 1913/1975) and who learned through action research how to inspire young children to pursue their interests in content that is worthwhile (Mayhew & Edwards, 1936; Read, 1966; Tanner, 1997).

Research funded by the National Writing Project (2007-2013) provides a good example of how cultural mediated writing instruction (Wickstrom, Arujo & Patterson, 2011: 145) was achieved by teachers who took a socio-cultural stance. Adding to this, one of the noticeable forms of constructivism is the socio-cultural perspective. One centred feature of this approach is the fact that learning is not only shaped by learner's prior learning experiences. Furthermore, it is also about tapping into social capital (Bourdieu, 1972; Dewey, 1899) and cultural experiences and motivation (Gardner, 1987: 1935). Studies done by Duff & Jonassen (1992) focused on instructional design in a constructivist classroom. Fosnot (2005) looks at the 'theory and practice' of constructivism. Bridging the gap between theory and practice, well-known scholars make constructivism accessible by showing its application in everyday classrooms. Stefe and Gale (1995) presented some good articles. They offered a multidisciplinary perspective on key issues of alternative epistemologies in education. These respected researchers were brought together to develop the theme of constructivism as it applies to many diversified fields.

Marlowe and Page (2005) bring together fresh ideas in the modern context of the constructivist theory with step-by-step guidance and ready-to-use checklists to make constructivist learning a reality in your classroom.

*The Comprehensive Handbook of Constructivist Teaching: From Theory to Practice (2010)* provides a detailed description of what a Constructivist classroom sounds like and looks like. This book fills that void by examining the philosophy, translating it into teaching strategies, and providing over forty examples. There are many studies in literacy and the constructivist approach in the school context.



However, the gauntlet is further extended in different areas such as Science education, Mathematics education, Social science education and Higher education.

### **2.15 Understanding the Significance of the English Home Language Classroom in high school**

The teaching of English is considered to provide better social, economic and educational opportunities (Alexander, 2010: 7-13). In light of the above statement, this study merits a further focus on the different ideas of the four theorists mentioned and their impact on the South African language teacher. Often, this is not highlighted and furthermore when the theorists are studied at University, young teachers have a tendency to forget what they learnt. This is also prevalent among the older teachers who have been long in the profession. Therefore, I believe the following discussion can be a bridge of remembrance and help the South African language teacher to cement his/her level of teaching under the auspices of the South African curriculum. This leads me to the next segment, which deals with the significance of the four theorists in the English language classroom.

### **2.16 The Significance of Vygotsky's ideas for the South African English Home Language Classroom in high school**

Vygotsky's ideas characterise many of our 21st century norms about how learning and development take place. According to Green (2014: 23), Vygotsky has:

reconceptualise the relationship between the thinking individual and society from one of mutual exclusivity, in which the world outside has to be taken inside, one of part-whole, where the individual is at the same time both unique and part of society.

The most important application of Vygotsky's theory to education for South African teachers is located in his concept of a zone of proximal development. This concept is important because teachers can use the ZPD as a guide to a child's development. It allows a teacher to know what a student is able to achieve with a mediator and thus enables the teacher to help the children attain that level by themselves.

Other important significances are:

- The role of play in his theory (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 51). South African teachers therefore need to provide children, especially children (primary and secondary), many opportunities to play. Through the dimension of play, and imagination a learner's conceptual ability stretches. Vygotsky contended that play leads to overall development (John-Steiner & Souberman, 1978). Designed play in the English language classroom forms a social cohesion and willingness for others to want to learn.
- Vygotsky's ideas can allow learners to reach the third stage of speech, which is inner speech, since it is this stage, which is responsible for all higher levels of functioning. It is through speech that learners (children) are able to reflect, make plans, help nurture behaviour, and solve problems (John-Steiner & Souberman, 1978). The use of talk is increasingly being recognised in schools as a learning strategy to assist children to express their ideas and thoughts (Barlett, Burton, & Peim, 2001).

This concept of talk is an important tool in the realization of the South African language model since in the Further and Education Training Phase (FET) learners have to do four orals. Adding Vygotsky's principles to these activities can add a measure of enjoyment:

- Enhancing the power of collaboration of learners for democratic purposes.
- Activities in the South African classroom should mimic real life.

Having zoomed into the value of Vygotsky's ideas for the South African English Home language classroom, I will now unpack the significance of Dewey's ideas for English Home language teachers.

### **2.17 The Significance of Dewey's ideas for the South African English Home Language Classroom in high school**

Dewey began a movement that others, such as Kolb (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 10) developed into the notion of experiential learning. To this day, his educational approach still remains one of the cornerstones of many learning programmes and can be a valuable asset for the South African language teacher. The significance of Dewey's ideas are:

- Offers equality of opportunity for everyone is at the heart of what every teacher should be striving for.
- Learners will be provided with experiences that engage them and build on their existing experiences.
- Each past or present experience should be viewed from the perspective of how it can shape future actions.
- Thinking and reflection should be the cornerstone of teaching practice. Encouraging learners to share their thoughts will allow the teacher to get to know the learners better and benefit the overall learning experience of the class.

(Bates, 2016: 19)

The above points can anchor the mind-set of a South African teacher. Next, I will zoom into the ideas of Bruner for the South African English Home language high school teacher.

## **2.18 The Significance of Bruner's Ideas for the South African English Home Language Classroom in high school**

Bruner's ideas are important because it focuses on the relationships between learning, perception, experience, environment and culture. Furthermore, Bruner is a firm believer that learning should spawn interest in the material rather than tests or punishment. Below I offer some important ideas of Bruner's theory. The main ideas of Bruner's theory can be summarized as follows:

- Teachers can make learning an active process. Teachers should reflect on how they engage with learners (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 108).
- Teachers can allow learners to select and transform information.
- Teachers enforce that learners make appropriate decisions and postulate hypotheses and test their effectiveness (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 108).
- Learners use prior experience to fit new information into the pre-existing structures (MacBlain, 2014: 56).
- Teachers can postulate the principles of a spiral curriculum (Bruner, 1996). This element of the curriculum states should revisit basic ideas, with the concept of building on them until the student understands the full formal concept (MacBlain, 2014: 56)

In the next part, I will reflect on the value of Freire's ideas for South African language teacher.

## **2.19 The Significance of Freire's ideas for the South African Home Language Classroom in high school**

There are clear links between Freire and Dewey who both championed a democratic notion of teaching and learning (Aubrey & Riley, 2016: 133). In reality, they both focused on a child-centred and culturally based approach to the curriculum. I will now summarize some of the ideas of Freire's theory as follows:

- Teachers should take an interest in learners' lives outside of the classroom
- Teachers should not be afraid to use different approaches to get learners to open up on issues that may be affecting their learning
- Always attempt quickly to build up a learners' confidence.

(Bates, 2016: 21)

An important element in Freire's theory is the fact that the richest learning begins with action. His methodology for helping teachers can be viewed in the following plan: ([www.liberationhealth.org/documents/freiresummarysimmons.pdf](http://www.liberationhealth.org/documents/freiresummarysimmons.pdf))

- Identify the Problem(s):
- Produce the Codes: Find an original way to deal with the problem.
- To See the Situation as Experienced by the Participants: See the problem through the learners' eyes.
- Analyze the cause of the situation.
- To Act to Change the Situation: Take action to solve the problem.

(Bates, 2016: 20)

I believe it is appropriate to end this section with the ideas of Freire because his thoughts in the South African context are in tune/ in sync with the democratic principles outlaid in the new South African constitution.

Having laid out the theoretical framework, tracked the stream of constructivism and shown the value of the four theorists and the English language classroom, I will now move on to provide a summary of part one.

## **2.20 Summary: Reinforcement of Issues**

The purpose of the first part of the literature review is to signpost issues and insights that constitute the theoretical background. The theoretical orientations I have surveyed in part one can help me to see the dimensions of literacy. There was a discussion of four educational learning theories. It served as the blueprint for this study. In order to underscore my argument for the significance of constructivist practices in a South African context in the classroom, I included the value of the constructivist approach in a broad context likening constructivism to a rainbow. The first part of my study has then forged inroads into understanding the influence of constructivism on literacy practices. Further implications of this review revealed the growth of constructivism among four educational theorists. In part two of the literature review, I unpack the position of the learning theory in South Africa as implemented by the Education Department, and then in a separate chapter I review the textbook as I continue the literature review.



## **2.21 PART 2: Educational Contours of the South African Education System: A reflection of Academic Output and Policy**

The various contours of the curriculum I believe suggest that the educational landscape in South Africa is constantly evolving. Part 2 constitutes my fuller elaborations on the evolving nature of the curriculum in South Africa.

### **2.21.1 Introduction: Currents of Change**

This section sets out to give an overall conception of patterns in the South African education system. In the current stream of thought, evidence of the value of constructivist theory in the classroom is especially important for educational practice in areas of social challenge (Department of Education, 2015). The democratic educational landscape of South Africa gives way to the conception and importance of the central role of Freirean imperatives for South Africa's educational future. In the political climate of South Africa, traces of Freirean, critical rhetoric became embedded in the rationales for the three-curriculum reconstruction initiatives post-1994. The 2011 Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) continues to espouse the principles of social transformation. In doing this its aim was to ensure that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sectors of the population and encouraging an active and critical approach to learning, rather than rote and uncritical learning of given truths (Department of Basic Education 2011: 4). In light of this, the social conditions of South Africa gravitate towards a constructivist framing.

This study indicates that a constructivist framework, when pertinently arranged, provides holistic and sustainable procedures for knowledge creation. According to Moreeng (2015: 118), the approach of social constructivism underpins teaching and learning in South African schools. This model of social constructivism entails a set of assumptions that constitute an epistemological position that is radically different from the empiricist and rational (predetermine) epistemologies currently dominant in westernised societies (Van Rensburg & Badenhorst, 2009). The contours in education in South Africa also indicate that the South Africa's education system is facing some major challenges. In some instances, a lack of financial support, smaller schools in rural areas have to close and a lack of sufficiently educated and motivated teachers as well as a lack of facilities places a huge strain on the system of education.

The dire strain of the financial burden to the local governments as well as to the pupils' families, who often belong to the previously disadvantaged population, is high. South Africa still has many pupils who still live in poorest conditions in rural areas or the growing townships of the major cities. Yet the paradox remains because in reality the standard of education in South Africa varies from region to region and school to school.

Having shown the link between constructivism and the South African educational system, it is important that I also lay out the different patterns of teaching theory that has travelled through South Africa. The different curriculum approaches bring with it different teaching strategies that can make all the difference in the classroom. It has the capacity to enhance or impede academic growth in the classroom. Over the past 20 years, the government of South Africa has been assessing approaches that suit the country's unique context. In the next segment, I will look at the different reforms post 1994. But prior to doing that it is important to harness a conception of a Curriculum because teachers will teach the curriculum.

## **2.22 Curriculum Conceptualization: The Travelling Course**

The Latin word for curriculum is “currere” which means, “race course” (Inglis & Aers, 2008: 62). This refers to the course of deeds and experiences through which children grow to become mature adults (Collins English Dictionary, 2003). The Merriam-Webster dictionary says that curriculums are courses offered by an educational institution e.g. the high school curriculum (www.merriam-webster.com). Simply speaking, curriculum is the set of courses and their contents offered at a school or university. In a textbook written for student teachers in colleges of education, the term curriculum is used to describe ‘a course of study which includes the whole study programme to be followed to reach a certain goal’ (Van Zyle & Duminy, 1979).

The outline of a curriculum can come across as negative or positive. According to Kelly (1999: 83), curriculum can be viewed negatively as a “syllabus which may limit the planning of teachers to a consideration of the content or the body of knowledge they wish to transmit or a list of the subjects to be taught or both”. The outcome here is the fact that simply conveying subject knowledge is insufficient to be an effective curriculum. It should offer much more than a statement about the knowledge-content in order to be a productive curriculum.

However, in South African terms, the new curriculum took on a positive stance for a nation recovering from its past. As a teacher for almost 20 years, I believe a curriculum is setting the end before the beginning.

Kelly (2008) believes that a “Curriculum is all the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried out in groups or individually, inside or outside the school”. His statement would imply that the curriculum specifies in advance, what we are seeking to achieve and how we are to go about it. Blenkin (2012) defined curriculum as a body of knowledge contents and or subjects. That is, curriculum is the process by which knowledge and skills are transmitted or delivered to learners by the most effective methods that can be devised. For (Akinsola and Abe, 2006) the curriculum is a tool of education to educate and humanize the whole man. Modern interpretation sees the curriculum as all the knowledge and experience got by a child in and out of the school walls, either on the timetable or outside it i.e. the experiences the learner has regardless of when or how they take place.

The discussion on curriculum issues that I have presented so far can serve as an awareness builder for the next segment where I propose to discuss the South African curriculum. I will now outline the curriculum path of South Africa post 1994.

### **2.22.1 South African Curriculum: All-Purpose Knowledge Promoter**

Curricula should be relevant and appropriate to current and anticipated future needs of the individual, society, commerce and industry (Gultig, Hoadley & Jansen, 2002: 5). Furthermore, the multicultural nature of the South African society poses a challenge to educators (Nieman & Monyai, 2006: 134). Therefore, it is no surprise that the South African curriculum has gone through many changes. It has survived many storms but its ultimate responsibility was to free the minds of its people by enhancing their capacity to break free and develop their potential that was rooted in their lives.

In a broad sense, the fundamental aim of the South African Curriculum is to “give expression to the knowledge, skills and values worth learning in South African schools. This curriculum aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. In this regard, the curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts, while being sensitive to global imperatives” (CAPS, 2011: 4).



The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 serves the purposes of enhance the potential of every individual. Its purpose fulfils itself in the following way:

- Equip learners, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country
- It provides providing access to higher education.
- It brings the facilitation of the transition of learners from education institutions to the workplace.

(CAPS: 2011: 4)

With the above concepts and principles in mind, I will now reflect on the path that the South African Government undertook in order to express these principles.

### **2.22.2 The Curriculum Path: The Road to Destiny or the Abyss**

This section looks into the issues surrounding effective implementation of the new secondary school curriculum in in South Africa over the past 20 years. The shift therefore portrays education in the 21st century as a total departure from the factory-model education of the past during the apartheid error. This meant a new way of understanding the concept of knowledge or old way, a new definition of the educated person in terms of contribution and wiliness to believe in the new system.

This section outlines the different curriculum patterns South Africa undertook in order to reform society and creates change for the betterment of South African learners. To this end, there is every need to review the status quo of secondary school curriculum in South Africa in order to consolidate further the new basic education programme of the ‘new’ Curriculum and

### **2.22.3 Policy Assessment: Experimenting or Cementing a Firm Base of Knowledge**

The discussion of curriculum studies aims to make sense of the teaching and learning by inquiring into the purposes of curriculum, questioning whose interests are served by curriculum, and considering research in successful teaching approaches. In doing so, I employ a historically informed and critical theoretical perspective.

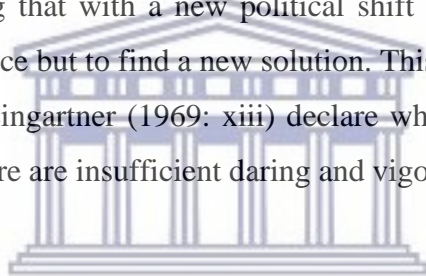
Within this wide construct, I focus on:

- Pre-Curriculum 2005
- Curriculum 2005 (C2005)
- Outcomes Based Education (OBE)
- Curriculum Review Committee (2000)
- National Curriculum Statement (NCS)
- Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)

Having shown what I will focus on I now will set out to discuss the individual components.

## **2.23 The Road We Travelled: Looking Back and Endeavouring to Getting Ourselves on Track**

It is a common understanding that with a new political shift often comes new educational reforms. Often there is no choice but to find a new solution. This assumption of mine can help signpost what Postman & Weingartner (1969: xiii) declare when they state that “within the Educational Establishment there are insufficient daring and vigorous ideas on which to build a new approach to education.”



### **2.23.1 Pre-Curriculum 2005: The Road Less Travelled**

After 1994, the Government of National Unity issued several curriculum-related reforms with the sole purpose to democratise education and eliminate inequalities in the post-apartheid education system (Jansen, 1997: 1-11). One of the first major reforms was outcomes-based education (OBE). This approach to education underpinned the new Curriculum 2005 (Lemmer, 1999: 118). The second measure that was implemented was continuous assessment into schools (Lucen & Ramsuran, 1997). The following characteristics mirror the reform:

- Learning intentions were called described as aims and objectives.
- Content was prescribed in detail.
- Assessment was called “evaluation”
- Teachers had a lot of freedom in deciding on the number and types of assessment tasks.
- Assessment was done to find out if objectives were achieved and if content was mastered (Lemmer, 1999: 118).

(Dreyer, 2015: 149)

### **2.23.2 Curriculum 2005: Transformational Purging or Positional Accuracy**

In the new context of South Africa, Curriculum 2005 (C2005) caused great excitement. In many ways, curriculum 2005 and the NQF represent specific South African forms of global, late-modern curriculum patterns (Cowen, 1996; Christie, 1997, Young 1993). The Minister of Education, Professor Bengu launched Curriculum 2005 in Cape Town on 24 March 1997 (Pinar, 2010: 190). The announcement of the C2005 was unequivocal. C2005 became a key project in the transformation of the South African Society (DoE, 2000). According to Jansen (1999: 145), the position of the government would be to adopt policy in the area of school curriculum, which would be based on the notion of outcomes-based education (OBE) and entitled 'Curriculum 2005'.

Ultimately, C2005 framed education in relation to the transformation process and goals such as equity, democracy and redress. This excitement led to an explosion of curriculum activity thundering across South Africa. A ferocious attempt was made as committees of departmental officials, curriculum developers, subject specialists, teachers, lecturers, trade union and business representatives attempted to translate OBE into workable units of information for teaching and learning which would be ready for first phase implementation in 1998 (Fataar, 2001: 21). On an international scale, a good representation of foreign 'observers' from Scotland to Australia also assisted with the transition into an OBE. Learning intentions were described as "outcomes" with associated assessment criteria and teachers with limited guidelines (Dreyer, 2015: 149) chose content. Formative and summative assessments would be used. In principal, its assessment, qualifications, competency, and skills-based framework encourages the development of curriculum models that are aligned to the NQF in theory and practice (DoE, 1997c).

The far-reaching implication of C2005 was the fact that its aim was to place South Africa on the path to competitive participation in a global economy. For this improvement, C2005 demanded a new role from teachers in order to give effect to a learner-centred approach in which the teacher was expected to become a facilitator of learning rather than the sole repository of knowledge (Department of Education, 1997a: 8). For the nation's pride, C2005 set out to produce citizens with a high level of skills a high level of knowledge, and the attitudes and values needed to rebuild our country.

The government also believed that “an OBE curriculum derived from nationally agreed on critical cross field outcomes that sketch our vision of a transformed society and the role education has to play in creating it” (Department of Education, 1997).

In summary, Curriculum 2005 was described as a curriculum that would do the following:

- Prepare learners to become effective in the work place.
- Integrate knowledge so that learning is relevant and related to real life situations.
- It would be learner centered.
- It would supposedly bring success to all learners.
- It would allow teachers to act as facilitates.
- Involve parents, guardians and community leaders in the curriculum.
- It would provide ongoing assessment of learners’ skills in critical thinking, reasoning and action.
- It would result in equal opportunities and equity for all.



(Lemmer, 1999:119)

As I mentioned earlier that a garden always engenders hope. There was a hope that the garden of outcomes-based education would harness a new type of learner. In the next segment, I will look at the dynamics and fall-outs of OBE in the context of South Africa.

### **2.23.3 Outcomes Based Education (OBE): The Path of Uncertainty or Unity**

According to Sivasubramaniam (Graduate Seminar Presentation, May 2017), “OBE is a closure-focused practice aimed at producing determined/fixed meanings which are not only atemporal and universal but are also measurable and quantifiable and therefore justifiable.” Therefore, it is no surprise that “at the very inception of OBE in South Africa, there was fierce contestation of the discourse” (Pinar, 2010: 190). Dowling (1998) refers to OBE as the “dystopia-utopia” dichotomy, where everything in the past (education in the Apartheid era) is considered bad (dystopia) and, therefore, the need for a new utopian language that represents the future as everything that is good.

One characteristic of an outcome-based education system was the fact that there was a claim that it promoted a learner-centred approach that focuses on outcomes. OBE would hope to demonstrate the ability of the learners to do task and translate knowledge and skills into performance (Spady, 1994: 9). Furthermore, Spady (1994: 10) stressed that OBE (1) Has a clarity of focus on outcome; meaning that instruction needs to have a clear focus and intent (2) Expands opportunity; using time more flexibly to expand the opportunity for the pupil to become a successful learner. (3) Produces higher expectations; confidence in the capability of learners (4) Design down; having the outcomes in mind and then building back from those outcomes. In the next segment, I will provide a point of departure in terms of the ultimate dangers of OBE according to Jonathan Jansen. His thoughts add value to my inquiry.

### **2.23.3.1 Jansen's Thoughts: A Point of Departure**

OBE is a magnificent, mindless monster trundling along blindly through the mud of misunderstanding and confusion towards an abyss of ignorance and no one can or dare to stop it.

Reginald Dreyer

An invigorating article by Jonathan Jansen in 1998 added an element of understanding in the diverse context of South Africa. A version of the paper was published in the Cambridge Journal of Education (Jansen, 1998). He voiced concern about the structure of OBE in a South African context. The premise of his critique was to demonstrate how the status of education in South Africa militates against sophisticated curriculum reforms such as OBE. Jansen (1998) noted 10 major reasons why OBE will have a negative impact upon South African schools.

At the outset, he made it clear that outcome-based education will fail, not because politicians and bureaucrats were misinformed about conditions of schooling in South Africa. However, he believes that the OBE's policy is driven in the first instance by political imperatives, which have little to do with the realities of classroom life. Furthermore, he also stated that OBE would not spawn an innovation in education but would expose the fragile learning environment of the new South Africa.

Jansen's reasons are as follows:

- The language of innovation associated with OBE is too complex, confusing and at times contradictory.
- OBE as curriculum policy is implicated in problematical claims and assumptions about the relationship between curriculum and society.
- OBE is destined to fail in the South African education system because it is based on flawed assumptions about what happens inside schools, how classrooms are organised and what kinds of teachers exist within the system.
- There are strong philosophical reasons for questioning the desirability of OBE in democratic school systems. One need not take the radical but enticing position that specifying outcomes in advance might be antidemocratic (McKiernan, 1994: 343-353).
- There are important political and epistemological objections to OBE as curriculum policy.
- OBE with its focus on instrumentalism--what a student can demonstrate given a particular set of outcomes--sidesteps the important issue of values in the curriculum.
- The management of OBE will multiply the administrative burdens placed on teachers.
- OBE trivialises curriculum content even as it claims to be a potential leverage away from the content coverage which besets the current education system. Children do not learn outcomes in a vacuum.

(Article presented at the University of Durban, Westville in March 1997)

Jansen presents some well thought out ideas concerning the failure of OBE, however, some aspects of his critique seem to slip away in other dimensions. His criticisms of the complex language of the innovation and that OBE makes flawed assumptions about what happens inside classrooms. Pinar (2010: 192) states that these are not principal criticisms of OBE but criticism of the new national curriculum framework (C2005) that happens to have an outcome-based orientation.

Further concerns about OBE also demonstrated that:

- The stress of OBE was not on learners mastering specific subject content but on the shaping of social attitudes and values.
- The mechanics of OBE reveals that the attainment of a school certificate is coupled not to academic standards but to state-defined social values and attitudes, as was the case in Curriculum 2005.
- The fundamental political stance of OBE is the fact that the result can be nothing other than the conformity of the state the absolute state in uniformity and collectivism of the individual exist only as parts of the state organism.

As the reality of OBE set in it was important for the Education Department to review the current unrest in the disharmony of OBE and the classroom. This leads me to the curriculum review committee of 2000.

#### **2.23.4 Curriculum Review Committee (2000): Truth for the Youth or Error Revealing a Silent Terror**

In February 2000, a Review Committee was appointed under Professor Kader Asmal. The express purpose of the committee was to provide recommendations on issues such as:

- Steps to be taken in respect to the implementation of the new curriculum in grades 4 to 7 in 2001.
- Important success factors
- Strategies for strengthened implementation of the new curriculum.
- The structure of the new curriculum and the level of understanding of outcomes-based education.

(C2005 Review Report 2000: 3).

The review of the curriculum found that there was too much integration in the curriculum, and too little specification of content to be learnt (Hoadley & Jansen, 2002: 174). On the 31 May 2000, the Review Committee presented its findings.

They were:

- Implementation was confounded by factors such as a skewed curriculum structure
- Design and lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policy.
- Inadequate orientation, training and development of teachers.
- Lack of learning materials and variation of the quality of learning materials.
- Policy overload and limited transfer of learning in classrooms.
- Shortages of personnel and resources to implement and support Curriculum 2005.
- Inadequate recognition of curriculum as the core business of education departments.

(C2005 Review Report 2000: 11-12)

One element that we can notice is the fact that there has been a repackaging of past curriculums or refinement, which marked the 'death of OBE'. This leads me to the National Curriculum Statement.

#### **2.23.5 National Curriculum Statement (NCS): The Weight of Assessment**

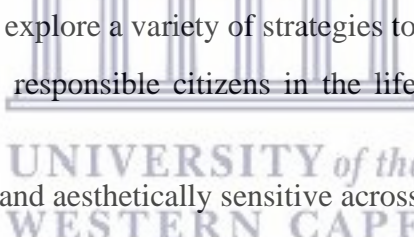
After the review by the committee, it was evident that teachers had to work with an interim document referred to as the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, 1997). This revised document was the forerunner that became the finalized version of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2003). The National Curriculum Statement retained the outcome-based form but it specified what outcomes, in terms of both skills and knowledge needed to be achieved in each grade (Hoadley & Jansen, 2002: 174).

Learning intentions were described as outcomes (Plessis, Conley & Plessis, 2007: 53) as well with associated assessment criteria, and content was described as the content and contexts for attainment of assessment standards (Dreyer, 2015: 149). Learning Outcomes in the NCS for Grades 10-12 were built on the Critical and Developmental Outcomes (DoE 2003:3). The Critical Outcomes required the following:



- Learners should identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking.
- Learners work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organization and community.
- Learners organize and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively.
- Learners collect, analyse, organize and critically evaluate information.
- Learners communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and or language skills in various modes.
- Learners use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others.
- Learners demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognizing that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

Furthermore, the Developmental Outcomes required the following:

- 
- Learners reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively.
  - Learners participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities.
  - Learners are culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts.
  - Learners explore education and career opportunities.
  - Learners develop entrepreneurial opportunities. According to the NCS document (DoE, 2003:6),

In achieving these outcomes, learners who emerged from the Further Education and Training band were expected to demonstrate achievement of the Critical and Developmental specific subjects in the Core and Elective Components individually promoted the achievement of particular Critical and Developmental Outcomes. Formative and summative assessments were also used. Assessment standards were added to specify the level of achievement expected. In this model, teachers complained about the excessive assessment administration involved. Furthermore, more the National Curriculum Statement ensured the promotion of a learner-centred approach, drawing on constructivist teaching approaches (NCS, 2003: 1-4).

However, one imminent problem at that particular time was the fact that teachers had no solid theoretical knowledge of constructivist teaching and pedagogy. In this section, it can be gathered that the implementation of any educational platform is not an easy task. Credit should be given that attempts by the South African government to enhance its people by introducing theoretical educational changes. However, with change come problems or certain ‘holes’ in the system. During the implementation, of C2005/OBE and the National Curriculum Statement there remained a number of issues that still needed to be addressed in order to make education in South Africa accessible to all its citizens. The process of transformation in terms of the educational process was more complex than anticipated (Green, 2014: 4). Hence, the season changed and the contours of education permeated towards the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). In conjunction with the changes, Harley and Wedekind (2004: 7) maintain that the RNCS had been ineffectively implemented in the schools because it reproduced social class divisions that had widened the gap between the historically advantaged and disadvantaged schools. After the reflections, the Department moved towards the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement, which I will discuss in my next segment. This communicative approach swung the methodological pendulum towards meaning and authentic language task-oriented activities that required completely new assessment practices (Maree & Fraser, 2004: 203). In the next segment, I will look at the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which is currently the path the country’s education system finds itself on. There is still a level of confusion to whether the curriculum policy statement is an “amendment, repackaged or re-circulation” of the NCS (Du Plessis, 2013).

#### **2.23.6 Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement: The Fountain of Youth or a Mountain of Posing Problems**

Change is necessary for you to reach your capacity.

John C. Maxwell

This segment attempts to give a broader outline of the curriculum assessment policy statement (CAPS) educational policy. I hope that this educational outline might invigorate an appetite to use what we have as theory, and create students as thinkers. After frequent changes within the landscape of education, in 2012 a new curriculum for Grade 10-12, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), was implemented in South African government schools.

This new curriculum applies to all subjects. CAPS was implemented in Grade 10 at the beginning of 2012, followed by Grade 11 in 2013 and reaching its final implementation year in 2014 with Grade 12. Having mentioned CAPS, I will now set out to start with a definition of this concept.

### **2.23.7 Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS): A Definition**

In a broad sense CAPS is a revision of the current National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (Pinnock, 2011). Adding to this revised version of CAPS every subject in each grade will have a single, comprehensive, and concise policy document that will provide details on what teachers need to teach and assess on a grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject basis. This curriculum review has the aim of lessening the administrative load on teachers, and ensuring that there is clear guidance and consistency for teachers when teaching.

#### **2.23.7.1 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework: The Shift to Uplift the Youth**

The fabric of life necessitates that everything in life has a season either to thrive or fail. As a researcher, I am acutely aware of the fact that everything needs counsel/argumentation. After the Review Committee's (2009) investigation which was to act on the recommendations of the Ministerial Committee by reviewing the implementation of the NCS in 2009 (Curriculum News, 2010: 2) an improvement in policy was essential in order to raise the standards in South African schools. After the review, amendments were made to address four main concerns about the NCS as identified by a task team and reported to the Minister of Education in October 2009 (Department of Basic Education, 2009).

The four concerns were:

- There were complaints about the implementation of the NCS.
- The aspect of teachers who were overburdened with administration.
- The different interpretations of the curriculum requirements.
- The underperformance of learners.

Therefore, the shift to CAPS would hold immediate benefits like the reduction of the administrative workload of teachers and by reducing the number of projects per learner, inevitably removing the use of learner portfolios.

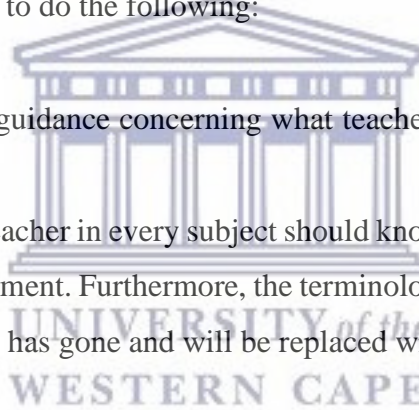
### **2.23.7.2 Curriculum and Assessment Policy: Changes and Adaptations**

It is understandable that many changes and adaptations were made to assessment (Dreyer, 2015: 149). Assessment can be seen as the vehicle that takes learning forward on its journey towards its destination (Dreyer, 2014). According to the Department of Education:

Assessment is a continuous, planned process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the performance of learners, and may take various forms. It involved four steps: generating and collecting evidence of achievement; evaluating this evidence; recording the findings; and using this information. The information is particularly used to understand and thereby assist the learner's development in order to improve the process of learning and teaching (CAPS, 2011a: 49.)

In principle, CAPS is believed to do the following:

- It gives more detailed guidance concerning what teachers need to teach and how they should assess.
- It stipulates that each teacher in every subject should know what to teach, when to teach it, and how to do assessment. Furthermore, the terminology of 'Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards' has gone and will be replaced with "Content" and "Skills".



### **2.23.7.3 The Language Domain and Curriculum and Assessment Policy**

According to CAPS (2011, 8) "language is a tool for thought and communication. It also provides learners with a rich, powerful and deeply rooted set of images and ideas that can be used to make their world other than it is; better and clearer than it is. It is through language that cultural diversity and social relations are expressed and constructed, and it is through language that such constructions can be altered, broadened and refined. The language in CAPS is less formal and lends itself more to a level of appreciation in the beginning but as one progresses through the document the language becomes more formal, technical. CAPS also include snippets of motivation and aspects of purpose. In terms of English as a Home language CAPS (2011: 8) provides the language proficiency that reflects the mastery of basic interpersonal communication skills required in social situations and the cognitive academic skills essential for learning across the curriculum. This can serve as an investment and if used correctly.

#### **2.23.7.4 Curriculum and Assessment Policy's Investment: Contribution to Schools**

Education is an investment and should benefit learners in the future. This is not always the case. Based on the CAPS (2011: 8-9) document the policy provides some important aspects that can promote English language teaching in the classroom:

- The Home Language curriculum is based on 4.5 hours per week in a 40-week academic year.
- Language content is presented in a two-week cycle, that is, 9 hours per two-week cycle. The time allocation for the different language skills in Grades 10 and 11 is 36 weeks.
- The policy leans towards text-based, communicative, integrated and process oriented approach.

This communicative approach will allow learners to engage more with their voices and zoom into learner specifics. In the next segment, I will address the Grade 11 English Home language structure within the curriculum. In doing this I will be able to infuse an awareness into the workload that goes with being an English language teacher in Grade 11, thereby signposting a portrait of the Grade 11 curriculum per quarter. An understanding of this can shed light on the timeframe within which the teachers have to teach and prepare. This understanding can show that teachers might have enough time to enhance (further) their creativity in the classroom. Furthermore, I have often heard that the workload for teachers is too much and as a result of this it impedes good quality teaching. I will now look at CAPS and the Grade 11 work structure.

#### **2.23.7.5 Curriculum and Assessment Policy and the Grade 11 Structure: Innovation or Contamination**

A truly creative person rids him or herself of all self-imposed limitations.

Gerald G. Jampolsky

This segment will highlight the components in CAPS concerning the grade 11 structure in terms of the four quarters. In the first term of Grade 11, learners must do four tasks, which are divided into a listening, an essay, transactional piece of writing and a comprehension and grammar test.

In principle, what you teach in the class gears itself towards the above tasks that I mentioned. In term two, there are only two tasks to cover and then the June examination. As a teacher, I feel the second and third term can be a gift for a teacher. I am of the opinion that in term two and three the doors of creativity and innovation can be opened if the teacher puts his/her mind to it. We should note that the reverse is also possible.

On a teaching level, I would finish my task early on and then have ample time to revise and try new and creative ways in teaching a subject area. In this spirit, I would teach English using a PS3 (besides the whiteboard), Drama, Fitness English, English by song, and a number of other weapons. The CAPS document provides the time available for various innovations. However, similarly the same policy can also provide a measure of laziness for teachers to teach in the same way and not show any form of flexibility and creativity. In the next section, I will highlight the fact that CAPS does lend itself to some practical innovations.

#### **2.23.7.6 Curriculum and Assessment Policy: Teacher Innovation and a Practical Possibility**



Insanity is continuing to do the same thing over and over and expect different results.

Albert Einstein

There is a gap in the research in teacher innovation under the CAPS domain especially in the in the Further and Education Training phase (FET). Further studies should look at the issue of innovation in the second and third quarter with regard to time availability for creativity.

All humans have the capacity to generate novel, original, clever, or ingenious products, solutions and techniques—if that capacity develops (Green, 2014: 89). Based on the facts that I mentioned in the above extract (previous section) it would appear to me that in term two and three of the grade 11 term, teachers can stretch their minds further with creative flair and innovation. In term three, there are only two tasks. Teacher quality has enormous impact on the academic achievement of students (Hall et al. 2014: 101). This platform/window of time can enhance the English teachers' level to try new things or old things that were forgotten and get the appetite of the class for learning. This would be in keeping with, Stoller's (1994: 200-327) study of innovation in language programmes provided a possible way of bridging the gap between the teacher and the learner.

The promotion of innovative methods of teaching can have a significant effect on altering the existing patterns of behaviour of a group or individual (Johnson, 2011). The above understanding of innovative expressionist in the classroom based on the principles of CAPS derives from my own understanding while partaking in the field of education. Furthermore, CAPS should encourage the English Home language teacher to experiment in order to break through to its learners. This takes a lot of work and sacrifice. Taba (1962: 464-645) states that experimentation is very important. Her principal thought about experimentation is that *“perhaps the greatest need is for protecting experimentation. Teachers need help to try out new and unfamiliar ideas. But, above all, they need to feel to experiment. They need assurance that the mistakes which occur in the course of experimentation will not be held against them.”*

Often if the climate at school is unfavourable then teachers close themselves up and shy away from experimentation. CAPS can add a measure of discovery for teachers to think experimentally or it can close up the mind of teachers. Therefore, CAPS can come across as a new beginning or tragic ending. In the next segment, I address this paradox.

#### **2.23.7.7 Curriculum and Assessment Policy’s Strength: Tragic Endings or New Beginnings**

I can’t understand why people are frightened of new ideas. I’m frightened of the old ones.

John Cage

The curriculum and assessment policy gives the teacher the suggested contact time for its objectives to be achieved (CIE, 2010: 4). Based on the information in the above segment I will reiterate that in the second and third term the English home language teacher can practice different methods of creativity. However, there must be a willingness to experiment and not be scared of failure. Furthermore, resources are indicated and ideas for assessment are suggested under every outcome expected of the learner. This educational map guides the teacher to perform his or her task. This begs the question if our generation will reflect on these changes.

## **2.24 Making Assumptions: Curriculum and Assessment Policy’s Weaknesses and the Hidden Slumber**

You cannot wait for inspiration; you have to go after it with a club.

Jack London

As part of this literature review, I see the need to discuss assumptions that underlie my thought patterns as well as underpin my study. In principle, I see assumptions, values and attitudes as part of constructed knowledge. Inevitably, these constructs form part of who we are. When looking at the strengths of CAPS, I would like us to remember that it is also possible that CAPS can change the dimension of a teacher (make you a lazy teacher). This dimension is often not brought out by teachers and researchers. With the free time that was suggested by me that is levied by some of the CAPS components, there is also the danger that teachers can use that same time to slumber and just allow the time to pass without utilizing it to maximize their learners’ potential. The conviction behind my statement is the fact that I have seen it with my own eyes. I have been in teaching for almost twenty years and have progressed through the teaching domain of different theories. What might have been meant as an incentive for teachers indirectly has the potential ‘to stab you in the back’. Therefore, in reality laziness is always a threat to a teacher. I deem it necessary to include a morsel of the reality of laziness in a teacher’s life. At this stage, we should be reminded of the fact once again that learners lose about 40% of learning time every year in South African schools because teachers habitually skip classes (<http://www.news24.com/2017>).

### **2.24.1 Laziness: The Possible Symbol of Brokenness in a Teacher’s Life**

In terms of research, I believe that there is a gap in the inquiry of teacher laziness. This might be because often teachers do not want to say aloud that they have lazy teachers at their schools. Furthermore, I also believe that many principals are also afraid to speak on this topic so that they can remain in the good books of teachers in order that both parties (teachers and principals) may not expose each other. In 2013, the oldest teacher in South Africa said, “teachers today were lazy and pupils were uninspired.”(<https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/92-year-old-slams-todays-lazy-teachers-20130323>).



Nontsikelelo Qwelane, aged 92 who has taught for 73 years delivered a lecture at the University of South Africa in Pretoria where she lambasted today's teachers and said they were "always tired" and today's pupils were satisfied with minimum results. She further states, "class management is becoming poor" and more importantly "teachers don't know what it means to be a teacher." This section serves to bring out the realization and belief that many teachers in South Africa are indeed lazy and as a result, it affects their level of teaching as well as motivating learners to reach new heights in their level of education. A lazy teacher will use any level of material to find an easy way to teach.

It is important that we come to terms with the fact that we will find lazy teachers. It has become common knowledge that you find lazy people in almost every single profession. I believe that being a teacher in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is an exciting time. Teachers should use the CAPS document to enhance their skill and creative ability. Laziness used in this section refers to abuse of time and other functional tools at school. For me as a researcher I have seldom seen this topic dealt with by teachers. Laziness further carries the characteristic of being 'boring'. Therefore, I am alluding to the fact that teachers can betray regular inattention and worst of all not even be aware of their span of attentiveness of "which every growing creature is composed and which is so needful for the process of growth" (Inglis & Aers, 2008: 118). Additionally, the word opposite of the word lazy conjures up images of being energetic but the energetic side is only one spectrum of the coin, the other being a movement of teachers becoming more thoughtful and concentrated.

I am cognizant of the fact that there are many other reasons that can drive a teacher to develop a passive attitude in/to school. They range from:

- Class Sizes
- Inadequate leadership
- Difficult neighbourhood
- Inadequate staff (not work together as a unit)

There are many other reasons that contribute to the above list. It is my biggest fear that the curriculum and assessment policy for grade 11 English Home language teachers could provide a 'space' for the development of laziness.

If it can occur in the English Home language learning just imagine what can happen in the other learning subjects. In this second segment, I will focus on the curriculum and the different policies during the 'new South African era.

Despite the journey and the excitement of new paths, it is still up to the fact how teachers embrace the new path. Fullan (2001) sheds light on the phenomenon of the role of teachers' subjective realities, by saying that one should always bear in mind that change is much more than just implementing a new policy. Teachers must take ownership if the policies implemented are to work.

#### **2.24.1.1 Rationale to include the Concept of a Teacher's Laziness**

The concept of teacher laziness deserves more research attention. Relatively little is understood about teacher laziness. As I mentioned early in chapter one that this intended study is also a precursor for Grade 12 since Grade 11 is so closely connected to the final year of school. In keeping with the scope of this study, it is important that I factor in all dimensions that rotate a teacher's life and one of the components would be laziness. We should once again remind ourselves that out of the 828,020 candidates who wrote the National Senior Certificate exam in 2016, 162,374 qualified for university, 179,619 for diploma study, and 100,486 for certificate study ([www.sowetanlive.co.za/news](http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news)). The numbers reveal that only 26% of Grade 12 learners passed with the basic requirement to enter university – one percentage more than 2015. In the end, if teachers are very creative and maintain a passion in the face of difficulties in their classroom in Grade 11 it can serve as a binding force to enrich the platform of teaching in Grade 12.

As a teacher, I have taught in ten different schools and this has helped me discern every corner of a teachers' life. Therefore, the section on laziness can help us to understand if the CAPS program in the FET phase is the 'best practice' for the South African classroom. In asking this question we can possibly discover if CAPS is an illegitimate importation from an inappropriate paradigm and that its use threatens to develop lazy or burnout teachers thereby undermining the very values that its proponents adopt. In addition to this, we can also ask the question if English Home language teachers are too lazy to use the textbook in the classroom. In the next subdivision, I will deal with teacher embracement and the landscape of change. I am mentioning this as an antidote to the concept of teacher laziness.

### 2.24.2 Teacher Embracement: The Ball is in Your Court

You must learn to become comfortable outside of your comfort zone.

John C Maxwell

There is a common notion that change can arouse emotions and despair. However, at the same time if taken positively it can bring hope, growth and progress. Change is the only course that is constant in our lives. Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe (2004: 314) point out that despite training that is meant to prepare teachers for changes in curriculum, teachers always show the sign of confusion and struggle to apply change in their classrooms. Adding to this is another perception that teachers are against curriculum change and that they would therefore resist it because they have not been involved (Carl, 2010: 199).

In light of the above statement, I believe that the higher institution should drive the point home and reaffirm in its courses that change imposes possibilities for innovation. This concept is important for new teachers to be aware of and more importantly, change can bring on Professional teacher development. This is in keeping with what Pennington (1992: 50) states when she says that teacher development implies “evolution from one state into a more advanced state” signifying “growth, a target to aim for and progress in achieving aims” in the educational arena. Development means change, a process of becoming better (Kenny & Savage, 1997: 88).

In principal, teachers can react in three ways:

- Teachers can accept the curriculum and adapt.
- Teachers can refuse the curriculum change and wear a mask as if one accepts the changes.
- Teachers can partly accept the curriculum changes.

Whichever way teachers find themselves in they should be cognizant of the fact that change will come again so teachers should use it to grow and mature in their teaching capacity. Teaching is a noble profession and I commend teachers for their valour.

Johnson (2011: 7) asserts, “Teaching is the most wonderful profession in the world. In the next segment, I will discuss the aspect of teaching and the teaching method chosen by the Department of Education in terms of English home language teaching. The approaches to teaching language in South Africa are text-based, communicative, integrated and process oriented. The central theoretical concept in communicative language teaching is rooted in “communicative competence”. In retrospect, it is also an expansion of the early definition of competence given by Noam Chomsky in 1965.

Dell Hymes (1972) originally introduced this concept which includes knowledge, skills and abilities in the concept of communication; whether or not (and to what degree) an utterance is formally possible, feasible, appropriate and actually performed. In terms of academic nuances, different writers imbue different meaning to communicative competence. This will depend on context. A case in point would be where Widdowson (1987) has deviated from the original meaning of the term. In doing this, he has played down the role of grammatical competence. According to Nunan (2015: 10), communicative language teaching was less a method than a broad philosophical approach to language, if viewed not so much as a system of rules but as a tool for communication. The literature points to Wilkins being one of the first, if not the first, to use the term 'communicative approach' (1974b). The earlier ambition of the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching (CLT) was first identified in Roberts (1982:97ff: 94-110,) as the British tradition. This identification also surfaces in Richards and Rodgers (1986: 64ff). Wilkins, who was one of the first, if not the first, to use the term 'communicative approach' (1974b). His work for the Council of Europe on the 'common core in a unit credit system', from which the concepts notion and function emerged, was crucial to further developments.

According to the CAPS (2011: 11) document, the communicative approach “suggests that when learning a language, a learner should have a great deal of exposure to the target language and many opportunities to practise or produce the language. Learners learn to read by doing a great deal of reading and learn to write by doing much writing.” In principle, the CLT can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom (Richards, 2006: 2). In similar terms like the NCS (2003), the Curriculum and Assessment Policy promoted the importance of merging communicative language teaching with process and text-based approach.

I will address the text-based approach later in this section. Since the CLT has come across as the answer to teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in South Africa, it is imperative that I deal with the notion of having the best teaching method but in retrospect what happens when the intended learning outcome does not accrue from the individual students' capacity. It is imperative that a teacher has a plan for this outcome and recognize when an outcome is not met. In the next part, I will deal with the concept of non-learning.

### **2.24.3 Non-Learning: Considering the Delay of Intended Outcomes**

Success in the teaching arena is always possible and it is a joy to see learning taking place. However, this is not always the case. The importance of learning is not just a matter of what happens when one learns something new. Furthermore, it must be understood that it is just as important to be interested in what happens when the outcomes in class are not met. This could be due to some barriers that exist to the process of learning. In my M.Ed thesis, I had dealt with certain barriers in the English Home language classroom. I am mentioning it here because there is still a huge gap in the understanding of these barriers and providing strong possible answers to these barriers in terms of the South African context. Resistance in the classroom is a common problem in the South African classroom. It presents a problem when specific learning does not occur as intended. Therefore, before I continue with “the teaching landscape” it would be appropriate to look at what can hinder the learning process in the English Home language classroom. Jarvis (1992) presented an outline of issues in three categories as to why learning has not been not taking place. The categories he presented were:

- Presumption
- Non-Consideration
- Rejection

In the next segment I will expand on the above list.

#### **2.24.3.1 Presumption: Satisfaction in the Wrong Way**

This concept implies that the learner thinks he/she already understands something and therefore does not register new learning (Ileris, 2002: 99). A case in point might be the function of comma in a text.

The learner might understand the one function of a comma but is not aware of the fact that the comma can be used up to 10 different ways but the learner is satisfied with one intended outcome, which is the way he/she understand it.

### **2.24.3.2 Non-Consideration: Forceful Distraction**

This concept implies that a person might register new opportunities but does not relate to them (Ileris, 2002: 99). This could be because the person is too busy or too nervous of what it might lead to if it adopts the concept of the lesson.

Numerous times in my own class, a learner might have Life science homework and attempts to do it during the English period. With this frame of mind, the learner does not consider the English lesson at all that is about to be presented.

### **2.24.3.3 Rejection: What Value does it have?**

This concept implies that on a more conscious level, a person does not want to learn something new in a particular context (Ileris, 2002: 99). This happens in the English classroom on the basis that the learner feels that the new knowledge has no value in his/her life. The above three concepts will appear in a teachers' life. I mention it here as a measure of awareness. I propose to revisit this issue concerning how teachers responded to these concepts indirectly in my analysis of data as it can provide a basis for me to recommend strategies to help alleviate the process.



## **2.25 Some Principles to Alleviate Non-Learning**

In order to deal with the problem of non-learning it is important that a teacher understand the culture of the classroom. This should preferably be done in the first two weeks of school. However, there are some basic things that a teacher can do in order to help the classroom culture. They can range from the following:

- There must be a balance between activities in the classroom and the underlying content or theory.
- Most lessons should harness the learner capacity to grow educationally. Adding to this is the notion there must be meaning for the student in the learning process. The learning activities must be personally relevant to the student.

- Classroom activities must allow the students to make connections between the learning they are doing and its relation to the world.
- Encouraging learners to step out of their comfort zones and showing them that it is possible (Chapman, McPhee, & Proudman, 1995: 243).

In the next segment, I will look at the educational stream that South Africa is currently following. The next section serves to highlight the characteristics of the communicative stream while at the same time I raise issues of concerns. As I intend to observe teachers using this model I aim to see through my own informed decisions if this model is productive enough to stimulate a high level of critical thinkers (critical thinking). This is important since I stated at the beginning of the literature review that some factors (teaching strategies) can improve learners' ability to improve their academic achievements.

## **2.26 The Teaching Landscape: The Communicative Stream in South Africa**

According to Engelbrecht (2016: 1), "a variety of socio-economical influences created a great diversity between learners which brought on the result that teachers had to assume a number of roles in the classroom to create a conducive learning environment." Therefore, the push toward communication has been relentless in South Africa, simply because learners were not on the same language acquisition. However, this push was already felt in the world in the 1980's (Higgs & Clifford, 1982). The traditional role of the teacher has changed a lot in recent years. In retrospect, it has forced the willing teacher to adjust their teaching methods (Nieman & Monyai, 2006: 1). This is important because the essence of effective teaching lies in the ability of the teacher to set up a learning experience that brings about the desired educational outcomes (Kyriacou, 1986: 33). It has also become common knowledge that the most valuable assets of any successful school are the teachers who deliver lessons to children every day (Beere, 2014). Breen and Candlin (1980) identify three basic roles of the communicative language teacher:

- The teacher is seen as the facilitator of the communication process.
- The teacher is seen as the participant within the learner teacher-group.
- The teacher is also seen as the researcher of the learner (analyse the needs of the learner).

The ultimate key to educational change and school improvement in school is the teacher (Hargreaves, 1994). The CTL model brings out the Text-Based method and the Process approach. Widdowson (2003: 4) echoes the belief that “teaching involves a constant inquiry of one’s own work, the experiences of other teachers and the search for new means to improve teaching. Teaching is an art but it is also a craft, which can be made explicit.” In keeping with this set of views, we understand that language learning requires greater input from the learners themselves and offers opportunities to apply language structures already acquired in real-life contexts (Maree & Fraser, 2004: 203). Furthermore, Richards and Rogers (1986: 66) describe CLT as an approach that aims to:

- Make communicative competence the goal of language teaching.
- Develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication.
- Communicative language teaching is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes learning a language primarily for communicating with others (Duff, 2014: 15).
- Inspire a host of interactive activities to teach literary texts at different levels (Kramsch, 1993: 131).

Canale and Swain (1980) add that the communicative approach also promote learners’ whole rounded communicative proficiency that grants one’s own successful language knowledge and skills. They further classify the communicative approach into four major genres:

- Grammatical competence- knowledge of lexical items and rules of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and orthographic competences.
- Discourse competence- an artful combination of grammatical forms and meanings, encoding decoding acts in to a cohesive and coherent spoken and written text of various genres (Savignon, 2002).
- Pragmatic competence-proper mastery of sociocultural rules and discourse conventions that has to be followed in diverse communication situations (Brown, 2007: 247).
- Strategic competence-verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that can be put in to action when needed to compensate for breakdowns at times of communication caused by performance variables or due to insufficient competence (Canale & Swain, 1980: 30).



Based on the above points language can be viewed as a communicative resource allowing learners to use the format of the extended stretches of language in authentic contexts (Feez (2002). Language development in this method is more intentional than incidental (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 91). The key characteristic of CLT is communication: “Language learning is learning to communicate” (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983: 91).

Adding to this, Dubin and Olshtain (1986: 88) state that the most significant contribution of the communicative approach that it has brought about a more comprehensive view of teaching and learning. The interaction that can arise between teacher and learner in the classroom can shape the quality of activities that occur during the lesson. In the next segment, I will deal with the good and the bad of the communicative approach. I hope that this discussion will bring an awareness of the possible dangers as well as benefits of this approach.

### **2.26.1 The Importance of the Communicative Approach and its Dangers for South African Learners**

The communicative language approach is currently the lyceum of English Home language teachers. Engelbrecht (2016: 1) emphasizes the fact that:

A communicative language teaching method foregrounds a midway between the extremes of learner goals and allows the teacher to teach the content in a comprehensive manner that would assist the learner in acquiring skills to communicate beyond the strict and impersonal rules of grammar.

This approach harnesses collaborative communication and promotes interaction. Kerns (1990: 104) presented eight fundamental and comprehensive principles of communicative approach:

- Language teaching is based on a view of language as communication, i.e. language is seen as a social tool which speakers and writers use to make meaning; we communicate about something to someone for a purpose, either orally or in writing.
- Diversity is recognized and accepted as part of language development and use in second language learners and users as it is with first language users.
- A learner’s competence is considered in relative, not absolute terms of correctness.
- Language variety is recognized as a viable model for learning and teaching.

- Culture is recognized as instrumental in shaping speakers' communicative competence, in both first and subsequent languages.
- No single methodology or fixed set of techniques is prescribed.
- Language use is recognized as serving the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual functions, as defined by Halliday, and is related to the development of learners' competence in each.
- It is essential that learners be engaged in doing things with language—that is, that they use language for a variety of purposes, in all phases of learning.

The above principles recognize the social dimension of teaching which is also rooted in the communicative approach. Therefore, in the communicative approach, the social interactional activities are tasks that require learners to choose language, which is functionally effective and appropriate to the social situation in which the interaction is taking place (Richards, 2006). In terms of language input, communicative competence is measured in terms of acceptability, or in terms of producing the language, which is appropriate to specific kinds of social situation (Littlewood, 1981: 20). The outcome of the practices of these social interactional activities can:

- Improve students' mastery of integrated language skills, but
- It also enables learners to know and make use of the socio-cultural rules and discourse conventions to follow in various social situations.

The substance of this approach can allow language teachers to play a significant role in enhancing learners' socio-cultural and discourse competences through designing and implementing functional and social interactional tasks. In principal, certain activities encourage students to actively and willingly participate in those activities. According to Nsibambi (1995), the communicative approach is the most effective teaching method because it is based upon appropriate principles that promote selection of good teaching methods.

### **2.26.2 The National Curriculum Statement and the Communicative Approach**

A communicative approach suggests a learner should have a great deal of exposure when learning a language. This implies that learners must be given relevant activities to practice the target language.

The CAPS document (2011: 11) reiterates this by stating, “Learners learn to read by doing a great deal of reading and learn to write by doing much writing. According to the NCS, a communicative approach sets out to achieve the following goals:

- It enhances the development of self-sufficient learners.
- Learners should be given ample opportunities to use language in class: to listen and speak and to read or view and write language. This means maximising opportunities for learners to practise oral language skills using group or pair activities and to practise reading through a range of individual activities (NCS, 2008: 10).
- The language should be broken down into components of analysis in terms of communicative situations in which they are used. The learners will know how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions (Richards, 2006: 3).
- Varieties of language skills are involved. Learners will know how to produce and understand different types of texts (NCS, 2008: 10).

The above points echo a relevancy based on which teachers and language teaching experts from “different educational traditions can identify with it and consequently interpret it in different ways” (Richards & Rodgers 2007: 157). Accordingly, as teachers, we must develop in our learners the ability to communicate effectively in a wide range of professional and social contexts (Richards & Renandya, 2002: 69). This is important in the context of South Africa because of its diversity. Educational researchers (de Beer, Du Plessis and Gravett, 2015; Landsberg & Swart, 2013 and Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2012) further support the communicative approach. Having given the outline of the communicative approach/communicative language teaching (CTL) in the system of English education and having shown its relevance to South Africa for implementing this approach, I will also need to showcase the negative applications of this approach.

### **2.26.3 Questioning the Communicative Approach: Who Understands It?**

The Communicative approach has been around for some time now. This does not mean that all language teachers understand it. According to Brumfit (1988), this should not surprise us because it adopts a 'post-method' view of language pedagogy. The communicative approach is characterised by a 'core set of theories and beliefs about the nature of language, of language learning, and a derived set of principles for teaching a language' (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 245); as such, it lacks closely prescribed classroom techniques.

Swan (2012: 120) states that teachers soon discovered that their jobs were no longer to teach English but “to train learners in the interactive interpretive and expressive skills and strategies required for negotiating meaning and assigning contextually determined values in real time to elements of the linguistic code...” It has therefore become obvious that the communicative approach is not the final answer. As Thompson (1996: 15) puts it, “whatever innovations emerge, they will do so against the backdrop of the changes brought about by communicative language teaching...” In the next segment, I will briefly refer to the communicative approach in the area of class sizes and group work.

#### **2.26.4 Class Sizes and the Communicative Approach: Does Size Matter?**

In developing countries, it would appear that class sizes are always fairly large. With large classes and maximum diversity, creating the right kind of interaction is a major challenge for teachers using the communicative approach. Creating the right kind of interaction for acquisition constitutes a major challenge for teachers. The communicative approach attempts to involve learners in more authentic and interactive learning tasks that promote both comprehensible input and learners' language output. A problem about output hypothesis is that output is surprisingly rare (Krashen, 1994). In the case of output, the problem is especially severe. By the same token, it has also been argued that classroom activities in which students work together in pairs or small groups to complete some task allow for more student-generated talk (Crandall, 1994; Echevarria, Vogt & Short 2004; Glaudini Rosen & Sasser, 1997; Grabe & Stoller, 1997). However, I also notice with a considerable measure of certainty that some teachers believe that student-centered classrooms in using the communicative approach may appear chaotic in nature. From the outset, this is the ‘nature of beast’ when using the communicative approach. In principle, there will always be a level of noise for the simple reason that vigorous interaction breeds noise (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).

#### **2.26.5 Group Work and the Communicative Approach: Logic or Illogic?**

The Communicative Approach emphasizes interaction. In doing this it perpetuates that group work can be an effective method (Nieman & Monyai, 2006: 124) to motivate students, encourage active learning, and develop key critical-thinking, communication, and decision-making skills. Similarly, if careful planning is not implemented then group can be a daunting task. Therefore, every type of grouping has advantages and disadvantages.

A short video on YouTube adds some value to the composition of group work (<https://youtu.be/5a7hP9doTBg>). Through group work, the creation within the classroom can become like a grand narrative. The English Home language classroom offers a sense of adventure in the context of group work. Hooks states that the classroom should be “a place that is life-sustaining and mind expanding where teacher and student work together in partnership” (Hooks, 2003). His expression can lead to some advantages of group work.

#### **2.26.5.1 Some Advantages of Group Work: A Bond for Life**

The advantages of group work can be summarised as following:

- It helps learners to work cooperatively.
- It encourages active participation in purposeful activities such as role play.
- It allows peer discussions and clarification about unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts.
- It develops higher order thinking skills like logical reasoning, analysis and open-ended problem solving.
- It helps learners to pool resources and to respect one another’s strengths and weaknesses.
- It allows the teacher to monitor the progress of an activity.
- It allows learners to learn actively rather than assimilate knowledge passively.
- It is multidimensional which means that the learning process is facilitated both cognitively and effectively.

(Nel, 2015: 29)

Having looked at the advantages, I will now turn my attention to the disadvantages of group work.

### 2.26.5.2 Some Disadvantages of Group Work: A Watchful Eye

The disadvantages of group work are as follows:

- Assignments must be designed carefully to ensure that all members of the group will be active participants.
- Assignments must directly meet the learning objectives of the course and relate directly to the content that has been taught. For some material, there are a limited number of viable projects.
- Instructors need to monitor each group, provide feedback and assist when necessary. This may prove to be more time-consuming than traditional teaching formats.
- The project must be designed in a way to promote assessment that is valid, fair and accurately reflects the knowledge and performance of all group members. Grading complexities can make group assignments difficult for instructors.
- Students may sometimes struggle with making decisions in a group setting.
- Students have varying attitudes regarding collaborative work in the classroom.

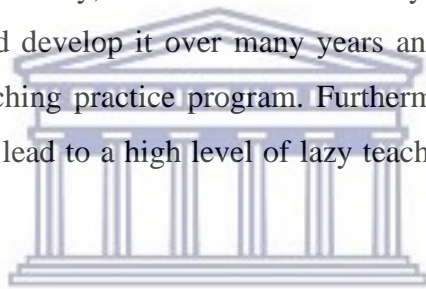
(Webb, 1989: 21-39)

In the context of South Africa there were many problems in terms of noise intensity when group work was initiated and the fact that many classrooms are situated next to each other cause the noise to filter into other rooms. Similarly, in some other schools group work will work well and can be an enjoyable activity. Furthermore, the aims of fluency and accuracy of the communicative approach do not necessarily have to be fluid all the time. Plainly, some methodologies aim to enhance the productive nature of a country and catapulting it into a developed country.

Having laid down the principles of the communicative platform in terms of the different components I would like to end this segment by pointing out some important aspects of what? expressed by Medgyes (1995:104). He states the following about the communicative classroom:

- It requires a teacher of extraordinary abilities
- It requires a multidimensional teacher.
- It requires high tech teacher.
- It requires a wizard-of-Oz-like super-person yet of flesh and blood.
- It requires a teacher that must be confident without being conceited.
- It requires a teacher that must be judicious without being judgemental.
- It requires a teacher that must be ingenious without being unbridled.
- The teacher must be technically skilled without being pedantic.
- It requires a teacher that must be far-sighted without being far-fetched.
- It requires a teacher that must be down to earth without being earth-bound and
- It requires a teacher that must be inquiring without being inquisitive

If we take the above points seriously, then teachers will really be focused and will discover these practicing principles and develop it over many years and not in four or five years at university and their short teaching practice program. Furthermore, the above profile of the communicative teacher might lead to a high level of lazy teachers or burnout teachers in the profession.



In the next segment, I would like to address the arguments on both sides of the communicative approach. I am aware that one Chinese learner referred to the CLT as “cruel language teaching” (Tsui, 2007). We should remind ourselves that no critique of the communicative approach would be without substance that does not take into account the critique presented by Swan (1985a & 1985b). I will now point out his position.

### **2.26.5.3 Positioning Swan’s Thoughts: Flagging Some Deep-Rooted Issues**

Swan’s provocative piece of writing is stimulating. His thoughts are important at this stage for the South African education system because at present the communicative approach is the lyceum for most South African teachers. Two important articles by Swan have flagged the way for some deep-rooted issues to be exposed. His critique does not serve as a ‘coherent and monolithic body of doctrine’ (Rossner & Bolitho, 1995:99). However, to shed some light on its ‘darker’ characteristics, I wish to refer to his thoughts. Swan brings out the following in his article:

- The Communicative Approach fails to take account of the knowledge and skills; which language students bring with them from their mother tongue and their experience of the world.
- Syllabus design has become a good deal more sophisticated—the boring and mechanical exercise types have slowly disappeared to be replaced by a ‘splendid variety of exciting and engaging practice activities.’
- The Communicative approach has the typical views of an intellectual revolution—it is choked with jargon.
- It makes exaggerated claims for the power and novelty of its doctrines.
- A great deal of learning takes place in settings, which are remote from the situation where the skills or knowledge will ultimately be used.
- Communicative’ courses achieve the appearance of communication without the reality.

Swan (1985a: 1-12; 1985b: 76-87)

The relevance of the critique will be seen through the initial stage of classroom observation. McDonough & Shaw (2003: 41) state that Swan is of course right to “remind us of the need for teachers to take a critical or at least a questioning, view of any new movement or set of beliefs claiming to revolutionize our profession.” In keeping with the scope of this investigation, it would be important to reflect on any counter arguments to Swan’s position. I will therefore present Widdowson’s thoughts on the issue.

#### **2.26.5.4 Positioning Widdowson’s Thoughts: Point and Counterpoint**

Widdowson (1985: 99) states that Swan’s article was to ‘provoke, not to persuade, to liberate thought, not to confine it by imposition of fixed ideas. This makes complete sense because in academia you present and argue but never impose your way of thinking vehemently on anyone else. Widdowson (1985: 99-102) argues that Swan misrepresents the ideas deliberately with reference to the ‘communicative approach’. He further states that the arguments presented by Swan are inconsistent. Widdowson believes that Swan fails to offer support for his own position on the theory of English language teaching. ‘What we need is clear thinking and explicitly, well-informed argument of the kind which Swan conspicuously fails to provide (Rossner & Bolitho, 1995: 102).



As a counter point Widdowson states that his book (Teaching Language as Communication) is not:

- In anyway intended as propaganda for a new communicative orthodoxy in language teaching.
- Trying to present a conclusive case.

(Widdowson, 1978: x)

Widdowson further adds that it is an appeal for critical investigation into the basis of a belief and its practical implications (Widdowson, 1979: x). The thrust of the debate between Widdowson and Swan highlights the beauty of English language teaching which reflects contextual variations for pedagogical styles. By looking at both sides, I will now offer my thoughts on the issue in focus here.

#### **2.26.5.5 Positioning my Thoughts: My Imposition**

Widdowson and Swan's exchange has stimulated critical debate, which enhances the informed theoretical enquiry into English language teaching. McDonough & Shaw (2003) feel that Swan overstates his case at times. However, in reality some of their conclusions will turn out to be mistaken because theory and teaching are two different things (in light of actual teaching experience because teaching is style and strategy is context bound). Furthermore, the fact that I was 'catapulted' into (CTL), it forced me to bring out a level of creativity in order to use it in a way that would benefit our learners and grow their level of thinking.

For me the contextual setting is a key feature for teaching pedagogy. I mention this on the basis of my teaching experience in Asia, Africa and Europe. In retrospect, it has forced the willing teacher to adjust their teaching methods (Nieman & Monyai, 2006: 1). Nevertheless, in the context of South Africa, the position of Swan (2012) carries significance:

The new interest in learner centred, naturalistic, activity-based learning was allowed to fill the horizon, so that teaching language was all too easily replaced by doing things with it.

Having presented a discussion on the positives and the negatives of communicative language teaching, I will now offer some characteristics of the text-based approach, which is a reflection of the communicative approach.

## **2.27 The Text-Based Approach: Displaying the Text of Relevancy**

If teachers want students to really think, they need to find material that is provocative, ambiguous, complex or emotionally engaging plus relevant to students' lives.

Jeff Halstead (2011: 20)

Text-based teaching conceptualizes language as a human resource for making meanings. A text is a vehicle for information and it means that texts can be chosen because their topics are motivating (Johns & Davies 1983: 5). Furthermore, "a text is a stretch of language which is held together cohesively through meaning" (Feez, 2002: 4).

The Text-Based method explores how texts work. The purpose of a text-based method is to enable learners to become competent and critical readers, writers, viewers, and designers of texts (CAPS, 2011: 11). Text-based approaches can be seen as a more teacher-centred approach than other current methodologies as the role of the teacher makes him/her appear more of an 'expert' (Candlin & Mercer, 2001: 63). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement says, "Through this critical interaction, learners develop the ability to evaluate texts. Adding to this is the system of integrating the explicit teaching of comprehension, text structure and word level strategies into compelling sense-making activities with texts increases student reading achievement (Pearson, 1996: 259-274). Authentic texts are the main source of content and the proponents of this approach believe that the text-based approach help learners master the functions and linguistic conventions that learners need to know for their writing (Hyland, 2002). In this system, teachers choose texts relevant to learners' purpose in the system of the global economy. When teachers practice the art of relevancy, they can enable their students to connect the hooks of instruction to their lives. Practices of relevance in the classroom can take many forms. Some forms of culturally relevant teaching may generate relevance, but not all of them do.

From my own experience, I have noticed that many learners do not feel connected to the texts. This can especially be seen at times in an exam setting. For example, I observed how many learners from one particular school did not take a liking to the Comprehension texts of the Grade 12 Paper 1, 'Cultural Appropriation'. This also includes many teachers who voiced their irritation with the text as well. Inevitably, the practice of relevancy can be a beneficial component in the English language classroom. This leads me to the notion of relevancy in the classroom.

### **2.27.1 Expanding the Notion of Relevancy: Granting an Appetite for Knowledge**

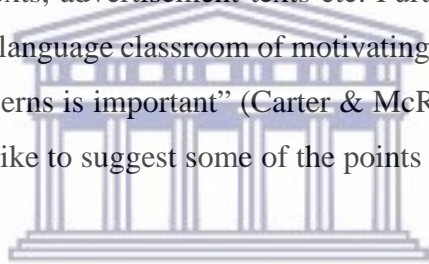
If literary texts are to serve the function in the language classroom of motivating and stimulating interest, then their relevance to student concerns is important.

(Carter & McRae, 1996: 72)

John Dewey's reflection (1956) carries the notion "that the school curriculum should reflect life not just preparation for life." In light of Dewey's notion, a "proper literacy curriculum should offer learners opportunities to engage in a range of literacy activities they encounter inside and outside of schools (Sailors and Hoffman, 2010: 294). Ultimately, the three most important components in English language teaching are learners, materials, and teachers. The scope of this 'trinity' echo the reality that they must interact to ensure the success of the teaching/learning process. Furthermore, I have noticed that when you deal with weak learners but you use strong materials (connection to a teenagers' life) and an experienced teacher, then a positive result from the teaching process can be expected. Although this sounds simple, many teachers do not follow this simple plan. Therefore, by "equipping teachers with an adequate understanding of the theoretical issues that underpin a well-informed choice of texts, can bring about a positive reinforcement of learning in the language classroom" (Sivasubramaniam, 2006: 15). Dean (2003: 5) also supports the above view when he states, "If we are to encourage pupils to continue reading as fully engaged enthusiasts, we have to be wholly in touch with the sorts of texts likely to have the necessary appeal to bring about real engagement."

All too often, I see teachers use materials that nullify the learning process in terms of the learners' attention span in the classroom. Therefore, the application of 'relevancy' in the classroom can add to teacher effectiveness (Xiaoju, 1984).

Hence, as we find out and probe the pedagogical objectives that provide a basis for language development we can also ascertain the impact of the literary text (Widdowson, 1975). This can help us understand social relevancy which Kumaravadivelu (2006: 201) as one of his ‘macrostrategies’ which characterizes postmethod language teaching. In the segment on ‘curriculum’ it has been emphasized that the curriculum should be relevant (Gultig, Hoadley & Jansen, 2002) not only to learners’ lives in terms of content material but also appropriate to current and anticipated future needs. There is a common concept under the text-based approach that teachers select texts of interest to learners. In keeping with the primacy of this approach, students should actively make sense of texts that feed into their lifestyle. Halliday (1973) first espoused on this structure of language. Learners in principle, learn language through working with whole texts. If the text is relevant to their lives, there is a palatable enthusiasm to understand it. Carter & McRae (1996: 72) voiced their views on the use of literary texts in the English language classroom. Here I am referring to texts that would appear in the textbook e.g. comprehension texts, poetic texts, advertisement texts etc. Furthermore, “if the literary texts are to serve the function in the language classroom of motivating and stimulating learners, then their relevance to student concerns is important” (Carter & McRae, 1996: 72). To solidify the concept of relevancy I would like to suggest some of the points made by Halstead (2011: 20). He states:



- To engage students, content needs to be relevant to their lives as possible.
- Teachers need to create assignments that require thinking yet entice interest.
- Expert reading teachers use clever, relevant newspaper clippings and magazine headlines to analyse the nuances of language.

Adding to the above, Zakia Sarwar (1991: 16-21) confirms the importance of relevancy as a component in the classroom. He lists four important components especially in terms of large classrooms, which is prevalent in many South African classrooms. The four components are:

- Re-education
- Responsibility
- Relevance
- Rapport

Based on what I mentioned in this segment it is vital that teachers learn to master the art of relevancy in order to not lose learners in the first part of the year. Relevancy promotes discussion in the classroom and ultimately relates to how a text can connect with an appeal to students through its relevance. This initiates a genuine response from learners.

### **2.27.2 The Value of Genuineness: The Push for Authenticity in the Classroom**

Based on the above segment the understanding of ‘relevant texts’ is important in the teaching process. However, this takes hard work and is something that some English teachers in South Africa do not fully adopt. Relevant materials therefore can present a problem for some English teachers in the South African context because:

- Using relevant text materials can be a burden for English teachers.
- Relevant texts sometimes contain difficult language.
- Time constraints to look for these materials.

On the other hand, relevant text materials are important because it can:

- Have a positive effect on learner motivation.
- Provide trustworthy cultural information.
- Show the composition of real language.
- Fundamentally, relevant text relates more closely to learners’ needs.
- Enhance a creative flow in English language teaching.

The above list closely aligns itself to Halstead list in the above segment. It has been firmly established in the communicative approach that the language classroom must be used as preparation for survival in the real world (Clarke and Silbertstein, 1977: 51). In this context, we can understand the dynamics of text usage. As indicated by Widdowson (1987) when he argues that classroom materials themselves should be derived from authentic texts and other forms of input, as long as the learning processes they facilitated are authentic. Having shown the importance of authentic (relevant) text in the classroom that can be found by the teacher in the textbook or in the teachers’ own capacity, I will now move on to the handling of the text which is vital for effective progression.

### 2.27.3 Texts Handling: Considering Text-Based Dynamics

Text handling by English teachers is an important skill that must be consistently developed in the classroom. However, a review of teaching would indicate that many older teachers received their teaching qualification way before the switch over of the South African Educational system as well as before constructivism popularity and text-based approaches. Therefore, in this ‘fresh era’ of text-based practice in South Africa the text-based theory does need unpacking and clarification for teachers (Kerfoot, Probyn & Desai, 2011). The last component to make up the trinity in the CAPS document is the process approach, which I will look at next.

### 2.28 Process Patterns: Moving Towards the End through Different stages

According to CAPS (2011: 11), the process approach is used:

- When learners read and produce oral and written texts.
- When learners engage in different stages of the listening, speaking, reading, and writing processes.
- When learners think of the audience and the purpose during these processes.

The process approach will enable them to communicate and express their thoughts in a natural way. The CAPS document further explains, “The teaching of writing does not focus on the product only but also focuses on the purpose and process of writing. During process writing, learners are taught how to generate ideas, to think about the purpose and audience, to write drafts, to edit their work, and to present a written product that communicates their thoughts.” CAPS encapsulate the principle that classroom practices emphasize the dynamic nature of writing.

A number of researchers and practitioners argue that writing should be a process rather than a product (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2013; Peñuelas, 2008; Sasaki, 2000; Weigle, 2005, 2014; White & Arndt, 1991). One dynamic concept of process writing sets up a collaborative process that takes learners through sets of prewriting activities, creation and revision of multiple drafts with rounds of peer and teacher feedback, final draft editing and proofreading (Weigle, 2014: 222–237). Based on the above we notice that the role of both the teacher and the student differs from other approaches in that,

The teacher, instead of being cast merely in the role of linguistic judge, now becomes a reader, responding to what the students have written; the students, rather than merely providing evidence of mastery of linguistic forms, proffer experiences, ideas, attitudes and feelings to be shared with the reader. (White & Arndt, 1991: 2).

We should also note that in the orientation of process, the process approach to writing was not necessarily conceived as part of sociocultural theory. However, it is fully compatible with it, and it is an integral concept in the South African education system.

### **2.28.1 Limitations: The Grey Matter of the Process Approach**

The process approach is currently part of the South African English classroom. The process approach is not perfect. There are some drawbacks to this approach. Badger & White (2000: 156) argue that the process approach evolved out of a dissatisfaction with more traditional product approaches. This approach sets the end before the beginning. Furthermore, many teachers are aware that this process requires a large investment of class time to be successful.

Large class sizes in the South African classrooms also add a new dimension to the effective practice of this approach. Therefore, it once again requires an additional investment of teachers for the simple reason that not all the students in the classroom will be at the same level of competency. This inevitably leads to the fact that the teacher will reply to all individual learners in order for learners to attempt an improvement in their work. This process pattern can also lead to teachers becoming frustrated, eventually many teachers might start to cheat the system of this approach, and simply allow learners to do the editing. The implication here is that not all of errors might be identifying. This process can start to become a burden when classes start to reach 40 learners and over in one classroom. As I mentioned in the process approach there is the atmosphere of a 'workshop' where their work is evaluated before the final production either by learners or by the teacher who acts like a facilitator (Hedge 2000).

Having mentioned some positives and limitations in the process approach and looked at the path of educational setting in South Africa, I will now deal with the world of the textbook. However, I will first give a summary of the chapter and the implications/directions of part two of this literature review.

## **2.29 Summary: The Bigger Picture**

Constructivist practicality in the classroom often shifts literacy practices and creates the opportunity for new or forgotten methods of teaching to appear or develop. As I will search and observe classroom activities in a constructivist classroom by various teachers in Cape Town, South Africa, it will keep the pendulum swinging into a rich field of inquiry. By adding the theoretical lens of the curriculum and constructivist theories amalgamated among teachers, I can harness a level of experiments to see the impact of different teaching methods in different communities and different classrooms as it relates to using different texts in the classroom.

The present discussion concerning CAPS holds value because it is the curriculum that is currently been adhered to in South Africa. A further review of the communicative approach in this section reveals why teachers can benefit from the communicative model while at the same time also exposing some of its pitfalls. According to Hattie (2009), teaching has the most influence on fruitful outcomes for learners. Therefore, it is important to investigate teachers in the present era through interviews, observations and material analysis. It will help the research community gain a deeper understanding of the ways to teach learners in South Africa in the 21st century. As I stated at the beginning of chapter 2 that teaching in South Africa is not easy. Therefore, this study will attempt to expose/uncover the different teaching methods used by English Home language teachers to help strengthen the landscape of teaching in South Africa. The next chapter will set out aspects of the world of the textbook and teacher patterns in the classroom and it will look at ways in using the textbook in the classroom. Consideration is specifically given to benefit the English Home language textbook while at the same time exposing the lack of content, which has the potential to diminish the level of teaching.



## CHAPTER THREE

### LITERATURE REVIEW: ISSUES AND INSIGHTS IN TEXTBOOK ORIENTATION

#### 3. Textbook Construction: Surfacing the Textbook

Textbooks should so be designed and organised that a great deal of improvisation and adaptation by both teacher and class is possible.

Robert O'Neil (1982)

##### 3.1 Introduction

A definitive element of this study is to activate an awareness of the English Home language textbook and therefore to make a contribution into this continuing route of investigation. Written passages that come in textbooks and other teaching materials can, if they are used properly, play an important part in the learning process (Swan, 2012: 180).

There is no doubt that English has enriched the lives of past generations, and therefore it will continue to enrich the lives of our learners provided, we take care that they learn how to understand and appreciate the English language. The English Home language textbook is a tool to help this process and bring out the creative impulses and drives of our teachers and learners. According to Shipley (1964), the textbook is the most widely used teaching aid in existence. In the 1980's, educational researchers began to find impressive results from their studies of what 'inputs' into students' education affected their performance on tests. Heyneman & Loxley (1983) & Fuller (1987) state that World Bank publications stress that the use of textbooks was an important indicator of learner achievement.

In light of the above many textbooks used in the English Home language classroom embody the curriculum (Richards, 1998a). Conventionally, the textbooks reflect the objectives of the language programme, the kind of syllabus used, the skills been taught and the methodologies advocated, and might be seen to function as a mediating object/artefact between the teacher and learner (Littlejohn, & Windeatt, 1989).

For teachers, textbooks offer a framework of guidance and orientation (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). For learners, they are perhaps the most important source of language input apart from contact with their teacher. Therefore, according to (Altbach, 1991: 242) ‘textbooks are one of the most important educational inputs: texts reflect basic ideas about a national culture, and ... are often a flashpoint of cultural struggle and controversy.’

For the English Home language teacher, the textbook can just be another resource. In sum and spirit, there are some common challenges with regard to the textbook:

- Inappropriate/boring content
- Textbooks are too expensive
- Many students don't even use the textbook unless the teacher uses the textbook.
- Textbooks structural component are essentially in the same format that they have been in for a long time.

Adding to the potential difficulties in textbook efficiency, Brophy's (1982) research revealed that many teachers did not teach strictly by their textbooks. Instead, they adapted particular curriculum to the needs of their students. Richards and Mahoney (1996) found that none of the teachers that they observed taught exclusively from the textbook, and none devoted the entire lesson to material from one textbook. Chandran's (2003) study revealed that teachers did not really use the prescribed textbooks provided. Instead, they preferred to use commercially published materials. Ultimately, the textbook can be a hindrance or a potential enhancer of English Home language proficiency.

In a bid to understand how teachers appropriate the English Home language textbook as a teaching/learning tool, I will unpack teachers' perceptions around the textbook and the manner in which they wish to use it. This reflection will provide insights for the collection of my data, which is to follow in a later chapter. Looking at the language domain of Activity Theory, I seek then to understand whether the introduction and use of the textbook has the potential to force/bring a change in the activity systems of the classrooms. In doing this, it can help clarify to me if creative teaching elements can improve learner performance and intensify the acquisition of the textbook.

The understanding that selective pedagogical components are important in the classroom motivates the focus of teachers in this study. In most cases, textbooks are at the centre of educational enterprise. First, they can offer learners “a rich array of new and potentially interesting facts and open the door to a world of fantastic experience” (Chambliss & Calfee, 1998: 7). I hope that this inquiry will deliver such an experience for future teachers. The study of the English Home language textbook views itself as the application of a future modification of the English Home language textbook. There is no doubt that English is a complicated language system that conveys meaning and allows the speaker/learner to conduct communicative activities. The role of the teacher is to promote learning, linking the learning process of the learner to the professional skills that will allow the learner to blend in to the working system. The English Language textbook is to assist the teacher and learner in the task of facilitating learning. Therefore, most textbooks aim at representing language use in its full variety and therefore draw upon a wide array of different genres and discourse types. In order to understand the world of the textbook I will give a definition of a textbook in the next section.

### **3.2 The Textbook: A Definition**

The definition for textbooks are wide-ranging. However, one common definition is that a textbook is a printed and bound artefact for each year or course of study (Encyclopaedia of Education, 2008b). They contain facts and ideas around a certain subject. In a school setup, the same textbook might be in use for a number of years. According to Johnsen (1993: 24), a textbook is a book whose purpose is aid instructional use. Prucha (1998: 13-16) states that a textbook is included into three systems for specific purposes of education:

- Textbook as a part of educational program – these textbooks are a part of the teaching curriculum at schools. They formulate the aims of education on general or in particular subjects.
- Textbook as a part of didactic means - this aspect is important especially by using technical means in lessons (audio-visual media).
- Textbook as a type of school didactic texts – Many different texts are used while teaching. The textbook is one of the kinds of didactic texts. It is designed as a book and consists of several school didactic texts that are intended to didactic reasons.

Since there are many textbooks, it is vital that a teacher understand its practice in the classroom. In doing this the teacher can allow what I refer to as textbook citizenship.

### **3.3 Textbook Citizenship: The Textbook as Part of the Learners' Life**

Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counsellors, and the most patient of teachers.”

Charles William Elliot

Certain writers argue for the recasting of participation in social, political and economic life as a question of fundamentally citizenship rights (Gould, 1988; Lister, 1997a; Fergusson, 1999). My study calls for the participation in the educational arena in terms of textbook competency. According to the dictionary, citizenship is the state of being vested with the rights, privileges, and duties of a citizen or the character of an individual viewed as a member of society; behaviour in terms of the duties, obligations, and functions of a citizen (<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/citizenship>). Similarly, my study is rooted in the fact that learners should have cohesion or an adequate understanding with/of the textbook. This statement we should then understand in conjunction with the fact that many teachers do not regularly use the textbook and the result is that learners do not have a flexible competency with the English Home language textbook. Imagine the transformational power of classroom teachers across the South Africa as they adopt an instructional philosophy that is predicated on treating the textbook as the constitutional book that echoes our legal rights. Sadly, many senior learners do not read the constitution and therefore do not know their rights. Many teachers choose to do absolutely nothing about the lack of comfort that some learners do not have with the textbook. Some consider it a mediocre topic. Often, teachers' simply request that learners must take out their textbooks and turn to this or that page and start working. Ignoring the differences in the textbook's comfort zones can have some bad consequences and outcomes.

In keeping with the above raised issues, teachers should not totally forget the cultural differences and identities of the classroom that can add a level of disorientation in textbook competency. In principle not using the textbook on a regularly basis puts the learner at a disadvantage because the textbook is often used to reinforce concepts taught in the class. In this study, textbook citizenship refers to obligations and functions of using the textbook.

The observation of lessons will reveal how comfortable English Home language learners are with the textbook. Furthermore, I believe that there is a gap in the research on textbook competency and comfortableness in South African in terms of learner practice.

### **3.4 The Textbook and Teacher Practice: A Reason for Turning the Page**

Books, though, are my most valuable sources for ideas and inspiration

Jim Knight (2011:143)

There is evidence from various research of the strong and significant role of textbooks. Ur (1998) points out that textbooks provide explicit framework which clues teachers and learners in what they have done and what will be done. In terms of teacher practice, textbooks serve as:

- Primary vehicles for delivering content knowledge.
- For determining in large measure what goes on in the class (Hummel, 1998, cited Lebrun et. al. (2002).
- For assessing what students do and not do (Freeman & Porter, 1989, cited in Oakes & Saunders, 2004: 57-83).

Many teachers use an English language textbook that calls for improvement to better their teacher practice. The textbook can essentially be a tool for motivation. Gardner and Lambert (1972) refer to motivation as a tool in a relationship that helps a learner achieve a goal. Those who are experienced and well qualified wrote most of the published textbooks and the contents of the textbooks are checked by a panel of evaluators. Often teachers who use textbooks would seek out the textbook that fits their purpose, keeping the students' requirements in mind. This is not always the case, as some textbooks sent by the Department of Education may not fit the teachers' viewpoint about their taste in a textbook. The textbooks in South Africa were published in conformity with the guide from the ministry of education. Most likely, the authors had gotten well-acquainted with learners' interests, background and their ability in the country or particular province. This of course might not always be the case. However, we have enough textbooks around to understand that the English textbook can be a source of enlightenment or ignorance.

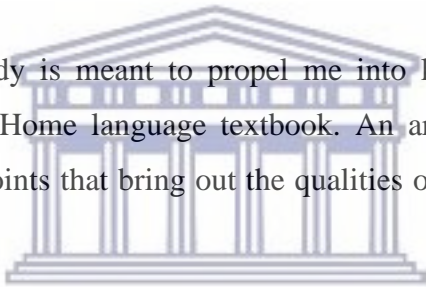
### **3.4.1 The Textbook: A Source of Enlightenment or Ignorance**

I believe the textbook can advance or block knowledge. It advances the spreading of formalised knowledge (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2004: 159). Many teachers have always relied on textbooks, which can help teachers with the expansion of ideas. Based on my own professional experience I have come to the realization that the English Home language textbook does not hold the same appeal as it once did. This might be due to the content in the textbook, which may not hold a direct link to a learners' life (social context).

### **3.4.2 The Appeal of the Textbook: Weaving the Right Content**

According to Grant (1987: 118) "the perfect textbook does not exist, but the best book available for students certainly does" (cited in McGrath 2002: 41). One of the most useful tools a teacher possesses is the textbook. One appeal of the textbook is that it provides "an organized outline of the subject content to follow" (Clark & Starr, 1996: 131).

The overall scope of my study is meant to propel me into looking at the good and bad characteristics of an English Home language textbook. An article by Aparna Dey (2012) highlighted some important points that bring out the qualities of good textbooks. I will list a few here. They are:

- 
- Textbooks that are intended to be used should be useful for the students as well as teachers. This implies relevancy to the immediate context of the school.
  - The size of the textbook should be handy. It should be possible for the students to carry them properly.
  - The exterior of the picture should be attractive. If the exterior is attractive, students would like to carry them and keep them. This is true of the books intended for primary classes.
  - The style of the books should also serve the psychological requirements of the students of different stages. Textbooks intended for the students of the primary classes should be written in a story form. In the textbooks meant for higher classes, the author may use the regional method or some other method that is useful for the students of the stage.
  - The textbooks should continue to keep the interests of the students alive in the subject matter. The subject matter should be presented in a simple and lucid style and clear form.

- Textbooks should be free from prejudice. The presentation of the subject matter should be unbiased. There should be no material, which can injure the susceptibility of any class or category of people. They should contain objective description of the people and conditions of different countries.
- At the end of every chapter of the textbook, there should be certain questions that may be used for the revision of the subject matter. Without these questions, the textbooks shall not be useful.

I regard textbooks as an important part of a learners' life. I see what value it holds in a learners' life when it comes to other subjects like Life science, mathematics etc. I hope that in the South African context that the English Home language textbook can reach a higher level of success. In saying that it has also become clear that publishers (manufactures) are competing with each other because the market is huge and millions can be gained or lost. Textbook competition can result in an unhealthy phenomenon and can cause more damage. In the next segment, I will deal with the economic imperatives.

### **3.5 Textbook Competition: An Unhealthy Phenomenon or a Beautiful Mess**

From the outset, it is important to note that only a certain number of textbook companies control the South African educational system. Later on in this chapter, I will review the different English Home language textbooks namely, Cambridge University Press, Macmillan and Oxford University Press. This review of looking through the textbook will reveal what publishers are doing to attract their customers and if it is working. Therefore, in keeping with the economic objectives, the textbook publishers come into fierce competition because at the end of the day it is about a financial imperative. Furthermore, I have noticed that certain textbooks carry no creative flair but might have just been assembled as a textbook and sold with no real passionate reflection to enhance learner advancement in the area of learning. Often Publishers are forced to release new editions every 3-4 years if the textbook in not sell well. With the release of a new textbook the problem might be that it could be worse than the one before or on the other hand it could also be better. Fierce competition can also have a positive effect in terms of allowing publishing companies to be innovative. However, inevitably, I believe that the unhealthy phenomenon of textbook competition in South Africa can lead to a weak textbook in terms of learner material.

### 3.6 The Textbook as a Possible Barrier: A Consideration

In my long years of teaching, I have also seen how textbooks can serve as a barrier to learners. In an early study it came to light that “texts were followed almost slavishly; the curiosity of the pupils was seldom aroused; rarely was an inquiring spirit stimulated by the teacher...” (Strayer, 1927: 26 cited by Bagley, 1931).

In the above referred study, data was collected from state inspectors and supervisors, as well as local supervisors, principals, and superintendents, who were asked to report on observations done in classrooms from schools in 30 states. I have referred to this earlier study so as to generate awareness that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the problem of textbook fixation still exists. I see the text as a barrier in a number of ways:

- Irrelevant material in the textbook that does not inspire learners.
- The general size of the textbook and the number of pages.
- The layout of the book—boring structure and nature of the textbook.

It is therefore no surprise that in the early 1950s, Cronbach (1955) called for research on teachers’ use of textbooks. Cronbach (1955: 110) stated, “the sheer absence of trustworthy fact regarding the text-in-use is amazing.” In a later study after Cronbach, Apple (1982) contended that a pre-packaged curriculum material used in schools had the danger to both control and deskill teachers, hence, the need for constant teacher creativity in the classroom becomes a constant educational imperative. Therefore, teachers need to guide themselves through continuous reflection. One way of understanding the overall dynamics of textbook practice is to guard against over-reliance on a single prescribed textbook. According to Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, (2004: 159), the reason for this is that it might create the impression that:

- The type of textbook used is the one and only source of information.
- It represents the absolute truth in terms of knowledge production
- The wrong notion that memorizing the textbook makes one knowledgeable.

In keeping with the above points, Swan (2012: 44) holds a similar view when he states.



Paradoxically, interesting materials can be dangerously precisely because they are, in one sense, so good. It is important to remember that the textbook must not only be good itself; it must leave room for the learners to be good too.

Furthermore, looking at the view of Cruickshank (2006: 93), I infer that textbook practice in the schools was more as an alternative to the blackboard. In the next segment, I will look at the struggle in using the textbook.

### **3.7 Some Reflections: The Struggle in Using the Textbook**

Some researchers believe that a teacher's English language proficiency level significantly influences teaching (Nunan, 2003; Orafi & Borg, 2009). Firstly, it is important that the teacher must appreciate the textbook and be willing to incorporate it into his/her lessons. The textbook must not just be used on days of inspection but should be used in a balanced way so that the learner can become comfortable with it. Nunan (2003: 589-613) believes that the communicative approach cannot be applied properly due to a lack of teachers with a high level of proficiency in English. Further to this is the fact of teaching learners how to use the textbook is a skill in itself (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2004: 159).

It is important for us to remember at this stage the importance of English in South Africa and the Development of the communicative language approach in our educational system. It is important because although a 'new' curriculum in South Africa was introduced to improve the quality of education, a review of the literature does show that classroom teaching does not always change according to curricular modifications (Li, 2001; Su, 2006; Wall & Alderson, 1993).

Using the textbook can present problems especially in the area of reading it. This inquiry will generate information about the ways in which teachers in high school use the textbook to generate interest and enhance the capacity of the learner. This study is meant provide an insight into the range of factors, which do not allow the teacher and learner to be competent users of the textbook. The learner variables and the instructional variables should be thought about in order to make a decision on adopting appropriate methods in textbook practice

### 3.8 Further Reflections: Negative Aspects of Textbooks

Course books are good servants, but poor masters.

Cunningsworth (1985: 15)

In principle, anything good can also be used in a bad way. Similarly, bad is also present when the teacher intends to be good. The contribution of the textbook is no exception. Therefore, some of the negative aspects of textbooks are:

- Textbooks are often implicitly prescriptive and thus might control the methods, processes, and procedures of classroom practice and ‘deskill’ teachers (Allwright 1982).
- Another concern is that since textbooks are often written for global markets, they might not suit all classrooms and might require adaptation to better meet students’ true needs (Richards 2005).
- Textbooks tend to concentrate on the introduction of new language and controlled work.
- A teacher relying too heavily on the textbook will often not be encouraged to provide enough roughly turned input or output practice (Harmer, 1983: 219; Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2004: 160).
- Textbooks also tend to follow the same format from one unit to the next.

Furthermore, it has become obvious that “some textbooks promote over-involvement of the teacher and under development of the learner” (O’Neill, 1982: 104).

#### 3.8.1 Some Learner Issues: Reading Concerns from the Textbook

To get learners to read from the textbook in class and at home can be a serious battle in many schools. Furthermore, in our world of consumerism and electronic gadgetry reading has declined as an educational practice. Added to this is the fact that reading by the learner sometimes does not necessarily change student attitudes. This is due to the habit that many learners have developed over the years and have become so passive in their approach to reading. It is also sad to witness that many of our high school learners read mainly in order to meet exam requirements. Sadly, many learners remain committed to trying to get by without doing the reading in class or at home. The reason for this might be that learners find no connection with the text and therefore see no value in making it as a part of their lives.

Besides having problems with developing a love for reading we also have teachers to blame. Some teachers fall into the trap of using class time to summarize key points of the readings. An important aim by the teacher should be to become a role model in reading and let learners know the value of the textbook. This is vital for our generation because the present-day poverty of reading among our students' points to the failure of a functional ability to read the world and their lives in a critical and inter-connected way (Freire and Macedo, 1987).

### **3.8.2 Textbook Practice: Inherent Pitfalls and Possible Solutions for Textbooks**

This segment falls in line with the sixth goal of the Department of Basic Education Policy for All (Department of Basic Education, 2014). The sixth goal in the policy outlined in 'Education for All' (EFA), states that the system will improve "all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence for all, so that recognised and measurable". In looking at the problems and solutions in textbook competency, it adds to the dimension of the principles of the goals of the educational system in the country. The current plan is directed at a broad range of stakeholders involved in the task of transforming South Africa's schools. There are many stakeholders in this transformation and it does not only include teachers. Stakeholders range from parents, school principals, officials at the district, provincial and national levels, members of the South African Parliament, private sector partners and researchers, and international partner agencies such as UNICEF and the World Bank. Since there is unification among the various groups to attempt at improving education in South Africa, I am inclined to see my investigation as a part of this process as it attempts to look at one component that I hope can add a level of awareness to the Department of Basic Education.

### **3.8.3 Possible Complications of the Textbook: The Hidden Silence**

In the English Home language classroom, the textbook can be a burden, a forgotten novelty or a great help in maximizing learner efficiency. For strengthening the role of education, this section looks at possible problems with textbooks and solutions. In principle, I would like to mention that teachers are the backbone of an education system.

It is imperative that a teacher learns how to utilize the English Home language textbook with precision to enhance the reading plateau in our learners. It is a vital contribution of English teachers to guide learners towards book reading. However, in retrospect possible complications might occur as pointed out below:

- Textbooks cannot cater for the need of every learner in the classroom.
- Often students have their own learning needs, which they believe is essential.
- Textbooks might not be suitable for a specific grade or group of learners. This mistake I have seen been made by many English teachers. It is because some teachers are not aware of their classroom culture. Often, I teacher will get the same class as he/she received in grade 10 because of the FET cycle. Therefore, while having the learners in grade the teacher can use the entire year as a base to understand the classroom culture. By classroom culture I am referring to the type of learner, mood performance ration etc. of the class.
- According to Finochiaro (1989), the level of the textbook can be too easy or too difficult for the learners or class.

In the early part of the 21st century, Richards (2001) view was widely accepted already that textbooks play an essential role in language classrooms. As a teacher for almost twenty years, I observed a number of important traits that a textbook can serve. I will now render some positive aspects of teaching with the textbooks:

- It helps lesson preparation time. This is important because teacher instructors deal with a number of different classes and grades.
- It helps the teacher keep track of the lesson over a period. In structural terms, it provides a framework.
- It provides a range of practice activities to use—a level of versatility.
- It is a very easy way of providing learner material.

For me one of the major concerns in teaching is the persistent prevalence of boredom found among learners. A defining fact for me at school is the notion that if texts are not stimulating enough to our South African learners a measure of boredom will set in quickly.

South African children are bored and desperately need stimulation through a wide range of activities in and out of the classroom. In the next segment, I will deal with textbook health and the importance for the learner to escape boredom.

### **3.9 Textbook Health: Escaping Boredom by Trying Something New with the Textbook or Text**

Based on my teaching experience I believe boredom is a major problem in South African schools. More importantly, teachers' response to boredom is even a bigger problem. Once a teacher becomes too comfortable in their teaching practice then there are problems. Adding to this is the fact that some teachers find themselves pregnant with only one thought, which is the thought of their salary. As a teacher, if you only work for a salary then you have lost out on your calling. Inherently built into my study is a call for teachers to rise up and become creative. Godlad (1984) wrote that boredom in school was "...a disease of epidemic proportions". In principle, boredom defines itself as a temporary emotional condition marked by disinterest in the information, context, or events provided by the teacher that may sometimes result in inappropriate behaviour (Harris, 2010).

In some South African classrooms (only my observations), lessons take on the same format every day. These types of pattern will definitely lead to boredom especially in terms of the learner. According to (Candlin & Mercer, 2001: 34), "lessons, which consist of the same routines, patterns, can lead to increased boredom".

Boredom often does the following:

- Boredom stimulates a form of anxiety & stress.
- Boredom evokes an emotional state that creates frustration and feeds procrastination. Boredom destroys future learning in the classroom.

Some teachers can admit that their styles are boring but often it is not easy for many teachers to admit that their teaching approach might be boring. Teachers should remember, "the classroom is considered to be inherently unreal and therefore does not count as a valid context at all (Widdowson, 2003: 113).

Teaching obligates us to motivate and break the cycle of boredom in the classroom. South African teachers can use the environment of boredom to enhance their own professionalism and show learners that they do not (no short forms in academic writing) need to feel uninterested in learning, waste time and fall asleep in some classes, and enjoy only the non-academic aspects of school e.g. friends, sports, activities (Schunk, Pintrich & Meerce, 2007).

I believe that boredom is a temporary state and I believe that teachers can take heart that they can have the ability to tackle problems like boredom and engage their learners with stimulating texts. As teachers we need not fear but first teachers must be honest with themselves concerning their approach to teaching. Escaping boredom eventual leads to a healthy environment for the learner to learner but first you must grab the learners by their brains. One way in doing this is through the textbook, which for me will lead to a process to escape learning.

### **3.10 Teacher Accountability: A Measure of Self-Cultivation to Get It Right**

I think self-knowledge is the rarest trait in a human being.

Elizabeth Edwards

Self-cultivation for class progression is a vital component in a teacher's life on the basis that you can become a victim so easily by losing your passion for teaching. According to Higgins (2011: 3), "ongoing self-cultivation on the part of the teacher is necessary) for fostering self-cultivation in learners. In principal, a teacher's mind-set will rub off on their learners. This necessary practice of self-cultivation is crucial, because:

- A teacher must grow and constantly challenge himself or herself (Higgins, 2011: 245).
- A teacher must recall and evaluated past experiences as well as ponder on the dynamics of the learners in terms of their learning process and continuity (Higgins, 2011), that spans generations of teachers and

Having rendered a tool for teachers to improve themselves throughout their lives (careers), I will now look at some possible complications. The scope of textbook practice is very wide and in our modern era, it extends into the digital world.

#### **3.10.1 The Textbook and the Digital World: Interfering or Helping**

For me, learners of the past have always depended on their teachers. This was because the teacher controlled their knowledge. However, in the 21st century the playing fields are slightly different. Panto & Comas-Quinn, (2013: 2), state that "having free access to a wealth of information and content on-line is now expected: being digitally literate today means being able to use appropriate tools to find useful, high quality information in an efficient manner".

In principle, the digital world to a certain degree has affected the prevalence of the textbook and its appreciation. Nevertheless, this does give teachers an opportunity to be creative and forces a teacher to come up with new ideas of teaching. In the next segment I will briefly discuss the current battle that exists between paper textbooks and electronic textbooks.

### **3.10.2 Paper Textbooks vs. Electronic textbooks**

Are electronic textbooks at least as good as paper textbooks? The answer to this question for me would depend on the context and climate of the culture. There are pros and cons to both sides. The following points that I will present are adapted from the website (<http://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0912/textbooks-vs.-e-textbooks.aspx>) and (<http://www.grossmont.edu/library/etextbooks.pdf>). In reality, the developed world appears to opt for paperless textbooks. Therefore, a discussion on paper textbooks deserve attention in this study. I will outline their negatives and the positives.

### **3.10.3 Advantages of Paper Textbooks**

The advantages of paper textbooks are:

- It is widely available.
- It can be found new or used.
- No electronic equipment needed.
- You can write in margins.
- You may be able to sell back or lend
- It may be available in library or tutoring center
- With care, can last for many years

### **3.10.4 Disadvantages of Paper Textbooks**

The disadvantages of paper textbooks are:

- It can be heavy and bulky.
- It can be expensive.
- It can be out of stock.
- Excessive markings can reduce buyback price.
- Difficult to search and find information at times.

(<http://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0912/textbooks-vs.-e-textbooks.aspx>)

Having looked at the component of paper textbooks it is important also to look electronic textbooks because the world is changing fast and some countries are moving towards paperless books. I will present their advantages and disadvantages.

### **3.10.5 Advantages of Electronic Textbooks**

The advantages of electronic textbooks are:

- It can never go out of stock. There is no wait for shipping.
- Many books can fit on a single computer/tablet/reader.
- There is an integrated dictionary.
- It is easy to search and find information that you want quickly.
- It can electronically highlight or annotate.
- Often annotations can be shared.
- It can have web or multimedia tie-ins.
- Some have text-to-speech reader built in.
- It is environmentally friendly.
- It can be downloaded wirelessly

### **3.10.6 Disadvantages of Electronic Textbooks**

The disadvantages of electronic textbooks are:

- You need an electronic device (computer, tablet, e-reader, phone) needed
- You may not be able to sell back or lend
- Copying/printing are usually restricted.
- May become out-dated and could make book files unavailable.

(<http://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0912/textbooks-vs.-e-textbooks.aspx>)

In light of the South African context, there has been a move to try to enhance the impact of the electronic gadgetry because of global impact. There have been attempts at certain schools in South Africa to operate with paperless textbooks.

However, in my view because of the tough economic situation in South Africa, it might still be a while before e-book finds itself in all schools in South Africa.



### **3.11 Textbook Trinity: An Activity Perspective that can cause Cohesion between Teacher and Learner**

The intended theoretical framework reminds me of the fact that learning always builds upon knowledge that a student already knows. Textbooks should be more significant and relevant for life experiences of the students and should prepare them for real life. The fundamental interacting components of the activity system are the subject, the object and the mediating artefact. Vygotsky (1978) was the first to introduce the ‘triangle’ with these components as important components as a simplified model of mediated action. The activity described in this model is part of the learning activity as a whole.

Vygotsky’s model was the triangular concept, where knowledge echoes from ‘textbook-student-knowledge’. Within this activity, the textbook serves as an instrument to acquire knowledge of effective and efficient textbook practice. However, this model disregards the widespread agreement that the teacher (Pimm, 1996; Pepin & Haggarty, 2001) usually mediates textbook use. Furthermore, Newton (1990) claims that “text use is usually perceived as a relationship between the teacher, the student and the text”. A different model is suggested in Newton’s theory, which is ‘teacher-student-textbook’.

This investigation follows the concept of ‘teacher-student-textbook’. Therefore, for the teacher the textbook mediates didactical aspects of the presented knowledge and brings out the method of teacher-textbook practice. Newton’s model includes another key dichotomy of the textbook, namely the dichotomy with regard to the nature of the knowledge represented in textbooks echoing the relevancy of the type of material used in the textbook. The relevance of material in an English language textbook can act as the conduit of knowledge transference.

The above stated points conform to Engeström’s (1990) view who describes dichotomies to be characteristic for all vertices of a vibrant model. Therefore, it is no surprise that in South Africa the production-function model, according to which learning, has dominated the theoretical underpinnings of research on basic education or student achievement, is based on economic value. Often teachers end up with textbooks that they were forced to use. However, this should not be a burden because teachers have the ability to try to adapt, reinvent and the evolve the textbook which they find in their hands.

### 3.11.1 Using the Textbook: Adapt, Reinvent and Evolve

In any textbook, there is always space for adaptation. The level of adaptation will be dependent on the skill of the teacher. According to McDonough & Shaw (2003: 73) a starting point in terms of any textbook is to think in terms of ‘adopting and adapting’. Often adapting is for the sole purpose of making work presented more relevant to the learner. From my experience as an English language teacher, I often set two days aside for the textbook during the week. The purpose for doing this is to maintain a balanced learning approach, which encompasses all levels of creativity with a book that can appear boring. It is important that teachers from time to time do something innovative with their teaching style and especially in terms of the textbook. From time to time, it is good to have an English lesson outside the class with the textbook. This gives the textbook a new dimension because often times in the learners mind the textbook is associated with the classroom. Having a balanced approach will keep the English language classroom well rounded and grounded in the belief that as a teacher you need not be afraid of trying out new things.

Therefore, a balanced activities approach sees the teacher as one that ensures that learners get a variety of activities, which foster acquisition and learning. In principle, the aim is to achieve a balance between language input, practice and communication output (Harmer, 1983: 38).

In my view, lessons in South African schools that “consist of the same routines, patterns, and formats have been shown to lead to a decrease in the attention” (Candlin & Mercer, 2001: 34). A balanced approach acknowledges the fact that the teacher is concerned with the aspect of motivation of the learner. This attitude helps to establish a platform for innovation and experimentation in the English Language classroom.

Pennington (1992: 50) states that teacher development implies “evolution from one state into a more advanced state”. Kramsch (1993: 3) is of the view that classroom teaching is a juggling act that requires instant-by instant decisions based on both local and global knowledge and on an intuitive grasp of the situation. In light of this, I am inclined to believe that using the old age textbook can be a test for creativity. In this segment, creativity refers to the vibrant teacher in the classroom. There is room in the context of the textbook for flexibility and growth. As White (1998: 73) points out, ‘published materials of any kind have to cater for a very wide range of possible users, which means that they cannot address any individual student or group of students directly’. In terms of the above quoted point, it is vital and it is a necessary activity among teachers to practice the process of adaptation.

McDonough & Shaw (2003: 74) stress that this is important because ‘the small-scale process of changing or adjusting the various parts of a coursebook is more closely related to the reality of dealing with learners in the dynamic environment of the classroom’. In the next segment, I will look at the type of textbook that current teachers are using. This will give us an idea of the range of activities that can be teased out of it

### **3.11.2 The Texts Potential: Exploiting the Text Efficiently**

The texts in the textbook has the potential to be used in a number of ways. According to Swan (2012: 181), they can:

- Provide material for practice in receptive skills
- Act as springboards for discussion, role-play or other kinds of extensive output work.
- Support analysed input by contextualising new language items.

Adding to the above, individual texts can draw in the learner to enhance effective reading with understanding.

Although the above information sounds tenable, I have also seen how a text can harm the process of reading and understanding. There are certain problems that become obvious when dealing with certain texts. These problems are:

- A text may simply be seen as something to be ‘gone through’ in one way or another without any clear definition of the outcomes envisaged.
- Using the text can become a habit just to fill up the language lesson.
- A teacher can be deceived into thinking that any text will do because it will make learners work.

(Swan, 2012: 182)

Having briefly shown the vulnerability of the text as well as the potential strengths of good texts, I will now deal with the South African English Home language textbook and what it has to offer.

### **3.12 Principles of the South African English Home Language Textbook**

As stated earlier, English language textbooks have long been a critical challenge within the South African education system. However, to alleviate the textbook formulation for schools and teachers, the Maskew Miller range from Grade 10-12 'English in Context' is a series for learners studying English as a main language and its intention is to develop mother-tongue proficiency in learners. I will now list some textbook variations.

### **3.13 South Africa's Communicative Textbook: Patterns of Impact or Damage**

Communicative textbooks emphasise the communicative functions of language (Grant, 1987: 14), not just the forms, skills in using language, focuses on pupils' interests, encourage work in groups and furthermore emphasise fluency, not only accuracy. The 'what to teach' aspect of the communicative approach stresses the significance of language functions rather than focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary (Harmer, 2001:84). The South African Communicative model has chosen this type of textbook to prepare learners to use their language knowledge in a real life. Therefore, a guiding principle in this approach was to train students to use these language forms appropriately in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes ((Harmer, 2001:84). In South Africa, there are different types of textbooks that are used at different types of schools. I will now look at some of the textbooks. This will give us insight into the scope and range of the knowledge base of these textbooks.

#### **3.13.1 Textbook 1: Maskew Miller Range**

The Maskew Miller range has added a new concept to it because it had to accommodate learners that are in a multilingual classroom. According to the Maskew Miller range, materials have been chosen to ensure the relevance of the series to the South African context and reflect the multi-cultural nature of southern African society (Hendry, Gardyne, & Burger, 2006). The Maskew Miller series has adopted:

- An integrated approach in which the division of the subject into separate components is understated.
- A contextual approach, which encourages the teaching of grammar but prefers that it is done within the context of a poem or story.

Maskew Miller ultimately established a new dimension in textbook development. This includes the principle that the textbook enforces the perspective on the final examination of the year.

Its aim in doing this is to refresh the memory and consolidate essential work done in previous years. The final section of the textbook consists of a selection of typical examination type questions and tasks that should provide valuable material for formal revision.

### **3.13.2 Textbook 2: English Home Language Macmillan Range**

The ‘Solutions for all English Home Language Grade 10-12 Learner’s Book’ has been developed to support the content (knowledge, concepts and skills) contained in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) as organised in CAPS. The textbook is divided into eighteen themes. The features (Kerr & Unterslak, 2011) of the book are:

- Learners will establish what they already know about a topic.
- Learners will learn new facts about a topic.
- Learners will practise using the new knowledge, concepts and skills they have acquired in the lesson.
- Learners are provided with homework activities.
- Extra practice activities that cater for enrichment
- Learners are given a summary of a cycle of work

### **3.13.3 Textbook 3: Platinum Range: English Home Language**

The Platinum range is CAPS compliant. The Learner’s Book follows the latest assessment guidelines and includes Formal Assessment Tasks for mid-year exam and end-of-year exam. Furthermore, the Teacher’s Guide includes unseen sample tests and exams. It also includes various worksheets for remediation and extension in terms of extra exercises.

### **3.13.4 Textbook 4: Oxford’s English for Success**

The Oxford’s textbook is an innovative Home Language textbook which “combines dynamic content and in the process it offers a variety of text types and extension activities” (Back Cover). The textbook contains many writing activities with guidance on how to write different kinds of texts (Barnsley, Nortje & Strydom, 2012: 5). According to Oxford University Press, teachers use English for Success for the following reasons:

- The local and international texts teach the necessary language skills with engaging context.
- Grammar list extend learners' knowledge of rich and idiomatic language use.
- The exemplar tests provide revision practice at the end of terms 1 and 3, and prepare learners for exams.

(Back Cover)

### 3.14 Textbook Symbiosis: Constant Designs of Development

Textbook patterns are forced to be reviewed constantly. In doing this it will have to blend in with current trends. In line with this, Brumfit (1995: 16) argued that the “scholarship about English has also become international: the ownership of an interest in English has become international”.

This vigorous pattern of the competitive nature of English and its survival is the price that English must pay for becoming an international language (Widdowson, 1994). With the recognition of the growing role of the language among native and non-native speakers, the textbook has no choice but to absorb the context of a multilingual classroom.

The progress/performance of learners in many ways determines the outcome of the English Home language textbook. Questions that reflect a specific outcome hinge on questions like:

- At what interval does a new grammar structure show up?
- How many new words are presented in each unit?
- What themes are relevant for insurgence into the textbook?
- What do changing times reflect?
- What amount of practice is to be given?

Some of the above questions should decide the emerging pattern of the textbook. The repeated investigation in society's trends plays the role of fixing knowledge. If a word is introduced only once, it will be forgotten. One word needs to be reiterated three or four times until a learner becomes proficient suitably. In the next segment, there is a need for me to factor in the element of the United Nations. In doing so I will emphasize the role of the Department of Education's collaborative model highlighting the process of teamwork.

### **3.15 South Africa's Teamwork with the United Nations Children Emergency Fund**

According to the Australian Council for Educational Research (Outhred, Bearis Stubberfield, Wilkinson, Murphy, 2013: 1) the Department of Education has taken a major initiative to provide Language textbooks and additional workbooks for learners in order to accelerate progress towards education for all. The Department of Education with the support of the United Nation's Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) commissioned the ACER to undertake an independent formative evaluation of textbooks in South Africa during the periods of April 2012 and February 2013 (ACER, 2013: 1).

South Africa has therefore realized and understood the nature of textbook development for improved educational development.

### **3.16 Re-emphasizing Textbook Positivity: Sparkling Gems and Textbook Appeal**

The textbook is, in fact, the heart of the school and without the ubiquitous text there would be no schools, at least as we know them.”

Ian Westbury, cited in Oakes & Sanders, 2004

The importance of appropriate textbooks in improving the quality of education have been increasingly highlighted since the 1990s (Braslavsky & Hafil, 2006). Betsy Parrish (2004: 227) gives a few benefits of using a textbook:

- It highlights a measure of structure, consistency, and logical progression in a class.
- It reduces preparation time for teachers.
- It gives learners the essential element of reviewing material or and allows learners to preview other lessons.
- It alleviates a learner's needs or expectations of having something concrete to work from and take home for further study.
- It provides novice teachers with guidance in course and activity design.

Tomlinson (2003: 39) believes that a textbook helps provide a route map for both teachers and learners, making it possible for them to look ahead to what will be done in a lesson as well as to look back on what has been done. Textbooks therefore serve as a general framework for teachers to follow in accordance with the curriculum. In principal, they ultimately function as a guide through the courses offering a wide collection of relevant examples and practices regardless of the subject matter.

Abdelwahab (2013: 55) maintains that the use of a textbook in a program “can guarantee that students in different classes will receive a similar content and therefore, can be evaluated in the same way.” From a curriculum perspective, the use of textbook promotes the standardization in instructional settings. Richards (2001) also highlights the importance of textbook and states that any learning program may have no impact if it does not have a textbook because it provides structure and a syllabus.

### **3.17 Teacher Beliefs: Helping or Hurting the Teaching of English**

Language teachers’ belief and understanding of teacher practice in terms of textbook usage play an important role in the classroom. As Harste and Burke (1977) postulated, teachers make decisions about classroom instruction in light of theoretical beliefs they hold about teaching and learning. Richards and Rodgers (2001) acknowledged that teachers possess assumptions about language and language learning, and that these provide the basis for a particular approach to language instruction. This is to suggest that if academic positioning is a major determinant of how teachers act during language instruction, then teacher educators can affect classroom practice by ensuring that teachers develop an awareness that is “reflective of current and pertinent research in the field” of education (Cummins, Cheek, & Lindsey, 2004: 183). Furthermore, the theoretical belief of teachers on instructional practice (Burns, 1992) can be a help or hindrance. In conjunction with Burns statement, Zeicher & Liston (1996: 5) have argued that ‘the voices and insights of teachers’ should be acknowledged by the educational establishment for contributing the knowledge base in areas of educational innovation.

### **3.18 Some Teachers’ Limited use of the Textbook: A Modern Problem**

Having taught English for the past 17 years, I can say without any equivocation that the English language textbook is not the most appreciative book for English teachers or the most used. There is some level of understanding since in the FET phase teachers have to cover so many genres. However, having taught in Asia, I have noticed that the appreciation of the English



textbook for students was quite high because they so much wanted to study English. Unfortunately, for many learners in my own country the textbook does not hold any real significant part in their student career. This is why a lot depends on the teacher to breathe life into the old age textbook. Therefore, teachers should model the textbook. From my own observation and general conversation, I have observed the following:

- Many teachers do not use the textbook.
- Many teachers consider the textbook book to be very boring.
- Many teachers consider the content of some textbooks to be inadequate.

Additionally, I also observed from learners that they consider the textbooks ‘as just another book that makes their bag heavy’. Having shown that there does exist a problem with using the textbook regularly, I will now show that if teachers and learners can use the textbook in creative ways.

### **3.19 Educational Alignment: Teacher, Textbook and the Grade 11 Learner**

Inevitably good teaching matters. Teacher quality has a great impact on the academic achievement of students (Hall, Quinn & Gollnick, & 2014: 101). Teachers should strive to make education a personal experience for each student. A teacher must be able to show the learners why the content of their work is relevant to their lives. Teaching strategies using the textbook can allow students to improve academically (Hall, Quinn & Gollnick, 2014: 397). The modern teacher must be among other things a change agent (Goble & Porter, 1977: 234). For teachers worldwide, the textbook offers a framework of guidance and orientation (Hutchinson and Torres 1994). However, for learners the textbook might perhaps be the most important source of language contribution apart from contact with the teacher. Richards and Mahoney (1996) textbook research into secondary schools discovered that there was a high rate of textbook usage, as teachers believed that textbooks could help them. Richards and Mahoney also discovered that none of the teachers observed taught exclusively from the textbook. In addition, in his book, ‘Great South African Teachers’, Jonathan Jansen paints a vivid picture of the power of teachers and their everlasting impact on learners’ lives through their creative capacity in and out of the classroom.

Quite a few language teachers surface in this book that emphasizes the fact that English Language teachers have an avenue for innovation and creativity. This inquiry will ultimately draw on teachers' creativity.

### **3.20 Teacher Creativity: Revisiting the Magic in the Classroom while using the Textbook**

In almost every analysis of the 21<sup>st</sup> century education challenge, writers, thinkers and speakers all call out for the development of creativity as a paramount and defining skill (Rshaid, 2014: 136). By the same token, if teachers are not aware of their own practice then they might fail to see that the textbook can limit a teacher's creativity (Ur, 1996). Self-cultivation for a teacher is therefore an important trait to harness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Similarly, several educators in the 19th century began to argue that schools should foster creativity. Creativity is an important component of the Montessori Method, and of Dewey's emphasis on inquiry and experience. Furthermore, one strategy that Benjamin Bloom expressed was to modify the teaching and learning resources to the individual needs and interests of the student (Husen, 2001: 1913-1999).

In addition to this calling for creativity, Abraham Maslow claimed that the most psychologically healthy people are the most creative (1959). Early before Maslow, Carl Rogers argued that the primary motivation for creativity is "man's tendency to actualize himself, to become his potentialities" (1954: 251). Then in the same year as Maslow, Rollo May (1959: 58) argued that creativity is "the expression of the normal man in the act of actualizing himself...the representation of the highest degree of emotional health".

Psychologists (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Gilbert, 2006; Haidt, 2006) have pursued empirical studies inspired by these humanistic insights, and have demonstrated that participation in intrinsically motivating creative activities contributes to happiness and well-being. The argument for creativity in schools shows us that creativity is nothing new. Therefore, this dissertation also serves the express purpose to awaken English teachers and alert them to the fact that you do not have to be afraid to try something new.

### **3.20.1 English Teachers: Creativity is Buried in Humans**

I have alluded to creativity in the above segment to show that creativity is buried in humans. As teachers, we should find a way of getting it out and no better place than the classroom that is arrayed with so many different personalities. At the heart of the classroom is innovation. Innovation is at the heart of education and it is vital that teachers develop their creativity to influence learners in a positive way in the classroom. The essence of creativity will not only brighten up their lessons but might at the same time brighten up their classroom in terms of structure. In light of this, no teacher should judge a book by its cover.

### **3.21 Teachers Proposed Inherent View: Never Judge a Book by its Cover**

It has been said in many ways that the true meaning of a book cannot be judged by looking at its cover alone. Similarly, I notice that the cover of textbooks is not that impressive and can come across as very boring. I have seen this repeatedly. However, even if the textbooks' outlook is revolting, a teacher can still weave the textbook with great skill. In doing this, a teacher can present the picture to never to judge a book by its cover. In principle, the teacher can take something old and make it new. Far too often, our assumptions about textbook and books in general are based on our previous experiences, and what we see; often important details are hidden from sight during the initial impressions.

### **3.22 Textbooks of Value: Finding the Good and Understanding the Bad**

Since a battery has a positive and a negative lead, I am of the opinion that everything in life carries with it the concept of a battery. When good is present, bad is also right there beside it. Often, we should not open the door for negativity to creep in. According to Harmer (1983: 219) good textbooks:

- Often contain lively and interesting material.
- Provide a sensible progression of language items, clearly showing what has to be learnt.
- Summarise what has been studied so that students can revise grammatical and functional points that they have been concentrating on.
- Can be systematic about the amount of vocabulary presented to the student and allow the student to study on his own outside the class.
- Relieve the teacher from the pressure of having to think of original material for every class.

However, as I stated earlier that with every good thing there is also something bad. Today textbooks compete with a number of other sources that may come across as more appealing.

### **3.23 The Textbook: Joining Hands with other Relevant Material or a Quick Fix**

Textbooks are tools. They are also only as good as the teacher using them and many teachers can use the textbook in a way that does not inspire learners. This also points out the fact that a teacher should not overuse the textbook. The balanced teacher is aware of this and can shift from the textbook to another resource at the right time. The textbook needs to be used carefully and it does have companions to help it achieve its goal. The textbook in South Africa is often shared with other relevant material e.g. X-Kit, the Answer Series etc. This does add some diversity that neutralizes any symptoms of boredom in the classroom. While this can be good, it is also apparent that teachers can run to the X-kits and ignore the textbook completely.

This study is also meant to reflect other existing material that captures the learners' attention. It serves as a guide for future textbook creativity. I will now list some of them in the following section.

#### **3.23.1 X-kit Achieve: Grade 11 English Home Language Study Guide**

This book is a good companion that can add to the dimension of the Grade 11 English Home language textbook. The book carries the simple principle that grade 11 learners should practice. It carries many exercises that correspond with the work done in class. It covers grammar, comprehension, visual literacy, literature and literary devices and transactional writing; it is a guide that give individual learners plenty of opportunity to practise those skills they typically struggle with in English and it furthermore complies with the latest CAPS standards.

#### **3.23.2 Answer Series: English Home Language 3 in 1 CAPS**

The Answer Series is structured according to the CAPS curriculum. It essential covers the 4 skills:

- Listening and Speaking
- Reading and Viewing
- Writing and Presenting
- Language Structures and Conventions

In principle, it offers:

- Comprehensive Notes on each of these four skills.
- Exercises with answers on each of the skill to improve competency.
- Exam papers and answers that can boast learner output.

The Answer Series complements the integrated approach emphasised in the curriculum by offering targeted support for specific sub-skills as well as integrated exercises. Furthermore, clear guidance provides learners on how to approach assessment tasks including examples with hints and constructive comments.

<http://theanswer.co.za/shop/english-grade-11>

Having looked at the different study guides that also play a role in learners' lives and for many learners it might be a replacement and a greater help than the textbook. In the next segment, I will discuss this paradox highlighting the concept of innovation because creativity can be a great resource for teachers.

### **3.24 The Paradox of the Textbook: Innovation for Teacher Progression**

There is no doubt that creativity is the most important human resource of all. Without creativity, there would be no progress, and we would be forever repeating the same patterns.

Edward de Bono

Textbook innovation exists in the past. Everything man made is a combination of old things. A new suit comes from an old sheep. A new pair of shoes is from an old cow. In principal, everything necessary to be creative with the English Home language textbook is in the present. Therefore, this study eagerly searches for the innovation in textbook practice within the classroom. The paradox of teaching success is the fact that you need to embrace failure to achieve it. I will address this concept in the next section.

### **3.24.1 The Paradox of Failure for Teacher Progression: Terminator or Invigorator**

The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones.

John Maynard Keynes

In almost every facet of life, failure is often inevitable in some area. However, it is not often spoken about because in human terms it looks bad. However, a relook at this concept might add a new dimension. As any inventor, creator or entrepreneur knows, great ideas are not born perfect but get developed in the furnace of trial and error. At this stage, the words of Niels Bohr remind me of true discovery. The Nobel Prize winning physicist said about progress in any field, “Mistakes are at the heart of progress, and so our challenge as scientists, is how to make more mistakes faster”.

If teachers truly considered this view, their classroom would be a remarkable place. Pablo Picasso said, “there’s nothing worse than a great start”. In keeping with this spirit, teachers selected in this inquiry have been long in the field and understand the power of failure. Failure can bring on innovation and it is the combination of old things in new ways. I mention the aspect of innovation and failure to underscore the indirect appraisal of textbooks in this study. Good textbooks can only become better through evaluation and appraisal. The opinion of teachers is important. Therefore, this study merits a discussion on the appraisal of textbooks.

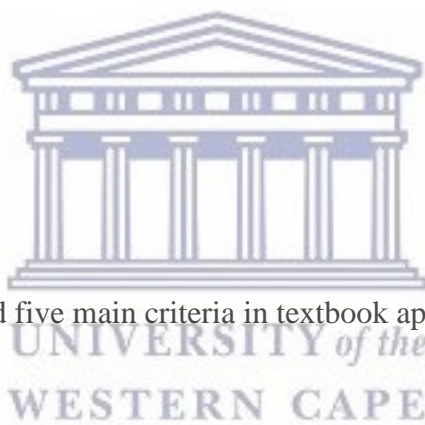
### **3.24.2 An Appraisal of Textbooks as a significant Factor in Teacher Practice**

An appraisal of the current use of the textbook is pertinent to this study since books can invigorate or send you to the avenue of boredom. In understanding the process of classroom practice, it is important to look at the appraisal system of the textbook because before it enters the classroom it runs through a course to determine if it is proficient enough for the classroom. Looking at this appraisal in a historical context will reveal the value of the textbook and perhaps help educational institutions and publishers to get back to including ‘material’ that can motivate our learners to love learning. The component of investigating English language teaching (ELT) materials has a long history resorting to a vast variety of methods and angles. The amount of English language textbooks produced today make the appraisal of the textbook the right choice for professionalism (Cunningsworth, 1985) in order to look after our learners’ academic competency.

This is important because few studies (Tomlinson, 2003, 2008 & 2010) have suggested that some English language textbooks are produced for commercial purpose and for huge financial gain. The educational output of the textbook industry is in danger because financial gain seems to be the driving force and not the principles of Language Acquisition (Litz, 2005, Sheldon, 1998).

It is vital that any English language textbook, according to Richards (2001) should be evaluated systematically. A set of criteria should be considered when we evaluate the English language textbook. According to Bruder (1978), a checklist of eight criteria should be applied namely:

- Level,
- Objectives
- Style
- Language
- Time
- Convictions
- Competency

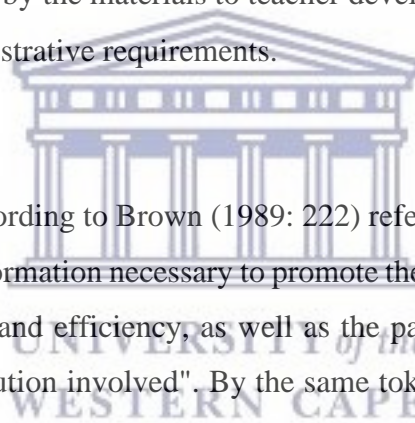


Cunningsworth (1995) stressed five main criteria in textbook appraisal:

- Language content
- Selection and gradation of language items
- Presentation and practice of new language items
- Developing language skills and communicative abilities
- Supporting materials motivation and the learner, conclusions and overall Evaluation.

In another classification, textbook evaluation reflects what Tomlinson (1996) regards as another way of action research that develops our understanding of the ways in which the material works. Furthermore, materials evaluation will ultimately contribute to teachers' professional development by providing them with a critical point of view and enabling them to scrutinize the textbook with an academic perspective. Tomlinson (2003: 16) further argues that textbook evaluation could be made up of subcategories. There are fourteen subcategories according to him and they are:

- The appeal of the materials.
- The credibility of the materials to learners, teachers, and administrators.
- The validity of the materials.
- The reliability of the materials.
- The ability of the materials to interest the learners and the teachers.
- The ability of the materials to motivate the learners
- The value of the materials in terms of short-term learning
- The value of the materials in terms of long-term learning
- The learners' perceptions of the value of the materials
- The teachers' perceptions of the value of the materials
- The assistance given to the teacher in terms of preparation, delivery and assessment
- The flexibility of the materials
- The contribution made by the materials to teacher development
- The match with administrative requirements.



The premise of evaluation according to Brown (1989: 222) refers to "the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum, and assesses its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants' attitudes within the context of the particular institution involved". By the same token, Lynch (1996b: 2) refers to evaluation as "the systematic attempt to gather information in order to make judgments or decisions". Adding to this, Carter and Nunan (2001: 223) define evaluation as "the process of measuring the value of learning materials (1) predictive pre-use evaluation (2) on-going whilst-use evaluation (3) retrospective post use evaluation". Tu'eimah (1985) also followed a three-way system in evaluating a textbook, namely, a tool for language teaching textbook analysis, a tool for language teaching textbook evaluation, and a tool for measuring language teaching textbook readability.

In order to understand the deeper complexities of the teacher and the textbook it is vital to expand on the theories of textbook analysis. This can allow us to understand the issues in the world of the textbook, which is of utmost importance for the English Home language teacher in South Africa.



### **3.25 Can Textbooks Weaken the Capacity to Teach: The Burning Question?**

The question alerts us to the problem that using the textbook can hamper teaching. The textbook can be a suitable commodity for classroom activity. In principal, teaching is often closely linked to adopted textbooks accordance with its educational policies (Taber, 2013: 32). Similarly, the textbook can also be a resource that learners ‘hate’ and do not enjoy working with it. Moreover, the danger with ready-made textbooks is that they seem to absolve teachers of responsibility (Swan, 2012: 42). Simply stated many teachers allow the textbook to take their place in the classroom.

### **3.26 Rationale to Include Theories of Textbook Analysis**

Although this study has a single stream of thought which is to investigate how teachers use the English Home language textbook there are other elements that play a role in the complexity of teaching English. Often teachers are not happy with the textbook that they are using especially the ones chosen by the Department of Education at times. However, this should not be that troublesome because the comments of an unhappy teacher do have the capability to give us insight into textbook formulation in terms layout and content. In doing this they can assist with future developments of English textbooks. Furthermore, the dynamics of this investigation compels me to look at the theories of textbook analysis, which could only add to the overall scope of language teaching. Therefore, I will list them in a systematic order.

### **3.27 Important Theories of Textbook Analysis: Classroom Practice and Understanding Development for Teacher Advancement**

In the 1970’s there was a great boom in textbook analysis. In this period authors like Stevick (1972: 101-120), Bruder (1978: 209-218), Tucker (1978), Cowles (1976: 300-303), Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979: 302-307) presented the theory for English textbook analysis. There were a number of models. I will present them in order to show the developmental stages of the models.

### **3.27.1 Model One: The Component of Stevick (1972)**

Stevick has suggested three important qualifications for the textbook to be successful:

- Strength/Weakness: the degree of appropriateness to the learner in terms of level of textbook content, vocabulary and sentence structure.
- Lightness/Heaviness: the degree of pressure, caused by the difficulty of pronunciation or the lengthy sentence.
- Transparency/Opacity: the cognitive property that shows how easily the learner is able to understand the connection between units.

### **3.27.2 Model Two: The Component of Bruder (1978)**

Bruder has presented 8 sections for English language textbook analyses: Level, Objectives, Style, Language Background, Age Background, Time, and Convictions. Furthermore, Bruder has set up the guidelines by which the evaluator will score the outcome of the textbook by numerical grading. The most salient thing about Bruder's evaluation standards is that it had established more unbiased grading than Stevick's evaluation theory.

### **3.27.3 Model Three: The Component of Tucker**

Tucker believed that English language teachers had a responsibility to evaluate the English language textbook for the development of English language education and argued at that time that English language education has so far lacked the systematic and efficient approach of evaluation.

The fundamental principles, which Tucker brought to textbook evaluation, were:

- The evaluation of the English language textbook system should extend over such a wide range that it may accord with the linguistic, psychological and pedagogical principles, existing in the basis of language teaching method.
- The evaluating method should reflect each character and a simple system where each evaluator can record his judgment.
- The sign for easy identification should be rendered as for the evaluation results and the rating chart, showing the whole of evaluation, should be existing. Regarding the ideal model of textbook and the evaluation results, visual comparison should be presented.

#### **3.27.4 Model Four: The Component of Cunningsworth (1984)**

Cunningsworth presented the general principle of textbook evaluation. Adding to his process he also presented a comprehensive valuation basis chart for English Language textbook. He divided into the evaluation criteria into four categories:

- Linguistic content
- The selection and grading of language items
- Presentation and practice of new language items
- Development of language skills and communication skills.

Cunningsworth (1995: 14) proposes pre-use, in-use and post-use evaluations. Pre-use evaluation intends to predict the potential performance of a coursebook. In-use evaluation is conducted while using a coursebook “when a newly introduced coursebook is being monitored or when a well-established but ageing coursebook is being assessed to see whether it should be considered for replacement”.

#### **3.27.5 Model Five: The Component of Grant (1987)**

The component of Grant (1987) is referred the CATALYST (Communicative, Aims, Teachability, Availability, Level Your impression, Students’ interest and Trying and testing). However, although these easy-to-remember models were made up as handy tools to evaluate textbooks, they may not be quite effective in having a deep understanding on the efficacy and the actual performance of a targeted textbook.

#### **3.27.6 Model Six: The Component of McDonough and Shaw (1993)**

McDonough and Shaw (1993: 64) propose a two-stage model for a thorough evaluation of textbooks. They suggest that a brief external evaluation should firstly have an overview of the organizational foundation of the textbooks. Then, it should be followed by a detailed internal evaluation “to see how far the materials in question match up to what the author claims as well as to the aims and objectives of a given teaching program”.

### **3.27.7 Model Seven: The Component of Abdelwahab (2013)**

Abdelwahab (2013: 55-70) suggests three basic methods to evaluate coursebooks. The impressionistic method, as the name suggests, involves analyzing a coursebook based on a general impression. He asserts that this method will not be adequate in itself and it needs to be integrated with the checklist method, which also covers the main idea of the present paper. The third one, the in-depth method, requires a profound scrutiny of representative features such as the design of one particular unit or exercise, or the treatment of particular language elements. Having presented the different models of textbook analysis I will offer a summary and conclude this chapter.

### **3.28 Summary and Conclusion: Implication for Future Textbook Construction**

Gleaning from certain elements of the literature review presented so far it is necessary for us to analyse the existing English textbook in a South African context in order to help future textbook construction. In addition, it is an essential prerequisite of the construction of theoretical basis to understand exhaustively the detailed features of each analysis theory in the context of South Africa. This study adds to theory and practice. In similar terms, good textbook practice will shift literacy practices and create the opportunity for creative methods of using the English Home language textbook. With the continuing development of curriculum innovations by the Department of Education, it keeps this as a rich field of inquiry. In keeping with Hattie's position (2009), I believe that quality classroom teaching has the most influence on fruitful outcomes for learners. Therefore, it is important to investigate one of the most common books in the classroom and endeavour to use it in some unconventional ways. For the research community and new and older teacher, it will help gain a deeper understanding of the ways to teach learners in South Africa and help them forestall the threat of boredom. In closing this chapter, I would like to reaffirm my position, which aligns itself with what Hutchinson & Torres (1994: 315) argue, "textbooks have a vital and positive part to play in the everyday job of teaching and learning English, and that the importance of the textbook becomes even greater in periods of change." In the next chapter, I will set out to discuss the design of the study and the choice of instruments that I need to use and revisit my research questions.

The analysis will look into the world of the development and progression of a teacher and the learner. This will be important because ultimately the hand of a skilful teacher must weave the textbook.

### 3.29 The Need for a Deeper Scrutiny: Educational Appropriateness

I am performing the scrutiny to arm the teachers with a vision of current, best 21st century classroom practice including some dangers formulated in some of their teaching practice. In the next chapter, my scrutiny will direct my focus on the examination of a corporate body that exists between teachers and learners. I will look at the synergy that exists between them as well as the lack of harmony that exist between them in the classroom. I hope that the information that I am able to provide will uncover the real areas of concern when dealing with grade 11 learners between the ages 16-18.

In light of this, I wish to liken my scrutiny to an autopsy. The word autopsy is derived from the Greek word *autopsia*, which means, "to see with one's own eyes" (<https://biologycorner.com/worksheets/articles/autopsy.html>). As a teacher for almost 20 years in the field of teaching English, I have seen a number of things that add value to English language teaching and I have seen things that would limit the practicality of English language teaching. In addition, the fact that I have taught in three different continents provides me with a basis to probe and seek continuously teaching methods that work in a context-based environment. By the same token, it also fortifies my position to reject certain teaching methods with an awareness that it could harm the very educational practice of teaching English. Therefore, I am to perform an autopsy based on the following reasons (which will be discussed in chapter 6):

- To determine the cause of failure in the past in terms of teaching methods that worked and did not work in the age group of 16-18.
- To state and evaluate the arena of effective teaching.
- To develop a diagnosis of the English Home language classroom.
- To gain information for Language Educational Practitioners.
- To zoom into deep rooted problems in English language teaching as well as to reveal the positive dimensions in English language teaching.
- To revive the centrality of the English language teacher.

Overall, this autopsy is informative and does have the potential to find unexpected contributors to English language teaching. I will now move on to the next chapter to further the scope and purpose of my investigation.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN OF THIS STUDY

#### 4.1 Introduction

Make your work in keeping with your purpose and design.

Leonardo Da Vinci

The purpose of this study was to explore with a sample of 12 grade 11 English Home language teachers and their perceptions of the English Home language textbook. I believe that a better understanding of this phenomenon would allow teachers to proceed from a more informed perspective in terms of textbook practice. Therefore, the main aim of my study was to seek ways to improve textbook practice in high school. Given that English Home language teaching is a strategic educational practice in my domain of investigation, I view this study as an educational inquiry, which poses fundamental questions about the nature of human experience (Brumfit and Mitchell 1990). Leedy & Ormrod (2005: 1) state that in virtually every subject area, our knowledge is incomplete and problems are waiting to be solved.

The purpose of this chapter is to attend to issues of design, setting, methodology, and the research questions. Hence, the design in this chapter reflects the particular ways in which language is used to capture and express experience (Kern 2000:1). Through this reflection, “we do not only learn a great deal about the conventions of the language, but we can also begin to glimpse the beliefs and values that underlie the discourse” (Kern 2000:1). Therefore, this chapter describes my study’s research methodology and includes discussions around the following areas: (a) qualitative shifts, (b) rationale for research design, (c) description of research sample, (d) overview of research design, (e) methods of data collection, (f) analysis of data, (g) ethical considerations, and (h) issues of trustworthiness of the study. The chapter ends with a brief concluding summary.

By conducting the research for my study, I endeavour to get closer to the prevalent reality by attempting to build knowledge about it (Pajo, 2018: 3). In my study, I intend to stand back from what is known and see it afresh (Carter & Goddard, 2016: 7). In light of this, I wish to uphold the belief that a healthier understanding of textbook practice would allow teachers to fine-tune their skills in the classroom. Therefore, for me, this interaction between teacher, textbook, and the learner honours the “educational process which is capable of fostering educational outcomes in terms of students’ learning” (Elliott 1991: 50). Furthermore, the theoretical underpinnings examined in the literature review chapters suggest that a study into textbook practice can best be understood qualitatively because different teaching methods are context based and can only be understood from a participant’s perspective in their specialized context. Therefore, in view of the theoretical and empirical grounding of this study, I am led to think that this study can only be understood within the context of a particular school because of the different personalities of teachers and children at particular schools. Qualitatively each context appears to be very different and therefore can influence meaning making.

Before I unpack the dynamics of this chapter I would like to reaffirm my concurrence with what Hutchinson & Torres (1994) argue when they declare “for teachers, textbooks offer a framework of guidance and orientation.” Furthermore, I am also in tune with what Swan (2012: 41) states,

I believe that any textbook needs adaptation and supplementation to make it appropriate for a particular group of students.

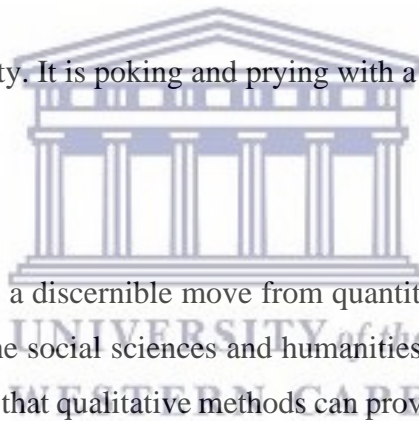
Reflecting on the above quote brings an awareness that as humans, our interaction with others can either harm or promote intellectual prosperity. Ping (2000: 27) notes, “the distinctive focus of educational research must be upon the quality of learning and thereby of teaching. With few exceptions, the classroom, the transaction between teacher and learner in all its complexity, our research should shed light upon.” In the next segment, I will reveal the path that I have taken to gather my data and I can establish the identities of the participants for this enquiry. Therefore, it is my hope that “through rigorous qualitative research methods we can gain valuable information that expands our understanding about what happens for those engaged in the process” (Green, 2014: 157).

Methodologically, the choice of qualitative research speaks to voice and agency, a reflection of what happens in the classroom situation. For me, this method brings out the uniqueness of each context and is in keeping with the idea that qualitative research views itself as a useful process for many different subjects, including education, sport, business and management, health, and social sciences (Holloway & Wheeler, 2013; Atkinson, 2012).

At this juncture, I will first reflect on the shift of qualitative research as it weaves and interweaves itself among other disciplines and I ponder on its potential to develop new constructions or enhance old modifications of a particular phenomenon. In doing the above, it will add clarity to my design in this study.

#### **4.1.1 A Qualitative Shift: Hoping for an Improved Understanding for the Development of New Constructions or Old Modifications**

Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.



(Hurston, 1942: 143)

In recent times, there has been a discernible move from quantitative to qualitative methods in numerous disciplines across the social sciences and humanities (Mullany & Stockwell, 2015: 50). Finch (1985: 114) affirms that qualitative methods can provide theoretically grounded and analytical accounts of “what happens in reality in ways which statistical methods cannot accomplish.” Barbour (2008: 1) also states that educational and social work research have also adopted qualitative methods, which is perhaps not surprising, given their reliance on interaction as a key component of professional practice. In addition to this, “qualitative research suggest that we should not assume that techniques used in quantitative research are the only way of establishing the validity of findings from qualitative or field research” (Silverman, 2014: 17). This is in keeping with what Cuzzort and King (2002: 708) caution in terms of scientific approach. They posit:

The more rigorously scientific we become in the social sciences, the more we remove ourselves from what we want to understand.



Qualitative research uses a wide and deep angle lens, examining human choice and behaviour as it occurs naturally in all of its detail (Johnson & Christensen, 2017: 35). My aim in this study is not to generalize to across large groups with my data but to determine common themes across small groups of teachers. Since one matchstick can destroy forests and at the same time help communities to keep themselves warm, I believe that this inquiry can afford us both the negatives and positives. Therefore, doing qualitative research in this study requires a conscious, internal awareness within the external structural, political, and human context of teacher education. This study is the result of a desire to fill a void that had received little attention in the current climate of education research in South Africa. I have provided an overview of the different platforms that play a role in the spectrum of English language education in the previous chapters. These different yet related bodies of knowledge, as well as others that are more theoretically and more practically oriented have served to ground this study. In order to tackle the issue of effective English language teaching in particular with the English Home language textbook the sections on learning theories, effective teaching and the underpinning of teachers' practice have attempted to highlight the need to connect what is known from research and how teachers can implement this knowledge in the classroom. This is in keeping with what Lincoln & Guba (2013: 61) state when they refer to the fact that the "aim of inquiry is the achievement of continuously improved understanding and extended sophistication which is accomplished through the reconstruction or extension of existing constructions and /or the development of new constructions." These new constructions can be a result of "the rich descriptions of everyday practice found in qualitative research" (Silverman, 2016: 27).

Having shown and identified a shift in research that has aligned itself with qualitative methods I will now proceed to deal with the issue of subjectivity in research. One major consideration in conducting research is trying to avoid the biases and faulty assumptions that can be characteristic of human thought (Delvin, 2018: 1).

#### **4.1.2 Vision and Challenges: Attempting the Concept of a Stranger as Writer**

In this segment, I hope to demonstrate my sense of balance as a researcher. I am acutely aware of the fact that my personal and professional experiences as well as my philosophy of teaching can have an impact on the process of my methodology. Furthermore, I also understand that my teaching belief does have the potential to affect the lens through which I examine these teachers' practices. Based on my own professional capacity, I tend to lean toward a more constructivist approach to instruction.

This implies that I will be more interested in studying a teacher who uses student-centered language discussion techniques to develop English home language education. Having stated the preconceived notions that can precede this study I would also like to mention something with regard to being subjective in relation to being objective. Saldana (2015: 59) believes that subjectivity is nothing to be suspicious of in the social research endeavours because “total objectivity is nearly impossible to achieve anyway.” Furthermore, Davies (2008: 1) believes that “all researchers are therefore to some extent connected to or part of the object to their research.” Being objective would imply that I would perceive “something from different angles without personal preferences or judgements” (Pajo, 2018: 21).

With the above stated issues in mind, I will attempt to undertake my research (write this chapter) with the eyes of a stranger. I am doing this because I am aware that a major task of a researcher is to manage the subjectivity of his/her work. The concept of a stranger I adopt from Schutz (1964: 91-95) ‘notion of a stranger’ approaching a new culture. Having lived in Japan, England and travelled abroad to other countries, I am well attuned to the common notion, which says not to be biased in terms of the way things are done in other countries compared to in your own country. Therefore, I will attempt to:

- See every part of what I do as a fresh phenomenon.
- Setting aside judgments about the expected nature and reality of things (Schutz, 1970: 316).

I identify the severity of my task in this chapter/study as I recognize once again that a researcher must manage his/her subjectivity. In an attempt to do this, I will employ the principles that Holliday (2002: 23) presents.

He states:

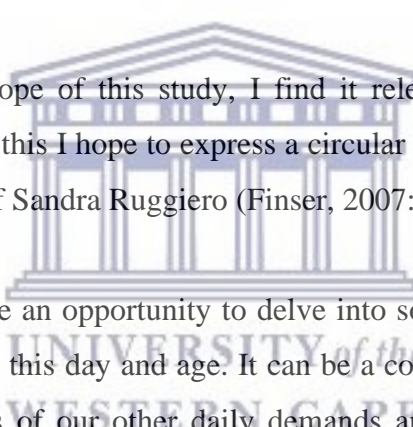
- The qualitative researcher as writer must see his/her own research experience as strangely and freshly as she/he does the social setting in which he/she is working.
- The researcher must be very vigilant in monitoring his/her own ideology in the language of the written study.
- The written study must communicate the sense of strangeness and culture learning encountered in the research process.

- The written study must show how the research has responded to the social setting in which it takes place.

Having mentioned my attempt to manage my level of subjectivity, I will now proceed to give a synopsis of this chapter.

As I have mentioned earlier, I put forward the design and methodology in detail I have used to conduct this inquiry. Before I present this description, I will also state the research study questions. After this, I will explain the research design. Then, I will describe the research site where investigations were conducted. This description will bring out the research participants and the research population and sample. In conclusion, I describe the instruments used to collect data including the procedures used for data collection and the methods used to analyse data and finally I present the ethical considerations.

In keeping with the broad scope of this study, I find it relevant to mention the value of educational research. In doing this I hope to express a circular nature of educational research, which I sum up in the words of Sandra Ruggiero (Finser, 2007: 36-37). She states:



Doing research gives one an opportunity to delve into something with depth that life seldom allows for in this day and age. It can be a counterpoint to balance the alacrity and shallowness of our other daily demands and pressures. To carry a question into waking and sleeping and through transformations of your own thinking is almost a form of mediation. To write it down is to allow others to also drink from the deep waters of your refreshing pool.

Having rendered a brief outline of the challenges that I will experience, I see the need to expand on the vehicle of educational research to bring change and awareness in the educational domain. I am doing this to signpost the fact that I believe that as teachers, we might forget the importance of educational research. I believe there is a general perception in South Africa that teacher researchers would only like to finish their research without it transforming their lives as they apply the principles and the discovery in the research. Furthermore, I hope my belief will encourage teacher research with the proper mind frame.

I believe research is "a careful or critical inquiry or examination in seeking facts or principles; a diligent investigation to ascertain something" (Webster's New International Dictionary, 1993). In the next segment, I will further expand on the value of educational research. I hope that this discussion will bring an awareness to the importance of educational research especially in the context of South Africa so that teachers doing research will not only finish their thesis because they merely want the 'degree' but that its value will transform their lives in the English Home language classroom or any other learning area.

#### **4.1.2.1 Rationale for Including the Components of Educational Research, Teacher Research, Action Research and Classroom Research**

Research if seen as an exercise in empowerment stretches through the very fabric of education. In this segment, I wish to compare the four components mentioned in the heading (liken) to the structure of the earth—crust, mantle, outer and inner core of the earth. Educational research (Crust) is the outermost layer of the education system. Beneath educational research, lies teacher research (Mantle). Just as the mantle contains more iron, magnesium and calcium—teacher research contains different teaching styles, teacher personalities and contextual variants in terms of different locations. Beneath teacher, research (mantle) lies the action research (outer core).

Action research is made up of different hermeneutical perspectives and can be made up of extremely different learner orientations, and lastly, at the center of educational output is classroom research (inner core). The center of the Earth (classroom research) is under higher pressures than the outer layers (educational research, teacher research, action research).

This is because the real battles and learning take place in the classroom (<https://sciencing.com/earths-structure-crust-inner-core-16911.html>). My rational for including these four components (using this metaphor/simile) is to emphasize that research is a natural process of life and that every day the elements of research are incumbents in our lives. In the next section, I deal with each one individually. I deem this necessary to heighten our awareness of the possible applications in the four components mentioned in this section.

#### 4.2 Educational Research: A Vehicle to Bring Effective Change and Awareness

I will begin by providing a larger context about the broader field of educational research. I am doing this in order to ground the methodological choices for this research. All teachers need to know that educational research can bring changes no matter how small. Often researchers can be viewed as troublemakers and therefore the aim of this segment is to explore/enhance the concept of educational research—its purposes and processes.

I present research as an integral and essential part of professional practice, and I explore some of the key issues, which I had to consider and understand. The beauty of research is to inform. Developing a spirit of enquiry starts in your own location (Carter & Goddard, 2016). The purpose of research is to develop knowledge for, in, and of, society (Pring, 2004). Educational research signposts some important points and as a researcher, I take comfort in the following:

- It endeavours to examine educational phenomena to learn from them and to improve existing knowledge, policy and practice.
- It draws on a number of disciplines including anthropology, history, philosophy, politics, psychology and sociology.
- It is concerned with issues to do with teaching and learning across educational the educational spectrum (in this study secondary schooling)

Based on the above, I seek the true meaning in the interpretation of the participants and elucidate them further to reveal the truth (Basit, 2010: 2). The concept of truth is seen as particular ‘actions in a specific context’. The discovery in each new context or social setting can bring a new awakening. Research require researchers to look at situations repeatedly and cannot be examined independent of context.

Sivasubramaniam (2017: 10, Personal Capacity) puts it eloquently when he states,

“Research in the bygone era, influenced by the Newtonian view of nature and the Cartesian search for certainty, examined knowledge independent of context. It is argued that such an intellectual posture is unhelpful, especially in the New Millennium where our ideas of nature and society are subject to frequent change and re-inquiry.”

In the next section, I set out to uncover the unique perspective of an educational awakening. For a developing country like South Africa, research is of utmost importance for social improvement in all areas of life. According to Sharpes (2010: 156), “research is intrinsic to history and is a key to the advancement of humanity.” For South Africa, it is then an important component of developing an upgraded society in educational terms.

### **4.3 Educational Awakening: Observing, Searching and Interpreting**

While writing this segment I am reminded of a movie where Jack Nicholson as Col. Nathan R. Jessep states with great relish, “You can't handle the truth!” This research will attempt to enhance teacher practice and disseminate it in the corridors of educational history. In this inquiry, I aim to “uncover the ways experience and expertise in teaching changes apprentices and journeymen...into master teachers” (Calderhead, 1987: 61). Therefore, I believe that a common principle of education is the fact that it can help a situation or individual(s) in a specific context. Since I desire to know the reality within certain contexts about teacher' textbook practice I must conform to standards available through the scope of educational research and its methodology. Pring (2004: 146) argues, “The overriding principle which informs research would seem to be that of finding the truth. This is much more than telling the truth, although it does of course include that. The purpose of undertaking research is the production of new knowledge.” Furthermore, the reasons for seeking new knowledge or forgotten knowledge are several in this inquiry:

- The improvement of teaching practice in terms of textbook variety.
- Information that can help improve the scope of textbook practice and relevancy.
- Increase accountability as a road to help solve the problem of boredom in terms of textbook practice.

Within this attempt to seek new knowledge, the implication is that it can help teachers and enhance teacher research. I will now elaborate on this in the next segment.

#### 4.4 Teacher Research: Touching the Broader Community

The abundance of teachers in the world makes this investigation a tool in the face of possible complacency by teachers in their field of expertise. With its literacy struggles that are rife in South Africa, this study does have the potential to awaken a teachers' appetite for teaching language. As a teacher in the field for almost 20 years, I can confirm that high quality teaching is now widely acknowledged as the most important school-level factor influencing student achievement. This in turn brings out the following:

- It focuses attention on the importance of teacher education.
- It allows for professional development in different ways, reflecting their distinctive values, beliefs and assumptions about the nature of professional knowledge and how and where such learning takes place.

Taking into account the above points, I place a lot of importance on data being gathered in natural or real-life settings, which brings a wide level of awareness to this inquiry. Against this backdrop, I believe teacher research is important in a number of ways:

- Teacher research can be used to inform the design and structure of teacher education. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this is even more relevant due to the constant change of the educational landscape.
- Teachers can be equipped to engage with and be discerning consumers of research. Teachers can boldly use methods that have been researched.
- Teachers can be equipped to conduct their own research to investigate the impact of particular interventions or to explore the positive and negative effects of educational practice.
- Since I have established the platform of educational research for this inquiry and the benefits of teacher research I now move on to the scope of the research questions and how they influence this investigation. In addition to this, I will first attempt to unpack the need and benefits of research in the Further Education and Training Phase in high schools in South Africa.

In essence, teaching affects every spectrum of life and furthermore, teacher research forms the basis of professional practice and that it should help practitioners in their work (Brown & Dowling, 1998).

Having looked at the value of teacher research, I will now zoom into the benefit of looking at the FET phase in high school. Gleaning through different qualitative thesis' in the context of South Africa I notice the absent of compositions relating an explanation in in doing research in the FET phase.

#### **4.4.1 Benefits of Teacher Research in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase in High School**

According to Carter & Goddard (2016: 7), the core of all good research is the ability to stand back from what is known and see it afresh. This study is cognizant of the fact that the final three years of school is very important for the teenager. It gets him/her ready for adulthood. The principles that a learner can acquire during these final three years of school could have considerable impact in his/her life. As a teacher that is long in the profession, I have seen this on many occasions and even now when I meet some of my students at University of the Western Cape, I can fully appreciate the binding effort of teachers during the last three years of a high school learners' school career. In view of the above points, I offer the list given by Wallace (2013: 1) as a few reasons that can serve as a benefit for doing research in the FET phase:

- Research in FET phase in high school is an extension of the process of reflection on practice and is therefore an activity, which is central to our role as professionals.
- Research in FET phase in high school is an essential tool for raising and maintaining the quality of learning and teaching.
- Research in FET phase in high school can be used as means of looking for solutions to difficulties or dilemmas we might face in the class
- Research in FET phase in high school can be used to raise levels of learner engagement or deal effectively with lack of punctuality.
- Research in FET phase in high school allows us to investigate the impact of policy innovations on practices in our own schools.
- Research in FET phase provides a means to keep up to date with ideas and developments in our subject area.



In no way does the above list presuppose that it is better to do research in the FET phase of high school. However, the list above can provide a solid base for me to venture into research in the Grade 11 English Home language classroom. In spite of the good elements that can be linked to research in the FET phase there is also a possible danger to this phase, which has been neglected. In the next section, I will offer the possible dangers.

#### **4.4.2 The Danger in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase in High School**

Although there are advantages to research in this phase, there is also a possible danger for the learner who is in this phase. From my experience, I have seen the complacency of many teachers in this phase. There are indications that from time to time teachers built teaching in this phase around the concept that the learners in this phase are matured. Teachers believe that this presupposes the idea that learners can do the work on their own. As a result, this type of behaviour leads to bad practice in the classroom. For example, many learners are tossed loads of work just to keep them busy and in return the teacher 'kills'/limits her/his own subject innovation. Here, I am not only referring to English as a home language but almost all other subjects in the FET phase. Therefore, in principle this is a wonderful phase for the learner. However, I believe that it is also a very dangerous phase. I base this on the fact that the work ethic of a teacher (being lazy) can rub off on the learners' future work and education.

There might be a tendency to have this experience in low-income areas because teachers might have the idea that anything goes in the classroom including the dimensions of boredom. I am mentioning the dangers of the FET phase for teachers and learners. In terms of teachers, a weak base for the learner with inappropriate teaching methods will not adequately prepare the learner for grade 12. Therefore, the fact that I have selected grade 11 does enable this inquiry to expose any hidden fallacies indirectly.

Having laid out the scope of educational research and the value of teacher research there is a further need to present a brief discussion about the component of classroom research, which will take place during observation. This is important because this is where all the action takes place.

#### **4.4.3 Classroom Research and Teacher Interconnection: Where it All Happens**

The classroom in my opinion is the second home of the learner and therefore I feel it should be observed. In keeping with the scope of this study, my beliefs and convictions have necessitated a focus on classroom research because this is where all the action takes place. As I am doing research in other teachers' classrooms I will eventually apply the principles gleaned from their teaching and apply it to my own classroom. I see this as an important process.

I mentioned earlier that some teacher researchers (I believe a number of South African teachers), merely finish their Masters or PhD in order to have the degree but in no small part do they apply it to their classroom. I hope to reverse that process as I am already implementing what I gleaned from my Master's Thesis because classroom action research is a very effective way of improving English Home language teaching. Action research has become increasingly popular around the world (McNiff, 2017: 9) and therefore is an attractive option for teacher research (Mills, 2011). It can provide the following:

- Action research can provide practitioners with new knowledge and understanding about how to improve educational practices or resolve significant problems in classrooms and schools (Mills, 2011; Stringer, 2008).
- Action research offers multiple, beneficial opportunities for those professionals working within the teaching profession (Johnson, 2012 & Schmuck, 1997).
- Action research helps teacher empowerment (Book, 1996).
- Action research will help bridge the gap between research and practice (Johnson, 2012; Mills, 2011).

I have included this section to bring an awareness that knowledge should not lay dormant but it is important to apply the knowledge you discover to yourself first before you recommended to other teachers. In the next segment, I will deal with the research study questions.

#### **4.5 Research Study Questions and Scope: Zooming in One Step at a Time**

My proposed investigation positions itself within the interpretivist model. According to Saldana (2015: 157), thinking interpretively helps to:

- Develop high and deep levels of reflection and high and deep forms of writing.
- Consider the practical and utilitarian value of your work to others.

The collective scope of the research questions brings out the concept of activity theory based on who is doing what, why and how. The core of an activity in this theory ranges on the format of subject (human doer) and object (the thing being done) and the outcome (what has been achieved). The principles of activity theory are grounded in the work of the Russian psychologist Vygotsky and his students, in particular. For this study, the activity theory framework provides a lens with which to get out and to better understand the human activity phenomenon in the classroom. The activity theory has the potential to stimulate interaction in the classroom and on this basis; I use this schema as a path of the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness. Consistent with this view, one can expect human activity in a way that can improve learner activity and academic advancement. By the same token, it can also damage learner performance in the classroom. Qualitative research does not conjure the same type of precision required by quantitative research (Holliday, 2002: 31).

Having discussed an array of issues and insights on educational research in the above segments, the theoretical framing of my study involved looking at the activities and approaches that can promote participation and engagement in a classroom setting. Therefore, in order to understand more definitively the different teaching methods encountered in the English Home language classroom my study will address two main research questions (MRQs) and three sub research questions (SRQs):

The Main Research Questions are:

- How do English Home language teachers use the English Home language textbook in and out of the classroom.
- What are English language teachers' perceptions about the current English Home language textbook?

The Sub Research Questions are:

- How do teachers use textbooks in planning and making decisions about instruction in the classroom?
- What learning barriers do teachers face concerning the English Home language textbook?
- How do teachers view other English Home language materials like the X-kit in South Africa?
- What are the possible factors that contribute to better textbook practice?

In the next section, I address the scope and contribution of qualitative research in relation to philosophical traditions. I delve into the concept of the paradigm and its methodological perspectives with the belief that research is seen as a story within a paradigm. I deem this necessary because the teachers of this study do have the potential to engender a different reality.

#### **4.5.1 Paradigms and Methodological Perspectives: Predominant Dispositions**

Methodological trends can be witnessed as belonging to much broader patterns (Mullany & Stockwell, 2015: 50). Therefore, at this time it is relevant to look at the different paradigms. Paradigms are “overarching philosophical systems” (Lincoln, 2005: 230). On a more general basis, a paradigm is best described as a whole system of thinking (Neuman, 2011: 94).

According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (1999: 6), a research paradigm is an all-encompassing system of interrelated practice and thinking that define the nature of enquiry along these three dimensions. They are ontology, epistemology and methodology. The purpose of this treatise on these three dimensions is to direct us to a systematic way, which underpins this study which, is constructivism. Therefore, as a researcher I should find the “way that the researcher believes that the research question could be answered most truthfully and thus his or her assumptions of how reality should be viewed” (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2011: 309).

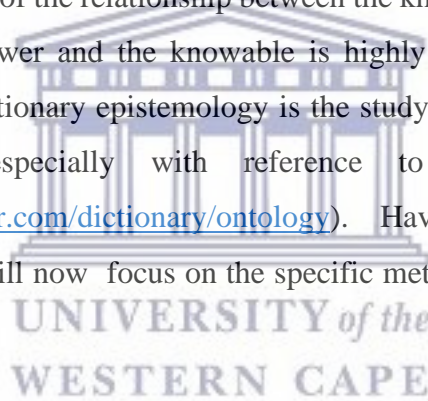
Mason (2002) refers to the above rendering as ontology, which presents an important question: How should reality be looked at? In the next segment, I will mention the three dimensions that constitute the above question.

#### **4.5.1.1 Ontology: The Nature of Reality and Discovering What Can Be Known**

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and what there is to know about the world (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2014: 4). Therefore, the ontological question emphasizes the interest of “What is there that can be known?” Lincoln & Guba (2013: 37) or a more aptly way of putting it is “What is the nature of reality?” According to the Webster dictionary, ontology is a branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature and relations of being. Ontology deals with abstract entities (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ontology>). In human sciences, entities exist in the minds of the persons contemplating them (Lincoln & Guba, 2013: 39).

#### **4.5.1.2 Epistemology: The Nature of Knowledge is Context Specific**

Epistemology is concerned with the ways of knowing and learning about the world ((Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2014: 5). Therefore, the epistemological question emphasizes the interest of “What is the nature of the relationship between the knower and the knowable?” The relationship between the knower and the knowable is highly person and context specific. According to the Webster dictionary epistemology is the study or a theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge especially with reference to its limits and validity (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ontology>). Having looked at the three dimensions of a paradigm I will now focus on the specific methodological choices that have guided my inquiry.



#### **4.6 Methodology: The Road of Discipline**

The methodological question emphasizes the interest of “How does one go about acquiring knowledge?” According to the Webster dictionary methodology is a body of methods, rules, and postulates employed by a discipline (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ontology>). Furthermore. There is a thin line between the concept of methodology and the concept of methods. Methodology can be defined as a “reasonable plan for gathering and analyzing information that responds to a line of research inquiry” (Egbert & Sanden, 2014: 75). Methods can be defined as the “specific procedures that accomplish the task of gathering and analyzing the data in a research study” (Egbert & Sanden, 2014: 75). The methodology appropriate to constructivism must “be one that delves into the minds and meaning making, sense-making activities of the several knowers involved” (Lincoln & Guba, 2013: 39).

The well-known interpretative explanatory method of hermeneutics seems appropriate. Furthermore, methodology refers to ways of obtaining organizing and analyzing data (Polit & Hungler, 2004: 233). According Babbie and Mouton (2006: xxv) conclude that there are three broad methodological paradigms that dominate the social research arena:

- Quantitative
- Qualitative
- Participatory action paradigms.

The theoretical paradigm that guides orthodox inquiry is positivism; interpretive or naturalistic inquiry is interpretivism or constructivism; and critical inquiry is critical theory (Denzil & Lincoln, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In an attempt to further ground this study, I will give an overview of the three paradigms that can guide inquiry. This overview, serves as a rationale for the subsequent discussion, on why a qualitative paradigm was chosen for this discussion. I rank them in the following order positivism and interpretivism. I will now proceed to look at them individually.

#### **4.6.1 Positivism: A Quantitative Ambition**

In order to understand the philosophical underpinnings of research, it is important that I factor in a conceptual understanding of positivism. Positivism implies a “model of the research process which treats ‘social facts’ which exist ‘out there’, independently of the activities of both participants and researchers” (Silverman, 2014: 23). According to Alasuutari (2012: 515) by the 1970s, there was growing dissatisfaction with the limitations of survey research. It is engraved in humans to attempt something new or something old in a new way. Therefore, the discovery of a new process of questioning and reasoning change the landscape of research into a more personal nature. This new landscape into “social phenomena coupled with observations and coming up with empirical findings was relabelled as qualitative research” Alasuutari (2012: 516). According to Glenda Bissex (1994), “quantitative research seeks to prove something; qualitative research seeks to learn something.”

The positivist stance is usually typified by a relatively objective style and approach and searches for facts that can be generalized (Atkins & Wallace, 2012: 22). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, positivism is a term still in use and the tenets of positivism are frequently questioned by researchers working in qualitative traditions (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2014: 9).

Positivism materialized as a philosophical paradigm in the 19th century with Auguste Comte's (Babbie, 2011: 35) rejection of metaphysics and his assertion that only scientific knowledge can reveal the truth about reality. In principal, positivism is a worldview that values measurement and observable events. Positivism defines a philosophy of science with clear roots beginning with at least David Hume (1776). Human beings are seen objectively, and as a result, social scientists look to different avenues to study human society (De Vos et al., 2011b: 5).

One of the founders of sociology, Auguste Comte (Lincoln & Guba, 2013: 87), coined the term positivism in the second quarter of the 19th century. According to Comte, human reasoning passes through three distinct historical stages: the theological, the metaphysical, and the scientific. In the theological stage, natural and social phenomena are explained by reference to spiritual forces. In the metaphysical stage, ultimate causes are sought to explain such phenomena.

In the scientific stage, attempts to explain phenomena are abandoned, and scientists seek instead to discover correlations among phenomena. In positivist scientific research, the researcher is concerned with gaining knowledge in a world, which is objective using scientific methods of enquiry (Denscombe, 2008: 14; 2010b: 120). The positivist researcher outlines the following characteristics:

- The positivist researcher prefers working with an observable social reality. The characteristics of such research will produce generalizations similar to those produced by the natural scientists.
- The positivist researcher believes that an objective reality exists outside personal experiences with its own cause-and-effect relationships (Remenyi et al., 1998:32; Saunders et al., 2000:85; Riege, 2003:77; Neuman, 2006:82; Babbie & Mouton, 2008:23; Saunders et al., 2009:113; Muijs, 2011:4).

- The positivist position upholds the notion that scientific knowledge consists of facts while its ontology considers the reality as independent of social construction.

The positive researcher prefers quantitative methods such as social surveys, structured questionnaires and official statistics because these have good reliability and representativeness (<https://revisesociology.com/2015/05/18/positivism-interpretivism-sociology>).

In positivist perspective, knowledge is objective, measurable and generalizable (Egbert & Sanden, 2014: 33). Methods associated with this paradigm include experiments and surveys where quantitative data is the norm (Druckman, 2005:5). Methods associated with this paradigm include experiments and surveys where quantitative data is the norm.

Analysis methods using statistical or mathematical procedures are frequently used, and conclusions drawn from the research setting may be used to provide evidence to support or dispel hypotheses generated at the start of the research process; in other words, by deduction rather than induction. The emphasis is on measurement, whether this be of scientific quantities e.g. time or speed through experimental activities, or of attitudes, behaviors and opinions through surveys and questionnaires. The assumption of positivism is that an inquiry can be carried out without the influence of a value system (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

While looking over the literature there are certain elements that suggest:

- The positivist tradition has not met with approval and support by all scientists, since it has produced some serious problems as well as some questionable assumptions. Henning et al. (2004: 17). This of course can also be said of qualitative research.
- Early positivist social scientists assumed that social reality can be explained in rational terms, because people always act rationally (Babbie 2010: 41); Rubin and Babbie; 2010:15)

In the arena of academe, the positivist approach undeniably has strengths, notably in terms of precision, control and objectivity. This view is in keeping with what Gratton and Jones (2010: 25) believe. In closing with this part of positivism, one fact becomes clear:



The inquiry of a positivist is generally straight forward in terms of planning because the data is collected in one go and the analysis of the data takes place at the same time.

At this juncture, I deem it necessary to give a rationale why positivism is not applicable to this inquiry. I hope that this rationale might reflect the functional bases for my decision to use a qualitative dimension.

#### **4.6.2 Rationale for not using the Positivist Approach in this study**

In this segment, I reaffirm my position. The phenomenon that I have chosen to investigate cannot be measured because it is context specific. Furthermore, the objects of the social sciences, namely people, in my belief are not suitable for the implementation of scientific methods. This study is about human learning and the effective use of textbook practice predicated on it. In the confines of research, I have discovered that the quantitative approach has been criticized for neglecting important aspects of human lives (McCracken, 1988) which for me the positivistic paradigm does not encompass. To the contrary, as expressed by Finch (1985: 114), qualitative methods can provide theoretically grounded and analytical accounts of what happens in reality in ways, which for me statistical methods cannot accomplish.

As a teacher for twenty years, I have always found myself in an interactive state among my learners. My own goal as a teacher was always to produce a level of activities that stimulate and grab the learners by their brains that breeds deep discussion and vibrancy. This has been the nature of teaching practice and positivism does not feed that ambition of mine. Through qualitative methods I find myself in the classroom observing the teachers and in reality, I am living the action.

This is in keeping with my belief and practice as a teacher and therefore a positivist approach would not I feel do justice to this study. Furthermore, the fact that research data in education is usually obtained from human beings, the compulsions to quantify them as seen in a rationalistic epistemology reduce human beings to test scores, mean scores, and experimental objects (Bailey in Byrnes, 1998: 81-82). From what I mentioned so far, I believe that the educational values of this study do not support or uphold the positivist view. In the next segment, I will discuss the interpretivism

### 4.6.3 Interpretivism: Action Bringing Meaning

Early, I stated that this study is rooted in interpretivism. Researchers using this paradigm emphasize two important aspects:

- Emphasize human interaction with phenomena in their daily lives.
- Reality is multilayered and complex and a single event can have multiple interpretations (coming from a constructivist or subjectivist epistemology).

(Egbert & Sanden, 2014: 34)

The interpretive paradigm is also referred as the phenomenological approach. Through the interpretivist approach, I aimed to “capture the lives of the participants in order to understand the meaning by analyzing conversations and interactions that the researcher had with the subjects. (Henning, 2004: 19). Interpretivism emerged as a paradigm with an ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology opposite of positivism (Carr & Kemmis, 1985; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1991).

Interpretivism proposes a relativist world of multiple realities that are constructed and co-constructed by the mind(s) and required to be studied as a whole (Lincoln & Guba, 2013: 88). In principle, it endeavours to do the following:

- It aims to understand people (Babbie & Mouton, 2008: 28).
- According to Willis (1995) interpretivists are anti-foundationalists, who believe there is no single correct route or particular method to knowledge (Willis, 1995).
- It argues that there are no ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ theories (Walsham, 1993).
- It assumes that knowledge and meaning are acts of interpretation; hence, there is no objective knowledge, which is independent of thinking, reasoning humans Gephart (1999: [online]).
- It echoes the belief that access to reality (whether given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings (online).
- It attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them (Deetz, 1996).

Interpretivism is underpinned by observation and interpretation. It harnesses the belief, which is to observe, and in doing observation, it collects data about events. Through the process of interpretation, meaning is established and inferences are drawn (Aikenhead, 1997: [online]). This is not interpretation for the sake of achieving outcomes but it is looked upon in its context. According to Reeves and Hedberg (2003: 32), the interpretivist paradigm stresses the need to put analysis in context. My study aligns itself with the concepts and principles of this approach on the basis that aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action in this case in the classroom. My study, then, in accordance with interpretivism focuses on exploring the complexity of social phenomena with a view to gaining understanding (Collis & Hussey, 2009: 56-57; Rubin & Babbie, 2010: 37).

#### **4.7 An Interpretive View from a Participant Perspective: A Classic Interpretivist Model**

An interpretivist approach “looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (Crotty, 1998: 67). Adding to this is the deliberate focus on studying individuals or groups in their natural settings El, Anzul, Friedman, Garner & Steinmetz (1991). The rationale behind this is simply the fact that events can only be understood adequately if they are seen in context. In summary, the interpretivism relies upon the participants’ views of the situation being studied. It further understands the impact on the research of their own background and experiences (Creswell, 2003: 8). As my inquiry is grounded in interpretivism a further set of principles, can help edify this study. They are:

- Interpretivism is underpinned by observation and interpretation. It attempts to understand the phenomena through the meanings that that people assign to them (Deetz, 1996).
- Interpretivism allows the researcher to get inside the head of participants and to understand issues from within (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 1989).
- Interpretivism sees the world as constructed (Ulin, Robinson & Tolley, 2004: 17).
- Interpretivism is concerned with understanding the world as it is from subjective experiences of individuals (Reeves & Hedberg, 2003: 32).
- Interpretivism can be used as a lens when investigating individuals or small groups in naturalistic settings (Willis, 2007).

- Interpretivism does not predefine dependent and independent variables but focuses on the full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994).
- Interpretivism allows the researcher not stand outside but to be a participant observer (Carr & Kemmis, 1986: 88).

In light of the above-stated points, qualitative research represents an interactive process through which the people studied teach the researcher about their lives (Hughes, 2003: 30). My choice for doing a qualitative study rather than a quantitative study is wholly because of my premise that competence is context-based and is not context-free. Simply stated, things differ because the context differs. Taking into account the above point in the next segment, I will bring added clarity to the components and challenges of fieldwork.

#### **4.7.1 Possible Difficulty: Field to Text to Reader**

Often the qualitative researcher will be confronted with “a mountain of impressions, documents, and fieldnotes that faces the difficulty and challenging task of making sense of what has been learned” (Denzin, 2009: 85). In principle working out an interpretation is the art of allowing “the fieldworker-as-bricoleur (Levi-Strauss, 1966: 17) to translate what has been learned into a body of textual work that communicates these understandings to the reader. This is a surgical approach and constitutes an accuracy from field to text to reader. The process embedded in the interpretivist approach lends itself to the presence of innovative ideas and expressive richness of data. Therefore, in my study, I embraced an orientation that would understand the distinguishing viewpoints of the people involved. In doing this I have attempted to capture the activities and interpret the flow of ideas that flow out in the classroom in the form of a narrative. In the next segment, I will discuss the elements of narration.

#### **4.7.2 The Narrative: Telling Stories Worthwhile to Ignite Action in a Teachers’ Repertoire**

A narrative is a storied account of events, a symbolic representation of knowledge and experiences (Saldana, 2015: 170). In this interconnected world, it would seem that ‘we humans are irrevocably locked into a perception of the world encountered as a linear series of experiences’ (Hazel, 2007: 2).

Narrative is the fundamental scheme for linking individual human actions and event into interrelated aspects of an understandable composite' (Polkinghorne, 1988: 13). Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990: 375).

Czarniawska (2004: 17) defines narrative research as a specific type of qualitative design in which "narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronological connected." Maynes, Piece & Laslett (2008: 1) define personal narratives as "retrospective first-person accounts of individual lives". Since this is a multifaceted study, it has different dimensions. The focus on events and the premise, that narrative's primary function is the recapitulation of events, is very widespread from different academic fields (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2008: 23).

In doing my research, I have drawn my inspiration from constructivist and interpretive/phenomenological approaches (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lather, 1988; Schwandt, 1994; Schwandt, 1997) in order to understand the complexity and beauty of narration while at the same time discovering why the narrative approach can be useful in educational settings.

#### **4.7.2.1 Why is the Narrative Approach useful in Educational Research?**

My discussion here demands the unavoidable need to reflect on the fact that my belief in the narrative approach will provide a value loaded perspective. Narratives (stories) are "portals through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006: 375). Furthermore, narratives are also rendered for epistemological reasons such as the "commitment to counter positivistic paradigms and to highlight the existence of multiple truths" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016: 416). Ultimately, I have chosen the narrative approach in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the work and experiences of a selected group of grade 11 high school teachers. Therefore, my study needs to add texture and complexity to the story the grade 11 teachers are living. In keeping with the above point, Saldana (2015: 172) posits that thinking narratively can:

- Stimulate the search for stories in the data and thus the character and processes of participants.
- Stimulate creative ways of rendering the creative report through more progressive forms of writing for enhanced reader engagement.
- Force meticulous attention to language as a powerful medium for communicating human insights.

In conjunction with the above-stated points, the narrative that I am constructing in this study weaves and interweaves the themes in the teachers' lives and their classrooms. I wanted to explore not only the private constructions of individuals, as is commonly the focus in narrative research, but also collective interpretations and constructions (teachers' perspectives). As Creswell (2012: 70) believes as a method, it begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals.

A narrative is "useful only to the extent that it opens up (to its audiences) a deeper view of life in familiar contexts: it can make the familiar strange and the strange familiar" (Clough, 2002: 8). Furthermore, Elliot (2005) notes that there are some common themes related to the narrative dimension. As the researcher, I have an interest in:

- Peoples' lived experiences and an appreciation of the temporal nature of that experience.
- A natural desire to empower research participants.
- An interest in process and change over time.
- Awareness that researchers are narrators too.

(Elliot 2005: 6)

Narrative methods can be considered real world measures that are appropriate when problems are investigated. Guided by Cronon's (1992: 1361) contention that bad story telling has "wreaked havoc" I have aligned myself with the principles of good narration.

A further assessment by Riessman (1993: 1) notes, scholars from various disciplines are “turning to narrative as the organizing principle for human action”. Cronon (1992: 1369) writes, for instance, of “the storied reality of human experience” to draw attention to the way that human accounts of experience are discursively constituted. Narrative research encompasses the study of the experiences of single individual embracing stories of the life and exploring the learned significance of those individual experiences. In this research, it conforms to the classroom. The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are story-telling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. In addition to this, the paths of narrative research methods are evolving, and the approach I have described here is personal in many ways. This narrative path of mine and retelling of this educational story attempts an explanation, a hope, a vision, an emphasis, a perspective response figuring in one or more stories. In light of this, elements along this path in my dissertation are:

- The notion that good teaching practice helps student advancement.
- Visions of creative patterns of innovations in the classroom.
- Enthusiasm for understanding when using the English Home language textbook.

To further ground the circular nature of narratives, I will highlight the defining features of a narrative presentation as presented by Creswell. He states:

- Narrative researchers collect stories from individuals (documents) lived and told experiences. This is in keeping with what I am doing in the class.
- Narrative stories tell of individual experiences.
- Narrative stories are gathered through many different forms of data (Observation, interview, document analysis).
- Narrative stories often contain turning points (Denzin 1989a). In principal, it can reveal something old or new that give contextual value to future research.
- Narrative stories occur within specific places or situations. The context becomes important for the researchers telling of the story with a place.

(Creswell, 2012: 71-72)

In the above segment, I have pointed out the relevancy of the stories that can be unfolded during a qualitative study. In retrospect, I will also like to mention the possible fallacies that can accrue from a narrative approach. They could be:

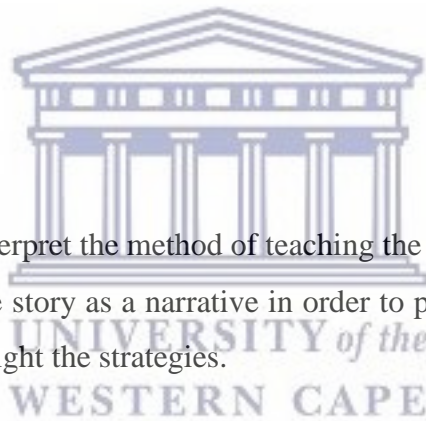
- The differences in people’s experienced meaning and the stories they tell about this meaning.
- The connections between storied texts and the interpretations of those texts

(Polkinghorne, 2007: 1)

In the previous segments, I explored concepts like paradigms and methodological perspectives that require researchers to reflect their position for research. Holding an awareness of these perspectives and understanding them will provide me with the necessary decision required to move forward in this inquiry.

In summary:

- I will interview and interpret the method of teaching the teacher uses in the classroom.
- I observe and retell the story as a narrative in order to pinpoint out the characteristics of the lesson and highlight the strategies.



Having anchored my position in stating why I am using the interpretive approach and pouring it out as a narrative I intend in the next segment to discuss my research design.

#### **4.8 The Research Design: The Road Taken**

In this segment, I clarify the path /route that I am taking in terms of my research design. Through a research design, I can conceptualize an “operational plan to undertake the various procedures and tasks required to complete my study” (Kumar, 2014: 123). Therefore, a good research design is one in which all the components work harmoniously together (Aurini, Heath, Howells, 2016: 35). According to Mouton (2001: 55), the research design serves as an outline for how I intend to conduct the study. Yin, (2003: 21) also states that a research design is a blueprint or a detailed plan the method on which one intends conducting a research.



The research design also reflects the methodological requirements of the research question that determine the type of data that was to be collected and how the data was to be processed. Adding to this is the fact that data collection and analysis should not be seen as two separate phases in the research process. Emerson, Fretz & Shaw (1995) stress that the notion of the “inseparability of methods and findings” underscores how integral and connected all aspects of the research process are. According to Maxwell (2013: 2), qualitative research design often involves simultaneous process of “collecting and analyzing data, developing and modifying theory, elaborating or refocusing the research questions and identifying and addressing validity threats. In this section, I wish to describe the design I have selected by defining it, outlining what it consists of and highlighting the underlined question that backs it up.

With this in mind, my inquiry is rooted in the following dimensions:

- This study has a descriptive and explanatory character
- This study seeks out to outline and understand the features of Grade 11 teachers’ effective literacy practices with regard to textbook practice.
- This study maintains a flexible research design as adopted (Robson, 2002)
- This study festoons itself with the fact that the observation and interviews were not done with the attitude approach ‘of anything goes’. Often a criticism of qualitative research a criticism is linked to precious statement (Antaki et al., 2002, cited in Braun and Clarke, 2006).
- I will now signpost the path leading me to this research design.

#### **4.8.1 A Trajectory from my Masters to alert Me**

In my Masters programme of studies in Education at the University of the Western Cape, I looked at ‘Common barriers to learning in the Grade 10 English Home Language Classroom and Informed (Innovative) Ways in dealing with them in High School’. In this study, I only looked at five barriers in the lives of Grade 10 learners. However, I was going to look at 10 barriers.

The sixth barrier on the list was the textbook, which I did not include. I looked at the barriers, which were already researched in studies but found very little on textbook practice in a South African context.

Furthermore, I felt based on my teaching experience and being aware of the fact that large groups of teachers neglect the textbook I felt with strong conviction that a study like the one that I am undertaking was deemed necessary to bring back the love for the age-old textbook.

Having looked at the research paradigm, research design and the methodological aspects of my study so far, I turn my attention to the overall model that informs this study, namely the qualitative method. Therefore, my decision underlying my choice to conduct a qualitative study was based on the argument that the different teaching methods/opinions that would surface during this study would be context-dependent and this demands that I come to terms with qualitative dimensions of the context of my study via a well-informed qualitative methodology. In the next section, I continue my discussion and give a rationale for my qualitative approach.

#### **4.9 Rationale for a Qualitative Model: Making a Case**

Quantitative research seeks to prove something; qualitative research seeks to learn something.



Glenda Bissex (1994)

The prevalence and proliferation of qualitative inquiry is reflected in the growth of original research papers, journals, and books, and specialist seminars, workshops and conferences (Pernecky, 2016: 11). For me, discovering meaning as well as the manner in which people understand themselves and their world is a platform for discovery. In addition, through qualitative research, information completely unanticipated by those soliciting input about the quality of classroom education can be collected.

Hence, the resulting data can be richly descriptive and faithful to teachers and learners' perspectives. I do not seek to describe a norm but to understand meaning and gain knowledge about teachers who vary from that norm as well as add to the richness and complexity of English Home language teachers. Therefore, "qualitative research aims at gaining insight and depth into whatever topic we want to know about" (Pajo, 2018: 11). I support the notion of Richards & Morse (2013: 218-219)). They believe

Qualitative inquiry constantly challenges assumptions, questions the obvious, reveals hidden and the overt, the implicit, the taken for granted, and shows these in a new light. Without such an active mode of inquiry, you risk a shallow, descriptive study with few surprises, reporting the obvious.

I also believe that the argument in favour of quantitative research against qualitative or vice versa is inconsequential and a bit misleading (Ahmed & Muhammad, 2017: 60). Consequently, the most qualitative-quantitative disputes are without logical basis (Given, 2008). There is a simple point to understand in these paradigms.

Sarantakos (2005) states, “each of the methodologies is suitable for studying a different form of reality that the other is incapable of as effectively. Furthermore, I want to learn how and why English teachers do what they do in a given context.

In the first part of my literature review chapter, I have discussed the constructivist model. Based on that discussion the nuances of a qualitative research design sit well with my inquiry. Bloomberg & Volpe (2016: 169) also believe that “qualitative research is grounded in an essentially constructivist philosophical position in the sense that it is concerned with how the complexities of the sociocultural world are experienced, interpreted, and understood in a particular context and at a particular point in time.” Furthermore, earlier in this chapter, I have mentioned that the underlying philosophy of qualitative research stems from the interpretive paradigm (Willig, 2001). It has been my contention that quantitative methods could not do justice to this study.

Since this study falls in the arena of interactionism, where I am in the midst of the research by being in the classroom, I believe that a quantitative model would not deliver or yield the rich data necessary to address the research questions and purposes. In addition to this, is the fact that the classroom as a product of research is a natural setting where human behaviour and events occur (Creswell, 2003). Based on what I already have discussed in this chapter, my belief is now anchored that a qualitative framework sits well with this inquiry.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) have elaborated that qualitative research is best used when the methods are:

- Complementary to the preferences and personal experiences of the researcher.
- Congruent with the nature of the research problem.
- Employed to explore areas about which little is known.

Before Strauss and Corbin, Miles and Huberman (1994) have stressed that qualitative research allows a more in-depth detail about something that is already known.

Phenomenology in principle is the exploration of individual experiences with a particular phenomenon (McMillan and Schumacher, 1997). The body of qualitative research reveals some effective teaching methods that have an impact on the classroom. I hope through this inquiry innovative and productive teaching methods of using the textbook will surface.

I therefore took the insider's perspectives because teachers and learners are part of a research community. In principal, I examine the participants experience in detail. Furthermore, this implied that:

- I was interested in the complexities of the socio-cultural world.
- I did want to know how it is experienced, interpreted and understood in a particular context at a particular point in time. This was in keeping with the views of (Mason, 1996; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990; Schwandt, 2000).

Understanding the above points, I gained a comprehensive understanding of underlying reasons, beliefs, and motivations for a particular action in and out of the classroom. In Sum and spirit, the intimate data that was gathered enhanced the study and therefore I felt deeply that the qualitative method would affect the findings because the motivation for qualitative research was that it answers the question "why". Also, it explains and provides an understanding of the phenomenon relating to the individual (Robson & Foster, 1989: 24).

The strength of qualitative research is the comprehensiveness of the perspective that it gives to a researcher and a deeper and fuller understanding of the research question (Babbie & Mouton, 2006: 309). In keeping with the above point in the next segment, I present a further dimension of qualitative research underlining the view from the other side.

#### **4.9.1 Qualitative Standards, Performance and Questions: The View from the Other Side**

Some social science researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 1989) perceive qualitative and quantitative approaches as incompatible; others (Patton, 1990; Reichardt & Cook, 1979) believe that the skilled researcher can successfully combine approaches. The perspective arguments can become muddled because researchers argue from the underlying philosophical nature of each paradigm. In principal, stating the obvious implies that the positivist and the interpretive paradigms rest on different assumptions about the nature of the world, they require different instruments and procedures to find the type of data desired. In addition, researchers tend to adhere to the methodology that is most consonant with their socialized worldview.

Seeking advice from qualitatively well-informed colleagues is advisable; it has been my experience that the number of qualitatively trained scholars in education is insufficient and lacking in substance as well. Many teachers need to fully understand the approach and maximize it to display the beauty of human interaction. In the spirit of helping members in the teaching community, I now turn to the reality of questioning the qualitative inquiry. Qualitative inquiry is fundamentally different from quantitative inquiry for the simple reason that each is based on different scientific traditions and worldviews. However, given the scepticism and disbelief of some researchers with regard to qualitative research, I realize that it will be helpful by posing the two questions, which can help strengthen my awareness of my rationale for using qualitative methods. This I have understood as an opportunity, which will help analyse some of the reported limitations as a way of deconstructing its underlying discourse. In light of this, I have proposed to present and discuss the two questions as justification for my qualitative research.

##### **4.9.1.1 Question One: Is Qualitative Research affecting Policy and Practice (Education realm) in the right way and is it getting a shot in the spotlight.**

In this segment, I highlight some potential problems with research in terms of developing educational policy. In my view and belief one that marginalizes and dismisses critical voices and methodologies that could improve educational practice is a potential area for disaster. I suggest a greater methodological diversity in the spectrum of school education in South Africa. Furthermore, I am suggesting that qualitative research should play a more important role in affecting policy and should not be neglected by important stakeholders in South Africa. Therefore, this section underscores the need for diverse methodological approaches and points to the significance of qualitative research to policymakers and practitioners.

At this stage, I am also acutely aware that “there are also other grounds for rejecting a naïve enthusiasm for the use of research in all possible circumstances” (Finch, 1986: 138).

#### 4.9.2 Problematization

I do not intend to rehearse the epistemological and methodological debates of the last few decades in education. However, I am filled with frustration when I am faced with evidence, which points to either a paucity of analytical thinking of educational outcomes and or an undiscerning reading of research that underlies policy formulation and its established practices. Furthermore, I want to highlight a potential flaw that might exist in the spectrum of research in my own country. Hammersley (2005a:3) observes, “Qualitative research tends to suffer by comparison with quantitative work because there is a myth that quantitative researchers have clear-cut guidelines which are available for use by policymakers.”

I want to briefly explore what it might look like for qualitative scholarship to be read by all stakeholders e.g. Ministers of Education, Curriculum advisors, Teachers etc. In conjunction with the above point, I would like to mention that the “assumptions of the nineteenth and twentieth century positivist thought underpinned the idea that science is the only genuine source of knowledge” ( Hammersley,2013: 40) to bring change.

I also want to highlight the fact that as a teacher I had no stake in choosing my set of books for grade 11/12. By the same token, I had no control over the following issues:

- What kind of research did the WCED use to make the decision to choose Life of Pie, Hamlet and Dorian Grey?
- How was the WCED informed of such a selection and did they use qualitative or quantitative research methods.

The same will apply to the type of English textbooks used for grade 11. Also, given the powerful new policy networks (e.g. think tanks etc.) successfully pushing current free-market ideologies (Scott, 2011: 580-599; Ward, 2011: 205-215), it is safe to say that academic scholarship of all kinds is increasingly struggling with how it might enter into and impact the public conversation about school reform.

In the context of South Africa as well as many other countries “the use made of social science findings takes place only in the context of availability of information from other sources but also within the fields where ideological viewpoints of various kinds are in play, under the influence of conflicting interest” (Hammersley, 2013: 11) Furthermore, the average teacher does not read the journals/papers/thesis on his/her learning area. We might even conclude that the ‘major players’ in education might not do the same. It appears our education platform in government might be at a disadvantage because they seem to lack the impetus to thoroughly go through educational research. It is virtually compulsory for doctors to read journals/papers in their field in order to keep up to date and be able to relate theory into practice.

In spite of a new discourse of “evidence-based” policy and practice, current school reform policies are more ideology-based than research-based (Shaker& Heilman, 2004). Wiseman (2010) suggests that the global policy convergence toward evidence-based policy-making may have more to do with gaining legitimacy than the actual use of evidence to make policy.

Within the school-based context, the above points appear to assume particular immediacy and primacy. It is apparent that there is a link between the neglect of research-based study findings/readings and the choice of making policy because it worked in other countries. However, the outcomes based educational platform should serve well to remind us of the danger of this type of action. Therefore, limited reading of qualitative studies can be detrimental to education because South Africa is still a developing country. Unfortunately, the reality is that educational findings operate in very ‘noisy’ and conflicting environments.

We are left with the reality that qualitative research is either underused or overused. In order to consolidate my thoughts in the above section I will end this segment with the views of Hammersley, which I believe further strengthens my leanings toward a qualitative methodology. The points below by Hammersley (2005: 3), I believe are consistent with my epistemological stance with regard to my research design for this study.

Hammersley posits:

- “Most qualitative researchers have probably always regarded their work as relevant to policy making and practice.”
- The fact that this is not always the case and most of it is academic in character in the sense of being aimed first of all at contributing to disciplinary knowledge. The primary audience here has been fellow researchers.
- Often, the issue with the result of the findings if it actually influences policies and practices has the effects claimed for them on a generalized basis (Oakley, 2000, 2001; Mosteller & Boruch, 2002; Slavin, 2002).

Having stated some dimensions of qualitative research and having problematized the possible neglect of implementing research information, I will now attempt to answer the first question under the microscope in the context of South Africa.

#### **4.9.2.1 Answering Question One in terms of the Educational Context of South Africa**

From the outset, since my studies are in a South African context I can only address these concerns in the context of South Africa. It has become custom to state that a researchers' inquiry can help policy. The reality is that many do not really believe in this position. It is often stated simply to fill the vacuum under the section of rationale. Furthermore, Western Cape Education Department (WCED) officials hand out letters for researchers to do their inquiry on school's premises but do WCED officials read the finished product. Can we blame them because there is so much research been done? However, I do believe there should be an 'alert section' for the WCED based on research where there is a vacuum. This is only my opinion that officials might also only be selective in their reading of researchers and even the university they study at. I mention this on the basis that I was recently shortlisted for a PhD program at the University of Cape Town but I first had to be interviewed. While our conversation ventured around the theoretical framework of a future study, I also mentioned the fact that I did my Masters at the University of the Western Cape. In my own personal capacity, I detected the malice in the two professor's voices and actions that inferred to my understanding that receiving my Masters at the University of the Western Cape carried little substance.



This revelation (which is not the first time) that I experience adds to the measure of what Hammersley (2008) argues and which I consider to be a case of racial academic prejudice. Unfortunately, this is the nature of the beast in a South African context. To add further clarity to this, which is often referred to as micro-aggression, I refer to an important article that was published on March 20, 2019 in the Cape Times (<https://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news/racism-does-exist-at-uct-commission-finds19975723>). The article was entitled, ‘Racism does exist at UCT’ and this article brings further clarity to my views expressed in this segment. On the basis of submissions received (by the university, students and other interested persons or entities) and the Institutional Reconciliation and Transformation Commission (IRTC) concluded in its final report to the University of Cape Town that “Racism at the UCT often demonstrates itself in subtle forms of daily micro-aggressions which have an impact equal to direct and explicit racial discrimination.” Master’s student Lorna Houston said she was “pleased that so many people made submissions and spoke about their lived realities at UCT.” Miss Houston further adds, "I knew from the outset that I hoped for the IRTC to expose the structural violence that maintains the culture of exclusion at the university which students sought to expose. The report exposes the massive failure by management to recognize the problems it faced - all of which students raised at the time.” I have included elements of the Cape Times article in order to bring a brief awareness that what I experienced is nothing new and it is still on going in 2019. Furthermore, I have seen the same racial academic prejudice at the University of the Western Cape between different faculties. Here I mention the fact again that I see many Masters and PhD students in Education who do not even believe in their own work (thesis). It is done for the sake of just finishing the project and getting the degree. In simple terms, they do not believe that their work can have an influence on a broader scale. There is strong merit in what Hammersley is saying and one possible way to protect the integrity of research would be to have:

- An annual Masters conference where they present their research to other masters’ students.
- PhD students and academic staff of the faculty evaluate it. This process should be advertised in the newspaper and other Universities. I have not seen this done yet in the Master’s program. Since knowing that there will be a presentation the calibre of work would increase and an invitation to WCED official to attend would add great substance for policy reframing.

The above points serve as a measure to infuse substance into research at the University of the Western Cape and other universities. In doing this it can serve, demonstrate its contribution to evidence-based policymaking, and practice (Hammersley, 2008: 3). In the next segment, I move on to discuss the second question.

#### **4.9.2.2 Question Two: Improper Balance in Understanding People’s Perspectives if their Actions are to be Explained?**

According to Hammersley (2008: 23), the problem with having to view the world and themselves implied is “the fact that the researcher is to learn to be able to see things in the same terms as participants, and thereby to recognize and document the internal rationality or logic of their perspectives.” Adding to this is the fact that “qualitative researchers insisted that by reducing perspectives to positions on an attitude scale, a great deal could be lost that might be significant if we want to understand people’s behaviour. Instead, they argue that less-structured methods like informal or open-ended interviews, which open up participants to talk freely in ways that can reveal the distinctiveness and complexity of their perspectives (Hammersley, 2008: 24). A failing then in qualitative research is found in the fact that “qualitative researchers have often been less ready to seek to understand and to represent in their own terms, the perspectives of those they regard as playing a more central role or dominant social role or those they have little sympathy (Hammersley, 2008: 25). I now shift to answer the second question.

#### **4.9.2.3 Answering Question Two in terms of the Educational Context of South Africa**

The above criticism brings an awareness that having a balance in research is of great value. In an attempt to answer the question posed by Hammersley, I offer the following in the next segment.

#### **4.10 Researchers/Teachers as Ambassadors of the Western Cape Education Department**

In this inquiry, I propose to level the playing fields by reinforcing teachers as researchers. Like ambassadors, teachers represent the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and often it is believed that they should only speak maintaining the principles of the WCED. In order to tackle this potential problem, I patterned my session with them in the parameters of unstructured interviews in order to break that conscripted position in their capacity as WCED teachers. This of course is done after the research has mapped the course of his study.

I hope that this shift of scenery/setting can deliver a better grounded reflection in terms of the practice of textbook and content relevancy. My second response to the above question is as follows:

#### **4.11 A Mixture of Teachers Making Up a Nucleus for Representation: Fruitful Data**

In this study, I have selected different teachers in different contexts to gather appropriate data. They range in diversity and they are:

##### **4.11.1 Teachers in their First Three Years of Teaching: Aiming for Creativity**

I selected four teachers in this group because I wanted to see their energy level and the range of activities they would use in ten classrooms. This group might be considered the learning group or the inexperience group at this stage but they might have a level of vibrancy that adds some fruitful data.

##### **4.11.2 Teachers with a Ten-Year Service: Aiming for Mastery**

I selected four teachers in this group because they had some high level of experience. This is not always the case but I would hope that based on the time sequence in the job that a measure of experience is embedded in them. So far, I have covered the bottom and the middle group of teachers.

##### **4.11.3 Teachers with Over Ten Years' Experience: Aiming for Abundant Experience**

In order to fill the vacuum of overall knowledge I have also selected four teachers that are assumed to have great experience based on length of service. I am cognizant of the fact that this might not always be the case; however, I should try to represent the overall spectrum of educators. I therefore present a nucleus of a body of teachers.

It was my attempt in this study to observe teachers in different settings but who carry passionate energy to teach with the textbook. At this stage, I should mention the fact that I am also aware that the above selection might not yield what I hope to achieve with the selection of teachers.

Having attempted to answer two questions that have seen to be important criticism of qualitative research, I will now set out to give some other limitations of qualitative research.

I am aware that there are more criticisms directed at qualitative research but the scope of this investigation does not allow me to answer all of them.

In the next segment, I will look at the position of qualitative methods and answer a pertinent question if qualitative methods are the best for my specific context.

#### **4.12 The Investigation: Are Qualitative Methods the Best for my Context?**

One fundamental concept enshrined in this study is the fact “that research methods should be chosen based on the specific task at hand” (Silverman, 2010: 9). This study seeks to rekindle a love for the textbook in an age when many teachers avoid the textbook. A quantitative study without the practice of observations of teachers would not do justice to its findings. It is therefore apparent that in qualitative research “we are not satisfied with simply drawing a picture of the facts; we want to know more insights, emotions, events, experiences, and details about the topic of the research” (Pajo, 2018: 11). Based on my own professional experience of nearly 20 years and having taught English in Asia, Europe and Africa, I deem qualitative measures a more commensurate approach for this study. In this segment of qualitative limitations, I have laid out a relatively short critique of qualitative research. However, this critique does serve the purpose of training me to undertake this study with the moral conviction to impregnate the culture of teaching.

I argue that some qualitative studies can live up to their own commitments and that they can provide genuine understanding of peoples’ perspective rather than be biased by methodological preconceptions and conventional wisdom. In closing this segment, I would like to provide a summary of the qualitative disposition planted in this inquiry.

#### **4.13 Target Population: Tales from Teachers**

I have conducted this investigation with one category of participants, Grade 11 English Home language teachers. In research methodology, the term population carries a different understanding to what is normally understood. In this context the term population does not refer to the population of a country but rather it refers to the objects, subjects, phenomena, events, cases or activities for the purpose of sampling (Brynard & Hanekom, 2005: 43).

A population can also be referred to as a group of individuals who possess specific characteristics and from which a sample is drawn to determine the parameters or characteristics (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 112; Maree & Pietersen, 2007:172; Singh, 2007: 8). In the next segment, I will discuss the sample.

#### **4.14 Sampling: The Path of a Purposeful Structure**

In principle, researchers cannot study all relevant circumstances, events or people intensively and in depth (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Therefore, I have had to select a sample. The participants were selected based on purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a method of identifying study participants who are chosen based on extreme cases, typical cases, maximum variation cases, critical cases, or convenience sampling (Patton as cited by Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This field of research in a South African context has been neglected. In an attempt to bring more depth to this area of study that I am undertaking, I am employing purposive sampling to deal with this malaise of inattention to the subject matter of textbook practice in the South African context.

In this study, the population consisted of a group of high school teachers from three-six different secondary groups. The Grade 11 secondary school teachers were the main participants of the study. Early on in this chapter, I have discussed the selection of teachers in certain categories. Overall, I planned to start with a pool of five to six teachers and continue the process of contacting more teachers until the assessment of the emerging rich data indicated no further participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Collecting data from my participants will generate a rich set of data and no further participants are needed. There were a number of participants to sample and according to Given (2008) it would be appropriate to choose participants that play a role in the context of evaluation, policy analysis and administering the program or service being evaluated, and who might otherwise be affected by it.

Based on the above points I would like to echo the words of Flick (2015: 271) who says that:

Sampling is a selection of cases or materials for study from a larger population or variety of possibilities.

Notwithstanding the above stated points, Schatzman & Strauss (1973: 39) state that selective sampling is a practical necessity that is shaped by the time the researcher has available to him by his framework by his starting and developing interests, and by any restrictions placed upon his observations by his hosts.

In sum, my selection portrays some key points:

- My participants are diverse in character.
- My participants are teachers and the curriculum advisors.
- My participants also include a Specialist in English Home language teaching.
- My participants have completely different backgrounds, which add depth to the study.

Additionally, sampling is the link between the study population and its generalization to the wider population (Bloor & Wood, 2006: 153). In terms of relevancy and the necessity of research in my field of investigation, I find this study to be an essential part of exploring the practice of teaching with the textbook.

The participants of this study will come from four to six different high schools. In total this study will harness I hope the creative flow from 12 Grade 11 teachers. The teachers were interviewed and their interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Before I mention the site locations and the techniques I have used for the study, I will like to mention other elements in relation to sampling. This will infuse further awareness of the broader scope of qualitative research.

#### **4.14.1 Other Elements of my Sampling Process: The Purpose of Information**

The sampling process of the study came in two stages. In the first stage, I had first selected the teachers I chose. In the second stage, I met the FET English Specialist in the school holidays and asked if there were any recommendations for selection of teachers that could help add a measure of creativity to the study.

This selective meeting added a new dimension to the selection process of teachers for this study. At that particular moment, the present teachers had no idea that I was interested in their classroom. Adding to this was the fact that I taught in the Metro-Central Area for many years and was pleased with the mannerism of teachers in the area of professional conduct. This also steered me towards selecting a few from the Metro South area.

'Whispers in the dark' from other teachers and parents and principals added a focus to my selection. All these different entities added a unique scope to this investigation and gave me the path to choose my participants. Therefore, in the Metro-Central area, I selected 4-6 schools. Furthermore, in keeping with the purpose of this investigation I was aware that purposeful sampling takes place when the researcher selects a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998). Often, qualitative research designs typically use small numbers of cases (Bloor & Wood, 2006). There are a number of contributors to sample and according to Given (2008) it would be suitable to choose participants that play a role in the context of evaluation, policy analysis and administering the program or service being evaluated, and who might otherwise be affected by it.

#### **4.15 Site Location: School Setting**

Site location refers to place where the research will be done. I will now render my site locations.

##### **4.15.1 First Site Location: South Peninsula High School**

Since I taught in the Metro Central Area in central Cape Town, I rarely paid attention to others schools. I felt a deep need to branch out and look at other schools in other districts. While searching for schools for this study I stumbled across South Peninsula high school.

However, to my delight it would serve my research purpose well in terms of teacher output. As of 2010, it had 1500 students. Furthermore, the school finds itself connected with Great Sankey High School, in Warrington, England and co-runs an exchange programme for staff and students each year. South Peninsula High School is a melting pot and accepts many students from historically disadvantaged areas in Cape Town including Mitchells Plain, Grassy Park, Lotus River, Heathfield, Strandfontein and Retreat. Zeid Baker is currently the acting principal of the school. South Peninsula is situated in Diep River and achieved a 99% rate in the 2017/2018 NCS Examinations. Furthermore, 154 students passed with Bachelors. I selected South Peninsula High School on the bases of the following:

- It is one of the only schools that I came across so far that have up to 6-7 English teachers in one grade. This would serve my purpose for research, based on the fact of the number of Grade 11 English teachers at the school.
- Different personalities exist in terms of a cultural disposition, which will present different perspectives.

- The school day ends at 3:10pm, which would help me in terms of the fact if I needed to see the teacher later during the day.

#### **4.15.2 Second Site Location: Harold Cressy High School**

Harold Cressy High School sits at the foot of Table Mountain. The school opened in 1951 and was previously known as Cape Town Secondary School. It was renamed after Harold Cressy; the first black university graduate in South Africa; the school is also a melting pot for learners with a representation of diversity.

I chose Harold Cressy High school based on the following reasons:

- In academic terms, the school struggles in two core areas namely English and Mathematics (based on the fact when I taught at Harold Cressy high school).
- I also selected Harold Cressy because of the interest in the new teachers that started to work there. It was hoped that their ‘newness’ would bring something innovative to this study. Some teachers use a whiteboard and thrive on the use of technology and some teachers do not have a white board and still teach the traditional way.

Therefore, the social setting of Harold Cressy High School and the fact that ‘old and new’ teaching method are still prominent at the school provide a good platform for research and would yield good data for this study.

#### **4.15.3 Third Site Location: Princeton Secondary High School**

Princeton Secondary School is situated in Woodlands, Mitchells Plain. It is currently 30 years in existence. I chose Princeton High school because it is close to my home and this would make it easier to interview teachers.

There is a good cultural diversity present at Princeton High school and the environment to teach is very challenging. Therefore, the teachers selected would provide useful information with regard to the relevancy of texts, which I would observe and see if there is a strong connection between the text and the learning.

I chose Princeton Secondary school based on the following reasons:



- It was closer to home, which would allow me to reach the school on my way home.
- The school reflects great diversity.
- Teachers would inherently have to be mentally tough to deal with many of the learners.

#### **4.15.4 Fourth Site Location: Groote Schuur High School**

Groote Schuur High School is an English Medium High School and was founded in 1959 as a co-educational Afrikaans High School in the Vredenhof residence, presently the Peter Clarke Art and Design Centre in the leafy suburb of Newlands. The school at first started with 37 pupils. It currently has 940 learners. The present school building in Palmyra Road, Newlands was inaugurated in June 1964. In 1978, Nassau High School amalgamated with Groote Schuur. The Groote Schuur High School crest incorporates the lion of Nassau and the gable of Groote Schuur. All of the school's classrooms are equipped with state-of-the-art interactive whiteboards. Throughout 2019 Groote Schuur High School is celebrating its Diamond Jubilee.

I chose Groote Schuur High School based on the following reasons:

- The school aims to develop the potential of each learner. I was eager to see this fulfilled in the classroom and how learners would be stimulated.
- The school reflects great diversity among learners.
- More importantly, it was on route to some of the others schools that I had to visit.

#### **4.15.5 Fifth Site Location: Good Hope Seminary High School**

Good Hope Seminary High School was founded in 1873 by Reverend Andrew Murray, and still on its original premises, we are a school that embraces our motto of Constantia et Virtute, which means With Courage and Perseverance. The anchor was adopted in the school badge because the school was one of the first in South Africa, and the anchor formed part of the Coat-of-Arms of the Cape of Good Hope. In addition, the anchor is a symbol of the connection and sense of belonging that this school offers the young ladies that attend the school.

Learners are given the opportunity to develop their full potential in an environment that is fully inclusive. In terms of academic output, the school helps build emotional intelligence, good communication skills and reinforces an awareness of the needs of others while developing

skills that will be demanded in the societies and economies of the future which is essential for the 21st century.

I chose Good Hope Seminary High school based on the following reasons:

- The school reflects a great deal of multiplicity among learners.
- The learners are given the opportunity to develop their full potential in an environment that is fully inclusive.

#### **4.15.6 Six Site Location: Cape Academy of Mathematics, Science and Technology in Cape Town**

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has established the Cape Academy of Mathematics, Science and Technology in Cape Town to provide specialised schooling for learners with the potential to excel in these subjects in the Senior Certificate examinations.

The Academy draws learners from all communities, with an emphasis on those from previously disadvantage communities. The school started in 2004 with learners in Grade 10. The Academy forms part of a broad WCED Mathematics, Science Strategy and Technology to improve results in these subjects throughout the province.

I chose Cape Academy of Mathematics, Science and Technology High school based on the following reasons:

- Teacher L first taught at South Peninsula but shifted to a new high school.
- It is a specialized school and I was eager to see teachers' specialization skills in their field subject method.

In the next section, I will deal with data collection instruments but first I will briefly mention the components of the actors, events and the process linked to this study.

#### **4.16. Actors**

The actors are the participants who will be interviewed for the study. In this study, the actors are twelve teachers. They are of diverse backgrounds, which add different dimensions to this study.

#### **4.16.1 Events**

The twelve selected teachers were interviewed and observed in order to study their methods when using the English Home language textbook. Particularly, I looked at methods of innovation to help and encourage the learners.

#### **4.16.2. Process**

I was in the classroom observing teachers' functionality and learner interaction while using different text. I looked at all the dynamics of language education in the classroom e.g. reading, oral formation, grammar specification etc.

In the next segment, I will deal with data collection instruments.

### **4.17 Data Collection Instruments**

In this section, I will discuss the instruments I need to use to collect my data. Qualitative research covers a spectrum of techniques, the centerpiece of which is formed by interviewing, observation and document analysis (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011: 397).

#### **4.17.1 The First Protocol: Interviewing**

An interview is a discussion with someone in which you try to get information from them (Thomas, 2017: 202). According Bogdan & Biklen, (2003) qualitative research is the key instrument in studies that reflect a natural setting. Therefore, in my investigation, the combination of interview and observation data affords me a detailed and comprehensive picture of teachers' beliefs and method of teaching in relation to textbook practices. As a teacher, I seek to understand both the world as it is, and the social world at the level of subjective experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 105-117). This is the calling of research and the nature of the inquisitive mind.

The first protocols that I employed were the interviews of selected participants because "the qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 1).

#### 4.17.1.1 Interviews

Silverman (2005: 238-239) notes that the majority of published qualitative research articles uses interviews. The purpose of a qualitative design in this study was to obtain an understanding about the experiences of teachers in the classroom in relation to how they teach and use the textbook. Therefore, I made sure that the questions were clear, precise, and motivating (Denzin, 1989). This study utilized qualitative interviews. An interview is a discussion with someone in which you try to get information from them. The information may be facts or opinions or attitudes, or any combination of these (Thomas, 2017: 202). One basic practice of my qualitative research interviews was to understand themes of participants' lives gravitating towards their own perspectives. This I displayed in a forum that comes close to everyday conversation (practice) with the additional flair of a specific approach and technique in questioning. According to Hornby (1995: 498), an interview is an occasion when one or more other people ask a person questions. My interviews, I believed would shed light on some of the techniques they employ when teaching and allow me to 'move back and forth in time to reconstruct the past, interpret the present, and predict the future' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 273). Polit and Berg (2012: 38) explain that the qualitative paradigm assists to create a holistic picture, established with words, which discuss the participants' experiences of the phenomenon, which is conducted in a natural setting. Interviewing is one of the most powerful tools used in attempting to understand people's points of view, beliefs and attitudes. Because of its interactive nature, interviewing has many advantages over other types of data collection strategies (Best & Kahn, 1998).

I believed that interviewing will allow for contextualization and elaboration of meaning. According to Tuckman (1994) interviews can allow us to know what is inside a person's head, it makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes (values or preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs). Interviewing may also be used to test theories or deliver new ideas (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Seidman (1991) believes that interviewing is one of the best instruments for qualitative data generation. In order to understand more definitively the challenges encountered in the classroom and the ways to get around it while using the textbook in grade 11 I had to ask questions that promote a practical composition of literacy.

I used open-ended interviews, which were in a sense semi-structured just to make sure that they acted as a guide to get the perspectives of the participants.

There were 10 questions that I designed, but I did not hesitate to follow up on any of the questions that were not clearly answered or the answers that indexed a new idea. Thus, the sample questions for the interview acted more like a guideline.

The interview questions for teachers were:

1. What is your perception of the English Home language textbook?
2. How do you use the textbook/types of text in the classroom?
3. Are there any particular aspects of the textbook/text that you like?
4. Explain your use of the communicative teaching method in the classroom with regard to the textbook?
5. Do you have any specific days in which you use the textbook?
6. Name the difficulties that some of your learners' experience with regard to language teaching?
7. How do you handle the difficulties that your learners experience?
8. How do you see teachers contributing to a learner-centred approach in terms of textbook practice?
9. What measures have you taken to help learner difficulties with regard to poetry, Shakespeare and grammar, which can be found in the textbook?
10. Can the textbook or type of texts be or become a barrier for learners.

In keeping with the dynamics of textbook diversity, I made sure that all the above questions were simple and covered the major themes that I propose to address in the data analysis and discussion of this study. The representational sampling of the interviews can be seen in the Appendix section.

#### **4.18 Gathering Data: Additional Elements of Interviews**

Interviews have a clear advantage when in-depth data are sought. Yin (2009: 106) also views interviews as one of the most important sources of information in case studies, which are guided conversations rather than structured queries, indicating fluidity instead of rigidity. Furthermore, Byne (2004: 182) renders the logic of interviews by expressing the following:

Qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals' attitudes and values—things that cannot necessarily be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire. Open –ended and flexible questions are likely to get a more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewee's, interpretation of events, understandings, experiences and opinions...qualitative interviewing when done well is able to achieve a level of depth and complexity that is not available to other, particularly survey-based, approaches.

In the next segment, I will deal with the concept of data.

#### **4.18.1 The Concept of Data: Information of Value**

According to Merriam (1998: 70) data can be defined as 'bits and pieces of information found in the environment' that are collected in systematic ways to provide an evidential base from which to make interpretations and statements intended to advance knowledge and understanding concerning a research question or problem (Lankshear & Knobel,2004: 172).

Data presupposes a few important points:

- Data is not out there awaiting collection (Merriam, 1998: 69). In principal data is always constructed by researchers during the research process.
- Data collection is always selective (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Logic would prevail in the understanding that researchers cannot collect all potential data concerning a phenomenon. I therefore had to make decisions at strategic points about what to include and exclude.

In the realm of interviews, a constructivist researcher, I carefully collected audio-recordings but focused on the teacher skill in weaving the textbook. As I employed the interview protocol, I had to deal with different types of data.

### 4.18.2 Spoken Data

According to Lankshear & Knobel (2004: 173), spoken data can be defined as ‘any stretch of oral language recorded in some durable or lasting form e.g. a digital sound file. The advantage of this is that it can be revisited. If I only have the audio then as a researcher, I can also be at a disadvantage if I cannot see the body language of the person being interviewed because the body language of a person can reveal a lot about the subject area, at times even when less is said. In the next segment, I will highlight my reason for including a short sample.

#### 4.18.2.1 About the Conversation: Signposting the Vortex of my Mind

I am presenting a short extract of Teacher C’s interview in order to signpost the vortex of my mind in terms of the interviews. There will be times in the interviews where I will have to redirect (adjust) misguided conversations.

In any piece of writing (transcriptions), there is a story between the lines and therefore I believe at this point to provide a short segment from an interview to reveal some of the predilections of the projection of the practices of the textbook before I share the themes from the interviews in the next chapter.

#### 4.18.3 A Short Sample of Teacher C

I have transcribed the following audio. The rest of the transcription can be viewed in the appendix section.

**R:** In terms of text, what do you prefer to do with them for the purpose of promoting grade 11 comprehension? For you what will interest them?

**TC:** Well, Ya so with regards to what interest them you have to find texts that is relevant to them what they are interested in; to the current culture and society, and trends with regard to younger kids. I find that while textbooks are highly informative—really on point with their explanations and questions and guidelines and all that I think it is important for teachers to not just stick to the textbook because they are very old.

It is what it is and kids have been seeing this stuff over and over and they dealing with the same kind of stuff, comprehension. It really put them off.

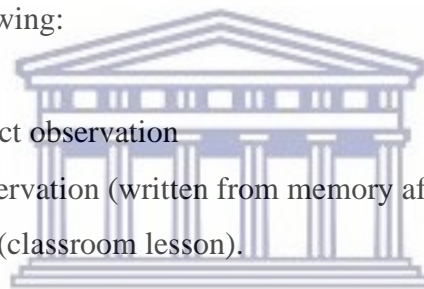
They lose interest immediately but if you bring in relevant new stuff, perhaps a little bit of off the wall type of material, something that is interesting to them then you are going to grab their attention and you'll find that their participation will be tenfold—wanting to contribute to the text. They have an opinion, which is relevant to them. Something they know and understand and they can talk about so if they can give and share their opinion then they are invested in the discussion and that is where learning can really take place. They are invested in what happens in the classroom.

In the next segment, I move on to observed data.

#### **4.18.4 Observed Data**

Observed data are pieces of information collected by means of systematically watching people Lankshear & Knobel (2004: 175) going about their daily lives (in this case the classroom). This type of data includes the following:

- Written records of direct observation
- Indirect records of observation (written from memory after the observation period)
- Videotapes of activity (classroom lesson).



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Lankshear & Knobel (2004: 175)

##### **4.18.4.1 A Short Sample of Teacher C**

Based on the interview and observation of the teacher, which I will expand further on another segment, Teacher C portrayed the following:

- Teacher C was confident in her answers.
- Teacher C gestured a lot with her hands while answering the questions.
- Teacher C kept eye contact with me for a large part of the interview.
- Teacher C's classroom was well organized and neat.

A further assessment of interviewing grounds this useful protocol and establishes that the interview is a managed verbal exchange (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).



Therefore, its efficiency heavily depends on the communication skills of the interviewer to listen attentively (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007); pause, probe or prompt appropriately (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003: 141); and encourage the interviewee to talk freely, and to “make it easy for interviewees to respond” (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007: 134). In addition, participants often experience the interview process as therapeutic and transformative, moving the interview beyond the researcher’s own needs. In this study, I proposed to engage in semi- structured and unstructured interviews based on my intuition and context.

#### **4.18.5 Unstructured Interviews: A Cloaking Method for Soaking in Truth**

According to Scott and Garner (2013: 284), unstructured interviewing is almost like having conversation among acquaintances and friends. For the researcher there is no such thing as worthless conversation. The unstructured interview is used widely in educational research generally and in teacher research more particularly. It has distinct advantages for the teacher-researcher working within a known culture with fellow professionals (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989: 163). This form of interview can be conducted informally and is quite useful to gather data on topical issues from informed participants who can shed light on recent developments, for example a new educational policy, something that has yet to be critiqued in the literature (Basit, 2010: 103). In this study, some methods of teaching and learning difficulties might come to the forefront.

#### **4.18.6 Advantages of Unstructured interviews: Teachers Unplugged**

The advantages of unstructured interviews are:

- Open-ended questions can produce valuable ‘answers’ to questions the researcher may not have thought to ask or include (Hartas, 2010).
- Provides a greater opportunity to develop a rapport with and gain the trust of the interviewee, which may have the effect of the participant being more likely to provide honest and accurate information or credible data (Oakley, 1981).
- The level of flexibility allows the researcher to probe interviewers’ answers.
- An unceremonious atmosphere can encourage the respondent to be open and honest natural and unrestricted.
- Unstructured interviews can be an important preliminary step toward the development of more structured interview guides.
- Sensitive subjects can be dealt with in educational terms.

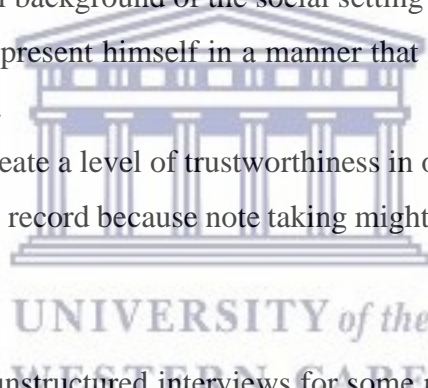
Using the unstructured method can breed a number of valuable solutions. Similarly using the unstructured method in the wrong way can cause problems. I will now list the disadvantages of unstructured interviews.

#### **4.18.7 Conducting an Unstructured Interview: Enhancing the Social Context**

I used the steps of Fontana and Frey (2005: 695-728) when conducting an unstructured interview.

They suggest the following:

- Be circumspect when gaining access because you are looked upon as an outside. I took into account the political and legal aspects that could develop during the process of access to schools.
- Understand the cultural background of the social setting (Fife, 2005).
- The researcher should present himself in a manner that is comfortable and in keeping with the social context.
- The researcher must create a level of trustworthiness in order to cultivate rapport.
- It is preferable to audio record because note taking might disrupt the natural flow of the conversation.



To further ground my use of unstructured interviews for some participants I find it important for participants to hold a high level of discourse.

The participants that I have selected for the unstructured interviews I believe have/hold the discourse of power. In light of this, I have selected a Vice Principal who in 2018 won a teacher's award for teaching English in the senior phase and I have selected a Head of Department of English who I consider relevant to this enquiry.

Fontana & Frey (2005: 695) help me understand the element of discourse in unstructured interviews when they emphasize the fact that the person that is interviewed must be knowledgeable and carry some degree of 'weight' in terms of educational input for the research problem to be maximized. I proposed to ask the following questions in the unstructured interviews:

1. To what extent do you believe that the English Home language textbook is still a relevant tool in the senior phase of high school?
2. How do you use the textbook in the classroom?
3. What parts of the textbook do you prefer or enjoy the most when you teach grade 11.
4. Do you think that the Study guides (X-Kit/Answer Series) have replaced the textbook?
5. What type of texts do you prefer to do with Grade 11?
6. Should Grade 11 teachers compile their own textbooks or should they still rely on the English Textbooks the Western Cape Education Department delivers.
7. What specific things do you do to help learners learn better in terms of English Home language?
8. Do you see textbooks being replaced by electronic textbooks in the future?
9. Is there any particular way that you would structure an English Home language textbook or are you satisfied with the current structuring of textbooks?
10. Can the English Home language textbook become a barrier to grade 11 learners?

I believed that the above questions could/would shed light on the research questions and provide a 'thick description' in terms of textbook practice. Furthermore, the nature of qualitative research can allow for the use of triangulation through multiple sources of data collection, which does have the capacity to strengthen the research findings. Bloomberg & Volpe (2016: 157) further reminded me "multiple data gathering techniques are frequently used in qualitative studies as a deliberate strategy to develop a more complex understanding of the phenomena being studied." Their insight once again highlights the significance of triangulation, which can enrich the quality of data from multiple sources and highlight the practice of metacognition. In addition, the triangulation process will illuminate different facets of contextual experiences.

Having indicated the attributes of the unstructured interview, I have also been acutely aware that some of the participants might like a more semi-formal structure interview. This might be required for some participants who are between 50-60 years of age. This will be based on a judgment call that I will have to make if I sense that it is necessary. In the unstructured type of interviews, I felt that I would be able to stretch the interview and ask some open-ended questions, which could allow me to express my own opinion freely.

This requires us (the interviewer and the interviewee) to be at ease because it is like a discussion or brainstorming on the given topic. Often in this type of unstructured format, the interview is not predetermined. The views of Preece, Rogers, and Sharp (2002: 24) helped me further understand this process by stating, “it makes it difficult to standardize the interview across different interviewees, since each interview takes on its own format. “ In this type of environment, it is possible to generate rich data, information and ideas in such conversations. This can be determined because the level of questioning can be varied to suit the context of the study. In the next segment I will justify my use of semi-structured interviews.

#### **4.18.8 Semi-Structured Interviews**

This research tool encourages “an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest” (Kvale, 1996: 14). The semi-structured interviews provide the best of both worlds as far as interviewing is concerned, combining the structure of a list of issues to be covered together with the freedom to follow up points as necessary (Thomas, 2017: 206). In light of the above point, I believe that the semi-structured interview does have the potential to help gather qualitative data by setting up a situation that allows the person that is interviewed the time and opportunity to talk about their opinions on a particular subject. I reinforce this point by enforcing the thoughts of Baker (1999). According to Baker (1999), semi-structured interviews pre-establishes a set of questions to know more information about specific issues. Therefore, as the researcher, I can rely on a semi-structured because it is governed by:

- An interview guide
- A set of prepared questions
- Cover the basic topics and themes for the respondent to address (Scott & Garner, 2013).

I have used semi-structured interviews because it would be an interactive process. I would investigate and learn from teachers “what another person knows about a topic, to discover and record what that person has experienced, what he or she thinks and feels about it, and what significance or meaning it might have” (Arthur, Waring, Coe & Hedges, 2012: 170). I will now present the features of semi-structured interview.

#### 4.18.8.1 The Features of Semi-Structured Interviews

In this segment, I present six points that typify the use of semi-structured interviews. They are:

1. It uses both ‘open and closed questions’ (Hartas, 2010: 231).
2. A set of pre-planned core questions for guidance (Shneiderman & Plaisant, 2005).
3. The interviewee is given opportunity to provide for information that is more relevant (Scott & Garner, 2013).
4. It insures that the respondents are answering a similar set of questions and that certain topics and themes will be addressed in all interviews (Scott & Garner, 2013).
5. Semi-structured interviews can be audio recorded to capture all the nuances of wording and framing (Scott & Garner, 2013).
6. Semi-structured interviews help to ensure coverage of the researcher’s agenda while also providing opportunities for interviewees to talk about what is significant to them, in their own words (Hartas, 2010: 231).

The above points will allow me to fine-tune the interview. However, there are some prior principles that I will adhere to in order to have a quality interview. I will present this in the next segment. However, I will give a simple illustration of how I used the semi-structure interview. In my interview with teacher C, I wanted to probe the concept of relevancy and position of certain texts. Since a semi-structured interview can be referred to as a ‘conversation with a purpose’ (Burgess, 1984), I intended to direct the question to accommodate the concept of relevancy. Below is a brief indication as to how I attempted this.

R: In terms of text, what do you prefer to do with them in terms of grade 11 comprehension? For you what will interest them?

TC: Well, Ya so with regards to what interest them you have to find texts that is relevant to them what they are interested in; to the current culture and society, and trends with regard to younger kids. I find that while textbooks are highly informative—really on point with their explanations and questions and guidelines and all that I think it is important for teachers to not just stick to the textbook because they are very old. It is what it is and kids have been seeing this stuff over and over and they dealing with the same kind of stuff, comprehension.

It really put them off. They lose interest immediately but if you bring in relevant new stuff, perhaps a little bit of off the wall type of material, something that is interesting to them then you are going to grab their attention and you'll find that their participation will be tenfold—wanting to contribute to the text. They have an opinion, which is relevant to them. Something they know and understand and they can talk about so if they can give and share their opinion then they are invested in the discussion and that is where learning can really take place. They are invested in what happens in the classroom.

In the above segment, some of teacher C's answers reflected the concept of relevancy e.g. "They lose interest immediately but if you bring in relevant new stuff, perhaps a little bit of off the wall type of material, something that is interesting to them then you are going to grab their attention and you'll find that their participation will be tenfold." The above tool in this study therefore helped the interview process to be effective so I could help prompt or encourage the interviewee if they are looking for more information.

#### **4.18.9 Prior Principles before the Interview**

In accordance with the ethical dimension of research I was aware that certain steps had to be followed in order persuade the participant to be part of this study. Therefore, I adhered to some of the basic principles, which was:

- I contacted the participant way before the time in order to give him/her time to process the outline of the study.
- Before the interview, the participant read and filled in the consent form. The consent form described the research that I was doing.

#### **4.18.10 Final Word on Interviews: Information and the measure of understanding**

Oppenheim (1992: 64-65) advises a researcher to be aware of the ethical problems in interviewing. Often interviewees dislike:

- The intrusion by a complete stranger
- Participants do not want to be too accurate in their responses for fear of overstepping boundaries.
- Participants want to be in control of the interview.

Taking the above points into consideration it is imperative that the researcher conduct the interview with an acute level of sensitivity (Basit, 2010: 117) and finesse.

#### **4.19 The Second Protocol: Observation**

The second measure of my qualitative presentation that I employed was the observation of teachers in the classroom. Mason (2002: 86) notes that the data researchers want may not be feasibly available in any other form. It is also a privilege to observe teachers for my own reflection and development.

Kidd & Czerniawski (2010: 98) encourages researchers and teachers not to rush into the process of observation but to “try and observe in a systematic way as far as possible.”

##### **4.19.1 Observation: Why Use it?**

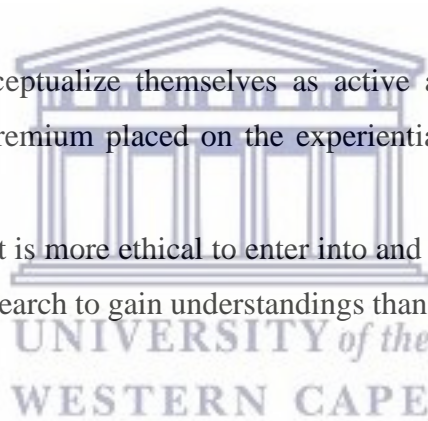
In order to see teachers in their natural setting I will employ the method of observation. Observing the behavior of others is a natural phenomenon (Basit, 2010:118). Observation is another major means of collecting data in qualitative research. Researchers like Cohen (2000) regard observational methods as a powerful measure to gain in-depth insight into situations. Marshall and Rossman (1999) define observation as the systematic description of events, behaviours and artefacts in the social setting chosen for the study.

Observation is the method, which allows the researcher to get information by seeing what is happening without asking questions (Nunan, 1992). Observation is a “non-judgmental description of classroom events that can be analyzed and given interpretation” (Gebhard, 1999: 35). In this study, I will adopt the simple observation method to collect data. Comprehensive field’s notes were documented throughout the period. Teachers will be observed based on their teaching method and the different techniques used to harness the learners’ potential. On some occasions, lessons will be video recorded. Observation of lessons will take place for Grade 11. The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) program will assist the pattern of observation at school. Basit (2010: 119) states that observation can be employed for appraisal and evaluation. A major contribution of observation is that it provides here and now experience in depth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:273).

#### **4.19.2 Observation: Mounting the Collective Purpose**

Researchers use instruments to help answer the research questions. Taking this into consideration observation is paramount to this inquiry. Furthermore, Mason (2002: 85-86) posits some of the possible reasons due to which researchers use observation as a definitive method of data collection:

- Their ontological perspective sees actions, interactions and behaviours and the way people interpret these and act on them, as central.
- Their epistemological perspectives suggest that knowledge and evidence of the social world can be generated by observing, participating in, or experiencing natural or real life setting and interactive situations.
- The researchers' views of the ways in which social explanations can be constructed lays emphasis on depth, complexity and roundness in data rather than surface analysis of broad patterns.
- Researchers may conceptualize themselves as active and reflexive in the research process because the premium placed on the experiential nature of this form of data collection.
- Researchers may feel it is more ethical to enter into and become involved in the social world of those they research to gain understandings than to stand outside and use other methods.



Based on the above points observation I believed that I could design a very efficient method of research, which can lead to greater understanding of teaching methods and learner cognition.

#### **4.19.3 Benefits of Observation for Research**

I endeavor to “gain in-depth insight into the manifestations of reality” (Druckman, 2005: 235). Furthermore, the method of observation holds some important contributions in qualitative research. They range from:

- It is possible to see how people behave in ‘natural’ situations (Burton & Bartlett, 2005). The main strength of observation is that it provides direct access to the social phenomena under consideration.
- An observer can gather large amount of data in a short time (Burton & Bartlett, 2005).
- Observe new techniques, strategies, ideas and resources (Hartas, 2010).



The instrument of observation allowed me to observe how teachers interact with their learners during the learning phase. Another helpful aspect was the observation of how teachers use the different resource materials. After completing and using the qualitative protocols, I will start data analysis. However, before I venture into the segment of data analysis I would like to mention my recent ‘training’ in developing an eye for effective research.

#### **4.19.4 Mannerism when detailing with Observation in Classrooms**

Firstly, the recent training in my life over the past four years has steered me to observe as a researcher and look at the underlying factors in a situation. In keeping with the understanding of the principles, I reminded myself to remember the following:

- Observation cannot be sloppy or haphazard (Basit, 2010: 119).
- Observation should be observed in a systematic way and attention to detail is crucial. Furthermore, Delamont, (1992: 115) believes that choosing where to look and when to look is a matter of systematic, principled, reflexive decision-making.
- Guarding against the natural tendency to move to quickly (Hopkins, 2008: 77).

Adhering to the above stated principles will allow the ‘eye’ of the researcher to advance with a level accuracy and determination. Having had a brief interlude with the concept of training, I would like to extend that platform in order to show the measure of research produced.

#### **4.20 The Development of my ‘Eye’ in the Spectrum of Critical Detail: Everything Working Together**

One of the amazing strengths of the qualitative researcher is the ability to use all the senses to undertake the research act (Janesick, 2004: 106). As a teacher, I have at times recorded my lessons and my orals of learners in order to fine-tune my teaching method as well as give learners the opportunity to enhance their weakness while at the same time showing their strengths. In principal, that experience allowed me to do the following, which helped this study:

- Listen and watch carefully.
- Record correctly so as not to create something that was not there.
- Appreciate the power of words and participants.
- Convey information with fine precision.

Adding to the above Kidd & Czerniawski (2010: 98) suggest the following:

- Confirm the observation with the colleague in advance.
- Make sure you are clear about your position in class.
- Do not write too many notes it can distract the teacher and the learners.
- Arrange in advance if the teacher would like you in the class or not (researchers can often be viewed as troublemakers).
- After the lesson, do not just walk out. Stay and ask questions and show that you were interested.

I would like to reiterate that over the past four years including the completion of my Masters in Language Education have given me a good sense of measure to undertake the different dimensions of qualitative protocol with a sharpness that conforms me to maintain a high standard of research because of my former ambition and purpose.

In order to help my process when I observed teachers I have used an observation tool that would help me zoom into specific aspects of the lesson. This design was beneficial to me because it will help me open up the data (thick description) that I collected and cement the teachers' method of teaching. I present below an example of the observation tool that I used:

**Teacher: A**

**Class: 11C**

**Period: 5**

**Date: February 2019**

**1. Teacher Activity**

1.1 Teacher activity on Entry

**A. The Teacher was standing at the door.**

B. The teacher was standing in front of the class.

C. The Teacher was writing on the board.

D. The teacher was walking around in the class.

**1.2 Teacher Activity during observation**

A. The teacher sat at his/her desk working.

**B. The teacher stood in front of the class giving instruction.**

C. The teacher walked around the class checking books.

**D. The teacher asked questions and engaged the class in discussion.**

**1.3 Teacher questioning technique.**

- A. The teacher did not ask questions.
- B. The teacher asked 5 questions or less.
- C. **The teacher asked more than five questions.**

**1.4 Direction of questions**

- A. Questions were mostly directed to the whole class who answered as a group.
- B. **Questions were mostly directed to the whole class but answered by individual nominated by teacher.**
- C. Questions were mostly directed at an individual.

**1.5 The purpose of the questions**

- A. The teacher mostly asked questions to elicit answers about the text.
- B. The teacher asked questions to elicit specific answers about the lesson topic (closed-ended questions).
- C. **The teacher used a mixture of closed, lower order questions and open, higher-order questions in a way that encouraged learners to think more deeply about the lesson topic.**

**2. Learner behaviour**

**2.1 Learner discipline**

- A. The flow of the lesson was repeatedly interrupted by learner misbehaviour.
- B. Learners were attentive but passive.
- C. **Learners were attentive and actively involved in the lesson.**
- D. Learners were not interested in the lesson.

**2.2 Learner Activity**

- A. For most of the observation period learners worked on their own at tasks set by the teacher.
- B. For most of the observation period learners were actively involved in dialogue and discussion with the teacher about the lesson topic.
- C. **For most of the observation period learners responded verbally to questions put to them by the teacher.**
- D. For most of the observation period learners listened passively and silently to the teacher.

**2.3 Individual or group work**

- A. Learners spent most of their time working on their own.
- B. Learners spent most of the time working in groups.
- C. **Learners were given a good balance of working on their own and dialogue with the teacher.**
- D. Learners were given a good balance of working on their own, dialogue with the teacher and deep analysis of the text.

#### 2.4 Textbook availability

- A. Every learner had his/her textbook.
- B. There were five or fewer learners without a textbook.**
- C. There were more than five learners without a textbook.
- D. Half of the class did not have a textbook.

#### 2.5 Use of the textbook

- A. The teacher made use of the subject textbook during the course of the lesson.**
- B. The teacher did not make use of the textbook.
- C. The teacher used the textbook and additional material.
- D. The teacher left the learners to their own devices with the textbook.

#### 2.6 Use of Learner book

- A. Every learner had a learner book to work in.
- B. There were five or fewer learners without learner books.**
- C. There were more than five learners without learner books.
- D. Half of the class did not have learner books.

Having mentioned some key elements of observation, I now move on to the element of content analysis and evaluation, which will also add to triangulation. The reality of a textbook is the fact that many English textbooks do not get the respect that it deserves. Many different kinds of texts can be studied via content analysis e.g. books, historical documents, diaries, blogs etc. (Leavy, 2017: 146). In the next segment, I elaborate further on the aspect of textbook analyses.

#### 4.21 Content Document/Textbook Analysis and Evaluation: Harnessing High Quality Textbooks

Every reading of the word is preceded by a reading of the world. Starting from the reading of the world that the reader brings to literacy programs (a social- and class-determined reading), the reading of the word sends the reader back to the previous reading of the world, which is, in fact, a rereading.

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the City* (1993, translated by D. Macedo)

In the above quotation, it is evident that dialogue can provide the link between oral and literate forms of interpreting, understanding and transforming the world.

For me, the above quote demonstrates the power of the classroom and how important textual positioning of a text is for learners. Therefore, in conjunction with other methodological issues, the decision to analyze aspects of the English Home language textbook is linked to the study's research design. By linking it, I believed that patterns of validation can occur that can demonstrate the meaning of the different texts through other data collection methods. I intended to analyse two English Home language textbooks. The observations and the interviews were meant to feed this process because through the data of the other research instruments (triangulation) I hoped to get a sense of how the teachers and learners engaged themselves with the text. In the next section, I deal with the process of content analyses.

#### **4.21.1 Content Analysis: A Methodical Rigorous Approach**

This segment describes the process of content analysis as a methodical, rigorous approach to analysing documents obtained or generated in the course of research. While writing this segment, I am once again reminded of the power of discourse in terms of the textbook. A recent study presented in the *Sunday Times* (2019: 4) entitled, 'Textbooks Stuck in Stereotypes' typifies the dialogue surrounding the dynamics of the textbook. The present discussion on textbooks admonishes me to engage in content analysis. Qualitative content analyses can reveal the language and concepts used to create particular portrayals of knowledge (Leavy, 2017: 145) in textbooks.

Leavy (2017) further adds that content analyses or document analysis is a method for systematically investigating texts. Roller and Larakas (2015: 232) state that qualitative content analysis is "the systematic reduction... of content, analyzed with special attention to the context in which it was created, to identify themes and extract meaningful interpretations of data."

In qualitative content analysis, the focus is on the uniqueness of the text (in the textbook) and the researcher is consciously aware of the multiple interpretations that can emerge from a scrutiny of the text. This is in keeping with Altheide and Schneider (2013) refer to as ethnographic content analysis (ECA). They state that:

Ethnographic content analysis is to be systematic and analytical but not rigid. Categories and variables initially guide the study but others are allowed and expected to emerge during the study, including an orientation to constant discovery and constant comparison of relevant situations, settings, styles, images, meanings, and nuances (Altheide and Schneider, 2013: 26).

In approaching documents (different parts in the textbook) as a field of research we should forever keep in mind the dynamic involved in the relationship between production, consumption, and content (Prior, 2003: 26). While undertaking content analysis I decided to highlight some key facets of the English Home language textbook. The following questions will guide the process:

1. Is the content of the textbook appropriate for grade 11 learners?
2. Does the content in the textbook reflect different aspects for grade 11 learners?
3. What kind of layout does the textbook exhibit?
4. Does the textbook give more attention to one genre?
5. What kind of comprehensions and poetry does the textbook explore?
6. Does the textbook present different aspects of grammar?
7. Can the same English Home language textbook in grade 11 be used in grade 12?

The above questions presuppose that enhancing the quality of the textbook (in particular good individual texts) is one of the key aspects we can do to benefit student learning. Ultimately, I would like to know if the content of the materials in the textbook are appropriate for a particular language teaching context. Too often textbook design is focused on monetary gains. Moreover, many textbook designs might have the tendency to be teacher based (focus on the needs of teachers) and less learner based (less 21st learner based). Therefore, by applying content analysis I have been able to immerse myself into “the content to get a sense of the bigger picture” (Leavy, 2017:147) in relation to the English Home language textbook overall purpose. In the next segment, I deal with the concept of literacy in terms of textual importance.

#### **4.21.2 Literacy as Text: The Text Matters**

Literacy can be understood in many different ways. In this segment, an understanding of literacy is looked upon as ‘subject matter’ (Bhola, 1994). This view looks at the nature of the text, which was produced for learners. As I mentioned that ‘texts’ vary by subject and genre (e.g. textbooks). Document analysis is the third research instrument that I will use to collect data. In this investigation, the textbooks/documents were accessible because they were available from schools. I was free to access and use the textbooks since it was readily available. The availability of the textbooks is important because according to Creswell (2009) it can become an issue if I have to locate documents from distant places and still have to get.

The data collected with this tool is used to determine content relevancy and the connection to a teenagers' life because this does have the potential to help the teaching process of English in high school. The data collected would also help answer research question 6.

Gul, Syed & Humail (2015: 79) believe that textbook evaluation has become a necessary practice in the field of teaching, seeking to assist in the choice of the best suitable book for a specific context. From the outset, I would like to offer a distinction between analysis and evaluation but during the outcome of the final data analysis, I would like to fuse them into one.

Considering the above in mind, McGrath (2002: 22) presents a distinction by stating, "Analysis is a process which leads to an objective, verifiable description whereas evaluation involves the making of judgments. Evaluation according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) applies to the process of making a value judgment.

In a South African context, the textbook includes the following: comprehensions, poetry, short stories, newspaper articles, advertisements and listening and prepared orals. Since different genres are captured in these textbooks, it is important to note that they require particular levels of language and literacy proficiency. Furthermore, it is important to analyze if the individual texts portrayed in the textbook fit in the ambit of the learners' world or academic proficiency. In order to enhance triangulation, I am doing document analysis (evaluation) of two Grade 11 English Home language textbooks.

Having stated my reasoning for using content analysis, I felt the need to further ground my choice for content analysis. Content analysis can be used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. Texts can be defined broadly as books, book chapters, essays, interviews, discussions, newspaper headlines and articles, historical documents, speeches, conversations, advertising, or any occurrence of communicative language. In summary, I would like to look at the advantages and disadvantages of content analysis, which I present, in the next segment.

#### 4.21.2.1 Advantages of Content Analyses

The advantages are:

- Content analysis offers several advantages to researchers who consider using it.
- Forman and Damschroder (2008: 60) posited that the greatest advantage of qualitative content analysis is that it is “a more hands-on approach to research than quantitative content analysis”.
- It is an unobtrusive and nonreactive way to study the phenomenon of interest (Babbie, 1992).
- Qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words or extracting objective content from texts to examine meanings, themes and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a particular text. It allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005: 1)
- It looks directly at communication via texts or transcripts, and deals with the of social interaction
- It can provide important historical/cultural insights through studying the texts.
- It is an unobtrusive means of analyzing interactions with the outside world.
- It provides insight into complex models of human thought and language use.

In summary, qualitative content analysis allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective, yet scientific manner; explore the meanings underlying physical messages; and is inductive, grounding the examination of topics and themes, as well as inferences drawn from them, in data (Patton, 2002; Zhang & Wildenmuth, 2009).

#### 4.21.3 Evaluating Textbooks/Analyse Textbooks: Textual Interaction

The interview questions for teachers are also geared to highlight the fact that the materials used in the textbook are good or bad in their context. Therefore, content analysis will strengthen the argument of relevant or irrelevant material in various textbooks. I hoped that this study can bridge the gap between the learner and the possible texts that can enhance critical thinking and literacy enjoyment. According to Cunningsworth (1995:7-10), textbook evaluation involves the careful selection of materials examining whether they reflect the needs of the learners, the aims, methods and values of a specific teaching program.



#### **4.21.3.1 Contextual Insights through Textbook Analysis**

Textbook analysis for this study does have the potential to help English Home language teachers to acquire useful, accurate, systematic and contextual insights into the overall nature of textbook materials (Cunningsworth, 1995; Ellis, 1997: 36-42). Littlejohn (1998) is also in agreement with Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) when he adds that textbook evaluation serves the purpose of examining whether the methodology and content of the materials are appropriate for a particular language teaching context (in this case Grade 11). In short, textbook analysis involves:

- The text materials including the structure, the focus, and special learning assists. This is important because there could be an element of discovery that might have never been figured out.
- The above point is linked to the fact that many textbook publishers and writers have developed texts with useful elements, if we are willing to figure out what they are.

To reiterate the value of textbook analysis and evaluation I will like to reinforce the aim of textbook evaluation. Cunningsworth (1995) believes that in order to support teacher development and help teachers grow towards becoming an effective teacher the insights into the nature of material is important. The goal of textbook analysis can help South African teachers understand the type of text (educational material) that can help function as the best framework for Grade 11 in English Home language teaching.

#### **4.21.4 Textbook Analysis: Helping Students Grow Academically**

Analysis of the textbook can help the academic process for learners. The teacher can maximize the relevancy of the text material and this can bring a further enjoyment to the learning process. An experience teacher will understand what to leave out in the textbook and what to use from the textbook. Making additions or deletions from the textbook can keep the utilization of the textbook. In the next segment, I expand on the concept of relevancy.

#### **4.21.5 Relevancy: The heart of Progression**

The question of relevance lies at the heart of this study because as teachers we need to capture our learners' attention in order to maximize their output. My purpose in this segment is to suggest a conscious that we remain in tune with the climate of the classroom.

Therefore, it is important that teachers can develop criteria for evaluating textbooks used in teaching English. Furthermore, this segment on relevancy in terms of text selection is meant to serve to empower teachers into becoming well-informed language practitioners and users in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Learners will blossom if you give them material that is so interesting that they cannot resist reading it. According to Sivasubramaniam, (2004: 201) relevance relates to how a text can connect with an appeal to students through its meaningfulness.

I have often noted that the meaningfulness of the text does not relate to the personal interests of students. Meaningfulness in the text is often necessary to help maximize the learners' involvement with it. Johnson (2011: 185) point out a number of aspects that help us understand the concept of relevance:

- Learners have no interest in most of the materials they are required to read.
- Find reading material compelling that they forget they are reading.
- Sometimes you need to develop your own textbook.

Notwithstanding the above stated points, I noticed a slight shift in the Grade 12 English Home language paper one written at the end of 2018. The shift in content was more identifiable with learners. In 2017, the comprehension topic was 'Cultural Appropriation', which did not sit well with many learners based on my general question to learners of different schools.

The comprehension topic in 2018 was 'Materialism: A system that eats us from the inside out'. I applied the same to many learners from different schools and discovered that there was a great appreciation to the text. Furthermore, the summary in section B was about superheroes, which most teenagers can identify because a number of big blockbuster movies that came out in 2018 was about superheroes. The three different examples that I gave reveal the elegance of concepts that are relevant to learners' lives and there is an immediate connection and a willingness to read the text. In the light of the above discussion, the study notes the unsuitability of texts in some textbooks in relation to students leaning. The study accentuates the need for a balanced deployment of different texts that draw in learners to read without noticing the fact that they are reading. In the next segment, I will deal with the criteria of textbook analysis and evaluation.

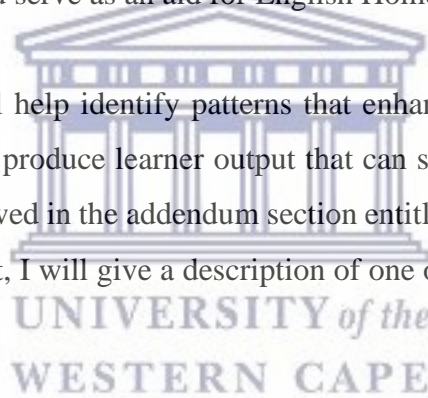
#### **4.21.6 Criteria for Textbook Analysis and Evaluation**

Tucker (1975: 355-360) suggest that whether a textbook is written for first or second-language speakers, it has to be assessed in terms of the following criteria:

1. The completeness and appropriateness of the items presented.
2. The activities suggested for practising the items selected.
3. The sequencing of vocabulary, particularly the functional load, rate and manner of entry and re-entry
4. The relevance of its contexts and situations and so on.

Halliday, McIntosh & Strevens (1964: 207-222) also state that a criterion for textbook analysis should consist of a combination of the linguistic and pedagogical components of language teaching analysis. Taking into account the criteria laid out by Tucker, I have decided to construct a checklist that could serve as an aid for English Home language teachers.

The checklist, I believed, will help identify patterns that enhance the textbooks' integration among Grade 11 learners and produce learner output that can stimulate learners in a positive way. The checklist can be viewed in the addendum section entitled, 'Grade 11 Home language checklist'. In the next segment, I will give a description of one of the English Home language textbooks.



#### **4.21.7 Textbook Presentation: Appearance and Structure**

In this section, I will present two Grade 11 English Home language textbooks. The following two textbooks were designed for the new curriculum (CAPS).

##### **4.22.7.1 Textbook One: Grade 11 English for Success**

One of the Grade 11 English Home language textbooks in use at the moment is *English for Success* published by Oxford University Press in 2012. By the time the students reach grade 11 they should have already mastered certain areas in English as a subject in high school. According to the authors, the purpose of the textbook is to build on the different areas that need practice and harness four important skills for the learner. They are:

- Listening and speaking
- Reading and viewing
- Writing and presenting
- Language

The thought behind the textbook under discussion was to provide a stimulating course for learning and practicing English as a dynamic, relevant and modern language (Barnsley, Nortje & Strydom, 2012: 5). The textbook contains a range of texts and activities, which are based on the texts to enhance learner productivity for the workplace. The book also contains many writing activities with guidance on how to write different kinds of texts. In the next segment, I will deal with the framework for data analysis.

#### **4.23 Data Analysis**

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995: 226-227) data analysis begins while the interview is still underway. The reason behind the above view tells you how to redesign your questions to focus in on the central themes as you continue interviewing. After interviewing, I will begin a more detailed and fine-grained analysis. Through this process while analyzing I hope that I can find additional themes and concepts toward an overall explanation. This includes the labour towards content analysis. Here, the analysis is inductive with codes and themes developing out of a recursive process of data collection and analysis (Hesse-biber & Leavy, 2011). In the next segment, I will demonstrate the measure of validity and reliability.

##### **4.23.1 Validity and Reliability**

I reveal in this dissertation that qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context specific settings, such as real-world settings (Patton, 2001: 39). Furthermore, unlike quantitative researchers who seek causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings, qualitative researchers seek instead illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations (Hoepfl, 1997). In the spectrum of the educational arena and research, the concepts of validity and reliability must be addressed in all studies. The issues of reliability, validity, signify to demonstrate the 'good' from impending 'bad' research.

In addition, Davies & Dodd (2002: 281) argue that the application of the notion ‘accuracy or rigor’ in qualitative research should differ from those in quantitative research by “accepting that there is a quantitative bias in the concept of rigor, we now move on to develop our re-conception of rigor by exploring subjectivity, reflexivity, and the social interaction of interviewing”.

#### **4.23.2 Validity**

For information to be considered valid, data must be gathered in an appropriate form from an appropriate source (Wallace, 2013: 46). What this means is the fact that for example. If I wanted to collect information about learners’ career aspirations in Grade 12 then I would make sure I ask the learners.

If I try to elicit this information from parents, teachers or test scores and form a hypothesis from that the data would be of limited validity. In qualitative research, there is no expectation of replication. Often words that are use similarly to validity in qualitative research are words like trustworthiness and dependability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Davis & Dodd, 2002). There are ways in qualitative research that I can use to address validly. They include:

- Triangulation of information amongst different sources of data.
- I can receive feedback from informant’s i.e. member checking or expert view. This allows the participant(s) the chance to collect errors of fact or errors of interpretation. In principal, member checks add the validity of the observers’ interpretation of qualitative observations.

#### **4.23.3 Reliability**

In principal, a good qualitative study can help us “understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing” (Eisner, 1991: 58). The concept of reliability ensures the element of consistency by implying that the same data would have emerged if a different researcher had asked the same questions (Wallace, 2013: 47; Mouton, 2001) or if the question were asked at a different time. Furthermore, reliability is not concerned with what is being measured, but with how well it is being measured (De Vos et al. (2005:163).

Reliability reflects the concept of dependability. Dependability is not a new term. Lincoln and Guba (1985: 300) use “dependability”, in qualitative research, which closely corresponds to the notion of “reliability” in quantitative research. In conjunction with this, other important elements emerge as essential components of reliability:

- The alignment of an “inquiry audit” (Lincoln and Guba 1985: 317) as one measure which might enhance the dependability of qualitative research.
- In doing the audit, it can be used to examine both the process and the product of the research for consistency (Hoepfl, 1997).

The research is the driving force of humanity and the concept of reliability cements the unknown to become the known. Researchers such as Clont (1992) and Seale (1999) endorse the concept of dependability with the concept of consistency or reliability in qualitative research.

#### **4.23.4 Validity and Reliability: A Positive Combination**

The concepts reliability and validity are essential in research. This positive combination is conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality. It is also through this combination the way the researcher can eliminate the danger of being ‘bias’. In eliminating the danger of hidden biases, the researcher can increase the platform of truthfulness concerning the social phenomenon under investigation (Denzin, 1978) using triangulation.

In summary, in addition to the other points made I will:

- Account for personal biases, which may have influenced findings (Morse, Barrett & Mayan, 2002: 1-19). Furthermore, a skillful researcher is able to minimize bias by keeping an open mind about what kind of data will be generated from the interviewees (Basit, 2010:115).
- Acknowledge biases in sampling and ongoing critical reflection of methods to ensure sufficient depth and relevance of data collection and analysis (Sandelowski, 1993: 1-8).
- Meticulous record keeping, demonstrating a clear decision trail and ensuring interpretations of data are consistent and transparent (Long & Johnson, 2000: 30-37)

- Include rich and thick verbatim descriptions of participants' accounts to support findings (Slevin, 2002: 79).
- Engage with other researchers to reduce research bias (Sandelowski, 1993).

Having dealt with the concept of validity and reliability in this study, I now turn my attention to my ethical considerations.

#### **4.24 Ethical Consideration: Maximum Benefit**

It is clear that there are underlying tenets in the field of educational research. As a researcher I take comfort in the fact that adherence to an ethical platform can bring maximum benefit to the contribution of participants. Stake & Jegatheesan (2008) remind us "to comprehend some meanings of life, one must get close to that life." However, in reality, anyone and everywhere cannot simply conduct research. According to Polanski, ethical considerations play an important role when conducting research (Polanski, 2004). Data collection is intrusive and time-consuming and participants can be made to feel under pressure, inadequate, inadequate 'invaded' and so on Lankshear & Knobel (2004: 185).

The first step before teachers are contacted must be the approval of the research by the school (Jones, Whitehurst & Egerton, 2012: 54). I contacted the Principal of the school. It is also procedural that I get ethical clearance from the Western Cape Education Department, which gives me permission to conduct research in high schools. In keeping with an ethical aspiration, I will also ensure that the process of data collection will not disrupt the normal program at school or inflict physical or psychological harm to the participants.

Each participant will have to sign an informed or assent form allowing me to quote or use his or her social context as a layer of investigation.

Participation for this research will be voluntary and participant confidentiality will be strictly adhered to at all times. I will also ask permission to video record the interviews and ensure confidentiality using password-protected files. After video recording, I will convert it to an audio file. I will use Tube Catcher to convert the files to audio. Confidentiality will further be preserved by using pseudonyms if required. I will also avail myself for debriefing.

#### 4.25 Conclusion and Summary

In this chapter, I have made an attempt to identify the key elements of my research design. In addition, I also offered a rationale for my choice of methodology, tools and techniques, which are crucial to my investigation. My decision to include some key components/aspects of educational research, teacher research, action research, classroom research, interpretive approach and the narrative approach can be seen as a set of concentric circles where each approach is in harmony with the other because the approaches/research all have the same core given their commonalities and complementarities. The different levels of research and approaches mentioned above fit inside each other and feed off each other to make up a story. Therefore, when circles are concentric, smaller circles will lie inside larger circles, regardless of how many circles are in the set. In the circle of educational research, the other layers of research will be inside the domain of educational research. In view of the above-stated point, the different layers of research and approaches are all interconnected. Adding on to the above comparison, I have factored in the use of triangulation in data collection in order to strengthen validity and reliability of this study. My study collected interviews of 12 grade 11 English Home language teachers and four observations. Adding to this I evaluate two English Home language textbooks on the bases of content and suitability for grade 11 learners.

I also introduced the reader to the ethical considerations in research and more importantly, I introduced the way to conduct research while protecting participants in any study. I also added a dimension that demonstrated my build up to my PhD studies and my life as a researcher. Finally, this chapter underscores my aptitude for being objective and the importance of looking at a problem from different angles without allowing personal predilections to take over. In relation to objectivity I also highlighted the fact that although “subjective thinking has its flaws, it is also a channel of our own creativity—an important part of being a researcher” (Pajo, 2018: 23). In retrospect, I know that I should manage my subjectivity.

In closing, I wish to liken my methodology to a mechanic fixing a car or giving it a service. According to the Collins dictionary, “a mechanic is a skilled worker who repairs and maintains engines especially car engines.” As a qualitative researcher (mechanic) I will use the tools of my methodological trade and exchange parts and give it a new look so that the car (classroom) can be maintained and the engine (teaching English adequately) can keep on running.



Since a car's engine has many different parts, it symbolically reflects the English Home language classroom that also has different layers (parts). In addition, the textbook that is used in the English Home language classroom also has different parts. These range from a comprehension part, poetry part, grammar exercise part and listening activities part. Hence, this inquiry will allow certain parts to be serviced based on the fact of what I will observe because the teachers of this study will not all use the same textbook and will not all teach the same lesson. As a mechanic, I understand that my research is an interactive process and that I should know a bit about everything similar to a 'jack of all trades', which is a person that knows a bit about everything. In this case, a bit about every part of the car (classroom) brings an awareness of how the car (classroom) is all knitted together. Therefore, my personal history, gender and social class and those of the participants in this inquiry shape this inquiry and allow me to offer a 'service' to the English language classroom. In the next chapter, I will deal with the presentation and analysis of data gathered in my study.



## CHAPTER 5

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 5.1 Introduction

Eyes that look are common eyes that see are rare.

Hellen Keller

The purpose of this study was to explore with a sample of 12 grade 11 English Home language teachers and come to terms with the dynamics and fallouts of the Grade 11/12 English Home language textbook. I also wanted to get a sense of what teachers experience during their daily teaching routine as well as their general perception of the textbook. Furthermore, I hope that the study would embellish some creative methods of teaching and harness innovative techniques of teaching in the English Home language classroom. One of the glaring problems is the fact that South Africa is not a reading nation (Educational Journal, March 2019:3). The price of books, magazines and even newspapers have become almost unaffordable. However, textbooks are free at schools and therefore it must be utilized effectively as a tool to enhance reading but also to enrich the entire spectrum of English.

I have used a qualitative research approach in the belief that it is particularly appropriate for exploring teaching ideas and conceptions about learning. This chapter presents and analyses the data gathered using the various methods that I have presented in chapter 4. While writing this chapter as well as sifting through and searching the data, I reflect on the words of Richards and Morse (2013: 218-219). Their words can help reinforce and reiterate my mental process at this stage. They affirm that thinking qualitatively is “an exhausting process of being constantly aware and continually asking analytical questions of data, which, in turn, regularly address the questions asked. Qualitative inquiry constantly challenges assumptions, questions the obvious, reveals the hidden and the overt, the implicit, the take-for-granted, and shows these in a new light. Without such an active mode of inquiry, you risk a shallow, descriptive study with few surprises, reporting the obvious.”

At this stage, I would like to reaffirm my belief that a better understanding of this phenomenon would allow teachers to proceed from a more informed perspective in terms of teacher practice. In this chapter, I present and discuss the data, which seeks to answer two of the primary/main research questions guiding this study. Therefore, the data collected required that I analyse, categorise and summarize it.

In the next section, I provide a basis for my path of data analysis.

### **5.1.1 Formulating a Basis for Data Analysis**

In my Masters studies, I discovered that qualitative methods tend to produce a large amount of data and this study is no exception. Therefore, I had to be flexible. I had to be selective in the data strands for my analysis. Furthermore, I believed that my selection should be consistent with the argument that within the nature of this study that, “there are no guidelines in qualitative research for determining how many instances are necessary to support a conclusion or interpretation” (Taylor and Bogdan 1998:156). Ultimately, it will come down to my own judgment in terms of strands of information, which feed the research aims. In light of the above point, I also recognize that a single incident or instant can be sufficient to build a conceptual category. In other words, it is possible that more can be discovered with saying less (important insights can come from a small amount of data). My understanding aligns itself with Richards (2009: 19) when she or he states,



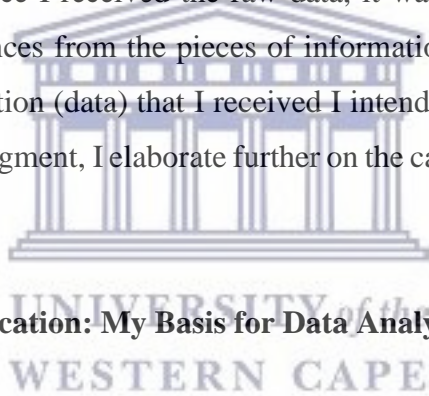
Well-designed qualitative research projects are usually small, the data detailed and the techniques designed to discover meaning through fine attention to content of texts or images.

With the above-voiced position in mind, I felt it necessary to be direct in the interviews so that teachers could speak with precision. The suggestion of De Vos & Fouché, (1998: 203) lends itself to my approach when they advocate that data analysis demands that I break down data into different components to obtain answers to research questions and to test the schemes. Based on the decision that I have taken, the words of Cooper (1999) are helpful in adding some sequence to data analysis. Cooper (1999: 104) states that analysis “involves reducing the separate data points collected by the inquirer into a unified statement about the research problem. Analysing then requires that I order, categorize and summarize the data.”

Ravitch & Carl (2016: 239) emphasize the fact that as a researcher ‘I should be intentional throughout data collection and that it is vital that I not wait until the end of data collection to engage with and organise the data’. Taking into consideration the advice given by Ravitch and Carl (2016), I began to organize and manage my data as soon as I received it. Spencer, Richie & Ormston (2014: 275) further helped me to infuse further clarity into my decision when they state:

Analysis does not begin when the researchers have finished collecting their data, but is an ongoing and inherent part of the whole process of qualitative research and should infuse all aspects. The analytical part of a researcher’s brain should always be alert to the implications of their choices at each stage of the research process.

Mostly, the analysis of data took place on Saturdays in the library at the University of the Western Cape at level 13. Once I received the raw data, it was transformed into something meaningful by making inferences from the pieces of information that I received. In order to enhance the nature of information (data) that I received I intend to categorize the information using metaphors. In the next segment, I elaborate further on the categorization of teachers using metaphors



### **5.1.2 Metaphorical Classification: My Basis for Data Analysis**

We do not choose our metaphors; our metaphors choose us.

Allen Kurzwell

While sifting through the data I noticed a number of similarities and consistencies from the data, which appeared to form conceptual patterns and categories. In Chapter 2 (See 2.1), I have referred to the importance of using figurative language in research. Therefore, I will continue to use it in this chapter to add further sharpen my focus in the presentation of the various teachers. Furthermore, Geertz (1973) argues that in a constructivist view of knowledge, the process of understanding and context(s) in which learners learn construct and interpret for themselves, ‘thick’ descriptions can only be attempted through a figurative use of language.

I am also applying the above concept to the method of teaching that the teachers performed by constructing knowledge. In the same vein, Atkinson (1992: 12) extends the above concept and states:

The use of tropes (figures of speech) such as metaphor and synecdoche are not a matter of arbitrary or optional embellishment. Its attempted elimination would rob of the power to describe social events and action in intelligible terms. The removal of metaphorical usage would reduce us to the most banal and meaningless of purely behavioural accounts. Metaphorical usage is fundamental to the analytic force of many social-scientific theories and models.

The above-mentioned quotation(s) underlie my decision to use figurative language in my interpretation. Therefore, I intend to use a metaphor to clarify and not obscure the contextual variation of the different teachers. My transfer of meaning (using the metaphor) is both like glass in its capacity for transparency and mirror in how it reflects back on the design of the study. In retrospect, the various teacher responses and teacher performances during the different stages of data capturing appear to match with my intuitions, beliefs and value systems that underlie my perception of their performances. Therefore, I decided to categorize the teachers through metaphorical classification because metaphors ‘create very colourful and persisting images, for example, of teacher’s roles...’ (Jaatinen in Kohonen et al, 2001: 134). Taking the above-voiced view into account, I believe that my classifications should provide the conceptual framework for the data analysis. With the above in mind, I endeavour to present the data using the following symbols as metaphors (three types of teachers):

1. Teachernaire (Creative and Innovative)
2. Perfunctory Performers (Mechanical plodders)
3. Commoners (Ordinary performers)

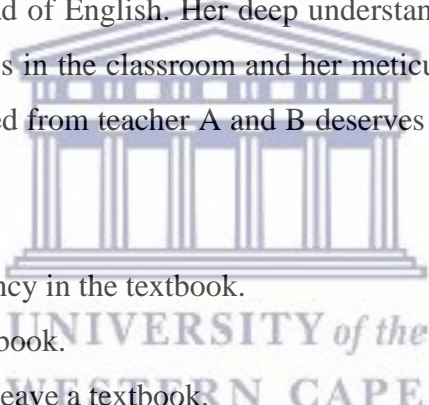
Originally, I intended to use the word champion instead of teachernaire but in reality, the word champion can be found in many spheres of life e.g. sports, business, medicine etc. I felt that because it carried the word teacher in it, teachernaire would be more significant. In the next segment, I will present the data from the teacher interviews first and then I will glean from the interviews the emerging patterns.

This is in keeping with what Bernard (2011: 338) states when he declares that analysis is “the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place.”

At this stage, it is important that I mention that from the teachers interviewed, I believe that I only found two/three teachers that fit the description presented in this segment. Based on the above I will present teacher A and teacher B interviews in a more complete way with the belief that their productivity and answers might expand the notion of a teacher and synergize the scope of this study.

#### **5.1.2.1 Rationale for Granting Teacher A, Teacher B and C a Fully Scope: High Profile Cases**

I consider teacher A and teacher B as high-profile cases because of the manner in which they teach. Teacher B is a vice principal and has a very elegant way of teaching and drawing in the learners. Teacher A is the Head of English. Her deep understanding of the English language and how to weave its dynamics in the classroom and her meticulous nature breathes life into the classroom. The data gleaned from teacher A and B deserves deeper attention based on the following:

- 
4. The dilemma of relevancy in the textbook.
  5. The frailties of the textbook.
  6. The nature of how to weave a textbook.
  7. The uselessness of the textbook.
  8. Formulating your own textbook

Based on some aspects and especially the points above I deem it necessary to render their interviews almost in its entirety in the hope that the knowledge gleaned from their data will ignite a fire that burns bright which can be passed onto other teachers. After presenting the data of teacher A and B, I will cluster the other teachers under the other metaphors that I mentioned. In the next segment, I will explain my bases for using the word ‘teacher’ and why I decided to coin this new word.

### **5.1.2.2 Rationale for using the word Teachernaire: The Hope to Reawaken the Passion for Teaching and informing Classroom Practice**

Doing the same thing over and over, yet expecting different results is the definition of crazy.

Unknown

(<https://www.leadershipnow.com/creativityquotes.html>)

I am using the word teachernaire to signpost the characteristics of a skilful/innovative teacher with reference to their social setting. While searching my familiar domains of English language use I have not found this word yet. Therefore, it is necessary that I unpack the qualities of a teachernaire (skilful teacher in a particular context). I will also address the aspects of common/traditional teachers and weigh it against the characteristics of a teachernaire. In the next segment, I will first attend to the coinage of the word teachernaire.

### **5.1.2.3 Coining the Word on the Basis that English is a Living Organism**

It has become a common trend that adding new words in the English language is nothing out of the ordinary. Hundreds of new words are coined or borrowed every year. However, in reality, some of the new words are added into the Oxford Dictionary and some are not (<http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~kemmer/Words/wordtypes.html>).

The coinage of a new word can surface because the English language is constantly evolving. In short, “Neologisms are newly coined terms, words, or phrases, that may be commonly used in everyday life but have yet to be formally accepted as constituting mainstream language” ([www.vappingo.com](http://www.vappingo.com)). I believe that the coinage of the word ‘teachernaire’ can whet the appetite for teaching with a greater capacity in the classroom and provoke English language teachers in South Africa (a third world country) into once again falling in love with English language teaching. For a number of years, I was looking for a concept-framing word to stand for a teacher with an abundance of teaching skills in or out of the classroom in any given context.

It was in 2014 that I decided to adopt the word ‘teachernaire’ into my professional vocabulary. I was looking for a word, which I could use in some of my conversations with teachers, with some appropriate explanation, would stand for that complex of thinking and acting in a specific context (different schools in different areas). I also needed a word that carried within it a sense of achievement by reflecting rigorous intellectual activity in its own right.

At this stage, I would like to mention that my coined word might come across as pedantic for some and perhaps even unnecessary, but I deemed it necessary in the context of South Africa and its literacy struggles. My appropriation of the word ‘teachernaire’ was not intended as just a straight swap for ‘skilful’. Rather it was to try to encapsulate unacknowledged teaching methods used by different teachers in their given context. As a teacher, I am constantly building up my vocabulary and as I researched the principles of coinage, I adopted the pattern of ‘Clipping’. Clipping is simply cutting or shortening a word (Šomanová, 2017: 5). To maximize the scope of the word ‘millionaire’, I clipped the last part of the word and added it to the word teacher evoking a sense of abundance. The abundance that I am referring to here is the practicality of teaching methods, which can be demonstrated through different teaching methods and styles in different contexts. In the next segment, I will add further nuances that can be associated with the word teachernaire.

#### **5.1.2.4 The Teachernaire: Reflecting the concept of an Abundance (millionaire)**

When love and skill work together, expect a masterpiece.

John Ruskin

According to Wikipedia, “A millionaire is an individual whose net worth or wealth is equal to or exceeds one million units of currency. It can also be a person who owns one million units of currency in a bank account or savings account.” In this study in reference to the concept of a millionaire, the word teachernaire refers to a teacher with a lot (variety) of teaching methods in and out of the classroom. A teachernaire has the ability to tackle old problems and create new possibilities. In the next segment, I elaborate further on the above point.



### **5.1.2.5 The Teachernaire: Old Problems, New Possibilities as Possible Labels of Creativity and Innovation**

When all think alike, then no one is thinking.

Walter Lippman

A central dilemma for teachers is finding ways to deal with the multiple perspectives and demands of pupils, parents, school's management and external forces (Cullingford, 2010: i). Teachers have the capacity to deal with old problems in new ways and to recall old ways to handle new problems. In order to demonstrate this concept, I would like to show the resilience of innovation. Even though it is a sad story, it does show the power of innovation in the face of adversity.

The following story also holds great value for teachers so that in the face of adversity they can also continue with the art of effective teaching. On January 28, 1986, the National Space Agency (NASA) shuttle orbiter mission broke apart 73 seconds into its flight, killing all seven crew members, which consisted of five NASA astronauts and two Payload Specialist. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oD7X3KvJAVk>). The message in this story carries an important idea for teachers, which is to keep on going in the face of difficulty. In South Africa, this is important because conditions in South Africa can allow teachers to stagnate in their teaching capacity. Therefore, I believe that it is vital to reawaken constantly a love for serious teaching in the face of adversity, which is so prevalent in South African schools. I hope that my coinage will be a small contribution to this reawakening. In the next segment, I will deal with the characteristics of the perfunctory performers and the commoners.

### **5.1.2.6 Perfunctory Performers: A darkness Hidden in Plain Sight**

This segment is an attempt to highlight a noticeable issue—the idea that a conscious complexity of the curriculum is a necessity. In no way is this segment declaring that Perfunctory Performers are bad teachers but I state that having accepted blindly that to teach the curriculum without the cast of understanding further dynamics of language teaching could be partly destructive in the grade 11 English Home language classroom. In the past, as I attended many English meetings it became a common practice that many were placed in a direction that completing the curriculum was first and foremost. This idea, however, does have the potential to work against a learner-oriented curriculum.

I have only chosen to address a relatively extreme approach in terms of completing the curriculum in a specific time. In no way is this section an attempt to emphasize that teachers are better than perfunctory performers (change all plodders to performers) but I intend to state what I regard as the characteristics as perfunctory plodders and how policy often plays a role in what constitutes the subject of English in many high schools. Furthermore, this analogy is also seen in many other learning areas e.g. life science, mathematics etc. Also, this section does not criticise the curriculum itself nor does it question the general value of communicative tasks in language teaching in grade 11. But it does bring an awareness of the circular nature of the English syllabus while at the same time it might highlight that the polarization of meaning-based and form-based instruction is unconstructive and may reflect a pattern of damaging ideological swings in language teaching from pre-1994 to post 1994. In the next section I present the characteristics of perfunctory Plodders.

#### **5.1.2.7 Characteristics of Perfunctory Performers**

My following list highlights the (my) perception of the perfunctory plodders, which I believe are commensurate with their characteristics:

- Finishing the components designated in the curriculum per quarter at the cost of learner inaccuracy. This in itself can create a sense of learners not learning affectively because English teachers will move on when learners might not understand the work effectively. The exclusive advocacy of finishing the curriculum per quarter reflects a perennial and often damaging pattern of ideological swing in language teaching theory and practice.
- The finishing of the curriculum is done in a mechanically or without interest or zeal, and merely for the sake of getting rid of the duty.
- The curriculum is taught in a careless manner as to conform to policy.
- The content of language is taught in a machine-driven way and this can come across as routine and boring.
- Perfunctory plodders often do not possess good academic freedom and it is difficult for them to dissociate themselves from a certain model of teaching.
- Perfunctory plodders often forget that today's learner is not yesterday's one.
- The common teacher is very durable since they often do not personally involve themselves with students they can work with minimal emotional fatigue.

The above-mentioned list although brief, does typify some characteristics in my opinion of perfunctory plodders. This list also became apparent in my conversations with some teachers as will be seen when I present the data. In the next segment, I will deal with the characteristics of the commoners.

#### **5.1.2.8 Commoners**

This segment is also an attempt to highlight a common issue that exists among teachers. Many of the commoner's adhere to the 'letter of the law' and is often seen as the 'goodie two shoes' of teaching. Often in the early stages of their career, there is a major fear of authority in the school system and many commoners believe everything must be done by the book. In no way is this segment declaring that commoners are weak teachers or that teachernaires and perfunctory plodders are better than the commoners. However, understanding the differences between the three types of teachers can help us understand the dynamics in the classroom and the different ways of teaching.

From my observations and interactions with many teachers over the years, I have noticed the following characteristics of the commoners:

- Often there is a lack of personal interaction between teacher and learner. Commoner teachers often do not learn about pupils' individual problems.
- They teach by the book and lack a creative flair to be flexible in the classroom.
- They are often very strict in class as they believe this is the right way and often adapted it from the predecessors.
- There is also a lack of differentiation. The teacher does not adapt to fulfil individual requirements.
- Similarly, commoners are often very routine. They stick to a comfortable and familiar method and do not incorporate variety.
- Commoners prefer to be inconspicuous. They do not challenge norms.
- Commoners are reliable. They usually have resources due to their preference of staying in a comfort zone.
- In terms of work ethic, commoners do enough to impart what needs to be taught but not more.
- Commoners tend to be mediocre. They do what needs to be done to get the job done.

### **5.1.2.9 Reflection: Teaching dynamics in the Grade 11 English Home language Classroom**

Inevitably, some teachers take the district guidelines to heart and race their way through the required textbooks and activities. This in return creates a reaction that leaves many students who cannot learn fast enough trailing behind the pack and in South Africa we have many learners that fall into that category. Furthermore, it can also result in the fact that an entire class ends up falling behind and the teacher is the only one who really understand the material. Instruction should favour learner-centredness rather than teacher control (Willis, 2003). In the next segment, I reveal how I have blended all the data.

### **5.1.3 Synthesizing my Formulation: Piercing it All Together**

Data familiarizations was crucial for me. It was important for me to appreciate the shades of meaning or expression expressed by the different teachers. Reading and re-reading the transcribed texts and listening to the audio-recordings brought a strong awareness of concepts and themes before putting them on paper. I then employed coding/shading and underlining to organize data and to come up with emerging themes and categories. It was also important for me to understand the nuances of my own intuitions. According to Firestone (1982: 2), “the richest approach is the intuitive, which depends on the researcher's thorough immersion in the field setting and contemplation of the situation.” However, intuitive insights unnourished by analytical articulation will wither away, whereas analysis devoid of intuitive scanning is already dead even if tenured posts in universities can provide life-support systems (Swanwick, 1994: 60).

After shading and underlining, I started to see themes. Greg (2012: 17) sees themes as “patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated with a specific research question”. Following this, I started to elevate the findings and conceptualize what echoes through the interviews. As I result of conceptualizing the interviews, I could develop an interpretation. In the next section, I expand on the concept of thinking interpretively.

#### **5.1.3.1 Thinking Interpretively: The Value of Discovery**

Bloomberg & Volpe (2016: 188) stress, “it is essential to keep an open mind, remembering that qualitative research is all about discovery.” With the above view in mind, I believe in conjunction with Swanwick (1994: 57) that qualitatively inclined researchers see themselves as engaged persons with an interpretative role rather than as neutral gatherers of data.

In addition to the above-stated point, I also believe that there is a need for me to think ‘higher and deeper’ in terms of interpretation (as I analyse the data). Thinking, “higher suggests that I rise above the surface of the data, while deeper suggest that I mine for treasure beneath the surface of the data” (Saldana, 2015: 156). Furthermore, I hold with what Smith and Osborn (2003:51) describe as combining “empathetic hermeneutics with a questioning hermeneutics’, which emphasizes sense-making in a given context. Therefore, the above interpretative analyses allow me to be cognisant (my overall attempt) of all aspects of the experience as described by the participants. This can include:

- Physical surroundings, objects
- Type of activity
- Social and personal interactions
- Time frame,
- Emotions, belief or value systems

Taking the above-mentioned issues into account, I can then look to identify commonalities among these aspects between the accounts from different participants. In sum, thinking interpretively is looking at the local and particularly of your unique field site and reflecting on the possible transferable meanings suggested by that synoptic (affording a view of the whole) microcosm of social life for the population at large. Those meanings can be applied to other sites, times, and contexts (Saldana, 2015: 156). Also, thinking interpretively enables me to extend beyond the tangible and real of your study into the conceptual and abstract (Saldana, 2015: 156). In the next section, I elaborate on the concept of looking at core themes.

#### **5.1.4 Format of Sequence: Looking at Core Themes**

Analysis begins by going back to the purpose of the study (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011: 373). Krueger & Casey (2000: 127) also confirm that it is important to remember, “the depth and intensity of analysis is determined by the purpose of the study.” The activity of analysis “takes data and reconfigures them in new ways...” (Saldana, 2015: 20). Therefore, after gathering my data and compiling my data archive, I set out to follow the suggestion given by McNiff (2016: 197) which was to identify trends and patterns with a view to describing and explaining the action.

In addition, I undertook the following, which according to McNiff is in keeping with what I have expressed in chapter 4:

1. Look through the entire data archive and get very familiar with it.
2. Read it two or three times.
3. Remind yourself of your research question and keep it in mind as you read.
4. Let ideas emerge i.e. let the data speak for itself.
5. When ideas and patterns begin to emerge then
6. Core themes will become visible.

(McNiff, 2016: 197)

From the above stated points, it is understandable that the emerging themes should relate to my research questions. In keeping with the above points, I studied the data and drew out important points establishing themes. This format is very similar to the constant comparative method, which characterizes the following:

7. Go through the data again and again.
8. Compare each element, phrase, sentence or paragraph with all of the other elements.

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a classical building facade with columns and a pediment, with the text 'UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE' below it.

UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

(Thomas, 2017: 245)

With the above-mentioned issues in mind, I can mark my data with codes, colour schemes or abbreviations. As I highlighted the important facets of my data emerged with important themes that capture the contents of my data and brings light to the research questions. However, as a qualitative researcher I was aware of the amount of data that the study has generated. Furthermore, the substance of the data appears to support the underlying beliefs and value systems of my study but based on this chapters' presentation it will be impossible to present and analyse all of the data in this limited space that this chapter would allow. Therefore, in order to overcome this problem, I have had to make a rigorous selection of important points. In light of this, I have decided to include some of my data strands here and present the rest in the appendices of my thesis (the entire interviews).

In the next segment, I will present selected strands of data that relate to the research questions in order to get a better and perhaps, a more definitive picture of teachers' perception about the different texts as related to the textbook and its practice. Hence, what counts as knowledge in this study is "synonymous with the context-bound characteristics of the setting in which it accrued" (Bailey and Nunan 1996: 2). Before moving to the interview presentations, I will first briefly share that I upheld participants' confidentiality.

#### **5.1.4.1 Participants' Confidentiality**

The teachers in this study are represented from the first letter of the alphabet e.g. my first discussion is around teacher A and second one around teacher B etc. It is ethically important in my study to safeguard the identity of participants. In the next section, I will move on to the interviews.

#### **5.1.4.2 Framing the Interviews: Hearing Data Speak**

The interviews were recorded, with the interviewees' permission, on a small audio camera. The audios were then transcribed and the recordings archived in a safe place to maintain confidentiality. Transcription allowed me to show the transcripts to the interviewees later in order to gain their approval to quote from them. The data is intended to shed light on teacher practice and teacher dynamics in terms of the English Home language textbook. The following data present information that was gathered from grade 11 teachers. As mentioned earlier, I made use of selected strands of data in the analysis through a rigorous selection. In conjunction with this, I have also made sure that a fuller version of the data is presented in the appendices.

In order to analyse the data from the interviews (teacher C-teacher F) I intend to use between 1-7 strands of information for each question in the analysis. After the strands are reflected in this chapter, I propose to represent the theme by employing its characteristics through a thick description to present the elements of data in the analysis. Furthermore, my readers should be aware that the themes that I used in my data analysis are not mutually exclusive but rather interconnected. In this data segment, I have used different interview questions to solicit the participants' perspective on the English Home language textbook, its functionality and status. In the next section, I present the data from the interviews.

## 5.2 Presentation of data

Data don't speak for themselves. We have to goad them into saying things.

Barry Turner, unpublished lecture (1993)

This segment captures teachers' interviews in Grade 11. Most of the interviews were held at schools. As the researcher, there was a need for me to be flexible with the period available. There was also a need to shift the questions around in order to build an atmosphere so teachers could be engrossed in the topic. The enormous quantity of words collected through the interviews needed to be refined and summarised. The transcription of the interviews can be seen in the Appendix section. Some important points emerged from my interviews with the teachers. Based on my observation while doing my Masters I have become aware that as a researcher you/I can talk many unnecessary things. Therefore, it was my intention to try to limit this component in my questioning and response. Since this was the first recipient, it also served as good practice for concern. Furthermore, the data from the first three interviews that I present in this section were gathered from unstructured interviews and I indicate teacher responses from the first letter of the alphabet e.g. teacher A, teacher B and teacher C.

Therefore, I indicate the teachers as shown in my presentation: TA, TB, and TC. In the interviews, I refer to myself as the researcher, which is represented by the letter R.

### 5.2.1 Data Segment 1: Teacher A

Based on my beliefs and value systems my data analysis is a narrative in which constructions are synonymous with connections and interpretations of experiences. Therefore, I present my data as a retelling of the response phenomenon (Bilton and Sivasubramaniam 2009: 315). As researchers, we are living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story and reliving a life story (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 60). Before the data was collected, I have theorized in chapters 2 and 3 that the English textbook can enable a stimulating environment in the classroom. The first interview in this study appears to be in keeping with the above phenomenon. Although there will be a discussion on the different themes that arouse from the interviews I do believe that a short deliberation of some aspects after I present the thoughts and strands is sufficient and necessary.



### **5.2.1.1 My Perceptions of Teacher A**

Teacher A is in her fifties. She has been teaching over twenty-five years. She is enthusiastic in my opinion and appears to be an encouraging teacher. She stimulates and challenges her learners in an exciting way and it appears is concerned with the classroom atmosphere because this can stimulate learning. She appears to be dominant and a self-confident person and is well organized. However, she comes across as timid yet gentle. She scores very high on sensitivity and flexibility. Her students emphasize the pleasant atmosphere she creates in the classroom. In the next section, I will highlight the different themes that arose/ascended from my interview with teacher A. The entire interview can be viewed in the appendices.

### **5.2.1.2 Landscape: Issues and Insights from Teacher A's Interview**

The first interview brought some important issues to the surface. The first issue was the component of relevancy. I will now briefly discuss this issue.

### **5.2.1.3 Relevancy: The Art of Contact with Senior High School Learners**

This inquiry inspires to enhance the concept of relevancy in order to draw learners closer into the classroom lesson. The above concept 'relates to how a text can connect with an appeal to students through its meaningfulness' (Sivasubramaniam, 2006: 15).

The following data strands are excerpts from the interviews that elicit the views of teacher A on the role of the teacher, textbook and learner in the English Home language classroom.

The following response focused on the role of relevancy and teaching a text that resonates with learners in the English Home language classroom.

R: Comprehension, poetry, whatever you choose for that age group. How would you go about it and what would you like to draw? Whether it is from the newspaper or from magazines, what do you think attracts them? What keeps their attention in your opinion? What type of text would [use] you for that type of age group?

TA: I like to choose something that's relevant, so I don't necessarily go through you know just do a text because it is there. So first of all, I'll try to choose something that I think they can learn something. I think with our grade 11, these are sort of the more mature teenagers. I have sort of two things that I think are important. On the one hand, I think teenagers must be, must have a certain kind of awareness about things that are

happening in the world, generally because they [are] too flighty, I mean they [are] very self-centred so, so I think on the one hand they must read things that, that sort of inform them and give them that kind of sensitivity towards what's happening in the world, but on the other hand because they are so you know about themselves, they also like things that are uhm that are more fun and you know sort of more geared towards teenagers, so kind of a balance between the two.

The views expressed in teacher A's words underlie her decision to use material from the textbook or not to bring a connection between her and the learners for the sole purpose of stimulating better learning.

Teachers A's concept of relevancy appears to lean towards Scholes (1985: xi) concept of textual power which emphasizes that "texts are places where power and weakness become visible and discussable, where learning and ignorance, manifest itself. Although the concept of relevancy is a simple concept, it is often a neglected one. It might be easy to practice the concepts of relevancy in the first two to three weeks of school; however, it might not be that easy to carry it over for the entire year. The next strand highlights the elements of dealing with the text of a comprehension that does have the potential to entice a learning environment that draws in the learner to be an active participant in the classroom.

R: Do you go into the background? Especially when you're dealing with a comprehension.

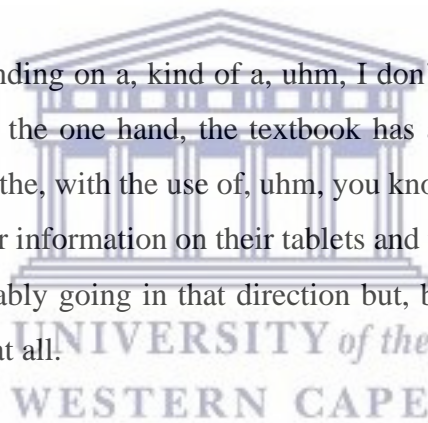
TA: Yes, we will read, ill maybe just give a bit of the context, I'll explain a bit of the context of you know what it is about and then read a bit, get children to read also, maybe highlight certain things that come up in the text, whether it be vocabulary, whether it be certain expressions, I'll highlight things about the language as well as about the content. So uhm yes so that by the end, they have you know, sometimes if it's something that they have in their books and not in the textbook, I get them to highlight, I mean physically highlight the things on their page and if it's something new that they've learnt you know just to, to sort of reinforce It so that at least now it becomes part of their knowledge and their vocabulary and the look at the specific questions. I must say that sometimes I don't, I don't always like the questions that are set on the text in this book, in fact I picked up a few incorrect references, line references and things like that, paragraph references so...

The above data strands highlight the fact that a text has a pretext and a post-text that bring harmony to the comprehension. Therefore, the assumption is that when a text is relevant then learners would like to know more about the subject matter and this can stimulate discussion and initiate deep-rooted questions. Furthermore, teacher A practices the positioning of new questions, which is an element of experience. However, even though teacher A is trying to maximize the skill of teaching and stimulating the classroom with her up-to-date teaching style she is aware that the textbook is under threat and that it might be inevitable that the textbook will lose its appeal. The next strand positions this thought:

R: Just in terms of your own opinion, do you think that the English textbook is still relevant in the 21st century? Broadly speaking, but also at the current school that you're teaching at?

TA: Well I think we're standing on a, kind of a, uhm, I don't know, middle ground like a crossroads because on the one hand, the textbook has always been part of language teaching but now with the, with the use of, uhm, you know [IT] and children more and more having their, their information on their tablets and that.

Uhm, I think we probably going in that direction but, but that doesn't mean that the textbook is not useful at all.



In the above-cited strand teacher A highlights the fact that even though the textbook is losing its appeal in many respects, as teachers we should not blindly forget about it. Furthermore, the use of the current textbook that teacher A is using is sufficient in her capacity. The strand below signals that significance:

R: What elements of the textbook do you appreciate?

TA: Well there are several things, uhm, first of all, if you, if you were just to glance through it, you know without looking at specific things, I think it is very uhm, I like the layout, I like the use of colour, I like that there are lots of attractive features you know, uhm that makes it more child-friendly. Also, I like the way they have the explanation at the beginning of each section and then a nice exercise, you know, just to consolidate what the chapter is about

The stimulating features in any textbook can increase the use of it. Ultimately, the presentation of the English Home language textbook can draw in the learners and stimulate them to learn. Teacher A further acknowledges the characteristics of the textbook that she currently uses in the response below:

R: And currently at the school you are teaching, using the oxford one, do you find this a satisfactory textbook?

TA: Well this particular textbook, I think is probable better than most of the others that I've used before, so I do find it useful yes. Definitely a good one

Teacher A in her current teaching capacity finds the textbook acceptable. Furthermore, she propels herself to lean towards a more learner-centred approach. The following strand articulates her sentiments:

R: And your own teaching style, are you learner-centred? What is your, your uhm, your teacher style?

TA: I think I'm trying to work towards being more uhm, allowing more uhm how can I say, learner-centeredness, if you can call it. I tend, I still find I tend to explain too much and not leave time for them to do their own discussion. I try to have a balance but I still find, especially with bigger classes, and with children who are, who easily, you know take advantage of the easy setup? You know it is more difficult you know to keep control.

Teacher A also brought out the fact that the textbook can become a barrier if not nurtured probably. The following sentiments signify the element of adaptation, which I have addressed in Chapter 2:

R: Can the textbook or the type of text become a barrier to the learner?

TA: I think, yes, I think it is how you use it. I mean no textbook, I think, can be used as is. Uhm, you, you, there's no way you going to allow a class to use chapter one and do everything in chapter one, chapter two and do everything... so you basically going to

select, you going to select. I don't think I've ever used a language textbook from cover to cover, so you going to select. For example, there will be good texts, I actually like the selection of comprehension texts in here, so I won't use all of them, ill select. I'll also add some of my own, it doesn't mean that I use this book exclusively for language, so ill add some other things. So, if you talk about a barrier in terms of the content in here, if there is any content that I find not suitable for the purpose that I'm going to use it for at that particular moment then I just don't use it. But I will choose the ones that I think are useful.

Teacher A's views on the ecology of teaching with the textbook can be summarized as follows: Although the entire interview can be summarized in many more points I have decided to limit each interview to five points.

#### **5.2.1.4 Summary of the Interview**

1. Teacher A believes that it is important to connect relevant texts to learners' lives.
2. Teacher A follows a learner centred approach.
3. Teacher A believes her current textbook is sufficient for its practical use in the classroom.
4. Teacher A highlights important features of the textbook that can come across attractive and draw in teachers and learners for learner stimulation.
5. Teacher A believes that the textbook can also be a barrier to the learner in the classroom.

In the next section, I present the elements of teacher B interview.

#### **5.3. Data Segment 2: Teacher B**

In teacher B's interview several themes concerning the perception of the textbook emerged. The second interview in this study also appears to be in keeping with certain elements in chapter 3. Although there are some good positive affirmations about the textbook, the negative issues expressed also tell a story that is vital to bring change in the construction of the English Home language textbook for grade 11. I present below themes identified in my analysis.

### **5.3.1 My Perceptions of Teacher B**

Teacher B is in his late forties. He has been teaching over twenty years. He is a great orator and powerful motivator. He knows how to stimulate and challenge his learners to achieve better results. Furthermore, he also knows how to motivate teachers and is often a speaker at teacher discussions in the Metropole Central district. He also appears to be dominant and a self-confident person and is well organized. Like teacher A he scores high on sensitivity and flexibility having taught in a number of different institutions. In the next segment, I will highlight the different themes that surfaced from my interview with teacher B. The entire interview can be viewed in the appendices.

### **5.3.2 Landscape: Issues and Insights from Teacher B's Interview**

The second interview raised some important issues. I will now briefly focus on the issue.

### **5.3.3 Textbook Vulnerability: Shaping its Contents for Future Generations**

I am inclined to think that my investigation also inspires the vulnerability of the textbook. In highlighting some of these aspects, we are made aware of some of the reflections, which teachers might share or resent about the English Home language textbook.

The first issue that came to the forefront in teacher B's interview was the fact that the textbook was insufficient and lacked many components that learners need to improve in the subject of English. The following response focused on some aspects of the inconsistencies of the textbook:

R: Good day Sir. I appreciate the interview. I am going to jump right into it. In your opinion to what extent, do you believe that the English Home language textbook is still a relevant tool in the senior phase of high school?

TB: I do not find the textbook particularly useful. The reality is that even at grade 11 level learners need more in the way of relevant exercises, and more pertinent comprehension passages that 'speak' to their experience. A textbook is by its very nature dated the day it is written so it is perhaps too much to expect that it be current. While the textbook tries to be up to date and relevant it cannot be expected to do so.

There is a paucity of language material suitable for the kind of learners that many educators encounter – those doing English Home Language despite the language not

actually being their ‘home language’. I believe that pertinent compilations of material more suited to the context and needs of learners work more effectively in addressing the requirements of learners.

I am not so sure that the textbook actually comes to grips with where young people are. Some of the material is ridiculously simplistic and assumes a far more facile understanding of issues than presented.

The above-presented scrutiny of the textbook reflects the contents of what I expressed in chapter 3 (3.6-3.7). Teacher B’s words reveals the persistent danger that exist in the formulation of the textbook if it is not geared with relevant exercises to harness the learners’ potential or in thoroughly preparing them for grade 12. Teacher B’s comment also appears to tally with the notion that Allwright (1982) expressed:

Textbooks are often implicitly prescriptive and thus might control the methods, processes, and procedures of classroom practice and ‘deskill’ teachers.

From the above-cited quotation, we can see the danger that will always exist in the use of the textbook and teacher B adequately voices this concern as I probed a further concept of textbook practice. Teacher B further adds,

R: Thank you for your answer. I really appreciate that and the manner in which you expressed yourself. Adding to that in terms of the textbook, how do you use the textbook/text in the classroom?

TB: I use the textbook on the odd occasion that I might want to focus on an aspect of visual literacy for instance and the textbook has a reasonable example that I don’t have to look for. The same applies to a comprehension passage. So, it serves a convenience function – more like a fast food take-away rather than something more nutritious when the need arises every once in a while.

The vulnerability of the textbook in teaching English in Grade 11 for teacher B is problematic and not a major issue. Therefore, teacher B finds it necessary to be an active participant of creativity in the classroom. Before I decided to deal with the concept of

creativity I first wanted to find out how would teacher B use the textbook. The following segment emphasizes teacher B's position.

R: The textbook has many components. What parts of the textbook do you prefer or enjoy the most when you teach grade 11.

TB: The poetry selection is not bad although it is pretty useless working from the textbook as the learners cannot write notes without defacing the book. It is easier to copy the poem for them.

R: Okay

Often the textbook seems a lost entity. Do you think that the Study guides (X-Kit/Answer Series) have replaced the textbook?

TB: The learners I experience who want to do well or improve are looking to specific books to assist with language or literature depending on their needs. The textbook does not generally fulfil this function. I feel that the textbook is also inadequate in preparing learners for the kinds of questions that they are likely to encounter in an exam and certainly does nothing to take them to matric level. The 'look and feel' of the textbook is also tedious to wade through. There is a lack of concise, precise explanation with pertinent, relevant and meaningful exercises. Too much focus on themes and not enough emphasis on assisting the learner.

Despite the negativity of some components of the textbook, teacher B does credit the poetry section of the textbook he has used. Often times the poetry questions are few in number so there is still a lot to do with the poem and this is where a teachers' creativity can come into play. However, despite the encouraging aspect of the textbook, teacher B also felt that many times the textbook was useless. In using the textbook, it was also important for me to understand the different texts that can be used in a grade 11 classroom.

R: Grade 11 is similar to grade 12 so what type of texts do you prefer to do with Grade 11?

TB: Firstly, a lot depends on the context within which one is working. Learners I teach enjoy contemporary, relevant and engaging issues. They have little interest in 'generic', 'soft', 'safe' material.



R: I have met teachers that compile their own textbooks. In your opinion, should grade 11 teachers compile their own textbooks or should they still rely on the English Textbooks the Western Cape Education Department delivers?

TB: Despite the additional effort I think that there is value in compiling material for learners that speaks to and addresses their needs and interests. With a compilation, it can be a vibrant, working document that is responsive to learners and to situations that may arise in current affairs.

Taking into consideration the above stated, it was necessary for me to understand teacher B's passion in terms of helping learners with specific issues.

R: As a teacher, what specific things do you do to help learners learn better in terms of English Home language?

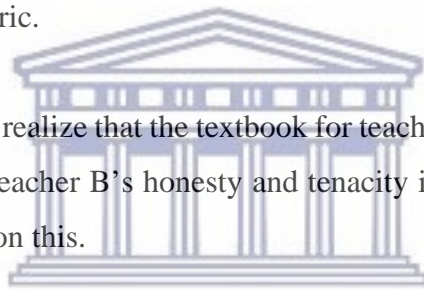
TB: One of the greatest challenges I face is in getting learners to think deeply about texts be they comprehension passages, adverts or cartoons. There is often a superficiality to their responses. Verbally, learners are often capable but battle to formulate cohesive, cogent and comprehensive written answers. I therefore try to develop an approach to answers which provides them with a step-by-step process to access and respond to what they are reading/viewing. The same is true of literature. The second or third mark in a question is lost because of a lack of obvious detail.

Learners often lack basic writing skills. They are incapable of telling a story that conveys an authentic voice. Sustaining interest in a structured way is also difficult. Reading examples of learner work, both 'good' and 'bad' often helps elicit appreciation for what is effective. Just having learners write an introduction or conclusion to a topic and have them read it out is a way to engage focussed writing and understanding of purpose.

I believe one important component that also emerged from my interview with teacher B was the fact that teacher B was very confident in as to how he would structure a Grade 11 textbook. The following segment emphasizes the issue in focus here:

- R: Is there any particular way that you would structure an English Home language textbook or are you satisfied with the current structuring of textbooks.
- TB: Maybe structuring the book around sections: writing, comprehension, visual literacy, language, literature would be more useful. This has potentially more value in providing a comprehensive and more conclusive approach than the current bits and pieces of everything everywhere style.
- R: I have seen how a text that is used in the classroom can become a barrier. In your opinion do you think that the English Home language textbook can become a barrier to grade 11 learners?
- TB: It can be. With the poetry as I mentioned earlier, the textbook is not helpful. The learners cannot engage with the actual poem by annotating. The questions are often not helpful. While I don't believe in preparing kids, no attention has been paid to building learners understanding of the kind of questions they are likely to be faced with in matric.

As I closed on this interview, I realize that the textbook for teacher B is not all that fashionable. However, I was intrigued by teacher B's honesty and tenacity in teaching. In the observation segment, I propose to expand on this.



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### 5.3.3.1 Summary of the Interview

1. Teacher B believes that the textbook is not particularly helpful.
2. Teacher B believes that there is a paucity of suitable language material for the kind of learners.
3. Teacher B uses the textbook in a limited capacity.
4. Teacher B believes that there is also a lack of concise, precise explanation with pertinent, relevant and meaningful exercises.
5. Teacher B believes like teacher C believes in compiling your own material does have merit because teachers can specifically feed learner learners. Teacher B also believes that the textbook can also be a barrier to the learner in the classroom.

#### **5.4 Data Segment 3: Teacher C**

In this interview, a very important theme emerged. The fact that teacher C does not use a textbook in grade 11 is intriguing to this study. For me this demonstrated innovation and creativity are in keeping with the components of innovation that I have raised in the literature review. The interview was enlightening to me as I discovered a ‘new’ (or old) that was hardly mentioned in my dealings with the different teachers that I have interviewed. As mentioned, this interview also appears to be in keeping with certain key elements presented in chapter 3. I have presented below the identified themes in my analysis.

##### **5.4.1 My Perceptions of Teacher C**

I was fortunate to meet teacher C as she will soon be moving to another school in a senior capacity at the end of 2019. This affirmation for me demonstrated her ongoing resolve to develop herself which is for me an important componential feature of a teachernaire. Teacher C is very passionate about English language teaching and is well prepared. She loves her learners and believes in ‘restorative justice’ when it comes to learners. She also scores very high on sensitivity.

##### **5.4.2 Landscape: Issues and Insights from Teacher C’s Interview**

The third interview raised some important issues. I will now briefly focus on the issues.

##### **5.4.3 Replacement: Enhancing Information Output for Personal Gain in Grade 11**

This inquiry is set to enhance the concept of creativity in order to optimize the capacity to teach effectively, which in turn will increase learner output and help remedy learner deficiency in the classroom. A teacher who has the characteristic of creativity will develop a classroom in which all the elements of creativity—space, movement, sound, rhythm, shape, and colour are used to provide the most favourable learning environment (Walker, 2013: 37). Teacher C embodies the essentials of the above-cited quotation. I consider teacher C to be a teachernaire because she took the initiative to set up her own textbook for her class in her context. The first question and teacher C response highlights this,

R: Miss thank you for the interview. I appreciate it. I will start immediately with the questions. In terms of the textbook, what is your perception of the English Home language textbook? Do you think that the English textbook is still relevant in the 21st century?

TC: Well firstly, I do not use a textbook. Of all the textbooks out there, too many of the textbooks are too mechanical. So, to accommodate good texts we compile our own textbook with material that we consider relevant. Of course, the material and type of lesson must adhere to the CAPS requirement.

Out of the 12 teachers that I have interviewed teacher C was the only teacher to recognize the fact that the textbook can be replaced with one's own creativity. The above characteristic reflects a level of flexibility that can be useful for understanding the climate of a classroom and deducing what type of texts the learners might appreciate more. This in return dictates as to when and how to use the text selected by teacher C. The following response emphasizes position.

R: Okay, and terms of using the textbook in the classroom. Do you have specific days for using the textbook?

TC: I don't use it on specific days. I use it to reteach a certain component and that is why I prefer to use my own material.

R: That is interesting and very creative and in terms of the type of materials that you like to use in reference to the different types of materials.

TC: Well I enjoy using different question papers from different schools in my classroom. Also, in some textbooks the information at the back with the writing formats, grammar rules and the exemplar papers are quite useful if the learners use it constantly because it resembles the exam format.

The segment presented above also confirms the fact that although she has developed her own textbook it does not mean she does not look through textbooks because some textbooks have question papers that can be used. Teacher C does the above because different learners have different difficulties and as a teacher it is important to be acutely aware of these differences. My next segment below highlights the issue in focus here:

R: Thanks. In terms of teaching grade 11's, what barriers do you see in your classroom?

TC: My learners struggle to transfer theoretical concepts like grammar to their writing and have difficulty with recognizing parts of speech in contexts. This in return affects other areas of writing.

R: Okay, adding to that in terms of the difficulties, how do you handle these difficulties in the classroom?

TC: I use many different texts to practice, i.e. answering the same type of question, just on a different text. This can help learners practice their weakness. Sometimes if I need to work on their concord then I might do five questions.

Also like most teachers, I will identify the weak ones as early as possible. As we move closer to the examination, I do have some extra classes for grade 12 and I often ask grade 11 learners to join the class.

As I mentioned that I do not use the textbook but in other components, I also address Shakespeare difficulties, poetry. Dealing with these difficulties, I create a Google drive folder where they have access to all the work we did in class. With poetry, I try to make use of as many visual images as possible so that they can see the images in the poem. I believe that sometimes images also help with tone, contrast and other aspects for understanding. I also use YouTube videos and readings of the poems.

Teacher C highlights a very important aspect in the abovementioned segments. First, the concepts of grammar are not that easy for learners in South Africa. This is often seen at times in the Grade 12 matric papers and especially in relation to question five of paper one. Teacher C highlights this aspect to a certain degree in her response. Furthermore, this adds to the idea as to why teacher C uses her own material most of the time to find solutions to those barriers or difficulties in the classroom.

The above presented segment helps us understand handling barriers learners face. However, in relation to this I also asked teacher C what can one do if the textbook is barrier itself. The segment below speaks to that:

R: Very good...also in your opinion do you think the textbook can become a barrier.

TC: Well, if we were to use the textbook, the only barrier would be the learners not bringing the textbook to school and that is one of the reasons I compile my own textbook.

R: That's a unique teaching style. Are you learner-centred?

TC: I think it is obvious that in our context we have to be learner centred. As far as possible, I try to develop critical thinking. In terms of poetry, I will hand out a poem and I will let them first grapple with it by themselves. Then I will ask general questions or I should say, guiding questions, reminding them of prior knowledge.

While the lesson is developing, I will eventually ask them to set their own questions. I will provide examples by using question stems and then I will ask them to come and write it on the board. I have a few mini-whiteboards so learners can bring it to their desks.

Teacher C's first response in relation to the textbook becoming a barrier can come across as a comical one. However, with deeper scrutiny it also highlights the fact that many teachers do not use the textbook or use it to a little extent. Some schools have lockers to keep textbooks, which can help the use of the textbook because it will be in close proximity. There of course is the possibility that when teachers use the textbook once every two- or three-weeks learners will immediately consider that it is not an important book.

#### **5.4.3.1 Summary of the Interview**

1. Teacher C does not use the textbook but does pick up textbooks to look for question papers.
2. Teacher C believes that the textbook is too mechanical.
3. Teacher C follows a learner centred approach and uses question papers from a textbook to reteach a certain component
4. Teacher C uses many different texts to keep learner attention in class.
5. Teacher C is a major use of technology and creates a google drive folder stores work where learners can access it anytime.

As I mentioned in section 5.2 of this chapter, I used the first three letters of the alphabet to indicate the different teachers and present their data. In the next segment I will continue to use the letters of the alphabet to indicate the data from the other teachers e.g. teacher D, teacher E etc. Furthermore, they will also be indicated by TD, TE, and TF etc. T will denote teacher and the following letter will stand for the number of the teacher according to the letter of the alphabet.

#### **5.5 Further Data from the Interviews**

The following data was gathered from semi-structured interviews. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I used the interviews to elicit attitudinal data from the 12 teachers. In the first three interviews, I recognized a deep sense of involvement and engagement with the data, which brought a deep sense of personal enrichment accruing from it.

This signified a huge level of experience, which was gained over the period of twenty years, which all these three teachers have been through. In the next section, I present the questions and then interpret their answers in regard to the categories that I have put them under. Furthermore, I added a theme to encapsulate their data. I will also add additional excerpts from the interviewees to indicate their response. I will now present the themes that emerged from the interviews.

### **5.5.1 Theme 1: The Good and the Bad of the English Home Language textbook**

In their responses to question 1 (In your opinion, what is your perception of the English Home language textbook and do you think it is still relevant?) of the interviews to teachers, they appear to agree that the textbook is still relevant in the classroom. This is in keeping with what I stated in the literature review in chapter 3 (3.3). Their reflection and comments create avenues for language learning through interaction with the textbook.

Before I present the data in this segment, I would like to first offer a reminder that the letter T stands for teacher and the letter next to it indicates the teacher that appears in sequence. TD would indicate that the teacher was the fourth person to be interviewed because the letter D is the fourth letter of the alphabet.

The perfunctory teachers felt that the textbook was an invaluable resource and to some level was learner-friendly. They also felt that the textbook was useful with regard to speaking and writing skills. Some felt that the textbook was incredibly informative not only on a curriculum-based level, but also on a worldly knowledge-based level. Unlike many other textbooks they believe that the 'English for Success' textbook is also very visually appealing; its inclusion of various images, fonts and colours help relay the content in a more exciting and pleasing manner. From the four perfunctory teachers there was one that believed that the textbook lacks subject content.

The following strands below highlight the elements of the perfunctory responses, which I have mentioned above.

- TD: Firstly, I use the textbook, 'English for Success (CAPS) gr.11'. I think it is a good textbook because it adequately covers the syllabus and is learner-friendly because the learners can readily identify with the subject matter covered and with the informal-type of language used.
- TE: I feel that the English Home language textbook seems incredibly informative not only on a curriculum-based level, but also on a worldly knowledge-based level. Unlike many other textbooks the English for Success is also very visually appealing; its inclusion of various images, fonts and colours help relay the content in a more exciting and pleasing manner. This can sometimes be extremely beneficial to many students, especially those who understand content better through visual representation. Ultimately, I must say, this textbook seems like it would be a helpful and informative resource for an English language class.
- TF: The English Home Language textbook prescribed to grades 10 and 11 learners seems to lack subject content. For example, at first glance the textbook appears focused on the development of skills such as oral presentation, creative thinking and pre-reading while marginally introducing subject content. The textbook accommodates the learners that have a rather weak command of the English language.
- TJ: We are currently using the solutions for all which is published by Macmillan. I consider this an invaluable resource to both learners and educators since it covers the various skills which need to be addressed in the classroom. I feel that the textbook proves to be quite useful with regards to speaking and writing skills, this is because it outlines the requirements for the various speaking activities which needs coverage and writing skills which need addressing. There's also a reference and index which I feel that the learners need to learn how to use.
- For exam, the book is extremely valuable however, I must say that the literature component is rather basic as only two of the prescribed poems are covered and the questions tend to be basic. I feel that it is safe to say that the literature studied in grade 11 is not catered for. The language section is also quite lacking in the sense that it only has definitions for grammatical terms, basic exercises these also do not cover the level of questioning that I feel the learners need to familiarise themselves with in preparation for the final grade 12 exam which is what we are geared towards in grade 11.



The above data presupposes that the textbook is still relevant and as teachers they can create an atmosphere that is conducive to language learning in the grade 11 English Home language classroom. This connection with the textbook does not happen overnight but teachers need to be motivated to use the textbook on a regular basis. This appears to be the right way to create an affective environment where students could be willing to engage and actively participate with the English Home language textbook.

The response from the commoners to question one advocated that the textbook was relevant to a certain extent because certain activities could help learners prepare for their examination papers. They felt that the textbook had some material (like comprehensions) that could connect with learners. The following data strands below are excerpts from the interviews that elicited the views of the English Home language teachers on the role of the English Home language textbook.

TG: Okay, I think the textbook is no longer that effective in teaching as it used to be before. Maybe it's because, um, the change and evolution from the Outcome based education.

TH: Yes. I do feel the textbook is relevant. It covers many themes in terms of it has the format of a language paper. It's got comprehension, it has advertisements, there's language in there that you could use in your class. So, the textbook is relevant because you are always looking for material and it's nice to have a book that you can use to engage the learners and the learners to go home and use it as a part of an extended study program as well.

TI: Yes. Okay so my perception of the English home language textbook is that, personally I feel that it is useful but only to a certain extent, because I feel like the textbook doesn't explain like the other textbooks does. However, um, I feel like the textbook has, um, it gives us nice comprehension activities that we can work through with the kids, as well as visual literacy activities and I feel like that, I only use the book for that reason, otherwise I wouldn't use the textbook.

TK: I feel that it is, the first perception of this book is that it touches on current situations; despite, the fact that it may be published in earlier years. For example; topics such as, The Refugee Reality and The Water Crisis.

TL: I feel that the textbook is limited. I found that often topics did not engage learners, they were not interactive enough and it prompted limited response.

Just like the data pointed out earlier, the above data also presupposes just like the perfunctory performers that the English Home language textbook is relevant and can be used effectively for certain aspects in the classroom to enhance the magnitude of language teaching for grade 11's.

### **5.5.2 Theme 2: Textbook Positioning and Functionality**

In their responses to questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the interviews to teachers, the perfunctory teachers felt that because of time constraints they would use the textbook on those aspects that the learners had problems with. The textbook would be used as a revision source for some. They did this so that the textbook would just not lie in the classroom and gather dust. They felt that the word bank in each theme of the textbook was helpful and that the textbook was set out according to time frames which they felt was good. At the same time, there was also the impression that today's textbook comes with a helpful Teacher's Guide which they felt was important. Furthermore, they also felt that their interaction will differ from text to text. They would use discussion in the classroom when it was necessary. The perfunctory teachers also believe that it was important for learners to engage appropriately with the text. They believe that discussion should encourage debate and argument that could enhance critically thinking. Adding to this they felt that because the literature section of grade 11 is so demanding the use of the textbook was limited. They set aside one day which for them appeared to be a Friday.

The following are some of the excerpts from their interviews that bring out the teacher responses to question 2, 3, 4 and 5. The questions were:

#### Question 2

In terms of senior classes like grade 11, how do you use the textbook or type of texts in the classroom?

#### Question 3

Do you use any particular aspects of the textbook to achieve your objective?

#### Question 4

What about your style of teaching? Do you flow with the communicative style of teaching with regard to the textbook?

#### Question 5

In terms of the textbook, are there any specific days you use the textbook?

#### **5.5.2.1 Perfunctory Performers' response to Question 2**

In terms of senior classes like grade 11, how do you use the textbook or type of texts in the classroom?

TD: Because of time constraints, I used the textbook only on those aspects that the learners have problems with. I would revise the work with them and let them do the activities based on the work.

TF: Firstly, I have disregarded the English Home Language textbook prescribed to grade 10 and 11 learners at my school. The textbook failed to provide the necessary resources for my learners' developmental needs—they are incredibly weak in language. Instead, I've made a range of resources available to my learners selected from study guides, teacher's guides and previous matric examination questions. My lessons were initially haphazard and lengthy where I tried to teach my learners as much subject content as possible from teaching resources I was able to extract from the internet. This method was proved ineffective when my learners were unprepared for class tests and examinations—although the content was taught in class.

I've been made aware of the resources available in study guides and teacher's guides and my lessons became exam focused and shorter. I was able to use the most fitting texts from study guides and teacher's guides and use part of the lesson to work through examination questions, too. These texts were used to consolidate and revise content that was taught in class. However, learners were unable to understand the examination and revision questions and I had to work through each question with them. As my lessons and texts became exam-focused, it failed to raise the learners' academic performance. Our learners have poor literacy skills and I need to address this alike.

TE: Personally, I believe that textbooks should be an additional resource in your teaching and not the primary resource, which is relied on solely. This is why I use the textbook to help enhance the information and content that has already been taught and as a way for students to get a different explanation, description or perspective. I like the textbook because it also has an extremely good collection of questions, activities and tasks which help guide the student and push them if need be. I'd also just like to add that the fact that this textbook has a lot of focus on important cultural, political and social themes and issues helps introduce that worldly-knowledge aspect to the student rather than focusing on the content in the curriculum solely.

### 5.5.2.2 Perfunctory Performers' response to Question 3

Do you use any particular aspects of the textbook to achieve your objective?

TD: Yes, I like the fact that these days the textbooks are set out according to themes and time- frames have illustrations and adequate activities have a variety of text types and are user friendly.

TF: My favourite texts are selected through personal preferences. I am particularly drawn to creative writing formats and guidelines since creative writing is a skill I am passionate about. These texts are found in the teacher's handbook and resources shared by the curriculum advisor.

I am most fond of any text related to prescribed setwork including poetry, the novel and drama. From historical context and background to poetic devices I am drawn to any text related to literature. Some of the set workbooks prescribed to our learners are inadequate in terms of examination preparation, they should be prescribed along with a study guide too. Some set work books are dated and are not CAPS compliant.

TE: One aspect of the textbook that I really enjoy is the inclusion of the 'X-blocks'. When teaching a very large class, it is sometimes impossible to ensure that every student is being tested according to their abilities. These 'X blocks' provide tasks for students who want to test and push themselves. Allowing the student to have this choice, rather than the teacher force something onto them that they aren't comfortable with yet, is extremely beneficial.

Furthermore, the fact that it is touching on important issues and topics which should be discussed helps bring the information the students are learning into the real world. This is something many students struggle with nowadays, the connection between what they are learning in school and how it is going to help them in 'real-life'.

This textbook helps combine these two aspects together giving the student a broader understanding of the content. This textbook has a lot of 'real- meaning content'; I would use the textbook as an additional resource to provide examples and further explanations of what I have already taught in class. The articles, clippings and cartoons help provide the students with a deeper understanding of the content and it assists them in expanding their knowledge both on a personal level and on a school level. Ultimately, I would use the textbook as a form of informal assessment; test how the students respond to questions and the real-life content of the textbook.

TJ: I try to use the textbook regularly so that it doesn't become an obsolete resource, gathering dust. I have writing and language periods on a regular basis where the learners are requested to bring their textbooks. I then require them to find information on the formats of various writing pieces, explanations of grammatical concepts or grammar rules as well as preparation for oral presentations. Despite the textbook providing background information, guidelines and facts, past matric papers are utilised more regularly.

#### **5.5.2.3 Perfunctory Performers' response to Question 4**

What about your style of teaching? Do you flow with the communicative style of teaching with regard to the textbook?

TF: My interaction with my learners varies from text to text. For example, when I teach Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet to my grade 11 learners, I encourage plenty of discussion since many learners do not read the setwork text and are not attracted to old English. The discussions are often related to examination questions and linked to everyday knowledge about love. I try to encourage debate and argument too where learners are encouraged to decide on a point of view. I have realised that informal discussions about setwork texts accommodates both the stronger and weaker learner. The weaker learner relies on everyday knowledge in order to understand school

knowledge while the stronger learner puts together everyday knowledge and school knowledge and develops a coherent argument or discussion. My grammar lessons are approached differently and I try to follow a series of steps.

TD: I make use of discussions, questions and answers, group work, debates, research, etc.

TJ: I find that learners engage with the texts be it textbook related, literature or past exam language or literature texts. I feel that learners are usually quite eloquent when expressing themselves orally but when they need to write they appear challenged and in need of assistance all the time. I usually explain concepts, give examples and exercises for independent work or homework however I often end up assisting them to the point where I give them the answers. I know I am spoon feeding them but with the loaded work schedule and generally lazy learners, what can I do? I try to have texts at hand, literature or language etc. which I use as a starting point for the learners' engagement.

#### 5.5.2.4 Perfunctory Performers' response to Question 5

In terms of the textbook, are there any specific days you use the textbook?

TF: I generally reserve the double lessons with my grades 10 and 11s for setwork study- Wednesday for grade 10 and Thursday for grade 11. I use the prescribed setwork to read and develop analysis while using the study guide and past examinations to consolidate content that was taught in class. Any other lesson is planned around notes extracted from my teacher's guide and study guides or past matric examinations. Most Friday's are set aside for class tests that were prepared from past matric examinations. These tests are English intervention.

TD: Yes, I use the textbook for comprehension, grammar and writing purposes on two days of the week time permitting and one day each for the poetry, novel and drama.

TJ: Yes. I usually use the textbook on Fridays when we do language and writing exercises.

The above data for question 2, 3, 4 and 5 reflect that the teachers used the textbook in a limited capacity but tried to use it at least once a week. They were selective in using only certain components of the textbook because some of them felt that it was merely an additional resource. The textbook was used partially but effectively to help other elements of English so learners could be strengthened in certain areas e.g. set work.

In terms of the commoners, they felt that it would be good to use the textbook in terms of content that is relevant for that particular grade. They felt that they would use the textbook when they need to and this could be once a week or once every two or three weeks. Similar to the perfunctory they felt the need to have a teacher's guide, which they hardly see. They felt that when the textbook offered literature activities that complement the literature books that the school is doing is effective but many textbooks do not offer that synergy. They also believe that many of the comprehensions offered in the textbooks that they were using was effective. Also, they believed that it was important that the texts would be used in a way that allows learners to develop various skills in the language. Skills such as their reading skills, listening skills, summarizing skills, writing skills and thinking beyond the text. They felt that each classroom will require a different approach and then as a teacher, we should adjust to that approach. The commoners also felt that interaction was important in the classroom while at the same time not neglecting group work. They felt that the use of the textbook in their classroom was for comprehension purposes and in reality, it was used sparingly.

The data strands I present below signify their viewpoints.

#### **5.5.2.5 Commoners' response to Question 2**

TH: It really depends if it's something relevant and current, then you would want them to engage because sometimes a text might not be suitable for their age group, so you can maybe find things on animals, that maybe something interesting, social media could have, there could have been an article written, how parents must raise their children. So sometimes, you want current articles that can relate to them, teenagers and love.

TI: Oh, so I would make use of various other textbooks such as Answer Series, the grade 10 one and there is a grade 11 one as well.

I feel like that textbook has sufficient comprehension activities. It explains every single part of speech that the learners need to know as well as figures of speech and all the aspects of language

TL: I must admit that the textbook was often not my primary source for teaching language or creative writing. I would often select activities that I found useful and disregard the rest. I would then design my own resource using more age appropriate and suitable texts.

#### **5.5.2.6 Commoners' response to Question 3**

TG: It's usually, um, the language component and comprehension.

TH: Yes, its appeals to me in terms of the layout of it. It's easy to, it's an easy reference to use in terms of you looking a comprehension, you looking for an advertisement it's in here, you just have to flip through it and you could find something that you need and also what's nice about the textbook is there is a lot of colour, its vibrant, kids can see it, because some kids are visual learners so looking at colour and things.

TI: They are into movies, um, series for instance. There is a handful of learners who are into certain songs that are now popular in this time.

TL: Yes, I like many of the visual literacy texts, adverts and cartoons as they were useful as examples.

#### **5.5.2.7 Commoners' response to Question 4**

TK: Due to the fact that a communicative approach is practiced, lessons involve group work, language games and a learner-centred classroom is created. I do feel that the textbook provides this for the learners

TI: So, the communicative language teaching approach, right so, it emphasises interaction. So, the way in which I would emphasise interaction in my classroom is maybe having learners do role playing in the class or group work. So if I were to use that textbook I



would let the learners get into, let us say, groups of 4 and they would then analyse a poem out of that textbook on their own and then afterwards we will analyse it together.

TL: I feel that my teaching methods are based on a multi-sensory approach. I feel is important to include all learners and recognize that each learner learns differently. This also helps to place them in groups according to strengths and then give them personalized challenges.

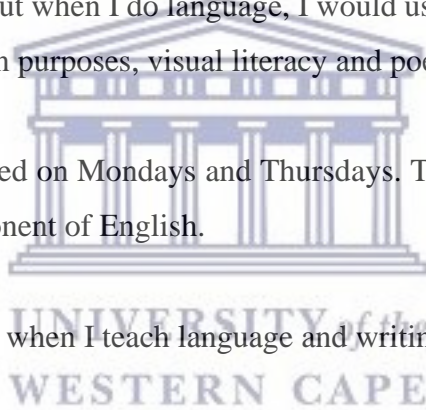
#### **5.5.2.8 Commoners' response to Question 5**

TH: I have specific days, so poetry one day, language one day, and the novel on the other two days.

TI: Not any specific day, but when I do language, I would use the textbook, but like I said, only for comprehension purposes, visual literacy and poetry exercises.

TK: Yes, the textbook is used on Mondays and Thursdays. This is when the learners focus on the language component of English.

TL: Yes, I use the textbook when I teach language and writing.



The above data strands highlight the fact that the commoners use the textbook on selective days and mostly the textbook used in their classroom for are comprehension purposes and it was also used sparingly. In the next segment, I deal with theme 3.

#### **5.5.3 Theme 3: Learner Difficulties, Textbook Struggles and Teacher Responses**

In this segment, I will present the data for questions 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 as they relate to handling difficulties with the textbook and how to overcome these difficulties. First as in the previous segment, I will state the research questions as featured in my instrument:

Question 6

Name the difficulties that some of your learners' experience with regard to language teaching?

Question 7

How do you handle the difficulties that your learners experience?

#### Question 8

How do you see teachers contributing to a learner-centred approach in terms of textbook practice?

#### Question 9

What measures have you taken to help learner difficulties with regard to poetry, Shakespeare and grammar, which can be found in the textbook?

#### Question 10

Can the textbook be or become a barrier for learners?

The perfunctory teachers believe that many learners are not interested in reading and with the easy access to films and YouTube videos, it is easier to watch the film. They also felt that learners could not focus with their set work texts. Perfunctory teachers also stress that many learners cannot recall content and so a large part of their teaching can come across as remedial. They felt there is a need to identify underperforming learners early on and then provided help during extra classes after school and in the holidays. This would include smaller classes. Furthermore, they also believe that to remedy the set work struggle they would include multi-media resources that would attract learners and bring better engagement in the lesson. They felt that learners should be made aware that the textbook is an indispensable resource in their education.

They also stressed that teachers should be trained to use the textbook and that teachers should make continuous reference to the textbook thereby enhancing the textbook's capacity. In doing this they believe that learners could then work independently through the textbook. Adding to this, learners should be reading the texts in class and discuss, debate and learn to develop their own opinions. For this group of teachers, it was important to change the poetry and Shakespearean lessons from lengthy and content-dense lessons to shorter, exam orientated lessons.

Perfunctory teachers also felt that it was effective to refer to relevant textbook pages where certain key concepts such as literary devices, aspects of drama and novel are explained to make learners understand concepts. They believe it is important to use different textbooks to address certain problems.

They said it depends on how effectively the teacher is used by the textbook and they stressed that the textbook was a literacy tool that aims to develop literacy skills and therefore can be used. Most of them felt that the textbook could become a barrier but should never become one.

With regard to the commoners, they believe that grammar and language for grade 11 was a very weak area for the learners. They also felt that reading will remain a problem for learners and this affects how they answer comprehensions. They felt that there was a need for extra classes but at the same time they felt it was important to give them extra activities regularly and check it. Commoners believe that discussion in the classroom was important because it could develop critical thinking. They were aware that learners do not enjoy Shakespeare but felt that the elements of paper 1 (language) was a concern. Furthermore, they also admonished the fact that extra classes which many schools have was a temporary solution. They said that in terms of language, it can become a barrier and also some texts are not relevant for learners. This makes the textbook not appealing. The strands below represent the perfunctory and commoner's response to question 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

#### **5.5.3.1 Perfunctory Performers' response to Question 6**

TF: My learners are unable to cope with the setwork texts and do not read through the setwork independently. Setwork lessons are a struggle for these learners and I have slowed down the pace of my lessons to accommodate their ability levels. These learners often fall asleep during lessons, forget or lose their setwork books and are discouraged by the experience altogether. I often lag behind other classes and do not cover as much content as I am required to. Many of my learners are visually impaired and desperately need the aid of reading glasses. This adds to the discouraged attitude towards setwork study. Many of my learners are unable to recall content that was taught during a previous lesson. When I recap an earlier lesson, learners often seem dazed and confused and often agree that I did not teach the content yet they return to class more confused than before. I like to consider my explanations and teaching methodology rather basic and remedial, yet my learners are unable to remember the theme of a previous lesson.

TD: Because learners in general do not read these days they often have problems with vocabulary spelling and writing.

TJ: Learners are generally not interested in reading as with all the accesses to videos on YouTube etc. It's easier to watch the films. I feel that learners are still under the impression that language does not have to be studied. They do not see it in terms of continuity but rather isolation, every grade they learn new concepts. I find there's a lot of forgetfulness as well, they do not remember the basics and these have to be retaught constantly. Their application of knowledge is also challenging, this shows when they have to find concord errors, malapropisms, tautology and editing etc. Despite spending so much time teaching literature they struggle to answer the questions, many of them expect to find the answers in the extract and end up rewriting chunks of the contextual passage.

### 5.5.3.2 Perfunctory Performers' response to Question 7

TK: Well, the underperforming learners are usually identified and they then attend the extra classes during the holidays and after school. I feel these are helpful as smaller groups are worked with meaning their weaknesses can be focused on. I always try to make my literature component understandable. I do this by providing summaries, key points, notes on characters, themes etc. I hand out questions and discuss the answers to the point where I even give out the answers. I try and expose them to as many exam type questions as possible to familiarise them with the skill of answering questions.

Whatever resources I have access to, I make available to them if possible. We do language lessons as well quite regularly and look at model answers. After P3 or a writing exercise I draw up a list of common concord errors which I type out and give to them. This provides a way to improve their writing skills and encourages using punctuation for effect, avoiding common conjunction errors etc.

TD: I encourage reading by letting individual learners take turns to read whatever text we are busy with, letting them look up unfamiliar vocabulary, giving them regular little spelling tests, and giving them feedback on their writing tasks.

TF: I have tried to remedy the setwork struggle with a range of multi-media resources. I wanted to attract my learners to setwork/texts. I have projected videos, pictures and audio during lessons.

This was ineffective since it often changed learners' perceptions and multi-media easily tampers with the meaning of a setwork text. Learners often misinterpreted the setwork and this was evident in their examination responses.

I have tried to develop a model of discipline around setwork study where I often sent parents sms's from the school's administrative system about the learners' participation during lessons, or lack thereof. I have seen a steady increase in the discipline of my learners towards setwork study and I have managed to develop a support system from parents. I have been unable to develop a solution about my learners who are unable to remember a previous lesson.

TE: I feel that English tends to be a very complex language and can be one that is very hard to pick up as it is heavily intricate. One difficulty I have noticed is that many students struggle to digest and implement the rules and techniques of the English language because they don't necessarily understand why it has to be this specific way and not another. It is quite hard for students to adapt and enforce this new form of language practice when they might already be stuck in their ways.

#### 5.5.3.3 Perfunctory Performers' response to Question 8

TF: I see teachers developing a learner-centred approach to the textbook as plausible, but many changes have to take place to accommodate this. Firstly, teachers should have the prerequisite teaching qualifications to teach English Home Language (grades 10-12). Teachers who are qualified to teach English at primary school level should teach English at primary school level. Many teachers have acquired their qualifications, but lack the necessary textbook training. All teachers should be trained on how to use the textbook effectively while developing the skills needed to contribute to a learner-centred approach to the textbook. Learners could work through a textbook independently if teachers are skilled enough to teach them how to.

TD: Teachers should act mostly as facilitators and allow learners to read the texts for themselves in class and to discuss, debate, give their own opinions on the text, and come up with their own conclusions.

TJ: Firstly, learners must realise that the textbook is an indispensable resource. Educators have to make continuous references to textbooks and utilise the information and activities in the book, educators must plan their lessons around this.

The book must also be standardised and comply with all the requirements of the CAPS curriculum. The exercises must align with the matric final exams. I feel educators must use the textbook as a main resource.

#### **5.5.3.4 Perfunctory Performers' response to Question 9**

TJ: I usually make reference to relevant pages where key concept ideas such as literary devices, aspects of drama and the novel are explained to make learners understand concepts. Once they understand the concepts they'll be able to apply it to the relevant genres and possibly understand it better. This is not possible with the textbook we use but rather with others. Newly published textbooks have a wealth of information, questions and guidelines which can help the learners under the literary texts better.

TF: I have offered extra tuition to my grade 10 and 11 learners on Saturday mornings and break-time. The attendance was poor and the lessons were discontinued.

I have changed my poetry and Shakespearean lessons from lengthy and content-dense to shorter, exam-oriented lessons. The content taught during these lessons attempted to prepared learners for every possible exam question. I shared additional resources with my learners including modern Shakespeare texts, examination questions and study guides.

I have included more grammar lessons to my term planner. Before, many lessons were dedicated to literature-grammar was often ignored.

#### **5.5.3.5 Perfunctory Performers' response to Question 10**

TF: Learners' ability levels have to be looked at closely in order to determine whether the textbook is a barrier or not. Learners who are weak in language and struggle with basic literacy skills such as reading, understanding, speaking, listening and writing will see the textbook as a barrier.

The textbook is a literacy tool that aims to develop these literacy skills, but if learners lag behind in cognitive development, the standard set in the textbook does not aid the development of the weak learner and the textbook becomes a barrier to the learner. One has to consider the type of textbooks that are prescribed to meritorious learners. Some textbooks are set at lower order and may not challenge the advanced learner. In this case, this type of learner becomes bored, frustrated and unfulfilled. Therefore, the textbook becomes a barrier. On the other hand, many advanced learners are prescribed a series of textbooks and study guides that accommodates their ability level. The textbook does not become a barrier under this circumstance.

TD: I don't think so, because the scope of language is so wide. Maybe for subjects such as history it can become a barrier as the learners are restricted to what is in the textbook.

The above data reflects that there are concerns with the English Home language textbook. In terms of teaching English in grade 11 the perfunctory teachers face many challenges to create an atmosphere that is conducive to language learning. Adding to the previous point the textbook was a barrier for some but it also depended on the teacher how he/she would adapt the textbook. This is in accordance with section 3.11.1 in the literature review. In the next segment, I will provide the strands drawn from the commoners.

#### **5.5.3.6 Commoners' response to Question 6**

TH: I think that the biggest challenge is that maybe not the fact that the reading but more the grammar and language. The fact that they don't know how to spell characters names which are important things and its simple things you might not necessarily be a language person but just simple tasks that are able to do in terms of grammar and language. I think that also the kids don't always read with understanding and there isn't always time for them to, to teach them that to learn to grasp.

TI: The most common problem is, they have a problem identifying various parts of speech. They also have difficulty reading to understand so that means that they have problems with comprehension.

TK: I feel that the majority of learners do not enjoy reading; hence, learners have difficulty with analysing and interpreting texts. Some learners do not have enough exposure to the target language such as foreign learners and learners whose first language is not English but who do English as a home language at school.

TL: I feel that many learners have difficulties with identifying parts of speech within a text, they will respond better when given the sentence and then asked the question directly.

#### 5.5.3.7 Commoners' response to Question 7

TH: I don't have extra classes but what I have done is I give them an activity and prefer to mark their book and show them where they have gone wrong and during an interval it will spill over and we will continue to work on things where we don't understand but you know that fact that my writing on the board is an indication of them not learning because they're just marking it and they won't understand it but one on one, at least we don't have so many learners so we can do it in an period, giving them an activity and you can quickly mark it and show them this is where you've, the errors which you have made.

TI: Yes, so I'll have extra classes, let's say, every Monday and Wednesday and Thursday also, um, I would love to have it every single day but I can't because learners have to go for extra maths classes as well and during those extra classes we just work through activities and, yeah, that's what I do.

TL: Fortunately, due to my experience in learning support I am able to adapt my lessons and resources. If my class size allows I spend individual or group time with learners that display a reading barrier as well difficulty in understanding.



### 5.5.3.8 Commoners' response to Question 8

TK: A learner-centred classroom is created. I do feel that the textbook provides this for the learners and creates discussion.

TL: Well firstly, we need ensure that teachers are using a learner-centered approach. This task is challenging; however, the content may be taught at various levels for all learners to grasp. The teacher could use the textbook as a basis for the lesson and then adapt the questions or task to suit the needs of learners.

### 5.5.3.9 Commoners' response to Question 9

TK: To assist the learners with their understanding I show them video clips from movies and I incorporate role play from various scenes in Shakespeare's work. In terms of poetry, I also use videos and listening material to assist them.

TL: Usually, before teaching poetry, Shakespeare and grammar I would teach introductory lessons which focus on theme, settings, background and then use the textbook. I teach the grammar and figures of speech separately and then integrate this into my lessons.

### 5.5.3.10 Commoners' response to Question 10

TH: Yes, it can become. It can be a, it does have a hampering effect. That's why it's important to have other resources that you are going to use other than a textbook. You must look on the internet, or you use old question papers or something. You won't find everything you want from the textbook, but the textbook is a guide.

TI: Yes, I feel that, um, maybe on the language aspect it can become a barrier but on the other, like literature, definitely. So, they can maybe just add more language to the textbook; it would be so much better because I feel that learners struggle with language more than literature

TL: I feel that the textbook needs to be used with guidance of an educator as it does not provide suitable guidelines or outcomes for learners. Therefore, it is safe to say, it can be a barrier for learners. One of the biggest changes that had a negative impact was to remove outcome-based teaching and learning materials.

The data from the commoners echoes the fact that language was a concern in grade 11 and presupposes that the textbook did not adequately present the component of grammar and language. Therefore, in that particular area the textbook is in danger of becoming a barrier. I will now deal with theme 4.

#### **5.5.4 Theme 4: Textbook Practice in the Classroom**

The following theme address question 11 (Do teachers use the textbook enough or do they neglect it?). The perfunctory teachers felt that the use of the textbook depends on the teachers' experience. But most of the time it was the time-constraints on literature that dictated the use of the textbook.

The strands below highlight the responses of the perfunctory teachers.

##### **5.5.4.1 Perfunctory Performers' response to Question 11**

TF: The use of the textbook relies on the teacher's teaching experience. I have noted that teachers who have been teaching for more than a decade have taught through curriculum change. These teachers have acquired a series of textbook resources and are able to use the textbook resources adequately. More so, who have marked matric examinations are rather up-to-date with the selection of their textbooks and have used their marking experience to develop the manner in which they use the textbook.

On the other hand, teachers who have just started teaching (including myself) are limited to the textbooks prescribed to learners. We have not accumulated textbooks since our experience in teaching is still to develop. Many of us are unaware of the many textbooks that have been published, we have not received textbook training and our inexperience with the use of textbook places us in a position where we marginalise the textbook. Experienced teachers use the textbook adequately while inexperienced teachers are too afraid to use the textbook.

TJ: I think this depends on the teacher and their subject. With content subjects the textbook is used optimally whereas with languages it seems to be neglected. Teachers tend to utilise other resources especially at an FET level, we tend to use past matric papers rather than the exercises in the textbooks. Although the textbook is used as a reference to revise terms, formats of various writing pieces etc. at a GET level, teachers are more reliant on the textbook.

The above data echoes that teachers often did not receive training with regard to using the English Home language textbook and this in return interferes with the fact how teachers deal and handle a text in the textbook.

In terms of the commoners, they felt that that some teachers use the textbook but most of the time it was not used. The strands below confirm their thoughts.

#### **5.5.4.2 Commoners' response to Question 11**

TK: I feel that the textbook is only a teaching-aid. It is there to provide a resource for the learner. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to scaffold the learner on how to best use the textbook. However, I also feel that teachers often prefer using their own texts as they tend to be more recent and practical texts. I get these from newspapers, magazines and the internet. In my opinion, theme teaching is practiced best in this way.

TI: There are certain teachers, who, um, actually make use of textbooks on a regular basis whereas others don't, but I feel that some teachers make use of the internet; they download question papers off the internet. That could also be helpful, but um.

The above data confirms the inherent pitfalls that come with the textbook and one of the major ones is not using it. This has also been pointed out in the literature review in chapter 3 (3.8.2). In this segment, the interviews yielded some interesting insights. One insight that I found running through the interviews was the fact that teachers did attempt to use the textbook but the use of the textbook was limited.

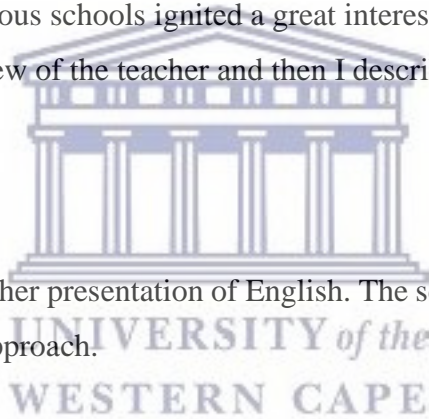
In the next section, I present the data I conducted during classroom observations. I adopt a naturalistic approach to studying teachers' techniques of using literary text as found in the textbook. In using the textbook, I wanted to gain insights into the strategies/technique's teachers employed in teaching while using the different texts

## **5.6 Data from Class Observations**

The following data constitutes my field notes based on my classroom observation. Observation means watching carefully and one can understand the behaviour of certain teachers. As researchers, we do this careful watching in some very different ways, depending on the approach to research that you have decided to take (Thomas, 2017: 226). Observation differs from interviews in that the researcher obtains a first-hand account of the phenomenon of interest rather than relying on someone else's interpretation or perspective (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016:155). In my Masters Studies, I only did research at one school and so my very intention to do research at various schools ignited a great interest in me. In the next segment, I wish to present a small overview of the teacher and then I describe the lesson and its attendant themes.

### **5.6.1 Teacher C**

Teacher C is very articulate in her presentation of English. The school is very diverse in nature and believes in a restorative approach.



### **5.6.2 Grade 11: Observation Poetry 'The World is too much with us', March 2019**

There are 30 learners present in the class. The class first lines up outside. The class is situated on the ground floor. Similarly, to the previous observation I move to my seat at the far right at the back. There are three cupboards and an overhead projector in the classroom. In this particular classroom there are desk, which look very neat.

### **5.6.3 Description of the Lesson**

After greeting the learners, Teacher C starts by giving the learners two contrasting pictures. She instructs them to look at it and gives them time to contemplate. After a few minutes of contemplation, the learners then come up with thoughts, feelings, ideas about the images and discuss it with the learner next to them. There is at least around five minutes of discussion. On the white board words environmental awareness appears.

Then teacher C elicits information from them asks the learners to take out their books. After a brief format of questions and discussion teacher C hands out a copy of the poem to each learner while at the same time the poem is also projected on the whiteboard. The teacher reads the poem and ask the learners to read it quietly and come up with interpretation. Learners discuss this the poem of groups of three and some in two. Teacher C then ask for a report back and learners give their initial impression of the poem. After this session, teacher C uses clips to explain the background information of the poem e.g. industrial revolution, romantic poetry.

After the revelation of the background of the poem teacher C moves on to explain the form (Sonnet), the turning point in the poem and the general discussion of unfamiliar terminology of the poem. The learners are comfortable with the projector and seem to appreciate the images projected. As the information is projected on the whiteboard, the teacher instructs them to make notes next to the poem. The learners start to get a clearer picture of what the poem is about. Having establish an overall understanding of the poem. The teacher does not give them questions. She asks the learners to develop their own questions on different levels. In this process, the teacher assigns certain members in the group to set up questions. After the questions are set, the different groups will answer each other's questions. Different learners come to the board and write their answers. Towards the end of the lesson teacher C selects some of the best questions for them to answer and looks at the answers. Teacher C used 'Prezi' (online program) to teach the poem and create zooming, moving, visually stunning presentations that grab and keep her students' attention.

#### **5.6.4 Debriefing of Teacher C**

Teacher C is in her late 30's. Teacher C is a very vibrant and creative person. Teacher C uses her own textbook and strongly feels the need to harness technology in its fullest capacity. In teacher C's opinion learners are so engrossed with technology that as teachers we cannot bypass it. In the next segment, I will mention a theme that emerged from the lesson.

#### **5.6.5 Theme one: Integrating Learning, Literacy and New Media**

In this study, my focus is directed at Grade 11 teachers and their use of the textbook. Before my research, I did not expect the use of any digital textbook. Having observed teacher C, I have noticed an appetite for the digital textbook. The digital textbook was used by teacher C to captivate learners in order to get a greater output from them.

Teacher C used an online site (Prezi) to teach the lesson. This technological tool was used indirectly (without the learners being aware of it) to:

- Bring a sense of calmness to the learners in order to get them to work.
- Take an old text and give it life through visual formation.
- To limit any noise level.
- Bring out deep responses in tune with the content of the poem.

The above list is linked to the subsidiary questions that were asked in chapter one. In harnessing the different technological tools in the classroom, Teacher C's approach is synonymous with the accrual of visual literacy, which 'can be a pathway into verbal literacy' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). The use of technology by teacher C appears to be central to the enterprise of education. Teacher C demonstrates how each teacher can become an active and more confident meaning-maker by using a digital textbook. These technological tools aid learners in the classroom to understand all areas of the English curriculum. According to Ohler (2013: 15) teachers are more important now than ever. Students need teachers who can help them sort through choices, apply technology wisely.

#### **5.6.5.1 A Past Reflection: The Text's Versatility**

During my Master's Study, one of the teachers that I observed also taught the same poem. This particular teacher used a rap song to introduce the poem and, in her context, it drew in the learners. The above?? observation of teacher C reminded me of the different hermeneutical positioning each teacher will face in his or her school.

#### **5.6.5.2 Teacher C's In-Use Practice of the Textbook (Digital)**

In summary, teacher C used her digital textbook in the following way:

- Teacher C used the digital format to capture her learner's attention.
- Teacher C empowered the learners to ask questions in an attempt to develop their skill of asking exam question.
- Teacher C elicited the meaning of certain parts of the poem and kept a good flow of the different elements of the poem.
- Teacher C taught in a systematic way, which was progressive.

In the next segment, I will present a snapshot of the lesson and the actions performed. This would serve as a microscope and magnify certain elements done during the comprehension lesson.

### 5.6.5.3 A Snapshot: Microscopic Elements within Four Corners

I will now present the snapshot of the lesson. The underlined part represents the teachers' positioning in the classroom

**Teacher C**

**Period: 6**

**Class: 11**

**Date: March 2019**

#### 1. Teacher Activity

##### 1.1 Teacher activity on Entry

- A. The Teacher was standing at the door.
- B. The teacher was standing in front of the class.
- C. The Teacher was writing on the board.
- D. The teacher was walking around in the class.**

##### 1.2 Teacher Activity during observation

- A. The teacher sat at his/her desk working.
- B. The teacher stood in front of the class giving instruction.**
- C. The teacher walked around the class checking books.
- D. The teacher asked questions and engaged the class in discussion.**

##### 1.3 Teacher questioning technique.

- A. The teacher did not ask questions.
- B. The teacher asked 5 questions or less.**
- C. The teacher asked more than five questions.

##### 1.4 Direction of questions

- A. Questions were mostly directed at the whole class who answered as a group.**
- B. Questions were mostly directed to the whole class but answered by individual nominated by teacher.
- C. Questions were mostly directed at an individual.

## 1.5 The purpose of the questions

- A. The teacher mostly asked questions to elicit answers about the text.
- B. The teacher asked questions to elicit specific answers about the lesson topic (closed-ended questions).
- C. The teacher used a mixture of closed-ended, lower order questions and open-ended, higher-order questions in a way that encouraged learners to think more deeply about the lesson topic.**

## 2. Learner behaviour

### 2.1 Learner discipline

- A. The flow of the lesson was repeatedly interrupted by learner misbehaviour.
- B. Learners were attentive but passive.
- C. Learners were attentive and actively involved in the lesson.**
- D. Learners were not interested in the lesson.

### 2.2 Learner Activity

- A. For most of the observation period learners worked on their own on tasks set by the teacher.
- B. For most of the observation period learners were actively involved in dialogue and discussion with the teacher about the lesson topic.**
- C. For most of the observation period learners responded verbally to questions put to them by the teacher.
- D. For most of the observation period learners listened passively and silently to the teacher.

### 2.3 Individual or group work

- A. Learners spent most of their time working on their own.
- B. Learners spent most of the time working in groups.
- C. Learners were given a good balance of working on their own and dialogue with the teacher.
- D. Learners were given a good balance of working on their own, dialogue with the teacher and deep analysis of the text.**



## 2.4 Textbook availability

- A. Every learner had his/her textbook.
- B. There were five or fewer learners without a textbook.
- C. There were more than five learners without a textbook.
- D. Half of the class did not have a textbook.
- E. Used a digital textbook.**

## 2.5 Use of the textbook

- A. The teacher made use of the subject textbook during the course of the lesson.
- B. The teacher did not make use of the textbook.
- C. The teacher used a digital textbook and additional material.**
- D. The teacher left the learners to their own devices with the textbook.

## 2.6 Use of Learner book

- A. Every learner had a learner book to work in.**
- B. There were five or fewer learners without learner books.
- C. There were more than five learners without learner books.
- D. Half of the class did not have learner books.

In the next segment, I present the next observation.

## 5.7 Teacher A

Teacher A is experienced in the field of teaching English and is very passive in her approach towards teaching English. However, she speaks loudly and is well respected by the class I observed. The school does not have major discipline problems and this helps the level of teaching.

### 5.7.1 Grade 11: Observation (Comprehension) ‘School not for sissies’, February 2019

There are 33 learners present in the class. The class first lines up outside. While doing this, other learners are walking pass to go to their classroom. The class is situated in an awkward position. There is a staircase close to the room and it is difficult to line up. Before they enter, I move to my seat to the far right at the back. The windows are on my left and there are a few top windows. There are two cupboards. On my left a small medium cupboard and in the right corner behind the door a long cupboard.

The learners enter and as teenagers, they talk to one another. The class is not so diverse. The teacher stands at the door and when the last learner enters she moves to the middle and greets. The desks are in rows that are common that one finds in other schools. The desks are brown and some desks are in not such a good condition.

### **5.7.2 Description of the Lesson**

After greeting the learners, Teacher A asks the learners to take out their books. The learners are using the textbook, 'English for Success'. She asks the learners to turn to page 106 because they will be dealing with a comprehension, 'School not for Sissies. The comprehension consists of a number of short paragraphs and she starts to read. After reading for a brief moment, she points to a learner to continue. It is a boy and he reads with some stumbling of certain words but is helped by other learners. There is an exchange of readers as the passage is long but is shared adequately.

At the end of the comprehension, the teacher asks learners to inform her what the text is about. An interaction takes place. Certain learners give a few responses and the teacher highlights what they said. One learner says that more learning takes place outside the classroom and refers to line 11 because of the assumption that the author of the text made. A few learners agree but respond in some colloquial expressions. The teacher asks who agrees with her. Some hands go up. There are a few boys agree and adds that it makes sense because school often feels like a prison and children become street smart outside of school and learn to survive. As the lesson continues, the comprehension is analysed and there is a sense of deep engagement with the text.

I notice from the text and the conversation between teacher and learners that for many learner's school is often regarded as a burden. Indirectly, the text that the teacher is teaching helps to reinforce stronger learners to maintain their passion for coming to school as well as motivate weaker learners to be proud of themselves for continuously coming to school. As the lesson continues, parts of the comprehension are tossed around and questions are asked to grab the attention of learners. The teacher explains the figures of speech that the text brings out namely pun and bathos. From my observation, learners are familiar with the pun and the teacher explains bathos.

Even though the textbook provides an explanation of bathos on the right-hand side of the comprehension segment, the teacher has another definition and reinforces with another example. As I look at the text, the paragraphs are laid out with a number of attachments. After the text is explained, the teacher directs the learners to start with the questions.

In question one a term, 'jargon' needs some explanation, which the teacher again provides by using other examples. There are ten questions and the teacher admonish them to finish the questions. The teacher asks a learner to do number one on the board and when the answer is written and shared with the rest of the class the teacher says thank you. As the teacher is teaching, she constantly moves around pausing in one spot for a brief moment as if to connect with all learners and then pointing certain learners to do the other questions on the board. While I was also present, I notice that there were no bathroom breaks.

### **5.7.3 Debriefing of Teacher A**

Teacher A is in her 50's. Teacher A is very passionate about teaching English in the senior phase. However, teacher A does feel that certain elements of the textbook are not much of a practical help. Like many learners, some are lazy and many of them get bored quickly. In teacher A's opinion the fact that there are learners who engage in the classroom on a regular bases helped her to sustain her focus and attempt as much as possible to teach English in an active manner. Teacher A also felt that it was essential to keep learners busy.

In the next segment, I will mention a theme that emerged from the lesson.

### **5.7.4 Theme One: Class Movement Creating Class Cohesion while engaging with the Text that is Relevant to the Learners**

Theme one does sound simple but I believe through the process of simplicity, we can often get more done. I believe that one of the most important elements of the classroom is the relationship between teacher and learner. The relationship with teacher A's students started at the door when she acknowledged their presence. This simple gesture strengthens relationships in the classroom. In return, this harnesses class involvement no matter what type of text the teacher decides to use. From the professional development program (Capturing Kids' Hearts), there was one takeaway that benefitted me the most: If I have a good relationship with my students, I can push them harder and further to learn because they trust me.

In conjunction with our interview, Teacher A did stress that relevant texts are vital and should be a concern for teachers.

Teacher A was small and timid and I assume that this was her way of managing discipline in her class by moving around in the classroom. Moving around gave impetus to the text.

This practice is in keeping with what Johnston (2011) refers to as ‘control your classroom, not your students’. Although there was a limited noise factor, I believe that the constant eye contact and movement to individual tables sets a precedent that the learners are aware of the teacher’s close-range inspection. In my view, this can numb the learners’ ability to act up and behave in a loose way. However, it should also be noted that the reverse is also possible and is based on the context of the school or classroom. Furthermore, through the constant movement, I also believe that teacher A breaks down the cultural differences by coming across as approachable.

Based on the two key points that I mentioned, I believe that the text introduced in this environment creates cohesion and willingness to understand the comprehension.

#### **5.7.5 Teacher A’s In-Use Practice of the Textbook**

In summary, teacher A used the textbook in the following way:

- Teacher A took the lead by reading first.
- Teacher A stopped the reading activity to explain concepts.
- Teacher A elicited the meaning of certain parts of the comprehension from the learners.

In order to synthesize the elements of the lesson and present the simple characteristics of the lesson which can have an impact on the entire lesson or which can affect the output of the lesson, I will present a snapshot of the lesson and the actions performed. This would serve as a microscope and magnify certain elements done during the comprehension lesson.

#### **5.7.6 A Snapshot: Microscopic Elements within Four Corners**

Using an instrument to record certain elements of the lesson, I will now present the snapshot of the lesson. The underlined part represents the teachers’ positioning in the classroom

Teacher A

Class: 11A

Period: 5

Date: February 2019

**1. Teacher Activity**

1.1 Teacher activity on Entry

**A. The Teacher was standing at the door.**

B. The teacher was standing in front of the class.

C. The Teacher was writing on the board.

D. The teacher was walking around in the class.

**1.2 Teacher Activity during observation**

A. The teacher sat at his/her desk working.

B. The teacher stood in front of the class giving instruction.

C. The teacher walked around the class checking books.

**D. The teacher asked questions and engaged the class in discussion.**

**1.3 Teacher questioning technique.**

A. The teacher did not ask questions.

B. The teacher asked 5 questions or less.

**C. The teacher asked more than five questions.**

**1.4 Direction of questions**

A. Questions were mostly directed to the whole class who answered as a group.

**B. Questions were mostly directed to the whole class but answered by individual nominated by teacher.**

C. Questions were mostly directed at an individual.

**1.5 The purpose of the questions**

A. The teacher mostly asked questions to elicit answers about the text.

B. The teacher asked questions to elicit specific answers about the lesson topic (closed-ended questions).

**C. The teacher used a mixture of closed, lower order questions and open, higher-order questions in a way that encouraged learners to think more deeply about the lesson topic.**

## 2. Learner behaviour

### 2.1 Learner discipline

- A. The flow of the lesson was repeatedly interrupted by learner misbehaviour.
- B. Learners were attentive but passive.
- C. Learners were attentive and actively involved in the lesson.**
- D. Learners were not interested in the lesson.

### 2.2 Learner Activity

- A. For most of the observation period learners worked on their own at tasks set by the teacher.
- B. For most of the observation period learners were actively involved in dialogue and discussion with the teacher about the lesson topic.
- C. For most of the observation period learners responded verbally to questions put to them by the teacher.**
- D. For most of the observation period learners listened passively and silently to the teacher.

### 2.3 Individual or group work

- A. Learners spent most of their time working on their own.
- B. Learners spent most of the time working in groups.
- C. Learners were given a good balance of working on their own and dialogue with the teacher.**
- D. Learners were given a good balance of working on their own, dialogue with the teacher and deep analysis of the text.

### 2.4 Textbook availability

- A. Every learner had his/her textbook.
- B. There were five or fewer learners without a textbook.
- C. There were more than five learners without a textbook.**
- D. Half of the class did not have a textbook.

### 2.5 Use of the textbook

- A. The teacher made use of the subject textbook during the course of the lesson.**
- B. The teacher did not make use of the textbook.
- C. The teacher used the textbook and additional material.

D. The teacher left the learners to their own devices with the textbook.

## **2.6 Use of Learner book**

A. Every learner had a learner book to work in.

**B. There were five or fewer learners without learner books.**

C. There were more than five learners without learner books.

D. Half of the class did not have learner books.

In the next section, I will present the elements of teacher E's Observation.

## **5.8 Teacher E**

Teacher E is Zimbabwean and has an accent, which I am sure, can be difficult for some learners to understand. She has been teaching for ten years. I wanted to observe teacher E because I believe that for foreigners to teach in South Africa is not always easy because many South African teachers have the tendency to believe that foreigners are stealing their jobs. This is why in the back of my mind I hope that she would display some creativity in the classroom. Teacher E is using the 'English in Context' textbook.

### **5.8.1 Grade 11: Observation Setwork 'Macbeth, Act 1, Scene 7', April 2019**

There are 34 learners present in the class. The classroom is big with one cupboard on the right-hand side of the teachers' desk. The class does not line up because it is situated in a corner close to the back gate of the school.

### **5.8.2 Description of the Lesson**

Teacher E starts the lesson with a short review of the previous lesson recapturing on what they already know about Macbeth Act 1 of Macbeth. While this is being done, two learners are handing out the textbooks.

Many schools have lockers and some do not but teacher E keeps the textbooks for easy control. Teacher E highlights the fact that many people speak to themselves and teacher E also mentions that many people sing to themselves. Teacher E stresses what Macbeth is doing here in Act 1 is not that strange. After a brief synopsis of the Act 1-2, teacher E asks two questions:

- Should it not be easy for Macbeth to kill Duncan?
- Is he not a military man?

Hands start to go up and different learners respond to the question. The question seems to stir up some tension and is familiar to the Novel that the grades 11's are doing which is titled, 'Things Fall Apart'. The teacher has to shout out aloud a few times in order to get their attention again because some of them are speaking all at once.

Teacher E allows four learners to respond to the questions. After that teacher E asks the learners to go to page 12 of the textbook where they will answer questions on a soliloquy spoken by Macbeth. There are only three questions associated with this soliloquy in the textbook. The soliloquy consists of 25 lines and teacher E asks five learners to read five lines. After the first reading, teacher E asks the learners to read it privately. While asking the questions teacher E walks around. Learners in the front start to highlight the scene and stress what is going through Macbeth's mind and why the question is troublesome for him. Teacher E allows learners to exchange ideas and does not interrupt deliberately but allows learners to engage on a forceful level. There is a heightened sense of noise but the vigorous exchange does allow the topic of the soliloquy to be dealt with. After the exchange, which last about 6-8 minutes, teacher E highlights a concern. Teacher E asks, was Macbeth justified killing King Duncan or shall we only blame Lady Macbeth? A few learners respond that she definitely does have a part to play in his death but the final decision was with Macbeth.

Teacher E compliments the learners for their active participation and their responses. Teacher then refers the learners to the three questions beneath the soliloquy. The learners attempt the questions and teacher E selects learners to come and write the answers on the board. Answers are read from the board and teacher E comments on the answers.

### **5.8.3 Debriefing of Teacher E**

Teacher E is 32 years old. Teacher E used the Maskew Miller textbook. In this particular lesson, there was harmony between the set work play and the textbook. Teacher E used the text of Macbeth in the textbook to reinforce the teaching of set work. The class was well behaved and participated well with the exercise. They were vibrant in their response and teacher E made me aware that she enjoyed teaching this particular class in comparison with her grade 9 classes. In the next segment, I will mention a theme that emerged from the lesson.



#### 5.8.4 Theme 1: Using the Textbook to Reinforce Literature (Set work)

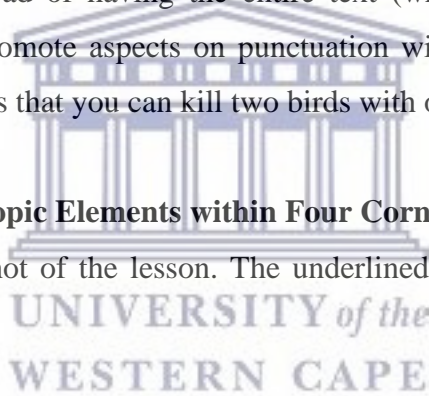
One common theme that emerged from teacher E's lesson was the fact that you can use the textbook to reinforce the Novel or Play that is read in Grade 11. In the Oxford, 'English for Success' textbook the play of Macbeth is reinforced a few times.

It also includes other plays like 'Romeo & Juliet'. Although this sounds simple, I believe that many teachers do not even know that elements of their Novel or plays might emerge in the textbook. In this particular lesson, Teacher E analysed a speech performed by Macbeth. There were only three questions in the textbook based on this soliloquy.

I believe that this can enable teacher E to develop more questions and create space for learners to develop an analytic mind by setting questions based on different levels. Using the textbook to reinforce literature at times could be comforting for learners because there is a single text (short) in front of them instead of having the entire text (whole book) in front of them. Furthermore, the text does promote aspects on punctuation within the confines of the play Macbeth. In essence, it appears that you can kill two birds with one stone.

#### 5.8.5 A Snapshot: Microscopic Elements within Four Corners

I will now present the snapshot of the lesson. The underlined part represents the teachers' positioning in the classroom.



**Teacher E**

**Period: 3**

**Class: 11**

**Date: April 2019**

##### **1. Teacher Activity**

##### **1.1 Teacher activity on Entry**

- A. The Teacher was standing at the door.
- B. The teacher was standing in front of the class.
- C. The Teacher was writing on the board.
- D. The teacher was walking around in the class.**

**1.2 Teacher Activity during observation**

- A. The teacher sat at his/her desk working.
- B. The teacher stood in front of the class giving instruction.
- C. The teacher walked around the class checking books.
- D. The teacher asked questions and engaged the class in discussion.**

**1.3 Teacher questioning technique.**

- A. The teacher did not ask questions.
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**1.4 The purpose of the questions**

- A. The teacher mostly asked questions to elicit answers about the text.
- B. The teacher asked questions to elicit specific answers about the lesson topic (closed-ended questions).**
- C. The teacher used a mixture of closed, lower order questions and open, higher-order questions in a way that encouraged learners to think more deeply about the lesson topic.

**2. Learner behaviour**

**2.1 Learner discipline**

- A. The flow of the lesson was repeatedly interrupted by learner misbehaviour.
- B. Learners were attentive but passive.
- C. Learners were attentive and actively involved in the lesson.**
- D. Learners were not interested in the lesson.

## 2.2 Learner Activity

- A. For most of the observation period learners worked on their own at tasks set by the teacher.
- B. For most of the observation period learners were actively involved in dialogue and discussion with the teacher about the lesson topic.
- C. For most of the observation period learners responded verbally to questions put to them by the teacher.**
- D. For most of the observation period learners listened passively and silently to the teacher.

## 2.3 Individual or group work

- A. Learners spent most of their time working on their own.
- B. Learners spent most of the time working in groups.
- C. Learners were given a good balance of working on their own and dialogue with the teacher.**
- D. Learners were given a good balance of working on their own, dialogue with the teacher and deep analysis of the text.

## 2.4 Textbook availability

- A. Every learner had his/her textbook.**
- B. There were five or fewer learners without a textbook.
- C. There were more than five learners without a textbook.
- D. Half of the class did not have a textbook.

## 2.5 Use of the textbook

- A. The teacher made use of the subject textbook during the course of the lesson.**
- B. The teacher did not make use of the textbook.
- C. The teacher used a digital textbook and additional material.
- D. The teacher left the learners to their own devices with the textbook.

## 2.6 Use of Learner book

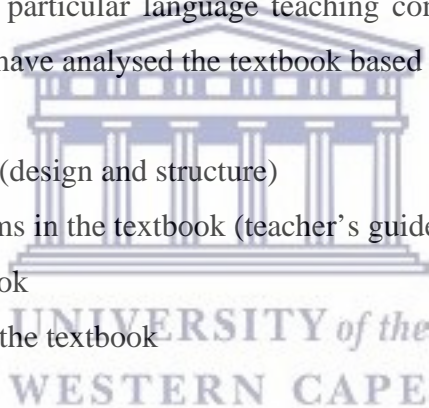
- A. Every learner had a learner book to work in.**
- B. There were five or fewer learners without learner books.
- C. There were more than five learners without learner books.
- D. Half of the class did not have learner books.

In the next section I will analyse/evaluate the data from the textbook. I am using the analyse and evaluate interchangeably.

### **5.9 Content Analysis of Three Textbooks**

Content analysis can be ‘thought of as a piece of report writing, similar to serious journalism’ (Carter & Goddard, 2016). I have stated in the literature review that textbooks provide novice teachers with guidance in course and activity design; it assures a measure of structure, consistency, and logical progression in a class. Therefore, in order to support teacher development and help teachers grow towards becoming an effective teacher, the insights into the nature of material is important. Text use might come across as a dull topic but different texts in a textbook can if they are used properly play an important role in the learning process. Furthermore, textbook evaluation serves the purpose of examining whether the content of the materials is appropriate for a particular language teaching context. In accordance with the section in chapter 4 (4.22.5) I have analysed the textbook based on the following:

- Textbook presentation (design and structure)
- Appropriateness of items in the textbook (teacher’s guide, CD etc.)
- Activities in the textbook
- Relevancy of topics in the textbook



The above four points are harnessed from the work of Cunningsworth (1995), McDonough & Shaw (1993) and McGrath (2002) which I stress in chapter 3/4. I will now move on to present the analysis.

### **5.10 Description of the Textbook: Oxford ‘English for Success’**

The textbook is 208 pages with 10 chapters. Each chapter consists of 17 to 20 pages and is divided into two sections. The chapters are as follows:

1. Chapter 1: Identify Yourself
2. Chapter 2: Crossing Borders
3. Chapter 3: Animal Antics and Activist
4. Chapter 4: Waterworks
5. Chapter 5: Mind the Gap

6. Chapter 6: Take Note
7. Chapter 7: Speak and be Head
8. Chapter 8: It's a Kind of Madness
9. Chapter 9: Urban Legends
10. Chapter 10: Stepping Stones

### 5.10.1 Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of English for Success according to the authors are based on the objectives of CAPS. The concept of CAPS I discussed in the literary review, which was rolled out in 2012. Specifically, it has been designed:

- To be innovative and present dynamic content offering a variety of text types and extension activities.
- To master the English home language holistically.
- To enable the teacher to focus on individual learner needs.
- To develop learner skills and challenge them to excel in their exams.

The general aims of the English for Success textbook is:

- To teach learners the necessary language skills with an engaging text.
- To enhance visual literacy.
- To include a toolbox which will serve as a reference guide to grammar rules, errors of style and figures of speech.
- To have exemplar Tests that provide revision practice at the end of term 1 and 3, and prepare learners for the examination.
- To include a teacher's guide and user-friendly assessment rubrics and planning tools.

English for Success (Back Cover)

### 5.10.2 Authors

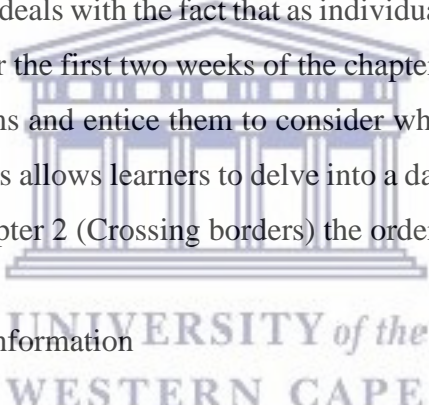
The authors of 'English for Success are I. Barnsley, K. Nortje and B. Strydom (2012). All the authors are experienced teachers. Their overall purpose was to provide a 'stimulating course for learning about English as a dynamic, relevant and modern language'. The publisher of the textbook is the Oxford University Press.

### 5.10.3 Textbook Presentation

Good design textbooks can help the learning process. According to Morgan (2014), well-designed textbooks have the potential to make learning more fun, lasting, and meaningful and may actively engage learners' cognition in many ways. The colour format of the textbook is made up of a dark blue and a light blue with shades of yellow and white. It is suitable for grade 11 & 12. The textbook consists of ten chapters and each chapter consists of ten to fourteen units. Different units have headings like 'introduce yourself, crossing society's border, language Test, Speak up'! At the end of each section, there is an exercise to cement the precious learning units.

### 5.10.4 Appropriateness of Items in the Textbook

In the previous segment, I have used chapter 1 in the textbook. In this segment, I will use chapter 2 as my area of presentation in terms of its appropriateness. The items do not follow a specific order in each chapter but it does reflect the common elements of the English language at different stages. The chapter deals with the fact that as individuals physical and social borders surround us. The sub-theme for the first two weeks of the chapter allows the learner to explore their opinions on societal norms and entice them to consider which ones they will break. The sub-theme of the last two weeks allows learners to delve into a darker side of human behaviour like human trafficking. In chapter 2 (Crossing borders) the order is as follows:

- 
- Listening for specific information
  - Looking at language
  - Newspaper article and comprehension.
  - Discussion
  - Poetry
  - Visual literacy (Advertisement)
  - Presenting a speech
  - Poster
  - Exam-like questions

### 5.10.5 Activities in the Textbook

Based on my own impressionistic view I will infer my stance on the quality of activities in chapter 2. The aim is to become immersed in the data (chapter 2), which is why the written material is read through several times (Burnard 1991, Polit & Beck 2004). As a matter of precaution, no insights or theories can spring forth from the data without the researcher becoming completely familiar with them (Polit & Beck 2004). This reflection is often looked upon as a level of an inductive approach. Almost every second activity is formatted in a colour pattern, which is very catchy to the eyes. The first activity in chapter 2 is a listening activity entitled, 'Graffiti artists cause a split in Darling'. There are thirteen questions ranging from 1 to 3 marks. The passage consists of three paragraphs and the background of the passage is shaded in green, which looks attractive. Immediately following the listening activity is a language exercise on the same passage.

There is a further enhancement of language following using a different passage but carrying the same message. This article is entitled, 'Graffiti art tagged for extinction'. The questions in my opinion are set up in a Paper one format that matches with the grade 11 examination structure. After the magazine article, a poem appears with sixteen questions. In the next section, visual literacy is dealt with. There are two advertisements presented. The colour format is eye-catching and draws in the reader. The first advertisement has seven questions and the second advertisement has five questions. The advertisement prepared the learners to speak about certain issues and this flows into the next segment which is speech. Issues range from:

- Xenophobia
- Rights for refugees
- Human trafficking
- Smuggling

After the activity of the speech, a vivid poster is presented for human trafficking. In this activity learners should develop their opinions on certain matters. The chapters close with an exam-like comprehension. The difference between this comprehension and the earlier one mentioned is the fact that this last comprehension is very short and that can come across as encouraging to teachers and learners. In the next segment, I deal with the concept of relevancy in the textbook.

### **5.10.6 Relevancy of Topics in the Textbook**

In this segment, the term relevancy is the concept of one topic being connected to another topic but more important it is also connected to learners' lives. Therefore, textbooks can determine what topics are taught in the classroom but also the way they are presented to the students (Stern & Roseman, 2004: 539).

Based on the idea Stern and Roseman, textbooks do have the potential to affect learning and teaching in different ways. Relevancy therefore in a way makes the text useful for reading because it has a direct bearing on learners. Based on my inductive process I believe that some of the topics presented are relevant. In a South African context issues like human trafficking appear constantly in the newspaper.

In South Africa, there is also constant reminder of the refugee issue as well. As an added component in terms of relevancy, I will select another activity (comprehension) and present the data concerning its relevancy and format. By relevancy, I am referring to the text and if it has any bearing on learners' lives.

### **5.10.7 Comprehension: Is there intelligent life?**

I selected this activity because I felt it was important to see how some publishers start their textbook(s) and do they intend to grab the learners and grab their attention. This was my own curiosity. At this stage, I am reminded of the fact that the main purpose of this research is to gain insight into teacher practice with regard to working with the textbook while at the same time to assess if the texts used in the textbook can be done in a productive manner because it is a stimulating text. Therefore, to gain an understanding into the nature of the text, looking at the text is paramount. The online text is presented below.



Is there intelligent life?

2009-12-16 00:00

Marianne Thamm

ONE of the joys (or perhaps disadvantages depending on how you view it) of the Internet is the facility for dialogue and the exchange of ideas that online threads offer.

As a writer of opinion, who began life in print where the intellectual current is a one-way street that left no room for potential discussion, I was, at first, mildly excited by the idea of readers engaging with the ideas or issues raised.

I believed that if there was one place we could learn to think and talk, it would be in the dynamic space we call the Internet, where anyone and everyone has the same opportunity to express their thoughts.

In many ways it is true, as someone once said, that the truth is reached through dispute.

For years South Africans were denied the right to free speech. As a young journalist I was prevented from writing about many things. About “banned people”, about what was happening in parts of the country and even ideas or concepts the state found threatening. We continued to try to do so, sometimes risking arrest.

I stood with a placard as security police frogmarched my editor, Tony Heard, out of our offices for printing an interview with Oliver Tambo in the Cape Times where I worked.

So, free speech is not negotiable.

In a way, we as South Africans still need to learn to speak freely. We need to find our voices when it comes to debating ideas and philosophies and engaging others in a productive and meaningful fashion.

But it is clear that the Internet is not where it's going to happen. Well, at least not in the public space as it currently exists. I am not the first local writer who has highlighted the shocking levels of abuse, threat and violence that pass for comment on local websites.

It seems as if the Internet is a magnet for the mad and the bad who feel safe in their anonymity. It is a haven for the intellectually impoverished who revel in attacking the writer rather than his or her ideas. These are often people who know no language except the metaphorical insult.

It is clear from many of the comments that have followed pieces I have written for this website this year that those who lash out seldom read what is really being said.

Many of the responses offer an atavistic, visceral response to a perceived attack. But the comforting thing perhaps is that this toxic online inclination appears to be a global phenomenon. Writers and bloggers in Europe, America, the United Kingdom and parts of Africa— suffer the same virtual assaults.

There is much value in the public exchange of ideas. It is important that ordinary people — and not just intellectuals or experts — are given the space to ask questions or make a contribution to important debates.

Banning the bigots and idiots is not the solution. Forcing them to identify themselves and think properly might be. A society can only understand itself if its members learn to talk to and with each other.

Shutting down a point of view because you do not agree with it takes us right back to where we once were. I still hold out hope for the Internet as the equivalent of a citizen's legkotla.

The text, 'Is there intelligent life?' is written by Marianne Thamm and was published in 'The Witness' newspaper on the 16 December 2009.

The title of the text is ambitious because the title would suggest that the author is going to talk about UFO's or different galaxies but this is not the case. The author is speaking about the power of the internet and the danger of how it is diluting the mind of intellectual stimulus. Therefore, based on the double 'play' of its textual positioning, I believe the text can be classified as a mixed genre. It is a newspaper report with a particular position echoed by the author. The author appears to be justified in her response because the author started her career with a print format of writing and not writing on the internet. Its purpose was on the one hand to provide information on the positives of the internet as well as the negatives of the internet and live your life with integrity when it comes to the internet. Therefore, the social purpose on the one hand was to persuade young teenagers to use the internet probably. Furthermore, I believe that it contains elements of both an information report and a believable genre.

In relation to the structure of the text: Firstly, the attraction of the title is deceptive but attractive enough to induce participation. The headline will fall in line with learners' believability because of all the movies available that perpetuate intelligent life beyond earth. The purpose and stance of the author was also visible in the body of the text, which focused on South Africans still don't know how to speak freely. The paragraph structure of the text is well managed (no long paragraphs) and this helps the readability of the text. Finally, the author stretches the reality of hope by ending the text with the words, I still hold out hope...'

For the comprehension there are 12 questions on the text. Likewise, the questions are set up in a grade 12 format which will help the learners prepare for the final grade 12 exam. I list four type of questions that have been ask to demonstrate the variety:

1. Refer to paragraph 1.  
In your own words explain the joys of the internet.
2. How are the words "dynamic space" in paragraph 3 an appropriate description of the internet?
3. Discuss what the writer is referring to in paragraph 5. Why do you think the writer had restrictions and "sometimes risked arrest"?
4. Explain the writer's point of view in paragraph 7

Following the 12 or 13 thirteen questions there is a switch to the focus of language where I see there are another six questions. They range from:

1. Explain the function of the brackets in paragraph 1.
2. “About ‘banned people’ ...threatening.” (paragraph 5)  
Why is the above sentence grammatically incorrect?
3. Explain the function of the dashes in paragraph 14.
4. Provide antonyms for the following words:  
A Public (paragraph 14)  
B ordinary

The above questions of the comprehension provide a brief impressionistic view in terms of its layout and interactive nature with learners in grade 11.

### **5.11 Description of the Textbook: Macmillan ‘Solutions for all English Home Language Grade 11 Learner’s Book’**

The textbook has 268 pages with 18 themes. Each theme consists of 15 to 20 pages and is divided into two weeks. The chapters are as follows:

Theme 1 Spirit of Africa

Theme 2 Festival fun in South Africa.

Theme 3 Home to gentle giants

Theme 4 Funky fashion!

Theme 5 Super South African sport

Theme 6 Innovative leaders

Theme 7 Ordinary people – extraordinary careers!

Theme 8 Written in the stars!

Theme 9 More than a flag

Theme 10 Technology – Gr8 or OMG?

Theme 11 Problem parents?

Theme 12 Metaphorical masks

Theme 13 A plastic addiction – not the final cut!

Theme 14 Music, movies, media and messaging!

Theme 15 It's our world

Theme 16 From books to buttons

Theme 17 Think, care, act!

Theme 18 Lights, camera, action!

In the next segment, I will address the aims and objectives of the textbook.

### **5.11.1 Aims and objectives**

The aims and objectives of 'Solutions for all English Home Language Grade 11 Learner's Book' according to the authors as the previous textbook is based on the objectives of Caps which was rolled out in 2012. This implies that this textbook has been developed to support the content (knowledge, concepts and skills) contained in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Specifically, it has been designed:

- To disseminate content knowledge previously learnt
- To present explanations and examples of new language concepts
- To present a variety of extracts and exercises with new and challenging literary texts
- To present a variety of current and interesting visual and written sources presented in 18 exciting themes
- To have classroom, homework and extra practice activities, as well as formal assessment tasks that give you sufficient practice to apply both your knowledge and skills in speaking, reading and writing English, using appropriate language skills.

### **5.11.2 Authors**

The authors of 'Solutions for all English Home Language Grade 11 Learner's' S. Bolton C. Foden (2012). No information is given about the authors. The publisher of the textbook is the Macmillan South Africa (Pty) Ltd.

### **5.11.3 Textbook Presentation**

Texts are best used with a clear purpose in mind. In this textbook, the cover page is rather strange. There are two hands that control a puppet. This may signify elements of a teacher control of the text or it may not.

The colour format of the textbook is made up of blue and purple and texts like a comprehension and poetry surface on colour pages, which looks elegant. Like the other textbooks, it is also suitable for grade 11 &12. The textbook is divided in components of work that should be covered over certain weeks. Every unit starts with the confirmation of ‘What you will learn in this chapter’; followed by the component, ‘Let’s talk about this Theme’.

#### **5.11.4 Appropriateness of Items in the Textbook**

The theme in this textbook is Africa. In the precious segment, I used chapter 2 in the textbook. I am using a systematic approach so I will use chapter 3 of this textbook. If I were to teach/use another textbook then I would use chapter 4 of that textbook. In line with the CAPS format, the textbook offers a traditional format:

- Listening and speaking activity
- Component of language (punctuation) as it develops from chapter 1.
- Writing and presenting (newspaper article)
- Reading, writing and understanding (focusing on cinematographic study)

The items presented above are in keeping with the criteria of a grade 12 final examination. The chapter deals with game parks in South Africa and it aim is to elicit learners’ response to important issues like poaching. Furthermore, it asks some questions like:

- How do game parks promote South Africa internationally and locally?
- How do game parks help in the development of local communities?
- What do you think are the benefits of parks and conservation areas for the environment in South Africa?
- Why do we, as the youth of the country, need to be aware of conserving nature?
- What can South Africa do to stop the poaching of our rhino, elephant, Southern right whale and other game that is threatened?

There is a level of appropriateness because poaching is an ongoing problem in South Africa. However, it is not an issue that ranks first in their intellectual capacity. In the next segment, I deal with some activities in this chapter.

### 5.11.5 Activities in the Textbook

As I become immersed in the data, I decided to look at the activities in chapter 3 based on the fact that in the other two textbooks I looked at chapter one and two. In chapter 3 the first activity is a listening activity. This is in keeping with the CAPS format. In theme 1 of chapter 3 the learners are encouraged to practise a listening comprehension with the focus of listening for specific information. Learners are taught how to identify the main and supporting ideas of a text. As the teacher will read, the learners will take meaningful notes. Your teacher will read a passage entitled, 'Doleful Elephants and Speedy Tortoises' by Jim Eagles. In activity two the teacher will deal with punctuation. According to the authors, punctuation is used to provide meaning and order in written language. Furthermore, the authors believe that it is essential to be able to use the various punctuation marks effectively in written language in order to communicate the message or purpose of the written task clearly and efficiently. Stress is laid upon the meaningful use of the apostrophe, dash and semicolon because it can help learners according to the authors improve learners' writing skills. Below I present

#### Activity 2.

Rewrite the review provided below of Dalene Matthee's book *Circles in a Forest*. Insert punctuation marks where you think they are needed. Make use of capital letters, commas, semicolons, dashes and the apostrophe to complete the task. Indicate the name of the book in the text with single inverted commas.

#### **Circles in a forest**

Saul Barnard is a woodcutter with a restless soul he wants to keep strangers away from the forest and stop the destruction of the forest there is also the legendary elephant bull old foot which broke free from his herd old foot and saul share a strange bond in the green duskiness of the outeniqua they walk on circular paths saul barnard rejected by his people and humiliated by unscrupulous timber merchants old foot relentlessly followed by hunters a man and his animal brother together in an untouched ancient forest that is being destroyed by gold diggers woodcutters and other eradicators saul follows old foot's tracks closer and closer to the truth that will change his life forever in circles in a forest dalene matthee focuses on conservation and strongly speaks out against the reckless destruction of the indigenous forest she also takes up the issue of the heartless exploitation of

those less privileged the illiterate people specifically the people of the forest but not only their attitudes and relationships are important underpinnings in her work (some problems of text status here???)

(<http://www.dalenematthee.co.za/english/books/circles/html>)

In the third activity, the learners are asked to prepare how to write a magazine article. However first they are asked to look up the borrowed from other languages. The use of a dictionary is encouraged to discover their language of origin and then they are instructed to create a table and present their findings to the class. Borrowed words include athlete, forest, veld, blizzard, alphabet, hamburger, impala, clock, a la carte, niece, bank, guitar, jumbo, safari, ancient and doleful. After this is done learners are asked to carefully read the example newspaper article provided below and note the strategy used for this writing task. I will now present the Article that learners are asked to read.

### **Stranded fishermen rescued**

Bobby Jordan

(The Times, 21 May 2010)

A dramatic air and sea rescue operation had a happy ending yesterday when two fishermen were found washed up on a beach in a remote diamond area of the Northern Cape. Pascale van Rooyen, 49, and Andries Klaase, 23, said they spent the night praying in the thick fog after their outboard engine broke down during a mission to find crayfish and they drifted out of cell phone reception with only one oar. They had set off from the Hondeklip Baai earlier in the day, in tandem with another boat that also suffered engine failure, but whose crew managed to row ashore. An earlier search for them was called off owing to thick fog. They were found on a remote stretch of beach in a restricted diamond area.

(DBE: Guideline for Teaching and Writing Essays and Transactional Texts in English Gr 10–12)



After reading the magazine article learners are asked to write their own magazine article. After the activities additional practice exercises are given to help the learners develop the skills they have developed in this theme. The theme ends with a summary of all the main contributions of the different activities. I will present the summary below:

## **Summary (Page 48)**

### **5. Listening and speaking**

1. When you record the main ideas of a listening text consider:
  2. fact: something known to be universally true
  - opinion: a personal belief or point of view.
3. Language
4. Use the appropriate punctuation marks for the text you write:
  - apostrophe: used either to show possession or to contract a word
  - dash: used when the writer wants to change the idea of a sentence or use two dashes to include extra information
  - semicolon: used when separating two closely connected sentences without using a conjunction or when separating clauses and phrases that already have commas.
5. Writing and presenting
6. When you write a newspaper article, keep the language formal and include facts. Attract your readers' attention by using short 'punchy' headlines and sub-titles. Answer the Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? of the story including facts, reasons and details, and quoting comments from eyewitnesses.
7. Use a personal style of writing. Include information about the names, places, times, and positions in the article. Use light, attractive fonts and beautiful illustrations or photographs.
8. Reading and viewing
9. An audience reacts to a shot by identifying the composition of a shot (angle of the camera). Cinematographic techniques include: camera shots, camera angles, foregrounding, backgrounding, frame of the shot and line of the shot. The composition of a shot is the way it is put together to emphasise character, theme, setting and/or plot.

In the next segment, I will deal with relevance of the topics.

### **5.11.6 Relevancy of Topics**

I reinforce my position by stating once again that relevancy is the concept of one topic being connected to another topic but more important it is also connected to learners' lives. This textbook is geared to promote South Africa and indirectly protect the youth of South Africa by reintroducing them to themselves i.e. to be proud of their South African status. In chapter 3, some of the material presented might not resonate with many of the learners in grade 11. Many of our learners they have not seen the aspects of the animal kingdom (big 5) which consists of the lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo. Given this, I feel automatically that there is no immediate connection to the animal kingdom. I also feel this particular unit might lack the depth and direction to harness learners' output in terms of academic productivity. Below I present an activity in this unit:

#### **Activity 3 (Page 46)**

1. Research the problem of poaching in game parks and why this is an increasing economic and environmental problem in South Africa to assist you with writing your newspaper article.
2. Research a game park or sanctuary in your local area that works successfully to protect endangered species to assist you with writing your magazine article.
3. Watch your favourite television show and practise analysing the composition of shots and its impact on the audience. Evaluate how the composition of each shot emphasises the personalities of the main characters, portrays the importance of the setting, highlights the director's message or advances the action. Remember to consider type of shot, angle of shot, frame and line.
4. Find a picture in a magazine and analyse its composition. Cut it out and bring the completed task to school to share with your class.

### **5.12 Description of the Textbook: English in Context Grade 11**

The textbook has 348 pages with 12 chapters. Each unit is divided into two or three sections named Read and React, Focus on Literature, Building Blocks and Revise and Assess Yourself with about four to eight activities in each section. The 'English in Context' textbook consolidates and extends language and literacy skills.

### 5.12.1 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of English in Context, according to the authors, are based on the general aims and objectives for secondary school students. Specifically, it has been designed, however:

1. To accommodate learners entering a multi-lingual classroom who initially need to develop home-language proficiency.
2. To develop materials to ensure the relevance of the series to the Southern African context.
3. To reflect the multi-cultural nature of Southern African society

The general aims of the 'English in Context' textbook is:

4. To develop proficiency in reading and viewing for information.
5. To promote writing practice across a variety of contexts to help learners to develop appropriate written, visual and multi-media texts.
6. To develop opportunities to practise effective speaking strategies and express ideas and opinions.
7. To have activities to extend vocabulary use and understanding of language structures.
8. To develop existing knowledge and promote imaginative and critical listening, thinking and reasoning.

English in Context (2006: 2)

### 5.12.2 Authors

The authors of 'English in Context' are J.O. Hendry, H.M. Gardyne and S.A. Burger. Although no information about their formal education and experience in teaching is mentioned in the book, they are all specialists in teaching English. The publisher of the textbook is Maskew Miller Longman.

### **5.12.3 Textbook Presentation**

The textbook is made up of two colours (yellow and white) with shades of white. The textbook consists of twelve chapters and each chapter consist of eight to thirteen units. Different units have headings like building blocks, Effective listening, focus on language and focus on literature. At the end of each section, there is a list of exercises wherein you can assess yourself.

### **5.12.4 Appropriateness of Items in the Textbook**

In this segment I will use chapter one as my area of presentation in terms of appropriateness. The items follow a specific order and they range from:

9. Comprehension: An English-speaking world (questions included)
10. Focus on literature (poetry/effective listening/Drama)
11. Building blocks (figures of speech)

### **5.12.5 Activities in the Textbook**

The data from the Maskew Miller textbook addresses both the diverse nature of South African society and the need to prepare South African learners for the global stage. The textbook thrives in its rich authentic national and international voices. I decided to look at chapter one in this textbook. In the first chapter, the emphasis is on reading and comprehension skills. The first activity is referred to as 'Read and React' on the play, 'War Horse' (page 5). There are nine questions set on this short text. Immediately following this is another text entitled, 'Prepare, indulge, repent' with eleven questions.

The text is not that long and does have the potential to come across as readable and accessible to learners. The above two activities are short comprehensions and both serve different functions. The format of the questions differs. After the two activities the format of questions are looked at and following that is a longer comprehension entitled, 'Time for a U-turn' that reflect an exam type format. The text consists of 13 paragraphs and the comprehension offers 10 questions. Following the comprehension, the next activity deals with interpreting pictures and analysing a cartoon. Cartoons are often funny and this one offers some humour (page 13). Chapter 1 ends with Comprehension test which consist of three different texts.

### 5.12.6 Relevance of Topics in the Textbook

The chapter that I analysed focuses on reading and comprehension of both written and graphic texts. The topics that range in this chapter are attractive in terms of content. Topics like:

- Heartbroken? Take one screwdriver ...
- Cellphone
- Time for a U-turn

The above topics represent some major elements in learners' lives. The topics do have the potential to pique the mind and create some deep discussion. I believe the length of texts presented in this textbook can help the process of interaction in the classroom. Furthermore, the activities appear to be designed to make learning accessible to learners from diverse and changing environments. Some texts are added to help learners who need additional support to understand certain concepts. Comprehension texts appear to be suitable for grade eleven learners because it can enhance learner output in the following ways:

- Enable learners to read sensitively to understand shades of meaning, tone, intention and bias.
- Enable learners to understand questions and refine their answer skills.
- Enable learners to discuss, compare and contrast different texts.
- Enable learners to understand graphic information.

In the next segment, I present the data from another textbook. The three segments on three different textbooks portray the different materials and the division each one has to offer. In terms of the textbooks, there appears to be some harmony and consistence between the layout. The data from the textbook confirms the structure of the CAPS platform. In the next segment, I offer a short summary of the chapter.

### 5.13 Summary

In this chapter, I have analysed and presented the data obtained from interviews, observations with teachers. I have also looked at three English Home language textbooks and analysed three different chapters. The main purpose of this research was to gain insight into teacher practice with regard to using the textbook while at the same time discovering if the material in the textbook does have the capacity to be weaved appropriately for better educational output. Hence, I would like to reinforce my position by stating again that the question of relevancy lies at the heart of this study because as teachers we need to capture our learners' attention in order to maximize learner output. Through the interviews and observations, I was able to compare the opinions and experiences of the teachers in terms of the textbook. The data was presented with the help of themes. The different themes, I believe will help answer the research questions. The data from the observation has also been presented using themes. In terms of the content analysis segment, I extracted units and gave examples of the activities while at the same time allowing my agency to clarify my own personal reflection of some of the material in terms of being relevant for learners.

In light of the above presented summary and my analysis and presentation, I wish to state that:

1. The interviews revealed a perceptible difference between the teachernaires, perfunctory and commoners in terms of their thought process with regards to the textbook.
2. The majority of the teachers do believe that the English Home language textbooks do still have a place in the educational realm of South Africa yet at the same time there were a few who believe the textbook is of no use.
3. Some ideas in the observation highlight the creative nature of some teachers like the development of your own textbook i.e. the teacher is the textbook.
4. Some of the content of the English Home language textbooks do have relevant material that can grab learners by their brains and initiate deep discussion. This in return can help learners develop their literacy skills;
5. The English Home language textbooks contain subject matter with some good learning activities. Some topics presented are interesting, challenging and motivating. However, some are also boring and can create a barrier in the learning process.
6. Activities and tasks in the three textbooks are appropriate to develop language use and literacy skills but a lot depend on the weaving of the text by the teacher.

7. The three textbooks contain good writing activities and tasks to develop students' writing capacities and increase their language use and literacy skills; however, the lack of the required level of language impedes students from developing their language use and literacy skills.
8. This analysis has also highlighted the fact that there is a constant need for the development of educational material for English Home language textbook.

Having presented and analysed my data in this chapter, I wish to discuss the findings of my study in the next chapter. In keeping with the data presented and analysed in this chapter, I propose to generate the confirmatory support that my study needs to answer my research questions in my next chapter.



## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

If there were only one truth, you could not paint a hundred canvases on the same theme.

Pablo Picasso (1966)

#### 6.1 Introduction: Scope and Focus on Better Textbook Practice

In this chapter, I wish to discuss the findings of the study by arranging the data I gathered from various sources into themes (categories) so as to produce a set of narratives. This, I believe will provide a basis for interpreting these findings. The purpose of my study is to investigate how 12 English Home language teachers of grade 11 use the textbook in the classroom. I also wanted to gauge English Home language teachers' perceptions of the English Home language textbook. I believe that my study so far has made an informed attempt to respond to issues that have been raised in terms of textbook practice. Some of the issues I am referring to is the fact that some teachers do not use the textbook. In addition, to the above-mentioned point some teachers use the textbook once a week or once every two weeks. In this chapter, I propose to argue the following:

1. I argue that linking material that have a bearing upon learners' lives can help English Home language teaching in the classroom.
2. I argue that if the textbook does not meet the teachers' condition or intended purpose the observation findings point to English Home language teachers selecting their own language materials for the classroom and creating their own textbook for classroom use
3. I argue that some English Home language textbooks need adaptation and supplementation to make it appropriate for a particular group of students in a particular context.
4. I argue that technology (multimodality) can light up the textbook and attract learners to engage themselves in the learning process.



Based on the above raised intended arguments I hoped that a better understanding of teachers' textbook practice and reflection of the grade 11 textbook would provide awareness and encourage support for the use of the textbook in the classroom. In conjunction with my belief that the textbook can be used effectively in a particular context Hutchinson and Torres (1994) also, mention that the good textbook, as long as it is properly used can be an excellent tool for effective and long-lasting change. They believe that the textbook is an important means of satisfying a wide range of needs that come out from the classroom. The role of the textbook cannot be ignored because it does have the potential to make the lives of teachers and learners easier, more secure, and fruitful.

In keeping with the fundamental tenets of my study, I am also concerned with the issue that the textbook for some teachers has become a wasted resource. It is for such reasons that my study focuses on the integration of creative and innovative methods of using the textbook. I should point out that in no way I am suggesting that English Home language teachers should reject textbooks and only produce their own made materials for their learners. However, I believe that if it serves the purpose of greater stimulation for teachers' grade 11 learners, then it can add hefty value to English lessons. Furthermore, I am critical of bad or unsuitable textbooks, and I believe that some English Home language textbooks need adaptation and supplementation to make it appropriate for a particular group of students in a particular context.

As mentioned earlier in my Method chapter, I want to use my study as the basis for constructing a story of the teachers' story which can be seen as an interpretation of interpretations or as voiced by Jameson (1981: 13) that the all informing processes of narrative is seen as 'the central function or instance of the human mind'. I discuss the issues and concerns raised with twelve grade 11 teachers and observe some teachers when using the textbook. Therefore, my study attempts to answer the following research questions, which are meant to answer my key concerns and issues:

1. How do English Home language teachers use the English Home language textbook in and out of the classroom?
2. What are English language teachers' perceptions about the current English Home language textbook?

The subsidiary questions were:

3. How do teachers use textbooks in planning and making decisions about instruction in the classroom?
4. What learning barriers do teachers face concerning the English Home language textbook?
5. How do teachers view other English Home language materials like the X-kit in South Africa?
6. What are the possible factors that contribute to better textbook practice?

In light of the above-stated research questions, I present my discussion based on the analysis of my data that was collected from 12 grade 11 teachers. The data was collected through teacher interviews (structured and unstructured), teacher observations and content analysis of the English Home language textbook. The range of data collection methods I have used well supported and recommended in qualitative research because it facilitates a triangulation of data. In addition, as attested by Gay, Mill and Airasian (2009), triangulation enabled me to obtain a completer/more definitive picture of the issues and concerns in my study, as well as to help me do a cross-check of information.

I am inclined to believe that my qualitative disposition in this study embraces the advice of Gay et al. (2009), which highlights the fact that the strength of qualitative data research lies in collecting data in different ways. Adding to the study's disposition, the potential findings are aligned with themes in response to the research questions. In the analysis, I searched for connecting patterns along with their congruencies within my proposed analytical categories, as well as the connections or themes that may emerge from the data. At a secondary level of analysis, I believe that the relevant theory and research need to be blended, as these themes are compared and contrasted with issues raised by the literature and the presentation of findings.

As mentioned earlier, I will refer concurrently to my analysis of data and attempt cross-referencing in order to reveal the links between the concepts discussed in my literature review and the findings in my previous chapter. In creating themes, I will provide interpretive insights into these findings as stated at the start of this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter will split apart pieces (chunks of data) and theories to tell the story of my research, I am attempting to reconstruct as a more holistic picture (understanding).

Additionally, my discussion also takes into consideration the literature of effective teaching and characteristics of effective teachers as well as the concepts of ‘relevancy in relation to the classroom climate’, which I believe can also deepen the confirmatory support for my study.

The implications of these findings are intended to augment the understanding of why some teachers use the textbook and others do not use the textbook. I propose to conclude the chapter with a re-examination of my assumptions.

In summary, my study argues that:

- If English Home language teachers do not like their textbook, then they have the capacity to select their own language materials for the classroom because of their understanding of their classroom climate.
- English Home language teachers can develop their own textbook.
- Some English Home language textbooks need adaptation and supplementation to make it appropriate for a particular group of students in a particular context.

Based on the above-stated summary, I am aware that low teacher effort is often considered one of the most serious problems in South African schooling (McKinsey Report, 2007). I believe that many grade 11 learners do not even get a chance to see or have an English Home language textbook. I further believe that teachers can make a positive difference in students’ lives despite the numerous factors beyond their control. I would therefore like to stress the fact that adequate understanding of textbook usage can help teachers create a platform for better learner performance.

Having summarised my intended arguments, I now present my discussion of the findings under the following themes:

1. Theme 1: Closing the Gap between Teacher and Learner
2. Theme 2: Creative Ambition and Creative Risk
3. Theme 3: The Use of Multimodality Helping the Textbook
4. Theme 4: Document Analysis and selected components

Before I move to discussing the findings, I first intend to use an analogy to explain the symbolic nature of my interpretation. I believe that this would add depth and understanding to the findings.

## **6.2 An Analogy Explained**

I wish to liken my interpretations to that of a good herbalist/health-care practitioner dealing with adaptogens. A good herbalist/health-care practitioner feels inspired to encourage people to stay healthy and prevent illness, rather than to wait until they feel critically ill and then start to look for help. Most herbs are wonderful for healing ailments but adaptogens are multi-dimensional in their efficacy.

Adaptogens help to rebalance the body, resisting stress by adapting the body's response to it and increasing the bodies overall vitality (Landon, 2017: xvii). In light of this, the herbalist believes that functioning of the body needs to be investigated and assessed in a context of inter-related features/symptoms. In an attempt to rebalance the body with adaptogens, the herbalist can factor out the negatives and zero in on the positives in the body.

## **6.3 Motivation for the Discussion of Findings**

In the above-mentioned segment, I declared my intention to interpret the findings in terms of a metaphor: herbalist. For this to be achieved, I have decided to link the research questions to the finding.

I interpret my findings in terms of the herbalist metaphor, which addresses some problems, and interpret ideas that can bring a re-balance in the English Home language classroom just as adaptogens can bring a rebalance to the human body. In order to do this, I will discuss the findings with reference to the research questions raised in the 'Research Methodology and Design of this Study' chapter. Each cluster will present the discussion under sub-headings and provide a summary of the discussion to reinforce my argument. I will first discuss the interview findings theme-wise with a view to providing a "thicker description" (Denzin, 2001).

## 6.4 Theme One: Closing the Gap between Teacher and Learner

The only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction

Barber & Mourshed (2007)

In this section, I focus my discussion on the type of materials found in the textbook as perceived by English Home language teachers. My analysis of data in the unstructured interviews that I have presented in section 5.2.1.3 of Chapter 5 points to and confirms that there is a gap between the connection of teacher and learner in terms of textbook material that they enjoy and appreciate. This is in keeping with what Johnson (2011) believes, when she states that learners have no interest in most of the material they are required to read. Furthermore, I believe that scholars at university can be enticed to read anything in order to analyse and evaluate it but not necessarily high school learners who get bored very quick. Also, it was suggested that the material in the textbook often appear to be out dated and hold no relevance to learners' lives as I have pointed out in Chapter 5 (see section 5.3.3).

With the above stated suggestion, there is an inherent call to close the gap within the “trinity of the classroom” which I refer to as the teacher, learner and textbook. Therefore, there was an attempt by teacher C to reintroduce selective material that have the potential to draw in the learners and try to grab them by their brains. Although this appears to be difficult, teacher C developed her own textbook with the idea to entice learners to be engrossed with her textbook material. Teacher A also stressed that the concept of relevancy that I analysed and presented in Chapter 5, section 5.2.1.3) holds particular value for learner output. Relevancy was the first element that emerged in the findings. In the next segment, I discuss the platform of relevancy, which in this study reflects how a text can connect with an appeal to learners through its meaningfulness (personal interest of the learners).

### 6.4.1 Selective Relevancy: Elements Relating to Research Question One, Two and Six

In the data drawn from the interviews of Chapter 5 in sections 5.2.1.3-5.4.3), it was echoed that the material that the learners receive is often not in harmony/consonance with their lives. In section Chapter 3 section 3.4.2, I have discussed the aspect of ‘weaving the right content’ in the textbook. I believe texts need to be developmentally appropriate and interesting for learners.

The more learners can relate to the information, the more likely they are to engage because there is a connection to their lives. The data analysed and presented in section 5.4.3 of Chapter 5 further points to the fact that the compilation of selected material should hold a level of relevancy to the lives of learners. However, there is no doubt that teachers can find it both demanding and demoralizing enough to determine their own choice of texts. Notwithstanding the issue I have discussed above, I believe that if a teacher understands the climate of the classroom, then it should be easier to understand what type of materials (texts) their learners will appreciate.

By classroom climate, I mean the “atmosphere that is created in the classroom through the rules set out, the way the teacher interacts with pupils and the way the physical environment is set out” (Creemers and Reezigt, 1999; Freiberg and Stein, 1999). At this juncture, I also wish to add those aspects in learners’ lives that can make them talk and something they appreciate that they will feel motivated to discuss. Furthermore, I need to mention once again that many learners have almost no interest in most of the material they are required to read. As an antidote to this, I concur with Johnson (2011: 185), who says that the trick is to find something so compelling that students forget they are reading.

The first three teachers’ responses analysed in sections 5.2.1.3-5.4.3 of Chapter 5, leads me to believe that a level of text relevance to their lives is essential. This discovery is in keeping with the issues referred to in my literature review. Often it is strange to think that publishers for a very long time have not considered this aspect very strongly. This can be a neglected component or innovation in the teacher’s arsenal.

According to Pressley & Hilden (2002: 33-51) teachers can stimulate students by providing them with interesting texts, allowing them choices in reading and writing, and helping students set authentic purposes for reading. Furthermore, there is often a tendency for teachers to copy things just to keep learners busy and forget about their fundamental role that is meant to enhance teaching by linking the subject content to their lives in the English Home language classroom. In order to develop learners’ reading skills and strategies, both learners and teachers should be interested in the reading materials as “... interesting content makes the learner’s task far more rewarding” (Nuttal, 1996: 170). In the interviews, it became clear to me that teachers do not use the entire textbook throughout the year as my data analysis points out in sections 5.5.2.4-5.5.2.8 of Chapter 5.

However, they only use certain portion of the material in the textbook that learners can relate to because it can help them appreciate the text more. Therefore, in terms of the first research questions, certain teachers used the textbook selectively because of its weak content. To sum up, often the selection of texts does not really reflect learners' interests. Learners may therefore not be motivated to read. While some texts may appeal to learners, other learners' interests may not be addressed adequately. It would therefore be good for any school or teacher to investigate the reading content of learners outside of school and this could be a reason for further research on the issue of relevancy outside of school. I therefore argue and consider the element of relevancy as an important component for the English Home classroom present and future teachers of South Africa. In the next segment, I propose to add a further grounding to the concept of relevancy.

#### **6.4.1.1 Relevancy: Building a Bridge for Good Creative teaching**

According to the data analysed in sections 5.2.1.3/5.2.1.4/ 5.3.3/ 5.3.3.1/5.4.3 of Chapter 5, I wish to argue that relevancy might be a window into the heart of the learner for interaction and effective communication between teacher and learner, which does have the potential to breed a mutual partnership. In order to develop learners' reading skills and strategies, both learners and teachers should be interested in the reading materials as "... interesting content makes the learner's task far more rewarding" (Nuttal, 1996: 170).

In light of the above stated quotation, boring texts alienates the teacher and disorients/deadens/numbs the learners into an avoidance of learning. If the lack of gratitude of the text is ongoing then many learners before they reach the English Home language classroom have already switched off and this one factor affects their understanding and appreciation of the subject. Therefore, I believe a "well-informed choice of text can lay the groundwork for teacher empowerment" (Sivasubramaniam, 2006: 16)) and may have the potential to bridge the teacher and learner for good creative thinking.

Further to Sivasubramaniam's view, Willingham's (2009) also believes that teachers should:

- Focus only on issues that are relevant and important to the learners.
- Organise ideas so that learners will find them interesting and easy to follow.

Based on the findings I believe that the component of relevancy matters in the classroom. The selection of texts for learners is broad because there are different genres to enforce it. The ‘teachernaires’ presented in section 5.2.1.3 of Chapter 5) do believe that there should be a balance of subject choice. On the one hand, there should be an awareness about things around them. Aspects that inform them about the world and often the place to do this effectively is through the selection of comprehensions the teacher will choose. On the other hand, because they are young teenagers’ teachers felt that they should also include things that are fun and geared towards teenagers. It would be good to have the right balance in the selection of topics and one area where this good be revealed will be through the comprehensions. I considered this essential because in their examination paper the comprehension carries 30 marks, which is the most crucial part in the entire paper for paper. In the segment, I first intend to reinforce my first argument.

#### **6.4.1.2 Sustaining Argument 1: A Case for Relevancy for good Connectivity**

In this segment, I wish to reinforce my argument (see Section 6.1). Engaging learners means engaging their emotional brains (Beere, 2014). Engaging them with selective good relevant instructional material will stay with them and I believe can inspire learners beyond their school experience. It could also give teachers a chance to let learners think critically about issues in their lives. This of course will depend on the type of material selected but the above activity also falls in the ambit of Freirean ethos, which I have discussed in my literature review Chapter.

Freire (1993) emphasized the importance of bringing the learner’s socio-cultural realities into the learning process itself and then using the learning process to challenge these social processes. Bates (2016) also believes that teachers should focus on activities centred around projects that the learner will find relevant. Therefore, selecting materials for learning-teaching resources is a great task for English language teachers as they provide a strong platform for interaction. Furthermore, presenting appropriate materials of students’ needs, relevant and engaging materials I believe is the prime/major responsibility of the teachers if publishers misalign the textbook to learner needs.

Teachers are urged to evaluate teaching materials since they are the users of the materials. Selection of the right materials makes teaching and learning a meaningful activity and an effective classroom environment.



Based on the data that I have presented sections 6.4.1/6.4.1.1 of this Chapter, I believe it anchors the importance of the concept of relevancy in relation to text output in the classroom to keep lessons attractive to gain learner attentiveness. The key of course would be to create effective/real links between input and output (instructional material) so that new language is recycled and consolidated in and out of the lesson.

In keeping with the above-mentioned point, I believe that there are a number of other ways of achieving this level of close engagement with input material. Texts can be brought in through dictation, storyboard-type activities, newspaper articles, nonfiction accounts etc. Furthermore, classes can even rewrite their boring textbooks if they are given the opportunity (I have not seen this activity yet in the context of South Africa). Of course, this will be done to make the text/textbook more interesting and maybe even for cost effective. Therefore, I argue that a key feature of effective teaching is the selection of materials that meet the needs of students and fit the constraints of the teaching and learning environment (climate of the classroom) in a particular context.

The data I presented in terms of the practice of relevancy leads me to believe that it does have the potential to change the dynamics of the English Home language classroom. Relevancy (materials that are related to learners' lives/teenagers) can help fortify a level of connectivity between teacher and learner so that texts can be appreciated more.

Beere (2014: 53) and Bates (2016: 288) note that building relationships between you and your class and between the pupils within your class could not be more important for them to make maximum progress. By the same token, Barber, Moffit & Kihn (2010) argue that at the core of delivering effective lessons is the need for effective relationship building in the classroom and one way to do that I believe is through selection of learner materials in the classroom.

At times in terms of the textbook, the result can be that carefully scripted presentations and activities in relation to texts run the risk of emphasizing teacher delivery rather than student learning. I believe that teachers do have the capacity to enhance their skills and refine it because at times when some teachers discover the climate of the classroom they might not be comfortable or knowledgeable within that sphere of component e.g. if a teacher discovers that 80 % of her learners are into hip hop, this does not mean that the teacher listens to hip hop and therefore, she would have to read about that genre and create or search for texts on that topic.

I believe that this is how a teacher refines her/his own level of teaching. Beere (2014: 56) refers to this type of teaching pattern as getting in ‘flow’ with your class. Furthermore, we should also note that carefully planned and prepared instructional resources sometimes tempt instructors to race ahead and to cover more which could take away a thorough understanding of the text and affect a strong position of comprehension. However, different strategies can be used to bring a level of connectivity that could enhance learner performance in the English Home language classroom like flexible approaches to help you tune into your learners’ world.

One approach that I argue here is using relevant materials that connect with learners’ lives e.g. it means taking an interest in the music and movies they like and social media appetite etc. so that you can relate authentically with them. Furthermore, it can help teachers in their classroom teaching if they can see learning as a journey. This can enable teachers with the possibility of aligning themselves with ideas of risk taking, optimism, resilience empathy and curiosity in learners so that English Home language teachers can link learning with the real world they live in.

Having presented the message of the data from the unstructured interviews I found the complete opposite from the semi-structured interviews. My analysis of data presented in section 5.5.1 of Chapter 5) confirms that the perfunctory plodders and the commoners believe that the textbook is still relevant and useful and provides some good exercises to develop grade 11 learner’s language skills. The above referred to data reveals that it touches current issues and is informative in the context of their teaching for some teachers. Having noticed two different thoughts in terms of the textbook, I would like to pose a question in the next segment.

#### **6.4.1.3 An Observation: Does Age Speak or Over-Speak?**

I observed from the above stated segment that the teachers who believed that the textbook was no longer relevant were between 40-60 years of age and those who felt that it was still relevant and useful were younger teachers. I mention this as an observation to try and grasp if those who are older are speaking with wisdom because the majority of perfunctory plodders and commoners felt that the textbook was still relevant whereas the ‘teachernaires’ believed it lacked an impact in the classroom. Furthermore, I also wish to mention the age phenomenon to show the difference in thought pattern between the teachers in the different characters while at the same time I would like to establish if there was some agreement within the scope of the study in terms of the textbook. I discovered that there was a sense of agreement in terms of the

elements of a ‘Comprehension’ for learners to do in the classroom. Some teachers felt that the dynamics of the comprehension was important because it dealt with more reading.

Since the teachers, as pointed out in the findings presented in section 5.1.2.3/5.5.2.6/5.5.3/5.5.3.1/5.5.3.6 of Chapter 5, believe in selecting good comprehensions based on a certain kind of awareness around them because many learners’ struggle with reading, I believe at this stage it is necessary to discuss the impact of good comprehension, which is related to the umbrella term of relevancy. A comprehension can come in many forms and texts and thus a discussion on a central topic in the grade 11 textbook is merited here.

To add further substance to the position of the ‘Comprehension’ in the textbook and to comprehend the dynamics that surround it I would like to offer further confirmatory support that grounds my discussion in terms of its importance. Furthermore, since I believe that one of the ‘carriers’ through which relevant material can feature effectively in the classroom would be the comprehension. Therefore, I deem it necessary to highlight the undercurrents of the comprehension, which will shed light on the dynamics of the interaction between the learner and the comprehension.

Elijah Mhlanga of the Basic Education Department, stated, “One of the glaring problems was that South Africa is not a reading nation” (Petersen, 2017: 3). Considering what Elijah Mhlanga has said, I wish to provide an account that might communicate to the reader the essential nature of a comprehension text and why it is a vital aspect in the domain of English Home language teaching as the data revealed its importance. Therefore, I would first like to reinforce the idea that the comprehension in the examination counts for 30 marks (which is the section with the most marks). This shows us the importance of comprehending a text because if the teacher is going to select relevant material as a comprehension it is important that the comprehension must still achieve certain objectives. In the next segment, I expand on this.

#### **6.4.1.4 The Teacher, Student and the Comprehension Text: A Strong Alliance**

An important idea from sociocultural theory drives this section. By situating comprehension as a worthwhile action, we can put students in a position to ‘transform’ textual meaning and to experience reading as an authentic activity where personal agency is of primary importance (Duffy, Miller, Howerton and Williams, 2010: 62).

This segment stems from the conviction that all language teachers should have a deep conviction of all the variants of a comprehension including the aspects of how learners understand texts. Therefore, in this section I want to argue/echo that the type of texts and interactions used by the teacher will make a difference in the English Home Language classroom.

Taking into consideration the points discussed above, I wish to advocate that engaging with the text in meaningful ways and sometimes in ‘different’ ways can add a level of ‘newness’ to the classroom climate that invigorates the lesson. This suggestion is relevant as the current poverty of reading and writing among our students’ points to the failure of a functional ability to read the world and their lives in a critical and interconnected way (Freire and Macedo, 1987). Furthermore, the classrooms in which teachers and students live each day are ‘interactionally constituted’ (Cairney, 1995). I hope that this brief discussion on comprehension can motivate teachers to attempt situated comprehensions so that students may ‘view comprehensions as enriching, enabling and empowering’ (Brophy, 2008: 132).

By the time, many learners reach grade 11 the comprehension text is just another text in the world of reading and is often met with some disdain. However, in paper one of the English Home Language can carry up to thirty marks making it an important part of assessment. Hence, using the textbook to build up comprehension skills is of great value and more importantly using texts of value where you can engage the learner in deep critical thought on subject matter that is of their interest can add a further dimension to it.

In principle, the textbook is filled with aspects of comprehensions, poetry, grammar, advertisements, dictionary concepts, and cartoons. Teachers have to choose which days in the week to use the textbook. Often English teachers use the textbook two or three times a week. However, the first form of work that English teachers turn to is either a comprehension or a poem. Oftentimes for teachers reading effectively is a journey toward ever-increasing ability to comprehend texts. In this journey of the construction of knowledge, teachers are the tour guides. Their task is to ensure that students stay on course and constantly evaluate the level of performance to make sure grade that grade 11 learners appreciate the landscape of understanding (comprehension), and encouraging the occasional diversion down an inviting and interesting array of interaction through discussion and questioning.

Ultimately, in **the Further Education and Training (FET)** phase, the teaching of reading needs to include a range of comprehension strategies.

#### **6.4.1.5 The Comprehension Text and the Process of Comprehension (Understanding)**

In whatever you do get understanding.

King Solomon

By the comprehension text, I am referring to the ‘comprehension text’ that is found in the textbook and by comprehension, I am referring to the process of understanding the meaning of the text, which is being read. According to Pando (2004), comprehension is a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with the text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text.” Furthermore, readers are expected to figure out implicit links in complex texts (Rose, 1997). Nuttal (1982: 22) further states, “Understanding is central to the process of reading...” Important aspects of the comprehension text are vital because the “reader should be creatively engaged otherwise he/she runs the risk of misinterpreting or misunderstanding the message at hand (Al Salmi, 2001: 698). According to Jeff Zwiers, a reader in terms of a comprehension text should:

- First sufficiently align his or her word meanings with the author’s meaning for those words.
- A reader needs to understand and condense (chunk) what came before the text.
- The abstractness of academic texts often requires the reader to connect to existing knowledge and come up with his or her own examples.
- Finally, a reader must recognize the author’s purposes, structure and commitment in a text which can be referred to as being in a constant state of “meta-reading”.

(Zwiers, 2008: 166-167)

Adding to the above list Schleppegrell & Oliveira (2006: 254) a reader must be able to determine the important information in a sentence by analysing its clauses to understand the main participants, processes and circumstances. In the next section, I will look at what teachers have to know and what teachers might already know.

#### **6.4.1.6 Teachers, Comprehenders and Construction: The Transaction**

There is a transaction taking place when a teacher does a comprehension in the classroom. According to Kucer (2001) comprehension occurs in the transaction between the reader and the text. The reader is unique in the dimension of comprehension. Narvaez (2002: 158-175) notes that the reader possesses certain traits or characteristics that are distinctly applied with each text and situation.

#### **6.4.1.7 Background, Knowledge and Context: Characteristics of Readers in the classroom**

Before the comprehension is set up in the classroom, there are some important aspects that could be helpful for teachers in terms of overall construction: They are:

- Before the text is received you have the reader's world knowledge (Fletcher, 1994).
- The function of background knowledge helps the reader connect with the text and this gives the reader the affordance to make sense of what is being read (Butcher & Kintsch, 2003: 575; Schallert & Martin, 2003: 31).
- The perception of new information takes place through a series of networkable connections known as a schema (Narvaez, 2002).

The third bulleted point needs some elaboration to show the different features of networking that takes place in the classroom. I will now render a definition of a schema and its features, which will support the aspects of a comprehension.

#### **6.4.1.8 The Schema Theory: Chunking Correctly in the Classroom**

In principle, the schema theory is based on the idea that "every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world" (Anderson et al., 1977, cited in Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983: 73). Anderson et al (1977), pointed out two important aspects:

- The schema theory provided a form of representation for complex knowledge
- An account of how old knowledge might influence the acquisition of new knowledge.

The word “Schema is the technical term used by cognitive scientists to describe how people process, organize and store information in their heads” (Al-Issa, 2006: 41). Schema theory posits that all knowledge is organized into units of knowledge and within these units is stored knowledge or former knowledge. In a similar vein, Smith (1994: 8) emphasizes that everything we know and believe is organized in a theory of what the world is like, a theory that is the basis of all our perceptions and understanding of the world, the root of all learning, the source of hopes and fears, motive and expectancies, reasoning and creativity. Through employing the correct dosage of the schema theory we can birth within our learners a hungry drive that can benefit our learners in the workforce and their future endeavours.

A simple way of imposing learning can be in the way of chunking. Although the title in this segment can come across as amusing, it does serve to inform a concept that in the 21st century still carries great importance. Many learners in South Africa ‘bunk’ certain classes. Teachers can try some innovative ideas to address this problem. In order to enhance the teachers’ platform of understanding the concept of chunking I will use Miller’s (1956) model to elaborate on this process.

#### **6.4.1.9 Miller’s (1956) Use of Chunking: The Case of Memory**

Miller (1956) suggests that there are limits to our capacity for processing information. This variation of processing can indeed be seen in the classroom especially when analysing a variety of text. Miller explains the process in the following way:

- Before information can be stored in long-term memory, a filter known as working memory processes it.
- Working memory can only retain about 7 (plus or minus 2) bits of information at a given moment in time.
- Organizing these bits of information into meaningful patterns of information makes them easier to store.

(Miller, 1956: 81-97; Bates, 2016: 78)

In principle, chunking is an excellent strategy to organize information and to help with retention (Reid & Green, 2009: 34). This can be an added benefit in the English Home language classroom. In the above presented segment, I believe I have provided some idea of how to retain information. My discussion here was to suggest a way to break down the information in a comprehension text. In the next segment, I extend the discussion by asking a pertinent question by alluding to Miller's theory.

#### **6.4.1.10 What does Millers' (1956) Theory Mean for English Home Language Teachers?**

Miller's theory does carry some important aspects for South African teachers especially in terms of having big classes. Therefore, applying in the classroom does add some value. Applying it in the classroom would mean the following:

- As a teacher, you will not overload learners with material especially complicated material.
- As a teacher, it is good to show learners that you can reduce output even when the input is at a maximum stage. In principal, as a teacher you will break down the workload into sizeable chunks (for me the number varies according to class size).
- As a teacher, understand and accept that the concentration span of learners are different. Appreciate it and use it to your advantage.

Chunking holds value in the context of handling a comprehension text and it will help grade 11 South African learners to understand (comprehend) better. Furthermore, teachers can apply this concept to almost any facet in the English Home language classroom. Having addressed chunking, I now move on to the aspect of cognitive processing and memory, which takes place during the transaction between teacher, reader and text. This leads me to the Schema Role and the comprehension text.

#### **6.4.1.11 The Schema Role and the Comprehension: Cognitive Processing**

In my literature review Chapter (see Section 2.3.2 of chapter 2), I have addressed briefly the topic of schema and schemata. In this section, I extend that discussion. As I have stated (see Section 2.3.2), one of the main theoretical principles behind the constructivist model is that all learning sifts through pre-existing schemata. We often use this schema as a path of the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness. Therefore, one can expect human activity in a way that can improve learner activity and academic advancement.



The impact of schema theory on reading comprehension process has been tremendous (Al Salmi, 2011: 696). Widdowson (1983) points out that schemas or schemata are cognitive constructs by which we organize information in our long-term memory. This is important because the process of thinking and memory allows us to gather information over the years. According to Brown (2001), a text does not by itself carry meaning. For Anderson et al (1984: 255) the schema theory is based on the belief that “every act of comprehension involves one’s knowledge of the world as well.” In principal, the reader brings a range of variables to the surface e.g. knowledge, emotion culture etc., which represent the components of schemata. The variables can have a bearing on understanding because if the topic of a comprehension is outside the learners’ experience or level of knowledge the learner enters a world of the unknown and this can bring confusion.

Aebersold & Field (1997) stress the importance of relevant knowledge in the schema of the comprehension. This is a vital component for teachers to remember in terms of memorization. At this point, I would like to enhance the different levels of the concept of memory. This section therefore serves to inform teachers about the transaction of the text and the segments of memory, which will be valuable for the classroom. For simplicity, memory can be divided into two main aspects, short-term memory and long-term memory (Reid & Green, 2009: 26).

In the next segment, I propose to discuss the aspects of memory and interpret the issues that constitute elements that can be found in the domain of the grade 11 learner in terms of remembering information in a comprehension text. Furthermore, I also provide a rationale for incorporating the aspects of memory in this study.

#### **6.4.1.2 Memory: The Brain in the Classroom**

This segment builds on Miller’ (1956’) concept that I have mentioned earlier. There are four types of memory (1) Working memory (2) Immediate memory (3) Verbal memory (4) Visual memory.

#### 6.4.1.12.1 Working Memory (Short term)

According to Braverman (2004: 202), the characteristics of working memory include the following:

- The ability to concentrate quickly or take in information. This is in terms of stimuli that are verbally or visually presented.
- A persons working memory either quickly records information or it does not.
- It involves bringing together old and current data.

Furthermore, the functions of working memory include:

- motor control
- Concentration
- problem solving skills
- planning
- retention of knowledge
- initial registration



(Braverman, 2004: 203)

A brief understanding of the above by the educational community will especially help teachers to present information a certain way that will help the memory process in the classroom.

#### 6.4.1.12.2 Immediate Memory

The concept of this memory is short term, lasting only about thirty seconds. It occurs when a stimulus is presented but before it has been recorded in long-term memory (Bravermann, 2004: 203).

#### 6.4.1.12.3 Verbal Memory

This component is necessary and vital for restoring words, sounds and stories (Bravermann, 2004: 203). Many learners are experts at recording the mistakes of teachers in terms of what they said that might have been incorrect. This is an example of verbal memory where they recall what the teacher said word for word.

#### **6.4.1.12.4 Visual Memory**

This concept involves “the ability to absorb and retain information such as faces, colours, shapes, designs, symbols and your surroundings” ((Bravermann, 2004: 203). Furthermore, vision trumps all other senses (Medina, 2008) and makes learning easier to remember. It is now a common theme for learners to use ‘colour markers’ when they study because of the visual stimulus.

#### **6.4.1.13 Rationale for Mentioning the Different Aspects of Memory**

Willingham (2009) argued that insight into how the mind works and how memory functions was the foundation for effective teaching. According to Medina (2008: 2), we have created high stress office environments, even though a stressed brain is significantly less productive. By the same token, I have seen English language teachers create high stress classrooms and get very little done. This segment is therefore meant to signpost the concept as well the belief system that creating a high stress English Home language classroom may be more damaging and counter-productive to the learning process. The brain is an amazing part of the body. Most teachers have no idea of what is really going on inside our heads. When teachers say that they want to change a learners’ thinking or life, they literally mean they want to change their brain. By mentioning the four stages of memory my intention is to enlighten teachers and the educational community to have a certain alignment that helps the memory process by choosing relevant learning material that ‘grabs’ the learners by their ‘brains’.

A further rationale is the fact that I was not a strong learner in school but I searched for a way to help my memory process after school. This endeavour helped me to prioritize certain paths in memorization, which gave me a certain level of knowledge to help with my level of memory. Therefore, I believe that the stages of memory can help the stages of the learning process. In this section, I have briefly touched on the concept of memory because it is a component, which assumes certain immediacy in the Grade 11 learners’ life in the period of time that precedes the period of time when comprehension text is given. In the next segment, I will look at the text and what should happen next in the classroom. The following discussion is closely linked to the concept of relevancy because many teachers might not know what to do with a text.

#### **6.4.1.14 Teachers' Role in the Interaction: What is Next in the Classroom?**

The teacher is the supporter in the classroom while the comprehension is engaged with. In the support process teachers according to Pardo (2004: 273-275) can do the following:

- Build and activate prior knowledge.
- Teach decoding skills.
- Help students build fluency.
- Teach vocabulary words.
- Motivate students.
- Engage students in personal responses to text.

Although the above-mentioned list sounds simple, however, when teachers start teaching grade 10-12 some tend to forget these principles. Furthermore, I also believe that sometimes there is the perception that because grade 11 learners are in their upper teenage years, they can read fluently, and because of this, they do not need motivation anymore. I believe that this is simply not the case and English Home language teachers should reform their capacity of teaching the text.

#### **6.4.1.15 Reforming Textual Capacity for Engagement**

There are different models based on cognitive processing (Ruddell, Ruddell & Singer, 1994: 813). Based on the theoretical framework that I have presented in Chapter two, this inquiry leans towards the framework of socio-cognitive processing. According to (Ruddell, Ruddell & Singer, 1994: 813), “the role of the classroom’s social context and the influence of the teacher on the reader’s meaning negotiation and construction are central to this model as it explores the notion that participants in literacy events form and reform meanings in a hermeneutic [interpretation] circle.” Pardo (2004: 276) further states, “teachers create contexts and learning opportunities that will support the construction of meaning.” Miller (2002) appears to concur with this notion by advocating the use of a variety of texts. This constructivist view (as I have advocated in my literature review) can promote the construction of meaning in the following ways:

- Learners can read the text aloud.
- Learners can take risks as they engage with the text and its meaning.

The above explanation posits the view that comprehension (understanding) as a process that involves meaning negotiation among text, readers, teachers and other members of the classroom community. The above stated point of view is symbolic of democracy where one component of a text may not mean the same for everybody but through proper argument, the learners' view is negotiated. This view promotes a good level of discussion and is vital in the process of dealing with a comprehension text. From Pardo's (2004) list, the last point can often be forgotten or it can be abused in terms of misdirecting the topic. At this time, I would like to augment the capacity of engagement, which in terms of a comprehension must lead to a set time of vigorous discussion. In the next segment, I address further strengths and possible gaps in the spectrum of relevancy, which is linked to the type of text being used.

#### **6.4.1.16 Summing Up: Possible Strengths and Gaps**

The main strength from the concept of relevancy is the fact that teachers do not have to be outdated concerning learners' 'likes and dislikes' in terms of subject interest. An English Home language teacher can carefully investigate and experiment in the classroom with different reading materials in the first quarter to iron out the different interest of the learners. By the same token, a gap in this field would be if a teacher selects the wrong material, which can result in boring material and can hinder performance in the classroom. To sum up, I believe that in many schools the selection of texts does not really reflect learners' interests.

It takes hard work to do this and a constant effort on the side of the teacher. The result of inadequate 'texts' can demotivate learners to want to read. While some texts may appeal to learners, other learners' interests may not be met. It could be good for English Home language teachers to investigate the reading content of learners outside of school. This could be a good platform for further research.

#### **6.4.1.17 Closing Remarks: Tutoring Program September 2019**

In September 2019, I was tutoring Grade 12 learners in terms of Paper 1. This paper consisted of a Comprehension section (30 marks), a Summary section (10 marks), an Advertisements section (10 marks), a Cartoon section (10 marks) and a section for using language correctly (10 marks). The first school that I tutored at was Kensington high school. The material that the Department of Education sent me was an entire question paper that I had to go through and teach. I mention this segment to highlight the comprehension that the curriculum advisors/specialist selected for this tutoring.

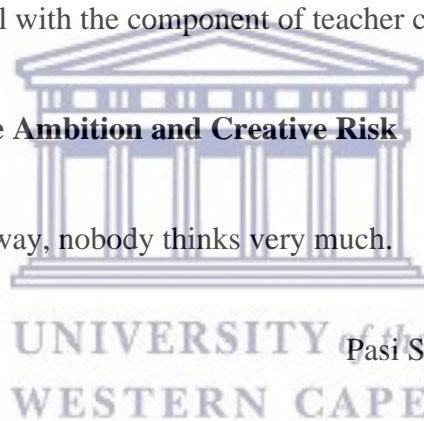
I believe this discussion is important to demonstrate the concept of relevancy and to determine if the comprehension text resonated with the learners.

The title of the comprehension was, 'The Art of Creativity'. During my lesson, I tried to get a sense if the learners considered the textbook a good one and what message did it send out to them. Majority of the learners stated that the Comprehension did reverberate with the lives and it made them think that creativity was also found in them. Although this sounds simple, I have met too many teachers, who allow their learners to interact with dull texts and learners complete it but take nothing out of the text to feed their own lives. The Department of Education shifted its angle of comprehension and this textual engagement I believe allowed learners to answer the comprehension questions with a greater determination. For me this was creative on the part of the Education department.

In the next segment, I will deal with the component of teacher creativity.

#### **6.4.2 Theme Two: Creative Ambition and Creative Risk**

If everybody thinks the same way, nobody thinks very much.



Pasi Shlberg's (2015) Grandmother

Effective teachers are very resourceful and inventive in how they teach their classes (Walker, 2013). Language teachers, too, must be willing to risk techniques and methods (Beebe, 1983). Having a creative classroom means that the teacher takes risks on a daily basis to understand the climate of the classroom and use that to his/her advantage. A creative teacher will incorporate elements of learners' lives to try and cement learning output. Brookfield (2006) suggest that teachers should research their students' backgrounds.

According to Walker (2013: 37), a creative teacher will incorporate technology, music, dance, drama, art, and hands on activities. Hence, the more information teachers have about their learners the more likely teachers can (are to) choose materials and use approaches that learners find congenial.

Further to the above-mentioned point, through assimilating new or forgotten strategies and ideas into their own teaching practice, teachers take ownership of their teaching as they ‘appropriate’ (Boud, Keogh & Walker (1985: 18-40) new knowledge and methods of teaching. This in turn can confer on teachers a degree of autonomy needed to make professional judgements in response to classroom situations/climate. This adaptation of different strategies (new ideas or old ideas) has the potential to generate knowledge, be transformative, and build the capacity ‘to assess progress and effectiveness’ (Phillips 2007:395). In essence, failure to experiment with alternative strategies and/or viewpoints will eventually allow teachers to stagnate and become complacent.

Having discussed the importance of creativity I would now like to add another characteristic to the list, which was revealed through the teacher interviews. One finding that came to the surface was creating your own textbook as presented in section 5.4.2 of Chapter 5.

#### **6.4.2.1 Creating Your Own Textbook: Elements of Research Question One, Two, Three and Six**

The data from the interview that I have analysed in section 5.4.3) of Chapter 5 has revealed that there was at least one element of ‘newness’ (originality/freshness) in a South African context, which I identify in this segment. It came to the surface in the interview that the possibility does exist to develop your own English Home language textbook and not use the one provided by the Department of Education. Teacher B’s responses as shown in section 5.3.3 and C’s responses as shown in section 5.4.3) confirms that the textbook was of little use and the type of material was not effective but outdated. It was in this premise that teacher C developed her own textbook which was a good act of discovery. Teacher C’s creative output transposes into other elements that enhances space, movement, sound, rhythm, shape and colour in her learning environment.

Teacher C’s concept is very simple and Teacher C was aware that it is important for a teacher to find something so compelling that students forget they are reading (see Section 5.4.3.1). In order for teacher C to create a textbook, the internet is a resource that can be fully exploited for her benefit. The only condition here is that teacher C must be mature enough to know the ‘climate’ of the classroom well in advance. This is possible because it is often the case that when a teacher takes a class in grade 10 then they will usually take them up to grade 12. Hence, in teacher C’s case she did know her grade 11 class in grade 10.

At this stage, I feel that a further elaboration of the concept of ‘climate’ in the classroom is necessary because I mentioned it very loosely here and I believe that it has important implications for English Home language teachers (practice).

#### **6.4.2.1.1 Climate of the Classroom: Important Considerations**

Based on the data selection in the previous segment, I inclined to assume that it would be useful for a teacher to understand the climate of the classroom as pointed out in section 5.4.3 of Chapter 5. In light of this, I deduced that every classroom has a climate (cultural capacity). In this study, climate refers to the fact that a teacher has a cultural awareness of the classroom. For example, if a classroom were occupied with mostly isiXhosa speaking learners, then it would be unwise for history teacher to teach only a white man’s history because the climate in the classroom does not reflect that. Similarly, if an English teacher detects that a high percentage of his learners love hip-hop then for his/her comprehensions it would be good to use material that reflect their issue of preference or love. This does not imply all the time. Through understanding the climate of the classroom, a teacher can pick up the learning style of the classroom. English Home language teachers should then:

- Get a feel for the classroom and learning style preferences
- Use a variety of materials that caters for all groups in the classroom
- Work with strong learners and sift out productive learning styles that could carry over to other learners.

Adding to the above listed points, the availability of the internet will provide English Home language teachers with the opportunity to allow their learners access to a vast range of potentially useful resources. Teacher C’s innovative approach requires constant sifting of information to accurately challenge learners. In the next segment, I further elaborate on teacher C’s textbook innovation.

#### **6.4.2.2 Textbook Innovation: The Value of Creativity**

In section 2.5.7.6 of Chapter 2, I have dealt with the aspect of teacher innovation and a practical possibility. In that segment I stressed that teachers should not be afraid to experiment and should be protected in the sense that they should be allowed to experiment with different teaching methods.



The interview as I have indicated in section (see Section 6.4.2.1) can help confirm the possibilities of experimentation. Therefore, I consider simple methods like creating your own textbook like what teacher C did to be revolutionary. Often textbooks can be too prescriptive and control teaching methods and classroom practice. This, however, can deskill teachers and numb/deaden the potential of teachers. Therefore, teacher C's textbook innovation does not deskill her but pro-skills her and gives her the freedom to change her method of teaching when needed. Furthermore, preparing your own textbook as a teacher also displays a high level of preparation. In light of this, Wong (2001) believes that being prepared is a primary factor in being an effective teacher.

Selecting her material was free in a sense or affordable and was highly flexible material because there was a lot to choose from in terms of teaching materials. Furthermore, an ideal materials deposit should not conform to one distinct methodology. Teacher C will teach the material that she has selected in a way that will be beneficial to her learners.

I feel this is important because 'classrooms are complex, tightly populated social structures' (Hall et al. 2014: 367) and therefore I believe teachers should strive to make education a personal experience for each student. A teacher must be able to show the learners why the content of their work is relevant to their lives. Teacher C's capacity as a teacher echoes and chimes in well with the thought of Scholes (1985).

Scholes believes that "there is always room for creativity in any discursive order but it is attained by mastering the practice of the discourse to a degree that enables new utterances to be formed, which in turn become a part of the body of discursive models and finally effect changes in the code itself" (Scholes, 1985: 24). Brookfield (2006) also believes that teachers should use a variety of methods and approaches in the classroom. Therefore, the fact that teacher C was doing some things differently can help learners overcome traditional boredom.

In relation to the above-discussed point, I believe that what students take away from a successful education usually centres on a personal connection with a teacher who instilled passion and inspiration for their particular subject. In addition, the success of an innovation will also depend on the personality and qualities of individual teachers (Candlin & Mercer, 2001: 61).

Teacher C's innovation can be a much needed 'medicinal treatment' for individual problems that are present within the English language curriculum and it can rebalance the pendulum of learners not liking the subject content to learners appreciating the content more because of a connection with their lives. However, it will be necessary for teachers to be adaptive in their lives and classroom. In the next segment, I wish to reinforce and discuss the idea about teachers and adaptability because I believe any textbook inevitably needs adaptability.

#### **6.4.2.3 Adaptability Fostering a Need for Change in the Future for teachers to help learners**

If we want to meet our students' vision and save it, "we can no longer accept quick-fix, mechanistic solutions to the problems facing education today. New approaches also require that we alter our more traditional ideas about the nature of knowledge and how it is required (Elliot, 2012: 159). I believe that the concept of 'relevancy and developing your own textbook' is a way in the future to overcome the problems that currently confront many Grade 11 learners at high schools.

The findings from the first three teachers presented in sections 5.2.1.2/ 5.3.2 /5.4.2 of Chapter 5, provide or calls for a definite measure of flexibility in the classroom. The data gathered from the teachers' interviews suggest that the new role that high school teachers will need in order to be most effective in the present and future classroom will require their earnest development of knowledge and skills beyond those that are subject matter related.

Often the older teacher is set in his/her way and can become complacent and boring. Ultimately, many learners do not learn from those that they do not like. Therefore, these findings from the teachers can add a level of satisfaction for different level teachers in South Africa and make a major contribution toward helping the South African learners renew their passion and readiness to face the world after they leave high school.

#### 6.4.2.4 Sustaining Argument 2 and 3: Textbook Novelty

We need to rethink schools so that learning relies more on customized learning plans and less on teaching drawn from a standardized curriculum.

Pasi Sahlberg (2015: 199)

Reece and Walker (2007) point out that there are many factors that will dampen a learners' enthusiasm to want to learn. Johnson (2011) further points out that learners have no interest in most of the material they are required to read. I therefore believe that creating your own textbook while understanding the climate of the classroom can infuse particular momentum into the teaching process and maximize effective teaching.

Creating your own textbook as a teacher gives you the capacity to develop activities that foster positive teacher-learner connections and experiences. I also believe that teachers have a great advantage in terms of the internet to help them gather good sources for their textbooks. Furthermore, the growing availability of digital content and open educational resources is giving teachers the opportunity to bypass some of the traditional expenses of textbook purchasing and in this context, it can give teachers the opportunity to build their own textbooks. I believe that the setting in South Africa allows for teachers to create their own textbook whether digital or paper format. There is no doubt that the move from print to digital content is shaking up the entire publishing industry and that is why I believe it is not so profound for teachers to make their own textbooks. When you digitize textbooks, you can disassemble all those various pieces that comprise it e.g. chapters, exercises, diagrams, illustrations and so on. After disassembling them you can re-engineer something completely different. Bates (2016) believes that teachers should look for a novelty in their teaching.

Notwithstanding the point discussed in the section above, if teachers build their own textbooks they can make sure that not just the core content, but all the various resources and exercises in it are useful and relevant to learners' lives.

In retrospect, a possible danger with ready-made textbooks is the fact that for some, textbooks may seem to absolve teachers of responsibility—ready-made textbooks are sometimes a very long way from reflecting the needs and interest of one’s learners.

Allwright (1981) criticized published materials for making decisions that, in his view, could be made by the teacher and/or students. In my conversations with teachers at various meetings like the ‘English Symposium’ it has been an often repeated point to hear that many teachers feel that they can provide better material for their learners than that are available in some published textbooks.

By the same token, I am aware that the work of selecting language elements (materials) and incorporating them into appropriate presentation material is time consuming. I am aware to expect the average working teacher to make their own textbook will be difficult. However, the data I presented did showcase that teacher C did what many might not expect and she thus created a novelty.

#### **6.5 Landscapes of the Observation: Strategic Issues**

Observation in Teacher C’s classroom provided deep, rich data to me and I believe that this can strengthen the credibility of my research process. Teacher C wanted to connect with her learners on different levels and tap into their lives in order to discover what was relevant and what was not.

The use of different approaches in the classroom helped ease the platform for boredom not to occur and the use of the internet fashioned the connection between her and her learners. The lively presentation using multimedia helped the learners understand the message of the poem. The visual stimulus made the lesson enjoyable and enabled learners to appreciate the lesson. In the next segment, I represent the first theme that emerged from the observation.

### 6.5.1 Theme 3: The Use of Multimodality Helping the Textbook

Literacy teaching and learning needs to change because the world is changing

Cope and Kalantzis. (2000: 41)

The following theme responds to research question 1 and 6. The data presented in section 5.6.3 of Chapter 5 can provide a positive correlation between a textbook and the use of technology. My findings can be divided into different categories because technology is a broad term and a teacher might only use one aspect of technology as teacher C has used one element (program for her lesson) as I will indicate it in a different segment.

Multimodality involves the complex interweaving of word, image, gesture and movement, and sound, including speech (Bearne & Wolstencroft, 2007). In terms of my research question one; an attempt was made by teacher C to captivate learner input by the use of different technological tools in order to get a greater output from the learners. Teacher C's innovative approach allowed her to use an aspect of technology to enhance her textbook. Her approach is in keeping with what I discussed about innovation in section 2.5.7.6 of Chapter 2.

Teacher C used 'Prezi' (online program) to teach the poem and create zooming, moving, visually stunning presentations that grab and keep her students' attention. Using 'Prezi added another dimension to the lesson. Prezi introduces a better way to present and would:

- Relax the learners and bring a sense of calmness in order to get them to talk afterwards since learners appreciate a visual stimulus more often.
- Cause good interaction with audiences/learners and you can go back and forth between concepts.

As a researcher, I had no knowledge of ‘Prezi’ and I also appreciated how the content of the lesson was presented. Furthermore, Harvard researchers found that Prezi was more engaging, persuasive, and effective than PowerPoint. The following site below was used by teacher C: ([https://assets.prezicdn.net/assets-versioned/cover/next/ease\\_to\\_impact/pdf/huffingtonpost.pdf](https://assets.prezicdn.net/assets-versioned/cover/next/ease_to_impact/pdf/huffingtonpost.pdf)). In the next segment I expand briefly on why multimodality is important and then I present teacher C’s online program ‘Prezi’ and its potential and characteristics.

#### **6.5.1.1 Classroom Anchoring: Theoretical Assumptions and Reasons for Multimodality**

Collins and Richards (2009) ask a central question in terms of the use of technology in schools. They would like to know if “whether our current schools will be able to adapt and incorporate the new power of technology-driven learning for the next generation of public schooling. The use of Prezi by teacher C provide some answer to the question. The reasons for multimodality give us a glimpse into our changing world in terms of schools and learners. Therefore, multimodality can benefit our learners in certain ways. They range from:

- The fact that the future of reading and writing are interwoven with the future of digital technologies because the world is advancing at a rapid rate.
- Grade 11 learners know about multimodal texts from their home experiences. As teachers we can take advantage of this and build on these experiences and the learners’ knowledge of multimodality in the classroom.
- Developing multimodality skills can help learners to read because a visual stimulus can help give grade 11 learners an appetite to read and analyse and in return can enable them to develop literacy skills for today and the future.
- Multimodality/Multimedia is a more attractive medium top many young people, an initially more attractive medium (Rshaid (2014).

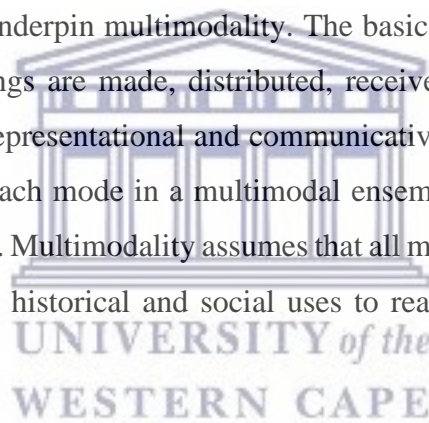
In relation to the attractive nature of multimodality I would like to present statistics relating to YouTube. In doing this I will be able to give a glimpse into how powerful multimodality can be and why it should be used. According to a self-supplied study YouTube statistic page, current as of February 2013 (the numbers would be more today):

- Over 800 million unique users visit YouTube each month.
- Over four billion hours of video are watched each month on YouTube.
- 72 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute.

Rshaid (2014)

The above statistics are simply a glimpse into the power of multimedia. Teachers should attempt to use outside influence to reflect commonality to learners. Furthermore, young teachers lean towards a perspective on digital media simply because most of the young teachers today were brought up in that context of digital media. I hasten to state that this in no way presupposes that older teachers will not use multimodality.

Adding to my list on the reasons for using multimodality, I would like to state certain theoretical assumptions that underpin multimodality. The basic assumption that runs through multimodality is that “meanings are made, distributed, received, interpreted and remade in interpretation through many representational and communicative modes. Another assumption within multimodality is that each mode in a multimodal ensemble is understood as realizing different communicative work. Multimodality assumes that all modes have, like language, been shaped through their cultural, historical and social uses to realize social functions” (Jewitt, 2017:15-16).



### **6.5.1.2 Technology: A Supplement Rather than a Replacement**

The data from the observation presented in section 5.6.5 of Chapter 5 confirms that technology can be a good supplement in enhancing a text. Rshaid (2014: 14) notes that the paradigm shift required is far reaching instead of thinking of how technology can enhance teaching. More importantly, we should also be thinking about how technology can also become a catalyst for learning and retaining knowledge. I believe that the choice of using digital media can help teachers teach more effectively because the use of digital technology is commonly more successful as a supplement rather than as a replacement for usual teaching. The facilities and features of multimodal configurations can impact on design and text production and interpretative practices (Jewitt, 2017: 19). Furthermore, I believe that today’s young teachers have a slight advantage of understanding the mind of teenagers. This is not always the case but they have common aspects that relate to the students that they are teaching.

This can filter through in music, movies, television series, internet sites etc. and therefore I believe that younger teachers can zoom into their lives and attention span, which can become helpful in the classroom. Having established so far the usefulness of technology, I will now present the characteristics of the internet program teacher C used.

### **6.5.1.3 Prezi: A Visual Presentation for the English Home Language Classroom**

My discussion of my finding based on sections 5.6.2/5.6.3 of Chapter 5 presented here has helped to verifiably support the use of, in principal; the multimodal facilities of digital technologies enable image, sound and movement to enter the communicational landscape in new and significant ways (Jewitt, 2017: 19). In business, presentations can close deals and help companies grow. Prezi, is a visual presentation platform that uses a single canvas instead of slides. The hope of teacher C was to grab learners' attention with the same mindset as if you were working in the business world. Teacher C believed that by using Prezi she might plant a good level of knowledge in her learners' lives and more important something that they might remember. To help us understand its wide potential as an online program for the classroom in 2017 we should not that Prezi is:

- Rated 12.5% more organized than PowerPoint.
- Rated 16.36% more engaged than PowerPoint.
- Rated 21.89% more persuasive than PowerPoint.
- Rated 25.28 more effective than PowerPoint.

(HuffPost/US Edition, 2017)

When a classroom presentation is too rigidly structured (with strictly ordered slides and a one-size-fits-all script), there is no room for adaptability. With a shift in approach, you can easily turn presentations into dialogues that are collaborative, dynamic, and engaging enough to keep learners tuned in from beginning to end. The power of technology can enhance education depending on how it is used. In terms of research question 5, teacher C used technology to enhance the text practicality and brighten up the textbook.

Innovative methods like using Prezi to convey a poetry lesson, is a drastic shift/departure from the old paradigm of teaching and learning. Cope and Kalantzis (2000: 41) affirm that literacy teaching and learning needs to change because the world is changing.



These changes and adaptation of technology demonstrates the value of the learner because a teacher can dig deep into the arsenal of teaching in order to find a way to help grade 11 learners. Teacher C used multimodality (see Section 5.6.5) to try and overcome certain barriers to learning which is also often found in many other classes. I believe that the use of this technology can help with:

- Lack of critical thinking hoping the song would bring out deep responses to the content of the poem.
- The noise level of the class in terms of talkativeness.
- The hope of learners being more encouraged to do homework.

Teacher C's incorporation of multimodality should then be seen as a "development of visual literacy which can be a pathway into verbal literacy" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). Therefore, "literacy and communication curricula rethought as mentioned above in the quotation, can offer an education in which creativity in different domains and different levels of representation is well understood, in which both creativity and difference are seen as normal and as productive" (Kress, 2004: 121).

In the next section I discuss the elements of one of the English Home language textbooks, 'English for Success'. I am doing this to shed light on the extent to which some activities can deepen learners' output in the classroom and the world. This will enable me to establish if there are any theoretical gaps that can impact on a learners' English Home language development. Furthermore, out of the 12 teachers, 7 (Teacher A, D, E, F, K, H, J; see Section 5.5.1 of Question 5) were using the 'English for Success textbook'. Therefore, I selected this textbook and am applying the criteria I mentioned in section 4.21.5 in my methodology chapter. However, first I will attempt to sustain my argument in the next segment.

#### **6.5.1.4 Sustaining Argument 4: Multimodality (technology) can be a good helper for the English Home Language Classroom**

With the use of multimedia technology in education and the growing importance of multimodal teaching and learning, it becomes necessary to explore the multimodality with textbooks as a way to help design high-quality multimodal textbooks.

My argument in this segment is that the representative multimodal texts are visually-verbally coherent and both demonstrate prominent features for better interpersonal relationships in the classroom between teacher and learner. Multimodality is the mixture of textual, audio, and visual modes in combination with mediums and materiality to create meaning (Murray, 2013). For the teacher, an innovative attempt to use multimodality combines with modern educational concepts in English Home language textbooks. In light of this, the study shows the importance of properly arranging the different modes to showcase the textbooks.

Innovative methods in English Home language education where technology can be used could be regarded as a pedagogical tool. This tool reflects an extension of human competencies for the socially constructed learning environment. Such processes will postulate different roles for the teacher and learners. By imposing some innovative methods, a methodology may be employed with which teachers may not be at peace at first.

I believe that learners are besieged by technology in almost all sectors/segments of their lives. An educational project in 2005 suggested that the average teenager devotes almost 6 hours a day using media (Roberts, Foehr & Rideout, 2010). In terms of South African teens they might spend around 7 hours using media. Another educational study, American Life Project report (2005) found that 87% of teenagers aged 12-17 used the internet ([www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)). Therefore, to supplement the information age it is a requirement that school learning should also occur in a meaningful context and not be separated from the learners' 'real world.' I am reminded of what Moore (1965) believed when he stated that technology will double in performance every 18 to 24 months. Taking into consideration Moore's (1965) belief, I believe that education must always attempt to adapt teaching and learning so that learners become more independent and active learners in the classroom.

It was therefore no surprise when teacher C showed her creativity in the classroom by using multimodality in such a vibrant way. Furthermore, technology makes acquiring information easier than it has ever been and has the potential to work well with discovering learning methods. Computers and the Internet can give children greater autonomy to explore ever-larger digital worlds (Papert, 2001). Also, we live in a time where the higher educational landscape is changing, a multiplicity of roles is emerging and more is expected from academics (particularly teachers) than ever before (Nicholls, 2001: 1-13). Technology possesses tools for teaching (Hall, Quinn & Gollnick, & 2014: 417) and it would be a waste not to use these tools effectively.

Furthermore, many teachers are attuned with technology but might not use it in an educational manner for the classroom. Strangely, today it is also difficult for some teachers not to be on Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter etc. However, even though teachers find themselves on these sites there is still the puzzle for teachers in how to use these sites in an educational purpose. For some teachers it has not even crossed their minds that these sites are of great educational value. Even though literacy is commonly defined as the ability to read and write (Kern, 2000: 3), it has become clearer that literacy is no longer simply reading and writing.

Outside the classroom students are engaged in literacy practices that may involve languages other than the English language and technologies that have moved far beyond paper and pencil (Cummins, Brown & Sayers, 2007: 46). In essence, Grade 11 learners that range between 16 and 17 years old are madly in love with their mobile device. There are schools that use technology well and there are others that do not use technology. Therefore, the essence of multiliteracies is that schools in the 21st century need to focus on a broader range of literacies than simply traditional reading and writing skills because this approach will speak to the needs of different types of language learners (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005: 6). I believe teacher C understood the above concept as she employed a level of multimodality in the teaching practice. Taking into account the above discussion I believe there are a number of good reasons to combine multimodality (technology) with some lessons:

- I am in agreement with Ajayi (2012) who believes that English language textbook producers integrate language and multimodal resources (e.g. image, color, layout, typography and font) to communicate messages.
- Tan (2012) supports the above view by stating that after examining claimed that a lively layout and image of a textbook facilitated literacy learning and stimulated students' interest in participation in learning practice, and the text and image coexisted to make meaning, while the image repeated the text content more.
- Li (2011) argues that the different tasks and cognitive characteristics of different classes determined mode and multimodality selection.
- Students are motivated by technology and they show a deeper understanding of concepts and an increased willingness to tackle difficult questions (Riel & Fulton, 1998; McGrath, 1998).
- Technology can help facilitate the knowledge-constructed classroom (Bork, 1985).

- With technology materials can be presented in multiple media for multi-channel learning. The reality is that different students learn differently and different concepts are acquired through different paths of learning (Haddad, 2003).
- With the aid of the computer, students are able to collaborate, to use critical thinking, and to find alternatives to solutions of problems (Jaber, 1997).
- In the age of information, there is an essential need to learn technology (Dockstader, 1999).
- \* Digital technologies can enable students to become more active and independent learners (Negroponte, Resnick, & Cassell 1997).
- Computer mediated instruction that are designed well can improve student scores and attitudes towards learning, and decrease learning time (Baker, Hale & Gifford, 1997; Fletcher, 2003).

The above-mentioned reasons represent the basic platform for using multimodality (technology) with learners in or out of the classroom. Like Kerfoot (1993) I also believe that the teacher might not always know what is in the best interest of the learner in terms of the changing world of the learner.

It can therefore be an advantage in the twenty-first century that English language teachers must be innovative, imaginative, and resourceful and have thorough knowledge of the subject and adopt new techniques to change socio, economic status of the country where technology can be used as an instrument in the classroom as a weapon for change. Teachers must learn to speak the new 'language' of the 21st century. For the South African educational system, it is essential. To sum up, the previous studies are insightful, but at the end of the day the use multimodality in the classroom in terms of the English Home language textbook is a choice.

My present study aims to fill this gap by giving us a glimpse into what it means to create your own textbook and using multimodality to enhance the teaching capacity in the English Home language classroom. In light of this study can serve as a spark for other English teachers to create their own English textbook for their learners which can help the learning process.

## 6.6 Theme 4: Document Analysis and selected components

Textbook quality can affect the learning experiences of many students. A quality textbook should be a model of good teaching.

Newton & Newton 2009

I believe inevitably that a textbook needs to present an idea, event, activity etc. together with everything relating to it in order to understand it better. Textbooks should help learners develop their language use and literacy skills in different ways. Therefore, it would be important to present activities and tasks in the textbook that can harness engagement with the teacher and the learner. Similarly, the content in the textbook should harmonize with learners' capacity to use the language more fruitful. Activities in the textbook when it meets learners' needs and passions can foster good pedagogical practices which in turn can cause good interaction between the teacher, learner and the textbook. Having briefly reinforced the activity theory in terms of learner teacher output, I propose to discuss in the following section, the findings that relate to:

- The Textbooks' Physical Physiognomies (Characteristics)
- Appropriateness of the items presented.
- The activities suggested for practising the items selected.
- The relevance of its contexts, situations, and so on.
- Selection of one comprehension.
- Selection of One Poem.

In the next segment, I start with discussing the aspect of the textbooks' physical physiognomies.

### **6.6.1 The Textbooks Physical Physiognomies (Characteristics): Contours of Research question 2 and 6**

The purpose of this study was to research how English Home language teachers use the textbook in the classroom as well as discover the perceptions regarding the textbook. Included in this purpose is the analyses of the content of the English Home language textbook.

In light of my intended aim, I propose to summarize and discuss the findings relating to the Physical and serviceable attributes of the ‘English for Success’ textbook and determine how these features can be a stimulus for learners’ literacy skills and answer research question 2 and 6. Firstly, it should be determined if the layout of the textbook is attractive and the secondly whether or not it indicates efficient use of texts and visuals. The findings indicate that for seven teachers the ‘English for Success’ textbook that I have presented in Chapter 5 (see sections 5.2.1.3/5.5.1/5.5.2/5.5.3/5.5.4) indicated that the selected material in the ‘English for Success’ textbook was compatible for grade 11 learners. Furthermore, the content (see section 5.10 of Chapter 5) for these teachers carried some relevant aspects pertinent in the South African society. In conclusion, it can be said that the ‘English for Success’ textbook has a good enough layout that can appeal to teachers and learners in and out of the classroom.

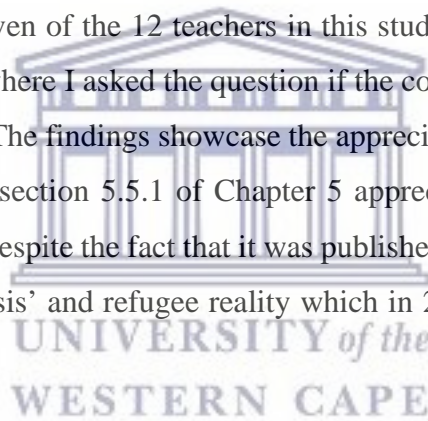
### **6.6.2 Appropriateness of the Items Presented: Contours of Research Question 2**

In the previous segment I discussed the findings that relate to the physiognomies of the textbook. In this section, I intend to discuss the appropriateness of the content of ‘English for Success Textbook’ based literacy opportunities in the classroom. Concerning the appropriateness of content in the ‘English for Success’ textbook in terms of teachers’ secondary schools the data I analysed and presented in Chapter 5 (see sections 5.10.4/5.10.5/5.10.6 and 5.10.7 of chapter 5) can confirm the following:

- The content of ‘English for Success’ textbook is relevant and well-organized in terms literacy skills development. This is in keeping with Cunningsworth (1995) which I mentioned in the literature review (see Section 3.24.2 of chapter 3). Cunningsworth’s believes that a good textbook should deal with different scenes of real life. This also concurs with Seguin’s view (1989) who also believes that the content of a textbook is interesting when it is based on realistic subject matter extracted from everyday life situations. Furthermore, topics like ‘Urban Legends’ and Identify yourself (see Section 5.10) were well received by teachers.

- The ‘English for Success’ textbook is well- organized, realistic in content that is relatable to South African learners, challenging, motivating in asking pertinent questions about teenagers and relevant subject matter that was addressed.
- It covers a variety of topics (see Section 5.10/5.10.4), which inform students on related but different fields in the country and internationally.
- The ‘English for Success’ textbook includes elements of work for paper 2 and paper 3 which is essential for grade 11 learners as they will write three papers in the June and the November Examination.
- The ‘English for Success’ textbook includes some good comprehension which is engaging and this can allow learners to reflect on a deeper level.

In light of the above stated points, I wish to mention once again that the ‘English for Success’ textbook has been used by seven of the 12 teachers in this study. Based on my question (see Section 4.21.3 in Chapter 4), where I asked the question if the content of a textbook could help learners’ grow academically. The findings showcase the appreciation of the textbook. Teacher K’s response as presented in section 5.5.1 of Chapter 5 appreciates the textbook because it touches on current situations despite the fact that it was published in 2012. This textbook deals with topics like ‘the water crisis’ and refugee reality which in 2019 are hot topics in a South African context.



Teacher E’s response as presented in section 5.5.1 of Chapter 5, also felt that that the textbook was informative not only on a curriculum-based level, but also on a worldly knowledge-based level. Teacher E also felt that this textbook was very visually appealing. The inclusion of various images, fonts and colours help relay the content in a more exciting and pleasing manner. In overall terms, teacher E believes that this textbook is an informative resource for an English language class. Teacher A felt that this textbook was good because it was more user friendly. Teacher F, H, J (see Section 5.5.1 of chapter 5) felt that the content of the textbook was appropriate. Adding on to some of the teacher’s assessment this textbook also has renowned researchers contributing in the textbook like Jonathan Jansen.

I believe that this textbook is designed indirectly to give Grade 11 a glimpse of the grade 12 language work. It also includes aspects of grade 12 literature like the play of Hamlet which the grade 12 are currently doing in South Africa. Somehow, the publishers might have been informed in 2011 that the grade 12's set workbook will change and the publishers have used this to their advantage.

Having so far discussed on the findings in regard to the appropriateness of the English Home language textbook, I also endeavour to focus on some negatives that I feel relate to this textbook.

### **6.6.3 Limitations of the Textbook**

Based on teacher B's assessment (see Section 5.3.3 of Question 5) a view arose that even at a grade 11 level, learners still need more in the way of relevant exercises, and more pertinent comprehension passages that 'speak' to their experience. The implication here is that a textbook is by its very nature dated the day it is written so it is perhaps too much to expect that it be current. Furthermore, textbooks try to be up to date and relevant. However, it cannot be expected to do so all the time.

Adding to the above-mentioned points there is often a paucity of language material suitable for the kind of learners that many educators encounter. This reflects the reality in South Africa where many doing English Home language at schools in grade 11 struggle because it is not their first language. Therefore, publishers might not consider the above aspect (point).

## **6.7 The Activities Suggested for Practising the Items Selected: Contours of Research Question 6**

Taking into the consideration of the objectives of this study and the element of relevancy and efficiency of the 'English for Success' textbook I propose to look at some of the activities in the textbook in this section.

I also propose to treat 'the activities for practising the items selected' and 'the relevance of its contexts and situations and so on' as one segment because they are so closely interrelated. This chapter will then enable me to find out whether there are possible gaps in relation to the development of language use for literacy.



In keeping with the aim of my study, one of my research questions was, ‘What are the possible factors that contribute to better textbook practice’? Seven teachers also believe that most of the content was relatable in terms of the ‘English for Success’ textbook and they felt that the textbook was compatible with grade 11 learners (see Section 5.5/5.5.1 of Question 5). They felt that specific content and good activities contributed to better textbook use.

In light of the above-stated information, I can report the following findings:

- Tasks start very simple in nature but moves to some more complex activities. This must be understood in relation to the start of the CAPS system (see Section 5.10.1 of Question 5). In conjunction with the CAPS system, many textbooks were being developed to accommodate the new adjusted curriculum.
- The objectives recommended for different tasks per chapter are practicable (see Section 5.10.5 of Question 5).
- Each chapter contains a range of different activities in order to accommodate the four genres in English Home language teaching (see Section 5.10.4 of Question 5).

The above-mentioned findings postulated that content material appears to be an important issue to keep learners’ attention in the classroom. For the purpose of discussion and elucidation and in conjunction with the first point in the list I find it useful to bring in additional information that supports the finding. In terms of older learners (grade 11) who are reading texts, the following features are important:

- The overall organization of the text should be clear. The better organized a text is, the easier it is to understand and the more the reader is able to engage in higher level processes such as summarizing and inferring.
- The text should have clear signalling devices. Such devices as titles, headings, visuals, clear topic sentences and text connectives, highlight the structure and the content of a well-organized text.
- The text should have appropriate conceptual density. New concepts should be spaced, and they should contain sufficient elaboration to make them understandable.

Based on the above-mentioned points, texts vary by subject and genre and more importantly a text matters in the classroom. In the next segment, I propose to select a comprehension from the 'English for Success' textbook and analyse it. The points listed above will add to the complexities and appropriateness of the text.

### **6.7.1 Comprehension Overview: School not for sissies**

Some researchers believe that reading will not be successful for learning if there is no comprehension (Nel, Nel & Hugo 2013: 96). In relation to one of the subsidiary questions 'What learning barriers do teachers face concerning the English Home language textbook? The student teachers revealed the frustration of discovering some of the difficulties that they found in the classroom and one of the frustrations was learner comprehension and learner retaining information.

The analysis of the Annual National Assessments (ANA) 2011 examination and PIRLS 2011 put reading and comprehension under the spotlight. One interesting awakening was the fact that research revealed that the more background knowledge a reader has that connects with the text being read, the more likely the reader will be able to make sense of what is being read (Butcher & Kintsch, 2003: 575–595; Schallert & Martin, 2003: 31-45). In light of the researchers' assessment presented above, the reason for relevant material would be that it would connect to their immediate world or context. I mentioned the above points with reference to the fact that the text which I am analysing will either bear witness to the fact that it is relatable to grade 11 learners or not.

In the next segment, I will discuss the text types of questions set in order to evaluate the manner in which reading with comprehension, language and grammar in contexts are assessed in this textbook. This can be weighed against what I have mentioned in my literature review in section 2.9.3 of Chapter 2. The 'English for Success' textbook exposed learners to a range of text types as required by CAPS (2011)/NCS (2003) policy guidelines. In the next segment I will discuss the comprehension.

### 6.7.1.1 Analysis of Reading comprehension: School not for sissies (p. 106)

The text 'School not for sissies' consists of a single unit of 20 short paragraphs. It is a newspaper article that was written by Jonathan Jansen. This reveals that the author's understanding of drawing on authentic text types. I will first below present the text and then continue with my discussion. The text can be seen at <https://www.timeslive.co.za/ideas/2011-11-10-school-not-for-sissies/>. I will adapt the font size of the text so that it can fit.

1 During the early years I was hopeless at everything in school. I was the first boy in the history of my school to be lapped in the 400m race. "How," you ask, "is that possible when this is a one-lap race?"

2 Well, the winner caught up with me on his victory lap. At one stage my mathematics marks were negative integers; those were the days of negative marking where they actually deducted marks for wrong answers.

3 Imagine if they applied that method of marking today; they would have to invent symbols below H in many of our schools. The highest marks I achieved in primary school were for a category on the report card called Neatness.

4 My music teacher was no help. She approached me one day with what I initially thought was encouragement: "With your voice, Johnny, you can go far."

5 I lapped up the praise, but then came the unforgettable let down: "The further the better."

6 I hated woodwork because, in Standard 6, everybody had to do this "practical" subject. I was just not good with my hands. The project for that year was to build an ashtray with some kind of mast in the centre to pick it up, and a half-hollow copper bowl in the middle.

7 At the end of the year I rushed home and woke up my mother, who was doing night shift later that evening as a nurse in the local hospital.

8 She was clearly irritated that I broke one of the house rules about night-shift sleep during the day, but damn, I had just completed my design masterpiece.

9 She rubbed her eyes, saw my white teeth in the dark bedroom, and knew she had to praise my project: "What a lovely boat, my boy!"

10 I crushed the bloody ashtray; who needs one in a non-smoking home?

11 I found my greatest learning outside the classroom. I was the Toweel (the surname of a famous boxing promoter family) of my primary school, organising regular fights after classes between the biggest boy from the Afrikaans class and the equivalent Goliath from the English class. Somehow the Boer-Brit language struggles found its way into my school.

12 I would set the time and the place and decide the winner. Bloody noses were common. Then one day, without telling the Toweel-wannabe, the two giants decided to turn on the promoter and beat me up for fun. The non-paying crowd collapsed in laughter, and there were no more fights after that.

13 For the most part, however, my mother made sure I hung out with the right crowd. She would warn us routinely with this hurtful expression: "I don't want you coming home with every Tom, Dick and Harry!"

14 My problem was that these were exactly the names of three of my closest friends: Archie Dick, Tom Jardine, and Harry Solomons.

15 Life was tough under Sarah, my mother's biblical name, who was married to that Old Testament patriarch, Abraham, whom together bore a son named Isaac. See-ree-yus. So I went out looking for friends with names like Methuselah, Beelzebub and Epaphroditus.

16 My dark skin was a mixed blessing at school. On the one hand, I could not prove to my parents that the teacher beat me black and blue; I was black and blue.

17 On the other, I discovered early that one of the few advantages of being black was that you could not blush. Like the time when a Standard 3 girl I set my sights on suggested I close my eyes for my first kiss ever; when I opened my eyes five minutes later, I was surrounded by a dozen of her girlfriends scattered on the grass, laughing. School was rough, man.

18 So to all the pupils writing examinations and feeling the pressure of adults on you at this time of the year, I want you to know that school is much more than tests and marks. I want you to enjoy all the other fun things that you experience and that you will remember long after you leave school.

19 Your teachers mean well, and they genuinely do care about you. Your friends at school will become your friends for life. Your parents obviously want the best for you, even though it doesn't feel like that at the moment.

20 Most of all, see the funny side of life and of school for, no matter what marks you get, it is not worth hurting yourself over this.

Looking at the text, I believe that it can be classified as a mixed genre—a newspaper report with a particular stance taken. Its purpose was on the one hand to provide information on the braveness of going to school because it was easy to drop out of school.

As a result, it contained elements of both information report and a persuasive genre as a real-life experience. A closer look at the structure of the text in the textbook will reveal the following:

- The headline is attractive (see Section 6.6.3.1 of Question 6) and I believe can gain an audiences' attention. In addition, the headline is not reflective of proper English. In principal it should have read, 'School is not for sissies'. This might reflect a shift in departmental thinking.
- It represents a deep personal story, which is good for our youth. '
- The introductory sentences set a captivating scene while at the same time filtering the first paragraph with some humour. I was the first boy in the history of my school to be lapped in the 400m race. "How," you ask, "is that possible when this is a one-lap race?"
- The purpose of the article was on the one hand to encourage learners not to drop out of school and at the same telling learners you are brave for continue when other might want to stop going to school. The points that I have made above are visible in the body of the text, which focused on the process of surviving your school career.
- The report culminated with a strong affirmation which will allow learners to think, 'Most of all, see the funny side of life and of school for, no matter what marks you get, it is not worth hurting yourself over this'.

Based on the above stated points I believe that this text can be considered grade 11 appropriate for the following reasons:

- There is a clear link between the title, written text and the learner. By the title alone, the reader can be drawn into the text.
- The author's subjective stance into the text comes across strong and the author uses direct quotes.
- The text has the potential to incite good discussion.

Having looked at the text and given a brief overview of it, I propose to discuss some of the questions that were asked in relation to the text. The comprehension had 10 questions (see Section 5.10.7 of Question 5). Questions asked mostly assessed explicitly stated information. The fact that each paragraph in the text was numbered and that most each question directed learners to specific paragraphs made it fairly easy to find the answer. I find that in doing that it robs the learner of his/her ability to find its own unique sense of comprehension.

In retrospect, their ability to scan for relevant information or to use knowledge of markers of rationality was not required. Furthermore, higher order skills such as evaluating, synthesising and critiquing information are not activated and a sense of a robotic/robotizing nature is stimulated.

Having presented my discussion on the findings drawn from the interview, observation and content analysis, I intend to bring in confirmatory information that could support and anchor my position in terms of the study's aim. Understanding the above mentioned hermeneutic will provide insight into what English Home language teachers said and what they do in their classrooms in their particular context.

In light of this, the 'one size fits all methodology' does not work because of the different social contexts'. I believe my next discussion will allow me to enhance and foster the harmony of my conclusions in chapter 7. In the next segment, I will conceptualize the connection between teacher, textbook and learner in the hope that it will add further clarity to my findings.

## **6.8 Connection between Teacher, Textbook and Learner**

In the literature review chapter, I have presented discussions about teaching, textbook and learning. However, in this section I am bringing in further theoretical support to give myself added theoretical anchoring for my discussion of the findings. In accordance with Langer (1991: 24), I too believe "literacy instruction needs to help students think more deeply and more broadly about language and content and to use these as they engage in socially purposeful activities". As I ponder on the quotation presented above, I reflect on the basis that an English Home language textbook should present contextualized (when a teacher understands the climate of the classroom) and effective learning situations that would help students develop their language use and literacy skills in variously different and rational ways. This would include the fact that the teacher could also come up with different ways of teaching literacy.

Often teachers can present activities and tasks in the textbook for the sake of presenting them or keeping learners busy for the sake of just giving them work. The presentation of the subject (activities) matter should be in close harmony with learners' capacity to use competently those activities and tasks more productively. In 2.6 of Chapter 2, I have addressed the activity theory, which harnesses activities that could enable better interaction.

An important code of the activity theory is the fact that an investigation can afford an analysis that would lead to the development of material and representative theoretic tools necessary to enact positive interventions. Therefore, it is plausible that when activities and tasks used in the textbook meet learners' needs, the nature of didactic practices can shift from imaginary to real practices and from exercise to achievement.

Having presented a brief synopsis of the concept of literacy in relation to the teacher, learner and the textbook I now intend to present my discussion further on the findings. Before I move to discuss the underlying themes, I would first like to reinforce the importance of developing literacy in a South African context.

### **6.9 Reinforcing a Perspective in a South African Context: Developing Literacy**

An international study on measuring literacy levels released on 5 December 2017 placed South Africa last out of 50 countries globally (Petersen, 2017: 3). Despite this statistic, my love of literacy is one of the key perspectives that has informed my research, and thinking. It informs all of the work that I do, and fundamentally impacts everything from the ways in which I view the world, to the very tweets that I send out on a daily basis. Therefore, I believe that there is always a need to discover different patterns that different teachers follow so that we can learn from them and enhance literacy in South Africa.

The different struggles in terms of education and schooling underlie my attempt in this segment to raise my thinking and practice a higher level of understanding with regard to the characteristics of effective teachers. In relation to the above statement, the study first discusses the following issues in order to reinforce my research perspective:

- The Imminent Failure Unless Teachers Start to Reflect
- The High School Learner in South Africa: The Changing Landscape
- The 16-18-year-old High School Learner: A Shift in Thinking
- Effective Teachers in the Future

The above-mentioned points are linked to the chapter in the literature review (3.29). In my literature review chapter, I presented discussions about the need for effective teaching. This additional discussion brings some other deeper issues to the surface, which highlights the circular nature of English Home language teachers.

### **6.9.1 Inside Teaching: Finding the Living, Understanding the Dead**

Research is to get your hands dirty.

Sivasubramaniam (2017)

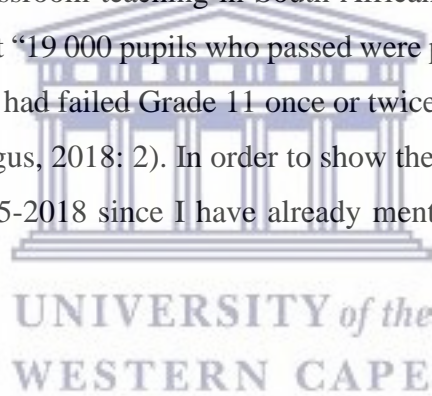
The above presented quotation is important to me because it could as well have read, ‘teaching is to get your hands dirty’. The following segment brings an awareness to the concept of literacy. In doing this, I am signposting a path that teachers can travel as well as a path that teachers can stay away from during their practice. I hope that in doing this I can create a level of motivation that can influence teachers and learners in South Africa. I am examining a body of performance indicators that I believe have the potential to point us in a direction that can help improve aspects of literacy. In doing this we can primarily determine the factors of improvement in the world of literacy development. By the same token, it will also bring out the negative realities that cause problems in literacy development.

In delivering this segment, I hope to be able to signpost the discovery of a more flexible innovative teacher, which I refer to in chapter 5 as a teachernaire. Like individuals, social institutions die and their deaths force us to face an uncertain future (Lieberman, 1993: 1). Whether we like it or not, our classrooms today must be a microcosm of the world at large (Clark, Erway & Beltzer, 1971: 3). At this stage, I would like to focus on two important points in the context of South Africa. Firstly, in 2015, the Grade 12 pass rate was 70.7%. This figure dropped from 75.8% in 2014 (<https://businesstech.co.za/news/general/76561/sas-real-matric-pass-rate-41>). The overall view of this pass rate must be understood in context. It has been the custom of a number of years to push up marks or adjust marks at the end of the year. One report claims that the real pass rate in 2015 in South Africa was 42% (<https://businesstech.co.za/news/general/76561/sas-real-matric-pass-rate-41>).



This percentage opens up a completely new dimension of the conditions of teaching in South Africa. Furthermore, the alarming dropout rate found in South African schools is of major concern. The Democratic Alliance Party puts the real matric pass rate of 2017 at 37.3%. This percentage was calculated “from the pass rate of the number of pupils who passed Grade 10 in 2015 to those who passed their final school exams in 2017” (Weekend Argus, 2018: 2). In reality, therefore only 26% of Grade 12 learners passed with the basic requirement to enter university – one percentage more than 2015.

I have mentioned the aspect of Grade 12 because there is a close alignment between Grade 11 and Grade 12. The differences between the two grades are only two to three tasks. I believe that this second point also holds merit for further scrutiny, which stems from my conviction that all those who are concerned with the fabric of education should have a deep interest in the conventions of classroom dynamics. I believe that the above conception is strong enough to merit a deeper scrutiny of classroom teaching in South African schools. For added clarity, I would also like to mention that “19 000 pupils who passed were progressed pupils—those who had failed Grade 11 once who had failed Grade 11 once or twice but were allowed to progress to Grade 12...” (Weekend Argus, 2018: 2). In order to show the overall picture, I will present below the pass rate from 1995-2018 since I have already mentioned the same for 2015 and 2016.



1995	53.4%
1996	54.4%
1997	47.4%
1998	49.3%
1999	48.9%
2000	57.9%
2001	61.7%
2002	68.9%
2003	73.3%
2004	70.7%
2005	68.3%
2006	66.5%
2007	65.2%
2008	62.5%
2009	60.6%
2010	67.8%
2011	70.2%

2012	73.9%
2013	78.2%
2014	75.8%
2015	70.7%
2016	72.5%
2017	75.1%

2018	78.2%
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Having presented a picture of the nature of South Africa’s learning performance based on the statistics that was provided, I wish to indicate that if teachers do not understand change we might have a sad awakening, which could result into imminent failure of the education system and its teachers.

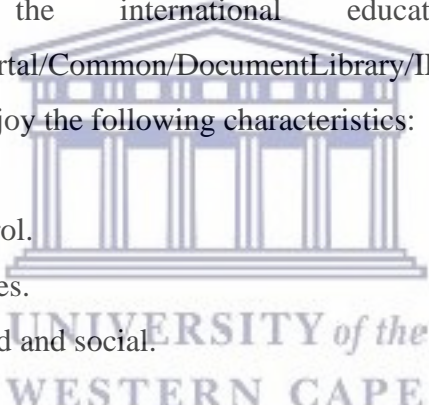
### **6.9.2 A Sad Awakening: The Imminent Failure Unless Teachers Start to Reflect**

In an attempt to remedy, the situation one would expect a sudden shift of ideas and intervention. However, the statement by the Department of Education was certainly puzzling. The measurement of the Grade 12 results was side tracked. It was stated, “Contrary to popular belief, the Matric pass rate on its own is not a good measure of academic achievement in the schooling system, nor was the pass rate ever designed for this. However, the pass rate can serve as a measure of the opportunities open to our youths” (<https://businesstech.co.za/news/general/76561/sas-real-matric-pass-rate-41>). This sad reality demonstrates a sad awakening. Therefore, this study of mine hopes to add some measure of assistance in helping our English Home language teachers with the possible problems they have in the classroom. Teachers must be aware that change is a constant especially in the classroom and “change is the most striking characteristic of the world we live in and that our educational system (especially teachers) has not yet recognized this fact” (Postman & Weingartner, 1969: xiii). Furthermore, “teachers’ thought processes tend to be much more descriptive, more emotional, more contradictory and less straightforward than many current teachers’ studies have led us to believe” (Calderhead, 1987: 161). Having briefly mentioned the danger of imminent failure in terms of teachers’ capacity in the classroom in South Africa, I now intend to deal with the most precious aspect that the teacher will deal with which : the learner.

### 6.9.3 The High School Learner in South Africa: The Changing Landscape

I believe that some teachers have no idea that we are dealing with a new type of learner because societies are changing rapidly. I am not overstating things when I say that the philosophical goalposts of a majority of school (if not all) have changed almost beyond recognition in the last 20-30 years. I believe that it is important that teachers also change as well and adapt to societies pace. This is one reason I am calling for a teachernaire i.e. that teachers run with the times. South African high school learners live in a fast pace world.

The landscape of the learner is changing so much that on average per day by my estimation; spend 5-7 hours each day saturated in electronic, digital, broadcast, taking photos and news media. South African learners listen to and download music, view videos, create music and create videos, publish content on the internet like Facebook and Instagram, play video games watch television, talk on mobile phones for long periods of time and ‘WhatsApp’ almost every day. According to the international educational advisory board ([https://www.certiport.com/Portal/Common/DocumentLibrary/IEAB\\_Whitepaper040808.pd](https://www.certiport.com/Portal/Common/DocumentLibrary/IEAB_Whitepaper040808.pd)) students of the 21st century enjoy the following characteristics:

- 
- They like to be in control.
  - They like having choices.
  - They are group-oriented and social.
  - They are inclusive
  - They are practiced users of digital technology.
  - They think differently.
  - They are more likely to take risks.
  - They value time off because they view life as uncertain.

Having giving some characteristics of the changing landscape of learners in South Africa, in the next segment I will deal with learners’ shift in thinking and how this impact on the classroom.

#### **6.9.4 The 16-18-year-old High School Learner: A Shift in Thinking**

Investigations have shown that the real growing point of a modern society, the point where the forces that are operating to make society what it will be, can best be controlled, lies in the field covered by the years 14 to 18 (Balfour Committee, 1927; Hadow Report, 1926; Malcolm Committee, 1926, 1928). In light of the above stated view, a shift in teachers' thinking must occupy our minds and establish a clear understanding that "learning to teach is both rewarding and challenging" (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2010). Therefore, teachers must enlighten themselves and "assist in new social adjustments by adapting itself to the interests of the growing boy or girl and to his or her needs present and future as seen in matters of civic, vocational and broadly social import" (Smuts, 1937: 2).

The delicate age of 16-18 is an important (significant) turning point in a teenager's life. Often if a habit is activated during this cycle of their lives, it is difficult for teenagers to uncork (get it out of their lives) it for a very long time. School, after all, is the one institution in our society that is inflicted on everybody, and what happens in school makes a difference—for good or ill (Postman & Weingartner, 1969: xiii).

In principle, teachers should always be aware of the different dimensions of a teenager's life. Therefore, this segment proposes some principles for teaching and learning when dealing with teenagers and understanding the different dimensions of teenagers' language. This is vital because teen language is critical to the advancement of language evolution and society itself (Tagliamonte, 2016: xiv).

A body of literature (Lankard, 1997; Kasworm, 1980 & Labouvie-Vief, 1982) suggests that teenagers are a different group of learners compared to children and adults because of the different dimensions that play a part in their lives. According to Bostock & Wood (2012: 5), 16-18 old learners display characteristics that often:

- Tend to challenge authority and appose structure.
- Tend to want to know why they are being asked to do something.
- Tend to have an overwhelming desire for social acceptance from their peers.
- Tend to gather information in order to try to answer the question 'Who am I?'
- Tend to move closer to independence.

I have used the above-mentioned points in order to show the vital components in a teenager's life and harken the call that teachers can use this information and bring it in their lessons e.g. poetry, comprehensions which can deal with all these issues. I find English as a subject that can break barriers, infiltrate a learners' life, and motivate learners for the future. At certain times, Grade 11 learners want to be naughty and will behave badly despite our best efforts. Furthermore, there are Grade 11 learners who misbehave in the classroom for the following reasons:

- Grade 11 learners become bored in their lives.
- Grade 11 learners face peer-pressure.
- Grade 11 learners are not motivated at this stage of their lives.
- Grade 11 learners are discovering where they fit into society.

The above stated list can be a silent phenomenon in a Grade 11 learners' life. Therefore, I believe that English Home language teachers should adjust their teaching strategies to meet the needs of these complex learners. More than ever in the context of the South African classroom it is a non-negotiable necessity. Teachers in South Africa can invigorate the following practice in order to deal with the characteristics of Grade 11 learners:

- Get active—use activities to get learners moving around the classroom.
- Get creative—do new activities.
- Quicken up the pace of your sessions.
- Be humorous and learn to laugh.
- Get interactive—use interactive activities to check learning.
- Get focused—use short intense activities that require deep thought or quick responses.

(Bostock & Wood, 2012: 133)

The above-mentioned list can strengthen the bond between teacher and learner. Furthermore, based on my own experience I have also become aware of what Grade 11 learners might think of their teachers. Their positive thoughts might range from:

- A good teacher is kind and generous.
- A good teacher takes time to listen to you.
- A good teacher has faith in the learner.
- A good teacher has fun with their subject.
- A good teacher does not give up on you.
- A good teacher does not hold a grudge and is forgiving.

After reading the Hay McBer's report of 2000, I am convinced that it bears witness to almost the same characteristics that I have mentioned above. Good teachers do exist; skillful teachers do exist. Kidd & Czerniawski (2010: 6) took the above-mentioned characteristics on the list and broke it down into three subsections. They determined that:

- Good teaching is emotionally supportive of learners and based on successful interpersonal skills and relationships.
- Good teaching is based upon your clarity as an effective communicator and in how you engage with the learners.
- Good teaching is expressed through your enjoyment and pleasure of the support of the learning of others.



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Having given some characteristics of teenagers and the different components that affect their lives, I feel that there is one aspect that many often fail to think about and that is the teenager and boredom. Gone are the days when teenagers had to go to bed between 8-10pm.

Today technology has interfered with that aspect of teenage lives and this has a direct impact on the learning process. In the next segment, I discuss the issue of boredom further.

### **6.9.5 The 16-18-year-old and Boredom: Keeping their Focus**

Harris (2010) defines boredom as a temporary emotional condition marked by disinterest in the information, context, or events provided by the teacher that may sometimes result in inappropriate behaviour. Grellet (1981) believes that materials selected for the reading class ought to satisfy students' interests. Lotherington (1988) also states that no matter how difficult or easy a text might be, it would be boring or difficult to read if it is not interesting to the learner.

Therefore, I believe that if learners are bored it can have a major impact on how well you do at school and how much you enjoy school. Furthermore, lessons, which consist of the same routines, patterns, can lead to increased boredom (Candlin & Mercer, 2001: 34).

There are numerous reasons for boredom and they can range from:

- Failure to engage with the subject deliberately because it was never taught in a way that created an interest for you.
- Feeling it's beneath your intellectual capacity
- Just temporary phases of boredom.

Based on the above-mentioned list it is important to tackle the source and find fun ways to cope with learner boredom. Another important aspect to remember is the fact that “the classroom is considered to be inherently unreal and therefore does not count as a valid context at all (Widdowson, 2003: 113).

In section 3.9 of Chapter 3, I have addressed the aspect of boredom. I have also stressed that when a teacher becomes too comfortable in their teaching practice in the classroom then there are problems. In this segment, I further discuss the experiential truth that boredom is even a bigger problem. For me it is no surprise that today in South Africa learners do not see the relationship between learning goals and real life. Oftentimes learners felt that school was separated from their reality.

I agree with Godlad (1984, page number?) that boredom is a “disease of epidemic proportions...” There is no doubt that the hearts and minds of learners are wide open to the wonders of learning. Therefore, it is vital for South African teachers to combat this by encouraging connectedness between school and the real world is critical for engagement.

Notwithstanding the above articulated point, I feel that a constant development of the relationship between teacher and learner is a crucial one. Furthermore, the space for error is created when too often high schools have a single curriculum that only works well for a small group of students.

I believe that based on the current problem of boredom the development of a teachers' skill in the classroom is necessary to protect the learner from using his/her intellectual capacity to think critically. I am not oblivious to the contextual dilemmas in terms of the social divide in South Africa and the number of learners in certain classrooms. I am also aware of 'tougher' schools that deal with gangsterism and many other social factors but in the midst of all of this, we need to take a stand somewhere and fight some of our methods of teaching.

In keeping with John Dewey's views (1938: 49) which I have discussed in my literature review, I believe that if the experience of "doing school" destroys children's spirit to learn then that will impact on their sense of wonder. Having giving a brief synopsis of boredom, which exists in the classroom I also feel that there is another component that is paramount. Therefore, another important changing landscape is the reality that many English classrooms in South Africa do not consist of learners whose home language is English.

I have met and seen this scenario many times and have been part of it for a very long time. In the next segment, I will mention the myths and the realities of the South African English home language classroom. I feel that my next discussion further strengthens the need for teachers to be creative in their English Home language classrooms.

#### **6.9.6 The English Home Language Speaker in High School: Myth and Reality**

The natural speaker of a language is often referred to as a native speaker (Davies, 2003: viii). Many high schools' English Home language classes are composed of learners whose first language is not English. This is the reality of the diversity and it is important that teachers accommodate this reality and redefine their teaching methods with the understanding that they have to cater for the learner who is bilingual. With reference to the above-mentioned point, many learners might be criticized on their performance of English indirectly but without the attempt of the teacher to either redefine their teaching skills (methods) or use Second language acquisition principles. At this stage, I feel that a further discussion on the component of diversity is merited because in South Africa most classrooms are diverse.

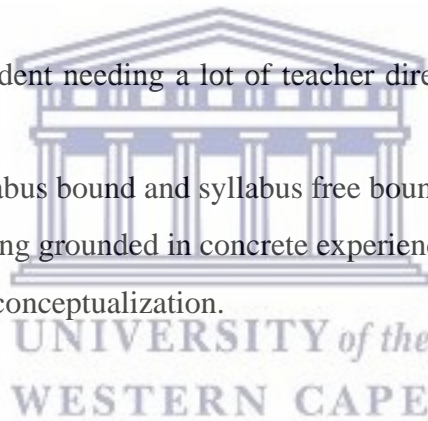


### 6.9.6.1 Diverse Classrooms: Avoiding Disconnection

In the context of South Africa, teachers are bound to end up in diverse classrooms. I recently visited a school where 70% of the staff were white but the learners were mostly 'Coloured and isiXhosa' speaking. This experience was again a firm reminder of the diverse nature of South Africa. This study/investigation is shaped by the convergence of classroom diversity since the schools that I have selected are composed of a diverse setting.

Despite the commonality of this context in South Africa, diversity remains an area of concern among some teachers' especially new teachers (Melnick & Meister, 2008: 39-56; Milner, 2006a: 491-522; Monroe, 2006: 161-165). This is understandable for new teachers; however, dealing with it in the early part of your teaching career can help further dynamize the practice of teaching. According to Brookfield (1995), classrooms hold some of the following:

- One group of students is field independent liking to be left alone to plan and conduct necessary learning.
- Others are field dependent needing a lot of teacher direction and externally imposed structure.
- Some learners are syllabus bound and syllabus free bound.
- A preference for learning grounded in concrete experience.
- Others prefer abstract conceptualization.



(Brookfield, 2006: 154)

In conjunction with the above stated points, I have detected the following based on my own experience:

- Based on diversity some learners' hide away living a silent life.
- Others feel inferior and feel they are not worthy.
- Some look down on themselves.
- Some hate reading because they feel embarrassed.

Based on the above shown list, I can attest to the fact that the fusion of different techniques can open new possibilities in the classroom and can help invigorate the teaching process.

Having briefly mentioned the contextual scenario in many South African schools, I will first deal with the notion of effective teaching and then conceptualize it. I highlight the platform of effective teaching, which I feel is necessary at this stage because my narrative follows the path of Teacher (effective teaching), learner and textbook practice, which was brought out in themes at a later stage.

#### **6.10 Effective Teachers in the Future: A Vital Commodity for South African Learners**

In section 3.17 of my literature review in Chapter 3, I have discussed the component of ‘teacher beliefs’ where I stress that teachers have their own theoretical beliefs for their own type of teaching skill. The implication here is that their teaching style could have been determined by a teacher that they were taught by. This can become a positive or a negative influence. In this segment, the discussion ranges around the concepts of effective teaching via which teachers can reposition themselves as this can help English Home language teachers in the classroom.

Improving teachers and their practice continues to be emphasized in the field of education (Bolin & Falk, 1987: 3). Everyone seems to agree that we have to have consistently high-quality teachers in schools (McCann, Jones & Aronoff, 2012: xi). South African teachers in the future will need to deal with a climate of continual change. In retrospect, we are already aware that South African teachers had to deal with so many changes on a political scale, which weaved its way into the classroom. The effective teachers in the South African classroom will be those who work to make what is now the best practices become the standard for all. Therefore, this research is based on the conception of teaching not only as a professional activity but also as one that involves teacher judgment and decision making in the English Home language classroom.

In doing this, it serves to share some good practices that can be used by all English teachers. It is the teacher, a person who has made a personal choice to teach who is of concern in this inquiry and who we can glean from in terms of practice for our future teachers. The teacher is central to the progress of a nation (Bolin & Falk, 1987: x). Therefore, in order to develop our teachers in the future we need to “use educational theories and research as a lens through which to help focus our attention on what we are doing, why we are doing it, and whether or not it is working” (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2010: 5). In the next section, I further conceptualize the element of effective teaching because it is a vital commodity for South African learners.

### **6.10.1 The Conceptualization of Effective Teaching: The Beauty of Opportunity**

A good discussion of the concept of teaching is reflected by the work of Passmore (1980) who characterized three important points in terms of teaching effectively. He concluded that to teach effectively was to (1) teach is normally to teach something (2) to somebody (3) in some context (Skinner, 2010: 6).

Effective teaching lies at the heart of the effective school (Dunne & Wragg, 1994: vix). This section draws attention to the centrality of teaching, learning and of classroom processes in determining teachers' overall academic effectiveness (Scheerens & Bosker 1997; Hill & Rowe, 1998). As noted by Sammons, Hillman & Mortimoreet (1995) the quality of teaching and teacher has the most significant role to play in fostering students' learning and progress. Furthermore, this section sets out to explain the key ideas in relation to effective teaching. This is important because an effective teaching method might not be effective in another context

A good understanding of effective teaching is important because it will provide a base from which teachers can gage their performance and areas of improvement. More importantly, teaching is a complex task (Perrott, 1982) and the different variations of teaching we must look at in order that other teachers can fine-tune their skills in the classroom. Furthermore, this section offers the capacity to understand the contextual scenarios that filter through our teaching. This section therefore offers:

- A simple yet balanced and powerful framework for thinking in terms of English and the English Home language classroom in high school.
- An outline of contemporary thought on effective teaching.

A teacher is one of the key elements in any high school. This is mirrored by the fact that effective teaching is one of the key propellers for school improvement. How do we Judge the Capacity of Effective Teaching? Effective teaching might surface in many ways because of the different social settings that perpetuate it. In principal, effective teaching has the capacity to solve problems in the classroom. Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs & Robinson (2004) built on Passmore theory and pointed to five factors that contribute to teacher effectiveness and allow us to look at it with some binoculars. The factors were:

- The range of activities referring to instructional, social, pastoral, welfare and leadership of other personnel.
- Different components of your subject area.
- Understanding learner background in terms of age, ability, sex, socio-economic status and ethnicity.
- Cultural and organized contexts in terms of school size and area location

Similar to the above stated list Borich's (2006: 9-19) research outlines five teaching behaviours that have aided high pupil attainments:

- There is the concept of lesson clarity implying the teacher uses good examples and knows how to steer the class towards the lesson outcome.
- The concept of instructional variety implying that the teacher knows when and how to inject questions in the class and lesson.
- The concepts of teacher focus on the learning task and not just merely concerned with pupil management.
- The concept of engagement in the learning process.
- The concept of student success rate implying how and when they complete tasks.

Having looked at aspects that some researchers have used to judge the effectiveness of teaching I would like to present some definitions of teaching effectively.

### **6.10.2 The Good of Effectiveness: A Teachers' Gift**

A remarkable gift given to teachers is the fact that they can be effective and influence the lives of learners. This effectiveness can transpire in many ways in and out of the classroom. In principle, the list below offers some of the key features of effective teaching:

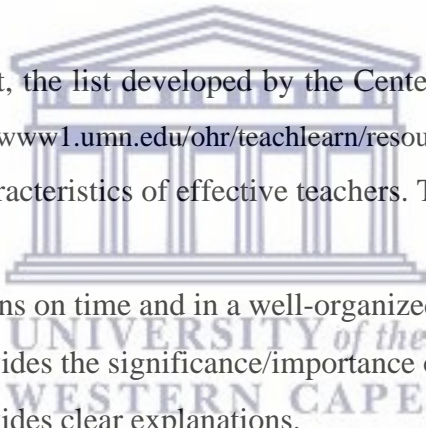
- Effective teaching offers students an engaging classroom.
- Effective teaching affords the learner appropriate learning opportunities.
- Effective teaching recognizes the fact the learners must be prepared for the outside world and therefore teachers can build real-time scenarios to show some of the social setting in the real world.

- Effective teaching creates strong relationships with their students that that connotes a goal orientated ambition and drive to succeed.
- Effective teaching communicates high expectations.
- Effective teaching helps students to envision a powerful future for themselves.
- Effective teaching offers content that is rigorous and aligned to student interest and motivation.
- Effective teaching promotes teamwork among colleagues in order to draw on different levels of teaching.

(Walker, 2013)

As I mentioned in the beginning of this segment that effective teaching is a gift in order to uplift learners for the future because in reality as teachers we are aware of how difficult it is in the 'outside' world.

Adding to the above stated list, the list developed by the Center of Educational Innovation at the University of Minnesota ([www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/resources/peer/guidelines/index.html](http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/resources/peer/guidelines/index.html)) outlined a list of observable characteristics of effective teachers. They are:

- 
- Effective teaching begins on time and in a well-organized way.
  - Effective teaching provides the significance/importance of information to be learned.
  - Effective teaching provides clear explanations.
  - Effective teaching holds the learners' attention displaying good classroom management.
  - Effective teaching uses active, hands-on student learning.
  - Effective teaching allows for varied instructional techniques.
  - Effective teaching provides frequent and immediate feedback to students on their performance.
  - Effective teaching uses good analogies.
  - Effective teaching carries itself with a sense of humour.
  - Effective teaching carries with it non-verbal behaviour, such as gestures, walking around and eye contact to reinforce his/her comments.
  - Effective teaching focuses on the class objective and does not let the class get side-tracked.

- Effective teaching often permits feedback from students (and others) to assess and improving teaching.
- Effective teaching reflects on the concept of teaching to improve it.

(Muijs & Reynolds, 2018)

The double list echoes the overarching principles that should (recognized) be in the life of an effective teacher. The list also provided an anchor during the observation process. Many South African teachers have characteristics that are found on the list but as teachers, we are always growing so the list serves as a yardstick for teachers because in reality as teachers we are always developing. In short, a teacher that stops developing their skill is a dead teacher and this leads me to my next segment, which will deal with a misconception of effectiveness.

I have met many teachers who would not be able to teach in other schools because the type of learner would be a problem and so their effectiveness is measure at many times with learners who can work on their own and achieve success. In the next segment, I address an area that I believe many researchers do not discuss.

### **6.10.3 The Bad of Mistaken Effectiveness: A Measure of Deception in Schools**

This segment is written from the viewpoint of first-hand experience that I have observed in the work place on many occasions. There are certain times that teachers come across as effective based on Examination results and performance.

The implication behind this is the fact that we regard the teacher(s) as doing a good job because of the examination marks that was achieved. However, in some social settings there is a level of deception. Many schools by themselves have hard working learners. You can leave these learners by themselves and they will learn without being told to work and study. Their natural inclination is to work and schools benefit tremendously from these types of learners.

In this type of context, a teacher does not have to do much because the learners' cognitive level is already at a higher performance. Many teachers are aware of the above scenario and this often leads to competition of having certain classes. This leads to a measure of deception where teachers:

- Indirectly choose classes that they want by informing the principal or HOD of the subject about the classes that they want the following year based on the work ethic of the class. One offshoot of this is that they dump the not so 'hard' working classes on newer teachers or other teachers. I can attest to this, as it was a product of my own high school.
- The danger of the above scenario can make teachers lazy while they are been considered as effective teachers. I regard it as a lie from the 'pit of hell'. It is an injustice that hides the fact those teachers in difficult situations innovative and shows a great level of creativity but are not recognized for their passion, purpose, and creativity.

I would like to reiterate that the above segment highlights the fact that oftentimes effectiveness can be dressed on the wrong person. I find this to be a common theme in South African high schools. Furthermore, I see teachers winning awards for outstanding teaching but they do not do that much because many of their learners are hardworking naturally. Although this section can come across as abrupt, it simply serves as awareness-raising exercise about a concept that is hardly mentioned and does need some attention.

#### **6.10.4 Summary of Points discussed in the above Segment**

The discussion in this part of the study has:

- Located English Home language teaching in an understanding of the classroom climate.
- Referred to the need for effective teaching because the landscape of learners between the ages of 16-18 are changing.
- Focused on new and old methods of using a text in the classroom.
- Offered an antidote for learners' struggle in literacy in terms of teacher dynamics with the reinforcement of the word 'teachernaire'
- Argued that there is a need to revive the concept of being a teacher.
- Examined the link between teacher and textbook practice (proficiency).

Having briefly given a synopsis in terms of the discussion so far and giving the complex nature that exist within teaching, I would like to move on to a more neglected topic in terms of another peripheral when it comes to teaching.

Knowing and understanding the unique challenges present in schools is important to understand the gap in knowledge that I am identifying in the next segment (cluster) segment. The scope for my next discussion might have come about as a result of an absence of authoritative discourse on the subject matter and therefore I need to address urgently the issue of the working teacher in terms of the difference between having a job and having a work.

I consider the following discussion as ‘fresh’ knowledge or I believe I am simply providing a new angle of reflection under the domain of teaching. By this I mean that I have seldom (or never) seen it mentioned in educational books with regard to teaching. In a recent book on effective teaching entitled, ‘Effective Teaching’ by Daniel Muijs and David Reynolds (2018), there is no mention of what I am about to discuss. Furthermore, in a new book published in South Africa entitled, ‘Learning to Teach’ by a host of authors they also do not mention what I intend to discuss. Adding to the above stressed points, I also provide a rationale for the inherent nature of the topic in this discussion.

#### **6.10.5 Building a deeper understanding between a Job and your Work**

The theft of your potential remains in the future.



(Frank, 2017: 135)

This segment 6.2.11-6.2.17 in this chapter addresses an important and too seldom addressed issue. This segment demonstrates the diversity in the spectrum of teaching. Firstly, I deal with the difference between a teacher’s job and his work. I consider that it is a difference that many teachers know little about and it often rules their heart in terms of teacher effectiveness. Therefore, I am mentioning this difference to imprint a subtle weakness that can exist in South African teachers and signpost the possibility of a course in the curriculum in Universities especially in the Department of Education. Although Universities do offer courses in ethics it often side tracts the concepts that I am about to mention.

I believe that there are also other elements that run parallel with the topic of a ‘job and your work’ e.g. salary, marriage and age.



Furthermore, I also believe what is to be gained by this information (research) is the fact that I believe that it is worthwhile to know because it contributes to the development of existing knowledge and address specific practical needs. In the next segment I will first provide a rationale for why I have included this area of information.

#### **6.10.6 Rationale to Include the Flowing Concepts: Job, Work, Salary, Marriage and Age**

I feel compelled to include orientations of the ‘forgotten’ in terms of teacher output. Since I am applying the laws of forensics in this scrutiny, it is imperative that I mention the above concepts. These are matters, which many consider being private but I believe that silence only makes it louder. The heading of this segment are issues that we should be aware of for the argument of this segment.

Stevens (1977: 46) in his book, ‘New Orientations in the Teaching of English’ highlighted some important components that arise from teachers’ individuality that can affect the classroom. However, he does not mention issues of salary and marriage, which I expand on in the next segment.

#### **6.10.7 Silence only makes it Louder: A Bird’s Eye View**

In their book, ‘Teachers Under Pressure’, Galton and Macbeath (2008) confess that teaching is not the same anymore. They highlight the main issues that influence teaching. They range from:

- Poor pupil behaviour.
- Lack of parental support.
- Teaching, learning and an overloaded curriculum.
- Lack of parental Support.

Like some authors, they fail to mention another dilemma that exist among teachers. We should remind ourselves of the fact that according to the Centre for Development and Enterprise learners lose about 40% of learning time every year in South African schools because teachers habitually skip classes (<http://www.news24.com/2017>). Teaching is not that easy in the context of South Africa but more importantly many teachers don’t really know why they are teachers. For some it might only be a job. Others allow their home circumstances to influence their level of communication with their learners for long periods of time.

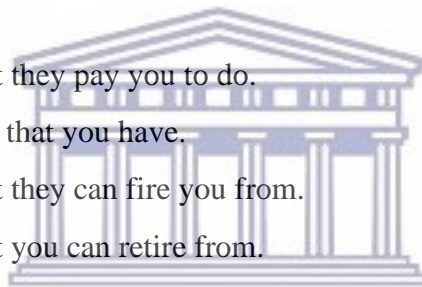
Since I feel that many authors do not touch on the outside environment of teachers' mind-set and since this is an autopsy, I feel it is necessary to include it here because it is a reality. Having taught for almost twenty years, I have seen all of the aspects regularly in schools.

Furthermore, the fact that I have taught in almost fifteen schools, places my lens in the position so that I can reflect on certain matters while having 'night vision'. Moreover, not to mention the concepts of job, work, salary, marriage and the platform of teachers' ages would be an injustice to the world of education.

#### **6.10.8 The Platform of a Job vs. the Platform of Work: Understanding the Difference**

I believe the following discussion is important because many teachers have lost their passion for teaching. This could be because teachers do not know the difference between a job and work. In the framework (end of the month salary) of this world, it is my viewpoint that a job holds the following characteristics:

- A job is something that they pay you to do.
- A job is a specific skill that you have.
- A job is something that they can fire you from.
- A job is something that you can retire from.



In comparison with the concept of work, it appears that a job and the concept of work appear next to each other on the same tract. However, I believe a closer look at the concept of work we can discover that it holds the following characteristics. For me:

- A work is something you were born to do.
- A work moves towards specialization.
- A work is something they cannot fire you from.
- A work you can never retire from.

After being presented with a difference between work and a job as I see it, I would like to ask a fundamental question which is:

- What I am doing now, is it a job or is it my work?

The above question I believe will divide ‘the men from the boys’ and point to the passionate teacher that will usually go beyond the call of duty. In this section, I have mentioned the two differences in order to bring awareness to teachers so that they might grasp an understanding of their work. It is imperative that English Home languages teachers become aware that they have a work instead of a job. A teachers’ work is a gift to the generations that they are born into in order to influence a generation in a positive way.

#### **6.10.9 The Ugly Truth: A Teacher’s Salary can be a Blinding Factor**

Often, a deeper scrutiny brings out hidden aspects that we might not know about. The potential to earn higher incomes remains the most common factor driving teacher migration (George & Rhodes, 2015: 11). Therefore, this section highlights what many know but do not speak about in public. Often, many teachers have fallen victim to only doing a job by only being satisfied with their salary. There are many reasons that may suggest my above point.

However, the danger here is the fact that if a ‘salary’ is the only measure of performance then as teachers you will work less on the job and do the minimum. So many teachers merely hand out photocopies and shy away from creativity because it cost so much energy and preparation. However, if they were taught the immense difference between a job and their work the mental faculty of some teachers might have been on a different level.

From the outset, I will like to make it clear that this section in no way demeans any teacher. I am aware that there are many great teachers in South Africa who work hard and love their learners with great passion. However, it is also true that there are many lazy teachers in South Africa. I hope that this minute section will spark awareness so that teachers can understand their tremendous impact and realize that their gift is not given to everyone. Furthermore, I would like to mention an issue that I have seen little been written about and that is the problem of bringing their personal lives into the classroom. In principal, teachers just don’t have jobs—they have professional and personal lives as well (Huberman, 1993: viii). Understanding this, I need to mention the danger that hampers a teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom. This holds great bearing for the English language teacher in South Africa.

#### **6.10.10 Bringing your Marriage Problems or Unhappiness into the classroom**

I believe this is not a taboo subject and should be addressed. Hurberman (1993: 3) posed an important question, which in my opinion has been given little attention. He asked, “What events in teachers’ private lives reverberate into the classroom”? and “What are the effects”? Here lies a great dilemma, which is to maintain your sanity when your life is not going all that well. I have seen and known many teachers who have come into the classroom with their marital problems and have caused havoc by being rude to learners and sometimes saying the ugliest of things (words). Unfortunately, learners remember this and switch off when you teach. I would like to render a story that I discovered that really helped me in teaching.

I use to do gate duty every morning at school and that surprisingly set the tone for the entire day. It is amazing that a simple smile with my learners can help my discipline in the classroom. I am mentioning this so show that one little action can help a teacher become effective. More important there were days that when I had a bad day but controlled my tongue and actions which helped me in the process of teaching. Therefore, it is important that teachers try to balance their social life and the classroom simply because it leaves a scar in the classroom, which inevitably affects your teaching practice.

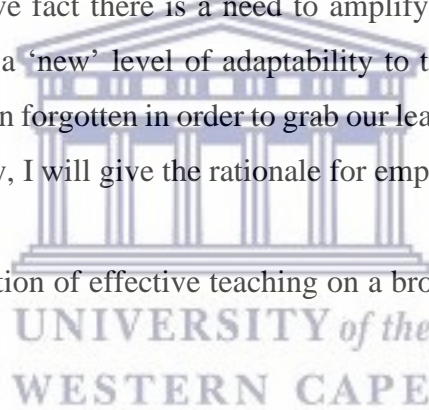
At this stage, one might ask where does this fit into the study but a teacher with a healthy mind and understands the dynamics of human behaviour can have a greater impact than a teacher that is bathed with anger and hatred. Furthermore, if the topics in section 6.9.6-6.9.11 come across as taboo I am reminded of my Master’s Thesis where I discussed the health and the obesity rate of teachers and the impact that it can have in the classroom. At one stage of my discussion, the topic of teachers’ obesity rate might have come across as a topic that is not discussed that often. However, on the 9 November 2019 the Sunday Times (Major Newspaper) in South Africa published a riveting article entitled, ‘Overweight Teachers on Fitness Watch’. I am highlighting this because at times that which comes across as taboo now might be very important in the future. My last point of discussion in this cluster is the fact of age, which I consider as important because many I feel that many do not include aspects of it. I will give a brief synopsis of the concept.

### **6.10.11 The Age of Conformity or the Age of Vibrancy in Teaching**

While I was growing up, I was frequently made aware of the expression, ‘with age comes wisdom’. Now I understand that this expression represents a half-truth because it does not mean that with age comes innovation. Often those over forty-five would like to remain in their set ways and the product of innovation does not sit that well with them. Furthermore, an ageing teaching stock means a higher demand for new teachers as many will be retiring. South Africa’s influx of young teachers is not that high (Cape Higher Education Consortium, 2009).

The proportion of those aged 40 and older increased from 29% in 1997 to 46% in 2002 and 51% in 2005 (Bot, 2003; Arends, 2007). According to Lewin (2008), 1 405 new teachers in Western Cape who were appointed to permanent teaching posts between April 2003 and February 2008, only 519 were still in service in 2008, with 886 having left the employment of the WCED. This reveals the fact that the young, less qualified teachers leave the profession sooner than the more qualified and experienced teachers who tend to stay in the teaching profession. Based on the above fact there is a need to amplify the status of a ‘new’ kind of teacher. By new here I mean a ‘new’ level of adaptability to try something new or bring in something that might have been forgotten in order to grab our learners and maximize their lives for school and learning. Firstly, I will give the rationale for employing a ‘new word’.

Having conceptualized the notion of effective teaching on a broad scale, I will now deal with the findings of this study.



### **6.11 Conclusion**

The main purpose of this research was to gain insight into teachers’ perception and practice with regard to the English Home language textbook. This study also wanted to gain understanding into the content of the relevancy of the textbook in terms of Grade 11 learners. Through the interviews, I was able to compare the opinions and experiences of the teachers. This chapter presented the findings of the unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews, teacher observation and document analysis. Findings were organised according to the two main research questions and the four subsidiary questions. Through the observations, I was able to see how teachers interact with grade 11 learners while using different texts. The findings of this study identified certain teaching methods that teachers use in the classroom while dealing with different texts from the textbook. Furthermore, this study captured the perceptions that teacher had towards the grade 11 English Home language textbook.

My discussion of the different findings so far can help confirm the following:

- The use of multimodality as a tool was used to captivate learner input by the use of different technological tools in order to get a greater output from the learners.
- The realization that the component of relevant material to grade 11 lives adds a great dimension in the English Home language classroom.
- The use of the development of one's own textbook gave a teacher greater flexibility to choose their own material.
- The use of a good comprehension can develop deep intriguing questions and create critical thinking on a different level. Good connective comprehensions evoke an immediate response from the learners.
- The use of risking by the teacher can be beneficial at times and help grade 11 learners to enhance their capacity in the English Home language classroom.
- The use of being innovative can change the complexity of the English Home language classroom.
- Seven out of the twelve teachers used the 'English for Success' textbook.

In addition to the above-mentioned points, certain barriers were also highlighted. In particular, the lack of teachers' work material in relation to the learners' actual lives. Ultimately, the findings of this study suggest that through careful planning by teachers the textbook can become a useful tool in the English Home language classroom. I believe that the discussion that I have provided in this chapter can help me lay the groundwork for stating my conclusion(s) in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

#### 7.1 Reviewing the Study: Looking Forward Understanding Backward

There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.

Edith Wharton

The purpose of this study was to shed light on textbook practice in grade 11. In light of this, I explored with a sample of 12 English Home language teachers who I intended to interview, observe and describe the dynamics and ramifications of the English Home language textbook as used by the them in the classroom.

Having discussed the findings in the previous chapter, I now turn to the implications of my investigation with reference to the teacher, learner and the textbook. From the outset, I would like to state/stress that the study recognizes the fact that we often make the mistake of confusing a degree/diploma with teaching appropriately in a given context. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned point, I also believe that we automatically assume that any teacher can use a textbook. Furthermore, some words become so commonplace like ‘textbook’ and ‘teaching’ that they cease to be useful or important, let alone their denigrating effect on our cherished and share educational values and beliefs. In many schools, classroom attendance can often remove learners from its immediate culture and place them in a somewhat primitive situation where they are taught knowledge from one particular angle (the curriculum). In light of the above-mentioned point, the injection of relevant material (learner connection) can enhance the creation and prevalence of a more well-rounded learner.

The study believes that it is only through the writing of teacher narratives that we can develop a deeper understanding of a teacher’s textbook practice. In this way we can also understand how a hermeneutical approach can breathe life into different pedagogical practices in the English Home language classroom.

In addition, we have the privilege in seeing out remarkable things in mundane settings. Hence, the core of all good research is the ability to stand back from what is known and see it afresh (Carter & Goddard, 2016: 7).

In the first segment of this chapter, I intend to revisit and review the major sections of the study and expound on what the study attempted to do and what resulted from it. My examination and the evaluation of the literature combined with my experience have helped me to widen the conceptual framework that informed the design and focus of this study. I believe that the framework of this study shaped the research process informing the methodological scheme thereby influencing the choice and use of data collection instruments to be used. In keeping with the above-mentioned point and given the fact that quantitative methodologies can often fail to provide a fuller picture of the phenomenon under investigation, the methodology used in this study attempted to overcome/mitigate the above-mentioned shortcoming.

The research approach of this study which is action based is applicable in this study because it meets the criteria of making improvements in teachers' professional practices (Atweb, Kemmis & Weeks, 1998). Further to the above-mentioned point, the constructivist epistemology of the researcher and my beliefs underlying it compelled me to search for new or old ideas and views that are consistent with such an epistemology. However, at the same time the discussion of findings in chapter 6 demonstrated both the positive and negative points of the English Home language textbook with regard to its content and relevancy and appropriateness to stimulate learners in grade 11. Hence, the findings point to the influence of moving, attitudinal and realistic influences of textbook literature (materials), which determine the willingness and ability of the students to be engaged in the classroom. Also, the findings imply the effectiveness of the different relevant materials in developing an interconnection between the teacher, learner and the textbook. The interviews and the observation of teachers support the above phenomena of interconnectedness. Therefore, by offering a wider exposure to grade 11 learners than the more limited materials of a general English Home language textbook to be used in the classroom does have the potential to contribute to a more engaged classroom.

Having given a brief reappraisal of the study I now move on to present an overview of the study.



### **7.1.1 An Overview of the Study**

My study is a descriptive and an interpretive study conducted at the Department of Language Education, at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. Also, my study aimed to demonstrate the educational and social values of the teacher, learner and English Home language textbook in the classroom against the demoralization of literacy problem within a South African context, in particularly where South Africa has been placed at the bottom in terms of performance when it comes literacy (reference was made to this in chapter 6). Therefore, the study provides some helpful insights into the problem of text connection to teenagers between the ages of 16-18 years. The study suggests that if we can equip English Home language teachers with a good understanding of the theoretical issues that underpin a well-informed text that can connect with a grade 11 learners' life, then it can bring about a positive reinforcement of learning in the English Home language classroom.

This study used a constructivist epistemology and my beliefs underlying my study necessitated my searching of ideas to attempt an improvement in literacy development in the grade 11 English Home language classroom. Therefore, the literature review identified theoretical and pertinent/practical issues that would support a constructivist approach (Chapter 2 & 3).

In addition to the above-mentioned point, the review of reading materials of this study identified the role of individual texts/textbooks. This discovery linked to the above-mentioned point also harnessed the ability to bring a level of empowerment to grade 11 teachers and learners which could change their perception not only about reading but could allow the learner to develop a deeper connection with the text and the teacher in the classroom in terms connectivity. Furthermore, in order to emphasize my educational value system, the review involved the identification, location and analysis of material related to the research problem.

The study was significantly guided by an orientation towards four theoretical perspectives, which were: Vygotsky's thoughts, John Dewey's view, the insights of Jerome Bruner and the key thoughts/views of Paulo Freire. The study also pointed out the gaps in our understanding of the textbook's role in the English Home language classroom and the need for equipping teachers and learners to try and maximize a reading text. Therefore, the findings point to the influence of texts which can determine the willingness of the learners and teachers to be realigned to/with one another in terms of better educational output.

The interview and observational data reemphasized the motivational benefits of relevant texts that could generate and connect to a greater reading response and work ethic in the classroom. This could be necessary because of South Africa's current prevalent low literacy rate and hence interesting texts could provide the stimulus for grade 11 learners to read, write and explore in the English Home language classroom. Furthermore, it is also evident from the findings that a sense of nostalgia exists in terms of the textbook because some teachers feel that it is not an effective tool in the classroom because of outdated material.

In summing up the advantages of using relevant texts for language development activities and greater interconnection between teacher and learner, the research cites Sage (1987) who states that literature is instrumental in engaging students' minds and feelings in meaningful communication in English. The importance of materials in language teaching and learning has been extensively acknowledged (McGrath, 2013).

Literature/texts (in the textbook) comes in many forms and can be shaped to advantage the learners in the classroom and in their lives because any text which sparks an engagement with the learner does have the potential to create deep critical thinking and therefore maximizes the readers' capacity to read the world. In addition, the pedagogy that arose from the study focused on the interactive approach to learning and literacy between the teacher, learner and textbook, which stresses the importance for/of a pedagogy in which engagement and participation constitute the mainstays of the educational practices of the classroom (Freire 1972). Further to the above-mentioned point/reference, my research questions facilitated a research design that would allow for triangulation. The triangulation helped reinforce the overall educational ideology of my research.

Hence, my choice of research design used in this study is meant to elicit the essence of the response phenomenon.

In Chapter One, the main research questions for this study were stated as:

1. How do English Home language teachers use the English Home language textbook in and out of the classroom?
2. What are English language teachers' perceptions about the current English Home language textbook?

The subsidiary questions were:

3. How do teachers use textbooks in planning and making decisions about instruction in the classroom?
4. What learning barriers do teachers face concerning the English Home language textbook?
5. How do teachers view other English Home language materials like the X-kit in South Africa?
6. What are the possible factors that contribute to better textbook practice?

Having given an overview of the study, I wish to relate the outcomes of the Study to the research questions in the next segment.

## **7.2 Aligning the Outcomes of the Study to the Research Questions**

The review presented in the previous segment of this chapter served as a summary outlining the main points of the study (recapitulatory function). In this segment, I intend to relate the research questions of this study to the outcomes discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. My explanations in this segment should be viewed as confirmations that support the relevance of ‘context to human behaviour along with the characteristics that underlie it, and the centrality of the subjective belief systems of those involved in research to the process and outcomes of research’ (Nunan, 1992: 71). Furthermore, my conclusions are context-dependent and context-based confirmations of knowledge proposed through a chain of narratives that feature teachers from different schools each with a different classroom climate.

Based on the above stated point, I propose to say in this section of the study that my findings are reinforcements, not generalizations, of what I have perceived as the ‘context-bound characteristics’ of perspectival/speculative knowledge (Bailey and Nunan, 1996: 2) which is simply not cast in stone. Therefore, my findings are neither absolute nor objective/atemporal, but it is a window into a deeper reflection of the teacher, learner and the English Home language textbook.

In view of my above stated point, the conclusions should not be seen as having the quality of being uninfluenced, ungoverned or unchanged by time (atemporal).

Having stated my intention to align the outcomes of the study with the research questions, I am confident that the interpretations that I have provided below referring to the research questions should help signpost the significance of my conclusions.

### **7.2.1 Research Question 1: How do English Home language teachers use the English Home language textbook in and out of the classroom?**

Keeping in mind the findings presented in Chapter 5 (See Section 5.3.3) and discussed in chapter 6 (see Section 6.4.1), teachers in the unstructured interviews believed that the component of relevant material in the textbook which had a bearing on learners' lives would make a difference in their interest in learning. The first important finding of this research points to the fact that the work that learners do in class should have a connection to learners' lives. This can be brought about through activities/practices that target the use of comprehension, poetry, drama etc.

The emphasis on the aspect of relevancy by teachers is an indication for a more stimulating approach to teaching. Therefore, certain activities in the classroom that contain a resemblance to grade 11 student lives can be adequate or motivating in setting a platform for good interaction between the teacher and the learners. The class observation revealed that the teachers had some planned activities in teaching their lessons in order to try to stimulate learners from the beginning of the lesson. Students were engaged through relevant components that had an impact on their daily lives. The findings also point to the fact that the English Home language teachers often use the textbook on a minimal basis at least once a week and that most of the teachers used it for revision in terms of paper 1. Furthermore, the study also revealed that the English Home language textbook was related to the teaching of all four genres (comprehension, poetry, Oral and language grammar activities).

In the next segment I start with conclusion one.

### **7.2.1.1 Conclusion 1: Closing the Gap by Linking Subject Matter to the Lives of Grade 11's**

I believe that the aspect of textbook practice is often unproductively put into use. I believe in a South African context that many times a language teaching text may simply be seen as something to be 'gone through' in one way or another. The danger of text work is that it can become a very (ugly) convenient way of filling up a language lesson and merely used to keep learners busy. In this study, the first conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that learners need to be stimulated and I believe grade 11 learners (most learners) would like to escape from the arena of boredom.

A further and related conclusion that can also be drawn in conjunction with the relevance of material used in the classroom to draw in and motivate learners is the use of digital media to appease learners and show learners that they are up to date with the present trends in their lives. Although this is not always easy, it is possible to embrace it a few times in the quarter. The use of digital media by teacher C created an atmosphere that unified learners to want to contribute.

The study recognizes that this measure of creativity might not always work in other schools because of contextual deviations. However, since this study is context based, I am inclined to believe that it served as a good corrective to netting learners' attention and navigate them away from boredom. Furthermore, the use of selective digital media components added a level of familiarity that high school learners are accustomed to since many of them have different digital components and are aware of some digital programs on the internet. The teacher's use of digital technologies was productive in the sense that it supported collaboration and interaction, particular supporting discussion and feedback.

Teacher A and C in this study embraced what Krumsvik (2006) referred to as 'epistemological contours' and understood to some degree that knowledge is shaped and altered by and within digital environments, which is now engraved in a teenagers' lives. In conjunction with the above-mentioned conclusion, I also believe that the insufficient depth of theoretical understanding of text-based approaches represented among teachers in South Africa is not wide enough in terms of pedagogical practices.

I further believe that this is simply because after English teachers receive their degree, the studying of the subject also ends because many teachers often practice their teaching the way they were taught at the school that they attended. Such theoretical underspecification will inevitably influence the teachers' pedagogical practices in their classrooms.

The above-mentioned insufficiencies fall in line with today's current challenges with regard to literacy teaching. However, I believe if teachers regularly practise a broader teaching methodology in the classroom, it can be a benefit and enhance their level of teaching in the classroom (in terms of using the textbook). Therefore, I offer recommendations based on the findings, analysis and conclusions of this study. I fervently believe that these recommendations should serve as a continuum/sequel to my conclusions and therefore help augment the epistemic focus of my study. The recommendations that follow are for improving teaching in the classroom in terms of the types of material used. It should be noted that some of the following recommendations may already be in place in some teachers' teaching approach. However, these recommendations should help articulate the centrality of my core beliefs, value-systems and their primacy and immediacy in our educational practices of teaching English via the use of textbook.

### **7.2.2 Recommendation 1: Storing Magazine and Newspaper Articles**

According to McDonough and Shaw (2003), a perfect textbook for all students does not exist. Furthermore, if a teacher understands his/her climate of the classroom then he/she could easily be aware if the textbook selected will be effective enough. Based on my first conclusion and first finding I recommend that teachers collect magazines and newspaper articles on a regular bases (the entire year) so that they can constantly search for clips, articles that fit the age category so they can incorporate relevant articles at least once a week (for me twice would be ideal). In doing the above it can serve as an act of empowerment for grade 11 teachers by making a well-informed choice of texts for classroom activity.

### **7.2.3 Recommendation 2: Establishing Learner Interest**

In addition to the above-mentioned points, a teacher can also monitor the interest level without the children being made aware that he/she is probing to gather information. When the teacher does the Oral presentations then the teacher can request articles that learners are speaking about and in doing this can sift and discover what learners are interested in.

I believe that this is important because innovative teaching and evaluation methods of material selection if employed persuasively, can enhance and benefit both teaching and learning for the educator and the learners. Tema (1997) describes the role of educators involving a wide range of teaching approaches and methods and moving easily as the occasion demands. Smith (2013, Book 3: 15) further notes that in these days of curriculum change in South Africa, teachers are often urged to make learning relevant to the lives and expected careers of learners-both from the learner-centred point of view.

#### **7.2.4 Recommendation 3: Practicing Adaptability**

I believe that “any textbook needs adaptation and supplementation to make it appropriate for a particular group of students” (Swan, 1992). Therefore, if teachers have a textbook in their possession, I recommend that they practice the process of adaptability, which can improve the skill of an English Home language teacher and give English teachers more confidence when they handle a text. In this study, teacher A was skilful in her adaptability of the text she was using in the classroom.

#### **7.2.5 Recommendation 4: Communication with the Publisher**

I recommend that they write to the publisher of the textbook if they found it unproductive. When communicating with the publisher they can stress the good and negative point about the textbook that they are using. I commend this because a textbook is a human product and mistakes are a necessary action for improvement in the educational sphere.

#### **7.2.6 Recommendation 5: Incorporating Elements of Question 5 in whatever Text you Use**

My discussion revealed that question 5 of paper 1 is often the most challenging section because many English Home language teachers focus on the set work more. I recommend that no matter what text the teacher is using that he/she incorporate one or two questions in line with question 5 of paper 1 (malapropism, concord etc.).

#### **7.2.7 Recommendation 6: Disguising the Textbook**

I recommend that English Home language teachers attempt to disguise the textbook by photocopying some material (e.g. poem, comprehension etc.) and not informing the learners immediately that the material came from the textbook. In doing the above, the learners are slowly introduced to the textbook.

In the next segment, I will address the second research question.

### **7.3 Research Question 2: What are English language teachers' perceptions about the current English Home language textbook?**

Keeping in mind the findings I have presented in Chapter 5 (See points 5.2.1.4-5.3.3.1 and 5.4.3.1/5.5.1) and discussed in chapter 6 (see 6.4.1), I wish to state that the overall feeling of the English Home language textbook is that it still bears a level of relevance. The textbook for seven of the teachers in this study does contain activities and tasks that can contribute to enhance English Home language teaching.

In this study, teacher A believes that teachers should not forget about the textbook. At the outset, Teacher B believes that there is a lack of suitable language material for the kind of learners in his classroom. Therefore, teacher B used the textbook in a limited fashion. Teacher C believes that the textbook was too mechanical and Teacher C followed a learner centred approach and used question papers from a textbook to reteach a certain component, which would feature in teacher C's question papers.

The perfunctory plodders believed that the textbook was a helpful resource. The perfunctory plodders further emphasized that to some level the textbook was learner-friendly. They also felt that the textbook was useful with regard to speaking and writing skill and incredibly informative not only on a curriculum-based level, but also on a worldly knowledge-based level. In conjunction with the above raised points, one believed that the textbook lacks subject content.

In terms of the commoners, the teachers believed that the textbook was relevant to a certain extent because certain activities could help learners prepare for their examination papers. The commoners felt that the textbook had some material (like comprehensions) that could connect with learners and be helpful in the classroom.



### **7.3.1 Conclusion 2: Do Not Forget About the Textbook**

In light of the above stated findings, I conclude that the English Home language Textbook used by the teachers of this investigation can contribute to learners' literacy development and be used as a base for grade 12 preparation (comprehension, poetry, grammar etc.). In addition to the above-mentioned point, I further conclude that listening activities can be adapted and tasks contained in the textbook are appropriate and efficient. Further to the above-mentioned conclusions textbooks provided a readily available source of materials for the teachers of this study. According to Edge & Wharton (1998), this is helpful because teachers do not have to prepare teaching materials. In addition, the teacher or learner can adapt any of these textbooks (mentioned in the above point) activities. I believe the textbook should become a bridge in which information should travel between teacher and learner and not become a wall with the teacher and her/his knowledge on the one side and learner's knowledge on the other side. As Swan (1992) puts it, learners can simply hijack the textbook to a more suitable destination. They are "designed to give cohesion to the language teaching and learning process by providing direction, support and specific language-based activities aimed at offering classroom practice for students" (Mares, 2003) and foster effective and quick learning of the language (Cunningsworth 1995).

The conclusion(s) in this segment in terms of textbook perception is not an unfamiliar one because research has suggested that it is common to see teachers incorporating the use of textbooks for daily teaching purposes (Byrd 2001, Harmer 1991, Litz 2005, McDonough & Shaw 1993). In light of the conclusion(s) in this segment, I offer some recommendations. I should note at this point that I will continue from recommendation six (as stated in the preceding segment) and hence my next recommendation would be recommendation 7.

#### **7.3.1.1 Recommendation 7: Do not Judge the Textbook by its Cover**

I recommend that English Home language teachers do not judge the textbook in light of its appearance but before they make an informed decision should scrutinize the entire textbook. In addition, to the above stated point, I also recommend that English Home language teachers remember that any textbook can be adaptable and even rewritten. The realization that the textbook can enhance the English Home language teachers' skill can propel teachers to come up with innovative methods of teaching because naturally teachers do not want to be doing the same things in our twentieth year of teaching as in our first. This will can be simple because our learner needs change based on the climate of the classroom.

I believe that far too often, our assumptions about the English Home language textbook are naively based on our previous experiences. This incorrect assumption can often lead to details that are hidden from our sight during the initial first impressions. A textbook is a human product and therefore I believe it can contain errors and look unappetizing to some teachers. However, teachers should think carefully about selection of textbooks and in their selection should not only consider it for the first quarter but incorporate it the entire year. There is the danger that Textbooks are dying out because more materials are now being made available digitally. However, I do not believe that this will happen in a South African context because South Africa is still a developing country and we still have a large degree of people trapped in poverty.

In the next segment, I offer further recommendations.

### **7.3.1.2 Recommendation 8: A More Sharpened Focus on the Product as well as the Process of Teaching**

I recommend that teachers take the time to reengage their learners with the textbook on more regular bases. I am aware that teachers will raise the fact that the setwork often interferes with the regular use of the textbook. If teachers can manage once week then I believe that it can be done in their double period, which would be around spending over 90 minutes with the textbook.

Using that time regularly to focus on question 5 of paper 1 could reap good benefits. There are good things to do with the textbook in the classroom but we do need to be sure that the textbook activities chosen by the teachers actually teach something useful. Ultimately, our learners are paying school fees and I believe when we walk out of the classroom, teachers should be able to say (if it was successful) what important bit of language the learners now know that they did not know before or teachers should ask what important skill did they develop that they did not have before. In doing the above, I recommend that English Home language teachers develop a more sharpened focus on the textbook as well as the process of teaching.

#### **7.4 Implications of Findings and Conclusions in Relation to the Two Main Research Questions**

In this study my conclusions and findings appear to confirm the statement made by the Department of Education (2005b: 67) which was that “educators are required to be creative in using a variety of teaching methods to reach all the learners.” The study also highlights the value of the English Home language textbook while at the same time revealing some weakness that teachers of this study identified. In this investigation, the findings imply the following:

- Didactic approaches to teaching English at secondary high schools need special attention. By special, I am referring to ‘context based’ because it is a ‘melting pot’ of different cultures.
- The textbooks used in the classroom differed in terms of outlook and activities and was weaved by the teachers in many different ways. The bases for the above-mentioned point is in keeping with the climate in the classroom which will dictate the type of teaching in the classroom.

Some of the textbook practices described in this section might be at odds with some initial traditions of literacy teachers e.g. forming your own textbook, using multimodality to enhance textbook output etc. However, complex problems in the classroom can reveal simple solutions that might have been forgotten over time. Therefore, being informed in terms of textbook practice can be used as an attempt to improve learner marks. Furthermore, it was also revealed that if teachers understand their classroom climate then the type of texts they select can help the learning process. Consequently, it would be helpful for teachers to understand the culture (contextual awareness) of the classroom. From the outset it should be stated that this is not an easy observation to make for teachers but the discovery of the ‘ways’ of the collective class can be a bonus for a teacher.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned points, a deeper awareness in the English Home language Grade 11 classroom can only benefit teachers in preventing the conflicts and misunderstandings between both teachers and learners that lead to negative behaviour in the classroom. Hence, I want to reinforce what the first finding suggested that if teachers use relevant material that directly relate to grade 11 learners, the atmosphere in the classroom could become very conducive to learning. Grade 11 learners can experience a sense of personal enjoyment and contribute much more effectively during the lesson.

Although this textbook practice sounds simple, when weighed against the number of learners that do not partake in a class activity then the texture of this practice, I believe will take on a new understanding.

Having looked at the first two main research questions and drawn my conclusion as well as presented some recommendation I will now deal with the subsidiary questions.

## **7.5 Discussion of Subsidiary Research Questions**

In this segment, I wish to discuss and answer the subsidiary research questions (SRQs). The findings that relate to the SRQs are also intended to incentivize the search for improvement in the teaching/learning of English in Grade 11 classroom.

### **7.5.1 Research Question 3: How do teachers use textbooks in planning and making decisions about instruction in the classroom?**

In many impoverished parts of South Africa, a textbook is the teachers' and students' first and sometimes only exposure to books and reading. The public and in particular parents, regard textbooks as authoritative, accurate and necessary. Furthermore, many teachers rely on them to organise lessons and structure subject matter. Therefore, I believe that in a South African context, textbooks have a key role to play in education and in the future.

#### **7.5.1.1 Conclusion 3: Varied Approaches to the Delivery in the Classroom**

The research in this study revealed that in terms of planning, teachers highlighted many different ways when it comes to the instruction in the classroom. Therefore, keeping in mind the findings I have presented in Chapter 5 (See points 5.3.3.4-5.4 and 5.5/5.5.2.2-5.5.2.6), I can conclude that teachers use the textbook in planning and making decisions about instructions in the classroom in the following ways:

- Teachers identify visual aspects in the textbook and use it to teach visual literacy in the classroom.
- Teachers use it to focus on the language component (e.g. grammar).
- The perfunctory performers used the textbook as a revision resource.
- The perfunctory performers were interested in the Helpful Teacher's Guide which they felt was important in the planning because it gave good guidelines.

- The perfunctory performers used the textbook in their planning on those issues that learners have problems with e.g. grammar and comprehensions and setwork.
- The commoners used the textbook in planning mostly for the comprehensions the textbook had to offer.

The above-mentioned characteristics showcase that the textbook is used in a limited fashion in terms of planning because teachers made me aware that for them (perfunctory performers and commoners) the textbook is an additional resource and not the main source of information.

#### **7.5.1.2 Recommendation 9: The Textbook as a Beacon for the language component of Grammar Teaching**

I believe that the English Home language textbooks are an indispensable part of an English Home language classroom. It is in light of the above-stated point that I believe that oftentimes grammar teaching has been called into question if it should be taught or not. I recommend that the textbook largely be used for grammar (in the planning process) and comprehension teaching in reference to question 1 (30 marks) and question 5 (10). Furthermore, question 5 in paper 1 and is often a weak area for many grade 11 learners. Based on the findings the textbook offers enough to practice this component as an additional resource. Although there might be better resources to revise grammar and the language component I believe it is an important skill for the teacher to show the learners how the teacher can weave any text and make it applicable to a grammar.

In doing the above there can be a resurgence of the long-standing disillusionment of the teaching of grammar. In a similar vein, Cunningsworth (1995) points out that the first considerations of textbook writers are what grammar items to include and to what extent they will correspond to learner needs. He believes that with the effective teaching of grammar, learners are equipped with the ability to make their own sentences and will be able use target language for their own purposes. Based on the findings I also recommend that a good selection of a textbook can also be used to reintroduce setwork as teacher E did when teacher E introduced selected elements of Macbeth. This is because many times the drama book can bring some displeasure to learners based on the type of language used in the play.

## **7.5.2 Research Question 4: What learning barriers do teachers face concerning the English Home language textbook?**

Swan (1992) argues that the danger with ready-made textbooks is that they seem to absolve teachers of responsibility. Oftentimes teachers want a quick fix (activities) to keep learners busy and in doing this they keep their potential (skill) undeveloped and rob themselves of the ability to enhance their proficiency in the classroom. Furthermore, I believe that no textbook contains exactly what is required for a particular learner (s)/class. In light of the above-stated point It should come across as no surprise that the textbook in different social settings should be considered as a barrier.

### **7.5.2.1 Conclusion 4: The Textbook as a Limited Barrier**

Based on the findings stated in sections 5.2.1.4/5.3.3.1/5.4.3.1/5.5.3.5 of Chapter 5, I wish to conclude that my study revealed that for the teachers the English Home language textbook can be a barrier because it did not contain activities that the teachers felt were good enough to convey the lesson they had in mind. For some teachers the English Home language textbook was also a barrier in terms of the type of activities presented in the textbook. The data from the teachers revealed that they felt that the language component (grammar) in the textbook was a concern in grade 11 and did not adequately present the component of grammar. In order to accommodate this inconsistency teachers used additional resources like question papers to handle this deficiency. In light of my conclusion here, I make the following recommendation.

### **7.5.2.2 Recommendation 10: Learner Creativity with the Textbook**

I believe that there are textbooks/texts that did not have the success that it deserved because there was so much more to do with the text. Apple (1986: 85) argues that the ubiquitous nature of textbooks is something we know very little about. I will take this a step further and say that many teachers do not know how to extend/lengthen the life expectancy of a textbook. I recommend that teachers allow learners to have a closer involvement with the textbook. By this, I mean allowing the learners to do something interesting with certain texts e.g. extending a comprehension in the textbook, adding new questions to poems and advertisements, creating something humorous with the cartoons in the textbook etc.

As Swan (2012: 44, 1992 published article) states “the best lessons are those when the book may do something interesting, but the students end up by doing something even more interesting as they used their newly learnt language to inform, amuse, entertain, persuade, or even move each other.” In light of what Swan (2012) states I believe that this would bring out learners’ creativity with the textbook.

### **7.5.3 Research Question 5: How do teachers view other English Home language materials like the X-kit in South Africa?**

I believe that a properly-focused text use can play an important part in the English Home language classroom. However, based on the findings in this study, I wish to state that hardly any reference was given to the X-kit. Terms like additional resource(s) was given but little reference was given to where it came from.

Therefore, there was not effective data (information to address this question but the findings do point to the fact that teachers do not only use the textbook but use other material as an additional resource.

#### **7.5.3.1 Recommendation 11: Establishing a Part 2 in Terms of Certain Activities**

I believe that any additional sources used by teachers can be an extension of the original textbook that the teacher is using. Teachers can therefore attach similar activities that can blend with the original activity that was done in the textbook. This will show learners that there is always a connection to something else and help learners to see a correlation between different reading activities.

### **7.5.4 Research Question 6: What are the possible factors that contribute to better textbook practice?**

I believe that the connection with the textbook for the teacher and learner does not happen overnight but teachers need to be motivated to use the textbook on a regular basis. In light of the above-stated point, teachers can create an affective environment where students can engage and actively participate with the English Home language textbook and the teacher.

#### **7.5.4.1 Conclusion 5: Factors that can Impede Textbook Practice**

Based on the findings in this study stated in sections 5.3.3/5.4.3/5.3.3.1/5.4.3/5.4.3.1 of Chapter 5, I wish to state that the first factor that carries a level of importance for better textbook practice is understanding the classroom climate.

Having an overview of the type of learner you have in the classroom can help you select the right texts which could help teaching in the classroom. The finding by teacher B stresses the idea that in grade 11 learners need relevant exercises, and more related comprehension passages that ‘speak’ to their experience of life. Another conclusion to be drawn from the data is that if the textbook does not have good activities and the teacher is not creative enough to add to these activities then this non-creative ability can damage textbook practice. This is important because there can be paucity of language material suitable for the grade 11 learners.

Some of the perfunctory performers believe that because the textbook does have some good comprehension activities, it can be used in that area of classroom activity. Therefore, another factor that affects textbook practice is the fact that some textbooks have comprehension components that are tough to read and does not speak to the grade 11 lives. Textbooks that do not cover the various skills which need to be addressed in the classroom for paper 1 can hinder effective use of the textbook.

I conclude that another factor that could damage textbook practice is if the textbook does not cover all areas of English that will be tested e.g. Oral, listening activities, setwork, grammar, comprehensions, Transactional writing etc. Also, the textbook was used minimally and this was a factor that impeded textbook practice.

Further to the above stated conclusions I also conclude that using technology to enhance the textbook like teacher C did is a useful tool. Therefore, a factor that could also hinder textbook practice if you allow the textbook to be seen as a boring book. Notwithstanding this, Teacher C used many different texts to keep learner attention in classroom and by doing this teacher C was keeping the textbook alive (taking an old text and giving it live through visual information) in terms of educational output. Furthermore, another factor that could hinder textbook practice would be if teachers do not use the textbook to enhance their setwork activity. This in return brings harmony between the setwork book and the textbook. To put it more succinctly, two is better than one. A further conclusion to be drawn is the fact that teachers need to be creative with the textbook. From the findings, it is evident that the more informed teacher tries new informed methods in the classroom like teacher C. I believe that this is a requirement in a South African context because teachers today are confronted with the many challenges when teaching grade 11 learners, who have different cultural backgrounds.



Textbook creativity lends itself to learner creativity. The better teacher invents new systems of teaching while working with different texts. English Home language teachers should keep up to date with new materials or take old materials and do something different (creative) with it.

#### **7.5.4.2 Recommendation 12: Factors that can Help Textbook Practice**

I wish to state that research has revealed that the more background knowledge a reader has that connects with the text being read, the more likely the reader will be able to make sense of what is being read (Butcher & Kintsch, 2003: 575–595; Schallert & Martin, 2003: 31-45). In light of the above stated point, teachers contemplating better textbook practice should:

- Know and understand their climate of the classroom and select appropriate texts for grade 11 learners. In retrospect a text should not be used as a filler to pass the time in the classroom.
- At times think like a grade 11 learner and not like a teacher all the time. Therefore, sometimes thinking as a learner would help in the following ways: (1) you can learn and discover what is relevant or common to teenagers and make use of that information in your comprehensions and poetry and (2) regular discovery of music trends among grade 11 and movies can be used in the classroom especially in terms of a teachers' drama lessons.
- You can exploit the many different aspects of multimodality to promote textbook practice. Teachers should not be afraid to try new things.
- Be versatile in the classroom. I believe that versatility is now a necessity in the South African classroom because ultimately our work as teachers is meant to impact our students' learning and in doing this, learners marks can improve as well as learners can have a deeper appreciation of the different texts being used in the English Home language classroom.

Having addressed the outcomes with reference to the research questions in the previous section, I will now point out the significance of the study.

### **7.5.5 Significance of this Research: Reconstructing**

This research does have the capacity to invite a critical examination of the components of a skilful teacher with reference to the effective use of classroom materials. Also, the study invites an awareness of teacher potential to (re)construct the level of teaching in the classroom in relation to textbook usage. The above-mentioned point, if implemented effectively will also foster the aptitude to disarm the oppressor and the exploiter, which in this case can be the teacher. This marks a qualitative shift with which we can divulge the impact of good teaching strategies, which then can have a ripple effect to assist others as well as schools to improve their academic performance.

The above-mentioned awareness is of utmost importance when we look at language classrooms from a sociocultural perspective that views teaching as more than knowledge transfer but as one which creates conditions for the construction of knowledge and understanding through social participation (Burns & Richards, 2009). Furthermore, the results of this study could provide baseline data for other studies in the future that can also focus on the different dimensions of the textbook. In summary the study can be significant for the following reasons:

- The research can assist teachers collaboratively as well as individually. The study has the potential to harness other informed ways of using the English Home language textbook.
- The research can help improve the quality and the justice of education in all of our own schools.
- The study can highlight some of the factors that affect students' performance.
- The outcome of the research can assist policy makers in teaching and training.
- The study can help new teachers develop an ability to understand more about the difficulties that learners' actual go through.
- The study can provide a platform for teachers and learners to face their difficulties and overcome them at school.
- I envisage that the findings of this study will be useful to curriculum developers, as the study made recommendations for teacher and learner development in the classroom.
- The study will enable practitioners to reflect critically upon the choices of texts available to them in assessing and supporting learner connection to text that connect with them.

I believe that every time we teach, it should encompass the strengthening of a teachers' capacity to respond in a certain way to a given set of circumstances. If English Home language teachers act in consonance with the above-mentioned point, we can also strengthen learners' literacy levels in the classroom. In addition, the issues and insights covered in the literature review of this investigation might help for better theoretical understanding on the role of different teaching methods while using different texts. Therefore, my study might provide alternative ideas that could help teachers, which might serve as a supporting document for further study in the area.

Having giving an outline of the significance of the study, I now intend to give the recommendations for further study in the next segment.

### **7.5.6 My Reflections of the Study**

I have come to believe that a great teacher is a great artist.



John Steinbeck

Stake (1995: 135) believes that “qualitative study is highly personal research. Researchers are encouraged to include their own personal perspectives in the interpretation. Therefore, a personal valuing of the work is expected.” For me qualitative research is exciting and important. I was engaged with things that matter, in ways that matter. I further explored a wide range of dimensions of the world of teaching which included the texture and the weaving of everyday teaching, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of my research participants and the significance of the meanings that certain actions generate.

As I near the close of this study I want to pause for a moment and reflect on the journey that I have undertaken. In 2014 when I discovered common barriers in the English Home language classroom, which ranged from learner attention span difficulties to learner location in the classroom and teenage boredom. Given this, I understand that there is no love for Shakespearean plays and no interest in grammar conception. At that particular moment number six on the list was the English Home language textbook which further piqued some interest in me. It was at that stage that the conception of the textbook as an area of research was born in me.

Therefore, I hope at this period of my study, I believe that I have been like a candle giving some guidance to teachers when using the textbook/texts in the classroom. The study was greatly enhanced by the insight and feedback of the research participants who willingly gave of their time to share their experiences with me.

I also hope that I might help to demystify the elements of textbook practice in the classroom. At the same time, I am grateful for all that I have learned and continue to learn as an academic and researcher. In the next segment I discuss the limitations of the study.

### **7.5.7 Limitations of the Study**

Although I have tried to adequately address the objectives and the aim of my research study it is commonplace to state that the study cannot be considered as fully authoritative or ultimate because of its contextual variants and the fact that there are many other different contexts in different areas (schools). In light of the above-mentioned points, I address in the limitations of this study.

#### **7.5.7.1 Limitation 1: Six Schools**

The study was limited to 6 schools and consist of only 12 teachers. Based on the previous point, the findings of this study may not be adequate to mirror the real condition in many other schools.

#### **7.5.7.2 Limitation 2: Financial Resources—My Burden, My Sacrifice**

I funded this study and sacrificed part of my salary regularly. Due to persistent funding cuts that have been in effect in the country, my means to obtain funding for my study did not yield in my favour.

#### **7.5.7.3 Limitation 3: Time Constraints—A Thorn in My Flesh**

The study was conducted within a limited period. As a School Governing Body (SGB) employed teacher the dimension of my job affected different levels of the study. It was difficult to get off to do observations at schools because I was teaching the senior grades. Hence, the time framing of data gathering in this study restricted my self-sufficiency and to accommodate the above-mentioned restriction it meant that I had to synchronize my teaching day which ended at 3:30pm and then go to the school where the interview would take place.

To remedy this, I had to work extra hours as well as extend my hours at the library through the week including Saturdays and Sundays. My sacrifice, I believe has created room for further research, which I hope, will be undertaken by other researchers.

#### **7.5.7.4 Limitation 4: Considered as Trouble Makers and Jealously Embedded or Not**

In reality, it was not easy to get permission to collect data in some schools and teachers. Even though I had authorization from the provincial authorities, some teachers would say yes to be interviewed and then I would never hear from them again.

Therefore, I believe that some English teachers including some Curriculum advisors consider researchers as people going around to create trouble. Furthermore, some also believe that a researcher would like to go around exposing their weak areas in teaching.

My greatest observation while trying to establish the participants was the element of embedded jealousy, which I feel is rife and rampant among my coloured people. In the future, I hope this would change because communities need researchers to develop the future of our children. Hence, the revelations engendered by this study as well as the concerns raised can be explored in further research.

#### **7.5.7.5 Limitation 5: Methodological/Teaching Limitations**

The methodology employed by teachers in the classroom and the data collected in the study are in themselves limited (reference to limitation 1). This is because they cannot account for all the characteristics of textbook practice in all grade 11 classes. Hence the techniques used in this study might not be able to provide a full picture of English Home language teachers' textbook use. In essence, the study presents a story about teachers' perception and use of the textbook from a restricted angle of investigation, which only encompasses grade 11.

#### **7.5.8 Recommendations for Further Research**

This study signifies and believes that language teaching methods will always evolve into something innovative. Like a river, I believe that the constant need for innovation in the educational arena especially for the English Home language teacher is ever flowing. The study postulates that the conformity to innovate is complex and dynamic because innovation is at a certain moment in time and in a given situation, a composite configuration that may not always be understood.

Therefore, the study recognizes the fact that innovation is context bound and is a product of many personal and professional factors that interact, intersect and influence each other.

I believe that a teacher is an artist and, in that respect, I believe that there is always room for innovation. Hence, further studies in textbook practice can identify other innovations in the English Home language classroom. In retrospect, if we take into account the nature of the findings of this study, I wish to state that the findings of the study are neither conclusive nor definitive. However, the research conducted in this study has led to some useful results and conclusions on textbook practice in the English Home language classroom. The data collected from this study reveal that the textbook has still been relevant in the context of the teachers under investigation in this study. The research has also made us aware of some of the barriers faced by teachers and learners in terms of the textbook in the Grade 11 English Home language classroom. However, the discoveries have been narrowing and therefore as I have mentioned that the findings of this study are neither absolute nor objective. However, based on the continuing effort to improving the aspects of teaching and education within which this research is placed it does provide a basis for further exploration and inquiry.

In light of the above stated point, the following should be considered:

1. Further studies need to be conducted at different schools in South Africa in order to discover other ways of using the textbook. This would give us a larger database of information so that we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of why teachers do what they do with the textbook in the English Home language classroom.
2. A further similar study using the same criteria should be undertaken among other grade 10-12 English Home language teachers and contrast the experiences with the present study.
3. A further study should be undertaken to assess how Grade 11 teachers use certain individual texts e.g. only poetry texts or comprehension texts.
4. A study of district officials' knowledge of textbook approaches/textbook practices, in order to ensure well-grounded support for teachers and guidance in relation to classroom pedagogy in the Further and Education and training Phase.

In the above stated points, I have discussed the reasons for further research. In the following segment, I present my conclusion.

### 7.5.9 Final Conclusion

I wish to declare that in this study the textbook was still relevant for teachers. Therefore, textbooks play a predominantly essential role in teaching and learning practices in the grade 11 classroom. Considering its importance, it is vital to find useful textbook techniques to use in the classroom because this will help with the overall representation of different texts in the classroom. Furthermore, in the Grade 11 English Home language learning context based on the findings it is evident that the textbook can also become a barrier in the classroom. In this chapter, I have attempted so far to unpack the purpose of what teachers perceive about the textbook and what they did in their classrooms. I formulated my conclusions and I further added recommendations based on the findings showing harmony between the teacher and the contextual setting of their classroom. I believe that teachers can explore textbook problems and find solutions. In the end, the findings indicated that the synchronisation of classroom environment and classroom organization coupled with teaching methods are the incentivising properties for innovative textbook teaching methods for grade 11 learners. Therefore, the narrative that I have presented has given me an opportunity to empower teachers into using a well-informed text in the classroom that bears a familiarity with a learner's life. Marshall (2016: 21) supports the above-mentioned view in his book, 'The Highly Effective Teacher' when he states, "the first critical connection involves linking the learning to students' lives." The following lines from W.B. Yeats (1921) *The Second Coming* echo my principal beliefs and concerns voiced in this research in addition to strengthening my resolve as an educator to function passionately and make changes where necessary in the English Home language classroom because something is churning and awakening; some new existence is rising out of the current haze of English Home language teaching. Research can therefore enlarge the scope of what English Home language teaching is and teachers can alter the interconnectivity of the teacher, textbook and the how of learner on a fundamental level:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

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- [www.academia.edu/25891673/Communicative\\_Language\\_Teaching\\_in\\_South\\_Africa?auto=download](http://www.academia.edu/25891673/Communicative_Language_Teaching_in_South_Africa?auto=download)
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## APPENDICES

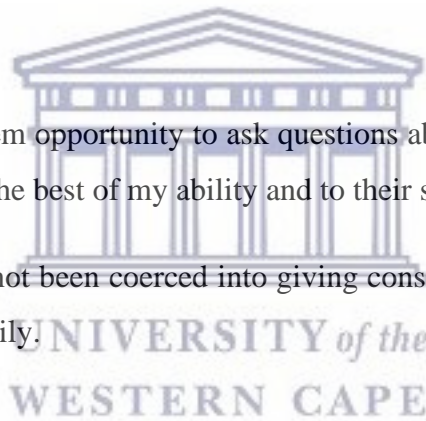
### APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE DOCUMENTS

Faculty of Education  
Private bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa  
Tel. 021-959 2449/2442  
Fax 021-959 3358

I, the undersigned, have accurately read out the information sheet to the participants, and to the best of my ability, I have made sure that they have understood what they are expected to do for this investigation.

I confirm that I have given them opportunity to ask questions about the study, and that I have answered all the questions to the best of my ability and to their satisfaction

I also confirm that they have not been coerced into giving consent, and that their consent has been given freely and voluntarily.



Researcher: Mark Frank (PhD Candidate UWC)

Signaturer:

Date: 28/10/2017

Mobile: 0826974298

Email: lemark77@yahoo.com

*Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:*

Signature: .....  .....

Date: 28.../...10.../...2017.....

Supervisor: **Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam**

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2449; [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

## PERMISSION REQUEST LETTERS



Faculty of Education

Private bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa

Tel. 021-959 2449/2442

Fax 021-959 3358

3 October 2017



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za

Tel: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282

Private Bag x9114,

Cape Town

8000

wced.wcape.gov.za

Dear Sir/Madam

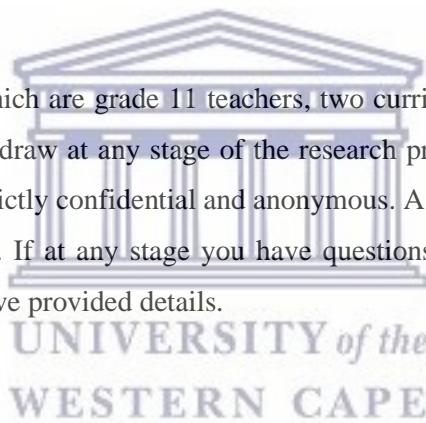
My name is Mark Frank. I am a PhD student in the Language Education Department, Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. I am conducting research into how English Home language teachers use the English Home language textbook in and out of the classroom.

Research Title: An Investigation into English Home Language Teachers use of the English Home Language Textbook in Grade 11:

1. To investigate how grade 11 teachers use the English Home language textbook.
2. To observe strategies used by teachers to help learners make the best of the English Home language textbook.
3. To examine and analyze creative ways of using the textbook.

The main purpose of this study is to attempt to find out some creative ways in how teachers use the English Home Language Textbook. The aim is to highlight the power of innovation in the classroom.

The researchers' participants, which are grade 11 teachers, two curriculum advisors and one English Specialist, have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. All information collected from the research will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. A system of coding will be used to protect the participants' identity. If at any stage you have questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above provided details.



Researcher: Mark Frank (PhD Candidate UWC)

Signaturer:

Date: 28/10/2017

Mobile: 0826974298

Email: lemark77@yahoo.com

Signature: .....  .....

Date: 28.../...10.... /...2018.....

Supervisor: **Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam**

**Contact details:** +27 (0) 21-959 2449; [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

Faculty of Education  
Private bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa  
Tel. 021-959 2449/2442  
Fax 021-959 3358

3 October 2017

The Principal  
South Peninsula High School  
Old Kendal Rd,  
Diep River  
Cape Town  
7801  
South Africa



Dear Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL**

I, **Mark Frank**, hereby request your good office to grant me permission to conduct research at your Centre, during the first or second quarter of 2018.

I am currently a part-time registered PhD in Language and Literacy student at the University of the Western Cape, under the supervision of Prof. Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam. My research entitled “**An Investigation into English Home Language Teachers use of the English Home Language Textbook in Grade 11.**” focuses on issues of Textbook Practice within the classroom.



I am aware of the ethical concerns involved with my data collection, which entails interviews, observations and discourse analysis. The information to be collected from the participants will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity.

The specific objectives are:

1. To investigate how grade 11 teachers use the English Home language textbook.
2. To observe strategies used by teachers to help learners make the best of the English Home language textbook.
3. To examine and analyze creative ways of using the textbook.

Should you have any queries regarding the study, you may also contact my supervisor, Prof. Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam at Tel: +27 21 959 2449 or [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

Yours sincerely,



Researcher: Mark Frank (PhD Candidate UWC)

Signaturer:

Date: 28/10/2017

Mobile: 0826974298

Email: lemark77@yahoo.com

*Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:*

Signature:.....  .....

Date: 28.../...10.... /...2017.....

Supervisor: **Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam**

**Contact details:** +27 (0) 21-959 2449; [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

# WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

**Directorate: Research**



Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za  
el: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282

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

**REFERENCE:** 20150805-2020

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

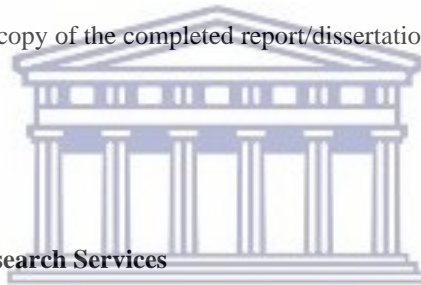
Mr Mark Frank  
14 Ajax Way  
Woodlands  
Mitchell's Plain  
7785

**Dear Mr Mark Frank**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: AN INVESTIGATION INTO ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE TEACHERS USE OF THE ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK IN GRADE 11.**

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

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 August 2018 till 30 September 2019**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
- 12.



**The Director: Research Services**

**Western Cape Education Department**

**Private Bag X9114**

**CAPE TOWN**

**8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

**Directorate: Research**

**DATE: 05 August 2018**

## INFORMATION SHEET FOR LESSON OBSERVATION

Faculty of Education  
Private bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa  
Tel. 021-959 2449/2442  
Fax 021-959 3358

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Mark Frank. I am currently studying towards a PhD degree in Language and Literacy with the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. I have several years' worth of experience in teaching English. As a result, this has resulted in my keen interest in researching new avenues for observing language practice.

I kindly request participants of this study to familiarize themselves with the content of this information sheet, and to freely ask questions or anything that may need clarification. The teachers will participate in the study where their lessons will also be observed. The normal progress of class activities will not be disturbed. The role of the researcher will strictly be to observe the lesson and he will not participate in the lesson in any other way.

Participation in this study is voluntary and one is free to withdraw from the study without any obligations. The information to be collected from the participants will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. The information will strictly be used for the completion of this study thesis.

The study will not cause any physical harm, and it will not cause any social, mental or emotional harm to participants or to any other member of the university community.

Research Title: *An Investigation into English Home Language Teachers use of the English Home Language Textbook in Grade 11.*

The research objectives of this study are to:

1. To investigate Grade 11 teachers use the English Home language textbook.

2. To observe strategies used by teachers to help learners make the best of the English Home language textbook.
3. To examine and analyze creative ways of using the textbook.

My hope is that this study improves the quality of English and Textbook Practice in South Africa. Furthermore, it will also strengthen my professional practices as a language educator.

Your voluntary participation in this study will be highly appreciated.

Researcher: Mark Frank (PhD Candidate UWC)

Signaturer:


Date: 28/10/2017

Mobile: 0826974298

Email: lemark77@yahoo.com



*Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:*

Signature: .....  .....  
UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

Date: 28.../...10.... /...2017.....

Supervisor: **Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam**

**Contact details:** +27 (0) 21-959 2449; [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

## PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM— LESSON OBSERVATION

Faculty of Education

Private bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa

Tel. 021-959 2449/2442

Fax 021-959 3358

I, the undersigned, have accurately read the information sheet, and understand what is expected of me as participant in this study. I confirm that I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and that the questions have been answered accurately and to my satisfaction.

I confirm that I have not been pressured into giving consent, and that my consent to participate in this study is given freely and voluntarily. I have also been informed that I may withdraw from this study at any time without any obligation.

Participant's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Researcher: Mark Frank (PhD Candidate UWC)

Signaturer:

Date: 28/10/2017

Mobile: 0826974298

Email: lemark77@yahoo.com

*Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:*

Signature: .....



.....

Date: 28.../...10.../...2017.....

Supervisor: **Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam**

**Contact details:** +27 (0) 21-959 2449; [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

## **CONSENT FORM FOR LEARNER PARTICIPATION**

Faculty of Education

Private bag X17 Bellville 7535

South Africa

Tel. 021-959 2449/2442

Fax 021-959 3358



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

**Dear Parent/Guardian**

I am a PhD student at the University of Western Cape (UWC). I have been granted permission by the Western Cape Education Department to conduct a research study with Grade 11 teachers at seven high schools. I will be investigating the way English Home language teachers use the English Home language textbook. This current research has the potential to enhance the way we look at different type of text and use them in the classroom.

### **Research Method and Participation**

I will observe teachers and learners as they interact while in the English Home language classroom. The purpose of the research will be explained to learners. The anonymity and protection of the teacher and the learners will be protected.

I would appreciate your child's participation in my research study in order to obtain the following specific objectives:

1. Explore the different teaching methods when using the English Home language textbook.
2. Analyze the factors that influence the practice of using The English Home language textbook in and out of the classroom.
3. Propose a framework for developing good content to help Grade 11 learners appreciate the textbook.

My hope is that this research improves the quality of language teaching in South Africa. Furthermore, it will also strengthen my professional practice as an English Home language educator.

Your confirmation of your Son/ Daughters participation in this study will be highly appreciated.



Thank you.

Mark Frank

Please sign and give this form to your child to bring back to school.

Thank you for your co-operation.

I, (name).....Allow/Do not Allow/ (Please circle one) my child to participate in the research. I am aware of the objectives of the study, that my child's identity will be protected, and that this study will not interfere with my child's academic performance.

Parent's signature.....

Child's name.....



Date: .....

**Researcher: Mark Frank (PhD Candidate UWC)**

Signaturer:

Date: 28/10/2017

Mobile: 0826974298

Email: lemark77@yahoo.com

*Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:*



Signature :..... UNIVERSITY of the

Date: 28.../...10..../...2017..... WESTERN CAPE

Supervisor: **Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam**

**Contact details:** +27 (0) 21-959 2449; [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

## LEARNER CONSENT FORM

Faculty of Education  
Private bag X17 Bellville 7535  
South Africa  
Tel. 021-959 2449/2442  
Fax 021-959 3358



### Dear Learner

I am a PhD student at the University of Western Cape (UWC). I am also a teacher. I have been granted permission by the Western Cape Education Department to conduct a research study with your teacher. I will be investigating how teachers use the English Home language textbook in the classroom and find out what type of texts do learners enjoy reading in the process while in the classroom.

### Research Method and Participation

I will observe your teacher as she interacts while in the English Classroom.

I, (name).....understand that I am part of a research study program for Grade 11 English Home language teachers. I understand the task of the

researcher and I have been made aware that I will be protected from any misrepresentation and that this study will not interfere with my academic performance.

**Researcher: Mark Frank (PhD Candidate UWC)**

Signaturer:

Date: 28/10/2017

Mobile: 0826974298

Email: lemark77@yahoo.com

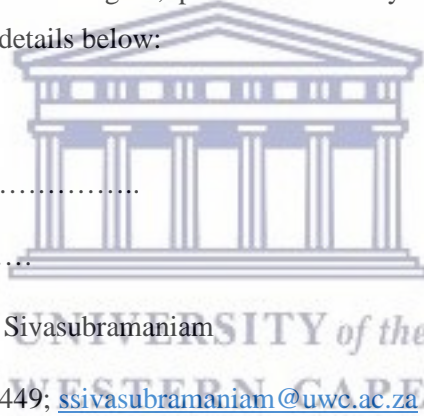
Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:

Signature: .....

Date: 28.../...10.... /...2017.....

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2449; [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)



**INFORMATION SHEET FOR HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)**

Research office  
University of the Western Cape  
Private bag X 17  
Bellville 7535, Western Cape  
Tel: 021 9592988  
Research-ethics@uwc.ac.za



**Dear Sir/Madam**

This information sheet serves as an awareness builder for the conduct of the researcher as well as to the manner in which the research was conducted. My name is Mark Frank. I am currently studying towards a PhD degree in Language and Literacy with the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

**Research Title: An Investigation into English Home Language Teachers use of the English Home Language Textbook in Grade 11.**

The research objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the different teaching methods when using the English Home language textbook.
2. Analyze the factors that influence the practice of using The English Home language textbook in and out of the classroom.

3. Propose a framework for developing good content to help Grade 11 learners appreciate the textbook.

My hope is that this study improves the quality of language teaching in South Africa. Furthermore, it will also strengthen my professional practices as an English Home language educator.

**Researcher: Mark Frank (PhD Candidate UWC)**

Signaturer:

Date: 28/10/2017

Mobile: 0826974298

Email: lemark77@yahoo.com



*Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:*

UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

Signature: .....

Date: 28.../...10.... /...2017.....

Supervisor: **Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam**

**Contact details:** +27 (0) 21-959 2449; [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

## INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHER INTERVIEW

Faculty of Education  
Private bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa  
Tel. 021-959 2449/2442  
Fax 021-959 3358

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Mark Frank. I am currently studying towards a PhD degree in Language and Literacy with the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. I have several years' worth of experience in teaching English. As a result, this has resulted in my keen interest in researching new avenues in the context of English in high school.

I kindly request participants of this study to familiarize themselves with the content of this information sheet, and to freely ask questions or anything that may need clarification. The lecturers will participate in an interview. The interview will last for about an hour.

Participation in this study is voluntary and one is free to withdraw from the study without any obligations. The information to be collected from the participants will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. The information will strictly be used for the completion of this study thesis. In the final report findings, it will not be traced back to the individual participants, the Language Centre, or the University of Western Cape.

The study will not cause any physical harm, and it will not cause any social, mental or emotional harm to participants or to any other member of the university community. There is also some positive washback in the process since participants will be involved in the alternative assessment discourse where they are likely to learn something about themselves and language assessment.

Research Title: An Investigation into English Home Language Teachers use of the English Home Language Textbook in Grade 11.

The research objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the different teaching methods when using the English Home language textbook.
2. Analyze the factors that influence the practice of using The English Home language textbook in and out of the classroom.
3. Assess the compatibility of relevant material content as related to learners' lives.
4. Assess the teachers' and curriculum advisors' attitude towards the English Home language textbook.
5. Propose a framework for developing good content to help Grade 11 learners appreciate the textbook.

My hope is that this study improves the quality of language teaching in South Africa. Furthermore, it will also strengthen my professional practices as a language educator.

Your voluntary participation in this study will be highly appreciated.

Researcher: Mark (PhD Candidate UWC)

Signaturer:

Date: 28/10/2017

Mobile: 0826974298

Email: lemark77@yahoo.com



*Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:*

Signature: ....  .....

Date: 28.../...10.... /...2017.....

Supervisor: **Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam**

**Contact details:** +27 (0) 21-959 2449; [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

# PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM— TEACHER PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

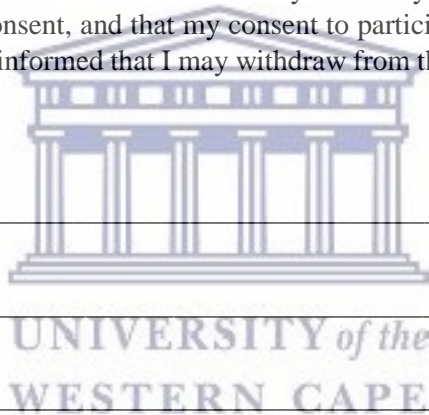
Faculty of Education  
Private bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa  
Tel. 021-959 2449/2442  
Fax 021-959 3358

I, the undersigned, have accurately read the information sheet, and understand what is expected of me as participant in this study. I confirm that I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and that the questions have been answered accurately and to my satisfaction. I confirm that I have not been pressured into giving consent, and that my consent to participate in this study is given freely and voluntarily. I have also been informed that I may withdraw from this study at any time without any obligation.

Participant's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

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



Researcher: Mark Frank (PhD Candidate UWC)

Signaturer:

Date: 28/10/2017

Mobile: 0826974298

Email: lemark77@yahoo.com

*Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:*

Signature: .....  .....

Date: 28.../...10.... /...2017.....



Supervisor: **Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam**

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2449; [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

## **APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE (STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS)**

1. What is your perception of the English Home language textbook?
2. How do you use the textbook/types of text in the classroom?
3. Are there any particular aspects of the textbook/text that you like?
4. Explain your use of the communicative teaching method in the classroom with regard to the textbook?
5. Do you have any specific days in which you use the textbook?
6. Name the difficulties that some of your learners' experience with regard to language teaching?
7. How do you handle the difficulties that your learners experience?
8. How do you see teachers contributing to a learner-centred approach in terms of textbook practice?
9. What measures have you taken to help learner difficulties with regard to poetry, Shakespeare and grammar, which can be found in the textbook?
10. Can the textbook or type of texts be or become a barrier for learners.

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE (UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS)**

11. To what extent do you believe that the English Home language textbook is still a relevant tool in the senior phase of high school?
12. How do you use the textbook in the classroom?
13. What parts of the textbook do you prefer or enjoy the most when you teach grade 11.
14. Do you think that the Study guides (X-Kit/Answer Series) have replaced the textbook?
15. What type of texts do you prefer to do with Grade 11?
16. Should Grade 11 teachers compile their own textbooks or should they still rely on the English Textbooks the Western Cape Education Department delivers.
17. What specific things do you do to help learners learn better in terms of English Home language?
18. Do you see textbooks being replaced by electronic textbooks in the future?
19. Is there any particular way that you would structure an English Home language textbook or are you satisfied with the current structuring of textbooks?
20. Can the English Home language textbook become a barrier to grade 11 learners?

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## APPENDIX 3: TEACHERNAIRE INTERVIEWS

### TEACHER A

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- R: Miss thank you very much for the interview. I'm just going to jump right into it. Uhm, just in terms of your own opinion, do you think that the English textbook is still relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Broadly speaking, but also at the current school that you're teaching at?
- TA: Well I think we're standing on a, kind of a, uhm, I don't know, middle ground like a crossroads because on the one hand, the textbook has always been part of language teaching but now with the, with the use of, uhm, you know IT and children more and more having their, their information on their tablets and that. Uhm, I think we probably going in that direction but, but that doesn't mean that the textbook is not useful at all.
- R: And currently at the school you teaching, using the oxford one, do you find this a satisfactory textbook?
- TA: Well this particular textbook, I think is probable better than most of the others that I've used before, so I do find it useful yes. Definitely a good one.
- R: What elements of the textbook do you appreciate?
- TA: Well there are several things, uhm, first of all, if you, if you were just to glance through it, you know without looking at specific things, I think it's very uhm, I like the layout, I like the use of colour, I like that there are lots of attractive features you know, uhm that makes it more child-friendly. Also, I like the way they have the explanation at the beginning of each section and then a nice exercise, you know, just to consolidate what the chapter is about
- R: And teaching grade 11 Ms, what barriers do you see or what barriers do they face? Do you have reading problems? Do you have writing problems? Especially in the grade 11
- TA: So, you don't mean language now, we're not talking about language?
- R: No, it can be anything in general

TA: Okay, I think generally by the time students at this school now, by the time students reach grade eleven, they've kind of settled, they've evened out, you can already see who the ones are, who have language issues. The ones who maybe started out in grade eight you know being a bit, uhm, uncertain, may have picked up, a lot of them have picked up and by, I think by grade 11 they reach a kind of a plateau so you can see who the definite students are that will need extra assistance you know and normally they, there's not many of them but I think, I can't say the specific writing or language or uhm literature. For some of them the swotting like let's say the literature they, they quite good at remembering the facts but then they may not be good at writing it. They can maybe explain it well but maybe the writing aspect is the problem. For some of them the comprehension aspect is the problem you know, they take a bit longer to understand but, but then they have that as a general problem with other subjects as well.

R: And did you teach grade 10 last year by any chance?

TA: I taught grade 10, not last year, the year before

R: Now that textbook, the Maskew Miller one compared to this one, is there a big difference? In terms of usage and structure

TA: I haven't specifically now looked at the two to, to uhm you know to compare but I do know that when I, when I started using this one, I found it much more user-friendly than the previous one yes

R: And just in terms of handling your learner difficulties, do you have extra classes? Do you uhm, after classes? In terms of grade 11 now

TA: Normally with, with grade elevens, well with all my classes I will identify the weak ones normally by the first exam. In the beginning I will maybe just have a one on one meeting with them and look at their specific, uhm, problem areas. I will advise certain things that they should be concentrating on. I'll leave them maybe for a while, just to see they actually taking my advice and doing it on their own. If I find that they're not, then I will have, you know, specific uhm, I will prepare specific uhm, homework or extra work for them

R: And how often you use the textbook? Uhm is it once a week possibly?

TA: Language?

R: Yes, specifically

- TA: Language textbook I use once a week, sometimes not even, but I normally have a specific uhm day set aside for language, sometimes two days, two periods uhm if we want to sort of do a big section but generally once a week
- R: And your own teaching style, are you learner-centred? What is your, your uhm, your teacher style?
- TA: I think I'm trying to work towards being more uhm, allowing more uhm how can I say, learner-centredness, if you can call it. I tend, I still find I tend to explain too much and not leave time for them to do their own discussion. I try to have a balance but I still find, especially with bigger classes, and with children who are, who easily, you know take advantage of the easy setup? You know it's more difficult you know to keep control.
- R: Okay. And if you must select your own type of text for a grade learner between that age category, what would you go for? What would you draw on? What would it be?
- TA: Do you mean, by text do you mean comprehension text?
- R: Comprehension, poetry, whatever you choose for that age group. How would you go about it and what would you like to draw? Whether its from the newspaper or from magazines, what do you think attracts them? What keeps their attention in your opinion? What type of text would [use] you for that type of age group?
- TA: I think, I think with our grade 11, these are sort of the more mature teenagers. I have sort of two things that I think are important. On the one hand, I think teenagers must be, must have a certain kind of awareness about things that are happening in the world, generally because they [are] too flighty, I mean they [are] very self-centred so, so I think on the one hand they must read things that, that sort of inform them and give them that kind of sensitivity towards what's happening in the world, but on the other hand because they are so you know about themselves, they also like things that are uhm that are more fun and you know sort of more geared towards teenagers, so kind of a balance between the two.
- R: Do you think Ms that the reason why a number of teachers don't use the textbook is because of the setwork book and the poetry that these cover, is that you say one of the main causes? And with novel and the this and that
- TA: Definitely. More so in grade 12, uhm language gets neglected, well there isn't time for language so what I tend to do is, I spend more time with language in grade 11 so that I

sort of prepare them for grade 12 language as well, so that in grade 12, I basically just do revision of the things I did in grade 11

R: And the for paper one that the grade elevens will write for 70 marks, would you, if you had the power and capacity, would you reduce it that paper or increase that one and reduce the paper 3 or reduce the paper 2? I mean we stationed with 70, 80 and 100, would you change the ratio of that paper since paper one is often the most challenging for uh grade 11 and grade 12, or would you keep that equation 70, 80 and 100?

TA: Uhh that's a question I, well, first of all, I think the reason why the writing counts the most is because this is something that children can score, its basically to, to give the children the advantage of getting a better mark and because the language is often something that they do badly at, I can understand why it is the smaller mark. Uhm whether id change the ratio, can't really say

R: But you're, you're fine with it?

TA: At the moment, yes, I think it's okay

R: Ms, so let's just say you do a text like that "school is not for sissies" on this page, if you do a text and, do you involve yourself with it? Where you partly read or do the learners read, you're your interaction once you're doing the text, do you read it twice? do you read it thrice? Then you explain. Do you go into the background? Especially when you're dealing with a comprehension

TA: Yes, I like to choose something that's relevant, so I don't necessarily go through you know just do a text because it's there. So first of all, I'll try to choose something that I think they can learn something from, the yes we will read, ill maybe just give a bit of the context, I'll explain a bit of the context of you know what it is about and then read a bit, get children to read also, maybe highlight certain things that come up in the text, whether it be vocabulary, whether it be certain expressions, I'll highlight things about the language as well as about the content. So uhm yes so that by the end, they have you know, sometimes if it's something that they have in their books and not in the textbook, I get them to highlight, I mean physically highlight the things on their page and if it's something new that they've learnt you know just to, to sort of reinforce It so that at least now it becomes part of their knowledge and their vocabulary and the look at the specific questions. I must say that sometimes I don't, I don't always like the questions that are set on the text in this book, in fact I picked up a few incorrect references, line references and things like that, paragraph references so...

R: Then you bring in your own questions?

TA: I sometimes add questions, delete questions because I don't always think that you know the questions are spot on or that the questions actually focus on the real issues in the text

R: Do you do that when you set the exams as well? If there's a text you use and then inject your own questions?

TA: Yes

R: Okay and Ms, from the four genres, for grade 11 especially, what are they struggling with? What are their strong points? Like in poetry? Do they enjoy it? Do they struggle with Shakespeare? There's writing, do they enjoy that? Is grammar a problem? Is language a problem? From that four so its poetry, Shakespeare, the grammar and then the creative writing. What's their strongest point would you say... in the grade 11?

TA: Generally, they score higher marks in their writing but that doesn't necessarily mean that their writing is better, it's probably just that the writing allows you to be more flexible with your marking. Uhm as far as poetry goes, they generally don't like poetry but often they score high marks in poetry if it is poems that maybe they studied well. Language... they don't really prepare much for language, the questions are always kind of, you know, things that they must just respond to on the spot, but I think with language they generally do bad, if I can sort of assess language, writing, poetry uhm Shakespeare. I know in grade 12, the Shakespeare question is always the one they do badly in and maybe the language, so I say those are the two aspects

R: And from the texts in textbook, do you do any poems from this book or the Macbeth questions or...? because I see they have Macbeth here, act 1 and act 5. Do you use that to reinforce your setwork from the textbook?

TA: I haven't, I've only used it for grade 10 so far. I haven't used it for grade 11, in fact, uhm, well because I have a lot of you know, worksheets and that that I've used in the past for my setwork, I didn't feel the need yet, you know to add to it but I did see it and I think I could, I definitely think it's something I can use, but I haven't used it yet.R:

And last question here Ms, can the textbook or the type of text become a barrier to the learner, and if so, then in which particular way would you say? So often, they might use the textbook once or twice a week and they don't really appreciate the textbook, but do you feel this can become a barrier for the learner? Or it just depends on the teacher?

TA: I think, yes, I think it's how you use it. I mean no textbook, I think, can be used as is. Uhm, you, you, there's no way you going to allow a class to use chapter one and do

everything in chapter one, chapter two and do everything... so you basically going to select, you going to select. I don't think I've ever used a language textbook from cover to cover, so you going to select. For example, there'll be good texts, I actually like the selection of comprehension texts in here, so I won't use all of them, ill select. I'll also add some of my own, it it doesn't mean that I use this book exclusively for language, so ill add some other things. So, if you talk about a barrier in terms of the content in here, if there is any content that I find not suitable for the purpose that I'm going to use it for at that particular moment then I just don't use it. But I will choose the ones that I think are useful.

R: Ms thank you for your questions, your answers were on par but I really appreciate it.

TA: You're welcome





## TEACHER B

R: Good day Sir. I appreciate the interview. I am going to jump right into it. In your opinion to what extent, do you believe that the English Home language textbook is still a relevant tool in the senior phase of high school?

TB: I do not find the textbook particularly useful. The reality is that even at grade 11 level learners need more in the way of relevant exercises, and more pertinent comprehension passages that 'speak' to their experience. A textbook is by its very nature dated the day it is written so it is perhaps too much to expect that it be current. While the textbook tries to be up to date and relevant it cannot be expected to do so. There is a paucity of language material suitable for the kind of learners that many educators encounter – those doing English Home Language despite the language not actually being their 'home language'.

I believe that pertinent compilations of material more suited to the context and needs of learners work more effectively in addressing the requirements of learners.

I am not so sure that the textbook actually comes to grips with where young people are. Some of the material is ridiculously simplistic and assumes a far more facile understanding of issues than presented.

R: Thank you for your answer. I really appreciate that and the manner in which you expressed yourself. Adding to that in terms of the textbook, how do you use the textbook/text in the classroom?

TB: I use the textbook on the odd occasion that I might want to focus on an aspect of visual literacy for instance and the textbook has a reasonable example that I don't have to look for. The same applies to a comprehension passage. So it serves a convenience function – more like a fast food take-away rather than something more nutritious when the need arises every once in a while.

R: The textbook has many components. What parts of the textbook do you prefer or enjoy the most when you teach grade 11.

TB: The poetry selection is not bad although it is pretty useless working from the textbook as the learners cannot write notes without defacing the book. It is easier to copy the poem for them.

R: Okay

Often the textbook seems a lost entity. Do you think that the Study guides (X-Kit/Answer Series) have replaced the textbook?

TB: The learners I experience who want to do well or improve are looking to specific books to assist with language or literature depending on their needs. The textbook does not generally fulfil this function. I feel that the textbook is also inadequate in preparing learners for the kinds of questions that they are likely to encounter in an exam and certainly does nothing to take them to matric level. The 'look and feel' of the textbook is also tedious to wade through. There is a lack of concise, precise explanation with pertinent, relevant and meaningful exercises. Too much focus on themes and not enough emphasis on assisting the learner.

R: Grade 11 is similar to grade 12 so what type of texts do you prefer to do with Grade 11?

TB: Firstly, a lot depends on the context within which one is working. Learners I teach enjoy contemporary, relevant and engaging issues. They have little interest in 'generic', 'soft', 'safe' material.

R: I have met teachers that compile their own textbooks. In your opinion, should grade 11 teachers compile their own textbooks or should they still rely on the English Textbooks the Western Cape Education Department delivers.

TB: Despite the additional effort I think that there is value in compiling material for learners that speaks to and addresses their needs and interests. With a compilation, it can be a vibrant, working document that is responsive to learners and to situations that may arise in current affairs.

R: As a teacher, what specific things do you do to help learners learn better in terms of English Home language?

TB: One of the greatest challenges I face is in getting learners to think deeply about texts be they comprehension passages, adverts or cartoons. There is often a superficiality to their responses. Verbally, learners are often capable but battle to formulate cohesive, cogent and comprehensive written answers. I therefore try to develop an approach to answers which provides them with a step by step process to access and respond to what they are reading/viewing. The same is true of literature. The second or third mark in a question is lost because of a lack of obvious detail.

Learners often lack basic writing skills. They are incapable of telling a story that conveys an authentic voice. Sustaining interest in a structured way is also difficult. Reading examples of learner work, both 'good' and 'bad' often helps elicit appreciation for what is effective. Just having learners write an introduction or conclusion to a topic and have them read it out is a way to engage focused writing and understanding of purpose.

R: Do you see textbooks being replaced by electronic textbooks in the future?

TB: In schools where electronic is not a viable option either because of safety or access to electronic platforms this may not be a relevant option.

R: Is there any particular way that you would structure an English Home language textbook or are you satisfied with the current structuring of textbooks.

TB: Maybe structuring the book around sections: writing, comprehension, visual literacy, language, literature would be more useful. This has potentially more value in providing a comprehensive and more conclusive approach than the current bits and pieces of everything everywhere style.

R: I have seen how a text that is used in the classroom can become a barrier. In your opinion do you think that the English Home language textbook become a barrier to grade 11 learners?

TB: It can be. With the poetry as I mentioned earlier, the textbook is not helpful. The learners cannot engage with the actual poem by annotating.

The questions are often not helpful. While I don't believe in preparing kids, no attention has been paid to building learners understanding of the kind of questions they are likely to be faced with in matric.

## TEACHER C

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R: Miss thank for the interview. I appreciate it. I will start immediately with the questions. In terms of the textbook, what is your perception of the English Home language textbook? Do you think that the English textbook is still relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

TC: Well firstly, I do not use a textbook. Of all the textbooks out there, too many of the textbooks are too mechanical. So to accommodate good texts we compile our own textbook with material that we consider relevant. Of course, the material and type of lesson must adhere to the CAPS requirement.

R: Okay, and terms of using the textbook in the classroom. Do you have specific days for using the textbook?

TC: I don't use it on specific days. I use it to reteach a certain component and that is why I prefer to use my own material.

R: That is interesting and very creative and in terms of the type of materials that you like to use in reference to the different types of materials.

TC: Well I enjoy using different question papers from different schools in my classroom. Also in some textbooks the information at the back with the writing formats, grammar rules and the exemplar papers are quite useful if the learners use it constantly because it resembles the exam format.

R: Thanks. In terms of teaching grade 11's, what barriers do you see in your classroom?

TC: My learners struggle to transfer theoretical concepts like grammar to their writing and have difficulty with recognizing parts of speech in contexts. This in return affects other areas of writing.

R: Okay, adding to that in terms of the difficulties, how do you handle these difficulties in the classroom?

- TC: I use many different texts to practice, i.e. answering the same type of question, just on a different text. This can help learners practice their weakness. Sometimes if I need to work on their concord then I might do five questions of a chapter 6 question. Also like most teachers, I will identify the weak ones as early as possible. As we move closer to the examination, I do have some extra classes for grade 12 and I often ask grade 11 learners to join the class. As I mentioned that I do not use the textbook but in other components, I also address Shakespeare difficulties, poetry. Dealing with these difficulties, I create a Google drive folder where they have access to all the work we did in class. With poetry, I try to make use of as many visual images as possible so that they can see the images in the poem. I believe that sometimes images also help with tone, contrast and other aspects for understanding. I also use YouTube videos and readings of the poems.
- R: Very good...also in your opinion do you think the textbook can become a barrier.
- TC: Well, if we were to use the textbook, the only barrier would be the learners not bringing the textbook to school and that is one of the reasons I compile my own textbook.
- R: That's a unique teaching style. Are you learner-centred?
- TC: I think it is obvious that in our context we have to be learner centred. As far as possible, I try to develop critical thinking. In terms of poetry, I will hand out a poem and I will let them first grapple with it by themselves. Then I will ask general questions or I should say, guiding questions, reminding them of prior knowledge. While the lesson is developing, I will eventually ask them to set their own questions. I will provide examples by using question stems and then I will ask them to come and write it on the board. I have a few mini-whiteboards so learners can bring it to their desks.
- R: That is good. Miss I want to thank you for allowing me to interview you. Once again, I appreciate it.
- TC: No problems

## APPENDIX 4: PERFUNCTORY PERFORMER INTERVIEWS

### TEACHER D

R: Good day, good day, good day

Thank you very much for the interview.

I am just going to jump right in because of the time factor.

R: What is your perception of the English Home language textbook?

TD: Firstly, I use the textbook, 'English for Success (CAPS) gr.11'. I think it is a good textbook because it adequately covers the syllabus and is learner-friendly because the learners can readily identify with the subject matter covered and with the informal-type of language used.

R: That is a very good point and in terms of using the textbook. Here I am speaking with reference to question 2. Let me just read it.

R: How do you use the textbook or type of texts in the classroom?

TD: Because of time constraints I used the textbook only on those aspects that the learners have problems with. I would revise the work with them and let them do the activities based on the work.

R: Okay, do you use any particular aspects of the textbooks to achieve your objective.

TD: Yes, I like the fact that these days the textbooks are set out according to themes and time-frames have illustrations and adequate activities have a variety of text types and are user friendly.

R: Is this something good for your learners.

TD: Yes, it is.

R: What about your style of teaching? Do you flow with the communicative style of teaching with regard to the textbook?

TD: I make use of discussions, questions and answers, group work, debates, research, etc.

R: Okay, that is good.

R: What about the days that you use the textbook?

TD: Yes, I use the textbook for comprehension, grammar and writing purposes on two days of the week time permitting and one day each for the poetry, novel and drama.

R: That is interesting

R: What about difficulties that your learners experience in the classroom?

TD: Because learners in general do not read these days they often have problems with vocabulary spelling and writing.

R: As a teacher do you deal with these issues and how.

TD: I encourage reading by letting individual learners take turns to read whatever text we are busy with, letting them look up unfamiliar vocabulary, giving them regular little spelling tests, and giving them feedback on their writing tasks.

R: Has this method of intervention for you shown some positive results.

TD: Yes. I am encouraged if I even see one learner improve.

R: Thanks for that. How do you see teachers contributing to a learner-centred approach in terms of textbook practice?

TD: Teachers should act mostly as facilitators and allow learners to read the texts for themselves in class and to discuss, debate, give their own opinions on the text, and come up with their own conclusions.

R: Okay. More importantly have you taken any measures to help learner difficulties with regard to poetry, Shakespeare and grammar, which can be found in the textbook.

TD: Besides what is in the textbook I will provide them with other extra resources that will give them different perspectives on the same topic.

R: Resources like what.

MH: Well, it is similar concept when we do a discursive essay so the aim would be to give them a balance view of a certain topic. For instant if the text deals with a positive aspect then other texts might show my learners a negative aspect and that would be a balance view.

R: Okay, thanks for that.

R: Can the textbook be or become a barrier for learners?

TD: I don't think so, because the scope of language is so wide. Maybe for subjects such as history it can become a barrier as the learners are restricted to what is in the textbook.

R: And as far as the practice of using the textbook do teachers use the textbook enough or do they neglect it?

In grade 11 and 12 the textbook gets neglected because of time constraints. Teachers spend most of their time on the prescribed literature.

R: Hmmmmmm

R: What was your most important trait as a teacher and what good techniques did you use in the classroom?

TD: I treated the learners as young adults. I encouraged them to discuss, interpret and debate issues with a view to making them aware that there are different perspectives to every issue. I had all the reading done in class as opposed to giving it to them as homework because I know half of them won't do it and I would give detailed feedback on all written tasks.

R: That is a very passionate approach

TD: Smiles

R: Miss thank you very much for allowing me to interview you. I am so boggled up with time so thank you once again.



TD: My pleasure.

R: Thanks

## TEACHER E

R: Miss, thank you for the interview, really appreciate it. What will happen is, whatever you say I will have to record it verbatim. I will write exactly what words you say and then I will draw themes.

So in your opinion, especially in high school, grade 11, grade 10, do you think the textbook is still relevant today?

TE: I feel that the English Home language textbook seems incredibly informative not only on a curriculum-based level, but also on a worldly knowledge-based level. Unlike many other textbooks the English for Success is also very visually appealing; its inclusion of various images, fonts and colours help relay the content in a more exciting and pleasing manner. This can sometimes be extremely beneficial to many students, especially those who understand content better through visual representation. Ultimately, I must say, this textbook seems like it would be a helpful and informative resource for an English language class.

R: So it's suited for the visual learners.

Interviewee: Yes.

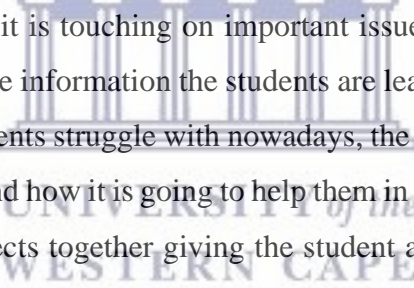
R: Miss, how do you use the textbook? With lesson planning or as a reference? What works for you?

TE: Personally, I believe that textbooks should be an additional resource in your teaching and not the primary resource which is relied on solely. This is why I use the textbook to help enhance the information and content that has already been taught and as a way

for students to get a different explanation, description or perspective. I like the textbook because it also has an extremely good collection of questions, activities and tasks which help guide the student and push them if need be. I'd also just like to add that the fact that this textbook has a lot of focus on important cultural, political and social themes and issues helps introduce that worldly-knowledge aspect to the student rather than focusing on the content in the curriculum solely.

R: I see. Okay, tell me, what about the textbook makes it fit for the learners? Is it also something that appeals to you?

TE: One aspect of the textbook that I really enjoy is the inclusion of the 'X-blocks'. When teaching a very large class, it is sometimes impossible to ensure that every student is being tested according to their abilities. These 'X blocks' provide tasks for students who want to test and push themselves. Allowing the student to have this choice, rather than the teacher force something onto them that they aren't comfortable with yet, is extremely beneficial.



Well also, the fact that it is touching on important issues and topics which should be discussed helps bring the information the students are learning into the real world. This is something many students struggle with nowadays, the connection between what they are learning in school and how it is going to help them in 'real-life'. This textbook helps combine these two aspects together giving the student a broader understanding of the content. This textbook has a lot of 'real- meaning content'; I would use the textbook as an additional resource to provide examples and further explanations of what I have already taught in class. The articles, clippings and cartoons help provide the students with a deeper understanding of the content and it assists them in expanding their knowledge both on a personal level and on a school level. Ultimately, I would use the textbook as a form of informal assessment; test how the students respond to questions and the real-life content of the textbook.

R: With regards to your planning, can it be any day or do you have like a Monday or Tuesday, in other words, a set day for the textbook?

TE: I must admit that during my teaching practice I adopted many methods of my mentor teacher. One thing she implemented was a weekly schedule. She separated each day of

the week with a different portion of the curriculum. For example, Mondays and Tuesdays were dedicated to the content novel and Wednesdays would be for poetry. Owing to this structure I would usually only use the textbook on Thursdays as this was the day I dedicated to Language.

R: Miss what difficulties or barriers have you encountered in your classes, what are the problems that learners have, do they struggle with reading, poems, certain texts etc.?

TE: I feel that English tends to be a very complex language and can be one that is very hard to pick up as it is heavily intricate. Unfortunately, because I have not had the opportunity to properly submerge myself in language teaching I am not sure about the serious difficulties that learners deal with. However, one difficulty I have noticed is that many students struggle to digest and implement the rules and techniques of the English language because they don't necessarily understand why it has to be this specific way and not another. It is quite hard for students to adapt and enforce this new form of language practice when they might already be stuck in their ways.

R: I see, and now that you identified the barriers, how do you deal with it, do you have extra classes or do you have specific content that they must work through, do you try different teaching styles?

TE: This is where incorporating what the students are learning into the 'real-world' can be helpful. If they can see how these rules and techniques are applied it might help give them a better understanding and help them truly grasp the concept. I would also try and focus on certain students, who are struggling, more personally. I'd ask them why they believe they are struggling and if there is any way they would understand the information better. Also, I would test different teaching methods and techniques to try and grasp which one would be more beneficial for this specific content.

R: Do you think that the textbook is beneficial to the learner? Do you encourage the learners to make use of the textbook to assist with their understanding or as part of their preparations for exams, revision etc.?

TE: I believe that textbooks can sometimes provide students with a form of independence making this resource very beneficial. By providing them with this textbook it gives them the opportunity to expand their knowledge and read or learn things that they may have a personal interest with within the textbook. Furthermore, it prevents the learner from relying solely on the teacher as a form of knowledge and information. It is now up to them as active students to extract information and apply it to what they know.

R: Lastly, do you feel that the use of the textbook improves or enhances your lessons in any way?

TE: I have come across numerous sections within the textbook that help with these concepts in a much broader context as it does not focus on these specific sections but rather on ways in which to approach these sections. I have incorporated this into my teaching. When teaching I try to always ensure that whatever content being taught is being taught in such a way that informs students on how to apply what they are learning to various aspects of life, not just apply it to the one they are learning right now. I feel that I'm able to do this by keeping my lessons very relatable and I also try and use my young age of 22 to my advantage by staying grounded and being honest and open with my students.

R: Yes, I understand, it's important for lessons to be relatable.

R: Miss, tell me, do you ever see the textbook as being a disadvantage to the learner?

TE: Yes, I feel that a lot of the time students can tend to rely so heavily on the textbook that they don't bother to try and learn more or research more. They have this mentality that textbooks are the be-all and end-all of knowledge and this results in them not being motivated to research these topics and learn more about them. This can sometimes lead to students being restricted to the information within the textbooks which proves to be a major disadvantage to them, they become narrow minded.

R: Miss, thank you, I really appreciate.

## TEACHER F

R: Thank you for agreeing to the interview

TF: My pleasure

R: What is your perception of the English Home language textbook?

TF: The English Home Language textbook prescribed to grades 10 and 11 learners seems to lack subject content. For example, at first glance the textbook appears focused on the development of skills such as oral presentation, creative thinking and pre-reading while marginally introducing subject content. The textbook accommodates the learners that have a rather weak command of the English language.

R: Okay

TF: On the other hand, the English Home language study guide and teacher's guide (literature and language) that is often not prescribed to learners includes the necessary subject content, adept examination preparation and effective cognitive development for grade 10 and 11 learners. These textbooks are exam focused and enables the teacher to effectively prepare learners for examinations.

There are many English Home Language textbooks, however, the textbooks that are issued to grade 10 and 11 learners are often lower order books (or cheaper) that does not include resources that enables them to prepare effectively for assessments and examinations. Learners should be offered a series of textbooks that offers a range of resources in language, literature and creative writing that will enable a holistic development in English.

R: Very interesting thoughts and in terms of its use...let me just read the second questions

R: How do you use the textbook or type of texts in the classroom?

Firstly, I have disregarded the English Home Language textbook prescribed to grade 10 and 11 learners at my school. The textbook failed to provide the necessary resources for my learners' developmental needs-they are incredibly weak in language. Instead, I've made a range of resources available to my learners selected from study guides, teacher's guides and previous matric examination questions.

My lessons were initially haphazard and lengthy where I tried to teach my learners as much subject content as possible from teaching resources I was able to extract from the internet. This method was proved ineffective when my learners were unprepared for class tests and examinations-although the content was taught in class.

I've been made aware of the resources available in study guides and teacher's guides and my lessons became exam focused and shorter. I was able to use the most fitting texts from study guides and teacher's guides and use part of the lesson to work through examination questions, too. These texts were used to consolidate and revise content that was taught in class. However, learners were unable to understand the examination and revision questions and I had to work through each question with them. As my lessons and texts became exam-focused it failed to raise the learners' academic performance. Our learners have poor literacy skills and I need to address this alike.

R: Thanks

R: Are there any particular aspects of the textbook or texts that you like?

TF: My favourite texts are selected through personal preferences. I am particularly drawn to creative writing formats and guidelines since creative writing is a skill I am passionate about. These texts are found in the teacher's handbook and resources shared by the curriculum advisor.

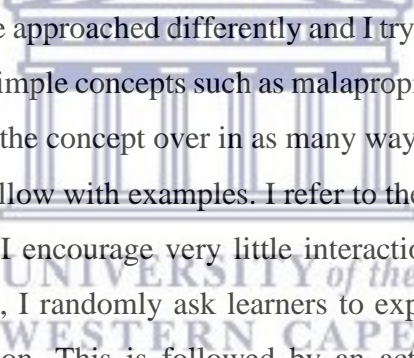
I am most fond of any text related to prescribed setwork including poetry, the novel and drama. From historical context and background to poetic devices I am drawn to any text related to literature. Some of the setwork books prescribed to our learners are inadequate in terms of examination preparation, they should be prescribed along with a study guide too. Some setwork books are dated and are not CAPS compliant.

R: Okay, thanks.

R: Can you

R: Explain your use of the communicative teaching method in the classroom with regard to the textbook or type of texts?

TF: My interaction with my learners varies from text to text. For example, when I teach Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet to my grade 11 learners, I encourage plenty of discussion since many learners do not read the setwork text and are not attracted to old English. The discussions are often related to examination questions and linked to everyday knowledge about love. I try to encourage debate and argument too where learners are encouraged to decide on a point of view. I have realised that informal discussions about setwork texts accommodates both the stronger and weaker learner. The weaker learner relies on everyday knowledge in order to understand school knowledge while the stronger learner puts together everyday knowledge and school knowledge and develops a coherent argument or discussion.



My grammar lessons are approached differently and I try to follow a series of steps. For example, when I teach simple concepts such as malapropism, tautology and redundancy I begin with explaining the concept over in as many ways I can think of. Once learners are able to respond, I follow with examples. I refer to the definition or explanation as I explain each example (I encourage very little interaction at this point). Once I have explained the examples, I randomly ask learners to explain the definition or link the example to the definition. This is followed by an activity handout where selected learners are encouraged to complete the first few examples on the board while the remainder of the activity is completed independently or as homework. When learners return to class the next day, many do not complete the homework, I work through the answers anyway.

R: thanks, in terms of dividing your teaching capacity

R: How do you plan...do you have any specific days in which you use the textbook?

TF: I generally reserve the double lessons with my grades 10 and 11s for setwork study-Wednesday for grade 10 and Thursday for grade 11. I use the prescribed setwork to read and develop analysis while using the study guide and past examinations to consolidate content that was taught in class.

Any other lesson is planned around notes extracted from my teacher's guide and study guides or past matric examinations. Most Friday's are set aside for class tests that were prepared from past matric examinations. These tests are English intervention.

R: From this perspective it seems that the textbook can be a hindrance.

TF: Yip

R: Okay

R: Can you name the difficulties that some of your learners' experience with regard to language teaching?

TF: My learners are unable to cope with the setwork texts and do not read through the setwork independently. Setwork lessons are a struggle for these learners and I have slowed down the pace of my lessons to accommodate their ability levels. These learners often fall asleep during lessons, forget or lose their setwork books and are discouraged by the experience altogether. I often lag behind other classes and do not cover as much content as I am required to. Many of my learners are visually impaired and desperately need the aid of reading glasses. This adds to the discouraged attitude towards setwork study.

Many of my learners are unable to recall content that was taught during a previous lesson. When I recap an earlier lesson, learners often seem dazed and confused and often agree that I did not teach the content yet-they return to class more confused than before. I like to consider my explanations and teaching methodology rather basic and remedial, yet my learners are unable to remember the theme of a previous lesson. These learners generally struggle with examination preparation for language and perform poorly in exams.

R: How do you handle the difficulties that your learners experience?

TF: I have tried to remedy the setwork struggle with a range of multi-media resources. I wanted to attract my learners to setwork/texts. I have projected videos, pictures and audio during lessons. This was ineffective since it often changed learners perceptions and multi-media easily tampers with the meaning of a setwork text. Learners often misinterpreted the setwork and this was evident in their examination responses.

I have tried to develop a model of discipline around setwork study where I often sent parents sms's from the school's administrative system about the learners' participation during lessons, or lack thereof. I have seen a steady increase in the discipline of my learners towards setwork study and I have managed to develop a support system from



parents. I have been unable to develop a solution about my learners who are unable to remember a previous lesson.

R: How do you see teachers contributing to a learner-centred approach in terms of textbook practice?

TF: I see teachers developing a learner-centred approach to the textbook as plausible, but many changes have to take place to accommodate this. Firstly, teachers should have the prerequisite teaching qualifications to teach English Home Language (grades 10-12). Teachers who are qualified to teach English at primary school level should teach English at primary school level. Many teachers have acquired their qualifications, but lack the necessary textbook training. All teachers should be trained on how to use the textbook effectively while developing the skills needed to contribute to a learner-centred approach to the textbook. Learners could work through a textbook independently if teachers are skilled enough to teach them how to.

R: You presented some very good points here.

R: What measures have you taken to help learner difficulties with regard to poetry, Shakespeare and grammar, which can be found in the textbook?

TF: I have offered extra tuition to my grade 10 and 11 learners on Saturday mornings and break-time. The attendance was poor and the lessons were discontinued.

I have changed my poetry and Shakespearean lessons from lengthy and content-dense to shorter, exam-oriented lessons. The content taught during these lessons attempted to prepare learners for every possible exam question. I shared additional resources with my learners including modern Shakespeare texts, examination questions and study guides.

I have included more grammar lessons to my term planner. Before, many lessons were dedicated to literature-grammar was often ignored.

R: Furthermore, can the textbook be or become a barrier for learners?

TF: Learners' ability levels have to be looked at closely in order to determine whether the textbook is a barrier or not. Learners who are weak in language and struggle with basic literacy skills such as reading, understanding, speaking, listening and writing will see the textbook as a barrier. The textbook is a literacy tool that aims to develop these literacy skills, but if learners

lag behind in cognitive development, the standard set in the textbook does not aid the development of the weak learner and the textbook becomes a barrier to the learner.

Learners who have a strong command of English have developed the necessary language skills that enables them to perform well in all aspects of language study. The textbook may and may not be a barrier for these learners.

One has to consider the type of textbooks that are prescribed to meritorious learners. Some textbooks are set at lower order and may not challenge the advanced learner. In this case, this type of learner becomes bored, frustrated and unfulfilled. Therefore, the textbook becomes a barrier.

On the other hand, many advanced learners are prescribed a series of textbooks and study guides that accommodates their ability level. The textbook does not become a barrier under this circumstance.

R: Aptly stated. It makes one think.

R: Almost done

R: Do teachers use the textbook enough or do they neglect it?

TF: The use of the textbook relies on the teacher's teaching experience. I have noted that teachers who have been teaching for more than a decade have taught through curriculum change. These teachers have acquired a series of textbook resources and are able to use the textbook resources adequately.

More so, teachers from other schools whom I have met at a symposium who have marked matric examinations are rather up-to-date with the selection of their textbooks and have used their marking experience to develop the manner in which they use the textbook.

R: That is an advantage.

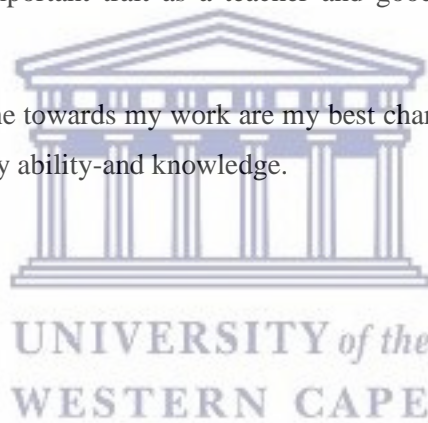
TF: On the other hand, teachers who have just started teaching (including myself) are limited to the textbooks prescribed to learners. We have not accumulated textbooks since our experience in teaching is still to develop. Many of us are unaware of the many textbooks that have been

published, we have not received textbook training and our inexperience with the use of textbook places us in a position where we marginalise the textbook. Experienced teachers use the textbook adequately while inexperienced teachers are too afraid to use the textbook. Also, many of my university peers have acquired curriculum compliant textbooks, but their contextual factors have limited their use of the textbook.

For example, these peers are unable to purchase copies of the textbook for their learners since their school's financial status does not allow such expenditure. They are unable to photocopy from the textbook as the school cannot afford to maintain a photocopying machine. Teaching experience, professional development and contextual factors affects the teacher's use of the textbook.

R: What was your most important trait as a teacher and good techniques did you use in the classroom?

TF: My attitude and discipline towards my work are my best characteristics. I perform all parts of teaching to the best of my ability-and knowledge.



## TEACHER J

R: Miss, thank you for the interview, really appreciate it. What is your perception of the English home language textbook?

TJ: We are currently using the solutions for all which is published by Macmillan. I consider this an invaluable resource to both learners and educators since it covers the various skills which need to be addressed in the classroom. I feel that the textbook proves to be quite useful with regards to speaking and writing skills, this is because it outlines the requirements for the various speaking activities which needs coverage and writing skills which need addressing.

There's also a reference and index which I feel that the learners need to learn how to use. For exam, the book is extremely valuable however, I must say that the literature component is rather basic as only two of the prescribed poems are covered and the questions tend to be basic. I feel that it's safe to say that the literature studied in grade 11 is not catered for. The language section is also quite lacking in the sense that it only has definitions for grammatical terms, basic exercises these also do not cover the level of questioning that I feel the learners need to familiarise themselves with in preparation for the final grade 12 exam which is what we are geared towards in grade 11.

R: So how do you use the textbook or any types of texts in the classroom?

TJ: I try to use the textbook regularly so that it doesn't become an obsolete resource, gathering dust. I have writing and language periods on a regular basis where the learners are requested to bring their textbooks. I then require them to find information on the formats of various writing pieces, explanations of grammatical concepts or grammar rules as well as preparation for oral presentations. Despite the textbook providing background information, guidelines and facts, past matric papers are utilised more regularly.

R: Miss, tell me, are there any particular aspects of the textbook or texts which appeals to you?

TJ: I like the word bank in each theme, the themes covered and basically all the skills that need to be covered, especially in listening and speaking, writing and language are covered and the learners can use the book as a resource for independent work. I also like the teacher's guide for the educator as it's CAPS compliant.

R: Do you use communicative teaching methods in the classroom with regards to the textbook or texts?

TJ: I find that learners engage with the texts be it textbook related, literature or past exam language or literature texts. I feel that learners are usually quite eloquent when expressing themselves orally but when they need to write they appear challenged and in need of assistance all the time. I usually explain concepts, give examples and exercises for independent work or homework however I often end up assisting them to the point where I give them the answers. I know I am spoon feeding them but with the loaded work schedule and generally lazy learners, what can I do? I try to have texts at hand, literature or language etc. which I use as a starting point for the learners' engagement.

R: How do you plan your days? Do you have specific days for the textbook?

TJ: Yes. I usually use the textbook on Fridays when we do language and writing exercises.

R: What difficulties do your learners encounter with regards to language teaching?

TJ: Learners are generally not interested in reading as with all the accesses to videos on YouTube etc. it's easier to watch the films. I feel that learners are still under the impression that language does not have to be studied. They do not see it in terms of continuity but rather isolation, every grade they learn new concepts. I find there's a lot of forgetfulness as well, they do not remember the basics and these have to be retaught constantly. Their application of knowledge is also challenging, this shows when they have to find concord errors, malapropisms, tautology and editing etc. Despite spending so much time teaching literature they struggle to answer the questions, many of them expect to find the answers in the extract and end up rewriting chunks of the contextual passage.

R: So how do you handle these difficulties?

TJ: Well, the underperforming learners are usually identified and they then attend the extra classes during the holidays and after school. I feel these are helpful as smaller groups are worked with

meaning their weaknesses can be focused on. I always try to make my literature component understandable.

I do this by providing summaries, key points, notes on characters, themes etc. I hand out questions and discuss the answers to the point where I even give out the answers. I try and expose them to as many exam type questions as possible to familiarise them with the skill of answering questions. Whatever resources I have access to, I make available to them if possible. We do language lessons as well quite regularly and look at model answers. After P3 or a writing exercise I draw up a list of common concord errors which I type out and give to them.

This provides a way to improve their writing skills and encourages using punctuation for effect, avoiding common conjunction errors etc.

R: How do you see teachers contributing to a learner-centred approach in terms of textbook practice?

TJ: Firstly, learners must realise that the textbook is an indispensable resource. Educators have to make continuous references to textbooks and utilise the information and activities in the book, educators must plan their lessons around this. The book must also be standardised and comply with all the requirements of the CAPS curriculum. The exercises must align with the matric final exams. I feel educators must use the textbook as a main resource.

R: Miss, what measures have you taken to help learner difficulties with regards to poetry, Shakespeare and grammar, which can be found in the textbook?

TJ: I usually make reference to relevant pages where key concept ideas such as literary devices, aspects of drama and the novel are explained to make learners understand concepts. Once they understand the concepts they'll be able to apply it to the relevant genres and possibly understand it better. This is not possible with the textbook we use but rather with others. Newly published textbooks have a wealth of information, questions and guidelines which can help the learners under the literary texts better.

R: Do you think the textbook can be or become a barrier for learners?

TJ: I feel that it boils down to how effectively the textbook is used by the educator. If they make continuous references to it and teach the learners how to use the information for their benefit then it shouldn't be a barrier. The book should be used as an extension for revising and further research on a particular topic therefore it should not be a barrier. In fact the textbook can never be a barrier because it has to comply with the CAPS curriculum and the work schedule, therefore educators should use these books optimally in their lessons and not neglect the book.

R: Do teachers use the textbook enough or do they neglect it?

TJ: I think this depends on the teacher and their subject. With content subjects the textbook is used optimally whereas with languages it seems to be neglected. Teachers tend to utilise other resources especially at an FET level, we tend to use past matric papers rather than the exercises in the textbooks. Although the textbook is used as a reference to revise terms, formats of various writing pieces etc. At a GET level, teachers are more reliant on the textbook.

R: Thank you miss, I really appreciate it.

TJ: No problem, my pleasure.

## APPENDIX 5: COMMONER INTERVIEWS

### TEACHER H

R: Miss, thank you for the interview, really appreciate it. What will happen is, whatever you say I will have to record it verbatim. I will write exactly what words you say and then I will draw themes.

So in your opinion, especially in high school, grade 11, grade 10, do you think the textbook is still relevant today?

TH: Yes. I do feel the textbook is relevant. It covers many themes in terms of it has the format of a language paper. It's got comprehension, it has advertisements, there's language in there that you could use in your class. So the textbook is relevant because you are always looking for material and it's nice to have a book that you can use to engage the learners and the learners to go home and use it as a part of an extended study program as well.

R: In terms of your senior classes, do you choose random texts, or have you found that my class likes this kind of texts so I just give from that. How do you choose your comprehension texts and sometimes your poetry texts that you feel? Is it based on your class or is it just per say, curriculum? I do that finished.

TH: It really depends if it's something relevant and current, then you would want them to engage because sometimes a text might not be suitable for their age group, so you can maybe find things on animals, that maybe something interesting, social media could

have, there could have been an article written, how parents must raise their children. So sometimes, you want current articles that can relate to them, teenagers and love -

R: So relevancy is important for you?

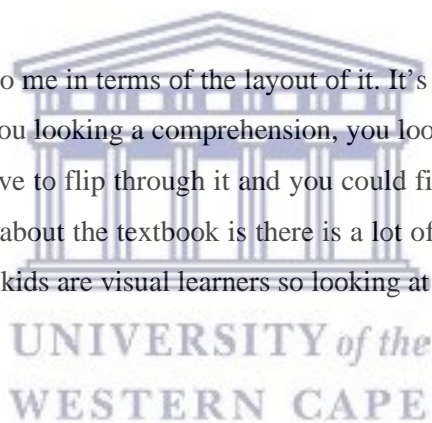
TH: Yes

R: It's the number one thing

TH: Yes, because they're young and they need to, they also want things that they can relate to and they're going to want to read it because that's maybe their only form of reading that they have, is that comprehension.

R: Okay. When you looked through that grade 11 textbook here, is it something that appeals to you?

TH: Yes, its appeals to me in terms of the layout of it. It's easy to, it's an easy reference to use in terms of you looking a comprehension, you looking for an advertisement it's in here, you just have to flip through it and you could find something that you need and also what's nice about the textbook is there is a lot of colour, its vibrant, kids can see it, because some kids are visual learners so looking at colour and things does add to



R: So that helps?

TH: Yes, it does help.

R: And your days, can it be any day or do you have like a Monday or Tuesday?

TH: I have specific days, so poetry one day, language one day, and the novel on the other two days.

R: What difficulties have you found in your senior classes that learners have, reading poems etc?

TH: I find that the, I think that the biggest challenge is that maybe not the fact that the reading but more the grammar and language. The fact that they don't know how to spell characters names which are important things and its simple things you might not necessarily be a language person but just simple tasks that are able to do in terms of



grammar and language. I think that also the kids don't always read with understanding and there isn't always time for them to, to teach them that to learn to grasp.

R: And now that you identified the barriers and to deal with it, do you have extra classes or do you have specific stuff that they must read or do?

TH: I don't have extra classes what I have done is I give them an activity and prefer to mark their book and show them where they have gone wrong and during an interval it will spill over and we will continue to work on things where we don't understand but you know that fact that my writing on the board is an indication of them not learning because they're just marking it and they won't understand it but one on one, at least we don't have so many learners so we can do it in an period, giving them an activity and you can quickly mark it and show them this is where you've, the errors which you have made.

Simple things like also, you know I said, to the grade 10's, today also, leave out the apostrophe, you know just, that, leave it out, you can see it's when you say it but when you can point it out to them in the area, they can see what you trying to say to them. Also the other thing is for the literature essay in terms of the fact that you must have just one point, so for example if we talk about the drudge school in The Mark, then everything about the drudge school needs to be in that paragraph, like the pledge,

R: It mustn't be scattered

TH: It mustn't be scattered, their things are scattered, they mention it there, they mention it later on also to tell them that their introduction must be just 2-3 lines

R: Yes, yes.

TH: You know in this environment, I don't want to hear from the start of a novel to the end so just 2-3 lines, you can use your question as part of it and so then you work up. Maybe I'm wrong in terms of my thinking

R: What works for you.

TH: I'm not a fan of the mindmap

R: Okay.

- TH: But the reason why is kids don't group their ideas together or one separate so when you show them you said that there, you said it there if you group your ideas together and say that will form paragraph 2 this will form
- R: Okay
- TH: Will form paragraph 3, 4 then it is an effective tool but they just scribble things because
- R: Just throw whatever on the page
- TH: Yes. But when I will teach for example introduction 2-3 lines, use the question, go paragraph 2 these are the things you are going to use, you have a block with the characters you want to use and the evidence you want to use because I just feel that gives them the structure and order they need
- R: Yes, yes I hear what you say.
- TH: Cause with the mindmap its fine if you're gonna go back to group your ideas together
- R: Okay.
- TH: Cause sometimes, we're all not writers but you can use little bit of that information to get to get to that point to have that logic and
- R: That process of yours can be applied to other texts as well
- TH: To other texts, yes.
- R: Other comprehensions, poetry, when you group stuff together
- TH: Yes, when you group stuff together in terms of what you feel is going to be in paragraph 1, paragraph 2, paragraph 3, 4, 5, 6
- R: From your senior classes, which is the most difficult area, is it Shakespeare, the poetry, the grammar, the comprehension, for you?
- TH: I'd say the language is the most the idea is that you move on from a metaphor to a paradox, litotes, and synecdoche. All of those kinds of things become more difficult. They not able to analyze advertisements, and getting the deeper meaning, not being

able to find the humor on certain things. I think, can't pick up puns, you know those kinds of simple things.

R: Okay.

TH: And they are not able to use it in their writing

R: Yeah

TH: Effectively you know. So I think it's one of those things

R: In your opinion, can the textbook become a barrier for the learner or even for the teacher?

TH: Yes, it can become. It can be a, it does have a hampering effect. That's why it's important to have other resources that you are going to use other than a textbook. You must look on the internet, or you use old question papers or something. You won't find everything you want from the textbook, but the textbook is a guide

R: Yeah

TH: In terms of what you're gonna need from the textbook

R: Yes, and your class size, are you satisfied with your class size, in terms of would you have one less or is that number you have sufficed.

TH: I suppose everyone would want less in terms of your marking load

R: Okay

TH: But I suppose, compared to what my other colleagues have I think I shouldn't complain. 33 is as fair number.

R: Yeah, and then from the textbook, which parts do you prefer to do?

TH: The comprehension

R: The advertisement, the comprehension?

TH: Yes and they have nice things of Shakespeare also in this textbook, which you can relate to your novel

R: Yes, and it matches sometimes with the drama that you do

TH: Yes,

R: In your current grade 11, grade 10 etc. yeah, so you choose one day for the textbook and is it a Tuesday, Wednesday?

TH: Friday.

R: Friday?

TH: Friday is my language day

R: Okay and the learners responds to the textbook. I mean is it just a book for them in terms or?

TH: I think it's just a book for them, it's just a book for them. Like it's an effort to bring it to this point you bring it here but it has good things which you could use.

R: Okay, and then your style of teaching? Are you interactive, are you walking around, engaging with the text, is it one on one sometimes or is it just a collective?

TH: It's interactive, it's a collective, we work together

R: So you mix it up basically?

TH: We mix it up together, I don't have a data projector,

R: Yes, at this moment?

TH: So it would be nice, at this moment I don't have a data projector. I'd use the board if I want to say certain things, like if I'm using a mindmap from a novel then I use the mindmap for the novel, because we were talking about characters and we can relate to them, moving from one point to another point you know. But I prefer I don't write the answer on the board we discuss it

R: Okay.

TH: You write and add as we continue

R: But it's a nice classroom,

TH: Yeah.

R: Nice and big as well.

TH: Yeah, it's nice and big, it does my classroom yeah. So in terms of that for them to write and do their homework. I think the biggest challenge is getting them to even do the homework,

R: Okay.

TH: Because if you start writing on the board it means they just taking it from there. They must add their own notes. Because sometimes you go back to a chapter, refer back, remember this happened here, now make a note for yourself, this is not the first time we're introduced to a character. Me, we've met Me before, you know just simple things that they might not.

R: So your teaching approach would be learner centered, you focus on them?

TH: Focus on them and we engaging and I will give answers and we do it together.

R: Okay.

TH: Discuss and,

R: Yeah.

TH: And thrash out what we need to,

R: Yeah.

TH: Where we need more text and.

R: Yeah, miss we've come to the end, we've covered it all the questions. Thank you very much. I really appreciate.

TH: No problem. Thank you.



**TEACHER G**



R: Miss, thank you for allowing the interview. I appreciate your time and your commitment as well.

TG: Okay.

R: Um, how do English teachers, like yourself, especially in the senior phase, grade 10 and 11, do you see them using the textbook? Or do you think the textbook is, has lost its appeal for teachers in the senior phase.

TG: Um, talking from experience about the school, right-

R: Okay.

TG: Okay, I think the textbook is no longer *that* effective in teaching as it used to be before. Maybe it's because, um, the change...evolution from the OB, um-

R: OBE.

TG: OBE to CAPS document-

R: Okay.

TG: So you would find that, of course, yes we have a lot of books now that are kept, um, centered-

R: Yes, yes.

TG: But, um, a lot of teachers-

R: Yeah.

TG: They are also not kept trained.

R: Yes.

TG: So now it's a difficult, now especially when you are working as a team, there is one who is not kept, um, trained and others are also kept trained so...-

R: Yeah, yeah.

TG: It's normally also even the senior teachers, no matter - or usually, that you'll find that are not kept straight-

R: Or long in the game, hey.

TG: Or long in the game-

R: Yeah.

TG: And they pull the chords, alright, they'll tell you what to do.

R: Yeah.

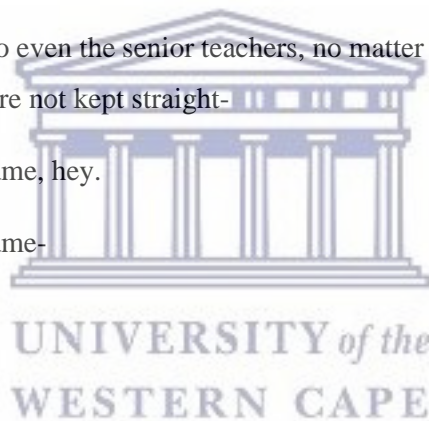
TG: So you'll find, now, they will tend to stray away from the textbook because they still have the old vision of how to teach-

R: Yes, yes.

TG: English as a subject.

R: Yes, yes.

TG: The OBE way, alright. And then, of course, here and there, I *might* be using the textbook but not as much as-



R: Yes.

TG: I would want to use it-

R: Okay.

TG: Yes.

R: And when you use the textbook, Miss, what do you usually use in the textbook? Comprehension? Grammar? Poem? Or literature? What do you use.

TG: The...

R: The component.

TG: The book is, um, it's usually, um, the language component and comprehension-

R: Yeah.

TG: Alright, that you'll find there.

R: Okay.

TG: The literature, normally we get the set-books for literature, that are different that, of course, may be...- the good thing is even the textbook, they actually have, um, some ideas of how to tackle the literature component but-

R: Yes.

TG: We rarely use that from the textbook because...

R: Yeah.

TG: It might not be relevant-

R: Okay

TG: But then, um, literature book that you might be using that time.

R: Do you think books like the 'X-KIT' and the 'Answer Series', do you think that that is taking away the textbook? That it's robbing, uh, the components of the textbook? Is it interfering with just using the textbooks or do you think that the 'X-KIT' and the 'Answer Series' are good stuff in the senior phase? Or is it just totally blocking the use of the textbook in the classroom?



TG: I would say yes and no.

R: Ok.

TG: Ok. Yes, in a way, it is sort of blocking the use of the textbook because it has everything so, for some teachers, they don't see any need of using the textbook.

R: Yes, yes.

TG: But, you will find not every child or every learner would-

R: Yeah.

TG: Have that kind of book, so, as a teacher, you'd also need to use a textbook

R: Yeah.

TG: For them to have- you know like, the textbook, it's good in the sense that it gives them a background-

R: Yes.

TG: Some background of what they are learning about, alright, and then, um, it's something that they can actually use alone at home-

R: Okay.

TG: without the, um, help of a teacher.

R: Yes.

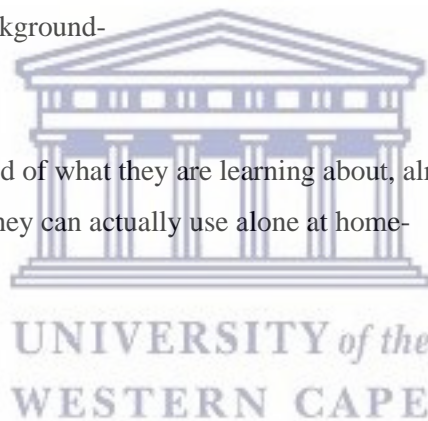
TG: Most of the textbook, they are self-explanatory, yes.

R: And the topics in the textbooks, from what you've seen over your years, do you think that the publishers are missing, uh, the topics that are relevant to learner's life, or are they asking stuff that learners find boring and they don't like? Would you include certain topics to make it attractive to teenagers, especially at High School?

TG: You and I, we both know that, um, when it comes to teenagers-

R: Yes?

TG: They are looking at a lot of romance.



R: Yes, yes.

TG: They are looking at a lot of, um, media and etc. etc. I think that must be something that should be included in the books. But you'll find that the content that you will see in- from the textbook is, ah, boring for their stage-

R: Boring, yes. Ok.

TG: Boring, yes. It's boring for their stage.

R: Almost outdated, you say?

TG: Almost outdated and they just do it for the sake of, "Ok, what must we do now? The teacher asked us to do it." But, you can actually tell they're bored.

R: Yes.

TG: Even some literature content that we are dealing with-

R: Yeah.

TG: Are outdated, I must say.

R: Yes. Does it- can that also come in the question papers if teachers ask a comprehension but the comprehension is *so* boring that...

TG: Even the comprehension. You'll find it all goes back to what the teachers are getting from the textbook.

R: Yeah.

TG: You understand? Yeah.

R: So learners of grade 9 last year, when they did 'Shane'...did learners like that book?

TG: They don't.

R: They don't, ok.

TG: It's been like, um, how many years I have been teaching. Every generation, every group that comes, they don't like 'Shane'.

R: Yes, yes.

TG: It's like, ok, we now- it's like, ok, this is what we must do at-

R: That book looks old as well, hey?

TG: The book is old. It's just the same as, um, the grade 8 one, 'Buddy'.

R: Yes, okay. So I'm already-

TG: But...

R: Yeah?

TG: As long- but, um, I think it's...we need diverse-

R: Yes and that follow- that can spill over into the senior phase also, hey? Ten and eleven, where you can also...they can have the same attitude if it's not planted right in the...eight and nine.

TG: Yes, yes.

R: Tell me, and the barriers in your class? Are...what, reading barriers? What do you still see in classes now as barriers for the English, is it reading ability, is it, um...?

TG: It is the writing.

R: The writing?

TG: The reading, I can say not everyone.

R: Okay.

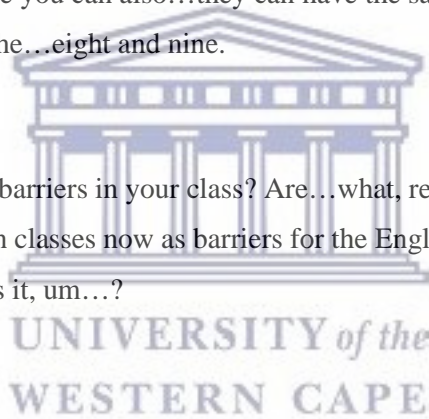
TG: Ok, of course you might have kids, like one or two but the writing.... The writing is getting worse and worse, mainly because of the media, you know, the texting-

R: Yes, yes.

TG: And everything, the short-hand...

R: Yes, yeah.

TG: And also, you will find that English, now, is sort of now diluted.



R: Diluted, yes.

TG: So...they are now taking in everything, especially at their stage; it's a tender age where, if they are not taught properly they will also...will not even know which one is wrong and which one is right.

R: Okay.

TG: So I see that problem with them, especially the grade eights and nines...

R: Yes.

TG: It's the writing, the spellings, the handwriting itself. I think those things should be taught in an introduction to English.

R: Yes, yes.

TG: But, um, -

R: And the process approach? Is that helpful or is it...harming? You know, like you have your rough, your mind map, and then it gets reviewed and fixed and then you get the original. Is that a-

TG: I don't know...um...

R: Yeah?

TG: You know, I also feel that the kind of child we are dealing with today is simply different-

R: Yes.

TG : From the child of yesterday, in the sense that they want things to go quick.

R: Yes, yes.

TG: Alright...

R: Quick-fix, hey?

TG: Quick-fix. So they find the process even boring.

R: Yeah.

TG: Tell them...

R: You are right.

TG: You know, “Do the planning, do your mind map. Your planning and do your rough draft and your final draft. Even if you are going to have three rough drafts, as long as your final draft is perfect.”

R: Yes, yes.

TG: They find the whole process boring and, uh, they just want the easy way out.

R: Yeah.

TG: The mind map and then the final draft-

R: They bring that to the other subjects as well, hey?

TG: Yes.

R: Yeah.

TG: And also, we as English teachers could be able to do it but unfortunately because of the CAPS...um...

R: Yeah?

TG: What do you call it? We don't have time anymore with children.

R: Yes, okay.

TG: We don't have time, you know everything is now like, assignments and this and everything so the time to sit with the child and...you know we used to have, even just a week, where we \*perfectise our essays.

R: Yeah, yes.

TG: Alright? If it means they have to go and redo it and then we have time in class to. We no longer have that time to do that because as a teacher also, at the back of your mind you are thinking, “I'm running out of time, I haven't done this and this and that. I must still do it.”

R: True, yes.

TG: So, it's now a matter of, “Ok, I've done my essays. Tick. Next: comprehension. Tick.” You know? Something like that...

R: So it's just fast-paced, neh?

TG: It's fast-paced, it's no longer like, um, you do according to the pace of the child...

R: Yeah.

TG: As long as the child is not yet there, you hold on to your pace until the child is there.

R: Okay.

TG: Yeah.

R: And lastly, Miss, if you were given a good textbook would that be part of your regular classroom use. If you liked the textbook, personally, would you be using it on a regular basis, would you assign one day or two days to textbook practice?

TG: I think the textbook is the way to go.

R: Okay.

TG: There's no- ok, yes of course we now have it in us that if you want to teach finite verbs, you know already, if you want to teach parts of speech, we have it already in us.

R: Yes, yes.

TG: But I think with a good textbook, life becomes easier.

R: Yes, yes.

TG: The children also, some of them, they are not aural learners, they are visual learners.

R: Yes, ok.

TG: So they want to see what you are talking about.

R: Yes, yes.

TG: So if there's a textbook, there are some, uh, logical learners-

R: That's a good point, yes.

TG: -or, they want to read and write, alright...

R: Yes.

TG: -see what the teacher has been talking about and then it makes sense to them.

R: Okay.

TG: So, just talking- telling them about it, to some, it doesn't make sense. It's ust coming from this side and going out there.

R: Okay.

TG: The moment the period end, that's where...-

R: That's it.

TG: That's it, yes.

R: Miss, thank you for your time today. I really appreciate it. Thank you very much, Miss.

**TEACHER I**



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R: Thank you Miss, for allowing me to do this, I really appreciate it. Teacher I

TI: You are welcome sir.

R: The fact that you just started here, it helps with the process. So what will happen is, I will record your audio and then I will write everything down and grab a theme out of there and use it.

TI: Okay, no problem

R: So I will start immediately. What do you think about the grade 11 textbook at this present moment? I think it's the Oxford one, that you use

TI: Yes. Okay so my perception of the English home language textbook is that, personally I feel that it is useful but only to a certain extent, because I feel like the textbook doesn't explain like the other textbooks does. However, um, I feel like the textbook has, um, it gives us nice comprehension activities that we can work through with the kids, as

well as visual literacy activities and I feel like that, I only use the book for that reason, otherwise I wouldn't use the textbook.

R: Now you teach grade 10 as well. Have you compared the blue one with the *Maskew Miller* one in grade 10?

TI: Yes

R: From that which do you think is more...?

TI: Are you speaking about the grade 11 textbook or the grade 10 one?

R: The grade 10

TI: Um,

R: Personally, I don't like the grade 10 one that much

TI: They are more or less the same, because like I said, it doesn't explain. It's supposed to be a home language book but it doesn't explain, like, figures of speech, parts of speech. It's just full of activities

R: Did you ever see the teacher's guide in that book or just the textbook?

TI: No

R: I think there is a teacher's guide

TI: Oh okay, so maybe that will have the...

R: Yeah. When you teach your grade 11 or even sometimes your grade 10 students, what kind of text do you like to use? If the textbook doesn't have what you want then, what kind of comprehension text will grab your learners?

TI: Oh, so I would make use of various other textbooks such as Answer Series, the grade 10 one and there's a grade 11 one as well. I feel like that textbook has sufficient comprehension activities. It explains every single part of speech that the learners need to know as well as figures of speech and all the aspects of language

R: If you were to select your own type of text, what would you use?

TI: Type of text?

R: Yeah, so maybe stuff like, that talks about movies or new songs

TI: Okay



- R: What kind of material would you use to grab your 15, 16- and 17-year olds? What have you noticed in your own class? What kind of stuff do they like?
- TI: They are into movies, um, series for instance. There's a handful of learners who are into certain songs that are now popular in this time
- R: Okay
- TI: But otherwise I would choose movies and series
- R: From that Oxford one is there any parts of that textbook, um, you mentioned the comprehension
- TI: Mmhm
- R: What do you think of the poetry in that textbook?
- TI: The poetry is also very helpful, I mean um, you can use it as exercises to help learners work through poetry exercises that will assist learners in exams or tests or whatever. And just how to analyse a poem
- R: So you saying it explains stuff well, with poetry
- TI: Yes, but not with language part, like the comprehension is fine,
- R: Some good content.
- TI: And visual literacy but the language, no. It doesn't do it for me
- R: I'm busy with number 4 now. Explain your use of the communicative teaching method in the classroom with regard to the textbook or the type of text
- TI: So, the communicative language teaching approach, right so, it emphasises interaction. So the way in which I would emphasise interaction in my classroom is maybe having learners do role playing in the class or group work. So if I were to use that textbook I would let the learners get into, let us say, groups of 4 and they would then analyse a poem out of that textbook on their own and then afterwards we will analyse it together.
- R: So how many learners are you dealing with in your class?
- TI: 38 max.
- R: That's still a lot. Are there any specific days that you use the textbook?
- TI: Not any specific day, but when I do language, I would use the textbook, but like I said, only for comprehension purposes, visual literacy and poetry exercises.

- R: Um, any difficulties that your learners experience in your English home language class? What is the common one?
- TI: um, the most common problem is, they have a problem identifying various parts of speech. They also have difficulty reading to understand so that means that they have problems with comprehension
- R: And can the textbook help to solve those problems? Can you use
- TI: Yes, yes, yes, definitely. Like they can work through various activities and that would, the more they...
- R: Practice it?
- TI: There we go... the better
- R: And the one, the textbook that you currently using, the *Oxford*, the blue one
- TI: Mhmm?
- R: Are there sufficient stuff on parts of speech and to help that aspect?
- TI: Not really. For that purposes, when I do deal with the parts of speech and the figures of speech I use the answer series or one of the, um, there's another language one I think *Maskew Miller*
- R: Yes, yes. Okay. How do you handle any difficulties that your learners experience in the classroom? Do you have extra classes or...?
- TI: Yes so I'll have extra classes, let's say, every Monday and Wednesday and Thursday also, um, I would love to have it every single day but I can't because learners have to go for extra maths classes as well and during those extra classes we just work through activities and, yeah, that's what I do
- R: Aand with regard to Shakespeare and grammar for grade 11 and 10 also, um, how do they respond to that?
- TI: To be honest with you, um, the learners are not very interested in reading Shakespeare, um, I find it very difficult to get them to focus on reading, um, Shakespeare even now with my grade 10's with *Romeo and Juliet*, they just don't like it at all and I think it's...they mainly have a difficulty with understanding what is happening in the play based on the current language that is used
- R: Okay. Can having Shakespeare part of the textbook help, sort of, make it more attractive or do you think when they get the entire drama book that puts them off, but

having elements in the textbook I think, like, in grade 10, can that make it more attractive?

TI: I feel, yes, definitely. I think in the *English In Context* of the grade 10's there's certain aspects of, or certain scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* that's in that book with an activity

R: And in grade 11 they have Macbeth so that can also help. So the textbook with Shakespeare can add something

TI: Yes, definitely, yes. Mhmm

R: Do you think the textbook is a barrier or can become a barrier for grade 11 learners

TI: Umm...yes I feel that, um, maybe on the language aspect it can become a barrier but on the other, like literature, definitely. So they can maybe just add more language to the textbook; it would be so much better because I feel that learners struggle with language more than literature

R: Okay. Can it now, let us turn the question around, can it become a barrier for the teacher in her approach or his approach to teaching.

TI: It could yes, because there is not enough material to teach to the learners.

R: So the teacher must be creative to go out and get material for them

TI: Yeah, definitely.

R: Do you think teachers use the textbook enough, especially in the senior phase, since we busy with the FET phase now?

TI: There are certain teachers, who, um, actually make use of textbooks on a regular basis whereas others do not, but I feel that some teachers make use of the internet; they download question papers off the internet. That could also be helpful, but um...

R: And for you, personally?

TI: I make use of both. So I will download question papers or activities, um, off the internet and I'll make use of textbooks, but I feel that the internet works best for me. That's just my personal...

R: How do you structure your day? Do you have like every Monday or Thursday or just a day before you decide? How do you structure your day for practice work in the textbook?

- TI: Um, I will do it the day before the time. I'll just sit the night, like if I have a lesson tomorrow, tonight I'll sit and I'll prepare and I'll read through whatever activity I'm going to do and that's how I go about doing it
- R: In your school, all the learners will have a textbook or must you photocopy? Which way do you think is better that its owned or the photocopies?
- TI: I feel that it is so much better if each learner has a copy of the text in front of him or her. Um, I feel that they, they just learn much better like that
- R: I see your school has lockers; do learners store the textbooks there or do they take it home?
- TI: Some store it there and some takes it home.
- R: Do you offer homework from the textbook for them to do at home?
- TI: Yes I would, I would do that
- R: And most likely which content will it be?
- TI: Um...
- R: From the 4: grammar, comprehension,
- TI: Mostly comprehension activities because I feel that if you look at the English exam, paper 1, the first section is a comprehension and that consists of the bulk of the mark of that paper. So I feel that learners need more practice in comprehension and most of the learners cannot read and comprehend
- R: Yeah, yeah
- TI: And I mean that they need to be able to do in all of their subjects, so yes, that is what I would do
- R: And, um, what was your most important trait or is your most important trait as a teacher, and what techniques have you found that has worked for your classes in the senior phase? So, firstly what do you think is your strong trait; your most important trait as a teacher?
- TI: um, my strong trait...I would say that...ooh I cannot think now
- R: Do you bond easily with the learners?
- TI: Yes, yes, yes, and I feel that that is highly essential hey, so if you cannot bond with your learners it makes your job harder and there will be no cooperation in the class. So

that's one thing I do, I make sure I have a good bond with my learners but we also need to keep in mind that we to maintain discipline in the class, so we cannot be too friendly with them. They need to know where the limit is

R: How are you finding the FET phase at this time in your teaching career? And compared with your GET phase which one do you prefer and why?

TI: Personally, I feel that the GET phase is better, um, because I feel like the FET phase is so much more work, especially where the plays are concerned and the poetry becomes more advanced as well. So it takes a lot of preparation for me as a teacher, um,

R: That Is the lower grade?

TI: No, for the FET. Whereas the GET phase, everything is plain and simple and yeah

R: And do you, um, structure a lesson in the senior phase? When you, um, when they come to your class, do you let them line up? Just go through it; what happens?

TI: Okay so um,

R: So you have 38, hey?

TI: 38, yes. So at the beginning of the lesson learners will line up outside my class. They will form two single lines, one for the girls and one for the boys, um, I will let them enter my classroom single file; we'll make use of single file and, um, at the beginning of the year I used to seat them in alphabetical order but that has died out so I'll just let them sit wherever they feel like sitting. They'll obviously stand and I'll greet them and once they have greeted me, they sit down. I'll instruct them to take out their books, be it their literature books or their language books as well as their textbooks and then I'll start the lesson

R: When you do your comprehensions from the textbook, do you read part of it or do you let individual learners read?

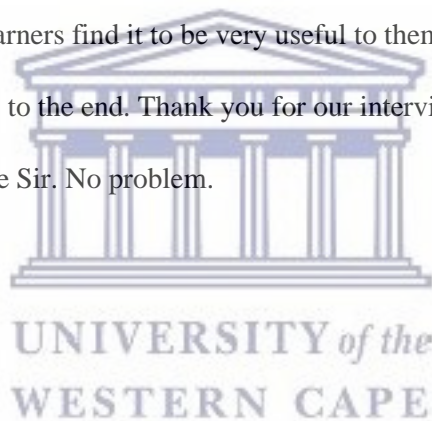
TI: So, um, this is the way I would do it. I would first read it aloud to the class, for the first time. Then, for the second time, I will appoint various individuals to read certain, let us say, depending on the length of the comprehension, maybe a paragraph or 4 lines each

R: And Miss, um, I believe your periods are 50 minutes?

TI: Yes

R: How do you find that? Is it a bit too long or is it just right?

- TI: Funny enough, I find it to be very useful because you can a lot done in those 50 minutes but, um, I will not spend the entire 50 minutes teaching. So I will teach for let us say, a half an hour and then the rest of the period I'll give them an activity to keep them busy. Because I feel like the learners cannot concentrate for 50 minutes. Then they start becoming restless and not paying attention anymore in class
- R: Miss, so overall the Oxford textbook, in terms of quality, it can hold its ground; it is a good textbook? Does it have enough in there; the blue one?
- TI: Um, yes. I would say so
- R: Compared to other textbooks?
- TI: Compared to other textbooks, yes. It's just that language section...
- R: Just the language section that is missing substance?
- TI: Yes. That lacks a bit of information but otherwise, I feel like it's a very good textbook and I feel like learners find it to be very useful to them as well, um, yeah
- R: Miss, that comes to the end. Thank you for our interview
- TI: You are welcome Sir. No problem.



## **TEACHER K**

- R: Miss, thank you for the interview. I will have to record it verbatim. I will write exactly what words you say and then I will draw themes. So for grade 11, do you think the textbook is still relevant today?

TK: I feel that it is, the first perception of this book is that it touches on current situations; despite, the fact that it may be published in earlier years. For example; topics such as, The Refugee Reality and The Water Crisis.

R: Okay. In terms of your senior classes, do you choose random texts? How do you choose and use your comprehension and poetry texts? Is it based on your class or is it just per say, curriculum?

TK: I feel that it's important that the texts would be used in a way that allows learners to develop various skills in the language. Skills such as their reading skills, listening skills, summarising skills, writing skills and thinking beyond the text.

R: When you looked through that grade 11 textbook, is it something that appeals to you?

TK: The visuals appeal to me as they are captivating. This also greatly benefits the visual learners. I also feel that many of the texts focus on expanding learner's vocabulary, their ability to read for meaning or with understanding. It also enhances their analytical skills. It teaches learners how to write certain texts such as; how to write-up an agenda, writing a poem and / or writing a speech. A lot of the texts also focuses on allowing learners to listen for meaning and evaluate what they have read.

R: Yes, okay. Now miss, with regards to your days, can it be any day or do you have like a Monday or Tuesday, in other words, a set day?

TK: Yes, the textbook is used on Mondays and Thursdays. This is when the learners focus on the language component of English.

R: Miss, What difficulties have you found in you senior classes that learners have, reading poems, texts, etc.?

TK: I feel that the majority of learners do not enjoy reading; hence, learners have difficulty with analysing and interpreting texts. Some learners do not have enough exposure to the target language such as foreign learners and learners whose first language is not English but who do English as a home language at school.

R: Do you feel that the textbook enhances or improves the social skills of the learners?

TK: Due to the fact that a communicative approach is practiced, lessons involve group work, language games and a learner-centred classroom is created. I do feel that the textbook provides this for the learners

R: Do you encourage the learners to make use of the textbook to assist with their understanding or as part of their preparations for exams etc.?

TK: I do ask the learners to pre-read texts and then have them discuss or explain in the next lesson what they have read.

R: From your senior classes, which is the most difficult area, is it Shakespeare, the poetry, the grammar or the comprehension?

TK: To assist the learners with their understanding I show them video clips from movies and I incorporate role play from various scenes in Shakespeare's work. In terms of poetry, I also use videos and listening material to assist them.

R: Miss, for 2019, will you use the textbook as much or less?

TK: I feel that the textbook is only a teaching-aid. It is there to provide a resource for the learner. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to scaffold the learner on how to best use the textbook. However, I also feel that teachers often prefer using their own texts as they tend to be more recent and practical texts. I get these from newspapers, magazines and the internet. In my opinion, theme teaching is practiced best in this way.

R: Miss, thank you for your time. It was a short interview but it is much appreciated.

TK: No problem. Thank you.

## **TEACHER L**

R: Thank you for the interview. This is the last one so I will jump right into it. What will happen is as I mention to the other teachers, whatever you say I will have to record it verbatim and then I will write exactly what words you say and then I will draw themes.



Miss, in your opinion, what is your perception or interpretation of the English Home language textbook?

TL: I feel that the textbook is limited. I found that often topics did not engage learners, they were not interactive enough and it prompted limited response.

R: I see, so Miss, how do you use the textbook or any types of texts in the classroom?

TL: I must admit that the textbook was often not my primary source for teaching language or creative writing. I would often select activities that I found useful and disregard the rest. I would then design my own resource using more age appropriate and suitable texts.

R: And are there any particular aspects of the textbook or texts that you particularly like?

TL: Yes, I like many of the visual literacy texts, adverts and cartoons as they were useful as examples.

R: Miss can you explain your use of the communicative teaching method in the classroom with regards to the textbook or type of texts?

TL: I feel that my teaching methods are based on a multi-sensory approach. I feel it is important to include all learners and recognize that each learner learns differently. This also helps to place them in groups according to strengths and then give them personalized challenges.

R: Do you have any specific days in which you use the textbook?

TL: Yes, I use the textbook when I teach language and writing.

R: Miss could you name the difficulties that some of your learners' experience with regards to language teaching?

TL: I feel that many learners have difficulties with identifying parts of speech within a text, they will respond better when given the sentence and then asked the question directly.

- R: So how do you handle the difficulties that your learners experience?
- TL: Fortunately, due to my experience in learning support I am able to adapt my lessons and resources. If my class size allows I spend individual or group time with learners that display a reading barrier as well difficulty in understanding.
- R: And how do you see teachers contributing to a learner-centered approach in terms of textbook practice?
- TL: Well firstly, we need ensure that teachers are using a learner-centered approach. This task is challenging, however the content may be taught at various levels for all learners to grasp. The teacher could use the textbook as a basis for the lesson and then adapt the questions or task to suit the needs of learners.
- R: What measures have you taken to help learner difficulties with regards to poetry, Shakespeare and grammar, which can be found in the textbook?
- TL: Usually, before teaching poetry, Shakespeare and grammar I would teach introductory lessons which focus on theme, settings, background and then use the textbook. I teach the grammar and figures of speech separately and then integrate this into my lessons.
- R: Do you feel that the textbook is or can become a barrier for learners?
- TL: I feel that the text book needs to be used with guidance of an educator as it does not provide suitable guidelines or outcomes for learners. Therefore, it's safe to say, it can be a barrier for learners. One of the biggest changes that had a negative impact was to remove outcome-based teaching and learning materials.
- R: Miss, do teachers use the textbook enough or do you feel they neglect it?
- TL: I do feel that teachers neglect the textbook due to its impracticality.
- R: What do you think your most important trait as a teacher is and what good techniques do you use in the classroom?

- TL: I feel my most important trait is being able to communicate well with all learners in my classroom irrespective of the varying aspects of diversity present.
- R: Miss we've come to the end, we've covered it all the questions.  
Thank you very much. I really appreciate.
- TL: Okay, no problem





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